

# Report to Council

27 February 2024



**Reading**

Borough Council

Working better with you

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>                 | Corporate Plan 2022-25 (2024/25 update)   |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b> | To make a decision  |
| <b>Report status</b>         | Public report   |
| <b>Report author</b>         | Alex Wylde, Policy and Performance Manager  |
| <b>Lead Councillor</b>       | Cllr Jason Brock  |
| <b>Corporate priority</b>    | All   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>       | That Council approve the update to the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024/25 and the accompanying appendix of key measures and projects, as set out in appendices 1 and 2. |

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides background to this year's proposed update to the Corporate Plan and outlines the changes that have been made for 2024/25.
- 1.2. The final draft plan is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Corporate Plan reflects the Council's priorities over a three-year period and provides direction for our staff in planning and delivering services.
- 2.2. The current Corporate Plan ("Investing in Reading's Future") is a 3-year plan covering the period April 2022 to March 2025. It was agreed and published in February 2022. The first annual update was approved in March 2023. The plan sets out the Council's Vision "to help Reading realise its potential and ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success."
- 2.3. This report outlines amendments proposed as a result of the second annual update. In 2024/25 we will develop the next Corporate Plan, which will be a full update and cover the period April 2025 to March 2028.

## 3. Corporate Plan updates

- 3.1. The refreshed Corporate Plan describes the major achievements and progress made over the last 12 months. It sets out the Council's priorities for 2024/25 against the themes of Healthy Environment, Thriving Communities, and Inclusive Economy. These themes are the same as those set out in the original version of the Corporate Plan and are not proposed to be changed.
- 3.2. This year's update to the Corporate Plan will be the third and final version of the plan. The plan has been refreshed for 2024/25 to take account of:
  - Our achievements over the past 12 months.

- The results of the 2023 Residents' Survey and what the Council is proposing to do in response.
  - A review of the Council's performance measures and projects, as set out in the Corporate Plan Appendix.
  - Factual updates throughout the document to reflect new or completed work and the latest figures.
- 3.3. The Appendix to the Corporate Plan (attached here as Appendix 2) sets out the projects and measures that will be monitored to track progress over the next year. Projects have been updated to reflect work that has finished and new work happening in 2024/25. Targets for 2023/24 and proposed targets for 2024/25 have been included along with actuals for 2022/23. These reflect our ambition to deliver improved services for residents and have also factored in any external factors where appropriate (for instance, the impact of inflation or new legislation).
- 3.4. As part of the annual refresh, we have also reviewed the Corporate Plan measures and targets. A table setting out the changes is provided at Appendix 3.
- 3.5. The Corporate Plan sits at the apex of the Council's performance management framework. The priorities set out in the plan inform Service Plans and the performance objectives of individual staff. Progress against the measures is reported to the Corporate Management Team and Councillors, and is published in the Quarterly Performance Report to Policy Committee.

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

- 4.1. The Corporate Plan is focused on the delivery of 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."
- 4.2. Three themes contribute to delivering this vision. These are:
- Healthy Environment
  - Thriving Communities
  - Inclusive Economy
- 4.3. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations", which explains how we work at the Council:
- People first
  - Digital transformation
  - Building self-reliance
  - Getting the best value
  - Collaborating with others

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

- 5.1. The Corporate Plan reinforces the Council's commitment to net zero carbon emissions, in line with the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy. The Plan sets out what we have delivered, and will deliver over 2024/25, to achieve this ambition. This includes measures to promote active travel, installing solar panels through the Solar Together initiative, and decarbonising our buildings and fleet of vehicles. Our leadership on climate change has been independently recognised for the third year in a row by being one of only 119 cities worldwide to be awarded 'A' status by CDP.

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

- 6.1. The Corporate Plan is informed by the annual Residents' Survey and major change initiatives are the subject of public consultation.

## **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 is not required, as the Corporate Plan is based on reducing inequality:
- Our Tackling Inequality Strategy aims to enhance access to education, skills, and training opportunities for everyone.
  - We explicitly state in the Plan that we will prioritise the needs of those most in need and excluded in our communities.
  - Our public health measures aim to reduce inequalities in health outcomes between different groups of residents.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1. There are no legal requirements to have a Corporate Plan. However, it is a key strategic document which sets out the Council's key priorities and provides a framework for both budget development and service delivery.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. The priorities within the Corporate Plan form the basis of defining the Council's spending plans over 2024/25. The Council's financial position remains challenging, with an on-going need to drive efficiency, productivity, and income to secure service delivery.

## **Appendices**

1. 'Investing in Reading's Future': Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-25  
Annual update: March 2024
2. Corporate Plan Appendix: Key Measures and Projects
3. Changes to Corporate Plan Key Measures