

## READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	06 October 2023
<b>Title</b>	SEND STRATEGY 2022-2027 UPDATE
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report author</b>	Brian Grady
<b>Job title</b>	Director of Education
<b>Organisation</b>	Brighter Futures for Children
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Board notes the progress on delivering the partnership SEND Strategy for Reading 2022-2027</li> <li>2. That Board notes the key challenges for the year ahead.</li> <li>3. That Board endorses next steps to continue to deliver the 2022-2027 strategy through the end of 2023 and 2024.</li> </ol>

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update regarding the delivery of the Reading partnership Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2022-2027.
- 1.2. This report summarises the further progress made in 2023 on the ambitions and actions set out in the strategy. The over-riding key performance indicator for the new strategy, as previously reported to Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2022 is that any local area inspection in the future rates Reading as one of the best local areas in the country for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- 1.3. The strategy 'went live' from January 2022 and work strands have driven priority actions, reporting to the monthly SEND strategy group, co-chaired by the Brighter Futures for Children Director of Education, and the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND (0-25), Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB).
- 1.4. Examples of the further progress made for children with SEND, building on the strong partnership working recognised by Ofsted and CQC in their Local Area SEND inspection of June 2021, are set out in this report. Contributions to this report have been received from across the partnership delivering the work strands of the strategy.

### 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. As reported to Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2022, the Reading partnership SEND Strategy 2022-2027 sets out how the local area partnership will deliver support and services in collaboration with children, young people, families and carers to meet local needs and national responsibilities.
- 2.2. Our strategy for children and young people with SEND is rooted in our vision for Reading's children and young people:

*All children and young people with SEND will be supported through the provision of the right support at the right time to be as independent as possible and have their emotional, social and physical health needs met. They will have choice and agency in adult life and be*

*able to access and navigate services to lead rich and fulfilling lives and flourish in a healthy, thriving and inclusive borough.*

- 2.3. Our strategy is aligned to the aims and objectives of the 2023 HM Government SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, to deliver 'The right support, in the right place, at the right time.' It reflects the positive outcome of the June 2021 local area inspection and the key areas for development identified through that report. Our strategy is co-produced with local parent carers and children, is informed by related key national documents such as the SEND Code of Practice (2015), National Autism Strategy (2021), the National Disability Strategy (2021) and the NHS Long Term Plan. It also takes account of national advocacy campaigns that promote the rights of disabled people. Our strategy will continue to be informed by any consultation results announced by HM Government.

### **3. Progress on the SEND Strategy 2022-2027**

- 3.1. The SEND Strategy 2022-2027 is being delivered through the following work strands:

- Strand 1: Improving communication
- Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist provision
- Strand 3: Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing
- Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood
- Strand 5: Support for families – short breaks

Each work strand is overseen by a steering group, with representation from Reading Borough Council, Brighter Futures for Children, NHS, and parents and carers. Progress in 2023 on each strand is set out below, with next steps for 2024 identified. The updated action plan for 2024 will be presented to Reading Borough Council Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee in January 2024.

#### **3.2. Strand 1: Improving communication**

- 3.3. Reading Family Information Service and SEND Local Offer have continued to effectively support families with information advice and support and are seen as trusted and impartial by parent carers. Quarterly monitoring evidences that between 90% and 100% of parent carers continue to rate these services as excellent, and would recommend the services to family or friends.
- 3.4. The Family Information Service have received recognition for their impact and quality as Winners of the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) Coram Family & Childcare award for Best Community Engagement 2022 and 'Best SEND Local Offer' 2022.
- 3.5. Reading Family Information Service and SEND Local Offer continue to monitor community trends in information and requests and demands in service. Any gaps identified are reported to the partnership Work Strand members and key teams within Brighter Futures for Children and Reading Borough Council, with a view to plan actions to address the gaps.
- 3.6. The new Brighter Futures for Children website includes an improved SEND section, with actions to review undertaken as set out in last year's update to Health and Wellbeing Board. The site includes refreshed SENDs guide, co-produced with children and parent carers through Special United, Reading's participation forum for children and young people with SEND, and Reading Families Forum.
- 3.7. Building on the success of last year's children and young people's coproduced videos for professionals last year, Special United our children and young people's participation group for children with SEND, BOB ICB and Brighter Futures for Children have worked together to develop a video to help boost understanding of children & young people with autism and/or additional needs. These videos have been circulated through a range of media in the summer term 2023.

- 3.8. Reading Information Advice and Support Service have continued to provide videos and webinars for children and young people and parents and carers on what the service is and how it can help; an introduction to SEND support and an introduction to EHCPs.
- 3.9. A range of new guides and information packs have been made available for parent/carers and children through partner websites and the local offer, which include; easy read short breaks information; the 'managing your wellbeing' web page; mental health support information and resources pages; the special needs Reading Services guide; the SEND local offer – Reading services guide; and the 'Parents Guide to Direct payments.' Regular updates on new SEND provision are provided through the SEND local offer newsletter.
- 3.10. Reading Families Forum continues to grow from strength to strength. 161 people came to the information day in September. it was an enjoyable successful day for attendees, and we saw many new families attending with younger children.
- 3.11. Impact of our communications and engagement continues to be tested out through parent carer and young people surveys, which are providing positive feedback. There is positive feedback from community groups in Reading regarding the improved SEND website, with the latest guides and resources for parents and carers, young people, and professionals being positively received following the latest annual refresh.
- 3.12. The Special United youth group for children with SEND has continued to actively support coproduction of information advice and support, to ensure professionals develop inclusive best practice. The new training videos, starring members of Special United and launched in 2023 to help schoolteachers and other professionals better understand pupils with SEND have been impactful, with professionals reporting greater awareness and understanding and improved practice.
- 3.13. Further developments this year include a Berkshire West keyworker programme coproduction with Special United, which has developed promotional information including videos to inform people about the new Dynamic Support Register. The new Dynamic Support Register and Care (Education) and Treatment Review national policy and guidance were published in January 2023 and aim to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and detention under the Mental Health Act for people with a learning disability and autistic people. It refreshes the Care (Education) and Treatment Review policy and guidance and for the first time combines this with the first published national Dynamic Support Register policy and guidance, linking these tools so neither are seen in isolation.
- 3.14. To increase the uptake of the annual health check with young people aged 14 and over and to ensure young people are on the GP Learning Disability register, BOB ICB have co-produced letters with Reading Families Forum and local special school pupils, which young people and families can send to their GP.
- 3.15. The Cost of Living crisis continues to impact local families in Reading. The Family Information Service have a dedicated page on the directory to support families access information quickly Reading Directory | Support - Food & Clothing, local charities ensure we are kept informed about any specific support and offers for families to access. The Family Information Service and SEND Local Offer are linked in on the Money Matters page.
- 3.16. **Improving communication: next steps**
- 3.17. Improved information and communications with parents and carers while awaiting an ADHD or ASD assessment remains a priority, with plans to increase visibility of information on ADHD and ASD assessments.
- 3.18. Work is underway to develop an enhanced publicity campaign for 2024 on the entitlement to free early years places, to encourage take up.
- 3.19. Improvements to readily available mental and physical wellbeing resources and information for parent carers and young people are planned through the Local Offer and Family

Information Service, with stronger signposting from partner websites, strengthening of engagement with reading young people social media channels and agencies' social media accounts.

3.20. Ongoing communication with parent carers about new SEND school places in Reading will remain a priority, as more provision becomes available.

3.21. We will continue to communicate new developments, including the delivery of the new Reading Inclusion Support in Education service to families through Local Offer newsletters, social media and the Local Offer homepage.

### 3.22. **Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist provision**

3.23. The Speech Language and Communication Needs revised pathway is now well established; with ongoing improvement actions delivered through the Early Years workstream. The Speech and Language Champions scheme is now in its second year with 43 champions enrolled in the programme. There has been an overall improvement in champions confidence levels including 90% reporting an increase in confidence in creating communication friendly environments.

3.24. The Wellcomm speech and language tool has been piloted and reviewed by the Best Start for Speech, Language, and Communication multiagency working group through the baby boost programme. 20% of children who had a review using the Wellcomm tool made progress in the first year.

3.25. Actions on Speech Language and Communication Needs seem to be impactful, with an overall 38% reduction in referral to speech and language therapy, contributing to a reduced waiting list and time for children.

3.26. Referral and assessment workstreams are working collaboratively across the BOB ICB area to design a new pathway structure with varied assessment lengths dependant on complexity. The pathway will be supported by an initial 'request for help' form and signposting, as well as the 'BOB-Neurodevelopmental Questionnaire' (BOB-NDQ) which will gather more information prior to an assessment to reduce assessment length and identify which assessment type is required. 12 more staff have been recruited across Berkshire to help reduce wait times. The team have continued to work very hard including holding weekend clinics so that we can offer more appointments to families. Work is also being undertaken by the ND team with Healios and Psychiatry-UK to reduce the waiting lists for Autism and ADHD.

3.27. A ND team newsletter is sent out to parents and carers on the waiting list to offer support whilst they are waiting. The offer includes SHaRON Jupiter (Support Hope and Resources Online Network), an online resource support for parents and carers of children and young people on the ND waiting list and those who have been diagnosed to receive peer support and support from services. This offer is monitored by the ND team.

3.28. Using the CReST tool there is now a Demand and Capacity report that shows the relationship between demand and capacity for ADHD and Autism referrals and assessments for children and young people in the BOB ICB area. This highlights existing challenges and will also act as a baseline for future improvement works.

3.29. Clarity consulting have been commissioned by BOB ICB to complete of therapies and referral pathways. The ambition is for pathways to be made clearer for parent carers and professionals and to help facilitate more seamless services.

3.30. As part of the delivery of their children and young people's strategy, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Hospital Trust has responded to identified areas for improvement in relation to completion of EHC assessments and simplifying the referral pathways for therapies for children. The Trust have instigated a more streamlined process allowing professionals to

complete EHC assessments in a more timely fashion which has led to an improvement in compliance.

- 3.31. Partnership working has continued to successfully reduce exclusions, enabling children and young people with SEND to attend school for longer and achieve better results. Whilst the partnership continues to make impact with the Therapeutic Thinking in Schools approach, exclusions of young people with Autism (with and without LD) is a continued area of focus and there are continuing issues for young people with LD who have additional emotional regulation and wellbeing needs.
- 3.32. Reading Borough Council have been successful in securing a £1M grant as part of the Department of Education's (DfE's) 'Delivering Better Value' (DBV) programme. Feedback from the Department of Education regarding Reading's application and proposals have been universally positive, with particular focus on our long-term strategic commitment to data-driven change. Reading Borough Council's proposals for this grant include a significant investment in support and advice to settings, to develop the most inclusive practice for children with SEND.
- 3.33. Plans to develop and implement a new advisory and support service, named 'Reading Inclusion Services in Education', or 'RISE' are well underway with recruitment for key posts in progress. Multi-agency working for the design and development of RISE has been established as the expected norm moving forwards to ensure closer integration between education, health and care colleagues. This integration will facilitate the creation of a service that is co-produced, high quality, data driven, holistic, and financially sustainable for children with SEND and their families in Reading.
- 3.34. The proposed Key Performance Indices (KPIs) for RISE are to:
  - Increase in the quality of 'Ordinarily Available Provision' and 'Graduated Response' across all Reading schools, to:
  - Increase school confidence and competence in supporting children with SEND through training and specialist support,
  - Increase parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of all children,
  - Improve the educational experience of children with SEND in mainstream schools in Reading (as evidenced by improved outcomes).
- 3.35. We are working with a range of schools to increase specialist capacity, to ensure that all children get the right support, at the right time and in the right place. As a result of positive work with Reading schools expressing an interest in developing more specialist provision through 2023, a significant number of additional places have been successfully secured, ensuring that children have been offered a suitable school place for September 2023:
  - Oak Tree special academy school has opened from September 2023 following last year's delay, currently providing an additional 25 places for Reading children
  - Oaklands independent special school has opened providing an additional 40 places
  - Thames Valley special academy school is providing additional satellite provision, providing additional places from January 2024 for reception and KS3 children
  - Hamilton special academy school are providing 7 additional places in Year 7
  - The programme to develop further Additionally Resourced Provision has been successful, with 90 places in provision opened for September 2023 and further options for provision with opening to be confirmed, which will support the need for further places from September 2024.
- 3.36. Reading Families Forum feedback regarding proposals for RISE has been positive, with the planned use of DBV investment receiving Forum support (the focus on recruiting a new team of Eps and therapists to support mainstream schools with SEND and thus support

families). The increase in school capacity, both inclusive mainstream and more specialist, has also been positively received this year.

### **3.37. Early intervention through to specialist provision: next steps**

- 3.38. The implementation of the Delivering Better Value Programme, and in particular the introduction of the new Reading Inclusion Support in Education service, is expected to enhance the inclusive practice, the capacity and confidence in Reading schools, in turn building further confidence of parents and carers in Reading's inclusive education offer.
- 3.39. Many parents and carers continue to be concerned about the amount of time they have to wait for a diagnosis appointment for ADHD and ASD. Reading Families Forum report that families are not sure where to start when their child is put on the waiting list for an assessment of Autism or ADHD or has another diagnosis. Most of the concerns at Reading Families Forum's recent Family Information and Fun Day related to this concern. The partnership will be taking action to improve the sharing of relevant information and advice to parents and carers, through the information guides available the Local Offer.
- 3.40. Some families still experience services and pathways across the partnership of providers which don't work together seamlessly. Some pathways to health services are not clear enough and can be confusing. Work with families will continue in the coming year to clarify pathways and continue to streamline how services work together through the commissioned review described above is anticipated to address these concerns through 2024.
- 3.41. Tackling Persistent Absence from school for children with SEND is a priority for 2024, including enhancing support and challenge to parent carers; ensuring caring responsibilities are addressed in Annual Reviews; ensuring provision for statutory age children is accessible; working with schools to commission Alternative Provision and/or providing personal budgets to families to make suitable provision other than at school where necessary; and where there is a school place and no identifiable reason why the young person is not attending greater use is being made of the legal process to ensure attendance.
- 3.42. Data sharing from across the Health system remains challenging. Data sharing is one of the top 3 priorities for the BOB ICB. Work is being undertaken to clarify what information can be broken down into local data, This will then inform a co-production approach across the partnership in 2024.
- 3.43. Whilst significant success has been achieved in delivering additional places for children for academic year 2023/2024, more places will be needed for academic year 2024/2025 onwards. Work through the DBV programme has established a future forecast of specialist provision demand. These projections are informing further work with Reading schools to develop more school places from 2024 onwards.
- 3.44. Progressing plans for increasing the sufficiency of local provision through the SEND Commissioning Strategy and the School Place Planning strategy remains a key priority for 2024. Reading Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children officers are reviewing options for the development of further specialist provision, including the development of more Additionally Resourced Provisions across the Borough and consideration of a further expression of interest in the anticipated next Free School Wave, as trailed in HM Government's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.

### 3.45. **Strand 3: Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing**

- 3.46. The much-valued 'Therapeutic Thinking Schools' networks and training are continuing to be supported in the vast majority of Reading schools, with positive impact on inclusion and support for Reading children. The Schools Link Mental Health Project is being developed as part of the SEND Strategy's focus on promoting resilience, prevention, and early intervention. Educational Psychologists and the Primary Mental Health Teams are offering mental health surgeries to all Reading schools as part of this approach. There is a comprehensive training offer to schools, early years settings and colleges and this supports schools in applying therapeutic thinking to reduce exclusions and promote mental wellbeing. There is in addition a new Trauma Informed Practitioner in place for the autumn term who will also provide additional support to Reading schools.
- 3.47. There has been positive feedback about the wider emotional health and wellbeing offer from Reading Families Forum, albeit with continued concerns regarding waiting times for specialist CAMHS. The attendance of the Mental Health Support Teams at the Reading Families Forum information and fun day was well received by families.
- 3.48. Learning Disability CAMHS is currently being mobilised across Berkshire West, with recruitment underway within Berkshire West for children and young people with a moderate to severe Learning Disability.
- 3.49. The Educational Psychology Service and Primary Mental Health Service have written and are delivering Early Years Mental Health Training: Little People Big Feelings to help ensure that the needs of vulnerable children under 2 are consistently identified by professionals.
- 3.50. Reading Families Forum have seen a large increase in children presenting with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), which is further evidenced by feedback from young people. The new EBSA team for children in a Reading school established in 2023 and a further Mental Health Support Team have added further capacity to address the needs of identified children and young people at risk of EBSA. Over the last year the EBSA team worked with 34 children, with over 560 contacts with families and over 370 contacts with the child. The intense support provided has shown significant success and of the completed work with 34 children, 95% were successfully reintegrated back into Education. The child's mental health also improved following this targeted intervention, with 80% of the children showing improvements in mental wellbeing. The service continues to provide regular training to schools on working with children who are not attending school due to fear or anxiety, and developed an online resource for parents and schools.
- 3.51. As of 2023, Reading now has two Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) covering two thirds of schools. The MHSTs provide evidence-based, low intensity interventions to support children and young people (and their families) who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems focusing particularly on low mood, anxiety and behavioural difficulties, helping prevent more serious problems developing. Over the last year the MHSTs worked with over 600 children and young people, with excellent outcomes – over 74% children made progress on clinical measures of mental health and 86% made progress against their goals.
- 3.52. The Reading Primary Mental Health Team (PMHT) has been similarly impactful, providing 1:1 direct time limited therapeutic support for Reading children and young people aged 5-18 who are at risk of developing serious mental health problems, or those who are experiencing significant impairment due to their emotional or mental health problems; most if not all of whom would not otherwise receive any specialist help. In the last year the PMHT worked with 121 children and young people, 97% of whom demonstrated progress against their Goal Based Outcomes, and 81% improved clinical outcomes.
- 3.53. Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust Hospital Navigators pilot project, funded by the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, has continued to be impactful through 2023. This offered young people 13 – 24 attending A+E the opportunity to have support from a matched

Mentor, with the intention of starting support at a critical point in time. Research shows that change is most likely to be initiated in these reachable moments, but this depends upon a person's available support. Starting Point, who were commissioned to provide this service, recruited and trained 24 volunteers and consistently cover Friday and Saturday night.

- 3.54. The reducing inequalities Task & Finish Group has focused on improving access for children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and cultures to mental health and emotional wellbeing support, information, and services. An Assistant Educational Psychologist is employed to lead on this work.
- 3.55. **Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing: next steps**
- 3.56. Continuing to focus on addressing inequalities in mental health services, including for children with SEND, is a key priority for 2024.
- 3.57. CAMHS capacity, crisis response and support for children with Learning Disabilities and Autism remain a concern for parents and carers. The new Specialist CAMHS service for Learning Disability and Autism is part of the partnership response and the partnership will continue to explore ways to support an improved CAMHS offer.
- 3.58. A continued partnership approach to improving children's mental health will be taken in 2024, with a focus on building the skills and resilience of our local communities, parents and carers, by offering training and workshops to those people most important to children's wellbeing, with a task and finish group chaired by a parent to guide and support this work.
- 3.59. Work is planned for 2024 with Public Health in supporting their partnership approach to suicide awareness and prevention, with a joint partnership action plan being developed, in particular looking at developing an action plan with a focus on priority groups.
- 3.60. We will continue to develop and embed our Autism Growth Approach in 2024, which focuses on all children having a positive experience of being in school; it includes training from the Autism Education Trust, workshops for parents, Intensive Interaction and specialist training.
- 3.61. **Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood**
- 3.62. The panel for preparation for adulthood is now well established and overseeing improved transitions and preparation for adulthood work across the partnership. Transition work in Year 9 upwards is an area of focus and is being addressed through joint working for children aged 14+ between Brighter Futures for Children and adult social care.
- 3.63. A Reading Borough Council – led Preparing For Adulthood enablement project is established and will continue through 2024. Increasing coproduction and opportunities for young people to shape pathways and provision is an ambition, building on the engagement of young people in a recent adult social care event, presenting their own journeys in enablement. The project also aims to improve systems and processes to ensure more smooth transitional experiences for young people, and to develop more enablement opportunities.
- 3.64. A new provider has joined Ways into work in delivering supported internships in Reading and this is increasing the numbers of supported internships in the town that are taken up by young people with EHC Plans. Work is starting on identifying young people who have the most complex needs to develop more options for supporting positive participation and outcomes into adulthood.
- 3.65. In August 2022, BOB ICB commissioned a Quality Improvement Project - Transition to Adulthood - the Journey for young people/adults with Learning Disability or Autism (13 to



24). The Berkshire West stakeholder group for this project includes Reading Adult Social Care and Brighter Futures for Children, BHFT and RBFT and are ensuring active Reading participation and leadership of this work. To support the BOB project and ensure we hear the voice of young people funding has been identified by the NHS England South-East Region for a SEND Improvement project: Improve transition planning through the lens of a CYP with autism, learning disability or both. This includes Reading young people and will involve special and mainstream schools.

3.66. The new Reading all-age Autism Strategy 2022-2026 has been successfully launched and is beginning to enhance partnership support in preparing children for adulthood. Public and partner engagement has been a core element of developing Reading's Autism Strategy, including autistic people and their families and carers, third sector and voluntary organisations and professionals from across Reading.

### **3.67. Preparing for adulthood: next steps**

3.68. Transitions continues to remain high on the agenda for parents and carers. We have comprehensive information on the Local Offer; however, some parents and carers experience difficulty navigating through the system to access support. Further engagement from key transition services to ensure the most effective information and support is available to parents and carers and young people is a priority.

3.69. Employment Education and Training for young people with SEND remains a key priority. Developing more pathways to fulfilling destinations for all young people with SEND remains an important priority for the partnership. Increasing links with Reading's business community and expanding the offer of supported internships are key objectives for 2024.

3.70. Developing college places and post special school provision for continuing participation, enablement and positive activities for young people with Physical Disability and Profound and Multiple Learning Disability is a priority for 2024.

3.71. Further developing the housing pathway and the SEND pathway for young people not known to Early Help or Children's Social Care is also planned for 2024.

3.72. Preparation For Adulthood will be moving in to an all age Learning Disability and Autism team under the new Reading Borough Council Adult Social Care redesign, which it is hoped will secure a enhance focus on positive destinations and outcomes for adults.

### **3.73. Strand 5: Support for families / short breaks**

3.74. The dedicated area on the SEND Local Offer providing information, advice and guidance on short breaks, continues to be well received. Co-production with Reading Families Forum, Special United and the wider SEND community-based services is undertaken to ensure that information is accessible, meets the needs of local families and that the services commissioned are structured around the feedback provided. This area is widely used by parent carers, school SENCOs, the wider Reading community and professionals working with families to help access and understand the short breaks offer.

3.75. Short breaks continue to be mapped based on feedback, gaps analysis and needs based on young people with SEND in Reading, this has encouraged take up of the offer. The Family Information Service and SEND Local Offer team are also part of professional forums, supporting for example social workers to explore and secure a wider range of alternative service options for families. The Family Intervention Service offer a brokerage service to vulnerable parent carers helping them to access short breaks. This support has enabled many families and children to access universal short breaks.

- 3.76. The Service has proved effective in helping the partnership better understand the feedback from commissioned providers and this is also an integral part of how local offer information is communicated to families. The Family Information Service capture feedback from parent carers and evidence of positive outcomes to further improve our offer. This co-productive approach to engagement has resulted in the creation of various short breaks.
- 3.77. **Support for families / short breaks: next steps**
- 3.78. Parent carer feedback in 2023 has asked for future commissioning to ensure that short break providers are fully inclusive and able to support children with physical disability (including being wheelchair accessible and with hoist/personal care being available). This is being delivered through the revised Reading Borough Council Accessibility Strategy.
- 3.79. An increasing number of requests have been received in 2023 for swimming sessions for children and young people with SEND, soft play sessions including at leisure providers and childcare suitable for all ages in holiday periods. During June GLL contacted the Family Information Service to inform that they are looking to develop SEND soft play sessions at all the leisure centres and were asking for guidance, which is a positive development, showing inclusive leadership of our local leisure provider and a positive outcome for Reading children and young people.
- 3.80. Work is also going to be undertaken to ensure that Direct payments are available to use at clubs for children with more complex needs.

#### **4. Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The information contained in this report and its appendices are in line with the overall direction of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Strategy, contributing to the following strategy priorities:
- *Help children and families in early years*
  - *Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people*

#### **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. No direct environmental and climate implications have been identified regarding the actions undertaken to implement the SEND Strategy 2022-2027 in 2023. Going forward, delivery of services local to children may reduce transport emissions, thereby positively contributing to Reading Borough Council's ambitions to be net zero.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. The development and delivery of the SEND Strategy has been supported by the proactive work undertaken with and by Reading Families' Forum and Special United – young people's forum, as set out in this report.

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The SEND Strategy 2022-27 aims to ensure the changing diverse and special education needs of Reading children are met, to raise the education standards for all and address inequality due to social disadvantage, disability (including multiple complex needs) and/or other protected characteristics, and contributes to the delivery of the Council's equality duties. The strategy will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changing demographics and to ensure that the diverse and special education needs of Reading children continue to be effectively met.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

8.1. Not applicable.

## **9. Legal Implications**

9.1. Not applicable.

## **10. Financial Implications**

10.1. Not applicable.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

11.1. The delivery of the SEND Strategy 2022-2027 will continue throughout 2024. A further update on progress will be provided on an annual basis.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1. There are none.