

# Choose an item

22 January 2024



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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<b>Title</b>	Tackling Inequality Strategy Update
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Gavin Handford
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Liz Terry
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the Committee notes the progress in delivering the Tackling Inequality Strategy objectives</li><li>2. That the Committee notes the intention for the two Place Based pilot projects to be extended and that a request will be made to reprofile the budget as part of year end processes, as detailed in para 3.17.</li></ol>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. In January 2023 the Council agreed its new Tackling Inequality Strategy 2023 – 2026. The Strategy outlined how the Council can go beyond its existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents in all areas of the Borough. The key focus of the strategy is to support our residents to become more resilient, building on a foundation of educational attainment, strong skills and practical knowledge that enables them to realise their potential through accessing suitable employment opportunities.
- 1.2. Within the first year of the new strategy, the Council has worked with Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College, and the Reading Economic Destination Agency (REDA) to deliver a broad range of activities to support Reading residents with the skills and learning to improve their financial resilience.
- 1.3. The Council is delivering part of this Strategy through an innovative and targeted place-based approach to address the underlying determinants of deprivation within the Borough that adversely affect Education, Skills, and Training.
- 1.4. The Council has commenced this place-based work within the Church and Whitley wards, identifying a broad range of opportunities to improve resident's individual and collective quality of life.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25 'Investing in Reading's Future' sets out the vision for Reading to reach its potential and to ensure that everyone living and working in Reading can share the benefits of our town's success.
- 2.2. Within Reading there is a mismatch between its economic success and the benefit realised by residents within some of our communities. Significant inequalities persist in

terms of skills, wealth and health, with the borough having some of the most and least affluent localities in the whole of the Thames Valley.

- 2.3 The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation from 2019 shows Reading has five areas within the Borough that are in the 10% most deprived nationally compared to two in 2015. A total of twenty-four areas have at least one indicator which is in the 10% most deprived in the country.
- 2.4 The initial finding from the 2021 Census shows a similar picture, with areas in the south of the borough showing the greatest prevalence of household deprivation relating to education, employment, health, and housing.
- 2.5 The specific scope of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is to go beyond our existing activities and strategies to achieve a more consistent quality of life for our residents, regardless of where they live within the borough.
- 2.6 The Council's Tackling Inequality Strategy and place-based pilot approach seeks to respond to this issue by focusing on:
  - those areas of greatest need, so that we can achieve our collective ambitions and deliver the successes we want for everyone within the Borough to share in Reading's success.
  - increasing attainment in skills, education and training enabling residents to access quality employment.
- 2.7 The development and delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy has happened during a backdrop of significant cost-of-living challenges for Reading residents including the new residents within the Borough who have sought asylum in the UK.
- 2.8 Tackling inequality is not something which the Council can do alone. Our strategy emphasises the importance of working with partners, particularly the voluntary and community sector which is often operating at the very local level to support residents. Direct engagement with our residents by public, private and voluntary sector organisations to understand their needs and aspirations, and what barriers they face to achieving them is crucial to the success of this strategy. The Tackling Inequality Strategy (2023 to 2026) can be found here:  
<https://images.reading.gov.uk/2023/02/Tackling-Inequality-Strategy-2023-2026.pdf>

### 3. The Proposal

#### Tackling Inequality Strategy Action Plan Delivery

- 3.1 The Tackling Inequality Strategy includes a detailed action plan of activities to support increasing educational attainment, skills and learning to support residents' economic self-sustainability. The delivery of these actions is being led by three key partners who are committed to achieving the aims of the Tackling Inequality Strategy. These are:
- 3.2 **Brighter Futures for Children:** BFfC have the target of improving educational attainment, skills, and learning through:
  - Early identification of additional needs, aligned with a wide range of provision.
  - Ensuring all Reading children are included, engaged in learning and barriers to achievement removed.
  - Promoting positive futures for all Reading young people, focusing on those most in need
  - Local schools work in partnership to realise the potential of all Reading pupils.

**3.3 Reading Economic Destination Agency:** REDA have the target of ensuring economic stability through:

- Emerging skills and jobs.
- Start Up Reading and small business support.
- Employment and employability.

**3.4 New Directions College:** NDC have three specific goals:

- To provide outstanding adult skills and community learning that meets the needs of learners, communities, and local businesses.
- Core Skills for Local People
- Employment And Employability

3.5 A summary of delivery against these actions is presented in Appendix 1.

### **Place-Based Pilots Programme**

3.6 Another key part of the strategy is the place-based pilots operating in two Wards. The aim of place-based working is to take a more holistic, targeted and co-designed approach to the deployment of Council, community, and private sector resources, in our least affluent Wards to better support residents. Crucial to the success of this approach is that everyone who has a stake or an interest in the area can contribute and share their perspective about how best the desired outcome might be achieved.

3.7 The place-based pilots programme covers two areas of the Borough: Church and Whitley Wards with the new approach being piloted over a period of twenty-four months.

3.8 The activities of the Place-Based Pilots are being managed through five specific workstreams:

<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Community Engagement	To connect with residents and communities to build strong ongoing relationships to understand what it means to live in Church and Whitley wards, and to involve and collaborate with these communities in the development and delivery of future services and activities.
Educational Attainment	To support pupils, parents & guardians, teachers, and local communities to secure the best educational attainment for our children and young people.
Increasing Skills and Abilities	To understand and nurture the skills and abilities that residents need to secure the employment that they want.
Sustainable Employment	To support residents into economically sustainable employment that provides them with good quality of life.
Community Priorities for Public Realm	To respond to what residents tell us about the physical environment and to create a place that supports their quality of life.

3.9 To support the delivery of the Place-Based Pilots, two Community Project Officers have been recruited to act as a focal point within the designated Wards.

- 3.10 A key element of their work is to build new relationships with stakeholders to drive successful collaborative working, engage, and to connect with the local community to build trust and encourage participation in Tackling Inequality Strategy activities. They are working with the local community, other public sector, and voluntary and community sector organisations to gather intelligence on the needs and aspirations of residents, support the development of options for targeting services and resources within the pilot area, and to work with the local community and partner agencies to strengthen local capacity and social capital.
- 3.11 During the first months of the Place-Based Pilots programme, the Community Project Officers have focused on:
- Identifying and collecting local data to measure progress, impact, and to inform service improvement activities and measure their achievements,
  - Mapping local assets, activities, and resources within the ward (a summary of local community facilities is attached as Appendix 2),
  - Planning and delivering of stakeholder events,
  - Identifying opportunities for regenerating local assets and infrastructure,
  - Identifying systems-based changes in service delivery to reduce silos and strengthen partnership working,
  - Identifying options for reducing demand on local services by early intervention and prevention activities.
- 3.12 This initial activity has identified a broad range of potential projects which could support the objectives and workstreams of the Place-Based pilots. This includes providing additional focus and support to existing Council projects to ensure that we are maximising their impact within Church and Whitley, and developing new projects identified through engagement with local stakeholders.
- 3.13 Through engagement between Brighter Futures for Children and the John Madjeski Academy, priorities for supporting local school children have also been identified to provide a focus for activities within the Place-Based Pilots. These priorities for delivering improved educational outcomes are:
- Parental Engagement and Co-Production of Improvement Outcomes.
  - Increased Attendance through Role-Modelling Positive Behaviours and Improved Public Health.
  - Classroom Activities supported by local community and cultural activities.
- 3.14 All three priorities can be enhanced by greater active connectivity between the schools and local community, and recruitment of school staff that align with the life experiences and heritage of the local community.
- 3.15 New Directions College has identified opportunities to go beyond its core offer, including:
- Be a physical community venue for activities linked to the place-base pilots and will attend other community events across the borough, to promote the offer of adult and community learning to support social mobility.
  - Provide bespoke Careers Guidance and Information, Advice, and Guidance to residents looking to secure employment or make progress with their career with enhanced qualifications or apprenticeships.
- 3.16 The next stage of the Place-Based Pilots programme is to engage with residents within Church and Whitley to understand their needs and aspirations in relation to attainment, skills and employment. We need to understand which will have the most impact and are therefore a priority for delivery. Given the time it will take to develop and deliver effective engagement practices within the two wards, it is inevitable that the Place-

Based Pilots Programme will not be able to deliver every improvement project that is identified during its current timeframe of 24 months, making this prioritisation process a vital piece of work with the local community.

- 3.17 Officers are currently developing a range of engagement methods to capture experiences, preferences, and feedback from the communities within South Reading. Some of these are new approaches that are being tested, and some will build on existing practices that residents value. To enable the maximum benefit from the resources committed to the Place-Based Pilots programme it would be prudent to extend the timescales for the programme. As part of the year-end budget process, a request will be made to reprofile the expected spend on the budget allocated to the Place-Based Pilots for 2023-25 to reflect this new timeframe. It is anticipated that the reprofiling request will reflect the table below. This would extend the delivery of the Place-Based Pilots into 2025/26 within the existing approved resources.

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
PBP Budget Allocation	£100,000	£250,000	£300,000

- 3.18 Following the assessment and engagement on potential improvements within Church and Whitley wards, any additional budget requirements (including extending the Community Project Officers posts) would be considered within the annual budget-build process.
- 3.19 Within the potential projects that have been identified, opportunities are also being reviewed for how any improvements within Church and Whitley can be delivered across the borough or can create systemic change in how Reading Borough Council services are delivered to residents. Creating improvements that can be realised across the whole borough remains a key aspect of the work of the Place-Based Pilots Programme.
- 3.20 Since the genesis of the Tackling Inequality Strategy work, Reading Borough residents have experienced the initial impact of the significant rise in the cost of living. What is not yet known are the longer-term impacts of this rising cost of living and how they relate to the objectives of the Tackling Inequality Strategy and the Place-Based Pilots Programme. This further supports the intention to reprofile the use of available resources so that emerging impacts of the sharp rise in the cost of living can be identified and understood.

### **Feedback from Engagement with Local Residents and Stakeholders**

- 3.21 Council Officers have conducted a range of engagement and consultation activities within Whitley and Church wards to understand the views of residents about what they see as important within their lives and the objectives within the Tackling Inequality Strategy. This included:
- Focus Groups with Residents and Council Tenants
  - Focus Group with Community Researchers
  - Whitley Wood Community Centre Survey
  - Whitley Community Development Association Engagement
  - Have You Say Event
  - Whitley Networking Meeting
  - Meetings with local Ward Councillors
- 3.22 The following key points have been raised during these engagement activities:
- Support for parents who are struggling to help their children with their education.
  - Community activities and events to build relationships with hard-to-reach residents.
  - Access to community spaces and condition of existing facilities.

- Improved communication of information that meets local needs.
- Finding enjoyable employment
- Council staff having a greater awareness of living in an area of historic deprivation.
- Sharing local experiences to decision makers
- Removing and challenging the South Reading stigma

### South Reading Community Information Ambassadors

3.23 120 people across Church and Whitley wards have signed up to act as an informal ambassador. These new ambassadors will share information with friends, family, work colleagues and neighbours, and are provided with monthly updates to share within the community.

### Residents Survey 2023

3.24 The annual Residents Survey results show the following priorities for residents in Church and Whitley wards, in terms of what they think makes somewhere a good place to live, and what needs improving in their area:

#### What Makes Somewhere a Good Place to Live?

Church		Whitley	
Factor	%		%
Level of crime	33%	Good schools	39%
Facilities for children and young	28%	Facilities for children and young	27%
Roads and pavement repairs	24%	Clean streets	21%
Good schools	24%	Level of traffic congestion	21%
Clean streets	22%	Level of crime/ shopping facilities	19%

#### What Needs Improving In Your Area?

Church		Whitley	
Factor	%		%
Level of crime	37	Road and pavements repairs	27
Road and pavements repairs	26	Clean streets	25
Facilities for children and young	26	Level of crime	22
Clean streets	21	Level of traffic congestion	17
Parking	17	Facilities for children and young	16

### Place-Based Pilots Programme – Alignment with Other Council Projects

3.25 Alongside the delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy objectives and the Place-Based Pilots programme, the Council has also delivered other projects focused specifically on addressing inequality within the borough. These include:

#### Cost of Living Response / Household Support Fund

- 3.26 In response to the rising cost of living experienced by people living in Reading, the Council has commissioned local voluntary and community organisations to deliver services and activities to support residents experiencing uncertainty and hardship. These commissioned services are complemented by a comprehensive information resource within the Council website developed to ensure that residents can find information about what support is available to address their specific needs.
- 3.27 The Council has also developed a programme of financial support for residents utilising the Household Support Fund grant provided by Department of Work and Pensions. This programme provides direct support to Pupil Premium Free School Meal families, Older People on Housing Benefit, and Care Leavers, as well as creating an opportunity for low-income households to apply for financial assistance.

### **VCS Compact**

- 3.28 In September 2023, the Council agreed a new VCS Compact between Reading Borough 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 the residents and communities of Reading.
- 3.29 This new Compact will help realise this ambition by embedding ways of working that combine the complementary capabilities and perspectives of Reading Borough Council and the voluntary and community sector to achieve:
- A strong and self-sustaining voluntary and community sector which Reading can be proud of.
  - More strategic alignment between the Council and the voluntary and community sector, recognising its important role in helping to understand priorities and shape service delivery across Reading, but also recognising that we may not always agree.
  - Mutual understanding between the Council and the voluntary and community sector of how each organisation/sector works alongside a commitment to overcome factors that constrain joint working and support each partner wherever possible.
  - Positive engagement and insight into the diverse needs of local people.
  - Better services more tailored to the needs of our residents.
  - A borough where volunteering is encouraged, nurtured, and celebrated.

### **Community Wellness Outreach Project**

- 3.30 In November 2023, the Community Wellness Outreach Project commenced which is an investment of £811,000 over two years from the Integrated Care Board, to develop a local community outreach service which offers prevention and early identification of cardiovascular disease to patients at the heart of communities in a way which best suits local needs.
- 3.31 This project recognises the role of voluntary and community sector organisations in supporting community wellness and reducing health inequalities, with a view to ensuring that the local operating model contributes to building community assets.

## **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The key objectives of the Tackling Inequality Strategy are to create strong self-sustaining communities by improving residents' skills and abilities to enable them to access employment opportunities which match their ambitions. Our local economy needs to be strong so that there are the good jobs that our residents want, or the markets to sustain small businesses and the self-employed.
- 4.2. These activities are supported by taking a holistic approach to improving areas of the borough to create a positive environment for growth and achievement.

- 4.3. These objectives relate specifically to the Corporate Plan themes of Thriving Communities and Inclusive Economy.
- 4.4. Delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is based on utilising the principles of partnership working and identifying opportunities to work differently to deliver more effective and efficient services for our residents.
- 4.5. Working effectively with our partners is critical to the work to tackle inequality. To help our residents obtain the skills and abilities to realise their potential, has required the Council to work closely with key partners such as Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College and the Reading Economy & Destination Agency, along with our schools, colleges and businesses who are also focused on securing outcomes for residents that provide opportunities for learning and development.
- 4.6. Central to our delivery of this strategy has been the establishment of area-based projects which enable Council services, local partners, our voluntary and community sector, and our residents, to come together as part of the multi-disciplinary project team and utilise all available resources to deliver the changes needed for our residents to realise their potential.

## **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. The Place-Based approach within the Tackling Inequality Strategy takes a holistic approach to identifying improvements, which can include environmental elements such as air quality; biodiversity/wildlife; greenspace/natural habitats; landscape/visual impact; natural resources; noise/disturbance; and waste management.
- 5.2. Specific carbon emission reduction activities could relate to the development of new facilities within communities which are more actively used by the local community, and energy efficiency improvements within people's homes. The creation of more suitable local employment opportunities for residents would reduce the need to travel.

## **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. Delivery of the Tackling Inequality Strategy is heavily dependent on understanding residents' particular needs and aspirations so that services can be tailored to be more effective. This engagement approach is complemented by a strong commitment to collaborative working with local partners and other stakeholders to develop mutually reinforcing service improvements.
- 6.2. A key element of the early work of the Community Project Officers has been to build relationships with local community stakeholders and provide opportunities for focused discussions on local community needs and aspirations. As part of the Place-Based Pilots work, new engagement models are being explored to embed effective ways to improve our understanding of our residents across the borough.

## **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. The Tackling Inequality Strategy is focused on exploring all issues which may limit residents' abilities to participate and enjoy the benefits of living within the borough, including all the protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act (2010), and residents belonging to the Armed Forces community.
- 7.2. By its very nature, the Tackling Inequality Strategy details how the Council will work to improve inclusivity within the borough, with a strong element of delivering improvements by engaging directly with residents to understand their individual circumstances, needs and aspirations.



- 7.3. There is a specific commitment within the Tackling Inequality Strategy to always be mindful of the diverse personal life experiences of our residents and how these can contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements within the borough.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1 None arising from the recommendations.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. None arising from the recommendations.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. See attached template.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. The Tackling Inequality Strategy and Place-Based Pilots Programme are focused on delivering improvements between 2023 and 2026.

## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1. None.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Tackling Inequality Strategy Action Plan Update – October 2023**

**Appendix 2: Local Community Assets within Whitley & Church Wards**

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report are set out below. Note paragraph 3.23 and recommendation 2 outlines proposals to request a reprofiling of the budget as part of the financial year end processes. This does not change the overall expenditure related to this activity:

### Revenue Implications

	<b>2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>	<b>2025/26 £000</b>
Previously Agreed Budget Allocation	£350	£300	
<b>Expenditure</b>	£350	£300	£0
Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	0	0	0
Net Cost (+)/saving (-)	£0	£0	£0

### Value for Money (VFM)

The activities of the Place-Based pilots within the strategy and commitment to collaborative working with key partners are all predicated on an aspiration to identify more efficient use of resources in delivering services for residents.

### Risk Assessment.

Failure to implement the tackling inequality agenda within the Borough and reduce levels of inequality is included within the Council's Strategic Risk Register. Identified issues to be mitigated include lack of resources, focus and coordination of internal teams, deficit of community infrastructure to support local delivery, and lack of effective community engagement leading to inappropriate interventions. Mitigations are in place for each element of the risk and are being actively monitored.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE – December 2023**

<b>1. IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, SKILLS, AND LEARNING</b>			
<b>Early identification of additional needs, aligned with a wide range of provision</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Agree partnership action to deliver the priorities of the SEND Strategy 2022-2027	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Report to Health and Wellbeing Board October 6 sets out details of progress on all outcomes in this section. Director of Education attended Reading Alliance for Racial Cohesion - led session on Education and inequalities, to promote more inclusive representation on Governing Boards and Reading Families Forum
Establish clear pathways and provision from early intervention through to specialist provision	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Autism Education Trust Hub established, training offer in place. Therapeutic Thinking in Schools, Principles of Instruction training offers in place with a focus on reducing inequalities. Anti-Racism project focused on recruiting more schools to participate. Provided schools with SEND consultant support in 22-23 to support school improvement and reduce risks for children with more complex SEND.
Improve Sufficiency of SEND placements	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Supported and evaluated curriculum provision and effectiveness in all mainstream based specialist resources and provided training and networking opportunities through the AET Hub and school effectiveness team
With health partners, develop integrated working to identify and respond to children's additional needs	BOB ICB, Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		NHS - led ICB review of therapies underway

<b>Ensuring all Reading children are included, engaged in learning and barriers to achievement removed</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
With Reading schools, understand and take action to improve attainment and reduce attainment gaps	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Reading Schools Partnership Board established to coordinate school-to-school support and challenge. School effectiveness framework in place and used to address issues in specific schools, successful Rapid Improvement actions have supported improved outcomes in schools. Annual School Standards report set out agreed actions to reduce attainment gaps, endorsed by ACE Committee, June 2023. Virtual School training offer, support, advice, and guidance for professionals working with children looked after evidenced as making an impact in 2022/2023 results and recent Ofsted visit. Overall, attainment gaps are still too wide and year to year reductions needed over a three-to-five-year trajectory
Coordinate education and wellbeing recovery action to support children's learning	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Support to schools in place to improve curriculum intent and implementation through the coordination of training for school leaders and programme of curriculum reviews evidencing impact in monitoring reviews. Maintained Ofsted Outcomes above national average. Monthly Emotional Health and Wellbeing Triage Support Group for focusing on reducing inequalities making progress on access and impact
Promote attendance and remove the barriers to engagement in education using trauma-informed and relationship-based approaches, including targeted work to prevent exclusions and reducing the number of Children Missing Education	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Persistent Absence is a priority area, including for vulnerable pupils. BFfC restructure has brought attendance support into Education department. Continued promotion of Therapeutic Thinking in Schools and training offer, behaviour reviews in schools where SEND or exclusion are concerning. Virtual School training offer, drop-in clinics, advice, guidance, and Personal Education Plans promote inclusive and trauma informed practice for schools, professionals and carers to support attendance. Dedicated VS Inclusion Support Officer with robust tracking and monitoring of inclusion data is helping achieve good attendance for our looked after children
Targeted School Effectiveness intervention with priority schools	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Successful Rapid Improvement approaches with schools supported improved outcomes in priority schools, with early data analysed for 22/23 results and schools causing concern identified

<b>Promoting positive futures for all Reading young people, focusing on those most in need</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Identify young people at risk of NEET and take targeted action to prevent them becoming NEET	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children	Green	Continued positive impact of NEET prevention work resulting in good outcomes for children at risk of NEET
Develop and promote a wider range of EET opportunities and possible futures for all Reading young people	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children	Yellow	A successful young entrepreneur's programme engaged groups of children at risk of poor outcomes to develop their creative skills into artistic product, including through arts and creative events focused on the Southcote area, which they sold at Wembley Entrepreneurs Fair. A wide range of additional opportunities identified, including in developing skills for culture and enterprise, but more needed to be done to integrate work of skills agenda, economic development partnership and schools' engagement
Reinvigorate the 16-19 partnership, building relationships with HE and FE providers	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children	Green	Reading School and College Leaders group has integrated work with colleges, ensuring Activate Learning and other FE and HE providers are integrated with a Reading-wide approach to tackling inequalities. Reading University Head of Education Institute has joined Reading Education Partnership Board.
Broker strong partnerships between businesses and schools to harness Reading's economy for the benefit of young people	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children	Yellow	Progress made with Price Waterhouse Coopers to secure opportunities for vulnerable children. More needed to be done to integrate work of skills agenda, economic development partnership and schools' engagement
Promote enrichment, cultural and leisure opportunities for primary and secondary pupils to help children develop their interests and skills	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children	Green	Promotion and take up of opportunities has seen a term-on-term increase over the last academic year. More work is planned to expand the engagement of schools in cultural and creative opportunities through the Cultural Education Partnership

<b>Local schools work in partnership to realise the potential of all Reading pupils</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Reading's leaders of education, working with the community and businesses, deliver an Education Vision and strategy promoting education, skills and opportunities for all pupils.	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Reading Education Partnership Board established, overseeing outcomes for all children and with a priority to reduce gaps in outcomes. RBC Covid recovery funding enabled catch up summer schools for vulnerable pupils. annual Standards and Achievement report established and presented to ACE committee, establishing a baseline understanding of inequality issues, in July 2023. ACE Committee endorsed educational priorities regarding reducing inequality and regular reporting cycle at July 2023 ACE Committee meeting.
Targeted school effectiveness support to Reading community schools ensures quality education for all pupils, reducing inequalities	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Successful Rapid Improvement Group meetings supported improved outcomes and reduced performance gaps in RIG schools, early data analysed for 22/23 results and schools causing concern identified. Writing and reading interventions ensured stronger outcomes at KS2 and KS1 moderation and in overall results for writing at KS2 for locally maintained schools in comparison to academies. Rate of improvement in LA maintained schools above national rate of improvement. Quality of education judgements good in all inspections bar one, with inclusive practice mentioned in all reports.
Peer to peer school support ensures consistent quality across all of Reading schools, reducing inequalities	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Reducing inequality and improvement projects have supported schools to work together most notably the Tom Sherrington Project this year. Education Partnership Board established
Wellbeing of school staff	Reading schools and Brighter Futures for Children		Support to schools subject to RIGS has resulted in improved wellbeing for all leaders involved. School to school support for schools commissioned as part of the RIG process has provided peer support. Additional support provided for Caversham primary from EP critical incident support through to specialist coaching for leaders

<b>To provide outstanding adult (age 19+) skills and community learning that meets the needs of learners, communities, and local businesses.</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Establish an Adult Skills and Community Learning Strategy for Reading that links to the Berkshire County Deal and the work being undertaken to devolve the Adult Education Budget.	New Directions College		Strategic Development Plan, Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Accountability Statement (published to DfE) are all clearly aligned to improving social and economic outcomes for adult learners in the Borough. Exploratory work is still ongoing in regard to the devolution of adult education in Berkshire, which Reading continues to lead.
Contribute to the development and delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and where appropriate, bid for structural development funds.	New Directions College		The College successfully bid for Local Skills Improvement Funding (the new name for SDF) and will be delivering transferable skills provision in Leadership/Management/Business Professional and Sustainability/Carbon Literacy. The College will play a key role in the delivery of the LSIP for Berkshire and will continue to feed into the workforce development plans.
Offer bespoke provision for adults with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities with a focus on developing pathways to employment.	New Directions College		The course offers for adults with SEND in 23/24 has continued to strengthen, as too is our partnership with local employers. Two planned cohorts of learners started in September 23 (meeting planned maximum numbers) and further courses are on offer throughout the academic year. Learners will be involved in one, possibly two exciting initiatives to run and manage local cafe facilities at the College and possibly Cedar Court (supported living accommodation in Whitley).
Offer/commission provision for adults with mental health conditions that will support their recovery and enable them to progress to further learning or employment.	New Directions College		The College's partnership with Compass Recovery College and Together remains strong. The college's dedicated IAG Officer is responsible for ensuring all learners are aware of local services to support mental health.

Offer/commission family learning activities which promote the development of basic skills and parental engagement in education.	New Directions College		The College is currently recruiting for a dedicated Skills for Life Community Tutor who will be responsible, along with the Curriculum Manager, for building links with local schools and children's centres and delivering bespoke skills for life programmes to parents.
Celebrate Adult Learner success throughout the year and via the annual Adult Learning Awards.	New Directions College		The second annual awards ceremony took place on 20th September at the Concert Hall with over 100 people in attendance. The Mayor of Reading presented awards to over 20 adult learners, staff and volunteers.

<b>2. SOUTH READING PLACE-BASED PILOTS</b>			
<b>Whitley &amp; Church Place-Based Pilots: Area Based approach to improving attainment, skills and outcomes for residents who are not realising their potential, supported by long-term improved economic sustainability</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Establish New Directions College as a centre of excellence for adult and community learning.	New Directions College		The College is on track to receive a Good/Outstanding Ofsted rating at its next inspection in 2024/25. The College continues to work with national sector bodies such as HOLEX, Education and Training Foundation, the Carbon Literacy Trust and EAUC to develop provision linked to industry standards and to share best practice.



<b>3. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</b>			
<b>Emerging Skills &amp; Jobs</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
New Directions College to build and deliver foundation level talent pipelines into jobs within key emerging sectors across Berkshire, including Film and Production Industries and Green Skills.	New Directions College		The College has secured a place on the LSIP delivery board and will play an active role in delivering skills provision for Green Skills/Sustainability. The college is well connected to the Screen Skills infrastructure across Berkshire, including the newly established Screen Skills Berkshire group and the work underway to deliver Skills Bootcamps for the sector. The College will continue to horizon scan and plan opportunities for partnership/delivery as and when appropriate.
<b>Core Skills for Local People</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
New Directions College to deliver a service that is effectively aligned and connected to local projects and programmes of work linked to improved economic and social outcomes and skills for adults.	New Directions College		Strategic Development Plan, Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Accountability Statement (published to DfE) are all clearly aligned to improving social and economic outcomes for adult learners in the Borough.
New Directions College to deliver provision that addresses foundation level skills gaps and meets the needs of unemployed and underemployed adults.	New Directions College		Academic year 2023-24 will see a continued increase in the volume of courses to support the unemployed, including more Sector Based Work Programmes with local employers and Skills Bootcamps (bid pending). There is also an increase in courses for adults with SEND looking for supported employment within Hospitality.
Deliver Multiply (national Numeracy skills development project) to over 1000+ adults in Reading until 2025, providing innovative numeracy courses that promote skills development and progression to further learning.	New Directions College		The College met Yr1 deliverables (275 adults engaged in provision) and is on target to meet/exceed deliverables in Yr 2 (285 engagements). The College has been selected by the DfE for a case study on our work with the NHS and to deliver numeracy skills provision to staff working at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and in the NHS across Berkshire. The College has also been pivotal in introducing a new web platform for Berkshire Local Authority Multiply providers so that residents can access

			the information they need in order to learn more about the programme: <a href="https://www.adultlearningberkshire.co.uk/">https://www.adultlearningberkshire.co.uk/</a>
Work with local FE and learning providers to build strong learning and skills pathways and avoid duplication, to ensure equality of access to high quality learning provision across Reading.	New Directions College		College Governance Board has 2 x local FE representatives. The College Chairs the Berkshire Adult Learning Network and Skills Devolution Working Group. The College is represented at several local networks and the Skills for Growth Group and is working with the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce on the roll out of activities linked to the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP)
<b>Employment And Employability</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
New Directions College to build on the successful employability opportunities that are created in partnership with local employers, key stakeholders such as REDA and JCP i.e. Sector Based Work Programmes linked to specific employers/sectors and targeted at specific learner groups.	New Directions College		The College continues to deliver Sector Based Work Programmes with JCP and local employers such as Thames Water, Ikea, Crowne Plaza, RBH etc and has submitted an EOI to the Berkshire LEP to deliver Skills Bootcamps for Accelerated Apprenticeships in Early Years and Sustainability for Leaders and Managers.
New Directions College to grow the delivery of Apprenticeships and technical/vocational education that meets the skills gaps within key sectors and is responsive to employer demand.	New Directions College		The College continues to play a key role in the delivery of vocational education for the Early Years and Schools sector. Work is underway to offer more Accelerated Apprenticeships within the Sector and to offer L3 pathways for 'Supporting Teaching and Learning' for the first time. This means that adult learners can start at L1 and move all the way through to L3 with the College. The College is also seeing an increase in uptake of adult learners studying the Award in Education and Training and moving onto the Certificate in Education and Training. Apprenticeships continue to be offered in Leadership and

			Management and Business Professional. More apprenticeship pathways are currently in development.
New Directions College to offer the National Skills Fund and Lifetime Skills Guarantee to Adults across Reading looking to secure their first full L3 qualification.	New Directions College		The College has fully utilised the L3 fund already for academic year 23-24 and will be requesting growth from the ESFA in Dec 23. This is an area that the Council could continue to support through the Social Inclusion Fund.
New Directions College to offer bespoke provision for adults with Learning Disabilities/Difficulties, with a focus on developing pathways to employment.	New Directions College		The partnership with Ways into Work and local Hospitality providers continues to strengthen the offer of training for adults with SEND. New initiatives are underway, including the establishment of an on site Café at the College which learners will manage and run, providing them with work experience. We are also exploring a partnership with Cedar Court in Whitley where learners could run a cooked meal/cafe service for residents.

<b>3. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</b>			
<b>Emerging Skills &amp; Jobs</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Employer led employment Opportunity and Support for every Reading student with strong focus on development of skills needs from emerging sectors (Low Carbon Economy and Creative Film Sector Jobs)	REDA		<p>Work with Education Business Partnership is in its final few weeks and is on target to reach 3,860 student employer interactions through 27 events at 6 secondary schools including The Wren, Maiden Erlegh Reading and Blessed Hugh.</p> <p>All delivery is being aligned with Tackling Inequality aims.</p> <p>REDA has now published its Screen Sector research updated to include partnerships with the LSIP, Screen</p>

			Berks and Resource Productions. The first Creative Skills task and finish group has met with the aim of aligning Screen Production Skills with other creative industries and skills delivery across Reading.
Co-ordinating and supporting new developer led S106 Employment and Skills Plans to meet local priorities	REDA		9 plans currently signed - 6 underway
New Employment Opportunities for Residents emerging from Developer ESPs	REDA		There are currently nine Employment and Skills Plans signed with developers locally, six of these are currently underway - including Greyfriars Church and most significantly Station Hill. There are at least six other significant plans in the development pipeline. Although new data is still awaited on some sites the cumulative ESP output is now 771: 25 apprenticeships, 452 local jobs, 38 work experience opportunities and education support to 256 students. Construction teams have engaged with several local schools including Civitas and Reading Girls, providers including New Meaning and Reading College, the University of Reading and Brighter Futures. ESP contributions continue to support the programme agreed by Policy Committee in Dec 22, outlined under Powered by People as above.

<b>Start Up Reading and Small Business Support</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Start Up and Employment Advice and Guidance in Community Setting	REDA		The next tranche of outreach delivery starts at the end of October. The first wave included 22 events at 6 venues reaching 366 residents, including Afghan women and Hong Kong emigres
Supported Ways into Self- employment through training	REDA		The second Rotary-organised self-employment course started on Oct 9th with 19 learners. The first 10-week course saw 11 people complete and start a business with mentor support, 7 of these have received start up grants from REDA. The self employment course by Supersonic StartUp (previously Enterprise Exchange) has begun with

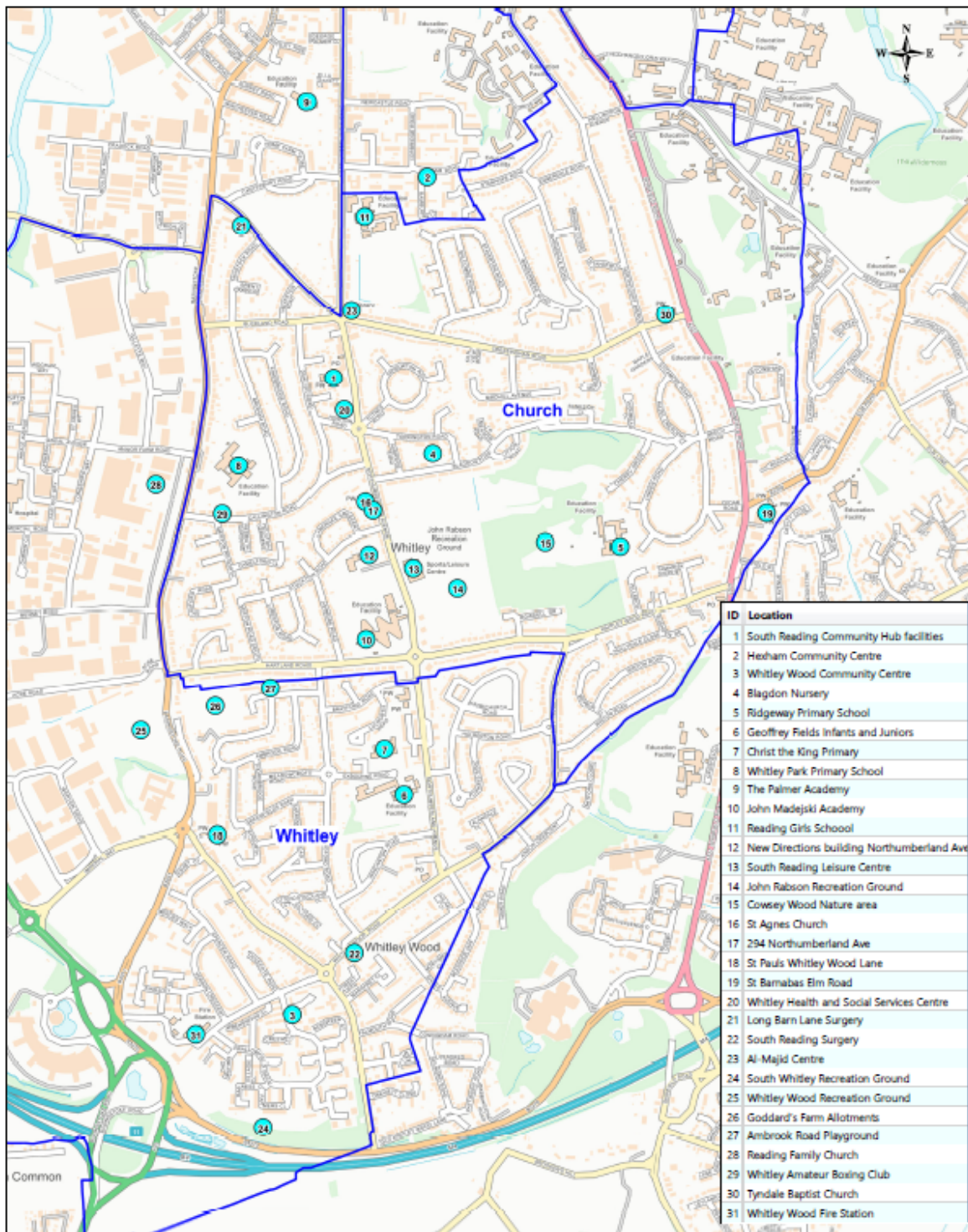
			17 participants, this runs until February with participants receiving intense one to one support.
Introduction to Self-Employment Taster Events	REDA		2 sessions have taken place at Whitley Community Café and The Pavilion, Oxford Road - 28 residents have attended and referred to courses, or other pathways
Workshop and Mentoring Programmes by business owners	REDA		As above, 11 have completed courses and being mentored through the ongoing Launch Reading programme (ongoing programme with 19 joining the programme in October)
Creating Strong Local Business Pathways and Growth Support to help business survive and grow local employment including skills and training	REDA		<p>Reading Business Network meets monthly online and Quarterly in person.</p> <p>The most recent live event was sponsored by the Reading Hilton, in partnership with Screen Berks and hosted 120 (of 160 registered) local businesses interested in opportunities in the Screen Industry supply chain. A follow-up online event took place in November with 70 attendees seeking expert advice on the Screen Industry and skills and procurement opportunity. Ambitious plans are now shaping to build on our creative industry cluster as well as support procurement routes in other sectors. RBN has nearly 500 members.</p> <p>Berkshire Growth Hub – is funded via the UKSPF serving all 6 Berks LAs - and has so far completed 11 t Start Ups and 2 High Growth.</p>

<b>Employment And Employability</b>			
<b>Intention/Aim</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Updates</b>
Post Covid and Cost of Living Crisis: Access to employment opportunities for all our residents through a range of jobs and skills events around the Borough, working with National Careers Service, New Directions and JCP to provide recruitment support and soft skills	REDA		The Job Fair in July attracted nearly 500 attendees / 47 exhibitors (employers with live jobs, training providers to support employment routes). A second Job Fest for 2023 took place at The Town Hall with close to 500 job seekers attending to meet 43 employers and training providers. This is the 10th year of DWP/REDA organised events.

Ensuring our workforce has the skills that employers need and where there are jobs waiting to be filled – including construction, hospitality, digital and healthcare.	REDA		28 young adults funded through CSCS training in partnership with New Meaning, supporting excluded young people with additional barriers to employment
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## APPENDIX 2

### Local Community Assets within Whitley & Church Wards



Title: Community assets in the South Reading area

Drg.No.: GIS00522

Date: 31/05/2023 Scale at A3: 1:10,000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref: G:\MID\CD\Edu&Comm\South Read Com.Assets\2022\social Inclusion Strategy Community Assets Mapping\_V2

