

Appendix 6: Council Plan Projects Q1 2026/27

Council Plan Theme	Project	Q1	Comments
Economic and cultural success	Deliver a new Civic Centre, including a new Central Library and improved Registrars and Customer provision.	Complete	The new Civic Centre opened in January and Central Library opened on 18 th June 2026.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Adopt the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy to secure funding and improvements to Reading's streets and open spaces.	Complete	The Town Centre Public Realm Strategy was adopted on 23 June at Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee.
Adults and children	Refresh the existing Home Care and Supported Living Framework to ensure sufficient supply.	Green	The new framework was in place April 2026. There are mobilisation plans in place and these are on track, there will be ongoing monitoring to ensure that supply issues are addressed, if and when they appear.
Adults and children	Deliver Family Hubs to bring together a range of support services in one place, reducing escalation of need and the number of children entering care.	Green	Four Family Hubs offering a range of services from multiple partners have been delivered on schedule. Parents and Carers can attend the hubs for several activities and support ranging from Stay and play sessions, Speech and Language Support, Parenting Support, Wellbeing support for young people, Housing Advice. We have an annual time table published on Reading's website. Progress and impact of the Family Hubs will be monitored and reported to the One Reading Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board.
Fit for the Future	Deliver the new Social Value Policy with our partners to increase the number of contracts delivering spend and social value in the local area.	Green	Alignment with Climate Board and Social Inclusion Board underway to identify improved ways for delivering meaningful social value in the borough. Recruitment campaign launched to appoint dedicated lead for procurement policy and governance. New Contract Procedure Rules approved at Full Council which includes requirement to consider local as part of procurement strategy. Tracking mechanisms being built to gather intelligence on local and social value data.
Equal Communities	Deliver the Education Strategy to reduce education inequality and increase school attendance and attainment for those groups who experience the most disadvantage.	Green	Reading's education outcomes show positive progress, particularly in Early Years, where improving Good Level of Development rates reflect successful early intervention and partnership working. KS4 attainment remains above national averages, although significant gaps persist for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and pupils with poor attendance. SEND is a key factor driving inequality across all phases, with affected pupils experiencing lower attainment, higher absence, and more suspensions. Attendance remains a major barrier, especially for vulnerable groups. While post-16 participation is strong, progression and

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			retention are weaker for disadvantaged learners and those with SEND. Key priorities include accelerating SEND reforms, strengthening early years support, improving attendance through multi-agency approaches, enhancing inclusive pathways, ensuring sustainable school planning, and protecting leadership capacity and wellbeing across the system.
Equal Communities	Develop approaches to ensure that health and wellbeing is considered across all policy areas.	Green	Delivery of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) programme remains on track. Significant progress has been made in embedding HiAP across the Council. A staff e-learning package has been completed and is ready for rollout, supporting a consistent understanding and application of HiAP across directorates. A dedicated HiAP and Health Impact Assessment webpage has also been developed and will launch in July 2026, improving access to guidance, tools, and resources. All materials have been co-produced with internal stakeholders and informed by learning from local authorities demonstrating leading practice in HiAP and Health Impact Assessment implementation. This work strengthens the Council's capacity to systematically consider health and health equity impacts in policy and decision-making.
Equal Communities	Deliver the voluntary and community sector compact action plan, including small grants funding.	Green	The new Reading Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership agreement and Action Plan has been developed and is due for consideration at Policy Committee in September.
Equal Communities	Develop and deliver our place-based approach to enhance access to education, skills, and training.	Green	The development of a new Tackling Inequality Statement and refreshed terms of reference for the Social Inclusion Board have commenced, which includes updating the objectives of the Council's Place-Based Programme.
Equal Communities	Provide advice and guidance to residents regarding the cost of living and direct financial support through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.	Green	Crisis Payments and Housing Payments application processes launched on 1st April. The overall CRF delivery approach was approved by Policy Committee in June. The CRF delivery plan was submitted to DWP on 1st July.
Equal Communities	Support the Community Safety Partnership and facilitate Safer Neighbourhood Forums to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.	Green	The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) led Community Leaders Network has been created which will facilitate key Community Cohesion messages to Community Leaders and Groups. The second CSP Annual report has been written and will be presented to Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee in July 2026.

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			The Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Fund has approved 13 CSP bids for community safety related projects, which will contribute to the CSP Priorities. Regular updates are provided to the CSP Executive Group. The Annual Community Safety Survey launched in July. Safer Neighbourhood Forums took place during the Spring period. Attendance is still limited across the forums, despite increased promotion of each forum.
Equal Communities	Support plans to tackle knife crime, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.	Green	The Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment completed with 3-year strategy development underway. A communications campaign launched at the beginning of the Football World Cup to highlight the impact of Domestic Abuse and promote services available. The Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategic Assessment has begun with a consultant undertaking this and writing the next 3-year strategy and plan. Officers from across Community Safety and Children's Services continue to support the Thames Valley Police led Knife Crime Meeting, to oversee management of prolific knife carriers. A Tri Borough Berkshire West Violence Against Women and Girls meeting has been introduced to support tackling shared themes across the 3 areas. A localised meeting will still deal with Reading specific themes and report into the CSP.
Equal Communities	Continue work to prevent and reduce homelessness.	Green	Successful preventions for Q1 - 44 (note this is likely to fluctuate as cases are closed retrospectively). Successful reliefs for Q1 - 41 (note this is likely to fluctuate as cases are closed retrospectively). The number of preventions achieved rely on the ability to access the private rented sector, which as a result of the Renters Rights Act 2025 has become more cautious with which tenants are considered, with this in mind there are still a significant number of homeless cases being prevented both prior to homelessness and following actual homelessness. This remains a priority for the team.

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Economic and cultural success	Through the Local Authority New Build programme, deliver 420 new homes at Dee Park and other sites by March 2029.	Green	We have set out our delivery of 421 new homes under the LANB programme to date, with plans to deliver a further 362 new council homes by 2029, 89 of which will complete this financial year. Our success in delivering the local authority new build programme was recognised at the Local Government Chronicle awards last week, where we won the silver award in the 'housing' category.
Economic and cultural success	Complete the acquisition of Homes for Reading housing stock into the Council by the end of 2027 and re-let the homes to households on the Council's Housing Register.	Green	This project is progressing to projected timelines, with efficient and effective cooperation between many teams. Of the 101 homes, 81 have now voided of which 68 have been purchased and been relet. 20 properties yet to void. Project is aiming for completion by July 2027.
Economic and cultural success	Progress an updated Local Plan towards adoption to provide a framework to guide decision making on the planning applications for homes and infrastructure.	Green	The main modifications identified by the Inspector were agreed by SEPT Committee on 23 June. The Inspector identified an additional modification committing the Council to an early review of the plan, which will need to be considered by Policy Committee in September. The Council is now expecting to adopt in January 2027.
Economic and cultural success	In partnership with other Berkshire councils, facilitate the Connect to Work programme to support residents with long term health conditions into work.	Green	Reading is on track to meet its Year 2 allocation of 89 residents. Current figures for this quarter stand at 27 residents resulting in meeting 30% of its Year 2 target.
Economic and cultural success	Deliver the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon	Green	Work is progressing on the new Studio Theatre at the Hexagon in accordance with the construction programme. The main structural elements of the building have been installed including the timber frame which helps meets the sustainability requirements of the design. The project is on track with the Studio Theatre scheduled to open in spring 2027. providing circa 200 seating flexible theatre (circa 300 standing) with step free access, accessible toilets on all floors, and bar and catering facilities.
Economic and cultural success	Improve the technology offer and access to library services funded through the Libraries Investment Fund.	Green	This is to deliver high quality digital provision to all libraries at the same time as the new Central library is delivered. Of the 10 purchasing lots, lendable on-site tablets, floor projected active games, screens for libraries for event screening and corporate messaging, interactive digital tables, take home borrowable tablets with data for home uses are live - Book

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			collection lockers and self-service cabinets for borrowing are currently ordered/being installed following successful procurement. We have also replaced all public PCs in libraries with this grant. We are yet to progress interactive trolleys that detect books, equipment to support activity sessions. Arts Council England as funder is briefed and has released the second tranche of payment – we have also sought approval to expand the scope of the project. Purchases remain under budget.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Complete the £8 million programme of work to improve residential roads and pavements.	Green	Tender closed, evaluation completed, award letter approval with Hub. Works to start Mid-August. On track and within budget
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including charging points, to move away from fossil-fuelled vehicles.	Green	Contract signed 13/05/2026. Mobilisation has been continuing at pace. 2 trial sites have been installed, and consultation letters have been sent to phase 1 residents to inform them that Electric Vehicle charge points are to be installed on their road. The phase 1 installations are scheduled to start middle of July. 6-8 to be installed per day.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Work with partners to deliver the Climate Strategy for 2025 to 2030 to achieve a net zero Reading resilient to climate change.	Green	The results of the borough wide emissions in 2024 year (published in July 2026) show a very slight increase of 0.7kT (<0.1%). The new Climate Emergency strategy for Reading aligns the targets with the Balanced Pathway with trajectory to -88% by 2040. Work with partners has continued through RCCP with a successful 2026 climate festival. Reading Community Energy Society installing their largest solar install to at bus depot. RTL has secured 49 Electric Buses, LEVI project contract to install public EV charging points across borough now in place. Hexagon decarbonisation project on track.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Dispose of property and land that no longer contribute towards the Council's objectives to invest in assets and service transformation.	Green	Disposals are now underway within the service. During Q1, four property disposals were completed, with a further nine properties currently progressing through the disposal process and scheduled to be placed on the market in Q2.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Introduce changes to the waste collection service in line with the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation.	Green	Planning for the delivery of kerbside waste collections from 1st April 2027 is underway to timetable. Procurement board approval has been obtained and procurement of goods and services to timetable is taking place.

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Adults and children	Redesign and commission an integrated 0-19 child health programme.	Green	On track for a contract start date of 1 April 2028. Decision pending on whether it will be a joint procurement with West Berkshire Council, update expected in Q2 following Local Government Reorganisation decision.
Adults and children	Deliver four new adult social care services to support people with complex needs, and enable them to live more locally	Green	Progress continues across the Amethyst, Battle and Hexham projects, with construction and development activities advancing across all schemes. Amethyst and Hexham remain on track for practical completion in September 2026, while Battle continues to progress towards a meaningful start on site. Key construction milestones have been achieved, including roofing, internal fit-out, mechanical and electrical installations, and enabling works. Service modelling is also progressing across the developments to ensure future services maximise benefits for residents and carers. Project teams continue to manage risks proactively, maintain programme momentum and support delivery of the intended outcomes for each scheme.
Adults and children	Enable more children with special educational needs and disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools and deliver new special school places	Green	The programme of work to delivery two specialist schools within Reading is on schedule for delivery by September 2027. Alongside this we are actively working with our headteachers to support children with Education, Health and Care Plans to remain in mainstream settings and access support via the Reading Inclusion Support in Education Team. We are progressing with our SEND Reforms plan collaboratively with Reading Families Forum and Partners overseen by the SEND Strategic Board.
Adults and children	Support children into adulthood, promoting greater independence and confidence.	Green	The Preparing for Adulthood group has remained a key workstream of the SEND Strategic Boards vision, in line with the SEND Reforms. This group has representatives from Education, Health, Children's and Adults Social Care. We will also be merging the 14-19 partnership has representatives from schools, education, health and social care and will be promoting the independence journeys of young adults with SEND. Evidence is demonstrating improving independence outcomes for young people with SEND resulting in a Green RAG rating.

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Adults and children	Deliver the requirements of our All-Age Carers Strategy action plan, including short breaks for carers.	Green	The Carer's Break Pilot launched on 13 July 2026, with Cardinal Care appointed as the Tier 1 provider through the homecare framework. Over a 6 to 9-month period, unpaid carers can access 38 hours of free respite through a sitting service, to be used within three months. Carer wellbeing support continues to expand, with the second Give It A Go cohort commencing in July. To date, 15 carers have accessed a six-week gym membership, fitness classes and weekly information sessions, while a further 25 carers have enrolled for the next cohort. Additional developments include carer engagement opportunities, investment in digital support, and work to establish Reading as a more carer-friendly employer network.
Adults and children	Reduce avoidable hospital admissions and supporting efficient and timely discharge.	Green	The Berkshire West Discharge Group has supported people with highly complex needs through the Diamond Escalation Pathway, bringing together senior leaders from health, adult social care, housing, and the voluntary and community sector to review cases, challenge barriers, and develop creative solutions. This collaborative approach has enabled Reading residents to be discharged safely from hospital with appropriate support in place to maintain their independence and wellbeing. Voluntary sector involvement has been particularly valuable in reducing isolation and connecting people to local community resources. The pathway has strengthened partnership working, improved timely decision-making for complex cases, and contributed to Reading having less people currently awaiting discharge than neighbouring authorities.
Adults and children	Reduce the likelihood of falls which lead to loss of independence, hospital admission and need for formal care through effective intervention to those at risk	Green	Falls Prevention Team recruited to, and the service is fully operational receiving referrals for 1:1 interventions and actively engaged in community outreach. Service operating on budget. <i>numbers of interventions</i>
Adults and children	Support the development of proactive and effective health and social care support for our residents by developing an integrated Neighbourhood Team working with Health and VCS partners.	Green	The development of Neighbourhood Plans is being co-ordinated through a sub-group of the Reading integration Board, which will also feed into the Berkshire West Prevention Board and Neighbourhood Steering Group. Ther initial group meeting was held on 12/06/2026 and future monthly meetings scheduled. An outline of the Neighbourhood Plan requirements has been developed and workstreams are being agreed, which include

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			community engagement. Representation on the working group includes VCSE, Housing, Community Health, Primary Care, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Sustainable Communities, Integration, Healthwatch and Integrated Care Board. Learning from the Southeast Accelerator Neighbourhood project, to do targeted work in specific areas to inform the wider neighbourhood health plans and ways of working, is still in progress, and being fed into the Neighbourhood Planning. The development of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will take at least 18 months
Fit for the Future	Continue to expand our IT systems to enable residents to access more services online at a time that suits them.	Green	The Council is currently working on developing voice and chat agents within the Zoom platform that will be available in our contact centre and the website. The first services to have it will be Council Tax and Waste with further services added. This will enable residents to resolve their queries without the need to contact the Council and help self serve in these areas. The functionality is expected to turn on in August 2026.
Fit for the Future	Implement an improved telephone system that routes customers effectively and improves the customer data we collect to help continually improve how we support residents.	Green	Since the successful go-live of the new telephone solution in March, the project has focused on resolving post-launch issues and supporting staff as they continue to use the new system. Work has also progressed on the additional functionality purchased as part of the project. Call summarisation successfully went live in June and has been well received. Work is also progressing well on the virtual agent for Council Tax and Waste enquiries, which is expected to launch during Q2
Fit for the Future	Deliver and embed our social care customer front door through enhancing our systems and working with the voluntary sector in providing support.	Green	Progress continues across community and digital transformation programmes. Improvements to Local Connector reporting have streamlined performance monitoring, while proposals for a new Community Activator Service are being developed to strengthen community engagement, early intervention and access to local support. Testing of the Digital Front Door is progressing well alongside enhancements to online financial assessments. Mosaic transformation work continues to improve key pathways, including hospital discharge processes. The Mosaic Provider Portal is operating successfully, delivering reliable provider payments with high accuracy, while further

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			finance workflow, reporting and service improvement initiatives are being developed and progressed.
Fit for the Future	Deliver additional cemetery space in order to continue offering a burial service to all residents	Green	Key concerns raised in the original pre-application planning advice have been substantially addressed through the Allotment Mitigation Plan. A revised pre-planning advice letter is expected shortly. Whilst the mitigation proposals are considered capable of offsetting the loss of the Henley Road allotments, the increased travel distance that some allotment holders will experience is regarded as a residual planning "harm". This harm will need to be balanced by the wider public benefits of the cemetery extension, particularly the provision of future burial capacity within the borough. Several areas require further evidence and clarification to support a future planning application. Overall, the pre-planning advice is positive. Tenders have been issued for the appointment of the project consultant to commence 16/11/26. Construction start date is 28/5/29 and the completion target remains 24//2030.
Fit for the Future	Introduce remote technology for staff who work outside of the office to improve efficiency.	Green	Phase 1: Field Worker devices (Lenovo's) deployed to around 50% of the staff in scope. Remaining devices will be deployed in phase 2 once CCM forms are available to support field-first working. Feedback from users has been positive, particularly within Housing.
Fit for the Future	Introduce artificial intelligence to improve customer service and reduce administration costs in line with our strategy.	Green	Use of AI expanding in Customer Contact space. AI Tools (beyond CoPilot), currently operating within Adult Social Care, Housing and Children's Services for transcription, summarisation, and Education, Health and Care Plan generation. AI Strategic Working Group underway, developing a Council-wide approach to use of AI: improving AI Strategy and Policies, designing AI Board and AI Governance; Digital and IT in discussions with Suppliers to identify AI opportunities in Reading.
Equal Communities	Deliver support to help people stop smoking, particularly those working in professions with higher rates of smoking.	Amber	In the first quarter of 2026/27, 275 people set a date to stop smoking. Of these, 154 people (56%) had successfully stopped smoking four weeks later. This was four percentage points below the 60% target. The Smokefree app has also been introduced alongside the existing stop smoking service to widen access to support and contribute towards achieving this year's quit ambition.

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Fit for the Future	Review the content of our website to ensure it is accessible and to drive customer self-service.	Amber	There has been significant work from content side to ensure successful implementation of RBC Chat. There has been some engagement with services to improve the content of small sections of the website. On the development side, work has been done on the legacy frameworks and libraries of the website. Investigative work has also begun on the redesign and implementation of new server structure to remove dependency on a third party organisation.
Fit for the Future	Deliver our three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial savings within to ensure that the Council lives within its means.	Amber	Quarter 1 financial monitoring position is a forecast adverse variance of £5.342m, of which £0.578m relates to savings pressures. While the Council has sufficient reserves to cover this adverse variance, action is being taken with the aim of bringing the figure down by the end of the financial year.
Fit for the Future	Ensure recruitment and selection processes support the Council's move towards ensuring the workforce represents the demographics of the Borough.	Amber	33% of new starters in Q1 identified as Global Majority (GM), with the rolling year total at 34%, and the overall GM proportion of the workforce increasing to 21.8%. Whilst turnover remains higher amongst GM employees than white employees (22% compared to 14%), there were substantially more GM starters than GM leavers during the year (116 compared to 67), supporting a continued increase in workforce representation. Analysis indicates that the difference in turnover is influenced by the success of GM recruitment in recent years, resulting in a larger proportion of GM employees within shorter service cohorts, where turnover is typically highest.
Fit for the Future	Continue to develop talent within the Council, including through our apprentice and work experience programmes.	Amber	At Q1, new apprentices represented 2% (40 heads) of the Council's headcount (target: 2.3%). In addition, 76 existing employees were supported through apprenticeship programmes to develop professional qualifications. Over the course of this Q1 we have had 11 new apprentice starts. We have had no levy funding lapsing during this period. We hosted 25 work experience students during May (Reading College students) and July (The Wren students).
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan to improve the reliability of bus services by increasing bus priority.	Amber	The Bus Service Improvement programme ended 31 March 2026, with DfT providing an extension of time (to all Local Transport Authorities) to March 2027. The Council are in the process of delivering the final

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			schemes on this programme, including Oracle Roundabout Bus Lane and London Road Bus Lane (Sidmouth st – London St). As well as these bus priority measures, the Council is also supporting the Buzz 9 and Buzz 18 contracts, as well as providing Sunday services between Mere oak Park & the Town Centre (via Green Park and Kennet Island). Each of these contracts is due to expire on 31/03/2027. This scheme has been rated 'Amber' on the basis that the original programmed completion date was March 2026. Moreover, supply chain / programme risks may impact the current planned delivery date of March 2027. This is being reviewed and managed through regular project/programme meetings.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Deliver funded active travel schemes to encourage more walking and cycling.	Amber	The Council continues to deliver an Active Travel Behavioural Change programme, which includes providing cycle maintenance, training, bike ability training in schools, and wellbeing walks. Alongside this the Council also continues to develop and deliver Active Travel improvements across the town. The amber RAG rating has been assigned due to the delays in implementing the Castle Hill / Bath Road Active Travel improvements, which is now scheduled for an informal public consultation commencing 14 July 2026, following which the designs will be updated, procurement undertaken. The Council currently expects works to commence in early 2027.
Sustainable and Healthy Environment	Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings, operations, and fleet, including investing in solar panels, energy efficiency in our buildings, and electric vehicles.	Amber	The 2025 carbon plan project and associated programmes was due to complete in 2025/26. The following projects were included: Decarbonisation: 1) Decarbonisation of Civic - complete, 2) Decarbonisation of Hexagon in progress 3) Decarbonisation of Rivermead and Palmer Park Leisure Centres - complete. Disposal of assets - 4) Central Library Fleet Decarbonisation - 5) High voltage install at Bennet Road, 6) Purchase of 12 no eRCV. 7) Replacement of Van fleet - ongoing but >10% behind schedule. Solar Installations - 8) Installation of Solar Canopies at Bennet Road - cancelled, 9) Installation of Smallmead solar farm in progress >10% late, 10) Installation of solar car parks >10% late. 11) Installation of Bus depot solar >10% late but share capital raised install imminent. 5 green, 2 amber, 4 red (average amber). Emissions for

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			25/26 year not yet available but unlikely to be on target (-85% by of 2008/9).
Adults and children	Promote independent and active travel to school for children with special educational needs and disabilities.	Amber	We continue to bring focus to independent travel in many areas across SEND. We have consolidated relevant groups with the 14-19 Partnership to deliver a focus on curriculum is part of this union and how independent travel skills can be aligned to a curriculum within schools to allow those with SEND to develop their independence skills. Independent travel is part of the outcomes toolkit which is being deployed across all schools. We are also promoting the use of personal transport budgets as an alternative to council arranged transport to school. supporting parents and their children and young people with SEND to develop more independent means of travelling to school. The project is rated as amber and not green, not because we are off schedule but due to many of the programmes being in the designing phase. We cannot yet measure the impact this will have on the independent travel outcomes for children with SEND.
Adults and children	Deliver an in-house assessment home and children's homes in Reading to ensure that children in residential care remain living in Reading wherever possible.	Amber	Significant progress achieved during this reporting period, with key workstreams advancing as planned. Progress has been made across registration, mobilisation, and property readiness activities, with one service progressing through Ofsted registration, another approaching registration and opening, and a third nearing completion. Recruitment activity remains positive, with successful onboarding of new staff and expanded recruitment campaigns supporting workforce growth and operational readiness. However, project status remains Amber due to the risk of delays in DBS processing, which could impact staff onboarding timelines and potentially affect mobilisation and service opening dates. This risk is being closely monitored, with mitigating actions in place to minimise impact on project delivery.
Economic and cultural success	Increase the number and timeliness of repairs delivered by our Housing Repairs & Property Services teams.	Amber	Sustained focus and effort on scrutinising jobs when they are raised, allocated and completed, is reflected in the delivery of repairs on time, across all priorities. We continue to review issues causing late delivery, and the embedded suite of checks facilitates the scrutiny required to

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			ensure this becomes BAU to maintain performance levels. They also allow us to identify issues early, and pinpoint causes of drops in performance against KPIs.
Adults and children	Increase the number of Brighter Futures for Children/Council foster carers to increase the proportion of children in care living in Reading wherever possible	Red	Residential placement numbers remain stable, with one fewer child in residential care at the end of this quarter compared to the previous quarter. During the quarter, 1 new foster carer was approved and a further 3 prospective foster carers were progressing through assessment. While this is positive progress, Reading continues to face a shortage of local foster carers, which affects our ability to place children close to their families, communities and schools. Work continues with Thames Valley local authorities and the Regional Care Cooperative to establish a regional fostering recruitment hub as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) Families First Partnership reforms. The DfE expects regional fostering recruitment arrangements to be in place from 1 October 2026. The hub is intended to strengthen recruitment activity across the region, improve the efficiency of assessment processes, and increase the availability of local foster carers to meet children's needs.
Economic and cultural success	Work in partnership to secure devolution for Reading and the wider area through a new Mayoral Strategic Authority.	Paused	A number of councils have recently withdrawn their support for seeking a Strategic Authority. The Council continues to engage with Leaders and senior officers in councils across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Swindon to continue discussions and work with Government to secure the benefits of devolution for Reading and the wider region.