

OFFICER DECISION NOTICE



Reading
Borough Council

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This notice is to be used for the following types of officer decisions. (Select one option).

A. Decisions taken by officers under a specific express delegation from Council or a Committee.

B. Decisions taken by officers under a general delegation from Council or a Committee, which relates to (i) a permission or a licence, or (ii) the rights of an individual, or (iii) a contract or expenditure over £100,000.

1. Title of decision:	S106 Employment and Skills Plans (ESP) - Sept 24 to March 2026 to support developers' plans and a direct delivery programme by REDA
2. Date of the decision:	23 September 2024
3. The decision maker:	Emma Gee, Acting Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services

4. Decision details:

(i) a new programme of S106 ESP delivery for 2024-26, specifically tailored to the needs of the local economy, its residents and small business and providing targeted employment and skills outcomes for priority areas.

(ii) the Council continues its commitment to close partnership working to support REDA (the trading name of Reading UK CIC) and its partners to manage and deliver this programme to ensure the sustainable economic growth of Reading.

(iii) the allocation of £245,000 of ring-fenced S106 developer contributions to support the delivery of the action plan.

5. Reasons for the decision:

To provide continuity and development of activity to:

- i. support local residents to be better prepared to access job, self-employment and training opportunities locally and small businesses to prosper through local trading and networking.
- ii. Advise and monitor developers to deliver their own ESPs, creating jobs, skills development and education outreach for local people.

The outcomes of the Employment, Skills and Training SPD contributes to achieving the Council's Corporate Plan objectives for 2022/25 in particular:

- Inclusive Economy
- Thriving Communities

The programmes are also strongly aligned with the Foundations of the Borough.

The programme is contributing to the delivery of the council's Social Inclusion Strategy and Place Based Pilots Initiatives.

6. Alternative options considered (if any) and rejected:

We believe this is a low-cost option compared with a range of national training and employment providers parachuted into Reading. We use local providers and bring together a range of stakeholders and community development workers in priority areas to provide information, advice and guidance, signposting to training and support and self-employment programmes.

7. List of open Background Papers:

- i. New programme details and summary of results of the previous programme – Appendix 1 attached to information report to Policy Committee 21 October 2024.
- ii. REDA's report on the previous programme framework approved by Policy Committee on 15 December 2022.

8. List of confidential or exempt Background Papers:

None.

9. Any other matters taken into consideration:

<input type="checkbox"/> Legitimate expectation of consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedural requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health implications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental or Climate Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management implications
<input type="checkbox"/> Transparency of Information (FOI etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Impact Assessments
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Act Duties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory duties	<input type="checkbox"/> EU withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces Covenant	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Details of the matters taken into account:**9.1 Equality Implication**

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

9.2 Environmental and Climate Implications

In particular the ESP programme has identified the potential for some 5,600 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Jobs in Reading by 2050 and the opportunity to upskill the Council's Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Teams to undertake this work on its own housing stock as well as compete in the Reading market among private ownership households.

10. Legal considerations

10.1 Employment and Skills Plans are secured through the Section 106 process, which is now governed by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The

tests for Section 106 agreements are whether they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

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

11. Financial considerations

- 11.1 The majority of ESPs referred to in this report are secured through Section 106 agreements and are either carried out by the developer in conjunction with REDA, or funded by the developer directly through ring fenced financial contributions in lieu of delivery.
- 11.2 The new guidelines for Officer Decision Notices set by the Council allows programmes under 500k p.a. to be authorised by officers subject to Lead Member approval.
- 11.3 The Developer ESP's plans and programme of activity will be delivered and managed by the Council's Economic Development Partnership Company, REDA. This is costed in the proposals and at no cost to the Council. The delivery of many programmes is supported by private sector and third sector partners, all of which provides excellent value for money and opportunities to attract further external funding to expand the programme for example from Government sources such as UKSPF and the Adult Education Budget.

12. Internal consultations

Details supporting this report were provided by REDA, 'Reading's Economy and Destination Agency', the Council's preferred economic development partner.

Sections 13 - 18: To be completed only for Decision A (express delegation from a Committee)	
13. The name of the Committee:	N/A
14. Date of the meeting:	Click or tap to enter a date.
15. Minute number:	N/A
16. The delegation given by the Committee:	N/A
17. The name of any member of the committee who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision:	N/A
18. Any Councillor or officer required to be consulted prior to the exercise of this delegation and details of their response.	N/A