

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting	11 July 2025
Title	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Review
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
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Organisation	Reading Borough Council
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board approves the production of a rapid “State of the Borough” JSNA, in parallel with conducting a review of the current JSNA.2. That HWB partners commit to actively supporting the JSNA review process3. That HWB partners identify and nominate suitable representatives from their organisations to participate in the JSNA Steering Group.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This paper sets out the process and timeline for reviewing and refreshing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in Reading. The JSNA is a key shared intelligence resource that enables the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and its partners to understand local population needs and inform strategic decision-making.
- 1.2. The current JSNA hosted on the [Reading Observatory](#), includes a wide range of thematic needs assessments and data. However, upon a public health self-assessment using the LGA Strengths and Risk tool, issues and opportunities relating to the JSNA were identified and discussed highlighting the need for improvement to ensure the JSNA is fit for purpose.
- 1.3. The proposed approach combines the delivery of a rapid “State of the Borough” JSNA in parallel with conducting a broader review of the JSNA’s structure, content, and delivery model. The latter process will run until October 2025 and involve cross-sector collaboration, including the formation of a Steering Group, stakeholder workshops, and a survey to inform development.
- 1.4. The HWB is asked to:
 - Approve the proposed approach and timeline
 - Request partner organisations to support the review process and nominate representatives to the JSNA Steering Group.
- 1.5. A final paper, including the outcomes of the review and an updated State of the Borough JSNA, will be brought back to the Board later this year.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to publish JSNA
- 2.2. The JSNA analyse the health needs of populations to inform and guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within local authority areas. The JSNA will

underpin the health and well-being strategy (HWS) and will inform the commissioning plans of the HWB member organisations.

- 2.3. The main goal of the JSNA is to accurately assess the health needs of the local population that can be met through any of the functions of the Council and the ICB. The NHS and the upper-tier local authorities have had a statutory duty to produce an annual JSNA since 2007.
- 2.4. The JSNA is:
 - Joint – that is owned by, and for the benefit of, all HWB partners.
 - Strategic – that is high level, identifying the key priorities for the area, not elucidating them in exhaustive detail
 - Needs Assessment – it outlines the physical and mental needs of residents.

3. **The Proposal**

- 3.1. The JSNA is not a single document but refers to everything on the [Reading Observatory](#) which includes: thematic needs assessments, population and demographic data, health and wellbeing profiles, data on deprivation, housing, economy and employment, environment, children and young people, as well as tools like the COVID-19 recovery dashboard and public health annual report.
- 3.2. The recent LGA review of HWB emphasised the fundamental importance of the JSNA as the basis for enabling the HWB to make informed decisions about its priorities – and recognised that work is needed on the current JSNA to make it fit for purpose.
- 3.3. There are several options that have been considered:
 - 1) Do nothing (leave the JSNA as it is)
 - 2) Update the JSNA immediately without review and evaluation
 - 3) Conduct a review and evaluation of the current JSNA approach as a precursor to updating the JSNA and the underlying processes.
 - 4) Produce a rapid “State of the Borough” JSNA, in parallel with conducting a review of the current JSNA, to inform the future JSNA approach (Recommended option).

3.4. **Rapid “State of the Borough” JSNA**

- 3.4.1. The recent LGA review of the Health and Wellbeing Board identified a desire by board members to focus on a smaller number of priorities that were informed by evidence of need
- 3.4.2. A relatively short overview of the key health needs of Reading will be produced using data and intelligence that is readily available. This will be reviewed by HWB members in a workshop in autumn to inform decisions about the Board’s priorities for action in the short to medium term.
- 3.4.3. Due to the short timeline, this will necessarily be concise and not exhaustive. it will serve as a starting point for conversations, and the workshop will be instrumental in the testing the findings, informing the review, and shaping the production of a more systematic JSNA delivered in partnership with colleagues from across the system.

3.5. **Review of the JSNA approach**

- 3.5.1. In parallel, a review of the JSNA and the associated processes and infrastructure will be conducted.
- 3.4.2 To guide the review and improvement of the JSNA, the following key questions are proposed for consideration:
 - What are the required functions and typical used cases of the JSNA?

- Is the current JSNA for Reading fulfilling its function of meeting the needs of the Borough and key stakeholders?
- What needs to change in order to improve its functionality?
- How is the JSNA produced and delivered?
- What should the JSNA end product look like?
- How should the production of the JSNA be co-ordinated and governed?

3.6. **Governance**

Health and Wellbeing Board	Accountable for production of the JSNA
Steering Group	Led by Director of Public Health, with strategic partners meeting at key milestones to guide the review process.
Working Group	Public health group will meet regularly to oversee development of the JSNA and coordinate the Review.

4. **Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The JSNA should be a critical driver for delivering Reading's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. A refreshed and inclusive JSNA ensures that Reading's response to local health challenges is evidence-based, targeted and equitable
- 4.2. The decision to undertake a review of the JSNA directly contributes to the delivery of the Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030 by ensuring that future actions, services and policies are grounded in accurate, current and inclusive evidence.
- 4.3. In particular, it contributes to reducing the differences in health between different groups of people by
 - providing disaggregated data by geography, ethnicity, age, disability and deprivation, helping identify where inequalities exist
 - enabling strategic targeting of services and resources to communities with the greatest need.
 - highlight emerging or hidden inequalities.

5. **Environmental and Climate Implications**

There are no direct environmental or climate implications associated with the decision to review the JSNA. However, the review process may create opportunities to strengthen the JSNA's coverage of: The health impacts of climate change, Sustainable development and transport. Etc.

6. **Community Engagement**

- 6.1. The following method will be used to gather insights, validate themes, and ensure that the final recommendations are informed, evidence-based, and reflective of stakeholder perspectives.
 - Review of good practice from elsewhere
 - Survey of stakeholders
 - Workshop to triangulate findings and develop recommendations
 - Report writing and finalisation

7. Equality Implications

Not applicable.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

Not applicable.

9. Legal Implications

Section 116 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Health and Care Act 2022, contains a duty for a Health and Wellbeing Board to prepare and publish a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of the health and wellbeing needs of its local population. [Health and wellbeing boards – guidance - GOV.UK](#).

10. Financial Implications

This work is funded through the public Health Grant. There are no additional project costs associated with this work, as it is being delivered within existing resources. The only requirement is officer time.

11. Timetable for Implementation

State of the Borough Report	September 2025
JSNA Review Completed	Winter 2025/26

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.