

To: Councillor Terry (Chair)
Councillors Leng, Dennis, Eden, Ennis,
Griffith, Lanzoni, McEwan, McGoldrick,
Nikulina, Smith, R Singh, Thompson, White,
Williams and Yeo

Direct: 
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8 September 2026

Your contact is: **Simon Hill / Jemma Durkan - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - POLICY COMMITTEE 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

A meeting of the Policy Committee will be held on Wednesday, 16 September 2026 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES 5 - 12

4. DELEGATED DECISIONS 13 - 14

5. PUBLIC PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS

Public petitions and questions may be submitted on any matter within the Committee's responsibilities. 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

7. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 2026-29 BOROUGH WIDE 15 - 32

This report sets out the new Partnership Agreement between the Council and Reading's voluntary and community sector.

8. HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES POLICIES BOROUGH WIDE 33 - 106

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This report outlines and seeks agreement for the approval and publication of the Housing Landlord Services policies.

9.	EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS DELIVERY REVIEW 2024/26	107 - 124
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This report provides an update on the delivery of Skills, Employability and Training programmes managed by REDA (the trading name of Reading UK CIC).

10.	FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2026-2027	BOROUG HWIDE	125 - 250
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This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2026-2027.

11.	LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE ADDITIONAL MAIN MODIFICATION	BOROUG HWIDE	251 - 258
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This report set out undertaking consultation on an additional main modification regarding committing to an early review of the updated Local Plan.

12.	UPDATE ON PROJECTS FUNDED BY 15% LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY	BOROUG HWIDE	259 - 268
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This report updates on the 15% of collected Community Infrastructure Levy projects.

13.	COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME	BOROUG HWIDE	269 - 280
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This report sets out proposed Council Tax Support Scheme options for consultation.

14.	2026/27 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING	BOROUG HWIDE	281 - 348
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This report sets out the provisional revenue and capital outturn positions for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as at the end of Quarter 1 2026/27 as well as performance against the measures of success published in the Council's Corporate Plan.

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Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

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Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);

Councillors Leng (Vice-Chair), Dennis, Eden, Ennis, Griffith, Lanzoni, McEwan, McGoldrick, Nikulina, R Singh, Thompson, White, Williams and Yeo

14. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcement:

'I regret to inform Members of the sad news that former Councillor Chris Goodall passed away over the weekend.

Chris was elected to the newly-formed Reading Borough Council in 1973 as a councillor for Church ward and was appointed Leader of the Labour Group. He later served on Berkshire County Council during the 1980s and 90s before returning to the Borough Council, where he continued to represent Church ward until standing down in 2008.

Chris gave many years of public service to the people of Reading, and I am sure Members will wish to join me in expressing our condolences to his family and friends.

Please join me if you are able in standing for a minute's silence.'

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr Williams	Road Resurfacing in Reading	Cllr Ennis
2.	Cllr Williams	Prioritising Tree Planting in Reading	Cllr Ennis
3.	Cllr Thompson	Clear and adequate signage for bus lanes	Cllr Ennis
4.	Cllr Williams	Grade II listed Cemetery Arch	Cllr Leng
5.	Cllr White	Cyclist Safety	Cllr Ennis

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

17. THAMES VALLEY SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

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The Committee considered a report seeking approval to participate in, and help lead, a joint Thames Valley partnership including all Oxfordshire councils, Berkshire unitary authorities and Swindon Borough Council, to progress the pre-inception phase of work for a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) as set out in the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Annexe 1 - Funding and finance arrangements
- Annexe 2 - High Level Programme and Indicative Timeline
- Annexe 3 - Governance and Resourcing

The report noted that the SDS was a new strategic planning statutory requirement and should provide a high-level spatial framework setting the scale and distribution of growth, investment opportunities and supporting Place infrastructure across multiple local planning authority areas. The proposed Thames Valley partnership would be in the form of an inter authority agreement until the statute was in place, and the report set out the framework for this partnership to proceed.

The report stated that work to date had focused on establishing a shared understanding of the SDS requirements, engaging with Government on the emerging geography as set out in the consultation in February 2026 and legislative timetable, and developing early programme outputs (including a pathway/statement of readiness and a strategic spatial baseline). Government grant funding had been made available to the Thames Valley area to support this early work, alongside defined expectations for transparency and quarterly monitoring and evaluation reporting.

The report explained that the statutory Strategic Planning Board for the Thames Valley was expected to be established through secondary legislation due in Autumn 2026 and therefore interim governance was required to provide clear decision-making, financial accountability and programme oversight during the pre-inception period. A joint partnership model with agreed monitoring, assurance and dispute resolution arrangements was proposed, with Bracknell Forest Council (on behalf of all authorities) acting as the accountable body and host authority for any dedicated staff resource.

Resolved –

- (1) That the establishment of a partnership with the Oxfordshire Councils, Berkshire Unitary Councils and Swindon Borough Council to develop a statutory Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the Thames Valley area be approved;**
- (2) That the proposed funding and resource allocations for the pre-inception programme be noted, recognising any final allocation would be brought back to Policy Committee for agreement;**
- (3) That it be agreed that Bracknell Forest Council would act as the accountable body for funds received/held on behalf of the partnership and would host any staff appointed to work on the Thames Valley SDS programme;**

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- (4) That the interim governance, monitoring and assurance arrangements as set out in the report be agreed, including arrangements for the period before a statutory Strategic Planning Board/Spatial Planning Board (SPB) was established through secondary legislation;
- (5) That the working arrangements for development of the SDS be agreed;
- (6) That the group nominated Chief Executive from Bracknell Forest Council, in consultation with individual authority Chief Executives and Monitoring Officers, be authorised to finalise and enter into the necessary inter-authority agreements and to make any consequential amendments required to implement the decisions above.

18. 2025/26 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report setting out the provisional revenue and capital outturn positions for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2025/26 and performance for the full year against the measures of success published in the Council Plan. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - General Fund – Revenue Outturn 2025/26
- Appendix 2 - Savings 2025/26
- Appendix 3 - General Fund – Capital Programme Outturn 2025/26
- Appendix 4 - Delivery Fund 2025/26
- Appendix 5 - Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Outturn 2025/26
- Appendix 6 - Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme Outturn 2025/26
- Appendix 7 - Reserves Position as at 31 March 2026
- Appendix 8 - Council Plan Performance Measures 2025/26
- Appendix 9 - Council Plan Projects 2025/26
- Appendix 10 - Debt Write-Offs (exempt information)

The report stated that the final outturn position, subject to the completion of the external audit process, was an adverse net variance of £3.115m. This reduction of £1.518m from the Quarter 3 forecast represented a significant improvement and reflected work undertaken across the Council to mitigate the financial pressures. The report also set out the year end position on reserves, savings, General Fund – Capital, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The report sought approval for amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme which would result in a revised budget of £54.994m. The amendments were set out on an individual scheme basis in Appendix 3 to the report. Approval was also sought to remove a budget of £0.371m in the HRA Capital Programme, where the scope of the scheme had been reduced, which would result in a revised HRA Capital Programme budget of £61.783m, as set out in Appendix 6 to the report.

The report also set out performance against the measures of success published in the Council Plan for the 2025/26 year. Of the 29 Council Plan Performance Measures for

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2025/26, at the end of the financial year 45% were rated “green”, 31% “amber”, 21% were “red” and 3% were not available. Of the 51 Council Plan Projects, 8% were “blue”, 57% were “green”, 31% “amber” and 4% “red”. The full list of Performance Measures was set out in Appendix 8 and Projects in Appendix 9.

Resolved –

(1) That it be noted that:

- a) The provisional General Fund revenue outturn position for 2025/26 was an adverse net variance of £3.115m which was an improvement of £1.518m from Quarter 3 (Appendix 1);**
- b) £8.667m (75%) of savings had been delivered in 2025/26, and a total of £0.879m of savings would be carried forward into 2026/27 (Appendix 2);**
- c) The provisional General Fund Capital Programme outturn was a positive net variance of £8.691m against the proposed revised budget of £54.994m (Appendix 3) before the additional net reprogramming of £9.001m of budgets to future years;**
- d) £2.387m of Capital Receipts had been used to fund transformation (the Delivery Fund) in accordance with the Capitalisation Directive (Appendix 4);**
- e) The provisional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn position was an adverse net variance of £3.403m, which resulted in a net drawdown from HRA Reserves of £9.755m rather than the budgeted drawdown of £6.352m (Appendix 5);**
- f) The provisional HRA Capital Programme outturn position was a positive net variance of £16.084m against the proposed revised budget of £61.783m (Appendix 6) before the net reprogramming of £16.084m of budgets to future years;**
- g) The Reserves position as at 31 March 2026 was as set out in Section 13 of the report and Appendix 7;**
- h) The deficit balance on the Dedicated Schools Grant was now £46.935m (an increase of £22.031m);**
- i) The performance achieved against the Council Plan success measures was as set out in Section 15 of the report and Appendices 8 and 9;**

(2) That the General Fund Revenue outturn balance of £3.115m be funded from the Financial Resilience Reserve as set out in Appendix 6;

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- (3) That the amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 10 of the report and Appendix 3) resulting in a revised Capital Programme budget of £54.994m for 2025/26 (before the additional net reprogramming of £9.001m of budgets to future years) be approved;
- (4) That the amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 12 of the report and Appendix 6) resulting in a revised HRA Capital Programme net budget of £61.783m for 2025/26 (before the net reprogramming of £16.084m of budgets to future years) be approved;
- (5) That the write-off of debts as set out in Section 7 of the report and Appendix 10, relating to Non-Domestic Rates of £95,224.80 and Sundry Debt of £50,384.03, be approved.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 20 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

20. PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION DELIVERY MODEL

The Committee considered a report setting out the proposed decommissioning of the Caversham Road Pods as part of a transition towards the approach set out in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 2031 and accompanying Action Plan, as approved by Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 10 March 2026 (Minute 30 refers).

The report explained that the supported accommodation delivered at Caversham Road Pods had been established as part of Reading's rapid response to the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting the national "Everyone In" initiative. The Pods had been intended as a temporary, emergency provision, with temporary planning permission currently due to expire in September 2026. The Pods model was not aligned with the Council's usual approach to commissioning and delivering outreach support and supported accommodation services and did not reflect the agreed strategic direction set out in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Operational experience had also identified limitations with the model in achieving consistent move-on, sustaining recovery and maintaining throughput for this cohort with complex needs. This combination of operational factors, the temporary nature of the provision and its misalignment with the Council's strategic direction, established a clear case for decommissioning.

The report recommended a full decommissioning of the Pods by September 2027, enabling a managed transition for current residents, allowing the Council to redirect resources into alternative supported accommodation and minimising the risk of increased rough sleeping.

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This approach supported the alignment of commissioning cycles across outreach, support and supported housing services for people who were rough sleeping and would enable more coordinated services with improved outcomes to be delivered from available resources. As set out in the agreed Strategy and Action Plan, from September 2027, the Council would fully recommission homelessness support and supported accommodation services, prioritising rapid “off the streets” responses and move-on, the growth of Housing First, and more dispersed model of provision, enabling improved recovery outcomes and tenancy sustainment.

The report noted that the potential redevelopment of the site for a residential-led scheme including policy compliant affordable housing as allocated in the Local Plan would be subject to an options appraisal on use, design and routes to delivery.

Resolved –

- (1) That the decommissioning of the Supported Accommodation provision at Caversham Road Pods by 31 August 2027 be approved;**
- (2) That the Executive Director for Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be authorised to:**
 - a) procure, award, and implement any necessary contracts and associated agreements required to decommission the Caversham Road Pods site, including the removal, disposal, sale or relocation of the modular units and restoration of the site, in accordance with procurement and financial regulations;**
 - b) exercise the permitted contractual extension to award an eight-month extension to the existing support contract with Launchpad Reading for the Caversham Road Pods and The Nova Project, covering the period 1 August 2026 to 31 March 2027, up to the maximum value set out in the report;**
 - c) approve and implement a further time-limited contract modification for up to five months, in accordance with Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2025 to extend the same support contract with Launchpad Reading for the Caversham Road Pods and The Nova Project from 1 April 2027 to 31 August 2027, up to the maximum value set out in the report, solely to ensure continuity of support and alignment with planned decommissioning and homelessness service recommissioning;**
- (3) That it be noted that an options appraisal and feasibility study for redevelopment of the site in line with the Local Plan allocation would be undertaken following decommissioning, to inform the future use of the site, and that any proposals and subsequent recommendations would be**

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subject to a separate decision-making process in line with the Council's Constitution.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3)

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.46 pm)

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Committee	Minute Date of meeting	number	Item title	Decision	Officer delegated to	Lead Councillor portfolio	Expected timescale for decision
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	17/09/25	25	Joint Procurement for Parking Enforcement Services	(1) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, and Director of Finance be authorised to: a. Commence a procurement exercise independently or in partnership with other councils for parking enforcement, permits, Penalty Charge Notice processing and postal services; b. Terminate, if appropriate, the existing contract for parking enforcement with Trellint (part of the Modaxo Group) by mutual agreement at a date that allowed an orderly handover to new contract arrangements; c. Enter into a suitable agreement with another council or councils to undertake the necessary procurement exercises on behalf of Reading Borough Council; d. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to provide on street and off-street parking enforcement services; e. Enter into an agreement with a company individually or jointly procured to deliver Penalty Charge Notice processing, issue permits for residents and businesses and provide postal services for same; f. Undertake any required contract modifications (to include extension / variation) as might be required from time to time to ensure effective operational management of the contract, subject to that impact not exceeding key decision thresholds.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#AD of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer/Returning Officer;#Director of Finance/s151 officer	Climate Strategy and Transport	Tenders received and moderated. Award of contract expected October 2026
Policy Committee	17/09/25	27	Broad Street Mall Redevelopment	(4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance, and Assistant Director of Property and Asset Management, to: (a) Negotiate and conclude terms with relevant parties in respect of the Heads of Terms for the surrender and the Construction and Management Agreement; (b) Negotiate and conclude terms for disposals and acquisitions in accordance with sections 123 and 120 of the Local Government Act 1972; (c) Negotiate to enter into any required and/or ancillary documentation and agreements to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development, and; (d) Procure commercial, professional technical and legal advisors and consultants as necessary, to facilitate the Broad Street Mall development.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#Director of Finance/s151 officer;#AD of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer/Returning Officer;#AD of Property & Asset Management	Leadership;#Planning and Assets	(a). Target for Conditional Exchange of Carpark Surrender Agreement – June 2026 ii. Target for agreeing Construction and Management Agreement (CMA) – Oct 2026 (b). Target for Conditional Exchange of Carpark Surrender Agreement – June 2026 (c). This would be in parallel to and following agreement of the CMA and would continue up to BSM starting on site in Q3 of 2027; there may also be requirements to enter in to agreements following works starting on site, this is TBD. (d). Procurement process commencing Oct 2025 *Timescale to be revised subject to an update from the developer.*
Policy Committee	17/12/25	56	160-163 Friar Street	2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets, the Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to dispose of the property to a selected bidder on the best terms available to secure Best Consideration; (1) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to: a) Procure and enter a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the Block Maintenance contract to be provided. The contract to be for up to eight years (four-year initial term with extension provisions) with a total maximum value of £4.4m for the eight-year duration; b) 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.	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Planning and Assets;#Leadership	Currently concluding the appointment of a marketing agent with a view to commence marketing in September 2026.
Policy Committee	13/04/26	75 (1)	BLOCK PLANNED MAINTENANCE	(1) That if the Arts Council England bid was successful for £2,068,000 of grant funding with match funding of £230,500, the grants spend be approved and the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts to deliver the outputs of the bid;	Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Adult Social Care	September 2026 - contract sent to successful bidder
Policy Committee	13/04/26	72	THE HEXAGON	(1) That if the Arts Council England bid was successful for £2,068,000 of grant funding with match funding of £230,500, the grants spend be approved and the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts to deliver the outputs of the bid;	Exec Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services;#Director of Finance/s151 officer	Leadership	Entering into contracts over the next 12 months to deliver project by March 2028.
Policy Committee	15/06/26	6 (2)	Procurement of Fixed Term Environmental Enforcement Partnership	That the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety, the Director of Finance, and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to procure and enter into a contract for an environmental partnership for a period of three years, with an estimated value of £300k per annum. (4) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Director of Finance and the Lead Councillor for Housing be authorised to enter into contract with relevant parties to enable delivery of the schemes set out in the report; (5) (That) the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to approve the appointment of the multi-disciplinary teams required to progress Phase 3; (6) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the 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 Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services	Environmental Services and Community Safety	Trial contract extended for six months to end of Feb 2027. Full contract due to commence 1 March 2027
Policy Committee	15/06/26	8	Local Authority New Build Programme Update	(6) That the Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the 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	Delegations cover schemes for Battle Street, Southcote Lane, LANB Acquisitions, Dee Park Phase 3 and Whitley Wood Community Centre with anticipated completion dates in 2028-30.
Policy Committee	15/06/26	10 (2)	Support for Low-income Households	That the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director of Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to confirm and make changes to the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme for Reading Borough whilst maintaining compliance with the funding allocation requirements from DWP, as detailed in para 4.45 of the report;	Exec Director of Resources;#Exec Director of Community and Adult Social Care Services	Leadership	The Crisis and Resilience Fund runs until 2029.

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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Voluntary & Community Sector Partnership Agreement 2026-29
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director of Resources
Report author	Mark Redfearn, Social Inclusion & VCS Partnerships Manager
Lead Councillor	Liz Terry, Leader of the Council / Ruth McEwan, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services & Resources
Council priority	Promote more equal communities in Reading
Recommendations	1. That the Committee approves the VCS Partnership Agreement document presented in Appendix 1. 2. That the Committee receives updates on the Partnership Agreement action plan at future meetings.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Reading continues to have a vibrant, effective, and committed voluntary and community sector. The Council along with the many and varied groups and organisations that make up the voluntary and community sector have the same broad ambitions of improving the quality of life for the residents and communities of Reading.
- 1.2 In 2023, following an independent review of the working relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector, a new Compact agreement was co-produced by the Council and many of the voluntary and community sector organisations from across the borough. This was the first Compact agreement in over 10 years to be agreed by the Council and the local voluntary and community sector.
- 1.3 The aim of the Compact was to create and embed mechanisms that ensure our work to improve the lives of our residents and communities is effectively joined up, that our complementary efforts are targeted where they can add most value and that each partner organisation supports the other as much as it can.
- 1.4 To ensure its relevance to the current working relationship between the Council and the local Voluntary and Community Sector, the Compact document has been reviewed and a new 'Partnership Agreement' document has been co-produced with the sector.
- 1.5 The new Partnership Agreement reflects the successes of the previous Compact agreement and action plan, the learning from collaborative working between the Council and the local VCS and incorporates the principles of the new Civil Society Covenant introduced by Government in 2025.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council's vision is to help promote more equal communities within Reading, helping our residents to realise their potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of Reading's success.
- 2.2 Our foundations which, underpin our delivery of our vision, includes collaborating with others. We are stronger in partnership, and we collaborate with organisations from major corporations to local groups; with the business sector, charities, education institutions, health and social care, the police, faith groups, and the voluntary sector in Reading and across the Thames Valley to achieve our vision for Reading.
- 2.3 Reading has a vibrant, effective, and committed voluntary and community sector. Among the sector's many positive impacts supporting residents and enhancing the town's cultural opportunities, it makes a significant contribution to social inclusion and community cohesion in Reading.
- 2.4 Although the Council and the groups and organisations in the voluntary and community sector are separate, there is a long history of working together in partnership for the benefit of our residents and the Council respects and values the independence of the sector.
- 2.5 This new Partnership Agreement between the Council and Reading's voluntary and community sector sets out the basis for strategic engagement, partnership working and collaboration to deliver our shared ambition of improving the quality of life for all residents and communities of Reading.
- 2.6 The Partnership Agreement incorporates the principles of the new Civil Society Covenant introduced by Government in 2025.

3. VCS Compact Achievements

- 3.1 The Partnership Agreement builds on the successful delivery of the objectives and actions within the previous Reading VCS Compact agreement. Between 2023 and 2025 some notable deliverables include:
 - Six monthly meetings between VCS infrastructure support organisations and the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to discuss important issues for the sector;
 - During the lifespan of the Compact, the Council has provided over £475,000 to local grassroots VCS organisations via its Small Grants Fund;
 - Reading Voluntary Action have completed a comprehensive 'State of the Sector' survey which has been used to inform the commissioning of services to support the local VCS;
 - Monthly VCS Intelligence Network meetings have been held to keep the VCS informed of Council activities, and to provide an opportunity for the VCS to feedback their views;
 - Over 20 local VCS organisations have been given access to support from the Council's Employee Assistance Programme;
 - A new 'accommodation request process' has been introduced to help local VCS organisations enquire about surplus Council accommodation that may be available to use;
 - Extensive engagement has been conducted with the VCS on commissioning activities, including the £1.4M p.a. Closing the Gap services;

- An analysis of the Council's spend shows that approx. £14M p.a. has been spent on VCS organisations – including £7M on Health and Social Care, £3M on Housing and Homelessness, £1.5M on Tackling Inequalities, and just under £1M on Community Safety;
 - Within this, in 2025/26, the Council provided £717,801 in grant funding to the local VCS, including £125,000 in Small Grants funding to 30 local VCS organisations;
 - The Council has maintained its Reading4Community funding portal with 329 registered users, so that local VCS organisations can search for available funding opportunities;
 - Many VCS organisations have provided Cost-of-Living support to over 8,000 low-income via the Household Support Fund;
 - The Council maintains a dedicated resource for VCS organisations on its RBC website;
 - There is a single point of contact within the Council to aid communication between VCS organisations and the Council;
 - The Council continues to offer all its employees the opportunity to take two days paid leave to volunteer within the borough;
 - The Council has updated its Asset Disposal Policy to make it clearer for VCS organisations to bid for surplus Council assets.
- 3.2 Given these achievements, there is a strong willingness from both the Council and the VCS to continue to maintain and, where possible, improve how we work together to provide services and activities that enable our residents to enjoy a positive quality of life.

4. Reading VCS Partnership Agreement

- 4.1 The Partnership Agreement has been jointly developed by the Council and Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) who are the main VCS infrastructure support organisation within the borough, which includes the delivery of activities specifically commissioned by the Council. RVA and the Council have engaged and consulted a broad range of local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in the development of this Agreement to ensure it reflects sector priorities and perspectives.
- 4.2 The draft Agreement in Appendix 1 sets out the shared expectations, values and ways of working that will guide partnership collaboration between the Council and the wider VCS in Reading.
- 4.3 The VCS and the Council understand that they will not always agree, and that the Council may have to balance competing factors and priorities in making its decisions.
- 4.4 The Council wants Reading to have a healthy and self-sustaining voluntary and community sector, so that it can continue to play a positive role in supporting the quality of life for our residents.

Purpose of the Partnership Agreement

- 4.5 The Partnership Agreement is a reciprocal arrangement recognising that both the VCS and the Council have distinct and shared roles in serving the public.
- 4.6 The Partnership Agreement fosters an environment in which the VCS is respected, supported and listened to by the Council when working in partnership and independently when speaking on behalf of their beneficiaries.

- 4.7 In turn, the Partnership Agreement recognises the ongoing demand pressures and financial constraints that the Council operates within, and its need to prioritise its resources on meeting its statutory requirements and delivering the vision and priorities set out in its Council Plan.
- 4.8 The Reading Partnership Agreement aligns with the four core principles of the Civil Society Covenant:
- **Recognition and value:** The Partnership Agreement fosters solid relationships and strengthens sector independence by promoting respect and value for the Council's and the voluntary sector's respective strengths, responsibilities, perspectives and constraints.
 - **Partnership and collaboration:** The Partnership Agreement encourages high quality, purposeful, collaborative working between the Council and the VCS to inform decision-making and service design, delivering better solutions for all.
 - **Participation and inclusion:** The Partnership Agreement provides greater opportunities for people to influence decisions and activities affecting their lives by enabling increased involvement and representation.
 - **Transparency and data:** The Partnership Agreement champions more open sharing of information and data through better availability, understanding of need and evidence-based solutions.

Partnership Agreement Action Plan

- 4.9 The practical commitment to the Partnership Agreement by the Council and the VCS is reflected in the Partnership Agreement Action Plan. The Action Plan includes details of existing activities which will continue to support the objectives of the Partnership Agreement, and new activities which will enhance them. The Partnership Agreement will be monitored by the Council through its Social Inclusion Board, and by the VCS at its VCS Intelligence Network meetings.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 5.1 A strong voluntary and community sector is central to Reading being a place where its local communities can thrive and make our town an exciting and diverse place to live and work. The Council's aspiration is that this spirit of inclusivity and community is carried into every aspect of life in Reading, wherever people live and whatever their stage of life.
- 5.2 Voluntary and community services are often focused on the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded in our communities, ensuring young people, older people and those with long term health conditions or disabilities are supported to live their best lives.
- 5.3 This is why the Council Plan prioritises promoting more equal communities within Reading and tackling social and economic inequalities in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.
- 5.4 The delivery of the Partnership Agreement Action Plan, is a specifically stated project within the Council Plan.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1 The local VCS is one of many groups of partners that the Council will work with to deliver the Climate Strategy for 2025 to 2030 to achieve a net zero Reading resilient to climate change.

- 6.2 The commitments to reciprocal working to meet our objectives for improving the quality of life of our residents means that the local VCS will continue to play an active and important role in delivering sustained environmental change within the borough.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1 In developing this Partnership Agreement document, Council officers have engaged directly with a wide range of local organisations, both collectively and individually to understand their views on working with the Council and how this relationship can improve to support their own organisational purpose and the support provided to Reading residents. This included three separate workshops and direct engagement with the VCS Leaders Group which is run by Reading Voluntary Action.
- 7.2 Alongside specific discussions on the development of the Partnership Agreement, the Council regularly and routinely hosts opportunities for voluntary and community sector organisations to discuss issues which are of importance to them and to provide feedback or points of learning to Council officers.
- 7.3 This engagement has formed a crucial part in the development of a Partnership Agreement document and Action Plan that reflects the needs and aspirations of the joint working between the voluntary and community sector and the Council.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 An EQIA has been completed and reviewed. No specific concerns or additional requirements have been identified
- 8.2 The voluntary and community sector within Reading supports residents with all protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010. By improving the working relationship between the Council and the organisations within the voluntary and community sector, the Council is enhancing the capacity available to improve the quality of life for everyone in the borough who may face challenges because of their own personal circumstances.

9. Health Implications

- 9.1. A substantial amount of joint working is done between the Council and local VCS organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of residents; therefore, this new VCS Partnership Agreement will provide a stronger basis for this important collaboration to be more successful in the future.
- 9.2. A Health in All Policies assessment is included in appendix 2

10. Other Relevant Considerations

- 10.1 Within all the commitments to work openly and collaboratively with the local VCS, there needs to be a recognition that the Council will do so whilst consistently maintaining its legal responsibilities and formally established procedures.

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1 None to note.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1 There are no additional financial commitments within the recommendations of this report. All activities relating to the finances of the Council are already contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan, including what is expected to be a substantial time commitment from Council staff to working with local VCS organisations.

- 12.2 It is also important to highlight the significant demand pressures, competing priorities and financial constraints that the Council must operate within, and how these should guide the expectations of the VCS about what capacity the Council has to directly support its operations.

13. Timetable for Implementation

- 13.1 The activities relating to the Partnership Agreement set out in the Action Plan will subject to approval of this report, be delivered between 2026 and 2029.

14. Background Papers

There are none.

Appendices

1. Reading VCS Partnership Agreement 2026 to 2029 & Action Plan
2. Health in All Policies Assessment

Appendix 1: Reading VCS Partnership Agreement 2026 - 2029

Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Agreement 2026-29

The Partnership Agreement has been jointly developed by the Council and Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) who are the main VCS infrastructure support organisation within the borough, the services they provide includes the delivery of activities specifically commissioned by the Council.

RVA and the Council have engaged and consulted a broad range of local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in the development of this agreement to ensure it reflects sector priorities and perspectives.

This document sets out the shared expectations, values and ways of working that will guide partnership collaboration between the Council and the wider VCS in Reading.

Statement of Intent

We recognise that achieving better outcomes for Residents will be more successful by working effectively in partnership. This Agreement is our commitment to this partnership.

This Partnership Agreement sets out the basis for strategic engagement, partnership working and collaboration between the Council and Reading's voluntary and community sector to deliver our shared ambition of improving the quality of life for the residents and communities of Reading.

This Agreement aligns with the principles of the national Civil Society Covenant (October 2025), providing a specific framework for partnership working.

Purpose of the Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement fosters an environment in which the VCS is respected, supported and listened to by the Council when working in partnership and independently when speaking on behalf of their beneficiaries.

In turn, the Partnership Agreement recognises the ongoing demand pressures, competing priorities and financial constraints that the Council operates within, and its need to prioritise its resources on meeting its statutory requirements and its vision, priorities and objectives as set out within the Council Plan.

The Partnership Agreement is a reciprocal arrangement recognising that the VCS and the Council have both separate and shared roles in serving the public.

This Agreement aligns with the aims and values of the Civil Society Covenant to deliver:

- a fair, just and equitable society with improvements to people's lives.
- a strong, sustainable and independent VCS which collaborates with the local authority for the benefit of Reading residents.
- resilient, connected and empowered communities with inclusive opportunities for participation which strengthen our social fabric.
- decision-making informed by VCS insight, expertise and constructive challenge.
- innovative long-term problem solving to benefit local people.
- a strong democracy where all people can participate and where all voices are heard.

The values and behaviours required to achieve the aims:

- **understanding** - demonstrating understanding of the challenges and pressures faced by all parties, respecting each other's roles and responsibilities.
- **flexibility** - demonstrating ability to adapt to changing circumstances and adjust ways of working, to innovate and include different types of organisations.
- **mutual learning** - working together to ensure all parties can be open about what has worked well and what needs to improve.
- **trust** - creating mutual trust by investing in relationships that recognise goodwill and build a shared purpose, communicating regularly, honestly and openly, acting with integrity and honouring commitments.
- **openness** - maintaining open channels of communication and respect, agreeing to disagree where necessary and seeking to resolve tensions without undermining collaboration.
- **diversity, equality and inclusion** - promoting rights and responsibilities in how we work with each other and with communities, ensuring equity of access wherever possible.

The Reading Partnership Agreement aligns with the principles of the Civil Society Covenant:

1. Recognition and value

The Partnership Agreement builds solid relationships and strengthens sector independence by promoting respect and value for the Council's and voluntary sector's respective strengths, responsibilities, perspectives and constraints.

Respect for independence and legitimacy

The Council respects the independence and legitimacy of VCS organisations to advocate and campaign, including protecting the right to engage in peaceful protest.

The Reading VCS respects the legitimacy of the Council to make decisions and its accountability to Government, as well as understanding the demand pressures and financial constraints that it operates within.

The Council does not treat VCS organisations which have constructively expressed disagreement with policies or decisions any less favourably by excluding them from strategic discussions or funding opportunities.

Recognition of value, role and different perspectives

The Council recognises and values the economic and social contributions of the VCS, including the inherent community benefit VCS organisations bring, and their ability to build cohesive, inclusive communities.

The VCS recognises that Reading Councillors are democratically elected and have formal accountability to the public as leaders.

The Council values VCS expertise when shaping policy and designing services. Areas of expertise may include trusted relationships with residents, deep knowledge about what works, community leadership and building, social business, and service delivery.

Understanding responsibilities and constraints

The Council and the VCS understand each other's respective responsibilities and operational parameters under legal requirements, financial constraints, relevant regulations and ethical standards.

The Council recognises the responsibility of charities to constructively speak out when local authority policy may negatively impact their beneficiaries.

The VCS and the Council understand that they will not always agree, and that the Council may have to balance competing factors and priorities in its decisions.

2. Partnership and collaboration

The Partnership Agreement encourages high quality, purposeful, collaborative working between the Council and the VCS to inform decision-making and service design, delivering better solutions for all.

Early, regular and ongoing engagement

The Council and the VCS Leaders will work together as strategic partners to identify and develop mutual priorities to achieve shared goals.

The Council communicates strategically and effectively with the VCS through channels that are accessible, open and inclusive for effective two-way conversations.

The VCS accurately and effectively shares information to ensure that it is aware of important local issues and its role in supporting them.

The Council enables the VCS to contribute insights and expertise to define challenges, create a shared purpose and where priorities align, agree outcomes to inform relevant policy development and service design.

In making this contribution, the VCS will draw on its strengths, including its expertise in representing the interests of the people or causes it has been established to support, acting strategically by engaging early, sharing evidence, insights, and expertise wherever resources allow.

Creating the conditions for collaboration and innovation

The Council and the VCS promote a culture and environment conducive to innovation, creating opportunities for testing new ideas, focusing on impact and learning, and building on what works.

The Council and the VCS work together to prioritise preventative interventions and take a long-term view to tackle challenges and realise opportunities.

Addressing barriers to delivery in partnership

Where appropriate, the Council supports collaborative commissioning models, recognising the inherent social value the VCS brings, offering flexibility to achieve outcomes, ensuring proportionate monitoring and seeking to align funding to agreed outcomes within available resources.

All commissioning and funding activity conducted by the Council will comply with procurement, subsidy control and financial regulations, and will be delivered in a way that appropriately manages conflicts of interest arising from early engagement and co-design.

VCS organisations work in partnership together and with other sectors, seeking to remove barriers for smaller VCS partners.

The Council encourages the VCS to work in partnership when it commissions services through multiyear funding arrangements, recognising that sustainable partnership working is vital to working jointly on long term issues.

The Council works with the voluntary sector in a fair, open, and transparent way to reduce barriers to and creates opportunities for partnership working.

3. Participation and inclusion

The Partnership Agreement provides greater opportunities for people to influence decisions and activities affecting their lives, where the Council and VCS enable increased involvement and representation.

Enable diversity, equity and inclusion

VCS organisations further diversity, equity and inclusion in ways that are relevant to their mission and represent the interests of the people or causes they have been established to support.

The Council works with the VCS to ensure relevant groups are represented in policymaking, through whichever method is most appropriate, particularly those who may experience barriers or exclusion, and listens to those impacted by decisions.

The VCS will work with the Council to improve community cohesion within the borough, and specifically to realise the ambitions of the Council's Ant-Racism statement.

The Council and the VCS follow accessibility, communication, and equality impact assessment best practice requirements.

Engaging residents and communities in decision making and delivery

The Council and the VCS have a shared ambition to involve communities and residents in shaping services that may affect them.

VCS organisations involve their beneficiaries in their work, including those with lived experience, where it is relevant to their mission.

Removing barriers to active participation to build a healthy democracy and community resilience

The Council and the VCS work together to facilitate and create the conditions for active participation in society, such as volunteering or social action, to build community capacity, social cohesion and resilience.

The VCS have a responsibility to highlight opportunities for residents to get involved with democratic decisions.

4. Transparency and data

The Partnership Agreement champions more open sharing of information and data to enable understanding of need and facilitate evidence-based solutions.

To ensure the maintenance of necessary standards and practices, all data sharing will comply with UK GDPR where personal data is involved.

Engage in open, honest and transparent communication

The VCS and the Council work together to create the conditions needed for open communication, applying proportionate and well explained confidentiality arrangements.

The Council aims to offer feedback after engagement on policy and funding decisions to drive learning and improvements.

The Council follows LGA guidance regarding the publication of impact assessments and consultation responses.

Make evidence and data publicly available

The VCS maintains public trust by being proactively transparent and accountable for the money they receive.

VCS organisations share the research and analysis they undertake as far as reasonably possible, whilst also complying with data protection regulations.

Improve data development

The VCS and the Council work together to find effective ways to measure the value and health of civil society, identify any evidence gaps and review adherence to this Partnership Agreement.

The VCS and the Council work together to recognise the value of different evidence sources, including lived experience.

The VCS and the Council work together to improve data collection, recognising the data and evidence challenges that civil society organisations can face and being informed by a range of different evidence sources and insights.

Embedding the Reading Partnership Agreement

To Improve engagement and participation an online hub on the RVA website will provide guidance, case studies and an online feedback form.

The Partnership Agreement will be considered in developing new Council policy, strategy or service proposals.

Annual presentation on the delivery and outcomes of the Agreement to the Council's Policy Committee.

Annual outcomes presentation to the Council's Social Inclusion Board to include Infrastructure delivery partners.

Quarterly review of the Agreement at VCS Intelligence Network meetings

The Agreement will be a standing agenda item for VCS Leaders meetings with the Council Leader and Senior Management.

VCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ACTION PLAN 2026 – 2029

(Actions continuing from previous years / **new actions from 2026**)

1. RECOGNITION & VALUE

Action	Activity / Deliverables	Lead	Timescale	Update
RBC Commission an Infrastructure service through Closing the Gap 2026.	An extensive range of advice and support services covering the 4 functions of VCS Infrastructure: Leadership and Advocacy: Giving a voice to the VCS sector, championing local community needs. Partnerships and Collaboration: Connecting diverse organizations, building cross-sector alliances, and facilitating joint working Capacity Building: Providing practical support, training, and resources to help small charities and community groups develop and thrive. Volunteering: Nurturing and encouraging volunteering opportunities, connecting people with causes they care about to drive local, positive change	Reading Voluntary Action in partnership with Reading Advice Network and Connect Reading	April 2026 with a 3–5-year cycle	Quarterly monitoring and outcomes available.
VCS Partnership Agreement Annual Statement	Develop an Annual Statement of achievements and progress against the VCS Partnership Agreement Action Plan, (including feedback from VCS), which can be presented to Policy Committee and shared publicly.	RBC / RVA	May 2027	
Provide training and mentor support to enable groups to evidence impact and raise awareness of their work.	To raise awareness of the effectiveness of community groups.	RVA	May 2027	

2. PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

Action	Activity / Deliverables	Lead	Timescale	Update
Work collectively to identify potential social value priorities to promote as opportunities through RBC procurement.	Commercial organisations winning RBC contracts contribute their skills and resources to achieve better outcomes for Reading residents.	RBC / Connect Reading/ RVA	May 2027	
Identify and share VCS engagement opportunities within Service Plan priorities	Systematic assessment of potential VCS engagement opportunities.	RBC	May 2027	
RBC Staff Volunteering Policy	Ability of staff to undertake 2 days per year paid leave for volunteering with Reading VCS?	RBC	May 2027	
RBC Working with Volunteers Policy	Agreed guidelines for how RBC services include supported volunteers when delivering services.	RBC	May 2027	
Work collectively as Closing the Gap 'providers' and RBC to improve collaborative working through the Closing the Gap Action Research Partnership	Improved opportunities for partnership working and joint learning across VCS and RBC, to enable better public health outcomes for communities	RBC / VCS	Closing the Gap contract cycle (3-5 years)	
Develop and maintain dedicated MS Teams site for VCS organisations delivering CTG2 commissioned services.	Ability for CTG2 providers to interact with each other and the Council.	RBC	June 2026	
Provide the Reading4Community Funding Portal	Provide VCS with information on potential funding opportunities.	RBC	Ongoing	
Enable VCS organisations to be able to express their accommodation needs to identify opportunities within RBC assets	Aligning available / surplus RBC assets with local VCS accommodation needs.	RBC / VCS	Ongoing	
Successful delivery of Small Grants Fund	Direct financial support to VCS activities within the borough.	RBC	January 2027	
Review and improve VCS Support / Volunteering pages on RBC website	Expand the range of information and support available on volunteering within RBC website.	RBC	October 2026	
Support for VCS workforce development through targeted Public Health training offers	Training offer to include Suicide First Aid tutor training, mental health and	RBC	May 2027	

	wellbeing training for VCS organisations.			
Public Health joint learning and system-wide capacity building.	Place Universal Offer training and previous facilitation of See Change training with VCS partners	RBC	May 2027	
Public Health Training for VCS	An ongoing intention to work with RVA and VCS partners to identify priority training needs where these align with public health and wider system objectives.	RBC	May 2027	

3. PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

Action	Activity / Deliverables	Lead	Timescale	Update
Engagement and comms to promote the Partnership Agreement across the VCS with opportunities to feed into the annual review.	Widen the partnership between RBC and the VCS, ensuring all parts of the VCS can input and shape the relationship.	RVA / RBC / VCS	May 2027	
Deliver themed VCS Assembly meetings, to share opportunities and propose solutions to issues	Opportunities for whole VCS and stakeholders to discuss priorities and solutions.	RVA	May 2027	
Maintain single point of contact escalation point for VCS Issues	A clear point of contact for the VCS on any immediate issues.	RBC	Ongoing	
VCS briefing on the RBC Budget for the forthcoming year	Provide an annual briefing for VCS organisations on the RBC Budget for the forthcoming year.	RBC	February (each year)	

4. TRANSPARENCY & DATA

Action	Activity / Deliverables	Lead	Timescale	Update
Map community groups.	Community groups are more visible.	RVA	May 2027	
RBC Leader & Senior Manager meetings with CTG2 Infrastructure providers	Direct strategic discussion opportunity between senior Council leadership and VCS Leaders.	RBC / VCS	3 meetings per year	
Maintain the Voluntary Sector Intelligence Network meetings	Sector-led information sharing and discussion on live issues.	RBC	Monthly Meetings	
Social Inclusion Board meeting dedicated to VCS	Opportunity for VCS to discuss current issues and explore future options with key senior RBC managers and partners.	RBC	May 2027	

Closing the Gap 2 Implementation & Monitoring	Increasing the resilience of residents through collaborative working with VCS.	RBC / VCS	Ongoing	
Analysis of volunteering within the borough	Improved understanding of volunteer opportunities and volunteer numbers within the borough.	RVA	May 2027	
VCS celebration events	Showcase and celebrate volunteering in all its forms across our communities.	RVA	May 2027	
Analysis of RBC financial contribution to VCS	Detailed understanding of how Council resources are utilised within the VCS, and how they support RBC delivery and financial priorities.	RBC	May 2027	

Appendix 2: Health In All Policies – Impact Assessment Form

Wider determinants: Does the proposal significantly change any wider determinants of health? No

Equity and vulnerability: Could any group experience disproportionate impacts or are protected groups impacted? No

Inequalities: Could the proposal widen or reduce existing health inequalities in Reading? Yes

Scale: Does the proposal affect a large number of people (over 5,000) or multiple wards? Yes

Public/political profile: Is the proposal high-profile, controversial or significant shift in current service delivery? No

Opportunity: Is there a clear window of opportunity to enhance health outcomes through modification? No

Statutory: Do other assessments indicate likely health impacts? No

Project title: VCS Partnership Agreement

Lead officer - author or HIA: Mark Redfearn

Email address for contact: mark.redfearn@reading.gov.uk

Department: Policy

Directorate: Directorate of Resources (DOR)

Summary of the proposal: Reading continues to have a vibrant, effective, and committed voluntary and community sector. The Council along with the many and varied groups and organisations that make up the voluntary and community sector have the same broad ambitions of improving the quality of life for the residents and communities of Reading. In 2023, a new Compact agreement was co-produced by the Council and many of the voluntary and community sector organisations from across the borough. The aim of the Compact was to create and embed mechanisms that ensure our work to improve the lives of our residents and communities is effectively joined up, that our complementary efforts are targeted where they can add most value and that each partner organisation supports the other as much as it can. To ensure its relevance to the current working relationship between the Council and the local Voluntary and Community Sector, the Compact document has been reviewed and a new 'Partnership Agreement' document has been co-produced with the sector. The new Partnership Agreement reflects the successes of the previous Compact agreement and action plan, the learning from collaborative working between the Council and the local VCS and incorporates the principles of the new Civil Society Covenant.

Who is affected by this proposal? Asylum seekers/refugees, Ethnic minorities, People living in areas of high social and economic deprivation, Families with young children, Children and young people (0 to 19 years), Adults aged between 18 and 60, Older people (60+), Women and girls, Men and boys, Carers, Unhoused people, People with dementia, Religious or belief groups, Visitors or those working in the district

Select all themes that have a link to the proposal: Social and community wellbeing
Impact: Positive

Impact certainty: Certain of impact

Description of impact: The VCS Partnership Agreement provides a commitment to collaborative working between the Council and the local VCS. The successes of the previous VCS Compact agreement are evidence of the positive outcomes that collaborative working and a commitment to the local VCS can deliver - including:

- Six monthly meetings between VCS infrastructure support organisations and the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to discuss important issues for the sector;
- During the lifespan of the Compact, the Council has provided over £475,000 to local grassroots VCS organisations via its Small Grants Fund;
- Reading Voluntary Action have completed a comprehensive 'State of the Sector' survey which has been used to inform the commissioning of services to support the local VCS;
- Monthly VCS Intelligence Network meetings have been held to keep the VCS informed of Council activities, and to provide an opportunity for the VCS to feedback their views;
- Over 20 local VCS organisations have been given access to support from the Council's Employee Assistance Programme;
- A new 'accommodation request process' has been introduced to help local VCS organisations enquire about surplus Council accommodation that may be available to use;
- Extensive engagement has been conducted with the VCS on commissioning activities, including the £1.4M p.a. Closing the Gap services;
- An analysis of the Council's spend shows that approx. £14M p.a. has been spent on VCS organisations – including £7M on Health and Social Care, £3M on Housing and Homelessness, £1.5M on Tackling Inequalities, and just under £1M on Community Safety;
- Within this, in 2025/26, the Council provided £717,801 in grant funding to the local VCS, including £125,000 in Small Grants funding to 30 local VCS organisations;
- The Council has maintained its Reading4Community funding portal so that local VCS organisations can search for available funding opportunities;
- Many VCS organisations have provided Cost-of-Living support to over 8,000 low-income via the Household Support Fund;
- The Council maintains a dedicated resource for VCS organisations on its RBC website;
- There is a single point of contact within the Council to aid communication between VCS organisations and the Council;
- The Council continues to offer all its employees the opportunity to take two days paid leave to volunteer within the borough;
- The Council has updated its Asset Disposal Policy to make it clearer for VCS organisations to bid for surplus Council assets.

Mitigation actions: The VCS Partnership Agreement Action Plan is being reviewed by the VCS Intelligence Network and overseen by the Social Inclusion Board

Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Housing Landlord Services Policies
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Melissa Wise – Executive Director for Communities & Adult Social Care
Report author	Natalie Waters – Director for Housing Landlord Services
Lead Councillor	Councillor Matt Yeo – Lead Councillor for Housing
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	1. For the Policy Committee to approve the following policies for publication: • Housing Landlord Services Decant Policy – this policy has been created to set out Reading Borough Council’s approach to supporting tenants who need to move temporarily or permanently from their home. • Housing Landlord Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy - this policy has been created to set out Reading Borough Council’s approach to delivering a responsive, efficient and tenant-focused repairs service for council homes. • Housing Landlord Services Compliance Policy - this policy has been created to set out Reading Borough Council’s approach to managing the six key areas of statutory housing compliance: gas safety, electrical safety, water hygiene, fire safety, asbestos management, and lift safety.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report outlines and seeks agreement for the approval and publication of the following Housing Landlord Services policies; Decant Policy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Compliance Policy which are required under the Regulator of Social Housing Standards, and their expectations of Landlords. These policies are based on best practice examples and propose no changes to the current service offered to tenants. However, the published policies will ensure the Council as a Landlord is clearly setting out their obligations to tenants, managing the expectation of tenants, and improving ease of access of information for tenants.

2. Policy Context

2.1. Regulatory Context of these Policies

- 2.2. The policies presented form a fundamental component of the Council's role as a social landlord, underpinning its tenancy and property management responsibilities and obligations to tenants.
- 2.3. In April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) introduced a revised set of Consumer Standards that all registered providers of social housing must comply with. This sets out clear expectations for how tenancies and properties are managed and maintained. The Consumer Standards relevant to these amended policies are set out in Appendix 4.
- 2.4. The Housing and Communities Service aims to tailor services to meet the individual needs of the tenants, and provide homes that are safe, whilst aligning this with our corporate parenting responsibilities. This approach allows all tenants moving into Council stock, including those leaving child or adult social care housing provisions, to have the specific support they need to sustain their tenancies and thrive.

2.5. Purpose of the New Policies

The proposed recommendations ensure documented compliance with the updated regulatory framework and statutory obligations for social housing landlords, and to meet the expectation, as landlords, to have clear, concise policies.

- 2.6 The policies have also been reviewed through the Council's tenant scrutiny arrangements, providing assurance that they have been tested with tenants and reflect tenant feedback and expectations alongside regulatory requirements.
- 2.7 These policies reflect best practice in tenancy and property/estate management, including proactive support for tenants. They also support the Council's broader strategic objectives, including:
- Tenancy sustainment - helping residents maintain stable housing;
 - Community safety - ensuring tenancies are managed in a way that promotes safe and cohesive neighbourhoods;
 - Housing standards - ensuring that tenancies are aligned with the Council's commitment to quality, well-managed homes.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. It is proposed that the following policies which reflect best practice standards are approved, and ensure the Council meet the requirements of the standards as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing (Appendix 4), whilst continuing to meet all current legal requirements.
- 3.2. All policies are designed to protect tenants, uphold community safety, and provide the Council with appropriate mechanisms to respond to evolving challenges. The updated policies primarily strengthen the Council's responsibilities as landlord and do not introduce any new requirements for tenants beyond those that already exist.

3.3. The proposed changes are summarised below:

- 3.3.1 The Decant Policy (Appendix 1) sets out Reading Borough Council's approach to supporting tenants who need to move temporarily or permanently from their home due to major repairs, refurbishment works, redevelopment, or where a property has become unsafe or uninhabitable. The policy establishes a clear framework for managing decants, ensuring that tenants are provided with suitable alternative accommodation wherever possible, while maintaining their tenancy rights and minimising disruption. It also confirms the Council's commitment to meeting its legal and regulatory responsibilities, including those relating to housing standards, health and safety, equality and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
- 3.3.2 The Decant Policy defines the responsibilities of both the Council and tenants throughout the decant process. The Council will provide a named Officer, maintain regular communication, support vulnerable households, cover reasonable decant-related costs, and ensure properties are safe and fit for occupation before tenants return. The policy also includes provisions for emergency decants, adapted accommodation, reasonable adjustments, tenant support, and complaint handling. A strong emphasis is placed on equality, accessibility and tenant wellbeing, ensuring that individual household needs are considered throughout the process and that tenants receive appropriate support to achieve a successful move and return home where applicable.
- 3.3.3 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 2) sets out Reading Borough Council's approach to delivering a responsive, efficient and tenant-focused repairs service for council homes. The policy defines the respective responsibilities of both the Council and tenants, providing transparency of service standards for responsive repairs, planned maintenance and major repairs, and ensures that homes are maintained in a safe, decent and compliant condition. It supports the Council's obligations under housing and consumer regulation, including the Decent Homes Standard, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), and emerging requirements linked to Awaab's Law.
- 3.3.4 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy clearly details repair priority categories and target response times, ranging from emergency repairs attended within three hours to planned and major works delivered through longer-term maintenance programmes. It also sets out arrangements for void properties, tenant adaptations, rechargeable repairs, permissions for home improvements, and tenant rights. In addition, the policy places a strong emphasis on health and safety, performance monitoring, tenant engagement, equality and accessibility, with commitments to make reasonable adjustments for vulnerable tenants and to use tenant feedback, performance data and regulatory measures to drive continuous service improvement.
- 3.3.5 The Compliance Policy (Appendix 3) brings together Reading Borough Council's approach to managing the six key areas of statutory housing compliance: gas safety, electrical safety, water hygiene, fire safety, asbestos management, and lift safety. The policy sets out the Council's responsibilities as a landlord to ensure homes remain safe, compliant with legal requirements, and well maintained, while also outlining tenants' responsibilities, including allowing access for inspections, reporting faults promptly, and following safety guidance. The policy aims to provide a clear and consistent framework for delivering compliance services, meeting regulatory requirements, and maintaining effective communication with tenants.
- 3.3.6 The Compliance policy details the inspection, maintenance, monitoring and record-keeping arrangements for each compliance area, including annual gas

safety inspections, five-yearly electrical testing, fire risk assessments, asbestos management procedures, water hygiene controls, and lift servicing and safety inspections. It also places a strong emphasis on tenant engagement, accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that information is available in accessible formats and that reasonable adjustments are made where required. Performance will be monitored through audits, key performance indicators and tenant feedback, with the policy reviewed every two years to ensure continued compliance with legislation and best practice.

3.3.7 Once agreed the policies will be made accessible via the Council’s website, under the strategies, plans and corporate policies page as well as on the Housing, Council Tenant web page to ensure transparency and easy access, for tenants. The policies will also be proactively advertised with tenants and shared with the teams that deliver these services or work closely with Landlord Services.

3.3.8 The policies will be reviewed every 2 years, or sooner if triggered by legislative changes, changes to consumer standards or the identification of further best practice.

4 Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1 Implementing these new policies will contribute to the vision and priorities outlined in the Reading Council Plan 2025–2028, particularly under the priority to ‘*Secure Reading’s Economic and Cultural Success*’ ensuring high-quality, affordable housing, which contributes to a stable, inclusive community and a thriving local economy.

4.2 The publication of transparent policies adheres to Housing and Communities common purpose of ‘Supporting the life that matters to you’ for tenants and contributes to the objective to improve tenant satisfaction with social housing by clearly defining tenant rights, responsibilities, and service standards, fostering transparency and stronger relationships between tenants and the Council.

5 Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1 Adopting these policies will not have any environmental or climate impact or implications as they propose no change to current service delivery.

6 Community Engagement

6.1 The draft Decant Policy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Compliance Policy were reviewed and scrutinised by the Tenant Sounding Board. Feedback was positive, with tenants confirming that in the main the policies were clear, accessible and written in plain English albeit tenants were keen for us to remove any abbreviations which has happened. No substantive concerns were raised. Several minor amendments were subsequently made to improve clarity, transparency and accessibility.

6.2 Amendments following tenant consultation

Policy	Amendment
Decant Policy	Clarified that tenants will be allocated a dedicated named Officer who will act as the main point of contact throughout the decant process.

Decant Policy	Expanded information on financial support available during a decant, including moving, storage, disconnection and reconnection costs, except where recharges apply
Decant Policy	Confirmed that tenants will not be expected to pay for two properties or be left out of pocket during a decant, except where costs arise from a breach of tenancy conditions.
Decant Policy	Strengthened wording regarding the frequency of contact between tenants and the named Officer throughout the decant period.
Decant Policy	Minor formatting and presentation amendments to improve readability and accessibility.
Repairs and Maintenance	Added clearer signposting and strengthened links to the Rechargeable Repairs Policy to help tenants understand the process when repairs do not progress as expected.
Compliance Policy	Reviewed technical abbreviations and terminology to ensure terminology is written in full when first used and added definitions to improve understanding of compliance-related terms.

6.3 The amendments do not alter existing service delivery arrangements. They are intended to improve understanding of the policies, clarify the Council's responsibilities as landlord, and provide greater transparency regarding the standards of service tenants can expect and their responsibilities under their tenancy agreement.

6.4 The policies are being introduced to clearly define the Council's obligations as a landlord and ensure transparency to tenants. They set out the ways in which we deliver services within legal parameters, the obligations we have as a landlord, and the expectations we set out for tenants based on their tenancy agreement.

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 There are no proposed changes to services, and no 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.

8 Health Implications

- 8.1 Safe, secure and well-maintained homes are a key determinant of health and wellbeing. These policies support residents' physical and mental wellbeing by setting clear standards for repairs, property safety, statutory compliance and support during decants.
- 8.2 The policies support the Building Blocks of Health, particularly through housing quality, housing stability and safe living environments. They help ensure tenants have access to well-managed homes and clear information about the services and support available to them.
- 8.3 The policies include provisions relating to accessibility, reasonable adjustments and support for vulnerable households, helping to promote equitable access to services and reduce potential inequalities in tenant experience and outcomes.
- 8.4 A separate Health Impact Assessment is not considered necessary because the policies do not introduce new services or change existing service delivery arrangements. They primarily formalise and make transparent the Council's existing landlord responsibilities, service standards and regulatory obligations.

9 Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.2 There are no other relevant considerations.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Regulator for Social Housing has set out its requirements for Safety and Quality, Transparency, Influence and Accountability, Tenancy and Neighbourhood and Community Standards. These policies cover the Council's requirements to meet these standards.
- 10.2 The Policies must also align with a range of statutory frameworks, and these are all listed within each policy. The main legislation relevant to these policies is highlighted below:
- The Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996, which govern the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in the social housing sector;
 - The Equality Act 2010, ensuring that tenancy policies and practices do not discriminate and promote equality of opportunity;
 - The Rent Standard 2026, which regulates rent-setting to ensure affordability and fairness;
 - Decent Homes Standard 2006, which sets the minimum standard that social housing homes must meet;
 - Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, which requires landlords to ensure that rented properties are safe, healthy, and free from hazards, with tenants able to take legal action if their home is unfit.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 All known costs associated with the implementation of these policies are accounted for within the existing Housing Revenue Account budget as the proposals are in line with current service delivery.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1 Within a month of approved, these policies will be made accessible via the Council's website, under the Strategies, plans and corporate policies section, as well as on the Housing, council tenant web page and distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

13. Background Papers

13.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Decant Policy
2. Repairs and Maintenance Policy
3. Compliance Policy
4. Regulator of Social Housing Standard

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Decant Policy

Document Control

Title	Decant Policy
Responsible Officer	Housing and Estate Service Manager
Author	Housing and Estate Service Manager
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Consultation and Distribution

Lead Councillor for Housing Housing and Communities Management Team Tenant Sounding Board	

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1. Introduction

As a landlord, Reading Borough Council is obliged, under the terms of the tenancy agreement, to keep the structure and exterior of its properties in good repair. If the property requires major refurbishment or repairs, a decant will be required. A decant involves a *temporary* move from a permanent property to an alternative property. There will be no change to a tenant's security of tenure in the instance of a decant.

A refurbishment may be required for a variety of reasons, for instance, when the property has been:

- Damaged as a result of fire or flood, making the property unfit for the tenant to occupy until the repairs have been carried out – this would be an "emergency decant".
- Rendered uninhabitable due to environmental reasons, for example in instances of, a very severe infestation requiring the property be vacant before treatment can take place. The severity would be assessed on a case-by-case basis and subject to the pest controller's recommendation.
- Subject to an ongoing problem, such as subsidence or persistent and major damp and mould; the specification for works may recommend that the property be empty for a period of time.
- Deemed as a risk to the health and safety of occupant(s), and it is not practicable to undertake work with the occupant in situ.

If tenants are required to move, we aim for all tenants to be offered a suitable property for their needs.

Where an individual has particular needs and their existing home has been specially adapted, we will ensure that accommodation is provided with similar adaptations.

Tenants who live in properties larger than their housing needs require, may be temporarily placed into a smaller property that is considered suitable, in line with our Housing Allocations policy.

If an emergency decant is required, we may need to place tenants in temporary accommodation. This may not be of the same suitability as the permanent property they are decanted from. It may also be the case that the tenant opts to stay with family or friends as an alternative short-term arrangement.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the approach Reading Borough Council will follow when a tenant or resident needs to be temporarily or permanently relocated (decanted) from their home due to major repairs, redevelopment, or other circumstances requiring vacant possession.

3. Scope

The Decant Policy applies to all occupants of properties managed by Reading Borough Council. It aims to minimise disruption to residents who are required to move out of their homes on a temporary or permanent basis, whilst balancing cost effectiveness and financial responsibility of the Council.

The position with leaseholders will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In such cases we will carefully review the lease conditions to ensure that all actions are taken in accordance with the lease agreement.

4. Compliance

Reading Borough Council will ensure that all decanting procedures comply fully with relevant legislation and regulation, including:

- The Land Compensation Act 1973
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Housing Act 1985, 1988 and 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 inc. Awaab's Law
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Decent Homes Standard 2006

The policy should also be considered alongside:

- The Tenancy Agreement
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Housing and Estate Management Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Allocations Scheme 2026
- Tenants Accessibility and Vulnerability Policy
- RBC Residential housing leases

5. Responsibilities

Reading Borough Council's responsibilities include the following:

- Notify tenants promptly and clearly when there is a need to decant and the reasons behind it.
- Provide suitable alternative accommodation that, as far as reasonably possible, meets the household's needs.
- Offer the tenant(s) a Decant Agreement if they are temporarily decanted into another council property. This will be subject to the same terms and conditions as their existing tenancy.
- Offer ongoing support and advice throughout the decant process.
- Cover reasonable costs relating to the decant, such as moving expenses, storage costs, reconnection costs etc.
- Have due regard to requirements under the Land Compensation Act 1973 (Home Loss Payments) in the event the property is due to be demolished.
- Ensure the tenant is informed about the costs for which they are responsible, which includes rent and rechargeable costs for their main residence or temporary accommodation. This also includes utility payments such as gas, electricity, internet, and phone bills.
- Ensure that all decant actions comply with legal obligations and policy requirements.
- Liaise with relevant support agencies for vulnerable tenants.
- Keep tenants informed of timescales for the work being carried out and notify them of any delays.
- Keep clear and accurate records of all contact notes, calls and meetings with the tenant concerning the decant and any queries arising from the decant or the decant process.
- Before a tenant returns to their main residence, carry out a thorough inspection / health and safety check to ensure the property is fit for habitation. Any snagging issues will be communicated to the tenant, along with a clear plan of action and timelines for resolution.
- Facilitate a smooth return to the original, or a suitable alternative, property when works are complete.
- Determine whether there are any exceptional circumstances that deem it appropriate for the tenant to stay at the decanted property on a permanent basis. This will only be possible if the temporary property can be let on the same tenancy type as a tenant's current tenancy, meets the tenant's assessed bedroom and household need, and complies with the council's published Allocations Scheme.
- Take appropriate legal action if the tenant refuses to move on (from either the permanent or temporary property).

Tenants' responsibilities include the following:

- Engage positively with council officers and attend meetings or appointments regarding the move.
- Provide timely and accurate information about household needs and circumstances to assist in finding suitable accommodation.
- Maintain the condition of the temporary accommodation during the decant period.
- Return the keys promptly at the agreed time of departure.
- Notify the council promptly of any changes in household composition or circumstances.
- Cooperate with all reasonable requests from the council relating to the decant process.
- Return the original property in a reasonable condition if moving permanently.
- Make arrangements for post to be redirected. If the temporary move is not in a hotel or serviced apartment, the tenant must make arrangements to have utilities to be switched on and billed to them at their temporary property.

6. Health and Safety

This policy is designed to help keep tenants safe and minimise health and safety risks. Where there are health and safety risks in a permanent home that cannot be safely managed, we will take steps to move residents into suitable temporary accommodation that is safe to occupy for an agreed period.

Our priority is always to reduce risk and ensure residents are supported in a safe and appropriate way, in line with our duties as a landlord.

7. Communication

Effective communication is essential to managing tenancy breaches and maintaining good relationships between tenants and Reading Borough Council as the landlord.

Reading Borough Council commits to:

- **Clear Information:** Providing tenants with accessible information about their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement, and how to report concerns.
- **Responsive Contact:** Acknowledging complaints regarding tenancy breaches promptly and keeping complainants informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations.
- **Neutral and Respectful Dialogue:** Ensuring all communications with tenants are handled impartially, respectfully, and confidentially.
- **Engagement:** Encouraging open dialogue and, where appropriate, facilitating mediation between parties to resolve any disputes amicably.

- **Staff Communication:** Ensuring all staff involved in tenancy management are kept informed of procedures and updates to policy.
- **Multi-Agency Coordination:** Communicating effectively with internal and external agencies such as Environmental Health, the police, and social services when their involvement is required.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Providing tenants with opportunities to influence and give feedback on how their tenancies are managed to support continuous service improvement.

This policy is accessible to all tenants including lessee's, as well as Reading Borough Council (RBC) staff, and stakeholders via the Reading Borough Council website and will be updated to reflect any changes. [Accessible Information and Communications Policy - Reading Borough Council](#).

Internally, this policy will be available to all staff and stored on the Reading Borough Council SharePoint site for easy access.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring equal and fair access to our services by considering the individual needs of our tenants, their families, and other members of their household. Whilst working with tenants we will consider these needs and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. We will always treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect.

This policy will be implemented in a way that:

- **Treats all tenants fairly and without discrimination** on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Recognises and respects the diverse needs** of tenants, ensuring communication and support are accessible to everyone, including those with language barriers, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- **Ensures reasonable adjustments** are made to accommodate tenants with specific needs or disabilities in relation to tenancy breach investigations and interventions.
- **Provides equal access** to complaint reporting mechanisms and support services for all tenants.
- **Promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity** among housing management staff to support positive and respectful interactions.
- **Monitors and reviews** the policy's impact on different tenant groups to ensure it does not disproportionately affect any particular community.

All our staff are regularly trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to help them understand when and where we may need to adapt our standard policies, procedures, and working practices to accommodate the unique needs of our residents.

Our policies sets out how we seek to meet the specific needs of vulnerable residents, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and adjustments that they need to sustain their tenancies.

9. Reasonable Adjustments

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants, including those with disabilities or specific needs, can fully access and benefit from this policy.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Identify and respond to individual needs** by offering reasonable adjustments in communication, investigation, and resolution of tenancy breaches.
- **Provide information in accessible formats** such as Braille, audio, or translated versions, depending on tenant requirements.
- **Offer alternative methods of communication**, including email, text message, or face-to-face meetings, to suit the preferences and needs of tenants.
- **Adjust appointment times or locations** to accommodate tenants with mobility, health, or caregiving needs.
- **Work closely with support workers, advocates, or family members** where tenants require this assistance to facilitate a move.
- Ensure appropriate sensitivity and tailored support when dealing with tenants with **health conditions or disabilities**.
- **Train staff** to recognise and respond appropriately to requests for reasonable adjustments in relation to tenancy management issues.

10. Complaints

Reading Borough Council is committed to handling complaints fairly, promptly, and effectively. We use complaints, comments, and compliments, to help us review and improve our services.

If a tenant has a complaint about this Decant Policy, this can be raised through the Council's Complaints Procedure. Further information, including how to make a complaint, is available via the Council's complaints process, linked below.

11. Implementation and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when there are changes to best practice or statutory requirements, to ensure the policy achieves its objectives and continuously improve services and performance.

It is the responsibility of the Housing and Estate Manager to ensure that implementation of the Decant Policy is monitored. All staff involved in these matters has the responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy.

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Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Document Control	
Title	Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Responsible Officer	Head of Housing Repairs and Property Services
Author	Housing Policy Officer
Subject	Housing Repairs and Maintenance
Information Asset Owner	Head of Housing Repairs and Property Services
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1. Introduction

Reading Borough Council is responsible for delivering housing repairs and maintenance services to Council tenants. Through our Housing Repairs and Property Services Team, we aim to ensure that homes are safe, well maintained, and kept in good repair. Our repairs service is delivered through a combination of our in-house team, the Direct Services Organisation (DSO), and specialist contractors who carry out major repairs, refurbishments and specialist works and all form part of our Housing Repairs and Property Services Team.

Reading Borough Council is committed to the services common purpose of “supporting the life that matters to you”, for our tenants whilst adhering to relevant regulations and standards.

2. Purpose

This Repairs and Maintenance Policy provides clear guidance for Council staff, tenants and other stakeholders of Reading Borough Council on how our repairs and maintenance services are managed and monitored.

In accordance with the requirements set by Reading Borough Council, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in their Safety and Quality Standard, and other relevant statutory bodies, this policy complies with all applicable legal and regulatory standards. The list of these regulatory requirements is provided in Appendix 1.

The policy outlines:

- the statutory obligations of Reading Borough Council,
- the roles and responsibilities of both the Council and its tenants
- clear steps for reporting and addressing repair issues
- how repairs are carried out promptly, fairly, and to a high standard

Our aim is to ensure that all properties are well-maintained, safe, and in a good state of repair, while also promoting efficiency, transparency, and effective communication throughout the repair process.

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring all repair and maintenance work is conducted in a timely, effective, and transparent manner, resulting in safe, well-maintained properties and a positive experience for all tenants.

Reading Borough Council is committed to delivering services fairly and consistently for all tenants. We recognise that some tenants may require additional support or reasonable adjustments, and we work in line with the

Equality Act 2010, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments, and our Tenant Accessibility Policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all properties managed by the Council, including statutory repairs, routine maintenance, urgent repairs, and planned improvements.

Where properties are managed on behalf of the Council by another company (for example a Private Finance Initiative), this policy will apply unless alternative repair and maintenance responsibilities are outlined in a separate management agreement.

4. Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities of the Council and its tenants regarding repairs and maintenance.

Reading Borough Council's responsibilities include the following:

- Maintaining the structure and exterior of the property including the roof, walls, windows, doors, drains and common areas and shared facilities in multi-unit properties.
- Ensuring homes are safe and free from damp, mould, and disrepair.
- Maintaining essential services, such as water, gas, and electricity supply systems, ensuring they are in proper working order and safe for tenant use.
- Ensuring homes meet the Decent Homes Standard which covers safety, thermal efficiency, and basic amenities including heating, hot water, and sanitation facilities in social housing.
- Carrying out repairs to a reasonable standard and within a reasonable period of time.
- Ensuring homes are compliant with the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- Ensuring homes meet all compliance levels required, according to all statutory legislation.
- Adhering to timescales we have agreed to follow.

Tenants' responsibilities include the following:

- Reporting repairs promptly where the Council is responsible for the repair, in line with the Tenancy Agreement.
- Notifying the Council as soon as possible if scheduled appointments are not suitable so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Allowing access for repairs and ensuring that personal belongings are moved to allow work to be carried out safely.
- A clean, safe, smoke-free environment should be maintained for Reading Borough Council staff and contractors, with any risks being notified to Council staff when reporting repairs.
- Maintaining any items they have installed themselves.
- Arranging chimney sweeps for wood or solid fuel burning appliances that have been installed by tenants (with prior permission from the Council).
- Carrying out basic DIY tasks where possible, such as changing light bulbs, unblocking sinks and toilets, putting up curtains.
- Maintaining internal decoration to a good standard.
- Ensuring all vents are kept clear to allow proper ventilation in the property and ensuring they are always used to prevent damp and moisture.
- Using extract fans and heating systems to enable proper ventilation of the property.
- Caring for any items gifted to them by the Council.
- Keeping gardens, external spaces, and boundaries tidy, safe, and free from rubbish and weeds.

This list is not exhaustive. Further details about tenant's repair responsibilities can be found within the Tenancy Agreement, on the Council website [Tenancy agreement - Reading Borough Council](#), or by contacting the Housing Repairs and Property Services Team.

We will consider reasonable adjustments where tenants require additional support in meeting these responsibilities.

5. Repairs and Maintenance

Reading Borough Council use three categories for repairs:

1. Responsive Repairs

2. Programmed Maintenance

3. Major Repairs

Essential maintenance to services, including Gas Servicing, Electrical Testing, and water treatment, are covered separately in our Compliance Policy which can be found on the Reading Borough Council website.

6. Void properties

Repairs to void properties are carried out and completed before new tenants move into a property, or when the property is unoccupied for a significant length of time. We work to meet our specified re-let standard before the property is re-let. If a tenant moves into a new home and identifies outstanding repairs, or has concerns about repairs, they should contact the Housing Repairs and Property Services Team as soon as possible.

7. Responsive Repairs in tenanted properties

Responsive repairs are typically requested by tenants. Repairs requests can be reported via our online portal, by telephone, or via Housing Officers and Estate Management staff. Sometimes repairs are requested by our contractors or third parties visiting our properties.

All responsive repairs are categorised into four priorities and out of hours services:

Priority	Description	Target attendance time	Target Completion Time	Notes
P1	Emergency- including out of hours calls	3 Hours	24 hours	We use this when there is an immediate and serious risk to you and/ or the property. We aim to attend the property within 3 hours, and we will make safe and secure only within 24 hours. If further repairs are required, we will schedule these with you following completion of the emergency works.
P2	Urgent	Not applicable	2 working days	We use this where a serious risk to you and/or your home is likely to develop if action is not taken quickly.

P3	Routine	Not applicable	15 working days	We use this where there is a low risk to you or your home. This is the standard priority of most work we do.
P4	Extended	Not applicable	40 working days (or agreed timescale for major works)	We use this where an item must be ordered or made to measure to complete the works – usually items like doors or windows.

We are committed to supporting the diverse needs of our tenants by making reasonable adjustments to the repair categories where possible (see section 28). Further information can be found in the Tenant Accessibility Policy on the Reading Borough Council website.

8. Out of Hours Repairs

We provide an out-of-hours service for tenants to report emergency repairs. This service operates outside of our core staff working hours and is available as follows:

- **Monday to Friday** – From 4pm until 8am the next working day
- **Saturday & Sunday** – 24-hour coverage
- **Public holidays** – 24-hour coverage

With out-of-hours calls, the call handler will assess what priority is needed for your repair request. Should it meet the requirements for an emergency call out, the repair will be classified as **Priority 1 – Emergency repair**. We aim to attend within 3 hours, providing they meet one of the following criteria:

- There is a significant health and safety risk.
- A vulnerable tenant cannot manage without the service.
- The issue will lead to higher costs/damage if not immediately addressed (e.g. a major leak).
- The repair is necessary to make the property secure.
- The repair is essential to protect the property or asset.

9. Repair Appointments and Access

Reading Borough Council provides scheduled repair appointments for all non-emergency repairs and strives to accommodate the needs of our tenants wherever possible.

For non-emergency repairs, Reading Borough Council offers flexible appointment times. Tenants reporting a repair will be given an appointment that fits within the appropriate repair category laid out in the table above.

Repairs appointment slots are available Monday to Friday between:

- **AM** – 8:00 am and 12:00 pm.
- **PM** – 12:00pm and 4:00pm.
- **Avoid school run** – Monday to Friday, between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm - we will accommodate this wherever possible

When repairs are reported, we may ask whether any vulnerabilities, disabilities, or health conditions should be considered so we can make reasonable adjustments to our service to meet the specific needs of the household (please refer to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section of this policy)

If the scope of the repair is unclear or requires an inspection, Reading Borough Council will offer an inspection to assess the required work. Following inspection, repairs will be categorised and scheduled appropriately.

All inspections will be coordinated by a supervisor, surveyor or manager within Housing Repairs and Property Services. If the issue cannot be resolved through a responsive repair and requires a full component replacement, these works will be classified as 'Programmed Replacements.'

If the scheduled appointment is no longer convenient, tenants must inform us to rearrange the appointment to a more suitable time as soon as possible.

In cases where there is an immediate risk or hazard to the property or occupants, we may take further action to ensure access to the property. This will follow your tenancy agreement, which allows the Council to make a forcible entry. In these circumstances the Council reserve the right to charge you for all associated costs incurred in gaining entry and carrying out works. For further details, please refer to your tenancy agreement, which can also be found on the Council's webpages [Access to your home \(section 10\) - Reading Borough Council](#).

For communal area repairs, where tenant access is not required (e.g., corridors, stairwells, shared entrances, communal kitchens, etc.), repairs will still be scheduled and completed within the relevant priority timescales.

10. Reporting a Responsive Repair

Tenants of Reading Borough Council can report repairs through the following methods:

Online

Tenants can raise a repair via the “My Repairs” tile on the summary page of your Housing Online Account. Assistance with creating a Housing Online account can be obtained from Housing Officers or by following instructions via the ‘Report a Housing Repair’ page on the Reading Borough Council website. [Report a housing repair - Reading Borough Council](#)

Telephone

- Customer Fulfilment Centre free on: 0800 318 296
- From Mobiles: 0118 937 3757
- Out of Hours: 0118 937 3737 (between 4 p.m. and 9 a.m. weekdays, and any time at the weekends)

In writing

Tenants can report repairs in writing to:

Council House Repairs, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU.

Emergency and urgent repairs should not be reported by post due to delays in postal delivery.

In person

Tenants can also visit the Civic Offices or speak with their Housing Officer for support with reporting repairs if the above options are not suitable.

Regardless of how the repair is reported, we aim to arrange repair appointments during the first point of contact and complete repairs in a single visit where possible.

11. Programmes of Work (Planned Maintenance)

If a responsive repair cannot resolve the issue and a full component replacement is necessary, the Council will categorise these works as 'Planned Maintenance.'

Programmed replacement works involve replacing key components, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Kitchen (partial or full)
- Bathroom fittings (partial or full), including anti-slip flooring
- External doors
- Internal doors
- Windows
- Fascias, soffits, and rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes)
- Secondary heating systems (gas and electric fires)

If a programmed replacement is related to Health and Safety, such as a fire door, the works will be prioritised.

All other agreed planned maintenance programmes are added to our programmes of work. Planned maintenance programmes are prioritised based on property condition, safety, available resources, and stock condition data each year.

Tenants will receive updates and communication throughout the programme, and programmes can run for up to 18 months.

12. Major Repairs

If a responsive repair requires more planning but is not urgent or hazardous, the Council will categorise these works as 'Major Repairs'. Major repairs are larger-scale repairs that require additional planning, surveying, procurement, or specialist works.

Major repairs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Some boundary works (i.e. garden walls and garden fences)
- Outhouse repairs (i.e. roofing, demolition)
- Planned electrical works
- Roofing repairs
- Path repairs

- Pointing work
- Rendering work
- Cleaning out guttering
- Extensive plastering (more than one full surface area)
- Planned plumbing works
- Garage repairs
- Cleaning out cavities
- Structural repairs

If a Major Repair is related to Health and Safety, these works will be prioritised.

Tenants will receive clear and timely updates on any agreed and outstanding work via letter, telephone call or email regularly during the works.

13. Rechargeable Repairs

Reading Borough Council will actively seek to recover the cost of any repair it is not responsible for, or where damage has been caused by the tenant, other household members, or visitors to the property. The Council will recharge tenants where repair costs result from:

- Damage to the property resulting from intentional or negligent actions by the tenant, anyone living with the tenant, or visitors to the home.
- Any court costs arising from a breach of tenancy conditions, such as incidents of antisocial behaviour or issues related to accessing properties for legislative services like annual gas checks.
- Boarding up and re-glazing windows due to intentional or negligent actions by a tenant, their household members, or visitors.
- Lock changes and replacement keys if the tenant has lost their keys or locked themselves out of the property.
- Damage to the property following police action where the police are not responsible for the repair.
- Removal of items left in communal areas.
- Clearing properties during the tenancy or at the end of the tenancy.
- Clearing gardens during the tenancy or at the end of the tenancy.

- Misuse of the emergency call-out service, for example, when a repair reported as an emergency is not urgent.
- Reinstating any alterations or improvements made by the tenant that have resulted in damage to the property or neighbouring properties.

The Council will document all rechargeable repairs with photographs and will provide a clear explanation as to why the repair is considered rechargeable. This information will be communicated in writing by our Housing Income Recovery teams, along with a request for repayment of the associated costs. Further information is available in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy, and in the Tenancy Agreement. Where recharges are not being paid, or other arrears accrue on a tenant account, a repairs stop can be placed on the tenant account, leading to only necessary repairs being carried out. Tenants should contact the Housing Income Recovery Teams on 0118 9372784 if they are having difficulty in paying their rechargeable repairs. More information can be found in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

14. Adaptations

Adaptations are changes made to a property, recommended by an occupational therapist, to help tenants live as safely and independently as possible. These modifications can take place both inside and outside of the property. Tenants can contact us to request a needs assessment via their Housing Officer or Council Support Worker.

15. Right to Repair

Reading Borough Council aims to complete all responsive repairs within the agreed and published timescales, while ensuring that all repairs meet the required standards. If this does not happen, tenants may be eligible for compensation. Further information on this can be found on the Reading Borough Council website [Repairs \(section 8\) - Reading Borough Council](#).

16. Right To Buy

Tenants who wish to purchase their home can apply for the Right to Buy (RTB) if they meet the required criteria. Once a RTB application has been submitted, tenants are only entitled to statutory repairs to ensure the property remains weatherproof and safe. Reading Borough Council will ensure that essential services (gas, electric, water, drainage) are in proper

working order. No replacement or programmed works will be undertaken, unless deemed essential, once an application has been submitted.

17. Awaab's Law

Damp and mould issues are managed in line with the Council's Damp and Mould Policy, which reflects current legal and regulatory requirements, including Awaab's Law. This can be found on the Reading Borough Council website [Manage damp and mould - Reading Borough Council](#)

18. Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Reading Borough Council will:

- Carry out property condition surveys, including HHSRS assessments, at least once every 5 years.
- Prioritise identification and removal of Category 1 hazards as an urgent priority.
- Ensure all reported hazards are inspected within 10 working days, with emergency hazards addressed within 24–72 hours.
- Maintain an up-to-date training programme for staff on hazard identification and management.
- Keep records of inspections and actions taken in response to findings.

19. Stock Condition Surveys and Asset Management

Reading Borough Council aims to survey 20% of its stock annually to ensure full coverage over a 5-year cycle. The data collected will support asset planning, lifecycle costing, and targeted investment as well as building the Planned Maintenance programmes.

20. Decent Homes Standard Commitment

Reading Borough Council are committed to ensuring homes are 'decent'. A home is considered "decent" if it:

- Meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (no Category 1 hazards assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System).
- Is in a reasonable state of repair.

- Has reasonably modern facilities (kitchen less than 20 years old, or a bathroom less than 30 years old).
- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Reading Borough Council will monitor the condition of the housing stock and use the information from stock condition surveys to target non-decent properties for upgrades through capital programmes.

21. Governance and Performance Monitoring

To ensure accountability, transparency, and delivery of strategic objectives, Reading Borough Council has a clear governance structure for asset management. This includes:

- **Elected Members:** Set political direction and approve key investment decisions, budgets, and strategic updates.
- **Director for Housing Landlord Services:** Holds overall accountability for housing services, including compliance and capital programme delivery.
- **Housing Repairs and Property Services Team:** Oversee day-to-day planning, procurement, and contract management aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Strategic Housing Board:** A cross-departmental body responsible for overseeing performance and risk across repairs, safety, and investment.
- **Tenant Engagement and Scrutiny Panels:** Provide tenant input into decisions about capital works, service delivery, and prioritisation.

22. Approval and Permissions

Tenants may wish to make improvements or alterations to their home. Written permission from Reading Borough Council as the landlord must be obtained before any work begins. This may also require planning permission or building regulation approval where relevant.

We will not unreasonably withhold consent when tenants request improvements, alterations, or additions, but all requests must adhere to the reasonable requirements of Reading Borough Council on any consent granted, including the standard of work to be carried out.

All authorised work must be completed to a high standard and by qualified and competent professionals. Any work involving gas or electrical installations must be

done by appropriately qualified individuals, and evidence of competency must be submitted to the Council before work begins.

After improvements, alterations, or additions are made or completed, the tenant will be responsible for the ongoing repairs and maintenance, or replacement of the improvement unless otherwise agreed in writing. In cases where permission has not been sought or approved for alterations, the property may need to be returned to its original condition when the tenant vacates. If it isn't returned to the original condition, recharges may apply. Tenants may be charged for any unauthorised changes identified during the tenancy where the Council deems necessary.

The Council will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by, or associated with, improvements or alterations carried out by tenants, with or without permission.

23. Performance

Reading Borough Council assesses the performance of the repair service through a set of published Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are compared with those of the Council's peer groups to ensure effective benchmarking. Performance against these KPIs is monitored and reported to senior management monthly. Tenant feedback from satisfaction surveys related to Repairs and Maintenance provides an additional tool for monitoring and improving service quality.

The Council publishes repairs performance information to tenants who are involved with the engagement and/or tenant scrutiny process. As standard practice, our repair performance is included in our quarterly performance report, which is published and made accessible to a group of engaged tenants. This report includes a summary of actions being taken to address any areas of underperformance.

Reading Borough Council also completes the 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)' and submit the results annually to the Regulator of Social Housing. These results are published on the website [Landlord services performance - Reading Borough Council](#), ensuring transparency and inclusivity.

24. Performance Monitoring

A robust performance monitoring framework helps ensure that our repairs and maintenance services are effective, transparent, and focused on continuous improvement. This includes monitoring service standards, customer feedback, compliance, and contractor performance. Key features of our approach include:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** monitoring performance across areas such as response times, customer satisfaction, completion rates, and compliance.

- **Monthly and Quarterly Reviews:** Service areas and contractors are subject to formal reviews, with escalation pathways for underperformance.
- **Periodic Reporting:** Progress against the strategy and regulatory compliance is reported to elected members every 3 months to the Housing, Neighbourhood, Leisure (HNL) Committee. The HNL reports are published for public scrutiny.
- **Benchmarking:** Performance is compared with peer local authorities and housing associations through sector bodies such as Housemark.
- **Complaints:** The Council is committed to dealing with complaints quickly and effectively, using complaints, comments, and compliments to review and improve its services.

25. Health and Safety

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that tenants feel secure in their homes, with a strong focus on safety and compliance as the highest priority in service delivery.

Throughout all repairs and maintenance operations, the safety of tenants, staff, and maintenance contractors will be prioritised. Council staff and representatives must follow Reading Borough Council's Health and Safety policy, ensuring that all work practices align with applicable health and safety laws and industry standards, protecting employees, tenants, buildings, and stakeholders.

We are committed to investing in the ongoing training and development of staff, ensuring that services are delivered safely and that both staff and tenants are always kept safe.

Tenants also share the responsibility of enabling our staff to carry out repairs safely, without unnecessary risk, while working in their homes.

We are committed to providing equal and fair access to our services by considering the individual needs of tenants, their families, or anyone else living with them. These needs will be considered during the repair process, with reasonable adjustments made where required. Our approach is always to treat tenants with fairness, dignity, and respect.

Staff are trained to carry out dynamic risk assessments, and if any health and safety concerns or risks are identified, they are authorised to stop the repair and leave the property. Examples of situations where this may apply include, but are not limited to:

- Violence or aggression
- Dangerous animals

- The presence of needles or other hazardous materials

We are also committed to ensuring tenants and staff are all kept safe and free from harm. In cases like these, the matter will be referred to Housing Management to investigate and address any potential breaches of the Tenancy Agreement.

26. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring equal and fair access to our services by considering the individual needs of our tenants, their families, and other members of their household. Whilst working with tenants we will consider these needs and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. We will always treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect.

This policy will be implemented in a way that:

- **Treats all tenants fairly and without discrimination** on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Recognises and respects the diverse needs** of tenants, ensuring communication and support are accessible to everyone, including those with language barriers, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- **Ensures reasonable adjustments** are made to accommodate tenants with specific needs or disabilities in relation to tenancy breach investigations and interventions.
- **Provides equal access** to complaint reporting mechanisms and support services for all tenants.
- **Promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity** among housing management staff to support positive and respectful interactions.
- **Monitors and reviews** the policy's impact on different tenant groups to ensure it does not disproportionately affect any particular community.

All our staff are regularly trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to help them understand when and where we may need to adapt our standard policies, procedures, and working practices to accommodate the unique needs of our tenants.

Our policies set out how we seek to meet the specific needs of vulnerable tenants, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and adjustments that they need to sustain their tenancies.

27. Communication

Effective communication is essential to managing tenancy breaches and maintaining good relationships between tenants and Reading Borough Council as the landlord.

Reading Borough Council commits to:

- **Clear Information:** Providing tenants with accessible information about their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement, and how to report concerns.
- **Responsive Contact:** Acknowledging complaints regarding tenancy breaches promptly and keeping complainants informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations.
- **Neutral and Respectful Dialogue:** Ensuring all communications with tenants are handled impartially, respectfully, and confidentially.
- **Engagement:** Encouraging open dialogue and, where appropriate, facilitating mediation between parties to resolve any disputes amicably.
- **Staff Communication:** Ensuring all staff involved in tenancy management are kept informed of procedures and updates to policy.
- **Multi-Agency Coordination:** Communicating effectively with internal and external agencies such as Environmental Health, the police, and social services when their involvement is required.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Providing tenants with opportunities to influence and give feedback on how their tenancies are managed to support continuous service improvement.

This policy is accessible to all tenants including lessee's, as well as Reading Borough Council (RBC) staff, and stakeholders via the Reading Borough Council website and will be updated to reflect any changes. [Accessible Information and Communications Policy - Reading Borough Council](#)

Internally, this policy will be available to all staff and stored on the Reading Borough Council SharePoint site for easy access.

28. Reasonable Adjustments

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants, including those with disabilities or specific needs, can fully access and benefit from this policy.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Identify and respond to individual needs** by offering reasonable adjustments in communication, investigation, and resolution of tenancy breaches.
- **Provide information in accessible formats** such as Braille, audio, or translated versions, depending on tenant requirements.

- **Offer alternative methods of communication**, including email, text message, or face-to-face meetings, to suit the preferences and needs of tenants.
- **Adjust appointment times or locations** to accommodate tenants with mobility, health, or caregiving needs.
- **Work closely with support workers, advocates, or family members** where tenants require this assistance to facilitate a move.
- Ensure appropriate sensitivity and tailored support when dealing with tenants with **health conditions or disabilities**.
- **Train staff** to recognise and respond appropriately to requests for reasonable adjustments in relation to tenancy management issues.

29. Complaints

Reading Borough Council is committed to handling complaints fairly, promptly, and effectively. We use complaints, comments, and compliments, to help us review and improve our services.

If a tenant has a complaint about any policy or procedure this can be raised through the Council's Complaints Procedure. Further information, including how to make a complaint, is available via the Council's webpages [Housing complaints procedure - Reading Borough Council](#).

30. Implementation and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when there are changes to best practice or statutory requirements, to ensure the policy achieves its objectives and continuously improve services and performance.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Housing Repairs and Property Services to ensure that implementation of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy is monitored. All staff involved in repairs and maintenance have the responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy.

31. Appendix 1 - Legislation

This Policy covers a broad range of relevant legislation and standards, including but not limited to:

- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Care Act 2014
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Decent Home Standard
- Electricity at Work Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Act 2004
- Land Compensation Act 1973
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 – including Awaab’s Law once enacted
- The Secure Customers of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994

Appendix 2 – Definitions

- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – Regular inspections to identify and remove Category 1 hazards.
- Decent Homes Standard – Ensuring all homes are warm, weatherproof, and have modern facilities.

- Building Safety Act 2022 – Implementation of accountable persons, building safety cases, and compliance with higher-risk building duties.
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 – Annual gas servicing and certification for all applicable homes.
- Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 – Five-yearly electrical installation condition reports (EICRs).
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 – Fire risk assessments, evacuation plans, and communal area management.
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 – Surveys and management/removal plans for asbestos-containing materials.
- Legionella and Water Hygiene – Regular testing and risk control measures in line with HSE guidance.
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 – Ensuring properties are fit for human habitation at tenancy start and throughout occupancy.
- Equality Act 2010 – Providing reasonable adaptations and accessible housing to meet diverse needs.
- Data Protection and GDPR – Managing tenant and property data responsibly and transparently.

Appendix 3 – useful links

- Raising a repair - [Report a housing repair - Reading Borough Council](#)
- Making a complaint or leaving a compliment - [Housing complaints procedure - Reading Borough Council](#)
- Getting started with - [Housing Online - Reading Borough Council](#)
- A guide to your rights as a tenant - [Tenants - Reading Borough Council](#)

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Housing Repairs and Property Services

Compliance Policy

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1 Introduction

Reading Borough Council, as a responsible landlord, is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of tenants by maintaining safe housing environments. This combined Compliance Policy integrates requirements for the key six statutory disciplines namely:

- 1) Gas Safety
- 2) Electrical Safety
- 3) Water Hygiene
- 4) Passenger Lifts and Stairlifts Safety
- 5) Fire Safety
- 6) Asbestos Management

This policy serves to ensure consistent standards across Housing in line with the following Key Statutory Legislations: (Full list of legislation is in Appendix A of this policy):

- 1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- 2) Fire Safety Act 2023
- 3) Building Safety Act 2022.

2 Purpose

This Compliance Policy is designed to provide clear guidance for Council staff, tenants and other stakeholders of Reading Borough Council on how housing compliance is managed, in accordance with the requirements set by Reading Borough Council, the Regulator of Social Housing, and other relevant statutory bodies.

This policy complies with all applicable legal and regulatory standards. Reading Borough Council are committed to ensure that all properties are well-maintained, safe, and in proper condition, while also promoting effective engagement and communication.

The policy outlines our statutory obligations as well as the roles and responsibilities of both the Council and its tenants.

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all compliance work is completed in a timely, effective, and transparent manner which results in safe, well-maintained properties and a positive experience for tenants.

The Council is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our tenants and adhere to

the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, as well as the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that all tenants receive a consistent level of service.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all properties managed by the Council, including statutory repairs, routine maintenance, urgent repairs, and planned improvements.

Where properties are managed on behalf of the Council by another company (for example a Private Finance Initiative), this policy will apply unless alternative repair and maintenance responsibilities are outlined in a separate management agreement.

4 Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities of the Council and tenants. This list is not exhaustive, and tenants should refer to the tenancy agreement for the full list of responsibilities.

Reading Borough Council's responsibilities include the following:

- Inform tenants of all legislations that relate to your property
- Conduct statutory inspections within required timescales
- Maintain all applicable inspection and servicing records securely.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and legislation regarding Health and Safety, Fire Safety, property compliance and building safety.
- Provide clear communication and support for tenants, contractors and staff.
- Ensure statutory inspections are completed within health and safety guidelines.

Tenants' responsibilities include the following:

- Allow access for inspections and servicing of the property.
- Maintain the property to a good standard.
- Report faults promptly to allow us to take appropriate action in good time
- Follow safety guidance provided by the Council.
- Do not undertake any modification to the property without prior consent.
- Do not store any items on the balcony or loft
- Ensure all additional works to the property have been approved by the Council to allow for adequate health and safety, and compliance, to be considered.

- Do not block any emergency access and escape routes within the home or communal areas.
- Do not store flammable or dangerous items in the property.

5 Asbestos

Asbestos Risk Assessment and Surveying

Reading Borough Council will carry out a comprehensive asbestos survey for all its buildings that fall under the “duty to manage” (CAR 2012 Reg. 4) to identify any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM’s). Surveys will be conducted as follows:

- **Management Survey:** A non-intrusive survey to identify potential ACMs in areas that are likely to be disturbed during normal activities.
- **Refurbishment/Demolition Survey (R&D):** A more invasive survey carried out when planning refurbishment or demolition works to ensure all asbestos is identified before disturbing the fabric of the building.

The results of the surveys are used to create and maintain an **Asbestos Register**, which details the locations, condition, and risk assessments of all identified ACM’s. This register will be kept up to date and accessible to all relevant staff and contractors prior to commencement of any works.

Managing Asbestos Risks

Risk Assessment:

- A risk assessment will be conducted for all identified ACMs. The assessment will consider the type, condition, location, and accessibility of the asbestos, as well as the likelihood of disturbance.
- Based on the risk assessment, a decision will be made on whether to manage the asbestos in place (if it is in good condition and unlikely to be disturbed) or remove it.

Asbestos Management Plan:

- An asbestos management plan will be developed for any property where ACMs are present. This plan will outline how the asbestos will be managed and what actions will be taken to ensure safety.

- The management plan will include regular inspections of known ACMs to check for deterioration, as well as procedures for dealing with any identified issues.

Removal of Asbestos:

- Asbestos removal will be carried out only by licensed asbestos removal contractors, in line with the **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**.
- Tenants will be informed in advance if asbestos removal work is necessary and will be provided with details of the work to be done and any precautions they need to take.
- Work will be carried out with the minimum disruption to tenants as far as reasonably practicable, and appropriate safety measures, including air monitoring, will be implemented to ensure that no asbestos fibres are released.

Emergency Procedures

If ACMs are disturbed accidentally, we will implement emergency procedures, including:

- Evacuating the affected area if necessary.
- Notifying the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and following all legal requirements.
- Engaging a licensed asbestos removal contractor to safely handle and remove the asbestos.
- Communicating with tenants to provide guidance on any actions they need to take.

Communication with Tenants

The safety and well-being of our tenants is a top priority. The Council will ensure tenants are:

- **Informed:** Tenants will be made aware of the locations of ACMs in their homes, if applicable, and advised not to disturb them.
- **Supported:** Tenants will be provided with guidance and support, particularly if asbestos removal or disturbance is necessary.

- **Consulted:** Tenants will be informed of any planned work involving asbestos and will be given the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

6 Water safety

Legionella Risk Assessment and Control Measures

Risk Assessment:

Reading Borough Council will carry out a Legionella risk assessment to all blocks of flats that share a communal cold and wholesome water supply systems. The assessment will:

- Identify potential sources of Legionella bacteria growth in water systems such as communal or property water tanks, pipe work infrastructure condition, pipe work dead legs, low usage outlets and shower heads.
- Evaluate the likelihood of Legionella growth, considering factors like temperature, water stagnation, and system design.
- Identify individuals who may be at risk to enable Reading Borough Council to put control measures in place.
- Provide clear recommendations on control measures to prevent Legionella contamination and protect tenants.

The risk assessment will be reviewed every two years for properties with communal water tanks and 5 years for properties with no communal water tanks but a shared communal water supply system.

Control Measures:

Based on the risk assessment, appropriate control measures will be put in place, including:

- **Temperature Control:** Ensuring that water temperatures are maintained outside the Legionella growth range (above 60°C for hot water systems and below 20°C for cold water systems).
- **Water Tank Maintenance:** Cleaning and disinfecting water tanks regularly to prevent the buildup of bacteria and other contaminants.
- **Flushing:** Ensuring that infrequently used water outlets, such as taps or showers, are regularly flushed to prevent water stagnation.

- **System Modifications:** Making any necessary modifications to the water system to ensure no water stagnation and the infrastructure pipework is operating safely and efficiently.

Monitoring and Testing:

Regular monitoring and testing of water systems will be carried out to ensure the effectiveness of control measures. This includes:

- Routine testing of water temperatures at key points in the water system.
- Periodic water sample collections and testing to detect the presence of Legionella bacteria, particularly in high-risk areas.
- Regular inspection of water tanks and pipes for any signs of stagnation, contamination or maintenance issues.

Specific Risk Assessment and Control of water hygiene for Domestic General Housing Stock

Reading Borough Council will carry out a review of the domestic general street houses and bungalows that may have water tanks and assess the risks accordingly. The water systems within these properties fall into the following 4 categories:

1. Domestic systems with gas central heating and stored hot or cold water tanks
2. Domestic systems with gas central heating combination boilers with instantaneous hot water and no storage tanks
3. Electrically heated hot water systems with both hot or cold water storage tanks (including cylinders)
4. Electric point of use water heaters

Simple control measures, which can prevent the growth of legionella bacteria include;

- Inspection of water tanks during void stage to identify possible stagnation
- Ensuring water storage tanks are correctly installed including good fitting water tank lids so no debris can enter the tank and all pipe work both hot and cold is suitably lagged
- Flushing out water systems before re-letting our properties
- Inspecting and installing new shower heads during the property void stage.

- Set the temperature of the hot water so it achieves 60 degrees centigrade once in a 24-hour period
- Making sure any redundant pipework/dead legs (a length of water pipework leading to a fitting through which water only passes infrequently) are removed
- Advising tenants to clean shower heads and hoses regularly and to flush all outlets after longer periods of little or no use – such as holidays

Void Properties

The risk of legionella may increase when a property is unoccupied, and the water system is not used for a period of more than 2 weeks which may cause the water to stagnate.

A void property offers us the opportunity to survey the water system and correct any faults that may encourage legionella bacteria.

Reading Borough Council has measures in place to mitigate the risks in void properties.

Cold water systems safety Management

Where premises share predominantly stored cold water supplies, such as blocks of flats, the Council will engage a suitable water hygiene contractor to undertake the works, as identified in the risk assessment's written scheme of control.

These include:

- 6 monthly communal tank inspections
- Annual tank cleaning and or system disinfections
- Regular sampling on communal tanks if required in the risk assessment.

The water hygiene contractor will carry out surveys as necessary to establish whether these shared facilities are in full use. If recommended, Reading Borough Council will organise works to remove storage water tanks and convert to mains feed water supply where there is no further need for the storage water tanks.

Sheltered Housing premises water systems

Where there are communal heating and hot water systems in sheltered housing accommodation, these are locally managed separately by the sheltered Housing Team under their Legionella Control procedure.

Where premises share predominantly stored cold water supplies, such as blocks of flats, the Council will engage a suitable contractor to undertake the works, as identified in the risk assessment's written scheme of control.

These include:

- 6 monthly communal tank inspections
- Annual tank cleaning and or system disinfections
- Weekly temperature checks on water outlets furthest from the hot water plant room.
- Regular sampling on communal tanks if required in the risk assessment.

Incident Management and Response

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of Legionnaires' disease, Reading Borough Council will take the following actions:

- **Notification:** The Council will promptly notify the relevant authorities, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and cooperate fully with any external investigations.
- **Immediate Action:** Any affected water systems will be isolated, cleaned, and disinfected immediately to prevent further contamination.
- **Risk Review:** The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated, and additional control measures will be implemented as necessary to prevent further incidents.
- **Tenant Support:** Affected tenants will be provided with health advice and relocation assistance if required.

Training and Awareness

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that its staff, contractors, and tenants are fully informed about Legionella risks and control measures. Our approach for this is:

- **Staff Training:** All relevant staff and contractors will receive training on the risks of Legionella, how to maintain water systems, and how to respond to potential issues.

- **Tenant Information:** Tenants will be provided with clear and accessible information on how to reduce the risk of Legionella during the start of a new tenancy agreement, including the importance of reporting concerns and maintaining water systems. Reading Borough Council will also provide this information to existing tenants through the Housing Compliance Team. This information will also be available on the Council's website.

Communication with Tenants

The safety and well-being of tenants are a priority for Reading Borough Council. To ensure clear communication with tenants:

- **Information and Guidance:** Tenants will receive regular information on Legionella risks, how to spot potential issues, and how to report them to the Council by the Housing Compliance Team. This information will also be available on the Council's website.
- **Updates on Maintenance:** The Council will notify tenants in advance of any planned maintenance, testing, or repairs to water systems.
- **Ongoing Support:** Tenants will have access to support and advice if they have concerns about Legionella or water system maintenance.

7 Fire safety

Fire Risk Assessments and Mitigation Measures

- **Fire Risk Assessments:** These are conducted in line with fire safety statutory requirements in all our residential buildings with the flat entrance door opening into a communal area. The council works closely with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) to ensure that risk assessments are suitable and sufficient. The frequency at which a Risk Assessment is carried out, is determined based on risk. The frequency can be changed based on the assessment outcomes.
- **Fire Safety Measures in High-Rise Buildings:** These are buildings over 7 floors or 18 metres. The council has implemented several key fire safety measures, including weekly inspection of communal fire doors, sprinkler systems control panels, fire staircase escape routes, passenger lift inspections, bins collection three times a week and external area housekeeping.

- **Tenant Engagement:** Regular fire safety communication with tenants in High rise buildings that include information of their front doors ensures they understand their role and responsibilities in maintaining fire safety.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will continuously review Fire Safety Risk arrangements to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects the latest fire safety standards and Industry best practices. The Council will continuously assess fire risks and review the effectiveness of implemented measures. Any changes to fire safety procedures or the introduction of new technology or regulations will be incorporated into the policy.

Fire Safety Measures

Reading Borough Council will ensure:

- Fire safety systems are monitored and maintained, including fire detection and warning systems, emergency lighting, fire resisting doors, fire suppression systems in line with British Standards, published government guidance, and best practice.
- Compartmentation will be maintained and, where possible, inspected regularly to ensure it remains intact. If for any reason there is suspicion the compartmentation has been compromised, we will take appropriate action to identify any breaches and take appropriate remedial action.
- All communal areas are maintained as sterile, in accordance with published government guidance, to ensure they always remain clear and accessible by operating a zero-tolerance policy.
- Evacuations strategies are established according to the known building construction and actual occupancy. These strategies will be automatically reviewed following a near-miss, actual fire event, or if any information suggests the viability of the strategy.
- Fire Risk Assessments are carried out according to the identified risk within each building. Known higher risk buildings of over 18 metres and those where vulnerable people are housed, are carried out annually. General needs buildings are generally carried out every three years.
- As part of the fire risk assessment, the assessor will consider the current time schedule and make a recommendation if that is satisfactory and should be maintained or changed, based on the risks identified. The council will also

monitor the building for any changes in risk and react with additional FRA's or decrease the time between subsequent FRA's.

8 Gas Safety

Access to Properties

As part of the annual gas safety check, tenants must allow access to their property. If access is not granted for the safety check, we will take appropriate action to ensure the check is carried out. This may include:

- Sending three reminder letters and phone calls to schedule the appointment.
- Requesting Housing Officer visits to schedule appointments
- Enforce the tenancy agreements in place to enter the property to complete the safety checks, in conjunction with the tenants Housing Officer
- Any costs reasonably incurred as a result of enforced access may be recharged to the tenant in line with tenancy conditions set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Gas Emergencies

In the event of a gas emergency, tenants must follow the instructions provided by Reading Borough Council, including:

- Immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter if it is safe to do so.
- Extinguish naked flames.
- Avoid operating electrical switches or appliances.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the property.
- Evacuate the premises if necessary and not re-enter until declared safe.
- Contact the council's emergency number for a gas engineer to attend.

Reading Borough Council will operate a 24-hour emergency response service for gas-related incidents and will ensure that appropriately qualified Gas Safe registered engineers attend within emergency response timescales.

All gas emergencies will be recorded and investigated where necessary.

Service Delivery

Reading Borough Council will ensure that gas safety checks and servicing are carried out by qualified Gas Safe registered engineers who are experienced in working with gas installations. We will ensure that:

- Only approved contractors or in-house qualified operatives will carry out gas inspections, servicing, and repairs. All staff who work on gas appliances or systems, will have qualification checks carried out to ensure that they are Gas Safe Registered to enable them to work on Gas Appliances. This includes Council staff and all contractors allocated work related to gas systems.
- Gas safety checks are completed within 12 months of the previous check in compliance with Regulation 36.
- A copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate is provided to tenants within 28 days of the inspection.
- Gas appliances and installations are maintained in line with legal requirements, safety standards, and industry best practices.
- Detailed records of all gas safety checks and servicing are maintained and are available for review upon request by tenants or regulatory authorities.
- Gas Safety Checks on communal heating systems, will be displayed in communal areas of buildings where appropriate.
- New tenants receive a copy of the current Gas Safety Record before occupying the property.

Where an appliance is classified as Immediately Dangerous (ID) or At Risk (AR), action will be taken in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (GIUSP). This may include immediate disconnection to ensure safety.

Gas appliances, pipework, and flues will be maintained in accordance with:

- Manufacturer instructions
- Current Gas Safe guidance

- Industry standards and codes of practice

Record Keeping and Documentation

Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all gas safety checks, servicing, and repairs. These records include:

- Gas Safety Certificates
- Warning Notices
- Repairs records
- Installation records
- Records of access attempts and enforcement action

These records will be made available to tenants upon request and will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation.

9 Electrical Safety

Electrical Inspection and Testing

Frequency of Inspections

- Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) will be carried out on all properties at a minimum of every five years unless specified otherwise by the EICR (we reserve the right to challenge if deemed necessary). This condition check will ensure that electrical installations are safe and compliant with the relevant standards.
- Routine checks will be conducted as needed or in response to reported faults or tenant concerns.
- Portable appliance testing (PAT) will be carried out on any portable electrical appliances provided by Reading Borough Council to ensure they are safe for use (this predominantly relates to RBC sheltered sites and is carried out by a third party contractor).

Electrical Repairs and Maintenance

- **Reactive Repairs:** In the event of an electrical fault or issue, Reading Borough Council will ensure that it is dealt with promptly to minimise risks to tenant safety and the property. Emergency repairs will be carried out in line with the Council's Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

- **Preventative Maintenance:** Regular maintenance will be carried out to ensure electrical systems continue to function properly. This includes ensuring that systems are up to date and compliant with any new safety regulations.
- **Upgrades and Replacements:** Where it is Identified that an electrical system does not meet current safety standards or are nearing the end of their useful life, Reading Borough Council will carry out necessary upgrades or replacements.

Reporting and Communication

- **Tenant Communication:** tenants will be informed about the scheduled electrical inspections and provided with information about how to report any electrical concerns.
- **Record Keeping:** Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate records of all electrical inspections, testing, repairs, and maintenance activities for each property.
- **Emergency Response:** tenants will be provided with contact information to report electrical emergencies, and we will respond in line with emergency repair procedures however, if the emergency is a significant risk to life and the emergency services are required, tenants should not hesitate to call 999.

Record Keeping and Documentation

Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all Electrical safety checks, servicing, and repairs. These records will include:

- EICR – Electrical Installation Condition report for each property
- EIC – Electrical Installation Certificates for any new electrical circuits
- Electrical Minor Works certificate(s) for small electrical works and component changes
- Repairs records

These records can be made available to tenants upon request and will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation.

10 Building Safety Management

Reading Borough Council will implement a robust building safety management system including:

- Safety Case Reports and Tenant Engagement strategies for each higher-risk building.
- Use of digital record systems to maintain the golden thread.
- A reporting culture that encourages staff, contractors and tenants to raise safety issues without fear of blame.

Communication with Tenants

Tenants will be provided with building-specific safety information, including:

1. Evacuation procedures
2. Information on the design and systems that operate in the building to help keep them safe
2. Safety contact details
3. Works and inspections schedule
4. The role they play to keep the building safe.

Updates will be shared through letters, noticeboards, tenant meetings, and the Council's website or digital platforms. Tenants will be invited to shape safety plans and participate in regular safety reviews.

Training and Culture

The Council will:

- Ensure all relevant staff receive training on the Building Safety Act, fire risk awareness, and emergency procedures.
- Promote a safety-first culture among all contractors and service providers.
- Regularly review and refresh training as legislation or policy evolves.

Performance Monitoring and Review

Building safety will be monitored through:

- Annual building safety audits completed by the Housing Compliance team and relevant authorities such as the fire and rescue service.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) reporting (e.g., Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) compliance, tenant complaints, completion of actions)
- Tenant feedback and satisfaction surveys

- Oversight from Housing leadership and scrutiny committees

This policy will be reviewed every year, or sooner if legislation or internal processes change.

11 Lift Servicing and Maintenance

Inspection and Maintenance

Planned Maintenance

All passenger/platform lifts will be serviced monthly or as per the manufacturer's guidance and lift risk profile.

Maintenance includes checking mechanical parts, control systems, alarm/emergency equipment, and overall operation.

Lift Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) Inspections

All lifts carrying people will be inspected every 6 months by an independent, qualified engineer (not carried out by the maintenance contractor).

LOLER certificates and findings will be logged and any defects addressed promptly according to their legislated categories

Emergency Repairs and Response

A 24/7 emergency call-out service is in place for trapped passengers and critical failures.

The contractor response times are:

- Entrapment: within 1 hour
- Safety-critical faults: within 4 hours
- Non-urgent repairs: within 24–48 hours

Communication with Tenants

Written notice of planned lift maintenance will be given to tenants at least 48 hours in advance, except in emergencies. Signs will be added in communal areas where applicable.

In the event of a breakdown, updates will be displayed in communal areas and via the Council's online channels.

Vulnerable tenants will be offered temporary support or alternative arrangements during prolonged outages (over 24 hours).

Tenants can report lift issues via the Council's Customer Fulfilment Centre.

Monitoring and Performance for Lifts

The Council will monitor lift maintenance performance through:

- Monthly KPIs (e.g downtime, response times, entrapments).
- Monthly contract review meetings. (subject to performance)
- Annual audits of compliance with LOLER and service schedules.
- Tenant feedback and satisfaction surveys. (We encourage all tenants to take these up when contacted for feedback as this will enable us to make informed service improvements to the benefit of tenants)

13 Performance Monitoring

A robust performance monitoring framework helps ensure that our repairs and maintenance services are effective, transparent, and focused on continuous improvement. This includes monitoring service standards, customer feedback, compliance, and contractor performance. Key features of our approach include:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** monitoring performance across areas such as response times, customer satisfaction, completion rates, and compliance.
- **Monthly and Quarterly Reviews:** Service areas and contractors are subject to formal reviews, with escalation pathways for underperformance.
- **Periodic Reporting:** Progress against the strategy and regulatory compliance is reported to elected members every 3 months to the Housing, Neighbourhood, Leisure (HNL) Committee and every 3 months to the Cross-Party Working Group. The HNL reports are published for public scrutiny.
- **Benchmarking:** Performance is compared with peer local authorities and housing associations through sector bodies such as Housemark.

14 Governance and Performance Monitoring

To ensure accountability, transparency, and delivery of strategic objectives, Reading Borough Council has a clear governance structure for asset management. This includes:

- **Elected Members:** Set political direction and approve key investment decisions, budgets, and strategic updates.
- **Director for Housing Landlord Services:** Holds overall accountability for housing services, including compliance and capital programme delivery.
- **Housing Repairs and Property Services Team:** Oversee day-to-day planning, procurement, and contract management aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Strategic Housing Board:** A cross-departmental body responsible for overseeing performance and risk across repairs, safety, and investment.
- **Tenant Engagement and Scrutiny Panels:** Provide tenant input into decisions about capital works, service delivery, and prioritisation.

14 Equality and Accessibility

Reading Borough Council recognises the critical role of lifts for older and disabled tenants. Where lifts are out of order:

- Alternative arrangements (e.g. home visits, assisted services) will be considered.
- Communication will be provided in accessible formats upon request.

15 Monitoring and Review

The combined compliance policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if legislation changes. Monthly KPIs, annual audits, and tenant feedback will be used to monitor compliance.

16 Communication

Tenants will receive advance notice of planned maintenance, updates during outages or emergencies, and accessible formats are available upon request. Signage will also be used to inform tenants.

Effective communication is essential to managing tenancy breaches and maintaining good relationships between tenants and Reading Borough Council as the landlord.

Reading Borough Council commits to:

- **Clear Information:** Providing tenants with accessible information about their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement, and how to report concerns.
- **Responsive Contact:** Acknowledging complaints regarding tenancy breaches promptly and keeping complainants informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations.
- **Neutral and Respectful Dialogue:** Ensuring all communications with tenants are handled impartially, respectfully, and confidentially.
- **Engagement:** Encouraging open dialogue and, where appropriate, facilitating mediation between parties to resolve any disputes amicably.
- **Staff Communication:** Ensuring all staff involved in tenancy management are kept informed of procedures and updates to policy.
- **Multi-Agency Coordination:** Communicating effectively with internal and external agencies such as Environmental Health, the police, and social services when their involvement is required.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Providing tenants with opportunities to influence and give feedback on how their tenancies are managed to support continuous service improvement.

This policy is accessible to all tenants including lessee's, as well as Reading Borough Council (RBC) staff, and stakeholders via the Reading Borough Council website and will be updated to reflect any changes. [Accessible Information and Communications Policy - Reading Borough Council](#)

Internally, this policy will be available to all staff and stored on the Reading Borough Council SharePoint site for easy access.

17 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring equal and fair access to our services by considering the individual needs of our tenants, their families, and other members of their household. Whilst working with tenants we will consider these needs and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. We will always treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect.

This policy will be implemented in a way that:

- **Treats all tenants fairly and without discrimination** on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy

and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

- **Recognises and respects the diverse needs** of tenants, ensuring communication and support are accessible to everyone, including those with language barriers, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- **Ensures reasonable adjustments** are made to accommodate tenants with specific needs or disabilities in relation to tenancy breach investigations and interventions.
- **Provides equal access** to complaint reporting mechanisms and support services for all tenants.
- **Promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity** among housing management staff to support positive and respectful interactions.
- **Monitors and reviews** the policy's impact on different tenant groups to ensure it does not disproportionately affect any particular community.

All our staff are regularly trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to help them understand when and where we may need to adapt our standard policies, procedures, and working practices to accommodate the unique needs of our residents.

Our policies sets out how we seek to meet the specific needs of vulnerable residents, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and adjustments that they need to sustain their tenancies.

18 Reasonable Adjustments

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants, including those with disabilities or specific needs, can fully access and benefit from this policy.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Identify and respond to individual needs** by offering reasonable adjustments in communication, investigation, and resolution of tenancy breaches.
- **Provide information in accessible formats** such as Braille, audio, or translated versions, depending on tenant requirements.
- **Offer alternative methods of communication**, including email, text message, or face-to-face meetings, to suit the preferences and needs of tenants.
- **Adjust appointment times or locations** to accommodate tenants with mobility, health, or caregiving needs.

- **Work closely with support workers, advocates, or family members** where tenants require this assistance to facilitate a move.
- Ensure appropriate sensitivity and tailored support when dealing with tenants with **health conditions or disabilities**.
- **Train staff** to recognise and respond appropriately to requests for reasonable adjustments in relation to tenancy management issues.

19. Complaints

Reading Borough Council is committed to handling complaints fairly, promptly, and effectively. We use complaints, comments, and compliments, to help us review and improve our services. If a tenant has a complaint about any policy or procedure this can be raised through the Council's Complaints Procedure. Further information, including how to make a complaint, is available via the Council's webpages [Housing complaints procedure - Reading Borough Council](#).

If there are specific concerns about safety in a high-rise building (a building 7 storeys or at least 18 metres high) then tenants can also contact the Building Safety Regulator on 0300 7906787 or fill out a form on their website 'Complain about a building safety risk in a high-rise building' - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

20 Implementation and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when there are changes to best practice or statutory requirements, to ensure the policy achieves its objectives and continuously improve services and performance.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Repairs and Property Services to ensure that implementation of the Compliance is monitored. All staff involved in compliance have the responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy.

Appendix A – Principal Legislation & Standards (consolidated)

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**
- **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**
- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)**
- **HSE Approved Code of Practice L8 & HSG274 (Legionella control)**
- **Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998** (as amended, incl. 2018)
- **Building Regulations 2010** (e.g., Part J – Combustion; Part P – Electrical)
- **The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989**
- **Wiring Regulations BS 7671 (current edition)**
- **Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 and GS38 Guidance Note**
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** and relevant fire safety regulations/guidance (including external wall/fire doors/evacuation)
- **Building Safety Act 2022 (as amended)** and associated regulations
- **Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998**
- **Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998**
- **British Standards** (e.g., BS EN 81 series; BS 7255 for working safely on lifts)
- **NICEIC Codes of Practice and guidance** (where applicable)
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Consumer Protection Act 1987**
- **National/regional Fire & Rescue Service guidance (RBFRS) and building specific requirements**
- **Gas Safe Register** (competency/registration requirements)
- **LEIA guidance** (Lift & Escalator Industry Association)

Appendix B – Minimum Service Standards (summary)

- **Gas Safety:** Annual LGSR (Landlord Gas Safety Record) for all properties with gas; immediate response to gas emergencies; Gas Safe only.
- **Electrical:** EICR ≤5 years (or per last EICR); PAT where the Council supplies appliances.
- **Fire Safety:** Risk based FRA programme; action plans tracked to closure; routine testing/maintenance of doors, alarms, detection and suppression; clear communal areas; agreed and communicated evacuation plans.
- **Asbestos:** Management surveys; R&D surveys pre-works; up to date register; licensed removal where required; emergency procedures; tenant information.
- **Water Hygiene:** Risk assessments (≤2 years); temperature control and flushing regimes; void controls; communal schemes per written scheme of control; incident notification and remediation.
- **Lifts:** Monthly (or risk based) servicing; 6monthly LOLER; 24/7 emergency response; KPIs, audits and tenant communication.

Appendix C – Records and Retention

- LGSRs, EICRs, FRAs, Asbestos Registers/Plans, LOLER TE reports, Legionella records: retain per statutory minimums and the Council's Records Retention Schedule; ensure secure storage and availability for audit/regulator inspection.

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1. **Regulator of Social Housing Standards:**

1. **Safety and Quality Standard (formerly Home Standard)**

Landlords must ensure homes are safe, properly maintained, and of good quality:

Health and Safety Compliance: Identify and remediate hazards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS); no Category 1 hazards allowed.

Repairs and Maintenance: Maintain structural elements (roofs, walls, windows) and essential systems (plumbing, heating, electrical).

Planned Improvements: Undertake renovations and adaptations, communicating with tenants about works.

Record-keeping: Maintain accurate property condition records for inspection and tenant review.

Fair Treatment: Respect tenants' rights and accommodate diverse needs.

2. **Tenancy Standard**

Covers fair and transparent tenancy management:

Allocation and Lettings: Apply clear policies for allocating homes.

Eviction Prevention: Avoid unnecessary evictions and manage tenancy breaches appropriately.

Mutual Exchange: Provide information and facilitate tenant-initiated exchanges.

Tenancy Fraud Prevention: Implement safeguards against fraudulent sub-letting or claims.

3. **Neighbourhood and Community Standard**

Supports secure, well-maintained communities:

Community Engagement: Collaborate with local authorities and partners to improve neighbourhoods.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Address antisocial behaviour and domestic violence in tenant areas swiftly.

Estate Management: Ensure services like waste management, grounds maintenance, and security meet tenant expectations.

4. **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard**

Focuses on transparency, tenant influence, and accountability:

Tenant Participation: Encourage tenant consultation and feedback in decision-making.

Information Access: Provide accurate, timely information about services and performance.

Complaint Handling: Implement accessible and responsive grievance procedures.

Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Employment And Skills Plans Delivery Review 2024/26
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Emma Gee / Nigel Horton-Baker
Lead Councillor	Cllr Terry, Leader of the Council
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	1. That the Committee notes the report and welcomes the delivery of employment and skills outcomes by REDA (Reading's Economy and Destination Agency) over the last 2 years as enabled by Section 106 funded Employment and Skills Plans. 2. The Committee supports the development of further similar programmes of activity delivered by REDA working with Council officers and their extensive partnership network, with Section 106 funds being made available through officer delegated authority.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This information report updates the Committee on the delivery of Skills, Employability and Training programmes managed by REDA (the trading name of Reading UK CIC) in line with the planning policies which promote Employment and Skills Plans, designed to support local growth for both residents and businesses.
- 1.2. The report notes that delivery has been aligned with other important programmes delivered across the Borough – notably UK Shared Prosperity Fund (completed in March 2026) and Social Inclusion and Placed Based ongoing programmes. The next 2 years will also see further engagement with, and contributions from, both developers and the end users of completed developments, which will be used to create employment and skills opportunities to assist local growth and to reach all parts of Reading's community.
- 1.3. Going forward the work of Employment and Skills Plans will be set against the context of the new Reading Economic Framework 2025-35 (see Appendix 1) and the emerging Berkshire Economic Growth Plan, while recognising the focus on the "lost generation" of young people at national level. RBC and REDA are responding to this report and subsequent updates through the Berkshire Prosperity Board.
- 1.4. Case studies of local Reading participants are included at the end of the report.
- 1.5. The programme of interventions, described in detail in Diagram 1 and Table 1 below, have been evaluated and it is felt provides a very good cost-effective record of achievement in supporting local residents who are struggling to find and sustain work, become self-employed or retrain in new skills. Just as important the programme begins to prepare the young people in our schools and colleges for the world of work. A new

plan will be agreed under officer delegated powers to continue to support local residents and young people into training and sustainable employment and self-employment.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 Reading Borough Council adopted the requirement for Employment and Skills Plans (ESP) under a 2013 Supplementary Planning Document that seeks to implement adopted (2008) Core Strategy Policies CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities, and CS13: Impact of Employment Development. Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure' of the recently adopted Local Plan continues the policy basis for the SPD. The original drafting of the SPD relied on detailed discussion between Reading UK CIC (now t/a REDA) and the Borough Council's Planning Service, with REDA being identified as the main agent for implementing the policy. The aims of the ESP requirement as part of a planning permission have been clearly defined in working with employers to improve the work and training opportunities of local people. ESP financial contributions also support other skills and employment training to benefit the local economy and its skills and employment base, being delivered by REDA.
- 2.2 An ESP requirement is attached to any new development or any regeneration or extension programme where more than 1,000 square metres of new non-residential floor space or 10 dwellings are being created, or it is costing more than £1million.
- 2.3 A developer can choose to either enter into a delivery plan, with advice from REDA and working with local partners, or pay a financial contribution towards the delivery of training and employment programmes, developed by REDA on behalf of the Borough Council. The financial contribution is based on a simple percentage of the anticipated construction costs and floor plans and will typically be confirmed by a S106 legal agreement which is entered into by the developer before planning permission is granted.
- 2.4 The programmes of work described below were accordingly funded from a pipeline of S106 agreements applied to the 2024-2026 programme. There are 32 current Section 106 agreements to support the next delivery phase (2026-28).
- 2.5 The Head of Economic Development (EDM) at REDA advises and assists developers to prepare plans that are deliverable, with clear outcomes and shaped to the needs of the relevant sector. The EDM co-ordinates partners such as schools and training providers to deliver the plans, provides ongoing monitoring of the delivery and outcomes, and feeds back to Reading Borough Council utilising the new joint working Economic Development Framework Task Group
- 2.6 Key delivery partners supporting this work include DWP Job Centre, New Directions, Activate Learning (Reading College), REDA Business Network and local schools such as The Wren and Reading Girls, amongst others working with Education Business Partnership. The ESP programme, alongside other employment and skills initiatives are developed, consulted on and monitored through the joint working arrangement between REDA and officers in the Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services and reporting to the REDA Board.

3 Review - Current Position

- 3.1 REDA has a strong track record of delivering benefits to the local community through using S106 developer contributions stretching back over a decade. These programmes provide outcomes benefiting local people and the economy (e.g. Job and Career Events) and in some cases supporting community programmes (Community Outreach Programme). Over the last two years REDA has worked with and supported in the region of 16,000 people and small businesses, through both the ESP programmes and other activities funded by UKSPF which are designed to develop routes forward in the jobs market or self-employment. These programmes are providing support to residents

who would not otherwise benefit from these opportunities or are provided by other agencies or organisations in an inclusive way. The recent ESP programmes alone have helped over 13,000.

- 3.2 Partnership working has been pivotal in ensuring our reach into the community and providing real value for money. Partnership with both public and private sector partners continue to be central to delivery of REDA's programmes. Match funding and support in kind from companies and organisations such as Green Park, Abbey Rotary Group, Hilton Reading, Activate Learning and the University of Reading continue to play a major part in shaping delivery.
- 3.3 In September 2024 a drawdown of funds from ring-fenced S106 contributions to a total cost of £245,000 was agreed by Officer Decision Notice. These funds were for REDA to deliver a plan of economic development activity specifically aimed at supporting local residents to benefit from the successful economy in and around Reading and support local businesses. The projects and services undertaken between July 2024 to June 2026, along with the key outputs, outcomes and value for money, follow in the report below.
- 3.4 The importance of this work to ensure local residents benefit from the town's economic prosperity can be demonstrated by the fact that Reading's level of Universal Credit claims is currently *above* the southeast average and has now also risen above the national average (Reading 4.3% / South East 3.1% / UK 3.9%) with 5,455 claimants in June 2026 (against 5,180 claimants in June 2024). Young claimants fare better against the national picture, though the total continues to rise year on year, with 880 claimants aged 18-24 in June 2026 (4.2% of Reading's working population against a national percentage of 5.7%). This is set in a challenging context of restricted entry level recruitment, previously unseen in Reading. There is still a persistent level of "hidden" unemployed, and workless people including people who would like to work if given the opportunity. There are currently 16,900 economically inactive – the last available figures (December 25) showed 2,900 inactive people wanting to work. Long term sickness/incapacity, seen initially as a short-term impact of Covid has now become an embedded issue for the employment market, with serious repercussions on a personal and societal level. Though Berkshire's figure of 14,900 (15.4%) compares well against the national rate of 27.8%.
- 3.5 The rate for Over 50's claiming Universal Credit sits at 4.5% (June 2026) - significantly higher than the southeast rate of 2.5% and the UK rate of 2.9% - although the figure has held steady for the last few years. Universal Credit is a key in-work benefit, and many working people are still reliant on additional financial support to make ends meet or are suffering from the longer-term impacts of the cost of living crisis.
- 3.6 **The Skills and Employment Programme 2024 – 2026:** In response to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, REDA's programmes have been delivered within the framework of the Borough's Social Inclusion Board strategy and its Place Based programme work. This identifies the indices of deprivation that adversely affect opportunity across Reading including parts of Whitley and Norcot amongst others. Both strategies aim to drive community participation and equality of opportunity across all parts of the Borough, providing support to access training and employment and ensure our economy is able to adapt to changing demands for both existing and new skills sets. A sectoral based approach delivered within local neighbourhoods will enable more people to find good quality work, develop the skills demanded by employers and continue to support those with multiple barriers to employment. In addition, taking delivery to the heart of communities would potentially utilise neighbourhood community space.
- 3.7 REDA's private/public sector Board, and two Business Improvement District Committees representing 750 businesses in the town centre inform this programme and have identified the following priority areas for support: Job Fests, Self-Employment Training, Growing Sectoral Skills, Young People and Work, Outreach Programmes in the Community and Support for people with Additional Barriers to Work.

- 3.8 ESP delivery between 2024 - 2026 outlined in detail in Summary Diagram 1 and Table 1 below has responded to known demand with a particular aim to upskill and retrain residents, helping them access better paid, better-quality work with an eye on emerging skills including the “green” economy and the rapidly developing creative screen sector.
- 3.9 The programme has begun to embed outreach activity through the community and voluntary sectors to ensure it is more accessible and targeted, delivering in user-friendly spaces such as libraries and community centres.
- 3.10 Specific groups targeted through 2025/26 included Reading’s priority secondary schools, the over 50s, women and people from minority ethnic communities. Work has therefore included closer working with New Directions, statutory agencies and voluntary organisations dedicated to supporting specific communities through adult employment support, sector skills training, as well as government led programmes such as Multiply and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Diagram 1: Summary of Outputs from ESP funded Programme Delivery July 2024 – June 2026:

Key Outputs of 2024-26 Programmes



Table 1: Report on the Outputs and Outcomes of the Programme of ESP Activity 2024-2026

Theme 1: Working with the local community to provide useful 1:1 advice and guidance on self-employment, jobs and training			
This a pilot to identify how we can provide cost effective outreach advice and guidance in communities exhibiting higher levels of unemployment and low benefit take up, working with local community centres and coordinating with other charity and voluntary organisations. This programme has provided 1:1 session with over 250 residents seeking to be self-employed and/or looking for a job and training. For most it is a last resort. It has provided opportunities for local people to move on to our startup business courses and receive a grant and/or be signposted to New Directions and other agencies for further job support. The work has given us an evidence base to consolidate our work going forward in South Reading and to develop a job club and more integrated local support on a regular basis based in a local community centre. As the service develops and becomes more embedded locally, we will be able to gain more permission to track how residents progress as a result.			
Project Title	Programme Content	Total Outputs (courses / events) and benefits to local people	Notable Outcomes
Outreach jobs programme in the community Cost: £59,534 (Unit cost £184/hr/resident)	Self-Employment Support and Skills in the Community. Outreach programme to find “hidden” unemployed – including sign posting, advice and potential small business support, linked to building on the UKSPF small business development project. successfully run with the ‘Launch Reading’. Delivered in Whitley Community Hub; Tilehurst, Caversham and Battle Libraries, Broad St Mall, Weller Centre and specific sessions for migrant communities.	Phase 4 April 2024- March 25 122 resident engagements in numerous settings across Reading Phase 5 Oct 2025 – March 2026 new programme of regular clinics in south Reading working closely with Whitley CDA and RBC South Reading project. The project met its target with over 200 conversations (132 individuals) aimed at encouraging and supporting residents into work and/or self-employment. Requests for help in finding a job were numerous and signposting was given to New Directions and DWP. The Law Centre and CAB are regular attenders at clinics in south Reading.	The programme has become well established within the WCDA café, engaging with good numbers of local residents. Residents are now requesting a meeting and asking for our advisor by name. It is proposed to continue the regular outreach sessions in this location to build on existing relationships and help establish word of mouth. One to one voluntary engagement sessions have been assessed as very successful by the WCDA and has allowed us to gauge demand and shape delivery of this ongoing service and closer involvement of all advice, guidance and training partners. With increased support of WCDA, and having established more trust in the community there, we will now pilot low key methods of tracking those who participate. Work is now ongoing to make available a pilot job club, helping with job search, job applications, interview preparation and online learning. Launch Reading, the REDA supported self-employment programme, attend many WCDA outreach sessions so that all residents interested in starting up a business can be assessed for the training, mentoring and grant programme which was UK SPF funded. This work will also support the community led Whitley Carnival in 2027
Theme 2: Ensuring everyone has access to jobs, training and careers.			
Complimenting Theme 1 these recruitment activities provide a one-to-many opportunity for those furthest from the labour market, not confident about approaching statutory services or who have been unable to gain access directly to employers with job opportunities. The Job Fests provide extensive reach, have a strong reputation gained over many years, with repeat attendance by employers and more wanting to attend (200 stands in total over 2024-26). Activities reached over 3400 residents, the majority through The Town Hall with its accessible town centre location, but additionally through local events in Whitley using the Councils community buildings. The overall budget under this theme was £31,000 - representing an investment of £8 per resident. We plan to maintain Jobs Fairs in the town centre, available to all our residents, and local events in south Reading, while maintaining work in the schools.			

Project Title	Programme Content	Total Outputs (courses / events) and benefits to local people	Notable Outcomes
Job Fests Cost £16,642 Unit cost £5 per resident	Four focused jobs and skills events: Sept 2024, June & Sept 2025, March 2026 Working with DWP and other key partners to deliver the area's biggest job events for employers, job seekers and those wanting access to training and guidance	Four Job Fests successfully delivered over period. 180 employers engaged + 20 training providers Approx 3,300 local people attended.	An exit survey is now organised for every Job Fest. Over the past two Jobs Fests we achieved on average a 6% response rate (114 individuals in total). This was governed by willingness to participate, our staff resources and logistics of the venue, something we are addressing. Results showed that among under 35's IT was the most sought-after job or career. While the over 35's were more likely to be looking for admin, social care, support and cleaning roles. Construction at both events was also popular with all age groups and REDA is now planning to provide CSCS card certification opportunities. This is the entry requirement for gaining entry to work on a construction site. Tracking actual outcomes remains difficult. Around 70% of Job Fair attendees are DWP clients, however DWP cannot share data on their customers, even as a result of the event. However, the event remains the lead job fair in the town with job seekers able to interact with up to 40 employers (all with real time jobs) and a series of career and training specialists. Employers are always keen to book for future events and others join the waiting list. We are aware that most employers are offering interview and meeting opportunities to 10-20 people on the day, though on follow-up are unable to provide information on take-up or successful employment.
Jobs and training Pilot Event - Whitley Wood Community Centre Cost £4,902 Unit cost £70 per resident	Up to 4 small, targeted events set in the south Reading area, working with 3-4 local employers, and partnered by New Directions (advice and guidance) and Ideas Fishing (startup guidance)	Two community events delivered in Whitley Wood (Oct 24 and Feb 26) 15 local employers and providers 70 attendees Advice and support were given to: - young job seekers, at least 2 people with barriers to employment - a group of skilled residents about to be made redundant.	See attached Case Study At the February 2026 event we undertook exit interviews with 20 of the 35 attendees. The most sought-after jobs were in catering, admin, construction, and marketing roles - which will be a focus for future events. REDA was able to contact the company making the redundancies and ensure they had links with DWP for redundancy support. REDA are now supporting RBC, South Reading outreach team and local partners to deliver the community job events directly in partnership with RBC's recruitment team and New Directions
Future Skills Careers Event 2025 Cost £9,500 Unit cost £24 per student	Organised with Education Business Partnership and key partners within RBC – promoting a broad range of STEAM based career options. Delivered in collaboration with Museum of Reading "Reading's Digital Revolution" exhibition	Destinations Expo delivered in Nov 2025 390 Yr 11 students from 7 schools attended. 25 science and technology related employers exhibited.	While attendance was strong, many students had hoped for a broader range of employers to attend. Survey results were mixed. Teachers scored the event 9.5/10, but students were less positive, which suggests that students were not filtered to attend based on their interest in science and technology-based careers. The event will remain a one-off linked to the Digital Revolution exhibition, though other wider ranging jobs and careers events will continue.

Theme 3: Training and supporting residents in to work.

Green skills in the form of ground works is a key skill supporting the Council environmental services and many large establishments such as hospitals, the university and many small businesses. This programme was hands-on, practical, suited to many jobseekers who want outdoor or physical work. The training was fully supported by the Council Parks team and provided a range of additional soft skills including pathways into employment and further training which some took advantage of. The courses provided an investment of £2,200 per participant (21 residents).

Project Title	Programme Content	Total Outputs (courses / events) and benefits to local people	Notable Outcomes
Growing Sectoral Skills: GREEN skills Cost: £46,842 Unit cost: £2,230 per resident	Programme with Groundworks – delivering landscaping, arboriculture, water conservancy and other blue/green skills working with people with barriers to employment and supported by RBC Parks Department.	Three 6-week courses completed with Groundworks, Jan–July 2025 44 referrals - 21 participants 16 achieved a certificate in ground maintenance. Skills covered included: • Health and Safety onsite • Risk Assessments • How to use hand tools safely in open spaces • How to use petrol tools • How to maintain tools Soft skills included • Behaviours in workplace • Strengths/ weaknesses • CV's • Effective job searching • Interview techniques • Social media • Employer visit	50% moved into employment and further education. All are still in employment or finished the courses in May 2026, Others decided not to pursue ground maintenance or are still applying. See case study. Having reviewed the course, it is felt to be well-run and comprehensive, managed well in partnership with RBC Ground Maintenance team, giving them access to future recruits already job ready and trained. – 9 participants moved in to work and or training e (7 directly related to the course) However, it is a very high unit cost activity provided by Groundwork, with high dropout rate and low attainment level. It is not planned to repeat the programme, but other ways of delivering the course at lower cost are being explored.
Screen Skills and Supply Chain Cost £0	This planned programme was subsequently funded via a much larger package of funding through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allowing the funding to be used for additional activity in Theme1 and 4 - building on REDA's previous engagement with the film sector locally and procurement events for trades - supporting the supply chain to the screen sector. (Both previously funded through ESP funded projects, which it is proposed will be	The associated activity that was funded by (UKSPF) expanded what was proposed, building on REDA's previous engagement with the film sector locally and aimed allowed us to undertake: -3 more focused supply chain events - pilot a programme of financial grant support for local film makers in Reading - support a local film festival - to highlight opportunities of the film sector to young people and adults -	----- The associated programme of work undertaken benefited our existing work, including: - Engaging 160 film sector business and connecting them directly with Screen Berkshire and Shadowbox Shinfield Studios, so they are listed for future work - Highlighting 3 key challenges to the film sector, creating a trilogy of films of the events, as a basis for ongoing development work addressing AI in film, Sustainability in Film and Financing Film - supporting the development of a Reading film festival – Through a Different Lense which aims to showcase local independent short films and highlight the work of underrepresented filmmakers attracting support of the University, over 100 attendees through out the day and 10 showcased entries. - a local resident-made short film, used as a pilot for local film maker grants.' Just a Mum' has been completed and now being promoted at a range of film festivals across the country. - A Screen Skills career fair for students and residents providing more information and contacts in this sector for local people in addition to the broader careers and jobs event REDA organises - A resident's filmmaking and performance training course in south Reading now being developed in a broader programme by the Council led Whitley Heritage Partnership

			All of which has elevated REDA to a position on the Board of Screen Berkshire now co-ordinating and delivering a new £1m fund across Berkshire to support the development of skills and inclusive job opportunities and careers for residents across Berkshire. The work has also provided evidence for continuation of activity to enable local people to benefit from the film sector that has been ignited by Shinfield Studios.
Developer Construction Employment and Skills Plans (ESP's) Led by Developers under management of REDA Cost: £15,000 Unit cost per ESP: £1,364	Working with developers through the planning process (£106 and Conditions) to develop site specific employment and skills plans for primarily construction but some end-use outcomes for residents. Delivery includes apprenticeships, work experience, education outreach, employment and training	452 Construction Jobs paid by developer. 25 Apprenticeships paid by developer and govern funded training Total of 11 ESPs signed in the period. Work on five new plans proposed during the period. Plus, four end-use plans developing with Station Hill occupiers.	The programme continues to support the delivery of skills outcomes for local people – £106 funds provide first level of support for people trying to get into work including IAG, and sign posting to intensive help from New Directions, DWP, Connect to Work and reaching out into the community. Outcomes from construction sites are limited to the build period, but we understand that the training received does prepare the students for the next job and encourage the developers to assist with referrals and references.
An exemplar ESP was conducted with Lincoln Property at the £81m Station Hill Phase 2 development. REDA supported construction firm Sir Robert McAlpine over 3 years. During this time SRM successfully worked with local and regional providers including CITB, Reading College/Activate Learning, Central Berks Education Business Partnership, Jelly, University of Reading, several local schools and DWP Job Centre. Outcomes (2022-25) included: 30 apprentices on site (including electrical and technical, levels 2-5) 26 local people at DWP events providing information on jobs and training in construction 290 students visited the site (against a target of 122) including attending masterclasses in bricklaying and drylining working directly with contractors on site. 53 students attended a CSCS workshop supported by CITB and Activate, 148 gained work experiences. SRM successfully delivered Women in Construction and Open Doors events as part of national campaigns. Upskilling training on site achieved remarkable levels of involvement – 2,878. While SRM recorded a figure of just 27% local labour this was still a significant number (802 people) on site and was probably much higher as agency staff did not provide postcodes. Following the successful ESP delivery Station Hill continues to undertake regular Student Events, College visits and training opportunities. Further jobs and training opportunities will now be available through the granting of planning permission for phase 3 of the Station Hill development.			
Project Title	Programme Content	Total Outputs (courses / events) and benefits to local people	Notable Outcomes
Support for people with additional barriers to work Start Up Costs: £7,500	Initial development planning for employer led interventions to support local people with barriers to work, who want to work, to take first steps into the workplace. REDA will work with all supported	REDA staff are members of the Berkshire Prosperity Board Employment and Skills Group responsible for the Ways into Work and Get Britain Working programme. Staff time has been invested in supporting the	Now the contracts are up and running support will be given to Palladium. REDA have established a good working relationship with Palladium and New Directions to support engagement of employers, supporting the programme when recruiting. REDA is currently approaching all its Board Members to support the scheme. Five have currently agreed to use the scheme in recruitment.

	employment providers and agencies to widen employer engagement. Client groups will include young people with special needs, those with underlying health conditions or disability. Working with DWP JobCentre Plus.	contracting of the CTW programme to Palladium which was delayed until Jan 2026 start. Links to potential individual beneficiaries and participating employers is being undertaken through a direct marketing campaign.	Palladium will attend the next two Jobs Festivals in September and March 2027 hosting a stand or recruit new participants that meet the criteria and networking with employers also exhibiting in order to recruit them to the scheme.
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Theme 4: Preparing Reading's Young People for Work

This has been a recurring programme over several years, providing consistently strong outputs. REDA has worked with local provider Education Business Partnership with the aim of preparing young people for the world of work, including events to give students a taste of the work environment. In addition, we provide access to work sites that they wouldn't otherwise get a chance to visit and soft skills training such as managing budgets and interview skills. Pupils have also had the chance to look at sectors such as media, AI and Low Carbon. It represents an investment of £85,000 in 57 events (£1,500 per event) and equates to £12,000 in each of 7 Reading schools.

Project Title	Programme Content	Total Outputs (courses / events)	Notable Outcomes
Young people and work Cost: £85,080 Unit costs: £12,154 per school £9.39 per student engagement	Programme of skills and employment interventions delivered with Education Business Partnership in 2025 and 2026. Tailored to support UKSP funded projects. NB: 2026 delivery was funded by reallocated Screen Skills funds – see below. Working with Years 10 & 11 in schools identified as in most need of employment support, access to work advice and life skills. Events around the Borough.	57 Careers Events 7 Secondary Schools 9,063 Students engaged This was an extended programme of activity on schools made possible through links to other sources of funding: Skills developed included: - self-awareness assessment - interview technique - choosing a career with company visits to learn about film jobs and green (low carbon) jobs. - meeting with employers -Guess My Job - what it's like to be self employed - Learning about AI - financial skills for life	All EBP delivery is evaluated by students, teachers and business volunteers. See case study showing excellent outcomes. A full evaluation report is provided by EBP and headlines include: 90% satisfaction- students would participate again. 92% of teachers were 80%+ satisfied with the content organisation and relevance to students. All employers agreed to be involved again. As a result of feedback, the next programme has been adapted to be more focused on employability skills and work readiness. We also monitor student performance by schools to ensure we are targeting the students that need the most help. REDA is now working with the Dir of Education to engage Headteachers in better tracking outcomes from school in employment and training, as a result of the EBP programmes.
Total Expenditure: £245,000			

- 3.11 Work in schools has been undertaken by the Education Business Partnership which has delivered great outcomes through previous ESP programmes. Working with employers in sectors where skills shortages or emerging skills are to the fore gives our pupils the opportunity of challenging work experiences and helps cultivate an ethos among employers for growing local talent. Support is typically for years 10 - 12 and in schools identified as most in need of pupil support. These have included Hartland High School (formerly JMA), Reading Girls, Maiden Erlegh Reading and Blessed Hugh Faringdon.
- 3.12 Support for self-employment is a route that works well for many local residents. This current programme has seen strong (and highly cost effective) results from "Launch Reading" – providing training, workshops and mentoring programmes with Abbey

Rotary Club. REDA has been able to empower these local start-ups with small business grants, made available through UK SPF funding.

- 3.13 Community Outreach sessions have run throughout 2025 and 2026, where appropriate providing advice on self-employment, signposting to employability training, upskilling, careers advice and financial advice from partner organisations. In particular the emerging opportunities for trades people and the self-employed to gain contracts with Film companies utilising Shadow Box, Shinfield Studios. Ongoing outreach work at Whitley Community Café has now become well bedded within the community.

4 Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The outcomes of the Employment, Skills and Training SPD contribute to achieving the Council's Plan, 2025/28. In particular: its 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 its priorities:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading.
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success

and to do this by:

- Putting Residents First
- Involving, Collaborating and Empowering Residents
- Being Proudly Ambitious for Reading

- 4.2 REDA supports this through its Mission to: "Boost Business and enhance the visitor experience in a way that improves the quality of life for all in the Reading region".
- 4.3 The work outlined in this report is now brought together to deliver the Council's objectives through the new REDA and RBC joint officer task group to deliver the new Reading Economic Development Framework. Key officers also part of the Social Inclusion Board and the Town Centre Working Group as well as the relevant Berkshire Prosperity Board work streams.

5 Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). A new Reading Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025-30, produced by the Reading Climate Change Partnership with the Council's support has been approved.
- 5.2 REDA's Employment and Skills Plans align with the aims of the Climate Emergency Strategy particularly in their adoption of Green Skills as part of the emerging Future Skills agenda. Associated work to this ESP programme highlighted the key issue of sustainability in film, a key growing sector locally and provided a basis for further work. The delivery of a 'green' town centre and Business Improvement District from which the ESP programme will leverage further funding has been assisted by report commissioned by REDA looking at 'How Green is Reading Town Centre', with recommended actions including sustainability training for employees in town centre businesses. This further develops our understanding from the 2023 REDA report 'Towards a Green Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Reading 2023' which showed the likelihood of 5,600 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Jobs in Reading by 2050. Key interventions could see this rise to 20,000 within the same period, including the opportunity to upskill the Council's Housing Services repairs and maintenance teams to undertake this work on its own housing stock as well as compete in the Reading market among private ownership households.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1 Work in schools has been developed over several years and we have feedbacked each year from students, teachers and employers involved on the programme so we can improve delivery and ascertain demand to continue the programme.
- 6.2 Work over the last two years period was focused on new ways of work and was highly interactive and participatory in its nature. This included talking with individuals in community settings (including Battle, Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries, Whitley Community Hub, Weller Centre and Broad St Mall) providing advice and identifying needs that can be fed back to stakeholder and partner activities as well as our own. The friendly knowledgeable drop-in informal style of providing this programme has led to people getting immediate help with:
- thinking about being self-employed and knowing about a route to join a local advice and mentoring programme with the possibility of a startup grant;
 - answering questions that the people have not asked anyone else;
 - knowing the pros and cons of spending money in starting up a business;
 - thinking positively about the journey back to work after having had breaks eg for family or health reasons.
- 6.3 The programme has engaged with a wide cross section of Reading's communities. Ages ranged from early 20s to 50s with an approximate 60/40 split between female and male. The majority were white British, however, a significant number were of southeast Asian heritage and some of African and Caribbean heritage. There was also representation from East Europe, Hong Kong and South America.
- 6.4 This local engagement with over 200 resident conversations undertaken, together with collaboration with local community development staff, other key agencies and staff at the Whitley CDA and Café, has informed our approach and development of the programme going forward.

7 Equality Implications

- 7.1 Employment and Skills Plans provide the opportunity for targeted programmes reaching some of our harder to reach residents and those in priority settings, including priority schools, residents in south Reading and those facing barriers to employment. We will work with RBC and other key partners especially DWP, to ensure we reach out and engage with those facing most difficulties in accessing work.

8 Other Relevant Considerations

None

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Employment and Skills Plans are secured through the Section 106 process, which is now governed by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The tests for Section 106 agreements are whether they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Employment and skills plans are not part of the Community Infrastructure Levy regime and will continue to be sought on major sites, where they meet the above tests.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The majority of ESPs referred to in this report are secured through Section 106 agreements and are either carried out by the developer in conjunction with REDA, or by sourcing third party funds, or funded by the developer directly.

Director of Finance Comments:

- 10.3 **VALUE FOR MONEY:** The SPD requires developers to prepare or fund ESP's that have a positive effect on employment, skills and training. This has a direct implication for economic development in the Borough, especially at this time of cost of living and austerity pressures. The needs and challenges of local people and businesses are addressed within the plan's responses to key sector skills shortages, and the idea of "future proofing" skills demand and upskilling and retraining local people to increase job opportunity, employment resilience and the dependence on financial support.
- 10.4 The Developer ESP's plans and programme of activity will be delivered and managed by the Council's Economic Development Partnership Company, REDA. This is costed in the proposals and at no cost to the council. The total costs of each activity and unit cost and investment in participating residents are identified in the report in Table 1. The delivery of many programmes is supported by private sector and third sector partners, all of which provides excellent value for money and opportunities to attract further external funding to expand the programme for example from government sources such as UKSPF.

RISK ASSESSMENT: There are no direct financial risks associated with this report.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 There are none.

Appendices

- 1 Reading Economic Development Framework Priorities 2025-2035**
- 2 Case Studies related to delivery of programme in 2024-26.**

Appendix 1.

IMPLEMENTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Priority Interventions and Actions

	2026 - 2027	2028 - 2030
GOVERNANCE	• Establishment of Strategic Project Board. • Agreement of project and monitoring protocols.	
INTERVENTION NO 1: A Levelled Up Skilled Workforce for Reading	• Sector focused workforce development plan. • Green economy skills plan. • Career destination planning partnership. • Formation of a business skills board & network. • Survey of the training needs of businesses. • 3-year skills and productivity action plan and pilots.	• Business cases for securing funds. • Implementation of main programme.
INTERVENTION NO 2: Coherent Mobilisation of the South Reading Voluntary and Community Sector	• Mapping of all local groups and providers. • Capacity building support programme. • Formal coordination and referral framework. • Targeted outreach campaigns to inform residents about available support services.	• Rolling evaluation, impact assessment and continuous improvement.
INTERVENTION NO 3: Boosted Investment in Reading's Key Sectors	• Bespoke marketing propositions. • Engagement with all potential referral agents. • Promotion of Reading place brand. • Set up of enquiry handling for DBT referrals.	• Collaboration with Berkshire, wide inward investment promotion.
INTERVENTION NO 4: Enhancing Reading as an Advanced Technology Economy	• Analysis of emerging growth industries, supply chains, workspace and support requirements. • AI zone of excellence development plan. • Business cases for securing funds. • Launch of high growth business support.	• Incubation and flexible workspace funding and development programme implementation.
INTERVENTION NO 5: Town centre Place Making Blueprint	• Town centre animation project plan. • Measures to safeguard office space from permitted development. • Policy and mechanisms for the recycling and renewal of outdated commercial buildings.	• Master planning to incorporate family size homes in or adjacent to Central Reading.
INTERVENTION NO 6: Animation of Town centre and South Reading	• Project plans for the animation of the town centre, and South Reading. • Plan and proposals for community cohesion initiatives conducive to enhanced interaction. • Define sources of business advice and support for community infrastructure providers. • Set up small grant regime. • Proposals for public realm improvements.	• Launch support and resources for local groups. • Proposals for rapid bus links from South Reading to employment hubs.
INTERVENTION NO.7: Accelerated Transport Infrastructure Funding	• Overarching case and updated project proposals for park-and-ride enhancements, rapid public transport solutions linking the town centre and peripheral business and residential areas.	• Public-private sector collaborative approaches to building the case for funding.
INTERVENTION NO.8: Integrated Devolution Plans and Proposals	• Overarching devolved framework and costed proposals.	• Design and implementation of funded projects.

Appendix 2. Case Studies

1. Community Business Outreach clinics (Theme 1)

The friendly knowledgeable drop-in informal style of providing this programme directly in various community locations across Reading has led to people getting immediate help with:

- thinking about being self-employed and knowing about a route to join a local advice and mentoring programme with the possibility of a startup grant
- answering questions that the people have not asked anyone else.
- knowing the pros and cons of spending money in starting up a business
- thinking positively about the journey back to work after having had breaks eg for family or health reasons.

Examples of key outcomes

- In Caversham Library we met with a man in his mid-30's. He had been running a gardening business for several years but was struggling. The session helped him think through his marketing clearly. He left a 30-minute conversation with a simple visual business plan diagram (he said he was dyslexic) of steps forward that were realistic and gave him a sense of direction. His feedback was that the session had been beyond his expectations. Practical, visual and confidence building. The session will help him get more business and be more sustainable in his self-employment.
- In Whitley CDA a man in his 40's came forward looking at the REDA pull up banner. The conversation with him was about the fact that he was out of work, keen to work but struggled with online applications and his own confidence in what to say (he said he could not read or write well, and neither could his wife). The conversation looked at other ways he could know about and apply for jobs. It also was about his confidence in customer skills and knowing how to show this confidence. He had got a job within two weeks of this conversation.
- In Southcote Library a woman in her 40's talked through her low confidence about returning to work after a career break. She also talked about her son who has ADHD and a Master's degree. Our conversation was around using Linked in (for her level of experience and for her son), how to build a profile and how to help her son have confidence that the Linked in platform is a safe place. Her feedback was that it had helped her know more about Linked in, know how to talk with her son about it and helped her realise she could use it to get ready to start looking for jobs. The session will have helped her know good actions to take to get her back to work and will help her son find the right job for him and see his ADHD as a positive characteristic.
- In Caversham Library a conversation developed with a Polish heritage solicitor who had residency in the UK. She was returning to work for when her children were in primary school. The conversation helped her navigate finding out how to turn her Polish qualifications into UK based work. The signposting and confidence boost about her language skills was a delight to her. The session will have helped her get to a job to really use her skills and aim higher than she might have thought.

2. Whitley Wood Community Centre Jobs and Skills Pilot Event (Theme 2)

Background and Purpose

Reading's Economy and Destination Agency (REDA) organised a pilot Jobs and Skills event at Whitley Wood Community Centre as part of its ongoing community outreach and commitment to the Whitley Place Based Pilot. The event aimed to:

- Reach residents unable or unwilling to travel to central venues.
- Identify and support unemployed people who may not be engaging with traditional services.
- Connect residents with employers and training providers.
- Provide advice and guidance in an informal, welcoming environment.

Event Planning and Delivery

The event took place on **17 November** in the community centre's small hall. While securing employer participation proved challenging despite two months' notice, the final exhibitor mix included:

- **Three employers:** Collards Environmental, Reading Borough Council Trade Services, and IHG Hotels (Holiday Inn South).
- **Two support providers:** New Directions and Idea Fishing Associates.

- **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** representatives offering employment, welfare and childcare advice.

Promotion was carried out through REDA networks and local South Reading Programme ambassadors.

Attendance and Outcomes

Approximately **30–40 local residents** attended and engaged with exhibitors throughout the two-hour event.

Attendees included:

- Young people seeking career changes from retail and hospitality roles.
- Individuals needing CV and job application support.
- Three skilled workers facing redundancy, who received advice and have since been offered additional support by DWP.

Exhibitors reported productive conversations, shared contacts with attendees, and established networking opportunities among themselves, leading to planned follow-up meetings.

Key Observations

- Six exhibitors were an appropriate number for the venue size.
- The small, informal setting encouraged personal engagement and effective signposting.
- Skills advisers and DWP staff added significant value by helping attendees understand training, childcare, benefits and employment options.
- Employers provided meaningful discussions about career opportunities and recruitment pathways.
- Most attendees were younger, lower-skilled residents from diverse backgrounds, with attendance driven largely by local word-of-mouth promotion.

Lessons Learned

- More prominent signage, particularly from nearby roads, would improve visibility.
- Employers require significantly longer lead times; future events should ideally be planned at least six months in advance.
- Maintaining an informal community-focused atmosphere should remain a priority, even if additional support from organisations such as DWP is utilised.

Overall Assessment

The pilot was successful in attracting residents, facilitating meaningful employer engagement, and providing accessible employment and skills support within the community. The event demonstrated demand for localised, informal jobs and skills provision and provided valuable insights for planning future community-based employment events.

3. Groundworks (Theme 3)

During 2025 the employment charity *Groundwork South* was contracted by REDA to provide training in Green Skills to long- and short-term unemployed residents in Reading. The programme was developed in partnership with Reading's own Parks Team with 3 separate cohorts of 6 weeks being supported over an 8-month period.

Referral partners from the Voluntary Sector and DWP JobCentre identified people that had an interest in working within the conservation and horticulture sector, but overall, the majority of trainees had no outdoor working experience. Once the trainees had been interviewed and confirmed Groundwork South and Reading's Park Supervisor identified sites that required tasks such as lopping, clearance and tree removal.

In numbers:

- 44 referrals
- 21 offered placements with 16 completing the full course.
- 13 of the trainees were over 40.
- 96% said the course had improved their mental health.
- 5 found work immediately after, 2 became self-employed, 1 has gone into horticultural training.

Over the 6-week 2 days onsite training, they all had the opportunity to learn the following:

- Health and Safety onsite
- Risk Assessments
- How to use hand tools safely in open green spaces
- How to use petrol driven tools
- How to maintain tools

Alongside practical sessions trainees completed employability workshops.

These sessions looked at:

- Behaviours in the workplace
- Strengths and weaknesses
- CV's
- Effective job searching
- Interview techniques
- Social media
- Networking
- Employer visit

Feedback:

Vincent was part of cohort one –

he has ADHD and Autism and mild learning difficulties. His mother contacted Groundworks to ask if he could join the training, he was interviewed as everyone else and after liaising with Vincent's mum, with appropriate risk assessments, Vincent was given the opportunity that he may not get with another organisation.

Feedback from **Vincent's mum** was positive -

'Thanks so much for the opportunity you have given Vincent. He absolutely loved the 6 weeks. He's gained useful skills, and I can see that he is more mature, independent and confident following his involvement with Groundworks'.

Rob was also in cohort one-

He was a key member of the team and supported Vincent throughout the 6 weeks. Rob said he has ADHD however he hasn't been professionally diagnosed. Rob was struggling with motivation, he was struggling with his mental health and wellbeing, after he spoke to his work coach he was put on the 6 weeks course. His work coach saw a huge improvement with Rob and said, 'this was the best thing he had done'. Rob also said – 'The amount I have learnt and the pointers I have received has really boosted my confidence, not to mention the reminder that getting out and about in the world of work will always reap benefits! I have started to go running again too, I haven't been running in years and having a routine again has helped me focus on my mental health and wellbeing'.

Rob has now become self-employed and is waiting for his certificate to take on landscaping jobs locally.

Working closely with the **Reading Council parks team**, the programme had excellent feedback from Liam Haines and Pedro Borralho:

'Thank you for your hard work and the volunteers help in keeping our parks tidy. Do keep up the great work!'

'Thank you for the update. The area looks fantastic from what I have seen so far. A credit to you, Jess, the volunteers, and everyone else involved.'

4. Education Business Partnership Schools Programme (Theme 4)

Education Business Partnership (EBP) delivered a full programme of **careers, employability and enterprise workshops** to Reading secondary schools between **April 2024 – July 2026**.

REDA's longstanding commitment to work with Education Business Partnership aims to address **local workforce shortages** by inspiring young people to explore career pathways. During the funding period students met **local, national and international employers**. All activities were very **inclusive**, supporting students of all backgrounds and covered both employment and soft skills giving students (for many) unique access to the world of work.

Workshops helped students build **employment skills**, raise **career aspirations**, understand **different sectors and roles** and connect with employers and discover new opportunities.

In numbers:

All planned workshops were completed including:

- **30 Employability Master Classes**
- **6 Mock Interview Days**
- **7 Spotlight on Careers events**
- **10 Site Visits / Guess My Job**
- **4 Champions of Enterprise workshops**

- A total of **9,063** students have been supported during the period at seven schools including;

The Wren, Reading Girls, Highdown, Blessed Hugh Faringdon, Hartland/JMA and Maiden Erlegh.

For all events and workshops, evaluation forms are taken for the students, teachers and business volunteers to complete. The feedback received from these workshops is vital to ensure the best content for the students.

Student Satisfaction

The following statistics show the percentage of students that found the workshops valuable. Across the board, students found all workshops extremely valuable with all workshops having a percentage over 90%

- Champions of Enterprise – 98%
- All About Me – 96%
- AI: The Big Debate – 93%
- Financial Untangle – 99%
- Growth Mindset – 97%
- People Like Me – 97%

For Guess My Job the question asked is whether they would like to take part in this workshop again. This shows how well received these workshops were by the students.

- Guess my Job – 96%

Teacher Satisfaction

92% of teachers gave a score of 8/10 or higher.

Feedback from Teachers

“This challenged students to think about their wider experiences and development outside of the usual curriculum; inspiring them to work hard “job roles”.

“What a fantastic experience for our future leaders of business”

“Excellent intro to AI from knowledgeable people - well planned and resourced and engaging”

“Engaging, well resourced, positive, well led, well organised, age appropriate”.

“It's always a pleasure I look forward to the event again, next year”.

“Fabulous team - managed to hold the attention of the students. They have thoroughly enjoyed the event”.

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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Food Service Plan 2026-2027
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 2026-2027

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the updated Food Service Plan for the period 2026-2027 (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 Authority's 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). There has been a delay to the availability of close of year figures this year due to ongoing works to improve data on our Management Information Service (MIS). Unfortunately, some data remains incomplete at this time.
- 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 Service's key achievements for 2025-2026 and outlines service objectives and work plans for 2026-2027.
- 1.6. The Food & Safety Team would like to draw particular attention to its enforcement achievements in 2026-2027. These are detailed within the Food Service Plan at

paragraph 6.4.4 and demonstrates a significant increase in the number of Hygiene Emergency Prohibitions (formal closures). The Authority also initiated and completed legal proceedings under food hygiene legislation against a persistently non-compliant business and has further increased the number of written warnings issued for both food hygiene and food standards (based on available data). The Authority has had a number of high-profile enforcement matters publicised throughout the year including 3 prosecutions against premises found to be trading in unhygienic conditions and exposing the public to harm.

- 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 all premises (categories A-D). As detailed in Table 1, below, the Authority has marginally fallen short across each rating category however, despite the reported percentage, the Authority completed all Category A premises that were open and available for inspection as at the end of 2025-2026. Following completion of our returns and upload of data to the MIS, a small number of premises that were not previously identified as requiring inspection have come to light. These are being inspected as quickly as possible but unfortunately contribute towards our inability to report 100% inspection completion across the board. Whilst we have marginally missed our 100% target we view that we have reasonably realigned with the Code of Practice and are in a position to report positive performance.
- 1.8. The Authority has continued to liaise, throughout 2025-2026, with the FSA's Performance Management Team. The Authority provided a further action plan in January 2026 after satisfying the FSA that they had resourced the team as far as possible. A copy of this action plan is available on request. The focus of January's action plan was in relation to data management and use of the MIS. The FSA has continued to be encouraged by the Authority's performance and efforts to document and complete the actions drafted however remains under monitoring. The FSA provided the Authority with a further deadline of 18th August for submission of accurate returns for 2026-2027 and a full establishment profile. The Authority has resubmitted updated returns to the FSA based on data updates carried out however a percentage of data uncertainty remains which is being addressed through a dedicated digital programme.
 - 1.8.1. Marginal differences exist as to the number of inspections, service requests and enforcement action carried out across the period 01/10/2025 31/03/2026.
 - 1.8.2. There is currently a 5% uncertainty factor of premises registered within this period.
 - 1.8.3. We are reporting estimated completion rates of: 100% of our food hygiene inspections for A and B rated premises, 94% of C premises, 90% of D premises and 71% of E premises that were due in the period 01/10/2025 to 31/03/2026. The data for unrated and outside of scope premises is not sufficiently accurate currently, so we are working on closing that gap.
 - 1.8.4. Current data indicates our food hygiene establishment profile to be:

Risk Rating	No of Premises
A	5
B	68
C	347
D	591
E	412
Unrated	150
Out of Scope	35
Total	1617

1.9. The FSA has also indicated that it will be monitoring the Authority's performance in delivery of official controls for Food Standards and required us to fully implement the new risk rating model.

1.9.1. The Authority carried out the conversion to the new risk rating model on 5th August 2026. We have successfully converted 94% of our premises to the new risk rating model and continue to work through the remaining premises.

1.9.2. The conversion has allowed us to run an establishment profile, which indicates our profile to be:

Intervention Frequency	No of Premises
1	0
3	0
6	6
12	59
24	324
36	366
48	118
60	148
72	75
120	17
Unrated	479
Out of scope	25
Total Number of premises	1617

1.10. The Food & Safety Team is currently fully resourced.

1.11. 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 (KPIs).
- 3.1.2. Throughout 2025-2026 the Food Service focussed its resources on carrying out priority work in line with internal key performance indicators and to address our remaining longstanding overdue premises, including those considered to present a low risk to the public. Details of achieved inspections in 2025-2026 and remaining inspections that have been carried over into 2026-2027 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 2025-2026 and the number of targets that were met. A comparison against the previous year 2024-2025 is also provided.

Table 1¹

Objective	Priority/Source	Target Set (2025-2026) (%)	Achieved (2025-2026) (%)	Met/Not Met (2025-2026)	Target Set (2024-2025) (%)	Achieved (2024-2025) (%)	Met/Not Met (2024-2025)
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated A (due/overdue)	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	100 100	88	Not Met Not Met	100 100	100	Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated B (due/overdue)	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	100 100	93	Not Met Not Met	80 100	100	Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated C	Food Law Code of Practice	100	97	Not Met	100	99	Not Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated D (overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	99.6	Not Met	100	97	Not Met
Inspection of Food Hygiene Premises risk rated E (overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	94	Not Met	100	51	Not Met
Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated A	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	100 100	100	Met Met	100 100	100	Met
Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated B (due/overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	48		100	45	Not Met
Inspection of Food Standards Premises risk rated C (due/overdue)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	74		100	44	Not Met
Unrated (newly registered) Food Hygiene Premises	Corporate KPI Food Law Code of Practice	75 100	99.4	Not Met	70 100	92	Met Not Met
Unrated (newly registered)	Food Law Code of Practice	100	44	Not Met	Not reported		

Food Standards Premises					
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1. Numbers are approximate.

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.

- 3.1.3. Please see paras 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 of the Food Service Plan for further details on inspections completed in 2025-2026.
- 3.1.4. From the total number of inspections due and overdue in 2025-2026 the Food Service achieved 95.2% of the total number of Food Hygiene Inspections due and 66.5% of the total Food Standards Inspections due, these numbers have increased significantly since 2024-2025. The number of completed inspections do not provide a full account of inspection activity carried out. A significant number of premises close within the year which is not accounted for. The Food & Safety team also carry out re-rating inspections of previously inspected premises.
- 3.1.5. The breakdown of food hygiene ratings of food premises in the borough as at 9 July 2026 is:

Food Hygiene Rating	Descriptor	Number of Premises
5	Very Good	882
4	Good	247
3	Generally Satisfactory	147
2	Improvement Necessary	38
1	Major Improvement Necessary	40
0	Urgent Improvement Necessary	5
Awaiting Inspection		82
Exempt from scheme		72

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.

- 3.1.9 There has been an increase in 2025-2026, from the previous year, in the number of premises that are not broadly compliant, that is those with a Food Hygiene Rating of 2 or lower.

- 3.1.10 The Food & Safety Team has carried out enforcement activity throughout 2025-2026; 27 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. Additionally, the team has concluded 2 food related prosecutions. 1,007 written warnings were issued to food businesses for food hygiene matters and a further 108 written warnings were issued for food standards matters. A breakdown of the notices served can be found in para 6.4.4 of the Food Service Plan.

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 2025-2026 but by a very small margin. Following ongoing monitoring of the Authority the FSA retains an area of concern where further improvement is required and is in initial correspondence regarding our delivery of food standards official controls. The area of concern is:

a) address issues with the MIS to enable accurate reporting.

The Authority continues to work with the FSA and to respond to their requests for action. There are currently no plans to provide further resourcing for food standards activities.

- 3.2.2. The Food Service Plan identifies the amount of work required to deliver not only our food safety responsibilities but the wider work of the Food & Safety Team, this is outlined in Appendix 5 of the Food Service Plan. 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 continue to prioritise resources towards our highest risk activities and work with the FSA to maximise efficiency.
- 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 2026-2027 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	Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process.
Secure Reading's economic and cultural success	Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses. Providing a paid advice service for complex and bespoke business needs.
Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint	Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain
Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children	Undertaking food hygiene and standards inspections, revisits to non-compliant premises and enforcement action where necessary. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses

	Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain
Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future	Developing our social media and web presence to ensure our services are accessible to all.

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. 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. 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 2026-2027 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 2.

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 3 to this report. Agreement to and implementation of the Food Service Plan 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 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.

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:

	2026-2027 £000
Employee costs	539
Other running costs	39
Expenditure	578
Income from: Fees and charges	-24
Other income	-2
Total Income	-26
Net Cost	552

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. Value for Money (VfM)

10.6 The Food Service Plan 2026-2027 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 2026-2027
2. Climate and Impact Assessment
3. Equality Impact Assessment

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Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Food Service Plan 2026-2027

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

Reading's adults and children	premises and enforcement action where necessary. Investigation of food safety, labelling and composition complaints Investigation of allegations of food borne illness and outbreak management. Management of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and encouraging higher food hygiene ratings through the re-rating process. Providing advice to existing and potential food businesses Encouraging the adoption of good hygiene practices at all stages of the food chain
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 2026-2027:

- 100% of Food Hygiene Premises rated A due before 31 March 27 to be completed.
- 100% of Food Hygiene Premises rated B due before 31 March 27 to be completed.

- 75% of new registrations (those awaiting inspection) to be completed before 31 March 27.
- 100% of Food Standards Premises due a priority intervention (1-6 months) before 31 March 27 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 2026 – March 2027.

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 3.5% (ONS 2024) within the town, lower than the national average of 3.7% (ONS 2024). 77 languages are spoken across Reading. Reading is classed as the 3rd most unequal city in terms of wealth and 12 of our neighbourhoods are within the 20% 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 is one large manufacturer within the borough.

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 new Elizabeth line (between Reading and London Paddington). 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 has three Farmers' market where producers from the surrounding locality sell their own produce. There are also two weekly street food markets as well as annual and specialist food festivals. 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://reading.gov.uk/constitution)

- 2.2.2 The Scheme of Delegations sets out who is responsible for making decisions, including the authority for the service of enforcement notice. A copy of the Scheme of Delegations is available 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 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 10 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 continued to experience significant recruitment and resourcing challenges throughout 2025-2026. Following a further resignation the team advertised and successfully recruited to four officer posts and one apprenticeship post in September 2025. All officers recruited were unqualified and officers in post are continuing to undergo training to meet competency requirements. The team is currently fully resourced.
- 2.3.5 The Trading Standards team were notified of the pending retirement of their Senior Consumer Protection Officer in May 2026 who carried out the majority of food standards work within that team. This post is currently frozen and other officers within the team are still undergoing training and qualification in food standards matters.
- 2.3.6 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 (Food Hygiene)	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 2026 due to ongoing data migration and input issues with our new MIS. We currently expect that our total number of premises sits at 1650-1700.

- 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. The Food & Safety Team will be increasing visits to these events in 2026-2027.
- 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. The service has seen increases in requests for FHRS re-rating inspections to enable premises to resume trading with online aggregators.
- 2.4.8 The service has continued to see 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. A large number of these premises are also being found to operate under separate food business operators which has increased the number of registrations received and inspections required.

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.

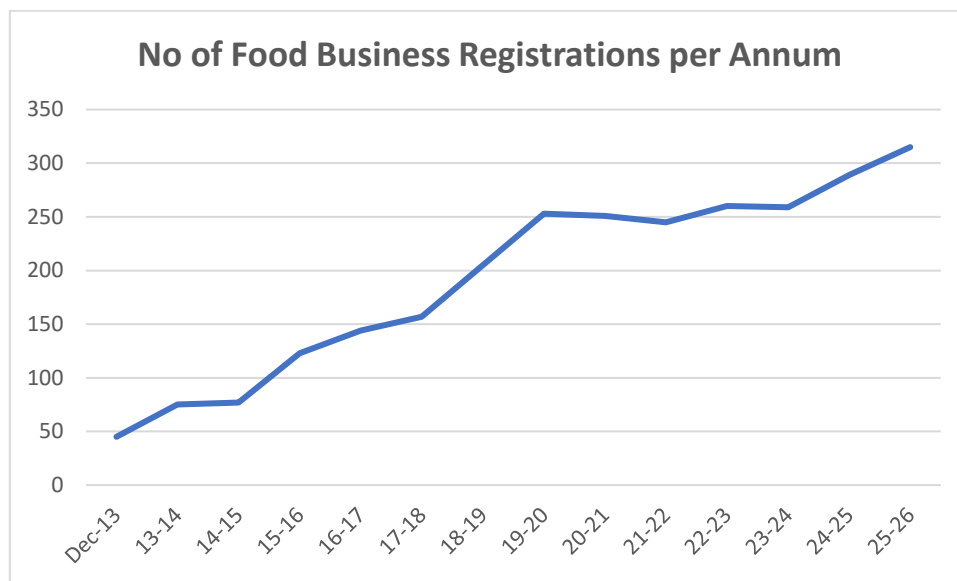
3. SERVICE DELIVERY

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, where officer competency permits, 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 The service continued to appoint contractors in 2025-2026 in order to address the backlog of overdue and due food hygiene official controls. In doing so the service has dramatically reduced the number of overdue/due inspections and has completed (INSERT %) official controls that were due before the end of 31 March 2026. The service has continued to experience a large number of issues with its MIS and has only been able to keep track of due and completed inspections manually since November 2024. Due to this, and following improvements made to the MIS in April 2026, a small number of premises that were previously not on our list of known due official controls have been missed. This was to be expected when resuming recording on the MIS and we are continuing to work through checking the validity of these official controls and completing any that are required. In relation to these ongoing issues the Council has continued to liaise with the FSA's Performance Management Team and has worked hard to meet their expectations.
- 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 further 9% increase on new business registrations in 2025-2026 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 remains unable to fully transition to the new risk rating model due to errors in its MIS. This transition will be completed once the MIS has been checked and corrected for issues with food hygiene premises.
- 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 2026-2027 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
Category A	100%
Category B	100%
Category C	N/A
Category D	N/A
Category E	N/A
Category Unrated	75%

	Food Standards
Priority Intervention High (1-6 months)	100%
Priority Intervention Medium (12-36 Months)	N/A
Priority Intervention Low (48 –120 Months)	N/A
Category Unrated	N/A

- 3.1.10 There are also a number of food hygiene and food standards premises that are considered to be 'outside of scope' and not subject to regular inspections. 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 and inspections that are carried out at outdoor events where the trader is registered outside of the Borough. A policy on determination of 'outside of scope' premises was set in 2025-2026 and existing premises identified as 'outside of scope' that had not received an intervention in the past three years have been reviewed and where necessary inspected. The borough currently still has a large number of 'outside of scope' premises listed for Food Standards which appears disproportionate compared to those listed for Food Hygiene. This review remains ongoing.

- 3.1.11 Category E food hygiene inspections can be carried out via an alternative enforcement strategy (AES) or using an official control such as inspection, partial inspection or audit. Work continued on our AES programme for food hygiene in 2025-2026 and following recruitment of further officers a number of these were used for inspection training purposes and so received a full inspection. AES work for food hygiene premises is continuing for 2026-2027 as we modernise our methods for contacting businesses and utilise available methods to complete an AES.
- 3.1.12 We continue to review the requirements under the new Food Standards risk rating model as to how we can apply AES and other official control measures. Due to issues with our MIS we are yet to move our full establishment profile fully over to the new model and are currently unable to have full picture of our food standards inspections due. We have currently not implemented fully the triage process for newly registered food standards premises.
- 3.1.13 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.
- 3.1.14 The resource requirements for allocated work are detailed in section 4 below.

Food hygiene

- 3.1.15 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 2026-2027, including those overdue from previous years is:

Category/ Frequency	Number of inspections Due 2026/2027
A / at least every 6 months ¹	8
B / at least every 1 year	68
C / at least every 18 months	217

D / at least every 2 years	352
E / Alternative Enforcement Strategy	54
Outside of scope (excl. Reading Festival) ³	Unknown
Unrated ²	113
Total	699

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.

³ The current number of outside of scope premises due for inspection in year is unknown. Data on out of scope premises was not correctly transferred from old MIS to new MIS and a new policy on outside of scope premises has been implemented. We are still reviewing premises to identify those which are outside of scope and updating their profile within the MIS.

N.B. the number of inspections due is approximate. Due to ongoing issues with our MIS we are currently not assured that the number of inspections due across each category is accurate and are working on correcting and improving and data anomalies which have come out between our manual data and MIS draft returns.

Food Standards – labelling and composition

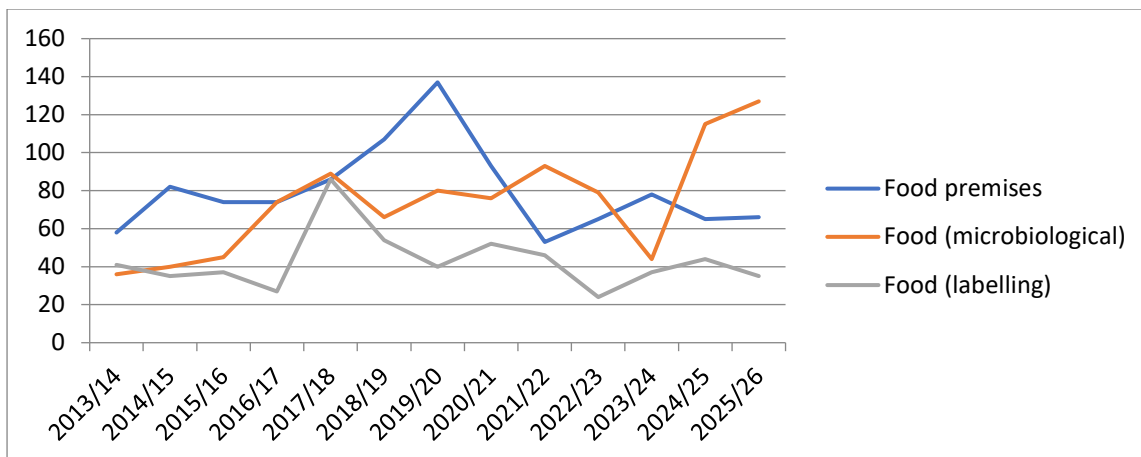
3.1.15 The frequency of food standards inspections is determined by the risk rating system stipulated in the Code of Practice. We are currently unable to provide detail of the number of inspections due in 2026-2027 through either the new or old risk rating model. Inspections since April 2025 have been carried out under the new risk rating model however our remaining premises are still awaiting conversion to the new risk rating model. We therefore do not have a complete data set under which to provide an establishment profile. Of those inspections carried out under the new risk rating model since April 2025 the following inspections are due as high priority interventions within the year 2026-2027 however this does not take into consideration other interventions due:

Category/ Frequency	Number of Inspections due 2026/2027
1 month (High priority)	0
3 months (High priority)	0
6 months (High priority)	3
12 months (Medium Priority)	28

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 we are continuing to see an increase in complaints regarding food products which includes complaints about alleged food poisoning and contamination of food. There has been a decline in complaints about food standards/labelling of products and provision of information. These changes may in part be due to changes in our categorisation of complaints following publication of new online forms and alterations to recording on our

MIS. We are expecting to continue to see an increase in food complaints moving forward.

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 Our MIS setup does not differentiate between requests for advice between food hygiene and food standards unless bespoke paid advice is requested. Frequently we find that requests for advice from businesses span multiple areas and they are not easily divisible into one specific category. In 2025-2026 the following requests for advice were made and provision of further advice (including during inspections) was given:

Category	2025-2026
Requests for general advice from the service	33
Request for bespoke Food Hygiene advice	6
Request for bespoke Food Standards advice	0
Provision of Food Hygiene advice	54
Provision of Food Standards advice	0

N.B. It is expected that the numbers for provision of advice are an under-representation of advice provided. This is due to bulk upload of inspections to our MIS that could not take into account every action that would have been completed at an inspection and due to ongoing training and familiarity with the new MIS.

- 3.3.4 The data above shows a decline in the number of requests for advice across the service. This is likely due to changes in categorisation of service request types on our new MIS as opposed to a reduction in requests for advice. 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:

- (i) the procurement of samples taken during food hygiene and food standards inspections, taking into consideration the FSA guidelines for imported food and feed controls.
- (ii) specifically targeting foods produced and distributed nationally, from producers and manufacturers based in Reading.
- (iii) in response to consumer and business complaints regarding food standards and food hygiene, and
- (iv) the participation in agreed national, regionally co-ordinated and local sampling programmes and in particular projects concerning imported foods.
- (v) 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 2026-2027 the food sampling budget for microbiological analysis is £8,705.31 which is held on account by UKHSA. This is an increase in budget from previous years.
- 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.
- 3.4.10 Following a loss of resource in April 2025 the service reduced their participation in sampling studies in 2025-2026 due to available resource. Training for new officers on sampling was delivered towards the end of 2025-2026 to enable this to be resumed as we move into 2026-2027.

Food Standards Quality and Compositional Sampling

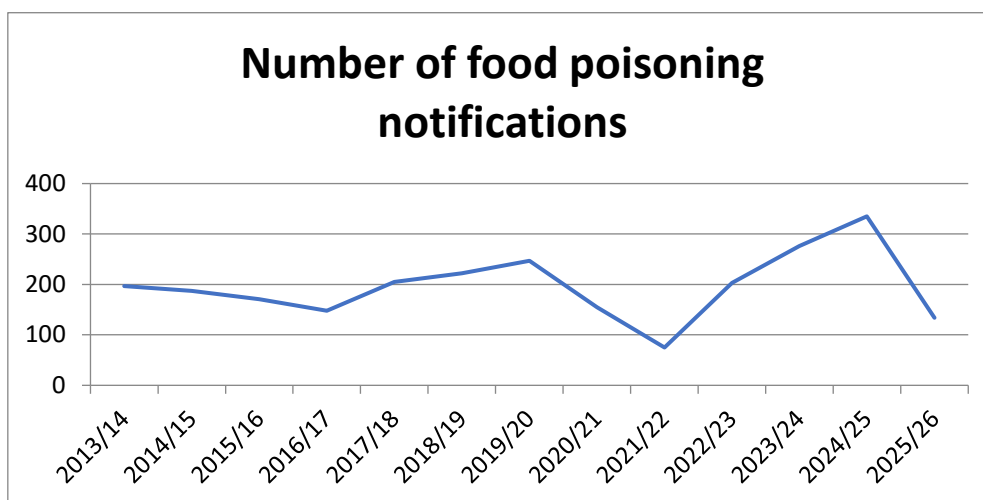
- 3.4.11 Trading Standards manages a coordinated annual sampling programme through Trading Standards Southeast Group (TSSE) and a local sampling programme. Any local sampling is shared with TSSE and other members of the group are invited to also take part in the sampling.
- 3.4.12 There is no set budget for Food Standards Sampling. Sampling is purchased through our agreement with HKSS where required.
- 3.4.13 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 substantial reduction in the number of notifications of infectious disease in 2025-2026. Across the region it was agreed that Local Authorities would no longer be notified of incidents of campylobacter unless part of an outbreak, this is because there was no expected action from Local authorities being taken for single cases of Campylobacter. The reduction in reported notifications is likely due to this matter.

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. This group was not active in 2025-2026.
- 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 joined the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) run by the FSA in 2011. We publish our ratings fortnightly. The information is uploaded to the website approximately once every 2 weeks. The authority charges for re-rating inspections under this scheme and delivers them within the 3-month required period.
- 3.8.2 The authority received and processed 47 re-rating inspections in 2025-2026. This dataset has not been reported on previously and due to transfer of data to our new MIS we cannot be assured that the number of requests for re-rating inspections previously is correct. However there appears to have been an 8% increase on the number of re-rating applications received from the previous year.

- 3.8.3 The authority received 6 appeals in 2025-2026, all of these were dismissed with the original issued food hygiene rating score being considered correct.

Food Hygiene Education

- 3.8.4 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.
- 3.8.5 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. Following ongoing monitoring from the FSA throughout 2025-2026 and submission of incomplete returns the authority agreed to and submitted to the FSA an action plan to resolve the outstanding critical issues in relation to our food hygiene and food standards data. The action plan was committed to be completed by end of March 2026. The Food & Safety team have worked tirelessly with the MIS project team and IT to resolve the outstanding issues with the MIS. Historic food hygiene and food standards data has now been remapped to the MIS. Inspections carried out between November 2024 and March 2026 have been processed and bulk uploaded to the database. The timescale for this experienced some delays and the authority was afforded an extension to submission of returns to enable full returns to be completed. Despite works being carried out the authority was not able to submit a complete data set for its April returns. Whilst data has been uploaded, comparison of expected returns with that reported from the new MIS do not correlate and the divergence is considered too substantial to be accurate. The authority are therefore working through all food hygiene risk ratings for 2025-2026 to review and where necessary correct discrepancies to enable them to provide a full establishment profile. Due to these ongoing issues the authority has not yet fully converted to the new risk rating model for Food Standards this is primarily because there is inadequate resource to resolve any issues identified whilst food hygiene data continues to be worked through. Further to this there are other areas of the action plan that remain undelivered, this includes set up and review of returns proformas, finalisation of the new food business registration form and missing processes to allow recording of approval processes. Issues across the MIS are widespread across the Council and all teams on this MIS are affected. We are currently awaiting further information as to how all issues across the Council will be prioritised and where resource will be allocated. This will likely impact further progress on fixes affecting the Food & Safety team.

Food Standards Delivery Model

- 3.9.2 The authority has been unable to fully implement the new Food Standards Model in 2025-2026 this is due to ongoing issues with its MIS, as detailed in section 3.9.1 above. As of 1 April 2025 the authority has completed all new inspections using the new risk rating model however our historic premises remain on the old risk rating model. It is not possible to correlate the two at present to operate one risk rating model and provide a full establishment profile or full list of due inspections. Furthermore the authority has not as yet implemented triaging, as detailed in the Code of Practice, for new businesses or existing unrated premises.

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 is still yet to complete this work but is reducing the backlog of unrated inspections in catering premises as food hygiene inspections are being conducted.

FSA Improvement Plan

- 3.9.4 The Council has continued to liaise with the FSA throughout 2025-2026 and committed to a renewed improvement plan at the end of 2024-2025. The Council has worked hard to complete all due and overdue official controls and has made substantial strides towards completing this. However, due to the issues with the MIS the council was working from manual recorded spreadsheets of inspections both completed and due, this has unfortunately led to some missed inspections when this data has been uploaded to the MIS. We are currently working through all risk ratings of inspections completed/due in 2025-2026 to identify any anomalies, including missed inspections. The majority of anomalies are being found to be due to premises being incorrectly closed on either the old or new MIS, minor discrepancies between risk ratings at time of upload and duplication or missing processes on the new MIS. The Council continue to work with the FSA's Performance Management Team and are continuing to work through issues identified with their MIS. 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 2026-2027 is £552,000. 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 8.86 FTE (including management), there are no vacancies. The Trading Standards Team has an allocation of 6.04 FTE (including management) of which 1 FTE is currently vacant. As at 01/04/25 there were 5.48 FTE allocated to carry out Food Hygiene Work and 2.4 FTE allocated to carry out Food Standards work. Of these allocations, as at 01/04/2025 there were 5.48 FTE filled and undertaking food hygiene work and 1.9 FTE filled carrying out food standards work. The authority appointed a number of training/qualifying officers in September 2025, these officers are still undergoing training and are not fully authorised to carry out food hygiene or standards official controls. Of the filled posts, 3.2 FTE is not fully qualified for food hygiene and 1.2 FTE is not fully qualified for food standards.
- 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 2026-2027 for the delivery of food hygiene and food standards is 5.005 FTE and 1.215 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. For 2026-2027 training will continue to be focussed on upskilling our new officers to enable them to be deemed competent to carry out a wider range of our work. All requests for training from staff are considered and where suitable budget is available and relevant to the current work of the team is typically honoured.
- 4.3.4 Further development on enforcement is required across the team to support an increase in enforcement work being carried out.
- 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. Training logs for new officers were implemented prior to release of the updated FSA competency framework. At present the service is working from their existing training plans and will review the requirements of the updated competency framework when the procedure is next reviewed.

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.

- 5.3 The council operates internal auditing processes. The Food & Safety team are due for a partial internal audit in 2026-2027.

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 whilst now fully resourced it has appointed unqualified officers that require ongoing training and support. The Council has continued to be impacted by the deployment of the new MIS. Overall it has made substantial improvement in realigning with the Code of Practice and requirement to deliver Official Controls but has unfortunately been able to complete this fully across all categories of risk rating.
- 6.3 The data below details the performance that was achieved in 2026-2027.

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 873 food hygiene inspections during 2025-2026.
- 9 'A' premises were due for inspection throughout the year. 8 of these were inspected and at the end of March 2026 1 premises was under a formal closure and was not able to be inspected.
- 68 'B' premises were due for inspection. 67 of these inspections have been completed or premises have found to be no longer trading. 1 premises was temporarily closed at the end of March 2026 and could not be inspected. A further 3 premises were found to have been B's that were not included on our manual lists throughout the year, these have now been inspected.
- 198 'C' premises were due for inspection. All but 1 of these premises were inspected, 1 premises was not trading within the final quarter and could not be inspected. A further 6 premises have been identified as missing from our inspection lists, 5 of these have now been inspected. MIS and returns data is still being checked for this category.
- 239 'D' premises were due for inspection in 2025-2026. The authority completed all but 2 'D' premises due. 1 of these premises was not found to be trading and available for inspection throughout quarter 4. This category of premises has not been fully checked between our MIS and returns data at present.
- 207 'E' premises were due for inspection in 2025-2026. All but two of these were subject to an inspection or AES inspection. Ongoing review of the MIS and returns which is incomplete for this category has so far identified a further

11 premises that did not receive an intervention, however a proportion of these are expected to be closed.

- The authority received 47 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 believes that it was up to date with all unrated premises at the end of March 26 and had inspected all premises that were actively trading. A number of registrations had been received for premises that were found not to be trading within the period and remain allocated for inspection. Review of the MIS and returns has currently identified a further 2 unrated premises that did not receive an inspection and were trading within this time. Analysis of this data is not complete.
- The authority completed 50 revisits to premises for matters of non-compliance and a further 3 visits to assess compliance with enforcement notices.
- Throughout the year a number of premises closed or changed hands and re-registered with the borough. 315 new business registrations were received during the year.
- The authority has not met its KPIs with respect to B and unrated premises set internally.
- The authority has not met the requirements of the Code of Practice across its establishment profile but has made significant progress in doing so. Had we been able to utilise the MIS fully we view that this would have been fully met across A-E premises.

6.4.3 Food Standards

- The authority carried out 511 food standards inspections during 2025-2026.
- There was 1 'A' premises due for inspection which was completed.
- 139 of 287 due 'B' premises inspections were completed.
- 266 of 360 due 'C' premises inspections were completed.
- 272 of 490 unrated premises (not including further registrations received) were inspected.
- 34 of 103 premises marked as outside of scope have been checked and inspected, reducing the number requiring review to 69.
- The authority completed 1 visit to assess compliance with an enforcement notice.
- Throughout the year a number of premises closed or changed hands and re-registered with the borough. 315 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 and has not fully moved over to the new risk rating model.

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	2026/27
Voluntary closure	0	1	1	2	4	7	3
Seizure, detention & surrender of food	2	0	1	2	0	4	1
Suspension/revocation of approval or licence	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hygiene Emergency prohibition notice	3	0	0	2	2	8	6
Prohibition order	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Simple caution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of premises where Improvement notices served	11	0	2	5	3	4	12
No of Hygiene Improvement notices served	21	0	7	12	4	8	16
No of FIR Improvement notices served	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Remedial action & detention notices	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Written warnings (Food Hygiene)	910	129	381	621	527	918	1,007
Written warnings (Food Standards)	75	35	84	117	101	234	108
Prosecutions concluded	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Prosecutions initiated	0	0	0	0	0	1	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
2025/26	26	0	0	N/A

6.5 Variations from the Service Plan

6.5.1 The following items were not met from the 2025-26 service plan and remain outstanding:

- The Council has been unable to achieve the full requirements of official controls detailed within the Code of practice, with outstanding inspections in B-E premises for food hygiene.
- The Council has not fully migrated to the new risk rating model for food standards.
- 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 been unable to submit full returns information to the FSA throughout 2025-2026.

6.6 Areas of Improvement

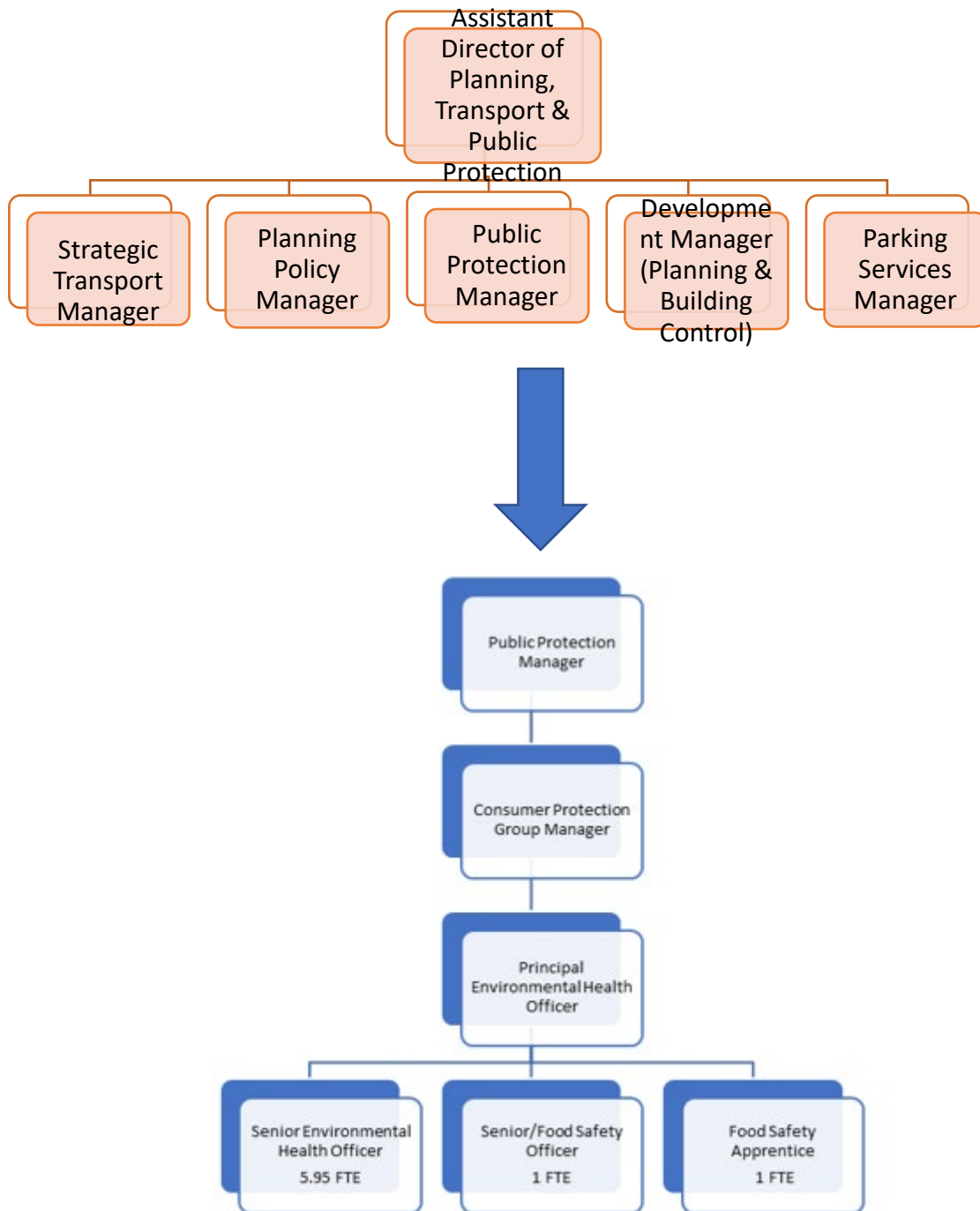
- 6.6.1 As identified above we continue to have deficiencies in the status of policies and procedures in comparison to the Food Law Code of Practice. This is an area where improvement is required, including ensuring that the correct policies and procedures are in place and that those in place are up to date. An ambitious programme of review has been put in place for 2026-2027.
- 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 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 2025 - Mar 2026 - 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 2026. Premises inspected in accordance with FSA Guidance on Service return No of A-D premises due/overdue inspection for this year = 510 New registered premises per year = c. 290 Total 800 inspections due.	Requirement of Food Law COP. Service Plan Priority / Target	Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food. Education of local businesses	Aim: 100% A premises 100% B Premises 70% Unrated premises inspected	A total of 873 proactive inspections were carried out: A - 100% inspected B - 94% inspected Unrated - 100% inspected 315 premises registered during the year. The number of inspections due at the beginning of the year has been exceeded and the authority was able to bring forward some inspections from 2026-2027 to utilise additional contracting resource in place however, due to recording issues associated with the MIS a small number of premises that were due in 2025-2026 were missed.
S	Alternative Enforcement Strategy for E premises and premises outside of scope Managed project undertaking desk-	Requirement of Food Law COP. Service Plan Priority / Target FSA Improvement Plan requirement	Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food. Education of local businesses	Aim: All E premises contacted to verify current level of compliance and confirm FHRS remains appropriate. Premises indicating changes in condition will be followed	205 of 207 E premises have been inspected or gave received an Alternative Enforcement Strategy intervention. A further 11 premises have been identified as part of a review of returns carried out through

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
	based assessment of E premises. 244 Premises. Estimated 20% on site follow up required - 49 premises.			up by an onsite full/partial inspection	Arcus, this review is ongoing and this category of premises has not been completed at present.
S	Food Hygiene Revisits and subsequent enforcement of non-compliant premises. Approximately 4% of premises are being found to be non-compliant. Estimate 64 premises across the borough. Ongoing non-compliance will require issue of formal notices and potentially lead to prosecution.	Food Law COP	Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.	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.	50 premises have been revisited within the year. The full number of premises identified for revisit at the beginning of the year has not been completed. 118 premises were inspected within the year that were not compliant and required a revisit. Approximately 42% of revisits generated within the year were completed.
S	Ongoing Enforcement including issue of notices. Resulting from ongoing or immediate non-compliance where a risk to public health and safety is presented.	Food Law COP	Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.	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.	27 enforcement notices were issued within the year, this is below the number expected and does not accord with the amount of non-compliance found within inspections.

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
	Average 60 per annum			Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.	
S	Approval of Premises Process applications for new approval activities. Inspect and review existing approved premises.	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Approval activities authorised and published. Food products accurately labelled and traceable.</i>	<i>Applications and inspections carried out within SOP timeframe. Full approval awarded after max 6 months or removed.</i>	2 applications for approval came in within 2025-2026, these premises have now been fully approved.
S	Food Hygiene Re-Rating visits (FHRS) for premises not overdue/due inspection Avg 40 requests received per year	<i>FHRS Brand Standard</i>	<i>Increase in FHRS and improved compliance with FH requirements. Increased consumer confidence in premises</i>	<i>All inspections carried out within 3 months. Applications for premises that are overdue/due inspection will be refunded to business.</i>	47 FHRS re-rating requests have been received, an increase of 8% on the number expected.
S	Respond to FHRS Appeals Estimate 3 per annum	<i>FHRS Brand Standard</i>	<i>Appeals handled in accordance with Brand Standard. Maintain confidence in Food Hygiene Inspections</i>	<i>Appeals responded to within timeframe. Appeals resolved without moving to Corporate Complaint.</i>	6 FHRS appeals have been received, twice the number anticipated.
S	Food Standards Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2026. No of due and overdue inspections = 772 New registered premises per annum approx. 290	<i>Food Law COP.</i> <i>Service Plan Priority / Target</i>	<i>Premises subject to standards requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe, correctly labelled food which does not mislead the consumer. Education of local businesses</i>	<i>Aim: 100% A premises</i>	511 food standards inspections were carried out. 315 new premises registrations were received.

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
	Total Inspections due - 1062				
S	Food Standard Revisits. Approximately 8% of premises have found to be non-compliant. Estimate approximately 85 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>	0 revisits were carried out for food standards. A further 25 premises inspected within the year came out as non-compliant meaning approximately 55 of premises are non-compliant.
S	Food, Water & Environmental Sampling (Microbiology) Estimate 50 samples per annum (10 Premises).	<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>	26 microbiological samples were taken
S	Food Standards Sampling Estimate 20 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>	No samples were taken for Food Standards
N S	National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Administration	<i>Discretionary function to take part in scheme. All LA's in England participate.</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 continued to be administered. Fortnightly updates were provided for publication.

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
		<i>Expectation of Customers.</i>			
S	FSA Returns (bi-annually)	<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 returns were completed however these were incomplete in relation to the borough profile due to our MIS issues and manual retention of data.
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: • 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 • Control and investigation of outbreaks and food	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.	A new policy was finalised and implemented for Outside of scope premises. The wider suite of documents were not reviewed and updated as intended.

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
		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. Inspection of existing towers in line with LAC67/2. Est. 4 premises	HSWA1974	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 further cooling towers registered within the year. No inspections of existing cooling towers were carried out. Of 3 existing cooling towers 2 are rated C and not currently due an inspection. 1 has not been inspected and is overdue an inspection.
S	Inspection and certification of registering special treatment premises.	Local Govt Miscellaneous Provisions Act	Compliant premises. Reduced incidence of blood borne infection.	Mobile and domestic premises inspected and compliant prior to certificate being issues.	11 premises inspections were carried out following applications.

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
	An average of 30 premises and 70 further operators/treatments are registering per year. Backlog of existing premises requiring inspection= 60			Backlog of commercial premises awaiting inspection removed.	16 Premises registrations were received. 75 operator registrations were received.
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	No revisits were carried out for special treatment premises.
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.	This work was not carried out.
S	Investigation of Infectious diseases and outbreaks including: Food borne illness & Legionnaire's disease. (Excl. Covid 19) Estimate 340 cases 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.	134 notifications of infectious diseases were received within the year. No outbreaks were 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
	Outbreaks: Estimate 1 per year				
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 return was completed.
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.	The audit was completed. Work to further develop and implement procedures was identified as a required action. This work has not been completed at present.
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.	Three during match inspections were carried out in relation to the Select Car Leasing Stadium. There were delays in issuing follow up letters, these were not completed within the specified timescale.
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.	This was completed.
S	Review of Operations Manual and Issue of new Safety Certificate for Palmer Park Regulated Stand	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.	The authority engaged with a new manager in place at Palmer Park and to explain the requirements of an Operations manual. The subsequent

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
	Plus initial engagement and sent up of SAG meetings				application has not been received.
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 have been attended and 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 work has been carried out in this area.
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.	99 licensing consultations have been received and reviewed.
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	A new process was put in place across the Food & Safety team to reflect how consultations should be processed. This has been implemented.
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 actioned within timeframe.

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
					Following a complaint enforcement notices were issued with respect to one premises where illegal imports of both products of animal origin and high risk products not of animal origin were found.
S	Reactive food & Safety work (service requests) • Dirty food premises • Microbiological, chemical & labelling • Allergens • Health, safety & Welfare • Business advice This excludes licence consultations and food business registrations which are covered elsewhere in this plan. Approximately 500 per annum.	Food Law COP and FSA guidance on service return. HSWA/EAR	Ensure food on sale is safe to eat, produced hygienically, correctly labelled and does not mislead the consumer. Ensure premises are safe to work in and visit.	All Service requests responded to.	442 service requests were received excluding licensing consultations, FHRS re-rate requests, FHRS appeals, paid advice requests and food business registrations (and requests to register) that are reported elsewhere. Infectious disease notifications have been removed as these are accounted for above. 75 show no response.

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
	N S Paid advice visits - Food Hygiene. Approx 5 requests per year. (Subject to promotion)	Improve food hygiene compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Improved hygiene standards and compliance at first and subsequent inspection.	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after first formal inspection	6 requests for bespoke food hygiene advice have been received and actioned.
	N S Food Standards and bespoke labelling advice (paid) Approximately 5 requests per annum (subject to promotion)	Improve food standard compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Improved standards and compliance of labelling and consumer information. Reduction in further interventions.	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after next inspection. Premises subject to paid advice will require less enforcement action.	None received
	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.	A new health and safety information page has been added. Changes to Special treatments information and publication of new online forms to submit enquiries and complaints, including additional forms that were not previously in place, have taken place.
	S Ensure all officers appropriately authorised and competent. Full review of all staff competency required and new training	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	No further work has been carried out on this.

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
	scheme to be implemented.				
	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 necessary powers and authority	Not completed
	N S 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 Issue of PAP export Certificates		Well managed PAP service compliant with statutory guidance	Level of service aligns with requirement of statutory guidance. PAP advice up to date and reviewed within timeframe. Enquiries and enforcement actions responded to within timeframe.	33 export certificates have been issued. 92 hours of charged work has been carried out on food standards matters.
	N S Reading Festival - Audit of Food Safety Controls & inspections, response to complaints, H&S monitoring & inspection (incl. Special Effects), SAG	Service Target	Safeguarding RBC residents and visitors	100% of festival food premises inspected and scored under Alfresco rating. Gold, Silver & Bronze nominees made. Non-compliant traders revisited and referred to home authority.	Allocated work for Reading Festival was changed this year following appointment by the festival of another food inspection company. Adhoc spot checks were carried out in relation to food safety.

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
	Meetings and preparation.			Food Team attendance at SAG Meetings prior to and during event. H&S hazards referred to Licensing	9 proactive inspections and revisits were carried out in relation to food safety. 121 H&S checks/inspections carried out. A spot check review of 7 pyro events was carried out with onsite inspection during demos. All SAGs 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 was not carried out and not deemed necessary as a formal exercise. Officers triage requests on receipt.
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.	No work carried out.
S	Food Service Plan	Food Law Code of Practice	Plan to demonstrate how the council will deliver its functions	Plan drafted and agreed through committee.	Plan agreed through committee.

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
		Service Plan priority	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		
	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.
	N S	Proactive project - Identifying Hairdresser and Barber premises within borough and educating to improve hygiene standards.	Officer objective. Response to Cllr enquiries	Improved hygiene standards of hairdressers and barbers	Reduction in complaints received.
	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 FOIs received by the service were responded to. There is no formal report of all FOIs received by the team. A minimum of 13 FOIs were received directly. Other FOIs were contributed to.
	N S	Arcus Project - Ongoing Implementation of MIS to working standard. Setup & refinement of processes, templates. Delivery of training across team. Set up	New MIS being implemented across Service	N/A	Tested and fully functioning MIS.
					A substantial amount of work has been carried out on the database throughout the year. In April 2026 improvements were seen on food inspection data however the database is yet to be fully functioning for the Food & Safety Team.

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
	on missing processes. Form set up and testing.				
S	Accident Investigation. Full investigation off and bringing of appropriate legal action following serious health and safety accident and local wholesaler.	HSWA74 - Investigation of accidents	Safer businesses	Regular Case reviews, authorisation to proceed, Work carried out in line with specified time frame for internal/external legal representatives.	89 accident notifications have been received this year. Work has continued on our significant health and safety accident from 2022 and charges against 2 defendants were laid in August 2025. Both defendants have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.
N S	Corporate mandatory training. 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	Mandatory training was fully completed by 9 of 10 permanent members of the team including 5 new starters. There were outstanding mandatory courses for 1 permanent officer. All 3 contractors completed all required mandatory training upon starting and at required intervals.
N S	Corporate Health & Safety. Development of internal health and safety policies and procedures including risk assessments.	Corporate requirement	Compliance with corporate procedures	Suitable, sufficient and up to date risk assessments with accompanying procedures in place and implemented	This work was not fully completed. A review of current H&S arrangements and risk assessments was 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
	Training of team on new policies and procedures				Further development of new risk assessments to align with changes to Public Protection were not completed.
N S	Internal training of qualified officers to other teams to meet standards for authorisation and delivery of food hygiene official controls	To deliver improvement plan to meet FSA requirements to align with FLCOP.	Increased number of officers available to deliver food hygiene official controls.	Appointed officers will be authorised to carry out a greater remit of work in line with the Food Law Code of Practice	3 officers were identified to receive further training. 2 of 3 officers continue to receive ongoing training which is a work in progress. 1 officer will not be continuing.
N S	Internal training of apprentice	An apprentice would not meet the requirements of an authorised officer and would require development. Requirement of apprenticeship scheme.	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	A training plan has been implemented for the apprenticeship officer. 20% on the job training time is provided for dedication to learning. The officer continues to progress through practical training but has completed initial theory training for food hygiene, food standards and special treatments.
S	Attendance at regional Food and health and safety liaison meetings.	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. RBC are chair for food meetings in 2026.
N S	Line Management of staff	Corporate and Team requirement	Monitored and improved staff/team performance	Supported, competent staff	This work has been completed. All annual reviews completed where possible, one officer was

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
					on long term sick and this remains incomplete. Regular one to one meetings take place with all officers. Probation meetings, as scheduled, were carried out for all new officers.
S	Implementation of new Food Standards Risk Rating Delivery Model. Migrate and review existing premises. New templates required. Training of staff including consistency checks.	It is a requirement of the FLCOP for all LAS to have migrated to the new risk rating model for Food Standards by 31/03/2025		Existing premises migrated to new model on Arcus, templates in place and new FS inspections completed under new risk rating.	This work has not been fully completed. Updated templates for inspection forms were completed and implemented. All inspections carried out in 2025-2026 were carried out under the new risk rating model. The authority has not migrated all existing premises to the new risk rating model.

APPENDIX 5**Food & Safety Work Plan Apr 2026 - Mar 2027**

A detailed breakdown of the work plan for the Food & Safety Team 2026-2027 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: 5.005 FTE Resource required for Food Standards Delivery: 1.215 FTE Resource required for Health & Safety Delivery: 2.339 FTE Resource required for other Delivery: 1.81FTE Total Resource Required: 10.369 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 01/04/26 (F&S): 8.66 FTE Permanent Resource in post as at 01/04/26 (TS): 0.3 FTE Temporary Resource in post as at 01/04/2026: 0.09 FTE (contractors in place for Q1) Pending resource in post for 2026/2027 (F&S): 0 Pending resource in post for 2026/2027 (TS): 0 Total expected in post resource for 2026/2027 (F&S): 8.75 FTE Total expected in post resource for 2026/2027 (TS): 0.3 FTE Total allocated resource for 2026/2027 (F&S): 8.75 FTE Total allocated resource for 2026/2027 (TS): 0.3 FTE Shortfall of resource for 2026/2027 against expected FTE in post (F&S): 1.219 FTE Shortfall of resource for 2026/2027 against expected FTE in post (TS): 0.1 FTE
Note - FTE per activity is calculated as follows - 37 Hour week / 7.4 Hour day multiplied by 52 weeks per annum = 1924 working hours per year.	

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 carry out 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. The situation remains ongoing and issues with Arcus are known widely across the Council. Continuous resource is required, predominantly from the PEHO to work on ongoing fixes and improvements to the database. The time required is unquantified but has an impact on the delivery of items outlined in this plan.
4.	Appointment of non-fully qualified officers	The team currently comprises over 50% unqualified officers who are working towards qualification and competency. These officers have settled in very well and contributing to service delivery but until they have passed their qualifications they are limited in ability to carry out official controls. Ongoing training needs is also impacting the time and available resource of authorised officers.
5.	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 4 the training of an EHA will redirect authorised officers from carrying out work outlined within the plan.

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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>	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
1	ENERGY USE	* 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: + 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	* 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: + 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 has now had mobile devices made accessible to them.
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	* 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: + 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>	SUMMARISE HOW YOU PLAN TO MANAGE AND REDUCE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
4	HEATWAVES	* 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	* 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	* 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	* 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	* 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?:			Not 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 * No impact on capital assets; or relates to minor capital assets (minor works)
Medium Impact (M)	* 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% * Relates to medium-sized capital assets (individual buildings or small projects)
High Impact (H)	* 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.

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, whilst having been access to mobile devices, has not yet been provided with suitable set up to enable these to work in place of paper forms and carbonated reports, it is unlikely that these will be sufficiently supported by our current database provider. Proactive and reactive interventions are carried out using paper inspection forms and carbonated paper report forms.

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Equality Impact Assessment

A. Information about the policy

Policy title	Food Service Plan 2026-2027
Lead officer (name and role)	Katie Heath, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Date of assessment (dd/mm/yyyy)	18/06/2026
Summary of the policy	Annual service plan for the Food & Safety Team meeting the FSA requirement to provide a service plan for the delivery of food hygiene and food standard controls. The plan includes a synopsis of performance in the previous year and outlines the work allocation to the Food & Safety Team, plus resourcing requirements for the current year.

B. Initial assessment

Guidance [delete before finalising]: If the answer to **all** the questions below is “no”, then a full EIA is **not** required, and you do not have to complete this template. However, you must ensure that the rationale for this is recorded elsewhere in an appropriate place (for example, the “Equalities” section of a business case).

If the answer to **any** of the questions is “yes”, a full EIA is required. Please complete sections A-D.

Note that the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics can be positive as well as negative. If there is a positive impact, this should be recorded as a “yes” and a full EIA is required.

	Assessment
PSED Aim 1 (unlawful behaviour): Could your policy lead to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010?	No
PSED Aim 2 (equal opportunities): - Could your policy affect how service users or employees access services or participate in activities relevant to your policy area? - Could it impact people with particular protected characteristics who have a disproportionately low level of access to services, participation in public life, or other activities? - Could it create or worsen disadvantages and inequalities in your community?	No

• Could it remove or minimise disadvantages and inequalities in your community?	
PSED Aim 3 (good relations): • Could your policy affect how people perceive or interact with others? • Could it help tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people with different protected characteristics? • Could it lead to prejudice, community tensions, conflicts, isolation, or segregation?	No

C. Full assessment

i. Impact on protected characteristics

Guidance [delete before finalising]: Carry out a full assessment of the impact of the policy on the protected characteristics set out in the table below. The first nine items on the list are the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act. In addition, the Council has identified three additional characteristics that should also be considered as protected characteristics for the purposes of an EIA. As set out above, the expected impact on a particular protected characteristic can be positive as well as negative. If there is no expected impact on a particular protected characteristic, you can write in "None".

Protected characteristic	Expected impact	Evidence
Age		
Disability		
Gender reassignment		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Race		
Religion or belief		
Sex		
Sexual orientation		
Marriage and civil partnership		
Membership of the armed forces community*		
Socio-economic disadvantage*		
Experience of care*		

*Additional characteristics identified by the Council to be considered in Equality Impact Assessments.

ii. Mitigating Actions

Guidance [delete before finalising]: List actions to mitigate any negative impacts identified for people with protected characteristics listed in the table above, including meeting the needs of disabled people specifically and actions to alleviate disadvantage and under-representation. If there are no negative impacts, please write “N/A”.

Negative impact	Mitigating action

iii. Monitoring and Review

Guidance [delete before finalising]: There are no set rules on when and how often policies need to be monitored for their actual equality impact. You should take a proportionate approach in setting out your monitoring and reporting plans. Aligning your equality impact monitoring and reporting to the wider evaluation plans you have in place for the policy will save you time and resources.

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D. Approval

Approving officer (name and role)	Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

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Food & Safety Work Plan Apr 2026 - Mar 2027

This Work plan identifies the work streams currently undertaken by the Food & Safety Team which sits within Public Protection. This work plan covers both annual recurring work (A) and individual, one-off projects (O) that fall within the remit of the Food & Safety team and have been identified as action required. In collating this plan consideration has been given to present and emerging risks including those arising from known legislative changes. It does not account for future legislative changes that have not been published at this time. This work plan covers the period April 2025 through to March 2026.

Work streams have been identified as Statutory (S) or Non-statutory (NS).

Work streams have been prioritised 1-3 with 1 considered highest priority. Priority 1 items will be completed before priority 2 and 3 items apart from where the team is directed to do otherwise.

S / N S	Reason		Resources						Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
S	Food Hygiene Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2027. Premises inspected in accordance with FSA Guidance on Service return No of A-D premises due/overdue inspection for this year = 717 (incl. an	Requirement of Food Law COP. Service Plan Priority / Target	Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food. Education of local businesses	Aim: 100% A premises 100% B Premises 70% Unrated premises inspected	PEHO - Management of inspection lists, monitoring of inspection and consultation with officers, estimate 3 days per month - 36 Days (0.14 FTE) Inspections (avg 4 hours incl officer administration) = 4068 Hours (2.11 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	estimate of 40 outside of scope premises) New registered premises per year = c. 300 Total 1017 inspections due. <i>N.B. These numbers are approximate, an accurate number cannot currently be given due to ongoing issues with the database.</i>				2.35 FTE					
S	Alternative Enforcement Strategy for E premises. 55 premises Estimated 50% on site follow up required,	<i>Requirement of Food Law COP.</i> <i>Service Plan Priority / Target</i> <i>FSA Improvement</i>	<i>Premises subject to hygiene requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe food. Education of local businesses</i>	<i>Aim: All E premises contacted to verify current level of compliance and confirm FHRS remains appropriate.</i>	Management of AES project including training and supervision - 10 days Contact and remote assessment of all premises, 30	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
	incl staff training - 25 premises.	Plan requirement		Premises indicating changes in condition will be followed up by an onsite full/partial inspection	min per premises = 27.5 Hours Onsite follow up at 2 hours per premises = 50 Hours 0.01 FTE					
S	Food Hygiene Revisits and subsequent enforcement of non- compliant premises. Approximately 9% of premises are being found to be non- compliant. Estimate a further 92 premises across the borough. Ongoing non- compliance will require issue of	Food Law COP	Staged enforcement action in line with the Corporate Enforcement policy to improve food hygiene standards and ensure safe food.	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	PEHO - Consultation/Review of notices and case consultation - 15 days (0.06 FTE) Inspecting Officers general follow up (1 day per premises avg) = 681 Hours (0.35 FTE) 0.41 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	formal notices and potentially lead to prosecution. <i>N.B. ongoing enforcement work is being carried out at premises previously found to be non-compliant.</i>			<i>be brought within time limit.</i>						
S	Ongoing Enforcement including issue of notices. Resulting from ongoing or immediate non-compliance where a risk to public health and safety is presented. Estimate 45 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.</i>	Officers (incl review by second officer) 1.5 Days per Notice/Premises = 500 Hours (0.26 FTE) Prosecution and complex matters, estimate 8 premises - 2 weeks per case = 592 Hours (0.31 FTE) 0.57 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
				Any court proceedings to be brought within time limit.						
S	Approval of Premises Process applications for new approval activities. Inspection of existing premises is included within food hygiene inspections.	<i>Food Law COP</i>	<i>Approval activities authorised and published. Food products accurately labelled and traceable.</i>	<i>Applications and inspections carried out within SOP timeframe. Full approval awarded after max 6 months or removed.</i>	Officer - Average 2 new premises a year (min 5 days for each new premises) 10 days / 74 hours PEHO - review and consultation, 0.5 day per premises. 0.04 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Food Hygiene Re-Rating visits (FHRS) for premises not overdue/due inspection Avg 50 requests received per year	<i>FHRS Brand Standard</i>	<i>Increase in FHRS and improved compliance with FH requirements. Increased consumer confidence in premises</i>	<i>All inspections carried out within 3 months. Applications for premises that are overdue/due inspection will</i>	3 Hours per premises (pre & post admin, inspection and liaison with business) 150 Hours 0.08 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
				be refunded to business.						
S	Respond to FHRS Appeals Estimate 10 per annum	<i>FHRS Brand Standard</i>	<i>Appeals handled in accordance with Brand Standard. Maintain confidence in Food Hygiene Inspections</i>	<i>Appeals responded to within timeframe. Appeals resolved without moving to Corporate Complaint.</i>	PEHO - 1 day per appeal (10 days) (74 Hours) Officer time - 2 hours per appeal = 20 Hours 0.05 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Food Standards Inspection Programme Until 31 March 2027. No of due and overdue inspections = 769 (EH premises - 75%) (TS premises - 25%) New registered premises per annum approx.	<i>Food Law COP. Service Plan Priority / Target</i>	<i>Premises subject to standards requirements inspected and compliant to ensure safe, correctly labelled food which does not mislead the consumer. Education of local businesses</i>	<i>Aim: 100% A premises</i>	EHO/FSO - 1 hour per inspection (catering premises) (including officer administration) - 1069 hours (0.56 FTE) TS Officers - 2 hours per inspection (including officer administration) - 534 Hours (0.28 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO PTSO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	300 (75% catering, 25% retail/manufacture/import/export) Total Inspections due - approx. 1069 of which 802 are to be inspected by EH and 267 are to be inspected by TS) N.B. These numbers are approximate, an accurate number cannot currently be given due to ongoing issues with the database and lack of conversion to the new risk rating model.				Total officer hours - 1603 Hours 0.83 FTE					
S	Food Standard Revisits.	Food Law COP	Staged enforcement	Increase in compliance	(EH/TS) 0.5 days per premises for	01/4/26	31/03/27	PEHO PTSO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead	
	Approximately 5% of premises have found to be non-compliant. Estimate approximately 54 premises will require revisits and follow up enforcement action due to non-compliance in line with the current risk rating.		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.	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.	revisit and potential notices. = 200 Hours 0.1 FTE				

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
S	Food, Water & Environmental Sampling (Microbiology) Estimate 60 samples per annum (20 Premises), including complaint samples	<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>	Officer time - 0.5 days per premises = 74 Hours Lead - Sampling plan management, quarterly Meetings attended. = 15 days Total = 185 Hours (0.1 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A
S	Food Standards Sampling Estimate 20 samples per annum, including complaint samples.	<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>	FSO/PTSO - 15 days preparation training and sampling, management of programme = 111 Hours (0.06 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO PTSO	2	A
N S	National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Administration	<i>Discretionary function to take part in scheme. All LA's in England participate.</i>	<i>Enabling consumer to assess food hygiene and safety.</i>	<i>Premises details uploaded to FHRS website fortnightly.</i>	Business Support - Fortnightly submission of ratings 24 days per annum	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO Busin ess Supp ort	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
		Expectation of Customers.	Provide consumer confidence in Reading businesses	Display of correct premises information	PEHO - 5 days per annum housekeeping. = 37 Hours (0.02 FTE)			Manager		
S	FSA Returns (bi-annually)	Food Law COP	Transparent Food Hygiene and Standards performance.	LAEMS Return or equivalent accurately completed within time limit	PEHO - Housekeeping & reporting (10 days) = 74 Hours (0.04 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
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	Food Law COP requires each LA to have written policies and procedures in place for the following: • Approval • Food Business Establishment Database • Food Incidents and Alerts • Authorisation • Control Verification	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.	PEHO/SEHO - 5 days per procedure, plus additional days for sub-procedures, e.g. enforcement. Estimate 777 Hours (0.45 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
	out including drafting and implementation of those not previously in place.	• Corporate Complaints • Food Complaints • Sampling • Equipment • Official food controls and other activities • Enforcement • Control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease • Information • Registration • Conflict of Interest • Sampling Policy • Enforcement Policy • Complaints Policy							

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead			
		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. Inspection of existing towers in line with LAC67/2 and current risk rating. Est. 1 premises per annum.	HSWA1974 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.	Officers - Inspections (including shadowing) 0.5 days (new Premises) 1 day (existing premises) SEHO - SOPs, training & authorisation 5 days 0.025 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO /SEHO	2	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead	
S	Review and update of Special Treatment register	Recent work has identified that information held is no longer correct and a register needs to be recreated.	Authority will hold up to date information on registered and practising special treatment premises.	New register in place. Knowledge of how many premises/operators of each treatment type. Accurate inspection schedule in place	SEHO/FSO - 20 days (148 Hours) 0.08 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27		1
S	Inspection and certification of registering special treatment premises. An average of 30 premises and 70 further operators/treatments are registering per year. Backlog of existing premises requiring	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.	Inspecting officers - 3 hours per premises. (90 Hours) Inspecting officers - 1 hour per additional operator - 2 hours per additional treatment - (105 Hours) Business Support - 1 hour per application (100 Hours)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1 A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
	inspection= 60 (estimated)			475 Hours 0.25 FTE						
N S	Review and replacement of Byelaws for Special Treatments	Byelaws do not conform with national guidance and templates, control measures have been updated since RBC last issued byelaws. Inconsistencies between byelaws.	Up to date byelaws adhering to national templates. Reduced burden for low-risk activities.	New byelaws in place.	PEHO/SEHO - Legal process to implement new byelaws Committee adoption. Estimate 10 days (74 Hours) 0.04 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO /SEH O	1	O
S	Investigation of Infectious diseases and outbreaks including: Food borne illness & Legionnaire's disease. Estimate 150 cases 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.	S/EHO - 1 Hour per case 150 Hours Outbreak - PEHO/SEHO x 2 at 10 days each = 148 Hours (0.15 FTE)	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
	Outbreaks: Estimate 1 per year			Service requests responded to within internal standards.						
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.	PEHO Housekeeping and return (3 days) 0.01 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PHO	1	A
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.	Service Manager - 0.5 days PEHO - 1.5 days Total - 0.008 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Sports Ground Safety Inspection programme	Statutory requirement Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 and	Structurally safe and well managed sports ground	Min. 3 during match inspections carried out following risk	Service Manager - 1.5 day PEHO - 6 days SEHO - 6 days	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
		associated legislation		assessment process. Inspection reports provided within SOP timeframe and enforcement action taken accordingly.	Inspection, pre & post admin. Total 99.9 Hours 0.05 FTE					
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.	PEHO/SEHO 5 days Each = 74 Hours 0.04 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Review of Operations Manual and Issue of new Safety Certificate for Palmer Park Regulated Stand Plus initial engagement	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.	PEHO/SEHO 126 Hours (17 days) for first review Follow up reviews and amendments - 7.5 days. (55.5 Hours) SAGs - 20 hours per annum.	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A/O

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead			
	and sent up of SAG meetings				Engagement 2 days Total = 0.07 FTE					
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.	PEHO & SEHO - attendance, pre and post admin incl. action review and minutes. Est. 40 Hours per annum 0.02 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Drafting, implementatio n 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.	PEHO/SEHO - Est. 20 days (research, drafting, implementation, review). 0.09 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A/O
S	Review and respond to Licensing consultations concerning premises licences,	Statutory consultee	Safer Events	Representatio n at and contribution to Safety Advisory Group Meetings	PEHO/SEHO - attendance at monthly SAG - 10 days, incl. preparation. 5 days = 111 Hours	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
	events and street trading. Including attendance at SAG. Approx 120 consults per annum		Proactive review of Event documentation Liaison with Event operators and objection to events where deemed necessary.	All officers - review and respond to consultations (1.5 hours each) = 180 Hours Total = 291 Hours 0.15 FTE						
S	Attendance at Events, excluding Reading Festival.	Food Law COP	Many food traders operating within RBC are registered elsewhere and do not routinely get checked by RBC. Attendance at previous events have identified issues. Attendance at SAGs have raised concerns over food safety and health and safety management	Further feedback into next SAG including debrief if necessary. Food/H&S visit details passed to Home Authority.	Site visits carried out in overtime and not included in general FTE allocation. 2 officers attending each event on average. 5 events attended per annum. Preparation time - ½ day per officer = 5 days. = 0.02 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]	
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
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	Resourcing for individual cases included in inspections & SRs above. PEHO/SEHO - Draft and implementation of Procedures - included above.	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Reactive food & Safety work (service requests) • Dirty food premises • Microbiologica l, chemical & labelling • Allergens • Health, safety & Welfare • Business advice	Food Law COP and FSA guidance on service return. HSWA/EAR	Ensure food on sale is safe to eat, produced hygienically, correctly labelled and does not mislead the consumer. Ensure premises are safe to work in and visit.	All Service requests responded to.	All officers - 3 hour per SR on average. 1800 Hours 0.94 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	This excludes licence consultations, food business registrations, FHRS re-rate applications & appeals and requests for bespoke business advice which are covered elsewhere in this plan. Approximately 600 per annum.									
N S	Paid advice visits - Food Hygiene. Approx 7 requests per year. (Subject to promotion)	Improve food hygiene compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Improved hygiene standards and compliance at first and subsequent inspection.	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after	S/EHO - 4 Hours per premises (incl. correspondence, preparation and travel time) - 28 Hours 0.015 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
				first formal inspection						
N S	Food Standards and bespoke labelling advice (paid) Approximately 2 requests per annum (subject to promotion)	Improve food standard compliance of businesses. Provision of support and advice to local businesses Income generation	Improved standards and compliance of labelling and consumer information. Reduction in further interventions.	Requests for business advice carried out within 28 days. Premises subject to paid advice will be broadly compliant or better after next inspection. Premises subject to paid advice will require less enforcement action.	Trading Standards Officer -4 days per annum / 29.6 Hours 0.015 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A
N S	Improve Food Hygiene & Health & Safety presence on RBC website	Modernise and improve communications with customer. Enhance transparency	Improved communications to and accessibility of service to customers.	Ongoing review and improvement of website pages. Food Team posts on corporate	PEHO - initiation, review and implementation - 14.8 Hours Officer - 37 Hours	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO /SEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
	and social media	and accessibility of service.	Reduction in service requests and enquiries. Improved compliance of food businesses.	Facebook/Twitter Feeds regarding food hygiene & Safety.	0.03 FTE					
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	PEHO - 20 days / 148 Hours Senior Officers - 2 days per officer (x4) = 59.2 Hours Non-senior officers - review in line with FSA COP competency framework 0 1 day per officer = 37 Hours 0.13 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	O / A
S	Authorisation and Enforcement Policy Review including implementation	Food Law COP / HSWA Delegations Register.	Review the delegations register and ensure officer authorisations are up to date - as	Delegations register is up to date There are clear lines of	PEHO - 10 days / 74 Hours CPMG - 2 days / 14.8 Hours	01/04/26	31/03/27	PPM/CPGM	1	O

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead	
	n of new authorisation system for staff	Service Plan Priority	part of the corporate review of the constitution and delegations register	delegated authority for officers to have the necessary powers and authority	0.05 FTE				
N S	Servicing of PAPs (Food Standards Only) - Annual work plan, meetings, response to queries & enforcement, review of policies/proced ures, issue of assured advice, review and update of published out of date advice Issue of PAP export Certificates		Well managed PAP service compliant with statutory guidance	Level of service aligns with requirement of statutory guidance. PAP advice up to date and reviewed within timeframe. Enquiries and enforcement actions responded to within timeframe.	Trading Standards Officer (SCPO) - Estimate 100 Hours of work per annum 0.05 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PTSO /SCP O	3 A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
N S	Reading Festival - Audit of Food Safety Controls & inspections, response to complaints, H&S monitoring & inspection (incl. Special Effects), SAG Meetings and preparation.	Service Target	Safeguarding RBC residents and visitors	100% of festival food premises inspected and scored under Alfresco rating. Gold, Silver & Bronze nominees made. Non-compliant traders revisited and referred to home authority. Food Team attendance at SAG Meetings prior to and during event. H&S hazards referred to Licensing	PEHO - 20 days (incl. SAG, team meetings, admin, preparation, document review, debrief and incident investigation) = 148 Hours Officers - 3.5 days per officer on site, 1 day H&S document review per officer = 299 Hours 0.23 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PPM/ CPG M/PE HO	1	A
S	Development, Implementation and Maintenance	Health and Safety has taken a backseat for more than a	Competent, knowledgeable and confident staff.	Documented and implemented SOPs.	Review, development and implementation of SOPs and	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	O/A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	of Health and Safety SOPs. Training and development of staff in Health and Safety	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.	Improved business compliance with health and safety legislation, safer workplaces.	Staff training records. Staff authorisation. additional materials as required. PEHO/Lead SEHO - 25 days each. SEHOs - Training, development and review of new SOPs. 5 days each (45 days) Total estimate 70 days Total 120 days / 888 Hours 0.46 FTE						
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	Plan drafted and agreed through committee.	Review of previous years performance. Target setting for upcoming year and assessment of resources.	01/04/26	30/06/27	PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
			residents, visitors and those working in the town through the efficient and effective enforcement of food safety laws in the Borough		Committee Process. PEHO - 10 days 0.05 FTE per annum					
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.	10 Officers - Minimum 30 Hours per officer per annum. 0.18 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	O
N S	Proactive project - Identifying Hairdresser and Barber premises within borough and educating to improve hygiene standards.	Officer objective. Response to Cllr enquiries	Improved hygiene standards of hairdressers and barbers	Reduction in complaints received.	Project Management and delivery - 5 days / 37 Hours 0.02 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO / SEHO	2	A
N S	Proactive Project -	Concern has been raised about levels of	Improved compliance amongst fixed	Improved officer confidence.	Staff training - 10 days.					

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
	electrical safety	non-compliance in the borough regarding electrical safety.	and mobile traders. Reduced risks to employees and members of the public.	Increased assessment of electrical safety at routine inspections. Small number of separate premises identified for enhanced inspection.	Inspection and follow up - 20 days. 0.12 FTE					
N S	Proactive Project Quartz slabs	Following identification of significant risk at one premises the borough needs to be reviewed for other non-compliances.	Proactive inspection of similar premises. Identification and action taken against significant risks present.	Compliant premises. Reduced likelihood of RIDDORs.	Estimate 5 days in event relevant premises are found. 0.02 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	0
N S	Proactive project - trampolines & inflatables	The borough holds a number of events that bring in inflatables. There is a trampoline park in the borough	Reduced risks to members of the public.	Trampoline park inspected and compliant. Increased intervention at events.	Trampoline Park - 4 officer days including follow up and preparation. Event visits included in separate category.	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	0

S / N S	Reason			Resources				Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
		which has not been inspected and falls under priority work of LAC67/2		0.016 FTE					
N S	Internal Audit	Food Hygiene inspections have been flagged for internal audit in 26-27	Identification and improvement to service and resource allocation.	Audit completed. Audit actions identified and implemented where feasible. 0.04 FTE	01/07/26	31/03/27	CPG M/PE HO	1	O
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 0.08 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
N S	Arcus Project - Ongoing Implementation of MIS to working standard. Setup	New MIS being implemented across Service	N/A	Tested and fully functioning MIS. PEHO - 1 day per week minimum 384.8 Hours	01/04/26	31/03/27	AD - PTPP	1	O

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	& refinement of processes, templates. Delivery of training across team. Set up on missing processes. Form set up and testing.				Ongoing training 2 days per officer (9) = 133.2 Hours 0.27 FTE					
S	Accident investigation Investigation of RIDDORs and non-reported accidents, including appropriate enforcement action where required. Est 100 per annum	Statutory requirement	Businesses have suitable and sufficient controls in place to prevent a recurrence. Staff and visitors safe.	All Accidents responded to, 95% within service response time.	Estimate 1 day of investigation work per accident = 100 days 0.38 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
N S	Corporate mandatory training.	Mandatory corporate requirement	Compliance with corporate procedures	Training courses up to date and completed	10 officers / 3 days per officer = 30 days	01/04/26	31/03/27	CPG M	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead			
	Staff completion of Corporate Mandatory training and attendance at corporate updates			within deadline	0.12 FTE					
N S	Corporate Health & Safety. 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	PEHO - 10 days to further draft and review relevant documents. 74 Hours 0.5 days per officer to review (9 officers) 33.3 Hours 0.06 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	0
N S	Internal training of qualified officers to other teams to meet standards for	To deliver improvement plan to meet FSA requirements to align with FLCOP.	Increased number of officers available to deliver food hygiene official controls.	Appointed officers will be authorised to carry out a greater remit of work in line with the Food	No impact on general FTE of team. Requires shadowing/accompanying of inspections that	01/04/26	31/12/27	PEHO	1	0

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
	authorisation and delivery of food hygiene official controls		Law Code of Practice	are already taking place. PEHO - Review and sign off per officer - 1 day per officer - 15 Hours 0.05 FTE						
S	Attendance at regional Food and health and safety liaison meetings.	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.	3 Meetings per annum at 1 day each, including preparation. Contribution to regional processes and national responses. 3 days per year. 22.2 Hours 0.01 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	2	A
N S	Line Management of staff	Corporate and Team requirement	Monitored and improved staff/team performance	Supported, competent staff	One-to-ones at 4-6 week intervals. 145.5 Hours Annual Reviews	01/04/26	31/03/27	CPG M/PEHO	1	A

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annua l Requir ement [A]/ One off projec t [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]	Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]	Start	Finish	Lead				
					36 Hours Additional support, guidance and meetings as required. (Est 10 hours per officer) 90 Hours 0.14 FTE					
N S	Case Management & Review	Review and management of prospective legal cases and ongoing investigations	Cases progressed and submitted in good time to legal. Proper consideration of significant matters for enforcement action.	Cases delivered to legal in ample time	Estimate 10 cases per year. Monthly updates. 200 Hours 0.10 FTE	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO	1	A
S	Implementatio n of new Food Standards Risk Rating Delivery Model.	It is a requirement of the FLCOP for all LAs to have migrated to the	Operating correct risk rating model fully as per Food Law COP and able	Existing premises migrated to new model on Arcus. Data	PEHO/PTSO - Local intel and history review of borough profile against FSA conversion ratings.	01/04/26	31/03/27	PEHO /PTS O	1	O

S / N S	Reason			Resources					Service Plan Priority (1-3)	Annual Requirement [A]/ One off project [O]
	Action, [what are going to change deliver or improve]		Outcome [what difference will this make]	Success Measures [how will know we have delivered]		Start	Finish	Lead		
	Migration of remaining premises to new model. Review of dataset in Arcus	new risk rating model for Food Standards by 31/03/2025	to submit complete returns	reviewed and correct. Returns submitted.	Review of database premises: 10 days 148 Hours 0.08 FTE					

Required Resource	Available Resource
Resource required for Food Hygiene Delivery: 5.005 FTE Resource required for Food Standards Delivery: 1.215 FTE Resource required for Health & Safety Delivery: 2.339 FTE Resource required for other Delivery: 1.81FTE Total Resource Required: 10.369 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 01/04/26 (F&S): 8.66 FTE Permanent Resource in post as at 01/04/26 (TS): 0.3 FTE Temporary Resource in post as at 01/04/2026: 0.09 FTE (contractors in place for Q1) Pending resource in post for 2026/2027 (F&S): 0 Pending resource in post for 2026/2027 (TS): 0 Total expected in post resource for 2026/2027 (F&S): 8.75 FTE Total expected in post resource for 2026/2027 (TS): 0.3 FTE Total allocated resource for 2026/2027 (F&S): 8.75 FTE Total allocated resource for 2026/2027 (TS): 0.3 FTE Shortfall of resource for 2026/2027 against expected FTE in post (F&S): 1.219 FTE Shortfall of resource for 2026/2027 against expected FTE in post (TS): 0.1 FTE
Note - FTE per activity is calculated as follows - 37 Hour week / 7.4 Hour day multiplied by 52 weeks per annum = 1924 working hours per year.	

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 carry out 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. The situation remains ongoing and issues with Arcus are known widely across the Council. Continuous resource is required, predominantly from the PEHO to work on ongoing fixes and improvements to the database. The time required is unquantified but has an impact on the delivery of items outlined in this plan.
4.	Appointment of non-fully qualified officers	The team currently comprises over 50% unqualified officers who are working towards qualification and competency. These officers have settled in very well and contributing to service delivery but until they have passed their qualifications they are limited in ability to carry out official controls. Ongoing training needs is also impacting the time and available resource of authorised officers.
5.	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 4 the training of an EHA will redirect authorised officers from carrying out work outlined within the plan.

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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Local Plan Partial Update Additional Main Modification
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	1. That the Local Plan Partial Update Additional Main Modification (Appendix 1) be approved for consultation.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2019. There is a statutory requirement to undertake a review of a local plan within five years of adoption. A Review to comply with this requirement identified that there was a need to undertake a Partial Update of the Local Plan, and this was agreed by Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport committee on 23rd March 2023 (Minute 36 refers). Consultation on Scope and Content was undertaken between November 2023 and January 2024, and consultation on a Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) took place in November and December 2024.
- 1.2. The LPPU was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. This resulted in a public examination led by an independent Planning Inspector, including hearings held in November 2025 (stage 1) and February 2026 (stage 2).
- 1.3. The Inspector identified a number of main modifications that are needed to make sure that the LPPU is sound and legally compliant. These main modifications need to be subject to consultation, and this consultation was agreed by Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23rd June 2026 (Minute 7 refers). However, the Inspector has since identified an additional main modification regarding committing to an early review of the updated Local Plan, and this will also need to be subject to consultation. This report recommends undertaking consultation on this additional main modification.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted by Council on 4th November 2019 (Minute 28 refers). Since that point, the Local Plan has been the main consideration in determining planning applications within Reading.
- 2.2. There is a statutory duty for local planning authorities to review their local plans within five years of the adoption date. Such a review should determine whether there is a need to update the Local Plan in full or in part. A review of the Reading Borough Local Plan as reported to SEPT Committee on 23rd March 2023 (Minute 36 refers) identified a need to carry out a Partial Update of the Local Plan.
- 2.3. Changes to national policy and guidance, in particular in relation to the level of housing need for the authority, represent particular reasons why plans or individual policies may

require updating. There have been a variety of changes to national policy, including new versions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021, September 2023 and December 2023 (and subsequently also in December 2024). These make significant changes to how local plans are expected to identify housing need. This was the main reason that a need to update the Local Plan was identified, but there are a number of individual reasons for the particular policies.

3. The Proposal

Current position

- 3.1 The first consultation stage in undertaking the Partial Update was a Consultation on Scope and Content under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 15th November 2023 approved this document for consultation (Minute 20 refers), and consultation was undertaken between 27th November 2023 and 31st January 2024.
- 3.2 The second consultation stage was a Pre-Submission Draft under Regulation 19. This was approved for consultation at Council on 15th October 2024 (Minute 22 refers). Consultation was subsequently carried out between 6th November and 18th December 2024.
- 3.3 Following consultation, the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) along with its evidence base was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Submission of the document commences a period of public examination held by an independent Planning Inspector. The purpose of the examination was to establish whether the plan was sound, legally compliant and fulfilled the statutory duty to co-operate. The Inspector appointed was Joanna Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI.
- 3.4 The examination was conducted in two stages. Stage 1 covered legal and procedural matters and housing need and included virtual hearings held on 11th and 12th November 2025. The Inspector provided a letter with her findings from Stage 1 on 24th November, which among other findings confirmed that the Council had complied with the duty to co-operate, and this enabled the examination to proceed to Stage 2.
- 3.5 Stage 2 covered all other matters, in particular the details of policies and sites. In-person hearings were held between 3rd and 12th February 2026, with an additional virtual hearing on 23rd February to allow a participant to speak who had been unavailable for the main hearings.
- 3.6 The Inspector identified that 'main modifications' would be required to ensure that the plan is sound and legally compliant. Main modifications are those that would be significant enough to require consultation and to be subject to sustainability appraisal. It would be unusual for a plan to escape the need for main modifications, and such modifications have been identified with each of the most recent development plan documents in Reading. Through the examination process, the Inspector identified where these modifications were required and liaised with the Council and, in some instances, other participants, to set out the drafting. Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee agreed these main modifications for consultation on 23rd June 2026 (Minute 7 refers).
- 3.7 However, before consultation could begin, the Inspector identified an additional main modification which commits the Council to undertaking a full review of the Local Plan earlier than would normally be required. This modification would also require consultation, and it is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The reason for the modification is that it was identified during the examination process that the evidence was insufficient in relation to two matters – the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and the impact of the proposed level of development on water quality. The Inspector made clear in her post Stage 1 hearings letter of 24th November 2025 that an early review in respect of gypsy and traveller accommodation was required.

A potential early review in respect of water quality issues was discussed during Stage 2 hearings in February 2026 but had not yet been formally required.

- 3.9 The understanding until recently had been that an early review could be undertaken in a partial manner, i.e. that once the additional evidence work had been completed, a partial update of the relevant elements of the plan would be undertaken. This would have likely been very limited in scope as it would have likely covered policy H13 on gypsies and travellers, policy EN16 on pollution and water resources and the infrastructure delivery schedule showing anticipated upgrades to the Reading Sewage Treatment Works (which are already planned by Thames Water) only.
- 3.10 However, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 were laid before parliament on 3rd March and came into force on 25th March 2026. These Regulations made major changes to the process for preparing local plans. Due to transitional arrangements, they would not be relevant to the current Local Plan Partial Update, but would be relevant to any plan review, including the early review identified by the Inspector. One change that had not been anticipated by the Council or the Inspector is that there is no longer any ability to undertake a partial review of the plan as the Regulations require a plan to be prepared in full.
- 3.11 Therefore, on 26th June the Inspector wrote to the Council identifying that an early review would require a full review of the entire plan, and that a modification would be required committing the Council to commencing such a review upon adoption. The Inspector made clear that the alternative would be to withdraw the plan from examination. The modification required is set out as Appendix 1.
- 3.12 For clarity, the full timeline of how this situation has been reached is set out below:
- 9th May 2025 – Submission of Local Plan Partial Update to Secretary of State;
 - 12th November 2025 – Discussion of accommodation for gypsies and travellers during Stage 1 hearings, at which prospect of an early review was initially discussed;
 - 24th November 2025 – Inspector's Post Stage 1 Hearings Letter that identified that the assessment of need for gypsy and traveller accommodation would require an early review;
 - 9th January 2026 – Hearing Statement from the Environment Agency received which raises concerns around the lack of water quality modelling of the level of development proposed, relating specifically to the capacity of Reading Sewage Treatment Works and the resulting potential for impacts on the Foudry Brook;
 - February 2026 – Stage 2 hearings undertaken which includes discussion of the water quality issue, and at which the prospect of an early review to allow water quality modelling to be undertaken is discussed;
 - 4th March 2026 – Local Planning Regulations laid before Parliament;
 - 18th March 2026 – Inspector's Post Stage 2 Hearings Letter requires the Council to work with the Environment Agency to set out a way forward in respect of water quality modelling;
 - 25th March 2026 – Local Planning Regulations come into force;
 - 17th April 2026 – Updated Water Quality Assessment prepared by Stantec on behalf of the Council;
 - April – May 2026 – Discussion with the Environment Agency on the results of the assessment and a proposed modification;
 - 21st May 2026 – Suggested main modification as agreed with the Environment Agency committing the Council to an early review involving undertaking water quality modelling provided to the Inspector;

- 26th June 2026 – Letter from the Inspector highlighting that an early review would be required that would encompass the whole plan.

- 3.8 An additional modification has therefore been drafted that would address the Inspector's points and this is included as Appendix 1. The modification makes clear that the timeline of commencing a new plan would initially involve an 18-month period following adoption to undertake evidence work on gypsies and travellers and water quality and to assess whether the results of this work constitute a significant change in circumstances that necessitate preparation of a new plan. In the event that a new plan is required, there would then be an additional 6 months before Gateway 1 (self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation) under the new Regulations would need to be completed. Gateway 1 is the formal commencement of plan-making and the government's expectation is that plans are adopted within 30 months of Gateway 1.

Option proposed

- 3.10 Main modifications require consultation before they can be incorporated into the LPPU. The proposal is therefore to consult on the additional main modification set out in Appendix 1. Consultation on the additional main modification will be carried out alongside those agreed by SEPT Committee on 23 June and is expected to take place in September and October for a period of six weeks.
- 3.11 Consultation responses will be provided directly to the Inspector, and it will be for her to consider them in preparing her final report. Only when the final Inspector's Report which concludes that the plan is sound, legally compliant and fulfils the duty to co-operate has been received can the Council adopt the LPPU.

Other options considered

- 3.12 The Inspector has made clear that the only alternative option to the proposed modification is to withdraw the plan from examination. The Council has already rejected this option. Withdrawal would mean that the Council would need to restart plan-making from the beginning and would therefore likely need to produce a plan earlier than set out in the modification. It would also mean that the Council would not be able to adopt up-to-date planning policies which are considered essential for putting a robust basis in place for determining planning applications.
- 3.13 It was considered whether the Council could request a pause in the examination in order to undertake the evidence work and potential updates to the plan within the current examination. However, examinations can only be paused for a maximum of six months, and this is simply not enough time to commission and undertake the evidence work and then undertake changes to the plan itself, which would also require updated assessments of potential sites for gypsies and travellers and potentially liaison with neighbouring authorities about meeting any unmet needs elsewhere. This would then likely result in the plan being found unsound as a whole.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1 The Local Plan Partial Update, through setting out the way Reading will develop to 2041, will contribute to the following priorities in the Council Plan 2025-28:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading: through ensuring that communities have access to the services and facilities to live a healthy life, including inclusion of a new policy requiring health impact assessments;
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success: through meeting the development needs of Reading including delivery of 825 homes per year, including affordable housing, and employment needs totalling up to 253,000 sq m;
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint: through promoting a sustainable pattern of development with good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, with increases in green infrastructure and by seeking the highest standards of energy efficiency in new development; and

- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children; through measures including planning for the needs for residential care and other specialist accommodation, ensure accessible housing and identifying opportunities for new primary healthcare provision.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1 There is a requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal of each stage of a Local Plan document. A sustainability appraisal assesses the impact of each policy, proposal and alternative option against a range of sustainability objectives covering environmental, economic and social matters. A Sustainability Appraisal of the main modifications including this additional modification has been prepared and will be published alongside the consultation as a background document. The environmental and climate implications of each policy and option are considered as part of that document.
- 5.2 There would be no specific environmental or climate implications of the modification itself as it is procedural in nature.

6 Community Engagement

- 6.1 There have already been two consultation stages on the Local Plan Partial Update, as set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.
- 6.2 'Main modifications' are those that would require additional consultation. A further six-week period of consultation is therefore required, which will be carried out in line with the Statement of Community Involvement (adopted October 2024), as for previous LPPU consultations. The consultation would be focused on the main modifications only, not the remainder of the Local Plan. The consultation period is proposed to be undertaken during September and October. As this is an extremely focussed consultation, no consultation events are planned.

7 Equality Implications

- 7.1 As set out in relation to section 5, a Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Draft has been prepared and will be published alongside the consultation. One of the sustainability objectives is to "Avoid significant negative effects on groups or individuals with regard to race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation", and appraisal of the main modifications against this objective therefore addresses the equality implications of the policies.
- 7.2 There are not expected to be any equality implications of the additional main modification as it is procedural in nature.

8 Health Implications

- 8.1 As set out in relation to section 5, a Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Draft has been prepared and will be published alongside the consultation. One of the sustainability objectives is to "Protect, promote and improve human health, safety and well-being including through healthy lifestyles.", and appraisal of the main modifications against this objective therefore addresses the health implications of the policies.
- 8.2 There are not expected to be any health implications of the additional main modification as it is procedural in nature.

9 Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1 There are none.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Local Plan Partial Update is produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Under Section 20(7C) of the Act, an Inspector can recommend main modifications, but only if requested to do so by the local authority. The process for producing local plans is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)

(England) Regulations 2012. Regulations 23, 24 and 25 concern the process for examination of a Local Plan and publication of an Inspector's Report.

- 10.2 A new system for preparing local plans was introduced as part of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 26 March 2026, set out the detailed process. It is the introduction of these Regulations which makes it necessary that an early review of the plan will need to be a full plan rather than a partial review around the issues of gypsies and travellers and water quality.

11 Financial Implications

- 11.1 Production of the LPPU prior to examination stage has been carried out within existing planning budgets. The holding of an examination is a significant cost to the Council and the full scale of the cost will only become known once the Inspector's Report has been issued and the Planning Inspectorate provides an invoice. Up to the end of February 2026 (which includes all of the hearing dates) the total cost of the examination including Inspector time, venue cost, consultant support and additional evidence was around £75k. The costs associated with the proposed consultation on main modifications will be very limited and will be met from existing budgets.
- 11.2 Production of a whole new local plan, as would be committed to in the modification, would be costly. It has been estimated that the cost would be in the region of £375k over and above existing budgets, likely incurred primarily during 2028/29 and 2029/30. The main costs would be assembling evidence and costs of holding an examination. However, these costs would also be incurred if the Council were to withdraw the LPPU from examination (the only alternative option) and would likely be required at an earlier stage.

12 Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1 The timetable for adoption of the LPPU will depend on when a final Inspector's Report is received which confirms that the plan is sound, legally compliant and complies with the duty to co-operate. It is anticipated that this will be by the end of the year. Once the Report is received, the LPPU will be brought to full Council for adoption and this is currently expected to be at the January 2027 meeting.

13 Background Papers

- 13.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Local Plan Partial Update Additional Main Modification

Appendix 1: Local Plan Partial Update Additional Main Modification

MM55	175	After paragraph 4.7.34	<i>Insert new section 4.8 containing a new policy and supporting text as follows:</i> <u>4.8 Next Local Plan</u> <u>LP1: Preparation of the Next Local Plan</u> <u>Within 18 months of adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU), the Council will:</u> <u>a) Have produced a new assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople; and</u> <u>b) Have undertaken catchment modelling in respect of water quality and engaged with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to understand the implications of the modelling results; and</u> <u>c) On completion of the actions set out in a) and b), assess whether either or both of these matters constitutes a significant change in local circumstances;</u> <u>d) In the event that either or both of these matters indicates that there has been a significant change in local circumstances, the Council will commence preparation of the next Local Plan.</u> <u>If needed, publication of a Gateway 1 self-assessment of readiness for local plan preparation will take place in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 within six months of the completion of the above matters. This may be in advance of the expected five years from adoption of the LPPU.</u> <u>Any new Local Plan would be a full and comprehensive Local Plan in accordance with s15C of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).</u> <u>4.8.1 Policy LP1 on Preparation of the Next Local Plan has been committed to by the Council, with particular regard to two outstanding issues relating to meeting the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers, and travelling showpeople and water quality. Failure to progress these actions in accordance with the timeframe set out above is likely to mean that the presumption in favour of sustainable development would be engaged at the decision-making stage.</u> <u>4.8.2 The Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites confirms that local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan: identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets, and identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. The Council has no five year supply of deliverable sites or developable sites for years 6 – 10 and beyond for permanent accommodation for gypsies and travellers.</u> <u>4.8.3 The LPPU was submitted on the basis of evidence which was not up to date in respect of the needs of gypsies, travellers, and travelling showpeople. The Council will produce a new needs assessment on gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople's accommodation in collaboration with stakeholders including the local gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople communities where possible, neighbouring boroughs, the Council's housing team, and registered providers. Should this needs assessment identify significant additional needs for pitches and/or plots, the Council will consider reviewing the LPPU to support this, through the preparation of a new Local Plan. Prior to that needs assessment being undertaken and any further action</u>	To reflect the need for an early review in respect of needs for gypsy and traveller accommodation and assessment of water quality	Post Stage 1 hearings letter [EX030] paragraph 14 Post Stage 2 hearings further letter [EX114] paragraph 10
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			being taken through plan-making, any proposals for new or extended sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople will be assessed against the criteria set out in LPPU Policy H13. 4.8.4 The Environment Agency maintains concerns about water quality as a significant constraint to development and growth in Reading, with reference to the need to upgrade Reading Sewage Treatment Works. Any additional flow to the sewage treatment works may result in rising main or pumping station failures, which in turn can damage the environment. The sewage treatment works discharge into Foudry Brook, which is at Poor ecological status and Poor for Phosphate. 4.8.5 With regard to infrastructure, the sewage treatment works has a Maximum Daily Volume permit. The Environment Agency is working with Thames Water to convert this into a Dry Weather Flow permit. These permits are not measured in the same way, with Dry Weather Flow permits allowing for more robust control over the impacts of sewage discharge on the receiving waterbody, regular reviews of the permit limits, and consideration of storm water capacity. The Environment Agency therefore considers that the sewage treatment works has potential capacity issues and that a robust assessment of capacity is therefore required, including consideration of scenarios based on a reasonable future Dry Weather Flow permit limit. 4.8.6 In terms of environmental capacity, the Council's Water Quality Assessment has not assessed potential impacts of planned growth on Foudry Brook's water quality. This is necessary to be consistent with statutory water quality objectives under the Water Framework Directive and the Environment Act 2021. Such assessment is normally undertaken via catchment modelling. The completion of catchment modelling would allow an understanding of whether growth can progress in Reading in the medium to long term without deteriorating water quality. In the intervening time between the adoption of the LPPU, the completion of catchment modelling, and any necessary progress towards delivery of a new Local Plan, development proposals will be considered against the requirements in LPPU Policy EN16 and the Council's monitoring framework. 4.8.7 The Council's assessment of whether the outcomes of the actions required by criteria a) and b) of Policy LP1, either individually or taken together, amount to significant change in local circumstances will be made publicly available.		
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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Update on projects funded by 15% local Community Infrastructure Levy
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	1. That the progress on the projects benefitting from the 15% local CIL allocated set out in Appendix 1 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 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (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 as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The vast majority of those projects allocated funds prior to July 2024 have now been delivered. There are three projects from previous allocations which remain underway (two of which have been combined into a single project).
- 3.5 A number of projects allocated in July 2024 have already been completed. The remainder are mainly in the process of delivery with a small number at the scoping phase. A number have not yet been completed purely because they are awaiting the Autumn planting season.
- 3.6 There have been 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 was the focus of the team's resources for a considerable period. These CIL-funded projects are now progressing.
- 3.7 This report does not deal with future allocations, but a further report is due to be brought to Policy Committee in October which proposes changes to the nominations and allocations process. This will involve changing the CIL Spend Protocol. If agreed it is expected that a new round of nominations would commence thereafter. It should however be noted that, as shown in Table 1 in section 10 of this report, the amount of 15% local CIL available to allocate is relatively low.

Other options considered

- 3.8 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 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 This paper reports on the progress of projects that have already been allocated funding. The equality implications of those allocations were assessed at the time that the allocation was made. This report does not therefore recommend any decisions that have equality implications.

8 Health Implications

- 8.1 This paper reports on the progress of projects that have already been allocated funding. This report does not therefore recommend any decisions that have health implications.

9 Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1 There are none.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 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.”*

- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 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)

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct financial implications of the recommended action of this report.
- 11.2 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 30/06/2026	£6.831m
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	£0.814m

Revenue Implications

- 11.3 There are no revenue implications of this report.

Capital Implications

- 11.4 There are no capital implications of this report,

Value for Money

- 11.5 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.

Risk Assessment

- 11.6 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1 The timetable for implementation is dependent on the individual project. More details on progress are within Appendix 1.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 There are none.

Appendices

1. Progress on projects already allocated 15% local CIL funding

Appendix 1: Progress on projects already allocated 15% local CIL funding

NB: Excludes projects already reported to Policy Committee in July 2022, July 2024 or July 2025 as completed, or where one of those meetings of Policy Committee agreed to reallocate funds away from the project

Name	Allocation	Scheme description	Delivery date (actual/expected)	Latest update
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 have been investigating works to Forbury Gardens grotto and wall. Structural survey carried out which identified safety risks. Unlikely to be sufficient funds allocated to the project to cover permanent works, but temporary support and protection measures are being investigated.
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.	September 2025	Completed
Improvements to Victoria Recreation Ground	£231,000 (March 2022)	To provide improved and upgraded play equipment in a new playground adjacent to Hodsoll Road	July 2025	Completed
Northcourt Avenue speed reduction	£200,000 (March 2022)	20mph scheme and traffic calming measures to address concerns of speeding on Northcourt Avenue (also to include Wellington Avenue).	April 2026	Completed
20 is plenty zone on streets around Oxford Road	£200,000 (March 2022)	Introduction of a 20mph zone in residential side streets off	Estimated, subject to consultation	Following engagement with Ward Councillors, reporting the proposed scheme to Traffic Management Sub-Committee, September 2026,

		Oxford Road. Initial phase(s) of wider desirable zone area.	outcome, delivery from Spring 2027.	seeking agreement to undertake the statutory consultation processes.
Landscape the verge along the route in front of the Irish Club along Chatham Street	£15,000 (July 2024)	-	May 2026	Completed
Re-landscape the front garden of Somerstown Court	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2026	Completed except for new planting timetabled for Autumn 2026
Town centre tree planting	£50,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2026	Some tree planting has already taken place as part of this project, and additional locations for the remaining budget have been identified with planting planned for Autumn 2026.
Permanent planters on Oxford Road IDR over pass	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	June 2026	Completed
Pocket Park biodiversity enhancement at Castle Hill roundabout (NW corner)	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2026	Clearance and groundworks have taken place and planting is planned for Autumn 2026.
Repair and cleaning and providing water to George Street allotments	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	May 2026	Completed
Planting green spaces in Battle ward	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2026	Sites for planting identified and new planting timetabled for Autumn 2026
More greenery on the Oxford Road	£75,000 (July 2024)	-	Spring 2026	Officers were unable to find suitable locations on the Oxford Road due to underground services, highways visibility etc. Therefore this is now to be combined with “planting green spaces in Battle ward” project, to allow greater flexibility for planting locations in the wider vicinity.
Zebra crossing on Portman Road opposite Milk & More	£85,000 (July 2024)	-	Estimated, subject to consultation outcome, delivery by April 2027.	Following engagement with Ward Councillors, reporting the proposed scheme to Traffic Management Sub-Committee, September 2026, seeking agreement to undertake the statutory consultation processes.
20mph zone for the Amersham Road estate area	£40,000 (July 2024)	-	Estimated, subject to consultation	A briefing note and initial concept plan has been shared with lead and ward Councillors and a report is now being prepared for Traffic

			outcome, delivery by April 2027.	Management Sub-Committee in September seeking approval to consult.
Traffic and crossing measures in Emmer Green	£40,000 (July 2024)	-	Estimated Summer 2027	Officers engaging with Ward Councillors on concept proposal shared in August 2026.
Maintenance/refurbishment of Albert Road Park tennis courts	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	October 2025	Completed
Provision of graffiti resistant information boards within the Cowsey	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	May 2026	Completed
Replacement of outdated/broken community noticeboards in Katesgrove	£15,000 (July 2024)	-	June 2026	Completed
Removal of the priority flow feature at the junction of Allcroft Road and Redlands Road	£25,000 (July 2024)	-	Estimated Summer 2027	Being treated as a single project with the project below. Initial concept scheme shared with Ward Councillors and good engagement received. Site meeting undertaken and concept proposals being redesigned.
Amend the width restriction build-outs on Redlands Road to include cycle-through bypasses	£12,000 (July 2024)	-	Estimated Summer 2027	See "Removal of the priority flow feature at the junction of Allcroft Road and Redlands Road" project
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 would need to lead on the planning application for the nets if it proceeds as it will be linked in with the leasing. However, the lease has so far not been agreed and it appears unlikely that this part of the project will be delivered.
Bath Road/Granville Road underpass enhancement	£26,000 (July 2024)	-	August 2026	Proposal to improve lighting, undertake deep clean and install mural art. Works programmed for October 2026.
Enhance the green in the Horncastle Conservation Area	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	February 2026	Completed

Improving the appearance of the public areas of the Orts Road Estate	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	To be confirmed	Identified focus on clean-up, landscaping, highway works (including bollards) and environmental measures. Community consultation events carried out between April and June 2025. Highway works due to commence in August 2026 and procurement underway for second phase involving landscaping.
Create a biodiversity friendly setting along the Gunther's Brook	£20,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Cost to clear brook exceeds budget. This project will therefore not progress further. It is expected that this funding will need to return to the overall 15% local CIL fund and be reallocated to other projects.
Water safety enhancements including at the Kennet river	£30,000 (July 2024)	-	October 2025	Completed
Installation of information board(s) and signage and improving pathway at Coley Water Meadows	£50,000 (July 2024)	-	End of 2025/26	Pathwork has been completed in October 2025, with fencing completed June 2026. Design work of information boards is underway and these will be installed once finalised.
Clean and enhance the underpass from Katesgrove Lane to the County Lock and general enhancement of the area	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	Autumn 2025	Art panels installed and deep clean and graffiti removal undertaken February 2026. Ceiling painting programmed for September 2026.
Infill footpath in Southcote Linear Park along the Holy Brook close to the allotments	£100,000 (July 2024)	-	July 2026	Completed
Repaint and resurface the footbridge over the Kennet between Kennet Walk and Avon Place	£200,000 (July 2024)	-	July 2026	Completed
Installation of additional river safety equipment along Thames Promenade and potentially more exit points	£25,000 (July 2024)	-	October 2025	Completed

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. A feasibility study was carried out to assess options, and following this a new signalised crossing on the northern side of Caversham bridge, with an alternative option being the improvement to the existing junction with Church Rd/Church Street, to provide fully signalised crossings was proposed and traffic surveys were undertaken. A briefing on the design is now being prepared.
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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
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Title	Council Tax Support Scheme
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Darren Carter, Director of Finance
Report author	Ian Savigar, Revenue and Benefits Manager
Lead Councillor	Cllr Ruth McEwan, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Council priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	1. That Policy Committee endorse the draft Council Tax Support Scheme as outlined in this report at Appendix 2. 2. That Policy Committee agrees to proceed with public consultation on the proposed scheme as soon as possible. 3. That a further report detailing the outcome of the consultation and any revisions to the draft scheme are considered by Members and, that a new scheme is approved by Council before the 31 January 2027.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Since the abolition of the Council Tax Benefit Scheme in 2012, government legislation has required councils to review their Council Tax Support Scheme annually and consult with major preceptors and the public where any revisions are required to its working age scheme.
- 1.2. Reading Borough Council introduced a Scheme for working age charge payers in 2013 which was very similar to the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme and over time it has made minor amendments to the Scheme.
- 1.3. Most working age, low-income households have now transitioned from legacy benefit systems on to Universal Credit as their main income source, which can result in fluctuating income levels and constantly changing Council Tax bills.
- 1.4. The current Council Tax Support Scheme is no longer fit for purpose, requiring regular changes to awards and the constant despatch of new bills, making it difficult for customers to understand or plan their finances as well as making administration and debt recovery complicated and expensive.
- 1.5. The final managed migration rollout of Housing Benefits concluded in June 2026 by the Department for Work and Pensions, making this an appropriate time to align the proposed changes to the current Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 1.6. Aligning assessments to the award of Universal Credit enables simplification of the assessment process.

- 1.7. This report proposes that the Council conducts public consultation on a new simplified banded income scheme to replace the current Scheme with effect from April 2027.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Council Tax Support for working age claimants is a discretionary power of the Council and it must follow strict process as documented in paragraph 10 of the report.
- 2.2. The scheme is aimed at supporting residents of working age who are financially vulnerable and on low incomes by enabling them to claim a reduction in their Council Tax liability.
- 2.3. The principles set out in paragraph 3.3 seek to make this process as simple and fair as possible for all residents and improve administration efficiency.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. Council Tax Support helps people on a low income by reducing the amount of Council Tax they must pay.
- 3.2. Officers have reviewed the current working age scheme and are proposing further changes from April 2027. The proposed changes seek to implement a less complicated scheme, which will be easier for claimants to understand and for staff to administer.
- 3.3. Several scheme options have been considered and modelled with the following objectives in mind.
- The scheme should be cost neutral;
 - Support those residents on the lowest incomes to afford their Council Tax liability;
 - It is easier to understand;
 - It will be easier to claim a reduction (automated where possible with no forms required);
 - Make administration simpler and quicker;
 - Reduce processing times (automated awards based on Department for Work and Pensions data);
 - Fewer Council Tax Support bills and letters are required;
 - A reduction in the cost of postage;
 - Improve collection rates for all charge payers;
 - Reduced recovery action and costs to the charge payer;
 - Reduce the need for customer contact.
- 3.4. A study completed by a company called entitledto in May 2025 looking at national trends for Council Tax Support Schemes across England showed that an increasing number of councils have moved to income banded schemes (just over 40%) [entitledtoctreport2526-final.pdf](#)
- 3.5. Across Berkshire, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and Slough Councils are already using banded income schemes to assess eligibility for Council Tax Support.
- 3.6. As previously stated, our current scheme is an amended version of the original council tax benefit scheme, as is the case for Windsor & Maidenhead and West Berkshire Councils. With all schemes across the County having different criteria for assessing awards.

- 3.7. Details of our current scheme, which has remained unchanged since the 2022/23 financial year, can be found on our website at [Council Tax Support - Reading Borough Council](#)
- 3.8. Several options have been considered in developing the proposed new scheme, these are detailed at Appendix 1.
- 3.9. The Draft Scheme we are recommending for consultation is a banded income scheme which best meets the criteria set out in para 3.3 above. The details are set out in Appendix 2 attached.
- 3.10. The recommended scheme as set out at Appendix 2 will deliver the following benefits:
- The proposed Council Tax Support Scheme will be easier for residents and advisors to understand;
 - Changes to backdating rules will help reduce debt and reduce the need for customer contact;
 - An automatic reduction can be awarded if the charge payer is on Universal Credit;
 - No need for form filling and faster processing times will improve customer service; Fewer recalculations and the need for revised billing will reduce the cost of postage;
 - Fewer recalculation letters and billing changes mean less need for customer contact;
 - Fewer bills will help improve the collection rate overall;
 - Reduced administration costs;
 - More time to support the most vulnerable residents.
- 3.11. These proposed scheme changes seek to achieve the objectives set out in para 3.3 of this report. However, with any change in a scheme such as this there are going to be gainers and losers.
- 3.12. Based on a snapshot of the live council tax support caseload in May 2026, analysis shows that of 4,174 live claims in the current scheme, 3,225 (77.2%) of them will see no change in their award; 477 (11.4%) will gain from the proposals; and 472 (11.4%) will lose as a result of the proposals.
- 3.13. All residents identified as losing out through these proposals will be contacted and invited to contribute to the consultation and invited to seek additional support to ensure they are maximising their income and offered debt advice. Access to the Crisis and Resilience Fund may be appropriate in some cases.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Council Tax Support Scheme indirectly supports all aspects of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, by supporting our most vulnerable residents.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. A banded income scheme will reduce the number of letters and bills issued to residents and an automated application process should reduce customer journeys and contacts.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The Council will have to fully adhere to the statement of intent previously issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government which specifies that it must:
- Consult any major precepting authority;
 - Publish a draft scheme in such a manner as it thinks fit; and
 - Consult other such persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

- 6.2. It is proposed that the Council will undertake a public consultation exercise on the recommended scheme set out at Appendix 2 to ensure it gives the best possible opportunity for interested parties to put forward their views. In addition, a listening and engagement session with key stakeholders is planned to discuss the options described and potential impacts.
- 6.3. Consultation will include writing/emailing to a representative sample of council tax payers, including those impacted by the scheme changes. We will also provide an online questionnaire using the Council's consultation portal to capture resident's views about the proposed changes.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The implications for reducing inequalities will be considered and assessed as set out below.
- 7.2. Government has stated that Council Tax Support Schemes should provide support for the most vulnerable; however, they have not prescribed the protection that local authorities should provide for vulnerable groups other than pensioners.
- 7.3. In designing local schemes authorities are reminded of their responsibilities in relation to vulnerable groups and individuals and the Department for Communities and Local Government (now MHCLG) consultation response makes specific reference to the following Acts: (a) The Child Poverty Act 2010, which imposes a duty on local authorities and their partners to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their local areas; (b) The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; (c) the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, which includes a range of duties relating to the welfare needs of disabled people; and (d) The Housing Act 1996, which gives local authorities a duty to prevent homelessness with special regard to vulnerable groups.
- 7.4. A full equality impact assessment will be completed, and consultation will take place with appropriate groups with protected characteristics that may be affected by changes to entitlement. We will also use the equality impact assessment to identify any unintended consequences for vulnerable groups to ensure that our local scheme is fair and equitable.

8. Health Implications

- 8.1. The Council Tax Support Scheme is intended to help those who are financially vulnerable and, by its nature, will inevitably have some health and wellbeing impact on residents who are struggling to pay outstanding debts due to low-income levels and/or high levels of expenditure.
- 8.2. Simplifying the system and automating the application process is intended to help residents access the council tax support they are entitled to quickly and easily. The banded income scheme should reduce the number of amended bills they receive under the current scheme and enable them to budget for payments with more certainty.
- 8.3. Reducing the administrative burdens should enable staff to spend more time supporting the most vulnerable customers working closely with the crisis and resilience team in the Council to ensure income maximisation and debt advice can be given quickly.
- 8.4. These proposals should help reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing between different groups.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. Whilst there are no immediate changes planned nationally for Council or Council tax Support Schemes, it has been suggested that these may be reviewed by government soon, with the possibility of a national scheme being re-introduced for Council Tax Support
- 9.2. These changes could lead to an increase in Council Tax Support awards and therefore increase the cost of the scheme, we will need to regularly monitor the position and potentially review the scheme in subsequent years.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. A Council Tax Support Scheme for working age charge payers is made under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, which introduced the council tax reduction scheme.
- 10.2. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 contain the mandatory elements for any local scheme and details the scheme that must be adopted for pensioners.
- 10.3. The Council must ensure that it follows the correct statutory process for consulting upon any changes to its Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the scheme must be approved by Full Council as part of the charge setting process.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. The cost of the Scheme is funded through the Collection Fund, and it is therefore important to have regard to all council tax charge payers when determining the amount of spend incurred. The estimated cost of the scheme must be considered when fixing the Council Tax Base and the cost is met by Reading Borough Council as well as the major precepting bodies.
- 11.2. This proposal has been modelled as a cost neutral scheme, although by its nature costs can fluctuate during the year depending on local and national factors impacting residents' income.
- 11.3. Based on data extracted in May 2026. current scheme and proposed scheme costs are estimated as follows: -

	No.	Current	Banded Scheme	Difference	
Working Age - Single	2291	£2,439,373.08	£2,478,008.86	-£38,635.78	-1.58%
Working Age - Couple	244	£341,163.50	£331,520.73	£9,642.77	2.83%
Working Age - 1 Child +	676	£781,215.03	£769,920.91	£11,294.12	1.45%
Working Age - 2 Child +	515	£602,551.77	£596,261.17	£6,290.60	1.04%
Working Age - 3 Child +	274	£326,620.43	£327,342.71	-£722.28	-0.22%
Working Age - 4 Child +	101	£119,857.82	£120,102.02	-£244.20	-0.20%
Working Age - 5 Child +	56	£71,019.28	£67,138.87	£3,880.41	5.46%
Working Age - Passported	17	£22,039.12	£22,039.12	£0.00	0.00%
		£4,703,840.03	£4,712,334.39	-£8,494.36	

- 11.4. The proposal offers value for money savings through reduced cost of administration and automation of the process; these savings should include reduced print and postage costs because of fewer bills and letters being issued. Last year we issued around 8,500 council tax support adjustment notices during the year against a caseload of 7,200 claimants, with just over 4,000 of these being working age claimants. A modest reduction in the number of notices issued should deliver around £5,000 reduction in print and postage cost.
- 11.5. Spending more time supporting vulnerable residents with debt advice and income maximisation opportunities could improve collection rates and ultimately reduce the cost of the scheme.
- 11.6. The work of modelling, consultation and development of the scheme is being undertaken in-house and should be funded within existing budget, although there will be some costs associated with the process.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1. The scheme must be approved as part of the budget setting process and there are several activities that are required before this can be finalised. A timetable of events is set out below; -

Aug/Sept	Ongoing discussions with staff and key stakeholders and major preceptors.
August	Prepare and review full Equality Impact Assessment.
16/09/2026	Public consultation on proposed Council Tax Support Scheme approved. (17 th September to the 19 th November 2026)
Aug/Sept/Oct/Nov	System testing and constant review of model data.
Oct/Nov/Dec	Conduct Public Consultation and analyse results and make direct contact with residents identified as potentially at risk of losing support under these proposals to offer advice and support.
Dec	Agree any changes to proposed scheme based on consultation outcomes.
Dec	Approve taxbase calculation taking account of the proposed scheme.
Feb	Scheme details approved as part of charge setting process at Full Council.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1. There are none

Appendices

1. Council Tax Support Scheme Options
2. Council Tax Support Scheme recommended for consultation

Working Age - Council Tax Support Scheme Options (Considered but not preferred)

Before deciding on a preferred scheme officers considered several options.

Using our test data extracted in May 2026 we tested several different schemes, with the objectives detailed in para 3.3 of this report.

Types of Schemes modelled: -

- Could we retain or enhance current scheme
- Simple Discount Scheme (No zero limit, i.e. all current applicants would qualify)
- Simple Discount Scheme exempting/excluding Childcare costs and Housing Costs.
- Banded Scheme by household two household types, single or couples.

The review of these options has been an iterative process. At each stage it was evident that there were issues that needed resolving.

All schemes modelled excluded incomes such as Personal Independent Payments/Disability Living Allowance, Child Benefit, and War Pensions, as well as certain elements of universal credit payments.

The table below gives a snapshot of the schemes that are being discounted as options for consultation because they do not meet all the success criteria set down.

INITIAL OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT DISCOUNTED

	Current	Simple Banded – Income scheme	Simple Bands – Some Additional Income Excluded – 100% Max	Single/Couple max – Further Income exemptions	Single/Couple– Further Income exemptions
		BASIC 1	BASIC 2	Household Bands 100%	Household Bands 70% max
Claimants	4174	4174	3969	4094	4173
Cost of scheme	£4,703,840	£3,075,596	£4,845,226	£4,535,947	£4,686,848
Winners		830	2809	1683	197
Losers		3344	1365	2491	364
No change		0	0	0	3612
	Does Not fully meet principles although could do some automation	Too many losers	Losers reduced but still too high	Too many losers	More Balanced, meets principles but concerns over cliff edge and 2 child cap

The single/couple scheme in the previous table did deliver most of the requirements set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report and this was structured as follows: -

	Council Tax Support Discount					
	70%	56%	42%	28%	14%	0%
Single	£0 - £160	£161 - £240	£241 - £320	£321 - £400	£401 - £480	£481+
Couple	£0 - £240	£241 - £320	£321 - £400	£401 - £480	£481 - £560	£561+
Single +1 child	£0 - £240	£241 - £320	£321 - £400	£401 - £480	£481 - £560	£560+
Couple +1 child	£0 - £320	£321 - £400	£401 - £480	£481 - £560	£561 - £640	£640+
Single +2 child	£0 - £320	£321 - £400	£401 - £480	£481 - £560	£561 - £640	£640+
Couple + 2 child	£0 - £400	£401 - £480	£481 - £560	£561 - £640	£641 - £720	£720+

This was eventually discounted because: (a) it did not recognise the issues created by the child cap; and (b) it was felt the spacing of the bands created too many cliff edges. A cliff edge being where a claimant sees their income increase resulting in a big change in their discounted award.

To address the two remaining issues a proposed scheme to be consulted upon is shown at Appendix 2.

Council Tax Support Scheme for Consultation

The following table illustrates the proposed scheme Income Bands and Claimant Type.

	Discount to be awarded against Council Tax Liability								
	70%	65%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
Working Age - Single	£0-£160	£160.01 - £180	£180.01 - £200	£200.01 - £240	£240.01 - £280	£280.01 - £320	£320.01 - £360	£360.01 - £400	£400.01+
Working Age - Couple	£0-£200	£200.01 - £220	£220.01 - £240	£240.01 - £280	£280.01 - £320	£320.01 - £360	£360.01 - £400	£400.01 - £440	£440.01+
Working Age - 1 Child +	£0-£200	£200.01 - £220	£220.01 - £240	£240.01 - £280	£280.01 - £320	£320.01 - £360	£360.01 - £400	£400.01 - £440	£440.01+
Working Age - 2 Child +	£0-£260	£260.01 - £280	£280.01 - £300	£300.01 - £340	£340.01 - £380	£380.01 - £420	£420.01 - £460	£460.01 - £500	£500.01+
Working Age - 3 Child +	£0-£320	£320.01 - £340	£340.01 - £360	£360.01 - £400	£400.01 - £440	£440.01 - £480	£480.01 - £520	£520.01 - £560	£560.01+
Working Age - 4 Child +	£0-£380	£380.01 - £400	£400.01 - £420	£420.01 - £460	£460.01 - £500	£500.01 - £540	£540.01 - £580	£580.01 - £620	£620.01+
Working Age - 5 Child +	£0-£440	£440.01 - £460	£460.01 - £480	£480.01 - £520	£520.01 - £560	£560.01 - £600	£600.01 - £640	£640.01 - £680	£680.01+

Income figures relate to weekly income.

The key changes between this scheme and the current scheme are that:

- This scheme introduces income bands rather than using applicable amounts, enabling fluctuations in income without the need to re-calculate awards and issue additional letters and bills;
- A £25 income disregard is introduced for those who have earned income;
- Backdating of late claims will increase from 1 to 3 months;
- We will use Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data notifications of universal credit as an application and change of circumstances rather than waiting for the charger payer to apply.

Most of our working age claimants receive Universal Credit, which is administered by the DWP, so using the notifications we receive, the following assessed elements will be treated as follows:

Universal Credit Elements	Treat as income in proposed scheme?	
	Yes	No
Standard Allowance	✓	
Child Element	✓	
Disabled Child Element		✓
Housing Cost Element		✓
Capability for Work Element		✓
Carer Element		✓
Childcare Costs Element		✓
Transitional Protection Element	✓	

In addition, we propose disregarding the following income types:

- Child Benefit;
- Child maintenance/support for children;
- Personal Independence Payments;
- Disability Living Allowance;
- War Pensions;
- Fostering payments.

All other income (e.g. wages, self-employed income) will continue to be used to calculate income.

Capital income will remain capped at £6,000 and awards will be made up to a maximum of 70% of Band D council tax charges for properties that are Band D & above.

Based on the above criteria and using live data extracted in May 2026, the new scheme awards will be allocated in the following Bands.

Council Tax Support Scheme	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8	Band 9
Groups	70%	65%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
Working Age - Single	2,152	55	32	37	10	2	1	1	1
Working Age - Couple	177	7	21	21	9	4	4	1	
Working Age - 1 Child +	488	42	87	30	22	3	3	1	
Working Age - 2 Child +	395	13	56	30	13	6	1		1
Working Age - 3 Child +	227	5	10	20	9	1	1	1	
Working Age - 4 Child +	66	12	2	19	1	1			
Working Age - 5 Child +	40	6		3	3	2	1	1	
Working Age - Passported	17								
Total	3,562	140	208	160	67	19	11	5	2

The above table shows that only 2 of the existing claims will no longer qualify under the new scheme.

This table below shows how many cases will gain and stay the same as under the current scheme.

Council Tax Support Scheme	Increase in CTS awarded						No Change
Group Description	£1000+	£750+	£500+	£250+	£100+	£1+	£0
Working Age - Single	1	7	30	44	120	15	1970
Working Age - Couple	1	3	11	4	9		164
Working Age - 1 Child +		1	15	20	50	8	426
Working Age - 2 Child +			10	25	32	4	355
Working Age - 3 Child +		2	6	8	22	2	202
Working Age - 4 Child +	2		4	3	7	3	56
Working Age - 5 Child +	1		1	1	3	2	35
Working Age - Passported							17
Total	5	13	77	105	243	34	3225

477 claimants will gain between £1 and £1,000 + as a result of these proposals with 3,225 claimants seeing no change in their award.

Council Tax Support Scheme	Decrease in CTS awarded							
Group Description	£1+	£100+	£250+	£500+	£750+	£1000+	£1250+	£1500+
Working Age - Single	38	30	28	8				
Working Age - Couple	4	20	11	9	3	4	1	
Working Age - 1 Child +	29	86	25	11	4	1		
Working Age - 2 Child +	12	45	22	6	3			1
Working Age - 3 Child +	2	11	13	5	1			
Working Age - 4 Child +	10	4	9	2		1		
Working Age - 5 Child +	3	1	3	3	2			1
Working Age - Passported								
Total	98	197	111	44	13	6	1	2

472 claimants will see a reduction in their awards based on these proposals.

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Policy Committee

16 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	2026/27 Quarter 1 Performance & Monitoring Report
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Chloe Hennessy, Head of Finance – Resources & Corporate
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Darren Carter, Director of Finance
Lead Councillor	Councillor McEwan, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services & Resources
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	That Policy Committee notes: 1. That the forecast General Fund revenue outturn position for Quarter 1 is a net pressure of £5.334m (Appendix 1); 2. That £0.578m (9%) of the total savings target and £0.181m (4%) of vacancy factor targets are included within directorate budget forecasts as pressures, with the remaining £5.707m (91%) of savings targets and £4.294m (96%) of vacancy factor targets currently forecast to be delivered in full (Appendix 2); 3. That the General Fund Capital Programme is forecasting a positive net variance of £0.310m against the proposed revised budget of £67.088m (Appendix 3); 4. That there is a total £2.040m Delivery Fund available for 2026/27 (inclusive of 2025/26 approved carry forwards). At Quarter 1, £1.830m of this funding has been allocated out to approved schemes; 5. That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting a balanced budget as at the end of Quarter 1, which includes a forecast drawdown from HRA Reserves of £3.161m; 6. That the HRA Capital Programme is forecasting to spend to budget against the proposed revised budget of £61.745m (Appendix 4); 7. The performance achieved against the Council Plan success measures as set out in Section 12 of this report and Appendices 5 and 6. That Policy Committee approves: 8. The amendments to the General Fund Capital Programme (as set out in Section 8 of this report and Appendix 3) resulting in a revised Capital Programme budget of £67.088m for 2026/27; 9. The amendments to the HRA Capital Programme (as set out in further detail in Section 11 of this report and Appendix 4) resulting in a revised HRA Capital Programme budget of £61.745m for 2026/27; 10. The write-off of debts as set out in Section 6 and Appendix 7 relating to:

	a) Non-Domestic Rates - £440,982.01; b) Sundry Debt - £29,862.19.
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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

General Fund – Revenue

- 1.1 The overall forecast variance for Quarter 1 is a net pressure of £5.334m. The main pressures are set out below:

Children's Services

- 1.2 Net cost pressures totalling £4.020m are forecast within Children's Services, which continues to be driven primarily by increasing demand and cost pressures within statutory services, combined with rising placement costs, a continued reliance on agency workers and other operational challenges across the service.

Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

- 1.3 Net pressures totalling £0.925m are forecast within Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, which has primarily arisen from a projected overspend on agency and overtime costs in Waste Collection and vehicle hire and maintenance costs in Fleet Management.

Corporate Budgets

- 1.4 Corporate Budgets is forecasting a net pressure of £0.283m, of which £0.200m relates to Capital Financing pressures. It is currently assumed that £1.088m of the Corporate Contingency budget will be needed to fund pressures included in the Other Corporate Budgets forecast arising from the 2026/27 pay award.

Savings

- 1.5 The Quarter 1 forecast shows that £0.578m (9%) of the total savings target is included within directorate budget forecasts as pressures, with the remaining £5.707m (91%) currently forecast to be delivered in full. Currently, 15% of savings have completed all their delivery milestones, 29% are in the early stages of delivery, 43% are in the mid stages and 13% are in the late stages.
- 1.6 The Quarter 1 forecast also shows that £0.181m (4%) of the total vacancy factor target is included within directorate budget forecasts as pressures, predominantly within DEGNS. Of the remaining target, £3.805m (85%) has currently been identified against specific budgets as deliverable and £0.489m (11%) remains unidentified but forecast to be delivered by the end of the year.

- 1.7 The Savings Tracker and Vacancy Factor Tracker, which lists progress against each target is attached as Appendix 2.

General Fund – Capital

- 1.8 The General Fund Capital Programme had an original budget for 2026/27 of £56.205m which was approved as part of the 2026/27 Budget. This budget was revised to £81.126m following approved adjustments as part of the 2025/26 Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 Performance and Monitoring reports to Policy Committee.
- 1.9 This report is requesting further adjustments, as set out at summary level in Section 8 and in detail in Appendix 3, that would result in a revised approved budget of £67.088m for 2026/27.
- 1.10 At Quarter 1, against the proposed revised budget of £67.088m, the current forecast is a net positive variance of £0.310m. This variance relates entirely to the Delivery Fund. The General Fund Capital Programme is set out in more detail in Section 8 and Appendix 3.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revenue

- 1.11 At Quarter 1, the forecast revenue outturn position on the HRA is a balanced budget, which includes a drawdown from the HRA Reserve of £3.161m. Further details are set out in Section 10.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Capital

- 1.12 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme had an original budget of £67.310m which was approved as part of the 2026/27 Budget. This budget was revised to £85.723m following approved adjustments as part of the 2025/26 Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 Performance and Monitoring reports to Policy Committee.
- 1.13 This report is requesting further adjustments, as set out at summary level in Section 11 and in detail in Appendix 4, that would result in a revised budget of £61.745m for 2026/27.
- 1.14 At Quarter 1, the HRA Capital Programme is forecasting to spend to budget against the proposed revised budget of £61.745m. The HRA Capital Programme is set out in more detail in Section 11 and Appendix 4.

Performance

- 1.15 The report also sets out performance against the measures of success published in the Council Plan.
- 1.16 Of the 18 Council Plan Performance Measures monitored monthly or quarterly, 50% are currently at or above target (green), 22% are within 10% of the target (amber), 28% are 10% or more off target (red) and none are outstanding.
- 1.17 Of the 50 Council Plan Projects, 4% are currently delivered (blue), 72% are on track (green), 22% are at risk (amber) and 2% are off track (red).
- 1.18 The full list of Performance Measures is attached at Appendix 5 and Projects as Appendix 6.

2 Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council approved the 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 – 2028/29 in February 2026.

3 General Fund – Revenue

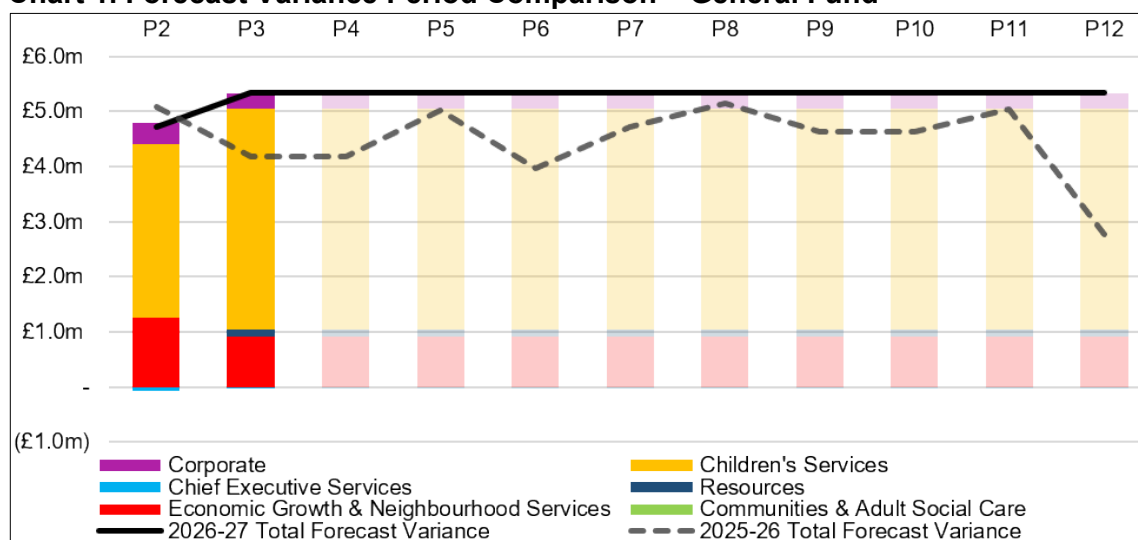
- 3.1 The forecast outturn position of the General Revenue Fund is a net pressure of £5.334m.

Table 1. General Revenue Fund Forecast by Directorate 2026/27

	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Communities & Adult Social Care	73.815	73.815	-
Children's Services	62.896	66.916	4.020
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	24.187	25.112	0.925
Resources	24.145	24.256	0.111
Chief Executive Services	1.580	1.575	(0.005)
Total Service Expenditure	186.623	191.674	5.051
Capital Financing	17.215	17.415	0.200
Contingencies	1.983	0.895	(1.088)
Other Corporate Budgets	1.143	2.314	1.171
Movement in Reserves	(7.302)	(7.302)	-
Total Corporate Budgets	13.039	13.322	0.283
Net Budget Requirement	199.662	204.996	5.334
Financed by:			
Council Tax Income	(134.176)	(134.176)	-
NNDR Local Share	(34.808)	(34.808)	-
Revenue Support Grant	(36.740)	(36.740)	-
One-off Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	6.062	6.062	-
Total Funding	(199.662)	(199.662)	-
Net Total Cost	-	5.334	5.334

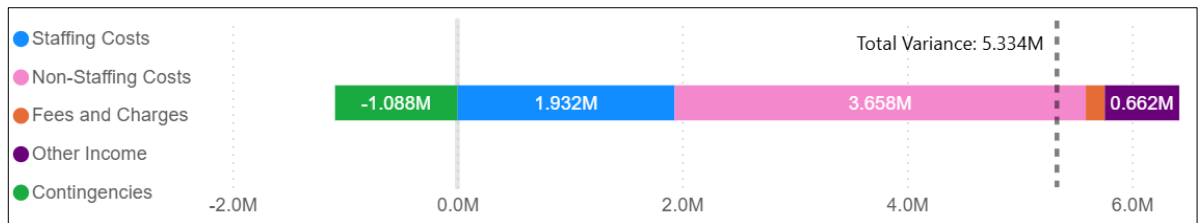
Graphical Information

Chart 1. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – General Fund



- 3.2 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by directorate, compared to last year.

Chart 2. Split of Total Variance – General Fund



- 3.3 This chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for the General Fund by high level category.

Communities & Adult Social Care (DCASC) - Balanced Budget

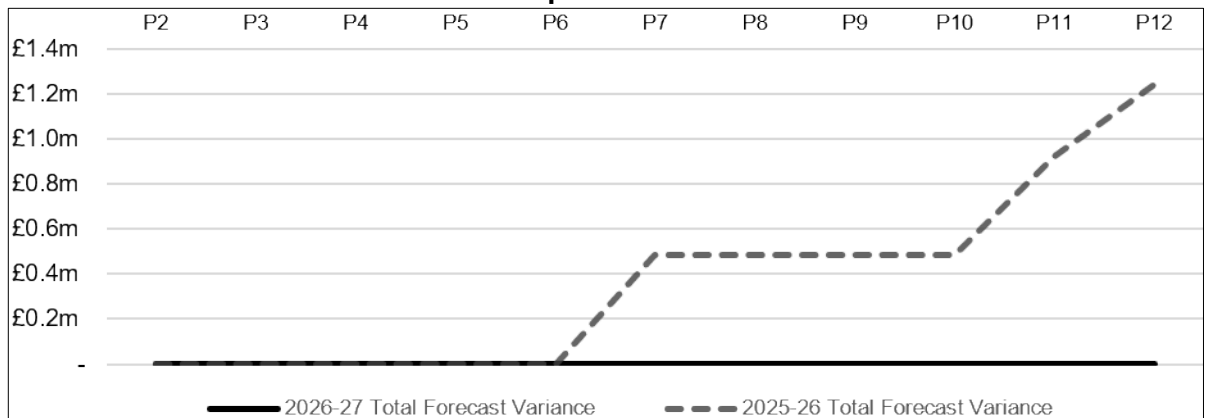
- 3.4 DCASC is forecasting a balanced budget at Quarter 1.

Table 2. DCASC Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(8.001)	(8.001)	-
Adult Social Care Operations	67.261	67.261	-
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	7.684	7.684	-
Communities & Adult Social Care Management	1.547	1.547	-
Public Health	-	-	-
Housing & Communities	5.324	5.324	-
Net Total Cost	73.815	73.815	-

Graphical Information

Chart 3. Forecast Variance Period Comparison - DCASC

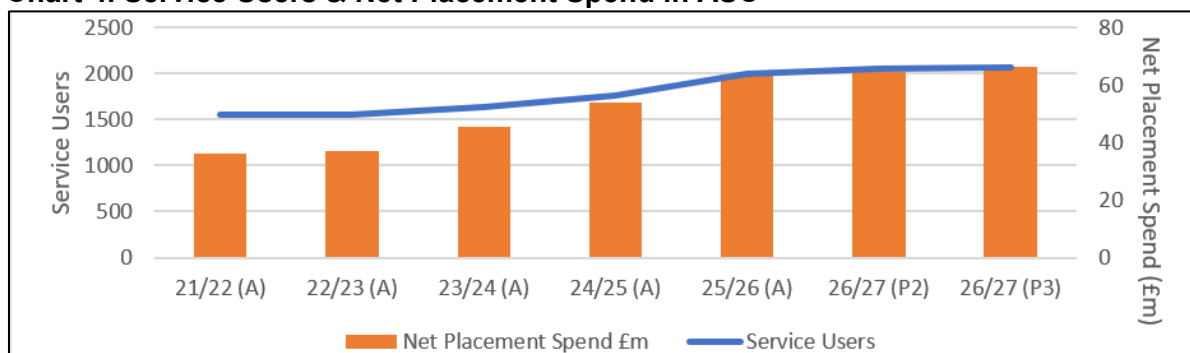


- 3.5 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within DCASC, compared to last year.

Adult Social Care Operations – Balanced Budget

- 3.6 Adult Social Care (ASC) is forecasting a balanced budget.
- 3.7 The number of service users was 2,013 on 1st April 2026, which increased to 2,071 by 30th June 2026. New service users are in the majority from the older adult age cohort (65+) representing 64% of new service users. This is more aligned to expectations, following higher growth than expected in the working age adult cohort in the past financial year.
- 3.8 The graph below illustrates the increase in service user numbers against the placement expenditure commitment for the service user cohort from 2021/22 to 2026/27 Quarter 1.

Chart 4. Service Users & Net Placement Spend in ASC

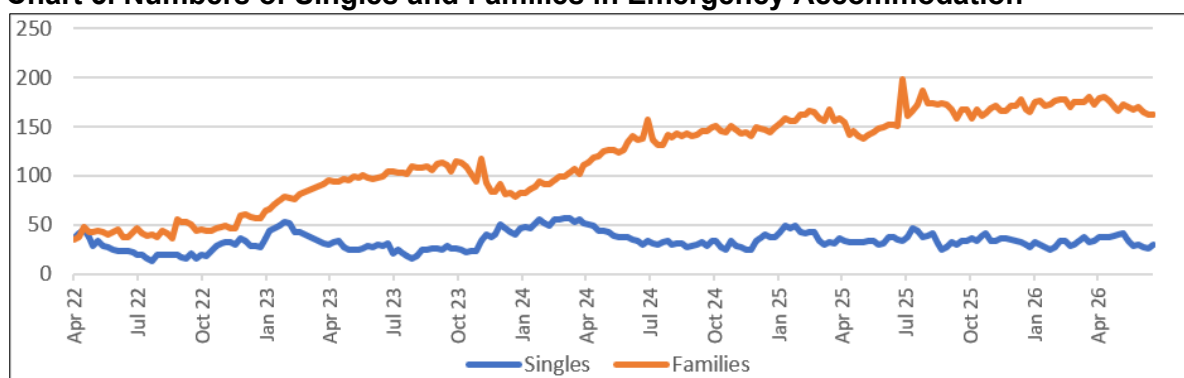


- 3.9 The most common service provision for new service users is Homecare, with an average cost per week of £264, whilst the average cost of placement across all service users across 2025/26 was £500 per week.
- 3.10 Adult Social care has MTFS savings totalling £3.310m for 2026/27 (excluding the vacancy factor) which are expected to be realised in full.
- 3.11 Preliminary work is underway to establish a recovery plan to offset pressures that may arise throughout the year due to a higher than expected increase in demand and complexity of need. Around £2m of potential pressures are noted as a risk that may arise throughout the year but not included in the forecast.
- 3.12 In addition, the service has received £1.5m of care provider inflation appeals following the inflation offer for existing placements for 2026/27. The budgeted level of inflation is included in the forecast, and appeals received will be reviewed and benchmarked before being quantified into an adjustment against the forecast.

Housing & Communities – Balanced Budget

- 3.13 Housing & Communities is forecasting a balanced budget, due to an additional £0.392m provided in the 2026/27 budget for Emergency Accommodation (EA) compared to 2025/26.
- 3.14 The number of singles and families in need of EA is currently 193, which is a decrease from the level of 213 as at the end of March 2026, as illustrated in the chart below.

Chart 5. Numbers of Singles and Families in Emergency Accommodation



- 3.15 The average nightly rate is the other cost driver on homelessness budgets. As at the end of June 2026, the average nightly rate was £82.00, compared to £82.85 as at the end of March 2026, as illustrated in the chart below.

Chart 6. Average Nightly Rate per Emergency Accommodation Placement



Children's Services (DOCS) - £4.020m Net Pressure

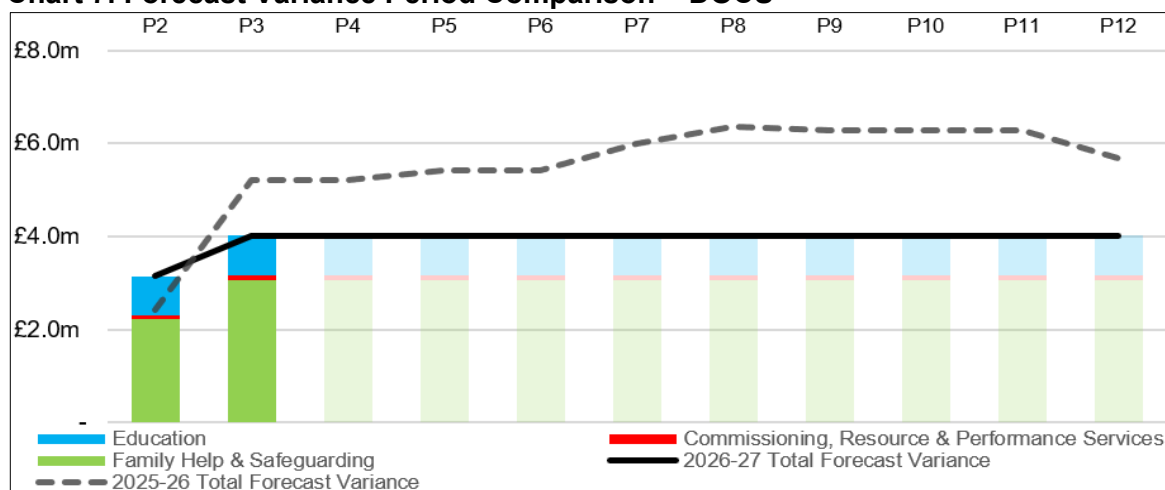
- 3.16 DOCS is forecasting a net pressure of £4.020m. The variance is driven primarily by increasing demand and cost pressures within statutory services, combined with rising placement costs and other operational challenges across the service.

Table 3. DOCS Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Family Help & Safeguarding	54.430	57.489	3.059
Commissioning, Resource & Performance Services	2.464	2.574	0.110
Education	6.002	6.853	0.851
Net Total Cost	62.896	66.916	4.020

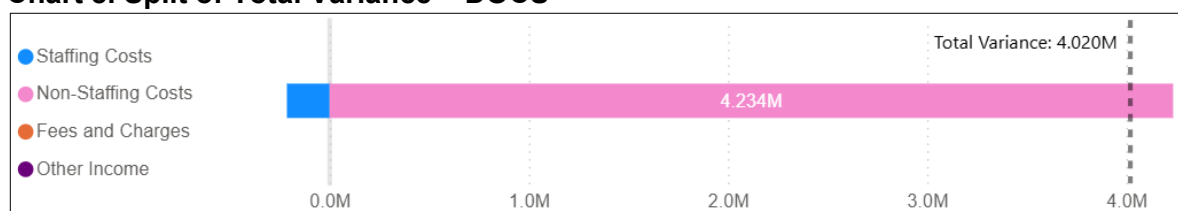
Graphical Information

Chart 7. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – DOCS



- 3.17 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within DOCS, compared to last year.

Chart 8. Split of Total Variance – DOCS



- 3.18 This chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for DOCS by high level category.

Family Help and Safeguarding – £3.059m Net Pressure

- 3.19 The main areas of financial pressure within Family Help & Safeguarding relate to placement costs. The care-related pressure reflects ongoing commitments and cost levels carried forward from the 2025/26 financial year.
- 3.20 The service is working through additional mitigations to bring in a balanced budget, including:
- Placement Stability & Sufficiency – to focus on challenging fee uplifts, reviewing cost breakdowns and packages of care, renegotiating costs, high-cost placement clinics, and placement panels to manage spend and negotiate better rates.
 - Edge of Care / Reunification / Family Help – to strengthen services that have already had positive results including preventing children from coming into care, successful reunification home, ceasing placements and placement stabilisation.
 - Recovering more NHS Continuing Healthcare / CCHC contributions – ensuring the right partner pays the right share where criteria are met.

Commissioning, Resource & Performance Services – £0.110m Net Pressure

- 3.21 Commissioning, Resource & Performance Services is forecasting a net pressure of £0.110m relating to staffing costs within the Business Support Team. This position reflects, in part, the additional MTFS 2026/27 savings requirement. The service is actively progressing work to identify and deliver mitigating actions, and the position will continue to be kept under close review as these plans are implemented.

Education – £0.851m Net Pressure

- 3.22 The principal financial pressure within Education Services at this early stage of the year relates to continued demand on the home to school transport budget, which remains a significant cost driver within the service. No additional growth was built into the 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to reflect this level of demand, and as a result the current forecast continues to reflect the underlying pressure carried forward from the final position reported in 2025/26.
- 3.23 The service is actively progressing through a range of mitigating actions intended to reduce the scale of the overspend, focused on three main areas:
- Reducing bus routes where this can be achieved safely and appropriately;
 - Maximising the use of larger vehicles to improve transport efficiency;
 - Increasing the use of college/school-led transport arrangements where suitable.
- 3.24 These mitigating actions are currently estimated to deliver savings of £0.451m within the Quarter 1 forecast. After taking these measures into account, a residual overspend of approximately £0.834m remains. Further work to identify additional mitigations is in progress.

Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS) - £0.925m Net Pressure

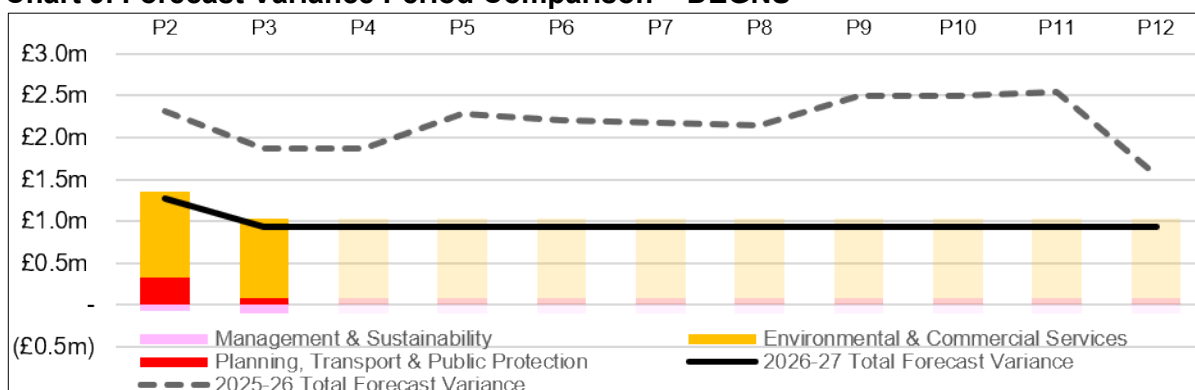
- 3.25 DEGNS is forecasting a net pressure of £0.925m at Quarter 1, which has primarily arisen from a projected overspend on agency and overtime costs in Waste Collection and vehicle hire and maintenance costs in Fleet Management.

Table 4. DEGNS Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	1.383	1.458	0.075
Culture	2.339	2.339	-
Environmental & Commercial Services	18.624	19.574	0.950
Property & Asset Management	0.839	0.839	-
Management & Sustainability	1.002	0.902	(0.100)
Net Total Cost	24.187	25.112	0.925

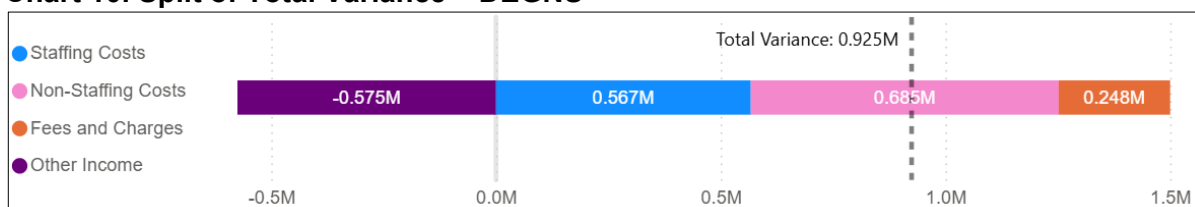
Graphical Information

Chart 9. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – DEGNS



- 3.26 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within DEGNS, compared to last year.

Chart 10. Split of Total Variance – DEGNS



- 3.27 This chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for DEGNS by high level category.

Planning, Transport & Public Protection – £0.075m Net Pressure

- 3.28 Planning, Transport and Public Protection is forecasting a net pressure of £0.075m.

Table 5. Planning, Transport and Public Protection Forecast 2026/27

Area	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Building Control	0.047	0.172	0.125
Planning Services	0.434	0.528	0.094
Regulatory Services	2.545	2.417	(0.128)
Network & Parking Services	(7.211)	(7.227)	(0.016)
Strategic Transportation	5.567	5.567	-
Net Total Cost	1.382	1.457	0.075

Building Control - £0.125m Net Pressure

- 3.29 Continued difficulties in recruiting permanent, qualified staff have contributed to net pressures relating to agency costs and reduced income generation of £0.125m. Measures undertaken during 2025/26 delivered a final overspend of £0.078m and there is a year on year improving position on the previous financial years and this trend is anticipated to continue with work being won from Private Building Control companies.

Planning Services - £0.094m Net Pressure

- 3.30 Reduced income following continued lower than anticipated levels of planning applications, has contributed to a forecast net pressure of £0.094m. The team has acted by promoting the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) on Major schemes, to help contain the income pressures. This current position is consistent with the final outturn in 2025/26, however there are some additional potential benefits from the consultation underway over the future level of fees able to be charged. Major developments which may generate significant fees in the future have not progressed. Staffing vacancies are being closely monitored to minimise costs incurred.

Regulatory Services - £0.128m Net Positive Variance

- 3.31 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) PSH Discretionary licences scheme was implemented at the end of 2025/26, generating additional income, some of which is needed in 2026/27, and some must be carried forward to future years to fund anticipated expenditure on further inspections in 2028/29 & 2029/30. This is identifying a balanced budget position for 2026/27, but is being closely monitored as the scheme is still bedding in.
- 3.32 Alcohol & entertainment licence applications have become static for last 2 years and no growth in applications is anticipated in 2026/27, leading to an income pressure of £0.064m.
- 3.33 Delayed recruitment in Planning Enforcement along with other positive variances across the service have helped to report a positive variance on Regulatory Services of £0.128m.

Network and Parking Services – £0.016m Net Positive Variance

- 3.34 An overall operational cost pressure of £0.582m is offset by £0.598m of incremental income, due to more Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) being issued and an increase in parking volume.

Culture – Balanced Budget

New Directions/Adult Education – £0.023m Net Pressure

- 3.35 New Directions/Adult Education are reporting a net pressure of £0.023m. The service has identified £0.177m of mitigating savings which has reduced the pressure to £0.023m and are continuing to find mitigating measures.

Archives – £0.023m Net Positive Variance

- 3.36 Savings from the agreed board spend from the joint arrangements have contributed a positive variance of £0.023m.

Environmental & Commercial Services – £0.950m Net Pressure

- 3.37 Environmental & Commercial Services is forecasting a net pressure of £0.950m.

Table 6. Environmental & Commercial Services Forecast 2026/27

Area	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Waste Collection	(0.525)	0.275	0.800
Re3 Waste Disposal	10.786	10.511	(0.275)
Highways, Drainage and Network	2.963	2.963	-
Streetscene	4.183	4.183	-
Fleet Management	1.218	1.643	0.425
Net Total Cost	18.625	19.575	0.950

Waste Collection – £0.800m Net Pressure

- 3.38 Agency and overtime costs remain high to ensure round completion, driven by sickness and vehicle failures, creating a pressure of £0.800m. This includes vacancy factor savings of £0.175m that cannot be achieved in this area. A deep dive review into the service including the related pressures on Fleet Management has been undertaken and measures to deal with the pressure on an ongoing basis have been developed for the 2027/28 budget setting process.

Re3 Waste Disposal – £0.275m Net Positive Variance

- 3.39 An underspend of £0.275m is reported in Waste Disposal due to:
- Successful Comms campaigns driving diversion of materials from Residual into higher levels of recycling & food waste at lower overall cost. Garden waste collections are also lower.
 - Insurance provision in budget not being needed.
 - Recyclate income being higher than projected.

Fleet Management – £0.425m Net Pressure

- 3.40 Vehicle Hire costs to ensure that waste collection rounds are completed, mainly due to failure of the electric RCV fleet, and maintenance costs remaining higher than budget have created a net pressure of £0.425m in Fleet Management.

Management & Sustainability – £0.100m Net Positive Variance

- 3.41 Management & Sustainability is forecasting an underspend of £0.100m, due to vacancies within the management team being held until later in the financial year.

Resources (DOR) – £0.111m Net Pressure

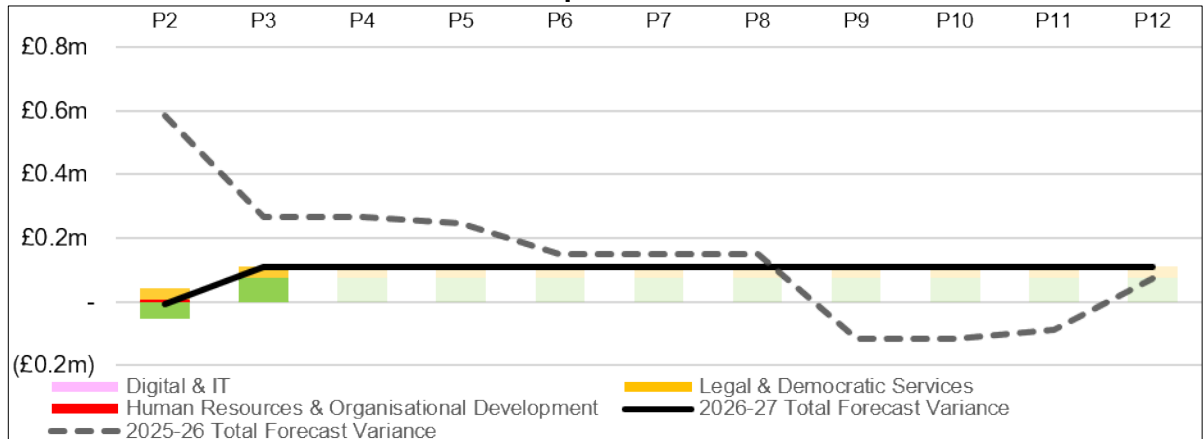
- 3.42 DOR is forecasting a net pressure of £0.111m.

Table 7. DOR Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Policy, Change & Customer Services	5.367	5.443	0.076
Human Resources & Organisational Development	2.461	2.461	-
Finance	6.708	6.708	-
Legal & Democratic Services	2.174	2.209	0.035
Digital & IT	7.435	7.435	-
Net Total Cost	24.145	24.256	0.111

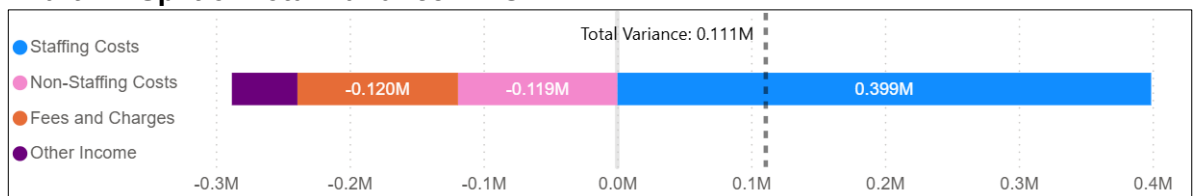
Graphical Information

Chart 11. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – DOR



- 3.43 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within DOR, compared to last year.

Chart 12. Split of Total Variance – DOR



- 3.44 This chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for DOR by high level category.

Policy, Change & Customer Services – £0.076m Net Pressure

- 3.45 There is a pressure of £0.076m in this service. This is predominantly due to an overspend within customer relations and information governance relating to unmet savings and additional staff required to meet growing demand within the service. This has been partially offset by positive variances relating to recharging of the staffing costs related to the crisis resilience fund and managing vacancies across the rest of the services.

Human Resources & Organisational Development – Balanced Budget

- 3.46 Human Resources is currently forecasting a balanced budget. It is anticipated that pressures caused by the need for temporary staffing within emergency planning will be offset through expeditious use of the agency rebate. The level of agency rebate in 2026/27 will be dependent on agency usage during the year.

Finance – Balanced Budget

- 3.47 Finance is currently forecasting a balanced budget and is anticipating to fully deliver its planned savings programme in 2026/27.

Legal & Democratic Services – £0.035m Net Pressure

- 3.48 There is a pressure of £0.035m within Legal Services related to lower Land Charges income, due to a reduction in demand for land searches. This ties in with the broader UK housing market, which has recently seen a drop in transaction volumes due to sustained high interest rates and broader economic uncertainty.

- 3.49 Staffing and agency costs within Legal Services are currently under review. There is work underway to bring forward a restructure in Quarter 2 to address long term structural issues in the funding of the service. Agreeing a revised staffing establishment that is fully funded by a combination of expenditure and recharge budgets will also allow a move away from the long-term use of agency staffing.

Digital & IT – Balanced Budget

- 3.50 Digital & IT is currently forecasting a balanced budget and is anticipating to fully deliver its planned savings programme in 2026/27.

Chief Executive Services (CEX) – £0.005m Net Positive Variance

- 3.51 CEX is forecasting a net positive variance of £0.005m at Quarter 1.

Table 8. CEX Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Executive Management Team	0.944	0.896	(0.048)
Communications	0.636	0.679	0.043
Net Total Cost	1.580	1.575	(0.005)

Executive Management Team – £0.048m Net Positive Variance

- 3.52 Executive Management Team is forecasting a net positive variance of £0.048m, relating to staffing budgets.

Communications – £0.043m Net Pressure

- 3.53 Communications is forecasting a net pressure of £0.043m. This is predominantly related to staffing budget pressures due to difficulty meeting the vacancy factor saving plus the additional cost of events that are being partially offset by additional income across other areas of the service.

Corporate Budgets - £0.283m Net Pressure

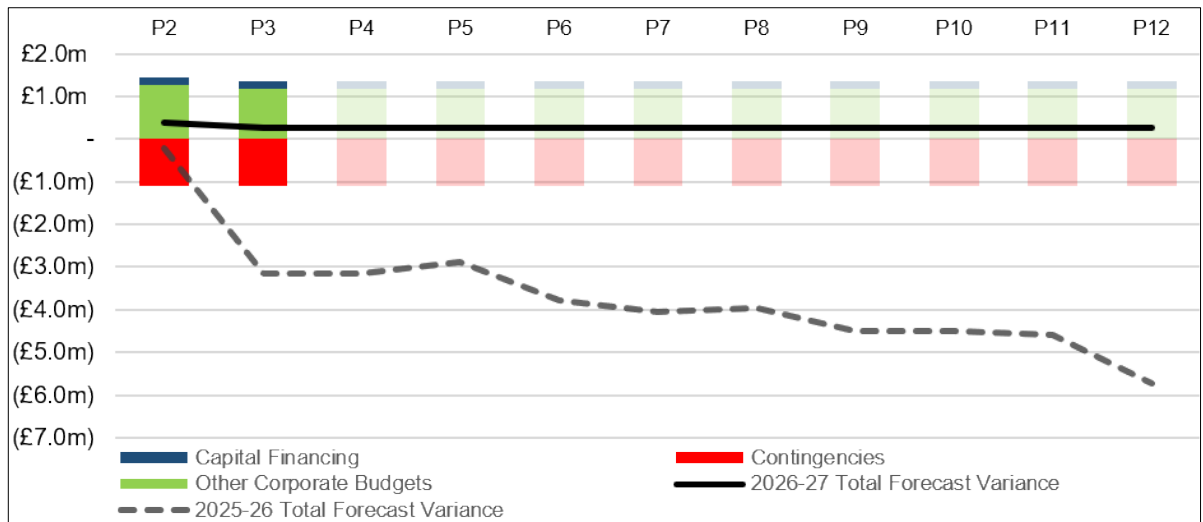
- 3.54 Corporate Budgets is forecasting a net pressure of £0.283m.

Table 9. Corporate Budgets Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Capital Financing	17.215	17.415	0.200
Contingencies	1.983	0.895	(1.088)
Other Corporate Budgets	1.143	2.314	1.171
Movement in Reserves	(7.302)	(7.302)	-
Net Total Cost	13.039	13.322	0.283

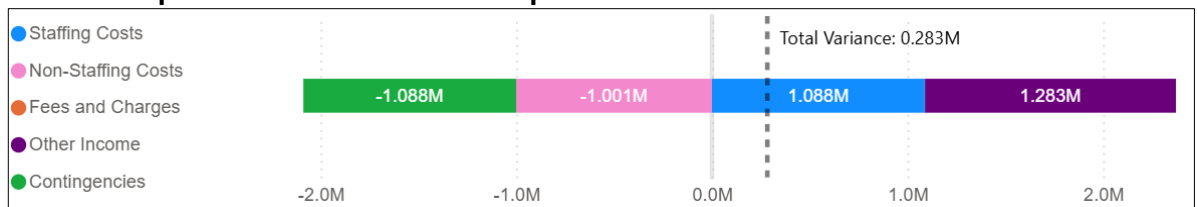
Graphical Information

Chart 13. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – Corporate



- 3.55 This chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within Corporate, compared to last year.

Chart 14. Split of Total Variance – Corporate



- 3.56 This chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for Corporate by high level category.

Capital Financing - £0.200m Net Pressure

- 3.57 Interest receivable is currently forecast to have a net pressure variance of £1.283m as the Council's cash balances have been kept to a minimum. This has been partially offset by a net positive variance of £1.083m on the interest payable budget. It is expected that in 2026/27 that loans will need to be taken in line with the timing of the forecast need to borrow. This keeps the cash balances lower but reduces costs at a time when the interest payable rate outstrips the rate of return on investment.

Other Corporate Budgets - £1.172m Net Pressure

- 3.58 There is a net pressure of £1.088m in relation to 2026/27 pay award and pension assumptions. Debt management expenses are creating an additional pressure of £0.058m and other small net pressures across the service total £0.026m.

Contingencies - £1.088m Net Positive Variance

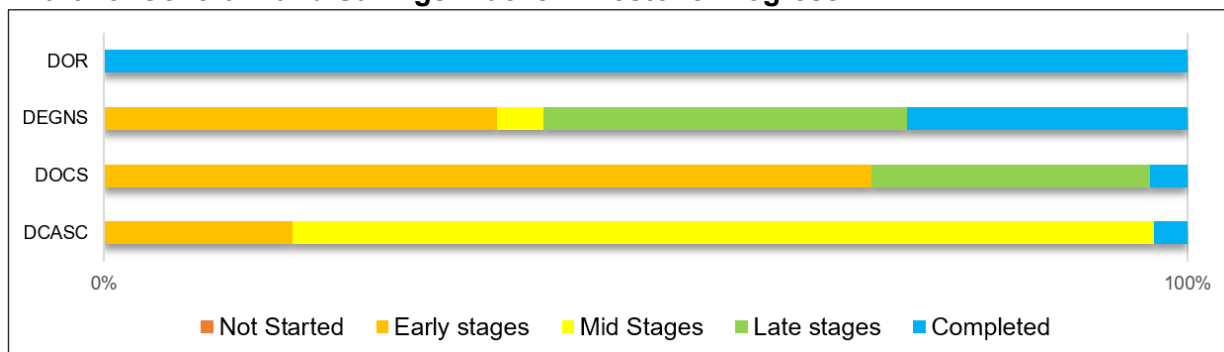
- 3.59 £1.088m has been released from corporate contingencies to cover pressures forecasted in Other Corporate Budgets relating to the 2026/27 pay award and pension costs.

4 Savings Delivery

- 4.1 Delivery of the Council's budget is predicated on achieving savings and additional income as agreed as part of the budget setting process in February 2026. Detailed monitoring of agreed savings, including the vacancy factor is tracked on a monthly basis (Appendix 2).
- 4.2 The 2026/27 savings target is £6.285m, with the progress against the milestones required to deliver the savings within the tracker summarised below:

Table 10. General Fund Savings Tracker Milestone Progress

Directorate	Not Possible	Not Started	Early stages	Mid Stages	Late stages	Completed	Total
DCASC	-	-	575	2,631	-	104	3,310
DOCS	-	-	610	-	221	30	861
DEGNS	-	-	636	75	590	454	1,755
DOR	-	-	-	-	-	359	359
Total	-	-	1,821	2,706	811	947	6,285

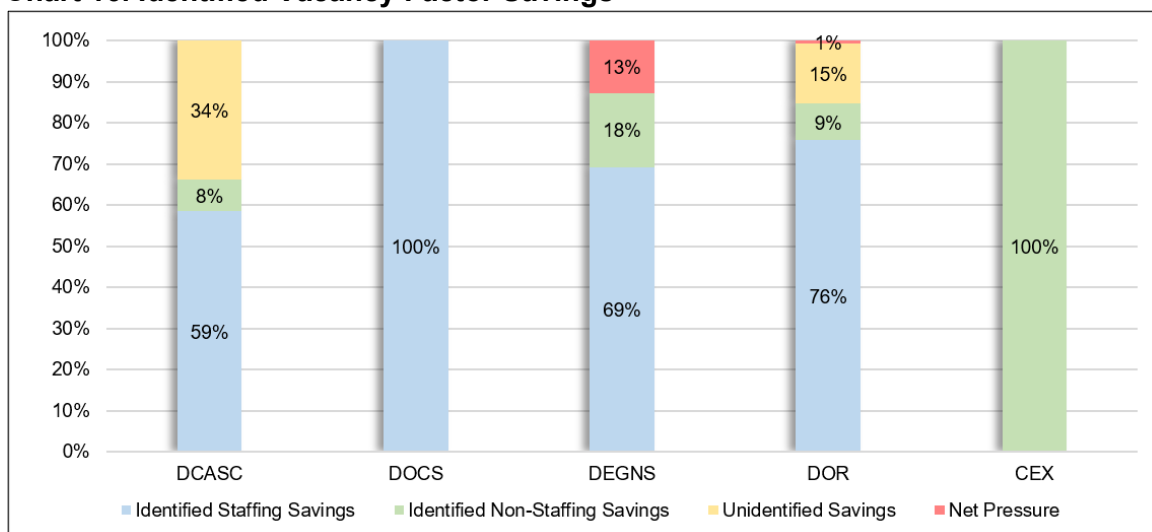
Chart 15. General Fund Savings Tracker Milestone Progress

- 4.3 A breakdown of how much of the savings target per directorate is included as a pressure within the forecasts above is summarised below:

Table 11. General Fund Savings Tracker Net Pressure Summary

Directorate	On Track £m	Net Pressure £m	Total £m
DCASC	3.310	-	3.310
DOCS	0.338	0.523	0.861
DEGNS	1.700	0.055	1.755
DOR	0.359	-	0.359
Total	5.707	0.578	6.285

- 4.4 The 2026/27 vacancy factor target is £4.475m, with a summary of how much of the saving has been identified against specific or non-specific budgets, and how much is currently showing as a pressure within the service budgets, summarised below:

Chart 16. Identified Vacancy Factor Savings**Table 12. Identified Vacancy Factor Savings**

Directorate	Identified Staffing Savings £m	Identified Non-Staffing Savings £m	Unidentified Savings £m	Net Pressure £m	Total £m
DCASC	0.578	0.075	0.334	-	0.987
DOCS	1.025	-	-	-	1.025
DEGNS	0.952	0.247	-	0.175	1.374
DOR	0.794	0.093	0.155	0.006	1.048
CEX	-	0.041	-	-	0.041
Total	3.349	0.456	0.489	0.181	4.475

- 4.5 The Quarter 1 forecast shows that 4% of the total vacancy factor target is included within directorate budget forecasts as pressures, predominantly within DEGNS. Of the remaining target, 85% has currently been identified against specific budgets as deliverable and 11% remains unidentified but forecast to be delivered by the end of the year.

5 Debt Performance

- 5.1 Total General Fund overdue sundry debt as at the end of Quarter 1 is £9.509m.

Chart 17. Split of General Fund Debt by Directorate and Days Outstanding

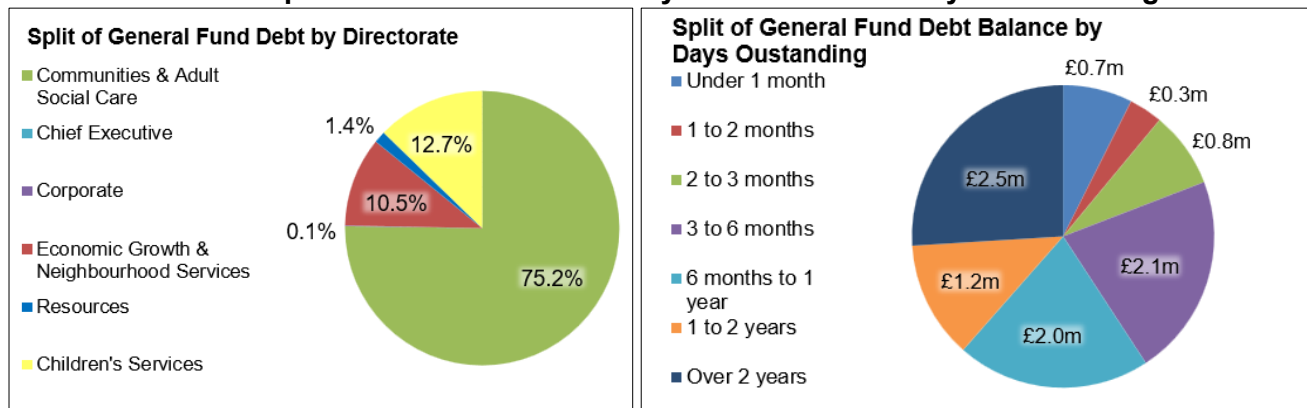
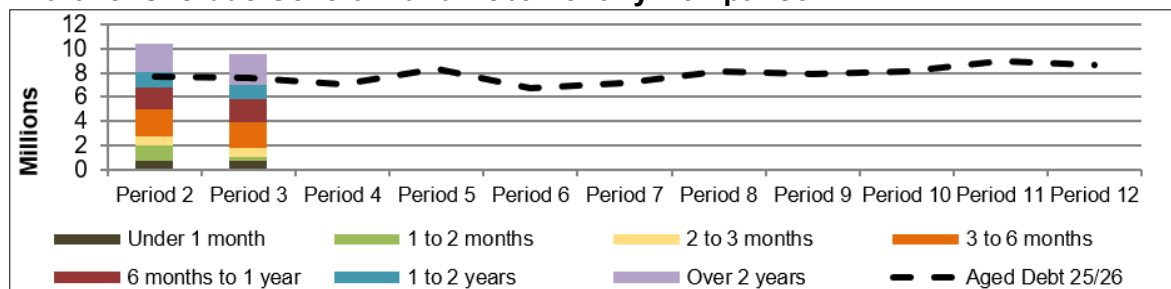


Chart 18. Overdue General Fund Debt Monthly Comparison



6 Debt Write-Off

- 6.1 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 - £440,982.01;
- Sundry Debt - £29,862.19.

- 6.2 The list of specific debts requested to be written off are set out in Appendix 7. It is considered that information contained within Appendix 7 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.

6.3 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.

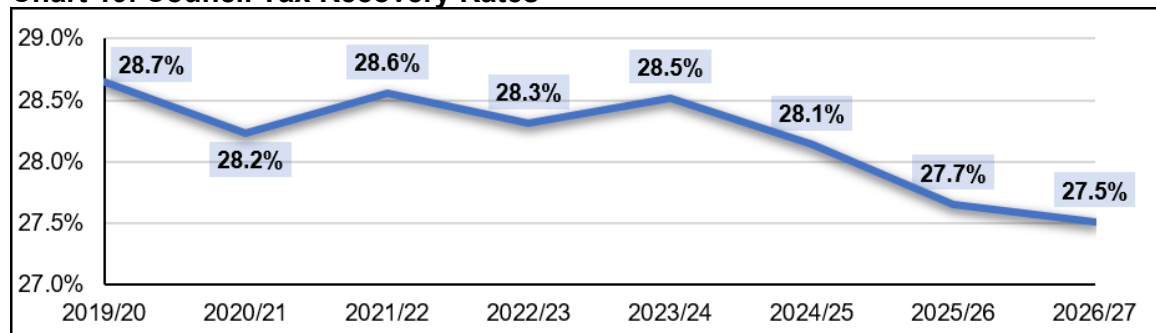
6.4 The cost of non-domestic rates write-offs is shared between the Council (49%), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (1%) and Central Government (50%).

7 Collection Fund

7.1 The following chart shows the Council's collection rate of the total annual debit raised for Council Tax and Non-Domestic (Business) Rates as at the end of Quarter 1.

7.2 Council Tax collection rates are slightly behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to 2025/26 collection rates at the same point last year. This is a similar trend across Berkshire and is likely related to the continuing cost of living crisis.

Chart 19. Council Tax Recovery Rates



7.3 Table 13 shows the collection performance levels for Council Tax across Berkshire:

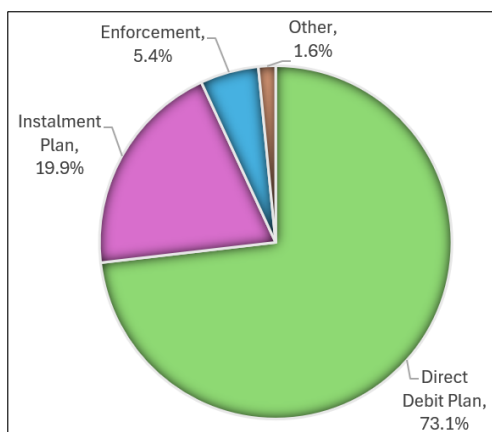
Table 13. Council Tax Collection across Berkshire (Quarter 1)

Council Tax	Comparison to 2025/26
Bracknell	↓ 0.09%
Reading	↓ 0.14%
RBWM	↓ 0.09%
Slough	↓ 0.51%
West Berkshire	↓ 0.05%
Wokingham	↓ 0.12%

7.4 For context, a 0.14% decrease in collection is worth approximately £0.229m to the Collection Fund for 2026/27.

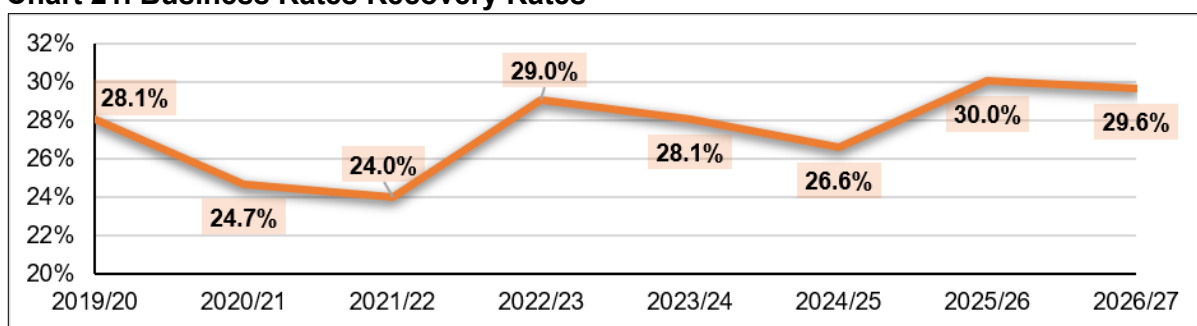
7.5 Chart 20 shows an analysis of 2026/27 Council Tax Arrears as at the end of June 2026.

Chart 20. 2026/27 Council Tax Arrears Analysis



- 7.6 Non-Domestic collection rates are slightly behind the collection levels at the same point when compared to 2025/26 collection rates at the same point last year.

Chart 21. Business Rates Recovery Rates



- 7.7 Table 14 shows the collection performance levels for Business Rates across Berkshire:

Table 14. Business Rates Collection across Berkshire (Quarter 1)

Business Rates	Comparison to 2025/26
Bracknell	↑ 6.50%
Reading	↓ 0.40%
RBWM	↑ 0.42%
Slough	↓ 2.89%
West Berkshire	↑ 0.52%
Wokingham	↓ 1.47%

- 7.8 For context, a 0.4% decrease in collection is worth approximately £0.618m to the Collection Fund for 2026/27.
- 7.9 On the 24th of June 2026, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a briefing note on collection rates for council tax and NNDR in England for 2025/26. The briefing note highlighted the following points:

- A fall of 0.3% in the collection rate for council tax in 2025/26, the first decline since 2020/21;
- A £261m increase in arrears outstanding for the current year, the largest increase since 2020/21;
- Total arrears on council tax outstanding at the end of March 2026 stood at £7.4bn;
- A fall of 0.5% in the collection rate for business rates in 2025/26, the first decline since 2020/21;
- The in-year amount of business rates uncollected in 2025/26 of £1.030bn was the highest since 2021/22.

8 General Fund - Capital Programme

8.1 The General Fund Capital Programme for 2026/27 has an approved budget of £81.126m. The following amendments are requested to be formally approved which would result in a proposed revised Capital Programme budget of £67.088m. These amendments are set out on an individual scheme basis in Appendix 3.

8.2 Against the proposed revised budget of £67.088m there is a positive net variance of £0.310m. This variance relates entirely to the Delivery Fund.

Table 15. General Fund Capital Programme Amendments

General Fund Capital Programme	£m
Revised Approved Budget 2026/27	81.126
Budget Movements Between Schemes	0.000
Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions	2.244
Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions and Borrowing	0.000
Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments	(0.078)
Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years	(16.204)
Proposed Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27	67.088

8.3 Budget movements requested between schemes are set out within Appendix 3.

8.4 A total of £2.244m of additional budget (as set out in Appendix 3) is requested to be formally added into the Capital Programme to be funded by grants and other contributions. This includes:

- £0.863m additional Education capital budget to correctly reflect the grant funding available;
- £0.626m for the new Healthcare Facilities scheme, which is fully funded by a S106 local healthcare contribution. This scheme is expected to commence in 2027/28 so has been subsequently reprofiled into future years;
- £0.459m for the Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector) scheme, to reflect the grant funding available;
- £0.211m for the new Best Start Family Hubs scheme, following the award of grant funding. This has been profiled over 3 years, so £0.142m has been reprofiled into future years;
- £0.063m for the new Building Safety Levy scheme implementation, fully funded by a New Burdens grant allocation;
- £0.022m additional grant funding for other schemes.

8.5 A total of £0.078m of budget (as set out in Appendix 3) is requested to be removed from the Capital Programme where approved CIL local schemes resulted in revenue expenditure, as allowed in the guidance, during 2025/26 rather than capital expenditure, requiring a subsequent capital budget adjustment.

8.6 A net total of £16.204m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed between 2026/27 and future years of the Capital Programme. This includes:

- £5.306m for grant funded Education schemes, to correctly reflect the timescales of the programme of works;
- £2.500m for the Cemetery Land Acquisition scheme, as this scheme has been deferred to 2028/29;
- £2.204m for the Minster Quarter schemes, to reflect current expectations of timings for this scheme;
- £1.400m for the Hexagon Investment scheme;
- £1.138m for the Children's Home for Children with Disabilities scheme;

- £1.000m for the Corporate and Community Buildings scheme due to delays with the programme to refurbish the town hall/museum roof;
- £1.000m for the Corporate Solar Programme scheme;
- £0.626m for the new Healthcare Facilities scheme;
- £0.561m for the Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading scheme;
- £0.469m of net re-programming between years across all other schemes.

8.7 In addition, a net total of £2.780m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed between 2027/28 and future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 3 for the Best Start Family Hubs and Cemetery Land Acquisition schemes and further reprofiling is requested in future years for grant funded Education schemes as set out in Appendix 3.

9 Delivery Fund

9.1 Costs of service transformation and the delivery of future ongoing savings can be charged to capital (and financed from new capital receipts) due to the introduction of the Flexible Capital Receipts Regulations. These regulations have been confirmed to have been extended to 31st March 2030.

9.2 There is a total £2.040m Delivery Fund available for 2026/27 (inclusive of 2025/26 carry forwards) and £1.830m of this funding has been allocated out to approved schemes. At Quarter 1, the forecast spend is £1.730m, which is a net positive variance of £0.310m. A review of any variances will be undertaken as part of 2026/27 outturn processes with any positive variances rolled forward into 2027/28 or returned to the unallocated contingency as appropriate.

10 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revenue

10.1 The approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget assumes a drawdown from HRA reserves of £3.107m. At Quarter 1, the forecast revenue outturn position on the HRA is a balanced budget, which is set out in the following table and explained below.

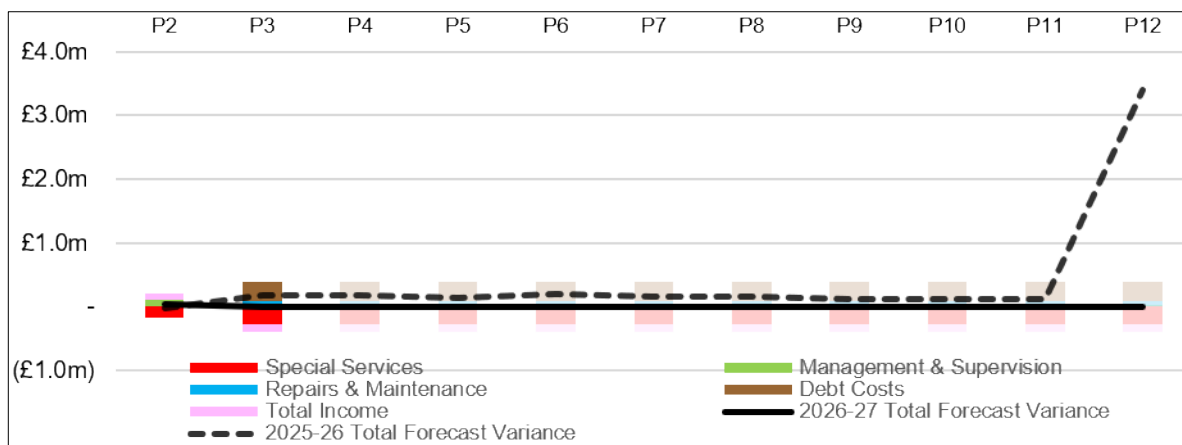
Table 16. HRA Forecast 2026/27

Service	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Management & Supervision	11.949	11.958	0.009
Special Services	5.185	4.912	(0.273)
Provision for Bad Debts	0.518	0.518	-
Repairs & Maintenance	10.048	10.129	0.081
Major Repairs/Depreciation	13.500	13.500	-
Debt Costs	9.123	9.431	0.308
PFI Costs	8.601	8.601	-
Total Income	(55.817)	(55.942)	(0.125)
Over/Under Budget	3.107	3.107	-
Movement to/(from) Reserve	(3.107)	(3.107)	-

Graphical Information

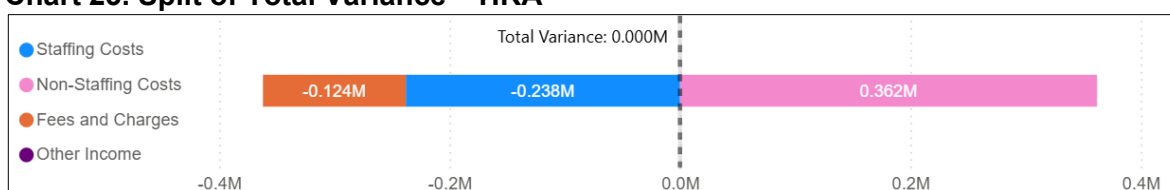
10.2 The following chart summarises the forecast budget variance, split by services within the HRA, for each period to date.

Chart 22. Forecast Variance Period Comparison – HRA



- 10.3 The following chart summarises the overall forecast budget variance for the Housing Revenue Account by high level category

Chart 23. Split of Total Variance – HRA



HRA Expenditure – £0.125m Net Pressure

- 10.4 Management and Supervision is forecasting a pressure of £0.009m due to agency costs.
- 10.5 Special Services, which include sheltered housing schemes, is forecasting a positive variance of £0.273m due to vacancies.
- 10.6 Repairs & Maintenance is forecasting a net pressure of £0.081m. This is due to higher subcontractor labour costs than expected as more work is carried out by subcontractor labour.
- 10.7 Debt costs is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.308m due to higher interest rates than projected in the business plan.

HRA Income – £0.125m Net Positive Variance

- 10.8 Service Charges is forecasting a positive variance of £0.009m. Other Income is forecast to overachieve against the budget by £0.100m. Interest on balances is forecasting a small positive variance of £0.016m due to higher reserves than projected in the business plan.

11 Housing Revenue Account - Capital Programme

- 11.1 The HRA Capital Programme for 2026/27 has an approved budget of £85.723m, including amendments proposed as part of the 2025/26 Quarter 4 Performance and Monitoring Report which is due to be presented for approval by Policy Committee in July. The following amendments are requested to be formally approved which would result in a proposed revised Capital Programme budget of £61.745m. These amendments are set out on an individual scheme basis in Appendix 4.

Table 17. HRA Capital Programme Amendments

HRA Capital Programme	£m
Revised Approved Budget 2026/27	85.723
Budget Movements Between Schemes	0.000

Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions	0.000
Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions and Borrowing	5.043
Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments	0.000
Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years	(29.021)
Proposed Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27	61.745

- 11.2 Budget movements requested between schemes are set out within Appendix 4.
- 11.3 A total of £5.043m of additional budget (as set out in Appendix 4) is requested to be formally added into the Capital Programme to be funded by capital receipts, revenue contributions, borrowing & reserves for the New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 – 4 and the Local authority new build programme for older people and vulnerable adults schemes. This amendment was included as part of the Local Authority New Build Programme update reported to Policy Committee in June 2026.
- 11.4 A net total of £29.021m of budgets are requested to be reprogrammed between 2026/27 and future years of the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4. This includes:
- £13.384m for the Major Repairs – Existing Homes Renewal & Zero Carbon Retrofit works scheme;
 - £8.563m for the New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 – 4 scheme
 - £7.074m for the Local authority new build programme for older people and vulnerable adults scheme.
- 11.5 Further reprofiling across future years, as set out in Appendix 4, is requested for both the New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 – 4 and the Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults schemes, following a detailed review, to reflect the revised estimate of spend to be achieved each year.

12 Council Plan Performance

Summary

- 12.1 This section of the Performance Report sets out progress against the Performance Measures and Projects included in the Council Plan 2025 – 2028 “Investing in Reading’s Future” March 2026 update.
- 12.2 The Council 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 five priorities of:
- 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
- 12.3 The Council Plan update, agreed in March 2026, includes 36 KPIs and 51¹ projects which underpin delivery of the Council’s vision and priorities. Of the 36 KPIs, 18 of these are annual measures.
- 12.4 The full list of Performance KPIs monitored in year is attached at Appendix 5 and Projects as Appendix 6.

¹ Devolution project has been paused

- 12.5 The table below provides a summary of the status of the KPIs and projects at the end of the first quarter of 2026/27.

Table 18. Performance Overview

	Q1 2026/27 Status (No.)			
What	Red	Amber	Green	Complete
Key Measures	5	4	9	N/A
Key Projects	1	11	36	2

Council Plan KPIs

- 12.6 The KPIs are rated as follows:

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

- 12.7 The following table shows performance against the target (red/amber/green) for the 18 measures reported in year for 2026/27, compared to the same quarter last year.

Table 19. Summary of Performance against target KPIs

Status	Q1 2025/26	Q1 2026/27
	No.	No.
Green	9	9
Amber	1	4
Red	6	5
Outstanding	1	N/A
Total	17	18

- 12.8 Further details are provided in Appendix 5.

Council Plan Projects

- 12.9 Projects are rated as follows:

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

- 12.10 The following table shows the RAG status for the Council Plan projects compared to the same period last year:

Table 20. RAG Status of Council Plan Projects and Previous Corporate Plan Projects

Status	Q1 2025/26	Q1 2026/27
	No.	No.
Blue	0	2
Green	32	36
Amber	18	11
Red	1	1
Total	51	50

- 12.11 Further details are provided in Appendix 6.

13 Contribution to Strategic Aims

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

14 Environmental and Climate Implications

- 14.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26th February 2019. The Council Plan monitors progress in reducing the carbon footprint of both the Borough and the Council.
- 14.2 There are no specific environmental and climate implications to report in relation to the recommendations set out in this report.

15 Community Engagement

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

16 Equality Implications

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

17 Other Relevant Considerations

- 17.1 There are none.

18 Legal Implications

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

19 Financial Implications

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

20 Timetable for Implementation

- 20.1 Not applicable.

21 Background Papers

- 21.1 There are none.

22 Appendices

1. Summary of the General Fund Budget and Forecast 2026/27
2. Savings and Vacancy Factor Tracker Quarter 1
3. General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1
4. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Quarter 1

5. Council Plan Performance Measures Quarter 1
6. Council Plan Projects Quarter 1
7. Debt Write-Offs

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Appendix 1 - Summary of the General Fund Budget and Forecast 2026/27

Directorate/Service	Approved Budget £'000	Budget Changes £'000	Current Budget £'000	Forecast Actuals £'000	Variance to Budget £'000
Communities & Adult Social Care					
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(7,786)	(215)	(8,001)	(8,001)	0
Adult Social Care Operations	67,337	(76)	67,261	67,261	0
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	7,752	(68)	7,684	7,684	0
Community & Adult Social Care Management	1,547	0	1,547	1,547	0
Public Health	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Communities	5,325	(1)	5,324	5,324	0
Communities & Adult Social Care	74,175	(360)	73,815	73,815	0
Children's Services					
Family Help & Safeguarding	53,697	733	54,430	57,489	3,059
Children's Commissioning, Resource & Performance Services	3,344	(880)	2,464	2,574	110
Education	5,801	200	6,001	6,853	852
Children's Services	62,842	53	62,895	66,916	4,021
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services					
Planning, Transport & Public Protection	1,392	(9)	1,383	1,457	74
Culture	2,426	(87)	2,339	2,339	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	18,668	(44)	18,624	19,574	950
Property & Asset Management	418	421	839	839	0
Management & Sustainability	1,276	(274)	1,002	902	(100)
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	24,180	7	24,187	25,111	924
Resources					
Policy, Change & Customer Services	3,707	1,660	5,367	5,443	76
Human Resources & Organisational Development	2,416	45	2,461	2,461	0
Finance	6,607	102	6,709	6,709	0
Legal & Democratic Services	3,551	(1,377)	2,174	2,209	35
Digital & IT	7,781	(346)	7,435	7,435	0
Resources	24,062	84	24,146	24,257	111
Chief Executive Services					
Executive Management Team	944	0	944	896	(48)
Communications	636	0	636	679	43
Chief Executive Services	1,580	0	1,580	1,575	(5)
Total Service Expenditure	186,839	(216)	186,623	191,674	5,051
Corporate Budgets					
Capital Financing Costs	17,215	0	17,215	17,415	200
Contingencies	1,767	216	1,983	895	(1,088)
Other Corporate Budgets	1,143	0	1,143	2,314	1,171
Movement in Reserves	(7,302)	0	(7,302)	(7,302)	0
Corporate Budgets	12,823	216	13,039	13,322	283
Net Budget Requirement	199,662	0	199,662	204,996	5,334
Financed By:					
Council Tax Income	(134,176)	0	(134,176)	(134,176)	0
Business Rates Local Share	(34,808)	0	(34,808)	(34,808)	0
Revenue Support Grant	(36,740)	0	(36,740)	(36,740)	0
One-off Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit - Council Tax	1,781	0	1,781	1,781	0
One-off Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit - Business Rates	4,281	0	4,281	4,281	0
Total Funding	(199,662)	0	(199,662)	(199,662)	0
Over/(Under) Budget	0	0	0	5,334	5,334

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SAVINGS TRACKER

Service Area	MTFS Reference	Type of Saving	Savings Title	26/27 Savings Target	Progress (not possible/not started, early/mid/late stages, completed)	What budget pressures relating to these savings have you included in your budget monitoring forecast? £'000s
Communities & Adult Social Care						
Adult Social Care Operations	DCASC-2526-06	Efficiency Saving	Supported Living Efficiency	(575)	Early Stages	0
Adult Social Care Operations	DCASC-2627-11	Efficiency Saving	Adult Social Care Placement Budget - Spending Wisely	(2,631)	Mid Stages	0
Adult Social Care Operations	DCASC-2627-17	Efficiency Saving	S117 Clients & Specialist Rent Reviews	(104)	Completed	0
				(3,310)		0
Children's Services						
Family Help & Safeguarding	BFFC-2627-16	Efficiency Savings	Service Reductions Business Support / Admin	(197)	Early Stages	110
Family Help & Safeguarding	BFFC-2526-02	Invest to Save	BFFC Children's Home	(413)	Early Stages	413
Education Services	BFFC-2627-04	Efficiency Savings	Participation of YP in Education, Employment or Training	(30)	Completed	
Education Services	BFFC-2627-14	Efficiency Savings	Education Psychology Service	(221)	Late Stages	
				(861)		523
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services						
Planning, Transportation & Public Protection	DEGNS-2425-03	Income, Fees and Charges	Increase in charges for pre-planning application and planning fees	(55)	Early Stages	55
Planning, Transportation & Public Protection	DEGNS-2526-06	Efficiency Saving	Rationalisation of Pay & Display Assets, Tariff Changes and Emissions Based Parking	(91)	Completed	0
Planning, Transportation & Public Protection	DEGNS-2526-05	Income, Fees and Charges	Removal of School Transport Licensing	(58)	Early Stages	0
Culture	DEGNS-2627-12	Efficiency Saving	Leisure Contract Costs Utilities and Inflation	(382)	Early Stages	0
Culture	DEGNS-2627-14	Efficiency Saving	Town Hall Operations	(44)	Early Stages	0
Culture	DEGNS-2627-14	Efficiency Saving	Reading Museum	(53)	Early Stages	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	DEGNS-2627-38	Efficiency Saving	Household Waste Recycling Centre Opening Hours	(44)	Early Stages	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	DEGNS-2526-11	Invest to Save	Behaviour, comms and interventions on waste	(90)	Late Stages	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	DEGNS-2526-14	Invest to Save	Operational resilience - Recycling & Waste Service	(266)	Completed	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	DEGNS-2627-16	Income, Fees and Charges	Allotments Full Cost Recovery	(67)	Completed	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	DEGNS-2627-20	Income, Fees and Charges	Charge for new and additional Recycling bins	(30)	Completed	0
Property & Asset Management	DEGNS-2627-31	Efficiency Saving	Cleaning Savings Proposal	(75)	Mid Stages	0
Property & Asset Management	N/A - Technical Adj	Income, Fees and Charges	RTL Depot Lease Adjustment	(500)	Late Stages	0
				(1,755)		55
Resources						
Policy, Change & Customer Services	DOR-2425-01	Efficiency Saving	New customer services model	(170)	Completed	0
Digital & IT	DOR-2526-07	Invest to Save	DTAC Next Generation Operating Model	(189)	Completed	0
				(359)		0

VACANCY FACTOR TRACKER

Service Area	26/27 Vacancy Factor Target	How much have you actively set aside in your staffing budgets? (Full year impact) Note: this should be net of agency related costs in the area E.g. held vacancies, spinal point/FTE variations	How much have you actively set aside from non-staffing budgets? E.g. additional income, savings in other areas	How much of your vacancy factor target have you included as a budget pressure in your budget monitoring forecast?	How much are you not yet forecasting as a pressure but have not yet been able to identify a specific source for?
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Communities & Adult Social Care					
Commissioning, Transformation & Performance	(159)	(159)	0	0	0
Adult Social Care Operations	(277)	(277)	0	0	0
Safeguarding, Quality & Practice	(321)	(90)	(75)	0	(156)
Community & Adult Social Care Management	(52)	(52)	0	0	0
Housing & Communities	(178)	0	0	0	(178)
	(987)	(578)	(75)	0	(334)
Children's Services					
Family Help & Safeguarding	(833)	(833)	0	0	0
Children's Commissioning, Resource & Performance Services	(118)	(118)	0	0	0
Education Services	(74)	(74)	0	0	0
	(1,025)	(1,025)	0	0	0
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services					
Planning, Transportation & Public Protection	(316)	(316)	0	0	0
Culture	(283)	(193)	(90)	0	0
Environmental & Commercial Services	(512)	(337)	0	(175)	0
Property & Asset Management	(208)	(51)	(157)	0	0
Management & Sustainability	(55)	(55)	0	0	0
	(1,374)	(952)	(247)	(175)	0
Resources					
Policy, Change & Customer Services	(327)	(321)	0	(6)	0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	(159)	(159)	0	0	0
Finance	(314)	(314)	0	0	0
Legal & Democratic Services	(155)	0	0	0	(155)
Digital & IT	(93)	0	(93)	0	0
	(1,048)	(794)	(93)	(6)	(155)
Chief Executive					
Communications	(41)	0	(41)	0	0
	(41)	0	(41)	0	0

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £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, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
General Fund											
Community & Social Care Services											
Adult Care and Health Services											
ASC Digital Transformation	18						18	0	18	0	(18)
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	2,694						2,694	9	2,694	0	(2,685)
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	2,712	0	0	0	0	0	2,712	9	2,712	0	(2,703)
Housing & Communities											
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	0						0	0	0	0	0
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal Encampments	63						63	7	63	0	(56)
Other Housing Minor Schemes	100						100	0	100	0	(100)
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	40						40	0	40	0	(40)
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,253		459				1,712	128	1,712	0	(1,584)
Foster Carer Extensions	629						629	35	629	0	(594)
Private Sector Renewals	433						433	3	433	0	(430)
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	2,518	0	459	0	0	0	2,977	173	2,977	0	(2,804)
Community & Social Care Services - Total	5,230	0	459	0	0	0	5,689	182	5,689	0	(5,507)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £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, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Children's Services											
Pinecroft-Children who have complex health, physical,sensory,disabilities & challenging behaviour	0						0	0	0	0	0
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	0						0	(18)	0	0	(18)
Provison of additional Children's Homes	690						690	307	690	0	(383)
Children's Home for Children with Disabilities	1,138					(1,138)	0	0	0	0	0
Early Years increase to 30 hours provision	232						232	0	232	0	(232)
Best Start Family Hubs	0		211			(142)	69	0	69	0	(69)
Children's Services - Total	2,060	0	211	0	0	(1,280)	991	289	991	0	(702)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

				Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000								
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services											
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection											
Air Quality Monitoring	136						136	2	136	0	(134)
Active Travel Tranche 2	1,174						1,174	0	1,174	0	(1,174)
Active Travel Tranche 3	2,058						2,058	1	2,058	0	(2,057)
Active Travel Tranche 4	50						50	0	50	0	(50)
Active Travel Tranche 4 extension	558						558	0	558	0	(558)
Active Travel Tranche 5	207						207	0	207	0	(207)
Consolidated Active Travel Fund	489						489	0	489	0	(489)
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	21						21	0	21	0	(21)
Bus Service Improvement	2,455						2,455	(327)	2,455	0	(2,782)
Local Transport Plan Development	2,935						2,935	0	2,935	0	(2,935)
National Cycle Network Route 422	0						0	0	0	0	0
Reading West Station	85						85	0	85	0	(85)
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	4						4	(71)	4	0	(75)
Town Centre Street Trading Infrastructure	9						9	0	9	0	(9)
Construction of Green Park Station	4						4	0	4	0	(4)
CIL Local Funds - Community	95				(41)		54	0	54	0	(54)
S106 individual schemes list	780						780	0	780	0	(780)
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0						0	0	0	0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	0						0	0	0	0	0
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	851	(100)	15				766	0	766	0	(766)
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) grant to RTL	71						71	0	71	0	(71)
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour change	15						15	0	15	0	(15)
Transport Demand Management Scheme	0						0	0	0	0	0
Building Safety Levy scheme implementation	0		63				63	0	63	0	(63)
Healthcare Facilities	0		626			(626)	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total	11,997	(100)	704	0	(41)	(626)	11,934	(395)	11,934	0	(12,329)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £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, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Culture											
Leisure Centre Enhancement	1,597						1,597	0	1,597	0	(1,597)
Hexagon Investment	2,118		7			(1,400)	725	17	725	0	(708)
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	11,691						11,691	1,654	11,691	0	(10,037)
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	1,507						1,507	11	1,507	0	(1,496)
Abbey Quarter restoration works	102						102	0	102	0	(102)
High Street Heritage Action Zone	86						86	0	86	0	(86)
Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading	661					(561)	100	0	100	0	(100)
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	10						10	0	10	0	(10)
New Directions Ways into work	12						12	0	12	0	(12)
Whitley Wood Pavillion	59						59	19	59	0	(40)
Library Improvement Works (ACE Fund)	297						297	60	297	0	(237)
Culture - Sub Total	18,140	0	7	0	0	(1,961)	16,186	1,761	16,186	0	(14,425)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

				Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments						
	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000		Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Scheme Name											
Environmental & Commercial Services											
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	19						19	0	19	0	(19)
Kenavon Drive Landscape	25						25	0	25	0	(25)
Victoria Rec	7						7	0	7	0	(7)
Thames Path works in Kingsmeadow	99						99	9	99	0	(90)
Restoration of historic eastern wall at Caversham Court Gardens	423						423	1	423	0	(422)
Restoration of historic western wall at Caversham Court Gardens	100						100	0	100	0	(100)
Ecological Works	21						21	0	21	0	(21)
John Rabson skatepark	42						42	0	42	0	(42)
Tree Planting	125						125	0	125	0	(125)
Highways Infrastructure Programme	4,061	(84)					3,977	(52)	3,977	0	(4,029)
Chestnut Walk Improvements	28						28	0	28	0	(28)
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	56				(1)		55	0	55	0	(55)
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	393				(36)		357	35	357	0	(322)
CIL Local Funds - Transport	751						751	78	751	0	(673)
Highway Traffic Signals	14						14	0	14	0	(14)
Streetlighting Investment	716	84					800	164	800	0	(636)
Pavement Channels	102	100					202	1	202	0	(201)
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	0						0	0	0	0	0
Pedestrian handrails	0						0	0	0	0	0
Pumping Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	6						6	0	6	0	(6)
Reading Station Subway	5						5	0	5	0	(5)
Safe and People Friendly Streets and Spaces	250						250	0	250	0	(250)
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	323	(322)					1	0	1	0	(1)
Network Management Programme	1	322					323	4	323	0	(319)
Digitised TRO's	307						307	(14)	307	0	(321)
Eastern Area Access Works	199					(199)	0	0	0	0	0
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	1,187						1,187	7	1,187	0	(1,180)
Oxford Road Corridor Works	856						856	0	856	0	(856)
Traffic Management Schools	394						394	0	394	0	(394)
Western Area Access Works	128					(128)	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	0						0	0	0	0	0
Glass Recycling Boxes	0	370					370	0	370	0	(370)
Replacement Vehicles	1,914	(370)					1,544	0	1,544	0	(1,544)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £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, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	12,552	100	0	0	(37)	(327)	12,288	233	12,288	0	(12,055)
Property & Asset Management											
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	402						402	0	402	0	(402)
Corporate and Community Buildings	2,974					(1,000)	1,974	254	1,974	0	(1,720)
Reading Cemetery Archway - Structural Conservation Works	600						600	0	600	0	(600)
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFfC Family Contact Centre - Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0						0	0	0	0	0
Acre Business Park	39						39	0	39	0	(39)
	29						29	0	29	0	(29)
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	4,044	0	0	0	0	(1,000)	3,044	254	3,044	0	(2,790)
Management & Sustainability											
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	430						430	2	430	0	(428)
Corporate Solar Programme	1,953					(1,000)	953	0	953	0	(953)
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	2,383	0	0	0	0	(1,000)	1,383	2	1,383	0	(1,381)
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	49,116	0	711	0	(78)	(4,914)	44,835	1,855	44,835	0	(42,980)
Resources											
IT Future Operating Model	448	(175)					273	2	273	0	(271)
ICT Tech Refresh	642	175					817	137	817	0	(680)
Cremator Procurement	621						621	(8)	621	0	(629)
Works to Henley Road Cemetery & Crematorium	198						198	0	198	0	(198)
Burial Chambers	10						10	(2)	10	0	(12)
Additional Burial Space	274						274	0	274	0	(274)
Cemetery Land Acquisition	2,500					(2,500)	0	0	0	0	0
Resources Total	4,693	0	0	0	0	(2,500)	2,193	129	2,193	0	(2,064)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

				Additional Budgets requested to be added to the Programme - Funded by							
	Approved Budget 2026/27 £000	Budget Movements Between Schemes £000	Additional Budgets added to the Programme - Funded by Grants & Contributions £000	Capital Receipts, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Scheme Name											
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)											
Additional School Places - Contingency	300	(1,288)				988	0	0	0	0	0
DFC	0		71				71	71	71	0	0
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	33	(33)					0	0	0	0	0
Asset Management	0	1,491				(994)	497	0	497	0	(497)
Civitas- Synthetic Sports Pitch	28	(28)					0	0	0	0	0
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	121	(121)					0	0	0	0	0
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety	425	(194)				69	300	(2)	300	0	(302)
Fabric Condition Programme	2,230	4,265	792			(4,800)	2,487	159	2,487	0	(2,328)
Green Park Primary School	60	(60)					0	(616)	0	0	(616)
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	2,393	(1,263)				(984)	146	20	146	0	(126)
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	29	(29)					0	0	0	0	0
Modular Buildings Review	346	(1,144)				798	0	0	0	0	0
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund	0	1					1	1	1	0	0
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate	0						0	0	0	0	0
SCD Units	0						0	0	0	0	0
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	333	(330)					3	3	3	0	0
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	8,865	(1,209)				(383)	7,273	202	7,273	0	(7,071)
The Heights Temporary School	279	(68)					211	(67)	211	0	(278)
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	67	10					77	29	77	0	(48)
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	15,509	0	863	0	0	(5,306)	11,066	(200)	11,066	0	(11,266)
Corporate											
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation	2,040						2,040	0	1,730	(310)	(1,730)
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100						100	0	100	0	(100)
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	2,000					(2,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Minster Quarter	378					(204)	174	0	174	0	(174)
Corporate Total	4,518	0	0	0	0	(2,204)	2,314	0	2,004	(310)	(2,004)
General Fund Total	81,126	0	2,244	0	(78)	(16,204)	67,088	2,255	66,778	(310)	(64,523)

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 2026-27 (Future years)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2027/28 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2027/28 £000	Approved Budget 2028/29 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2028/29 £000	Approved Budget 2029/30 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2029/30 £000	Approved Budget 2030/31 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2030/31 £000	Total Revised Budget 2026/27 to 2030/31 £000
General Fund																	
Community & Social Care Services																	
Adult Care and Health Services																	
ASC Digital Transformation	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	18
Co-located profound and multiple learning disabilities day opportunities and respite facility and sheltered housing flats	964	0		964	411	0		411	0	0		0	0	0		0	4,069
Adult Care and Health Services - Sub Total	964	0	0	964	411	0	0	411	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,087
Housing & Communities																	
Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation	0	0		0	3,455	0		3,455	0	0		0	0	0		0	3,455
Harden Public Open Spaces to Prevent Illegal	25	0		25	25	0		25	25	0		25	25	0		25	163
Other Housing Minor Schemes	0	0		0	0			0	0	0		0	0	0		0	100
Green Homes Scheme - GF element	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	40
Disabled Facilities Grants (Private Sector)	1,197	0		1,197	1,197	0		1,197	1,197	0		1,197	1,197	0		1,197	6,500
Foster Carer Extensions	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	629
Private Sector Renewals	300	0		300	300	0		300	300	0		300	300	0		300	1,633
Housing & Communities - Sub Total	1,522	0	0	1,522	4,977	0	0	4,977	1,522	0	0	1,522	1,522	0	0	1,522	12,520
Community & Social Care Services - Total	2,486	0	0	2,486	5,388	0	0	5,388	1,522	0	0	1,522	1,522	0	0	1,522	16,607
Children's Services																	
Pinecroft-Children who have complex health, physical,sensory,disabilities & challenging behaviour	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Cressingham- Community Short Breaks Provision	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Provision of additional Children's Homes	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	690
Children's Home for Children with Disabilities	0	1,138		1,138	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,138
Early Years increase to 30 hours provision	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	232
Best Start Family Hubs	0	142	(72)	70	0	72		72	0	0		0	0	0		0	211
Children's Services - Total	0	1,280	(72)	1,208	0	72	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,271
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services																	
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection																	
Air Quality Monitoring	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	136
Active Travel Tranche 2	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,174
Active Travel Tranche 3	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	2,058
Active Travel Tranche 4	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	50
Active Travel Tranche 4 extension	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	558
Active Travel Tranche 5	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	207
Consolidated Active Travel Fund	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	489
Berkshire Coroner's Removals	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	21
Bus Service Improvement	1,500	0		1,500	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	3,955
Local Transport Plan Development	989	0		989	400	0		400	400	0		400	400	0		400	5,124
National Cycle Network Route 422	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Reading West Station	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	85
South Reading MRT (Phases 3 & 4)	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	4
Town Centre Street Trading Infrastructure	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	9
Construction of Green Park Station	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	4
CIL Local Funds - Community	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	54
S106 individual schemes list	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	780
Defra Air Quality Grant - Bus Retrofit	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Defra Air Quality Grant - Go Electric Reading	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Electric Vehicle Charging Points	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	766
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) grant to RTL	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	71
Air Quality Grant - AQ sensors awareness & behaviour	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	15
Transport Demand Management Scheme	0	0		0	600	0		600	0	0		0	0	0		0	600
Building Safety Levy scheme implementation	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	63
Healthcare Facilities	0	626		626	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	626
Transportation, Planning & Public Protection - Sub Total																	
Total	2,489	626	0	3,115	1,000	0	0	1,000	400	0	0	400	400	0	0	400	16,849

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 2026-27 (Future years)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2027/28 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2027/28 £000	Approved Budget 2028/29 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2028/29 £000	Approved Budget 2029/30 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2029/30 £000	Approved Budget 2030/31 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2030/31 £000	Total Revised Budget 2026/27 to 2030/31 £000
Culture																	
Leisure Centre Enhancement	308	0		308	217	0		217	581	0		581	478	0		478	3,181
Hexagon Investment	65	1,400		1,465	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	2,190
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New performance space at the Hexagon Theatre	229	0		229	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	11,920
Levelling Up Delivery Plan - New Reading Library at the Civic Centre	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,507
Abbey Quarter restoration works	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	102
High Street Heritage Action Zone	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	86
Roman Britain Reimagined in Reading	0	561		561	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	661
Berkshire Record Office - extension of storage space	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	10
New Directions Ways into work	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	12
Whitley Wood Pavillion	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	59
Library Improvement Works (ACE Fund)	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	297
Culture - Sub Total	602	1,961	0	2,563	217	0	0	217	581	0	0	581	478	0	0	478	20,025
Environmental & Commercial Services																	
Playground equipment and Refreshment: Boroughwide	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	19
Kenavon Drive Landscape	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	25
Victoria Rec	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	7
Thames Path works in Kingsmeadow	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	99
Restoration of historic eastern wall at Caversham Court Gardens	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	423
Restoration of historic western wall at Caversham Court Gardens	700	0		700	128	0		128	0	0		0	0	0		0	928
Ecological Works	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	21
John Rabson skatepark	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	42
Tree Planting	150	0		150	200	0		200	50	0		50	50	0		50	575
Highways Infrastructure Programme	2,677	0		2,677	2,941	0		2,941	3,955	0		3,955	1,838	0		1,838	15,388
Chestnut Walk Improvements	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	28
CIL Local Funds - Heritage and Culture	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	55
CIL Local Funds - Leisure and Play	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	357
CIL Local Funds - Transport	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	751
Highway Traffic Signals	350	0		350	350	0		350	350	0		350	0	0		0	1,064
Street Lighting Investment	890	0		890	700	0		700	207	0		207	0	0		0	2,597
Pavement Channels	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	202
Pedestrian Defined Urban Pocket Gardens	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Pedestrian handrails	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Pumping Station Upgrade Scheme (new)	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	6
Reading Station Subway	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	5
Safe and People Friendly Streets and Spaces	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	250
Car Park Investment Programme (inc P&D, Red Routes & Equipment)	326	0		326	326	0		326	326	0		326	326	0		326	1,305
Network Management Programme	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	323
Digitised TRO's	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	307
Eastern Area Access Works	0	199		199	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	199
Local Traffic Management and Road Safety Schemes	500	0		500	500	0		500	150	0		150	150	0		150	2,487
Oxford Road Corridor Works	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	856
Traffic Management Schools	100	0		100	100	0		100	100	0		100	100	0		100	794
Western Area Access Works	0	128		128	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	128
Glass Recycling Boxes	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	370
Vehicle Maintenance Workshop	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Replacement Vehicles	2,991	0		2,991	3,681	0		3,681	677	0		677	0	0		0	8,893
Environmental & Commercial Services - Sub Total	8,684	327	0	9,011	8,926	0	0	8,926	5,815	0	0	5,815	2,464	0	0	2,464	38,504
Property & Asset Management																	
The Heights Permanent Site Mitigation	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	402
Corporate and Community Buildings	3,800	1,000		4,800	1,000	0		1,000	1,000	0		1,000	1,000	0		1,000	9,774
Reading Cemetery Archway - Structural Conservation	100	0		100	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	700
1 Dunsfold Fitout for BFFC Family Contact Centre - Development for Community Use	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Maintenance & Enhancement of Council Properties	0	0		0	0	0		0	8,650	0		8,650	0	0		0	8,689
Acre Business Park	0	0		0	541	0		541	0	0		0	0	0		0	570
Property & Asset Management - Sub Total	3,900	1,000	0	4,900	1,541	0	0	1,541	9,650	0	0	9,650	1,000	0	0	1,000	20,135

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 2026-27 (Future years)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2027/28 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2027/28 £000	Approved Budget 2028/29 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2028/29 £000	Approved Budget 2029/30 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2029/30 £000	Approved Budget 2030/31 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2030/31 £000	Total Revised Budget 2026/27 to 2030/31 £000
Management & Sustainability																	
Salix Decarbonisation Fund	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	430
Corporate Solar Programme	0	1,000		1,000	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,953
Management and Sustainability - Sub Total	0	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,383
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services Total	15,675	4,914	0	20,589	11,684	0	0	11,684	16,446	0	0	16,446	4,342	0	0	4,342	97,896
Resources																	
IT Future Operating Model	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	273
ICT Tech Refresh	799	0		799	458	0		458	477	0		477	377	0		377	2,928
Cremator Procurement	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	621
Works to Henley Road Cemetery & Crematorium	198	0		198	198	0		198	198	0		198	198	0		198	990
Burial Chambers	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	10
Additional Burial Space	1,416	0		1,416	1,382	0		1,382	0	0		0	0	0		0	3,072
Cemetery Land Acquisition	0	2,500	(2,500)	0	0	2,500		2,500	0	0		0	0	0		0	2,500
Resources Total	2,413	2,500	(2,500)	2,413	2,038	2,500	0	4,538	675	0	0	675	575	0	0	575	10,394
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes)																	
Additional School Places - Contingency	300	(988)	688	0	688	(688)		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
DFC	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	71
SEN Provision - Avenue Centre	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Asset Management	0	994	(497)	497	0	497		497	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,491
Civitas- Synthetic Sports Pitch	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Crescent Road Playing Field Improvements	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Critical Reactive Contingency: Health and safety (Schools)	300	(69)	69	300	200	(69)	169	300	169	(169)		0	0	0		0	900
Fabric Condition Programme	3,526	4,800	(3,258)	5,068	94	3,258		3,352	0	0		0	0	0		0	10,907
Green Park Primary School	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Heating and Electrical Renewal Programme	0	984		984	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1,130
Initial Viability work for the Free School at Richfield Avenue	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Modular Buildings Review	798	(798)		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Dee Park Regeneration - Housing Infrastructure Fund	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	1
Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds - School Estate																	
Double Glazing Programme	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
SCD Units	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Schools - Fire Risk Assessed remedial Works	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	3
SEN High Needs provision capital allocations	2,547	383	8,350	11,280	6,000	(8,350)	2,350	0	2,350	(2,350)		0	0	0		0	18,553
The Heights Temporary School	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	211
Park Lane Primary School Annexe Replacement	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	77
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (Education Schemes) Total	7,471	5,306	5,352	18,129	6,982	(5,352)	2,519	4,149	2,519	(2,519)	0	0	0	0	0	0	33,344

Appendix 3 - General Fund Capital Programme Quarter 1 2026-27 (Future years)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2027/28 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2027/28 £000	Approved Budget 2028/29 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2028/29 £000	Approved Budget 2029/30 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2029/30 £000	Approved Budget 2030/31 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2030/31 £000	Total Revised Budget 2026/27 to 2030/31 £000
Corporate																	
Delivery Fund (Pump priming for Transformation projects)	1,500	0		1,500	1,500	0		1,500	1,500	0		1,500	1,500	0		1,500	8,040
Oracle Shopping Centre capital works	100	0		100	100	0		100	100	0		100	100	0		100	500
Minster Quarter - Brownfield Land Grant Element	0	2,000		2,000	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	2,000
Minster Quarter	0	204		204	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	378
Corporate Total	1,600	2,204	0	3,804	1,600	0	0	1,600	1,600	0	0	1,600	1,600	0	0	1,600	10,918
General Fund Total	29,645	16,204	2,780	48,629	27,692	(2,780)	2,519	27,431	22,762	(2,519)	0	20,243	8,039	0	0	8,039	171,430

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Appendix 4 - HRA Capital Programme Quarter 1 (2026/27)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2026/27 £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, Revenue Contributions, Borrowing & Reserves £000	Reduced Budgets - Completed Schemes & Other carry forward budget adjustments £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2026/27 £000	Spend to 30 June 2026 £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	spend vs forecast £000
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)											
Disabled Facilities Grants	812						812	0	812	0	(812)
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal & Zero Carbon Retrofit works	30,758					(13,384)	17,374	0	17,374	0	(17,374)
Acquisitions from Homes for Reading	9,527						9,527	6,095	9,527	0	(3,432)
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	0						0	0	0	0	0
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	1,062	(221)				0	841	2	841	0	(839)
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	17,985	315		4,298		(7,074)	15,524	1,650	15,524	0	(13,874)
New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	25,579	(94)		745		(8,563)	17,667	721	17,667	0	(16,946)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	85,723	0	0	5,043	0	(29,021)	61,745	8,468	61,745	0	(53,277)

Appendix 4- HRA Capital Programme Quarter 1 2026-27 (Future years)

Scheme Name	Approved Budget 2027/28 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2027/28 £000	Approved Budget 2028/29 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2028/29 £000	Approved Budget 2029/30 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2029/30 £000	Approved Budget 2030/31 £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Previous Year £000	Budgets reprogrammed (to)/from Future Years £000	Revised Budget Quarter 1 2030/31 £000	Total Revised Budget 2026/27 to 2030/31 £000
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)																	
Disabled Facilities Grants	600	0		600	600	0		600	600	0		600	600	0		600	3,212
Major Repairs - Existing Homes Renewal & Zero Carbon Retrofit works	11,294	13,384		24,678	9,900	0		9,900	9,900	0		9,900	9,900	0		9,900	71,752
Acquisitions from Homes for Reading	6,615	0		6,615	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	16,142
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
Homes Provided under Local Authority Housing Fund	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	841
Local authority new build programme for Older people and vulnerable adults	19,912	7,074	(386)	26,600	3,982	386	(768)	3,600	0	768	0	768	0	0		0	46,492
New Build & Acquisitions - Phase 2 - 4	36,315	8,563	(20,243)	24,635	48,102	20,243	(6,470)	61,875	6,511	6,470	(1,359)	11,622	0	1,359		1,359	117,158
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Total	74,736	29,021	(20,629)	83,128	62,584	20,629	(7,238)	75,975	17,011	7,238	(1,359)	22,890	10,500	1,359	0	11,859	255,597

Appendix 5: Council Plan Performance Measures Q1 2026/27 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Council Plan Priority	Measure	Units	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Status	Comments
Economic and cultural success	Physical visits to Reading Libraries (annual cumulative)	No.	50,000	68,706	Green	New Central library open for last 2 weeks of June. Already very high monthly total, first full month of impact to come in July. Issues, visits and memberships are already higher, running at double previous levels.
Economic and cultural success	Participation at our theatres and museums	No	68,005	87,013	Green	The heat wave in end May impacted Museum visitor numbers (school visits were all cancelled that week, as were regular events). However, we have still exceeded the quarterly target.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Missed bins (per 100,000 collections)	No.	80	67	Green	The service performance target of 80 (or less) missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections was met in June, with a performance of 73.25. The average for Q1 was 67
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Household waste recycled or composted	%	51	52	Green	The provisional recycling rate for Q1 2026/27 is 52.3%. This compares to 51.5% in the same quarter of 2025/26. The food waste communications campaign started mid-November and involved stickers attached to general waste bins and households receiving leaflets along with extra caddy liners to support food waste recycling. In Q1 increased food levels and decreased kerbside residual (non-recyclable) waste can be seen.
Adults and children	Special Educational Needs children supported in mainstream schools (primary) (%)	%	18.3	21	Green	Reading's trauma informed therapeutic thinking in schools approach is ensuring that more children are accessing a local mainstream place in their neighbourhood.
Adults and children	Special Educational Needs children supported in mainstream schools (secondary) (%)	%	14.8	15	Green	Reading Borough Council SEND Team are working closely with Secondary and College Leaders to continue to grow accessible school places in mainstream secondary schools.
Adults and children	Children Looked After (per 10,000 children)	No.	71.2	69	Green	The number of children in our care remains relatively consistent, reflecting the positive impact of our Edge

Appendix 5: Council Plan Performance Measures Q1 2026/27 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Council Plan Priority	Measure	Units	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Status	Comments
						of Care service and its contribution to reunification outcomes, as well as our wider work with families. The service plays a key role in helping to reframe family narratives, improve children's lived experiences, and support children to return safely to their families where this is appropriate. This is achieved alongside tailored support packages that enable families to make meaningful changes, build resilience, and feel empowered to sustain and maintain those improvements over the longer term.
Adults and children	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)	%	70	70	Green	Multi-agency work is embedded for the majority of children at the transition point to Adult Social Care. Work is being undertaken to identify children known to Children's Services who may transition to Adult Social Care earlier.
Fit for the Future	Contracts over £125,000 achieving Social Value (% of total)	%	60	75	Green	Number of offers received in bids continues to trend upwards; this demonstrates positive adoption of the Policy. 6 in-scope contracts awarded this quarter and meeting policy requirements with 2 exceptions noted due to urgency of provision to be sourced to meet a statutory obligation. Last FY full-year performance was circa 72% achievement, so first quarter is already exceeding this.
Adults and children	Adults whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, for 65 and over (No. per 100,000)	No. per 100,000	139	154	Amber	Oversight of the number of admissions to care homes is a critical area of focus for ASC as we have seen increases in recent years reflecting factors such as ageing population and increasing complexity of need. ASC completed a detailed analysis of the number of admissions in 2025 and continue to explore approaches to reduce the need for care home admissions through our Home First approach and use

Appendix 5: Council Plan Performance Measures Q1 2026/27 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Council Plan Priority	Measure	Units	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Status	Comments
						of reablement and TEC to support independence in the home so that care home admission can be delayed or prevented; as well as supporting people who self-fund to fully explore care alternatives before choosing residential care.
Economic and cultural success	Housing repairs urgent completed within 2 working days	%	90	88.7	Amber	Sustained focus and effort on scrutinising jobs when they are raised, allocated and completed, is reflected in the delivery of repairs on time. We continue to review issues causing late delivery, and the embedded suite of checks facilitates the scrutiny required to ensure this becomes BAU to maintain performance levels. They also allow us to identify issues early, and pinpoint causes of drops in performance. In June, the urgent jobs completed on time dipped to 87% from 90% in May. This figure represents 29 urgent jobs that missed the 2 working days target over the month.
Adults and children	New contacts to the Advice & Wellbeing hub resulting in a successful outcome not requiring an ongoing service (%)	%	90	86.5	Amber	Staff are supporting residents in a proactive manner, signposting residents to voluntary sector and continuing to use a Strength Based Approach.
Equal Communities	Residents setting a quit date who successfully quit smoking	%	60%	48%	Amber	In the first quarter of 2026/27, 275 people set a date to stop smoking. Of these, 154 people (56%) had successfully stopped smoking four weeks later. This was four percentage points below the 60% target.
Economic and cultural success	Planning applications for major development decided on time	%	100	67	Red	Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are at risk of being designated as “underperforming” if targets are not met over the preceding 24 months. The criteria for designation as “underperforming” for major development is less than 60 per cent of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant. With the small number of

Appendix 5: Council Plan Performance Measures Q1 2026/27 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Council Plan Priority	Measure	Units	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Status	Comments
						major applications received a small fluctuation makes a marked change in performance expressed as a %. In this quarter we issued 3 decisions and 2 were determined within the time limit.
Adults and children	Carers supported in last 12 months (no.)	No.	1,193	920	Red	With the new commissioned service the number of carers assessment continues to increase. The data comes from three separate organisations that make up the carer's partnerships. Some will also come back to us for additional processing. Currently the data has not been cross checked to remove duplication so this number will decrease when this happens.
Adults and children	Children in care living more than 20 miles from Reading (% of total)	No.	23	42	Red	There are a number of children living at a distance from Reading in stable and loving homes. These children have been matched with their carers and therefore they will not be moving back to within a 20-mile radius. There are a small number of children in this cohort who are yet to be long term matched and we are still seeking loving homes for them in Reading, these decisions are reviewed through care planning meetings, supported by the child's social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and panels. Growing local resource through an increase in foster carers and building our own children's residential care homes will increase opportunities for us to keep our children rooted in Reading. Our new children's homes will be open in summer 2026.
Adults and children	Children placed in external children's homes (No.)	No.	25	41	Red	The national and local shortage of foster carers, combined with complexity of need, means that more children are living in children's homes. A programme is underway to open three children's residential homes in Reading in 2026 so that where residential care is the best option for our children, they are living in stable loving homes in Reading. This is in addition

Appendix 5: Council Plan Performance Measures Q1 2026/27 **Green** = at or above target **Amber** = within 10% of target **Red** = 10% or more off target

Council Plan Priority	Measure	Units	Q1 Target	Q1 Actual	Status	Comments
						to work within our fostering team to increase the number of foster carers locally. In the summer of 2026 three new children's homes will be opened in Reading.
Fit for the Future	Customer satisfaction with the outcome of contact with the Customer Fulfilment Centre (% satisfied or partially satisfied)	%	85	74	Red	This KPI has been impacted by two factors when moving to the Council's new telephony platform. In the first month of the quarter testing was still impacting data. The new telephony platform also uses a different methodology, making immediate comparisons difficult. In the meantime, supervisors and managers continue to review call feedback to identify any areas for improvements.

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Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Economic and cultural success	Deliver a new Civic Centre, including a new Central Library and improved Registrars and Customer provision.	Complete	The new Civic Centre opened in January and Central Library opened on 18 th June 2026.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Adopt the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy to secure funding and improvements to Reading's streets and open spaces.	Complete	The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy was adopted on 23 June at Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee.
Adults and children	Refresh the existing Home Care and Supported Living Framework to ensure sufficient supply.	Green	The new framework was in place April 2026. There are mobilisation plans in place and these are on track, there will be ongoing monitoring to ensure that supply issues are addressed, if and when they appear.
Adults and children	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.	Green	Four Family Hubs offering a range of services from multiple partners have been delivered on schedule. Parents and Carers can attend the hubs for several activities and support ranging from Stay and play sessions, Speech and Language Support, Parenting Support, Wellbeing support for young people, Housing Advice. We have an annual time table published on Reading's website. Progress and impact of the Family Hubs will be monitored and reported to the One Reading Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board.
Fit for the Future	Deliver the new Social Value Policy with our partners to increase the number of contracts delivering spend and social value in the local area.	Green	Alignment with Climate Board and Social Inclusion Board underway to identify improved ways for delivering meaningful social value in the borough. Recruitment campaign launched to appoint dedicated lead for procurement policy and governance. New Contract Procedure Rules approved at Full Council which includes requirement to consider local as part of procurement strategy. Tracking mechanisms being built to gather intelligence on local and social value data.
Equal Communities	Deliver the Education Strategy to reduce education inequality and increase school attendance and attainment for those groups who experience the most disadvantage.	Green	Reading's education outcomes show positive progress, particularly in Early Years, where improving Good Level of Development rates reflect successful early intervention and partnership working. KS4 attainment remains above national averages, although significant gaps persist for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and pupils with poor attendance. SEND is a key factor driving inequality across all phases, with affected pupils experiencing lower attainment, higher absence, and more suspensions. Attendance remains a major barrier, especially for vulnerable groups. While post-16 participation is strong, progression and

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			retention are weaker for disadvantaged learners and those with SEND. Key priorities include accelerating SEND reforms, strengthening early years support, improving attendance through multi-agency approaches, enhancing inclusive pathways, ensuring sustainable school planning, and protecting leadership capacity and wellbeing across the system.
Equal Communities Page 332	Develop approaches to ensure that health and wellbeing is considered across all policy areas.	Green	Delivery of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) programme remains on track. Significant progress has been made in embedding HiAP across the Council. A staff e-learning package has been completed and is ready for rollout, supporting a consistent understanding and application of HiAP across directorates. A dedicated HiAP and Health Impact Assessment webpage has also been developed and will launch in July 2026, improving access to guidance, tools, and resources. All materials have been co-produced with internal stakeholders and informed by learning from local authorities demonstrating leading practice in HiAP and Health Impact Assessment implementation. This work strengthens the Council's capacity to systematically consider health and health equity impacts in policy and decision-making.
Equal Communities	Deliver the voluntary and community sector compact action plan, including small grants funding.	Green	The new Reading Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership agreement and Action Plan has been developed and is due for consideration at Policy Committee in September.
Equal Communities	Develop and deliver our place-based approach to enhance access to education, skills, and training.	Green	The development of a new Tackling Inequality Statement and refreshed terms of reference for the Social Inclusion Board have commenced, which includes updating the objectives of the Council's Place-Based Programme.
Equal Communities	Provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.	Green	Crisis Payments and Housing Payments application processes launched on 1st April. The overall CRF delivery approach was approved by Policy Committee in June. The CRF delivery plan was submitted to DWP on 1st July.
Equal Communities	Support the Community Safety Partnership and facilitate Safer Neighbourhood Forums to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.	Green	The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) led Community Leaders Network has been created which will facilitate key Community Cohesion messages to Community Leaders and Groups. The second CSP Annual report has been written and will be presented to Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in July 2026.

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			The Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Fund has approved 13 CSP bids for community safety related projects, which will contribute to the CSP Priorities. Regular updates are provided to the CSP Executive Group. The Annual Community Safety Survey launched in July. Safer Neighbourhood Forums took place during the Spring period. Attendance is still limited across the forums, despite increased promotion of each forum.
Page 133 Equal Communities	Support plans to tackle knife crime, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.	Green	The Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment completed with 3-year strategy development underway. A communications campaign launched at the beginning of the Football World Cup to highlight the impact of Domestic Abuse and promote services available. The Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategic Assessment has begun with a consultant undertaking this and writing the next 3-year strategy and plan. Officers from across Community Safety and Children's Services continue to support the Thames Valley Police led Knife Crime Meeting, to oversee management of prolific knife carriers. A Tri Borough Berkshire West Violence Against Women and Girls meeting has been introduced to support tackling shared themes across the 3 areas. A localised meeting will still deal with Reading specific themes and report into the CSP.
Equal Communities	Continue work to prevent and reduce homelessness.	Green	Successful preventions for Q1 - 44 (note this is likely to fluctuate as cases are closed retrospectively). Successful reliefs for Q1 - 41 (note this is likely to fluctuate as cases are closed retrospectively). The number of preventions achieved rely on the ability to access the private rented sector, which as a result of the Renters Rights Act 2025 has become more cautious with which tenants are considered, with this in mind there are still a significant number of homeless cases being prevented both prior to homelessness and following actual homelessness. This remains a priority for the team.

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Economic and cultural success	Through the Local Authority New Build programme, deliver 420 new homes at Dee Park and other sites by March 2029.	Green	We have set out our delivery of 421 new homes under the LANB programme to date, with plans to deliver a further 362 new council homes by 2029, 89 of which will complete this financial year. Our success in delivering the local authority new build programme was recognised at the Local Government Chronicle awards last week, where we won the silver award in the 'housing' category.
Economic and cultural success	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.	Green	This project is progressing to projected timelines, with efficient and effective cooperation between many teams. Of the 101 homes, 81 have now voided of which 68 have been purchased and been relet. 20 properties yet to void. Project is aiming for completion by July 2027.
Economic and cultural success	Progress an updated Local Plan towards adoption to provide a framework to guide decision making on the planning applications for homes and infrastructure.	Green	The main modifications identified by the Inspector were agreed by SEPT Committee on 23 June. The Inspector identified an additional modification committing the Council to an early review of the plan, which will need to be considered by Policy Committee in September. The Council is now expecting to adopt in January 2027.
Economic and cultural success	In partnership with other Berkshire councils, facilitate the Connect to Work programme to support residents with long term health conditions into work.	Green	Reading is on track to meet its Year 2 allocation of 89 residents. Current figures for this quarter stand at 27 residents resulting in meeting 30% of its Year 2 target.
Economic and cultural success	Deliver the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon	Green	Work is progressing on the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon in accordance with the construction programme. The main structural elements of the building have been installed including the timber frame which helps meets the sustainability requirements of the design. The project is on track with the Studio Theatre scheduled to open in spring 2027. providing circa 200 seating flexible theatre (circa 300 standing) with step free access, accessible toilets on all floors, and bar and catering facilities.
Economic and cultural success	Improve the technology offer and access to library services funded through the Libraries Investment Fund.	Green	This is to deliver high quality digital provision to all libraries at the same time as the new Central library is delivered. Of the 10 purchasing lots, lendable on-site tablets, floor projected active games, screens for libraries for event screening and corporate messaging, interactive digital tables, take home borrowable tablets with data for home uses are live - Book

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			collection lockers and self-service cabinets for borrowing are currently ordered/being installed following successful procurement. We have also replaced all public PCs in libraries with this grant. We are yet to progress interactive trolleys that detect books, equipment to support activity sessions. Arts Council England as funder is briefed and has released the second tranche of payment – we have also sought approval to expand the scope of the project. Purchases remain under budget.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Complete the £8 million programme of work to improve residential roads and pavements.	Green	Tender closed, evaluation completed, award letter approval with Hub. Works to start Mid-August. On track and within budget
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including charging points, to move away from fossil-fuelled vehicles.	Green	Contract signed 13/05/2026. Mobilisation has been continuing at pace. 2 trial sites have been installed, and consultation letters have been sent to phase 1 residents to inform them that Electric Vehicle charge points are to be installed on their road. The phase 1 installations are scheduled to start middle of July. 6-8 to be installed per day.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Work with partners to deliver the Climate Strategy for 2025 to 2030 to achieve a net zero Reading resilient to climate change.	Green	The results of the borough wide emissions in 2024 year (published in July 2026) show a very slight increase of 0.7kT (<0.1%). The new Climate Emergency strategy for Reading aligns the targets with the Balanced Pathway with trajectory to -88% by 2040. Work with partners has continued through RCCP with a successful 2026 climate festival. Reading Community Energy Society installing their largest solar install to at bus depot. RTL has secured 49 Electric Buses, LEVI project contract to install public EV charging points across borough now in place. Hexagon decarbonisation project on track.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Dispose of property and land that no longer contribute towards the Council's objectives to invest in assets and service transformation.	Green	Disposals are now underway within the service. During Q1, four property disposals were completed, with a further nine properties currently progressing through the disposal process and scheduled to be placed on the market in Q2.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Introduce changes to the waste collection service in line with the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation.	Green	Planning for the delivery of kerbside waste collections from 1st April 2027 is underway to timetable. Procurement board approval has been obtained and procurement of goods and services to timetable is taking place.

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Adults and children	Redesign and commission an integrated 0-19 child health programme.	Green	On track for a contract start date of 1 April 2028. Decision pending on whether it will be a joint procurement with West Berkshire Council, update expected in Q2 following Local Government Reorganisation decision.
Adults and children Page 336	Deliver four new adult social care services to support people with complex needs, and enable them to live more locally	Green	Progress continues across the Amethyst, Battle and Hexham projects, with construction and development activities advancing across all schemes. Amethyst and Hexham remain on track for practical completion in September 2026, while Battle continues to progress towards a meaningful start on site. Key construction milestones have been achieved, including roofing, internal fit-out, mechanical and electrical installations, and enabling works. Service modelling is also progressing across the developments to ensure future services maximise benefits for residents and carers. Project teams continue to manage risks proactively, maintain programme momentum and support delivery of the intended outcomes for each scheme.
Adults and children	Enable more children with special educational needs and disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools and deliver new special school places	Green	The programme of work to delivery two specialist schools within Reading is on schedule for delivery by September 2027. Alongside this we are actively working with our headteachers to support children with Education, Health and Care Plans to remain in mainstream settings and access support via the Reading Inclusion Support in Education Team. We are progressing with our SEND Reforms plan collaboratively with Reading Families Forum and Partners overseen by the SEND Strategic Board.
Adults and children	Support children into adulthood, promoting greater independence and confidence.	Green	The Preparing for Adulthood group has remained a key workstream of the SEND Strategic Boards vision, in line with the SEND Reforms. This group has representatives from Education, Health, Children's and Adults Social Care. We will also be merging the 14-19 partnership has representatives from schools, education, health and social care and will be promoting the independence journeys of young adults with SEND. Evidence is demonstrating improving independence outcomes for young people with SEND resulting in a Green RAG rating.

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Adults and children	Deliver the requirements of our All-Age Carers Strategy action plan, including short breaks for carers.	Green	The Carer's Break Pilot launched on 13 July 2026, with Cardinal Care appointed as the Tier 1 provider through the homecare framework. Over a 6 to 9-month period, unpaid carers can access 38 hours of free respite through a sitting service, to be used within three months. Carer wellbeing support continues to expand, with the second Give It A Go cohort commencing in July. To date, 15 carers have accessed a six-week gym membership, fitness classes and weekly information sessions, while a further 25 carers have enrolled for the next cohort. Additional developments include carer engagement opportunities, investment in digital support, and work to establish Reading as a more carer-friendly employer network.
Page 337 Adults and children	Reduce avoidable hospital admissions and supporting efficient and timely discharge.	Green	The Berkshire West Discharge Group has supported people with highly complex needs through the Diamond Escalation Pathway, bringing together senior leaders from health, adult social care, housing, and the voluntary and community sector to review cases, challenge barriers, and develop creative solutions. This collaborative approach has enabled Reading residents to be discharged safely from hospital with appropriate support in place to maintain their independence and wellbeing. Voluntary sector involvement has been particularly valuable in reducing isolation and connecting people to local community resources. The pathway has strengthened partnership working, improved timely decision-making for complex cases, and contributed to Reading having less people currently awaiting discharge than neighbouring authorities.
Adults and children	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	Green	Falls Prevention Team recruited to, and the service is fully operational receiving referrals for 1:1 interventions and actively engaged in community outreach. Service operating on budget. <i>numbers of interventions</i>
Adults and children	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.	Green	The development of Neighbourhood Plans is being co-ordinated through a sub-group of the Reading integration Board, which will also feed into the Berkshire West Prevention Board and Neighbourhood Steering Group. Ther initial group meeting was held on 12/06/2026 and future monthly meetings scheduled. An outline of the Neighbourhood Plan requirements has been developed and workstreams are being agreed, which include

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			community engagement. Representation on the working group includes VCSE, Housing, Community Health, Primary Care, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Sustainable Communities, Integration, Healthwatch and Integrated Care Board. Learning from the Southeast Accelerator Neighbourhood project, to do targeted work in specific areas to inform the wider neighbourhood health plans and ways of working, is still in progress, and being fed into the Neighbourhood Planning. The development of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will take at least 18 months
Fit for the Future Page 338	Continue to expand our IT systems to enable residents to access more services online at a time that suits them.	Green	The Council is currently working on developing voice and chat agents within the Zoom platform that will be available in our contact centre and the website. The first services to have it will be Council Tax and Waste with further services added. This will enable residents to resolve their queries without the need to contact the Council and help self serve in these areas. The functionality is expected to turn on in August 2026.
Fit for the Future	Implement an improved telephone system that routes customers effectively and improves the customer data we collect to help continually improve how we support residents.	Green	Since the successful go-live of the new telephone solution in March, the project has focused on resolving post-launch issues and supporting staff as they continue to use the new system. Work has also progressed on the additional functionality purchased as part of the project. Call summarisation successfully went live in June and has been well received. Work is also progressing well on the virtual agent for Council Tax and Waste enquiries, which is expected to launch during Q2
Fit for the Future	Deliver and embed our social care customer front door through enhancing our systems and working with the voluntary sector in providing support.	Green	Progress continues across community and digital transformation programmes. Improvements to Local Connector reporting have streamlined performance monitoring, while proposals for a new Community Activator Service are being developed to strengthen community engagement, early intervention and access to local support. Testing of the Digital Front Door is progressing well alongside enhancements to online financial assessments. Mosaic transformation work continues to improve key pathways, including hospital discharge processes. The Mosaic Provider Portal is operating successfully, delivering reliable provider payments with high accuracy, while further

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			finance workflow, reporting and service improvement initiatives are being developed and progressed.
Fit for the Future Page 339	Deliver additional cemetery space in order to continue offering a burial service to all residents	Green	Key concerns raised in the original pre-application planning advice have been substantially addressed through the Allotment Mitigation Plan. A revised pre-planning advice letter is expected shortly. Whilst the mitigation proposals are considered capable of offsetting the loss of the Henley Road allotments, the increased travel distance that some allotment holders will experience is regarded as a residual planning "harm". This harm will need to be balanced by the wider public benefits of the cemetery extension, particularly the provision of future burial capacity within the borough. Several areas require further evidence and clarification to support a future planning application. Overall, the pre-planning advice is positive. Tenders have been issued for the appointment of the project consultant to commence 16/11/26. Construction start date is 28/5/29 and the completion target remains 24/1/2030.
Fit for the Future	Introduce remote technology for staff who work outside of the office to improve efficiency.	Green	Phase 1: Field Worker devices (Lenovo's) deployed to around 50% of the staff in scope. Remaining devices will be deployed in phase 2 once CCM forms are available to support field-first working. Feedback from users has been positive, particularly within Housing.
Fit for the Future	Introduce artificial intelligence to improve customer service and reduce administration costs in line with our strategy.	Green	Use of AI expanding in Customer Contact space. AI Tools (beyond CoPilot), currently operating within Adult Social Care, Housing and Children's Services for transcription, summarisation, and Education, Health and Care Plan generation. AI Strategic Working Group underway, developing a Council-wide approach to use of AI: improving AI Strategy and Policies, designing AI Board and AI Governance; Digital and IT in discussions with Suppliers to identify AI opportunities in Reading.
Equal Communities	Deliver support to help people stop smoking, particularly those working in professions with higher rates of smoking.	Amber	In the first quarter of 2026/27, 275 people set a date to stop smoking. Of these, 154 people (56%) had successfully stopped smoking four weeks later. This was four percentage points below the 60% target. The Smokefree app has also been introduced alongside the existing stop smoking service to widen access to support and contribute towards achieving this year's quit ambition.

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Fit for the Future	Review the content of our website to ensure it is accessible and to drive customer self-service.	Amber	There has been significant work from content side to ensure successful implementation of RBC Chat. There has been some engagement with services to improve the content of small sections of the website. On the development side, work has been done on the legacy frameworks and libraries of the website. Investigative work has also begun on the redesign and implementation of new server structure to remove dependency on a third party organisation.
Fit for the Future	Deliver our three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial savings within to ensure that the Council lives within its means.	Amber	Quarter 1 financial monitoring position is a forecast adverse variance of £5.342m, of which £0.578m relates to savings pressures. While the Council has sufficient reserves to cover this adverse variance, action is being taken with the aim of bringing the figure down by the end of the financial year.
Page 340 Fit for the Future	Ensure recruitment and selection processes support the Council's move towards ensuring the workforce represents the demographics of the Borough.	Amber	33% of new starters in Q1 identified as Global Majority (GM), with the rolling year total at 34%, and the overall GM proportion of the workforce increasing to 21.8%. Whilst turnover remains higher amongst GM employees than white employees (22% compared to 14%), there were substantially more GM starters than GM leavers during the year (116 compared to 67), supporting a continued increase in workforce representation. Analysis indicates that the difference in turnover is influenced by the success of GM recruitment in recent years, resulting in a larger proportion of GM employees within shorter service cohorts, where turnover is typically highest.
Fit for the Future	Continue to develop talent within the Council, including through our apprentice and work experience programmes.	Amber	At Q1, new apprentices represented 2% (40 heads) of the Council's headcount (target: 2.3%). In addition, 76 existing employees were supported through apprenticeship programmes to develop professional qualifications. Over the course of this Q1 we have had 11 new apprentice starts. We have had no levy funding lapsing during this period. We hosted 25 work experience students during May (Reading College students) and July (The Wren students).
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan to improve the reliability of bus services by increasing bus priority.	Amber	The Bus Service Improvement programme ended 31 March 2026, with DfT providing an extension of time (to all Local Transport Authorities) to March 2027. The Council are in the process of delivering the final

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			schemes on this programme, including Oracle Roundabout Bus Lane and London Road Bus Lane (Sidmouth st – London St). As well as these bus priority measures, the Council is also supporting the Buzz 9 and Buzz 18 contracts, as well as providing Sunday services between Mere oak Park & the Town Centre (via Green Park and Kennet Island). Each of these contracts is due to expire on 31/03/2027. This scheme has been rated 'Amber' on the basis that the original programmed completion date was March 2026. Moreover, supply chain / programme risks may impact the current planned delivery date of March 2027. This is being reviewed and managed through regular project/programme meetings.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Deliver funded active travel schemes to encourage more walking and cycling.	Amber	The Council continues to deliver an Active Travel Behavioural Change programme, which includes providing cycle maintenance, training, bike ability training in schools, and wellbeing walks. Alongside this the Council also continues to develop and deliver Active Travel improvements across the town. The amber RAG rating has been assigned due to the delays in implementing the Castle Hill / Bath Road Active Travel improvements, which is now scheduled for an informal public consultation commencing 14 July 2026, following which the designs will be updated, procurement undertaken. The Council currently expects works to commence in early 2027.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings, operations, and fleet, including investing in solar panels, energy efficiency in our buildings, and electric vehicles.	Amber	The 2025 carbon plan project and associated programmes was due to complete in 2025/26. The following projects were included: Decarbonisation: 1) Decarbonisation of Civic - complete, 2) Decarbonisation of Hexagon in progress 3) Decarbonisation of Rivermead and Palmer Park Leisure Centres - complete. Disposal of assets - 4) Central Library Fleet Decarbonisation - 5) High voltage install at Bennet Road, 6) Purchase of 12 no eRCV. 7) Replacement of Van fleet - ongoing but >10% behind schedule. Solar Installations - 8) Installation of Solar Canopies at Bennet Road - cancelled, 9) Installation of Smallmead solar farm in progress >10% late, 10) Installation of solar car parks >10% late. 11) Installation of Bus depot solar >10% late but share capital raised install imminent. 5 green, 2 amber, 4 red (average amber). Emissions for

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			25/26 year not yet available but unlikely to be on target (-85% by of 2008/9).
Adults and children Page 342	Promote independent and active travel to school for children with special educational needs and disabilities.	Amber	We continue to bring focus to independent travel in many areas across SEND. We have consolidated relevant groups with the 14-19 Partnership to deliver a focus on curriculum is part of this union and how independent travel skills can be aligned to a curriculum within schools to allow those with SEND to develop their independence skills. Independent travel is part of the outcomes toolkit which is being deployed across all schools. We are also promoting the use of personal transport budgets as an alternative to council arranged transport to school. supporting parents and their children and young people with SEND to develop more independent means of travelling to school. The project is rated as amber and not green, not because we are off schedule but due to many of the programmes being in the designing phase. We cannot yet measure the impact this will have on the independent travel outcomes for children with SEND.
Adults and children	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.	Amber	Significant progress achieved during this reporting period, with key workstreams advancing as planned. Progress has been made across registration, mobilisation, and property readiness activities, with one service progressing through Ofsted registration, another approaching registration and opening, and a third nearing completion. Recruitment activity remains positive, with successful onboarding of new staff and expanded recruitment campaigns supporting workforce growth and operational readiness. However, project status remains Amber due to the risk of delays in DBS processing, which could impact staff onboarding timelines and potentially affect mobilisation and service opening dates. This risk is being closely monitored, with mitigating actions in place to minimise impact on project delivery.
Economic and cultural success	Increase the number and timeliness of repairs delivered by our Housing Repairs & Property Services teams.	Amber	Sustained focus and effort on scrutinising jobs when they are raised, allocated and completed, is reflected in the delivery of repairs on time, across all priorities. We continue to review issues causing late delivery, and the embedded suite of checks facilitates the scrutiny required to

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
			ensure this becomes BAU to maintain performance levels. They also allow us to identify issues early, and pinpoint causes of drops in performance against KPIs.
Adults and children Page 343	Increase the number of Brighter Futures for Children/Council foster carers to increase the proportion of children in care living in Reading wherever possible	Red	Residential placement numbers remain stable, with one fewer child in residential care at the end of this quarter compared to the previous quarter. During the quarter, 1 new foster carer was approved and a further 3 prospective foster carers were progressing through assessment. While this is positive progress, Reading continues to face a shortage of local foster carers, which affects our ability to place children close to their families, communities and schools. Work continues with Thames Valley local authorities and the Regional Care Cooperative to establish a regional fostering recruitment hub as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) Families First Partnership reforms. The DfE expects regional fostering recruitment arrangements to be in place from 1 October 2026. The hub is intended to strengthen recruitment activity across the region, improve the efficiency of assessment processes, and increase the availability of local foster carers to meet children's needs.
Economic and cultural success	Work in partnership to secure devolution for Reading and the wider area through a new Mayoral Strategic Authority.	Paused	A number of councils have recently withdrawn their support for seeking a Strategic Authority. The Council continues to engage with Leaders and senior officers in councils across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Swindon to continue discussions and work with Government to secure the benefits of devolution for Reading and the wider region.

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Policy Committee

Confidential Financial Annex



16 September 2026

Title	2026/27 Quarter 1 Performance & Monitoring Report
Report author (name & job title)	Chloe Hennessy, Head of Finance – Resources & Corporate Gavin Handford, Assistant Director of Policy, Change & Customer Services
Lead Councillor (name & title)	Councillor McEwan, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services & Resources

This report contains exempt information within Appendix 7 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 7) 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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