



**Brighter  
Futures for  
Children**



# Annual Business Plan

Priorities and Finance  
2021-22

## **SUMMARY**

This document outlines the business priorities and financial plan for BFfC for 2021-22. It complements the overarching BFfC Corporate Strategy as well as the children's services priorities in RBC's corporate plan.

## **OWNER**

**Di Smith,**  
Board Chair

## **VERSION**

1.0

## **DATE**

February 2021

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## 1. Welcome

As Chair of the Board, I am delighted to introduce this year's business plan which outlines how Brighter Futures for Children will deliver further improvements to children's services in Reading in 2021/22.

The company is now two years old and having established firm foundations it is time to shift up a gear to deliver our ambition for children, young people and families. We have a number of significant achievements under our belt and a clear understanding of the priorities which must be addressed in the next year.

It is important that our plan recognises and responds to local and national challenges within children's services and beyond. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has forced us to think quickly and do things differently. We are grateful for the resilience and adaptability of our staff who have shown outstanding commitment over the past 12 months. Our staff are our most valuable resource and so this plan outlines our commitment to the development of a stable, motivated and agile workforce.

The financial climate for children's services across the country, and in Reading, is challenging so it is imperative that we operate within our budget, deliver savings and manage demand for our services in order to achieve longer term financial stability. Through our Transformation Programme we plan to address the key drivers of demand, deliver improvement and secure value for money. Improving the availability of local provision for children in our care is just one of the projects central to this work.

In developing the business plan, we have adopted a 'one company' approach and this will be essential to effective delivery of the outcomes. Our single organisational focus is on services to children and families and we are committed to ensuring that every part of the company works together in a coordinated and integrated way to maximise our collective endeavour.

Our governance arrangements are more robust and our performance management framework will ensure that senior leaders are more accountable. We expect everyone in the company to know how they are driving forward changes and improvements that lead to better outcomes for children, young people and their families in Reading.

All of this is 'as one' with Reading Borough Council's own corporate plan. RBC has entrusted us not just to deliver children's services in Reading but to improve outcomes. This document is our 2021/22 map of how we plan to do so.



**Di Smith**  
Chair of the Board

## 2. Introduction by Reading Borough Council

The challenge of maintaining business as usual, at a time when things are anything but, is one now familiar to us all. Some priorities may have changed, but there are some areas on which we will not compromise. The care and education we provide to children and young people in Reading sits firmly in that category.

While no area of work has been untouched by the pandemic, it is also important to shout about achievements during these difficult times. We are acutely aware of both the short term and long term impact on the wellbeing and mental health of some of the most vulnerable young people and families in our society, for example. Our children's social care team continue to absorb the extra pressures. Whilst the ripples are likely to be felt for years to come, it remains our responsibility to minimise the impact.

The NHS and our adult social care staff have been rightly applauded for their tremendous response, but teachers and teaching staff have also been at the frontline throughout. Classrooms have remained open for children of vital key workers and teachers' summer holidays were spent preparing for the daunting task of all pupils returning to the classroom. Those huge challenges now continue. On behalf of Reading Borough Council, thank you.

Budgets everywhere have of course been hit. As part of the family of services delivered on behalf of the Council, colleagues at Brighter Futures for Children will need to make adjustments, and these have been set out in this latest business plan.

At a time of uncertainty, it can sometimes be necessary to focus on the short term. Getting the basics right is essential, particularly where the care and education of young people is concerned. It is also important to keep at least half an eye on the end game. For everyone at the Council and at BFFC, that remains building on the upward trajectory, which was recognised by Ofsted last year, improvements which would not have been possible without the tremendous ongoing support of our partners at Brighter Futures, health, police and schools. We need to focus our efforts on continuing to develop the vital care, education and support services for children and young people in Reading, so that every child can reach their full potential.

The world may have changed for the time being, but our responsibility to children and young people in Reading has not.



**Peter Sloman**  
Chief Executive  
Reading Borough  
Council



**Cllr Jason Brock**  
Leader of the Council  
Reading Borough  
Council



**Cllr Liz Terry**  
Lead Councillor for  
Children  
Reading Borough  
Council



**Cllr Ashley Pearce**  
Lead Councillor for  
Education  
Reading Borough  
Council

### 3. Context

COVID-19 has, as it has across the world, interrupted our planned activity but it hasn't deterred us from our aim of getting children's services to 'Good' in Reading.

This plan outlines our realigned ambitions and priorities for Year Three, which take account of work we begun during the pandemic but will expand upon – at pace – over the coming year.

We have addressed changes to our delivery model that includes less funding but the same strategic ambition to improve the quality and delivery of children's services in Reading.

The wellbeing and welfare of all Reading children, young people and their families must come first. We must deal with the surge in families' acute distress, a decline in young people's mental health and, after a prolonged period of home schooling, some parents' growing inability to manage their children's challenging behaviour.

We will take a strong stance and continue to proactively respond. The Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield has spoken about COVID-19 'hiding' abuse and we know that demand for our services will increase as a result.

Our staff have – and will continue to – deliver additional support for those children and young people who fall outside the DfE definition of vulnerable, where non-attendance and lack of professional contact is cause for concern. We're doing more virtual and doorstep visits, including children not previously known to us. We have our eyes open.

Data shows that young people's mental health [has worsened substantially](#) during the pandemic. The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) that has been monitoring the [social impact of COVID-19](#) has found that young people are more likely than other age groups to report that lockdown has made their mental health worse.

Given the backdrop of the pandemic, we have strengthened our partnerships with schools, academies and the independent sector in Reading. Each state-funded school has an allocated 'go to' person to deal with queries and support. Weekly headteacher dial up meeting and briefings are now the norm, in which we share key messages and in which we give praise and celebrate success.

Our web presence has increased and we have pledged to do more this year. We have created a young people's zone with information on mental and physical wellbeing support and we've done the same for parents and carers. We have put learning and fun activities online, as well as links to the latest government and Public Health England guidance in a 'one stop' information point. We had more than 7,000 visitors in one week. We will continue to provide this support.

Our Early Help teams have quickly adapted to new virtual ways of working. Direct work is focused on new families or those experiencing crisis.

Our youth/detached workers have been on the streets of Reading. They've covered 240 kms, amassing 900 contacts with young people, 300 of whom were regular contacts. They're continuing with this work.

And we've maintained cover in police stations and covered additional 'appropriate adult' work in evenings and weekends. Support has been deployed for young people and their families impacted by significant delays in court hearings.

We know how much we've done but also how much we have to do in 2021/22.

We know we must improve the quality of our delivery while our resources are depleted and our owner – Reading Borough Council – has faced a substantial loss in income. We know we will have to take our own share of impending cuts and to be prepared for that.

Crucial to this is a common understanding by everyone at BfFC of the journey ahead and the importance of working together on our revised strategic objectives and priorities, with clear, joint vision and deliverable outcomes.

Work on our different service area plans on a page (see **Appendix 1**) will not be carried out in isolation. The delivery of the right outcomes cut across many areas of the company and we must work together to achieve that. Bringing our children looked after into foster care placements within 20 miles of Reading involves so many teams, all working together on their 'strands' - the Independent Fostering Agency, transformation, commissioning and children's social care....and many more working together as one.

In Year Three we will have clarity over our end-to-end processes and new action plans in place to drive change forward for better outcomes for children and young people.

We have our Architecture for Professional Practice, which is trauma informed and restorative. It's an approach which will run, like a golden thread, through our company and our partners, so we all work collaboratively on children and young people's behalf.

The Senior Leadership Team has the additional skills and expertise needed for a company structure and for the new ways in which we intend to roll out sustainable improvements.

Our Executive Director of Finance & Resources is leading work to stick to our contract sum but to explore additional funding streams and revenue alongside our strategic plans for improvement. Our Executive Director of Children's Services is realigning our focus on frontline practice with a focus on demand management and innovative work in early help, as well as overseeing our strategic approach to working with schools and improving attainment in education, training and employment opportunities. All are crucial to young people's futures, particularly given the current circumstances.

And the Board will continue to offer expertise, challenge and scrutiny of the company and the achievement of objectives it has set for itself.

We are actively working on new and innovative ways to build our reputation and encourage more people to join us and stay with us.

In this plan we have set out our priorities and what we plan to do, alongside our revised financial position, in terms of time-limited grants and allocated funds and how we intend to implement budgetary controls to spend less (but more wisely) to succeed in what we have set out to do.

And, in our plans on a page, we have outlined our approach towards our primary objective, which is to improve services to children, young people and their families in Reading.

## 4. Our Mission, Vision and Values

### Our Vision (direction)

Our overall vision and key purpose is to deliver the best possible opportunities for the children of Reading.

### Our Mission (focus)

To unlock all the resources in the borough of Reading to help every child have a happy, healthy and successful life.

### Our Values (behaviours)

We continue to promote our company values and embed them in everything we do.



### Our commitment

We commit to supporting Reading Borough Council's Corporate Plan and to mirror the council's commitment to achieving a carbon neutral borough by 2030 . We will also review our transport, energy and other aspects of our carbon footprint, seeking to reduce this alongside the council. We will also continue to work with schools in how they, in turn, support delivery against the overall carbon neutral objective.

## 5. Year Three Priorities

Our priorities are based on our local operating context.

In 2020/21, we amended our priorities due to the coronavirus pandemic. We have decided to carry most these into 2021/22 (Year Three), but to consolidate our strategic approach by changing some priorities into enablers and moving some of our key transformation programme projects into business as usual.

This annual business plan should be viewed in line with the BFFC Corporate Strategy, which outlines our long-term strategic approach to improved delivery of children's services in Reading over the next three years. The plan also clearly demonstrates how we align with the overall strategic approach of Reading Borough Council's priorities for children's services, as outline in its corporate plan.

Our list of priorities is followed by an explanation of why we are concentrating on each of these for 2021/22.

- **Priority 1: Deliver transformation of services in all areas of the company to ensure continuous improvement and better outcomes for our children and young people**
- **Priority 2: Make optimal use of resources, deliver best value and scope opportunities for external funding and income generation to maximise our impact for children and young people**
- **Priority 3: Complete end-to-end process mapping and develop and embed a demand management approach for all services**
- **Priority 4: Implement and embed the Early Help approach securing active commitment of community partners**
- **Priority 5: Support education providers to give our children and young people the best start and to promote excellent teaching and learning, especially for those with SEND.**
- **Priority 6: Focus on building a stable workforce of permanent staff**

**Priority 1: Deliver transformation of services in all areas of the company to ensure continuous improvement and better outcomes for our children and young people**

We have revised and consolidated our Transformation Programme projects. In 2020/21, we closed projects we'd completed, we moved pilot project work with beneficial outcomes into business as usual and agreed projects to carry forward into Year Three.

We have moved away from the traditional project management tools to a more agile method which follows a clear process, where the starting point is why we're doing something (the outcome for children and young people) and then work on the way we do it. Any new project will start in a 'discovery' phase, which will identify what quality and time improvements, as well as savings, are possible.

If viable, it then leads to a business case, where we identify what we'll improve for children and young people, how we'll do it, how much it will cost and what the savings will be before we start work. The project then moves into OKR – Objective Key Results planning, which focuses us on why something needs doing and then getting things done, rather than producing lots of documentation and plans that need constant change.



This approach rapidly highlights the challenges and lets us concentrate on getting things done through confident assessment and also allows alignment with our key corporate priorities.

For example, using analytics to improve referral workflow. We know that many referrals can be rapidly accelerated to the next step without assessor review. We will review this process and investigate automating this so that we respond to referrals more quickly.

The faster deployment of work on key priorities will help us to move to 'excellent' more quickly and focus on the things that matter.

So, in a nutshell, we know what we'll improve, how we'll do it, how much it will cost and what the savings will be before we start work. In addition, all Transformation Programme work in 2021/22 will be closely aligned to our IT strategy and digitalisation, so we futureproof the improvements we introduce.

## Priority 2: Make optimal use of resources, deliver best value and scope opportunities for external funding and income generation to maximise our impact for children and young people

Our key priority for 2021/22 is to deliver on budget and, in doing so, deliver services that deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Reading.

An important part of not only improving services but making sure new ways of working are sustainable long term is the ability to innovate. Innovation often means research, exploring different options and piloting new ideas.

It means diversifying, finding ways to package and offer the best of our working practices to the open market, finding companies who might sponsor projects or partner with us, finding ways of reducing debt and controlling our costs. Only then can we introduce the 'new' business as usual and replace the previous 'old' ways of working.

While our Transformation Programme is the key place for this work, we cannot rely on single sources of funding. We have pledged this year to explore two aspects of funding and resources. One is to scope out and find opportunities to bid for monies for specific project work that can identify new ways in which we can work and, in doing so, improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The other is to explore traded services opportunities, which can help us become self-funding on some areas of our work and can bring in additional income in others, to help fund the work we do.

## Priority 3: Complete end-to-end process mapping and develop and embed a demand management approach for all services

No roadmap for future success or any individual service area strategy will succeed if we don't know align every service area strategy to our overarching strategic plan.

But without clear understanding of what our current starting point is and without qualitative data to back up revised approaches and identify new, more effective ways of working, we can't improve.

As one of our employees so clearly put it at one of the two recent all-staff roadshows we've had to discuss our priorities: 'Mapping will identify what's good and what's not'.

We started the process in 2019 and we continue to build on it. We are mapping all of our 'as is' processes and finding innovative and alternative delivery methods. We're identifying what adds value and what doesn't; we're understanding and developing alternative pathways; and, most importantly, we're doing it with BFFC staff and those we help – not to them.



We realise that our processes are important as enabler but it's the outcome that matters. An example of this is our work within our placement solutions team, where we have re-looked at placements to make sure a child or young person has the right level of support and is in the right place. This has led to better outcomes for children and reduced cost to the organisation. That is why we are continuing this work into 2021-22.

We will continue with this work until we get it right, the outcome of which will be that we'll spend less time on them and more time on delivery of better services.

#### Priority 4: Implement and embed the Early Help approach securing active commitment of community partners

Tackling issues which result in children crossing the threshold into statutory social care remains our priority. Building community capacity will prevent cases from escalating. Offering the right help and support at the right time much earlier in the process is fundamental, as is working closely with partners in a multi-agency approach.

Deprivation, domestic abuse, substance misuse and adult mental health all create demand pressures on us but only a partnership consensus around local practice and how we each respond to 'need' will further help us develop creative and impactful responses at the earliest possible point in a child's life. Embedding our trauma informed and restorative approach within BfC and training our partners too will unify our approach.

Early help services are, to us, crucial in the long-term aim to reduce the number of children crossing the social care threshold.

We will continue to be an active participant in the ONE Reading Children & Young People's Partnership and to work collaboratively to reduce the number of referrals into our Children's Single Point of Access.

Through our early help Child in Need pilot project, we are delivering targeted family support and intervention at a higher level of need, working differently and innovatively with children who meet the statutory threshold. We have launched weekly partnership and youth diversion hubs and early indications are that these are helping reduce re-referrals by co-ordinating a partnership response to children and families who need help.

Our approach is showing positive results and will remain a key focus for Year Three.

#### Priority 5: Support education providers to give our children and young people the best start and to promote excellent teaching and learning, especially for those with SEND.

The pandemic has shone a particular light on the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and their access to learning.

It has been a disruptive year and evaluating the effectiveness of schools' performance will be almost impossible this year. Cancelled exams, schools closing, opening and closing again will mean we will have little viable school performance data to show how well children and young people have been able to learn. Schools have, understandably, been focused on dealing with the crisis.

We have refocused on the outcomes for children and young people whose schooling has been disrupted by the pandemic. Reading should be one of the top places in the country for educational achievement at all levels. Indeed, 94% of maintained schools are rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. However, we can only be the best if certain groups, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, achieve above national averages.

Our focus for 2021/22 is to help schools and pupils through the crisis and to work with them to offer opportunity and provision of support in areas where schooling has been missed. There is talk of summer schools and other initiatives to help support children and young people to catch up on missed schoolwork and we must work creatively with schools to help them achieve. Our focus must be focus on the quality of teaching and outcomes for children and young people.

Alongside this, we are aware that results from the newly published [Mental Health of Children and Young People survey](#) for England indicate that one in six young people aged 11–16 years were identified as having a probable mental disorder during the 2020 national lockdown period (July 2020).

Support for mental health, through our education psychology team, must be a priority area for development and we must strengthen our support in the months ahead. We must ensure that our efforts are inclusive of all children and young people in Reading.

We have continued to build on our partnership with Reading Families Forum, ensuring that we respond to their concerns through the development of our 'you said, we did' approach.

In addition, for children and young people with Education and Health Care Plans, our new approach to quality assurance will ensure we monitor plans so that they capture the voice of the child.

We will continue to work collaboratively with Reading Borough Council on its £4m capital investment plans for the provision of more Reading school places.

The SEND strategy, which is a cornerstone of our approach, will be refreshed and co-produced with our key stakeholders and we will work with RBC to also increase provision in SEND school places so that more children and young people with SEND can attend schools closer to home.

To respond to the demand for school places, we have 2 new schools opening. From September 2023, the River Academy – an eight form of entry secondary school - will open. In addition, the Oak Academy will open from September 2022, catering for children and young people with ASC and SEMH.

Our school improvement team continues to work in partnership with schools to develop our therapeutic thinking approach leading to a reduction in fixed term exclusions in our schools.

#### Priority 6: Focus on building a stable workforce of permanent staff

Working with children, young people and their families is one of the most important and rewarding jobs - the right person can make the biggest difference to their lives.

However, we also know that demand for the best staff outstrips supply. Therefore, we need to set a standard to attract and retain high calibre social care professionals to our front-line Social Work teams supporting our most vulnerable children and young people.

Our aim is to have a fully resourced, permanent, and highly qualified and competent Social Care workforce. At a time when there is a national shortfall in qualified and experienced Social workers, we will put in place a strategy to make BFFC the employer of choice in this region.

The strategy will have a number of key priorities for BFFC:

- 1) to recruit sufficient permanent high-quality staff with suitable qualifications and experience

2): to retain existing employees by supporting them to carry out their roles effectively, and by ensuring that our total offer for new and existing employees is competitive within the marketplace

3): to create and sustain manageable Social Worker caseloads

4): to facilitate career development through student placements, progression to Advanced Practitioner and Manager

5): to make Brighter Futures a place where everyone is able to contribute and be their best regardless of their backgrounds.

Underneath each priority will be a number of key actions and targets. These targets will be realistic but also challenging. We know that on Key Performance indicators such as turnover, sickness absence and ratios of off payroll workers to establishment we are not performing well. Our targets will in all cases aim to put us in the average for our region with an ultimate aim to being best in class.

#### Facilitating/enabling objectives:

To achieve our priorities and futureproof our work, we must, in tandem, also achieve the following:

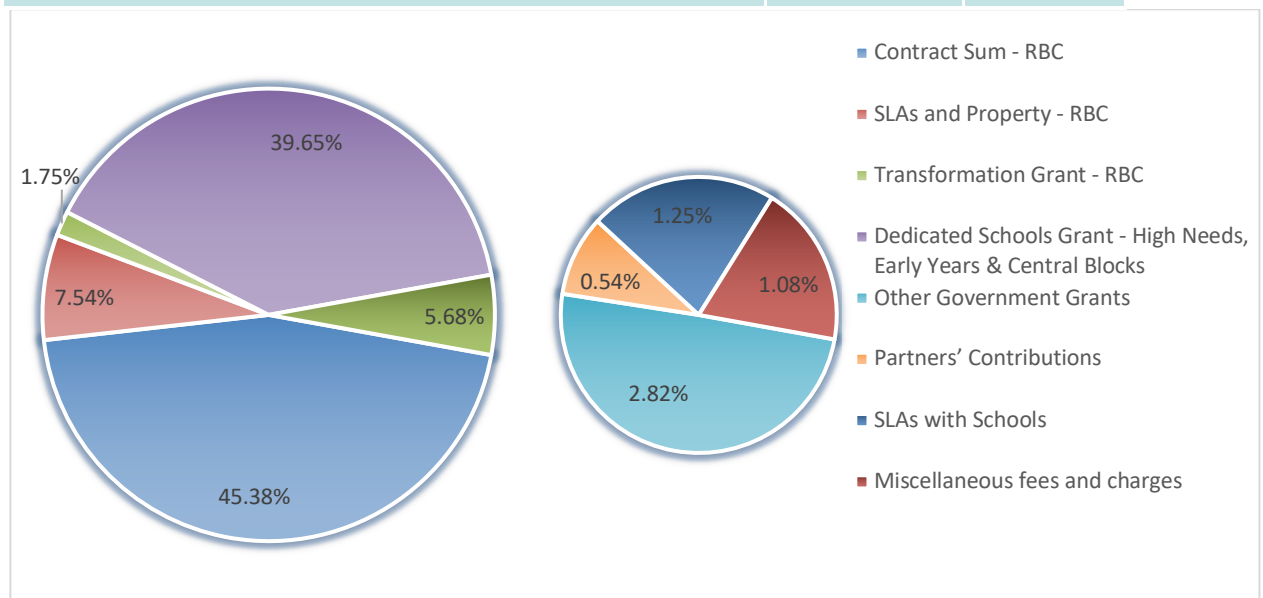
- Develop agile ways of working including increased use of digitalisation
- Engage actively in contract monitoring with Reading Borough Council to seek best possible value for money and quality of service.

These enablers form part of our service area strategies and action plans, as summarised on our 'plans on a page' (see **Appendix 1**). Progress on these is regularly discussed at Senior Leadership Team meetings, reported to Executive Committee meetings, Board committees and to the Board itself.

## 6. Our Financial Plan

### 6.1 Sources of Funding 2021/22

| Sources of Funding   | 2021/22<br>£m | %              |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Contract Sum - RBC   | 40.68         | 45.38%         |
| SLAs and Property - RBC  | 6.76          | 7.54%          |
| Transformation - RBC   | 1.57          | 1.75%          |
| Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs, Early Years & Central Blocks | 35.55         | 39.65%         |
| Other Government Grants (includes DFE Transformation)              | 2.53          | 2.82%          |
| Partners' Contributions  | 0.48          | 0.54%          |
| SLAs with Schools  | 1.12          | 1.25%          |
| Miscellaneous fees and charges                                     | 0.97          | 1.08%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>89.65</b>  | <b>100.00%</b> |



### 6.2 Reading Borough Council

The funding from RBC is for the statutory and non-statutory services for children's services, covering children's social care, early help, adoption and fostering and preventative services and education services. This funding includes the SLAs costs to be recharged to us.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Reading Borough Council – Contract sum and SLAs</b>             | <b>54.66%</b> |
| <b>Government Grants including Dedicated Schools Grant</b>         | <b>42.47%</b> |
| <b>Other income sources – schools SLAs, partners contributions</b> | <b>2.87%</b>  |

### 6.3 Government Grants

The Government Grants are administered by Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of RBC, and include the following key grants:

- Dedicated Schools Grant – including Schools (administered by RBC), High Needs, Early Years & Central Blocks (all administered by BFFC).
- Pupil Premium Grant – allocated by the Virtual Head for CLA to Reading's schools
- Youth Justice Grant – source of funding for the Youth Offending Service.

### 6.4 Transformation Programme Funding

Additional funding to be secured for the Transformation Programme is essential to deliver a three-year savings programme of £11.2m by March 2022.

It is important for Brighter Futures for Children to transform and deliver value for money and the successful delivery of the savings programme is core to managing current and future levels of demand as well as the relevant inflationary pressures.

Investment in early intervention and prevention, coupled with effective demand management strategies - including development of local placement provision - will enable us to remain within the contract sum. Improving practice will also deliver efficiencies.

The Transformation Programme was set up to deliver sustainable savings and improvement. To date, it is on target. Our bid to RBC for £1.57m funding for 2021/22 was successful and the work it will fund will deliver our savings plan.

For 2021/22 we have decided to continue with the revised priorities we submitted in the last quarter of 2020/21 and a reduced number of transformation programme projects. These projects are a combination of opportunities carried forward from 2020-21 and others that have been newly identified. To ensure that what we change and embed is sustainable for long term improvement.

These projects are a combination of savings outcomes and systems improvement:

| WORKSTREAM                                   | PROJECTS   |
|--|--|
| <b>A: Improving Practice Standards</b>       | 1. Court Proceedings<br>2. Family Group Conferencing   |
| <b>B: Developing Workforce Excellence</b>    |  |
| <b>C: Building Community Capacity</b>        | 3. ONE Reading Children & Young People's Partnership<br>4. Children in Need cases  |
| <b>D. Stronger Stability for Children</b>    | 5. Re-imagining Foster Care<br>6. Placement Solutions Team   |
| <b>E: Consolidating Corporate Resilience</b> | 7. Direct Payments<br>8. Enhanced Short Breaks Service<br>9. Modernising ICPCs<br>10. End to End Process Mapping<br>11. End to End Demand Management<br>12. Contact Centre Review<br>13. SEND Transport Review<br>14. Using Analytics to Improve Referral Workflow |

## 6.5 Other Income Sources

Other income sources include SLAs with schools for education services, partnership contributions, health funding, selling of placements to other local authorities, fees and charges and other miscellaneous income.

During 2021/22, we will be looking at additional bids to secure funding for emergency accommodation to support Reading children to stay in local provision, as well as increasing the number of Reading-based foster carers, to reduce our out-of-area placements and associated costs.

## 6.6 Medium-Term Financial Strategy

| Net Operational Budget               | 2021/22   | 2022/23   | 2023/24   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                      | <u>£m</u> | <u>£m</u> | <u>£m</u> |
| Base Budget                          | 48.42     | 47.44     | 46.94     |
| Pay inflation and increments         | 0.73      | 0.73      | 0.74      |
| Contract inflation                   | 0.42      | 0.49      | 0.50      |
| Other Pressures                      | 1.97      | 0         | 0         |
| Savings                              | -4.10     | -1.72     | -1.74     |
| Budget - contract sum excluding SLAs | 47.44     | 46.94     | 46.44     |

The contract sum for 2021/22 was agreed at the contract negotiations as £47.44m and included the following adjustments:

- Pay inflation and increments £0.73m
- Contract inflation £0.42m
- Pressures £1.97m
- Savings = £-4.10m

The RBC Core Contract Sum budget figures for the next three years are:

2021/22 - £40.68m

2022/23 - £40.18m

and for 2023/24, £39.68m as shown in the Funding Streams table below:

| Funding Streams                      | 21/22     | 22/23     | 23/24     | TOTAL     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                      | <u>£m</u> | <u>£m</u> | <u>£m</u> | <u>£m</u> |
| RBC Core Contract Sum                | 40.68     | 40.18     | 39.68     | 120.54    |
| SLAs pass through including Property | 6.76      | 6.76      | 6.76      | 20.27     |
| RBC Transformation Funding           | 1.57      | 0         | 0         | 1.57      |
| TOTAL                                | 49.01     | 46.94     | 46.44     | 142.38    |

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for BFfC is shown in the expenditure budget table below and covers the three-year financial period of 2021/22 to 2023/24. The table shows high level funding requirements for the organisation including our Transformation Programme funding bid to RBC for £1.57m in 2021/22.

| Expenditure                      | 2021/22      | 2022/23      | 2023/24      |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                  | <b>£m</b>    | <b>£m</b>    | <b>£m</b>    |
| Employee Costs                   | 26.15        | 25.46        | 25.66        |
| Running Costs                    | 56.75        | 55.36        | 54.66        |
| SLAs                             | 4.50         | 4.50         | 4.50         |
| Property - Rents                 | 1.14         | 1.14         | 1.14         |
| Property - Facilities Management | 1.12         | 1.12         | 1.12         |
|                                  |              |              |              |
| Gross Expenditure                | <b>89.65</b> | <b>87.58</b> | <b>87.08</b> |
|                                  |              |              |              |
| <u>Income</u>                    |              |              |              |
| Grant Income                     | 38.08        | 38.08        | 38.08        |
| Other Income                     | 2.57         | 2.57         | 2.57         |
| Transformation from RBC          | 1.57         | 0            | 0            |
| Total Income                     | <b>42.21</b> | <b>40.64</b> | <b>40.64</b> |
|                                  |              |              |              |
| Net Expenditure                  | <b>47.44</b> | <b>46.94</b> | <b>46.44</b> |

The average number of CLA reflected in the overall budget for the next three years is:

|         | Children Looked After (CLA)<br>numbers |
|---------|--|
| 2021/22 | <b>270</b>                             |
| 2022/23 | <b>260*</b>                            |
| 2023/24 | <b>250*</b>                            |

*\*figures include Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and 'Others', which means children with special educational and/or disabilities, who are also CLA. All figures are subject to benchmarking exercise*

## 6.7 Next Steps

Brighter Futures for Children's MTFS does not currently include the impact of increasing commerciality for the company as the pace of our delivery of new and amended traded services were stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on schools.

The two key areas we plan to market and develop funding opportunities for in 2021/22 are (1) increasing the education services (including school improvement and educational psychology services, but not exclusively these) and (2) financial services to schools and academies.

As there is a clear demand for high quality services, BFfC has an opportunity to market its services in Reading and more widely across Berkshire and beyond. This has the potential to become an excellent funding source creating additional income to re-invest in existing and new services. This is now a priority for Year Three (2021/22).



## Appendix 1 – Plans on a page

### Plan on a Page. The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for the TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME 2020-21



#### WHAT we'll do and WHY

To identify and implement transformational improvements across BfFC.

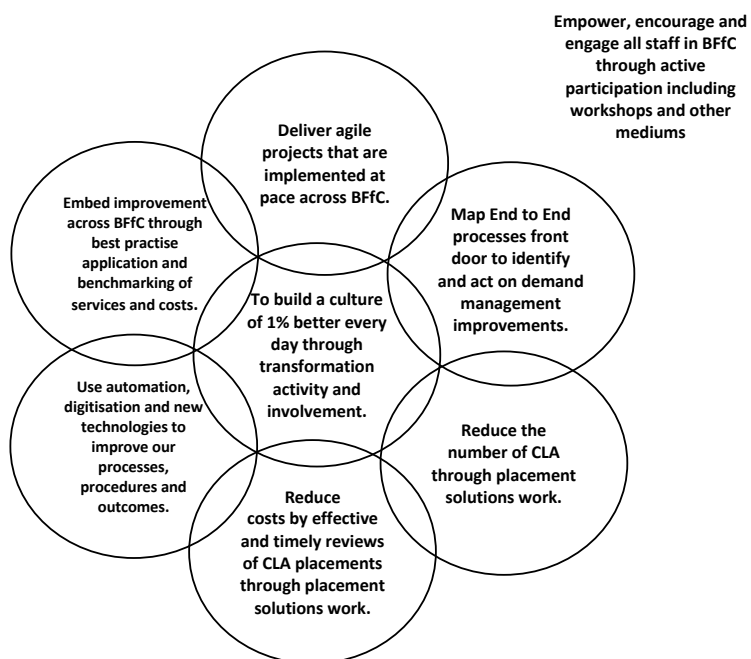
Developing on our previous workstreams of:

- Improving practice standards
- Developing workforce excellence
- Building community capacity and partnership working
- Instigating stronger stability for children
- Consolidating corporate resilience

We will deliver savings in the range of £2.21m-£3.32m that are built up through the use of agile project delivery using discoveries to identify large and small improvements across the organisation.

Building on our successes in 2020-21, learning will also be transferred into day to day operations to enable a culture of continuous improvement and responsibility.

#### HOW we'll do it AND BY WHEN

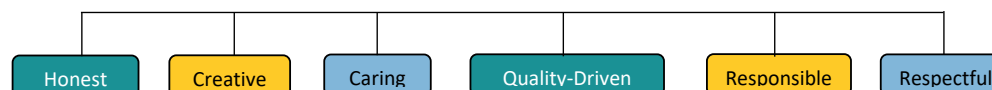


#### HOW we'll make a difference

##### EVIDENCE:

- Approved business cases by the Board to 'discovery' findings.
- Payment of transformation funding RBC based on 'discovery' business cases.
- Reduced Placement Costs through the work of the Placement Solutions Team.
- Reduced Children Looked After (CLA) through the work of the Placement Solutions Team.
- Application of technology and digitisation across BfFC reducing costs or improving service quality.
- Improving demand management with our services.
- Ensuring the transfer of knowledge and learning from the Transformation Team into day to day operations.

#### All of our work is underpinned by our values:



## Plan on a Page. The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE 2021-22



### WHAT we'll do and WHY

#### Our priorities will be to address:

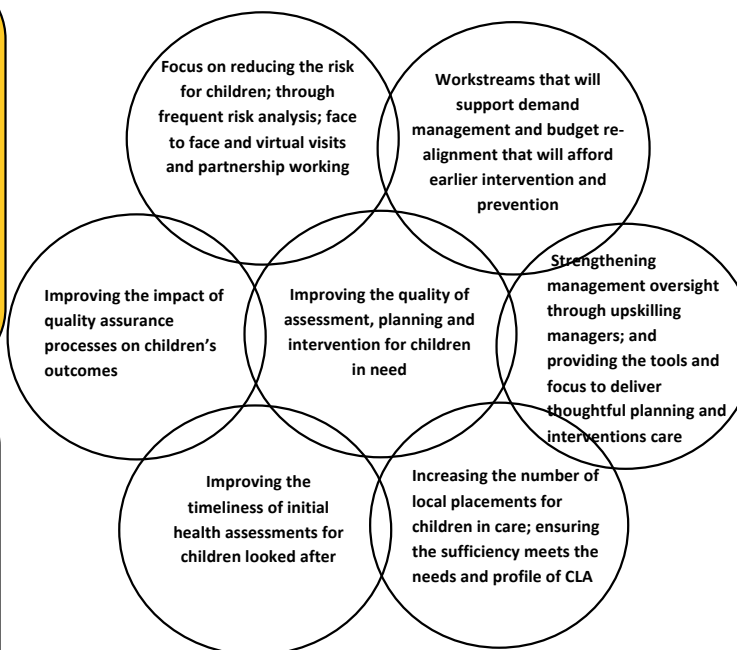
- Our demand management for statutory services – with a rebalance to early intervention and prevention
- The quality of practice; specifically, Children in Need
- Safeguarding all children; through face to face and virtual visits and partnership working
- Strengthening management oversight and direction
- Skilling up and stabilising the workforce

#### We need to improve to:

- Ensure the right children receive the right service at the right level and the right time
- Help families be as resilient as they can be so children can safely and happily remain at or return home
- Reduce levels of risk and escalation into care proceedings or children becoming looked after

### HOW we'll do it AND BY WHEN

All measured target deadlines are by March 2022



### HOW we'll know if we've made a difference

#### EVIDENCE:

- Improvement on results in KPIs 1-9
- Reduction in the number of children crossing the threshold into statutory children's social care
- Reduction in the number of children subject to child protection plans and/or becoming looked after
- More children will have permanent care arrangements more quickly
- We'll have a more stable, skilled and resilient workforce which delivers proactive, thoughtful and quality social work practice
- More local placements for our children looked after, especially through our Independent Fostering Agency.

All of our work is underpinned by our values:

Honest

Creative

Caring

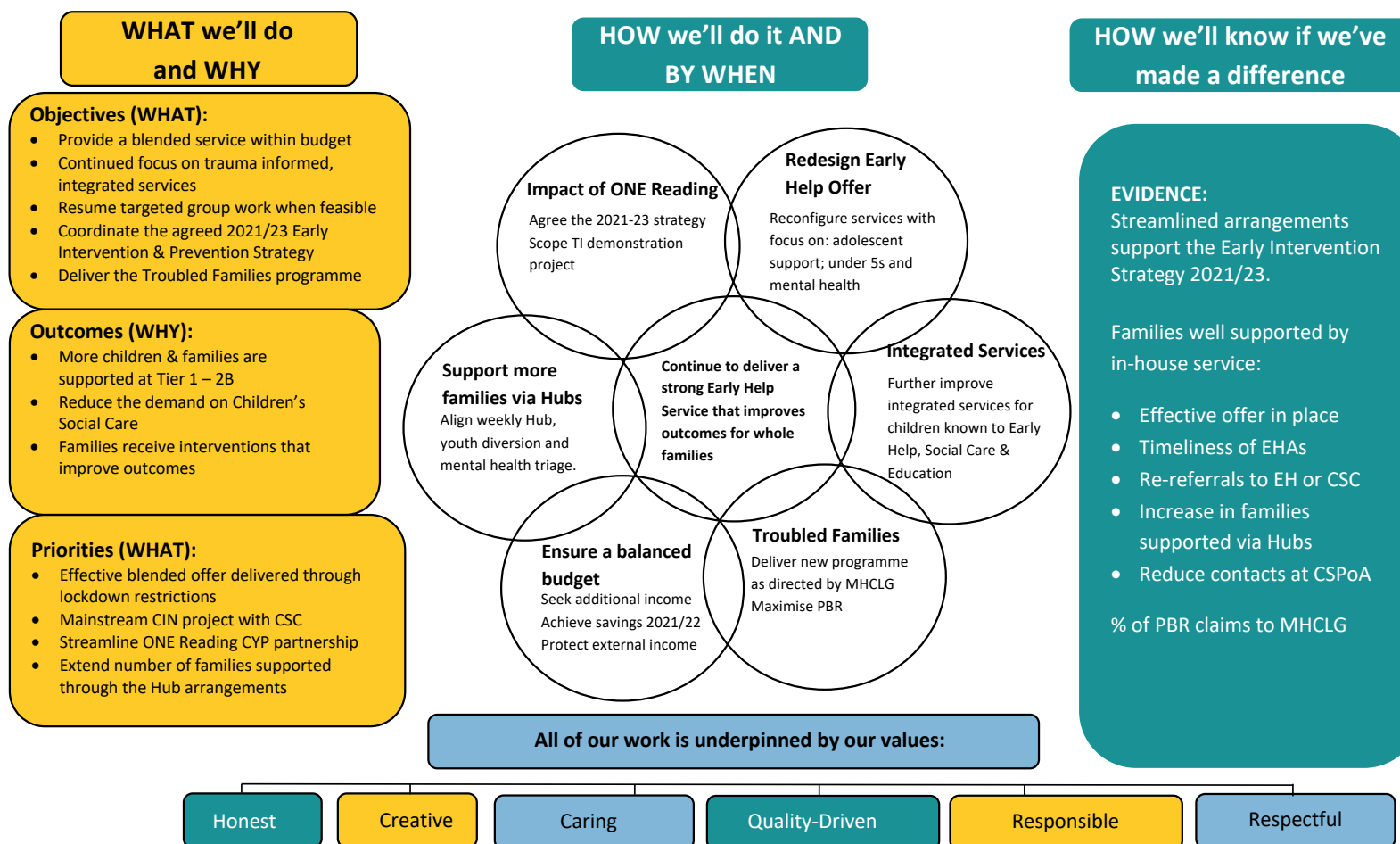
Quality-Driven

Responsible

Respectful

## Plan on a Page: The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for:

### EARLY HELP & PREVENTION 2021-22



## Plan on a Page. The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for EDUCATION 2021-22



### WHAT we'll do and WHY

#### Raise standards by:

- Supporting our schools to be good or outstanding
- Complete review of Early Years provision and impact in partnership with Early Help
- Develop traded services offer

#### Improve outcomes for CYP with SEND and for CLA

- Continue to expand local provision through the delivery of a SEND school focused on ASC and SEMH
- Continue to support our Virtual School to build on the excellent progress to date

#### Ensure we meet the educational needs of our children and young people:

- Work with Reading Borough Council to ensure sufficiency and suitability of school places.

### HOW we'll do it AND BY WHEN

#### More local places for children

Support the opening of a SEND school for children with Autism and SEMH

Support the opening of River Academy

#### Tackle the disadvantage gap:

Work with locally maintained schools to ensure Ofsted approach to tackling the disadvantaged gap is embedded.

#### Support children with SEND:

Continue to expand places and support available

Refresh our approach to funding schools for SEND pupils

#### Continue to implement the SEND strategy

Develop a new strategy

Ensure EHCPs and Annual Reviews are impactful and delivered on a timely basis

#### Support early years to give our children the best start

Assess impact of Covid-19 and continue to develop support and challenge to providers

#### All of our work is underpinned by our values:

Honest

Creative

Caring

Quality-Driven

Responsible

Respectful

### HOW we'll know if we've made a difference

#### EVIDENCE:

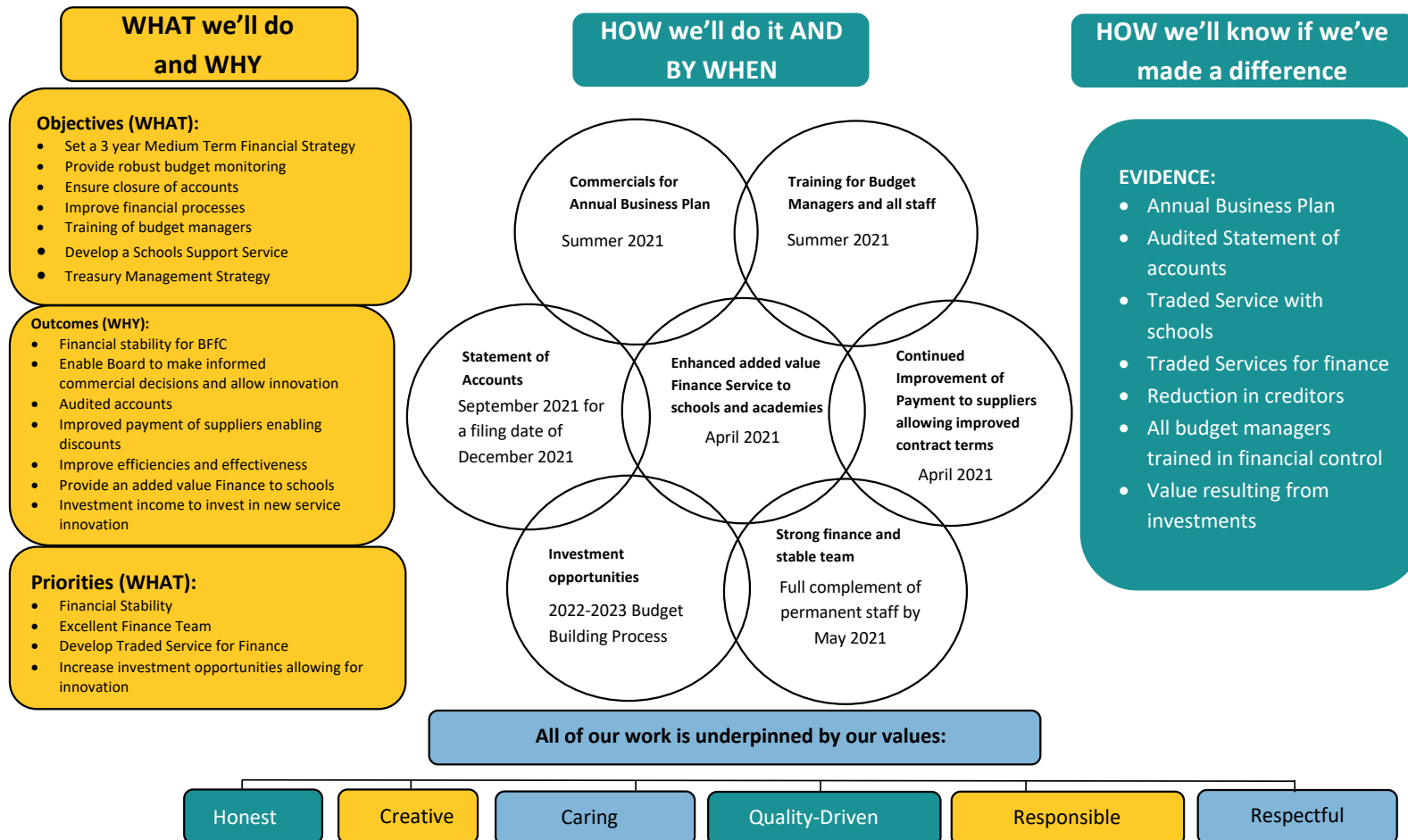
- Ofsted rating of schools
- Sufficient quality Early Years provision
- Sufficient secondary places
- More local provision for CYP with ASC and SEMH

#### GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

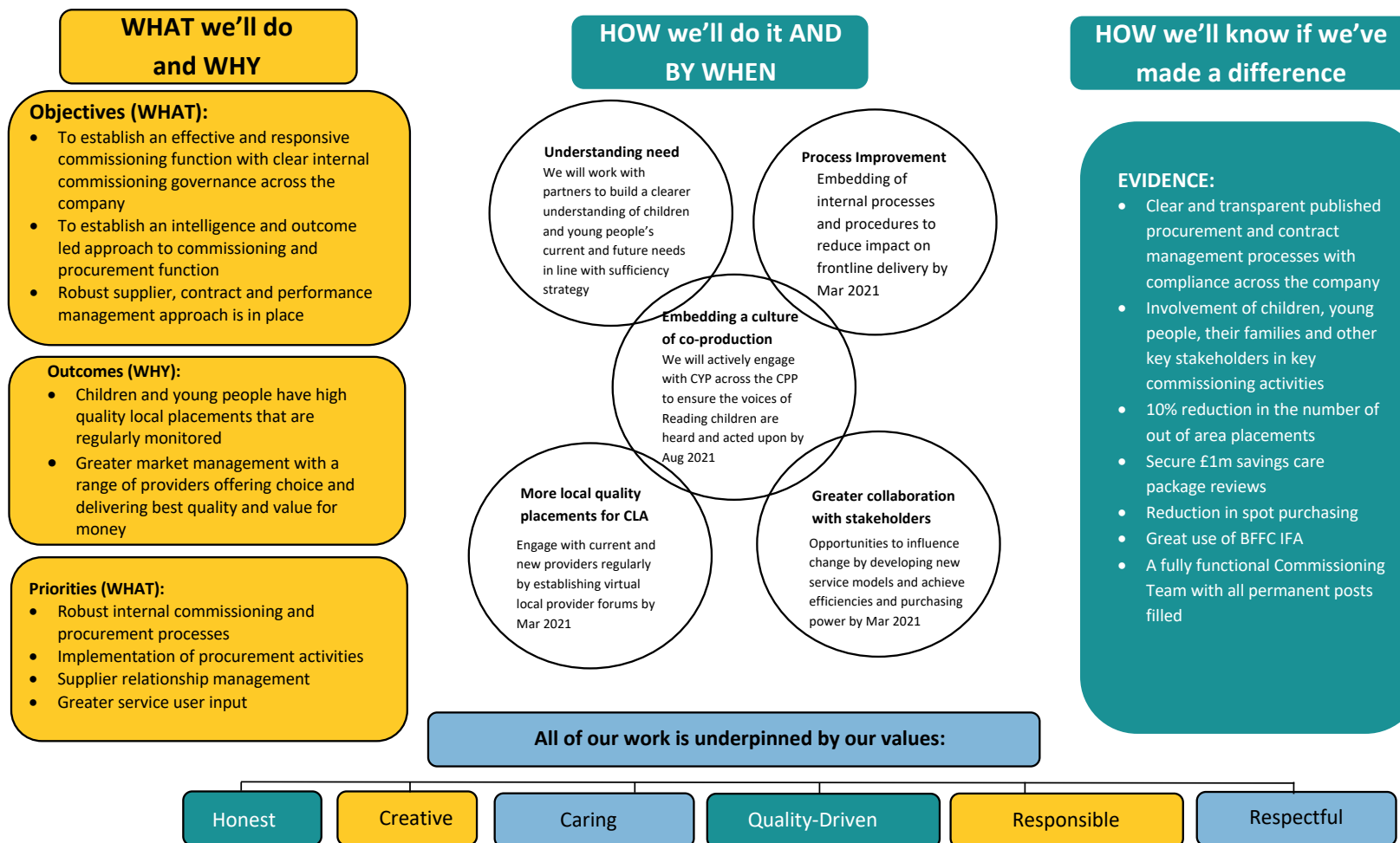
ASC: Autism Spectrum Condition  
CLA: Children Looked After  
CYP: Children & Young People  
EHCP: Education, Health & Care Plan  
SEND: Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities  
SEMH: Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health

## Plan on a Page: The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for:

### FINANCE 2021-22



## Plan on a Page: The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for: COMMISSIONING, CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT 2021/22





## Plan on a Page. The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING 2021-22



### WHAT we'll do and WHY

#### Raise awareness and reputation of BFC by:

- Improving website presence and quality of external information
- Quality, targeted recruitment materials and messaging
- Implementing comms & marketing and social media strategies' external action plans

#### Improve practice by

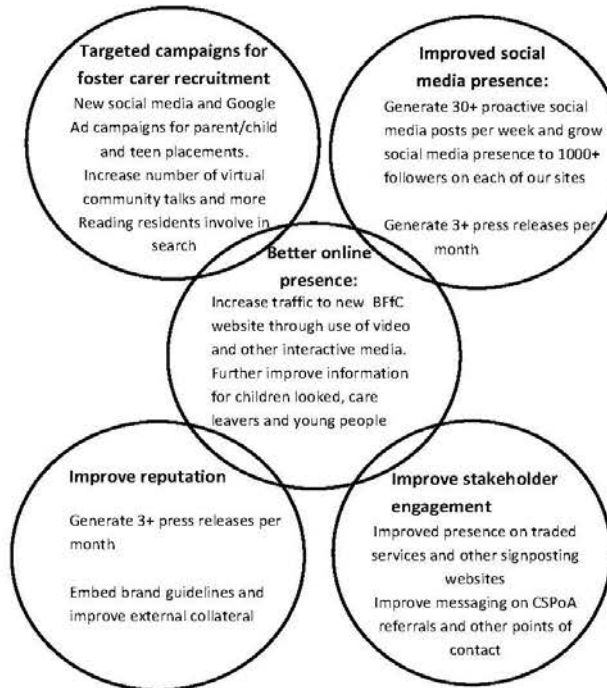
- Supporting Transformation projects
- Implementing the SEND communications strategy action plan
- Further improving the staff intranet's knowledge hub and 'lessons learned'

#### Ensure all activity dovetails with business priorities:

- Align all productivity to the business priorities and develop in-house processes for improving earlier staff engagement

### HOW we'll do it AND BY WHEN

All measured target deadlines are by March 2022



### HOW we'll know if we've made a difference

#### EVIDENCE:

- Analytics data for website and intranet; Increase in followers and engagement on social media sites
- Number of targeted foster carer enquiry leads generated
- Improved staff engagement with processes via intranet
- Increased engagement with information for Children Looked After and Care Leavers
- Increase in young people who respond to our targeted messaging

All of our work is underpinned by our values:





## Plan on a Page. The WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND WHEN for:

### HUMAN RESOURCES 2021-22



#### WHAT we'll do and WHY

##### Objectives (WHAT):

- Support the company having an agile workforce
- Strategies to improve employee wellbeing
- Instil a positive work culture to improve ways of working aligned to our values
- Keep staff for longer

##### Outcomes (WHY):

- Need to reduce agency staff and improve stability for children & young people
- Need to prevent key staff leaving
- Improve our Ofsted rating

##### Priorities (WHAT):

- Strategies to attract and retain permanent staff and reduce reliance on agency workers
- Instil our values and develop behaviours
- Develop new ways of working to support agile working

#### HOW we'll do it AND BY WHEN



#### HOW we'll know if we've made a difference

##### EVIDENCE: By 2022

- Reduce agency spend and numbers to bring us in line with national average
- Reduce company turnover to 14%
- Embed new company behaviours
- Implement new key HR policies
- New leadership development programme via use of Apprenticeship Levy
- New Equality and Diversity strategy for delivery
- Deliver minimum of 6 virtual roadshow by end of 2021

All of our work is underpinned by our values:

