

Policy Committee

17 March 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Council Plan 2025-28
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Alex Wylde, Policy and Performance Manager
Lead Councillor	Cllr Liz Terry
Corporate priority	This report defines the corporate priorities for the next 3 years.
Recommendations	1. That Policy Committee recommend that Council adopt the Council Plan 2025-28 (appended).

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. A new Council Plan is needed for 2025-28. The proposed new Council Plan is attached for consideration by Policy Committee and Council.
- 1.2. This has been developed following significant engagement across the organisation and externally, building on the learning from the delivery of the current plan.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. In line with the requirement set out in the Council's Constitution, a draft Council Plan for 2025-28 has been developed. The Council Plan sets out the Council's vision, priorities and objectives for the next three years, together with the projects to deliver them and the measures that we will use to measure our progress. The activities set out in the Plan are aligned with the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy agreed by Council on 25 February.

3. Council Plan structure

- 3.1. The Council Plan is structured around five components:
 - **Vision:** which sets out what we want for the future of Reading. This is unchanged from the previous Corporate Plan and is as follows:

“Our Vision is to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success.”
 - **Priorities:** the Plan includes 5 high-level areas of focus over the next three years to deliver the vision:
 - Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
 - **Objectives:** these are the specific outcomes (5-6 for each priority) we want to deliver over the next 3 years.

- **Projects:** these are the activities we are undertaking to deliver the objectives. Progress will be reported quarterly to Policy Committee.
 - **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** these are the metrics that tell us the progress we are making in delivering our objectives and how well our day-to-day services are performing. Each KPI has an associated target and performance against these will be reported quarterly to Policy Committee.
- 3.2. Key deliverables set out within the Council Plan include:
- The delivery of over 300 new council homes through the Local Authority New Build programme.
 - Completing the new Central Library and Civic Reception.
 - Investments to reduce the Council’s carbon emissions in our buildings, fleet, and operations.
 - Delivering 3 new children’s homes and four new adult social care facilities in Reading.
 - Completing our £8 million programme to improve roads and pavements.
- 3.3. The Council Plan provides the framework for prioritisation of resources and is used to inform Service Planning and performance objectives for our staff. It does not set out everything the Council will do. However, by setting out the Council Plan in this way, it then informs the activities of our day-to-day services as well.
- 3.4. The draft Council Plan is appended for consideration. It is advised that Policy Committee recommend the Council Plan for approval at Council on 25 March.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The Council Plan defines the vision and objectives of the Council over the next three years and is used to inform Service Planning and performance objectives for our staff and provides the framework for prioritisation of resources.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council Plan includes priorities related to our commitment to environmental and climate improvements for Reading. It does not, however, seek to replicate in full the commitments and activities that are set out in more detailed plans already adopted by the Council (e.g. the Reading Climate Strategy).

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. We ran a public engagement exercise from 5 to 23 February on the vision, priorities, and objectives in the Council Plan, as well as our principles and values. Local partners, including the VCS, were also invited to share their views. A dedicated engagement meeting with the VCS took place on 19 February.
- 6.2. Results from the engagement are appended. Of 162 respondents, 63% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the vision for the Council Plan. Where individual responses did not agree with the vision and priorities, varied reasons were provided. These included concern about Council Tax increases, that the plan was too ambitious and should focus only on core services, and objections to delivery of net zero and housing development.
- 6.3. There was a majority support for all five priorities, ranging from 76% for “safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading’s adults and children” to 58% for “develop fairer communities and affordable housing”. Responses also included several suggestions for improvements to the Plan, which have informed the final version that is appended.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The Council Plan sets the overall priorities of Reading Borough Council for the next 3 years and does not in itself introduce any new policies or activities. The Plan aims to reduce inequalities between groups that share protected characteristics and advance equality of opportunity. This is articulated in the Plan's overall vision "to help Reading realise its potential and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share in the benefits of its success" and in the specific programmes of work set out. Individual projects set out in the Council Plan will have separate Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. Given the timescales involved it will be necessary to circulate the Council Plan ahead of Council slightly later (18 March) than the usual dispatch date for Council papers so that Policy Committee can review on 17 March.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. None.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The Council Plan has been developed in parallel with the budget and only includes projects and commitments that are funded and consistent with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. If approved at Council on 25 March, the Council Plan will be immediately adopted by the organisation and published on the Council's website.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. **Draft Council Plan 2025-28**
2. **Council Plan engagement results**