Title of Report: Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues

Report to be considered by: Executive

Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010

Forward Plan Ref: EX2000

Purpose of Report: For the Executive to consider the various traffic management issues that need to be resolved in Newbury town centre prior to commencement of trading at the new Parkway development.

Recommended Action: That the Executive resolves to approve the recommendations set out below:

1. To convert Parkway Bridge to a two-way shuttle working traffic signal controlled route for buses, taxis and cycles only with advanced cycle stop lines, a bus/taxi/cycle lane, and licence plate recognition cameras.

2. To authorise officers to make capital bids for funding for the two-way shuttle traffic signals and for the licence plate recognition cameras during the financial year 2010/11 in order that they can be installed and operational in time for the opening of the Parkway development at Easter 2011.

3. To remove buses from all areas of the pedestrianisation zone (ie Bartholomew Street north, Mansion House Street, Market Place and Northbrook Street).

4. To permanently remove the taxi rank from Market Place and to prevent taxis from driving though Market Place during pedestrianisation hours.

5. To convert the feeder taxi rank in Wharf Street to a formal rank where customers would be able to get a taxi.

6. To continue to operate the taxi rank in Wharf Street in the current direction and only to reverse the direction if this proves to be operationally problematic.
7. To introduce a loading ban in Wharf Street between its junction with Wharf Road and the site of the rising bollards to coincide with the operational time of the pedestrianisation zone.

8. To change the pedestrianisation zone end time from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

9. To retain the current traffic management arrangements for West Street and to keep the West Street Junction with Northbrook Street open to traffic.

10. To authorise officers to obtain feedback from the various interest groups and organisations listed in 8.1 and to put the details of the proposed traffic management changes on the Council’s Web Site when finalised as indicated in 8.2.

11. Subject to there being no significant objections at the feedback stage, in which case these will be reported back to the Executive, to authorise officers to carry out the statutory advertisements and consultations as necessary on revised Traffic Regulation Orders as set out in 8.3.

12. Subject to there being no objections to the statutory advertisements and consultations on revised Traffic Regulation Orders that cannot be overcome, to authorise officers to carry out all work necessary to implement all of the proposed changes in time for the opening of the Parkway development.

13. To authorise officers to refer any objections on revised Traffic Regulation Orders that cannot be overcome to the Portfolio Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT for consideration by means of an Individual Decision report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

1. To introduce traffic management measures within the town centre to complement the Parkway development.

2. To enhance the town centre shopping experience for visitors.

3. To cater for the changes in traffic patterns that will result from the Parkway development.

Other options considered: None.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:

- CPP3 – Reduce West Berkshire’s carbon footprint – to reduce CO₂ emissions in West Berkshire and contribute to waste management, green travel, transportation and energy efficiency

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
- CPT12 - Including Everyone

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

(a) rationalising the movement of traffic in Newbury town centre;
(b) balancing the servicing needs of the business community, the accessibility needs of disabled persons, and the access and egress needs of properties within the pedestrianisation zone;
(c) creating a virtually traffic free environment for pedestrians within the pedestrianised zone during the day.

### Portfolio Member Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Telephone No.</th>
<th>Councillor David Betts - Tel (0118) 942 2485</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dbetts@westberks.gov.uk">dbetts@westberks.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Portfolio Member agreed report</td>
<td>24 December 2009</td>
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### Contact Officer Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Mark Cole</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Title:</td>
<td>Traffic Services Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. No.:</td>
<td>01635 519210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mcole@westberks.gov.uk">mcole@westberks.gov.uk</a></td>
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### Implications

#### Policy:

The recommendations within this report accord with existing Council policies and procedures.

#### Financial:

Capital bids will need to be made in 2010/11 for the two-way shuttle working traffic signals (£50,000) and for the licence plate recognition cameras (£40,000). Statutory advertisement and consultation for revised Traffic Regulation Orders will be funded from existing budgets.

#### Personnel:

There are no personnel issues arising from this report.
Legal/Procurement: Legal Services will process the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders. Procurement processes will be used for provision of the two-way shuttle traffic signals and for the licence plate recognition cameras.

Property: There are no property issues arising from this report.

Risk Management: A potential risk management issue has been identified in relation to pedestrians who may initially be at higher risk of an accident if the pedestrianisation end time is brought forward from 6.00pm to 5.00pm. However it is considered that this risk can be adequately managed. Paragraphs 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.7 of this report cover this aspect in more detail.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Removal of the taxi rank in Market Place is proposed and this may impact persons with mobility difficulties. Conversion of the feeder rank in Wharf Street to a formal rank where customers can get a taxi is proposed to mitigate this impact. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be produced before any proposals are carried out.

NOTE: The section below does not need to be completed if your report will not progress beyond Corporate or Management Board.

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Executive Summary

1. **Introduction**

1.1 This report seeks a resolution of a number of key issues concerning the management of traffic in Newbury town centre as we move towards the opening of the new Parkway development in Spring 2011. All of these issues are interrelated and need to be considered holistically in order for the correct decisions to be taken.

1.2 In particular the issues that need to be resolved are:

- Vehicles that should be permitted to use Park Way Bridge
- Removal of buses from the pedestrianisation zone
- Removal of taxis from Market Place
- Changes to the operational use of the current taxi feeder rank and introduction of a loading ban in Wharf Street
- Changes to pedestrianisation zone timings
- Permanent traffic management solution for West Street.

2. **Proposals**

2.1 Park Way Bridge should be converted to a two-way shuttle working traffic signal controlled route for buses, taxis and cycles only with advanced cycle stop lines and a bus/taxi/cycle lane. The method of enforcement of the bus/cycle/taxi lane should be by means of licence plate recognition cameras.

2.2 Buses should be removed from all areas of the pedestrianisation zone (ie Bartholomew Street north, Mansion House Street, Market Place and Northbrook Street).

2.3 The taxi rank should be permanently removed from Market Place and taxis prevented from driving through Market Place during pedestrianisation hours.

2.4 The feeder taxi rank in Wharf Street should be converted to a formal rank where customers would be able to get a taxi and a loading ban introduced.

2.5 The pedestrianisation zone end times should be changed from 6.00pm to 5.00pm.

2.6 The current traffic management arrangements for West Street and its junction with Northbrook Street should be retained as they are at present.

3. **Conclusion**

3.1 It is considered that if these proposals are all implemented, they will provide the best options for the movement of traffic through Newbury town centre, for the servicing needs of the business community, for the pick up and drop off needs of disabled persons, for the access and egress needs of occupiers of premises situated within the pedestrianisation zone, and for pedestrians who would enjoy a virtually traffic free environment during the day within the pedestrianisation zone.
Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 There are a number of traffic management issues that need to be resolved in the period between now and the completion of the Parkway redevelopment. Some of these issues relate to existing problems that have been causing ongoing concerns and some of them are issues that have been considered by the Newbury Town Centre Task Group during the last two years.

1.2 The issues that need to be resolved and that are discussed in this report are as follows:
- Vehicles that should be permitted to use Park Way Bridge
- Removal of buses from the pedestrianisation zone
- Removal of taxis from Market Place
- Changes to the operational use of the current taxi feeder rank and introduction of a loading ban in Wharf Street
- Changes to pedestrianisation zone timings
- Permanent traffic management solution for West Street.

1.3 The Newbury Town Centre Task Group has discussed all of these issues and recommends that they should be formally taken forward to implementation.

2. Vehicles that should be permitted to use Park Way Bridge

2.1 The “Vision for Newbury 2025” identified Park Way as a public transport corridor for Newbury. This is linked to the attractiveness of the new Parkway development that will have key anchor stores at this location and excellent links through to Northbrook Street. A decision needs to be made on what we mean by Park Way being a public transport corridor. Park Way will have to continue to provide access to the Camp Hopson car park and for service vehicles but Park Way Bridge can be either a two way route for buses only or for buses and taxis only. A formal Council decision needs to be made so that the statutory processes can begin to make the necessary changes to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to define the vehicles that will be permitted to use Park Way Bridge.

2.2 The advantage of not allowing taxis to use the bridge is that it is less likely that other cars will continue to use the route. Experience from other towns is that when drivers see taxis using a route they use it as well. This can also happen when the route is for buses only but is less of a problem. However when traffic signal two-way shuttle working operation for buses only was employed over Park Way Bridge during town centre road works in the past there was significant abuse by other vehicles.

2.3 If taxis are prevented from using Park Way Bridge it is likely to be a very unpopular decision within the taxi trade. Taxis would still be able to come down Park Way from north to south and use the turning facility and small taxi rank that is being provided on the north side of the bridge if the decision is to prevent them from using the bridge. This would be very inconvenient for them however because if they were situated in the taxi rank in Wharf Street they would have to take a very long route via the A339 to get to Park Way to pick up passengers. Similarly if they picked up passengers in Park Way that had destinations to the south of the bridge they would...
have a long route via the A339, which they currently don’t have to take because all vehicles can use the bridge in this southbound direction.

2.4 If taxis are to be permitted to use Park Way Bridge there are measures that could be introduced to control the problem of other vehicles using the route as well. These are as follows:

2.4.1 Police enforcement – unlikely to be very effective because they do not have sufficient resources available to carry this out on a regular basis.

2.4.2 Introduction of a bus and taxi lane over the bridge together with licence plate recognition enforcement cameras. The Council obtained the powers to carry out this enforcement in its successful application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for decriminalised parking powers as part of the West Berkshire Clear Streets Parking Project. This means that the Council has the necessary powers to enforce this traffic offence.

2.5 Another decision that needs to be taken is whether or not cyclists will be permitted to use Park Way Bridge. This decision needs to be taken whether or not taxis are to be permitted to use the bridge. The advantage of permitting cyclists to use the bridge is that it supports policies to encourage more people to use this method of transport. A disadvantage is that the traffic signal settings are likely to require a longer all red clearance stage to allow for slow cyclists to get over the bridge safely when the lights have changed. However it is considered that this problem can be minimised by introducing advanced cycle stop lines. If the decision taken is to permit cyclists, then the solution in 2.4.2 above would require either a bus and cycle lane, or a bus, taxi and cycle lane.

2.6 It is considered that on balance Park Way Bridge should be a two-way shuttle working traffic signal controlled route for buses, taxis and cycles only with advanced cycle stop lines, a bus/taxi/cycle lane, and licence plate recognition cameras. This is therefore the recommended course of action. It is further recommended that capital bids are made for funding for the two-way shuttle working traffic signals and for the licence plate recognition cameras during the financial year 2010/11 in order that the traffic signals and cameras can be installed and operational in time for the opening of the Parkway development in Spring 2011. The estimated cost of installing the two-way shuttle traffic signals is £50,000 and for the licence plate recognition system is £40,000.

2.7 Summary of recommendations

2.7.1 Park Way Bridge should be a two-way shuttle working traffic signal controlled route for buses, taxis and cycles only with advanced cycle stop lines, a bus/taxi/cycle lane, and licence plate recognition cameras.

2.7.2 Capital bids should be made for funding for the two-way shuttle working traffic signals and for the licence plate recognition cameras during the financial year 2010/11 in order that the traffic signals and cameras can be installed and operational in time for the opening of the Parkway development in Spring 2011.
3. **Removal of buses from pedestrianisation zone**

3.1 If it is agreed that buses should use Park Way as the main public transport corridor for Newbury town centre, the opportunity arises to remove buses from the pedestrianisation zone. This has been a long held aspiration of the Newbury Town Centre Task Group and would make the environment for shoppers and visitors to the town a much more relaxed and enjoyable experience. If this opportunity were taken up the only motorised vehicles that would enter the zone during pedestrianisation hours would be emergency service vehicles, post vehicles and bullion vehicles. There are no plans to prevent cyclists from continuing to use the pedestrianisation zone. Taxis would still pass through and park in the rank in Market Place but this issue is discussed later in this report. All other through traffic would have access outside of pedestrianisation hours as would service vehicles. If buses are removed from the zone and reassigned to Park Way this would be at all times, as it would not be practical to have different bus routes at different times of the day.

3.2 It is recommended that buses be removed from all areas of the pedestrianisation zone (ie Bartholomew Street north, Mansion House Street, Market Place and Northbrook Street). This would have the added advantage, in addition to the environmental ones mentioned above, that buses would no longer pass through the rising bollards in Bartholomew Street north and so the bollards would remain in the up position for the majority of the time during pedestrianisation hours. The bollards would only lower when occasional emergency service, post office or bullion vehicles needed to enter the zone. This would have an immediate impact on reducing the number of incidents of vehicle strikes on these rising bollards that arise from drivers tailgating the buses. Since the bollards will be in the up position for most of the time during pedestrianisation hours drivers making mistakes and failing to read all of the advanced warning signs should not fail to see the bollards themselves and will not have their view of the bollards obscured by buses in front of them.

3.3 It would be possible for only Northbrook Street to become bus free and for buses to still use the route from the bus station via Market Street, Bartholomew Street north, Mansion House Street and Market Place. However it is considered that in order to make the best use of Market Place as a venue for events and as a pavement café area it would be preferable to remove buses completely from all areas of the pedestrianisation zone. Bus routes to the north would not be delayed when leaving the bus station, as the buses would turn right on leaving and proceed to either the A339 or to Park Way Bridge via Market Street, Cheap Street and Bear Lane. Delays at the Wharf Road/Bear Lane junction should also be significantly reduced because south bound through traffic would no longer be using this route. The only traffic using this junction would be to and from the car parks in Wharf Road. Buses leaving the bus station to travel to the south via Market Street and Bartholomew Street south would not be affected.

3.4 **Summary of recommendations**

3.4.1 **Buses should be removed from all areas of the pedestrianisation zone (ie Bartholomew Street north, Mansion House Street, Market Place and Northbrook Street).**
4. **Removal of taxis from Market Place**

4.1 In 3.3 above the merits of seeking to make best use of the environmentally enhanced Market Place for events and as a pavement café area is mentioned. It is considered that the presence of taxis in the rank in Market Place and the constant feeding of this rank by taxis entering from Wharf Street from the feeder rank via the rising bollards detracts from this aspiration. Also if buses were removed in order to give a predominantly pedestrian environment throughout the pedestrianisation zone hours, Market Place would be the only part of the zone where this would be undermined by the presence of taxis. Consequently it is recommended that the rank should be permanently removed and that taxis should be prevented from driving through Market Place during pedestrianisation hours.

4.2 There may be some opposition from groups representing people with mobility problems, or indeed from the people themselves, about the loss of a taxi drop off and pick up service in Market Place. In order to try to overcome these potential objections it is proposed that the feeder rank in Wharf Street should be converted to a formal rank where customers would be able to get a taxi. This rank is a very short distance from Market Place. This issue is discussed in further detail in section 5 below. It should also be pointed out that the rank in Market Place only holds four taxis but the rank that has been installed in Market Street, funded from the Cinema development, holds five taxis. A further rank that will hold four taxis is to be provided on the north side of Park Way Bridge as part of the Parkway development transportation works.

4.3 **Summary of recommendations**

4.3.1 The taxi rank should be permanently removed from Market Place and taxis should be prevented from driving through Market Place during pedestrianisation hours.

4.3.2 The feeder rank in Wharf Street should be converted to a formal rank where customers would be able to get a taxi.

5. **Changes to the operational use of the current taxi feeder rank and introduction of a loading ban in Wharf Street**

5.1 If the taxi rank is removed from and taxis are prevented from driving through Market Place the issue of how best to cater for taxi routes has to be addressed. As indicated above it is proposed that the feeder rank in Wharf Street should be converted to a formal rank where customers would be able to get a taxi. The Traffic Regulation Order aspects of this are easy to do but there are some operational aspects that need to be resolved in order for the rank to operate acceptably.

5.2 At present taxis feed into the rank from the east and exit to the west through the rising bollards into Market Place. If we go ahead with the proposal to prevent them from doing this they will have to leave the rank at the western end and U-turn back to Wharf Road where they will either be able to use Park Way Bridge for routes to the north or Wharf Road/Bear Lane for other routes. By permitting taxis to use the public transport route over Park Way Bridge as recommended in 2.6 there is no significant disadvantage from taking them out of Market Place from a traffic perspective. U-turning the taxis does not give rise to any significant concerns because the traffic flows on the adjacent section of Wharf Street are very light and...
there is a turning head at the western end of the rank to assist this manoeuvre. This section of the road is two way in any case because of the requirement to maintain access and egress to the private car park immediately west of the turning head. Even when the bollards are in the down position outside of pedestrianisation hours the traffic flows will be fairly light if no through traffic is travelling south over Park Way Bridge because it is the public transport only route. Although not anticipated, if it proves to be problematic to operate the rank with U-turns out of it, the alternative solution would be to have taxis U-turning into the rank at its western end and exiting at its eastern end (ie reversing the direction of operation of the rank). It is therefore proposed that the rank is operated in its current direction and only reversed if this proves problematic. It may be possible to convert the feeder rank to a formal rank in advance of the other town centre traffic management proposals. However this would need careful consideration because traffic flows in Wharf Street will still be significant outside pedestrianisation hours whilst Park Way Bridge continues to have all traffic travelling over it in the southbound direction.

5.3 There are regular occasions when service vehicles park on the double yellow lines in Wharf Street in order that their drivers can deliver loads within the pedestrian zone by trolley or by hand. These vehicles cause obstruction and have to reverse out of Wharf Street if they are too large to use the turning head located near the rising bollards. This situation is not only considered undesirable from a road safety perspective but if allowed to continue could interfere with the u-turning movements from the taxi rank. Consequently it is proposed that a loading ban is introduced on the section of Wharf Street from its junction with Wharf Road to the site of the rising bollards to coincide with the operational time of the pedestrianisation zone. As most businesses within the pedestrianisation zone can only carry out servicing before the pedestrianisation start time or after it has ended, it is not considered unreasonable to impose this loading restriction in Wharf Street.

5.4 As with Bartholomew Street north the bollards would be in the up position for the majority of the time during pedestrianisation hours. Consequently with taxis prevented from using this route the risks of other vehicles tailgating them and striking the rising bollards would be substantially reduced at this location also.

5.5 Summary of recommendations

5.5.1 The taxi rank in Wharf Street should continue to operate in the current direction and only be reversed if this proves to be operationally problematic.

5.5.2 A loading ban should be introduced in Wharf Street between its junction with Wharf Road and the site of the rising bollards to coincide with the operational time of the pedestrianisation zone.

6. Changes to pedestrianisation zone timings

6.1 The issue of changing the timings of the pedestrianisation zone and the associated access difficulties has been the subject of much debate over the last two years. In particular it was reviewed in considerable detail at the Newbury Town Centre Task Group meeting on 23 July 2008. The pros and cons of the various possible permutations for pedestrian zone timings were covered in considerable detail in section 7 of the Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues report to that meeting, identified as a background paper to this report.
At present there are three north to south routes available to all traffic in the am peak period (ie Northbrook Street, Park Way and A339) and two south to north routes (ie Northbrook Street and A339). In the pm peak there are two north to south routes available (ie Park Way and A339) and one south to north route (ie A339). If Park Way bridge is closed to all traffic except buses, taxis and cycles, this would reduce the available north to south routes in the am peak for other traffic to two (ie Northbrook Street and A339). There would be no change to south to north routes for other traffic because no traffic can travel north over Park Way Bridge. In the north to south direction during the pm peak the loss of Park Way Bridge for other traffic would reduce the available routes from two to just one (ie A339). In the south to north direction there would again be no change for other traffic with the single route of A339 being the only one available because Park Way Bridge is currently southbound only. Consequently if Park Way Bridge is to become a two way buses/taxis/cycles only route as recommended, it would be prudent to bring forward the end of the pedestrianisation zone time from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm to make available replacement north to south and south to north routes in the pm peak in order to avoid unacceptable congestion.

The following factors need to be considered before this decision is confirmed however.

6.3.1 Pedestrians currently using the town centre would have become accustomed to a traffic-free area, and would not immediately be aware of the dangers of traffic if the restrictions are lifted at 5pm, and may initially be considered to be at a higher risk of accident compared with areas in which they are accustomed to expecting traffic.

6.3.2 A further consideration is the impact that the opening of Northbrook Street will have on the character of the town centre shopping area. There would be approximately 330 vehicles per hour as a combined total for both directions on Bridge Street, changing it substantially from a pedestrian dominated area to one for traffic between 5.00 pm and 6.00pm.

In 2007 the Council’s traffic model consultants undertook some assessments to ascertain the impact of bringing forward the pedestrianisation end time from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm. The key findings of this work at that time were that:

- Purely in terms of traffic flows and journey operating efficiency, the proposal to end pedestrianisation at the earlier time of 5.00pm appears to be workable with little or no adverse effects.

- For those residing or working in the central, central-western and central-southern area, there are advantages in being able to avoid lengthy delays at the Robin Hood roundabout.

- In almost all cases the journey time via the A339 is actually improved due to reduced traffic volumes created by other traffic diverting to the town centre routes, creating an incentive to remain on the A339. The same is also true for certain town centre movements (for example Market Street to Shaw Hill) and it is only locally based origin and destination zones that benefit from the alternative routes.
6.5 It is considered that the traffic patterns in Newbury have changed substantially since the decision was taken in the past to revise the pedestrianisation zone end time from 5.00 pm to 6.00pm. The peak period for pm traffic has become more spread with more workers varying their leaving times and more employers adopting flexible working arrangements. Consequently it is considered that historical problems of queues in Strawberry Hill are likely to be less acute because visitors and workers will vary their leaving times depending on traffic conditions.

6.6 The A339 is the main north/south route for through traffic and this should be encouraged. Recent improvements at the Robin Hood Roundabout Gyratory have made both this junction and the A339 a more attractive route than the route through Northbrook Street for all but fairly specific local journeys. If we revert back to 5.00 pm for the pedestrianisation end time it would be necessary to monitor the situation carefully. If this change were to result queues in Strawberry Hill a possible solution to this would be to install traffic signals at the Old Bath Road/Oxford Street mini-roundabout junction and at the Old Bath Road/Strawberry Hill mini-roundabout junction at some future date.

6.7 With regard to the issues of initial risks to pedestrians and the changed environment between 5.00 pm and 6.00pm identified in 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 above it is considered that with sufficient advanced publicity and use of temporary signs these risks can be managed. Although there would be traffic present in the pedestrianised zone an hour earlier, the nature of the zone with its footways and carriageways at the same level, blockwork surfaces, deliberate lack of road markings, 20 mph speed limit, street furniture and trees will continue to give the impression that pedestrians are the dominant users of the zone and that drivers should exercise caution.

6.8 Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of bringing forward the end of the pedestrianisation zone from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm it is recommended that on balance the proposal is beneficial and that this should be done. This view is supported by the Newbury Town Centre Task Group. The key driver to implementing this change is getting buses and taxis out of the pedestrianisation zone which cannot be achieved until the alternative route for these vehicles is established over Park Way Bridge together with proposed new bus stops and the taxi rank in Park Way that are to be provided by the developer. Consequently it is further recommended that the change to 5.00 pm should be programmed to coincide with the opening of the new Parkway development.

6.9 Summary of recommendations

6.9.1 The pedestrianisation zone end time should be brought forward from 6.00pm to 5.00pm.

7. Permanent traffic management solution for West Street

7.1 Construction of the Broadway and northern end of Northbrook Street environmental enhancements commenced on 24 August 2009. The works were suspended for the Christmas / New Year shopping period and resumed on 01 February 2010. The project should be completed by early in April 2010.

7.2 Various consultations took place before this enhancement scheme commenced about whether or not the Broadway and Northbrook Street north of the junction with West Street should be pedestrianised to match the pedestrianisation zone to the
south. In the 23 July 2008 Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues report to the Task Group it was pointed out that there would be considerable difficulties associated with pedestrianising this northern section of road because of the large number of private parking spaces accessed directly from Broadway, Northbrook Street, Albert Road and West Street. There is no obvious solution on how the private parking spaces accessed from Broadway, Northbrook Street and Albert Road could remain useable. Consequently the decision was taken that this environmental enhancement scheme would not include pedestrianisation.

7.3 Since the decision not to introduce pedestrianisation in Broadway and the northern end of Northbrook Street some stakeholders have suggested that consideration should be given to closing West Street at its junction with Northbrook Street. Given the private parking access problems associated with pedestrianising this northern section of Northbrook Street and Broadway discussed above, there are no benefits to be derived from closing this junction. On the contrary there are a number of problems that this would cause that are discussed below.

7.4 The rising bollards are located just south of the junction of West Street with Northbrook Street at the point where the pedestrianisation zone commences. Despite the extensive signing that warns drivers as they approach the pedestrianisation zone from routes north of the town significant numbers of vehicles continue to drive down Northbrook Street during pedestrianisation hours only to find that they cannot proceed further south of the rising bollards. West Street provides the escape route for these vehicles. If the junction were closed at Northbrook Street, these vehicles would have to undertake U-turns in order to exit to the north. This would be a most undesirable situation with resulting confusion for both drivers and pedestrians. The situation would be bad enough with cars making these U-turn movements but would being particularly problematic when HGV vehicles inadvertently entered from the north and had to turn around.

7.5 Closure of the junction of West Street where it joins Northbrook Street would require changing the one-way westbound operation of West Street to two-way operation with access from the junction with Strawberry Hill in order to maintain access to the private parking spaces and to allow servicing of the premises situated off of West Street. There are three concerns that arise from this change to two-way operation of West Street.

7.6 The first is that with the present one-way westbound arrangement there are four vehicle directional movements at the Strawberry Hill junction with West Street. These are north to south, south to north, east to north, and east to south. If two-way is introduced in West Street two additional movements of north to east and south to east would be introduced at the junction. The geometry of this junction is poor as it is situated on a double bend and visibility to the north is not ideal. Although this situation already exists it is considered that adding the extra north to east and south to east movements would add to the risks of accidents at the junction.

7.7 Secondly, the width of West Street is nominally 5 metres. Although it is possible for this width to accommodate two-way traffic it is considered that it is rather narrow for the number of vehicle movements that would occur.

7.8 The third concern is that there is no chance of providing a turning head at the western end of West Street. Although not many cars would need to access this end of West Street and would probably be able to turn around if they did, the situation
would be particularly difficult for larger service vehicles. These vehicles would either have to drive along West Street from the Strawberry Hill junction and reverse back when loading or unloading was complete or would have to reverse from the Strawberry Hill junction and drive out again when loading or unloading was complete. Both of these options would present unacceptable road safety risks. The McDonald's deliveries would be particularly hazardous because this would involve reversing the delivery vehicle over the whole length of West Street. There is an access to some premises on the north side of West Street approximately half way along it that vehicles might choose to use for turning but this is a private access and there would almost certainly be complaints from the occupiers if this occurred. As the Highway Authority we should not introduce a traffic management arrangement that would result in vehicles using private land for manoeuvring or turning.

7.9 In view of the fact that there are no benefits from closing West Street at its junction with Northbrook Street and that there are a number of problems that would arise if this were done, it is recommended that the current traffic management arrangements for West Street remain as they are now.

7.10 Summary of recommendations

7.10.1 The current traffic management arrangements for West Street should be retained as they are now and the junction of West Street with Northbrook Street should remain open.

8. Consultation

8.1 It is recommended that the proposed traffic management changes contained within this report should be discussed with the various interest groups and organisations that represent Newbury town centre stakeholders so that they have an opportunity to provide feedback on them. The groups and organisations that it is proposed should be contacted are:

- Newbury Town Centre Partnership
- Newbury Retail Association
- Newbury Town Council
- Newbury Town Centre Neighbourhood Action Group
- West Berkshire Disability Alliance and the Inclusive Transport Action Group
- West Berkshire Cycle Forum
- West Berkshire Taxi and Private Hire Association
- CABCO
- West Berkshire Executive Hire Association
- Newbury Buses
- Weavaway Travel
- Emergency Services
- Newbury Post Office
- Newbury Banks
- Newbury Building Societies.

8.2 It is also proposed that once finalised the details of the proposed traffic management changes should be put on the Council’s Web site to inform individual stakeholders and give them an opportunity to comment on them if they wish to.
8.3 Ultimately the proposed traffic management changes will require statutory advertisement and consultation on revised Traffic Regulation Orders and there will therefore be further opportunities for stakeholders to formally respond at this statutory regulation stage.

9. Conclusions

9.1 All of the options discussed in this report are interrelated and need to be considered holistically in order that the correct decisions are made about what is best for the movement of traffic through the town centre, for the servicing needs of the business community, for the pick up and drop off needs of disabled persons, for the access and egress needs for properties situated within the pedestrianisation zone, and for pedestrians who would enjoy a virtually vehicle free environment within the pedestrianised zone during the day.

9.2 The Executive is requested to consider the implications of the various interrelated factors that have been discussed at length in this report and the recommendations summarised at the end of each section. The detailed recommendations are set out in the Recommended Action section of this report and the Executive is invited to resolve accordingly.

Appendices

None.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: To be consulted as indicated in section 8 of this report and as a part of the statutory process for revising Traffic Regulation Orders for the various changes proposed.

Officers Consulted: John Ashworth; Mark Edwards; Bryan Lyttle; Jenny Noble; Gabrielle Esplin, Valerie Witton, Elaine Vincent.

Trade Union: Not applicable.
Reorganisation of Provision for Secondary Age Pupils With Hearing Impairment

Title of Report: Reorganisation of Provision for Secondary Age Pupils With Hearing Impairment
Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: EX1950

Purpose of Report: To seek approval for the reorganisation of hearing impaired provision for secondary age pupils.

Recommended Action: Approval of the closure of hearing impaired resources at Denefield and Park House schools and the opening of a new resource in a different school.

Reason for decision to be taken: Numbers in the Authority's two secondary resources for pupils with hearing impairment are dropping whilst at the same time numbers of placements in independent and non maintained schools for the deaf are increasing. There is a need to reorganise and improve the Authority's provision in order to give it more credibility with parents, increase numbers of hearing impaired students in West Berkshire's maintained provision and reduce numbers of placements in independent and non maintained schools for the deaf. The recommended option is that the hearing impaired resourced units at Denefield and Park House schools are closed and one larger HI resourced unit is opened at another school (Option D in the consultation).

Other options considered: Option A: Maintain the status quo, ie. continue to maintain HI resourced units at Park House and Denefield schools. Option B: Close both HI resourced units without making any replacement provision. Option C: Close one of the existing HI resourced units and develop one larger and improved resourced unit at either Park House or Denefield

Analysis of consultation responses

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:

CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement – improving school performance levels

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning
CPT12 - Including Everyone
CPT13 - Value for Money

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Reorganisation of the Council's secondary hearing impaired provision will improve educational outcomes for children with hearing impairment, will give more deaf children the opportunity to be educated in an inclusive mainstream environment, with appropriate support, and will provide better value for money by educating more children in West Berkshire's maintained schools rather than the independent and non maintained sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
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<td>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Officer Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. No.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Implications

Policy: None. This proposal is consistent with the Council's SEN Inclusion Policy.

Financial: Redundancy costs of the 2 members of staff at the Denefield and Park House resources if neither are appointed to posts in the new resource: approximately £35,000.

Additional revenue costs of the new resource: Approximately £44,000 per annum. This represents the cost of 2 additional nursery nurse posts (including on costs) in addition to the 2 teaching posts which are already funded. Improving the staffing ratios in this way is necessary so that the new HI resource can meet the more complex needs of the pupils it needs to serve.

This additional staffing will increase the unit cost of a place in a secondary HI resource from £9628 per pupil per annum (current cost) to £14,028 per pupil per annum. However, this is still significantly less than the cost of a place in an independent or non maintained school for the deaf. NB. This cost has been put forward as a pressure for 2010-11 from headroom in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The revenue cost of maintaining the existing pupils in their current placements cannot yet be provided but would in any case fall to Reading Borough Council (through recoupment arrangements) as the only West Berkshire pupil in the current provision is in Year 11 and is expected to leave next summer.

Additional capital costs: Additional capital costs should be
minimal or nil for creation of a new HI resource in the school which has been identified. There will be some costs, however, associated with improving the acoustic environment of the school. These have not yet been estimated as an acoustic survey of the school buildings has not yet been carried out. However, improvements could be carried out as part of a rolling programme and would not all be required by September 2010. Some of the Schools Access Initiative capital budget could be allocated for initial acoustic treatment in 2010-11.

There will be no immediate savings on the Out of Authority placement budget as it is not proposed that children will be moved from Mary Hare to the new provision because of the disruption this would cause to their education. However, in the longer term there should be reductions in expenditure on placements at non maintained and independent schools for the deaf.

**Personnel:**
Staff at the existing resourced units for hearing impairment and their unions have been consulted. Staff have been given the option of voluntary redundancy or application for a post in the new resource or a post elsewhere in the Authority. If staff apply for a post in the new resource they will automatically be given an interview. If staff do not volunteer for redundancy and do not secure a post in the new resource or elsewhere, there is a possibility of compulsory redundancy.

**Legal/Procurement:**
Publication of statutory notices will be required.

**Property:**
Improvements to the acoustic environment of the school identified as the host for the new resource will be required.

**Risk Management:**
None.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**
None.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yes: ☒</th>
<th>No: ☐</th>
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<tr>
<td>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item is Urgent Key Decision</td>
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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority currently maintains two resourced units for secondary pupils with hearing impairment, one at Park House School and one at Denefield School. Each resource has 5 places and is staffed by a teacher of the deaf. This provision was inherited from Berkshire County Council and has not been reviewed since West Berkshire District Council was formed in 1998.

1.2 Numbers at both resources have been falling in recent years. There is now only 1 pupil in the Park House HI resource and 3 pupils in the Denefield HI resource. (All 3 pupils in the Denefield resource are resident in Reading Borough Council and their places are funded by Reading Borough through normal recoupment arrangements for statemented pupils). As only 4 places are occupied, the Council is effectively funding 6 vacant places in its two secondary HI resourced units. The unit cost of a place is £9626 in the 2009-10 financial year.

1.3 A number of placements have had to be made in recent years at independent and non maintained schools for the deaf as it was not possible to meet the needs of the pupils concerned in our own HI resourced provision for a variety of reasons. The Authority’s provision for secondary hearing impaired pupils was set up many years ago and was not designed to meet the increasingly complex needs of children now requiring placement.

1.4 In order to meet these needs and reduce the numbers of placements in independent and non maintained special schools, provision for secondary age deaf pupils needs to be reorganised with a view to the creation of new and improved facilities.

2. Consultation

2.1 A formal consultation has been carried out on options for the future of secondary hearing impaired provision in West Berkshire. The recommended option, closure of the HI resourced units at Park House and Denefield schools and opening of a new, larger HI resource in a different school, was supported by 76% of respondents.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that procedures are put in place to close the resourced HI units at Park House and Denefield schools in July 2010 and to open a new, larger resource in a different school in September 2010. A school has been selected to host the new resource but cannot be identified yet pending formal approval by the Governing Body. Statutory notices will need to be published to close the existing resources and open a new one.
Executive Report

1. Provision for children with hearing impairment in West Berkshire

3.2 Pupils with hearing impairment in West Berkshire are catered for in a variety of ways depending on the severity and complexity of their needs. Pupils with milder hearing impairments attend their local mainstream schools with additional support, including regular visits from a qualified teacher of the deaf. Pupils with more severe hearing impairments who require more intensive support, including access to a teacher of the deaf at all times, are usually placed in a resourced unit for children with hearing impairment attached to a mainstream school. Such resourced units exist at Westwood Farm Infant School, Westwood Farm Junior School, Denefield Secondary School and Park House Secondary School. A small number of pupils with severe hearing impairments attend independent or non maintained schools for the deaf, such as Mary Hare Primary School and Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf in Newbury. Pupils who have a significant learning difficulty in addition to their hearing impairment would usually attend The Castle or Brookfields special schools.

3.3 The HI resourced units at Park House and Denefield Schools cater for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years who have a significant hearing loss and associated difficulties such as delayed language skills. Some pupils may also have additional disabilities. Each HI resourced unit is a 5 place setting, giving a total of 10 places across the Local Authority. Many of these pupils have already attended the Local Authority’s Resource for HI within the primary school (at Westwood Farm Infant School and Junior School).

3.4 Each HI resource is staffed by a full time teacher of the deaf. The combined budgets for the two resources in 2009-10 is £96,288 per annum. The unit cost of a place is therefore £9,628.80 per annum although some pupils with particularly high level needs may receive additional “top up” funding on a case by case basis.

3.5 Where pupils from Reading Borough Council attend West Berkshire’s HI resourced units, the costs are recouped from Reading Borough Council through normal recoupment arrangements. Recoupment regulations allow Authorities to recover from other Authorities only the actual cost of the provision plus a small charge for administration, so there is no particular financial benefit to having pupils from other areas in provision maintained by West Berkshire, although there is a benefit in terms of having viable numbers of deaf children and an adequate deaf peer group for children attending our resources.

3.6 The costs of the HI resourced units at Denefield and Park House schools are met from Dedicated Schools Grant.

3.7 In addition the Authority funds transport of any West Berkshire pupils attending the HI resourced units who meet the criteria for transport for statemented pupils as laid out in the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy. Transport costs are met from the Council’s base budget rather than Dedicated Schools Grant. Transport costs for pupils from Reading are met by Reading Borough Council.
4. Numbers on roll at Denefield and Park House HI Resources

4.1 Numbers on roll in both the Denefield and Park House HI resourced units have been declining in recent years. The table below shows the numbers of pupils at the beginning of each academic year in each Resource since September 2004. The table also shows the Local Authority which the pupils come from.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denefield</th>
<th>Park House</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of pupils</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 In the current academic year there is only 1 pupil in the Park House HI resource (a Year 11 pupil), and 3 pupils in the Denefield HI resource (all 3 being Reading pupils, Year 8, Year 12 and Year 13). No new hearing impaired pupils started at either resource in September 2009.

4.3 There are therefore 4 surplus places at the Park House HI Resource and 2 surplus places at the Denefield HI Resource, with no West Berkshire pupils in attendance at the latter provision.

5. Secondary age hearing impaired pupils placed in independent and non maintained special schools

5.1 West Berkshire Council currently funds 6 pupils to attend Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf. The average cost per pupil is approximately £31,000 per annum.

5.2 West Berkshire Council sometimes funds children to attend other independent and non maintained schools for the deaf, including schools which offer signing provision, but there are no such placements currently being funded.

6. Rationale for change

6.1 The current provision for hearing impaired pupils was inherited from Berkshire County Council and has not been reviewed since West Berkshire District Council was formed in 1998. Local Authorities have a duty to review their SEN provision to
ensure that it meets changing needs and that effective use is made of public resources.

6.2 There is a decline in demand for places in the HI resourced units, as demonstrated by the figures above. This decline in numbers can be attributed to a number of factors, including a greater number of parents choosing their local mainstream school, and, in addition, an increase in placements at Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf.

6.3 Maintaining surplus places in resourced units whilst funding a relatively high number of placements at independent or non maintained schools for the deaf does not constitute an effective use of public resources. It is necessary to examine why numbers in the secondary HI resourced units have dropped and how the Authority can offer a broad continuum of provision for hearing impaired students to meet a variety of different needs.

6.4 The HI resources at Denefield and Park House Schools were set up several years ago when the client group was different from the present client group. At that time there was less inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Pupils with moderate hearing impairments tended to be placed in the HI resourced units and pupils with more severe needs were usually placed in special schools. Mainstream schools have now, however, become more confident and competent at addressing a wider range of needs. At the same time legislation has changed so that there is a presumption children with special educational needs will attend their local mainstream schools, if their parents wish it, unless there are very compelling reasons why this should not be the case. As a result of these changes, children with moderate hearing impairments now tend to be placed in their local mainstream schools with additional support, including regular visits from a qualified teacher of the deaf. The children who require placement in resourced schools now have more complex needs; usually severe or profound hearing impairments, with associated difficulties such as delayed language and literacy skills and in some cases additional disabilities.

6.5 In some cases it is difficult to meet the needs of these more complex pupils at the Denefield and Park House HI resources because they sometimes require provision which the resourced units, as they are currently organised and resourced, cannot make, such as higher staffing ratios, more access to small group work and a better acoustic environment.

6.6 Consequently, it has been necessary to place some children at non maintained schools for the deaf, such as Mary Hare, whose needs could potentially have been met in a mainstream school with a resourced unit for hearing impaired children if the resourced units were organised and funded differently.

6.7 This is not in any way a reflection on the staff who run the resourced units at Denefield and Park House schools, who have made excellent provision for the children in their care. It is more an issue about the way in which the resourced units are set up and funded and the impact of this on their ability to meet very complex needs.
7. **Analysis of future demand for secondary hearing impaired provision**

7.1 The number of pre school and primary age children with a diagnosed hearing impairment changes on a regular basis as a result of new children being diagnosed and children moving in to and out of the Authority. The total number stands currently at approximately 84, 33 of whom have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The total number is predicted to rise as some large cohorts in the early years move through the system.

7.2 The majority of children with Statements of Special Educational Need are placed in their local mainstream schools with additional support including regular visits from a teacher of the deaf. Some are placed in the HI resourced units at Westwood Farm Infant and Junior schools and a very small number are placed at Mary Hare Primary School.

7.3 Children who do not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs may have a relatively low level of need which can be met in their mainstream schools with support from a visiting teacher of the deaf. Some may need a Statement of Special Educational Needs in the future but may not yet have been through the statutory assessment process leading to a Statement. This is likely to be the case for some of the pre school children who may have high level needs but for whom the statutory assessment process may not yet have been initiated.

7.4 Analysis of the numbers and the known needs of children in this age range demonstrates that there is sufficient demand for a secondary HI resourced unit provided that it is organised and resourced in such a way as to fully meet the needs of children with severe / profound hearing impairments and associated difficulties.

8. **Continuum of provision**

8.1 West Berkshire Council is committed to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream settings. Where parents of hearing impaired children wish their child to attend a local mainstream primary school, this will be supported wherever possible, provided that the child’s needs can be met in a mainstream setting with additional support.

8.2 However, there will always be some children with hearing impairment who require more intensive specialist support than can realistically be provided in a local mainstream school. It is the Authority’s view that these children should have the opportunity to attend a mainstream school which is specially resourced for hearing impairment, as opposed to a special school, as some parents and children will prefer a mainstream school to a special school and because mainstream schools have certain benefits for children with hearing impairment which special schools cannot offer, such as access to normal language models and social inclusion with hearing peers.

8.3 For this reason the continuation of some form of specially resourced secondary mainstream provision is recommended, although it is clear that the provision will need to be redeveloped and improved. This will form part of a continuum of provision which includes local mainstream schools, secondary HI resourced provision and special school placements. This continuum of provision will allow for
a wide variety of needs to be met and will offer parents and children some choice in how those needs are met.

8.4 It is not proposed that the Authority will cease to make placements at special schools for children with hearing impairment such as Mary Hare School. It is envisaged that there will always be some children who have such severe and complex needs that a special school placement is required. For such children, Mary Hare makes very good provision and offers good value for money. However, the existence of a secondary HI resourced provision will give parents of hearing impaired children whose needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school the option of a mainstream education for their child. It will also enable the Authority to make better use of its resources by slightly reducing the number of children who need to attend special schools for the deaf, whilst not eliminating these placements altogether.

9. Options for reorganisation of secondary HI provision

9.1 A consultation process was initiated on 20th November 2009. The following options were put forward, with Option D being the recommended one.

**Option A: Maintain the status quo, ie. continue to maintain HI resourced units at Park House and Denefield Schools**

This was not recommended because numbers of pupils attending the HI resources at Park House and Denefield schools are so low. Even if both resourced units were developed and improved to enable them to cater better for children with very complex needs, and therefore attract more children, the Authority’s view is that a single 10 place resourced unit is preferable to two separate 5 place resourced units.

**Option B: Close both HI resourced units without making any replacement provision**

This option was not recommended as it would mean that all HI pupils in the secondary age range would either have to be placed in their local mainstream schools with additional support or in non maintained or independent special schools for the hearing impaired. This is not considered desirable for the reasons given in paragraph 6.2 above, ie. children whose needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school would be denied the option of a mainstream education which they and their parents may prefer and which would provide certain benefits which special schools cannot offer. It is also not considered to be a cost effective option given that the average annual cost of a placement at Mary Hare is £31,000. Whilst this represents very good value for those pupils who really require a special school placement, some pupils could have their needs met very effectively and more cost effectively in a mainstream resourced provision, provided that the provision is correctly set up and resourced.

**Option C: Close one of the existing HI resourced units and develop one larger and improved resourced unit at either Park House or Denefield**

This option was not recommended as both Park House and Denefield schools have restricted space on site for the development of a new, improved and larger hearing impaired resourced unit. Both schools in recent years have also developed very good links
with their local special schools, Park House with The Castle Special School and Denefield with Brookfields Special School. A great deal of high quality and innovative work has been developed including joint professional development, teacher exchanges and special school pupils attending Park House and Denefield schools to access specific courses which the special schools cannot provide. The Headteachers and staff of both Park House and Denefield schools have shown great commitment to this work which it is hoped will continue to develop and form the basis of potential future colocation opportunities. With this in mind, it is not considered reasonable to expect either school to host a redeveloped and larger hearing impaired resource in addition to the inclusion work they are also doing with the special schools.

In addition, if only one HI resourced unit is to be maintained, neither Denefield nor Park House is ideally placed and a school in a more central location would be preferable.

Option D: Close both HI resourced units and open one larger HI resourced unit in a different school.

This was the recommended option. It would have the advantage of all secondary HI provision being concentrated in one place with the potential to be developed as a centre of excellence. A single 10 place resource would be preferable to two 5 place resources, as deaf children would have a larger deaf peer group and there would be two qualified teachers of the deaf on site rather than just one, in addition to other specialist staff. Visiting professionals such as educational audiologists could focus their efforts on one school rather than two. It would also be more cost effective to develop just one school to have a high quality acoustic environment rather than attempting to do this in two schools. A school would be sought which has a high level of commitment to inclusion, has the physical space on site to accommodate the facility and, ideally, is reasonably centrally located within the Authority.

The aim would be to create a first class facility which offers a very high level of intensive support whilst at that same time allowing pupils to access the opportunities afforded by a mainstream school.

10. Consultation Process

10.1 The consultation period started on 20th November and ended on 18th December.

10.2 Consultation documents were sent to:

- Parents of all primary age pupils with hearing impairment
- Parents of hearing impaired pupils attending the Denefield and Park House HI resources
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors at Denefield and Park House schools
- Teachers in Charge of HI Resources at Denefield and Park House Schools
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors at all other West Berkshire Schools
- Trade Unions
- Primary Care Trust, including Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service
- National Deaf Children’s Society
- Mary Hare School for the Deaf
- Heathlands School, St. Albans
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Diocese of Oxford
• Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
• Children with hearing impairments at Westwood Farm Infant and Junior schools, Denefield and Park House.

10.3 Meetings were held with the following:
• Headteacher and Chair of Governors at Denefield
• Teacher in Charge at Denefield
• Teacher in Charge at Park House
• Headteachers of Westwood Farm Infant and Junior schools & teachers in charge of the HI resources at those schools
• Chief Executive and Principal at Mary Hare School for the Deaf
• Children with hearing impairment at Westwood Farm Infant and Junior schools and Denefield and Park House schools.

10.4 A meeting was offered to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors at Park House school but this offer was declined as the school had no objection to the proposal and considered a meeting unnecessary.

10.5 Staff affected by the proposals, ie. the teachers in charge of the HI resourced units at Denefield and Park House schools, were invited to bring a union representative to the meeting. One brought a union representative and the other did not. A Human Resources representative was present at both meetings.

10.6 Meetings with children were facilitated by the teachers in charge of the HI resource at the school and the Learning Support Services Manager.

11. Consultation Responses

11.1 There were 21 responses to the consultation. The category of respondents is shown below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of respondent</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Trade Union representative</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Diocesan representative</td>
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<td>PCT employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Berkshire employee</td>
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<td>Other: Teacher of the Deaf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: Sensory Consortium Service</td>
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11.2 The options selected by respondents are shown below.

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<th>Option</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Option D</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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11.3 The majority of respondents, 76%, were in favour of Option D. The reasons given for supporting this option included:-

- A larger resource is preferable as deaf children will have a larger deaf peer group whilst still being able to access a mainstream curriculum
- Children will benefit from having two teachers of the deaf rather than just one
- A resource needs to have a high profile within a school and it is difficult to achieve this if there are too few pupils
- Having one resource in one school is a more cost effective and sustainable option
- There needs to be a good quality alternative to a school for the deaf as, although this is necessary for some children, it is not the best place for others and can cause their language skills to deteriorate. Also some pupils who have attended special schools for the deaf struggle in further education as they have not developed sufficient independence skills and are not used to functioning in a large group.
- Having a resource in one school will enable best use to be made of specialist resources, including speech and language therapy
- More flexible use of staffing and resources would be possible if there was just one resource
- A “fresh start” with a new secondary hearing impaired unit might encourage more parents of primary HI children to choose a resourced unit. It would be an opportunity to create a secondary HI facility which has a similar offer to its primary counterparts in terms of good acoustics and which the primary resource staff would feel able to recommend with confidence to parents. (Headteacher of Westwood Farm Infant school which has a HI resource)
- It is important to have a secondary resource which is attractive to parents

11.4 Some of the respondents stated that they were supporting Option D on the understanding that there would be adequate staffing, including teaching assistants as well as teachers of the deaf, and that the school selected to host the resource would be acoustically treated to ensure a good environment for the deaf pupils.

11.5 The two respondents who selected Option A, ie. no change, were both parents of secondary age children with hearing impairment. One was a parent of a child currently placed in the Denefield resource. The other parent did not give their name so it is not possible to say whether they are a parent of a child who is placed at Denefield or Park House or elsewhere. The parent of the child at Denefield expressed concerns about continuity of education for children currently placed in the Denefield Resource. The other parent expressed concern about whether Reading children would still be able to attend the new resource.
Comment:
It is not proposed that children at the existing resources would be required to move to the new resource. It is anticipated that they will complete their education in their current placements and that even when the resourced units at Denefield and Park House schools are closed, teacher of the deaf and other professional support will be available to those pupils for as long as it is required. The precise details of this support will have to be negotiated with Reading Borough Council for pupils who are resident in Reading.

Reading Borough Council did not make a formal response to the consultation. However, informal discussions with Reading officers would suggest that the Council does not plan to set up its own HI provision and it is expected that Reading pupils will continue to be placed in West Berkshire’s provision. The additional distance to the new resource should not be sufficient to act as a deterrent to placement. Placement of deaf pupils by Reading in West Berkshire provision is regarded as a positive as it provides a larger deaf peer group.

11.6 The two respondents who selected Option C were both in favour of the closure of Park House resource and the creation of a new, larger resource at Denefield School, building on the existing resource there. The two respondents who selected this option were the teacher in charge of the HI Resourced Unit at Denefield and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (the Trade Union representing the teacher in charge). The reasons given were as follows:-

- The Council already has a group of resources located closely together which already work well together and could operate as a federation of hearing impaired resources, ie. the Westwood Farm schools and Denefield school, which all have HI resources and Brookfields special school which has a sensory resource. The Council should capitalise on this opportunity rather than creating a secondary resource elsewhere which would fragment provision and cost more to set up than enhancing facilities at Denefield. Secondary transition will be more difficult for pupils attending the Westwood Farm HI resource if the resource is closed at Denefield and placed elsewhere.

Comments:
It is acknowledged that the geographical proximity of the Westwood Farm schools, Denefield and Brookfields, appear to present an opportunity for the development of a group of resources for hearing impairment based in one area. However, geographical proximity to other resources is not as important as quality and attractiveness of provision. The resource at Denefield has not been popular with parents of hearing impaired children in recent years. Apart from one child in Year 8, placed in September 2008, there have been no new placements since 2004. One of the reasons for this appears to be the fact that the school has not been seen as performing well and is currently in special measures. Whilst the Local Authority has every confidence in the senior management and Governors of the school to bring it out of special measures, there is a need to regain parental confidence in West Berkshire’s hearing impaired provision quickly and establish a resource which will have credibility with parents and attract students. Parents have lost confidence in the Authority’s secondary HI provision. There is a need for a fresh start.

The difficulty for children of transition from Westwood Farm Junior school to a secondary school other than Denefield is not considered to be a convincing argument in favour of retention of a resource at Denefield, as in reality pupils are
not transferring to the Denefield resource in any case. Also, it is considered possible to achieve a good transition for pupils to a secondary school in a different area with adequate transition support.

It is suggested that creating a resource in a different school would be more costly than expanding the one at Denefield. This is not necessarily the case. The additional revenue costs of improving staffing ratios would be the same whether the resource was at Denefield or another school. A capital project is planned for Denefield but this would not include the creation of the required facilities for a new, larger resource. This would be an additional capital cost, whereas the school which has been identified to host the resource would have space to do so with little or no capital cost. The only additional capital costs for the new resource would be for acoustic treatment. This would also be required if a resource remained at Denefield as the acoustic environment is not satisfactory. This is one of the criticisms frequently made by parents of West Berkshire current secondary HI provision.

11.7 Having considered the consultation responses, it is recommended that Option D is implemented and that officers are instructed to set in motion procedures to close the HI resourced units at Park House and Denefield schools in July 2010 and open a new resource at another school in September 2010.

12. **Timescale and process**

12.1 These proposals are subject to the following procedures for further consultation and approval.

(i) Publication of statutory notices to close the HI resources at Denefield and Park House schools **February / March 2010**

(ii) Formal identification of new school and development of new HI resource including publication of statutory notices and recruitment of staff: **February to September 2010**

(iii) Opening of new HI Resource: **September 2010**

**Appendices**

There are no Appendices to this report.

**Consultees**

**Local Stakeholders:** As set out in the report

**Officers Consulted:** Corporate Board

**Trade Union:** Not consulted
Title of Report: Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework Agreement

Report to be considered by: Executive

Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010

Forward Plan Ref: EX1948

Purpose of Report:

To seek delegated authority for West Berkshire District Council to form the Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework ("the Framework") and to enter into contracts appointing building contractors to the Framework.

Recommended Action:

The Executive is requested to agree that:

1. the Head of Property Services is delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and the Head of Legal & Electoral to form the Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework with the other five unitary authorities of Berkshire.

2. the Head of Property Services is delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and the Head of Legal & Electoral Services to enter into framework agreements appointing contractors to the Framework.

Reason for decision to be taken:

To meet the relevant time scales as outlined in the report and to support cross authority framework arrangements.

Other options considered:

None

Key background documentation:

None

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener
- CPT13 - Value for Money

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

- The stated objective of the frameworks is to create capacity to deliver programmes of work, reduce waste, and streamline processes through the whole life of projects, identification and effective management of risk, and to provide value for money.
Portfolio Member Details

Name & Telephone No.: Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address: astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report: 08 January 2010

Contact Officer Details

Name: Andy Green and Tom Herring
Job Title: Maintenance Manager/Corporate Contract and Procurement Manager
Tel. No.: 01635 519831
E-mail Address: agreen@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: None

Financial: There are no significant financial issues associated with this paper. The cost of the framework manager will be shared equally by the six Berkshire authorities and the WBC element of the charge will be picked up through existing revenue budgets within Property Services.

There is the potential for financial efficiencies of some 1%-2% of construction cost annually on procurement cost from the client side.

Personnel: None

Legal/Procurement: There are two potential issues for the Council to consider, firstly, the risk of challenge to the procurement process is the Council risk alone. This cannot be shared. The other five Berkshire unitaries will not face a legal challenge as the Council, acting as the lead authority advised on the procurement process. The second issue concerns the operational and governance arrangement associated with the joint working between the Berkshire unitaries, this needs to discussed and formalised in a legally binding agreement.

Property: Provides a legally compliant framework to procure the Council's capital programme.

Time savings in the early stages of projects in procurement could be between 10%-15% and potential to complete projects up to 3 months earlier.

Risk Management: None

Equalities Impact Assessment: Impact survey will have to be undertaken by Property Services.
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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 In 2008, the Council with the support of the then South East Centre for Excellence (SECE) set up a working group to form the Berkshire Cluster Group. The purpose is to appoint contractors to undertake works on the Council’s capital building programme. This report also highlights the implications for West Berkshire Council acting as the lead authority.

2. Proposals and Lead Authority Role

2.1 The Council as lead authority advised on the procurement process throughout the procurement phase publishing the contract through the official European Journal (OJEU) and legal advice and chairing meetings of the six authorities. This collaboration is West Berkshire Council’s contribution to sub-regional collaborative procurement work.

2.2 The main reason for this report is twofold, firstly to gain formal approval for West Berkshire Council to continue to take this lead role through the framework award stage by forming a legal agreement with the contractors and secondly to manage the framework agreement on a shared cost basis on behalf of the other five authorities, both of these subject to a legal agreement with the other authorities.

2.3 Key risks involve the Council entering into the framework agreement with all of the successful contractors, should legal challenge be made by any contractor over the processes followed before or after tender, it will be the Council’s responsibility to manage/defend such challenges with the support of the other five authorities. A legal agreement will seek to balance and share the risks with the other five authorities but any risk associated with a challenge remains with the Council.

2.4 Consequence of not receiving approval to continue would be that the joint procurement exercise would probably be abandoned with the loss of the benefits of the framework agreement (including future protection from cover pricing), the Council’s reputation may be damaged with both the five authorities and the contractors involved in the process and WBC may consequentially be excluded from other collaborative exercises lead by other authorities in the future.
Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 In 2008, the Council with the support of the then South East Centre for Excellence (SECE) set up a working group to form the Berkshire Cluster Group. The purpose is to appoint contractors to undertake works on the Council’s capital building programme.

1.2 To provide a background to this initiative the regional context will be explained and the rationale for a sub-regional Tier 3 construction framework agreement for the Berkshire authorities will be described. This report will also describe the Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework and highlight the implications for the Council acting as the lead authority.

1.3 Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE), formerly SECE, was established to support the implementation of the National Procurement Strategy and the delivery of efficiency targets. The development of procurement framework arrangements such as these that work either regionally or sub regionally, recognising different and variable usage patterns is a key priority for the IESE.

1.4 As a first step, a Regional framework has been established for major projects and programmes of work. This is now available to all IESE Local Authorities and other public sector organisations, including all 7 County Councils, 12 Unitary Authorities, 55 District Councils, Fire, Police and Health Authorities and Trusts, Foundation Schools, Voluntary Aided Schools, Further Education Colleges, Housing Authorities, and the like. The framework has been established to deliver primarily major projects in excess of £1m, and is referred to as a Tier 1 framework.

1.5 It has been recognised that more sub-regional arrangements are required to deal with the smaller projects, to make best use of local resources and expertise. These sub-regional frameworks will be established to deliver projects within notional financial bands, and are intended to complement each other and the Tier 1 framework. The financial bands are a guide to the nature of the intended projects, and are not a restriction on the size of projects that may be delivered by the individual arrangements. The Berkshire Cluster Group Framework is aimed at the Tier 3 category. A summary of the guide financial banding is shown below:

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<th>Maximum guide value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>£500,000</td>
<td>£2,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 3/Berkshire Cluster</td>
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1.6 Following a PQQ exercise twenty four contractors were invited to tender for Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework works within the boundaries of Berkshire. The Berkshire Cluster consists of six Unitary Authorities as listed below:

- West Berkshire District Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council
- Slough Borough Council
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

1.7 Further contracting authorities as schools, Fire Brigade, or their successors may also participate in this arrangement.

1.8 In Hampshire County Council a similar framework labelled as tier 3 is in place and the learning and output from the arrangement has been directly transferred into this framework as we have had their active assistance throughout.

1.9 It is hoped that we will appoint 10 -15 contractors from the tender process.

2. Objectives

2.1 The construction frameworks are being established to create highly efficient and effective building procurement vehicles capable of undertaking large volumes of public construction work.

2.2 The stated objective of the frameworks is to create capacity to deliver programmes of work, reduce waste, and streamline processes through the whole life of projects, identification and effective management of risk, and to provide value for money.

2.3 Four goals have been identified to support this objective:

(1) Improved processes for design development, procurement and construction

(2) Better use of resources to ensure that competencies are properly deployed and wasteful activities are driven out.

(3) To add value to the whole life of a project by engaging all parties in joint ownership and collaboration seeking out opportunities in design, procurement and construction.

(4) To seek out gains through aggregation, leverage discount for economy of scale, and to avoid bespoke procurement.

2.4 Whilst the IESE Tier 1 framework utilises National Contractors to provide the capacity and management resource required for the more complex major projects, the Berkshire Cluster Framework are hoped to be aimed at local resources. This arrangement for Tier 3 projects in Berkshire in particular is aimed at contractors who regularly undertake projects up to £500k, and who have specific skills for this type of work.
2.5 There has been much press coverage of the OFT report on anti-competitive practices in particular the practice of ‘cover pricing’. Framework agreements are seen as a practical solution to this problem as tender prices are sought for the whole programme at the beginning of the framework agreement and not at individual project level.

3. **Benefits**

The principle benefit of establishing the framework for aggregated service delivery is to create a highly efficient and effective building procurement vehicle capable of undertaking a large volume of public construction work. By using the framework, parties have opportunities to realise benefits through:

- legally compliant procurement process.
- simpler and quicker procurement process.
- improving predictability of time, cost and quality.
- buying gains and economies of scale.
- standard and streamlined processes.
- performance improvement from regular feedback.
- efficiencies from joining common projects across the Cluster region into programmes of work.
- using resources more efficiently.
- sharing skills and knowledge.
- early supplier involvement and reducing aborted work.
- more meaningful and consistent engagement of the whole supply chain.
- higher visibility of oncoming workflow.
- smoother and more consistent flow of works to the market.
- reducing demands on smaller authorities and bring the benefits within their reach.

4. **Nature of the Workload**

4.1 These arrangements will be capable of undertaking a diverse range of construction work throughout Berkshire both in terms of each Contracting Authority’s programmes and as a direct result of significant central government investment in public services.
4.2 The main areas of activity will comprise individual projects or programmes of new build, extensions, minor maintenance, reinstatement or refurbishment and alteration. Work could arise from any mix of the following public authority facilities:

- schools,
- libraries,
- civic offices,
- care homes,
- headquarters buildings,
- social services properties,
- museums,
- social housing,
- sport and leisure facilities.

4.3 Other areas of activity could involve any other public sector building work commissioned by any of the Contracting Authorities.

4.4 The value of individual contracts under the framework will vary but are likely to involve individual projects or programmes of work with values ranging up to £500,000 or greater if appropriate.

4.5 The total workload under the framework may be in excess of £20,000,000 per annum, this figure is an estimate based upon information from the Berkshire Cluster.

5. **How the framework will operate**

5.1 The framework will comprise main contractors (construction companies) through which selected projects or programmes of work will be developed, procured and implemented.

5.2 Contractors will be invited to participate in the early design process of individual projects together with the Contracting Authority’s design team. Through this collaborative process, the design team and contractor will deliver an agreed design product that includes the contractor’s buildability assessment together with:

- an agreed standard of quality
- an agreed programme
- an assessment and allocation of the project risks
- an agreed contract sum

5.3 This process will offer Contracting Authorities an alternative to the conventional tendering process, and make better use of the pre-construction efforts of both the contractor and the client’s team.

5.4 There is no requirement for contractors to cover the whole of the Berkshire area. The decision to appoint to the framework will take into account achieving an overall balance of contractor capacity.
5.5 The framework agreements will be between the selected construction companies and West Berkshire Council acting as lead authority for and on behalf of the Berkshire Cluster for all participating Contracting Authorities.

5.6 Specific appointments to underlying contracts through the framework agreements will be by the Contracting Authority. Central governance and support arrangements will be developed and administered on behalf of the Berkshire Cluster by West Berkshire Council.

5.7 The project approvals including funding arrangements and decision to utilise these arrangements for individual projects / programmes of work will be at the discretion of the Contracting Authorities.

5.8 It is expected that up to 15 construction companies will be appointed to the framework. The exact number of appointments required will depend on anticipated workload, the requirements of the Contracting Authorities, and the geographic coverage and capacity of the successful contractors. The tender process is expected to be completed by November 2009 and it is hoped the framework will be fully operational early next year.

5.9 It is envisaged that the form of the Framework Agreement will be an amended version of that published by the JCT (Joint Contracts Tribunal) dated 2005 and the underlying contracts will generally be from the JCT 05 suite of documents.

5.10 Appointment to the framework does not guarantee a specific volume of, or any work; the degree of its use and the pace of development of the arrangements will be determined by the requirements of the Contracting Authorities and the performance of the contractors.

5.11 The framework agreement will not be used exclusively by Contracting Authorities. Other procurement methodologies will continue to be used as appropriate.

5.12 The principal skills required will be the capacity and expertise to deliver the projects through collaborative working techniques, and the culture within the construction companies to work with Contracting Authorities in helping to shape the aspirations for this initiative into practical working arrangements.

5.13 In the framework tender contractors priced 5 templates for:

- Fire remedial works
- Small extension
- Medium extension
- Infill/modular building
- Internal refurbishment

5.14 The options for allocation of work under the framework are:

(1) **Option 1**: project is a precise fit to tender template project then select the winning tender response.
(2) **Option 2:** project is not a precise fit to tender template project then issue expression of interest and apply the short listing matrix. This may lead to a single appointment if clear water however if more than one contractor short listed this will lead to mini competition.

(3) **Option 3:** mini competition.

6. **Governance**

6.1 A Steering Group will be established to provide scrutiny and support for the development of governance arrangements for the framework. The body will meet quarterly and at key framework milestones to review decisions, performance, and to formulate management strategy for the future. Membership of the Steering Group will consist of representatives from active Contracting Authorities.

6.2 A Strategic Forum consisting of all the framework contractors will be established. This body will meet quarterly, and will review availability, capacity, performance, and framework development issues. The forum will be chaired by West Berkshire Council as lead Authority for the Berkshire cluster, and other active Contracting Authorities will be invited to attend as necessary.

6.3 There will be one to one meetings with each contractor’s framework director. This will be as required dependent upon workload, but certainly no less than once a year. This meeting will focus on issues specific to the contractor such as performance measurement, or development.

6.4 The cycle of meetings is completed by the project specific meetings between Contracting Authorities, their consultants, and the chosen framework contractor. These will be held regularly through the life of a project, and will include the project review and performance measurement meetings.

7. **Lead Authority Role**

7.1 The Council as lead authority advised on the procurement process throughout the procurement phase publishing the contract through the official European Journal (OJEU) and legal advice and chairing meetings of the six authorities. This collaboration is West Berkshire Council’s contribution to sub-regional collaborative procurement work.

7.2 The main reason for this report is twofold, firstly to gain formal approval for West Berkshire Council to continue to take this lead role through the framework award stage by forming a legal agreement with the contractors and secondly to manage the framework agreement on a shared cost basis on behalf of the other five authorities, both of these subject to a legal agreement with the other authorities.

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7.4 Consequence of not receiving approval to continue would be that the joint procurement exercise would probably be abandoned with the loss of the benefits of the framework agreement (including future protection from cover pricing), the Council’s reputation may be damaged the both the five authorities and the contractors involved in the process and WBC may consequentially be excluded from other collaborative exercises lead by other authorities in the future.

7.5 The ongoing framework management will be performed by the Council with a jointly funded 22 hour per week Framework Manager Post. The Framework Manager will be responsible for governance of the framework. In year one ISESE have agreed to fund half of this post with the remainder of the cost being paid for by equal shares by the 6 contracting authorities. In years two, three and four the full cost will be borne equally by the 6 contracting authorities.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Head of Property Services is delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Head of Legal & Electoral Services to form the Berkshire Cluster Minor Works Framework with the other five unitary authorities of Berkshire.

8.2 The Head of Property Services is delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and the Head of Legal & Electoral Services to enter into framework agreements appointing contractors to the Framework.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Not consulted
Officers Consulted: Tom Herring, Shiraz Sheikh, Andy Walker, Steve Broughton
Trade Union: Not consulted
Title of Report: Care Quality Commission Annual Rating for Adult Social Care 2008-09

Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: EX1995

Purpose of Report: To note the Care Quality Commission grading for Adult Social Care for 2008-09.

Recommended Action: To note the findings, and agree the actions being proposed to address the identified areas of improvement.

Reason for decision to be taken: N/A

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Care Quality Commission Performance Assessment Guide 2008-09

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT8 - A Healthier Life
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
- CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Ensuring the standard of adult social care in West Berkshire meets the needs requirements of the Care Quality Commission and continues to deliver excellent services to the people of West Berkshire

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</td>
<td>Councillor Joe Mooney - Tel (0118) 9412649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmooney@westberks.gov.uk">jmooney@westberks.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Jeanette Chappell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Title:</td>
<td>Interim Performance Manager</td>
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<tr>
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<td>01635 519947</td>
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<td>E-mail Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jchappell@westberks.gov.uk">jchappell@westberks.gov.uk</a></td>
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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) replaced the Commission for Social Inspection (CSCI) on 1st April 2009 as the new joint health and social care regulator.

1.2 The Council’s performance against its responsibility for commissioning and delivering Adult Social Care is assessed and rated annually CQC.

1.3 This purpose of this report is note the 2008/09 assessment, and to highlight those areas where CQC recommends further improvement or development, together with actions required.

2. Outcome

2.1 In 2008-09, CQC judged the Council as Performing Well which is defined as A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for people, is cost-effective and makes contributions to wider outcomes for the community.

2.2 All councils in the South East region except one have been rated as Performing Well. The one council not to be awarded a rating of Performing Well has been rated as Adequate.

2.3 The overall rating for delivery of outcomes aggregates the seven individual outcomes first defined in the Green Paper ‘Independence, Well Being and Choice’, and subsequent White Paper, ‘Our Health, Our Care, Our Say’.

2.4 West Berkshire’s overall rating of ‘Performing Well’ comprises two scores of ‘Excellent’ and 5 of ‘Performing Well’. In previous years, councils were rated on ‘Delivering Outcomes’ and ‘Capacity to Improve’ but this year’s assessment is based solely on ‘Delivering Outcomes’. Thresholds to achieve the standards have also been raised to promote a culture of continuous improvement and therefore direct comparisons to previous years are not appropriate.

2.5 The 2 domains of Leadership and Commissioning and Use of Resources previously forming the ‘Capacity to Improve’ judgement now feed directly into the CAA judgement.

2.6 CQC have highlighted a number of best practice areas alongside a number of areas where they will be looking for improvements in the next assessment year.

3. Conclusion

3.1 In order to maintain the highest level of performance, it is important to demonstrate our continued commitment to improving outcomes for people who receive adult social care services, particularly focusing on those areas CQC has identified as requiring further development.

3.2 The areas for improvement as identified by CQC will be used to form the basis of an action plan to be managed through the performance management framework.
Executive Report

1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) replaced the Commission for Social Inspection (CSCI) on 1st April 2009 as the new joint health and social care regulator. As a result, the performance assessment process was changed in line with legislation and there is no longer a star rating for adult social care. Instead the assessment of performance in terms of delivery of outcomes have been graded individually and then aggregated up into an overall judgment.

2. **Rating**

2.1 In 2008-09, CQC judged the Council as Performing Well which is defined as A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for people, is cost-effective and makes contributions to wider outcomes for the community.

2.2 The overall rating for delivery of outcomes aggregates the seven individual outcomes first defined in the Green Paper ‘Independence, Well Being and Choice’, and subsequent White Paper, ‘Our Health, Our Care, Our Say’.

2.3 West Berkshire’s overall rating of ‘Performing Well’ comprised two scores of ‘Excellent’ and 5 of ‘Performing Well’ as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Health and Emotional Wellbeing</td>
<td>Performing Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Quality of Life</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Positive Contribution</td>
<td>Performing Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Choice and Control</td>
<td>Performing Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from Discrimination &amp; Harassment</td>
<td>Performing Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Well-being</td>
<td>Performing Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Personal Dignity &amp; Respect</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 It should be noted that West Berkshire is only one of two councils in the South East, and one of 12 in England to be awarded an Excellent rating for ‘Maintaining Personal Dignity & Respect’ which encompasses the adult safeguarding agenda.

2.5 In previous years, councils were rated on ‘Delivering Outcomes’ and ‘Capacity to Improve’ but this year’s assessment is based solely on ‘Delivering Outcomes’. Thresholds to achieve the standards have also been raised to promote a culture of continuous improvement and therefore direct comparisons to previous years are not appropriate.

2.6 The 2 domains of Leadership and Commissioning and Use of Resources previously forming the ‘Capacity to Improve’ judgement now feed directly into the CAA judgement.

2.7 All councils in the South East region except one have been rated as Performing Well. The one council not to be awarded a rating of Performing Well has been rated as adequate.
3. **Strengths**

3.1 CQC highlighted a number of positive examples and strengths under each outcome which include:

1. People’s sense of health and wellbeing in West Berkshire is better than in most areas.

2. Older people are helped to achieve independence through rehabilitation/intermediate care, and the council is performing well above the average for other similar council areas.

3. A very high proportion of people are supported to live independently through social services when compared to other councils.

4. Waiting times for major adaptations are low and fewer people than in previous years are waiting.

5. The rate of needs assessment or review for carers has increased and is better than in similar councils.

6. The council makes good use of the analysis of the complaints it receives.

7. The council’s safeguarding adult’s team has developed a framework to encourage teams to manage risk through early intervention and prevention processes.

4. **Areas for improvement**

4.1 CQC also highlighted some areas for improvement under each of the seven outcomes. These included:

1. The council should continue to improve its recording and reporting of the number and outcomes of those in alcohol treatment and publish this information to better understand the role of other external Tier 2 providers of alcohol misuse services.

2. The council should continue to improve its links with the voluntary sector in West Berkshire and provide a better focus for engagement with voluntary organisations.

3. The timeliness of social care assessments is well below average and the council needs to take steps to improve this.

4. The council should improve the timeliness of delivery of social care packages following assessment.

5. The council needs to understand why it has relatively low numbers of people with a learning disability helped into paid employment.
5. **Conclusion**

5.1 In order to maintain the highest level of performance, it is important to demonstrate our continued commitment to improving outcomes for people who receive adult social care services, particularly focusing on those areas CQC has identified as requiring further development.

5.2 The areas for improvement as identified by CQC will be used to form the basis of an action plan to be managed through the performance management framework. To maintain the high standards achieved over the past 5 years, it is vital that continuous improvement is demonstrated. The continuing progress towards ‘Putting People First in West Berkshire – Adult Social Care Strategy’ will build on the existing record of delivering care to a high standard with a clear vision to further improve services into the future.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Care Quality Commission Annual Performance Assessment Report 2008-09

**Consultees**

Local Stakeholders:  
Officers Consulted: Teresa Bell, June Graves, Jan Evans  
Trade Union:
Annual Performance Assessment Report
2008/2009
Adult Social Care Services

Council Name: West Berkshire
This report is a summary of the performance of how the council promotes adult social care outcomes for people in the council area.
The overall grade for performance is combined from the grades given for the individual outcomes.
There is a brief description below – see Grading for Adult Social Care Outcomes 2008/09 in the Performance Assessment Guide web address below, for more detail.

Poorly performing – not delivering the minimum requirements for people
Performing adequately – only delivering the minimum requirements for people
Performing well – consistently delivering above the minimum requirements for people
Performing excellently - overall delivering well above the minimum requirements for people

We also make a written assessment about Leadership and Commissioning and use of resources
Information on these additional areas can be found in the outcomes framework
To see the outcomes framework please go to our web site: Outcomes framework
You will also find an explanation of terms used in the report in the glossary on the web site.

Delivering Outcomes Assessment
Overall West Berkshire council is performing:

Outcome 1: Improved health and emotional well–being
The council is performing: Well

Outcome 2: Improved quality of life
The council is performing: Excellent

Outcome 3: Making a positive contribution
The council is performing: Well

Outcome 4: Increased choice and control
The council is performing: Well

Outcome 5: Freedom from discrimination and harassment
The council is performing: Well
Outcome 6: Economic well-being
The council is performing: Well

Outcome 7: Maintaining personal dignity and respect
The council is performing: Excellent

Click on titles above to view a text summary of the outcome.

Assessment of Leadership and Commissioning and use of resources

Leadership

The council has been working well with other organisations to develop services for local people in West Berkshire. The council has publicised its vision for social care services, and in particular, it has raised the importance, understanding and awareness of the need for effective safeguarding processes to be in place. The council has consulted widely with local people about social care and the development of services which is outlined in their strategy ‘Putting People First in West Berkshire’. To help with this implementation, the council has established a small dedicated team of people to manage the improvements needed in adult social care.

To address concerns about social inclusion, the need for improved cohesion across services and equality of access to services, the council has developed a stronger communities partnership, within which the police and Berkshire West Primary Care Trust are an integral part, addressing cohesion concerns.

Councillors take an active role in the development of social care, and the lead for adult social care is vice-chairman of the regional member’s network of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services. The council has been able to develop effective systems to record and demonstrate how it has achieved positive outcomes for those who use local social care services. The council publishes this evidence on its website. This achievement has been recognised across the council as an example of good practice and has been adopted in different departments. The council has improved how it plans services, in order to be more responsive to local needs, through careful analysis and assessment of what services are required and using information from the profile of the local population. The council is keen to develop its staff and there is a dedicated team to provide training and development for the council staff and the local voluntary and independent sectors. This includes a leadership and management development programme. The council also participates in the ‘Research in Practice for Adults’ action learning set’, which promotes good practice in social care management, particularly in personalised local services.

The council has a high rate of staff turnover somewhat reflective of the current change programme which has increased and is higher than other similar councils. There are a high number of staff vacancies, which accounted for 11% of the workforce in 2008/09. Sickness rates are also very high and have doubled in the past year. The council is working towards analysing the reasons behind higher sickness rates.

Commissioning and use of resources

The council is a member of the ‘Joint Commissioning Partnership’ along with representatives from the NHS and the two other local authorities covered by the Primary Care Trust. The council has a good understanding of the need for local social care services and what to commission to meet the needs for the people of West Berkshire. The council will not place people in care homes or use home care services which have been assessed as poor by the
Care Quality Commission. If the quality of care of the services already commissioned by the council falls below an acceptable standard, the council will work with the providers to ensure these services improve to the required standards. The council works closely with local people to define specifications of service requirements and, central to this, is the need to ensure effective safeguarding practices. It also uses the regulatory information from the Care Quality Commission to inform commissioning decisions. The council recognises the key role that carers have in ensuring that services are personalised and has involved carers in developing its pilot programme to implement personal budgets. The council has worked with colleagues across the whole of the area covered by the local Primary Care Trust to develop a joint ‘carer’s strategy. This is currently in draft format.

Summary of Performance

The council provides information and advice about physical and mental health and wellbeing in a variety of formats. These include hard copies, electronic information via the website and touch screens in offices. There are also a wide variety of enterprising schemes and activities to get people involved in healthy living such as the ‘Feel Good Fortnight’. However, despite the availability of information on healthy living, there were still some people who were not able to easily access this information. In general, there is good quality and healthy food available for people who use services in the council area. The council however wants to improve standards by providing further guidance on healthy food particularly for care homes.

The council helps a high number of older people to return to their own homes, and remain as independent as possible, following discharge from hospital. The council also has a well-established approach to be able to intervene at an early stage of need. The council helps people to feel safer and be as independent as possible at home, through the use of telecare. The council could increase the numbers of people getting telecare and develop this service to provide a 24 hour telecare response service. Increasing numbers of people with a learning disability have their own health action plans and the council should continue to work to improve this further. Many local people are helped to live independently, but the council is aware that it needs to improve publicity about the support and information available to people and to work closely with people in areas identified as relatively deprived sections of the community. There are examples of good practice for people who require specialist services such as the ‘Magpies’ service for people with brain injury. The council is responsive to the need to provide major adaptations in peoples own homes and there are generally low numbers of people waiting to have the required adaptations made.

In West Berkshire people are given advice about how to access social care from a number of sources. These include specialist social care teams, the council website, the ‘All You Need to Know” project and through the GP surgery link workers. However, the council does not yet have a way to check if people who are not eligible for its services get help from other sources. The council has plans to build more ‘extra care’ housing and to convert existing houses to provide improved facilities.

The council provides people with a variety of opportunities to take part in community life and activities. An example of this is the ‘The Pathways to Employment’ project which supports people to get back to work and helps them access employment opportunities in the local community. Outreach workers have also been employed within day services to support people to be able to use local community amenities. People are also helped to be able to take part in community life via the council supported Handibus voluntary service and also the shop mobility scheme. Most people report that they feel they belong to their neighbourhood and people take part in civic activity, but this varies depending on the area that they live in. The council’s own cultural survey has highlighted transport links and access to services as a concern for older people and this should be explored and addressed.
The council has set up an emergency respite scheme for carers and has now made contact with over 1,000 carers out of the estimated 12,000 carers that live in West Berkshire. There is joint work underway with the Princess Royal Trust and neighbouring councils to highlight needs and develop good practice in relation to priority groups such as young carers and minority ethnic carers. Carers have also contributed to the service specification for a supported living resource for young people with complex needs.

The council supports voluntary organisations and has particularly strong links with the Greenham Common Trust. Participation by people in West Berkshire in regular volunteering is well above average. However, voluntary organisations in West Berkshire felt that the local authority helped them to a lesser extent than was the case in similar councils. The council has begun to take steps to further develop its links with the voluntary and community sector through changes to the voluntary and community sector infrastructure.

Some people in West Berkshire have to wait for a longer time than average to get an assessment of their needs for social care. This is particularly poor for people with learning disabilities, where only 10% of people have their assessments completed within 4 weeks. The council has a dedicated early intervention officer who works with occupational therapists to speed up the process to ensure that referrals are allocated for immediate assessment. However, the council does not believe that waiting times will be impacted during the initial phase of the transformation of social care, as Personal Budgets are being offered to existing clients and also that the needs of people requiring an assessment are becoming more complex, but the Council recognises there is more work to do to improve this area.

More people are receiving direct payments and the council is providing a better than average level of self directed support to people in West Berkshire. Following a successful pilot of Individual budgets, the council has set itself challenging targets to increase the number of people receiving these. The council is opening a number of supported living schemes for a variety of needs and there are significant developments in the private sector for extra care housing. Home care is also being redeveloped to a reablement and specialist dementia service. The council is supporting the development of a new advocacy service to improve access by people who need this.

The overall complaints rate has risen by a third in West Berkshire, primarily in services for older people. The council believes that this has been largely triggered by changes to the home care service, which the council made to improve their overall reablement services. There has also been a concerted campaign to raise awareness on complaints and the opportunities for the authority to learn from feedback.

The council provides clear information about people’s entitlement to social care. The council’s eligibility criteria remain at the highest level of ‘critical’ but is subject to regular review. People who are not assessed as being eligible for council support are referred on to services in the independent and voluntary sector. There is a well-developed programme to support vulnerable people who may not be eligible, which funds a diverse range of services. An example of this is for people, who are discharged from hospital but not eligible for social care, can be referred to the Home from Hospital Service run by Age Concern.

The council has clear equality objectives, which are set out in its corporate ‘Including Everyone’ strategy. This has been identified as a priority for the council. An action plan is being developed to support the delivery of this strategy. The council has self assessed itself at level 3 against the equality standards for local government which translate to level 2 against the new equalities framework. The council has provided evidence to demonstrate fair access to services...
and freedom from discrimination and harassment. People in West Berkshire report that they are fairly treated by local services.

Easy read versions of policy documents have been produced for people with learning disabilities following the equality impact assessment for community care and wellbeing. The council is aware that the needs of people with autism are not being fully met in West Berkshire and intends to address this. The work of the Local Strategic Partnership board has provided a wide range of information about equality issues for the more marginalised groups of people within the local community.

The council gives advice to people who use services to manage income to meet their support costs and to be financially secure. People assessed for care can be referred to the client financial services team and offered benefits advice. This team have worked with the pension service and Citizens Advice Bureau and have increased the number of people accessing attendance allowance and pension credit. The council has met its Local Area Agreement targets in this area. The council welfare benefits office provided support to 1,422 people and increased their benefits by £1.91 million. In addition to this the outreach service supported 138 people to access benefits to the amount of £316,000. The direct payments support service has developed a small brokerage pilot to help people manage their finances within a self-directed care model.

The council continues to provide good services to improve economic wellbeing for people and has an effective employment service in the ‘Pathways 2 Employment’ programme. The council states that there has been some pressure this programme and the job centre plus scheme due to the current economic climate and the scope to find people work has been reduced. This is also reflected in the growing demand for the Citizen’s Advice Bureau service. The council plans to provide an additional welfare benefits officer, review the ‘Fairer Charging’ policy, and improve the services for carers to help to reduce some of the effects of the recession. There are low numbers of people with learning disabilities in West Berkshire that are helped into paid employment. The council believes that its “critical” eligibility threshold means many of its clients have very complex needs and are therefore unable to work.

The council is a member of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adult’s Partnership Board and has a strategic framework for safeguarding people from abuse, neglect and self harm. The council believes that the strategic framework for safeguarding is robust across the organisation. A safeguarding adult’s coordinator role is being developed to lead on the council’s response to safeguarding issues. This role will also be responsible for the co-ordination of referrals for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments.

The corporate director for community services is the joint Association of Directors of Adult Social Services national lead for safeguarding. The council’s policies and procedures are in line with national frameworks to increase the focus on the importance of robust risk assessment. A risk assessment tool has been introduced as part of the alert/referral process. The council have combined responsibility for complaints, safeguarding and care quality into a joint safeguarding adult’s team to consolidate the local approach to safeguarding adults.

As part of its ongoing communication strategy the council intends to again raise awareness of safeguarding issues from September onwards and expects referrals to increase as a result. However this work is occurring later than most other councils. The rate of addressing safeguarding issues, completed within the year, is good. Only 14% of safeguarding referrals were about people buying their own care, despite the large proportion of self funders in the council area. Most of the council’s staff working in adult social care have been trained to identify and assess risks. 30% of staff employed by independent sector registered care services in the council area had received training on the protection of adults directly from the Council. However, there is a well established Train the Trainer programme for the Private, Voluntary and
Independent sector, funded by adult social care services. This rate remains approximately half the average rate in other councils and improvements need to be made.
Outcome 1: Improved health and emotional well–being

The council is performing: **Well**

What the council does well.

- People’s sense of health and wellbeing in West Berkshire is better than in most areas.
- Older people are helped to achieve independence through rehabilitation/intermediate care, and the council is performing well above the average for other similar council areas.
- There is a new tier 2 alcohol misuse service, with Turning Point as the provider, and the council’s Health Scrutiny Committee has agreed a strategy for drugs and alcohol.

What the council needs to improve.

- The council needs to analyse health outcome information in a way that identifies the progress being made within more deprived sections of the community in West Berkshire.
- The council should continue to improve its recording and reporting of the number and outcomes of those in alcohol treatment and publish this information to better understand the role of other external Tier 2 providers of alcohol misuse services.

Outcome 2: Improved quality of life

The council is performing: **Excellent**

What the council does well.

- The council won an award for the best approach to commissioning home improvement agency services at the Foundations Home Improvement Agency Awards 2008.
- The specialist occupational therapist, in partnership with Multiple Sclerosis Society, has been nationally recognised as a model of good practice through the ‘National Service Framework for Long Term Conditions’ good practice guide.
- ‘Magpies’ provides a good specialised service for people with brain injuries.
- The early intervention officer is providing a rapid assessment service and relieving pressures on occupational therapists and surgery link workers.
- In view of constraints around land use, the council is working with a registered social landlord to develop extra care across a range of sheltered housing provision.
- A very high proportion of people are supported to live independently through social services when compared to other councils.
- Waiting times for major adaptations are low and fewer people than in previous years are waiting.

What the council needs to improve.

- The council’s should continue to monitor Ridgeway Care and Repair to ensure accuracy of data and performance against agreed targets for providing minor adaptations, which have slipped in the past year.
- The council needs to have a more systematic approach to check the outcomes for people who are deemed ineligible for council support through the local fair access to care service arrangements.
Outcome 3: Making a positive contribution

The council is performing: Well

What the council does well.

- Carers have contributed to the service specification for a supported living resource for young people with complex needs.
- The percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood is above the average compared with other councils.
- There is a high level, well above the average, of participation in regular volunteering in West Berkshire.

What the council needs to improve.

- The council should continue to improve its links with the voluntary sector in West Berkshire and provide a better focus for engagement with voluntary organisations.
- The council should continue to implement its action plan to address the issues arising from the place survey data relating to civic participation and people feeling they belong to their neighbourhoods.

Outcome 4: Increased choice and control

The council is performing: Well

What the council does well.

- ‘All U Need 2 Know’, which provides an extensive and wide range of information about local health and wellbeing services and resources, is readily available to the public and professionals alike.
- The Council’s ‘Improving Community Services for Adults’ is a comprehensive directory of the various elements of the services on offer, which is updated on a rolling basis.
- The rate of needs assessment or review for carers has increased and is better than in similar councils.
- The council makes good use of the analysis of the complaints it receives.
- There are plans for an increased investment and support for advocacy services.

What the council needs to improve.

- The timeliness of social care assessments is well below average and the council needs to take steps to improve this.
- The council should improve the timeliness of delivery of social care packages following assessment.

Outcome 5: Freedom from discrimination and harassment

The council is performing: Well

What the council does well.

- People in West Berkshire report an above average level of fair treatment by the council.
• The council is analysing the needs of non-eligible people with autistic spectrum disorder.

**What the council needs to improve.**

• The council should ensure that progress is made towards the implementation of level 3 of the new equalities framework for local government as part of its ‘including everyone’ strategy.

**Outcome 6: Economic well-being**

The council is performing: **Well**

**What the council does well.**

• There are positive outcomes from the council’s ‘benefits surgeries’.
• The council has agreed to fund an additional welfare benefits officer post to increase the capacity of welfare benefits advice locally and to provide debt counselling.
• The council has met its Local Area Agreement targets in this area.

**What the council needs to improve.**

• The council needs to understand why it has relatively low numbers of people with a learning disability helped into paid employment.

**Outcome 7: Maintaining personal dignity and respect**

The council is performing: **Excellent**

**What the council does well.**

• West Berkshire has completed a self-assessment against key service standards for safeguarding and has an action plan to address the issues raised.
• The council’s safeguarding adult’s team has developed a framework to encourage teams to manage risk through early intervention and prevention processes.
• There is a good rate of completion for safeguarding referral cases.
• As part of its ongoing communication strategy, the council intended to increase awareness on safeguarding issues in September 2009.

**What the council needs to improve.**

• The proportion of safeguarding referrals from housing providers is relatively low and the safeguarding board should examine the reasons for this.
Title of Report: Community Care (Adult Social Care) Compliments and Complaints Report

Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: EX1944

Purpose of Report: To outline the approach to handling complaints for Adult Social Care and to provide information about the number and type of complaints within Community Care (Adult Social Care) Covering compliments and complaints received from April 2008 to March 2009. This report will illustrate how complaints and compliments are logged and monitored, and review the actions taken as a result of the lessons learned.

Recommended Action: To note the analysis of Community Care complaints for the financial year 2008/09.

Reason for decision to be taken: In order to comply with the relevant legislation
Other options considered: None
Key background documentation: None

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
- CPT13 - Value for Money
- CPT14 - Effective People
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First

Portfolio Member Details
Name & Telephone No.: Councillor Joe Mooney - Tel (0118) 9412649
E-mail Address: jmooney@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:

Contact Officer Details
Name: Mary Page
Job Title: Complaints & Public Liaison Manager
Tel. No.: 01635 503391
E-mail Address: mpage@westberks.gov.uk
Implications

Policy: None
Financial: None
Personnel: None
Legal/Procurement: None
Property: None
Risk Management: None
Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required

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<th>No: □</th>
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<tr>
<td>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Item is Urgent Key Decision</td>
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</table>
Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Council and Elected Members of the ongoing work and learning from complaints.

2. Background

2.1 Adult Social Care is required to manage complaints in accordance with a legislated process. This governs what constitutes a complaint, who may complain, what they may complain about, and how complaints should be processed. Legislation also sets timescales, and requires that data about the process is reported to elected Members.

2.2 The report demonstrates how complaints have been responded to within statutory timescales. 99% of complaints were acknowledged within 3 working days. 98% of complaints were dealt with within the statutory 10 working days, responses later than the 10 working days were agreed with the complainant, due to complexities of the complaint, annual leave or sickness of managers.

3. Managing Complaints

3.1 Complaints received relating to Adult social Care are dealt with within the social care system and are allocated and monitored through to resolution by the Adult Complaints and Public Liaison Manager.

3.2 Complaints re services provided by West Berkshire Council are managed directly by the Complaints Manager who will allocate responsibility for the investigation, monitor progress and assist where needed in compiling a response and agreeing any resulting actions.

3.3 Complaints re services provided by external providers will be dealt with under the providers own complaints procedures; in these cases the role of the Complaints Manager is to, log and monitor progress to ensure an appropriate and timely response is received by the complainant.

4 Access to the complaints process

4.1 Complaints are received either directly from service users, or via a relative, carer or Members. Information about the complaints process and how to access it is given to every service user when they first start to receive a service.

4.2 This information is included in the information pack held in every household receiving a West Berkshire council commissioned Home Care Service, and found in complaints leaflets that are available on display in all Day Centres, care Homes and all council establishments throughout the district. The complaints procedure can also be accessed on line via the West Berkshire website.
Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Compliments and Complaints – annual report 1st April 08 to 31st March 2009
Appendix B – Provider Complaints
Appendix C - Complaints Process

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: None
Officers Consulted: Corporate Board
Trade Union: Not consulted
APPENDIX A

Annual Report of Adult Social Care Compliments and Complaints – Community Services

For period – 1st April 08 to 31st March 09

Summary of Complaints and Compliments 08/09

Below is a summary of the levels of compliments and complaints received, key themes that have emerged and positive action taken to address any identified areas of improvement.

During the period April 08 to March 09 Community Services have dealt with 85 stage 1 complaints, 6 stage 2 complaints and there were no Review Panels.

The table below provides an overview of the number of stage 1 complaints logged from April 08 through to March 09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Community Care Issues</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport Issues</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users complaining about aggressive behaviour of other service users</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegation against member of staff/Professionalism of staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns re: level of care in care home</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting List / delay in commencement of services</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level /standard of support /disagreement with professionals</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Plan issues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract issue/change in provider services</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication Issue – In House Homecare</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait for OT equipment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H &amp; S issue / serious incident</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of Meals at Day Centre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay in commencement of services/care package</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement with charging / financial assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complaints received relate to a range of issues across all services. No service has a significantly greater number of complaints compared to others. The Complaints Manager works closely with the Investigating Manager to ensure a productive resolution of each complaint at stage 1.

Of the 85 complaints logged, 18 were made by service user and 67 were raised by the relative/ carer of the service user.
Stage 2 Complaints

There were six stage 2 complaints during this reporting period - All of the complainants were satisfied after completing stage 2 of the process. None of the complainants asked to continued using the process and request a Review Panel (Stage 3).

April 09/10

April 09 saw the introduction of a combined complaints process where social care and health complaints will be dealt with under a joint procedure. This change to the regulations, created an opportunity to review the existing framework to ensure that West Berkshire was working within the new regulations that came into effect. These new regulations focus more on Listening, Responding and Improving, the only statutory timescales is to acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days. From there it is the task of the Complaints Manager to agree with the complainant an action plan and timescale for investigation, response and their desired outcome.

A risk matrix tool has been added to help identify the seriousness of each complaint before an investigating manager is appointed. Once the risk has been scored then a manager at appropriate level will be appointed to investigate.

Developing and Learning from Complaints

Complaints provide an essential mechanism for shaping and improving services. The collation of data from all available sources will enable clarity in terms of lessons learned and support positive change for current and future services users. Much of the learning is by individuals through learning how to better their individual practice, communications skills, and build on the experience of complainants.

A complaint may identify specific service development needs, examples of learning and service shaping are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaint</th>
<th>Service Learning</th>
<th>Organisational Sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Badge</td>
<td>Stamp, stationery and envelopes for blue badge clients to be changed to care management team-west.</td>
<td>No further action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of day centre service users</td>
<td>Reviewing the CCTV screen placed above the door, identifying an easier way of recognising / staff /service users/ visitors</td>
<td>Across all Day Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns re health and safety</td>
<td>Review of H &amp; S procedures and implementation of new guidelines</td>
<td>New guidance shared across all day centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial contribution</td>
<td>SAE and tear off strip for SU/family to sign and return to say they agree and understand what their assessed financial contribution will be before SU can move into a care home.</td>
<td>New procedures shared with all care managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident involving 2 service users</td>
<td>When completing an incident report the names of any service user involved in an incident to be included. Guidance will be drafted and staff trained on new system</td>
<td>To be shared with 4 x LA homes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incident reporting  
System to be devised to ensure information from any incident is brought to the residents next care plan review  
To be shared with 4 x LA homes  
To be shared with Day Services

Risk Assessments  
Risk Assessments to be completed by Senior Residential care officer and signed off by the Manager or Deputy.  
New procedures shared with all care managers

Conflicting information and advice  
To avoid confusion protocol for clarification that Duty Officer should be the person dealing with crisis situation when it unfolds to ensure vital information and messages are passed on. Staff not to make medical diagnosis, this to be left to health professionals  
To be shared with 4 x LA homes  
To be shared with Day Services

Self neglect / safeguarding  
New Safeguarding guidance put into place to ensure that if SU's wishes are respected this does not put them at risk.  
Guidance around how to manage any identified risk. More use of IMCA’s as a management tool to help identify risks and implement safety checks.  
All staff to be updated and trained on new procedures.

Self neglect / safeguarding  
The Council has recently amended its Adult Safeguarding Protocol that covers adults at risk of, or being abused, to include adults who are vulnerable due to their chosen lifestyles or self neglect. This protocol includes Risk Management plan, that is a Risk Assessment and actions to mitigate the identified risks where possible and who is responsible for each action.  
Consideration of a serious case review to the Safeguarding Adults Board  
Implementation of Safeguarding Protocols.  
To be discussed with chair of West Berkshire Safeguarding Board  
To confirm Policy with all providers

Ongoing Development of the Adult Social Care Complaints Service

To support and underpin the ongoing improvements in the quality of our services, a number of initiatives have been developed to manage the complaints process, ensuring the best advantage is made of the opportunity to engage with services users in this way.  
These developments broadly fall into three areas, some of the resulting improvements are outlined below.

Staff Support

- Ongoing training for all staff and Members on complaints process facilitated regularly by complaints manager.  
- Proactive approach with staff to follow through on complaints through attendance at team meetings and opportunities for outcomes to inform service wide learning.  
- Regular meetings with management to identify concerns & complaints and manage early resolution  
- Quarterly meetings with all residential care home managers and day centre managers.
Increasing Awareness of Complaints Process to Services Users

- Staff support described above ensures the maximum number of users are aware and informed of the complaints process
- Development of cards for Learning Disabled clients to proactively encourage compliments and complaints. NB - We are in the process of designing a complaints leaflet for LD clients, this is being done in consultation with the Speaking Up Group of LD Service Users
- Development of a system where service users who are visually impaired can access the complaints process easier
- Development of a system where deaf service users can access the complaints process.

Communication

- Regular briefings for the Portfolio holder for Community Care
- Monthly Director Briefings – to discuss ongoing complaints, identify trends & learning.
- Compliments are now also monitored closely & shared with the director who personally writes to members of staff complimented.
- A summary of complaints and compliments regarding the Learning Disability Service are provided for an Overview Panel to facilitate the monitoring of the Preparing for the Future Programme

Compliments

96 compliments were received in this reporting period - awareness regarding the importance of centrally collating compliments is increasing and promoted at every opportunity. It is anticipated that the number of compliments formally logged will increase as teams become more effective in passing compliments through to the Complaints Manager.

Through this route valued evidence of good practice and the impact this has on services, particularly in relation to ‘outcomes’, will be collected to assist and support the directorate with evidence for inspections and to recognise the achievements of staff working in this sector.

Examples of positive comments relating to service provision include:

“The care provided was perfect. When help was needed it was provided very quickly. The carers were all very good, very professional”

“Rated care as excellent, could not have managed without it. Carers were more professional than nurses.”

“Night wardens do a fantastic job, have taken the pressure off, would not have been able to cope without it.”

“My mother in law died recently in her own home and in her own bed just as she has always wanted. This was only made possible by your team of home carers. Hope it is appreciated
what a wonderful team you have. Rated service as excellent and described the carers as brilliant.’’

“I am extremely grateful for the fantastic work that you and your colleagues do to significantly improve the quality of my father (and others) lives. He would not be alive if it wasn’t for the work that social services undertake. The regular contact and care in addition to the nutrients he is now receiving have given him another precious year of life. In that time he has written a new book of poems inspired by his experiences in Hospital”

“Thank you for your concern for my wellbeing, and the periodic contact lets me know there are people in the health care systems that do really care.”

“Compliment letter – express our thanks to Care Manager who has shown mum the utmost kindness and consideration in her move to a care home. Care Manager has been invaluable as a guide and mentor. The press often criticise social services, so I felt I wanted to redress the balance with this letter.”

“Dad has now successfully been rehabilitated. Combined efforts have helped him to turn his life around against improbable odds thank you”

“Thank you for your support and assistance during my mother’s illness. Your honesty, warmth and patience were greatly appreciated.”
APPENDIX B
Provider Complaints

Development of the Provider Complaints Service

Provider complaints do not sit within the statutory reporting requirement, however, we keep a systematic log of such issues is maintained to ensure that providers act on the complaints and make the necessary improvements in quality. This information also informs future commissioning decisions. Considerable improvements have been made to services as a consequence of the intelligence gathered about providers, as outlined below:

Safeguarding Adults Framework

The complaints process is now part of the Safeguarding Adults Team and as such sits within West Berkshire Council’s Safeguarding Adults Framework. The creation of a Safeguarding Adults framework has improved our ability to monitor, identify and respond to trends and patterns of concerns emerging within our services and to monitor the overlap between complaints, safeguarding issues and service provider deficits. Combining these processes within the Safeguarding Adults Team has resulted in a timelier and more appropriate level of response through:

- Closer working between the Complaints Manager and the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator to share areas of concern and provide a consistent approach.
- Monthly Safeguarding Adults Team meetings to ensure consistent approach
- The creation of a Care Quality Board that meets monthly to highlight any potential provider concerns, agreed actions for supporting providers to deliver a good quality service.
- Close liaison with the Complaints Manager and Care Quality Officers.

Monitoring Provider Concerns

Intelligence gathered from the various strands of the overall Safeguarding network help us to monitor providers to ensure the level of care being delivered to our service users is consistent across all agencies.

- Framework to monitor and respond to provider concerns is now more robust, this is critical given the increased number of services that are being commissioned externally.
- Introduction of care deficiency reports passed directly from commissioning to the provider for investigation and response
- Strengthened links with contracts and commissioning to further enhance proactive approach to logging and responding to provider concerns.
- To ensure that Adult Social Care continues to work proactively with senior managers, care managers, service users and their families, a Care
West Berkshire Council Executive 18 February 2010

Quality Framework has been developed within the newly formed Safeguarding Team. This function realises greater sharing of information between key members of staff and is a very successful mechanism for capturing a more accurate picture of overall concerns, complaints, and adult protection issues. The Care Quality Framework monitors both external and In-House services.

- A Care Quality Board meeting is held once a month and ensures that key members of staff are kept well informed of any ongoing issues and enables all service teams to gain a clear picture of activity across all services providers in relation to the quality of services delivered.

- Information about areas of concern are fed into the Care Quality Framework this intelligence forms the basis of provider reviews to discuss issues highlighted, ensuring continuous standards are maintained.

- Where a high number of complaints are received about an external provider that is disproportionate to the total number of contracted hours, a Care Quality Officer together with the lead Service Manager, will meet with the provider to highlight areas of concern and agree an action plan for improvement.

- Information regarding key themes that have emerged from complaints in relation to domiciliary care, has been used constructively to inform and strengthen the specification for services used in the re-tendering of block contacts.

**External Provider Complaints**

We received 56 provider complaints during this reporting period. Legislation states that where service users or their families are not happy with the level of care being provided they should bring this to the attention of the provider in the first instance. If the provider has investigated and responded and the complainant is unhappy with this reply they can then ask the local authority to use their statutory procedure. The table below provides a breakdown on the issues complained about.

Of the 56 complaints 52 were raised by carers or relatives, and the remaining 4 were reported directly by the service user.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Provider Issues</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missed/Late calls/recording/carers not stopping allocated time</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to rota</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed Medication</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catheter care</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of care/personal hygiene</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier/difficulty</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of carers/professionalism</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct payments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Like many other areas of Adult Social Care, the management of complaints has undergone a number of changes driven either by legislation, or the desire to move forward and make the best of the opportunity a complaint presents to improve.

Through the course of 2009, Adult Social Care will continue to see significant change as the System Transformation programme for Adult Social Care starts to realise some of its aims and objectives. Alongside any major change programme there will always come with it a level of anxiety and a period of adjustment for all involved and this will need to be managed well. A sound complaints process will underpin the change and provide a valuable opportunity to engage with services users and others to understand the impact this is having on those we seek to serve best.

Changes realised over the last year to capture local intelligence regarding the quality of commissioned services into a centralised Care Quality Framework will provide a sound basis for what lies ahead. However there is still work to do particularly in relation to the integration of the Adult Social Care and Health complaints process, which will form a major part of the work programme for this area going forward into 2009/10.
APPENDIX C
Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 = looking into issues/providing a response at front line – usually by Team Manager should be dealt with within 10 working days. People who request it must be given advocacy support.

Stage 2 = formal investigation, usually by an external person, with the provision of a written report and formal response letter from the Head of Service. This stage should be dealt with within 25 working days, although if there is going to be a delay the Complaints Manager needs to negotiate this with the complainant for up to 65 working days.

Stage 3 = Appeal to a Panel of 3 Independent People – this stage should be set up within 30 working days and response sent to complainant from the Corporate Director 15 working days after the panel has sat.

NB the corporate process is used when complainants are not eligible to use the social care statutory process.

Stage 2 Complaints

At stage 2 of the complaints process we engage an independent investigator to interview the complainant, take a statement of complaint and investigate, they will need to read the client file to acquaint and equip themselves with the bigger picture, they then need to interview key members of staff to ascertain the sequence of events leading up to the complaint. Once all this work has been completed they will provide a report, setting out recommendations for the Head of Service to respond to. Both the HOS response and the external report are shared with the complainant and they are advised of what steps the Authority intend to take to ensure we do not repeat our mistakes, apologies are always given when necessary. Timescales dictate this work should be completed within 25 working days with the option to extend this period to a maximum of 65 working days with agreement from the complainant.

Stage 3 Complaints (Review Panel)

Stage 3 (review panel) constitutes a panel of 3 Independent People, their task is to review the complaint at stage 2, meet with the complainant, Head of Service and Complaints Manager, they will hear from all parties and consider whether or not the Authority could do any more to satisfy the complainant – the Chair of the panel will produce a report to the Director, either upholding or not upholding the complaints, this has to be completed within 5 working days. The Director has 15 working days in which to report back to the complainant.

The Local Government Ombudsman considers complaints once they have been through the three stages of the Local Authority's statutory process. No complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman during this reporting period.
Title of Report: West Berkshire School Admission Arrangements 2011-12

Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: EX1938

Purpose of Report: To determine admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and for Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes for 2011-12.

Recommended Action: To determine the proposed arrangements for 2011-12.

Reason for decision to be taken: Statutory Requirement.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Schools Admission Code 2009.
Co-ordinated admission scheme 2011-12.
Parents Guides to Admissions 2010-11.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:

CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement – improving school performance levels

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
Achieving clear, fair and objective school admission arrangements.

Portfolio Member Details
Name & Telephone No.: Councillor Barbara Alexander - Tel (01635) 201320
E-mail Address: balexander@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report: 05 February 2010

Contact Officer Details
Name: Malcolm Berry
Job Title: Manager Parent Student Advice Centre
Tel. No.: 01635 519770
E-mail Address: mberry@westberks.gov.uk
Implications

Policy: This is a Statutory requirement.
Financial: None
Personnel: None
Legal/Procurement: This is a Statutory requirement.
Property: None
Risk Management: None
Equalities Impact Assessment: None

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<th>Is this item subject to call-in?</th>
<th>Yes: ☒</th>
<th>No: ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item is Urgent Key Decision</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Regulations require the Local Authority, being admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools to determine admission arrangements for those schools for the 2011-12 year and to do so by 15 April 2010. Arrangements should not conflict with the West Berkshire Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme agreed by the West Berkshire Admissions Forum.

1.2 A consultation is required to be carried out for 8 weeks between 1 November and 1 March. Consultation, as agreed by Individual Member Decision, closed on 8 January 2010.

2. Proposals

To substantially continue with the Admission Arrangements in place for the 2010-11 year with only minor amendments for the 2011-12 year.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Proposed arrangements for determination are attached alongside the co-ordinated scheme for information in appendices.
Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Regulations require the Local Authority, being admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools to determine admission arrangements for those schools for the 2011-12 year and to do so by 15 April 2010. Arrangements should not conflict with the West Berkshire Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme agreed by the West Berkshire Admissions Forum.

1.2 A consultation is required to be carried out for 8 weeks between 1 November and 1 March. Consultation, as agreed by Individual Member Decision, closed on 8 January 2010.

1.3 The agreed consultation was distributed widely, to all West Berkshire schools and governing bodies, Council Members, Parish Councils, neighbouring LAs and school admission authorities, Diocesan Boards, Department for Education and Skills, West Berkshire Admissions Forum, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Heads Implementation Group and the West Berkshire Admissions Forum.

1.4 The West Berkshire Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2011-12 required formulation by 1 January and underwent wide consultation prior to agreement by the West Berkshire Admissions Forum and the proposed admission arrangements complement the scheme.

1.5 Admission arrangements remained largely unchanged for the consultation and the proposed arrangements show only minor amendments for clarification to those determined in 2010-11, e.g. rewording of the process used as a tie-breaker for oversubscription criteria following comments by the Schools Adjudicator after the National Compliance exercise.

1.6 The consultation for admission arrangements received only two responses, the first concerning the arrangements for nursery admissions, following which there has been a minor amendment to oversubscription criteria therein to match the existing criteria for admissions to schools. This amendment provides priority for catchment children with siblings in the unlikely event of catchment children exceeding admission number.

1.7 A second response, too late for inclusion within the Management Board Report, concerns criteria that would prioritise children seeking places to continue at partner junior schools to infant schools and for subsequent siblings. The request is aimed at continuity of education and assisting parents with attendance issues. Currently admission arrangements appropriately prioritise Catchment Area Pupils before Siblings and the LA is required to consider Infant and Junior schools as completely separate schools for admissions purposes. With the support of the Admissions Forum, the LA has been working to keep priority for catchment pupils over any non-catchment pupils and has removed feeder school priority to ensure sufficient places for local children. However, the sibling issue has always been accommodated, and continues to be, with regard to Infant and junior schools; the sibling criteria applies to those attending partner infant/junior schools thereby giving priority over other applicants. There is therefore no proposal for change on in this regard.
Appendices

Appendix A – Determined Admission Arrangements 2011-12, including 2011-12 Co-ordinated Scheme.
Appendix B – Nursery School and Nursery Class Admission Arrangements 2011-12.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: All West Berkshire schools and governing bodies, Council Members, Parish Councils, neighbouring LAs and school admission authorities. Diocesan Boards, Department for Education and Skills, West Berkshire Admissions Forum, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Heads Implementation Group

Officers Consulted: Ian Pearson, Anna Ditchburn
Trade Union: Not consulted
APPENDIX A

WEST BERKSHIRE
ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2011-12
FOR
COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

1. EARLY YEARS ADMISSIONS

These arrangements apply to the normal admissions round for the first point of entry to a school, not to nursery education at a Nursery School or a Nursery Class at a school. Admissions to nursery education are subject to separate admission arrangements. Attendance at a Nursery School or a Nursery Class does not guarantee a place at any school; a separate application must be made for a school place.

2. NURSERY ADMISSIONS

The 2011-12 policy for admission to nursery classes at Community or Voluntary Controlled infant and primary schools and the two maintained Nursery schools is attached separately. The responsibility for applying the Nursery policy rests with the schools concerned.

3. PRIMARY AND INFANT SCHOOL NORMAL ADMISSION POINT

For the 2011/12 academic year the Council will be admitting pupils to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools at a single point of entry as follows:

September 2011 (Autumn Term) for a child whose 5th birthday falls between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012.

4. JUNIOR SCHOOL NORMAL ADMISSION POINT

September 2011 for a child whose 8th birthday falls between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012.

5. SECONDARY SCHOOL NORMAL ADMISSION POINT

September 2011 (Autumn Term) for a child whose 12th birthday falls between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012.

6. ADMISSION NUMBERS

The LA’s Admission Numbers for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are listed in Appendix A.

7. ADMISSION TO YEAR 12

Admission process will be applied as detailed in Appendix B.

8. CO-ORDINATED AND IN-YEAR ADMISSION SCHEME

West Berkshire council centrally administers admissions for all schools in the Local Authority in accordance with the agreed co-ordinated and in-year admission scheme. All applications will continue to be considered on an equal preference basis against the over-subscription
criteria for each of up to three preferred schools, NOT considered on the basis of first preferences before other preferences. The admissions timetable is detailed in the scheme (Appendix C).

9. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

For Community or Voluntary Controlled schools that are oversubscribed, places are allocated according to the over-subscription criteria for the school preferred as outlined below.

A. Looked After Children

B. Catchment Area Pupils, i.e.
Children whose permanent home address is in the school’s designated catchment area (as shown on the maps in Appendices to the Parent’s Guides). Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings in catchment. The Home address is taken to be the address at the closing date for applications in the normal admissions round (26 October 2010 – secondary; 17 December 2010 – primary). Where parental responsibilities are equally shared, the home address will normally be considered to be with the parent/carer with whom the child spends the majority of time and nights Monday to Friday; this will normally be expected to be with the parent/carer that receives the pupil's Child Benefit.

It is the child’s normal permanent home address where he or she lives with his or her parents/carers that is used to decide in which school’s catchment area the child lives. Temporary addresses cannot be used to obtain school places, e.g. temporary addresses whilst retaining a previous permanent home will not be accepted. If parents/carers plan to move, documentary evidence will be required, such as proof of exchange of contracts or a tenancy agreement to confirm residence at the time of admission. If such evidence is received by 1 January for a secondary place, or 15 January for a primary place, during a normal admissions round, the new address will be accepted for the forthcoming allocation. Confirmation received after these dates will not normally be taken into account until immediately after allocation dates and waiting lists adjusted accordingly. At all other times changes of address will be considered immediately on receipt of evidence. Any child offered a school place based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information concerning a catchment area permanent home address will have their place withdrawn and a new application will be required, by which time preferred schools may be full. This may also occur after the child has been admitted to a school.

Criteria C to E apply to children whose permanent home address is not within the preferred school's catchment area

C. Siblings, i.e.
Pupils with a brother or sister including step/foster sibling and children of the parent/carer’s partner living in the same family unit. For Primary applications a sibling who will be on the roll of the preferred school (or partner infant/junior school) at the point of admission. For Secondary applications a sibling who is already on the roll of the preferred school, and in relation to admissions at the preferred school’s first point of entry, will continue to attend compulsory education at the school during the following academic year.

D. Denominational/Non-denominational Requests, i.e.
(This category only applies to Primary school admissions).
Children whose parents are choosing the preferred school for denominational or non-denominational reasons.
Requests will only be considered if:
1. the pupil is not resident in the catchment area of another school of the same denomination or another non-denominational school,
2. the preferred school is the nearest school of the same denomination or non-denominational school, and
3. when for a denominational school, a supporting letter from the leader of the parent's congregation of the same denomination to that of the preferred school is provided with
the application for admission to confirm attendance at that congregation at least twice a
month.

E. All other applicants.

10. TIE BREAKER
Priority will be given within any of the above over-subscription criteria to the applicant whose
permanent home address is nearest to the preferred school. Distances will be measured
using the West Berkshire Admissions Geographical Information System taking a straight line
between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points
within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).
In the case of multiple births, the parents/carers will be approached to decide which
sibling or siblings will receive the available places.

11. WAITING LISTS
Waiting lists will continue to be maintained for all Community and Voluntary Controlled
schools and year groups where necessary for children not offered a school place at their first
preference school. Placement will be determined by applying the over-subscription criteria.
They will remain until 1 September when parents will be asked to confirm in writing their wish
to be placed on a newly constructed waiting list. Names will be removed from the lists if
requested or if the offer of a place that becomes available is not accepted. Positions on
waiting lists may change due to new applications or revised applications in respect of a
change of preferred schools, and precedence is given to those subject to a direction or an
admission in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

12. LATE APPLICATIONS
Late applications are considered as detailed in the co-ordinated and in-year admissions
scheme (Appendix C).

13. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS (AFTER THE NORMAL ADMISSIONS ROUND)
The administration of applications outside the normal admission round is detailed in the co-
ordinated and in-year admissions scheme (Appendix C).

14. ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP
Requests from parents for school places outside a normal age group will be considered
carefully whether for gifted and talented pupils or for those who have experienced problems,
e.g. having missed education due to ill health, etc. Each case will be considered on its own
merits and circumstances. However, cases will not normally be agreed without a consensus
that to do so would be in the pupil’s interests between the parents, schools concerned (both
old and preferred) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by the
LA. Those refused places outside the normal age group will be informed of their statutory right
of appeal.

15. APPEALS
Any parent not offered a school place at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an
independent appeals panel. This can be for a place at one or more of your preferred schools
and against an alternative school place that has been allocated by this Council. Information
on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application. Appeals must be lodged
by the dates set out in the co-ordinated and in-year admissions scheme for the normal
admissions round or within 21 days from the date of the offer or refusal letter.
### Published Admission Numbers 2011/12

#### Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Admission Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aldermaston CofE Primary School</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basildon CofE Primary School</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beedon CofE Primary School</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beenham Primary School</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Copse Primary School</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brimpton CofE Primary School</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucklebury CofE Primary School</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burghfield St. Mary's CofE Primary School</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcot Infant School and Nursery</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcot Junior School</td>
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<td>Chieveley Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fir Tree Primary School and Nursery</td>
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<td>Francis Baily Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garland Junior School</td>
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<td>Inkpen Primary School</td>
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<td>John Rankin Infant and Nursery School</td>
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<td>Long Lane Primary School (Infants)</td>
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<td>Mrs Bland's Infant School</td>
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<td>Pangbourne Primary School</td>
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<td>Shefford CofE School</td>
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<td>School Name</td>
<td>Admission Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speenhamland Primary School</td>
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<td>Springfield Primary School</td>
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<td>Spurcroft Primary School</td>
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<td>Streatley CoE Voluntary Controlled School</td>
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<td>Thatcham Park CoE Primary School</td>
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<td>Theale CoE Primary School</td>
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<td>Welford &amp; Wickham CoE Primary School</td>
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<td>Whitelands Park Primary School</td>
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<td>The Winchcombe School</td>
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**Community Secondary Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
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<th>Admission Number Year</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>John O’Gaunt School</td>
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<td>Kennet School</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park House School</td>
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</tr>
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<td>The Willink School</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theale Green Community School</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity School</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

West Berkshire Council Year 12 Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2011/12

General Criteria/principles

These arrangements apply to new students entering the school at Year 12 for the first time, not existing school students.

All schools offer a wide range of courses based on grades achieved at GCSE and it is considered that acceptance is based on a student's capability of benefiting from a course and admission to the Sixth Form. Any particular course will depend on students being appropriately qualified to start that course. Although Admission is not dependent on interview, a course guidance meeting may be advised.

Admission to the Sixth Form will respect parental and student preference as long as the school offers the course and the prospective student has appropriate pre-requisite qualifications for the course.

Admission Numbers

Admission numbers for year 12 are listed in the Appendix B.

Places will be offered on the basis of the following criteria

1. Criteria for academic courses:

   Students who wish to follow the two year advanced courses should have at least five GCSE passes at grade C or better.

   Students who wish to follow the one year level 2 courses, at least five GCSE passes at grade E or better.

   A. Students choosing to take 4 or 5 A/Sp followed by 3 A2, or 2 A2 and 1 A/S will be expected to have achieved mainly As and A*s at GCSE.

   B. Students choosing to take 4 A/Sp followed by 3 A2, or 2 A2 and 1 A/S will be expected to have achieved mainly Cs at GCSE with at least 5 Cs at GCSE.

   C. Students choosing to take 3 A/Sp followed by 3 A2 will be expected to have achieved mainly Cs at GCSE with at least 5 Cs at GCSE.

2. Criteria for Vocational courses:

   D. Students choosing BTEC courses will be expected to have achieved 2 Ds or above at GCSE.

   E. Some subjects will apply their own criteria, usually requiring a grade B at GCSE in the relevant or related subject as detailed in schools' Sixth Form prospectus.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a school place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. The student concerned also has the right to a separate appeal. The appeal can be for a place at any one or more of the preferred schools. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application.
Appendix C

CO-ORDINATED AND IN-YEAR ADMISSION SCHEME
FOR ALL MAINTAINED WEST BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS
2011/12

Introduction

This is the qualifying co-ordinated and in-year admission scheme adopted by admission authorities for all maintained schools in the area of West Berkshire for the 2011/12 academic year pursuant to Section 89B of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The admission authorities to which the scheme applies are the following:

West Berkshire Local Authority (for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools) and the Governing Bodies of all West Berkshire Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools.

The scheme has been formulated following consultation with all maintained schools in the area and neighbouring local authorities having regard to advice and recommendations from the West Berkshire Admissions Forum. The scheme aims to secure admission arrangements to schools in the areas of different local authorities that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, compatible with each other. The LA must inform the Secretary of State of the adopted scheme by 15 January 2010.

The Normal Admissions Round

In relation to any application made in the normal admission round, each parent in the area shall receive a single offer of a school place, or a refusal, determined under the scheme, the result of which shall be communicated in writing to the parent on 1 March 2011 (for secondary admission) or 15 April 2011 (for primary admission), by the LA.

West Berkshire residents must make applications for school places online, via the West Berkshire web-site, or on a West Berkshire Common Application Form, where parents can express a preference for up to three schools, rank those schools and give reasons for the preference. All preferences must be expressed on this form, including those for schools in a different area.

Residents of other areas should make their applications on their home local authority Common Application Form and return them to those authorities. Relevant information will be forwarded by those local authorities to West Berkshire for consideration if a preference is made for a West Berkshire School.

Each preference will be considered against the school’s over-subscription criteria if necessary and, where more than a single school place could be offered, the place will be offered for the highest ranked preference. Information on applications stating preferences for schools for which the governing body is the admissions authority will be passed to the schools preferred. Places will be offered after consultation with those schools regarding available places.

Where a child is eligible to be admitted to a single school applied for online or on the Common Application Form, a place will be offered for that school.

Where a child is eligible to be admitted to more than one school applied for online or on the Common Application Form, a place will be offered for the highest ranked school.

Where a child is not eligible to be admitted to any school applied for online or on the Common Application Form the LA will either:

1. offer an alternative school place if that child is from the area, or
2. make no offer for an alternative school place if that child is not from the area.
Children from the area with no allocated place will normally be offered a school place in the following order:

1. At the catchment area school if a place exists, using distance as a priority;
2. At the nearest school from the home address where a place exists. Should this occur, parents will be given the offer of advice regarding an appeal and any change of preferences having regard to the reasons expressed.
3. In the unlikely situation of there being no West Berkshire school places available, at the nearest West Berkshire school without breaking class-size legislation. Priority over waiting lists will be given.

The normal admissions round process will be undertaken in accordance with the timetables below.

**Late Applications**

The closing date for applications in the normal admission round is **26 October 2010** (for secondary admissions) or **17 December 2010** (for primary admissions).

The authority will only accept, so far as possible, applications received after this date for good reason, provided that they are received before allocation procedures begin.

For **secondary** admissions, allocation procedures normally begin on **1 January** and all late applications will be processed in accordance with the following timetable:

- Late applications received between **27 October 2010** and the offer date of **1 March 2011** will be processed together from **4 March 2011**.
- Late applications received between **2 March 2011** and **31st March 2011**, will be processed together from **1 April 2011**.
- Late applications received from **1 April 2011** will be processed by date of receipt.

For **primary** applications, allocation procedures normally begin on **15 January 2011** and all late applications will be processed in accordance with the following timetable:

- Late applications received between **18 December 2010** and the offer date of **15 April 2011** will be processed together from **16 April 2011**.
- Late applications received between **16 April 2011** and **31st April 2011**, will be processed together from **1 May 2011**.
- Late applications received from **1 May 2011** will be processed by date of receipt.

**In-Year Applications (after the Normal Admissions Round from 1 August 2011)**

West Berkshire residents must make applications for school places on a West Berkshire Common Application Form where parents can express a preference for up to three schools, rank those schools and give reasons for the preference. All preferences must be expressed on this form, including those for schools in a different area.

Residents of other areas should make their applications on their home local authority Common Application Form and return them to those authorities. Relevant information will be forwarded by those local authorities to West Berkshire for consideration if a preference is made for a West Berkshire School.

Each preference will be considered against the school’s over-subscription criteria if necessary and, where more than a single school place could be offered, the place will be offered for the highest ranked preference. Information on applications stating preferences for schools for which the governing body is the admissions authority will be passed to the schools preferred. Places will be offered after consultation with those schools regarding available places.

Where a child is eligible to be admitted to a single school applied for on the Common Application Form, a place will be offered for that school.
Where a child is eligible to be admitted to more than one school applied for on the Common Application Form, a place will be offered for the highest ranked school.

Where a child is not eligible to be admitted to any school applied for on the Common Application Form the LA will either:
1. make no offer for an alternative school place if that child is from a different area but place the applicant on a waiting list, or
2. where there are no available places within a reasonable distance from the home address, refer the application to the Pupil Placement Panel in accordance with the Council’s In-Year Fair Access Protocol (Appendix E). Children placed by the PPP will be admitted as a priority irrespective of existing waiting lists.

Any child for which the West Berkshire In-Year Fair Access Protocol will apply shall have a placement, and subsequent registration, determined by the Pupil Placement Panel following appropriate referral and consideration.

**Entry on the School Roll**

A child must be included in a school’s Admission Register for the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the child will attend the school.

The local authority will notify the parents and school of the date by which the child is to be admitted so that there is no ambiguity about the date from which the child is on the school roll. The dates will normally be confirmed as follows:

For admissions in the normal admission round a child shall be registered at the start of the Autumn Term, or other appropriate Term subject to parental deferral or Voluntary Aided primary admission arrangements.

For the admission of a child in-year following a change of home address into the area, or further than a reasonable distance from their existing school, the last date by which the child shall be registered shall be the first day of the second school week following the offer letter. This will provide for at least one full week if required to arrange re-integration.

For the admission of a child in-year transferring between schools, one or both being within a reasonable distance from the home address, the last date by which the child shall be registered shall be the first day of the one of 6 West Berkshire School Terms following the offer letter.

In each of the above in-year situations a school may register a child earlier than the date provided if considered appropriate following re-integration discussion between the school and parents.

In the case of a school place being sought for a future date, applications will not be considered more than one West Berkshire Term ahead of the date by which a place is required when that is the start of a future term. Other applications will be considered before the start of the term in which the admission is required.

Children placed by the Pupil Placement Panel for whatever reason shall be registered, dually if appropriate, by the date provided on the outcome sheet. Actual attendance may be determined after periods of assessment elsewhere.

**Duties of the LA**

To forward application data received for places at Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools in the area to the governing body as soon as possible.

Where an application is made online or on the Common Application Form for a school outside the area, or received from another LA for a school within the area, to exchange details of that
application with the other LA as soon as possible, and no later than the timetabled date for
the normal admissions round.

To determine by reference to the LA’s admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria
the order in which any application for a place at a Community or Voluntary Controlled school
is ranked.

To confirm with the Governing Bodies of Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools, by
reference to their admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria, the order in which
any application for a place at those schools is ranked.

To determine whether a child is to be granted or refused a school place at a school in the
area in accordance with this scheme, and timetable for the normal admissions round.

To inform the governing body or other LA where appropriate of the decision whether to grant
offers or refuse applications, and by the timetabled date in the normal admissions round.

To communicate the decision granting or refusing places at schools in the area to parents,
including the date by which the pupil will be registered, on behalf of a governing body where
appropriate, on 1 March 2011 (for secondary admissions) or 15 April 2011 (for primary
admissions) for the normal admissions round.

In relation to in-year admissions, where an application is made for a school place in another
area, or received from another LA for a school place within the area, to exchange details of
that application with the other LA as soon as possible, and subsequently communicate the
decision granting or refusing places, etc. to West Berkshire residents.

**Infant Classes**

Infant classes (i.e. those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6, or 7 during
the school year) **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified school teacher.
While admission can be refused on normal prejudice grounds once an admission number of
lower than 30 (or multiples of 30) has been reached, admissions **must** be refused on “infant
class-size prejudice” grounds where the published admission number allows for classes of 30,
and the school would have to take ‘qualifying’ measures to keep to the statutory class size
limit if more children were admitted e.g. the employment of another teacher.

**Duties of the Governing Bodies acting as Admission Authorities**

To forward applications incorrectly received directly for places at the school to the LA as soon
as possible.

To receive application data from the LA and determine by reference to the governing body’s
admission arrangements and over-subscription criteria the order in which any application for
the school will be ranked, and to notify the LA of the ranked list by the timetabled date for the
normal admissions round.

To ensure that any determination under this scheme to offer or refuse a place at the school
will only be communicated to the parent by the LA on behalf of the governing body.
### Secondary Schools – Normal Admissions Round Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 October 2010</td>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 November 2010</td>
<td>LA transfer of applications data to other LAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January 2011</td>
<td>First provisional allocation list sent to other LAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 March 2011</td>
<td>Offers and refusals issued to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2011</td>
<td>Parents’ acceptance of offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March 2011</td>
<td>Closing date for appeals</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Primary Schools – Normal Admissions Round Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 December 2010</td>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 February 2011</td>
<td>LA transfer of applications data to VA Governing Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Additional data received later from other LAs will be transferred for inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March 2011</td>
<td>West Berkshire VA Governing Bodies’ ranked lists to the LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April 2011</td>
<td>Offers and refusals issued to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April 2011</td>
<td>Parents’ acceptance of offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 May 2011</td>
<td>Closing date for appeals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This co-ordinated and in-year scheme for school admissions for 2011/12 has been adopted by the Governing Body of

................................................................. School.

Signed........................................ (Chair of Governors)

Date.................
APPENDIX B

West Berkshire Council
Nursery Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2011/12

NURSERY ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2011/12

POLICY PROCESS

• This policy applies to Community Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes at Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in West Berkshire for the 2011/12 academic year
• Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools with Nursery Classes will receive recommendation to adopt a similar policy with an aim of equitable access
• Policy will be reviewed annually alongside School Admission Arrangements, i.e. Consultation completed by 1 March and Determination by 15 April. (Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools should do similarly)
• Consultation should be wide and involve seeking consensus at the West Berkshire Admission Forum
• Policy will be published in the Local Authority’s (LA’s) composite admission prospectus (Parents’ Guide)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLOCATION

• The LA will delegate responsibility to Governing Bodies to apply this policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools
• The Governing bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools are responsible for setting their own Nursery Admissions policy and applying that policy as they see fit
• The LA will offer support and advice to schools with the implementation
• It is recommended that full Governing Bodies establish an Admissions Sub-Committee consisting of, as a minimum, 2 Governors, the Headteacher and, if desired, a non-voting Nursery Teacher, to confirm allocations within the policy
• The Governing Body or Headteacher must not override the published policy and criteria
• Places must not be refused on grounds of information from other sources
• Places must not be refused due to perceived special educational needs
• Places must not be refused on grounds of previous difficult or challenging behaviour
• No priority will be given to children of school staff or governors
WEST BERKSHIRE PROVISION

- 2 Community Nursery schools
- 11 Community Schools with Nursery Classes
- 5 Voluntary Controlled Schools with Nursery Classes
- 1 Voluntary Aided School with a Nursery Class
- Places available may be limited to a specific number of funded 4 and 3 Year old places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>NO. P-T PLACES</th>
<th>OPENING TIMES</th>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
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<td>Hungerford Nursery School</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>09.00 – 14.45</td>
<td>3 - 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Nursery School</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>08.00 – 16.00</td>
<td>3 - 5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Community Schools with Nursery Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcot Infant School &amp; Nursery</td>
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<td>08.50 – 15.10</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fir Tree Primary School &amp; Nursery</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>09.00 – 15.15</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Willows Primary School</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>08.45 – 11.30 (TBC)</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rankin Infant &amp; Nursery School</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>09.00 – 12.00</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Bland’s Community Infant &amp; Nursery School</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>09.00 – 15.30</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangbourne Primary School</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>08.50 – 11.30</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Sandilands Primary &amp; Nursery</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>09.00 – 12.00</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield Primary School</td>
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<td>Spurcroft Primary School</td>
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<td>3 – 5</td>
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<td>The Winchcombe School</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>09.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Controlled Schools with Nursery Classes</td>
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<td>Basildon Church of England Primary School</td>
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<td>Lambourn Church of England Primary School</td>
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<td>08.45 – 15.15</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thatcham Park Church of England Primary School</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>08.45 – 15.00</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
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<td>Theale Church of England Primary School</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>09.00 – 15.10</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Aided School with a Nursery Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John The Evangelist Infant &amp; Nursery School</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>09.00 – 15.05</td>
<td>3 - 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A pupil’s final term will be the term in which he or she will attain the age of 5 unless offered and accepted a school reception place within the Local Authorities admission arrangements and co-ordinated scheme
- No fees or charges will apply at any time for the core entitlement. Please note, you could be offered additional sessions, where available, but these may be chargeable. These may, however, need to be withdrawn if required at a later date for another pupil as part of their free core sessions.

SESSION ALLOCATION

- The core entitlement will consist of a maximum offer of 15 hours per week–this may be offered flexibly if agreed with the parent
- Allocation limited to available hours
- Full-Time sessions only offered exceptionally on social grounds with independent professional supporting evidence, e.g. Health Visitor or Pre-School Teacher Counsellor. To be agreed by the Governing Body or Sub-Committee
- Parents normally take up the maximum free entitlement
- Parents will not be able to defer allocation of the free entitlement to a following term; the application must be considered afresh with the child remaining on the waiting list
- It is the responsibility of the school/nursery to find out if the child is being funded in the private or voluntary sector e.g. day nursery, pre-school or accredited childminder, or within another county
MEALS PROVISION

• Eligible children receiving the free entitlement before and after a lunch period will be eligible for a Free School Meal
• Eligibility will be assessed similarly as for Free School Meals in a school

TRANSPORT PROVISION

• Free home to school transport is not normally available for pre-compulsory aged children
• Refused applications have the right of appeal
• Fare-paying seats may be available on transport contracted by the LA. A graded fare-paying system exists based on radial distances and discounts are available for additional siblings

REGISTER OF INTEREST

• Parents should be able to register an interest in a nursery place from the age of 2
• No parent shall be guaranteed a place in the nursery
• No place will be allocated without completion of a Nursery Admission Form at the appropriate time

APPLICATION FORMS

• Forms will be available on www.westberks.gov.uk
• A Nursery Admission Form (NAF) will be produced by the LA on an annual basis
• No admission will be considered without completion of a NAF
• Admission Forms will request the following:
  1. Name
  2. DoB
  3. Gender
  4. Address
  5. Telephone Contacts
  6. Birth certificate / Passport check
  7. Declaration from parent/carer to determine if child is/would be attending another setting
  8. Ethnicity (Non- compulsory request)
  9. Parent / Carer details
  10. Signature and Date
  11. Session preference (a.m./p.m./flexible offer/No Preference – Where available) (N.B. the free entitlement will be allocated in order using the oversubscription criteria shown over the page

ALLOCATION PROCESS

• Applications to be considered on a termly basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM TO COMMENCE NURSERY EDUCATION</th>
<th>APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE</th>
<th>NURSERY/SCHOOL TO NOTIFY PARENTS BY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>28 February</td>
<td>1 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>30 June</td>
<td>1 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>30 November</td>
<td>1 January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Allocated places must be accepted within 2 weeks or withdrawn and re-allocated
• Places will be available until the parent withdraws the child or he or she reaches compulsory school age
• There will be no right to an appeal but parents should be given the opportunity to receive an explanation from the Headteacher in writing and personally if requested
• The LA will normally only consider cases where parents feel that this policy has not been applied correctly
• Applications will not be considered on the length of time on a waiting list or by date of application
LATE APPLICATIONS

- Late applications will only be accepted for a good reason provided that they are received before allocation procedures begin
- All other late applications will be placed on the waiting list and if necessary considered in the following term’s allocation process

ABSENCE

- Any child with un-authorised absence for a period of 15 consecutive school days may have their place withdrawn
- Any child with a withdrawn place must make a fresh application for a place and, if necessary, be considered in the following term’s allocation process

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

- Priority will be given to children with Statements of Special Educational Needs and Looked After Children (regardless of age) before allocation of further places

Thereafter, applications will be considered on a termly basis against the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Oversubscription Criteria</th>
<th>Tie Breaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A – all pre compulsory school age 5 year old children</td>
<td>Within any of the over-subscription criteria priority will continue to be given to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to the preferred nursery. Distances will be measured using the West Berkshire Geographical Information System available through the home page (<a href="http://www.westberks.gov.uk">www.westberks.gov.uk</a>) taking a straight line from the home address and the nursery and not taking travelling distances. In cases where there are multiple births, priority will be given by time of birth, eldest first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B – 4 year old children with exceptional social grounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C - Siblings already in the Nursery or Nursery Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - Living within Catchment Area of attached Infant/Primary school NB Community Nursery Schools do not have catchment areas. Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings in catchment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E - All other applicants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F - 3 year old children with exceptional social Grounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G - Siblings already in the Nursery or Nursery Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H - Living within Catchment Area of attached Infant/Primary school NB Community Nursery Schools do not have catchment areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I - All other Applicants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Exceptional Social Grounds – should be supported by professionals, e.g. Health Visitor or Pre-School Teacher Counsellor

WAITING LISTS

- Waiting lists will be established for those who have not been offered places and prioritised in the same order as the oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists will be amended with in term and non-compulsory school age applications; including 5 year olds of non-compulsory school age with the above criteria applying similarly
- Places will be allocated as they become available within the term
DEFINITIONS

- The definitions of the following terms will be as defined in the LA schools admission arrangements:
  1. Parent/Carer
  2. Sibling
  3. Home Address – including change of address process
  4. Core Entitlement – 5 X 3 hour free sessions

NOTES REGARDING ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS

- There is no automatic transfer from a nursery class to a school
- A place at a nursery will provide no advantage when seeking a school place
- Applications for school places must be made on the LA Primary School Admission Form – hardcopy or on-line (example deadline dates below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM TO COMMENCE SCHOOL EDUCATION</th>
<th>APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE</th>
<th>OFFERS MADE TO PARENTS DURING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2011 (SEPT)</td>
<td>17 December 2010</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All school places will be allocated in accordance with the Primary Co-ordinated Admissions scheme

If you have any questions, comments or queries regarding this policy please contact Andy Cordell, Parent & Student Advice Centre Officer, Education Service, Avonbank House, West Street, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1BZ. Response by e-mail would be welcome to acordell@westberks.gov.uk or telephone 01635 503409
Title of Report: Annual Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment Services in West Berkshire

Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: N/a

Purpose of Report: To provide feedback on the recent unannounced inspection of child protection services in West Berkshire.

Recommended Action: That Executive:
1. notes the content of the report;
2. approves the Action Plan, and
3. responds to the findings by establishing two additional qualified Social Work posts and one additional administrative officer in the Referral and Assessment Team.

Reason for decision to be taken: The Council is required to publish the report of the unannounced inspection, and outline how it intends to respond to its findings.

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: None

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority:

CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic recession – to alleviate the impact on different communities and individuals who find themselves out of work and/or disadvantaged

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities
CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
Implications

Policy: Safeguarding vulnerable children is a key priority for the Council.

Financial: The cost of a qualified SW post on the mid-point of scale H to I is £40.5k, including all on costs. Establishing two new posts in the Referral and Assessment Team will therefore cost £81k.

An administrative post on Grade C/D is £19k including all on costs.

Total costs are therefore £100k.

Personnel: The report recommends the establishment of three additional posts.

Legal/Procurement: The Council is required to provide a safe and effective system for dealing with child protection referrals, and to respond to any inspection findings from Ofsted.

Property: N/A

Risk Management: Failing to respond to the report will increase the risk to vulnerable children locally.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Maintaining an effective and efficient child protection system is essential in order to ensure that vulnerable children from all parts of our community are adequately safeguarded.

Is this item subject to call-in? Yes: ✗ No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision
Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Ofsted carry out unannounced inspections of Child Protection services in every local authority area annually. Two inspectors carried out such an inspection in West Berkshire on Tuesday and Wednesday January 12th and 13th 2010. The final Letter containing the Inspectors’ findings was published on 5th February.

1.2 The inspection sampled the quality and effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in West Berkshire, in order to ensure that the Council’s services keep children safe. The Inspectors identify strengths and areas for development, indicating any specific actions that it would wish the council to attend to.

2. Inspection Findings

2.1 Strengths

A number of strengths have been identified:

Staff have good access to regular supervision and value professional advice from managers at all levels; there is ready access for consultation.

Good evidence of robust partnership working.

Screening of initial referrals is well managed in the Contact Centre and the Referral and Assessment Team.

Auditing of practice standards is well established and reported to managers and the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

2.2 Satisfactory

The Council is seen to be delivering a satisfactory service in relation to:

Clear policies and procedures;

Well structured and efficient administrative support services;

Clear and agreed thresholds;

Standards of assessments, and informing children and their families of the outcome;

Addressing equality and diversity issues;

Arrangements for case transfer;

Analysis of performance information by managers.
2.3 Areas for development

(1) Timeliness of assessments needs improvement to bring performance up to the national average. Managers are aware of this and addressing already. There has been improvement over the last 18 months as set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>August 2008 WBC</th>
<th>January 2010 WBC</th>
<th>National average (08/09 – last available figures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Assessments</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Assessments</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Some social worker performance issues are identified and appropriate action is taken by managers; however, their impact on a small team is affecting allocation of cases and contributes to the delay in completing assessments. *The additional resources proposed will alleviate this problem.*

(3) There is currently insufficient clarity regarding the allocation of cases to Family Support Workers; some of these cases require allocation to a qualified social worker. *The additional resources proposed will help to alleviate this problem.*

(4) Some unqualified staff working with families where there is domestic abuse between adults do not always understand or apply the appropriate risk thresholds. *Unqualified staff do have training in Domestic Abuse issues, and this will continue alongside careful pre-visit planning; however the additional resources proposed will help to alleviate this problem.*

(5) Case recording is too variable, and staff do not have the time to keep it up to date and therefore accessible to others. *This is in part a practice issue, and the following actions identified as part of the Action Plan will lift standards of recording*

* A workshop on thresholds, which will include standards and principles about case recording, has been arranged for February 22nd.
* Assessment documents have been shortened and simplified already, making them easier and quicker to complete.
* All staff are to complete ‘Write stuff’ training.
* A Recording Audit had already been undertaken prior to the inspection; those findings will be shared and actions implemented.
* The Joint Legal Service will arrange a workshop on ‘Reporting to Court’.
* Recording will be taken as a standing item in all team meetings.
* Increased supervision of workers will include quality assuring written work as per the existing standards guide.
* Supervision of Assistant Team Managers has been increased to review their oversight of cases.
* A random weekly overview of recording on cases held by the team will be undertaken.

**Better administrative support will also make a significant difference.**

(6) Children are always seen and spoken to – but their views are not always recorded in a timely way, or taken into account in care planning. This is an issue about practice standards, which is being addressed as follows:
* The threshold workshop noted above will include coverage of this issue under standards of recording.
* A communications skills workshop will be arranged within 3 months.
* Managers to ensure that all staff have recently attended assessment training.
* SWs required to evidence in supervision that they have recorded full notes of all visits, including when the child was seen, and what their views were.
* More frequent supervision of staff, including group supervision, will include QA of standards of written work.
* Team Manager to review case recording weekly.

(7) Recording of managerial oversight and case planning is not always sufficient, robust and consistent.
* Course for all managers and supervisors on ‘Management and supervision of SWs holding child protection cases’ to be held within 3 months.
* Managers to record their overviews and decision making on cases and set out the circumstances, conclusions and reasons for the decisions being made.
* Service Manager to chair a fortnightly performance meeting for the R&A management team.
* YOT Manager to provide advice on more robust QA processes.

2.4 **Area for Priority Action**

Some assessments to ascertain whether children are at risk of significant harm lack sufficient rigour in risk analysis. In some cases, where the analysis is clear that the child is not in need of protection but of family support, insufficient time available for completing assessments and managerial oversight results in unavoidable delay in the provision of services.

This is the area we need to attend to as a priority. Further input for both staff and managers on risk analysis has been arranged already. Assessing risk is one of the most complex areas of child protection social work, and requires experience in order to be done well. However, the very nature of Referral and Assessment Teams means that they are often staffed by the most inexperienced workers, and therefore management systems and supervision need to be very robust. The Inspectors did note that this finding applied to some cases, not all; there are some very good examples of risk analysis undertaken in this team, but we have to establish greater
consistency across all workers. All of the actions outlined above will contribute to this area of work; the following specific actions will also be undertaken:
* Fortnightly reflective/evidence-based/child centred supervision held with all SWs.
* ATMs will meet with SWs following visits to debrief and consider the further analysis of information and plan what further action is necessary.
* More robust QA processes put in place, with advice from YOT Manager.
* All CP cases to be reviewed by TM and S/M prior to closure or transfer.

3. **Overall response**

3.1 This is the first year of the unannounced inspections of safeguarding services, so the system is evolving gradually. In comparison with the outcome of inspections in other authorities, West Berkshire would appear to be performing at a similar level to most. At the last review, there had been 8 unannounced inspections in the south east so far, and 5 Councils have had at least one Area for Priority Action, some two or three.

3.2 Overall, the picture is of a well-structured and largely effective child protection system which is meeting statutory requirements. However, there is further work to be done to ensure that staff are well trained regarding risk assessment and recording, that recording is kept up to date and accessible and that managers have good oversight of cases and provide timely and effective feedback. Additionally, the way in which we currently allocate work to unqualified staff needs to change. Some of these issues will require additional staffing.

3.3 The Government is currently consulting on a revision of Working Together, the guidance paper for staff working in child protection systems. This is likely to place further restrictions on the kind of work to be carried out by newly qualified staff, and the numbers of cases held by social workers.

3.4 The necessary training for staff will be put in place immediately, as will more robust systems of managerial oversight on cases.

4. **Conclusion**

4.1 The Directorate needs to ensure that the practice and management issues identified by the inspectors are dealt with quickly and effectively. Plans are in place already to do this

4.2 Additional resources are required in the Referral and Assessment Team in order to attend to the areas identified for development and for action. Given the numbers of cases currently allocated to unqualified workers, and the much higher levels of referrals now being received relating to domestic abuse, two additional qualified Social Workers are required in this team in order to progress work in a timely way and allocate all cases. In addition, much of the pressure on the system for recording work undertaken, and for the minuting of Strategy meetings, could be relieved by the allocation of one additional fte Administrative post, thus freeing up staff to carry out social work.
4.3 The Council runs good social care services for children and their families, and various inspection reports confirm this over a considerable period of time. This particular inspection confirms that many elements of the services are good or satisfactorily meeting statutory requirements; those issues which have been identified here now need to be responded to in a timely way.

Appendices

Appendix One - Letter from Ofsted dated 5th February 2010.
Appendix Two - Referral and Assessment Inspection outcome Action Plan

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:  
Officers Consulted: Lorna Hunt; Corporate Board  
Trade Union: Not consulted
5 February 2010

Ms Margaret Goldie
Corporate Director for Children and Young People
Civic Offices, West Berkshire Council
West Street House,
West Street, Newbury
RG14 1BZ

Dear Ms Goldie

Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within West Berkshire children’s services

This letter contains the findings of the recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within local authority children’s services in the West Berkshire Council which was conducted on 12 and 13 January 2010. The inspection was carried out under section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will contribute to Ofsted’s annual review of the performance of the authority’s children’s services.

The inspection identified one area for priority action and some areas for development, which are detailed below.

The inspection sampled the quality and effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements and their impact on minimising the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Inspectors considered a range of evidence, including: electronic case records; supervision files and notes; observation of social workers and senior practitioners undertaking referral and assessment duties; and other information provided by staff and managers. Inspectors also spoke to a range of staff including managers, social workers, other practitioners and administrative staff. I am grateful to you and your staff for your help and the time given during this inspection.

From the evidence gathered, the inspection identified a number of areas where the contact, referral and assessment arrangements were delivered satisfactorily in accordance with national guidance, in particular:

- Clear procedures and policies are in place to ensure that statutory requirements to safeguard children and young people are met.
- Administrative processes within the referral and assessment team are well structured and efficiently support work within the service.
Thresholds for access to children’s services and protocols for collaborative working are clear and are agreed by partner agencies.

In most cases children and their families are informed of the outcome of their assessment.

Most assessments of children in need are satisfactory and some are of good quality.

Equality and diversity issues are appropriately addressed in casework assessment and planning.

Arrangements for transfer of cases to locality teams are clear, flexible and effectively implemented.

Managers routinely analyse detailed performance information to help plan service development.

From the evidence gathered, the following strengths and areas for development were also identified:

**Strengths**

- Staff have good access to regular supervision and value the professional advice and support provided by managers, who are readily accessible for formal and informal consultation.

- Robust partnership work is well embedded, facilitating prompt communication and effective collaboration between agencies.

- Screening of contacts and referrals is well managed through a call centre and directly within the referral and assessment team.

- Auditing of files and services is well established. Issues are identified and actions recommended which are appropriately reported to and monitored by managers and by the West Berkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

**Areas for development**

- Performance in the timeliness of assessments is below targets set by the council and is lower than the national average.

- Performance issues in relation to some social work staff within the referral and assessment team have been identified by managers and appropriate action has been taken. However, this action has created difficulties in allocating more complex work and contributes to the delay in completing assessments.

- Most cases held within the referral and assessment service are allocated to
suitably qualified staff. However, there is insufficient clarity regarding the appropriate allocation of cases to Family Support Workers and some of these cases require allocation to a qualified social worker.

- Some unqualified staff working with families where there is domestic abuse between adults, do not always fully understand or apply the appropriate risk thresholds.

- The quality of case recording is too variable. In many cases recording is not up to date due to time pressures on staff. In some cases assessments and case planning have not been recorded in any accessible format.

- Children are routinely seen during assessments. However in many cases their views are not recorded and it is not evident that their views are taken into account when making plans for their future.

- Recording of managerial oversight and case planning is not sufficiently robust or consistent.

This visit has identified the following area for priority action.

### Area for priority action

- Some assessments to ascertain whether children are at risk of significant harm lack sufficiently rigorous risk analysis. In some cases, where the analysis is clear that the child is not in need of protection but in need of family support, delay in completing the assessment, and, insufficient managerial oversight result in avoidable delay in the provision of services.

Yours sincerely

**Pietro Battista**
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

Copy:  
Nick Carter, Chief Executive, West Berkshire Council  
Stephen Barber, Chair of West Berkshire Safeguarding Children Board  
Barbara Alexander, Portfolio Member for Children’s Services, West Berkshire Council  
Andrew Spencer, Department for Children, Schools and Families
# APPENDIX TWO: Referral & Assessment Inspection Outcome Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection Outcome</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comments/Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of Assessments below national and local targets.</td>
<td>ATM to be taken off duty manager rota to focus on overdue assessments</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Immediate and Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular Performance meetings to review progress</td>
<td>SM &amp; LM</td>
<td>Every 3 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisors book 1 day every 2 weeks to supervise and review individual caseloads, to read and sign off documents and ensure timescales are adhered to.</td>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>Every 2 weeks</td>
<td>TM to check in supervision that this is happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision of ATMs every 2 weeks</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>SM to monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning meetings to allocate daily tasks to continue as now</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly audit of oldest cases held within the team</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report to HoS</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>HoS monitoring regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly progress meeting to assess weekly performance achievements</td>
<td>TM + SM</td>
<td>Friday PM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SM to report to HoS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection Outcome</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Comments/Update</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case recording too variable</td>
<td>Threshold workshop including standards and principles organised.</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>22 Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All staff to have attended “write stuff” training</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>End of Feb 2010</td>
<td>TM to do TNA and organise training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording Audit action plan to be shared with team</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Legal Team workshop ‘reporting to court’ to be set up for all SW staff</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>By Sept 2010</td>
<td>TM to organise with JLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards document to be written as good guide to case recording</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased supervision for workers to include QA of written work as per standards guide</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision of ATMs increased to review their oversight of cases</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Every 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly overview of case recordings held within the team</td>
<td>TM/SM</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audit of Recording practice</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording as Standing item for Team meeting</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection Outcome</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Comments/Update</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s views not recorded adequately</td>
<td>Threshold workshop including standards and principles organised.</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>22 Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased supervision for workers to include QA of written work as per standards guide</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td>This area is to be reviewed in three months by SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards document to be written as good guide to case recording</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly overview of case recordings held within the team</td>
<td>TM/SM/LM/TM</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audit of Recording practice</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording as Standing Item for Team meeting</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thresholds for Domestic Abuse</td>
<td>Threshold workshop including standards and principles organised.</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>22 Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team to attend ‘dash’ training, in meantime, to use assessment tools from Home Office inventory and checklist based on ‘dash’.</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>This is police training and will be rolled out to other agencies when they have trained their officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to develop links with DAU and BWA</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection Outcome</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Comments/Update</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance at MARAC and preparation for information sharing in this forum</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FSW to only be allocated S17 DA cases. Work to be planned prior to visit, clearly recorded and monitored in supervision.</td>
<td>ATMs/TM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient clarity re. type of cases held by FSWs</td>
<td>Produce a document clarifying roles and case thresholds, to be adapted for each team</td>
<td>TMs/SMs</td>
<td>By May 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording of Management oversight and case planning is not reliably robust or consistent</td>
<td>Fortnightly reflective supervision</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Every two weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management oversight notes to be reviewed monthly by SM</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managers to record overview and decisions in a way that clarifies the circumstances, decisions and reason for the decisions being made.</td>
<td>TM/SM/LM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>This area is to be reviewed in three months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisors/ATM to meet with SW prior to visits to plan assessments</td>
<td>TM/ATM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATMs to meet with SWs following visits to debrief and consider further actions and planning</td>
<td>TM/ATM</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection Outcome</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Comments/Update</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audits of management recording including case planning</td>
<td>TM/SM/LM</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threshold workshop (arranged as above)</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>22 Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM +SM to meet with YOT manager to look at developing more robust QA processes.</td>
<td>SM/LM</td>
<td>End Feb 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TM = Team Manager, SM=Safeguarding Manager ,LM=Locality Manager**
Title of Report: Underwood Road Councillor Call for Action

Report to be considered by: Executive
Date of Meeting: 18 February 2010
Forward Plan Ref: EX1977

Purpose of Report: To advise the Executive of the proposed responses to the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission’s consideration of the circumstances surrounding the shopping centre at Underwood Road, Calcot, following the raising of the matter as a Councillor Call for Action.

Recommended Action: That the Executive endorses the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission’s recommendations.

Reason for decision to be taken: To improve the amenity of the Underwood Road area.

Other options considered: As discussed at the PSMC meeting


The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
Setting in train a series of events that will remove the eyesore that is the present Underwood Road shopping and replace it with housing units.

Portfolio Member Details
Name & Telephone No.: Councillor Keith Chopping - (0118) 983 2057
E-mail Address: kchopping@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report: 14/01/2010

Contact Officer Details
Name: David Lowe
Job Title: Policy and Scrutiny Manager
Tel. No.: 01635 519817
E-mail Address: dlowe@westberks.gov.uk
Implications

Policy: None.

Financial: The financial cost of any potential CPO is yet to be determined.

Personnel: None.

Legal/Procurement: The serving or development of a CPO will have legal implications for which external advice will be required at a cost of c£10,000. There is no budget for this and the Executive should be mindful of the need to identify funding.

Property: If subject to a CPO, the area will be added to the Council's property portfolio.

Risk Management: None.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required at this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this item subject to call-in?</th>
<th>Yes: □</th>
<th>No: ✗</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Item is Urgent Key Decision</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting of 1 December 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) considered a ‘Councillor Call for Action’ (CCfA) from Councillor Brian Bedwell. The CCfA related to the shopping centre at Underwood Road, Calcot.

1.2 This report provides a background on the operation of CCfAs in West Berkshire Council, an outline of the situation at Underwood Road, a summary of the OSMC’s considerations and the proposed response to the Commission’s recommendations.

2. Proposals

2.1 That the following responses are given to the recommendations made by the OSMC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Srl (a)</th>
<th>OSMC recommendation (b)</th>
<th>Proposed response (c)</th>
<th>Responsible officer (d)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Whilst in continuing negotiations with Bellway to secure the sale and development of the site, investigations be undertaken to assess the likely cost and time required to compulsorily purchase the site.</td>
<td>Accepted.</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>If the sale of the site has not been finally agreed with Bellway by the end of February 2010, the Council should take steps to compulsorily purchase it.</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>In advance of any sale, the costs of keeping the site tidy should be charged to the owner where feasible.</td>
<td>Accepted.</td>
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3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the Executive endorses the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission’s recommendations.
Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting of 1 December 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) considered a ‘Councillor Call for Action’ (CCfA) from Councillor Brian Bedwell. The CCfA related to the shopping centre at Underwood Road, Calcot.

1.2 This report provides a background on the operation of CCfAs in West Berkshire Council, an outline of the situation at Underwood Road, a summary of the OSMC’s considerations and the intended response to the Commission's recommendations.

2. Councillor Call for Action

2.1 The Councillor Call for Action is a mechanism that provides elected members of the Council with the opportunity to ask for discussions at scrutiny committees on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted.

2.2 CCfA is not guaranteed to provide a solution to a problem but can provide:

(a) a public forum for discussion of the issues
(b) an opportunity to discuss the issues in a balanced way
(c) an opportunity to discuss the problem with the explicit and sole aim of providing an appropriate recommendation
(d) a high profile process owned by the ward councillor.

2.3 All of these factors can make resolution easier to achieve.

2.4 In assessing whether a proposed topic is suitable for examination as a CCfA, the following conditions are applied:

(a) the CCfA must relate to a single locality only.
(b) all other methods of resolution must have been exhausted.
(c) the required outcome must be sufficiently defined.
(d) none of the CCfA specific exclusions must apply.
(e) the OSMC’s involvement must be able to contribute to the issue’s resolution.

2.5 Should the OSMC agree that the matter should be accepted for review, consideration should then be given to the most appropriate method. Options may include:

(a) referral to a Select Committee; or
(b) the establishment of a time limited task group; or
(c) the examination of the subject as a full Commission.
3. **Underwood Road shopping centre**

3.1 Councillor Brian Bedwell (Calcot) reported in his submission to the OSMC, requesting that the matter be considered as a CCfA, that the shopping centre at Underwood Road, Calcot is an eyesore and has been neglected for a number of years. Councillor Bedwell also cited the activity that has been undertaken by numerous individuals over the course of many years to address the problem.

3.2 The outcome required by Councillor Bedwell is that within 18 months from the date of the meeting of the OSMC at which the matter was considered, work to improve the amenity of the area will have started on the site.

4. **Consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission**

4.1 Underwood Road shopping centre was examined by the full OSMC at its meeting of 1 December, during which evidence was provided by:

   (a) Councillor Brian Bedwell, Ward Member, Calcot  
   (b) Councillor Peter Argyle, Ward Member, Calcot  
   (c) Nick Carter, Chief Executive, West Berkshire Council  
   (d) June Graves, Head of Housing and Performance  
   (e) Alok Sharma, prospective parliamentary candidate for Reading West.

4.2 Although invited, the owner of Underwood Road shopping centre, Mr G Binani of ‘Tossetti’, was unable to attend.

4.3 Members gave consideration to the following aspects of the topic, in order that they could understand it and make appropriate recommendations:

   (a) The problems that were presented  
   (b) Why the problems had arisen  
   (c) The action that had been taken to address them  
   (d) The options that were open to further address them  
   (e) The obstacles to redevelopment  
   (f) How the obstacles might be overcome.

4.4 The minutes of the OSMC’s debate are shown at Appendix A.

4.5 The OSMC made a number of recommendations, which are shown, along with the proposed response, within Section 5.
5. OSMC recommendations and proposed responses

5.1 The following responses are proposed:

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6. Recommendations for Management Board

6.1 It is recommended that the Executive endorses the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's recommendations.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission minutes – the meeting of 1 December 2009

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:
Officers Consulted:
Trade Union:
Appendix A

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission meeting 1 December 2009

COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION: UNDERWOOD ROAD SHOPPING CENTRE, CALCOT.

(Councillor Brian Bedwell declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 by virtue of the fact that he called the item for action and because he was Ward Member for the area concerned. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate as Ward Member, but would not vote on the matter or Chair the item).

(Councillor Jeff Brooks in the Chair)

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the Councillor Call for Action in respect of the Underwood Road Shopping Centre, Calcot.

Councillor Bedwell, as Ward Member, made the following points as background to the item:

- The shopping centre was a large area in the centre of housing. It was bordered by a good primary school and there was a footpath between the site and the school that was used by parents.

- The precinct originally had a supermarket, a row of shops with flats above, a GP surgery, a pub and a large car park. However the supermarket had been burnt down in 2000 and had not been rebuilt leaving it as open flat land. The pub closed in 2008.

- All that remained on the site was a newsagent/post office, Chinese takeaway, the GP surgery and the car park. The other buildings/shops on the site had been bordered up and were subject to graffiti. Councillor Bedwell praised the good work of the Neighbourhood Wardens in keeping the site clean and respectable, despite the fact that it was the responsibility of the site owners.

- The site was privately owned by Tossetts. Mr Binani had been invited on their behalf to this meeting but had sent his apologies and was unable to send a substitute.

- A planning application had been submitted and approved in 2002 and another in 2007 after the option of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) had been discussed and agreed by the Executive. Over 500 residents had signed a petition requesting that the Council take action through a CPO of the site.

- The majority of residents wanted the site to be cleaned up, there was a demand for housing, a shop/post office and a GP surgery to be retained. It was felt that much could be done for the community with the Section 106 contributions agreed as part of the 2007 planning application.
• Despite being included in the site owners second planning application the pub was not in their ownership, this became apparent when the lease went up for sale approximately six months ago.

• The issues surrounding the site had been ongoing for nearly 10 years, had involved many senior officers, and meetings had been held with the owners, but all to no avail.

• Action was needed on the site and Councillor Bedwell had concerns about the owner’s interest in developing the site.

Councillor Webster, who lived in Calcot, commented that the community were all too aware of the issue, but it was hidden to those outside the area due to its position at the very edge of the District. It was questioned whether action would have already been taken if this was in a more prominent site within West Berkshire.

Councillor Webster went on to say that the options were limited as the site was in private ownership, a CPO would be a costly and lengthy process but the community deserved this action if it was the only remaining option. Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s) and developers could also be engaged to discuss options.

June Graves then provided an update from the viewpoint of the Housing Service and described potential ways forward:

• Grant funding for affordable housing on the site had been awarded and lost twice. There was no commitment from the owners and it appeared that the site was being held for investment purposes. It was believed that the owners had a lack of development experience.

• Options to consider were to continue negotiating with the owner regarding their potential development of the site or for them to sell the site; offering a staged process for making S106 payments, particularly in the current economic climate; or compulsory purchase.

• Bellway Homes and Sovereign Housing were discussing options for developing the site and its viability was being considered.

• Completely open market housing or a mixture of affordable housing and open market were options. The 2007 planning application was for 78 residential units, 2 retail units and the GP surgery. 30% of the residential units were proposed to be affordable housing. Nick Carter added that there was activity after the application had been approved, but by the time the S106 agreement had been signed off the country was in a recession and new housing developments were not being built.

• 268 people were currently on the housing register for Calcot. 50% of those were already resident in the area with the remaining 50% wishing to move into Calcot.

Nick Carter updated Members following a positive meeting he had a week ago with the owner’s solicitors and Bellway:
• It appeared that discussions were well advanced in respect of the sale of the site and it was expected that legal papers would be exchanged by the end of the calendar year.

• Assuming the sale went through, Bellway were looking to start construction in approximately 18 months time. A further meeting was scheduled for next week to continue to move this forward.

• There was a mortgage on the site and the rights of surrounding properties needed to be considered. These were issues that Bellway would want to resolve.

• Bellway had offered to meet with Ward Members to discuss options for the site and it was felt that they would be happy to attend a future meeting of the Commission.

Nick Carter went on to advise that if the purchase by Bellway were to fall through, then the Council would look to make contact with other developers in respect of purchasing the site.

In respect of the pub it was believed that it was at an advanced stage of being sold. However in discussions between Mr Binani’s solicitors and Bellway it was not proposed that the pub be retained.

Councillor Argyle, Ward Member, commented that action had been proposed many times previously and until the potential sale was formally confirmed the Commission should still consider making recommendations to the Executive.

Mr Sharma was then invited to speak on the item and made the following points:

• In his 3.5 years as parliamentary candidate for the area he had regularly been made aware of the issues by residents and action was needed in what was a good area.

• Members and residents had been very patient and it was encouraging to hear of the latest negotiations with the owners.

• Facilities, particularly in relation to healthcare, needed to continue to be provided and improved.

• Mr Sharma was pleased the issue was being debated and felt that local residents would want to see clear actions and a timescale.

The Commission, in considering the information provided, discussed the following issues:

• There was a potential risk that inappropriate agreements, i.e. the site being sold below market value, could be reached in order to get the development started. This might create an issue of precedent in the future.

• It was suggested that the owners be made aware that the option of CPO would be explored if the sale did not go through in a given timeframe. Therefore a potential recommendation was suggested for the Executive to consider a CPO and a full review of the associated costs, while also continuing negotiation with the owner and Bellway. If
the sale did not go through as planned then compulsory purchase should take place. It was felt that the Commission should return to the issue to monitor progress at the next meeting with Bellway potentially invited to attend.

- As well as taking the development forward in the future, the site needed to be kept clean for residents in the meantime. This was the responsibility of the owners and any such work should be carried out at their expense.

In response to these points Nick Carter advised that:

- Having Bellway engaged was positive and a time limit on a conditional sale would be useful. The end of February 2010 was considered an appropriate date.

- If CPO was recommended then the Executive would need to be made fully aware of the cost, process and timescales involved. However if the time limit on the sale was passed then the option of CPO should be progressed.

Councillor Bedwell hoped that agreed recommendations would lead to something positive happening for residents.

Councillor Argyle added that it was vital that the Council should be asked to proceed with a CPO if expected progress on the sale was not made.

Based on the discussions, Councillor Brooks confirmed and then proposed the following recommendations:

(1) Whilst in continuing negotiations with Bellway to secure the sale and development of the site, investigations be undertaken to assess the likely cost and time required to compulsorily purchase the site.

(2) If the sale of the site had not been finally agreed with Bellway by the end of February 2010, the Council should take steps to compulsorily purchase it.

(3) In advance of any sale, the costs of keeping the site tidy should be charged to the owner where feasible.

(4) The subject be examined again by the Commission at its January meeting.

These were seconded by Councillor Webster and agreed by the Commission.

RESOLVED that recommendations 1-3 would be forwarded to the Executive for their consideration.