

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

2026-27 Council Plan refresh



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

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# 1 Foreword

Our borough is an amazing place to live, work and visit. With beautiful countryside, thriving towns and villages, excellent schools, strong transport links and a rich heritage, it is somewhere people are proud to call home. I know that pride personally. I have lived here all my life and have served as a councillor for over 30 years, so I understand the vital role the council plays and the wide-ranging impact it has on the lives of our residents.

When people think of the council, they often think of the visible services – repairing potholes, collecting waste and keeping our streets clean. But the council's work goes far beyond that. Every day, we support some of the most vulnerable members of our community – protecting children, supporting people with lifelong disabilities, caring for older residents and helping families facing housing challenges.

It is clear that we are still paying the price for the financial recklessness of the past, alongside national decisions on the way councils are funded significantly reducing our income. At the same time, demand for services – particularly adult social care, children's services and housing – continues to rise. Despite these challenges, we remain laser focused on getting things done.



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

Through our Financial Improvement and Sustainability Plan, we have already made significant progress in transforming services and delivering savings and will continue to take responsible and sometimes difficult decisions, protecting the services residents tell us matter most.

It is within this context that we present our refreshed Council Plan, setting out the clear aims and priorities we will deliver through to 2028.

I am determined that our borough will be cleaner, greener and safer. We are stepping up action to tackle litter, graffiti and fly-tipping, while investing in our play parks and car parks so that residents see real, visible improvements in their neighbourhoods.

We are equally committed to playing our part in addressing climate change. Our plan strengthens our work towards net-zero and increasing biodiversity, ensuring we are responsible guardians of our landscape and wildlife for future generations.

Ensuring we 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 is key for us.

Whether it is working with older residents to take preventative action so they can live independently for longer, or early help for young people to prevent family breakdowns and mental health crises - investment up front can save so much in the longer-term and support our residents to live improved lives.

We are also transforming housing services – investing in prevention, building new capacity into the service and reducing reliance on costly temporary accommodation – so that support is available to those that need it, when it is needed most.

Prevention is also the overarching aim in our recently published Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy – which aims to embed this approach across the council and implement action for its four key themes – Best Start in Life, Living Well, Ageing Well, and Healthy Place.

Our refreshed Council Plan demonstrates that the council is firmly at the heart of our community. We are champions for residents, supporters of local businesses and enablers of a thriving voluntary sector.

Above all, we are focused on getting things done for the people of this borough.

**Cllr Simon Werner  
Leader of the Council**



Nearly three years into my role as Chief Executive of the Royal Borough, I continue to be proud to work in such a great place and feel confident about the opportunities ahead of us.

We must continue to provide support to people who need it, when they need it most – whether that is in the form of social care, housing or financial support. As we do this, we will aim to accentuate the strengths of the people we support in order to create opportunities for them, so they retain their independence.

Our residents and businesses want a council that makes their lives easier – a council that is responsive, easy to transact with, invests in the visible universal services which benefit all. Some people need more of our support, whereas some want us to ‘not get in the way’ as they go about their busy lives.

Our financial position continues to be very challenging. Just a few months ago, we had a clear path to financial sustainability which, although requiring some difficult choices, was achievable. The government’s recent decision to reduce our funding by nearly £30m over the next three years has moved the goalposts. But we will continue to tackle the challenge head on, building on the progress we’ve made over the past three years.



**Stephen Evans**  
Chief Executive

As I think of what’s been achieved, I think of:

- The significant grip we now have of the council’s finances, as recognised by our external auditors, CIPFA and government.
- The progress we’ve made to transform services. Three years ago, RBWM didn’t have a transformation programme. Now we have one - implemented from scratch - which delivered nearly £6m in savings last year; is on course to deliver close to £6m more this year; with a further £6.4m of savings identified for next year.
- The complete redesign of adult social care services, which were previously provided by an arms-length company – the only council in the country with such a model. Adult care services are now back ‘in house’, giving us greater control over service quality and budgets.
- The reductions in agency staff across children’s and adult social care, with nearly 80% of our adult social care workforce now permanent, up from 50% two years ago.
- AI tools rolled out to social workers, making their lives easier and freeing up more of their time to provide care.
- Children’s social care services rated ‘good’, with ‘outstanding’ support to care leavers and a recent follow up visit from Ofsted highlighting further improvements.
- A new council-operated children’s residential home opened in the borough, providing better services and saving money.
- The RBWM property company abolished with property services back under council control.
- A programme of assets sales which is delivering tens of £ millions in capital receipts to support our financial management.
- Performance improvements across a range of indicators in all major service areas, particularly environmental services.
- A 12% reduction in number of people in temporary accommodation between summer 2025 and spring 2026.
- Visible improvements in town centres through our Cleaner, Greener, Safer campaign and major town centre housing and regeneration schemes now progressing in Ascot, Windsor and Maidenhead.
- A refined capital infrastructure programme which is almost entirely funded from developer contributions and other external grants, avoiding further borrowing.

The progress we’ve made, and much more besides, has been achieved by councillors and officers working together with a shared purpose to improve the borough. This gives me hope that, despite the scale of our financial challenge, we’ll continue to improve as an authority and tackle our challenges with confidence.

**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 158,943 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 including host three State visits in 2025.

Borough residents broadly enjoy longer and healthier lives than average in England. Healthy life expectancy at birth is 67.5 years for men and 68.9 years for women (2021-23). 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.

The borough offers a strong educational provision, with local education attainment (Average Attainment 8 score of 47.2 at Key Stage 4) exceeding the South East average of 46.9 and placing Windsor and Maidenhead within the top 40% of areas nationally in 2024/25.

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 (1.11 Vs 0.85: 2023), and unemployment is low at 3.4% (Oct-24 to Sep-25).

Financial pressures remain significant, despite progress in stabilising the council's position and securing government support for 2025/26. The council is working to implement measures that will ensure financial stability and maintain service delivery for residents.

Despite a common perception of affluence, IMD 2025 data indicates that 69.8% of the population live in areas ranked within deciles 8–10 (higher deciles indicate lower levels of deprivation) and 4.5% of the local population experience higher levels of deprivation relative to the rest of the borough, as indicated by Index of

Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles 3 and 4. This headline figure conceals pockets of deprivation within the Borough, where residents continue to experience hardship. In response to the cost-of-living pressures, the council has continued to provide support and information on [a range of support](#) including financial assistance for essentials, such as food, heating, and childcare for residents struggling financially during this winter.

Solutions are implemented to address social care and housing pressures. However, the increasing demand, evident at national level, is impacting our borough too. Around 299 (December 2025) households are in temporary accommodation. Around 5,253 (8.2%) households in the borough are in fuel poverty (2023) and around 2,900 children live in families with absolute low income (2023/24).

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



# 4

## Our vision

### Our vision for the council

Our vision is to build a **borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all**. This ambition is at the heart of our Council Plan and guides our decisions, how we deliver services, and our partnerships.

To achieve this, we recognise that the council's culture and the way we work - our behaviours, our collaboration, our accountability - is what will turn this ambition into reality for our residents. Everyone across the council, and our councillors, play an important role in shaping a positive, high performing council that delivers for our residents in a way which is consistent with our organisational values.



### A culture that enables success

Ensuring the right organisational culture and structure is in place to deliver our Council Plan, by prioritising resources and transforming services to meet current and emerging priorities, will be key to our success.

Attracting and retaining talent, alongside effective performance management, and fostering a challenging yet supportive culture of accountability, will enable the council to develop our workforce to meet the needs and ambition of the organisation.

To support this and achieve our ambitions we are committed to achieving our vision for a workplace where everyone feels valued, supported and empowered, to enable us to:

- be resident centred - ensuring services are accessible and high quality
- break down silos and work collaboratively as 'one council'
- challenge the status quo, by embracing technology, data-driven decision making and innovation
- enable everyone to do their best work through aligned leadership and transparent decisions
- learn from others and strengthen our partnerships
- actively manage our finances
- be accountable with clear expectations and shared responsibility for outcomes

## A council that works together for residents

While we face significant challenges and must be realistic about what the council can deliver, we continue to be focused on ensuring residents feel listened to, respected and informed, to ensure our services are reflective of residents' needs, accessible, high quality, digitally enabled and financially sustainable.

By developing effective relationships between councillors and officers, and a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, we can help everyone align to the council's priorities and their role in achieving them.

## Engagement and inclusion for all

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 and reducing barriers to those facing digital exclusion.

Reflecting the Council Plan vision to be at the heart of the borough's communities, empower residents and embed a strong and inclusive approach to engagement, we will continue to embed our strengthened approach to engagement across the council - ensuring we hear residents' views, and they have a chance to influence the decisions that are important to them.



## 5 Our strategic aims and priorities

Over the period 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 increase resilience and serve the borough effectively**

- 1.1 Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position.
- 1.2 Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- 1.3 Drive channel shift and improve digital access to services, including the council's website – making payments and transactions easier and refreshing reporting functions.
- 1.4 Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- 1.5 Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- 1.6 Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

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

- 2.1 Keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe and in a good state of repair through increased investment, partnership working and engagement.
- 2.2 Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- 2.3 Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing, temporary accommodation and tackling homelessness.



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

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



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

- 4.1 A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- 5.4 Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.



# 6 Technical Appendix

This appendix sets out the key activities and deliverables we will focus on to achieve our strategic aims and priorities.

This also contains the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which we will use to measure our progress.

Deliverables that directly link to the council’s Financial Improvement & Sustainability Plan are indicated by [FISP] and [NEW] indicates a deliverable that is newly added to the Council Plan (including deliverables that may already exist in other plans such as FISP).

Where deliverables span multiple years or are ongoing, completion dates have been set either to March 2027 to maintain focus on the next 12 months, or to March 2028, which marks the end of the current Council Plan period (2024–28).

## Priority activities and Key Performance Indicators

### Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to increase resilience and serve the borough effectively

Strategic Priority	1.1 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	
[NEW] Delivery of the Finance Service Transformation Plan.	March 2028	Resources	

Strategic Priority	1.2 Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
[FISP] Introduction of Direct Debit payments for adult care contributions.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities	
[NEW] [FISP] We will work to improve how we deliver priority services, focusing on outcomes that matter most to residents. Using technology more intelligently and empowering our teams, we will create services that support independence, resilience, and stronger communities.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities	

Strategic Priority	1.3 Drive channel shift and improve digital access to services, including the council's website – making payments and transactions easier and refreshing reporting functions		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
[NEW] Make ReportIt easier for issues to be reported via an enhanced map feature that allows reports to be submitted in places other than highways.	September 2026	Resources	
[NEW] Make ReportIt easier for issues to be reported via allowing the device's GPS, where permitted, to capture report locations and display them as a feature on the map.	September 2026	Resources	
[NEW] Make it easier for users to report rectifiable issues by map identifying council maintained and private-owned land on the map as a feature when reporting issues.	March 2027	Resources	

Strategic Priority	1.4 Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money including insourcing where appropriate		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review governance arrangements for contract management within the Place Directorate, seek in-year contract efficiencies which maintain quality while supporting essential services and embed improvements to strengthen practices, rationalise systems and quality assure delivery.	March 2028	Place	

Strategic Priority	1.5 Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review debtor management practices to improve collection rates across council functions and recover existing debt.	March 2027	Resources	
[FISP] New Parking Strategy to inform differential fees & charges and wider parking policy, aligned to emerging Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) work.	March 2027	Place	
[FISP] Work with NHS and public health to maximise impact of grants, including Better Care Fund and Hospital Discharge funds in line with emerging preventative agenda, to keep rate of people placed into long term residential care low.	March 2028	Adults, Health & Communities	
[NEW] Embed Advertising and Sponsorship policy and begin delivery of income generation and sponsorship opportunities.	March 2027	Chief Executive	

Strategic Priority	1.6 Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own		
Deliverables		Target completion date	Lead Directorate
[NEW][FISP] Develop and implement an Asset Strategy that sets out a clear framework for evaluating asset performance, identifying underutilised or surplus assets, and bringing forward opportunities for disposal where these provide best value.		September 2026	Place

### Aim 1: Key performance indicators

Indicator	
<b>Budget</b>	Forecast variance to service revenue budget (£000).
	Savings made or on track (£000s).
	General fund reserves (£000s).
	Overdue debts (excluding Housing Benefits overpayments, Council tax and Business rates arrears) (£000s).
	% of Client Contributions outstanding and at risk of non-collection.
	Value of client contributions collected which was outstanding by >6 months (£000s).
<b>Revenues</b>	% of council tax collected.
	% of non-domestic rates (business rates) collected.

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

Strategic Priority	2.1 Keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe and in a good state of repair through increased investment, partnership working and engagement		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Increase engagement with residents and businesses as part of borough-wide campaign to keep the borough clean, increase recycling and encourage positive behaviour change to reduce waste.	March 2027	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.	March 2027	Place	
Deliver effective regulatory functions to ensure a safe experience for our residents, visitors and businesses and encourage economic growth.	March 2027	Place	
Approve an improved enforcement policy (including civil penalties) that is transparent, proportionate, consistent and targeted at higher risks.	March 2027	Place	
Conduct regular monitoring of council owned parks & green space to ensure they are safe and well maintained for residents to enjoy.	March 2027	Place	
[NEW] Conduct regular monitoring of all other council-owned assets and facilities to ensure they remain safe and well maintained for residents.	March 2028	Place	

Strategic Priority	2.2 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 efficiency and decarbonisation projects.	March 2028	Place	
Improvements to parks, playgrounds and green spaces for recreation and leisure, where appropriate, following the assessment of their conditions and build on community involvement in protecting and enhancing the environment including biodiversity.	March 2027	Place	
Develop a new grounds maintenance contract to help protect and improve the environment and green spaces.	September 2026	Place	
[NEW] Identify and deliver projects to reduce carbon emissions (for example heat pumps/solar panels) in council operated buildings.	March 2028	Place	
[NEW] Maximise biodiversity net gain via Local Nature Recovery Strategy and working with developers.	March 2028	Place	

Strategic Priority	2.3 Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Strengthen partnership working and support delivery of our priorities via further Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or other methods of collaborating with key borough businesses and organisations.	March 2027	Place	
[NEW] Establish the Berkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership including clear strategic priorities and commercial strategy.	March 2027	Chief Executive	

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>2.4 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</b>	
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Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop and embed a new Local Transport Plan.	June 2026	Place
[NEW] Review findings from the Business improvement district (BID) feasibility study and begin work to deliver.	April 2027	Chief Executive
Explore community governance opportunities, including a community governance review on the unparished areas of Windsor and Maidenhead.	May 2027	Chief Executive

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>2.5 Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on tackling homelessness</b>	
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Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Review and revise housing strategies, policies, practice and procurement to provide improved service and accommodation solutions to those who are homeless or seeking provision of social housing.	March 2028	Place
Identify opportunities (including grant funding) to increase availability of permanent social housing and in borough temporary accommodation in addition to reducing overall spend on temporary accommodation.	March 2028	Place
[FISP] Supported accommodation scheme partner selected and work underway.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities

## Aim 2: Key performance indicators

Indicator	
<b>Community safety</b>	# of anti-social behaviour incidents and complaints.
<b>Economy &amp; Place-making</b>	Retail vacancy rate: (Ascot, Maidenhead, Windsor).
<b>Environment</b>	Council's direct carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from council operations (in tonnes CO2e).
	% of borough land for nature.
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</b>	% of food premises rated 0,1 or 2 (not broadly compliant), moving to a compliant rating of 3,4 or 5 against the Food Hygiene Rating System following intervention by food safety officers.
<b>Environmental services</b>	% of reported fly tipping (hazardous and non-hazardous) instances removed within timescale.
	% of reported graffiti on council land resolved within published timescales.
	% of grass cutting completed against target (parks, highways and cemeteries).
	[NEW] # of high or moderate risk park maintenance issues.
<b>Highways</b>	% of 24hr orders responded to on time.

Indicator	
<b>Housing &amp; rough sleeping</b>	% successful homelessness prevention activity for households subject to the prevention/relief duty.
	# of people sleeping rough known to the council.
	# of rough sleepers supported through the rough sleeper pathway.
	% of temporary accommodation provided on a nightly rate.
<b>Waste management &amp; recycling</b>	% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling.
	Average no. missed collections per 100,000 collections.
	[NEW] % completion of serviced waste and dog bins in parks.

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

Strategic Priority	3.1 Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
<p>[NEW] Establish a Multi-Agency Child Protection Team to strengthen local safeguarding arrangements and improve the coordination of responses to children at risk of significant harm. The team will bring together professionals from social care, health, police, and education to deliver a consistent, joined-up approach to child protection, enhancing decision-making and ensuring effective early intervention.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>	<p>Children's Services &amp; Education</p>	
<p>[NEW] [FISP] Analyse data and underlying factors that lead to children entering care to inform earlier identification and targeted support. This work will bring together insights from social care, education, and early help to identify patterns, trends, and opportunities for earlier intervention. Findings will be used to shape practice, commissioning, and service design to reduce the need for children to come into care and improve family outcomes.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>	<p>Children's Services &amp; Education</p>	
<p>[NEW] [FISP] Build a stable and skilled workforce, reducing reliance on agency staff and improving continuity of support for children and families. This will include developing targeted recruitment activity, promoting professional development opportunities, and embedding a supportive culture that enhances retention.</p>	<p>March 2027</p>	<p>Children's Services &amp; Education</p>	

Strategic Priority	3.2 Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
<p>[NEW] Identify and develop options to expand local provision for children in care and care leavers, informed by local need and sufficiency analysis. This will include exploring models of supported accommodation and other step-down options to ensure young people's care and support needs can be met safely and locally, while promoting independence and stability as they transition to adulthood.</p>	December 2026	Children's Services & Education	
<p>[FISP] Increase the number of foster carers by working with the South East Regional Recruitment Hub to strengthen recruitment activity. Prospective carers will have access to a central platform for enquiries and support at the start of their fostering journey.</p>	March 2027	Children's Services & Education	
<p>Partake in the Regional Care Cooperative, which aims to bring together and improve governance around commissioning fostering, residential and secure care placements, so that local authorities can ensure fair practice and value for money when commissioning placements for young people.</p>	March 2027	Children's Services & Education	
<p>Create a 'local offer' for all kinship arrangements, this will reduce placement breakdown for existing 'at risk' placements and attract new kinship arrangements so that more children can remain in family environments.</p>	March 2027	Children's Services & Education	

Strategic Priority	3.3 Support all children and young people 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, including the creation of a borough wide Education Board.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education
[NEW] Develop more readily available and inclusive provision within mainstream education settings. For this year, this includes the opening of the Forest Bridge Sixth Form. Further work will be informed by the forthcoming SEND Schools White Paper, which is expected to provide greater national direction around inclusion.	December 2026	Children's Services & Education
[NEW] We will develop and implement a comprehensive Best Start Local Plan to drive significant improvements in outcomes for children from pregnancy to age five, aligning with the national ambition for 75% of children to achieve a Good Level of Development by 2028.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education
[NEW] Implement actions in line with the Government's Child Poverty Strategy (awaiting publication), working with councils and partners to reduce the impact of poverty on children and families. Through this work we will contribute to reducing inequality and improving long-term outcomes for children and young people across our boroughs.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education
[NEW] Implement and embed the Neuro Divergent Strengths and Needs Toolkit across social care, health and education - developed in partnership with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the Integrated Care Board. The toolkit will allow practitioners to strengthen early identification and support for neurodivergent children and young people without the need of clinical diagnosis.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education
[NEW] In preparation for the anticipated SEND and Schools White Paper, Achieving for Children will work closely with councils, schools, and health partners to review and align local systems with the national direction of reform. This will include strengthening inclusive practice across education settings, improving pathways for children with special educational needs and disabilities, and developing local provision to meet needs earlier and closer to home. The focus will be on readiness for implementation once the reforms are published, ensuring that AfC is well placed to deliver improvements in inclusion, attainment, and wellbeing.	March 2027	Children's Services & Education

Strategic Priority	3.4 Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
<p>Develop and implement a multi-disciplinary Family Help Service, bringing together social workers and otherwise qualified practitioners to deliver coordinated, whole-family support. The service will align with the national social care reforms and the Families First Programme, ensuring families receive timely, proportionate, and relationship-based help that reduces escalation and improves outcomes.</p>	September 2026	Children's Services & Education	

### Aim 3: Key performance indicators

Indicator	
Care Leavers	% of Care leavers in accommodation considered suitable (19-21 years).
	% of Care leavers in education, employment or training (19-21 years).
Child Protection	% of initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale.
	% of child protection plans (CPP) starting during the year, which were a second or subsequent plan.
Children in Care	% of children who cease being looked after due to special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangements order (CAO).
	% of Children in Care with an annual health assessment.
	% of Children in Care with 3+ placements within 12mths.
	% of fostered children placed with in-house (Achieving for Children Independent Fostering Agency) carers.
	% of children in care that are in a foster care placement.
	% of Children in Care placed more than 20 miles from home.

Indicator	
Children in Need/ Referrals	% of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12mths (YTD cumulative).
	# of children referred per 10,000 population (annualised).
Education & SEND	Overall absence for CINO at quarter end [ CINO: children in need, excluding children on a child protection plan and children looked after].
	Overall absence for CPPO at quarter end [CPPO: children on a child protection plan, excluding children looked after].
	Overall absence for CiC 12 months at quarter end [CiC: Children in Care].
	% of children achieving a good level of development in EYFS (Not eligible for FSM) [EYFS: Early Years Foundation Stage] [FSM: Free School Meals].
	% of children achieving a good level of development in EYFS (FSM eligibility).
	Average Attainment 8 score (Disadvantaged).
	Average Attainment 8 score (Not Disadvantaged).
	% of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at KS2 (Disadvantaged).
	% of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at KS2 (Not disadvantaged).
	% of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at KS2 (All SEN) [KS: Key Stage].
% of EHCP assessments completed within 20wks (inc. exceptions) [EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan].	
Family Hubs	% of Family Hub referrals closed in the period with a positive outcome.

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

Strategic Priority	4.1 A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
[NEW] Deliver the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy by embedding a prevention approach across the council and implementing the action plans for its four key themes – Best Start in Life, Living Well, Ageing Well, and Healthy Place, ensuring measurable outcomes.	March 2028	Adults, Health & Communities	
Work with a range of partners to support residents experiencing financial difficulties, with a focus on those most at risk - through targeted financial and practical support including Here to Help, Crisis Resilience Fund, and provision of advice to maximise incomes.	March 2027	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 recently published strategies and plans.	March 2027	Place	
[NEW] Implement the public health service plan to enhance population health, prevent illness and enable healthy and independent living across our communities.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities	

Strategic Priority	4.2 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.	March 2028	Adults, Health & Communities	
Reduce occupational therapy waiting times through the use of strength-based assessments.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities	
Implement and continuously develop a clear Public Health performance framework to provide assurance on the use and impact of the Public Health grant and additional funding streams, and to support health intelligence–informed decision making for ongoing service improvements.	March 2028	Adults, Health & Communities	

Strategic Priority	4.3 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 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) recommendations and action plan to drive continual service improvement: 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.	March 2028	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.	March 2027	Adults, Health & Communities	
[FISP] Additional supported accommodation scheme providing “lifetime homes” opened with first residents taking up accommodation.	March 2028	Adults, Health & Communities	

**Aim 4: Key performance indicators**

Indicator	
<b>Adult social care</b>	[Quartile] % extremely satisfied or very satisfied with the care & support services they receive.
	% extremely satisfied or very satisfied with the care & support services they receive.
	% of permanent admissions to a care home for those aged 65yrs+ (previously self-funded).
	[NEW] % of residents contacting Adult Social Care referred to community support.
	# of permanent admissions to care for those aged 65yrs+ per 100,000.
	[NEW] % of people (18-64) with learning disabilities in long-term support living at home or with family.

Indicator	
Health improvement	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Male).
	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Female).
	# of residents setting a quit date for smoking .
	% of drug & alcohol clients making substantial progress.
	[NEW] % of physically active adults.
	[NEW] Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity).
Leisure centres	# of attendances at leisure centres.
Libraries	# of new library members.
	# of visitors (physical) to libraries.

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

Strategic Priority	5.1 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.	September 2026	Chief Executive	
Strengthen resident engagement on key decisions by setting up a Residents Panel and ensuring high quality consultations are run, using the consultation policy.	March 2028	Chief Executive	
[FISP] Ensure appropriate protections in place, for those most at need, if government gives permission to raise council tax above the current cap .	March 2027	Resources	

Strategic Priority	5.2 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	
Set up a Housing Board to ensure engagement with all stakeholders to review and revise the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	March 2027	Place	
[NEW] Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy to encourage commitment from borough organisations and businesses to contribute positively to economic growth, and support local communities and our voluntary organisations - which links to the existing Social Value Procurement and Advertising & Sponsorship policies.	September 2026	Chief Executive	

Strategic Priority	5.3 Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Enhance the assurance framework by refreshing the council's performance management approach including a new strategy development framework and rollout across the council.	June 2026	Chief Executive	
[NEW] Review and enhance the evidence base for policy and strategy development across the council. Ensure research and insights drive policy and strategy development and are part of the performance management process for service and policy delivery.	March 2027	Chief Executive	
Deliver the planning service improvement plan to strengthen service-delivery across key customer-facing and enabling functions.	March 2027	Place	
[NEW] Progressing a new Local Plan in line with the Local Development Scheme (LDS).	March 2028	Place	
Deliver planned digital migration of Local Land charges system.	June 2026	Resources	
[NEW] Prepare evidence for the building safety regulator audit.	March 2027	Place	

Strategic Priority	5.4 Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
[FISP] Seek to stabilise the finance team through filling of vacancies and remove the reliance on interims. This will then form the bedrock that allows the team to implement the service improvement plan.	April 2027	Resources	


## Aim 5: Key performance indicators

Indicator	
<b>Benefits</b>	Average # of days to process new claims (Housing Benefits).
	Average # of days to process changes in circumstances (Housing Benefits).
<b>Complaints</b>	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld/partially upheld [RBWM Formal Corporate].
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld/partially upheld [Adults].
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld/partially upheld [Children's].
	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale [Adults/Children's/RBWM combined].
<b>Customer service</b>	[NEW] % of Stage 1 complaints upheld/partially upheld for Customer Service Centre (CSC).
<b>FOI requests</b>	% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests processed within 20 working days or within agreed timelines.
<b>Planning</b>	% of major planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period).
	% of minor planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period).
	% of other planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period).
	% of planning decisions overturned at appeal.
	[NEW] % of full plans building control applications decided within statutory period (5wks or 2 calendar months).
	[NEW] % of all building control applications having an initial response within 10 working days.

Indicator	
Workforce	# of working days lost to sickness per headcount (YTD) [RBWM].
	% voluntary turnover (YTD) [RBWM].
	% of posts filled with permanent staff [RBWM].
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [Achieving for Children].
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [ASC].
	% of concluded vacancies successfully filled [RBWM].



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