

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee



Reading
Borough Council

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02 July 2025

Title	SEND Strategy 2022-2027 Annual Update
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Brian Grady, Director of Education
Lead Councillor	Councillor Wendy Griffith, Lead Councillor for Children and Councillor Rachel Eden, Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That ACE Committee notes the progress on delivering the partnership SEND Strategy for Reading 2022-20272. That ACE Committee notes the key strengths, challenges and priorities set out in the partnership Self Evaluation Framework (SEF)3. That ACE Committee endorses next steps to continue to deliver the 2022-2027 strategy.

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 on the ambitions and actions set out in the strategy. The over-riding key performance indicator for the strategy is that the future local area inspection in Reading, in the complex national context, identifies the effectiveness of all partners to improve outcomes 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 SEND strategy group.
- 1.4. On 17th October 24 a strengthened Reading SEND Strategy Board was launched, with strengthened senior leadership. The revised SEND Strategy Board is co-chaired by The Executive Director of Children's Services, Reading Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children, and the Director of Vulnerable People, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West NHS Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB).
- 1.5. Significant progress has been made to review the impact and effectiveness of the SEND strategy and examples of the partnership's impact on outcomes for children are included [here](#). In addition, detailed work on the self-evaluation framework (SEF) of the SEND partnership system in Reading has been completed, responding in the first instance to the lived experience of our children and families, and is attached to this report for reference (Appendix 1).

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council Plan 2025-28 has established five priorities. These are:
 - Promote more equal communities in Reading
 - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
 - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint
 - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
 - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 2.2. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website. These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective, and economical.
- 2.3. The Reading partnership SEND Strategy 2022-2027 contributes directly to the Council's priorities to Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children, promote more equal communities in Reading and to secure Reading's economic and cultural success. The Council Plan sets out our objective to improve our local special educational needs and disabilities offer and support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so children receive high quality education locally, and achieve their potential.
- 2.4. As reported to Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2024, 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.
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. 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.
- 2.7. Reading partnership have completed an area SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), following strategic analysis of the Reading partnership system's strengths, strategic risks and gaps. The SEND SEF provides the narrative around the SEND system and the particular strengths in the Reading system for children with SEND, including the commitment to coproduction with families and the strength of the Therapeutic Thinking approach to working with schools. The SEND SEF is attached to this report at Appendix 1 and provides a more detailed update to the Committee.

3. Progress on the SEND Strategy 2022-2027

- 3.1. The SEND Strategy 2022-2027 has been delivered through the following work strands:
 - Strand 1: Communications
 - Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist support
 - Strand 3: Emotional wellbeing

- Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood
- Strand 5: Short breaks
- Strand 6: Local Area Inspection

Each work strand has been overseen by a steering group, with representation from Reading Borough Council, Brighter Futures for Children, NHS, and parents and carers. Progress in 2024 on each strand is set out below, with next steps for 2025 identified.

3.2. In summer 2024 a thorough review of Reading SEND systems sufficiency for children and young people was undertaken. This started with listening with care to the lived experiences of children and families; and informed a first Strategic Risk & Risk Mitigation partnership framework being developed and embedded in BFfC/RBC and BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB) governance structures.

3.3. In response to the updated SEND Strategic Risk Assessment for Reading and the Self Evaluation (SEF) the focus of each workstream has been strategically refocussed from October 2024, in specific and measurable strategic workplans, to make best use of partnership resource.

3.4. Strand 1: Communications

3.5. Work strand 1 has been highly effective and productive.

3.6. 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. 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.

3.7. Considerable attention has been given to co-designing and updating SEND resources for Reading families and for the wider partnership support system. This has included significant time and energy invested in:

- Preparation for Adulthood resources
- Updated [Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Response](#) advice and guidance

3.8. These resources have been actively contributed to by SEND families, supported by Reading Families' Forum and wider community groups, and by the wider partnership spanning BFfC, education, health and voluntary sector partners.

3.9. Special United/Me2Club, our children and young people's participation group for children with SEND, BOB ICB and Brighter Futures for Children have worked together to build upon the videos to help boost understanding of children & young people with autism and/or additional needs; their lived experience has informed the Ordinarily Available and Graduated revised guidance to early years settings, schools and the wider system.

3.10. 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 Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

3.11. In response to direct requests from parents and caregivers, a [condensed summary of the SEND system](#) (SEND Roadmap) has been developed in close partnership with Reading Families Forum and wider community groups.

3.12. In partnership with the health economy, new simplified guides to accessing speech and language therapy support have been produced and published.

3.13. Impact of our communications and engagement continues to be tested out through parent carer and young people surveys, which are providing positive feedback. Close attention has

been paid to the lived experience of families and young people, including the design of a new SEND quality assurance thematic learning programme, which embeds cultural humility into learning.

3.14. Communications: next steps

- 3.15. The new strategic workplan for the communications workstream focuses on the promotion of the many newly produced resources and guidance for SEND families and for the local system of professionals.
- 3.16. Following communications support to capture Reading partnership's positive impact on outcomes for children and young people with SEND, promotion of the achievements and learning of the partnership is underway.
- 3.17. Improved information and communications with parents and carers while awaiting an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment remains a priority.
- 3.18. Ongoing communication with parent carers about new SEND school places in Reading will remain a priority, as more provision becomes available.
- 3.19. 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.

3.20. Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist support

- 3.21. Following Reading Borough Council having been successful in securing a £1M grant as part of the Department of Education's (DfE's) 'Delivering Better Value' (DBV) programme, significant investment was made in establishing the RISE programme to provide support and advice to educational settings, to develop the most inclusive practice for children with SEND. The impact of this work on outcomes for children is currently being reviewed.
- 3.22. Significant work has been undertaken to improve the quality of information and support to partners and to families, on clear expectations for Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) and Graduated Response guidance. These significant improvements to local guidance were approved by the SEND Strategy Board in October 2024.
- 3.23. A whole system review of the SEND system from early intervention through to specialist support has been undertaken to inform a whole system Reading SEND strategic risk assessment; identification of impact on outcomes for children; gaps analysis and detailed Self Evaluation (SEF). This has led to a redesign of SEND Strategic governance and all workstreams.
- 3.24. Early Years Early Intervention Fund rollout commenced on schedule in April 2024. Initial uptake has been strong, and a number of Education, Health and Care Need Assessments for children in early years have been diverted towards early intervention, thereby evidencing impact on improving Ordinarily Available Provision.
- 3.25. The changes to the Speech and Language system have improved timely access to speech and language support in the early years, i.e. there are currently no children on the waiting list for support in the early years, which is a crucial systems improvement for early intervention.
- 3.26. Capacity in the Early Years Portage team has increased following recruitment and change of model resulting in 92 families now able to receive home visits and 20 families can be invited to group.
- 3.27. As part of the delivery of their children and young people's strategy, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust has responded to identified areas for improvement in relation to

completion of Education Health and Care (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 timelier fashion which has led to an improvement in compliance.

3.28. Early intervention through to specialist support: next steps

- 3.29. Following the implementation of the DfE Delivering Better Value Programme, and in particular the introduction of the new Reading Inclusion Support in Education service, the impact of the RISE offer is being reviewed.
- 3.30. 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. 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 Neuro Diversity team with Healias and Psychiatry-UK to reduce the waiting lists for Autism and ADHD. Reading Families Forum and wider community groups report an experience of waiting times that requires further consideration. ICB leaders are actively reviewing how the whole system might move from a traditional medical model to an early intervention, needs-led system. Timescales and proposals on the approach to this necessary development for the system are welcomed and awaited.
- 3.31. 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.
- 3.32. Data sharing from across the health system remains challenging. Data sharing is one of the top 3 priorities for the BOB ICB. Work has been undertaken to provide local (i.e., Reading-specific) data, a data dashboard is required.
- 3.33. Progressing plans for increasing the sufficiency of local provision through the SEND Commissioning Strategy and the School Place Planning strategy is a key priority. Whilst significant success has been achieved in delivering additional places for children for academic year 2024/2025, as previously reported to ACE Committee, more places will be needed for forthcoming academic years onwards and a programme of significant development for specialist educational provision to meet demand has commenced.
- 3.34. Also as previously reported to ACE Committee, working with schools to focus on reducing suspensions and exclusions of SEN children is a key priority for the Reading area SEND partnership and the Reading Education Partnership. Work is being undertaken to embed the range of training, resources and support to schools so as to increase inclusion of Reading's children and young people and reduce exclusions of SEN children in mainstream education (recognising that vulnerability to extrafamilial harm, exploitation and other forms of harm, increases significantly for our children when they are excluded from school).
- 3.35. Intentional work with early years and education providers is underway to increase cultural curiosity, humility and sensitivity to marginalisation and minoritisation, and how lived experience of prejudice and discrimination impacts on proactive inclusion practice, and specifically the importance of understanding and proactively responding to intersectionality for SEND children.
- 3.36. There continues to be a need to increase special educational provision from early years to KS4. Proactive Commissioning Strategic intention and co-design with the system, spanning Workstream 2 and Workstream 4, will progress the range of provision available in the coming years. Proposals for expanded and new local special school provision is being considered by Reading Borough Council.
- 3.37. SEND early identification opportunities are informing the design and development of family support, including the development of Reading's Family Hubs; and are informing preventative Youth Justice support.

3.38. Educational attainment for SEND children starts off strongly in early years, but deteriorates by the time children reach Key Stage 4. Improving outcomes at later Key Stages is a key strategic priority for the Reading Education Partnership and the Reading area SEND partnership.

Strand 3: Emotional wellbeing

3.39. Significant progress has been made with emotional health and wellbeing. As noted in the previous report, The work of the emotional wellbeing group is of significant importance for the SEND Strategy. The co-design of Emotional Health (EMH) Triage has progressed significantly and final draft design stage has been reached and approved by Brighter Futures for Children Senior Leadership Team and Reading's DPIA Board.

3.40. EMH Triage has been modelled on national best practice and relies on a set of detailed arrangements. Reading's co-design of EMH Triage bring relevant EMH partners together to respond to these children's needs more effectively and be clear which service is best placed to provide help and support to the child/family. This builds on the strengths of the front door One Reading Partnership (ORP) arrangements [Please see EMH Visualisation].

3.41. The aims of Reading's EMH Triage are:

- To give children and young people with mild to moderate emotional health needs (who don't yet need CAMHS or more intensive support) a single point of contact for help.
- To make sure children get the right help at the right time, reducing the need for multiple referrals and waiting for different services.
- To provide early, preventative support, helping children feel better and keep improving their emotional health.
- To quickly connect children who need more help to more specialist emotional health support.
- To make sure that if there are any concerns about a child's safety, these are dealt with quickly.
- To track the impact of the support given on outcomes for children and make improvements where needed.

3.42. The Information Sharing arrangements (ISA) set out for EMH Triage are founded on the ISA agreement in the BWSCP (Berkshire West Safeguarding Child Partnership) arrangements will provide the wider system for governance. Specific detailed escalation arrangements have been designed for EMH Triage in the event of safeguarding concerns being identified for a child and we have agreed a CSPOA ATM will attend EMH Triage to support this function. Clinical escalations will be managed through to BHFT, and this has been agreed with the CPE Team, BHFT senior managers and BOB ICB.

3.43. EMH Triage will start with a soft launch anticipated in July 2025, managing the existing referrals for children with emotional health needs we receive routinely to better coordinate the system and test the efficacy of the arrangements. Partnership and self-referrals will commence from September 2025, all being well and a specific referral form has been developed for this purpose.

3.44. The feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive and significant support has been offered from schools to the design, this platform for co-design also provided an important opportunity for relationship building with leads in Family Help and CSPOA.

3.45. It is essential that each child is robustly monitored and reviewed and a routine tracking of each child on a 12 weekly basis is proposed, to ensure the journey of our children is understood and improved impact on outcomes is achieved.

3.46. 'Therapeutic Thinking Schools' networks and training are strategically crucial to Reading's preventative approach to inclusion of all children in Reading schools. Therapeutic Thinking continues to be supported in the vast majority of Reading schools, with positive impact on inclusion and support for Reading children. Educational Psychologists and the Primary Mental Health Teams are offering mental health surgeries to all Reading schools and this is well received.

3.47. The impact and effectiveness of the Mental Health Support Teams is notable and is a regional and national example of good practice. This has led to Reading MHST leaders being invited to attend government roundtables in May 2025. However, it is with regret that we must inform the ACE Committee that Reading and surrounding Local Authorities have been unsuccessful with the MHST bid. MHST provision will move to BHFT from August 2025. School leaders have been expressing their concern regarding service continuity to BOB ICB directly.

3.48. Reading's mature leadership of systems change to improve outcomes for children continues with Reading having picked up the leadership of Neuro Divergent systems change for children across Berkshire, supported by all six Directors of Children's Services, Frimley and BOB ICB leaders and BHFT leadership.

3.49. ACE Committee will be aware of the complaints from Reading Family Forum and from Reading schools about the impact of changes to the neuro divergent system; and will in parallel note the expectations in proposed SEND Reform that early identification (screening for neuro divergence) is a core element of early help/support for all children nationally. Reading is leading by example, providing strategic transformation leadership in this area. This strategic transformation aims to improve the way Berkshire supports neurodivergent children by identifying their needs early and providing the right support. It involves collaboration across Berkshire between local authorities, schools, healthcare providers, and families. With the right tools and strategies, the hope is to create a more effective system that benefits all children, especially those with neurodivergent strengths and needs. It intends to introduce a needs led, rather than diagnosis dependent, system of support for our children.

3.50. This project is expected to take 18-24 months to fully implement. It will include creating a collaborative approach involving families, school leaders, social care providers, and other partners to implement neurodivergent screening across Berkshire. The process will involve:

1. **Communication:** Working with local families and schools to co-design the proposed changes.
2. **Planning:** Setting up a steering group to oversee the changes and review screening tools that could work best for Berkshire.
3. **Testing:** Running workshops in each local area to test how the strengths/needs tools work and adjusting them to fit local needs.
4. **Training:** Providing training for educators and other professionals on how to use the screening tools.
5. **Implementation:** Rolling out the new approach across Berkshire, with close monitoring of how it's working and making adjustments as needed.

3.51. We anticipate the conflation in the Berkshire system between children presenting with complex trauma and presenting with Neuro Divergence to be one of the foremost curious questions that our systems leaders will need to pay close attention to in this work, and adapt our support system for children accordingly. A Berkshire wide Board of Directors of Children's Services, Directors for them Health economy and lived experience colleagues

was established on the 11th May 25 and a Berkshire wide event will be hosted in Reading on the 27th June to review national evidence based practice for neurodivergent screening (please note our Berkshire families will name our collective approach) has been organised. We will keep ACE Committee informed of progress.

3.52. Emotional wellbeing: next steps

- 3.53. Following the important learning from the SEND Thematic Audit programme, and the recognition of the indications of the effectiveness of this programme from the Local Government Association (LGA); a specific multi-professional dip sampling audit of children missing from education (CME) and/or Educated Otherwise with SEND needs is being designed and will be undertaken in Quarter 1 25/26. We expect this to yield rich intelligence to inform future service design and commissioning.
- 3.54. A continued partnership approach to improving children's mental health 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, has continued.
- 3.55. In partnership with Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) ICB and through the development work associated with SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities), we have identified that there is opportunity to reconsider the emotional and mental health system, moving from a traditional medical model of diagnosis and treatment, to a more preventative model of whole system support, which is well developed in Reading schools as outlined above. There is also commitment to begin a more strategic conversation about the approach to commissioning across the system (BFFC, RBC and ICB).
- 3.56. The partnership is continuing to develop and embed our Autism Growth Approach in 2025, which focuses on all children having a positive experience of being in school; including training from the Autism Education Trust, workshops for parents, Intensive Interaction and specialist training, and the application of this learning in the revised Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Response guidance.

3.57. Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood

- 3.58. Preparing for adulthood is an area of significant strategic focus for the newly formed SEND Strategy Board.
- 3.59. The panel for preparation for adulthood is 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. This continues to be an area of particular strategic focus for improvement.
- 3.60. Coproduction with local young people and families, a Preparing for Adulthood Guide has been developed by the Communications team and recently approved by the new SEND Strategy Board in October 24.
- 3.61. BOB ICB leaders and Reading Families Forum led a Transitions whole systems event and discussion with young people, parents/carers and professionals to develop practice and learn from the experiences of young people transitioning to adult services and eradicate unwanted variation. A Community of Practice has been established to share and embed learning.
- 3.62. The pilot to develop supported internships in Reading has been taken up by young people with EHC Plans and led to successful outcomes for eight young people. Partners like the RBHFT continue to work hard to create employment opportunities for SEND young people.

3.63. Preparing for adulthood: next steps

- 3.64. Transitions continues to remain high on the agenda for parents and carers. The experience of transitioning from children's to adult's social care is benefitting from particular dedicated

attention, as a key area of continued improvement. This is a specific area of focus for Reading's SEND Strategic Board,

- 3.65. Integrated commissioning is crucial for the onward development of the SEND system for Reading's children and to make adequate preparedness for adulthood (and readiness within the adult system to receive young people with complex lifelong needs). This is a specific area of strategic focus for Reading's SEND Strategic Board.
- 3.66. A clear Commissioning Strategy, with a five year forward view, is being developed for SEND children (0-25) with a view to transitioning successfully to adulthood, bringing the BFFC, RBC and ICB Commissioning functions into closer partnership, and building on progress that has been made individually in specific areas. Priorities include:
 - Ensuring individual young people requiring transition to adult services are considered early (from age 14) and actively, and effectively, planned for together by education, health and social care providers, to ensure clear partnership planning and investment, with families, in preparation for adulthood (in close partnership with Work stream 5).
 - Ensuring sufficiency of Special Educational provision (for more complex children) from Early Years to KS4, based on existing forecasting (in close partnership with Work stream 2).
 - Taking a transformational approach to the service design and commissioning of a renewed needs-led whole system approach to SEND (moving away from a medical model), to be more responsive to the needs of children and families and improve the accessibility and effectiveness of timely support (in close partnership with Work stream 3).
 - Ensuring the effectiveness and delivery of Integrated Therapies, and specifically commissioned services, in reaching the children that need support in a timely and effective way (with demonstrable impact on outcomes for children).
 - Co-design of Supported Living and Respite provisions, based on the analysis of need, and in close partnership with families and children's leads.
 - Dedicated resource to support employment pathways into adulthood for SEND young people, building on the learning from supported internships.
- 3.67. 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 2025.
- 3.68. 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 remains a priority.
- 3.69. Further developing the housing pathway and the SEND pathway for young people not known to Early Help or Children's Social Care was planned for 2024, but has not yet progressed. Leadership of SEND Workstream 4 has been reinvigorated to progress these actions.
- 3.70. In order to support the timely progression of the areas that require leadership from this workstream, the strategic focus, membership and leadership of workstream 4 has been reviewed and is being reinvigorated.
- 3.71. **Strand 5: Short breaks**
- 3.72. 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 developed further in 2024 with a conference with families reviewing the quality and availability of provision, and reviewing that information is accessible, meets the needs of local families and that the services commissioned are structured around the feedback provided.

- 3.73. Progress is being made to enable the systematic collection of short break information for all children, to enable forward planning and strategic forecasting for this cohort of children. A new system is expected to go live in early 2025.
- 3.74. 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.
- 3.75. Reading's Accessibility Strategy has been reviewed and updated to respond to learning and feedback from families, and changes to the landscape of provision in Reading, following a large expansion of Additionally Resourced Provision in the proceeding twelve months.
- 3.76. The Family Information 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. Short breaks: next steps

- 3.78. System developments to enable central registration for short breaks is progressing well, to subsequently provide the data/informatics that is required to inform future design and commissioning within the system (in close partnership with Work stream 4).
- 3.79. Consideration is being given to the sufficiency of Occupational Therapy resourcing, short break and respite provision in response to analysis of current and forecast need (in close partnership with Work stream 4).
- 3.80. In light of the priorities to develop integrated commissioning, work is underway to develop clearly defined expectations between Adults' and Children's social care services, and in turn with the health economy (e.g., ICB Commissioning, Continuing Care, specialist equipment, etc), to ensure clearly defined roles and responsibilities and expectations for integrated planning and commissioning for children with complex needs, spanning Children and Young People Disability Team and children in special educational settings.

4. Contribution to Reading's Strategic Aims

- 4.1. Improving services for children with SEND will directly improve engagement of young people in education, and as a result engagement in employment and training. These actions and outcomes will directly contribute to the strategic aims of the Council regarding Thriving Communities and an Inclusive Economy.
- 4.2. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 4.3. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways 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 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. 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 is directly informed by coproductions with local families and by the proactive work undertaken with and by Reading Families' Forum and Special United/Me2 Club (i.e., young people's forum), as set out in this report.
- 6.2. A Coproduction charter is under development with Reading Families Forum to formalise the considerable time and efforts put into coproduction in Reading.
- 6.3. Reading has recently been highlighted by an independent government commissioned provider that is analysing the effectiveness of coproduction in the country, Safe Lives, as evidencing national best practice in coproduction and Reading has been invited to share this at a national webinar in March 2025.

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 2025. A further update on progress will be provided on an annual basis.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2022-2027**

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s18534/SEND%20Strategy%202022-2027.pdf>

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Reading Area SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF)