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Notice of Meeting

Cabinet

Councillors Simon Werner (Chair), Lynne Jones (Vice-Chair), Richard Coe, Geoff Hill, Joshua Reynolds, Catherine Del Campo, Adam Bermange, Karen Davies and Amy Tisi

Wednesday 27 March 2024 7.00 pm

Grey Room - York House - Windsor & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

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Agenda

Part I

Item	Description	Page
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	-
2	Declarations of Interest To receive any declarations of interest from Cabinet Members.	5 - 6
3	Minutes To consider the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2024.	7 - 16
4	Appointments	-
5	Forward Plan To consider the Forward Plan for the period April 2024 to July 2024.	17 - 30
6	2023/24 Month 10 Budget Monitoring Report <i>Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance</i> To note the report and: i) note the forecast revenue outturn for the year was an overspend on services of £9.647m which reduced to an overspend of £6.069m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets (para 4); ii) note the forecast capital outturn was expenditure of £41.125m against a budget of £89.541m (para 9); and iii) approve the revenue budget virements set out in Appendix C.	31 - 48

Cabinet Member Reports

7	<p>Achieving for Children (AfC) Reserved Ownership Decisions</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education & Windsor</i></p> <p>To note the report and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the new AfC Strategic Plan (appendix A) ii) the detailed 2024/25 budget (appendix B) including Medium Term Financial Strategy (appendix C) iii) the Treasury Plan (appendix D) 	49 - 132
8	<p>Council Plan 2024-28</p> <p><i>Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection & Maidenhead</i></p> <p>To consider the Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree to take the Council Plan to Full Council in April 2024 for consideration and agreement. ii) Consider the recommendations made by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny at their meeting on 25 March 2024, and agrees to accept these, as appropriate. 	133 - 184
9	<p>Proposal for the continuation of two Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) in Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot to address dog fouling, dog control and cycling prohibition areas</p> <p><i>Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection & Maidenhead</i></p> <p>To note the report and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Consider the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, Public Space Protection Order (dog control and dog fouling) 2021 and the Public Space Protection Order (cycling in pedestrianised areas) 2021 and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead to approve both Orders. 	185 - 212

10	<p>Adult Social Care Case Management System</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services</i></p> <p>Due to the urgent nature of the report, it was not available to be published with the agenda. The report will be circulated as a separate supplement shortly.</p>	To Follow
11	<p>Approval of Contract Award of the New Independent Adult Advocacy Service</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Housing Services</i></p> <p>To note the report and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Approve the award of the new Independent Adult Advocacy Service as outlined in Appendix B (Part II). ii) Delegate authority to Executive Director Adult Social Care, Health and Communities (DASS) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services to exercise the option to extend the contract for a period of up to an additional two years. 	213 - 254
12	<p>Highways Services Contracts</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre & Employment</i></p> <p>To note the report and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre and Employment, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to agree terms for the extension of required Highway services with the current supplier, VolkerHighways Ltd. 	255 - 266
13	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>Agenda items 14 and 15 are supported by annexes containing exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If Cabinet wishes to discuss the content of these annexes in detail, it may choose to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“That pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of items 14 and 15, which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:</p> <p>(3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).”</p>	-

Part II

Cabinet Member Reports

14	<p>Highways Services Contracts</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre & Employment</i></p> <p>To consider Appendix B in Part II if required.</p> <p>(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)</p>	To Follow
15	<p>Approval of Contract Award of the New Independent Adult Advocacy Service</p> <p><i>Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Housing Services</i></p> <p>To consider Appendix B in Part II if required.</p> <p>(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)</p>	267 - 268

By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Oran Norris-Browne, Oran.Norris-Browne@rbwm.gov.uk, with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: Tuesday 19 March 2024



MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIs (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

DPIs (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
 - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
 - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other Registerable Interests:

- a) *any unpaid directorships*
 - b) *any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority*
 - c) *any body*
 - (i) *exercising functions of a public nature*
 - (ii) *directed to charitable purposes or*
 - (iii) *one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)*
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management*

Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

Agenda Item 3

CABINET

TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Werner (Chair), Lynne Jones (Vice-Chair), Geoff Hill, Joshua Reynolds, Catherine Del Campo, Adam Bermange, Karen Davies and Amy Tisi

Also in attendance: Councillors Helen Price, Genevieve Gosling, Julian Tisi and Mark Wilson

Also in attendance virtually: Councillors Maureen Hunt, Julian Sharpe, Sayonara Luxton and Gurch Singh

Officers: Oran Norris-Browne, Stephen Evans, Lin Ferguson, Elizabeth Griffiths, Andrew Durrant, Elaine Browne and Kevin McDaniel

Officers in attendance virtually: Becky Hatch

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Coe.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bermange declared an interest in Item 11 as he was a trustee of Autism Berkshire. However, he attended the meeting with an open mind.

Minutes

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 January 2024 were a true and accurate record.

Appointments

Cabinet noted the following appointments:

- Shahnaz Din as a Key Stage 2 Teacher representative in Group C on the Standing Advisory Council Religious Education (SACRE)
- Councillor Coe's cabinet portfolio was being changed to now include Trading Standards and Environmental Health. His new title would be "Cabinet Member for Household & Regulatory Services".

Forward Plan

Cabinet noted the contents of the Forward Plan, including the following additions for the meeting on 27 March 2024:

- AfC Reserved Ownership Decisions
- Council Plan – 2024-28
- Approval of tender award of the new independent adult and discretionary advocacy service

Budget 2024/25

AGREED: That the order of business be changed so that item 7 is heard first, followed by items 8 & 9 due to the number of registered speakers.

Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, said that before she wished to introduce the report to Cabinet, she believed that Councillor Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Communities & Leisure, wished to propose an edit to the budget. He wished for an edit to be made to show the following lines in Fees & charges as *For Consultation* - Outdoor Facilities - Football, Rugby, Cricket, and Lawn Tennis, so that any proposed increase could be consulted on properly with the affected sports groups. He said that the final increase in fee would then be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with himself as Cabinet Member. This edit was accepted by Councillor Jones as the relevant Cabinet Member, along with the rest of the Cabinet as a whole.

Councillor Jones continued her introduction by saying that many councils across the country were setting budgets in a challenging environment of increased social care demand and costs, increased borrowing costs and increased contract costs. Frustratingly the borough also had to deal with the legacy decisions around council tax and capital spend that had long lasting effects on the borough's spending power. The amount that the council had to spend was £322 per resident less than comparable councils. She said that last year, the outgoing Section 151 Officer also warned that given the level of savings identified, the Council needed to assure itself that there were robust plans and processes in place to deliver and report on the delivery of savings during the current financial year of 2023/24. She added that it appeared obvious to her that given the budget overspends, the robust plans and processes were not in place in February 2023 to deliver the savings that were needed.

Councillor Jones then said that for 2024/25, the borough had to take a different approach and not base the budget on amendments to previous years, as was usual. They had started from the bottom up and had calculated current demands, current costs, current income, looked at trends, strengthened the confidence in the numbers used and addressed any issues that were found whenever and however they came about. There was a £6.00m budget gap and in addition to this, the borough had to address the Adult Social Care £5.00m gap between the 23/24 base budget and demand. The plans to provide growth of nearly £10.00m and savings of £7.50m were already in place and would have the appropriate resources available, in order to achieve the targets. Moving forward, this would be monitored by both the Executive Leadership Team and the Cabinet monthly, following improvements to the finance reporting.

Councillor Jones then discussed changes to the draft budget following the public consultation and also the increase in the settlement grant, which were detailed on Page 5 of the report. Included within this were a prudent estimation of income from the observation wheel, staffing resource and use of flexible capital receipts to resource the transformation projects. This had allowed the borough to increase the contingency budget to £3.60m, which was up from the £2.40m seen last year, with the intent to add any unused contingency to the reserves in April 2025. She thanked the residents, groups and businesses that took the time to respond to the consultation, with one outcome being that 'first' parking permits were frozen.

Councillor Jones then discussed the Medium-Term Financial strategy. The current levels of funding RBWM were not generating sufficient surpluses to create capacity for growth, with a choice having to be made on whether to allocate to growth pressures or improve the borough's financial resilience by increasing reserves. The growth Items were shown in Appendix D, with the most notable factors being the £5.20m in Adult Social Care and £2.60m in Childrens Social Care to address the inadequacies in the 2023/24 budget. In the last decade, Social Care had increased from being 54% of net revenue expenditure to nearly 80%, which had greatly impacted other services.

Councillor Jones then added that many fees and charges were agreed in principle in December and were implemented early, with the remaining fees and charges in Appendix F

having not yet been approved. She then said that Appendix H showed that the total capital program was £30.50m with £10.80m being projects that had slipped from previous years. Capital spend was being restricted to the necessary infrastructure, funded by an external grant, and therefore reduced the need for borrowing. She said that the high level of debt currently held by the borough, put pressure on the revenue budget amounting to £13.00m or 11% of the overall budget. In addition, the Capital program was at Appendix I and set out the new bids for 2024/25 and the committed capital spend to 2028/29.

The Treasury strategy at Appendix K highlighted the importance of the borough's cashflows, borrowing and investments. Large amounts of unfunded borrowing had left the authority with around £200.00m of debt. More work was needed to generate better quality forecasts to inform management decisions going forward and support was already in place to strengthen both capacity and capability. She added that the remaining appendices included the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Pay Policy, the Equality Impact Assessments, and the Chief Finance Officer's Report.

In terms of the CFO Report, Councillor Jones drew the Cabinet's attention to the key risks of Contingency, Change, Control, Complacency and Capacity and the mitigations detailed against these risks. She added that there were also some recommendations from the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel that met in January 2024. Concerns were raised regarding defects at Braywick Leisure Centre for example. She said that there was a trade-off between the description and the volume of information that was published, with the descriptors in the tables having been given more focus than before, with the situation having been set out more transparently than in other years.

Councillor Jones then said that in relation to CIL, buying social housing took large amounts of capital or borrowing, neither of which the council was in a position to do. The borough was looking into the eligibility for Homes England funding and the preference was to use the balance of S106 monies as a contribution to Social Housing providers with the council holding nomination rights.

Councillor Jones concluded by saying that the enormous effort of officers and councillors, in a very challenging situation and despite last year's budget being inadequate, a balanced budget had been delivered. £5.20m of growth had been added to Adult Social Care, £2.60m to Childrens and the contingency had been increased by £1.20m to £3.50m. She noted that the borough was delivering services at a much lower cost than other councils, but the actions set out in the report such as the following, put the borough in good stead. These were:

- the transformation programme
- the capital project management
- the increased financial governance
- putting back the processes that had disappeared over the years
- the increase in capacity
- the focus on income generation

Councillor Jones ended her submission by thanking the Executive Director of Resources and her team, the Senior Leadership Team, and officers across the council, as the borough now had a challenging but deliverable budget.

Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources, wished to thank officers for their hard work since September 2023 to deliver a balanced budget. She said that £7.00m in efficiencies were needing to be delivered in-year. The flexible use of capital receipts were used to add temporary resource to aid in delivering this. Legacy cuts to Council Tax had seen a lot less funding being available compared to that of local neighbouring authorities. The budget would have to increase by a quarter to match them. This was along with a legacy of debt that needed to be serviced.

Stephen Evans, Chief Executive, wished to add to this by saying that every line of the budget had been gone through to eliminate any spending that could feasibly be removed. Proposals of Council Tax increases and increases in fees and charges were not easy decisions to take, however as Councils appeared to now be self-funded, these decisions had to be made. He said that presenting a balanced budget was a huge moment for any Council, especially with the weak financial resilience that had been seen. He said that he did believe that the Council was on the right track, however further work of course needed to be done.

Councillor Tisi, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Windsor, said that she wished to comment on some of the positive aspects of the budget that were being seen in Windsor specifically. These included the west Windsor healthy routes to school, money allocated to improve the health suite at Windsor Leisure Centre and the tennis courts by Alexandra Gardens. The Youth Council had also brought attention to street lighting within the borough. She then said that it was the administration's intention to certainly continue with the operation of the Windsor Museum, however the previous administration had cut the budget for this, meaning alternative ways and models would need to be explored.

Councillor Davies, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Biodiversity & Windsor Town Council, thanked officers for their hard work and their initiative in seeking funding for achieving the administration's ambitions. The public sector decarbonisation scheme for Windsor Leisure Centre would see gas fire boilers being replaced by air source heat pumps, which would improve sustainability. She then added that a new full-time position of a climate partnership co-ordinator had recently been recruited to, with a start date of March 2024, which was seen as a major positive in taking the partnership forward.

Councillor Reynolds said that the public sector decarbonisation fund money was fantastic, with a grant being obtained from Central Government of over £8.00m. He said that there had recently also been a £0.400m investment into the new gym at Windsor Leisure Centre, which was a massive bonus for residents. In addition to this, he praised the £0.200m that was being used towards the health suite, as Councillor Tisi had just mentioned.

Councillor Bermange, Cabinet Member for Planning, Legal & Asset Management, wished to make the point about what had changed within the last two months, since the draft budget last came before Cabinet. A public consultation had occurred, allowing residents to provide feedback on the proposed budget, but also this had led to in-year changes to the finances also, which would be picked up on in item 6. He then referred to Appendix O of the report, which made statements about the robustness of the estimates and the reserves. He said that the announcement from the Secretary of State was also a one-off, with the additional funding being used to assist with the next financial year's reserves.

Councillor Jones completely agreed with this and replied by saying that during her time as a Councillor since 2011, reserves seen before were as low as £5.00m, with no contingencies. No other decision could possibly be made to ensure that the contingencies were there, other than what had been agreed now.

Councillor Del Campo, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Housing Services, thanked the public for their responses during the consultation period, which had been read and taken into account. She continued by saying that it was very important to look after the borough's most vulnerable residents, who would always be at the forefront of their minds. Some comments from the consultation that were specifically picked out, which really resonated with her were that adult support should be a Central Government funded subject, and not by the Council. She said that income tax was a fair way to tax people, however Council tax was not as fair, due to it being a regressive tax. She did not want to increase this, however there was not much alternative due to the financial challenges that the Council faced.

Councillor Del Campo added that care home charges were negotiated very hard, and the borough were seeking to hold them to a much lower amount than what was first proposed moving forward, for which she was very proud of the borough's commissioners. The idea of

the borough having its own care home was something that was also being looked at, however if it proved to not be cost-effective, then this would of course not be pursued. She noted that it was however still early days in this process.

The Chair then invited Peter Haley, Gerald Hyder, John Baldwin, and Andrew Hill to address Cabinet for 3 minutes each as registered public speakers.

The Chair's responded to Peter Haley's comments by saying that the new administration had been left with a mess to fix and said that this would take time however he was very much determined to assist with the issues mentioned around shop mobility in Maidenhead, following the demolition of the Broadway car park.

Councillor Reynolds responded to Gerald Hyder by saying that he wished to work with Councillor Tisi as Cabinet Member for Windsor to look at what potential routes could be taken to potentially relocate the location of the Windsor Museum for example. He could not understand some of the legacy ideas of the previous administration surrounding the museum, which had left it in its current state.

Councillor Jones responded to John Baldwin's comments by saying that not all adult social care providers were looking for increases, with only 1 or 2 providers potentially only looking for higher incomes. She added that she had indeed challenged aspects of the previous budget, including that of Children's Services, in addition to the word 'review' being used too many times in the previous budget. She added that the issuing of a Section 114 notice would be the worst outcome for residents, which she did not endorse.

The Chair thanked him for his comments and said that he believed that the previous administration knew that they were going to lose power, so began to stuff the finances, as nobody would be able to stop them. Councillor Jones then also responded to Andrew Hill's comments and stated that there would never be a fire sale of Council assets.

Councillor Price then spoke as a non-Cabinet Member and thanked officers and the Cabinet for the draft budget as it was a lot clearer, more transparent, and comprehensive, compared to previous years, in addition to the resident-friendly terminology that had been used. She then said that Appendix O was a masterpiece in explaining why the borough were in the situation that they were in, and why such measures were being needed to be taken. She then said that it was clear that issues existed with paper spreadsheets being used, assets failing to be maintained and building a new leisure centre at Braywick with defects amongst others. She added that residents feared what deals existed between developers and the Council. She asked how many more stones were yet to be turned over and how confident were the Cabinet that the reserves were sufficient in order to cope with the unknowns.

Councillor Jones replied by saying that at the moment, the Cabinet just did not know. Three new persons had been brought in and a lack of audit had allowed for this to all occur, with a lot more still expected to be seen both positive and negative.

Councillor Price then expressed disappointment with the little amount of reference to levelling up, at a time when Central Government were stopping the Household Support Grant. She asked if the Cabinet were working closely enough with social housing providers such as Abri and the community organisations. There was also no mention of various religious groups in the borough who did so much for the community. Councillor Jones replied by saying that the Council tax reductions scheme did exist, and that communication was the key there in getting this message out to those who needed it. In addition to the business rates reduction scheme for local charities too. Again, communication was the key for this. In relation to religious groups, the Chair agreed that religious groups and better phrase faith groups, would be added to the list of groups.

Councillor Price then asked about the plans for transformation and noted the previous Cabinet Transformation Sub-Committee and its lack of meetings last year. Councillor Jones then

explained what the proposed process was going to be for this going forward, with directorate meetings, an overall board and with results being reported publicly at Cabinet.

Councillor Wilson then spoke as a non-Cabinet Member. He thanked officers for their hard work when it came to the budget. He said that the CFO Report showed the borough to be on a financial cliff edge, however he was optimistic. He said that it was good to see things being repaired, including things being reported 2 weeks prior to the month's end, which was a more rewarding and better position to be in. He also liked the reference to income generating opportunities and when thinking of Windsor itself, there were of course a vast number of visitors to the town annually, specifically tourists. He then placed on record his thanks that there was a line in the budget for the re-opening of the Eton Wik library. He then made a transparency request, which was to disclose the gross income and costs for parking. It was currently quite hidden and believed that it would go down well with residents, when currently it was a difficult topic for them. Councillor Jones said that the average amount that was brought in from parking, was just under £13.00m. Greater governance processes were also going into the Prop Co.

He then asked about officer pay and what was being discussed to boost compensation and disparity between the pay of RBWM staff and that of neighbouring local authorities. Councillor Jones said that if the money was there, then of course they would increase officer pay to bring it more in line with neighbouring authorities. Terms and conditions were being enhanced, which was as much as could be done in the current circumstances.

In reference to Eton Wick library, Councillor Reynolds replied by saying that he wished to continue working hard with him, Councillors, and residents to drive this forward. Introducing a tourist tax was also being looked into, however it could not be seen to harm local businesses.

Councillor J Tisi then spoke as a non-Cabinet Member. He also praised the Cabinet and officers for their work on balancing the budget, especially considering the borough's position compared to that of other local authorities. He stated that he disagreed with what an earlier public speaker had said, which implored the Council to submit a Section 114 notice and bite the bullet so to speak. He did not think this was the correct route to go down and fully supported the response from Councillor Jones earlier in the meeting. He then commented on the unrealistic income target set for the Windsor Museum.

Councillor J Tisi asked in reference to Appendix O, it appeared that there appeared to be a deficit for the current year for around £6.00m or £7.00m and if this was still the case. Councillor Jones replied said that at month 9 the overspend showed £9.00m, which reduced to £5.200m, when the unallocated contingency budgets were applied. However, another £1.00m was being looked at as an additional overspend in month 10.

His second question was about the lack of audit and stones being unturned, he asked what the Cabinet's thoughts were on the cut of £0.082m in audit funding and how comfortable the Cabinet Member for Finance was with this. Councillor Jones replied by saying that there was a significant capacity issue within the Council and when this existed, it was difficult to do the positives whilst also going through an audit too. Stephen Evans said that good governance and internal audits were very important, which he welcomed. The proposed internal audit plan included over 600 days of audit. Adults and Children's Services were also two of the most regulated services out there, which added greater pressure on the balance between auditing and overburdening officers. Elizabeth Griffiths said that a new process was in place to assess which audits they needed to do, in addition to the involvement of both the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive Leadership Team. It was all about creating an internal audit system that was beneficial and deliverable to staff and the borough as a whole.

AGREED: That Cabinet reviewed the Council's approach to balancing the budget and agreed and recommend that Council approved:

- i) **The net budget for 2024/25 of £118.721m as set out in the main body of the report.**
- ii) **Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix F to the Report.**
- iii) **The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts for the purposes outlined in Appendix G of the report.**
- iv) **The statement of MRP policy contained in Appendix H to the report under the heading Minimum Revenue Provision**
- v) **The Capital Strategy 2024/25 as set out in Appendix H to the report.**
- vi) **The consolidated Capital Programme for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix I**
- vii) **That delegated authority is given to the Executive Director of Place and the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the inclusion of the proposed PSDS project, subject to business case.**
- viii) **The breakdown of projects with the highway resurfacing programme as detailed in Appendix J to the report.**
- ix) **The breakdown of projects within the footway maintenance and construction programme as detailed in Appendix J to the report.**
- x) **The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix K to the report, including the Treasury Management Policies and Lending Counterparty Criteria**
- xi) **The prudential indicators as set out in Appendix K to the report, including the Operational and Authorised limits for external borrowing.**
- xii) **The allocation of the £165.017m Dedicated Schools Grant as set out in Appendix L to the report.**
- xiii) **The updated Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix M to the report.**
- xiv) **An edit to the budget that showed the following lines in Fees & charges as *For Consultation* - Outdoor Facilities - Football, Rugby, Cricket, and Lawn Tennis, with the final increase in fee to be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities & Leisure.**

Draft Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document

Councillor Bermange introduced the report to Cabinet by outlining that the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would serve as an important document to allow for the borough to work with developers to ensure that there was adequate provision of affordable housing for those residents in the borough that really needed it. He said that the average cost of renting and also house prices in general were both extremely high and that it was a priority of the new administration to deliver more affordable housing for residents. He then reminded Cabinet that like other SPDs that had been brought before them, they could not create new policy and did not replace existing policy that was already in place from the Borough Local Plan (BLP). He then continued by outlining some key aspects of the proposed SPD.

Councillor Bermange then wished to comment on the successful debate at the Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel, earlier in the month. One topic of debate that was hotly discussed was what would happen if a developer believed that they would not be able to deliver a policy compliant level of affordable housing. A very clear justification as to the change in circumstances would need to be provided if this were the case. Developers would also need to demonstrate that they had considered alternative sites if they would not be able to deliver the required level of affordable housing. He concluded by asking for as many members of the public as possible to respond to the public consultation when it began.

The Chair then invited Andrew Hill to address Cabinet for 3 minutes as a registered public speaker.

Councillor Bermange responded to Andrew Hill's questions. He said that a planning inspector could certainly come to a different decision, unforetold by that of the Council, however he believed that everything relevant to the SPD was spelled out extremely well within the document. In response to his first question, he said that the SPD made it quite clear that all

viability assessments should reflect recommended approaches in national planning guidance. Persons with knowledge in the local area were key in helping to shape the SPD via the public consultation.

Councillor Del Campo said that the Council would have nomination rights for the affordable properties, as laid out within the document. As part of Section 106 agreements, developers would be responsible to sign a nomination protocol. Persons who were in need of these affordable homes most would then be nominated.

Councillor Price asked if the Equalities Officer could review the EQIA section of the report, prior to the commencement of the consultation being opened to the public. Councillor Bermange confirmed that this could be actioned.

AGREED: That Cabinet noted the report and:

- i) Approved the publication of the draft Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document as set out in Appendix B for public consultation; and**
- ii) Delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management, to approve and publish any minor changes to the draft Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prior to its publication and to approve Appendix 5 of the draft Affordable Housing Delivery SPD which would set out the justification for the financial contribution's calculator.**

Establishment of a Joint Committee - the Berkshire Prosperity Board

The Chair introduced the report to Cabinet by saying that over the last few years, the relevant Council Leaders had met quite regularly to look at how their collective power could be used to lobby Central Government. A change in administrations at most of the local Berkshire authorities had meant that a lot of new faces were now present around the table. Central Government were keen for this and had also proposed an elected mayor, however all of the unitary authorities in question, had rejected this idea. The local enterprise partnership (LEP) funding was also to be ended by Central Government from the end of March 2024, with these budgets being handed back to local authorities. To further these discussions, a board was to be established, which would focus upon six different workstreams, which were:

- Net Zero
- Health & Inequalities
- Education Skills
- Affordable Housing
- Set-Development
- Strategic Infrastructure

The Chair then invited Andrew Hill to address Cabinet for 3 minutes as a registered public speaker.

The Chair responded to Andrew Hill's comments and said that he agreed with some of his points about barmy ideas being brought forward by the previous administration when it came to LEP funding. He said that there had been numerous schemes that had been financed by the LEP, which had been decided by the previous administration dubiously. Stephen Evans said that these responsibilities would transfer to the borough from 1 April 2024, who would then in the short term, commission the LEP. A choice would then be available in the future as to whether or not to continue with that relationship.

Councillor Bermange said that he wished to highlight the proposed governance arrangements for the proposed committee. He said that the executive decision making would be subject to overview & scrutiny panels, with the ability being there to call-in decisions that are made by the board. Business would also be conducted in public and also have the provision for public

questions to be asked. He said that previous projects may have been a bit of a white elephant, which he hoped would be avoided with these new governance procedures.

Councillor Del Campo said that decisions made at the meeting would have to be unanimous and in order for them to be quorate, everyone would need to be in attendance. In addition, it showed that people could work well across multiple political parties. The Chair said that their partnership cabinet had showcased this well.

Councillor Reynolds was happy to second Councillor Werner's report.

AGREED: That Cabinet noted the report and recommended to Full Council:

- i) To agree to the establishment of a fully constituted Joint Committee (to be known as the Berkshire Prosperity Board) from May 2024 to deliver a Berkshire-wide vision for inclusive, green and sustainable economic prosperity.**
- ii) That the proposed constitution for the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix A - Functions and Procedure Rules for a Joint Committee, Appendix B - responsibilities of the accountable body and Appendix C - governance structure is approved, subject to the Monitoring Officer being authorised to make minor amendments to the Functions and Procedure Rules in conjunction with the participating authorities.**
- iii) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated to agree and enter into a legally binding agreement between the six member authorities setting out the supporting arrangements and responsibilities between the authorities - particularly that between the lead authority (known as the accountable body) - and the other member authorities and go through the relevant democratic process if required.**

2023/24 Month 9 Budget Monitoring Report

Councillor Jones introduced the report by saying that month 9 was December, which showed a forecasted overspend of £8.663m, which reduced to an overspend of £5.273m when contingency budgets were allocated. On page 2 of the report, it listed the significant changes that were seen in month 9, one being where an error was made for provisions not having been made for assets that were under construction in the MRP. She then noted that month 10 was looking at an overspend of an additional £1.00m.

Councillor Price asked about the £1.00m overspend and the specifics about the supreme court ruling that led to this added cost. Kevin McDaniel, Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Communities said that a judgment had been made and that there was currently a specific active case, which he was happy to pick up with her offline.

AGREED: That Cabinet noted the report and:

- i) Noted the forecast revenue outturn for the year was an overspend on services of £8.663m which reduced to an overspend of £5.273m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets (para 4); and**
- ii) Noted the forecast capital outturn was expenditure of £41.125m against a budget of £89.541m (para 9).**

Determination of School Admissions Arrangements 2025-26

Councillor Tisi introduced the report to Cabinet by giving a brief background on the report. RBWM were the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the borough. The admissions code was published by Central Government and stated that it was an annual requirement for an admission authority to publish its admission arrangements. Whenever changes were to be made, then a public consultation would be required, which was the case here. She then outlined what the proposed changes were as set out within the report.

The Chair thanked her for all of the work that she was doing and said that the report was vitally important.

AGREED: That Cabinet noted the report and determined (approved) the proposed RBWM Admission Arrangements that were set out in Appendix A for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2025/26.

Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision Capital Strategy Update

Councillor Tisi introduced the report to Cabinet and said that the borough had been allocated a grant of £3.700m from the high needs provision capital allocation, which could be used to fund new special educational needs and disability places. This would ensure that the best education possible could be given to the children of the borough, who particularly required this additional level of attention. She then outlined some key aspects that were being put forward within the report which included some new accommodation at the Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) and a resource base at Churchmead school, which would be a joint venture with Slough Borough Council. At Forest Bridge School, new accommodation was also being looked at to assist in expanding post-16 places. Finally, at Manor Green School a current building was being turned into a new learning space for around 16-20 students to be provided education for. The report essentially ensured that the borough's young persons were successfully provided for, in accordance with their specific needs. She then noted that there was an appendix in part II that detailed the finances around this, however Cabinet agreed that they did not require to move into part II to discuss this separately.

AGREED: That Cabinet noted the report and:

- i) **Requested that officers carried out a public consultation in Spring 2024 on proposals to be included within an updated Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) capital strategy and**
- ii) **Requested a report back to Cabinet in May 2024, to provide the outcome of the consultation, cost estimates for the proposals and a recommended programme for capital investment.**

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 9.10 pm

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Changes made to the Cabinet Forward Plan since the Cabinet meeting on 20.02.24:

Item	Scheduled date	New date	Reason for change
Highway Services Contracts	27.03.24	-	New Urgent Item
Adult Social Care case management system implementation project status update	27.03.24	-	New Urgent Item
Novello Theatre - Sale of Property	24.04.24	-	New Item
Quality of Education - A review of academic year 2022/23	24.04.24	-	New Item
RBWM Leisure Management Contract re-procurement	24.04.24	-	New Item
Lease renewal of office space at York House, Windsor	24.04.24	-	New Item
Quarterly Assurance Report	24.04.24	-	New Item
Empty Property Strategy	24.04.24	23.10.24	To allow further scoping time.
School Transport Policy 2024-25	24.04.24	02.10.24	As currently awaiting the completion of the peer review with Hampshire prior to making any policy changes.
Bus Service Improvement Plan Refreshment	22.05.24	-	New Item
SEND and Alternative Provision Capital Strategy 2024 update	22.05.24	-	New Item

Appointments to Outside Bodies	03.07.24	-	New Item
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FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

All enquiries, including representations, about any of the items listed below should be made in the first instance to Democratic Services, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead. Email: democratic.services@rbwm.gov.uk

Residents can access the Cabinet Forward Plan via the following link - [Browse Forward Plans - Cabinet \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Browse-Forward-Plans-Cabinet). The Forward Plan is published at least 14 days prior to the beginning of that month's business. All Key Decisions that are planned to be taken by the Cabinet, shall be listed here, covering the next four month period.

FORWARD PLAN

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information ? See categories below.	Short Description	Key Decision , Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
19 Standards and Quality of Education – A Review of the Academic Year 2022-23	Open -	<p>This report sets out the progress across the Borough's schools during the academic years 2022-23, summarising the available qualitative and quantitative data that is contained in the Education Pack 2022-23 and other appendices.</p> <p>This report outlines some of the support provided by the Education</p>	No	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Windsor (Councillor Amy Tisi)	Clive Haines, Lin Ferguson	Internal	Cabinet 24 Apr 2024	

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
		Service and the next priority steps for continued improvement in education to give all pupils the best chance of success.						
20 RBWM Leisure Management Contract re-procurement	Open -	This report requests that Cabinet note the report, and agree to proceed with re-tendering of the Borough's Leisure Management Contract, which will seek to appoint the operator for the next contract period, which will commence with effect from 1 April 2025	Yes	Cabinet Member for Communities & Leisure (Councillor Joshua Reynolds)	Andrew Durrant, Michael Shepherd	Internal	Cabinet 24 Apr 2024	
Quarterly Assurance Report	Open -	Report setting out detail of council performance and risk.	No	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection & Maidenhead (Councillor Simon Werner)	Chief Executive Becky Hatch	Internal process	Cabinet 24 Apr 2024	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
21 Lease renewal of office space at York House, Windsor	Part exempt -	Terms have been agreed to renew the lease to existing tenant of the 2nd floor of York House in Windsor. Cabinet approval is required under the Council's Constitution as the aggregate level of rent exceeds £500,000 over the terms of the lease.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Planning, Legal & Asset Management (Councillor Adam Bermange)	Ian Brazier-Dubber, Andrew Durrant	Internal	Cabinet 24 Apr 2024	
Novello Theatre - Sale of Property	Part exempt - 3	Request Cabinet approval to sell the Novello Theatre and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place in Consultation with the Leader member for Asset Planning and Law to complete the sale.	No	Cabinet Member for Planning, Legal & Asset Management (Councillor Adam Bermange)	Executive Director of Place Ian Brazier-Dubber	Briefing note and email	Cabinet 24 Apr 2024	
May In-Year Monthly Budget Update	Open -	A monthly report to provide an update on the Council's finances.	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Lynne)	Elizabeth Griffiths	Internal	Cabinet 22 May 2024	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
				Jones)				
22 Bus Service Improvement Plan Refreshment	Open -	In the NBS (National Bus Strategy), the statutory framework for delivery of the strategy through partnership is provided by the Bus Services Act 2017 and the key document setting out the vision, objectives and delivery plans of LTAs and their partners at the local level is the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Our last published version was 2 years ago and needs refreshing.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre & Employment (Councillor Geoff Hill)	Andrew Durrant, Alysse Strachan	Internal	Cabinet 22 May 2024	
Revocation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within RBWM	Open -	The report seeks Cabinet approval to revoke the 5 AQMAs within RBWM which are no longer required as the	Yes	Councillor Karen Davies, Councillor Simon Werner	Andrew Durrant, Amanda Gregory	Internal	Cabinet 22 May 2024	

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
23		<p>measured levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) are well below the nationally set, health-based air quality objectives. RBWM can demonstrate no exceedances in all 5 AQMAs for at least 4 consecutive years. Provisional results for 2023 indicate continued compliance which will bring the consecutive years to 5, therefore the council must proceed with the revocation of all 5 AQMAs.</p> <p>The Annual Status Report for 2023 including results from 2018 to 2022 can be found here: https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-</p>						

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
24		<p>09/eh_air_quality_anual_report.pdf. Defra's appraisal report concluded that: On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached are accepted for all sources and pollutants. Following the completion of this report, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead should progress with the revocation their compliant AQMAs and submit an Annual Status Report in 2024.</p> <p>Section 83(2)(b) of the Environment Act 1995 allows for the revocation of an AQMA by an</p>						

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
		Order, if it appears on review the air quality standards and objectives are being achieved and are likely throughout the relevant period to be achieved, within the designated area.						
SEND and Alternative Provision Capital Strategy 2024 update	Part exempt -	A report giving the outcome of public consultation on proposals for new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision in the Royal Borough, and the resulting recommendations on which way we should proceed.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Windsor (Councillor Amy Tisi)	Lin Ferguson, Sam Franklin, Ben Wright	Internal	Cabinet 22 May 2024	
Appointments to Outside Bodies	Open -	To make appointments of council representatives on outside and associated bodies. Each year, the Council appoints a number of	Yes	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection & Maidenhead (Councillor Simon Werner)	Mark Beeley, Elaine Browne	Internal	Cabinet 3 Jul 2024	

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
26		<p>representatives to sit on organisations to act as a communication link between the organisation and the council.</p> <p>Each political group will be given the opportunity to put forward nominations before Cabinet formally confirms the representative for each body.</p>						
School Transport Policy 2024-25	Open -	This report proposes changes to the School Transport Policy, effective from May 2024, based on a review of the school transport policy undertaken with the support of Hampshire County Council.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Windsor (Councillor Amy Tisi)	Lin Ferguson, Lynne Penn	External consultation using RBWM process	Cabinet 2 Oct 2024	
Review of Air Quality Monitoring Programme for	Open -	The report will provide an update on the PM2.5 and PM10 monitoring	Yes	Councillor Karen Davies, Councillor Simon Werner	Andrew Durrant, Obi Oranu	Internal	Cabinet 23 Oct 2024	

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
PM2.5 and PM10		programme within RBWM.						
27 Empty Property Strategy	Open -	Cabinet to agree RBWM's Empty Property Strategy. The Empty Property Strategy aims to work with empty homeowners to increase the supply of housing. The strategy will set out the approach RBWM will take to provide a clear direction for addressing empty homes which blight communities and adversely affect neighbourhoods.	Yes	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Housing Services (Councillor Catherine del Campo)	Andrew Durrant, Amanda Gregory	Consultation may be required with residents, landlords.	Cabinet 23 Oct 2024	
Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Open -	The Strategy shall contain: -A description of Berkshire's biodiversity -A map of areas of particular importance for biodiversity -A list of priorities for nature recovery	Yes	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Biodiversity & Windsor Town Council (Councillor Karen Davies)	Andrew Durrant, James Thorpe	Public Consultation	Cabinet 18 Dec 2024	4 Dec 2024

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ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
		for Berkshire (the statement of biodiversity priorities) -A map of areas that could become of particular importance (the local habitat map)						

ITEM	Private Meeting - contains exempt/confidential information? See categories below	Short Description	Key Decision, Council or other?	REPORTING MEMBER (to whom representations should be made)	REPORTING OFFICER / DIRECTOR (to whom representations should be made)	Consultation (please specify consultees, dates (to and from) and form of consultation), including other meetings.	Date and name of meeting	Date of Council decision (if required)
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DESCRIPTIONS OF EXEMPT INFORMATION: ENGLAND

- 1 Information relating to any individual.
- 2 Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
- 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 4 Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- 5 Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- 6 Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
- 7 Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

N.B. All documents to be used by the decision maker to be listed in the report to Cabinet

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Report Title:	2023/24 Month 10 Budget Monitoring Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources Julian McGowan, Senior Finance Business Partner
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

This report details the forecast outturn against budget for the 2023/24 financial year. It includes the revenue and capital budgets along with the financial reserve position at year end.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i) notes the forecast revenue outturn for the year is an overspend on services of £9.647m which reduces to an overspend of £6.069m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets (para 4);
- ii) notes the forecast capital outturn is expenditure of £41.125m against a budget of £89.541m (para 9); and
- iii) approve the revenue budget virements set out in Appendix C.

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
To note the Council's outturn.	This is the recommended option.
To not note the Council's outturn.	This is not the recommended option.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council faces considerable financial risks that could have a significant and immediate impact on its finances. However, whilst reserves are currently above the minimum level that the S151 Officer deemed required in the February 2023 budget papers to protect against financial and service risks (£7.900m), they are projected to fall below £5m by the end of the year, based on the current forecast.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 RBWM faces significant financial challenges. In the Cabinet meeting of 27 September, the Chief Executive and S151 Officer gave an update to Cabinet, stating that the Council's reserves were low and there was a risk that a S114 notice would need to be issued. Since then, whilst a balanced 2024/25 budget was set at February Council, the in-year position continues to deteriorate.
- 4.2 The majority of the overspend is in our statutory services and, despite processes being strengthened and costs being mitigated, the pressure of additional placements is largely beyond our control. The risk attached to these rising costs is that the placements which drive them will continue into the new financial year creating an instant overspend on the budget which already had millions of pounds of additional funding added to cover these services but may not be enough to cope with ever increasing rises in demand.
- 4.3 The month 10 forecast is an overspend of £9.647m on service budgets, which reduces to £6.069m when considering contingency and funding budgets. This is an adverse movement of £1.0088m from the prior month.
- 4.4 The significant changes in month 10 are:
- Children's services additional social care placements costs (£0.242m).
 - Revised forecast of staffing in Children's services (£0.366m).
 - Shortfalls on income in Adult Social Care from subletting of block commissioned beds and Funded Nursing Care (£0.360m).

Table 2: 2023/24 Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn

	Current Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults and Housing	40,505	47,225	6,720	360
Children's Services	27,759	29,208	1,449	607
Place	11,985	14,041	2,056	(1)
Resources	13,023	12,459	(564)	18
Chief Executive Department	1,013	999	(14)	0
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	94,285	103,932	9,647	984
Contingency	2,934	846	(2,088)	107
Other funding and non-service expenditure	(97,219)	(98,709)	(1,490)	(297)
DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND	0	6,069	6,069	794

GENERAL FUND	
Opening balance	(10,213)
Transfer out	0
CLOSING BALANCE	(£10,213)

ADULTS AND HEALTH

4.5 The forecast is an adviser variance of £0.360m from the prior month due:

- A more detailed review of income budgets has identified a pressure including £0.200m on leaseback income (whereby block beds are sublet) and £0.150m from Funded Nursing Care. Further work is being undertaken to maximise funding before year end, but it remains a challenging area particularly as the ICB face their own budget challenges.

Table 3: Adults and Health Forecast Outturn

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Exec Director & Commissioning	1,735	1,767	32	(293)
Adult Social Care	38,525	45,230	6,705	670
Transformation and Community	170	153	(17)	(17)
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0
Total	40,505	47,225	6,720	360

Executive Director and Commissioning (forecast overspend of £0.032m)

4.6 Note the favourable movement this month of £0.293m is largely offset by an adverse movement in Adult Social Care, as two Assistant Director posts have transferred back from Optalis to the Council.

Adult Social Care (forecast overspend of £6.705m)

4.7 The primary cause of the overspend is placement cost which is £4.700m, £3.800m of this is due to the residential care costs of older people whilst £0.900m is due to mental health placements. The budget assumed demand would return to pre-Covid levels but that has not been the case. There is also significant inflationary pressures from all providers, especially those with no contractually agreed terms. This is particularly noticeable in residential and nursing home places where we are seeing requests for 8%-16% uplifts on existing placements, having budgeted 5%.

4.8 Staffing shows an overspend of £0.870m due to the large number of vacancies and the subsequent reliance on agency staff.

4.9 There is pressure of £0.470m on income forecast which is mostly driven by shortfall of £0.290m in Leaseback income, shortfall of £0.145m in Funded Nursing Care income.

4.10 Non-staff adverse forecast variance of £0.66m is primarily driven by bad debt provision. The current forecast variance is £0.52m adverse and this is likely to

increase to estimated £0.872m adverse variance at year end. In addition to non-staff variance is a vacancy savings target of £0.1m.

- 4.11 Ongoing actions to address the overspend include establishing a rigorous panel process for new care placements, the Homefirst project that seeks to support people as they leave hospital to reduce the risk of care home placements, and a targeted review of care packages which started in August. There are early indications that the panel review and Homefirst are having positive impacts, but with demand led services we must wait to see longer term trends before drawing firm conclusions.

Public Health

- 4.12 Public Health spend is met from the ringfenced grant and as such there is no impact on the General Fund, and nil variance reported.

5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 5.1 The forecast is an adverse movement of £0.607m in month 10 due to:

- Increase in residential placement of £0.242m. This is due to two young people who have moved from an independent fostering agency placement to residential due to their complex needs, review of support package for one young person and a 12-week mother and baby assessment placement has been extended for one family.
- Following an in-depth re-forecasting a further pressure of £0.366m is now being reported on social care staffing. There remain recruitment challenges at both a local and national level, due to a shortfall of qualified and experienced practitioners.

Table 4: Children's Services Forecast Outturn

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Mgt & Business Services	3,158	3,134	(24)	(63)
Education	1,279	820	(459)	(122)
SEND	3,676	4,394	718	73
Social Care & Early Help	21,043	22,577	1,534	737
Public Health	(11)	(45)	(33)	(17)
Grant budgets	(1,387)	(1,673)	(286)	0
Total	27,758	29,208	1,449	608

- 5.2 Use of agency staff to cover vacancies is important to support safe services and retention of existing practitioners, whilst permanent recruitment takes place. Agency social workers cost an average of £0.030m more per year than permanent staff. There is active recruitment in progress, including conversations with agency staff members about whether they would be interested in permanent employment contracts. Children's services also

continue to review the local benefits package to ensure it is as attractive as possible. The service is also looking at how experienced (but not social work qualified) children's services practitioners could be used to carry out more functions.

- 5.3 The budget remains volatile due to the statutory duty to safeguard children of the borough. As a demand led service any increase in demand to support children and families will likely have an impact on the budget projections.

6. PLACE

- 6.1 There are no significant variances on the budget this month.

Table 5: Place Forecast Outturn

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director of Place	20	20	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	8,027	9,848	1,821	(25)
Planning	1,330	1,785	455	24
Housing, ES & TS	2,134	2,005	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0
Infrastructure, Sust. & Transport	3,382	3,291	(91)	0
Total	11,986	14,041	2,056	(1)

Neighbourhood Services (forecast overspend of £1.821m)

- 6.2 There are significant cost pressures on the waste contract (£0.600m) due to haulage and vehicle costs. There also a pressure on the highways contract due to higher inflation than budgeted (£0.360m). There are ongoing discussions with contractors to identify savings.
- 6.3 On the positive side, reprocessing rates for dry mixed recycling is higher than anticipated (£0.325m) and a new contract for recycling has resulted in a saving (£0.180m) reduced by (£0.030m).
- 6.4 Parking income is £1.200m below budget (£0.750m daily parking, £0.390m season tickets). Compared to the previous year daily parking is 3% up, and season ticket 7%, but this is equivalent to increases in charges and is insufficient to make up the budget (2022/23 included a reduced target to reflect recovery from the pandemic). As reported last month, communications have been enhanced as part of the Maidenhead parking strategy. Promotions including the uptake of season tickets as well as the development of the parking strategy continue.
- 6.5 It should be noted that following public consultation, the February 2024 parking fees increase has been included in the full year forecast (£0.150m).

- 6.6 The Leisure Contract is £0.560m below budget as the budgeted concession income is less than currently obtained. There was uncertainty at the time of setting the budget as the tender was in progress at the time and has subsequently been delayed. This is partly mitigated by holding funding of the community wardens and identification of alternative sources of funding (e.g. Public Health). There are ongoing discussions with Leisure Focus on commercial options such as increase of prices.

Planning (forecast overspend of £0.455m)

- 6.7 There is a pressure on planning fees (£0.760m) due to the current market and a low volume of building control applications. The planning fee increase of 35% has been included in the forecast (£0.055m).
- 6.8 Appeal costs of £0.180m have also been included (see Appendix B: Risks and Opportunities) for further information. It should also be noted that one-off CIL funding of essential tree works is included in the forecast (£0.570m).

Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards (forecast overspend of £0.129m)

- 6.9 The underspend is due to release of earmarked reserves no longer required and agreed by ELT, and underspend on the air quality monitoring budgets. Housing Temporary Accommodation is a volatile budget, and it should be noted that although it is forecast to budget, it remains a volatile area and includes a one-off injection of funding from the Homes 4 Ukraine grant (£0.500m). There is also an Asylum Dispersal Grant of £0.298m which is forecast to be spent mostly after year end – see Appendix B Risk and Opportunities for further info.

7. RESOURCES

- 7.1 There are no significant variances this month.

Table 6: Resources Forecast Outturn

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	(72)	0
Revenues, Bens, Library & Res	5,078	4,170	(908)	(11)
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	31	0
HR, Corporate Projects, and IT	3,355	3,283	(72)	0
Corporate Management	(196)	591	787	10
Finance	1,615	1,546	(69)	19
Governance	2,368	2,299	(69)	0
Legal Services	1,025	833	(192)	0
Total Resources	13,023	12,459	(564)	18

Executive Director of Resources (forecast underspend of £0.072m)

- 7.2 The underspend is due to the Director post being vacant for the start of the year.

Revenues, Benefits, Library & Residents Services (forecast underspend of £0.908m)

- 7.3 The underspend is related to the release of earmarked reserves previously agreed by ELT (£0.799m). These reserves were mostly funded from New Burdens grants that related to previous years. There is also an underspend of £0.124m in Business Services and Registrars primarily due to vacancies and Court Cost income, and an overspend of £0.051m across library services.

Human Resources, Corporate Projects, and IT (forecast underspend of £0.072m)

- 7.4 The underspend is due to a number of smaller variances, most significantly savings on IT contracts (£0.065m).

Corporate Management (forecast overspend of £0.787m)

- 7.5 The pressure is caused by the additional external audit fees for 20/21 and the increase in the scale fee for 23/24 (£0.587m), and a saving in respect of a reduction in bad debt provision that is unlikely to be achieved.

Finance (forecast underspend of £0.069m)

- 7.6 Despite the pressures on agency staffing, finance is forecasting an underspend which is caused by increasing recharges to the Pension Fund and Propco to properly reflect the cost of providing this support, and vacancies in the Procurement Team. This may change as further interim resource is brought in at ahead of year-end.

Governance (forecast underspend of £0.069m)

- 7.7 The variance is made up of a number of smaller variances, most significant staff vacancies and member allowances budget not being used.

Legal Services (forecast underspend of £0.192m)

- 7.8 The forecast underspend is due to staff vacancies (£0.142m) including the case worker and an Executive Assistant post, and over achievement of income from legal fees (£0.050m).

8. SUNDRY DEBT

- 8.1 The current level of overdue sundry debt is £9.772m. On subsidiary systems there is also debt of £2.917m and £0.175m in relation to Housing Overpayments and Housing Rents respectively. This remains an area of high focus and actions being taken on this have been reported in previous Cabinet reports.

Table 7: Aged debt

	> 1 month	> 2 month	> 6 month	> 1 year	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Health					
Adult Social Care	171	759	670	2,759	4,359
Deferred Payments	23	146	114	540	822
Children's Services	6	1	19	6	32
Place					
Housing	43	4	3	1,325	1,374
Commercial property	193	129	555	130	1,007
Other Place	827	167	212	102	1,309
Resources	122	664	6	78	869
Total Agresso Debt	1,385	1,869	1,579	4,939	9,772

Subsidiary systems:

HB Overpayments	2,917
Housing Rents	175
Total overdue debt	12,864

Note: excludes CTAX and Business Rates payable to the Collection Fund

9. CAPITAL

- 9.1 The 2023/24 budget of £88.267m includes the capital programme of £35.338m and slippage of £52.929m from 2022/23 and prior years. All capital expenditure is under review to minimise external financing requirements and reduce spend where possible. The 2024-25 budget papers includes the estimated £43.011m of capital budget that will be slipped to future years though this is subject to further review. A final figure will be reported at year-end.

Table 8: Capital programme forecast outturn

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast slippage to 24/25 and later	Forecast variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000
ASC and Health	1,738	626	(899)	(213)
Children's Services	15,787	10,666	(5,121)	0
Place	68,243	27,834	(36,368)	(4,041)
Resources	3,774	2,000	(623)	(1,151)
Total	89,541	41,125	(43,011)	(5,405)

9.2 The following table details how this year's capital spend will be financed.

Table 9: Financing of the capital programme

	£000
Government Grants	15,585
Other Grants	275
Community Infrastructure Levy	12,116
Section 106	3,842
Capital Receipts	587
Borrowing	8,721
Total	41,125

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 In producing and reviewing this report the Council is meeting its legal obligations to monitor its financial position.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 Projected variances require mitigation to reduce them during the financial year.

12. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

12.1 Equalities. There are no direct impacts.

12.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no direct impacts.

12.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no direct impacts.

13. CONSULTATION

13.1 None.

14. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

14.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately.

15. APPENDICES

15.1 This report is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix A – Revenue monitoring statement
- Appendix B – Risk and assumptions
- Appendix C – Budget virements for Cabinet approval

16. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 16.1 This report is supported by one document, the budget report to [Council February 2023](#).

17. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>	
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	21/02/24	21/02/24
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	22/02/24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	21/02/24	
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	
Helena Stevenson	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	21/02/24	21/02/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	21/02/24	21/02/24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	21/02/24	21/02/24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	21/02/24	21/02/24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Julian McGowan, Senior Finance Business Partner

Service	Current budget	Forecast outturn	Forecast variance	Previously reported variance	Change from previously reported variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive Department					
Chief Executive	244	244	0	0	0
Strategy & Performance	769	755	(14)	(14)	0
TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE	1,013	999	(14)	(14)	0
Children's Services					
Director of Children's Services	(79)	(79)	0	0	0
Achieving for Children Contract	44,686	46,135	1,449	842	607
Children's Services - Retained	58,853	58,853	0	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant - Income	(75,701)	(75,701)	0	0	0
TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES	27,759	29,208	1,449	842	607
Adult Social Care and Health					
Executive Director and Commissioning	1,735	1,767	32	325	(293)
Adult Social Care	38,525	44,845	6,320	6,035	285
Better Care Fund - Spend	14,579	14,964	385	0	385
Better Care Fund - Income	(14,579)	(14,579)	0	0	0
Transformation and Community	170	153	(17)	0	(17)
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	0	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0	0
TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE and HEALTH	40,505	47,225	6,720	6,360	360
Resources					
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	(72)	(72)	0
Revenues, Benefits, Library & Resident Services	5,078	4,170	(908)	(897)	(11)
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	31	31	0
Human Resources, Corporate Projects & IT	3,355	3,283	(72)	(72)	0
Corporate Management	(196)	591	787	777	10
Finance	1,615	1,546	(69)	(88)	19
Governance	2,368	2,299	(69)	(69)	0
Legal services	1,025	833	(192)	(192)	0
TOTAL RESOURCES	13,023	12,459	(564)	(582)	18
Place					
Executive Director of Place	20	20	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	8,027	9,848	1,821	1,846	(25)
Planning Service	1,330	1,785	455	431	24
Housing, Environmental Services & Trading Standards	2,134	2,005	(129)	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0	0
Infrastructure, Sustainability & Transport	3,382	3,291	(91)	(91)	0
TOTAL PLACE	11,985	14,041	2,056	2,057	(1)
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE	94,285	103,932	9,647	8,663	984
Sources of funding and non-service expenditure					
Contingency and Corporate Budgets	2,934	846	(2,088)	(2,195)	107
Precepts and Levies	2,066	2,066	0	0	0
Financing and investment (income) and expenditure	5,180	4,329	(851)	(557)	(294)
Taxation and non-specific grant income	(110,629)	(110,629)	0	0	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	3,139	3,572	433	433	0
Transfer to / (from) earmarked reserves	(1,375)	(2,378)	(1,003)	(1,000)	(3)
Contribution to Pension Fund deficit	4,400	4,331	(69)	(69)	0
TOTAL FUNDING AND NON-SERVICE EXPENDITURE	(94,285)	(97,863)	(3,578)	(3,388)	(190)
(INCREASE) DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND	0	6,069	6,069	5,275	794

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Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
All	<p>FLOODING</p> <p>Costs in relation to recent flooding in the borough are expected. A central register is maintained of possible issues but it is too early to quantify accurately (i.e. impact of three car park closures in Windsor, contractor support in i.e. closing roads and cleansing, reallocate residents to nearby accommodation, council staff time, alternative adult social care provision when usual services unavailable, use of Windsor Leisure Centre etc).</p> <p>The government has announced support for households and businesses which the Council may be required to administer if the funding level is triggered. New Burdens grant may be receive to cover these costs.</p>	Unknown
Place	<p>TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>This is a volatile area and there are a number of pressures, both locally and nationally, which make this worth noting as a risk as we head into year end. The current risk is based on figures as at the end of Jan 24, where spend has been higher than average previous months.</p> <p>There also remains a significant amount of Housing legacy debt on Agresso which needs further investigation (Housing rents moved onto a new system, ARA, from June 2022).</p>	0.250
Place	<p>ASYLUM DISPERSAL GRANT</p> <p>This is a specific grant for the asylum hotels (£298,500). There is a plan in place to utilise this funding but the assumption is that the grant can be carried forward to 2024/25, clarification is being sought from government. There is a risk that costs exceed the level of the grant.</p>	Unknown
Place	<p>HOUSING ROUGH SLEEPER DISPERSAL GRANT</p> <p>The grant has been used to pay for Temporary Accommodation costs for rough sleepers, however this is not part of the program agreed with DLUC. As such further work is required to move these Temporary Accommodation costs to the General Fund and to confirm the extent other costs can be substituted in.</p>	0.400
Place	<p>PLANNING APPEAL</p> <p>Costs in relation to a planning decision compensation / costs are expected. £0.180m has been included in the forecast but this is an estimate and may increase by an additional estimated £0.350m in case the planning committee's decision is overruled.</p>	0.350
Place	<p>TREE MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Increase in re-active maintenance as a result of ongoing inspections by end of March 2024 have been included in the forecast. However, the higher end of this forecast indicated potential additional costs of £0.085m which are not in the forecast.</p>	0.085
Resources	<p>EXTERNAL AUDIT FEES</p> <p>Deloitte have requested to the local government audit regulator (Public Sector Audit Appointments) that they be allowed to charge additional fees of £0.400m in respect of the 2020/21 audit, which includes additional work responding to objections. This has been included in the forecast we are challenging the scale of these additional fees so there could be a benefit if that was accepted.</p>	Unknown
Resources	<p>BAD DEBT PROVISION (excluding Adults& Health / legacy Housing Debt pre ARA)</p> <p>A saving of £0.190m was included in the 2023/24 budget in respect of reducing the bad debt provision (though the saving relates to Place as well, it has been recorded in Resources for simplicity). However, it is looking unlikely that this target will be achieved and there will be a cost from a requirement to increase the bad debt provision. Bad debt provisions are volatile depending on the timing of large invoices, but there is a risk that the requirement for an increase in the provision will be significant. The current forecast assumes the saving will not be met, but there will be no increase in bad debt provision.</p> <p>There are however some unreconciled credits on Agresso of approximately £0.360m which may mitigate the pressure.</p>	Unknown
Resources	<p>HOUSING BENEFITS</p> <p>The Housing Benefit position is complicated and we are not in a position to reliably forecast this until several year-end procedures are complete, including completion of the subsidy claim and calculation of the bad debt provision. However, the recovery rate on overpayments has dropped which is likely to have a negative impact.</p>	Unknown
Children's	<p>HEALTH FUNDING</p> <p>The budget assumes health funding for four placement of young people, totalling £0.668m. However, there is a risk that health will not fund part or all of these costs.</p>	0.668

Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p>DATA QUALITY OF INFORMATION TO BASE ADULT SOCIAL CARE FORECASTS ON</p> <p>The lack of a care system that integrates with the ledger and automates processes results in significant concerns over the quality of data used to inform forecasting in Adult Social Care. Finance are reliant on the service to update manual spreadsheets of care packages, but there are significant differences between what is currently on the spreadsheets and the commitments recorded on the care system. This could be that the care system is not up to date, but each case needs to be followed up individually. As an example, in Mental Health there are £1.288m of care costs recorded on finance spreadsheets that are not recorded on the care system.</p> <p>There are also delays in notifying finance of new care package changes, some of which have been backdated to pre-1 April. So far prior year costs not accrued have been identified that total £0.194m. As an example, we have been made aware of services in October 2023 that backdate to December 2022.</p>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p>INCOME FORECASTING</p> <p>Client income is proving difficult to forecast and there remains a risk of significant variations in forecast in the final months leading up to year-end. This is due to the invoicing of clients being a manual process and therefore requiring complex manual spreadsheets to monitor, exacerbated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - frequent backdating of financial assessments, for example due to delays at Court of Protection granting deputyship; - data quality issues (see data quality above) meaning finance may not be aware of the care package and the associated assessed client contribution; - learning disability clients who finance have recorded as having to make a contribution (including CHC) but have not been invoiced; - s117 clients where it may be that the ICB should be meeting costs. 	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p>RAISING OF INCOME</p> <p>Unlike with other departments, the finance team have to raise invoices for income from funding bodies (e.g. the ICB, other Councils). This is due to historic practice and also the budgets are on the RBWM ledger but the budget holders sit in Optalis. As accountants are raising the invoices, they are also having to take on the role of chasing this debt. The finance team are concerned over the completeness of records and the extent the service take ownership of this debt. Historic spreadsheets suggest there could be unclaimed income, but there appears to be no master list and finance have been requested to contact the ICB to resolve.</p>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p>PROVISION FOR SOCIAL CARE COSTS</p> <p>At the end of 2022/23 we provided £314k for a Continuing Health Care case for which health have offered to pay 35% (£0.103m). We are still disputing this but if the 35% was accepted would allow us to release part of the provision.</p>	(0.103)
Adults & Health	<p>FUNDED NURSING CARE (FNC)</p> <p>FNC is a contribution from health to nursing residential placements. The Council pays care providers the FNC as part of its nursing block fees and then reclaims it from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Council is projected to pay £0.250m more FNC than it receives. However, because claims will only be backdated for 28 days the FNC received may be circa £35k for 23-24.</p> <p>Finance had recently reviewed FNC and identified FNC not paid to RBWM as far back as 2021. The ICB have agreed to pay £0.052m, the full amount identified by finance.</p>	(0.250)
Adults & Health	<p>ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES</p> <p>The ICB limited the uplift it will fund in 2023/24 to 1.8% so they are not paying the published fees and charges for Council / Optalis provided care services. The Director of Adults & Health is challenging this decision.</p>	(0.060)
Adults & Health	<p>BAD DEBT PROVISION (ADULTS AND HEALTH)</p> <p>Although there is a project underway concerning the large amount of old debt in Adult Social Care, it is looking increasingly unlikely that any improvement will be realised in the year. The budget contains a bad debt saving of £0.350m which may not materialise in 2023/24. In addition the current bad debt provision is projected to increase by £0.522m. This makes a total projected overspend of £0.872m by March 2024. £0.524m is in the forecast. It should be noted that the current project chasing debt over 1 year old has shown some early success, with £0.090m of legacy debt paid following sending of standard letters.</p>	0.348
Adults & Health	<p>PUBLIC HEALTH REPLACEMENT SPEND</p> <p>The budget assumes Public Health funding of £0.190m will be received for preventative services (day care and supported employment). However, the Public Health team have previously indicated that such funding is predicated and a more substantive case being made. The forecast assumes Public Health will continue to provide this funding.</p>	0.190

Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p>SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON S117 AFTERCARE</p> <p>In 2023 the Supreme Court ruled on determining responsibility for aftercare when people are placed out of area and then detained again under the Mental Health Act 1983. This impacts on which local authority has responsibility for aftercare , (including funding) for a person detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act. The ruling represents a change in the law resulting in £1m risk to RBWM arising from specific circumstances.</p>	1.000
Adults & Health	<p>ADULT SOCIAL CARE JOINT LEGAL TEAM COSTS</p> <p>No invoices have been received yet for legal costs in 2023/24, yet we have just been advised that costs of £0.185m are to be levied for the first 10 months. This is £0.060m more than the full year budget, and if costs continue at current rate this will rise to £0.083m.</p>	0.083

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REVENUE BUDGET VIREMENTS

Where revenue budget virements exceed £0.100m, or £0.025m when funds move between departments, the Council Constitution requires Cabinet sign off. The virements up to the end of Month 10 that required Cabinet sign off are set out below, along with an explanation as their purpose.

Budget line	Debit £m	Credit £m	Explanation
Adults & Health – Adult Social Care	0.252		Use of earmarked reserves – COMF funding
Adults & Health – Public Health	0.075		Use of earmarked reserves – COMF funding
Resources – Revenues and Benefits	0.689		Use of earmarked reserves - New Burden grants
Place - Housing	0.117		Use of earmarked reserves – Housing grants
Funding from reserves		(1,133)	Use of earmarked reserves to support the current financial position, agreed by Executive Leadership Team. These reserves are legacy grants and not earmarked for future use.
Adults & Health – Executive Director	0.123		Transfer of budget between Optalis and the council to reflect insourcing of senior Assistant Director posts (part year)
Adults & Health – Adult Social Care		(0.123)	As above
Adults & Health – Executive Director	0.049		Further increases in the Coroners Joint Arrangement (hosted by Reading council) which will be funded from the contingency budget as the service has little control over it.
Contingency		(0.049)	As above

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Report Title:	Achieving for Children (AfC) Reserved Ownership Decisions
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Tisi, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Lin Ferguson, Executive Director of Children's Services
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead owns 20% of Achieving for Children Community Interest Company (AfC) and is responsible for making reserved matter ownership decisions in relation to the strategic direction of the company jointly with the two other council owners. This report seeks approval of the following reserved matters:

- Approval of the organisation's strategic direction through the adoption of the new Strategic Plan
- Approval of the Company's budget for 2024/25 including Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Approval of the Company's arrangements for managing cash flow through the adoption of the Treasury Plan for 2024/25

In developing these proposals AfC has engaged with relevant council officers and members. The budget for Windsor and Maidenhead based AfC services mirrors the budget proposed as part of the Local Authority's budget approval process.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and approves:

- i) the new AfC Strategic Plan (appendix A)
- ii) the detailed 2024/25 budget (appendix B) including Medium Term Financial Strategy (appendix C)
- iii) the Treasury Plan (appendix D)

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a joint owner of Achieving for Children Community Interest Company (AfC). The Royal Borough owns a 20% share of the company together with Kingston and Richmond who each own 40%. AfC was set up by Richmond and Kingston in 2014 to deliver children's services on behalf of the owning boroughs and Windsor and Maidenhead joined in 2017 as a third council owner. The three council owners retain significant control over AfC and as such are responsible for making a number of joint key reserved matter decisions.
- 2.2 The Cabinet has a key role in the oversight and decision making for AfC. The detailed responsibilities are outlined in a previous report to Cabinet:

2.3 This report seeks approval of the following matters that are reserved to the Local Authority as a jointly owner of AfC:

- Approval of the organisation’s strategic direction through the adoption of the new Strategic Plan;
- Approval of the Company’s budget for 2024/25 including Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Approval of the Company’s arrangements for managing cash flow through the adoption of the Financial Plan (known as the Treasury Plan) for 2024/25;

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
The Cabinet approves the Strategic Plan, AfC budget including Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Plan This is the recommended option	This will ensure that AfC has agreed strategic objectives, agreed budget and Treasury Plan.
The Cabinet does not approve the Strategic Plan, AfC budget including Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Plan	If this option is chosen AfC will move into the new year without agreed strategic objectives or an agreed budget and Treasury Plan. An emergency Ownership Board would be arranged to discuss and agree to an alternative plan put forward by the Local Authority.
The Cabinet approves the Strategic Plan, AfC budget including Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Plan with a number of requested changes which will be subject to mutual approval of the other two owning boroughs.	If this option is chosen AfC will discuss the suggested changes with the other owning councils and seek virtual agreement to support strategic direction and budget clarity as soon as possible. It is recommended that Cabinet delegates final sign off to the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the lead member for Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Windsor to support a timely final decision.

3. Reserved Matter Decision One: Approval of strategic direction via the new *Achieving More for Children Strategic Plan*

3.1 Cabinet last approved the existing five year Business Plan in February 2023. This plan comes to an end in March 2024 and AfC has developed a new plan, in consultation with stakeholders, for the period April 2024 - March 2029. There are a number of sections to the Plan which can be used individually for different audiences and different purposes:

- **Children and Young People’s version** - This summarised version is written to the child /

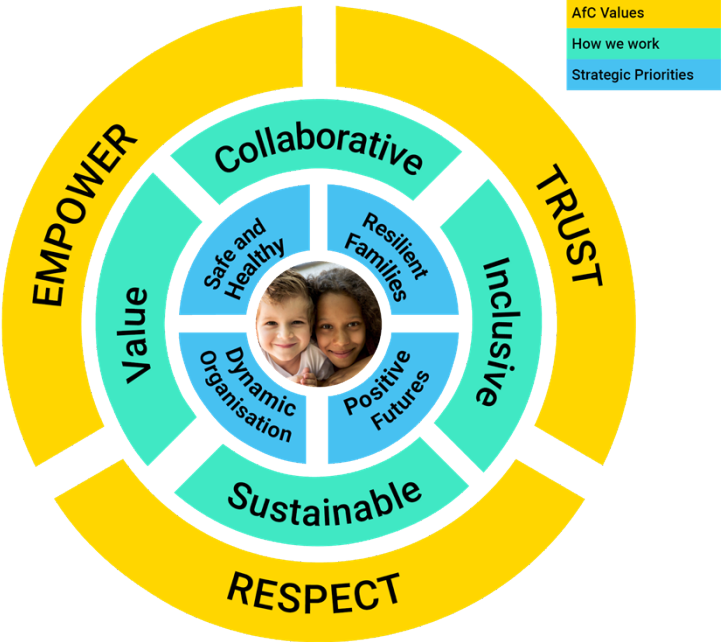
young person and contains a high level summary of our commitment to young people and how this feeds through to our strategic priorities, ways of working and behavioural values.

- **Strategic Priorities** - This section is aimed at explaining AfC's strategic priorities and values to practitioners and partners who work with us to support children and young people.
 - **Priority Programmes** - This section outlines planned priority programmes for the coming five years that will support AfC to achieve its strategic priorities.
 - **Who We Are** - This section explains who AfC are as an organisation, including what services AfC delivers, and how we work with children, young people and families. It is aimed at professionals and partners who are interested in working with, or learning more about, AfC.
- 3.2 The new Plan has been developed with significant reference to Richmond, Kingston and Windsor and Maidenhead strategic plans as well as engagement with stakeholders. Engagement activity has included:
- Joint workshop with the AfC Board and children and young people
 - Young People invitation to comment
 - AfC leadership and AfC Board development sessions
 - Staff and partner invitation to comment
 - Meetings with the AfC Ownership Board, which includes representative councillors from each of AfCs owning local authorities, Chief Executives and Contract Commissioners
- 3.3 The AfC Board considered and approved the Strategic Plan in January 2024 and is recommending that each of the owning councils now formally sign off the strategic direction and associated plans. Once approved by Richmond, Kingston and Windsor and Maidenhead the Plan will be launched in April 2024.

Strategic Plan - Achieving *More For Children*

- 3.4 The updated **Strategic Plan** (page 1 - 7) is attached at **appendix A**. Since the creation of Achieving for Children in 2014, our objective has been to support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes and this drives everything that we do. We want children and young people to have the best start in life and to live safe and fulfilled lives.
- 3.5 The AfC Strategic Plan aligns well with the new RBWM Council Plan 2024 – 2028 which is due to be launched in April this year. The new RBWM Council Plan contains 5 strategic aims, one of which is that children have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood. There are a number of key deliverables set out in the RBWM Council Plan which will help us to achieve this aim, together with a set of performance indicators against which success will be measured.
- 3.6 The AfC Strategic Plan summarises our strategy and ways of working as follows:

Diagram 1: Strategic Plan



3.6 The new strategy outlines four strategic priorities that will shape what we do over the coming years:

- **Safe and healthy-** Supporting children and families to live safe and healthy lives.
- **Positive futures-** Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally.
- **Stronger families-** Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.
- **Dynamic workforce-** Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

3.7 The strategy moves on to define four working principles as follows:

- **Inclusive** - Embracing inclusion and diversity is not just a checkbox exercise for us: it's a conscious effort to create an inclusive space that celebrates differences, promotes innovation and empowers people to reach their full potential.
- **Sustainable** - We are committed to ensuring that we are proactive in minimising the environmental footprint of our own activities, to promote a sustainable environment for future generations to enjoy.
- **Value for Money** - We will maximise the impact of the money and resources we have by being transparent about what money is available, how it is being spent and regularly review whether it is aligned to our priorities.
- **Collaborative** - We will support and promote strong, effective and respectful partnership

working, not only with other agencies such as schools, the police, health, adult social care, the voluntary sector, but also with our children, young people and families.

3.8 AfC launched three behavioural values in 2019. The values of Trust, Empower and Respect are well embedded into all our policies and processes and are still relevant so they have not been changed. AfC's values align well with RBWM's recently refreshed and re-launched values of Humility, Empowerment, Respect, One Team (HERO) which creates clear synergies between the two organisations and provides a strong platform continued shared working. We have included a more detailed definition in the strategy of what they mean for how AfC colleagues will work with young people and families, with each other and with partners.

3.9 The **Priority Programme Plan (page 8 - 22)** details programmes of work that align to the priorities and that will support AfC to support young people to achieve their best outcomes. The Plan notes which programmes will apply to all three AfC boroughs and which are specific to RBWM.

3.10 The programmes will be reviewed each year to ensure they remain relevant and progress will be monitored and reported through a narrative and KPI dashboard. Progress will be monitored and reported via the AfC Leadership Team, Contract Commissioners and the AfC Ownership Board.

4. Reserved Matter Decision Two: Approval of the AfC Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.1 The approval of the AfC budget is a reserved matter decision and provides the three owning councils with a significant amount of control over AfC's finances. **Appendix B** to this report contains a copy of the AfC Budget Report which was considered and approved by the AfC Board in January 2024, subject to final approval by AfCs three owning councils.

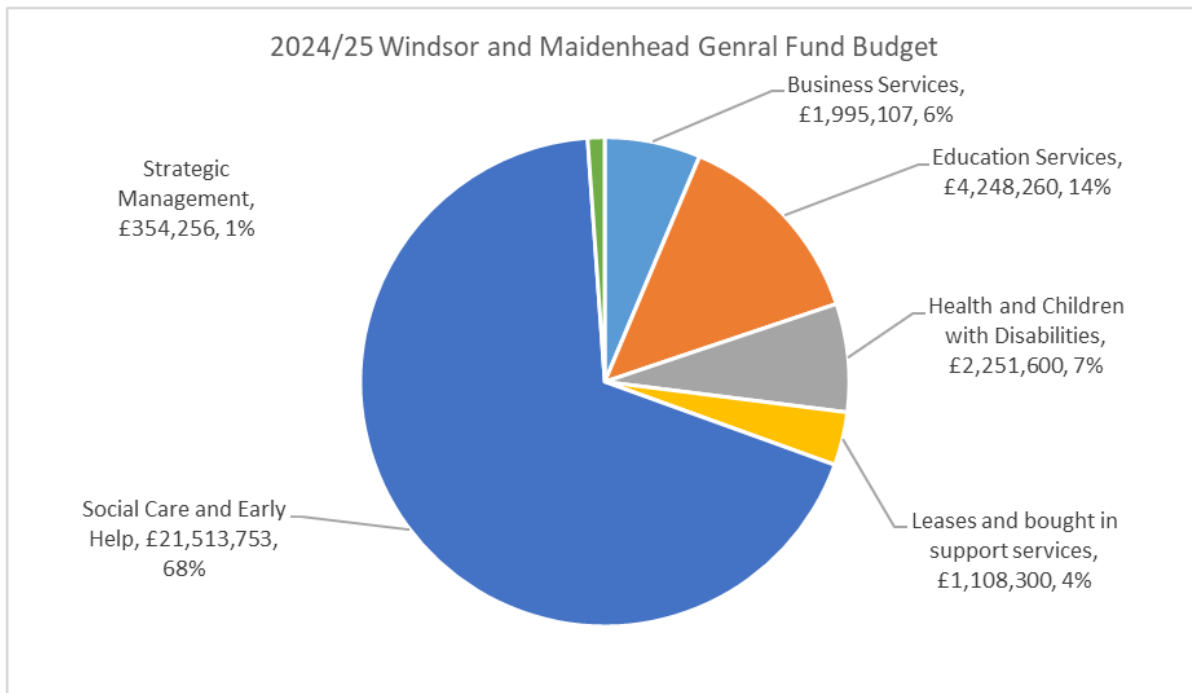
4.2 AfC fully engages in Windsor and Maidenhead's budget setting process each year and the proposals outlined that relate to Windsor and Maidenhead mirror the proposals outlined for children's services in the council's own budget paper. This is also the case for Kingston and Richmond.

4.3 A net revenue operating budget of £209,573,065 is proposed for AfC in 2024/25 as follows:

table 2: AfC Budget

Contract Prices	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
	£	£	£	£
General Fund	54,570,600	50,161,000	31,471,275	136,202,875
Dedicated Schools Grant	29,990,300	27,656,000	15,723,890	73,370,190
TOTAL	84,560,900	77,817,000	47,195,165	209,573,065

4.4 The budget report contains more detail about how these base contract prices have been estimated. The Windsor and Maidenhead elements are planned to be spent as follows:



4.5 The provisional Dedicated Schools Grant allocations were released for all three boroughs on the 19th December 2023. AfC is responsible for administering the Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) but the income and expenditure forms part of each councils' retained budget. Some DSG funding is used to pay for services that are delivered by AfC on behalf of each council and this is the amount included in the pie chart above. The detail of how the Dedicated Schools Grant will be spent is available as part of each Council's detailed budget setting papers and is not repeated here. The Windsor and Maidenhead paper was presented to Cabinet in February. The DSG amount within the AfC contract price above relates to high needs and central education funding that either funds teams or support that is commissioned by AfC staff (e.g. Admissions Team, Early Years Advisory Team, high needs education placements). The DSG not included in the contract price relates to amounts that are passported to education providers in accordance with a pre-determined formula.

4.6 A Medium Term Financial Strategy is also presented at appendix C. The 2024 strategy will continue to focus on achieving financial sustainability in the context of escalating financial pressure in the specific delivery of children's and education services as well as in Local Government generally. The organisation will be following three overarching principles:

- Delivery of value for money services that are low cost and high outcome;
- Maximise resources available to front line services;
- Shared budget responsibility.

4.7 The strategy prioritises ensuring services are affordable as follows:

- Ensure there is a mutual understanding of what is affordable for each local authority in terms of funding and quality of services;
- Achieving value for money;
- Achieving challenging cost reduction targets;
- Generating income to support services;
- Ensuring available funding is directed at priority areas;
- Ensuring that the financial interest of each owner is safeguarded;
- Planning for financial sustainability over a medium to longer term period.

- 4.8 The strategy recognises that the cost of AfC’s children’s services benchmark well but that there is still an affordability gap for services and areas for further development particularly in relation to SEND and social care. The next couple of years will be hugely challenging and the strategy draws out a number of themes and activities from the Strategic Plan that will be a key focus to achieve sustainability.
- 4.9 The Cabinet is asked to approve the AfC 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as part of the Council’s role as joint owner of AfC. A detailed budget report is included in appendix B and the MTFS is attached as appendix C.

5. Reserved Matter Decision Three: Treasury Plan

- 5.1 The approval of the Treasury Plan for AfC is a reserved decision for AfCs three owning councils. The plan is approved annually and when events require a review. It was last approved in February 2023.
- 5.2 The Treasury Plan outlines how AfC is permitted to borrow and invest for cashflow purposes in the coming year. The Plan also provides assurances to the councils around the procedures in place for banking and treasury management in AfC and for monitoring by the Local Authorities.
- 5.3 The treasury management and banking functions in AfC are overseen by the Chief Operating & Finance Officer and carried out by suitably experienced staff with appropriate training. Treasury transactions are undertaken on the basis of formal proposals and authorisations requiring at least two members of staff and following the current treasury procedures and policies of the Company. Physical transactions are carried out using a secure internet banking system. AfC plans and reviews its treasury activities on a regular basis and longer term plans are reviewed at least annually in line with AfC’s business planning process.
- 5.4 The Local Authorities monitor AfC’s borrowing through the formal borrowing and repayment requests and they have access to all AfC’s financial records on request. Banking institutions used by AfC to hold money are approved by the three Local Authorities. Proposed changes to the Treasury Plan are agreed at officer level prior to reporting to the Cabinet. AfC will take advice from Local Authority officers on all aspects of its treasury management function and will comply with any instruction or direction from the councils, acting jointly, with regard to its treasury activities and investments.
- 5.5 The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the 2024/25 Treasury Plan outlined in **appendix D**.

Table 3: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
AfC is strategically aligned to the council’s priorities for children’s services	Inadequate progress made against key priorities	Progress made on all key priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan	Progress made on all key priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan including priorities outlined for future years	Progress made on all key priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan including priorities outlined for future years	31st March 2029
AfC delivers services within the agreed budget envelope	Overspend	Nil overspend	Underspend or reinvested surplus	Underspend or reinvested surplus	31st March 2025

AfC borrows and invests in a way that is acceptable to the Council	Losses due to inconsistent treasury management	No treasury management losses	No treasury management losses	No treasury management losses	31st March 2025
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6. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 6.1 The detailed financial implications are outlined in the report and associated appendices. AfC has worked with Local Authority officers to reach a proposed 2024/25 budget and the budget detailed in this report is also reflected in the Council's draft budget proposal. It is clear that there will continue to be significant financial pressures in relation to children's services moving into 2024/25 and it is important that the Council continues to gain assurance on what AfC is doing to proactively manage those pressures.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 With regards to the recommendations concerning approving the Strategic Plan, the detailed 2024/25 budget and the Treasury Plan these are band 3 Reserved Matters which require approval of the Cabinet.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The specific risks are outlined in the various appendices to this report and the three key risks are highlighted in table four.

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Risk that the strategic direction of AfC becomes misaligned with that of its three owning councils	Medium	The approval of the strategic direction and budget for AfC is a decision reserved for the three owning councils. This governance approach provides the three councils with a mechanism to directly control AfC's strategic direction. In putting the various strategies and plans together AfC has engaged with the Ownership Board which includes representation from all three councils as well as the council's commissioners and a number of other key council officers. The AfC Board also consists of two representatives from each council who are responsible for representing the views of the council in strategic decision making	Low

Risk that the cost of delivering services exceeds budget	High	AfC has well established systems to ensure that financial or demand led pressure in one local authority area does not adversely impact on other AfC boroughs. There are plans detailed in the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy that support the development of delivery models, placement sufficiency and commissioning strategies to improve AfC's ability to drive value for money and control costs. The biggest risk to the budget position next year relates to inflation in relation to the pricing and complexity of placement budgets. Inflationary impact will be carefully monitored and whenever possible mitigated. The overall budget is monitored on a monthly basis and where needed mitigating actions are discussed within AfC and with the councils to reduce the scope for overspends and reach a mutually agreed position.	Medium
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9. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 9.1 AfC produces an Annual Equalities Report which is published on its website and sets out actions to address any inequalities identified. The AfC ED&I Board has recently updated the AfC Action Plan, in consultation with staff, and this will be launched in the new financial year to drive improvement over the coming two years and beyond. Equalities Assessments are completed in the planning stages for all key programmes and publicly available at the following link: <https://www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/about-us/reports-and-documents>
- 9.2 The updated Strategic Plan (page 6) includes a specific commitment to working in an environmentally sustainable way and working towards carbon neutrality by 2030.
- 9.3 AfC completes data protection impact assessments for all significant programmes of work that could have data protection implications. AfC has a qualified Data Protection Officer who oversees compliance against GDPR.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 In putting together the Strategic Plan, AfC has consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including young people, families, partners, the councils and AfC staff. AfC and the Local Authority will work together to consult on specific proposals in the Strategic Plan and budget as required as part of the implementation plans for each project or change.

11. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 11.1 The Cabinet will receive further updates on Reserved Matter decisions over the course of the year including progress against the plans outlined in this report. The next planned items are:

- September - AfC Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
- September - AfC Annual Impact Report

11.2 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is approving the reserved matters in this report jointly with the Royal Borough of Kingston and the London Borough of Richmond. All three councils will be meeting to consider and approve the reserved matters with implementation of the revised documents from 1st April 2024. The full implementation stages are set out below.

Table 5: Key dates

Date	Details
29 January 2024	AfC Board
22 February 2024	Richmond Education and Children's Committee
12 March 2024	Kingston People Committee
27 March 2024	Windsor and Maidenhead Cabinet
1st April 2024	Implementation

12. APPENDICES

12.1 This report is supported by **five** appendices:

- Appendix A1 - Strategic Plan, Achieving *More* for Children (Young people version)
- Appendix A2 - Strategic Plan, Achieving *More* for Children (Professionals version)
- Appendix B - 2023/24 Budget
- Appendix C - Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Appendix D - Treasury Plan

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

13.1 This report is supported by two background documents:

- AfC Reserved Matter Decisions
<https://rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s45552/Item%208%20Reserved%200Ownership%20Decisions%20Covering%20Report.pdf>
- AfC Governance Review
https://rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29683/Governance%20proposed%20next%20steps%20January%202020_240220.pdf

14. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>			
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	14/2/24	18/3/24
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	14/2/24	22/2/24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	14/2/24	

Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	14/2/24	
Helena Stevenson	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	14/2/24	
<i>Mandatory: Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>			
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	14/2/24	
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	14/2/24	
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	14/2/24	21/2/24
<i>Mandatory: Assistant Director HR – to advise if report has potential staffing or workforce implications</i>			
Nikki Craig	Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT	14/2/24	22/2/24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	14/2/24	21/2/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	14/2/24	
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	13/2/24	14/2/24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Windsor	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: 26/01/24	No	No

Report Author: Lucy Kourpas, Achieving for Children, Chief Operating and Finance Officer
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Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	AfC Strategic Plan, Budget, Treasury Plan
Service area:	Childrens Services
Directorate:	Childrens Services

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

This report sets out the new five year Strategic Plan, 2024/25 budget and 2024/25 Treasury Plan. All the proposals in the plans aim to support children and young people to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives. The plan will be delivered by Achieving for Children in partnership with the RBWM council as well as partners. Although the Strategic Plan is a new plan the intended outcome and aspirations for children and young people have remained consistent from the previous plan. The budget has become more challenging and EQIAs have been undertaken for key programmes of work.

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

The activities and priorities outlined in this report will impact on children, young people and families. Individual EQUAs will be undertaken for specific programmes of work as it is important the impact of each project / activity is considered so that the detail does not become lost in a generic assessment.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal? For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff
Children, young people, families.
Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented? For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?
Too early – see individual EQIAs
What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?• Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?
Too early – see individual EQIAs
What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment? Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.
Too early – see individual EQIAs

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Disability	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Sex	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Race, ethnicity and religion	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Pregnancy and maternity	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Marriage and civil partnership	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Armed forces community	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	Too early – see individual EQIAs		
Children in care/Care leavers	Too early – see individual EQIAs		

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

<p>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>Too early – see individual EQIAs</p>
<p>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
<p>Too early – see individual EQIAs</p>
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future? See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.</p>
<p>Too early – see individual EQIAs</p>

6. Sign Off

<p>Completed by: Lucy Kourpas</p>	<p>Date: 26/2/24</p>
<p>Approved by:</p>	<p>Date:</p>

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

<p>Reviewed by:</p>	<p>Date:</p>
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Achieving more for Children

Positive Futures



Supporting you to live, learn and thrive locally

- We will make sure you have good, safe places to live, if you cannot live within your birth family.
- We will work with schools, nurseries, colleges and local businesses to make sure you have a good choice of places to learn, near where you live. We will work with our schools to make sure that all children are included, and have the support they need to learn and grow.
- We will ask you what you want to do in the future and help you make a plan to achieve your goals.
- We will work in your local community to make sure that you have the opportunities you need to achieve your life goals. This might include making sure you can train in things that you are interested in and can work in jobs that you enjoy.
- We will help you to develop the skills you will need to live independently when you are ready.

Stronger Families



Supporting families to develop resilience and independence

- We will have welcoming family hubs and/or youth centres that will give you and your family information and help when you need it.
- We will work with you and your family to understand what is working well and help your family change things, when needed, to make sure you are safe and happy.
- We will make sure that we have ways for you to tell us how you are feeling. We will listen and learn from what you say to improve how we help you and other young people.



Safe and Healthy

Supporting you to be safe from harm and where you need it, get help with your physical or mental health



- We will listen to what you tell us you are worried about and what makes you happy. If needed, we will take steps to keep you safe.
- We will listen to what is working well for you and help you find solutions to your problems.
- We will work together to give you help with your mental health and wellbeing and tell everyone who works with you how important it is.



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for children

How we work



Value for money

We will not waste money and will make sure that we spend the money we have on things that will improve children's lives.



Inclusive

We will work to make sure that you feel included and can get the help you need to be happy and achieve your goals.



Sustainable

We will work in a way that does not damage our planet and ask people we work with to do the same.

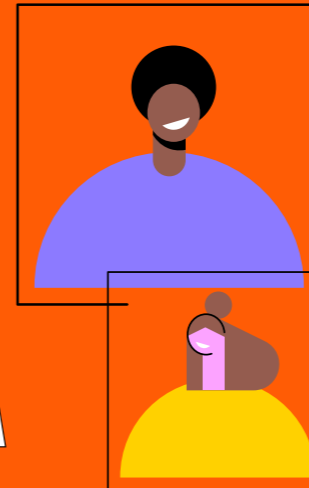
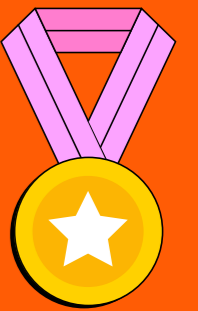


Collaborative

We will work with you, and with others, to make sure that what you say makes a difference.



How we will know if we have made a difference



- Young people feel that they are able to speak up and that what they say makes a difference.
- Families and children know where to get help or advice, and go on to improve things, so that they can live happily and safely together.
- More children who cannot live with their birth family are living in homes in their local communities.
- More children and young people with additional needs are going to nursery, school or college in their local communities rather than far away.
- Children and young people are getting the health support they need, when they need it.
- More young people that we work with are going on to find jobs or continue learning.

Our values ★★★★★

Trust



We tell you the truth so that you understand our worries, the things that are working well and what happens next.

Empower

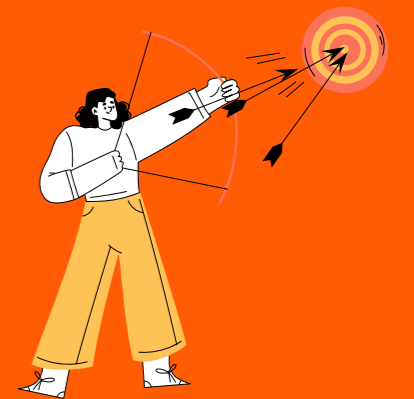
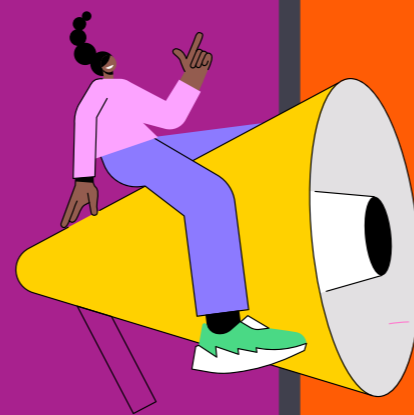


We take time to help you understand what you are good at and encourage you to find your own answers and achieve your goals.

Respect



We listen to you and take into account your wishes and feelings.



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for children**



Achieving **more** for Children

Strategic Plan

2024-2029

67



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Let's start at the beginning

Since the creation of Achieving for Children (AfC) in 2014, our objective has been to support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes and this drives everything that we do. We want children and young people to have the best start in life and to live safe and fulfilled lives.

We are owned by and commissioned to deliver children's services across three local authorities: the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK), the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBR), and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

We deliver services to more than 120,000 children and young people aged 0 to 25, including early help, social care, education, health, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and youth services, including youth offending.

We are an organisation of over 1,400 employees. We employ colleagues across a wide variety of professions, including social work, teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychology. Our support services work alongside our frontline teams and specialise in finance, IT and data, communications, commissioning, programme management and human resources.

We are a multi-disciplined organisation of talented professionals who are focused on working together, and with partners, to provide the best possible support to children, young people and their families.



Setting the scene

We aim to offer a mix of universal, targeted and statutory services that support and enrich the lives of children and young people who live and learn in our boroughs.

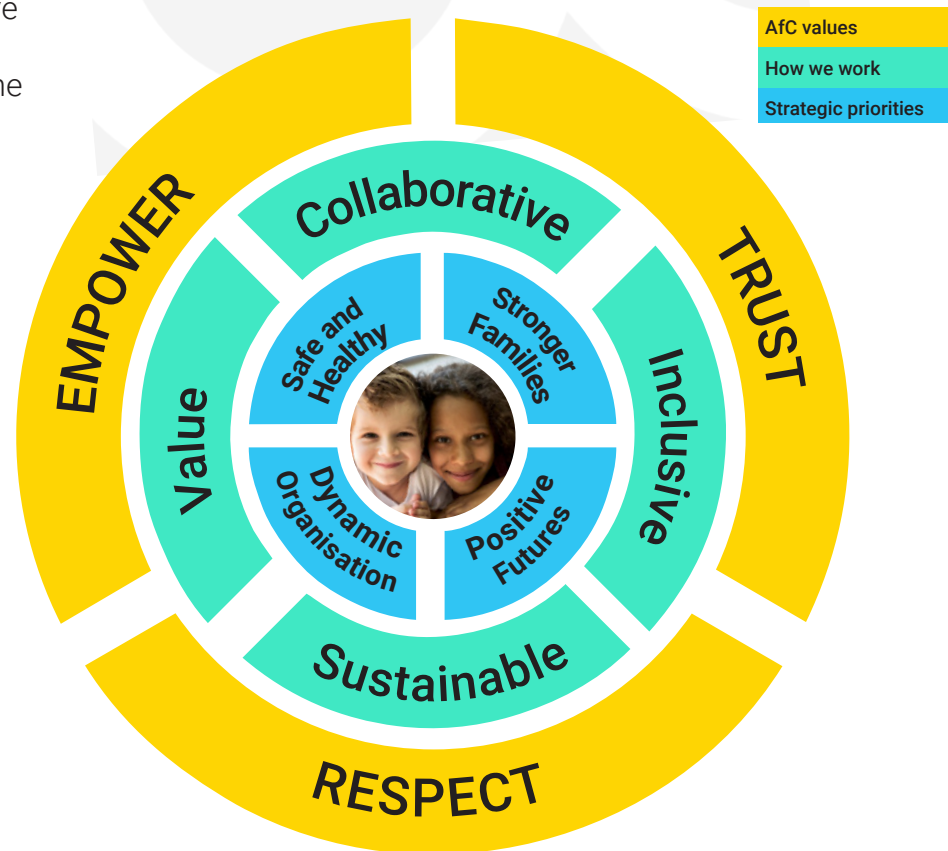
We regularly review our service offer to make sure that we are aligning the resources we have with what we know young people, families and partners want and need.

Planning our services has become more difficult in recent years, as money to fund essential children’s services has become tighter. At the same time more children, young people and their families need our support. The complexity of their needs and the type of support they require is also changing.

Our Strategic Plan will shape how we work and prioritise resources over the next five years. In developing the plan and our strategic priorities, we have reflected on what we know about our communities, and what has worked well or not so well during the term of our previous plan. We have sought feedback from children, young people, parents, carers and the different professionals working within and alongside AfC, as well as from the three local authorities that own and commission us to deliver children’s services.

Our strategy includes three interconnecting components:

Strategic priorities:	These four priorities will set out the main themes of what we do and how we seek to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in our boroughs
Principles for how we work:	These four principles will guide how we approach and plan our work
AfC behavioural values:	These three values will shape how we interact with each other, services users and partners



Our strategic priorities

Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

Supporting young people to be safe and healthy is at the core of what we do. Our aspiration is that every child in our boroughs is supported to be safe, happy and access the care that they need, when they need it.

Working with partners, we will seek to facilitate a joined-up local offer that identifies needs early. We will support young people and families to help avoid their needs escalating, where possible, and will encourage partners to do the same.

We will champion the safety and wellbeing of children, nurture safe and caring family environments and, where needed, step in to support the safety and wellbeing of children living in our boroughs.

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“The children’s centre is without doubt our happy place. Thank you for being my safe space. Thank you for being a safe, stable, strong place for my children.”

Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

Our aspiration is to have good quality and inclusive provision so that children and young people can live, learn and access the support they need locally. We want the majority of young people to be able to stay within their home community and close to established and familiar support networks.

We will invest in services, and work with partners, to support young people to prepare for adulthood, and work with our councils to ensure that our boroughs are places where young people have opportunities to go on to become successful adults.

We will continuously evaluate what provision is needed locally and work with partners to build a strong and attractive local offer. This will include education, employment, social care and health services.

“Excellent support from AfC organising work experience and discussing post-16 career options with my daughter.”

Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will work to equip families and young people with the tools, skills, knowledge and confidence they need to navigate challenges and lead independent and fulfilled lives at all ages and into adulthood.

Our services will consistently use reflective, collaborative and strengths-based approaches to work with the whole family. We will work with families to build on what works well in their lives, so that parents are able to make positive and lasting changes to the care they provide to their children.

"I feel prepared to be an adult and move into the next phase of my life."

"You have consistently supported my children and me. You have always made allocations and allowances for us, and you have done this with so much patience and understanding and respect."

72 Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We want AfC to be an adaptable, inspiring and inclusive organisation that is able to meet the changing needs of the children, young people and families living in our boroughs.

We will create an efficient and supportive work environment, underpinned by a stable and talented workforce, where teams have the support, technology and equipment they need to make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.

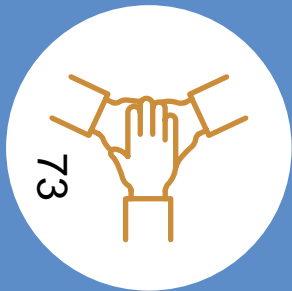
"We need a support system that is not just limited to appointments - we can't put a time on when we will have a panic attack or a breakdown. A support system that cares."

How we work

In our approach to every aspect of our work, we will demonstrate four essential qualities:

Collaborative ~ Sustainable ~ Value for money ~ Inclusive

These qualities serve as our guiding principles, influencing how we work and make decisions.



Collaborative

Relationships, collaboration and partnership working are essential to our success as an organisation. We recognise the positive impact on the experience of children, young people and their families when we work

alongside them and join up our services with the other organisations that support them. We will support and promote strong, effective and respectful partnership working, not only with other agencies such as schools, the police, health, adult social care, the voluntary sector, but also with our children, young people and families.

It is our responsibility, when working collaboratively with other organisations, to respectfully hold them to account for their role in ensuring that decisions made are in the best interests of children and young people. We will champion the voices of children, young people and families in all forums.



Value for money

We will maximise the impact of the money and resources we have by being transparent about what money is available, how it is being spent and regularly review whether it is aligned to our priorities. We will seek to maximise the amount of money that is spent directly on supporting children and young people and ensure that spending decisions reflect the best use of funds.

We will agree budgets with our local authorities and take all reasonable steps to implement solutions that support the delivery of services within affordable financial envelopes. We will benchmark against comparable organisations and be open to developing ever more efficient delivery models based on best practice.

We will seek to maximise the amount of funding available to support children's services by seeking out income generation opportunities and by working collaboratively with partners to pool budgets.



Sustainable

As an organisation that works with children and young people every day, we feel that we have an important role to play in raising awareness of environmental issues, as well as leading by example in the way we deliver and commission services. We are committed

to ensuring that we are proactive in minimising the environmental footprint of our own activities, to promote a sustainable environment for future generations to enjoy.

Our commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 reflects a shared conviction with many of the young people we work with and with our owning councils.

We will embed environmental considerations into our policies, practice and commissioning intentions and proactively support the voice of children and young people in this area.



Inclusive

We will continue to develop and invest in a culture where everyone feels valued and included. Our commitment to inclusion ensures that every member of our staff has an equal opportunity to thrive and use their diverse perspectives and experiences, to enrich the work we do with children, young people and families.

We will seek to understand and always respect the unique backgrounds and needs of our children, young people and families and tailor our support and advice to their individual needs.

Embracing inclusion and diversity is not just a checkbox exercise for us: it's a conscious effort to create an inclusive space that celebrates differences, promotes innovation and empowers people to reach their full potential.



Our values

Our organisational values aim to express our shared understanding of what we believe are our most important ways of working, how we aim to behave and what we aspire to be as an organisation.

	Trust	Empower	Respect
How we work with you (children, young people and families)	We build strong and consistent relationships with you. We are honest with you so that you understand our worries, the things that are working well and our next steps.	We help you to realise your potential. We recognise the strengths that are present in every family and help you to develop your own solutions. We encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings.	We listen to you in a non-judgemental way and take into account your wishes and feelings.
How we work together (our partners)	We are reliable: you can count on us to undertake tasks and deliver on what was agreed – we will do what we say we will do.	We work with you to ensure services are accessible, equitable and inclusive. We are responsive when issues are raised.	We listen to and value your priorities and perspectives and work with you to find solutions.
How we work with each other (our AfC colleagues)	We encourage open and honest communication, and model clear and fair professional boundaries.	We show appropriate and respectful use of the power given to us in our jobs or positions.	We use respectful language and tones.

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Achieving **more** for Children

Priority Programmes



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Introduction

Our refreshed Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to reflect on what we have learnt over the past five years and refocus our energy on what is most important to the children and young people we serve, as well as the changing landscape in which we are working. Over the next five years we will continue our work to support young people to live safe and fulfilled lives.

We have made significant progress in improving outcomes for children and young people since we were established in 2014 and we maintain our commitment to continuous learning and progress.

Most programmes of work will cover the three boroughs we work in, because they meet a common need. Some programmes are also required to meet specific local circumstances or to reflect the priorities of an individual local authority.

Our priority programmes support the four main strategic priorities, set out in our Strategic Plan.

- **Safe and healthy:** Supporting children and families to live safe and healthy lives.
- **Positive futures:** Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally.
- **Stronger families:** Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.
- **Dynamic workforce:** Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

Abbreviations:

RBK - Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

LBR - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

RBWM - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Have a universal early help offer in our family hubs and youth centres so that families and young people can seek information advice and help at an early stage and in a welcoming environment. In practice, this offer will look different between Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead.	We will publish our local offers for Kingston, Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead so that children, young people, families and professionals know where and how to seek help.	Problems for children, young people and families are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.	Director of Children's Social Care and Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help and Associate Director for Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Provide targeted support for those children and young people who are vulnerable to protect them from harm.	In Windsor and Maidenhead, Family Hubs are already in place. They will be developed further including the development of the Families Together Team. This team will work with vulnerable young people and families to support them to build resilience and, wherever possible, to stay together. In Kingston and Richmond to develop multi-disciplinary teams, built on the needs of each borough, to support children likely to suffer significant harm at the earliest possible opportunity so that they do not need child protection interventions or to come into care.	There are fewer children subject to child protection plans and entering care because they and their families are getting the early help and support they need.	Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director of Social and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Provide targeted support to those children and young people who are vulnerable to protect them from harm (continued).	Develop a local model for parent and baby assessments that is understood and trusted by the family court, available when needed, high quality and value for money.	There is an affordable local model for assessing the capacity of new parents in a supportive and timely way, enabling better and faster decisions to be made about the permanent care of babies and very young children.	Associate Directors for Safeguarding (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director of Children's Social Care (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	79 Develop targeted outreach support for adolescents and their families so that young people's needs can be safely met at home or in their communities rather than needing residential care.	Fewer adolescents aged 16 to 18 are in care because their needs are being met in a coordinated way by local services, and they are safe at home and living in their local communities.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
Support mental health and wellbeing, and champion its importance in our communities.	Contribute to an independent review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to strengthen the local delivery model, streamline pathways into and out of services and ensure financial resources are sufficient to meet children's and young people's identified needs.	Children and young people receive the mental health assessments, treatment and support they need from the most appropriate service when they need it.	Associate Director for Emotional Health (RBK and LBR) Associate Director for Educational Psychology and Wellbeing (RBWM)			✓
	Families with children experiencing difficulty with their mental health can access early help.	Fewer families require crisis intervention.	Associate Director for Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Safe and healthy

Supporting children and young people to live safe and healthy lives.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
	Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers so that they have the support they need to maintain good physical and emotional health and to help manage any health conditions.	More children in care and care leavers have a regular assessment of their health needs and report better physical and emotional health as a result of the support they receive.	Associate Directors for Corporate Parenting	✓	✓	✓
Encourage and facilitate joined-up thinking and working across education, social care and health services to provide better coordinated support to children and young people with multiple and/or complex needs.	Embed a lived experience model across education, social care and health services to better plan and coordinate early help and support to children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and who are supported by children's social care services.	Children and young people receive the coordinated support they need from an integrated team of professionals at the earliest opportunity, reducing the need for higher-cost and more specialist education and care placements.	Associate Directors for SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Develop local and good quality accommodation and support options for those children and young people who cannot continue to live with their birth families. These will be both independent and in-house options and include a mix of foster care, residential children's homes, supported accommodation and independent housing.	Participate in the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to develop a regional approach to foster carer recruitment.	More children in care will benefit from family-based care because an increased number of mainstream foster carers have been recruited and approved.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Participate in the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to implement the Mockingbird programme to provide peer support, training, mentoring and short breaks to foster carers.	There are high levels of foster carer retention and fewer placement disruptions or breakdowns because foster carers are better able and supported to manage challenging behaviour and situations.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Develop more in-house registered children's home provision and supported accommodation for care leavers to meet the care needs of children and young people safely and locally.	More children and young people who need residential care or supported accommodation are able to live in or closer to their home borough, their families and support networks and the professionals who work with them.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Strengthen our approach to family network meetings and family group conferences to identify and approve kinship and connected carers for children and young people as a viable alternative to foster and residential care; improve the support available to kinship and connected carers.	More children will benefit from stable, long-term care from a family member or connected person, reducing the need for external foster care and residential care placements.	Associate Director for Provider Services	✓	✓	✓
	Develop a care leavers' guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to care leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.	More care leavers will achieve independence by moving into their own housing and maintaining their own tenancies.	Associate Director of Strategic Commissioning and Business Development	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Implement a clear plan to work with partners to support inclusive and good quality education provision across our boroughs and to create and encourage supported internship, apprenticeship and employment opportunities.	Transform the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that local, high-quality education, health and social care provision meets children's assessed needs.	Independence for children and young people with SEND will be maximised, whilst also delivering value for money.	Director for Education Services (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	Develop alternative education provision to better support the educational progress, achievement and wellbeing of children and young people with challenging behaviours who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school.	Children and young people with challenging behaviours have access to appropriate provision which meets their needs, and improved educational progress, attainment and outcomes.	Director for Education Services and Associate Director for Pupil Support (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Work with schools to support inclusion and invest in educational models that support children and young people to learn in mainstream settings where this is appropriate.	Develop resources to support assessment and early intervention in mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges.	Early years, schools and colleges feel confident and competent to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who are below the threshold for an education, health and care plan.	Director of Education, Associate Director for School Standards and Improvement Associate Director for Pupil Support (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM) Associate Directors SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Positive futures

Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Reduce attainment gaps to enable children and young people to reach their full potential.	Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers to provide the foundation for all children to achieve well and have positive choices for their future learning.	The attainment for reading, writing and mathematics (combined) at the end of key stage 2 for pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant is better than the results of the statistical neighbour peer group.	Associate Director School Standards and Improvement (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Prepare children and young people for life transitions and support them to take opportunities to be more independent.	Work with adult social care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND so that services and support are in place to meet their needs, promote independence and enable a positive experience of early adulthood.	All young people with SEND have an agreed transition plan in place by the age of 15.	Director of Education and Head of Education Business Partnerships and Vocational Pathways (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM) Associate Directors for SEND	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Work with children, young people and families in a strength-based way, using our practice framework to build resilience and overcome obstacles.	Continue to build on the Signs of Safety model by developing a consistent practice framework across the organisation.	Children, young people and families consistently experience effective strengths-based assessments and interventions from all social care services.	Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Ask children and young people what is important and what is good in their life and work with them to build strong support networks that promote their resilience.	Develop a participation strategy for Achieving for Children that sets out how services will proactively engage children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact on their lives.	More children and young people have the opportunity to build their skills and confidence to share their views and participate in decision-making and in their local communities.	Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Director of Children's Social Care (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
	Empower and support children and young people to hold decision-makers to account for the commitments they have made to deliver or improve services in the children's and young people's plans.	Children and young people report that good progress has been made in delivering the priorities in the children's and young people's plans and that the support they receive has improved as a result of this.	Directors of Children's Services	✓	✓	✓
Invest in services that support young people and families to develop the skills and confidence to live, learn and grow independently.	Continue to seek out new sources of funding and partnerships that will enhance our local early help offers and enable us to support families through challenges, eg cost of living crisis.	The early help offer is enhanced with targeted services delivered through partnerships, so that more families receive the support they need.	Associate Directors Family and Adolescents Associate Director of Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
	Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support, led by social workers and supported by non-qualified practitioners.	Children, young people and families receive the holistic support and interventions they need at an earlier stage, reducing the number of children escalating to child protection interventions.	Director of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Work closely with our partners to make sure our services are joined-up and more accessible to children, young people and their families, and that our local offer is better understood especially by those families who are least engaged.	Develop Family Hubs to bring together the support that children, young people and families need from different services into a single accessible location in their local communities, so that families only need to explain their stories and the support they need once, rather than having to tell many different practitioners.	Children, young people and families receive the joined-up support they need when they need it from an integrated team of practitioners so that they can overcome any difficulties they are facing, become more resilient, and do not need further support from more specialist social care services.	Associate Director Family and Adolescents (RBK and LBR)	✓	✓	Family Hubs are already in place
	Improve information sharing between those agencies providing early help to families by delivering the Early Help Systems Guide and RBWM threshold document.	The needs of families are identified at the earliest opportunity so that the support they need can be offered and provided at the earliest opportunity and prevent issues becoming more serious and requiring support from more specialist social care services.	Associate Director Families and Adolescents (RBK and LBR) Associate Director of Early Help and Family Support (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Stronger families

Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Provide families with the information, advice and guidance they need to make choices about childcare and early education.	Implement the national reforms to childcare so that all eligible working parents have choices about affordable childcare and early education for their children.	From September 2024, 15 hours of childcare support a week is available to the eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3 years. From September 2025, eligible working parents of children aged under 5 years have access to 30 hours of childcare a week.	Director for Education Services (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director for Education (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓



Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
87 Listen to our workforce and work together to shape our workplace.	<p>Ask our workforce what is working and what is not working for them. Develop and implement a plan to improve satisfaction rates over time.</p> <p>Publication of a 'You Said, We Did' document sharing progress.</p>	AfC colleagues know that their voice matters and that their feedback leads to change. We have good staff satisfaction and retention rates.	Associate Director Workforce	✓	✓	✓
	<p>Improve the standard of accommodation for Kingston-based staff by working with the council to plan what investment would be the most impactful and clearly communicate timescales and work undertaken.</p>	All AfC employees have a safe and well maintained working environment. Accommodation issues are resolved in a timely way and staff feel they have a pleasant space to work individually and in teams.	Associate Director Strategy and Transformation (RBK)	✓		
Recruit and retain talented workers, value their expertise and support their professional development and wellbeing.	<p>Strengthen recruitment and retention, including regular review of the benefits package and workforce development offer.</p> <p>Review the organisation's approach to staff recruitment which will include refreshing approaches to attraction, selection and onboarding. Ensure the approach is understood and monitor impact.</p> <p>Clear attraction and recruitment strategy including targets.</p>	<p>AfC is an attractive employer and we are able to recruit and retain talented children's services professionals.</p> <p>A strong and stable workforce with an acceptable turnover and agency staff rate.</p> <p>Managers understand and engage in recruitment and retention activity.</p> <p>Approach changes with the needs of the organisation.</p>	Associate Director Workforce	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
Recruit and retain talented workers, value their expertise and support their professional development and wellbeing (continued).	Review the staffing model in children's social care to create a multi-skilled team that enables social workers and other specialist practitioners to focus on their core professional roles.	There is a highly skilled social care workforce with more permanent social workers and other specialist practitioners, resulting in greater stability for children and young people.	Directors of Children's Social Care (RBK and LBR) Deputy Director Social Care and Early Help (RBWM)	✓	✓	✓
Invest in a modern infrastructure of systems, processes and resources that support efficient, compliant and high quality services.	Implement the new case management system in RBWM to replace the existing PARIS system, and align systems across children's services.	Consistency of practice is improved; reducing the administrative burden on staff; automating much of the standard reporting needs; and enabling more effective collaboration with partners, families and children. Production of performance datasets is more automated, enabling improved focus on analysis and solutions.	Associate Director for Strategy and Transformation (RBWM)			✓
	Improve the reliability of ICT and ICT user experience for staff by proactively working with our two ICT providers to feed back areas for improvement, agree action plans and hold them to account.	Staff are able to access the applications they need and have access to suitable ICT equipment when working from an AfC place of work.	Associate Director for Strategy and Transformation	✓	✓	✓

Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
<p>Maximise funding available to the services that work directly with children and young people and regularly re-evaluate how best to prioritise funding to be most impactful.</p>	<p>Annual budget review and engagement in budget challenge processes.</p> <p>Annual benchmarking of financial performance.</p> <p>Accurate reporting during the year on financial performance to inform decision making.</p>	<p>We set affordable budgets and benchmark as a low cost service relative to other local authority children's services.</p> <p>Positive feedback from councils on budget engagement.</p> <p>Funding is appropriately prioritised towards services that have a real impact on the outcomes of children and young people.</p>	<p>Chief Operating and Finance Officer Directors of Children's Services</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>

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Strategic priority: Dynamic organisation

Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.

We will	Action	What will success look like?	Lead	Borough priority		
				Kingston	Richmond	Windsor & Maidenhead
06 Maximise funding available to the services that work directly with children and young people and regularly re-evaluate how best to prioritise funding to be most impactful (continued).	<p>Review and strengthen capacity and arrangements for commissioning, procurement and contract management, including the joint commissioning of services with the Integrated Care Board, to achieve good quality, good value and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.</p> <p>Up-to-date published Procurement Code of Practice with key staff trained</p> <p>Up-to-date contracts register and clear pipeline of work that is agreed by senior leaders</p>	<p>Comprehensive commissioning arrangements will be in place, including effective partnership agreements with Integrated Care Boards and lead health providers.</p> <p>Staff understand their role in the procurement process and feel confident in undertaking procurement work.</p> <p>Spending decisions and procurement activity happens in a timely and compliant way.</p>	<p>Associate Director of Business Development and Strategic Commissioning</p> <p>Associate Director for Educational Services and Resources (RBWM)</p>	✓	✓	✓
	<p>We will review our approach to placement brokerage and develop a proactive strategy that outlines how we will develop local placements and manage the placement market.</p>	<p>The best and most cost-effective placements for children are commissioned.</p>		✓	✓	✓

Monitoring and reporting progress

Achieving for Children's Board of Directors and senior leaders will review progress against this plan on a quarterly basis. We will report publicly on progress as part of our suite of annual reports, as well as through priority programme updates to our owning councils.

A set of key performance indicators and quality measures are reported as part of our commissioned arrangements with each local authority. These have been set by the councils as part of our contract with them and by our Board of Directors to ensure the continual development of the organisation and the services we deliver.

Annual review

Each year the priority programmes will be reviewed and updated, capturing any new work which is planned. The annual review will provide a self-assessment of our progress at implementing our priorities in the previous year, as well as refreshing our priorities and activities for the year ahead.



Achieving **more** for Children **Who we are**

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achieving
for **children**

A little bit about us and what we do

Achieving for Children (AfC) is a not for profit, community interest company, originally established in 2014. We are owned and commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to deliver their children's services.

We are an organisation of 1,400 children's services practitioners and are dedicated to putting children and young people at the heart of everything that we do. Our delivery model supports integrated services across education, health and social care to achieve positive outcomes for the families that we work with. We actively seek the views of children and young people when shaping services and believe that we have a responsibility to make sure that their voices are heard, not only in AfC, but also with partners and across our communities too.

We work closely with local partners including our local authorities, schools, colleges, early years providers, health, adult social care, the police and the voluntary sector to support and champion a joined-up experience for children, young people and families who live and learn in our boroughs.



Key information about **Achieving for Children** and the children and families we help

General



165

Schools across three boroughs



114,547

Children and young people aged 1 to 17

94



28,220

Children and young people from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds

SEND



4,813

Children with education, health and care plans

Education



Kingston
100%

Richmond
100%

RBWM
92%

of schools 'Good' or 'Outstanding'



78,869

Children attending school

Children's Social Care



61

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Children's Social Care



885

Children and families receiving early help support



428

Children subject to child protection plans



371

Children in care



498

Young people leaving care (18 to 25)

Data included was correct at end of December 2023

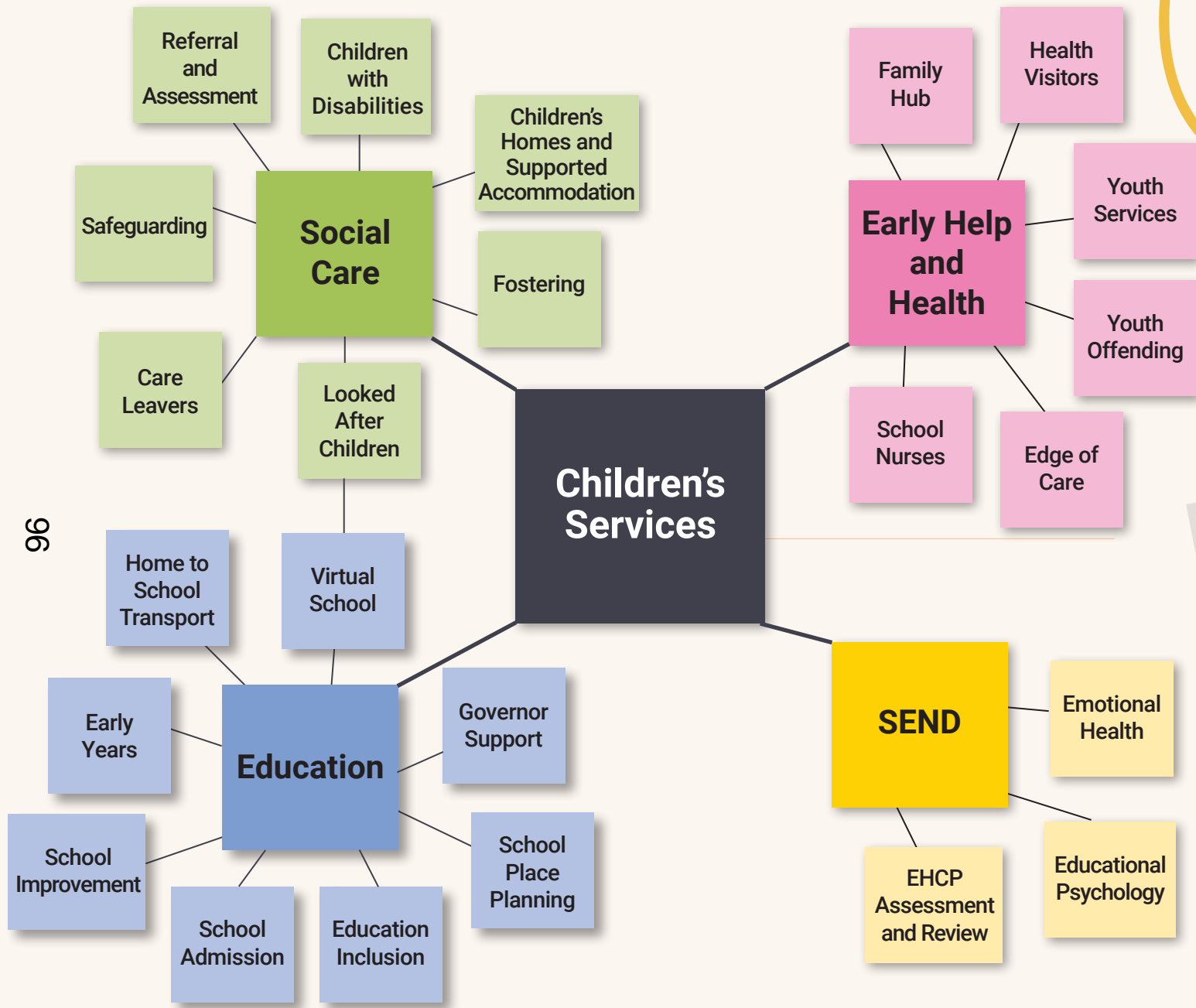
Our services

We support young people from birth up to the age of 25 years. Our service offer is rooted in strong universal and targeted early help provision. We aim to support families and young people at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs escalating and to support independence and resilience.

Services are delivered in person and digitally and we regularly review them to ensure they can be accessed in a way that is convenient and engaging. We host services online and in community-based buildings, including youth centres, family hubs, children's centres, family contact centres and offices across all three of our boroughs. We encourage partner agencies to co-locate services in our buildings, or on our web platforms, to support an integrated experience.

95





The way we work in practice with children, young people and families

Our practitioners use the strengths-based Signs of Safety approach, which is supplemented by a range of complementary interventions and tools. This means that when working with families and young people, we agree what we are worried about, what is working well and what needs to happen to support safety and wellbeing.

We listen to what families, children and young people tell us and work together to agree how we can support them. We keep the best interests of children at the heart of our decision-making and create safe spaces where they are heard. Our aim is to equip families and young people with the skills and knowledge they need to lead safe and fulfilled lives.

Our eight core and cross-cutting practice standards are:

Standard 1:	Children and young people's best interests will be of primary consideration in all areas affecting them
Standard 2:	Work is carried out in partnership with a child or young person through meaningful engagement
Standard 3:	Work is carried out in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to meet their responsibilities and to achieve optimum outcomes for children and young people
Standard 4:	Work with children, young people and their family is carried out within community networks and between agencies to achieve the best outcomes
Standard 5:	Work with children and young people is undertaken within the legislative framework and follows best practice guidance
Standard 6:	Work with children, young people, parents and carers consistently promotes social inclusion
Standard 7:	Records and reports are accurate, complete, accessible and up-to-date, and demonstrate the decision making process
Standard 8:	Work with children, young people and their families is managed and supervised to achieve the best possible outcomes

Listening to children, young people and families

Listening to the voices of children, young people, parents and carers actively shapes who we are as an organisation. Their input informs our strategic decisions, policy development and service design so that we are able to continually develop and improve our services.

We have a variety of methods to capture the voices and opinions of children, young people, parents and carers. These include the following.

Participation groups

We facilitate diverse participation groups such as the children in care councils, care leavers forums, youth councils, girls forum, parents and carers consortiums. These groups provide a platform for open dialogue and collaboration, where individuals can share their experiences and ideas.

Feedback mechanisms

We maintain accessible and user friendly feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and suggestions boxes, to ensure that our user groups can easily express their views. We have also developed a 'My Say' app that uses digital technology to collect the views of children and young people in an easy way.

Consultations and engagement events

We organise regular consultation and engagement events, workshops and focus groups across the year to gather insights and ideas directly from children, young people and families.



Come and join us

We are always looking for talented professionals who want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people. We employ staff across a range of professions from frontline practitioners in social care, health and education to colleagues in back office support functions.

All our colleagues have access to a comprehensive package of support, including a supportive working environment, professional development opportunities and a fair benefits package. We have an embedded flexible working policy to support people in different circumstances and at all stages of life to come and work with us.

Find out more about what it's like to work at Achieving for Children and view our current vacancies at www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/work-for-us.



Useful information

Achieving for Children website

www.achievingforchildren.org.uk

Achieving for Children information for young people and families

Kingston and Richmond

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/>

Windsor and Maidenhead

<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/>

Achieving for Children Local Offer for children and young with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Kingston and Richmond

https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer

Windsor and Maidenhead

https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer



ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
DATE:	29th January 2024
REPORT AUTHOR:	Lucy Kourpas - Chief Operating and Finance Officer
SUBJECT:	ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BUDGET 2024/25
PURPOSE:	To present the 2024/25 budget for approval and recommendation

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the proposed 2024/25 budget for Achieving for Children (AfC). The budget has been discussed in detail with each of the three councils that commission services from AfC. The final budget approval is a matter reserved to Richmond, Kingston and Windsor and Maidenhead councils as AfCs owners and will be formally presented for approval in February / March 2024. The following table summarises the proposed contract prices:

Table 1: Achieving for Children contract prices

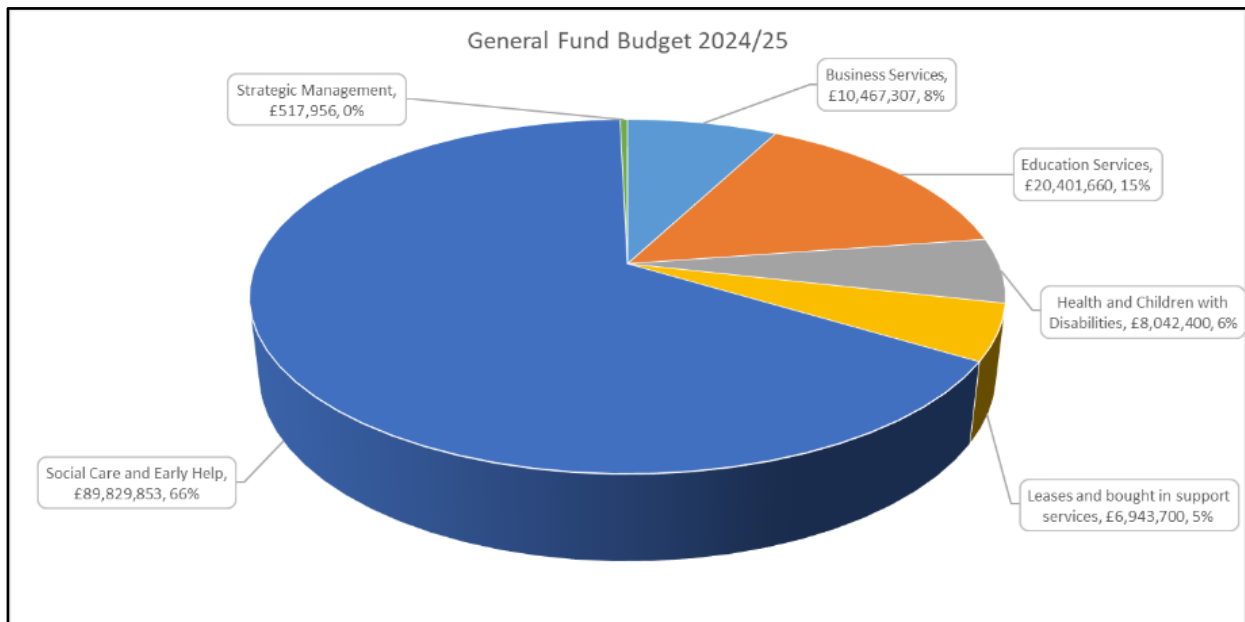
	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
Contract Prices	£	£	£	£
General Fund	54,570,600	50,161,000	31,471,275	136,202,875
Dedicated Schools Grant	29,990,300	27,656,000	15,723,890	73,370,190
TOTAL	84,560,900	77,817,000	47,195,165	209,573,065

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is asked to agree to the 2024/25 budget that will go forward to the councils for approval.

3. GENERAL FUND BUDGET

- 3.1 The overall AfC budget is proposed at £209,573,065 profiled as follows:



3.2 AfC have been fully engaged in each of the three budget setting processes taking place in the Local Authorities and have undertaken the company's detailed budget setting process alongside their respective timetables. This budget, once agreed, will form part of the three commissioning council's political budget setting processes which concludes in Councillors approving budgets in late February and early March 2024. Each of AfCs owning councils is also required to consider and approve the AfC budget and Strategic Plan each year.

3.3 The proposed changes to the 2024/25 AfC budget are outlined below:

Table 2: Contract price change summary

	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
	£	£	£	£
Contract price movements				
2023/24 Base budget	45,829,700	43,802,500	29,144,973	118,777,173
Growth	4,716,300	4,655,100	3,038,344	12,409,743
Savings - agreed with councils	-423,500	-1,287,400	-2,206,000	-3,916,900
Savings - unfunded Inflation	-93,300	-97,200	-92,000	-282,500
Unfunded Inflation - increments	93,300	97,200	92,000	282,500
Inflation - contracts	1,628,300	1,036,500	1,494,294	4,159,094
Net Growth	5,921,100	4,404,200	2,326,637	12,651,937

Grant and virement changes 23/24 and 24/25	2,819,800	1,954,300	-335	4,773,765
Net change after allowing for grant adjustments / virements	8,740,900	6,358,500	2,326,302	17,425,702
2024/25 opening contract price excl DSG	54,570,600	50,161,000	31,471,275	136,202,875
DSG funding in contract price	29,990,300	27,656,000	15,723,890	73,370,190
2024/25 base contract price incl DSG	84,560,900	77,817,000	47,195,165	209,573,065
Growth to be awarded in year - pay award	1,087,000	1,152,000	-	2,239,000

GROWTH (£12.410m)

- 3.4 Growth requests have been provisionally approved in all three boroughs. The anticipated 2024/25 growth levels are listed in the two tables below. Where growth is not funded, AfC will need to identify in-year mitigations to avoid overspending.

Table 3: Demand led growth

Demand Growth	Richmond £000	Kingston £000	Windsor £000	Total £000
Social care placement growth	2,586	2,869	1,309	6,765
Home to School Transport	213	790	561	1,564
Legal Advice - Social Care	335	282	379	996
S17 Budgets	174	162	0	336
General Fund Demand Growth	3,309	4,103	2,249	9,661

Table 4: Non placement growth

Controllable Growth	Richmond £000	Kingston £000	Windsor £000	Total £000
Social Care Staffing - leaving Care, foster panel, child protection conferences, (LBR/RBK), agency staff (LBR), children missing education (RBWM)	710	113	329	1,152

Reduction in grant funding for social care and education costs associated with supporting Ukrainian refugee families	0	0	180	180
Statutory increase in special guardianship allowances	55	92	0	147
Children with disabilities - short break care and OT equipment (LBR)	72	72	0	144
Extension of Council Tax support scheme for care leavers	164	0	0	164
Digital and systems improvements - case managements, cyber security, independent review recommendations, Transformation Manager	136	136	230	502
Social Care and Early Help Transformation Leads	70	70	50	190
SEND Senior Leadership and Inspection Leads	35	35	0	70
Family Hubs - running the White House	149	-	-	149
Other	16	34	0	50
Total	1,407	552	789	2,748

SAVINGS (-£4.799m)

- 3.5 A significant challenge for the Company relates to savings targets set by the councils as part of the wider public sector regime of budget reduction as well as savings required due to unfunded growth. The following table summarises the budget reductions that have been built into the 2024/25 budget.

Table 5: Savings

Savings	Richmond £000	Kingston £000	Windsor £000	Total £000
Social Care and Early Help transformation	-225	360	335	470
Placement transformation	355	569	1,478	2,402
Education income generation	0	66	75	141
Transport transformation	158	200	266	624

Digital and business services	135	92	52	280
Total	423	1,287	2,206	3,917

- 3.6 In addition to the savings details above, services will need to manage staff pay increments within existing resources. This creates an additional pressure of £282k across the three boroughs as follows:

Table 6: Savings associated with unfunded contractual pay increments

	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
Contract price movements	£000	£000	£000	£000
Unfunded Inflation - increments	93	97	92	282

- 3.7 The savings are subject to formal agreement at the various council political meetings in February/March. If the councils do not wish to proceed with any of the proposed savings at this stage in the process AfC will first look to propose alternative savings (where possible) and if alternatives can not be agreed the councils will need to provide growth to avoid overspending next year.

INFLATION (£4.442m)

- 3.8 AfC submitted inflationary growth requests to each borough in the Summer / Autumn 2023 and the following table summarises the outcomes of these bids:

Table 7: Inflationary growth

Inflation Growth	Richmond £000	Kingston £000	Windsor £000	Total £000
Social Care Contracts Inflation (residential, supported accommodation, fostering)	1,324	750	837	2,911
Transport	188	150	187	525
Contracts (Legal, Regionalised Adoption, service contracts, insurance, apprenticeship levy, systems, short breaks, audit etc)	117	137	13	267
Pay Award - in base contract	-	-	457	457
Total	1,628	1,037	1,494	4,159
Pay Award - not in base contract	1,087	1,152	-	2,239

Total	2,715	2,189	1,494	6,398
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- 3.9 In addition to the inflationary pressures detailed above teams will experience inflationary pressure on staff pay. This includes contractual increments and the annual staff pay award that adjusts salaries for inflation. Teams will need to make internal savings to cover staff increments and the pay award will be funded in-year to match the actual staff pay award agreed. We have not included the additional funding for staff pay award in the contract price but indicative rates for a 4% pay award in Kingston and Richmond and a 3% pay award in Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 3.10 Where AfC holds contracts with specific inflationary increments this has also been provided for using the inflationary factor outlined in the contract. The inflationary factors vary by Local Authority and where they are lower than requested we have agreed to jointly manage the risk.

Table 8: Inflation assumptions

	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor & Maidenhead
Pay Award	*4.0%	*4.0%	3.0%
Placements	7.1%	3.8%	6.5%
General Contract	4.5%	4.5%	5.0%

**will be adjusted to actual award*

GRANT AND OTHER BUDGET TRANSFERS (£4.774m)

- 3.11 The contract prices will also change for a number of agreed adjustments to reflect estimated Government Grant amounts or one off prior year service funding. These include where Government funding may have changed or where it has been agreed that budgets will be reflected differently between the councils and AfC. These budget adjustments are agreed at an officer level between the Local Authorities and AfC during the year.
- 3.12 The most significant movement next year relates to the London Mayors Universal Free School Meals Grant that is passported to schools in Richmond and Kingston.

4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

- 4.1 The provisional grant settlement for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was announced on 19th December 2023. AfC will continue to manage the DSG grant funds on behalf of the three councils although not all of the money will be included in the annual contract prices. This means that AfC will be responsible for the management of those funds including passporting funding directly to schools and early years settings. AfC will also deliver significant education services with the most material being high needs education services but also including services such as school admissions, early years advisory services and school improvement.

4.2 The table below details the anticipated DSG budgets for each borough, after block transfers which are expected to be agreed as part of each council's budget setting process.

Table 9: Dedicated Schools Grant Fund budgets

Block	Richmond DSG Budget £	Kingston DSG Budget £	Windsor & Maidenhead DSG Budget £
Schools Block	150,720,207	134,149,020	115,832,285
Central School Services Block	1,011,948	1,150,371	970,784
Early Years Block	21,506,011	19,473,908	17,969,342
High Needs Block	38,814,023	33,320,610	27,621,360
Total	212,052,189	188,093,909	162,393,771

4.3 The funding must be applied to education services with a significant portion being passported to schools and early years providers as de-delegated budgets.

4.4 AfC have drafted detailed budget reports for each council and so the details will be formally approved in February and March. The links to the detailed budget reports are detailed below for information:

- [Richmond Schools Budget Report](#)
- [Kingston Schools Budget Report](#)
- [Windsor and Maidenhead Schools Budget Report](#)

4.5 The most significant challenge for next year will remain the management of high needs education services within the budget available. In Richmond and Kingston this budget has been agreed with the DfE and council as part of the five year Safety Valve Funding agreement and will exceed the amount of grant funding available (shown in table above). In Windsor and Maidenhead the expenditure on high needs is expected to be manageable within the funding allocation as long as the Delivering Better Value action plan continues to be prioritised and successfully implemented. The Send Futures Plans and Delivering Better Value Plans will remain a key priority for AfC next year.

4.6 In recognition that shortfalls in high needs education funding is a growing national issue, the DfE issued guidance to strengthen the DSG fund ringfence and has extended the three year statutory override to support Local Authorities implement plans over time without the deficit impacting on Local Authority financial viability and meeting statutory duties for children and young people.

4.7 It should also be noted that AfC teams continue to work closely with a number of schools and early years providers who are struggling to balance their schools budget within the DSG allocation. This is a growing risk across all three local authority areas as funding for

schools becomes tighter. Grant increases are not sufficient to cover general inflationary and growing SEND support pressures.

5. RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

5.1 The following table summarises key financial risks for the coming year and associated actions

RISK / CHALLENGE	ACTION TO MITIGATE RISK
<p>Inflation - inflationary pressures pose the most significant risk to children's services budget in 2024/25. Pressure is being experienced on placement budgets, staffing budgets, agency staffing budgets, contractual spend and fuel budgets.</p>	<p>Inflationary increases have been built into budgets but it is possible given the escalation in RPI and CPI that it may exceed the amount allowed for. Robust commissioning practises that minimise inflationary increases on expenditures as well as solution focused partnership working will be key to understanding this pressure and mitigating it wherever possible.</p>
<p>Placement budgets – This pressure will be impacted by the number of children who require support next year as well as the complexity of their needs. Practitioners have reported a clear step up in complexity of need since the onset of the pandemic and this is coming through in more intensive and expensive support packages. Children's services have been operating in an environment where demand outsrips supply for specialist placements in recent years and the increase in demand nationally and locally due to the increase in asylum seekers supported is exacerbating the placement shortfall and pushing up prices.</p>	<p>Internal review system for all placements to ensure they are the most appropriate in terms of service and cost.</p> <p>Detailed financial monitoring at an individual placement level.</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>Engagement with joint commissioning groups / initiatives to drive down cost and increase purchasing power</p> <p>Monthly financial monitoring updates provided to each council and quarterly meetings with commissioners to discuss latest performance and activity data, risks and associated actions</p> <p>Claim of additional grant funding wherever possible for refugees, unaccompanied asylum seekers and care leavers</p> <p>Demand management strategies such as edge of care support and other established early help services.</p>

<p>Balance young people's outcomes with balancing budget - Risk that the organisation does not strike the right balance between spending within budget and ensuring that children and young people are safe from harm / their wellbeing is supported.</p>	<p>The Leadership Teams review the monthly monitoring and agree on all financial actions that could impact on services. This ensures that the service impact of financial action plans is considered and risks identified/ monitored. Director overview of all decisions relating to their directorates</p>
<p>Achievement of savings and agreement of one off costs for redundancy etc. - Risk that savings are not achieved leading to in year overspends.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of progress against savings plans.</p> <p>Project plans for each of the high value schemes with regular reporting to the Leadership Teams</p> <p>Quarterly progress reporting to the AfC Board and Commissioners.</p>
<p>Risk of cross subsidy if the level of funding that can be afforded by each LA differs</p>	<p>Operational area budgets recorded separately to avoid high level cross subsidy. Demand budgets ringfenced to ensure that placement / transport budgets are not vulnerable to cross subsidy</p> <p>Definition of core service provided by Business Services and agreement about level of support for each borough in the context of funding levels</p> <p>Annual financial exercise undertaken to check actual expenditure levels against contract prices</p> <p>Oversight by Directors of Children's Services and Chief Operating Officer</p>
<p>Risk that Councils do not agree proposed savings and growth</p>	<p>Regular briefings for councillors throughout the budget setting processes</p>

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Budgets will be carefully monitored during 2024/25 to ensure that appropriate action is taken where financial pressure arises. The combination of inflationary, demand pressures and savings required means that 2024/25 will be another challenging year in financial terms.
- 6.2 Balancing the ever increasing financial pressure with the responsibility to ensure the best outcomes for children remains a significant challenge going into 2024/25. Increases in demand and high average cost of placements is a national issue that is causing budget pressure for most providers of children's social care and education services. The councils have provided significant

levels of growth and so it is important that the budgets are prioritised effectively to ensure demand is managed within the available budget envelope.

- 6.3 The underfunding of high needs education, rising inflationary pressures and the step up in complexity of support needed by children and young people remain the greatest challenges next year and it is important that as an organisation we periodically review delivery models and make changes to support value of money.
- 6.4 Challenging savings targets have been built into the budget for next year and it is important that progress against these projects and achievement of planned budget reductions is monitored. The achievement of planned savings and managing demand will need to continue to be a high priority for all staff that have authority to commit to spend. Where projects under-achieve savings targets or there are demand-led overspends, cost reductions will need to be found from elsewhere to ensure the AfC can operate within the contract funding envelope agreed with the councils.
- 6.5 It is important that AfC continues to embed a culture of financial restraint into all officers with spending power and that the Company regularly reviews the financial position to ensure that money is aligned to service needs and priorities. Expenditure restraint policies and procedures will need to continue into 2024/25 to ensure that controllable budgets remain balanced and resources can be effectively prioritised in demand led budgets.

7. CONTACTS

Lucy Kourpas
Chief Operating & Finance Officer
lucy.kourpas@achievingforchildren.org.uk



Champions for children and families

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY **2024-2028**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Achieving for Children's (AfCs) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sits alongside the Strategic Plan and is produced as part of the budget process. It is reviewed and updated at least annually.
- 1.2 There are a number of key factors that influence AfC's finances:
- Central government funding of children's services, local government and specifically the impact of this on the Councils that own and fund the majority of AfC's costs
 - The relative financial positions of each of the commissioning councils
 - Central government's policies and guidelines on children's services
 - Changing demographics and levels of social need in our three boroughs that impact on the number of children requiring support and the complexity of that need
 - Need for children's services both statutory and preventative.
 - Income generation
 - National factors including the cost of living crisis, economic factors such as inflation and availability of placements and experienced staff

2. KEY OBJECTIVE OF THE MTFS

- 2.1 The 2024 strategy will continue to focus on achieving financial sustainability for the Company in the context of escalating financial pressure in the delivery of children's social care, health and education services as well as in Local Government generally. The organisation will be following three overarching principles:
- Delivery of value for money services that are low cost and high outcome

- Maximise resources available to front line services
- Shared budget responsibility

2.2 The Strategy prioritises ensuring services are affordable as follows:

- Ensure there is a mutual understanding of what is affordable for each council in terms of funding and quality
- Achieving value for money
- Achieving challenging cost reduction targets
- Generating income to support services
- Ensuring available funding is directed at priority areas
- Ensuring that the financial interest of each owner is safeguarded
- Planning for financial sustainability over a medium to longer term period

3. FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 This plan is being written in the context of continued and escalating pressure on children's services budgets in our local boroughs and the rest of the country. This pressure has been exacerbated by the longer term impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis which has increased the need for children's services and is expected to have a lasting financial impact over the coming years. In addition the ongoing high levels of inflation and shortages of specialist placements and practitioners are impacting on the cost of supporting children and young people as suppliers seek to pass on increases. The funding and demand pressures in social care and high needs education services has continued to feature in national press and also in national findings reports undertaken by Local Government representative groups. Need for these services and complexity of that need has continued to increase during the 2023/24 financial year and whilst there is a clear requirement to meet statutory duty the organisation must ensure that it continues to develop mechanisms to drive down average costs of support if services are to remain affordable. The budgets of all three of AfCs commissioning councils remain challenging and AfC is committed to working in partnership to implement solutions that are both affordable and achieve good outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.2 The Local Government sector has seen significant funding reductions since 2010 and our commissioning councils are all balancing borough priorities as well as increasing demand for housing, adults and children's services. It is important that in the delivery of services there is ongoing discussion with the commissioning councils regarding affordability, scope of services, service models and quality. AfC must support each council to make decisions about how the funding that is available should be prioritised between children's services and this may lead to difficult decisions. In addition, it is important that AfC safeguards the individual financial resources of each council where financial positions dictate a different level of service offer.
- 3.3 Given the tightening financial envelope it is important that as an organisation we are clear about what can be afforded and look to transform services to continue the quality journey whilst delivering within the financial resources available. This may involve doing things differently and

challenging the way things have always been done. The new five year Strategic Plan outlines how this will be achieved over the coming years.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

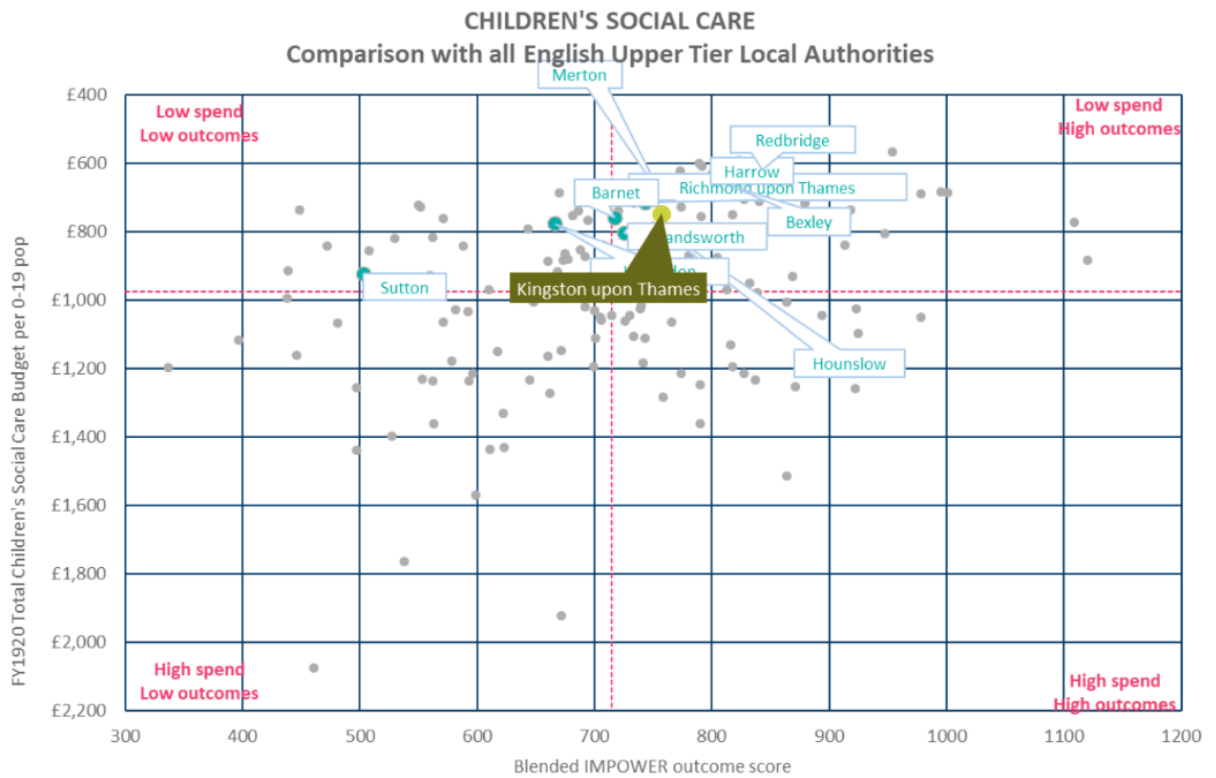
4.1 Financial performance can be measured by looking at how our services benchmark based on two key financial performance elements:

- Relative value for money
- Ability to deliver services within what is affordable for each commissioning council

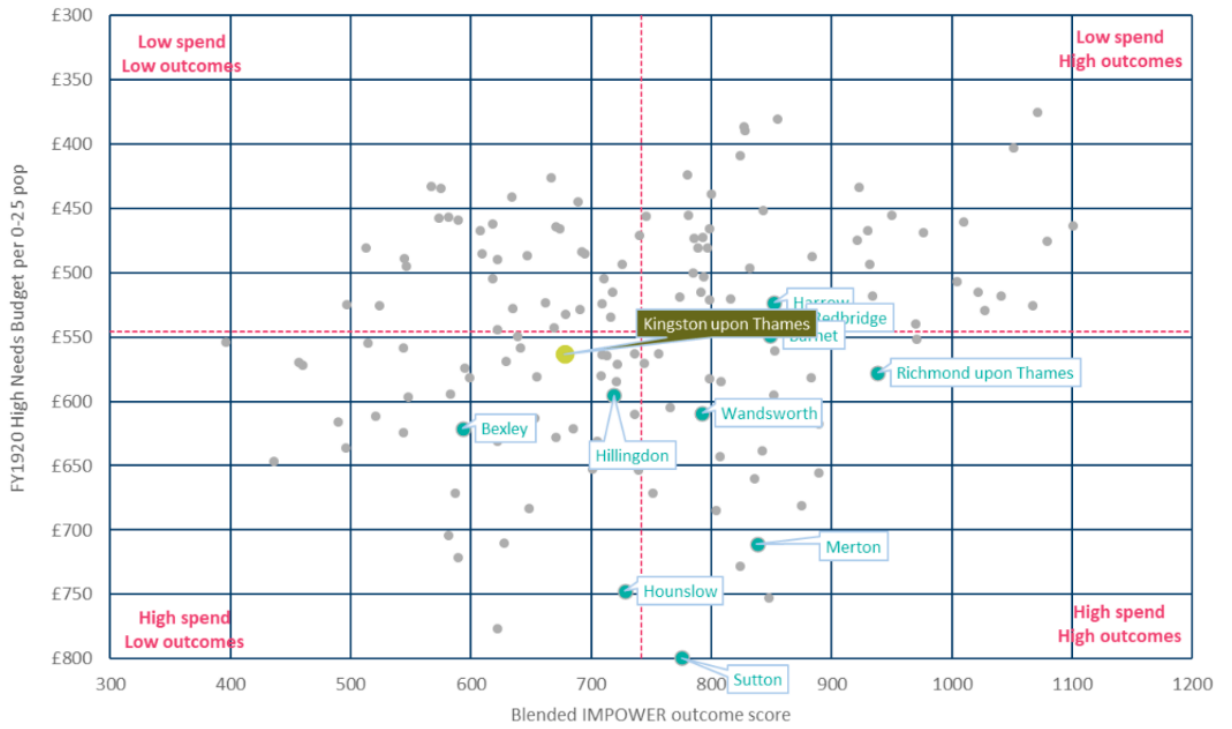
Value for money

4.2 AfC aims to deliver low cost and good quality services across all three council contracts. The most recent Impower Index (2022/23) demonstrates that AfC’s children’s social care services perform well when comparing level of investment to outcomes being achieved. There is a more mixed picture for high needs education.

KINGSTON

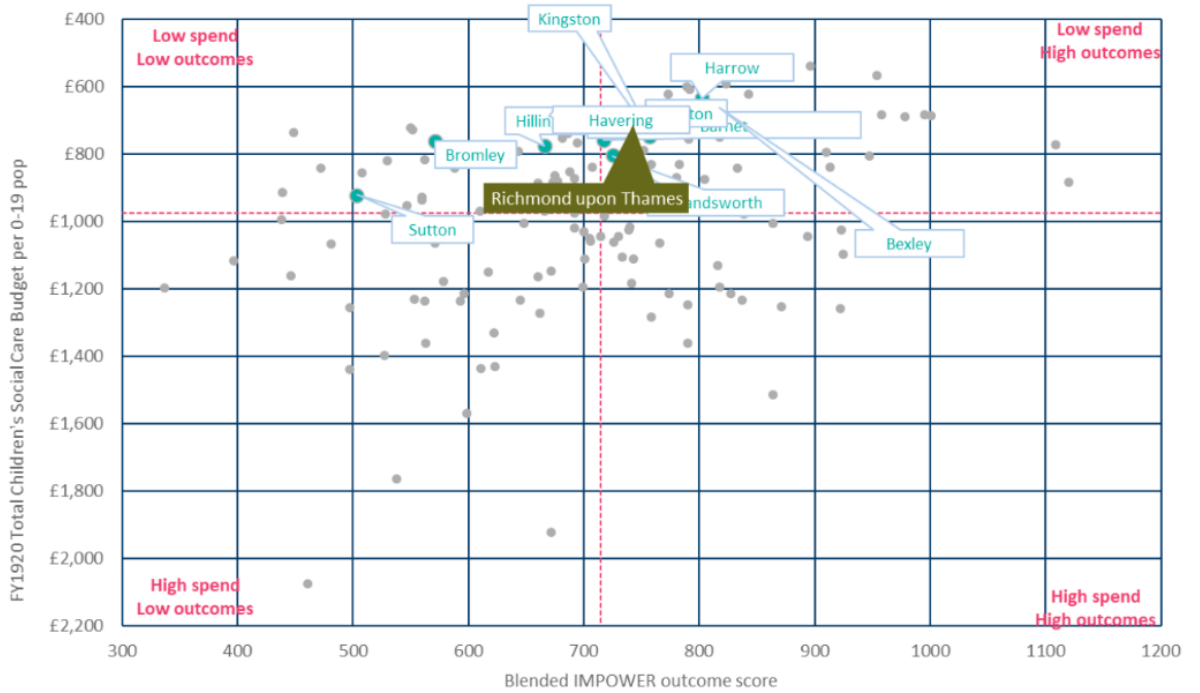


CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS
Comparison with all English Upper Tier Local Authorities

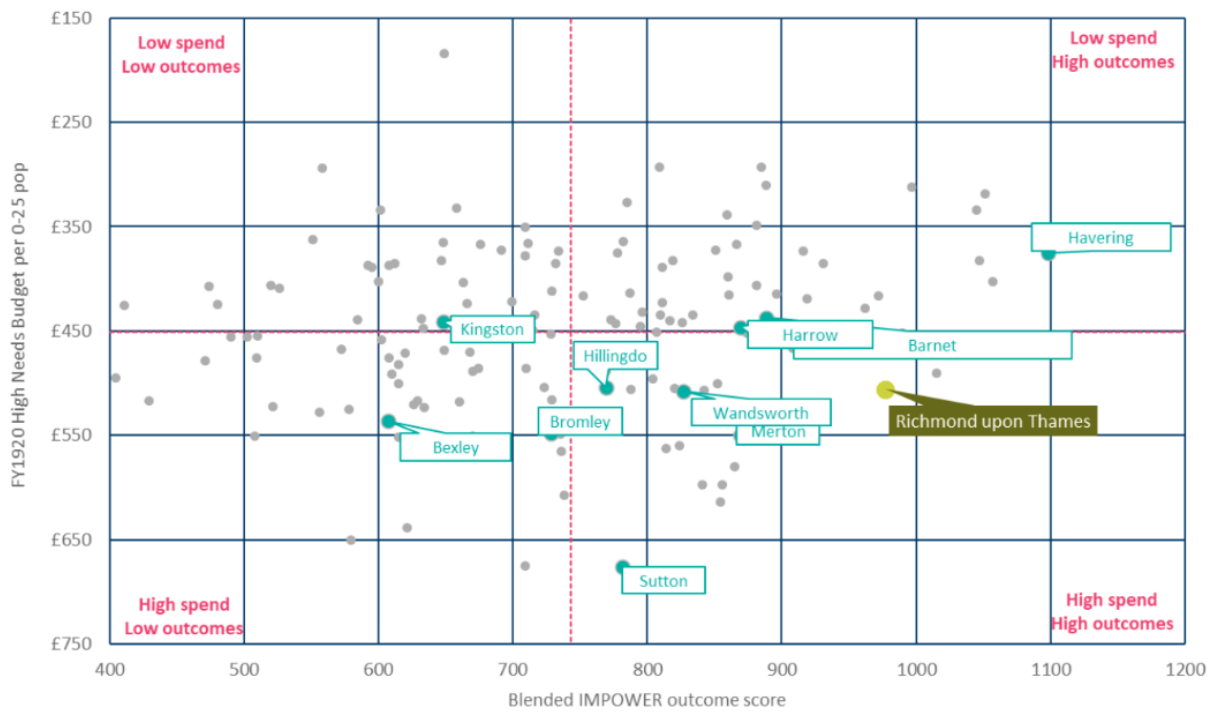


RICHMOND

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
Comparison with all English Upper Tier Local Authorities

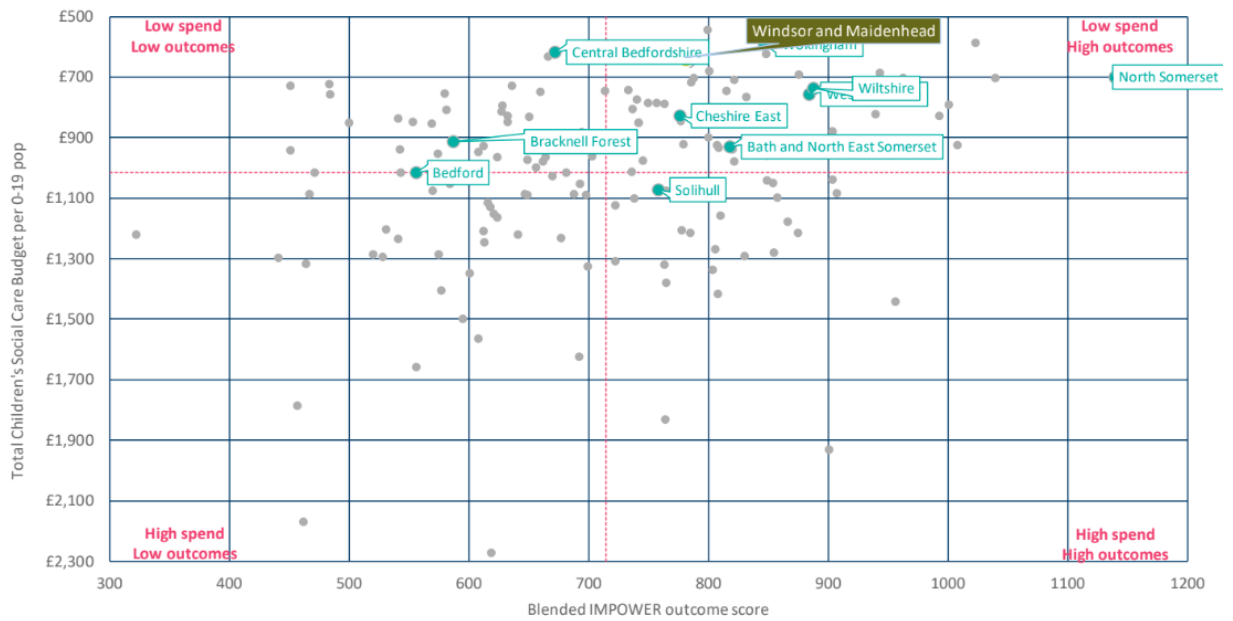


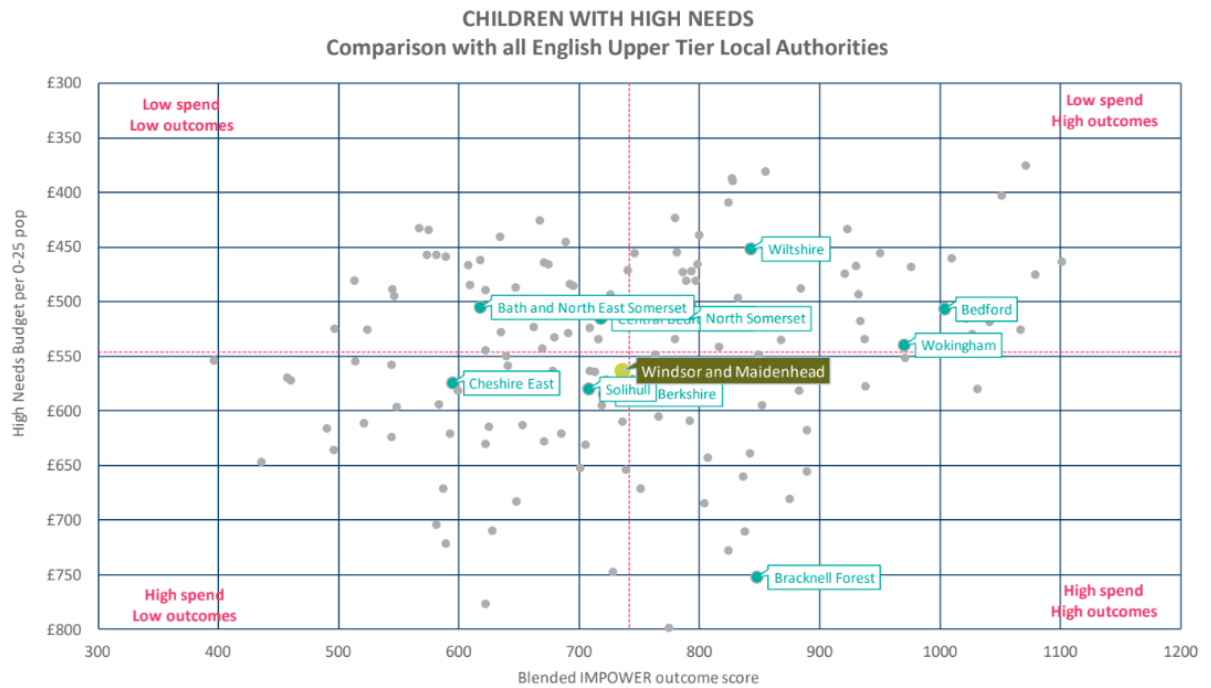
CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS
Comparison with all English Upper Tier Local Authorities



WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
Comparison with all English Upper Tier Local Authorities





4.3 When looking at the latest available actual spend benchmarking data services for all three boroughs continue to be delivered at a reasonable average cost particularly in the context of the positive inspection ratings.

	RICHMOND		KINGSTON		WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	
	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparables	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparables	Average spend per head	Rank compared to 151 comparables
Childrens Social Care	£584.02	45	£490.02	15	£473.24	10
Non School Education	£191.32	96	£45.00	6	£43.10	5
Schools Education	£2,211.15	115	£1,935.79	96	£1,719.98	72

Commissioning Council Affordability

4.4 Although value for money benchmarks would indicate a relatively strong performance, services are still costing significantly more than is provided within the base contract prices. Overspends are occurring to different scales across all three contracts due to a number of reasons:

- Increasing levels of need for services beyond what can be accommodated within base budget envelopes and current average costs
- Inflationary pressures associated with general inflation, market dynamics and escalations in complexity of need that is being supported in placements.
- Systemic underfunding of high needs education services within the ringfenced DSG funds
- Non achievement of some savings that were built in to the base budgets

4.5 It is important that service quality and spending expectations are mutually agreed and understood with each commissioning council to improve this position. The approach to this has improved in recent years with AfC contributing at a more granular level to each commissioning council's budget setting process. The key ways in which a mutual position is reached are as follows:

- The AfC Leadership team and other relevant staff engage with the relevant local authority process in setting the annual budget. The three local authorities have subtly different approaches but all include the identification and agreement of growth and savings.
- Annual AfC contract review as part of the commissioning process to look at the budget and performance targets for the following year.
- Submission of monthly budget and performance monitoring data and periodic meetings with the commissioner to discuss performance.
- Input into each council's political approval and monitoring process which dovetails with AfC Board approvals and monitoring.

5. LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

5.1 Achieving a financially sustainable business model continues to be one of the Company's key priorities in 2024/25 and the medium term. The priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan look to balance quality and affordability as well as achieve service improvement within a challenging financial envelope. The Strategic Plan and budget has been produced with significant amounts of engagement with staff, stakeholders and the councils. The Plan focuses on four themes, which align with borough specific projects and objectives. The following table looks at these strategic themes to identify how they can be aligned to the organisation's financial objectives.

Strategic priority	What we will achieve for children and young people?	Link to Financial Sustainability
SAFE AND HEALTHY	Supporting young people to be safe and healthy is at the core of what we do. Our aspiration is that every child in our boroughs is supported to be safe, happy and access the care that they need, when they need it. Working with partners, we will seek to facilitate a joined-up local offer that identifies needs early. We will support young people and families to help avoid their needs escalating, where possible, and will encourage partners to do the same.	This theme should help manage needs-led services through providing early intervention support to prevent need and costs escalating, reinforcing thresholds to access services and manage need, ensuring that funding is prioritised to those children most in need and where possible reducing the requirement for costly permanent accommodation.

	<p>We will champion the safety and wellbeing of children, nurture safe and caring family environments and, where needed, step in to support the safety and wellbeing of children living in our boroughs.</p>	
<p>POSITIVE FUTURES</p>	<p>Supporting children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth until they transition to adulthood and enable them to live, learn and thrive locally.</p> <p>Our aspiration is to have good quality and inclusive provision so that children and young people can live, learn and access the support they need locally. We want the majority of young people to be able to stay within their home community and close to established and familiar support networks.</p> <p>We will invest in services, and work with partners, to support young people to prepare for adulthood, and work with our councils to ensure that our boroughs are places where young people have opportunities to go on to become successful adults.</p> <p>We will continuously evaluate what provision is needed locally and work with partners to build a strong and attractive local offer. This will include education, employment, social care and health services.</p>	<p>This theme should have a positive impact into adulthood. Focusing funding on support that will increase independence should both reduce average costs over time including as young people transition to adulthood. The support of children locally will enable financial resources to be focused on developing local provisions rather than on costly transport and out of borough independent sector provision.</p>
<p>STRONGER FAMILIES</p>	<p>Supporting young people and families to develop resilience and independence.</p> <p>We will work to equip families and young people with the tools, skills, knowledge and confidence they need to navigate challenges and lead independent and fulfilled lives at all ages and into adulthood.</p> <p>Our services will consistently use reflective, collaborative and Strengths-based approaches to work with the whole family. We will work with families</p>	<p>This theme is about early intervention and investing in supporting families and young people to build resilience and over time become less reliant on external interventions. This will reduce the need for costly statutory interventions over time.</p>

	to build on what works well in their lives, so that parents are able to make positive and lasting changes to the care they provide to their children.	
DYNAMIC ORGANISATION	<p>Developing a workforce and organisation that is tailored to the needs of children, young people and families of our boroughs.</p> <p>We want AfC to be an adaptable, inspiring and inclusive organisation that is able to meet the changing needs of the children, young people and families living in our boroughs.</p> <p>We will create an efficient and supportive work environment, underpinned by a stable and talented workforce, where teams have the support, technology and equipment they need to make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.</p>	<p>This theme will ensure that staff are skilled and retained which should reduce reliance on the more expensive agency workforce and ensure that staff are delivering efficient and high quality services through developing to their full potential.</p> <p>We will maximise the resources that are available for front line services and continue to deliver an affordable support service that meets business needs. We will develop our use of technology to make processes and business processes more efficient including developing our accommodation and flexible working strategy.</p>

6. KEY STRATEGIC PLAN / DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- 6.1 It is clear that affordability of services must continue to be a key focus over the term of this strategy and the Strategic Plan across all three boroughs. Increasing need, inflation and complexity of needs is continuing to add pressure across education, social care and health services. This has been further complicated by the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The following key areas of work will be integral to delivering affordable services in the coming year and beyond:

PRIORITY ACTIVITY TO CONTROL COSTS	HOW WILL IT BE DELIVERED?
<p>DEMAND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Supporting the prioritisation of services to young people most in need and demand management through the application by service teams of consistent thresholds.</p>	<p>Core services have well established threshold guidance that is periodically reviewed both internally and externally through inspections or specific requests for independent review. The DCSs are responsible for ensuring there are arrangements in place to monitor compliance and support staff to understand the threshold guidance.</p>
<p>LOCAL PROVISION</p>	<p>The Sufficiency Strategy has been agreed by all three Local Authorities and progress continues on</p>

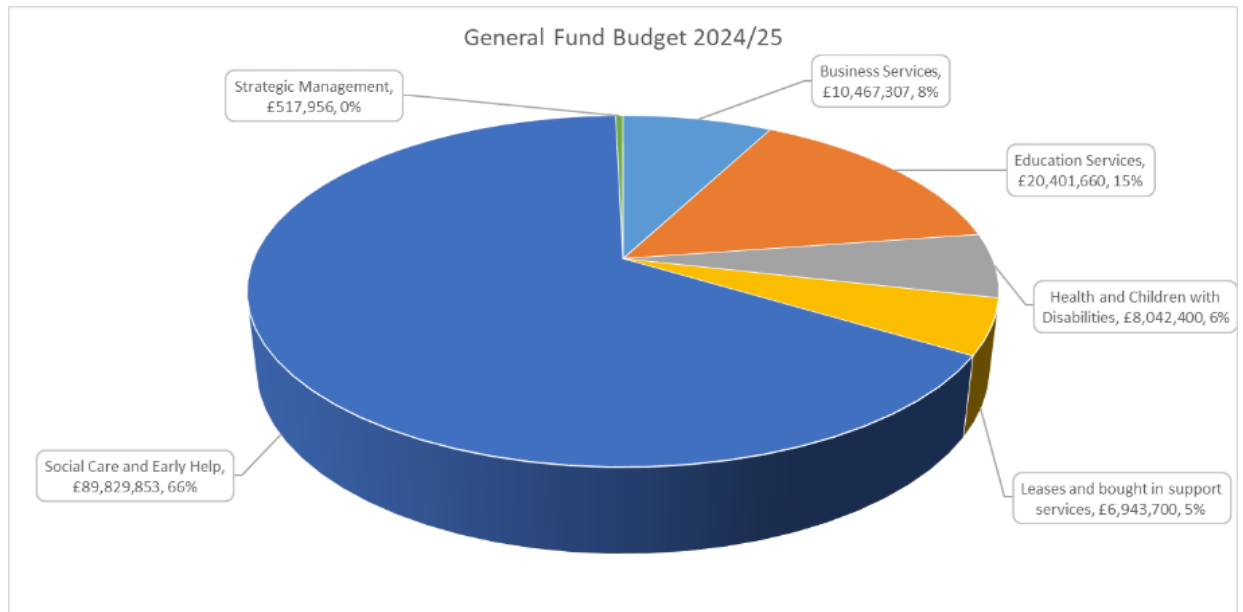
<p>Delivering the recommendations of the AfC Sufficiency Strategy at pace in terms of using commissioning opportunities effectively and developing more local provision where it makes financial sense to do so.</p>	<p>implementing the recommendations including development of the Independent Fostering Agency, development of commissioning expertise and capacity, evaluation of options associated with increasing local residential placements and associated support services.</p>
<p>COMMISSIONING/PROCUREMENT COMPETENCE</p> <p>Building commissioning and procurement capacity and competence in the organisation to ensure that placement and other procurement activity is as effective as possible in finding solutions and driving down cost.</p>	<p>The organisation will continue to build competence and capacity within the commissioning team to ensure that the improved practice from the last three years in relation to placement commissioning continues and that we get the best price when undertaking procurement activity. The Associate Director of Business Development and Strategic Commissioning will continue to develop the commissioning strategy to ensure that we are making best use of our market share and where appropriate planning ahead with providers to get preferable rates. We will also continue to link in with commissioning partnership arrangements for SEND and social care.</p>
<p>REVIEW</p> <p>The effective review of placements, plans and working models is key to ensuring that we are promoting independent, resilient families and that we are prioritising the funding we have in an effective way.</p>	<p>The company has established practices to ensure that plans and placements are periodically reviewed to support the continued alignment of funding and support to the changing needs of young people. It is important that we continue to work to improve these practices particularly in social care and SEND where the financial pressure and scope for changing needs is most significant.</p>
<p>MODERNISATION OF WORKING PRACTICE</p> <p>Review of how we work to ensure that we are making best use of technology, flexible working practices and that support services offer value for money.</p>	<p>AfCs 'Future Ways of Working Strategy; outlines how we will build back better in terms of efficient use of buildings, homeworking, digital technologies and reduced travel / printing. Cyclical reviews are also undertaken of all back office support services.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL MONITORING & PLANNING</p> <p>Detailed monitoring of all high risk areas on an ongoing basis and consistent reporting internally, to the AfC Board and to the Councils.</p>	<p>The finance team will continue to monitor budgets and report performance to budget managers, leadership teams, the board and councils regularly. The finance team will also work to further improve budget awareness and confidence in managing budgets across the organisation.</p>

7. SHORT TERM BUDGET

7.1 In setting the 2024/25 AfC has worked closely with each of the three councils and the table below shows the proposed position and movement for next year. Detailed budget reports will be considered by each council between January and March 2024.

	Richmond	Kingston	Windsor and Maidenhead	Total
Contract price movements	£	£	£	£
2023/24 Base budget	45,829,700	43,802,500	29,144,973	118,777,173
Growth	4,716,300	4,655,100	3,038,344	12,409,743
Savings - agreed with councils	-423,500	-1,287,400	-2,206,000	-3,916,900
Savings - unfunded Inflation	-93,300	-97,200	-92,000	-282,500
Unfunded Inflation - increments	93,300	97,200	92,000	282,500
Inflation - contracts	1,628,300	1,036,500	1,494,294	4,159,094
Net Growth	5,921,100	4,404,200	2,326,637	12,651,937
Grant and virement changes 23/24 and 24/25	2,819,800	1,954,300	-335	4,773,765
Net change after allowing for grant adjustments / virements	8,740,900	6,358,500	2,326,302	17,425,702
2024/25 opening contract price excl DSG	54,570,600	50,161,000	31,471,275	136,202,875
DSG funding in contract price	29,990,300	27,656,000	15,723,890	73,370,190
2024/25 base contract price incl DSG	84,560,900	77,817,000	47,195,165	209,573,065
Growth to be awarded in year - pay award	1,087,000	1,152,000	-	2,239,000

7.2 The budget is planned to be spent as follows:



- 7.3 The biggest risk to achieving a balanced position on general fund services is the cost of needs led services both in terms of potential increases in the number of children needing support and the average cost of that support. Inflation continues to be unpredictable and has the potential to have a very material impact on cost of services.
- 7.4 The ringfenced DSG funds are not expected to achieve a balanced position due to underfunding for high needs education services within the councils' DSG grant allocations. Cost management programmes are in place and outlined in the respective borough Deficit Management Plans and these plans must be a core focus over the period of this strategy and beyond. AfC continues to work to raise awareness of this issue and has the clear remit that statutory obligations to the young people should continue to be met despite the government underfunding.
- 7.5 Where the savings plans identified do not achieve an in-year balanced position, discussions have been held with the relevant Council to agree authorised overspends. Where a balanced position is reliant on the achievement of the riskier savings, contact is ongoing with the relevant Council to report progress against achievement of the cost reductions and if these do not come to fruition there should be an agreement about alternative cost reductions or an in-year contract change control.

8 MEDIUM TERM BUDGET

- 8.1 Achieving for Children undertakes high level budgeting for a five year period (including current) to ensure that there is a planned approach to delivering services. The following table outlines the high level changes to the general fund budget (Non DSG). The expectations are reviewed with the councils each year to ensure that medium term financial planning remains aligned. This table represents a point in time. Savings plans and growth requirements are periodically reviewed during the year to identify how budget gaps can be resolved. This is informed by changes in the council's relative financial positions as well as emerging pressures and opportunities within children's services.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
Growth - direct costs	9,660,935	3,487,390	3,606,148	3,621,658	20,376,130
Growth - indirect costs	2,748,813	1,135,000	815,000	665,000	5,363,813
Savings - agreed with councils	-3,916,900	-1,869,718	-1,254,861	-1,254,861	-8,296,340
Savings - unfunded Inflation	-282,500	-280,000	-280,000	-280,000	-1,122,500
Inflation - pay award	2,696,000	1,989,540	2,038,944	1,449,234	8,173,717
Inflation - increments	282,500	280,000	280,000	280,000	1,122,500
Inflation - contracts	3,702,155	2,938,076	2,366,411	1,919,153	10,925,795
Inflation - pensions	0	0	570,000	0	570,000
Net change before budget adjustments	14,891,004	8,585,666	8,585,666	8,585,666	40,648,002

8.2 The table above summarises the latest position and work is ongoing to identify further cost mitigation / reduction for the latter years of the plan. It is also recognised that significant work needs to be undertaken to reduce down the level of year on year growth required for needs-led social care placements.

8.3 In relation to the general fund the biggest financial challenges for the medium term period are:

- The management of need for social care and health services and the management of unit costs in these areas. This will be undertaken through the monitoring of thresholds to access services, continued investment in early intervention and the further development of the local placement market and placement commissioning / brokerage function.
- Management of increasing staff costs, particularly in social care due to regional shortages of suitably qualified staff. The workforce strategy will look to reduce reliance on expensive agency workers through targeted recruitment campaigns, improved agency arrangements and a review of the incentives package for staff groups where recruitment and retention is challenging. AfC also periodically reviews delivery models to support efficiency of the service offer and how it is delivered.
- The challenging savings targets that have been built into all three council contracts as well as additional savings required to fund pressures that have not been funded within the base contract prices. The project management approach will keep the leadership team focused on the achievement of these programmes and associated savings. There will be early conversations where the achievement of savings is not possible to reach a mutual agreement with the relevant council about associated actions.

- 8.4 In addition to the general fund pressures the company is working towards bringing DSG funded high needs education expenditure more in line with the associated Government Grant allocation across all three boroughs. This activity is likely to last for at least the period covered within this plan. Detailed plans are in place and AfC continues to work closely with the councils, DfE and partners to review and improve the position.
- 8.5 The Directors of Childrens Services and Chief Operating & Finance Officer are responsible for identifying savings with their leadership teams and planning for the implementation of these changes. They are supported in doing this by a senior member of the finance team who attends their leadership meetings. All major areas of pressure have detailed financial recovery plans which are subject to continual monitoring, review and contingency action planning where actions do not achieve the required financial impact. It is integral that AfC achieves the plans' ambitions to reduce and control needs-led budgets so that services can be sustained in the longer term.

9. FINANCIAL CONTROL

- 9.1 AfC operates a devolved approach to budget management with nominated budget managers responsible for service spend. The budget manager is a member of staff at team manager level or above and is the officer who makes the operational decisions about how to spend money. The ongoing financial challenges faced by the company has necessitated a review of the arrangements that govern budget manager spend. Under the revised financial regulations budget managers are able to spend up to their designated budget but must formally seek permission from their director to spend above this limit. The director may opt to transfer budget from elsewhere in their department on a temporary or permanent basis to enable the higher level of spend or may seek a contract change control from the relevant commissioning council. Each budget manager is supported by a dedicated management accountant who meets with them at least quarterly and more frequently for higher risk budgets. The finance team produces monthly monitoring information which is signed off by the relevant leadership team before being sent to the Board and relevant council.
- 9.2 The Company has three main categories of spend which determines the key controls and levers for controlling spend:

Budget Type	Key controls
<p>Controllable budgets are budgets that AfC can directly impact by taking associated actions. They support statutory services but may not in themselves be statutory. Examples include staffing, training, stationary, travel, supplies and services.</p>	<p>Leadership Team approval of vacancies prior to recruitment.</p> <p>Centralisation of general budgets e.g. training, stationary, furniture and equipment etc.</p> <p>Where overspends are anticipated senior level sign off of spend over a pre agreed limit</p> <p>All budgets allocated to individual budget managers and signed off prior to the year</p> <p>Periodic review of agency staff by Leadership Team</p>

	<p>Budget manager sign off of all invoices</p> <p>Budget manager training</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by leadership teams monthly</p>
<p>Stepped Costs are those that are demand led but can be directly controlled through associated action and the risks associated with reducing spend can be managed more easily. The main category of budget here relates to salary costs within frontline teams where the number of staff may not have to increase with every increase in demand but where there are a certain number of staff needed to maintain caseloads within an agreed range.</p>	<p>Leadership Team approval of all vacancies prior to recruitment.</p> <p>Leadership Team consideration of alternative options via the request form before recruitment decisions made</p> <p>Monitoring of workloads via information produced by the data intelligence team</p> <p>Manager sign off of funded establishment annually</p> <p>Periodic Leadership Team review of teams over establishment</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by Leadership Team monthly</p>

<p>Demand (or needs / direct) led budgets are those that are directly linked to the meeting of statutory duty and are difficult to influence in the short term. Examples include placements for children looked after, rent and allowances for care leavers, direct costs related to agreed educational placements and legal costs associated with specific cases.</p>	<p>Child by child placement monitoring and sign off by budget manager monthly</p> <p>Budget manager sign off of all invoices</p> <p>Attendance of key staff at decision making panels including finance where finance decisions are being made</p> <p>Periodic high cost placement reviews</p> <p>Monthly reconciliation and production of management information</p> <p>Periodic review of placement types by commissioning team</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring produced by finance team in consultation with the budget manager</p> <p>Consideration of overall position by Leadership Team monthly</p> <p>Development of the commissioning team and placement sufficiency strategy</p>
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9.3 A number of programmes are under way to support the organisation to improve financial performance including recruitment initiatives to reduce reliance on unbudgeted and expensive agency staff and further development of options to improve placement brokerage and sufficiency.

9.4 In recent years a more structured project management approach was introduced with the DCSs and COFO having overarching responsibility for the achievement of savings in their areas. The relevant leadership team and the Board receive updates on progress and risks. Each programme has a service lead, a project lead and a finance lead. Progress and achievement of net cost reductions will be monitored during the year with alternative actions being agreed with commissioners, if needed, through periodic commissioning meetings.

10. RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

10.1 The following table summarises key financial risks for the coming year and associated actions

RISK / CHALLENGE	ACTION TO MITIGATE RISK
<p>Inflation - inflationary pressures pose the most significant risk to children's services budget in 2024/25. Pressure is being experienced on placement budgets, staffing budgets, agency staffing budgets, contractual spend and fuel budgets.</p>	<p>Inflationary increases have been built into budgets but it is possible given the escalation in RPI and CPI that it may exceed the amount allowed for. Robust commissioning practises that minimise inflationary increases on expenditures as well as solution focused partnership working will be key to understanding this pressure and mitigating it wherever possible.</p>
<p>Placement budgets – This pressure will be impacted by the number of children who require support next year as well as the complexity of their needs. Practitioners have reported a clear step up in complexity of need since the onset of the pandemic and this is coming through in more intensive and expensive support packages. Children's services have been operating in an environment where demand outsrips supply for specialist placements in recent years and the increase in demand nationally and locally due to the increase in asylum seekers supported is exacerbating the placement shortfall and pushing up prices.</p>	<p>Internal review system for all placements to ensure they are the most appropriate in terms of service and cost.</p> <p>Detailed financial monitoring at an individual placement level.</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>Engagement with joint commissioning groups / initiatives to drive down cost and increase purchasing power</p> <p>Monthly financial monitoring updates provided to each council and quarterly meetings with commissioners to discuss latest performance and activity data, risks and associated actions</p> <p>Claim of additional grant funding wherever possible for refugees, unaccompanied asylum seekers and care leavers</p> <p>Demand management strategies such as edge of care support and other established early help services.</p>
<p>Balance young people's outcomes with balancing budget - Risk that the organisation does not strike the right balance between spending within budget and ensuring that children and young people are safe from harm / their wellbeing is supported.</p>	<p>The Leadership Teams review the monthly monitoring and agree on all financial actions that could impact on services. This ensures that the service impact of financial action plans is considered and risks identified/ monitored. Director overview of all decisions relating to their directorates</p>

<p>Achievement of savings and agreement of one off costs for redundancy etc. - Risk that savings are not achieved leading to in year overspends.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring of progress against savings plans.</p> <p>Project plans for each of the high value schemes with regular reporting to the Leadership Teams</p> <p>Quarterly progress reporting to the AfC Board and Commissioners.</p>
<p>Risk of cross subsidy if the level of funding that can be afforded by each LA differs</p>	<p>Operational area budgets recorded separately to avoid high level cross subsidy. Demand budgets ringfenced to ensure that placement / transport budgets are not vulnerable to cross subsidy</p> <p>Definition of core service provided by Business Services and agreement about level of support for each borough in the context of funding levels</p> <p>Annual financial exercise undertaken to check actual expenditure levels against contract prices</p> <p>Oversight by Directors of Children’s Services and Chief Operating Officer</p>
<p>Risk that Councils do not agree proposed savings and growth</p>	<p>Regular briefings for councillors throughout the budget setting processes</p>

11. CASHFLOW AND LIQUIDITY

- 11.1 AfC has access to a contractual Revolving Credit Facility of up to £45m to provide working capital for the provision of the three major contracts with the owning Councils. This is needed as services are billed for in arrears and so it can be up to two months before the company receives payment for services delivered. The company uses the facility to ensure that there is sufficient liquidity to meet day to day operational needs. AfC holds short term deposits with a number of banking institutions to ensure that the administrative burden of operating the loan facility remains practical. Investment limits are agreed with the owning councils annually as part of the Financial Plan.
- 11.2 AfC has had an average borrowing of £28m over the last 12 months, comfortably below the £45m. The borrowing essentially pays for the services delivered to the councils on credit and any one off set up costs that remain on the Company’s Balance Sheet.

12 GOING CONCERN

- 12.1 As a company, AfC is required to demonstrate that it is a going concern. In order to do this the Board needs to consider its future financial position and assure itself that its position for the short/medium term is capable of continuing to trade. It also needs to provide assurance to the

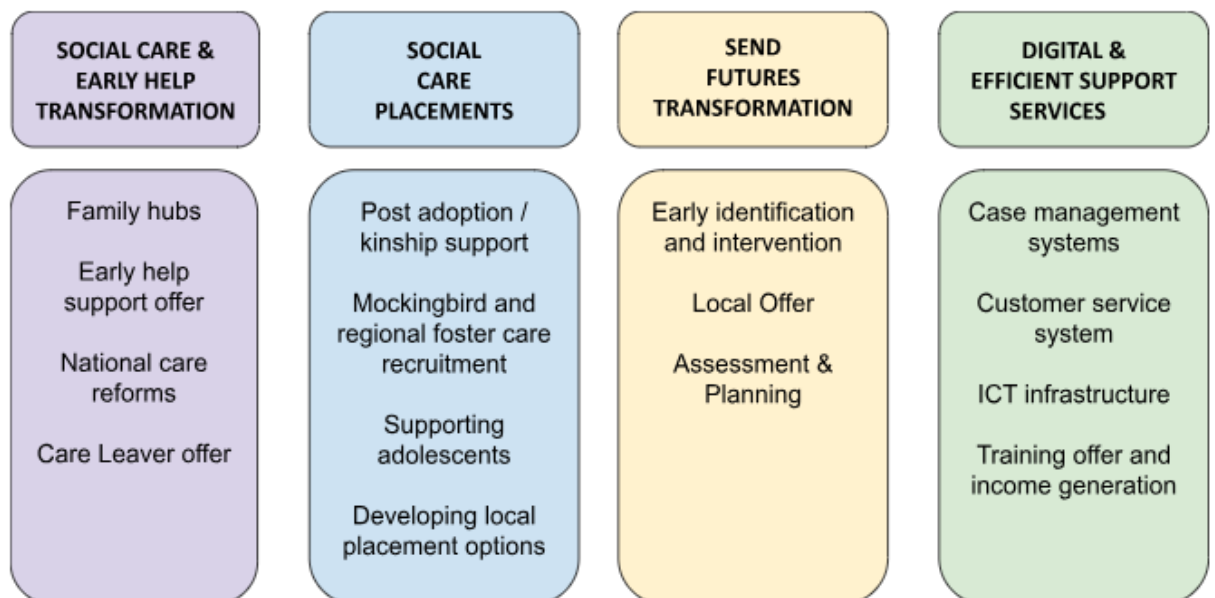
councils that its financial plans are robust and issues around its future financial position are presented to, and agreed by the Councils as part of the detailed budget setting process.

- 12.2 It is important that AfC continues to engage with the three owning Councils in relation to what is affordable and what level and cost of service the councils need to make the contracts with AfC financially viable for them.
- 12.3 Due to the nature of AfC’s services and the decision to offer AfC staff the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) AfC holds a considerable pension liability on its Balance Sheet. The decision to offer the LGPS was made at the inception of AfC and is an important factor in ensuring that AfC is in a good position to recruit and retain high quality social care staff. It is important that AfC is able to explain this position to potential trading partners and provide assurance that it is a going concern. This will be done through the Statement of Accounts and associated publications.

13 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

13.1 It is clear that the coming years will be financially challenging for Achieving for Children. It is of paramount importance that the organisation continues to work with commissioning partners to ensure a mutual understanding of existing and emerging pressures and reaches agreement on the level of funding available, and how that funding should be prioritised in line with both organisation and council objectives. The following activity will be prioritised over the coming months to move this plan forward:

- Continued implementation of the four key transformation programmes:



- Prioritisation of actions detailed in the Workforce Strategy including recruitment initiatives, campaigns and incentives to move towards a more permanent and affordable workforce
- Achievement and monitoring of detailed budgets and associated savings plans
- Continued demand management through early intervention work and threshold management

- Continued detailed monitoring and reporting to AfC leadership teams, AfC Board and commissioners
- Progression of this strategy alongside the AfC Strategic Plan and 2024/25 budget through council decision making processes

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN TREASURY PLAN 2024/25**Introduction**

1. AfC is not allowed to enter into any borrowing, credit facility or investment arrangement (other than trade credit in the normal course of business) unless it has been approved by the Councils. The Financial Plan (the Plan) provides the authorisation for AfC to borrow and invest in the particular situations specified and the Plan has to be approved by the Members, as the owners of AfC. The decision to approve the Treasury Plan has been delegated to the Ownership Board (formerly Joint Committee) as a Band Three Reserved Matter.
2. The Plan will be reviewed at least annually and when events require a review in order to ensure that the Company's banking and treasury activities are operating efficiently and that risks are being appropriately managed in order to comply with the Councils' treasury policies.

Borrowing

3. AfC will only borrow from the Councils and in accordance with the terms set out in the Revolving Credit Facility (RCF).

Investment

4. AfC will only invest surplus funds, including sums borrowed under the RCF, in order to manage its cash flow to make payment of its obligations in a timely manner without having to borrow on a frequent basis from the Councils.
5. Such investment will be on the following basis:
 - a) Investment will be in deposit/instant access bank accounts that can be withdrawn at notice on the same day
 - b) Investment will be in banks approved by the Councils
 - c) Investment in each bank will be subject to a maximum amount (or limit) invested at any time
 - d) The aggregate of investments in all banks will also be subject to a maximum amount

e) The banks that AfC can make investments in and the limits are as follows:

BANK	LIMIT OF INVESTMENT
Barclays	£4,000,000
Nationwide	£3,000,000
NatWest bank	£5,000,000
Svenska Handelsbanken	£2,000,000
Total Investment	£14,000,000

The total aggregate investments that AfC can have outstanding at any time is £14 million

6. At any time the Councils can jointly agree to
 - a) remove approval or vary the investment limits for any of the banks, and vary the total aggregate investments
 - b) approve additional bank(s) with appropriate limits on investment, and
 - c) any such changes shall be agreed in writing (email) by the Finance Directors of each Council and AfC (or their appointed deputies for this purpose) and shall be reported to the next meeting of the Ownership Board and adopted as a change to the Plan as soon as practical and appropriate.
7. The treasury management and banking functions in AfC will be supervised by the Chief Operating and Finance Officer and undertaken by appropriately experienced staff within the finance section of AfC. Treasury activity will be planned and reviewed weekly and longer term plans prepared at least annually.
8. AfC will take advice and act on instructions from the councils, acting jointly, on its treasury activities and investments.

Report Title:	Council Plan 2024-28
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Werner, Leader of the Council
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report shares the new Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council's strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan. The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.

The Council Plan is being shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27 March. Recommendations made by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion. Where recommendations are accepted they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16 April for agreement and adoption.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet considers the Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix and:

- i) Agrees to take the Council Plan to Full Council in April for consideration and agreement.**
- ii) Considers the recommendations made by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny at their meeting on 25 March 2024, and agrees to accept these, as appropriate.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Cabinet agrees to share the Council Plan, 2024-28, at Full Council in April, for agreement and adoption. Cabinet agrees to include any amendments resulting from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny recommendations, where agreed.	This is the recommended option.
Cabinet does not agree to share the Council Plan, 2024-28, with Full Council.	This is not recommended. The Council Plan is the key strategic document, for the council.

2.1 The Council Plan is the council’s most important strategic document – it sets out our vision over the next few years for the council and the borough; our priorities; what we’ll do to deliver those priorities; and how we’ll measure our success.

2.2 The Strategic Aims and Priorities set out in the Council Plan, are as follows:

Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

- Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council’s financial position.
- Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough’s key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities.
- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.

Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen the council’s governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.

2.3 The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, summarising a selection of activities that will be delivered in order to achieve our priorities, and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which will enable us to monitor progress, and identify and respond to issues. The Council Plan deliverables focus on the coming financial year (2024-25) and will be updated on an annual basis. The full Council Plan is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.4 Progress against the Council Plan will be monitored through the Quarterly Assurance Reports (QAR) to Cabinet. The Quarterly Assurance Report will include the revised set of KPIs included within the Technical Appendix and share updates on progress against deliverables. A full assessment of progress on delivering the Council Plan will be included within an Annual Report. An annual review and refresh will be undertaken to reassess and update our deliverables and KPIs as appropriate.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Council Plan delivered	Performance off track on > 40% of KPI Failure to progress against substantial number of deliverables.	Majority of KPI show performance on track. Good progress against majority of deliverables.	Progress exceeds milestones identified in Technical Appendix. Performance against KPIs above target in substantial number of areas.		31 March 2025 (Annual Review and refresh)

4. FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Council Plan provides the framework for decisions on resource allocation and the draft Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared as part of the reports to Cabinet and Full Council on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in November 2023 and February 2024. Budget allocations are informed by our priorities, and in turn, the activities undertaken to achieve these priorities are developed in line with the resources available.
- 4.2 The Council Plan makes it clear that setting the council on to a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively, must be the primary focus. The current financial position constrains the organisation's ability to pursue wider priorities until it achieves a more stable financial position. However, the council remains ambitious for the borough. The council will spend almost £100m next year in delivering essential services, in addition to capital investment of £13m in the borough's critical infrastructure. The council is also undertaking an ambitious transformation programme to change the ways in which we deliver services, and to enable more efficient and effective delivery of our priorities.
- 4.3 The full Council Plan was considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 25 March. A verbal presentation of the recommendations made at this meeting will be shared at Cabinet for consideration and discussion. Any amendments agreed will be reflected in the final the Council Plan will go to Full Council on 16 April 2024, for agreement and adoption.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None. Legal implications associated with specific deliverables will be considered as part of the development and delivery of these activities.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Council Plan includes key deliverables and performance indicators which enable the council to monitor its performance and progress. This includes performance against our corporate priorities, delivery of statutory services and in delivering the savings and transformation needed to achieve a balanced budget. The Council Plan provides a strategic framework which supports the organisation to assess and manage risk.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 **Equalities.** An Equalities Impact Assessment for the Council Plan is attached at **Appendix C**. The Council Plan makes clear the council's commitment to addressing inequalities in the borough and providing support to those in need at the earliest opportunity. The specific priorities and deliverables focused on equalities, or with particular equalities impacts, are highlighted within the EQIA.

7.2 **Climate change/sustainability.** Climate change and sustainability are a key priority for the council, as reflected in **Strategic Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough**, and specifically under the priority to 'Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity'. The delivery of our climate change and sustainability aims requires action across all areas of the organisation and externally with our communities, businesses and partners.

7.3 **Data Protection/GDPR.** Not applicable.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The Council Plan has been informed by engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups including: young people, older people, people with disabilities, the voluntary and community sector, Members, parishes and staff. A total of 224 people participated in the sessions, with more contributing to responses submitted via email or the online survey. There was support for the general direction of the council's emerging aims and priorities, with feedback contributing to their shaping and definition in a number of key areas, such as partnership working. The early community engagement highlighted priority concerns for residents and the VCS and the later sessions fed into the definition of the aims and priorities. A summary of key themes from the engagement is included at **Appendix B**.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 If agreed by Cabinet, the Council Plan will be shared with Full Council on 16 April for their consideration and agreement. It will then be adopted with immediate effect. Communications and engagement with Members, staff and stakeholders will follow the adoption of the Plan, to ensure that it is embedded across the organisation and externally.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by three appendices:

- Appendix A: Council Plan, including Technical Appendix
- Appendix B: Council Plan Engagement Summary
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix D: Recommendations from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny – to follow

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	12.03.24	15.03.24
Elaine Browne	Monitoring Officer	12.03.24	13.03.24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	12.03.24	12.03.24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	12.03.24	13.03.24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	12.03.24	15.03.24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services	12.03.24	15.03.24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	12.03.24	15.03.24

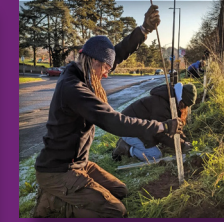
Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Simon Werner, Leader of the Council	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	Not applicable

Report Author: Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD 139 COUNCIL PLAN 2024 - 2028



A borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all

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1 Foreword

Our borough is an amazing place. Beautiful countryside, desirable towns and villages, fantastic schools, with strong transport links to regional, national and international connections, and a rich portfolio of heritage assets. We can all be proud of living here and it is not surprising that so many people come to live, work and enjoy time in our borough.

I'm a life-long resident and have been a councillor here for over 30 years now so I understand the importance of the council and the wide-ranging impacts it has on our communities. We are responsible not just for the highly visible services like fixing potholes and collecting rubbish but also providing essential services to the most vulnerable members of our communities including children, people with lifelong disabilities and older people.

The council continues to face significant financial challenges and remains in a weak and serious financial position, which will take time to turn around. Higher inflation and interest rates are driving up council costs, our income has fallen and demand for our services – particularly adult social care, children's services and housing – continues to rise. We also have specific circumstances, as a result of historic decisions, taken nationally and locally, and also macro-economic pressures more recently including high levels of inflation and interest rates which weaken the council's financial position. These include low rates of council tax compared to other authorities – meaning that the council is not able to bring in as much income as other local authorities to fund local services. We have high levels of debt relative to the size of the council's budget and low general fund reserves.

It is in this challenging context that we present our Council Plan to provide a framework of aims and priorities that we will focus on delivering over the coming years.



**Cllr Simon Werner,
Leader of the Council**

“I really want to see the council back at the heart of the community – being a champion for residents, supporting our communities and businesses and enabling our voluntary sector to thrive.”

Creating more social housing is a key priority for the council going forwards.

We have a commitment to clean up the borough. I've seen for myself and heard from you how litter, graffiti and fly tipping are very visible across the borough and I am passionate about sorting out these problems. We also want to increase what the council is doing to head towards net-zero and increase our biodiversity, to ensure that we are responsible guardians of our landscape and wildlife.

In my view, for the times we are living through, there has never been a greater need for strong local government. Our new Council Plan demonstrates how a strong democratic council working collaboratively across the borough can deliver (and advocate for) the policies and resources that all residents need to live a good life within the framework of a resilient, sustainable, healthy borough.

***Cllr Simon Werner
Leader of the Council***



Our top priority must be to put the council on a strong financial footing. Without money, we simply cannot do all the things we want to do and there continue to be tough choices ahead.

The borough's popularity means that housing is expensive, and many residents struggle to afford to rent and buy homes for their families.

2 Introduction

As the head of the council's officer team, I can say how proud we are to serve the people of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. We take our responsibilities seriously.

We know that the council plays a big part in people's lives – not just in providing services to all members of our community; but in supporting some of our most vulnerable residents; driving economic prosperity; creating opportunity for our young people and helping to shape the future of the borough – our people and places.

As someone who was born and brought up in the borough, I was very lucky to benefit from the opportunities it provides. My motivation is to make sure that everybody can benefit from those same opportunities – working to protect what people love about the borough and improve what needs to be improved.

Local government – like many other parts of the public sector – faces some big challenges. Our council is no different. We undoubtedly face a serious position financially and this remains our top priority. But we also have big opportunities ahead and we're determined that the budget challenges we face won't define us. We'll continue to deliver high quality services and work tirelessly to improve the borough. I see such strong determination by colleagues at the council – our Councillors and staff – to get things done in difficult circumstances since I joined as Chief Executive in April 2023.

Our new Council Plan sets out our vision for the borough and for the council. It's not intended to capture everything we do, but it does set out those things we think are most important and the areas we will focus on. These are our strategic priorities – what we want to achieve as an organisation and for the people of the borough.



Stephen Evans
Chief Executive

“This document is intended to set out a blueprint for progress – driving a positive culture, reforming local services and delivering for the people we're here to serve. My task is to build an organisation capable of delivering our ambitions day in, day out. That is my focus.”

But it's important that we also set out what we're going to do to get there and how we'll measure our progress, so that the people of the borough can hold us to account. Which is why our new Council Plan sets out some of the key programmes and activities we will deliver over the next four years in order to achieve our ambitions, together with the performance targets we'll use to check we're on track.

As we look to the future, our goal is always to do what's best for the people of the borough. Working together towards a shared vision, putting the people of the borough at the heart of what we do, living our organisational values and demonstrating a strong customer ethos is what must drive us.

Stephen Evans
Chief Executive



3 The Royal Borough context

Located in the heart of the Thames Valley, the Royal Borough is rich in areas of natural beauty and green space and home to 153,500 people.

Distinct towns and villages, connected by attractive countryside, create a high-quality environment in which to live, work and visit. The Royal Borough's long association with the Crown has gifted the borough with an impressive portfolio of heritage assets, attractions and world class events.

Borough residents broadly enjoy longer and healthier lives than average in England. Healthy life expectancy at birth is 69.7 years for men and 70.3 years for women. An active, skilled and caring volunteer community regularly give their time and energy to a range of causes, and this helps people of all ages to connect with each other and enjoy life.

With 93.8% of borough schools rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding, the borough's educational offer is strong and local educational attainment (73.2% achieving Grades 9-4 at Key Stage 4) betters both the South East (67.5%) and England (65.4%) averages in 2022/23.

Strong regional, national and international links mean residents are able to take advantage of employment opportunities across the Thames Valley region and in the capital. The number of jobs available in comparison to working age residents (job density) is high compared to the South East, and unemployment is low at 3% (Oct-22 to Sep-23).

But there are challenges.

The majority of our population have happy and secure childhoods, go on to work in well-paid roles and enjoy a high quality of life. However, this can mask inequalities and there are concentrations of disadvantage and poverty within some neighbourhoods.

Around 230 households are in temporary accommodation, and many other residents have been supported with cost-of-living and benefits payments and services. In a 2022 survey, over half of residents said that the cost-of-living is their primary concern for the years ahead, with young adults (aged 18-34) being concerned particularly about access to affordable housing and job security. Around 4,000 households in the borough are in fuel poverty (2020) and around 2,000 children under 16 live in families with absolute low income (2021/22).

We are already living with the effects of climate change and weather events have increased in frequency and magnitude. These can have a devastating impact on the lives of residents and business owners in the borough, as seen most recently in the 2024 floods.

More information about the Royal Borough – including population, health, economy, and deprivation statistics – can be found online at [Berkshire Observatory](#) and benchmarking is available from [LG Inform](#).



4 About the Council Plan 2024-2028

Our vision, aims and priorities

This Council Plan sets out our vision for the borough over the next four years. The intention of the Plan is not to capture everything we do as a council but to provide a framework for the decisions we take – how we prioritise and how we allocate the resources we have available to achieve these priorities. It describes the most important aims and priorities that we will focus on completing.

It's important that the Plan is more than a high-level strategic document, which is why the 'technical appendix' at the end of this document sets out the key deliverables we will take forward to help achieve our ambitions, together with a set of performance targets for measuring progress and against which we will be held to account.

Although our aims and priorities are likely to remain fairly constant over the medium term, the rapidly changing environment within which the council operates means that we will update this Plan every year.

How we will measure our progress

The technical appendix in this Plan sets out:

- The priority deliverables we will complete to achieve our aims and priorities, with target delivery dates. The deliverables are focused on those actions we will complete in the coming year (2024-25) and new deliverables will be set ahead of each financial year of this four year Council Plan.
- A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measuring our performance across a range of important service areas. Our performance against these KPIs will be monitored and reported publicly on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Annual review

Council Plan aims, priorities and KPIs will be reviewed and updated each year to reflect any change in emphasis. An updated set of deliverables will be agreed by Cabinet on annual basis, focused on the year ahead.

The annual review will include an assessment of performance in the previous year and this will be reported to Cabinet alongside the annual budget, so that the council's strategic approach continues to influence how our resources are spent.

When strategic reviews are undertaken for service areas these may occasionally lead to changes in KPIs during the year; where this is the case, this will be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular quarterly reporting process and reflected in the next annual refresh of this Council Plan.



5 Our vision

Our vision for the council

We have a clear vision about the type of council we want to be:

- **An outward-looking, collaborative, learning organisation** where all colleagues feel empowered and take responsibility.
- **A council at the heart of the borough's communities** – championing local issues, caring for and empowering residents, and creating opportunity.
- **A council which operates on a regional footprint**, leading and convening partners and stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors to drive economic growth and prosperity and get the best outcome for our people and businesses.

Our vision for the borough

Our vision for the borough is: **“A borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all”**.

This vision is underpinned by our five strategic aims:

- Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively.
- A clean, green, safe and prosperous borough.
- Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood.
- People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities.
- A high-performing council that delivers for the borough.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all residents

We are committed to equality for all borough residents. As an employer, contractor of services and a community leader, we celebrate diversity and the contribution that different groups make to the borough.

We are committed to the delivery of accessible services and removing barriers to participation, making sure that we do not discriminate against someone because of perceived difference.

Our workforce and organisational values

The talent, skills, passion, knowledge and experience of our workforce are central to all that we do. If our Council Plan is our strategic blueprint, the culture of the organisation is what will achieve our ambition.

Our organisational values – refreshed and relaunched in September 2023 – set the standard of the way we work and behave every day. This means that we are all invested in, and accountable for, building and maintaining a positive working culture for our customers, partners, elected members and each other.



Humility



Empower



Respect



One Team

6 Our strategic aims and priorities

Over the next four years to 2028 we will focus on achieving five aims. These are cross-cutting, so every area of the council will look for ways to work together to support the delivery of our aims. These aims and priorities will be delivered in partnership, through different services working together and with a wide range of partners across the borough.

Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

- Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position.
- Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

Aim 2: A clean, green, safe and prosperous borough

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough's key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities.
- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

Aim 3: Children and young people have a good start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.



Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.



Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.



7 Technical Appendix

This technical appendix to the Council Plan sets out the key activities and deliverables we will focus on to achieve our strategic aims and priorities. The deliverables are in the main due for completion in the year 2024-25. Deliverables will be updated each year and focused on the most important actions that need to be taken to make progress towards our vision for the borough.

The appendix also contains the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which we will use to measure our progress and which we will report against publicly on a quarterly basis, so that the people of the borough can hold us to account. Many indicators have targets against which we will assess our performance. Some indicators are new measures, and we will be baselining data for this year with the intention of setting an appropriate target for next year. Some indicators do not have a specified target, but we will ‘track and report’ performance. We will assess our performance and progress by benchmarking against relevant comparator groups such as our CIPFA neighbours, our region or nationally where available and appropriate.

Priority activities and Key Performance Indicators

Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

148 Strategic Priority	Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council’s financial position		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Cabinet to review and scrutinise the in-year budget position on a monthly basis, with update reports published to aid public scrutiny. The annual draft budget to go through the scrutiny process before approval.	Process established	All directorates	
Create a new Performance & Resources Board – chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and attended by Assistant Directors from across services – to scrutinise and monitor budget forecasting, risk and savings delivery.	Process established	All directorates	
Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to scrutinise the in-year budget position on monthly basis. Directorate Leadership Teams to also scrutinise their budgets on a monthly basis.	Process established	All directorates	
Establish a new combined Quarterly Performance Report which brings together challenges; successes; progress against performance targets; risk management and audit performance – scrutinise the combined Report quarterly through ELT, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.	Process established	Chief Executive	

Strategic Priority	Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Review and refresh Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers and continue to report publicly on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.	Process established	All directorates
Review and update the Medium-Term Financial Strategy on an annual basis.	Process established	Resources

Strategic Priority	Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop and implement a new directorate level and corporate service transformation programme to drive service change and achieve savings. The new "Future Shape RBWM" transformation programme will ensure the right resources and governance structures are in place to improve delivery.	New programme established by April 2024	Chief Executive / Resources
Implement a new Case Management System (Mosaic) in Adults Services to support more effective service delivery and ensure income collection is timely and robust, including recovery of unpaid debt for care, and drive system and team integration to make "30-day billing with self-service" the norm for adult social care recipients.	March 2025	Adults, Health & Communities
Deliver Phase 1 of migration to a new Case Management System (LiquidLogic) in Children's Services to support more effective service delivery.	January 2025	Children's Services & Education
Embed new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to improve customer interaction.	September 2024	Resources
Upgrade and update our Content Management System (Phase 1) to support improvements to our public-facing website (Phase 2).	October 2024	Resources

Strategic Priority	Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money including insourcing where appropriate		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Develop and strengthen organisational capacity and capability in procurement and contract management, including through the recruitment of two new posts in the procurement team and developing a council-wide procurement pipeline document.	June 2024	Resources	
Review governance arrangements for contract management within the Place Directorate and embed improvements to strengthen practices, rationalise systems and quality assure delivery.	March 2025	Place	

Strategic Priority	Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
150 Review debtor management practices to improve collection rates across council functions and recover existing debt.	July 2024	Resources	
Identify and implement new commercial opportunities for revenue generation, including from events, advertising and sponsorship, with initial phase to review and rationalise existing cross-council approaches.	July 2024	Place	
Review all fees and charges on an annual basis to ensure that fee income continues to play an important role in generating income to fund local services.	Process established	Resources/all directorates	

Strategic Priority	Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop a Corporate Landlord Portfolio Management Plan to ensure council owned premises are well managed, compliant and that assets are regularly reviewed to optimise usage and commercial benefit.	March 2025	Place

Aim 1: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
151 Budget	% forecast variance to service revenue budget	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Forecast variance to service revenue budget (£000)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% savings made or on track	100%
	Savings made or on track (£000s)	Track and report [Monitoring]
	% of first bills for Adult Social Care delivered within 30 days	Baselining
	Overdue debts (excluding Housing Benefits over-payments) (£000s)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
Revenues	% of Council Tax collected	≥ 98.5%
	% of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) collected	≥ 98.3%

Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough

Strategic Priority	Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Engage with residents and businesses and deliver campaigns to keep the borough clean, increase recycling and promote positive behaviour in relation to reducing waste.	March 2025	Place
Work in partnership to deliver key priorities for public protection in the reduction of serious violence, crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and enabling community resilience through community warden engagement.	Process established	Place
Deliver effective regulatory functions to ensure a safe experience for our residents, visitors and businesses and encourage economic growth.	Process established	Place
Deliver effective Emergency Planning response to major events (e.g. flooding) and maintain effective business continuity arrangements to protect residents, businesses and visitors.	Process established	Place
152 Deliver an improved enforcement policy for businesses, to enable light touch, right touch enforcement along with civil penalties. Aim to prioritise based on risk, encourage self-compliance, with enhanced focus on repeat offenders and those who target the vulnerable.	March 2025	Place

Strategic Priority	Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Secure external funding to deliver energy and decarbonisation projects, with a focus on design work to enhance energy efficiency within council-operated leisure facilities.	December 2024	Place
Centralise council energy procurement and management in order to reduce utility costs.	April 2024	Place
Assess condition of facilities (Phase 1) as part of improvement to parks, playgrounds and green spaces for recreation and leisure, and build on community involvement in protecting and enhancing the environment including biodiversity.	September 2024	Place

Strategic Priority	Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Prepare a new Economic Growth Plan, with a focus on building stronger business partnerships, resilient and compliant businesses, vibrant town centres and local skills and employment.	October 2024	Place
Establish a new Berkshire Prosperity Board with the five other Berkshire local authorities to oversee a joined-up approach to driving economic growth and discharging functions transferred from Local Enterprise Partnerships.	May 2024	Chief Executive
Develop and agree a series of Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with anchor businesses and organisations to strengthen partnership working and support delivery of our priorities.	Process established	Place

153 Strategic Priority	Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough's key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop plans in partnership to unlock place-making opportunities within key town locations, including establishing programme governance for Windsor Vision, review and refresh of the Maidenhead Vision and Charter, and adoption of the Ascot Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).	March 2025	Place
Develop and embed a new Local Transport Plan.	April 2025	Place
Review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect priorities for investment.	March 2025	Place
Develop and adopt the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed advice and guidance on energy and carbon, climate adaptation, sustainable materials and construction, biodiversity and sustainable transport.	May 2024	Place

Strategic Priority	Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on tackling homelessness	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Review and revise Housing policies, practice and procurement to provide improved service and accommodation solutions to those who are homeless or seeking provision of social housing.	March 2025	Place
Identify opportunities and explore partnerships to increase availability of permanent housing/temporary accommodation and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.	March 2025	Place
Develop and adopt Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed guidance to support implementation of the affordable housing policy requirements in the Borough Local Plan.	July 2024	Place
Review empty Council Tax properties in the borough (Empty Homes Review) in support of central government initiatives to tackle the shortfall in national housing.	March 2025	Resources

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Aim 2: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
Waste management & recycling	% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling	≥ 50%
	Average no. missed collections per 100,000 collections	≤ 60
Environmental services Revenues	% of reported fly tipping (hazardous and non-hazardous) instances removed within timescale	Baselining
	Levels of litter [NI 195a]	Baselining
	Levels of detritus [NI195b]	Baselining
	% of grass cutting completed against target (parks, highways and cemeteries)	≥ 89%

Indicator		Target 2024/25
Highways	% satisfaction with the condition of road surfaces [NHT Survey KBI 23]	Track and report [Bigger is better]
Community safety	# of anti-social behaviour incidents and complaints	Track and report [Monitoring]
Environmental Health & Trading Standards	% food businesses that are broadly compliant with food law	≥ 80%
Environment	Borough's CO2 emissions estimates – Grand total (LA influence) (in kt CO2e)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Council's direct carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from council operations (in tonnes Co2e)	≤ 2,620
	% of borough land for nature	≥ 25.63%
Economy & Place-making	% of working age people in employment	Track and report [Bigger is better]
	% of working age people who are unemployed	Track and report [Smaller is better]
Housing & Rough Sleeping	% successful homelessness prevention activity for households subject to the Prevention/Relief duty	Track and report [Bigger is better]
	# of people sleeping rough	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of households in temporary accommodation that is located within the borough	Track and report [Bigger is better]


Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

Strategic Priority	Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Publish the support available within the borough so that children, young people, families, and professionals know where and how to seek help.	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education
Build on our targeted outreach support for young people and their families so that their needs can be safely met at home or in their communities, when appropriate.	September 2024	Children's Services & Education
Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
159 Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Review and appraise options for sustainable delivery of statutory health visiting and school nursing duties, alongside specific early help interventions, and deliver preparatory work ahead the new health visiting and school nursing specification implementation in August 2024.	August 2024	Children's Services & Education and Public Health

Strategic Priority	Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Participate in the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to better recruit foster carers.	April 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	
Embed the Mockingbird programme to strengthen support for foster carers as part of the Department for Education's Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme	September 2024	Children's Services & Education	
Develop an in-house registered children's home provision and supported accommodation model for Care Leavers to meet care needs safely and locally.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education	
Strengthen our approach to Family Network Meetings and Family Group Conferences to promote viable alternatives to foster and residential care and enhance support to kinship and connected carers.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education	
Develop a Care Leavers' guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to Care Leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education	

Strategic Priority	Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Active co-production with parents/carers and children/young people to ensure that the deliverables in the SEND Strategy are achieved.	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	
Develop a model for alternative education provision to better support children and young people with challenging behaviours who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education	
Develop resources to support assessment and early intervention in mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	

Strategic Priority	Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers.	March 2025 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Work with Adult Social Care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND.	April 2024	Children's Services & Education

Strategic Priority	Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
 Develop an enhanced practice framework, based on the Signs of Safety practice model.	September 2024	Children's Services & Education
Develop a Participation Strategy to strengthen engagement with children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact their lives.	May 2024	Children's Services & Education
Empower and support children and young people to co-produce their own plans, chair their own meetings when appropriate and involve them in meetings where they have the opportunity to hold decision-makers to account for commitments made to deliver or improve services (e.g. Youth Council, Girl's Forum).	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Identify new external funding opportunities and partnerships to enhance our local offer and enable us to support families through challenges, eg cost of living crisis.	Process established	Children's Services & Education
Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education

Strategic Priority	Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Strengthen Family Hubs to bring together different support services into a single accessible location in local communities as part of the 'tell us once' principle.	September 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Improve information sharing between services as part of the Early Help Systems Guide and RBWM threshold document.	April 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Implement the national reforms to childcare so that all eligible working parents have choices about affordable childcare and early education for their children.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education

Aim 3: Key performance indicators

Indicator	Target 2024/25	
Care leavers	% of care-leavers living in 'suitable accommodation' DfE (19-21yr olds)	≥ 95%
	% of care-leavers in education, training and employment (19-21yr olds)	≥ 60%
Child Protection	% of initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	≥ 90%
	% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for 2+wks visited within last 10 working days	≥ 95%
	% of children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2yrs	≤ 20%
	Domestic violence: # of children in households of MARAC referrals (including repeats)	Track and report [Monitoring]
	Domestic violence: # of reports to police in RBWM (crimes + non-crimes)	Track and report [Monitoring]

Indicator		Target 2024/25
Children in Care	% of Children in Care visited within statutory timescale (6wks)	≥ 95%
	% of Children in Care statutory reviews held within timescale	≥ 95%
	% of Children in Care with 3+ placements within 12mths	≤ 10%
	% of eligible young people with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	≥ 90%
	% of fostered children placed with Achieving for Children Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers	≥ 60%
	% of Children in Care who are attending a school rated by Ofsted as good/outstanding	≥ 90%
Children in Need	# of children referred per 10,000 population (cumulative)	≤ 530
	% of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12mths	≤ 22%
160 Education & SEND	% of borough schools rated by Ofsted as good/outstanding	≥ 95%
	% of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 (Disadvantaged)	≥ 44%
	% of EHCP assessments completed within 20wks (inc. exceptions)	≥ 90%
	# of new Education, Health and Care Plans issued	Track and report [Monitoring]
Family Hubs	# of children referred to Family Hubs	Track and report [Monitoring]
	% of referrals closed in the period with a positive outcome	≥ 90%
Health Visitors	% of children with a review at 2-2.5 years of age	≥ 77.2%
	% of eligible children receiving a 6-8wk review within 8wks	≥ 87%

Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

Strategic Priority	A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Refresh and embed our Health & Wellbeing Strategy to align across council priorities and embed a council-wide focus that builds in prevention for long-term improvements in healthy life expectancy.	Autumn 2025 (current strategy ends 2025)	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop a delivery plan and make progress towards RBWM becoming 'Smokefree' in line with the national ambition.	Summer 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.	Process established*	Adults, Health & Communities	
161 Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.	March 2025	Adults, Health & Communities	
Increase access and opportunities for residents to be physically active as part of daily life, including sport, leisure, active travel, and participation within community clubs, supported by newly published strategies and plans.	December 2024	Place	

* Phase 6 of [Whole systems approach to obesity: A guide to support local approaches \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) to be completed by November 2025

Strategic Priority	Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help to maintain and extend independent living		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review and embed stronger engagement practices with appropriate community sector partners to support early community-based, non-statutory help for residents, helping them to remain living independently for longer in their own homes.	September 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Work with Achieving for Children to provide clearer pathways into adulthood, including independent living, so that more young people can thrive in their local communities as adults.	September 2024	Adults, Health & Communities and Children's Services & Education	
Review ongoing arrangements for care packages and services such as day centres to ensure that clients receive targeted and effective support/provision at the right cost to the council. This includes services funded by the Better Care Fund as well as directly by the Council to ensure compliance with the Care Act 2014.	Process established	Adults, Health & Communities	
Help to reduce the impact of cost of living rises on our residents, with a focus on those most at risk, through targeted financial and practical support e.g. Here to Help, Household Support Fund, Warm Spaces, Multiply.	Process established	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.	November 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Review and revise the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy to enable wider use of the funding in supporting residents to live a safe and full life in their own homes.	September 2024	Place	


Strategic Priority	Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Drive continual service quality and practice improvement, building on forthcoming Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection recommendations: including co-producing solutions with service-users which seek to increase the length of time that residents can live independently at home. This includes timely reablement to further reduce the reliance on long-term support.	Refreshed plan following CQC inspection	Adults, Health & Communities	
Explore options and potential risk/return of working with Optalis to provide a council owned and run nursing home, catering for the most complex level of care needs.	November 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop more “lifetime homes” in Windsor and up to 18 “Shared Lives” arrangements across the borough to enable more people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes or with families, reducing the number of out-of-borough residential placements and further increasing service value for money.	March 2026	Adults, Health & Communities	

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Aim 4: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
164 Adult social care	[Rank] % satisfied/very satisfied with the care & support services they receive (exc LD customers)	Ranking within England top 10%
	% of safeguarding concerns progressing to enquiry	Track and Report [Monitoring]
	% of permanent admissions to a care home for those aged 65yrs+ (previously self-funded)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	# of permanent admissions to care for those aged 65yrs+ per 100,000	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of clients with Learning Disabilities in settled accommodation	≥ 78.8%
	% of Mental Health clients securing appropriate employment	≥ 8%
	% of older people (aged 65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	≥ 80%
	Average length of stay in residential and nursing homes for older people (by enabling people to stay at home for longer)	35 days less than baseline
	# of people placed in Shared Lives	≥ 6
Health improvement	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Male)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Female)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of service users who have successfully quit smoking at 4 weeks	≥ 60%
	# of residents with drug and alcohol issues engaged in treatment, support, and recovery services.	≥ 604
Leisure centres	# of attendances at leisure centres	1% increase on baseline

Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

Strategic Priority	Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop and deliver a refreshed Communications and Engagement Strategy to strengthen and update the council's overarching approach to communications with our communities and other stakeholders.	December 2024	Chief Executive
Continue to embed the council's engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.	August 2024	Chief Executive
Establish a community-based Equality Forum in order to strengthen relationships with diverse groups in our communities.	June 2024	Chief Executive
 Develop and embed a new Customer Services Strategy.	April 2025	Resources
Develop a comprehensive asset-based community development plan to leverage existing community resources, skills, networks and grant funding priorities in order to strengthen communities. Further develop a targeted capacity-building program for communities to build the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate and lead asset-based community development projects.	January 2025	Adults, Health & Communities

Strategic Priority	Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, and parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review and embed stronger engagement practices with appropriate community sector partners to support early community-based, non-statutory help for residents, helping them to remain living independently for longer in their own homes.	August 2025	Adults, Health & Communities	
Further develop the infrastructure support and guidance for a wider range of community and voluntary groups so that there is a wide base of services to support residents across the Borough. Use this wide base to promote and support a range of targeted activities including delivery of projects which support community-led priorities.	March 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Engage with all stakeholders to review and revise the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to reduce Homelessness in the Borough and ensure that those in need have a safe place to call home.	March 2025	Place	

Strategic Priority	Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Deliver lawful elections and by-elections and ensure effective management of the Electoral Register.	December 2024	Resources	
Embed strong governance and strengthen programme and performance management, including through Quarterly Assurance Reports and a new Corporate Transformation Board.	Process established	Chief Executive	
Deliver the Planning Service improvement plan to strengthen service-delivery across key customer-facing and enabling functions.	March 2025	Place	
Deliver planned IT infrastructure upgrades and maintenance including: Broadband, Firewalls replacement, Network refresh, Laptop and mobile phone refresh, Wifi replacement and Telephony review.	March 2025	Resources	

Strategic Priority	Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Deliver planned digital migration of Local Land charges system.	December 2024	Resources	

Strategic Priority	Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Address continuing challenges with recruitment and staff retention by continuing to develop our staff offer and opportunities to reform terms and conditions	March 2025	All directorates	
Continue roll-out of HR platform (iTrent) modules (workforce). Identify and implement automation of HR platform (iTrent) to deliver increased functionality and reduce manual practices.	October 2024	Resources	
Continue to explore ways to improve staff Terms & Conditions to make RBWM a more attractive employer	Process established	Resources	

Aim 5: Key performance indicators

Indicator	Target 2024/25	
Customer service	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [RBWM]	≤ 30%
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [Adults]	≤ 40%
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [Childrens]	≤ 40%
	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale [Adults/Childrens/RBWM combined]	≥ 70%
	% of calls answered within 2mins	≥ 80%
	% of calls abandoned after 5 seconds	≤ 4%
Benefits	Average # of days to process new claims (Housing Benefits)	≤ 12 days
	Average # of days to process changes in circumstances (Housing Benefits)	≤ 5 days
FOI requests	% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests processed within 20 working days or within agreed timelines	≥ 90%
Planning	% of major planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 80%
	% of minor planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 75%
	% of other planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 85%
	% of planning decisions overturned	Track and report [Smaller is better]


Indicator	Target 2024/25	
Workforce	# of working days lost to sickness per headcount (YTD) [RBWM]	≤ 5.8 working days*
	% voluntary turnover (YTD) [RBWM]	15.5%*
	% of posts filled with permanent staff [RBWM]	Baselining
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [Achieving for Children]	≥ 70%
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [Optalis]	≥ 81%
	% of vacancies advertised and filled successfully at first attempt [RBWM]	Baselining

*Will be reviewed mid-year

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 01628 683 800

 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF



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Appendix B: Summary, Council Plan 2024-25 Engagement

Introduction

Following the change of administration after the May 2023 local elections it was considered appropriate to review the Council's aims and priorities as expressed in the Corporate Plan, developed in 2021. The public engagement around the development of the 2021-26 Corporate Plan took the form of a public consultation, held in early 2022, which sought the public's agreement on the proposed headline commitments and objectives.

The development process for the 2024-2027 Council Plan (previously referred to as Corporate Plan) sought to undertake internal and external engagement that was broader than that carried out for the previous Corporate Plan and took place at an earlier stage. This enabled a wider range of stakeholders to have greater opportunity for input into the council's emerging aims and priorities. The challenging financial situation of the council makes effective engagement, and the enhanced insights and stakeholder buy-in associated with that, especially important for this Council Plan.

A series of separate engagement activities and events were carried out involving a range of stakeholders:

- 9-13th October 2023: Community (including residents and VCS organisations)
- 5-13th December 2023: internal colleagues (including Achieving for Children and Optalis)
- 11-12th December 2023: elected members
- 11th December 2023: parish councils

As the community engagement took place first, the Council Plan was at a more incipient stage and so the information presented to participants focused on the council's financial situation and the broader priorities for the council and borough. Discussions then took place in small groups on topics of interest that were relevant to each stakeholder group, and which aligned with the broad themes emerging within the Council Plan. For the later sessions held with staff, elected members and parishes, it was possible to share a draft of the aims and priorities for the Council Plan and for discussion to focus more on the proposed structure and content. Although formal early engagement did not take place with these latter groups, ongoing conversations with the Cabinet and with colleagues ensured that their priorities and focus areas were taken into consideration in the development of those aims and priorities.

Summary of Engagement Sessions

Community engagement

Four in-person engagement sessions were planned, targeting specific groups of stakeholders: young people (aged 12-18, up to 25 years for care leavers); older adults (65+) and people with disabilities; voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations; and local businesses. These groups were chosen to represent a range of community stakeholders with different interests within the borough. The two 'resident-focused' sessions targeted demographic groups that are most likely to be in touch with the services which account for most of the council's budget (Adults and Children's Services) and that have the most potential to be affected by changes in budget allocation and service delivery. There was insufficient interest for the in-person business session to go ahead so this was replaced by an online survey, promoted through the Chamber of Commerce. Excluding current councillors and officers, there were 16 participants at the older and disabled people's

session, 19 at the VCS session, and 8 at the young people's session (with an additional 10 having attended an initial planning session to identify relevant discussion topics).

Alongside the in-person discussion sessions, a Facilitation Pack was created which contained information and resources to enable community groups and residents to run their own discussion session and to feedback their comments for inclusion with the feedback from the council-run sessions via an online survey. This approach was intended to increase the reach of this engagement and to make it more inclusive. Three additional groups provided feedback in this way.

Staff engagement

Three sessions were held for staff members, which were open to colleagues from RBWM, AfC and Optalis. To maximise participation, two of these were online (with one promoted particularly to colleagues resident in the borough) and one was held as an in-person session in the Town Hall. Attendance across the sessions was good, with a total of 127 colleagues participating and all three organisations represented.

Councillor engagement

Two online sessions were held for elected members of the council. There was good attendance from councillors, with a total of 28 attending the sessions.

Parish Council engagement

One session was held for Parish Councils with 16 Parish Councillors attending.

Community engagement feedback on local area

Participants at the community engagement sessions were invited to share what they felt were the strengths of the borough and what were the main challenges and areas for improvement.

Strengths of the local area

Some strengths were mentioned in all three in-person sessions:

- the location of the borough, particularly in terms of its connectivity and access to green spaces;
- the safety of the local area;
- local facilities, such as the libraries.

The strength and potential of the local voluntary sector came through strongly, although this is unsurprising considering the number of participants who were involved in the VCS. The relative affluence of the area was mentioned in several comments relating to residents' general health and wellbeing. This also fed into expressions of community cohesion, highlighting the sharing of community spaces and the willingness of people to look after those less well off.

Areas for improvement

From the in-person and online feedback received from the community engagement some issues were consistently mentioned as areas for improvement:

- Travel and transport
- Communication and engagement
- Community facilities
- Maidenhead town centre

Feedback on Council Plan themes

General feedback

There was overall agreement across the engagement sessions that the emerging aims and priorities were appropriate and reflected the direction that the council should be taking. Several participants in different sessions noted that without having more detail about the activities, metrics and timescales that would underlie the aims, it was difficult to provide as much feedback as they would like. Participants were keen to understand how the aims would translate into measurable actions and how residents could hold us to account.

Structure and language of the Plan

There was discussion about the importance of highlighting the co-benefits of the different aims and priorities, and how best to reflect areas of work which span more than one aim. This also linked in with comments about the importance of moving away from the practice, or perception, or silo working.

Some suggestions were made about refining the wording of certain aims, in particular the reference to 'resilient neighbourhoods' (Aim 3). However, overall it was felt that the language and wording of the aims and priorities were acceptable and understandable for the council and its residents.

Communication and engagement

A desire for better communication and engagement by the council (Aim 4 in the version shared) was a key theme for stakeholders in all sessions. From a community perspective, there were comments about the sharing of information and responsiveness to communication from council officers and members. Potential improvements in the council's communication and engagement of specific groups of residents, namely young people and people with learning disabilities, were also discussed.

There was a general feeling from internal and external stakeholders that the council should undertake engagement which is more representative and inclusive of the diversity within the borough and which enables a broader range of residents and stakeholders to inform council decision-making. Community engagement and local volunteering were identified as opportunities for building a sense of community and strengthening residents' feeling of responsibility and ownership for their local areas. More effective engagement and communication with partners was also highlighted as a key aspect in strengthening our approach to partnership working.

There was also an acknowledgement of the importance of the communication and engagement around the ongoing development of the Council Plan, and in particular the need to 'close the feedback loop' with stakeholders who have been involved in the process so far. There was discussion about how the Council Plan is presented to residents and what the narrative is, particular in terms of relevance to residents who are not in more vulnerable groups and so are not currently in touch with higher-need council services.

Maidenhead town centre

A common theme with residents, as reflected in the staff sessions and in the community sessions, was a concern about the changing character of Maidenhead town centre. This was expressed as a reduction in the sense of pride in the town, the absence of 'destination' shops/venues in the town and a perception of a lack of a coordinated vision for recent development works. Concerns were also raised over the capacity of existing (and planned) infrastructure to support the increased demands from new developments. A suggestion was made to involve residents more through the coproduction of a town plan. It is worth noting that the focus on Maidenhead may reflect the fact that the in-person community engagement sessions were all held in Maidenhead (although involved participants from across the borough) and that the location of the main council offices at Maidenhead Town Hall may have resulted in a greater number of Maidenhead residents amongst the participants at the staff sessions. Discussion of how 'clean and green' the borough was prompted comments about littering, graffiti and poor maintenance of public spaces.

Travel and transport

Travel and transport (and the infrastructure to support it) came across as a key priority in the community engagement sessions. Discussion focused primarily on dissatisfaction with public transport and active travel provision, including the accessibility of pavements. Some specific travel issues were mentioned, such as children travelling to school, bus transport in rural areas, and poor public transport services to key community assets such as Norden Farm. Car parking was also mentioned as an area to improve.

Local facilities

Local assets and facilities including the libraries, heritage assets and community spaces were highlighted in the community sessions as strengths of the borough. However, this was coupled with a concern for the future of libraries and community facilities in particular and discussions about the lack of facilities and spaces that cater to young people and to older adults who want places to meet and engage with others. This feeling that there should be more focus on the needs of these particular demographic groups, especially as the borough has an ageing population, featured in more general comments as well.

Other areas to include in Council Plan

The sharing of the draft aims and priorities at the sessions with staff, elected members and parishes enabled a discussion of whether certain topics and service areas were underrepresented in the Council Plan. One issue raised was that business and the local economy did not feature as prominently as it might and that there was also no consideration of benefits to visitors to the borough. A similar point was also made about aims and priorities around children and young people, beyond the council's role as Corporate Parent, and around adult statutory services.

Changes to the Council Plan following this engagement

As a result of these engagement activities and the feedback received, a number of amendments have been made to the draft aims and priorities:

- The original Aim 3 previously related to services supporting both children and adults. This has now been expanded into two aims: Aim 3 which focuses on children and young people and is aligned with the priorities of AfC, who deliver this service; and Aim 4, which focuses on adults.
- Aim 5 (formerly Aim 4), 'a high-performing council that delivers for the borough', now includes strengthening accountability and transparency in response to feedback from a number of sessions.
- Aim 4 (formerly Aim 3) has been changed from 'People live healthy and independent lives in inclusive and resilient neighbourhoods' to 'People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities', responding to feedback on the term 'resilient neighbourhoods'.
- The priorities under Aim 5 have been expanded to include reference to working with business.
- The process has been adapted to enable Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to review the KPI and Deliverables Technical Appendix in March. The full Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix, will be agreed at Full Council in April.

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Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

Council Plan 2024-28

Background Information

Service area:	Council-wide
Directorate:	Council-wide
Completed by: Clare Walsha Date: 15/03/2024	Approved by: Date

Introduction

This EQIA is for the Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council’s strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan. The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.

The five aims of the Council Plan are:

- Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively
- Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough
- Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood
- Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities
- Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

The Council Plan makes it clear that setting the council on to a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively, must be the primary focus. The current financial position constrains the organisation’s ability to pursue wider priorities until it achieves a more stable financial position. However, the council remains ambitious for the borough. The council will spend almost £100m next year in delivering essential services, in addition to capital investment of £13m in the borough’s critical infrastructure. The council is also undertaking an ambitious transformation programme to change the ways in which we deliver services, and to enable more efficient and effective delivery of our priorities.

The Council is committed to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community, whilst pursuing cost-effective solutions to support the enablement and empowerment of those with a lower level of need alongside a longer-term approach of prevention and early intervention. Under each of the five aims of the Council Plan there are a number of strategic priorities some of which are linked to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act. These strategic priorities are set out by the aims below.

Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

EQIA for the budget has been carried out separately and was published as part of the papers for Budget Council Thursday 29 February, Agenda Reports Pack p.169.

Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough

- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.

Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.

The EQIA sets out the deliverables under the priorities which will impact on the key groups.

Consultation

The Council Plan has been informed by engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups including: young people, older people, people with disabilities, the voluntary and community sector, Members, parishes and staff. A total of 224 people participated in the sessions, with more contributing to responses submitted via email or the online survey. There was support for the general direction of the council's emerging aims and priorities, with feedback contributing to their shaping and definition in a number of key areas, such as partnership working. The early community engagement highlighted priority concerns for residents and the VCS and the later sessions fed into the definition of the aims and priorities.

Equality Impact Analysis

	<p>How do the protected characteristics influence the needs of individuals within this proposal?</p> <p>How might these characteristics affect the impact of the proposal?</p> <p>(If no influence on impact, state 'N/A')</p>	<p>Overall impact</p> <p>(Tick where relevant)</p>
Age	<p><u>Older people</u> A deliverable under aim 4 focuses on improving accessibility and inclusivity for older people (amongst under groups) Aim 4: Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p> <p><u>Children and younger people</u> Aim 3 focuses on children and young people and a number of deliverables will positively impact the experience of children and young people including through targeted out-reach, new 'Think Families' approach, development of services for children in need and those with mental health difficulties. Priority: Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives Deliverable: Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support. Deliverable: Build on our targeted outreach support for young people and their families so that their needs can be safely met at home or in their communities, when appropriate. Deliverable: Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health.</p> <p>Priority: Support young people and families Deliverable: Develop a Participation Strategy to strengthen engagement with children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact their lives.</p>	<p>The overall approach of the Council Plan is designed to improve outcomes in the medium term, to mitigate impacts to the most vulnerable and to strengthen preventative services, and will therefore have an ultimately positive impact. Due to budget constraints, priorities and deliverables under Aim 1 in some cases have a negative impact which is covered by a separate EQIA.</p>

	<p>Deliverable: Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 4 specifically references intervention with regards to weight for children. Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 5 specifically references improving engagement with young people. Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better Deliverable: Continue to embed the council's engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Two deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving care and interventions for children with mental health and SEND. Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives Deliverable: Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health. Priority: support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes Deliverable: Work with Adult Social Care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND.</p> <p>Two deliverables under Aim 4 specifically refer to those with disability and improving support for those living in their own homes and also increasing provision for those unable to live independently. Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time Review and revise the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy to enable wider use of the</p>	

	<p>funding in supporting residents to live a safe and full life in their own homes.</p> <p>Priority: Deliver quality adult social care Deliverable: Develop more “lifetime homes” in Windsor and up to 18 “Shared Lives” arrangements across the borough to enable more people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes or with families, reducing the number of out-of-borough residential placements and further increasing service value for money.</p> <p>A deliverable under aim 4 includes a focus on improving pathways and access to services for those with disability.</p> <p>Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 5 includes a reference to under-represented groups which includes people with disability.</p> <p>Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better Deliverable: Continue to embed the council’s engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p>	
Sex	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	
Race, Ethnicity and Religion/Belief	<p>A deliverable under Aim 5 includes reference to improving engagement with under-represented groups which includes minority ethnic groups and religious groups.</p> <p>Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better Deliverable: Continue to embed the council’s engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p> <p>The following priority includes specific reference to strengthening partnerships with faith groups.</p>	

	<p>Priority: Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, and parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Under Aim 4, there are plans to improve the provision of services to the LGBTQ+ community through partner working.</p> <p>Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.</p>	
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.</p>	
<p>Care experience (children in care and care leavers)</p>	<p>A number of deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving the experience of children in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives</p> <p>Deliverable: Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Priority: support children and young people in our care</p> <p>Deliverables: Develop an in-house registered children’s home provision and supported accommodation model for Care Leavers to meet care needs safely and locally.</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop a Care Leavers’ guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to Care Leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.</p>	
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage (e.g., low income, poverty)</p>	<p>A deliverable under Aim 2 will benefit areas of high deprivation who are more likely to have higher levels of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Priority: Keep our neighbourhoods green and safe’ sets out a deliverable</p> <p>Deliverable: Work in partnership to deliver key priorities for public protection in the reduction of serious violence, crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and enabling community resilience through community warden engagement.</p> <p>Two deliverables under the Aim 2 are focused on improving people with socio-</p>	

	<p>economic disadvantage who are homeless or at the risk of becoming homeless. Priority: Ensure availability of housing that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness Deliverable: Review and revise Housing policies, practice and procurement to provide improved service and accommodation solutions to those who are homeless or seeking provision of social housing. Deliverable: Identify opportunities and explore partnerships to increase availability of permanent housing/temporary accommodation and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Multiple priorities and deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving outcomes of those in poverty and/or socio-economic disadvantage. Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives. Deliverable: Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support. Priority: Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes Deliverable: Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers. Priority: Support young people and families Deliverable: Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.</p> <p>Multiple deliverables under Aim 4 will benefit those with socio-economic disadvantage because children who in poverty are more likely to be obese, people with socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to require access to drug and alcohol treatment services, people with socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to be adversely effected and more profoundly affected by increasing cost-of-living and therefore more likely to benefit from these interventions</p>	
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	<p>Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.</p> <p>Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>Priority: Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time</p> <p>Deliverable: Help to reduce the impact of cost of living rises on our residents, with a focus on those most at risk, through targeted financial and practical support e.g. Here to Help, Household Support Fund, Warm Spaces, Multiply.</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p>	
Marriage and Civil Partnership (in respect of employment discrimination only)	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	
Armed Forces Community (in respect of access to public services)	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	

Where a potential negative impact has been identified, what measures would be put in place to mitigate or minimise it?

The Council Plan is not anticipated to have a negative impact on any of the groups within the EQIA, excluding those groups already identified through the Budget 2024/25. The Council Plan aims at explicitly improving services including accessibility and inclusivity for those who have protected characteristics.

Report Title:	Proposal for the continuation of two Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) in Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot to address dog fouling, dog control and cycling prohibition areas in Maidenhead and Windsor town centres
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place Amanda Gregory, Assistant Director, Housing and Public Protection
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were brought in under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which came into force on 20 October 2014. PSPOs specify an area where activities are evidenced to be taking place that are detrimental to the local community's quality of life. PSPOs impose conditions or restrictions on people using that area; such as alcohol bans or putting up gates.

1. This report deals with the proposal to continue two existing PSPOs in Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot for a further 3 years.
2. The report recommends the continuation of a PSPO for a Borough wide ban on dog fouling and ineffective control of dogs.
3. The report also recommends the continuation of a PSPO which prohibits cycling on the highway in pedestrianised zones of High Street, Maidenhead and the pedestrianised zone of Peascod Street, Windsor.

The continuation of the PSPOs to tackle dog control/dog fouling in the Borough and cycling in pedestrianised zones of High Street, Maidenhead and the pedestrianised zone of Peascod Street, Windsor supports the Corporate Plan commitment to 'Taking action to tackle climate change and its consequences and improving our natural environment'.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Considers the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, Public Space Protection Order (dog control and dog fouling) 2021 and the Public Space Protection Order (cycling in pedestrianised areas) 2021 and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead portfolio to approve both Orders.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
<p>To continue the PSPO for dog control and dog fouling.</p> <p>To continue the PSPO for cycling in pedestrianised areas.</p> <p>This is the recommended option</p>	<p>To continue the two PSPOs to be enforced by authorised persons. This option is recommended as the PSPOs are based on a solid and long- standing evidence base to address the related key issues.</p>
<p>Do nothing and allow the PSPOs to expire.</p>	<p>This option is not recommended as it would mean existing PSPOs expire in April 2024 and the issues would be unenforceable causing distress for residents and visitors of the Borough.</p>

- 2.1 The PSPO to address dog control and dog fouling and cycling has been in place for the past 3 years and is due to expire on 27 April 2024 and needs to be renewed so that they can continue for a further 3 years. The PSPOs allow the police or other authorised officers to continue to be able to ask someone who has a dog that is behaving out of control to put their dog on a lead and for a person to clean up their dogs mess. If that person does not comply, they could then be issued with a £100 fixed penalty notice. Similarly, continuing the PSPO for cycling allows authorised persons to ask cyclists to dismount from their bikes if they are seen cycling through the pedestrianised zones specified in the orders. If that person does not comply, they could then be issued with a £100 fixed penalty notice.
- 2.2 We are proposing to continue the PSPOs as having them in place for the past 3 years has had a positive effect on the number of incidents in the Borough. For dog fouling, our PSPO signage warning residents of their responsibility has resulted in an improvement noticed by our Wardens and residents. The Community Wardens have not had to issue any fines as they have not witnessed anyone dog fouling but patrol hotspots on a weekly basis and engage with dog walkers using the PSPOs as a tool to educate and remind dog walkers of their responsibilities. For cycling, the Community Wardens have carried out patrols in the two zones on daily basis and the majority of the time cyclists will dismount when asked or they have already dismounted after seeing the signage. Wardens have only had to issue fines on five occasions where cyclists have not complied with the instruction to dismount.

- 2.3 Following review of the consultation feedback, particularly in reference to the feedback submitted by cycling groups, we are proposing to amend the PSPO that relates to cycling so that it operates only during the hours of 10am to 5pm each. This will align it to the same restrictions placed on motor vehicles.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
The PSPO (dog fouling and dog control) continues and is enforced by authorised persons.	The PSPO does not continue and authorised officers cannot enforce behaviours. Reports of anti-social behaviour continue/increase.	Conditions continue to be in place and dog fouling and effective control of dog conditions are enforced.	Reports of anti-social behaviour decrease.	Residents feel safe and this is reflected in the resident's survey.	27 March 2024
The PSPO (cycling on the highway in pedestrianised zones of High Street, Maidenhead and the pedestrianised zone of Peascod Street, Windsor) continues and is enforced by authorised persons.	The PSPO does not continue and authorised officers cannot enforce behaviours. Reports of anti-social behaviour continue/increase.	Conditions continue and cycling on the highway in pedestrianised zones conditions are enforced.	Reports of anti-social behaviour decrease.	Residents feel safe and this is reflected in the resident's survey.	27 March 2024

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. The levels of charge for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in this Borough were approved by Cabinet on 27 September 2018 at £100 (reduced to £75 if paid within 10 days). It is proposed that these are kept as the charges for the two PSPO FPNs to be consistent with the other FPNs in place in the Borough.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Royal Borough is empowered under s.59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to make PSPOs where activities carried on in a public place have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;

- Are, or are likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- Are, or are likely to be, unreasonable; and
- Justify the restrictions imposed.

5.2 Furthermore, under s.59, the Royal Borough has to consider the restrictions, and the duration of the order proposed.

5.3 Section 66 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 allows that an interested person, i.e. “an individual who lives in the restricted area or who regularly works in or visits that area”, may challenge the validity of a PSPO, by application to the High Court where:

- A local authority did not have power to make the order; or
- That a requirement under the legislation was not complied with

No such challenge has been received in relation to this proposal to date, and there have been no indications that anyone is considering such a challenge.

5.4 Additionally, Regulation 2 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Publication of Public Spaces Protection Orders) Regulations 2014 requires that the Royal Borough must take certain steps to publicise PSPOs.

5.5 The legislation stipulates that PSPOs must be subject to regular review. New orders should ideally be reviewed after a year, and thereafter PSPOs must be reviewed triennially.

5.6 Finally, under s.71, it must have had regard to the Rights of Freedom of Expression and of Assembly under the Human rights Act 1998, before making the Order. European Human Rights considerations are covered overleaf.

5.7 In accordance with the Council’s Constitution; Public Space Protection Orders within a single ward have been delegated to the Licensing and PSPO Sub Committee; however as the PSPOs in this report relate to multiple wards these PSPOs must be approved by Cabinet.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
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There is a risk that there could be a legal challenge to the validity of the PSPO process which could result in reputation damage to the council and potential court costs.	Minor	Low	Review by internal and external legal counsel. Public consultation on PSPOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc PSPO panel to decide on local PSPOs • Initial review of individual Panel to decide on strategic PSPOs • PSPOs Triennial reviews of all PSPOs 	Minor	Low
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7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A. We will review the consultation responses for any equalities considerations and if appropriate amend the EQIA as necessary.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no known identifiable factors that would impact climate change or sustainability.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required. The information journey has been captured in the Privacy notice which can be found on [Privacy notice: Public Space Protection Orders - Public consultation | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/privacy-notice-public-space-protection-orders-public-consultation)
- 7.4 The Council will give regard to the rights and freedoms set out in Article 10 (right of freedom of expression) and Article 11 (right of freedom of assembly) of the European Convention of Human Rights in order to conclude that the restrictions on such rights and freedoms imposed by this Order are lawful, necessary and proportionate.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 We are currently running a consultation to propose the introduction of the PSPOs, the consultation went live on Monday 29 January 2024 and runs until Monday 26 February 2024.
- 8.2 The consultation consists of an explanation and copies of the existing PSPOs and a brief outline of the proposal and a short survey. The survey allows local residents or people with a connection to the Borough to express whether they agree or disagree with the proposals.

- 8.3 The consultation was publicised via a press release, social media channels such as RBWM Twitter and Facebook and notices in public areas such as libraries, notice boards in shops/parks and parish council's notice boards.
- 8.4 RBWM consulted with key stakeholders such as Thames Valley Police, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, Landowners, Town Centre Managers, Kennel club, cycling groups and residents groups.
- 8.5 A summary of all consultation responses will be circulated in a supplementary document following the closure of the consultation on Monday 26 February 2024.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately. The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
27 March 2024	Cabinet to decide whether a PSPO is appropriate.
27 March 2024	If Cabinet is satisfied that a PSPO is appropriate, the Council's solicitor shall be authorised to issue the Orders with the revised date and seal.
27 March 2024	New Orders are sealed following Cabinet.
27 March 2024	The Orders will be published on the website and notices will be erected at the sites as considered sufficient.
8 May 2024	Challenges to the PSPO must be made to the High Court within 6 weeks of the order being made.
27 March 2025	After 12 months, partner review meeting convened to review whether to continue/amend/remove the orders.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by 5 appendices:

- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix B- Existing order for the PSPO relating to dog control and dog fouling.
- Appendix C – Existing order for the PSPO relating to cycling.
- Appendix D – Consultation Questionnaire
<https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/public-spaces-protection-orders-pspo-consultation>
- Appendix E- Responses from consultation- to follow.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 This report is supported by 2 background documents:

- Public Space Protection Orders are established in sections 59 to 75 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This can be viewed at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/part/4/chapter/2/crossheading/public-spaces-protection-orders/enacted>

- Guidance on the legislation is available on the Home office publication: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956143/ASB_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	13/02/24	n/a
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	13/02/24	21/02/24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	13/02/24	13/02/24
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	13/02/24	n/a
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	13/02/24	22/02/24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	13/02/24	20/02/24
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	13/02/24	13/02/24
<i>Assistant Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Amanda Gregory	Assistant Director of Housing and Public Protection	13/02/24	29/02/24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead portfolio.	Yes- approved at briefing paper stage.
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision	No	No
First entered into the Cabinet		

Forward Plan: 23/01/2024		
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Report Author: Mandy Mann, Anti social behaviour coordinator, 07920504572
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Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	<u>Public Space Protection Orders 2024</u>
Service area:	<u>Neighbourhood services</u>
Directorate:	<u>Place</u>

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

The overall aim of the Public Space Protection Orders are to reduce incidents and improve community cohesion through taking action to tackle dog fouling, ineffective dog control and cycling in pedestrianised zones of Windsor and Maidenhead high streets.

The key objectives are to prohibit certain behaviors that are causing harassment, alarm and distress in spaces where the public have access and to give powers to Authorised persons to help tackle anti social behaviour caused by dog fouling, inadequate control of dogs and cycling in pedestrianised areas.

Authorised persons such as Community Wardens and Police Officers and PCSOs can use the powers under the PSPO.

Both PSPOs have been in place since April 2021 but need to be renewed for a further 3 years.

Data isn't collected on the demographics of the people who receive PSPO fines but that the small numbers involved would make any analysis of that data very limited.

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If Yes, state 'Yes' and proceed to Section 3.
- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Yes, addressing these behaviours. The use of PSPO's is not linked to an individuals race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age. However, addressing these behaviours would have a positive impact on all people and particularly young people, elderly people and people with disabilities. People who are pregnant may also be positively affected in terms of feeling safer.

The PSPOs are aimed at either people causing alarm and distress by cycling in crowded areas or by not keeping control of their dogs or picking up their mess in public places.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

Community Wardens will be affected as this will continue to allow them to challenge people.

Residents and tourists who use the parks and open spaces for picnics, walking, sports would be benefit as the open spaces will continue to remain clean.

Pedestrians of the High Street, Maidenhead and Peascod Street, Windsor will benefit from not being hit/startled by cyclists.

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

No.

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

We will do a public consultation for 4 weeks asking residents for their views on the proposal and giving them an opportunity to share any concerns or ask any questions. We will provide this consultation electronically but also hard copies at our libraries for people who do not have access to the internet. Staff at the libraries will also be able to assist people in completing the online form. Our wardens will hand hard copies out during their engagement work and can assist people in completing the form should they have issues.

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Examples of possible sources of information are in the Guidance document (Section 2.3). You may also wish to consult the [EQIA Evidence Matrix](#) for relevant data.

97% of residents surveyed in the residents survey felt safe in the local area during the day. 82% of local residents feel safe in the local area after dark.

Perceptions of female safety after dark are comparably lower amongst all age and home ownership groups.

Green and open spaces are a key priority to residents and dominant factors that make their local area a good place to live

- 45% referenced the quality of parks and open spaces
- 34% referenced access to nature / the countryside

Quality of parks & open spaces (38%), peace and quiet (31%) and community support / getting on / helping each other (26%) are the primary contributors for residents aged 75 & over.

Perceptions of safety are high across demographics but comparably lower amongst residents living in Windsor, female residents, residents aged 75 & over, residents whose activities are limited due to a health condition and residents who own their property outright or rent from the council, housing association or trust.

Just over a quarter (27%) indicated they are concerned about antisocial behaviour in their local area; 40% are not concerned.

- A higher proportion of residents aged 35-74 indicated they were concerned compared to other age groups.

Residents who indicated they were concerned about anti-social behaviour in their local area were asked to detail their main concerns. Reasons were given in residents' own words and these have been categorised into themes for analysis purposes.

- A variety of concerns were raised but the most common are groups of young people / teenagers / children and drug dealing / taking.

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'.

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the EQIA Guidance document (available on the intranet).

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	Older people may feel less distressed if less likely to be cycled into and able to use public parks freely without fear of walking into dog mess and out of control dogs. There are positive benefits to children and young people in terms of the improvements to parks and less risk of being knocked into by a bike.	✓	NA
Disability	People with disabilities may feel less distressed if less likely to be cycled into and able to use public parks freely without fear of walking into dog mess and out of control dogs.	✓	NA
Sex		NA	NA
Race, ethnicity and religion		NA	NA
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment		NA	NA
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnant women may feel safer if less likely to be cycled into and able to use public parks freely without fear of walking into dog mess and out of control dogs.	✓	
Marriage and civil partnership		NA	NA
Armed forces community		NA	NA
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty		NA	NA
Children in care/Care leavers		NA	NA

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

<p>What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group</p>
<p>The public consultation will be available in digital and hard copy format to ensure it is accessible and inclusive.</p>
<p>Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
<p>How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?</p>
<p>Community safety data will be reviewed through future residents surveys and community safety surveys. The public consultation includes demographic questions so will help in identifying any other equality impacts.</p>

6. Sign Off

<p>Completed by: Mandy Mann</p>	<p>Date: 17/01/2024</p>
<p>Approved by: Amanda Gregory</p>	<p>Date: 02/02/2024</p>

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

<p>Reviewed by:</p>	<p>Date:</p>
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Appendix B

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014

PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (DOG CONTROL) ORDER 2021

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION ONLY PURSUANT TO s.72(3)9A)

1. This draft Order is that proposed to be made by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead ('The Council'), pursuant to Section 59 (1) of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act") and all other enabling powers.
2. This Order may be cited as the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Spaces Protection (Dog Fouling and Control) Order 2021 and shall come into operation on 2021.
3. The Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that:

The activities below have been carried out in public places within the Council's area, and have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality,

And that:

The effect, or likely effect of the activities, is, or is likely to be of persistent or continuing nature, and is, or is likely to be such as to make the activities unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions and requirements proposed by the notice.

4. The Order is concerned with the following activities:

Dog Fouling
Dog control

5. The Council is satisfied that the requirements proposed by this draft order are reasonable to impose to prevent the detrimental effect of these activities continuing, occurring, or reoccurring, or to reduce that detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or reoccurrence.
6. The Council has further considered the rights and freedoms set out in Article 10 (Freedom of expression) and Article 11 (Freedom of assembly) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and has concluded that the requirements set out in the proposed order do not infringe these rights.
7. If granted, this order shall be in place for a period of 3 years.
8. The proposed requirements of this order are:

- i) That any person in charge of dog/s, whether or not temporarily, shall ensure that faeces are properly cleared, should the dog/s foul in the restricted area. The faeces shall then be removed, or deposited in a general waste bin, or a dog waste bin.
 - ii) That any person in charge of dog/s, whether or not temporarily, in the restricted area, shall immediately place their dog/s on a lead upon the request of a constable, or an authorised officer of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, should the dog/s be considered to be out of control, or otherwise causing a nuisance to other users of the locality.
9. This Order is proposed to apply to the ‘restricted area’, namely the land set out in Schedule A, being all public places within the boundaries of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 10. For detail as to exemptions from complying with the terms of this Order, reference is made to Schedule B.
 11. Further, under S.67 of the Act, any person who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with the requirement to clear and properly dispose of faeces as detailed at (i) above, to comply with the direction of a constable or Authorised Person to place the dog/s on a lead, as at (ii) above, shall commit an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding Level 3 on the Standard Scale or to a fixed penalty notice (as set out below).
 12. Depending on the circumstances of the failure to comply with this Order, the Authorised Person may decide that a fixed penalty notice would be the most appropriate sanction. This may be issued by an Authorised Person. If a fixed penalty notice is issued, payment would discharge any liability to conviction for the offence. However, if payment due under a fixed penalty notice is not made within the timescale prescribed therein, a prosecution for the offence of failing to comply with this Order may be commenced.
 13. Any interested person being an individual who lives in the Restricted Area or who regularly works in or visits the Restricted Area wishing to question the validity of this Order on the grounds that the Council had no power to make it or that any of the requirements of the Act have not been complied with may make an application to the High Court within 6 weeks from the date on which this Order is made.

1. SCHEDULE A – borough wide map

SCHEDULE B – exemptions

Nothing in this Order shall apply to any person who:

- a) Is registered as a blind person, in a register compiled under S.29 of the National Assistance Act 1948; and/or
- b) The dog in question is working as an assistance dog, as trained by one of the member organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK)

THE COMMON SEAL of the
ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR
AND MAIDENHEAD

was hereunto affixed

this day of 2021

in the presence of:

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Appendix C

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014

PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (CYCLING IN SPECIFIED PEDESTRIANISED AREAS) ORDER 2021

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION ONLY PURSUANT TO s.72(3)9A)

1. This draft Order is that proposed to be made by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead ('The Council'), pursuant to Section 59 (1) of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act") and all other enabling powers.
2. This Order may be cited as the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Spaces Protection (Cycling in Specified Pedestrian Areas) Order 2021 and shall come into operation on 2021.
3. The Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that:

The activities below have been carried out in public places within the Council's area, and have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality,

And that:

The effect, or likely effect of the activities, is, or is likely to be of persistent or continuing nature, and is, or is likely to be such as to make the activities unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions and requirements proposed by the notice.

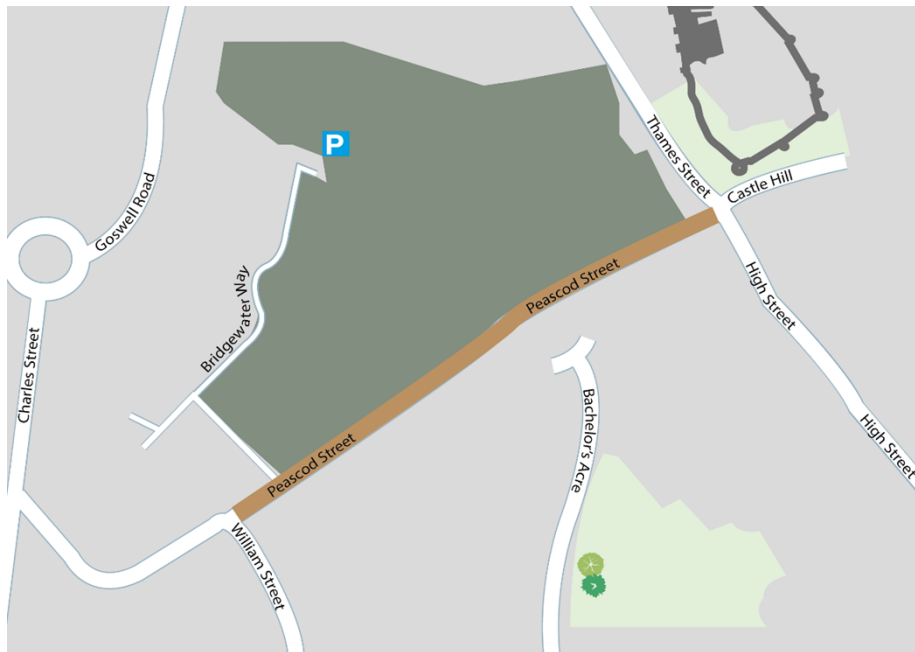
4. The Order is concerned with the following activities:

Cycling in pedestrianised areas of the public highway within Windsor and Maidenhead town centres.
5. The Council is satisfied that the requirements proposed by this draft order are reasonable to impose to prevent the detrimental effect of these activities continuing, occurring, or reoccurring, or to reduce that detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or reoccurrence.
6. The Council has further considered the rights and freedoms set out in Article 10 (Freedom of expression) and Article 11 (Freedom of assembly) of the European Convention on Human Rights, and has concluded that the prohibitions set out in the proposed order do not infringe these rights.
7. If granted, this order shall be in place for a period of 3 years.
8. The proposed prohibitions of this order are:

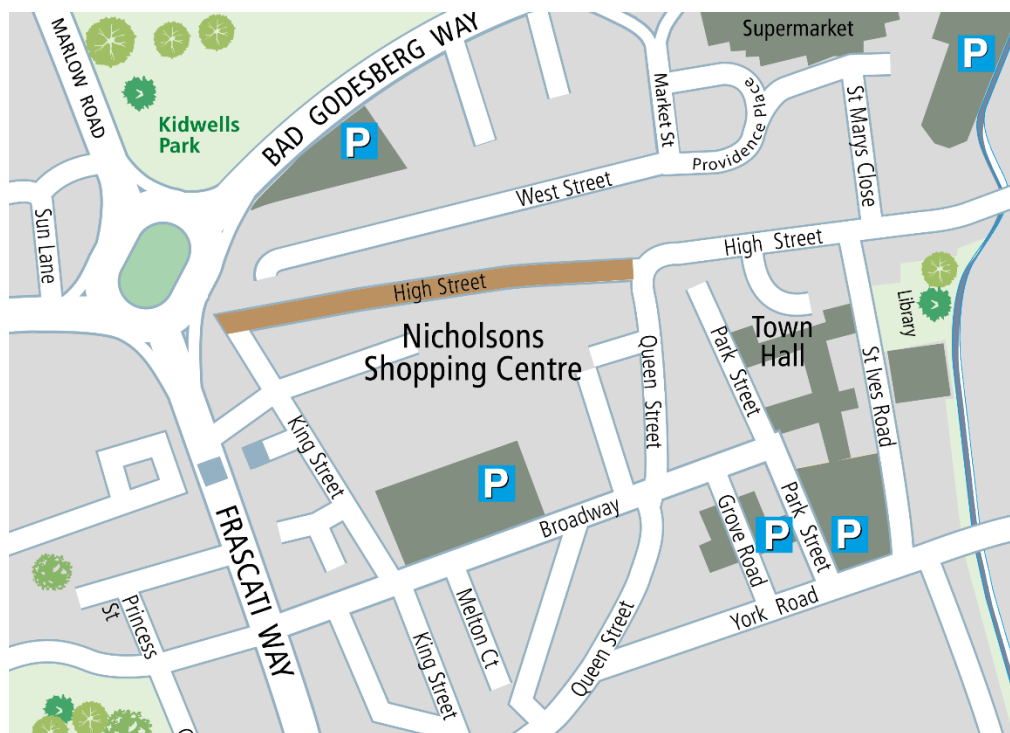
- i) That it be prohibited for any person to cycle on the highway in the restricted areas
- 9. This Order is proposed to apply to the ‘restricted areas’, namely the list set out in Schedule A, together with the accompanying maps.
- 10. For detail as to exemptions from complying with the terms of this Order, reference is made to Schedule B.
- 11. Further, under S.67 of the Act, any person who, without reasonable excuse, cycles in the restricted areas, in contravention of this Order as detailed at (i) above, shall commit an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding Level 3 on the Standard Scale or to a fixed penalty notice (as set out below).
- 12. Depending on the circumstances of the failure to comply with this Order, the Authorised Person may decide that a fixed penalty notice would be the most appropriate sanction. This may be issued by an Authorised Person. If a fixed penalty notice is issued, payment would discharge any liability to conviction for the offence. However, if payment due under a fixed penalty notice is not made within the timescale prescribed therein, a prosecution for the offence of failing to comply with this Order may be commenced.
- 13. Any interested person being an individual who lives in the Restricted Area or who regularly works in or visits the Restricted Area wishing to question the validity of this Order on the grounds that the Council had no power to make it or that any of the requirements of the Act have not been complied with may make an application to the High Court within 6 weeks from the date on which this Order is made.

1. SCHEDULE A – [include maps]

- a) The pedestrianised area of Peascod Street in Windsor, as marked brown on the map



b) The pedestrianised areas of High Street, in Maidenhead, as marked in brown on the map.



THE COMMON SEAL of the
ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR
AND MAIDENHEAD

was hereunto affixed

this day of 2021

in the presence of:

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Appendix D

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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

Proposal to continue Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) in Windsor and Maidenhead.

COMMENT FORM

Please see supporting information explaining the proposed order before completing this form.

1. In what capacity do you wish to respond to this consultation?

- As a local resident
- On behalf of a local business
- On behalf of a community or voluntary group
- Other (please specify)

2. What is your postcode?

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe _____
- Prefer not to say

4. Which age band best describes you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over
- Prefer not to say

5. What is your ethnic group?

- Asian or Asian British
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- Mixed or Multiple
- White
- Other ethnic group _____
- Prefer not to say

6. Do you have a long-term physical or mental illness, impairment or disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

7. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot for a further 3 years? (Please tick)

Type of PSPO	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A PSPO to address: Dog fouling and effective dog control.				
A PSPO to address: Cycling on the highway in pedestrianised zones of High Street, Maidenhead and the pedestrianised zone of Peascod Street, Windsor.				

8. Have you experienced any other issues in relation to anti-social behaviour in public spaces?

- 9. Do you have any comments or suggestions on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) for Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot?**

Thank you for your responses.

This consultation closes at midnight on Monday 26 February 2024

Completed surveys can be returned to **FAO Mandy Mann, Community Safety, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF**

If you require paper copies of the consultation documents, these are also available from libraries upon request.

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Appendix E

1. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 1.1 In total 297 people responded to the consultation. Out of all of the responses 287 were via the online survey accessed through the RBWM webpage. (Redacted responses can be shared upon request) and 10 were via paper copies of the survey.
- 1.2 Residents were first asked: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address dog fouling and effective dog control for Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot for a further 3 years?
- 1.3 272 respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the proposed continuation. Only 14 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remainder did not respond.
- 1.4 Residents were then asked: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address cycling on the highway in pedestrianised zones of High Street, Maidenhead and the pedestrianised zones of Peascod Street, Windsor for a further 3 years?
- 1.5 238 respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the proposed continuation. Only 50 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remainder did not respond.
- 1.6 We received feedback on the proposals from the Windsor Ascot Maidenhead Active Travel, Windsor Cycle Hub & Active travel group, Windsor & Maidenhead Cycling Action group and the Windsor Cycle Hub. The primary suggestion was that the PSPO relating to cycling operate during the hours of 10am to 5pm to bring it in line with restrictions on motor vehicles. This feedback has been taken into consideration and we are proposing to amend the PSPO accordingly.
- 1.7 We received feedback on the proposals from the Dogs Trust who fully support a well implemented order on fouling and suggested that an adequate number of disposal points are provided, free disposal bags and sufficient signage. They also questioned whether issuing on the spot fines was effective. We will pass on their feedback to our parks teams re bins and review our signage. We addressed the query re fines in that we first and foremost regard the PSPO as an opportunity to engage, educate and change behaviour with fines being a last resort and a deterrent.
- 1.8 We also received feedback from the Kennel Club who suggested some other pro active measures that could be implemented in addition to the PSPOs such as increasing the number of bins available for dog owners to use; communicating to local dog owners that bagged dog faeces can be disposed of in normal litter bins; running responsible ownership and training events; or using poster campaigns to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dog. They also encouraged local authorities to be more flexible and use targeted measures at their disposal. They also emphasised the importance of clear signage to ensure dog walkers are aware that PSPOs are operating in the areas.

- 1.9 The Kennel Club also encouraged the Council to allow for some flexibility when considering whether a disabled person's dog is acting as an assistance dog. They suggested that the Council could consider adopting the definitions of assistance dogs used by Mole Valley District Council or Northumberland County Councils. This will be passed onto our legal teams for consideration.

Report Title:	Approval of Contract Award of the New Independent Adult Advocacy Service
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	Yes – Main report and Appendix A are Part I. Appendix B is Part II and not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor del Campo, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Kevin McDaniel, Executive Director Adult Social Care and Health (DASS) Lynne Lidster, Director of Commissioning, Optalis
Wards affected:	All wards

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REPORT SUMMARY

The current adult social care contracts for the provision of statutory adult advocacy services and self-advocacy service, expire in June 2024. Approval is sought to award a new contract for the Independent Adult Advocacy Service that was tendered by the council in November 2023. The contract term is for a period of a three years, with an option to extend for a further two years. Subject to approval, the contract is due to begin on 1 July 2024.

This report sets out information regarding the tender process, recommendations from officers following the tender and seeks approval for future contracting arrangements.

The proposal supports the objective within the Corporate Plan 2021-2026 of Thriving Communities – where families and individuals are empowered to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential including the approaches identified in the Plan to ‘Shape our service-delivery around our communities’ diverse needs and put customers at the heart of all we do’; ‘Make the most effective use of resources – delivering the best value for money’ and ‘Promote health and wellbeing, and focus on reducing inequalities, across all areas’.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves the award of the new Independent Adult Advocacy Service as outlined in Appendix B.**
- ii) Delegates authority to Executive Director Adult Social Care, Health and Communities (DASS) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services to exercise the option to extend the contract for a period of up to an additional two years.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
That Cabinet approves the recommendations as set out in this paper. This is the recommended option	This option ensures that the council remains compliant with its statutory duty to provide independent advocacy under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019), the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
Extend the existing contracts with the current provider rather than award a new contract	This option is not compliant with the contracting and procurement standing orders and regulations as the existing contract will have reached the end of all possible extension options by June 2024 - and is therefore not permissible.
Do nothing	The provision of independent advocacy is a legal requirement for local authorities under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019), the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This option would mean the existing contracts would lapse in June 2024 without ongoing arrangements in place, bringing the council into breach of its obligations. This option is also not compliant with the contracting and procurement standing orders and regulations.

- 2.1 Advocacy means giving a person support to have their voice heard. Every person has a right to have their voice heard on matters relating to their care and support, to defend and safeguard their rights, and to have their views and wishes seriously considered when decisions are being made about their life. Not every person is able to make their thoughts and wishes known. This may be for a variety of reasons, including their cognitive ability, their health, their confidence, their ability in speaking up, or their age. When a person is not able to make their voice heard, an advocate is needed to be their voice. Advocacy promotes equality, social justice, social inclusion, and human rights, and speaks for people when they are unable to do that themselves. It empowers people to make the most of their lives.
- 2.2 The provision of independent advocacy is a legal requirement for local authorities under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019), the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

- 2.3 The current commissioned independent advocacy contracts commenced in 2019 and expire on 30 June 2024. Under the current arrangements, a single provider, The Advocacy People, delivers statutory adult advocacy and self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities for the borough under two separate contracts. The statutory service activity equates to the provision of around 2,700 hours of support per year, or 230 referrals per year. The self-advocacy service delivers the Learning Disability Partnership Board, two self-advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities and a support group for carers of adults with learning disabilities.
- 2.4 The new contract for Independent Adult Advocacy Service has been tendered, to take effect from 1 July 2024. The proposed service will comprise:
- Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICAA)
 - Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA)
 - Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) support, including:
 - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
 - Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) from 16 years old upwards (once implemented)
 - Relevant Person's Representative (RPR)
 - Rule 1.2 Representative
 - Litigation Friend
 - Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)
 - Self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities, including facilitation of the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB), LDPB sub-groups and self-advocacy groups
 - Carer advocacy support
 - Advocacy projects
- 2.5 The model of support within the specification focusses on a person-centred and outcomes-focussed approach to enable people to have their voices heard and rights upheld.
- 2.6 The value of the contract is fixed rather than open to price bids from providers, so that the bids received would be assessed and scored purely on quality criteria not on price, enabling providers to compete on equal terms. The rationale was to ensure the resultant service delivered to the borough's vulnerable adults is high quality and this approach would avoid a 'race to the bottom' with providers submitting unrealistically low prices, potentially resulting thereafter in an inability to recruit and retain quality staff, inability to accept new cases, or failure of the contract, resulting in the service being handed back to the local authority to re-commission. Bidders were required to submit a cost breakdown of the proposed service as part of their tender.
- 2.7 In line with the Regulations (PCR 15), the Contract Notice was published on the Find a Tender service (and the Contract Finder) on 29 November 2023. The initial closing date for the ITT submissions was 9 January 2024, which was later amended (due to the request for extension from one of the potential bidders) to 15 January 2024. The Open Procedure has been used for this procurement.

- 2.8 11 suppliers (potential bidders) accessed the online portal, five raised queries prior to the tender submission deadline (the responses to all queries were shared with all potential bidders). Two submitted their proposal by the deadline stipulated in the Contract Notice.
- 2.9 The two tender submissions were evaluated accordingly under the open procedure (a one stage process) with a requirement that potential providers must pass pre-qualification criteria to confirm that they have the required experience to deliver the service. The criteria included legal and regulatory, economic, financial, technical and professional capacity and case studies evidencing previous experience.
- 2.10 The two tender submissions passed the pre-qualification stage and were further evaluated against the method statement responses by a dedicated evaluation panel comprising representatives from the Optalis Commissioning Team, statutory adult social care service and Community Lives service, following best practice procurement procedures. Tenders were evaluated on the basis of the assessment of bidders' technical responses to qualitative questions which were marked against a scoring matrix.
- 2.11 The ten quality criteria and weightings were as follows:

Table 2: Quality Criteria and Weightings

Quality Criteria	Weighting
Processes and Procedures to be applied for the delivery of the Service	22.5%
Resource allocated to the Service delivery	7.5%
Partnerships and collaborative working	7.5%
Public and workforce awareness-raising and Service promotion	7.5%
Service improvement, innovation, co-production and communities	12.5%
Quality assurance and outcomes-based reporting	22.5%
Mobilisation	5%
Management of the budget	7%
Fund raising capabilities	5%
Added Value	3%

- 2.12 The tender submitted by the provider that achieved the highest overall score from the evaluation is considered as the best tender and, therefore, nominated as 'Preferred Supplier' and recommended for contract award.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 See table 3 below.

Table 3: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Existing contracts with provider end on 30 June 2024	Existing contract continues beyond 30 June 2024	1 July 2024	N/A	N/A	30 June 2024
New contract is established in readiness for commencement on 1 July 2024; RBWM able to ensure compliance with legislation.	New contract does not commence, or commences after 1 July 2024	New contract commences on 1 July 2024	N/A	N/A	1 July 2024

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 The value of the contract is £686,450 over the course of five years: £137,290 per annum, of which £102,290 is funded by a statutory advocacy ring-fenced budget through the Better Care Fund. The cost of delivering this contract is contained within existing resources and the inflation was built into the 2024/25 Better Care Fund budget. The contract will be in place from July 2024. In future years of the contract, inflation is at the discretion of the Council and the Better Care Fund and will take into account factors such as CPI and changes to staff costs.

4.2 It is anticipated that, within the lifetime of this contract, proposed reforms to the Mental Capacity Act in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) changing to Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) and adoption of the government white paper on Mental Health Act reform will see expansion in the right to an advocate. There is a high degree of uncertainty as to whether and when these reforms will be implemented and to what they will translate in terms of numbers of cases. Flexibility has, therefore, been built into the contract to be able to adapt to changes in demand as reforms are implemented.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The provision of independent advocacy is a legal requirement for local authorities under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019), the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Care Act also states that people must have choice and control over the services they receive. The Council also has other legal obligations, including the Equality Act 2010 under which the Public Sector Equality Duty arises.

- 5.2 The contract has been procured in line with PCR 15 and in compliance with the Council's Contract and Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution. Procurement have been involved in the process and their advice has been followed.
- 5.3 TUPE regulations may apply to some roles transferring from existing Suppliers. The Council will work with suppliers to ensure consultation and transfers are undertaken in accordance with the Regulations.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk that the contract will be impacted by legislative reforms (Mental Capacity Act and Mental Health Act) because these reforms may be implemented within the life of this contract which could result in an increase in statutory advocacy activity	Moderate 2	Medium	Flexibility has been built into the contract to enable it to adapt to changes in demand as reforms are implemented. The contract is being let on a 3 + 2 basis to enable more significant changes to the service should the implemented reforms have a higher than expected impact.	Exercise the option to end the contract after the initial term of three years and reprocure the service under a revised service specification.	Minor 1	Medium
There is a risk that demand for statutory advocacy services is consistently and significantly higher than anticipated because of the demographic composition of the borough's population	Moderate 2	Medium	The Preferred Supplier is expected to give priority to statutory advocacy over self-advocacy. Fluctuations in statutory case activity are expected within the contract term and the Preferred	Exercise the option to end the contract after the initial term of three years and reprocure the service under a revised service specification.	Minor 1	Medium

and future population projections which could result in service capacity being exhausted			Supplier is expected to deploy a flexible approach to managing all activity. The contract will be closely monitored to ensure that consistent and significant increases in activity are managed within the existing contract budget.			
There is a risk that the delivery of the self-advocacy service is negatively impacted because the service is required to prioritise statutory advocacy services, which could result in the reduction in the delivery of the self-advocacy service	Moderate 2	Medium	The Preferred Supplier is expected to deploy a flexible approach to managing all activity and must ringfence a minimum of 22% of the contract budget to ensure continued delivery of self-advocacy. This is subject to review by consensus.	Exercise the option to end the contract after the initial term of three years and reprocure the service under a revised service specification.	Minor 1	Medium

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the council to ensure that when considering any new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure the impacts on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/ public groups, have been considered. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is available to view on the Council website and is also shown at Appendix A.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. In their tender submission bidders were asked to set out their commitment to operating in an environmentally sustainable way and describe their initiatives.

7.3 Data Protection/ GDPR. Under this contract personal data will be processed, therefore a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been completed in partnership with Procurement, Legal Services and the Data Protection Officers for the Council and Optalis Ltd.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services and the Executive Director of Adult Services and Health was undertaken as part of the process. Approval was sought for the Contract for the new Independent Adult Advocacy service to go out to tender.

8.2 Consultation was undertaken with people who use the existing service, who include people with learning disabilities and/ or autistic adults and carers, to inform the new service specification. Further consultation and engagement took place with other local authorities and providers of advocacy services that operate outside of the region, enabling commissioners to hear impartial experiences and advice, and with operational Adult Services and NHS staff, ensuring that the new contract is delivered in an integrated way with people and their outcomes at its heart.

8.3 A co-productive approach was taken to ensure that the resulting service will meet people's expectations, is person-centred and is fit for purpose. Two members of the Speaking Out self-advocacy group volunteered to help plan and co-lead the engagement session with the rest of the group, which included devising questions to ask the group seeking their feedback on the existing service and suggestions for the new service.

8.4 The group fed back their experiences and ideas and identified a range of 'I' statements that were inserted into the service specification. These 'I' statements show the outcomes the group members expect to achieve through their self-advocacy service:

- I am enabled to think about things that affect my life
- I have an advocate who listens to me
- I am able to speak up for myself, or someone else speaks up for me on my behalf
- I am heard
- I am helped to ask questions, understand choices and enabled to make informed choices about important decisions
- I am confident that the people who work with me know what matters most to me
- I am supported to learn and try new experiences
- I am more confident

8.5 Feedback from every engagement session had a direct impact on the commissioner's approach to the advocacy service, informing the new service specification and driving improvements to the current service.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date if not called in: 1 July 2024. The full implementation stages are set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
18 April 2024	Expected end of 'standstill' period
19 April 2024	Confirmation of Contract award
19 April 2024 onwards	Contract mobilisation
1 July 2024	Contract commencement

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by the following two appendices:

- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix B – Contract Award of the New Independent Adult Advocacy Service

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by the following one background document:

- Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	14.02.24	
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	14.02.24	26.02.24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	14.02.24	14.02.24
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	14.02.24	
<i>Mandatory: Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>			
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	14.02.24	15.02.24
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	14.02.24	26.02.24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	14.02.24	22.02.24
<i>Mandatory: Assistant Director HR – to advise if report has potential staffing or workforce implications</i>			

Nikki Craig	Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT	28.02.24	
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	14.02.24	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	14.02.24	
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	14.02.24	
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	14.02.24	17.2.24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Housing Services	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key decision: First entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan 08.02.24	No	No

Report Author: Laurel Sanderson, Commissioning Officer – Adults, 01628 683662

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	<u>Independent Adult and Discretionary Advocacy Service</u>
Service area:	<u>Commissioning Team</u>
Directorate:	<u>Optalis</u>

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

The Cabinet member for Adults, Health and Housing Services and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Communities approved the decision to go out to tender for the Independent Adult and Discretionary Advocacy Service. The services to be delivered under this Service are currently being delivered under two separate contracts: Adult Advocacy (a joint contract with Wokingham Borough Council) and Self-Advocacy for People with Learning Disabilities, both of which will expire on 30th June 2024. A provider of advocacy services will be appointed through the tender process.

Every person has a right to have their voice heard on matters relating to their care and support, to defend and safeguard their rights, and to have their views and wishes seriously considered when decisions are being made about their life. Not every person is able to make their thoughts and wishes known. This may be for a variety of reasons, including their cognitive ability, their health, their confidence, their ability in speaking up, or their age. When a person is not able to make their voice heard, an advocate is needed to be their voice. Advocacy promotes equality, social justice, social inclusion, and human rights, and speaks for people when they are unable to do that themselves. It empowers people to make the most of their lives.

This will be a Service that is person-centred, empowering, strengths-based and outcomes-focussed which allows our residents to have their voices heard, their rights protected and be given opportunities to co-design and co-produce the Service they receive. This Service will enable RBWM to fulfil its statutory duty to deliver independent adult advocacy services to eligible people.

The Service will deliver:

Service Element 1: statutory services

- Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICAA)
- Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA)
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) support, including:
 - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
 - Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) from 16 years old upwards (once implemented)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant Person’s Representative (RPR) ○ Rule 1.2 Representative ○ Litigation Friend ● Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) <p>Service Element 2: non-statutory services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discretionary advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities, including facilitation of the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB), sub-groups and self-advocacy groups ○ Carer advocacy support ○ Non-statutory advocacy projects <p>The Service will, primarily, ensure that the individual advocacy outcomes agreed with each Advocacy Partner (a recipient of the Service) are achieved. Additionally, it is expected that the Service will make a difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in the lives of Advocacy Partners ● in the way that the health and social care sector delivers services and responds to people ● in the way communities can support people to be included and enriched by peoples’ full participation and involvement ● in the way that advocacy services develop and improve
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2. Relevance Check

<p>Is this proposal likely to <u>directly</u> impact people, communities or RBWM employees?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If Yes, state ‘Yes’ and proceed to Section 3. ● If No, please explain why not, including how you’ve considered equality issues. ● Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)
<p>Yes</p>

If ‘No’, proceed to ‘Sign off’. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

<p>Who will be affected by this proposal?</p> <p>For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vulnerable RBWM residents, in particular people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who have health, care and support needs ○ Who lack capacity, including those living with dementia ○ Have mental health problems ○ Who have learning disabilities and/ or are autistic ○ Unpaid/ family carers of vulnerable people ● Other people who meet the eligibility criteria ● Employees of the incumbent advocacy provider ● Voluntary organisations and their associated volunteers ● RBWM, Optalis and Achieving for Children employees: current working practices are likely to require some changes.

Eligibility criteria are set out in legislation:

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019)
- Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007)
- Health and Social Care Act 2012

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

Yes, among those affected by the proposal a higher proportion of the Advocacy Partners are older people, people who have mental health problems or have a disability or sensory or cognitive impairment. People with other protected characteristics are not disproportionately represented.

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

Engagement and consultation has been carried out with:

- People with learning disabilities who are recipients of the existing service
- Unpaid/ family carers of people with learning disabilities
- Advocacy provider organisations
- NHS partners (in particular, operational managers of teams/ ward staff who refer into the existing service for independent adult advocacy services: mental health, health complaints, mental capacity)
- Optalis teams (in particular, operational managers and staff who refer into the existing service for independent adult advocacy services: mental health, Care Act, mental capacity, self-advocacy)

The engagement with people with learning disabilities was co-produced with two people with learning disabilities who worked with Optalis to develop the meeting agenda, how the session should be run and the questions to ask the wider group. With the support of Optalis, the two people co-facilitated the in-person session with the Speaking Out self-advocacy group and notes were taken by Optalis.

The session with unpaid carers was carried out on Zoom and was facilitated by Optalis with notes taken.

The two objectives of this engagement were to consider if/ how to improve the existing service and to inform the specification for the proposed Service. Feedback received has directly influenced the Specification, resulting in a relevant, focused and fit for purpose Service.

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Please consult the [EQIA Evidence Matrix](#) for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document (Section 2.3).

- Contract data monitoring: Adult Advocacy Contract 2019 – 2023
- 2021 Census
- Office for National Statistics (2012); NOMIS - Long term health problem or disability by health by sex by age from Census 2011

- **Berkshire East Public Health Hub (2022) Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead’s People and Place Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary**
- **Independent Advocacy Guide for Commissioners, Scottish Government (2013)**
- **Race Equality Foundation (2020)**
- **Ethnicity facts and figures - Mental health (gov.uk)**
- **Office for Health improvement and Disparities; Public Mental Health dashboard**
- **The King’s Fund (2022) What are health inequalities?**
- **NHS Digital (2021) Health Survey England Additional Analyses – Health and health-related behaviours of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults (2011-2019)**
- **Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Perinatal Mental Health Profile**

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state ‘Not Applicable’.

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the EQIA Guidance document (available on the intranet).

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age	<p>RBWM’s is an ageing population: there has been a 17.5% increase in people aged 65 and over in the last decade, while the population of people aged 20 to 24 has decreased by 4.6%, while the proportion of people aged 20 to 44 has decreased by 4.6%. RBWM’s population is slightly older than England’s with a median age of 42 years (2021 Census).</p> <p>Between 2019 – 2023, where age was specified, approximately 63% of the referrals received by the current adult statutory advocacy service were for older people, 36% for working age people and fewer than 1% for young people and children.</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, who will primarily be aged 18 and over. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner’s preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case.</p>	Yes	

	The Specification requires the Provider to collaborate with Achieving for Children and providers of children’s advocacy.		
Disability	<p>17% of people in England have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their daily activities (Office for National Statistics (2012); NOMIS - Long term health problem or disability by health by sex by age from Census 2011). In 2020-21 0.8% (1,333 people) of RBWM’s total population was living with dementia (which is significantly higher compared with England data), 0.3% (469 people) of the population had a learning disability and on 31.03.21 1,215 people in RBWM were recorded as having a serious mental health disorder on their GP Record (Berkshire East Public Health Hub (2022) Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead’s People and Place Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary).</p> <p>Advocacy provides an approach to support people with a range of disabilities. People with disabilities often find it difficult to make their voice heard and may experience barriers to accessing their human rights in areas such as health and wellbeing, housing, personal assistance, employment, finance and decision-making. Independent advocacy can promote choice, access, justice, and empowerment by helping people to have a stronger voice and address power imbalances. (Independent Advocacy Guide for Commissioners, Scottish Government (2013)).</p> <p>Between 2019 – 2023, referrals to the existing service showed that the vast majority of individuals had one or more identified disability.</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their disability. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner’s preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case. People with a learning disability (including those who are also autistic) will be given the confidence and skills to self-advocate, particularly in respect of their health and social care choices.</p>	Yes	

Sex	<p>Between 2019 – 2023, where gender was specified, nearly three quarters of referrals to the existing statutory service were for females and just over one quarter were for males. The proportion of referrals where the person identified as neither female nor male was minor (less than 0.5%).</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their sex. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner’s preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case, for example, a person of the Advocacy Partner’s own sex with whom they might feel more comfortable.</p>	Yes	
Race, ethnicity and religion	<p>People from black, Asian and ethnic minority groups have a higher risk of mental ill health, as they are disproportionately impacted by social determinants associated with mental illness. Access, treatment and recovery indicators all indicate inequalities in the way different ethnic groups experience mental health services and support. For example, people from African Caribbean communities are three times more likely to be diagnosed and admitted to hospital for schizophrenia than any other group. Irish Travellers are six times more likely to die as a result of suicide than non-Travellers (Race Equality Foundation (2020)); Racial disparities in mental health: Literature and evidence review). In 2020/21, people from a black ethnic group were 5 times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act compared to those from a white group (Ethnicity facts and figures - Mental health (gov.uk)). A summary of evidence show that people from ethnic minority groups are more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be diagnosed with a mental health problem • defer seeking help until in a crisis situation and then access that help via A&E • be admitted to hospital with a mental health problem • experience a poor outcome from treatment • disengage from mainstream mental health services <p>(Office for Health improvement and Disparities; Public Mental Health dashboard)</p>	Yes	

	<p>Between 2019 – 2023, where ethnicity was specified, the vast majority (approximately 82.5%) of referrals to the existing statutory service were for white British people. Asian people accounted for next largest ethnic group (approximately 6.5% of referrals).</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their race, ethnicity and religion. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service, which includes the delivery of culturally appropriate advocacy. The Provider will ensure staff and volunteers are appropriately trained/recruited under equal opportunities legislation.</p>		
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment	<p>People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) experience higher rates of poor mental ill-health and lower wellbeing than those who do not identify as LGBT (The King’s Fund (2022) What are health inequalities?) and they have a higher prevalence of mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental conditions than heterosexual adults (NHS Digital (2021) Health Survey England Additional Analyses – Health and health-related behaviours of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults (2011-2019)).</p> <p>Between 2019 – 2023, where gender was specified, nearly three quarters of referrals to the existing statutory service were for females and just over one quarter were for males. The proportion of referrals where the person identified as neither female nor male was minor (less than 0.5%).</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender reassignment status. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider is encouraged to provide LGBTQI+ awareness-raising training to advocates. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner’s preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case.</p>	Yes	

Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Perinatal mental health problems affect between 10% to 20% of women during pregnancy and the first year after having a baby. The most common mental health problems that women in the perinatal period experience are depression and anxiety. The risk of developing a severe mental health condition such as postpartum psychosis (which affects between 1 and 2 in 1,000 women who have recently given birth), severe depressive illness, schizophrenia and bipolar illness is low but increases after childbirth (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Perinatal Mental Health Profile). Detention under the Mental Health Act is a risk for some pregnant women, particularly those with pre-existing mental health conditions, therefore the Provider will engage with this group.</p> <p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their pregnancy or maternity status. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner's preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case.</p>	Yes	
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>The Service is inclusive and person-centred and delivered to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of their marriage and civil partnership status. The person-centred approach means that each Advocacy Partner is treated as an individual and their goals, aspirations and how they want to lead the process will define the approach to this Service. The Provider is encouraged to provide LGBTQI+ awareness-raising training to advocates. The Provider will endeavour to allocate the Advocacy Partner's preferred advocate to work on their statutory advocacy case.</p>	Yes	
Armed forces community	<p>The Service will be delivered throughout RBWM, ensuring that no communities are excluded.</p>	Yes	
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty	<p>The Service will be delivered throughout RBWM, ensuring that no communities are excluded.</p>	Yes	
Children in care/Care leavers	<p>The Specification requires the Provider to collaborate with Achieving for Children and providers of children's advocacy, particularly in cases where the young person is</p>	Yes	

	transitioning from Children’s Services to Adult Services to ensure a consistent approach to supporting the young person.		
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5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?

For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group

The Provider will ensure the Service can be accessed and delivered in a range of ways to ensure that those requiring the support are not disadvantaged and that access is consistent and equitable. Considerations relating to access to, and delivery of, the Service will be in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will be further expanded to meet the needs of those who are at risk of inequality although they may not have a protected characteristic.

Advocates will always consider the person’s communication needs and preferences in the locations, dates, times or methods of Service delivery. The Service will be available in a wide range of customer interface channels (for example, face-to-face, web chat, email, text message, telephone, video calling etc). Visits and other advocacy input must be made at appropriate times and intervals so that the Advocacy Partner has enough time to meaningfully engage with the advocacy support.

The Provider must follow the Accessible Information Standard by law. The Standard sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

The Provider must enable people with communication difficulties, including those with sensory impairments, those who lack capacity, those whose first language is not English or do not use spoken language, to access the Service by supporting any communication needs.

Advocacy partners will be helped at meetings, for example, getting ready for the meetings, having people to support at the meeting to make sure they have a voice, making sure simple language is used, having support after the meeting to talk through and revisit topics.

Advocates should make regular visits to inpatient settings to identify people who would benefit from advocacy and help them to access it. All advocates should take all necessary steps to ensure that people who would otherwise be unable to instruct an advocate, or who would find it particularly difficult, do not miss out on statutory advocacy services. Particular efforts should also be made to facilitate access to advocacy for people in isolation, seclusion or segregation.

Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?

- For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.

How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?

The Contract will be managed in line with the Optalis Commissioning Team contract management procedures. This includes ensuring that advocates are appropriately trained/ recruited and monitoring demographic data to ensure people with protected characteristics are accessing the Service.

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Laurel Sanderson	Date: 23.10.23
Approved by: Lynne Lidster	Date: 01.11.23

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by:	Date:
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Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Data Protection Impact Assessment
Independent Adult and Discretionary Advocacy Service

Laurel Sanderson
Commissioning - Adults
24.08.2023

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Introduction and guidance

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help identify and minimise the data protection risks of a project or new purpose for processing personal data.

A properly conducted DPIA will identify privacy issues and protections from the outset negating the requirement to retrofit systems at further expense and protect against a breach of the Data Protection Act 2018 resulting in reputational damage and fines of up to £17,000,000.

A DPIA should be carried out whenever there is a change that is likely to involve a new use or significant change in the way that personal data is handled, for example a redesign of an existing process or service or a new process or information asset being introduced, which is “likely to result in a high risk” to the data subject. The purpose of this assessment is to identify the risks that may arise through the project and propose methods to mitigate against the risks.

The GDPR states that a DPIA must be carried out in the following instances:

- Where it is proposed to use systematic and extensive profiling with significant effects.
- Where it is proposed to process special category or criminal offence data on a large scale; or
- Where it is proposed to systematically monitor publicly accessible places on a large scale.

The Information Commissioner’s Office requires a DPIA to be carried out in following the additional, circumstances:

- Using innovative technology
- Processing personal data in a new way that is not already depicted in a privacy notice.
- Using profiling or special category data to decide on access to services
- Using profiling of individuals on a large scale
- Processing biometric and genetic data
- Matching or combining data sets from different data sources
- Collecting personal data from a source other than the individual without providing them with a privacy notice.
- Tracking individuals’ location or behaviour
- Profiling children or target marketing or online services at them
- Processing data that might endanger an individual’s physical health or safety in the event of a security breach.

Where a DPIA is carried out, it should address the following:

- A description of the proposed processing and the purposes –what personal data will be collected; who will have access; how it will be stored; who it will be disclosed to

- An assessment of the necessity and proportionality of the processing
- An assessment of the risks to the rights of the individuals affected
- The measures envisaged to address the risks and demonstrate compliance with the GDPR.

The Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO) must be consulted at the design phase of any new system or process that includes processing of personal data.

dpo@rbwm.gov.uk

The DPO will record all completed DPIAs in the Record of Processing Activity register. (RoPA)

Stages of a Data Protection Impact Assessment

Stage 1: The initial screening questions (Appendix A)

This section is to be completed by the service manager or project lead responsible for delivering the proposed new system or change of purpose for the personal data processing.

The purpose of the screening questions is to ascertain if a DPIA is required.

Stage 2: Data Protection Impact Assessment (Appendix B)

To be completed by the Project Manager or Project Lead responsible for delivering the new system/proposed change. The completed form will be assessed by the Data Protection Officer who will advise on the next stage. There are four possible outcomes:

1. The DPIA is incomplete and will have to be repeated or further information obtained.
2. The DPIA has highlighted low value risks and includes appropriate actions considered through the project to mitigate these risks.
3. The DPIA has identified medium to high value risks which require an action plan to be put in place to resolve. Consideration of Caldicott Guardian and SIRO involvement required.
4. The DPIA has identified no risks, and no further information needs to be obtained.

Stage 3: Identified risks, proposed mitigations, and action plan (Appendix C)

Where the initial DPIA identifies further information governance issues, an action plan should be developed on how the risks will be mitigated. This will include:

- identified risks
- proposed solutions

- action assigned
- timescale for resolution

The Council's Data Protection Officer and SIRO should be included at an early stage where high risks to the rights and freedom to data subjects have been identified.

Stage 4: Sign-Off (Appendix D)

The sign off form must be completed by Heads of Service and returned to RBWM's DPO. DPO@rbwm.gov.uk

Screening Questions (Appendix A)

These questions are intended to help decide whether a DPIA is necessary. Answering 'Yes' to the screening questions below represents a potential information governance risk that will have to be further analysed to ensure those risks are identified, assessed and fully mitigated.

Q	Category	Screening question	
1.1	Identity	Will the project involve the collection of new information about individuals?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.2	Identity	Does the project/process include the processing of "Special categories of personal data"?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.3	Identity	Will the project compel individuals to provide information about themselves?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.4	Multiple Organisations	Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.5	Data	Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.6	Data	Have you introduced new ways of processing/using personal data, even where your reasons for processing the data have not changed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.7	Data	Does the project involve you using new technology which might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? For example, the use of biometrics or facial recognition.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
1.8	Data	Will the project result in you making decisions or taking action against individuals in ways which can have a significant impact on them?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1.9	Data	Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For example, health records, criminal records or other information that people would consider to be particularly private.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.10	Data	Will the project require you to contact individuals in ways which they may find intrusive?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
1.11	Approval	Has this project/process already been started as a pilot without a screening or DPIA being undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the questions above, please proceed with the DPIA. (Appendix B)

If you have answered 'NO' to all the questions above a DPIA is not required.

Data Protection Impact Assessment Inception. (Appendix B)

DPIA Reference Number: Provided by the Data Protection Officer.
Project Title: Independent Adult and Discretionary Advocacy Service
Project Purpose: The provision of independent advocacy is a legal requirement for local authorities under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (amended 2019), the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This project is to commission a new Independent Adult and Discretionary Advocacy Service that meets RBWM's statutory obligations and the needs of RBWM residents. This replaces two existing commissioned services with contract expiry dates of 30.06.2024. The Screening Questions in Appendix A have been completed on the basis that a new Provider will take on the Contract commencing 01.07.24. Should the incumbent provider take on the Contract commencing 01.07.24 there will be no change to existing data processing arrangements.
Implementing Organisation: The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Head of Service/Nominated Officer Name: Lynne Lidster Contact: lynne.lidster@rbwm.gov.uk
Implementation Date: 01.07.2024

Data Protection Impact Assessment Template

2.1	<p>Is this a new or changed use of personal information that is already collected?</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Changed
	<p>Purpose of the processing: Personal information is collected by the Provider of adult advocacy to deliver the Service as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICAA) • Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA) • Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) support, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) ○ Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) from 16 years old upwards (once implemented) ○ Relevant Person’s Representative (RPR) ○ Rule 1.2 Representative ○ Litigation Friend • Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) • Discretionary advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities, including facilitation of the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB) and self-advocacy groups ○ Carer advocacy support ○ Non-statutory advocacy projects <p>Service delivery requires the collection of data to determine eligibility for the Service or to advocate effectively on behalf of the person receiving advocacy.</p>	

2.2	<p>What personal data will be collected?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forename <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surname <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOB <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postcode <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other unique identifier (please specify): <input type="checkbox"/> Other administrative data (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.</p> <p>Special categories of personal data:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Racial or ethnic origin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious or philosophical beliefs <input type="checkbox"/> Political opinions <input type="checkbox"/> Trade union membership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health or sex life <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Genetic data <input type="checkbox"/> Biometric data <input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission or alleged commission of an offence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NHS Number <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proceedings for any offence committed or alleged <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Description of other sensitive data collected: Care Group (mental health, learning disability, autism, substance misuse, older person, physical disability, cognitive or sensory impairment, carer (including young carer), young person aged 16-18 in transition to Adult Services). Details of the issues with which the person requires advocacy support. Details of their 'substantial difficulties, including any communication difficulties and reasonable adjustments ... already made for them' (eligibility question to determine whether they meet the criteria for an advocate). Referrer's details (name, contact details). Details of any professionals (including any existing advocates) involved with the person and any family/friends actively involved in their care. Any risks or behaviours that may affect lone working.</p>
2.3	<p>Does the information involve processing children's data? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Does the information involve processing adults' data? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
2.4	<p>What is the lawful basis that the personal information is collected and/or shared?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent of individual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative/Statutory requirement</p>
2.5	

	<p>How will individuals be informed about the proposed uses of their personal data? The Contract requires that the Provider has policies and procedures in place to check that informed consent was provided before referral and to check on first contact with Advocacy Partners that they have consented to the referral.</p>	
2.6	<p>How will you manage Individual complaints? The Provider will have in place a complaints policy and process. The Contract monitoring process will note any complaints and compliments received by the Provider and follow up as necessary. If the referred individual states that they did not/ do not consent to the referral – the Provider will have systems in place in order to delete all information held on that individual unless there is a lawful basis to proceed without consent (for example the individual lacking capacity to make the decision on consent – and a best interests decision under the Mental Capacity Act affirms the necessity to proceed).</p>	
2.7	<p>Are other organisations involved in processing the personal data? <i>If yes, please list below</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	RBWM	
	Adults and children’s advocacy providers	Optalis
	Manor Green School NHS	Achieving for Children Care homes
2.8	<p>Does the proposal include employing external individuals? If yes, have they signed a 3rd party disclosure agreement? Template agreements are available from the DPO dpa@rbwm.gov.uk</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.9	<p>Has a data flow mapping exercise been undertaken?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
2.10	<p>How will the personal data be collected? The Provider will collect information from referrals received. RBWM, Optalis, the NHS and other referring agencies (including self-referrals or referrals from carers, friends, members of the public) will send information via the prescribed referral routes.</p>	

	<p>The Provider and the Commissioner will be joint data controllers.</p> <p>The Provider will use information received via referrals in order to make contact with referred Advocacy Partners to offer appropriate advocacy services. Advocacy Partners may be eligible for more than one statutory advocacy Service and/ or non-statutory advocacy so may seamlessly move within and between the Service Elements. For example, an Advocacy Partner may be referred for an Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy due to lacking capacity to make the decision to move from hospital to residential care. Inherent within that there may be a requirement to assess their needs under the Care Act 2014 and so they may also be eligible for Independent Care Act Advocacy as well as for an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate. The Provider will make decisions on eligibility for aspects of the Service based on information received in the referral and additional information gathered in its own assessment of the Advocacy Partner's circumstances.</p> <p>Personally identifiable information (PII) will only be shared by the Provider with others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on a case-by-case basis where it is necessary in order to advocate on the Advocacy Partner's behalf or to meet the Advocacy Partner's health or social care needs • where they have the consent of the Advocacy Partner to do so (or where they have a lawful basis to do so, for example, under the Mental Capacity Act in order to fulfil the advocacy role) • via the most appropriate method (such as telephone call or secure email to, for example, the Adult Services Safeguarding Hub, the allocated social worker, relevant hospital ward or care home staff). <p>Anonymous Service usage data will be shared with the Commissioner on a quarterly basis. This does not contain any PII.</p> <p>RBWM is not prescriptive on how the Provider will store information, only that its systems for doing so are compliant with GDPR. The Contract will also specify compliance with record retention lengths and the requirement to delete information once retention periods have been met.</p> <p>The highest data processing risk is the sending of PII information via non secure email either from referrer to the</p>	
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	<p>Provider or from the Provider to another agency. The Provider will be required to ensure that they send information securely and referral information will make clear that information must be sent securely to them or if that is not possible to refer by phone. The potential for an online web-based referral form, removing the necessity for referrals via email, will be explored with the Provider.</p> <p>The Provider may receive a referral for an adult with capacity to make a decision about the receipt of the Service where they have not provided consent to be referred. The Contract will need to ensure that the Provider has procedures in place to check that informed consent was provided before referral and to check on first contact with individuals that they have consented to the referral.</p> <p>If the individual states that they did not/ do not consent to the referral, the Provider will have systems in place to delete all information held on that individual unless there is a lawful basis to proceed without consent (for example, the individual lacking capacity to make the decision on consent and a best interests decision under the Mental Capacity Act affirms the necessity to proceed).</p> <p>If the Advocacy Partner has consented and withdraws their consent for their information to be held/ processed by the Provider, then the Provider will need to ensure that they have systems in place to manage this scenario and delete the individual data. Additionally appropriate mechanisms will be required to capture anonymous Service usage data if the Advocacy Partner has received any Service Element prior to consent being withdrawn.</p> <p>The Provider may receive a referral for an adult lacking capacity to make a decision about the receipt of the Service. The Contract will need to ensure that the Provider has procedures in place to check that there is a lawful basis to proceed without consent.</p> <p>Where appropriate and the Advocacy Partner has capacity, advocates are encouraged to complete an Advocacy Agreement form with their Advocacy Partners, setting out the issues that will be dealt with by the advocate. This document can be reviewed at any time, and advocates are always clear with Advocacy Partners about the issues they can and cannot deal with. Wherever possible, if an issue is not appropriate to be dealt with by an advocate, the Advocacy Partner will be signposted to another agency.</p>	
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	<p>Advocacy Partners will be asked to complete a permission to share agreement at the point of engagement with the Service and at regular intervals thereafter, but no less than annually.</p> <p>Information will be held in accordance with the Provider's data protection policies, which in turn will be compliant with the terms and conditions of the Contract.</p>	
2.11	<p>Where will the information be stored? Personal data will held by the Provider. Storage will be, at a minimum, compliant with relevant legislation as set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract. The Provider will hold electronic and paper files to support the delivery of the Service.</p> <p>A range of IT systems or applications are available to providers. If not already secured, the specific system will be secured by the Provider once the Contract is awarded. IT systems will need to reflect the requirements as set out in the Specification.</p>	
2.12	<p>Appropriate access controls Does the system involve accessing personal data held in other systems or locations?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
2.13	<p>Retention/disposal schedules Has an appropriate retention period been identified and applied to the information? <i>If no, please get advice from the DPO.</i> Retention periods will be set by the Provider's own data protection policies, but will be, at a minimum, compliant with statutory timescales.</p> <p>If the individual states that they did not/ do not consent to the referral – the Provider will have systems in place in order to delete all information held on that individual unless there is a lawful basis to proceed without consent (for example the individual lacking capacity to make the decision on consent – and a best interests decision under the Mental Capacity Act affirms the necessity to proceed).</p> <p>If the Advocacy Partner has consented and withdraws their consent for their information to be held/processed by the Provider – then the Provider will need to ensure that they have systems in place to manage this scenario and delete the Advocacy Partner's data. Additionally appropriate mechanisms will be required to capture anonymous</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

	Service usage data if the Advocacy Partner has received any Service Element prior to consent being withdrawn.	
2.14	<p>Data quality How will the information be kept up to date and accurate? The handling, storage and use of information will need to be compliant with the requirements set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract. The terms and conditions of the Contract clearly set out the requirements to be compliant with data protection laws, including ensuring that only personal data that is adequate, relevant, and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is processed is collected.</p>	
2.15	<p>Right to rectification/deletion If you are procuring new software, does it allow you to amend/delete personal data when necessary?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.16	<p>Please state by which method the information will be transferred?</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Courier (Internal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By Hand <input type="checkbox"/> CD/DVD <input type="checkbox"/> Web access <input type="checkbox"/> HDD storage </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GCSx Email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post (External) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> USB <input type="checkbox"/> Wireless Network </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Portable <input type="checkbox"/> Cloud storage </p> <p>The information will be transferred as: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-identifiable <input type="checkbox"/> Pseudonymised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymised </p>	
2.17	<p>Who will have access to the personal information? Access to files will be set out in the Provider's own policies and procedures but will be, at a minimum, compliant with relevant legislation as set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract.</p> <p>Members, attendees and presenters at meetings, such as the Learning Disability Partnership Board, self-advocacy groups, support groups or other advocacy groups, meetings or events will have access to each others' names and Care Group (when this data is relevant to the Service provision).</p> <p>What security and audit measures have been, or will be, implemented to secure access to and limit use of personal identifiable information?</p>	

	<p>The highest data processing risk is the sending of PII information via non secure email either from referrer to the Provider or from the Provider to another agency. The Provider will be required to ensure that they send information securely and referral information will make clear that information must be sent securely to them or if that is not possible to refer by phone. The potential for an online web-based referral form removing the necessity for referrals via email will be explored with the Provider.</p> <p>Anonymous Service usage data will be shared with the commissioner on a quarterly basis. This does not contain any PII.</p>
2.18	<p>What staff training will be provided? Employed staff and volunteer training will be set out in the Provider’s own policies and procedures but will be, at a minimum, compliant with relevant legislation as set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract.</p>
2.19	<p>What disaster recovery and business contingency plans are in place? Disaster recovery and business contingency plans will be set out in the Provider’s own policies and procedures but will be, at a minimum, compliant with relevant legislation as set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract.</p>
2.20	<p>Subject Access Requests Are arrangements in place for recognising and responding to requests from individuals for a copy of the personal data processed?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
2.21	<p>Are there any new or additional reporting requirements for this project? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Who will be responsible for running the reports? The Provider.</p> <p>Who will receive the report or where will it be published? The Commissioner will receive anonymous quarterly performance monitoring reports will be shared with appropriate Optalis and NHS staff and any Advocacy Partners invited to commissioning support/ Contract monitoring meetings, but will not be published or publicly available. The Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS) Lead will receive person-identifiable reports detailing out of area DoLS cases being processed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

	<p>by the Provider, which will not be published or publicly available.</p> <p>Which format will the reports be in? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-identifiable <input type="checkbox"/> Pseudonymised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anonymised</p>	
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2.22	Additional comments and notes:

Identified risks, proposed mitigations, and action plan (Appendix C)

A 'privacy risk' is the risk that a proposal will fail to meet individual's reasonable expectations of privacy. Calculating risk is not simply about assessing whether the project will be legally compliant. It's possible to comply with the law and for the behaviour still to affect whether our residents reasonable privacy expectations are met. Risks to an individual will often directly equate to risks to the Council. Consider not only the direct risks from the proposal, but also any knock on effects. A DPIA doesn't set out to identify and eliminate every possible risk to an individual from using their personal information or otherwise impacting on their privacy.

Identified risks

Risk Ref	Issue	Who is the risk to?	Proposed Solution
1	The sending of PII information via non secure email either from referrer to the Provider or from the Provider to another agency.	Advocacy Partner	The Provider will be required to ensure that they send information securely and referral information will make clear that information must be sent securely to them or if that is not possible to refer by phone. The potential for an online web-based referral form, removing the necessity for referrals via email, will be explored with the Provider.
2	Provider data protection compliance	Advocacy Partner/ RBWM	The Provider must have a current Data Protection Policy and Procedures and comply with any notification requirements and observe all their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 ('DPA') and the UK General Data Protection Regulation ('UK GDPR'), which arise in connection

			with the Service. In the event of a personal data breach the Provider must initiate the relevant procedure which must include the completion of a risk assessment. The Provider will take steps to contain the breach and mitigate against any reputational damage to RBWM and will put processes in place to help prevent it from happening again.
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Click here to enter text.
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Click here to enter text.

Solutions to be implemented

Risk Ref	Approved Solution	Result ¹	Approved by
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose.	Click here.
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose.	Click here.
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose.	Click here.
Ref.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose.	Click here.

Agreed actions

Action to be taken	Completion Date	Responsible for action
Click or tap here to enter text.	Date.	Click here.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Date.	Click here.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Date.	Click here.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Date.	Click here.

Other identified risks

Other risks which have been identified which do not relate to Privacy but need to be escalated, e.g. Business Continuity, Health & Safety.

Risk	Escalated to	Date
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Date.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Date.

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Date.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click here.	Date.

*Is the risk reduced, eliminated or accepted?

Sign off Form (Appendix D)

Signatories required once the DPIA has been completed.

Head of Service	
Name:	Lynne Lidster
Signature:	Lynne Lidster
Date:	28.11.23

Data Protection Officer	
Name:	Samantha-Lea Wootton
Signature:	Samantha-Lea Wootton
Date:	29.11.23

Senior Information Risk Owner	
Name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date:	Click or tap here to enter text.

Email completed DPIA to the DPO DPO@rbwm.gov.uk

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Report Title:	Highways Services Contracts
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	Yes Part I: Main Report Part II: Appendix B – Legal and financial implications of report’s recommendation. Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Hill, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre and Employment
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant – Executive Director of Place Services Alysse Strachan – Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services
Wards affected:	All



REPORT SUMMARY

The Council’s current contract for Highway Maintenance & Management reached the end of its initial term in March 2022. Approval was obtained to extend the contract until March 2024 to enable a procurement process to take place.

On 1st December 2022 Cabinet received a report and approved recommendations relating to the procurement of contracts to deliver Highway Services as part of a new service model. The recommendations in the report proposed grouping services into lots as part of the procurement exercise and to bring certain functions, including highway inspections, back in-house to provide better quality and cost control.

On 29th November 2023 Cabinet received a report and approved the award of four contract lots:

- Lot 1 - Highway Maintenance and Capital Works
- Lot 2 - Street Cleansing
- Lot 3 - Highway Transport and Bridge Professional Services
- Lot 4 - Traffic Signal and ITS (Integrated Traffic System) Maintenance

The preferred bidders and the financial implications were included in the Part II appendices to that report.

Lots 2, 3 and 4 have been awarded and the suppliers are now mobilising to commence services on 1st April 2024.

The Lot 1 preferred bidder was provisionally awarded the contract on 8th December 2023. During the 10-day Alcatel (standstill) period required by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCRs) the three unsuccessful bidders contacted the Council questioning how the commercial scoring methodology had been applied for one specific aspect. The Alcatel (standstill) period was extended to allow the Council to investigate.

Following investigation, it is recognised that there was a lack of clarity between the tendering instructions, a clarification response posted in July 2023 and how the scoring was applied. Officers took specialist external legal advice and have considered how to resolve this issue in a fair, open, compliant and efficient manner that will comply with the PCRs, whilst minimising additional costs and protecting the Council from the risk of legal challenge.

Having investigated all options thoroughly, the Council concluded – supported by external legal advice received - that it was not possible to continue with the procurement fairly and lawfully, and that it would not be expedient and in the public interest to proceed.

On this basis the procurement was terminated, and the Council will now run a new procurement process for the Lot 1 services. Lots 2 – 4 remain unaffected and the new contracts will come into effect as planned from 1 April.

To allow for a new procurement process to be undertaken and to allow for approval and mobilisation of a new contract, an extension of the existing contract with VolkerHighways Ltd will be required.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre and Employment, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to agree terms for the extension of required Highway services with the current supplier, VolkerHighways Ltd.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Extend the existing contract for required Highway services with the current supplier, VolkerHighways Ltd. This is the recommended option	This would ensure that the Council can continue to deliver Highway services and fulfil statutory duties whilst the council conducts a new compliant tender process.
Do Nothing	This is not possible as services could not be delivered so the Council would not be able to fulfil its statutory and regulatory duties.

The discrepancy

- 2.1 In July 2023, before bids were received, a clarification question response was issued erroneously on the Procurement Portal. This response suggested that a specific scoring approach would be applied to individual sub-components of the price element of the bid evaluation, which was at odds with the original and intended scoring approach. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of the original intended scoring approach (i.e. the specific scoring approach was applied to the price score as a whole).
- 2.2 Upon receipt of the scores and feedback following the award of the contract, all three unsuccessful bidders have complained and queried why this approach was taken by the evaluators.
- 2.3 The Council has investigated those complaints and has sought external specialist legal advice, which has led to the conclusion that it would be unlawful to proceed to enter into the Contract with the preferred bidder, particularly in light of likely legal challenge. It is likely that some bidders may have been unintentionally misled by the clarification response before preparing their bids.

Options considered

- 2.4 The Council has investigated whether it would be possible to proceed with the current procurement by partially rewinding the process, by clarifying how the price element of the bid evaluation would be carried out and allowing all bidders to re-submit the price element of their bids.
- 2.5 Since the preferred bidder's scores and technical feedback had been disclosed to the unsuccessful bidders in their unsuccessful award letters (as per the PCRs) and to ensure equal treatment, a rewind could only take place by disclosing all of the scores and the narrative feedback of each of the unsuccessful bidders to all bidders.
- 2.6 Not all bidders agreed to the proposed rewind and the Council has concluded, based on legal advice, that it is not possible to proceed with the rewind in a way which is lawful and consistent with its duties under the PCRs.

Termination of procurement – Lot 1

- 2.7 The Council is entitled to terminate this procurement process as set out in the Invitation to Tender, and not enter into the contract in question so long as any decision is reached in accordance with the Council's duties under the PCRs which include the duties of equal treatment, transparency and proportionality.
- 2.8 It is the view of officers, supported by external legal advice, that the Council had no option other than to terminate the procurement of Lot 1. Letters have been sent to the four bidders terminating the procurement. The Council has therefore revoked the award to the preferred bidder and will not be proceeding to award the Contract to any bidder.

New procurement – Lot 1

- 2.9 The Council will now commence a new procurement exercise for Lot 1 and ensure the completion of a rigorous and compliant competitive procurement (Open Procedure) process following the PCRs. Upon completion of the

procurement exercise a report will be presented to Cabinet recommending an award to the preferred bidder, once established.

- 2.10 As part of this, a lessons learned review is being taken forward – led by members of the Council’s Executive Leadership Team – which will lead to additional safeguards being put in place and processes amended where necessary in order to reduce to risk of further issues in relation to this or other procurement processes. A number of changes have been implemented immediately, including limited access to documents relating to clarification responses and a review of all posted clarification responses prior to the submission of bids.

Extension of existing service provision

- 2.11 There is insufficient time to conduct a procurement to secure an interim contract for the services in Lot 1 which are required for the council to fulfil statutory duties. To enable the new procurement process and ensure a compliant procurement to be concluded, the existing contract with Volker Highways Ltd will need to be extended (excluding services to be delivered through Lots 2 and 3). There is no alternative viable option to continue to deliver core Highway services during this period, a number of which are required to meet statutory duties.
- 2.12 All of the stages set out in this report were jointly developed between RBWM Highway, procurement and legal teams in conjunction with external specialist legal advice.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The approval of the recommendation in this report will ensure that statutory and legal obligations can be met as the Highway Authority.
- 3.2 Alongside the mobilisation of Lots 2, 3 & 4, and the new procurement for Lot 1 services, a parallel piece of work is ongoing to review and restructure the Highways service which will support the new operating model required for all contracted services. This includes functions, including highway inspections, being brought back in-house to provide better quality and cost control.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Enter into a contract extension with VolkerHighways Ltd to deliver Highway services from the end of the existing contract (31 st March 2024) until the new contract commences	Extension not agreed	Agreed extension	N/A	N/A	1 st April 2024 – extension in place

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 No financial implications from this report at this stage. The financial implications from Lots 2, 3 and 4 remain unchanged from those set out in the Cabinet report of 29th November 2023. There may be financial implications relating to the extension for existing services, but they are not known at this stage. Every attempt will be made to keep any additional costs to a minimum. Any financial implications relating to the extension for existing services will be considered under the recommended delegated authority. The financial implications relating to the award of the Lot 1 contract will be presented to Cabinet as part of the award decision.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The discussions of the legal implications in this report's recommendations are contractually sensitive and therefore additional information is included in Appendix B which is Part II by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5.2 The termination of the existing procurement process and commencing a new procurement process will ensure the contract has been procured in line with the Council's constitution and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Council's Legal Services Team have been involved throughout the procurement and will support contract mobilisation activities and contract sealing.
- 5.3 The Council undertakes the role of Highway Authority, which provides statutory powers to operate and maintain a safe highway asset for all road users. Highway Authorities often work with suppliers to discharge these statutory duties, through service contracts, whereby the supplier delivers services which discharge the Authorities duties under the Highways Act 1980.
- 5.4 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) may apply to some roles transferring back to the Council from existing suppliers. The Council would work closely with suppliers to ensure any required consultation and transfers are undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and are seamless.
- 5.5 All contractual matters and certification required will be put in place to enable the extension in relation to the terms agreed with VolkerHighways Ltd.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The termination of the existing procurement and commencing a new procurement for Lot 1 will ensure the Council has conducted a compliant tender process following the PCRs. This provides assurance that the procurement process has been undertaken in an open, fair, transparent manner, giving all bidders equal treatment. Whilst there is always a risk of a challenge to the outcome and selection of a Preferred Bidder, which could result in delay to the contract award, the Council believes this approach to be suitably robust and compliant.

- 6.2 If the Council chooses not to enter an extension with VolkerHighways Ltd, it would be at significant risk of not being able to deliver its statutory and regulatory duties as Highway Authority. The extension of the existing contract recommended in this report is essential to maintain the continuity of services whilst a compliant tender process is concluded.

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Threat or risk	Impact with no mitigations in place or if all mitigations fail	Likelihood of risk occurring with no mitigations in place.	Mitigations currently in place	Mitigations proposed	Impact of risk once all mitigations in place and working	Likelihood of risk occurring with all mitigations in place.
There is a risk that a supplier may challenge the extension	Medium	Medium	External expert Legal advice on the approach taken		Medium	Medium

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and is available as Appendix A to this PART 1 Report.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no specific climate change/sustainability implications in this report.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no specific data protection/GDPR implications in this report.
- 7.4 Staff and HR Matters. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) may apply to some roles transferring back to the Council from existing suppliers. The Council would work closely with suppliers to ensure any required consultation and transfers are undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and are seamless.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Cabinet Paper on proposed options was considered and approved at Cabinet on 1st December 2022, developed further to consultation with officers and Members.
- 8.2 Cabinet Members and Senior Officers have been regularly updated through the procurement process, including the proposal to rewind the commercial evaluation element of the Lot 1 procurement, and the decision to terminate the procurement and the requirement to extend the existing contract.

8.3 The Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services, the Strategic Lead – Contracts & Service Improvement and the Procurement Manager have briefed the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) including the Section 151 Officer. ELT approved the termination of the Lot 1 procurement on 21st February 2024.

8.4 The Procurement Manager has been involved throughout the procurement, evaluation and in developing recommendations.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date: 28th March 2024. The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
27 March 2024	Cabinet Approval
28 March 2024	Enter extension with Volker Highways

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by the following appendices:

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B - Legal and financial implications of report's recommendation. (Part II)

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by two background documents:

- Cabinet Report 29th November 2023.
- Cabinet Report 01st December 2022.

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	23/02/24	
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	23/02/24	27/02/24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	23/02/24	28/02/24
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	23/02/24	

Helena Stevenson	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	23/02/24	
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>	
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	23/02/24	27/02/24
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>	
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	23/02/24	
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>	
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	23/02/24	26/02/24
<i>Mandatory:</i>		<i>Assistant Director HR – to advise if report has potential staffing or workforce implications</i>	
Nikki Craig	Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT	23/02/24	25/02/24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
Steve Mapple	Insurance & Risk Manager	23/02/24	29/02/24
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	23/02/24	27/02/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	23/02/24	26/02/24
<i>Assistant Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	23/02/24	
Becky Hatch	Assistant Director, Strategy & Communications	23/02/24	29/02/24
Alysse Strachan	Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services	23/02/24	23/02/24
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
N/A			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Hill, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre and Employment	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Key Decision. First entered onto the Forward Plan 26th February 2024	Yes	No - Main report and Appendix A Yes – Appendix B

Report Author: Chris Wheeler, Strategic Lead – Contracts & Service Improvement, Neighbourhood Services

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	Highway Services – Lot 1 contract
Service area:	Neighbourhood Services
Directorate:	Place

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

This contract extension is required to maintain and improve the borough’s Highway network and fulfil RBWM duties as Highway Authority.

These services are already delivered through contracts for RBWM. The new contracts/ extension cover the same services in different groupings (lots).

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you’ve considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

No - as no change to existing service provision. All people will benefit from a well-maintained Highway network.

If ‘No’, proceed to ‘Sign off’. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff</p>
<p>Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented? For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?</p>
<p>What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?• Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?
<p>What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment? Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.</p>

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age			
Disability			
Sex			
Race, ethnicity and religion			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Armed forces community			
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty			
Children in care/Care leavers			

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it? For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group
Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this? <ul style="list-style-type: none">For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.
How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future? See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Chris Wheeler	Date: 22/02/24
Approved by: Alysse Strachan	Date: 22/02/24

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by: Ellen McManus-Fry	Date: 26/02/24
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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