

# London Borough Of Redbridge Productivity Plan

A BETTER BOROUGH FOR EVERYONE

## 1. Our Redbridge

Redbridge is an outer northeast London Borough; it has the 10th largest area in London with the 11th largest Population. With over 35 parks and open spaces we are one of the greenest boroughs too. Between the 2011 and 2021 census our population has grown by 11% to 310,260 residents and households have increase by 5%. We have areas of high deprivation where residents struggle to manage the rising cost of living. Redbridge is the 3rd most diverse borough in the UK with over 100 languages spoken and 50 nationalities represented. Over 25% of our residents and 56.8% of pupils in our schools do not speak English as their main language. Over 65.2% of Redbridge residents are from a black and minority ethnic (BAME) background. Redbridge is very religiously diverse with 31.29% Muslim, 30.45% Christian, 11.07% Hundi, 5.68% Sikh, and 2.07% Jewish.

## 2. Transforming our Services

We are continually working to transform services to deliver positive outcomes for our residents and better use of resources. We want to be financial sustainable, live within our means but ensure vital services remain high quality and available for Redbridge residents.

**Shaping our Future Transformation** programme is supporting us to be more sustainable in the long term and support local people to live better lives in our vibrant borough. The programme includes improved customer services and provide a single view of the customer to enable services to take an Early Intervention and Preventative approach. We are also working to become more efficient through improving our commissioning, procurement, contract management, and income and debt collection processes harnessing the power of data, digitalisation, automation and artificial intelligence to increase efficiency and offer a deeper level of intelligence to support data driven decision making.

We have a new **Corporate Performance Framework** to monitor productivity and progress towards delivering the priorities in the **Redbridge Plan**. This helps us ensure that the level and quality of services are maintained and where possible improved, ensuring that value for money is achieved for our residents in the current challenging financial environment in which we operate. The Performance Scorecard is monitored quarterly and supports an understanding of trend, by providing an early warning system indicating where any intervention may be required.

The new **Council's Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028** outlines our commitment to our communities, their needs and our vision to further improve accessibility and inclusiveness of our services. Elected members are equipped to understand specific challenges faced by our communities and work with officers to develop a progressive organisational culture. The Council promotes community pride, unity, and empathy by hosting events, spreading awareness, and creating visibility of E&I initiatives across the borough. With our partners, we create a space for open dialogue and collaboration to foster relationships based on trust, respect, and equality.

## 3. Planned Improvement 2024/25

We have a number of **High Impact Projects** underway in 2024/25 to help us deliver improvements for our local residents and services users under our 4 key corporate themes.

### Jobs & Skills

- The Council has a flagship Work Redbridge programme, partnering with the Redbridge Institute to help adults find employment pathways. Collaborations with New City College and the commitment to a university campus will make Redbridge a premier place for learning.
- We are supporting local business growth and sustainability by refurbishing Queen Victoria House to house a new Business & Enterprise Hub, aiding both new and existing businesses.
- In Summer 2024 we will launch a new Cultural Quarter in Ilford Town Centre, combining civic, leisure, education, and community uses. This includes Mercato Metropolitano, a sustainable community food market that offers community events, innovative growing practices, circular economy models, and global cuisine, providing exciting new employment opportunities.
- VCS Sector strategy to enhance collaboration and achieve more for Redbridge.

## Safe and Healthy

- Revitalising Ilford Town Centre by addressing environmental issues and tackling persistent challenges such as rough sleeping, problematic tenants, substance abuse and ASB.
- The Community Crime Commission is delivering 48 interconnected recommendations to create safer neighbourhoods and achieve long term reductions in crime and enhance support for victims
- Improving access to leisure facilities by developing a climbing centre, building a new Wanstead swimming pool and upgrading the existing school and leisure estate.
- Our new Engagement Hubs are being rolled out to offer a variety of front-line services and early intervention support at the heart of our communities where they are most needed.
- Additionally, we are prioritising our commitment to becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly Borough by 2026, ensuring inclusivity for all young people.
- Adult Social Care Tech; £1m funding to deliver an 18-month programme of work introducing and evaluating care technologies across several settings with a focus on falls-prevention.
- Care City Partnership; Ongoing programme of work to identify technologies that meet client needs with associated cost benefits; embedding a culture change supported by key frontline staff
- Develop a Family Reunification Team to reduce children in and out of care and support step downs of children in residential provision into alternative arrangements.
- CLA Clinical Intervention Team to screen, assess and provide interventions for all children and young people with mental health and wellbeing concerns
- Create stronger alignment for children and families with SEND and CAMHS interventions to improve practitioners' use of interventions contained in EHCP's and CAMHS services.
- Improving Pre-birth Services and pathway to support families referred to Children's Social Care during a pregnancy to enable earlier intervention with those considered to be vulnerable.

## Clean and Green

- Improvements to Fairlop Waters Country Park, including a new entrance and a natural play space, enhancing pathway and accessibility and rebranding of the park with new signage and maps.
- Our Climate Change Action Plan has reduced the Council's carbon footprint by 33% and we are addressing broader environmental impacts. We will enhance flood prevention, improve air quality around schools, and invest further in electric car charging points. We are committed to planting thousands of trees, developing a biodiversity plan, and a sustainable transport strategy.
- The Council is increasing recycling efforts and intensifying the fight against fly-tipping.

## Homes & Neighbourhoods

- By 2026, we aim to deliver 500 new council homes and 1,000 affordable homes.
- Our landlord licensing scheme ensures fair treatment for tenants and improves housing quality.
- Community hubs plan to offer services and advice on issues that matter most in each community

## 4. Our Technology & Data

In Redbridge we maximise the use of our Technology and data assets to inform service design and underpin decision making. The **Digital Transformation Project** within the Shaping Our Future Transformation Programme brings together key commissioning, procurement, contract management, and income and debt collection systems, to provide a single view of the customer. By harnessing the power of data, digitalisation, automation and Artificial Intelligence we are improving Business Intelligence and deploying interventions at an earlier stage than we would have previously.

Development of **Digital Data Customer Scorecard**, providing up to date automated information advising residents on the performance of the council in the areas that matter the most to them.

The **Redbridge Council website** has been ranked the top performing Local Government website nationally by Sitemorse. The last time a London borough received this accolade was over 10 years ago. Our IT and Digital teams have been working hard, continuously making changes to our website resulting in it jumping an incredible 22 places to first position.

**Performance & Data Solutions;** We are working with Microsoft to develop a modern, efficient, and effective performance reporting solution to produce automated data collection and a versatile array of digital dashboards in real-time to support organisational performance management. Aligning with the council's goals for continuous improvement and enhanced customer satisfaction.

We are active members on various **Pan London working groups** including; **The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI)** which supports digital collaboration across London, and **The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA)** which supports the sharing of data and technology to help drive Improvements and outcomes for London's children and young people.

Internal communities of best practice including the '**We Do Data**' data forum and the **Programme Management Community of Practice** support organisational learning, networking and information sharing amongst officers. Networks includes data practitioners and participants in the 'Data Academy' apprenticeship which is a run by Multiverse and funded by Apprenticeship Levy.

Redbridge is supporting the **Families First Children Pathfinder programme**, helping to develop best practice models for children's social care. By designing a holistic approach to delivering vital services to help more children stay with their families in safe and loving homes and protecting vulnerable children from harm where needed.

## 5. Ensuring Value for Money

**Our medium-term financial strategy** sets out the current and projected financial forecasts over a 5-year horizon and supports the management of our budgets to deliver of our key plans and strategies.

The **Redbridge Plan** sets out our key ambitions and our priorities to 2026. We measure and report progress against these outcomes to our Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Our Performance management framework scrutinises performance and supports services in areas of underperformance by completing data deep dives to offer greater intelligence and drive data driven decision making.

**Shaping our Future** has eight major workstreams that bring about improved efficiencies and greater effectiveness. Shaping our future supports new ways of working by focussing on developing a Workforce of the future by understanding and planning for the skills and leadership we will need.

New ways of using data continue to be explored, bringing about learning opportunities and improved data driven decision making. **Analysis of local authority financial expenditure and comparative performance** has helped understanding and identified opportunities for learning.

**Single view of the customer and single view of debt works both are working to** support a Single View by providing a holistic approach to aligning data system and information to place our service users at the heart of everything we do.

## 6. Barriers to Success

Redbridge has had to become more productive and efficient over the past 14 years since the period of austerity which saw significant reductions to funding. It is estimated that **since 2010/11, London boroughs' Core Spending Power<sup>1</sup> has reduced by £2.2bn (20%) in real terms** from £11.1bn to £8.8bn in 2024-25. Over the same period, **Redbridge has seen its population grow by 11%**, meaning that **Core Spending Power per capita is now 28% lower than it was in 2010/11**.

London boroughs have taken on new duties and responsibilities without sufficient or sustained funding such as the localisation of council tax support; the transfer of public health duties; duties from the Homeless Reduction Act 2017; duties resulting from the 2014 Children & Families Act; changes to Youth Justice and Health policy that impact children's social care. Its estimated that new duties and other underfunded burdens have **added over £1bn of additional funding pressures**

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<sup>1</sup> London Councils – 23 May 2024. Calculated on like-for-like basis with how HMG has defined CSP from 2015-16 onwards.

- **Three to four year settlements** – one-year settlements are a barrier to becoming more productive, as they offer no longevity or certainty to plan services strategically and take invest-to-save decisions in the long term. multi-year settlements would go a long way to solving this.
- **Reduce ringfencing** –and reporting requirements associated with grant funding to empower and trust councils to get on with delivering services most in need.
- **Reduce the number of funding pots** –and arduous bidding processes.
- **Ensure funding reflects need** –a review of the funding formulae for all major government grants. The system doesn't reflect local needs and productivity is restricted due to underfunding.

### Housing

- Remove barriers **preventing councils from combining Right to Buy receipts with grant funding** to deliver affordable housing.
- **Remove the cap on the proportion of individual sites that can be funded through Right to Buy receipts.**
- **Make the increase in LHA rates from Autumn Statement 2023 a permanent** measure.
- **Remove the cap on LHA payable for Temporary Accommodation** in Housing Benefit subsidy (set at 90% of January 2011 LHA rates).
- Provide funding to **help councils buy accommodation sold by private landlords.**
- Deliver a **new HRA debt settlement** based on updated assumptions, as government policy changes have altered the existing 2012 agreement beyond recognition.

### Adult social care

- **Deliver the adult social care funding reforms** to providing long-term financial certainty.
- **Baseline all existing ASC grants** and consolidate into one fund.
- Implement the **Hewitt Review recommendation of 1% of ICB budgets towards prevention.**
- Implement the **'Fair Shares'** approach to distribution of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

### Children's services

- Ensure the **Social Care Grant reflects children's social care needs**
- **Reform the children's social care market** to reduce profiteering.
- Allow local authorities to **open and run special schools** to reduce placement costs, help meet rising demand more quickly and ensure greater local oversight of places.
- **Mandatory register for all home educated** to improve identification of children at risk of harm.
- **Extend the DSG statutory override to provide financial certainty for councils** – otherwise at least a quarter of councils risk running out of general fund reserves.
- Consider **writing-off accumulated DSG deficits.**

### Regulation

- **Simplify the regulatory framework**, including developing a coordinating role for Oflog. Servicing multiple inspections limits capacity and hinders productivity for local councils.
- **Ensure regulators have the appropriate capacity** and understanding of councils and local places, including their financial context.