

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 21 May, 2013 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 13 May 2013

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact David Lowe / Elaine Walker on (01635) 519817 / 519441

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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 21
May 2013 (continued)**

To: Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Agenda

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1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any),	
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 16 April 2013.	1 - 8
3. Declarations of Interest To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.	
4. Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	9 - 18
5. West Berkshire Forward Plan June 2013 to October 2013 <i>Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from June 2013 to October 2013 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.</i>	19 - 30
6. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme <i>Purpose: To receive, agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission, the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Resource Management Working Group for the remainder of 2011/12.</i>	31 - 40
7. Items Called-in following the Executive on 9 May 2013 To consider any items called-in by the requisite number of Members following the previous Executive meeting.	
8. Councillor Call for Action <i>Purpose: To consider any items proposed for a Councillor Call for Action.</i>	
9. Petitions <i>Purpose: To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.</i>	



**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 21
May 2013 (continued)**

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| 10. | Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy
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| 11. | Housing Allocations Policy
<i>Purpose: To consider the draft Housing Allocations Policy.</i> | 81 - 128 |
| 12. | Scrutiny Annual Report
<i>Purpose: To receive the draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13.</i> | 129 - 134 |

Andy Day
Head of Strategic Support

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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2013

Councillors Present: Peter Argyle (Substitute) (In place of Marcus Franks), Jeff Beck (Substitute) (In place of Virginia von Celsing), Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Dave Goff, David Holtby, Mike Johnston, David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Davy Pearson (Youth Offending Team Manager), Ian Pearson (Deputy Corporate Director (Communities) & Head of Education Service), Elaine Ricks (Joint Principal Adviser for School Improvement), Maxine Slade (Principal Adviser for School Improvement), Jason Teal (Performance, Research & Consultation Manager), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Sarah Brinkley (Head Teacher - John O Gaunt School), David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager), Councillor Gordon Lundie (Leader of Council & Conservative Group Leader), Councillor Irene Neill (Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education), Supt Robin Rickard (Thames Valley Police), Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer) and Charlotte Wilson (Head Teacher - Trinity School)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Marcus Franks and Councillor Virginia von Celsing

PART I

104. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

105. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 10, but reported that, as her interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Tony Vickers declared an interest in Agenda Item 12, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 13, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

106. Actions from previous Minutes

The Commission received an update on actions from the previous meeting and raised the following comments:

Paragraph 2.2: Councillor Vickers asked when the Housing Allocations Policy would be completed. David Lowe responded that it was currently progressing through the Executive Cycle and agreed to ensure that the Forward Plan reflected its progress.

Paragraph 2.5: Councillor Jeff Brooks requested a target date for the availability of the annual road condition survey.

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Paragraph 2.7: Councillor Brooks asked whether the statistics relating to numbers of library visits was reflective of national trends.

Paragraph 2.8: Councillor Jeff Beck requested further clarification of the numbers of empty homes being brought back into use, asking in particular whether the figures shown were cumulative, and what reason could be given for the significant increase in 2012/13. Councillor David Rendel believed that a more relevant figure would be the net figure as it would represent those brought back into use and those subsequently left empty.

Paragraph 2.9: Councillor Vickers asked when information would be available relating to the practices of other local authorities in making performance information available for scrutiny.

Paragraph 2.10: Jason Teal introduced a report setting out how the Commission could be involved in the process of appraising and assuring the Council's key accountable measures and associated targets. Councillor Rendel suggested that the Commission should have a greater and more proactive role in the setting of the targets at an early stage of the strategic planning cycle so that their views and suggestions could be incorporated into service delivery plans as they were developed and refined.. Councillor Boeck disagreed, likening the role of scrutiny to auditors, who would not suggest what should be measured, but might have an opinion as to the suitability of the measures put in place. Councillor Webster agreed that it was not the role of the Commission to formulate the measures and framework, but to ensure what was produced was appropriate. Councillor Vickers explained that he would prefer to be involved at an earlier stage unless he could be assured that targets were being set prior to the end of the year. Jason Teal confirmed that the service delivery planning process started over the summer and that substantive measures and activities were agreed towards the end of quarter four for the following year. Notional targets may be provided as part of this process, but these would only be confirmed and approved once previous year end outturns were available. The Commission were content with the proposed approach as set out in the report. Councillors Webster and Webb volunteered themselves for inclusion on the sub group. A representative from the Liberal Democrats would be nominated at a future date.

Paragraph 2.11: Councillor Vickers asked whether the Chief Executive had decided whether to write to Shelter to set out the concerns of the Commission in relation to the Mystery Shopper exercise undertaken on the Housing Service in 2012. Nick Carter responded that he did not feel it would be appropriate to communicate from his position as Chief Executive as it would disproportionately elevate the level of concern. Nick Carter added that a meeting had been held with Shelter following the exercise where many of the Commission's concerns had been raised, but that some of the issues had arisen as a result of the commissioning process and not through Shelter's actions. Councillor Vickers enquired as to when the Homelessness Policy would be concluded. The Chairman reminded the Commission that the review had formed part of the consultation process, and that the completion of the policy would occur in due course. Nick Carter confirmed that the policy was currently progressing through the Executive Cycle.

Resolved that:

- David Lowe would ensure that the progress of the Housing Allocations Policy was correctly reflected in the Council's Forward Plan;
- The Head of Highways to provide a date by which the annual road survey would be available;
- Jason Teal to provide information to clarify whether the reduction in the numbers of library visits was reflective of national trends;

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- The Head of Housing to clarify whether the figures provided for the number of empty homes brought back into use was cumulative, and what reason could be given for the significant increase in 2012/13;
- The Head of Housing to provide information to illustrate the net number of empty homes brought back into use;

Jason Teal to provide information as to the practices of other local authorities in making performance information available for scrutiny;

107. **West Berkshire Forward Plan April 2013 to July 2013**

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 5) for the period covering April 2013 to July 2013.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

108. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme**

The Commission considered its work programme and that of the Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group.

Councillor Vickers drew the Commission's attention to a suggested scrutiny topic of Welfare Reform. Councillor Vickers expanded that the subject was of concern to residents and to Officers in the Housing Service. It was not clear how the Council was preparing for the changes that would take place in coming years.

Councillor Webster advised that there was good information available on the Council website which might aid in individual cases. Councillor Webster went on to give her support to the suggested review, but voiced some concerns that the review might be better undertaken after the introduction of the reforms in order to understand how it was impacting on residents and the Council.

Councillor Dave Goff suggested that it might be appropriate to provide information through a Member Development session to ensure all Members were provided with current information with which to assist residents, and that a scrutiny review might be appropriate at a later date. Nick Carter informed the Commission that the next Member Development session would include a significant amount of information on welfare reform, and on request, agreed to clarify this to all Members.

The Commission agreed to include the topic on the work programme for review in early 2014.

Resolved that:

- Information be circulated to Members to clarify the content of the next Member Development session;

Welfare Reform be added to the Commission's work programme for review in early 2014.

109. **Items Called-in following the Executive on 21 March 2013**

No items were called-in following the last Executive meeting.

110. **Councillor Call for Action**

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

111. **Petitions**

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

112. **Schools Performance**

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(Councillor Webster declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 by virtue of the fact that her cousin used to teach in a West Berkshire school. As her interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

Ian Pearson provided the Commission with an introduction to school performance, drawing Members' attention to previous reviews which had considered 2011 results and in the following year, 2012 GCSE results. Following a review of 2011 results, the Commission had been disappointed by the mathematics results. Strategies had been put in place to address this, and the following year they had proven successful. In 2012 it was the results for GCSE English which had been disappointing and discussions were taking place to consider strategies to address this. Ian Pearson further commented that consideration was being given to more vulnerable students such as those in receipt of free school meals, for whom the Government provided £900 per pupil in pupil premium. The results achieved by these students were included in the annual results.

Ian Pearson introduced Sarah Brinkley and Charlotte Wilson, Head Teachers of John O Gaunt school and Trinity school respectively. Both schools had achieved an increase in their overall results from 2011 to 2012.

The Chairman asked what the Head Teachers considered to be the reason for the improvement in results. Charlotte Wilson responded that in 2008 the school had been part of the national challenge programme as the results were very poor. By 2012 the school had become very different by changing its systems, ethos, and uniforms. The school aimed to provide pupils with the tools to have confidence and believe in themselves. The catchment area of the school included one of the most impoverished areas of Newbury.

Councillor Beck asked whether the pupil premium played a part in increasing standards. Sarah Brinkley responded with a number of examples of how the pupil premium was used by John O Gaunt school which included homework clubs, laptop loans, peripatetic music lessons, providing taxis for parents to enable them to attend parent evenings, reading devices, placements and work programmes. Work was also being undertaken to raise the aspirations of boys, for example by using climbing walls to assist in visualising and reaching a dream. The school was currently visiting villages to interact directly with parents. The impact of these initiatives was being seen in different ways: pupil's attitude to learning was improving, there had been an increase in homework submission for example; attendance had increased; attendance at parent evenings had increased; there had also been an upturn in the levels of progress in English.

Councillor Beck asked whether interaction with parents during the village roadshows had proven successful. Sarah Brinkley replied that in addition to visiting primary schools, they were arranging different venues in order to attract parents who were not comfortable in any school setting. The first of these meetings in alternate venues was to be in a local pub and was yet to take place hence it was therefore too early to assess their success.

Councillor Webster asked for suggestions as to how funding could be better used. Elaine Ricks advised the Commission that, in terms of secondary schools, there were currently five Academies; four local authority maintained secondary schools and one undergoing transition to become a sponsored Academy, which bought back support from the Local Education Authority. Four years ago there had been a larger team able to provide subject support to ten secondary schools. The School Improvement Team was now reduced in size. A programme would shortly be offered to schools for middle leaders.

Sarah Brinkley commented that additional support with English was useful as it provided a fresh pair of eyes to consider. She continued that the middle leadership programme

would be of interest and that additionally networking between schools would be valuable in order to meet and share experiences.

Councillor Quentin Webb enquired as to the relationship between the schools' leadership teams and governing bodies. Charlotte Wilson advised that Trinity school had a small governing body who had been asked to be focussed in their challenges. It was a successful relationship as the governors were keen to allow leaders to operate the school whilst being a critical friend to them. Sarah Brinkley agreed that John O Gaunt's governing body was equally supportive and challenging, and importantly was considered to be a key part of the school.

Councillor Irene Neill advised the Commission that the Council had a governor support role to assist individuals in understanding their role as governor as well as providing information on how to interpret school data.

Councillor Dave Goff asked how governing bodies knew whether they were working effectively. Ian Pearson responded that it was possible to audit governing bodies to ensure understanding of and compliance with its role. He added that training and support were provided but some governors were resistant. Sarah Brinkley advised that the governors meeting at John O Gaunt often included a short session of training across different areas to ensure all governors were equally skilled.

Referring to the examples provided about the use of the pupil premium, Councillor Rendel asked to what extent schools were sharing information about the success of different initiatives. Maxine Slade responded that national good practice reports (for example from Ofsted) were circulated to schools, and in addition a Pupil Premium Strategy was being developed for West Berkshire, and an Officer had been identified to take the lead for information sharing between schools.

In response to being asked how the number of pupils entitled to the pupil premium should be calculated as numbers might change during the course of a single year, Ian Pearson responded that the information was made available by the Department for Work and Pensions whose database provided information on families who would qualify. It was acknowledged that the information was not always completely accurate. The Chairman requested that this be addressed in the Pupil Premium Strategy. Maxine Slade confirmed that it would be included.

Councillor Rendel asked who ensured that pupils claimed the free school meals they were entitled to. Maxine Slade advised the Commission that pupil premium was also available for looked after children and the children of service personnel and confirmed that schools wrote to parents to inform them of their eligibility.

Sarah Brinkley commented that the stigma of receiving free school meals needed to be removed in order to increase take up and suggested that it might be productive for information to be more readily available in locations where parents would find it.

Charlotte Wilson informed the Commission that family support workers could be directed to assist and, in addition, at Trinity school there was a secretary who discretely assisted with the completion of the necessary forms.

Councillor Vickers was concerned that the welfare reforms might impact on those entitled to free school meals and requested that this be specifically considered. Maxine Slade advised that if a pupil had qualified for free school meals within the previous six years, the school would remain entitled to receive the pupil premium for them. This was intended to assist with any transition periods. Charlotte Wilson confirmed that the pupil premium was allocated on an individual basis and was not related to whether siblings were entitled to it.

Councillor Brooks stated that he was reassured by the information received but asked what confidence there was that there would be an improvement in 2013. Ian Pearson acknowledged that English results had been disappointing, but highlighted that for the English Baccalaureate, West Berkshire schools had been in the top quartile nationally. Additionally, while West Berkshire schools achieved a result 1.7% lower than the national average, in terms of 5 A*-C including English & Maths, by removing the GCSE equivalent qualifications, West Berkshire performed 4.2% above the national average.

Sarah Brinkley expressed her belief that the literacy challenge would not be solved quickly but that by taking a whole school approach whereby teachers of every subject took responsibility for the correct use of English steps would be made. Charlotte Wilson agreed and added that secondary schools needed to work with primary schools to ensure that pupils arrived with a good level of literacy. It was also critical to ensure that good quality teachers were recruited in the key areas of English, Maths and Science.

The Chairman thanked everybody for their contribution.

Resolved that the report be noted.

113. Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2012/13: Quarter Three Results

The Commission considered the Council's performance report for quarter three 2012/13.

The Chairman asked about the relationship between the number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants (1661) and the number of unfilled job vacancies (1222), and asked whether vacancies were publicised adequately for example through job fairs. David Lowe confirmed that an annual jobs fair was held at Newbury College through the Skills and Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Brooks advised that whilst many employers were keen to train people, they often imposed strict requirements which meant that many applicants were not accepted. Nick Carter commented that West Berkshire were leading the way in the use of apprenticeship schemes and considered that there was frequently a mismatch between skills and the vacancies available. In addition many vacancies did not offer the hours that potential applicants wished for.

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked what the base level of unemployment was once natural turnover was removed. Nick Carter responded that the unemployment rate had not yet returned to the pre-recession level and that youth unemployment was a factor.

Councillor Goff asked what the level of long term unemployment was as this was of greater concern than short term unemployment. Jason Teal advised that although this was an issue for some, the comparative statistics did not suggest experiences in West Berkshire were more acute than elsewhere.

Councillor Vickers asked whether the Commission should be concerned by the 20% increase in children subject to a Child Protection Plan. Jason Teal commented that the number of Child Protection Plans tended to oscillate around the numbers provided. Rachael Wardell stated that some of the increase was in response to an Ofsted inspection in 2012 which considered that some children might have benefited from a Child Protection Plan being put in place sooner.

Councillor Beck questioned the increase in adult learners and asked if there was a reason for this. Jason Teal advised that this was in large part due to funding being secured for courses enabling greater take up by learners.

Councillor Brooks commented that the number of service users receiving a personal budget had consistently fallen below target and, accepting that some individuals were not willing to take on a personal budget, asked whether a more realistic target could be set in the future. Councillor Mike Johnston requested clarification of the numbers which implied

that fewer people were managing their own personal budgets in quarter 1 of 2012/13 than in quarter 4 of 2011/12.

Councillor Brooks requested that the Portfolio Holder for Housing be invited to comment on activities being undertaken to manage the 13% increase in people presenting as homeless.

Resolved that:

- The Head of Adult Social Care clarify the information provided in relation to the number of people who manage their own personal budget.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing be invited to comment on activities being undertaken to manage the 13% increase in people presenting as homeless.

114. Youth Justice

(Councillor Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12 by virtue of the fact that his wife was undertaking Restorative Justice training. As his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Commission considered a report providing an update on the use of the Youth Restorative Disposal in West Berkshire. Following questioning, Davy Pearson and Superintendent Robin Rickard provided the following information:

- The numbers of low level crimes resulting in a Youth Restorative Disposal in West Berkshire were expected to be broadly similar to those in Reading. However it would be expected that more complex crimes would be more prevalent in Reading;
- The Youth Restorative Disposal involved a police officer linking the youth offender and victim in order to obtain a positive outcome such as an apology or payment. It was intended that this would prove positive for the victim, allowing them to move on from the crime;
- There would be a risk assessment prior to the victim and offender meeting, and if it was not considered suitable, the offender would undertake victim awareness sessions which might generate a letter of apology;
- Restorative Justice Panels were managed by the Safer Communities Manager;
- Information showed a greater incidence of reoffending by those involved in drugs offences and this was to be investigated further.

Resolved that the report be noted.

115. Health Scrutiny Panel

(Councillor Rendel declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 13 by virtue of the fact that his wife was a GP in West Berkshire. As his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Commission considered a report on the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP).

Councillor Webb reported that at the last meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel the following topics had been discussed:

- Continuing Healthcare – further work was being undertaken following recommendations from an independent review;
- PCT Quality Handover – an update was due to be received in approximately six to nine months;

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- Changes to the West Berkshire Healthcare – issues identified as high risk were to be revisited in the future;
- Dignity and Nutrition – a report was received from Tony Lloyd which was to be followed up.

In addition the Panel was reviewing Adult Social Care eligibility criteria. In September the results from a public consultation were due to be available following which recommendations could be formulated.

Councillor Vickers asked whether there would be any effect on the Health Scrutiny Panel by Public Health working within the Council. Councillor Webb responded that the Panel would continue to scrutinise activity and Public Health would continue to manage patient care.

Resolved that the report be noted.

116. Resource Management Working Group

The Commission considered a report on the work of the Resource Management Working Group (RMWG).

Councillor Vickers reported that at the last meeting of the Resource Management Working Group the following topics had been discussed:

- Blue Badge Improvement Service – this was not able to be concluded as a full review would not be carried out by the Highways service until a full year of operation at the end of April 2013;
- Establishment Report – a regular item on the agenda. However Councillor Vickers advised that this report would need to be requested in future;
- Shaw House – consideration was being given to how Shaw House could be better and more profitably utilised.
- Month 10 Financial Update – a regular item.

In addition, Councillor Vickers advised the Commission that John Ashworth would be attending the next meeting to explain the new asset management database.

Resolved that the report be noted.

117. Scrutiny Recommendations Update

The Commission considered a report updating the progress of scrutiny recommendations.

Councillor Beck commented that no mention had been made of the Riverside building in the response to the promotion of Council buildings for wider community use.

Resolved that the report be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.45 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Agenda Item 4.

Title of Report:	Actions from previous meetings
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To advise the Commission of the actions arising from previous meetings

Recommended Action: To note the report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission with an update on the actions arising from its previous meeting.

2. Resolutions

- 2.1 **Resolution:** David Lowe would ensure that the progress of the Housing Allocations Policy was correctly reflected in the Council's Forward Plan;

Action / response: This action is complete.

- 2.2 **Resolution:** The Head of Highways to provide a date by which the annual road survey would be available;

Action / response: The Head of Highways has advised that the highway survey has now been completed. The results show that:

4% of Principal Roads (A Roads) are in poor overall condition and are likely to require planned maintenance soon (i.e. within a year or so) on a "worst first" basis (although there may be justification for postponing major repairs, and only carrying out minor repairs to keep the road safe and serviceable, in order to minimise whole life costs i.e. "economic prioritisation"). This shows a year on year improvement against a target of no more than 5%

6% of Non-Principal Roads (B and C Roads) are in poor overall condition and are likely to require planned maintenance soon (i.e. within a year or so) on a "worst first" basis (although there may be justification for postponing major repairs, and only carrying out minor repairs to keep the road safe and serviceable, in order to minimise whole life costs i.e. "economic prioritisation"). "). This shows a year on year improvement against a target of no more than 10%

- 2.3 **Resolution:** Jason Teal to provide information to clarify whether the reduction in the numbers of library visits was reflective of national trends;

Action / response: The Library Service Manager has provided the following data:

Comparator authority	Change 2011-12	Change 2012-13
Bracknell	-4%	-10%
Windsor & Maidenhead	No data	-4.2%
Reading	-1.4%	-7%
Brighton & Hove	-0.1%	-4.8%
Medway	+0.1%	+1.7%
West Berkshire	-3.4%	-9%

The 9% drop in footfall in 2012-13 was in line with the reduction in library open hours. The other main reason was the reduction in the Stock Fund over the past few years. The budget for this was reduced to £150K in 2012-13 and remains the same for 2013-14. Because books and other library resources are bought for a shelf life of several years, reductions in the Stock Fund are cumulative, so borrowers tend to be put off using the library by the reducing purchasing power.

Medway is the only authority out of the five comparators to report an increase in visitors, and they put this down to an increase in promotional events in libraries. West Berkshire is already looking to expand this aspect of the service with more small scale author visits, rhyme times etc. A staff training workshop is scheduled for later this month at which a marketing campaign will be planned.

- 2.4 **Resolution:** The Head of Housing to clarify whether the figures provided for the number of empty homes brought back into use was cumulative, and what reason could be given for the significant increase in 2012/13;

Action / response: The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager has confirmed that the numbers provided were not cumulative. The year on year increase in the number of empty homes brought back into use is the result of extensive work with owners; and it can take several years for a positive outcome to transpire.

- 2.5 **Resolution:** The Head of Housing to provide information to illustrate the net number of empty homes brought back into use;

Action / response: It is not possible to provide data from the Council Tax records – the most accessible information held by the Council – about the net number of long term empty properties brought back into use. This is because there are a number of different forms of discount and exemption which apply to empty properties and which may follow one another during the “empty” life of the property.

The Council Tax system will hold details of the current state of a property in an accessible form for bulk queries but it has not been possible to identify a route whereby bulk historic data may be accessed in order to track back through the “empty life” of a property and to extract candidates for the required summary. At an individual property level this information is readily available from the history display screens in the council Tax system.

- 2.6 **Resolution:** Jason Teal to provide information as to the practices of other local authorities in making performance information available for scrutiny;

Action / response: See report at Appendix A

- 2.7 **Resolution:** Information be circulated to Members to clarify the content of the next Member Development session;

Action / response: This action is complete.

- 2.8 **Resolution:** The Head of Adult Social Care clarify the information provided in relation to the number of people who manage their own personal budget.

Action / response: Confirmation has been received that the number of service users receiving a personal budget is a total number and does not reference new clients. The total is reported on a rolling 12 month basis and includes one-off and

on-going personal budget clients in the reporting period and recognises that the cohort changes as clients are reviewed, their needs change or they pass away.

There was a drop between Q4 2011/12 and Q1 2012/13 due to one-off Direct Payment and personal budget payment/services ending. For example, we currently have 514 on-going Direct Payment/personal budget users but are reporting 687 Direct Payment/personal budget users for 2012/13 as this includes one-off and on-going services.

2.9 **Resolution:** The Portfolio Holder for Housing be invited to comment on activities being undertaken to manage the 13% increase in people presenting as homeless.

Action / response: The Portfolio Holder for Housing has agreed to attend a future meeting of the Commission for the purpose of discussing this.

Appendices

Appendix A – Comparison of other Berkshire Unitary Authorities presentation of performance outturns

Appendix A

Title of Report:	Comparison of other Berkshire UAs presentation of performance outturns
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21st May 2013

Purpose of Report: To provide an overview of how other Berkshire councils make performance information available for scrutiny

Recommended Action: To review the span / presentation of performance material considered by OSMCs in other Berkshire UAs

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Executive Summary

3. Introduction

- 3.1 At the last OSMC meeting on the 16th April, a task was assigned to investigate how other councils make performance information available for scrutiny.
- 3.2 This report summarises information provided by the 5 other Berkshire UAs.

Reading BC

- 3.3 Have a dedicated performance webpage (<http://www.reading.gov.uk/council/performance-and-spending/performance/>) although the last report available is labelled 'Corporate Performance Overview Q1: 2012/13'.
- 3.4 This is essentially high-level, one page summary, listing revenue budget, staff FTE, whether progress towards core priorities are on track (single flag for each of the four priorities), whether progress towards six significant projects are on track (e.g. station upgrade, improving quality of safeguarding children, customer management service development), as well as top three achievements / issues / actions needed. This is provided in appendix A.
- 3.5 It is not obvious from the previous scrutiny minutes / agenda the type of performance information considered by the committee.

Bracknell Forest

- 3.6 Have a dedicated performance webpage (<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council/performance>). This lists a CExec's overview of performance: this is a high level narrative of key performance issues and successes as well as an overview of external inspections, audit and scrutiny and strategic risks.
- 3.7 Quarterly outturns are provided on an individual directorate-by-directorate and a service-by service basis, rather than pulled together into a composite whole. These are fairly detailed reports, providing general metrics on finance, complaints, customer services, FoI etc as well as outturns for the quarter in question. These are compared to the previous quarter only. The report also provides progress on key actions (or projects) within the service. See appendix B for an example.
- 3.8 The number of measures / activities are relatively extensive – for example, the Adult Social Care alone reports progress against on 32 measures and 72 activities.
- 3.9 Q3 reports were considered by the OSMC on 28th March.

Wokingham

- 3.10 Could not locate a dedicated performance space on the main part of Wokingham's website.
- 3.11 However, OSMC receive updates on a composite 'scorecard' or basket of measures of key aspects of service delivery reporting progress against themes generally. See

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasysiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=221285&type=full&servicetype=Attachment> – example provided in appendix C.

- 3.12 This provides a summary of progress against a set of 7 composite indicators, assessing the council's effectiveness in relation to (e.g.) internet usage, children's safeguarding, narrowing the gap, organisational health etc.
- 3.13 It is not immediately clear however which / how many measures are compiled within each of these composite indicators although more detailed data is provided a further small set of 8 'core' metrics relating to revenue / capital budget over/underspend, average time to process benefit claims, average time to re-let void council housing, nos people killed seriously injured.
- 3.14 Q3 balanced scorecard considered by OSMC 20th Mar 2013.

RBWM

- 3.15 Could not find any dedicated performance space on the main part of Slough's website.
- 3.16 However OSMC receive an quarterly, integrated performance monitoring report describing progress against a number of core metrics related to the council's priorities. See [http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/minsys3.nsf/d9c360870262e3708025765d004cf06a/7cb44f7de9c9e0a680257b260058ac4d/\\$FILE/meetings_130314_csosp_ipmr.pdf](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/minsys3.nsf/d9c360870262e3708025765d004cf06a/7cb44f7de9c9e0a680257b260058ac4d/$FILE/meetings_130314_csosp_ipmr.pdf). An example is provided in appendix D.
- 3.17 This is a very detailed, lengthy report incorporating aspects of finance, HR and risk management.
- 3.18 Within the report, progress against 23 primary performance measures are captured with a substantial amount of longitudinal data contextualising the current outturns. In addition, a secondary set of 14 measures are reported in lesser detail where 'monitoring of performance is important and where reporting may become necessary at a particular point in time (for instance underperformance over consecutive quarters)'.
3.19 Q3 Integrated Performance Monitoring Report considered by OSMC 14th March.

Slough

- 3.20 Could not find any dedicated performance space on the main part of Slough's website.
- 3.21 However OSMC receive qtrly updates on a composite 'scorecard' as well as updates on progress amongst the Council's 'Gold Projects'.
- 3.22 The format to the scorecard is similar to ours. See <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s27531/Appendix.pdf> – example provided in appendix E.
- 3.23 Progress is reported against a list of 37 performance indicators, banded together by strategic themes: customer focus, economy and skills, health and well being etc.

The data itself is simply provided for the quarterly outturn (presuming this is YTD) and compares this to the target, rather than providing any further longitudinal data.

3.24 Q3 reports were considered by OSMC on 7th February.

Appendix A. Reading BC, example corporate performance overview

Corporate DRAFT			
Reading BOROUGH COUNCIL Performance Overview 2012/13 First Quarter			
Revenue Budget actual variance £000 £580 (0.2%) Total Budget £120,1M	Staff Staff Numbers	3132.30 FTE (Incl Schools)	
Core Priorities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping Children & Adults Safe Developing early intervention and prevention for children & Adults Budget - in year monitoring and issues plus planning for future years and delivering VFM. Living within the approved budget for 2012/13 Customer management & Community engagement improve service to residents 	On Track	On Track	
	On Track	On Track	
	On Track		
	On Track		
Significant Projects			
Transfer of Public Health Consultation	GREEN		
Reading Station upgrade	GREEN		
Manage the delivery of the £150m Dee Park Regeneration Scheme with full community engagement	GREEN		
Ongoing work to improve the quality of safeguarding children	GREEN		
Developing Early Intervention & prevention services for children & adults	GREEN		
Customer Management Service development	GREEN		
Top 3 Achievements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Call Centre and Customer hub at the Civic have been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award and Contact Centre Accreditation Improved Early Years results Secured 20.7m from 'green' transport bid (LSTF) 	Top 3 Issues		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing delivery of budget and savings and identification of further savings Ensuring sufficient school places for Reading's children Integration of Public Health into Local Authorities 	Top 3 Actions Needed	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning to address the implications of the Local Government Resource Review Work with communities to establish the most effective way to meet the sustained level of demand for school places Continue to implement the transition plan to enable successful integration of Public Health into the Council 	

Appendix B. Bracknell Forest, example service performance card.

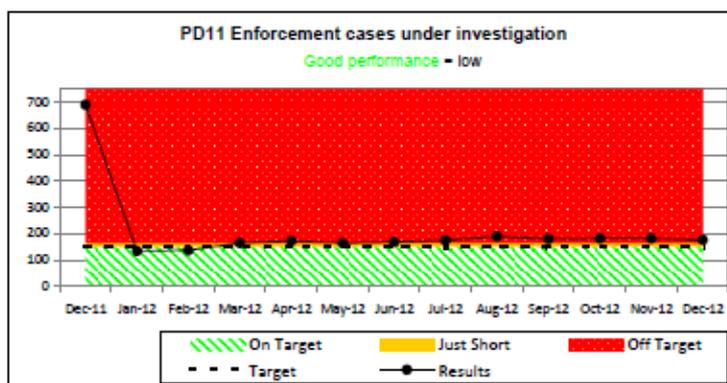
Adult Social Care

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q2 2012/13	Current Figure Q3 2012/13	Current Target	Current Status	Comparison to same period in previous year
NI132	Waiting times for assessments (Quarterly)	90.8%	92.5%	90.0%		
NI133	Waiting times for services (Quarterly)	85.3%	87.8%	90.0%		
NI135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information (Quarterly)	24.6%	35.3%	26.0%		
OF2a.1	Adults aged 18-64 admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	2.70	4.10	6.70		
OF2a.2	Older people admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	280.40	567.7	545.2		
L137	Number in residential care (quarterly)	176.00	169.00	150.00		
L138	Number in nursing care (Quarterly)	111.00	117.00	141.00		
L159	People receiving Self-Directed Support as a percentage of Eligible People (Quarterly)	90.5%	97.6%	90.0%		
L172	Timeliness of financial assessments (Quarterly)	44.00%	61.40%	95.00%		Previous data not available

Appendix C. Wokingham BC, example performance 'scorecard'.

Appendix A - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORTING 2012-13												
Part 1 - Baskets of Indicators												
Basket of Indicators - An explanation												
Each basket is made up of several individual indicators. These indicators are awarded a score based on performance.		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>The basket has an overall percentage equal to or greater than 75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amber</td> <td>The basket has an overall percentage between 50% and 75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>The basket has an overall percentage of less than 50%</td> </tr> </table>					Green	The basket has an overall percentage equal to or greater than 75%	Amber	The basket has an overall percentage between 50% and 75%	Red	The basket has an overall percentage of less than 50%
Green	The basket has an overall percentage equal to or greater than 75%											
Amber	The basket has an overall percentage between 50% and 75%											
Red	The basket has an overall percentage of less than 50%											
The scoring system works as follows: - An indicator meeting or exceeding the target is given a score of 1 - An indicator missing the target by less than 10% is given a score of 0.5 - An indicator missing the target by more than 10% is given a score of 0.												
The total score is then aggregated and calculated as an overall percentage, based on the number of indicators within the basket. This percentage is used as a year to date score for the basket, and the traffic light is based on this following the key to the right.												
Ref	Basket description	January 2013	Year to Date (April 2012 to January 2013)		Direction of travel	Notes						
		Breakdown of traffic lights	Previous Traffic Light	Current Traffic Light								
CS1	Children's Safeguarding		Amber	Green	↑	Core Assessments completed within timescales is set as amber for performance against target for year to date. The remaining two indicators in the basket are set as green for performance against target.						
CS2	Narrowing the gap		Green	Green	↔	All indicators in the basket are set as green for performance against target.						
BS1	Organisational Health		Green	Green	↔	<p>The chart shows ongoing performance for the indicator - complaints resolved or responded to within 10 working days. This indicator has performed well for most of the year but monthly performance deteriorated in January. Most of the late responses were complaints received by Tenant Services.</p>						
CC1	Choice & Control		Green	Green	↔	Wokingham Borough is performing well in comparison to the National Averages for indicators contained within the baskets.						
CC2	Health & Wellbeing		Green	Green	↔							
PP1	Determination of Planning Applications		Red	Red	↓	<p>Major and Minor Planning Applications determined in timescales are both set as red for year to date performance, however Major Planning Applications are set as green for performance in January 2013.</p> <p>Planning appeals is set as amber for year to date performance and green for performance in January 2013.</p> <p>An action plan is included in Appendix B for the indicators set as red.</p>						

Appendix D. RBWM, detail on metric from performance overview.



Lead Officer:	Simon Hurrell	Lead Member:	Cllr Saunders
Why is this important?			
Closing enforcement cases indicate the resolution of a problem that impacted on adjoining residents or the wider community.			
Strategic Priority: Delivering Together			
Good performance: Improved performance is typified by a lower number			
Last year's data: 165 (Mar 2012)			
Current data: 176 (Dec 12)		2012/13 Target: 150	
Note: This is a new indicator for 2012/13 which shows the scale and size of the caseload the Enforcement Team are dealing with.			
Comments:			
The figure has dropped significantly during January 2012 as the system audit had over 500 cases closed due to the fact that they are no longer live. This indicator is currently running at 176 cases for December which is 17% above the target.			
The pressure on resources for the Council's Enforcement team has impacted the team's ability to clear the backlog. The team is working to reduce the backlog of cases. In the last Quarter, the team has dealt with 2 public enquiries relating to enforcement notices served and were successful in prosecuting persistent breaches of planning control on 7 cases. This took a significant amount of resources. Over the Christmas period, the Council has commenced a further review of the outstanding cases and expect to close a significant number of duplicate and old cases. In addition, the team are preparing for the need to enforce compliance with the Enforcement Notice against the Traveller Community at Shurlock Road. The team are currently investigating the robustness of the data, cleaning the data and then will be able to break down the 'open cases' into categories.			

Appendix E. Slough BC, example performance 'scorecard'.

Safer Communities							
Performance Indicator	Date updated	Baseline	2012-13 target	Actual	Direction of travel	RAG rating	Comments
% of Initial Assessments completed and authorised within 10 working days (in month)	Dec-12	60.1% [2011-12 year]	above 80%	71% [in month of Dec-12]	↑	Red	Performance in the month of December improved on previous month and has returned to a value that is better than baseline. Sustained remedial actions are being implemented to improve compliance further and achieve target.
% of Core Assessments completed and authorised within 35 working days (in month)	Dec-12	56.6% [2011-12 year]	above 80%	77% [in month of Dec-12]	↑	Amber	Performance in December rose but remains below the 80% target. Improvement activities are being implemented.
Children looked after by the council at month end (excluding respite care arrangements) (a) Number (b) rate per 10,000 local children.	Dec-12	172 54.3 [March-12]	rate below last England average	189 50.5 [Dec-12]	↓	Green	The Council is legally obliged to accommodate children when this is necessary to ensure their safety. This month saw an overall increase of 5 children.
Children subject to Child Protection Plans at month end (a) Number (b) rate per 10,000 local children.	Dec-12	209 55.9 [March-12]	rate within +/- 15% of last England average	171 45.7 [Dec-12]	↑	Green	The number of children subject to a child protection plan has decreased slightly since last report, but remains within tolerance zone of the target. At current knowledge of comparison values, a range of between 134 to 181 children represents appropriate safeguarding practice.
% of children looked after adopted from care or granted a special guardianship order (in year to date)	Dec-12	27.6% [March-12]	above 8%	15.1% [yr to Dec-12]	↓	Green	Current performance represents 19 children who have secured permanent family homes due to adoption or special guardianship arrangements in the past 12 months. Whilst latest value is a reduction on the baseline value, this follows a period of significant success; we are now returning to a more sustainable rate that remains in excess of comparators.

Agenda Item 5.

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Forward Plan
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from June 2013 to October 2013 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the plan.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission considers the West Berkshire Council Forward Plan and recommends further action as appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Forward Plan attempts to cover all decisions, not just those made by the Executive, which the Authority intends to take over the next 4 months. The Forward Plan, attached at Appendices A and B, for the months of June 2013 to October 2013, also shows the decision path of each item including Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.
- 1.2 In order to hold the Executive to account, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Members are asked to identify any areas of forthcoming decisions which may be appropriate for future scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – June 2013.

Appendix B – West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – July 2013 to October 2013.

JUNE 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
ID2629	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/06/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		June 2013
ID2607	Parking Amendment No.13 <i>To consider the responses received during statutory consultation.</i>	ID	03/06/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		24/05/13	Statutory consultees, general public, Parish Council and Ward members		June 2013
ID2676	Proposal to consult on the development of additional Resourced Provision for Children and Young People (CYP) with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) <i>To seek permission to consult on the development of additional Resourced Provision for CYP with ASD in Primary and Secondary Phases.</i>	ID	03/06/13	Communities	Rhian Ireland	Children & Young People, Education, Youth Service		24/05/13			June 2013
ID2618	West Berkshire Forward Plan – 01 August to 30 November 2013 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	20/06/13	Resources	Maira Fraser	Leader of Council		12/06/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	Not subject to call-in	June 2013

JUNE 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
EX2532	Financial Performance Report Year End <i>To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.</i>	EX	20/06/13 EX	Resources	Melanie Ellis	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		12/06/13			June 2013
EX2677	London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) Strutt & Parker Market Report <i>To present Strutt & Parker's Market Report to indicate the level of positive developer interest in the LRIE and seek the Executive's authority to begin the process of procuring an appropriate development partner for the LRIE redevelopment.</i>	EX	20/06/13 EX	Communities	Bill Bagnell	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		12/06/13			June 2013
C2585	Community Infrastructure Levy - Draft Charging Schedule <i>To consider and approve the Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC			June 2013
C2586	Supplementary Planning Document for Developer Contributions - Adoption of updated Topic Papers <i>To adopt the updated Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC			June 2013
C2599	Greenham Control Tower <i>To report back on the deliberations of the Planning Policy Task Group following the referral of a motion to the group at Full Council on the 13 December 2012.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Gary Lugg	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Planning Policy Task Group		June 2013

JUNE 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
C2600	GAMA Site <i>To report back on the deliberations of the Planning Policy Task Group following the referral of a motion to the group at Full Council on the 13 December 2012.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Steve Broughton	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Planning Policy Task Group		June 2013
C2650	Compton Institute for Animal Health Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) <i>To adopt the SPD.</i>	C								Delayed until September 2013	
C2675	Sandleford Park Supplementary Planning Document <i>To adopt the Supplementary Planning Document.</i>	C								Delayed until September 2013	

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
JULY 2013											
ID2667	SEN & Disability Strategy 2013 - 2016 <i>To seek approval of the draft SEN & Disability Strategy 2013 – 2016.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Communities	Jane Seymour	Children and Young People, Education, Youth Service		TBC	Parents of children with SEN, schools, statutory and voluntary agencies involved with children with SEN.		July 2013
ID2660	Speed Limit Review – May 2013 <i>To approve the statutory consultation for alterinmg the speed limit on a number of roads following a meeting of the Speed Limit Task Group.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Speed Limit Task Group		July 2013
ID2630	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		July 2013
ID2663	Community Care (Adult Social Care) Compliments and Complaints Report <i>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). To highlight the number and nature of compliments received from April 2012 to March 2013. To illustrate how complaints and compliments are logged and monitored, and review the actions taken as a result of the lessons learned.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Communities	Mary Page	Community Care, Insurance		TBC			July 2013

The items included in the Forward Plan were correct at the time of publication. The Forward Plan may, however, change and you are advised to contact Moira Fraser – Tel: 01635 519045 or e-mail: mfraser@westberks.gov.uk to confirm the contents of any agenda before attending a meeting. **Executive decisions may be taken by the Executive acting as a collective body or by officers acting under delegated powers.**

KEY:	
ID =	Individual Executive Member Decision
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C =	Council
GA =	Governance & Audit Committee
SC =	Standards Committee
PC =	Personnel Committee

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
ID2679	Raised zebra crossings in Pangbourne Village <i>To approve the statutory consultation for altering the speed limit on a number of roads following a meeting of the Speed Limit Task Group</i>	ID	01/07/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC			July 2013
ID2680	ICT Strategy <i>To approve the updated strategy.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Resources	Kevin Griffin	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		TBC			July 2013
ID2684	Thatcham Level Crossing Improvements <i>To review the results of a consultation into proposed improvements on the southbound approach to Thatcham Level Crossing.</i>	ID	01/07/13	Environment	Jon Winstanley	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC			July 2013
GA2678	Internal Audit - Workplan for 13-14 <i>To outline the proposed work programme for internal audit for the coming year</i>	GA	08/07/13	Resources	Ian Priestley	Finance, Pensions, Economic Development, Health & Safety, HR		28/06/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Service		July 2013
GA2683	Amendments to the Constitution - Part 5 (Executive Rules of Procedure) and Part 6 (Scrutiny Rules of Procedure) <i>To note the amendments to the Constitution following the May 2013 Council meeting if required.</i>	GA	08/07/13	Resources	Andy Day	Leader of the Council		28/06/13			July 2013
SC2691	Standards Committee Report Quarter 1 of 2013/14 <i>To update the Standards Committee on activity over the past quarter.</i>	SC	15/07/13 SC	Resources	Moira Fraser	Chairman of the Standards Committee		05/07/13			July 2013

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

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ID2619	West Berkshire Forward Plan – 01 September to 31 December 2013 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	25/07/13	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of Council		17/07/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	Not subject to call-in	July 2013
EX2538	Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2012/13. Update on progress: Q4 outturns	EX	25/07/13 EX	Resources	Jason Teal	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		17/07/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services		July 2013
EX2682	City Deal <i>To outline to Members the detail behind a Reading and Central Berkshire City Deal.</i>	EX	25/07/13 EX	Resources	Andy Day	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, Pensions		17/07/13			July 2013
AUGUST 2013											
ID2631	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/08/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		August 2013
ID2620	West Berkshire Forward Plan – 01 October 2013 to 31 January 2014 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	22/08/13	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of Council		14/08/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	Not subject to call-in	August 2013

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

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SEPTEMBER 2013											
ID2632	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/09/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		September 2013
GA2559	Review of the Council's Bribery Policy <i>In accordance with the recommendation of the Governance and Audit Committee to revisit the Council's Bribery Policy adopted on the 10 September 2012 to ensure that it is fit for purpose.</i>	GA	02/09/13 GA	Resources	Ian Priestley	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, Pensions		23/08/13			September 2013
EX2645	Treasury Management Annual Report 2012-13 <i>To inform Members of the previous year's treasury management activities and the performance of the Council's investments.</i>	EX	05/09/13 EX	Resources	Gabrielle Esplin	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, Pensions		28/08/13			September 2013
EX2646	Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2013/14. Update on progress: Q1 outturns <i>To report Quarter 1 progress against the key accountable measures and activities for West Berkshire Council for 2013/14 and to report by exception those measures/activities not achieved/expected to be achieved and cite remedial action that is being taken.</i>	EX	05/09/13 EX	Resources	Jason Teal	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		28/08/13			September 2013
EX2668	Financial Performance Report - Q1 of 2013/14 <i>To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.</i>	EX	05/09/13 EX	Resources	Melanie Ellis	Finance, Pensions, Economic Development, Health & Safety, HR		28/08/13			September 2013

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

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ID2621	West Berkshire Forward Plan – 01 November 2013 to 28 February 2014 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	12/09/13	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of Council		04/09/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	Not subject to call-in	September 2013
OCTOBER 2013											
ID2633	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/10/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		October 2013
ID2681	Economic Strategy <i>To approve the updated strategy.</i>	ID	01/10/13	Resources	Janet Duffield	Finance, Economic Development, Health & Safety, Pensions		TBC			October 2013
SC2692	Standards Committee Report Quarter 2 of 2013/14 <i>To update the Standards Committee on activity over the past quarter.</i>	SC	14/10/13 SC	Resources	Moira Fraser	Chairman of the Standards Committee		04/10/13			October 2013
EX2685	Adoption of the Housing Allocations Policy <i>To approve and adopt the Council's policy for assessment and allocaton of applicants seeking social housing.</i>	EX	17/10/13 EX	Communities	Mel Brain	Strategy, Council Plan, Housing		09//10/13	CHR Applicants, residents, Members, Registered Providers & other itnersted stakeholders (e.g. agencies who work with CHR applicants)		October 2013

The items included in the Forward Plan were correct at the time of publication. The Forward Plan may, however, change and you are advised to contact Moira Fraser – Tel: 01635 519045 or e-mail: mfraser@westberks.gov.uk to confirm the contents of any agenda before attending a meeting. **Executive decisions may be taken by the Executive acting as a collective body or by officers acting under delegated powers.**

KEY:
 ID = Individual Executive Member Decision
 EX = Executive
 C = Council
 GA = Governance & Audit Committee
 SC = Standards Committee
 PC = Personnel Committee

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – 01 July to 31 October 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
ID2622	West Berkshire Forward Plan – 01 December 2013 to 31 March 2014 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	24/10/13	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of Council		16/10/13	Corporate Directors, Heads of Services, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	Not subject to call-in	October 2013

The items included in the Forward Plan were correct at the time of publication. The Forward Plan may, however, change and you are advised to contact Moira Fraser – Tel: 01635 519045 or e-mail: mfraser@westberks.gov.uk to confirm the contents of any agenda before attending a meeting. **Executive decisions may be taken by the Executive acting as a collective body or by officers acting under delegated powers.**

KEY:	
ID =	Individual Executive Member Decision
EX =	Executive
C =	Council
GA =	Governance & Audit Committee
SC =	Standards Committee
PC =	Personnel Committee

Title of Report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To receive, agree and prioritise the Work Programme of the Commission, Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group.

Recommended Action:

- To consider the current items and any future areas for scrutiny.
- To consider and approve the suggested topic for scrutiny – Newbury Town Centre Parking.
- To consider and approve the suggested topic for scrutiny – Asset Disposal via Community Right to Bid.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group is attached at Appendix A for the Commission's consideration. Members are also asked to consider any future areas for scrutiny.
- 1.2 Parking in Newbury Town Centre has been proposed by Councillor Vickers as a topic for scrutiny by the Resource Management Working Group, and is presented at Appendix B for consideration and agreement by the Commission.
- 1.3 Asset disposal via Community Right to Bid has been proposed by Councillor Vickers as a topic for scrutiny by the Resource Management Working Group, and is presented at Appendix C for consideration and agreement by the Commission.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

Appendix B – Scrutiny Suggestion – Town Centre Parking

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/11/107	Update on the Health Service in West Berkshire	To update members on the changes to Health Service in West Berkshire	Monitoring item	HSP	Ongoing		Cllr Graham Jones	In Progress	
OSMC/11/119	Continuing Healthcare (CHC) assess the effect of the CHC operations policy and procedures in practise	In meeting review		HSP	Start: March 2013 End: Sept 2013	Jan Evans – 2736 Adult Social Care	Cllr Graham Jones	In Progress	Monitoring of the CHC independent review action plan. Update against actions requested after 6 months.
OSMC/12/122	Home Care To understand and critically appraise the processes in place for the provision of Home Care.	TBD		HSP	Start: Oct 2013 End: Oct 2013	Jan Evans–2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	In Progress	Established within the ASC Efficiency programme with a review of inhouse service and a new procurement mechanism for external domiciliary care - to be reviewed in Oct 2013
OSMC/12/133	PCT Quality Handover To examine the PCT's arrangements for the handover of its quality responsibilities to Clinical Commissioning Groups	In meeting review.	Members satisfied with arrangements	HSP	Start: March 2013 End: Sept 2013	Sam Otoropec, PCT	Cllr Graham Jones		6 month update requested.
OSMC/12/143	Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria To conduct a review of the Council's Fair Access to Care Services policy			HSP	Start: December 2012 End: Summer 2013	Jan Evans–2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	In Progress	Terms of Reference for the review agreed to take place across five sessions.
OSMC/09/02	Performance Report for Level One Indicators To monitor quarterly the performance levels across the Council and to consider, where appropriate, any remedial action.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Monitoring item	OSMC	Start: each Q End:	Jason Teal – 2102 Policy & Communication	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	Quarterly item.
OSMC/11/129	Housing Allocations policy To contribute to the development of a new policy	In meeting policy development supported by task group and individual Member activity.		OSMC	Finish August 2013	Mel Brain - 2403 Social Care Commissioning and Housing	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	- Added to work programme at the 10 January 2012 meeting, following a suggestion by Corporate Board - Following consultation exercise by Housing Service, expected to return to OSMC in May 2013
OSMC/12/135	Annual target setting To examine the annual targets being set for 2013/14.	Task group working directly with PM officers	Annually recurring	OSMC	Start: End:	Jason Teal – 2102 Strategic Support	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	Independent work, unsupported by scrutiny officers. Output directly for consideration in the following year's Council Plan.
OSMC/12/139	Schools and early years To contribute to the development of the strategy for managing school organisation that ensures there are sufficient school places and in the right locations to meet demand	In meeting review		OSMC	Start: 21 May 2013 End: 21 May 2013	Ian Pearson - 2729 Head of Education	Councillor Irene Neill	In Progress	Agreed at the meeting of 18 September 2012
OSMC/13/146	Fire Service To understand how the RBFRS provides cover for the West Berkshire area	In meeting review		OSMC	Start: End:		Councillor Graham Jones	To be scheduled	- item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 26/02/13

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/13/147	Welfare Reform To understand the preparations for national Welfare Reform and consider any issues arising.	In meeting review		OSMC	Start: Early 2014 End: TBD	Sean Anderson - 2149 Head of Customer Services	Councillor Alan Law	Scheduled	- Item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 16/04/13 - Schedule for early 2014
OSMC/09/57	Revenue and capital budget reports To receive the latest period revenue and capital budget reports To consider any areas of concern.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	RMWG	Latest report to each meeting	Andy Walker – 2433 Finance	Councillor Alan Law	In Progress	May lead to areas for in depth review.
OSMC/11/110	Energy Saving To review the Council's policies and procedures for Energy Saving.	In a meeting review the Council's procedures to Energy Saving		RMWG	Start: April 2014 End: April 2014	Adrian Slaughter	Councillor Hilary Cole	In Progress	Completed in April 2012. Review to be undertaken in April 2014.
OSMC/11/111	Risk Register To scrutinise individual items on the Risk Register on an annual basis. Annual recurrence	In meeting review and scrutinise individual items on Risk Register.	Monitoring item	RMWG	Start: TBD End: TBD	Ian Priestley	Councillor Roger Croft	To be scheduled	Annual Item for November
OSMC/11/112	Medium Term Financial Strategy To review the role and format of the MTFS Annual recurrence	In meeting review of the MTFS		RMWG	Start: Oct 2013 End: Oct 2013	Andy Walker	Councillor Alan Law		Annual item for October
OSMC/11/113	Procedures for Blue Badge Holder To review the operation of the new procedures, criteria and rules of use for Blue Badge holders following the introduction of them in January 2012.	In meeting review.		RMWG	Start: 12 Mar 2013 End: 28 May 2013	Mark Edwards	Councillor Keith Chopping	In Progress	Requested by RMWG on 26 July 2011. Update received Mar 2013. Finaical update required after full year in operation Report only to be presented to RMWG in May 2013.
OSMC/12/144	Shaw House To understand the utilisation and income generated	in meeting review		RMWG	Start: Mar 2013 End: May 2013	Steve Broughton - 2837 Head of Culture & Environmental Protection	Councillor Hilary Cole	In Progress	Item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 11/12/12. Discussed at RWMG March 2013. Final discussion to follow visit to Shaw House.

Key:

OSMC Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
 RMWG Resource Management Working Group
 HSP Health Scrutiny Panel

Suggest a topic for scrutiny

About you – contact details	
Title	Cllr
Firstname*	Tony
Surname*	Vickers
House No./Name*	62
Address (Line 2)	Craven Road
Address (Line 3)	
Address (Town/City)	Newbury
Postcode*	RG14 5NJ
Email Address	tonyvickers@phonecoop.coop
Telephone Area Code/Number*	01635 230046

* These details must be filled-in.

Your suggested topic(s)	
Your suggested topic for scrutiny:	
Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue	
Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered: <i>(Please include your reasons for suggesting the topic and include details of any evidence you may have)</i>	
see attached notes for further details	
Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria. Please click the appropriate box(es):	
(1) The issue is an area of key public concern (e.g. as identified through Members surgeries, constituents' concerns, the Annual Satisfaction Survey, raised in the local media, etc).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) There is evidence of poor performance within the activity (i.e. through performance indicator data, experience of Members, internal or external auditor findings, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(4) There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) It is a corporate priority for the Council as published within the Council Strategy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(6) It has an external focus (e.g. scrutiny of the Council's partners, government agencies, utility providers, private sector companies, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) It is a Central Government priority area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) It is an area of new Government legislation that has significant implications for the Council or its partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>

The outcomes you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve:

better utilisation of council-owned car parks and public highways in vicinity of retail, commercial and residential town centre area, with increased net revenue

If you have already raised this issue with a Member or Officer of West Berkshire Council, please provide details here:

numerous occasions with parking and planning services and at planning and transport member task groups

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Whilst we cannot guarantee that your suggestion for scrutiny topics will always result in a scrutiny project, every suggestion or comment will be carefully considered.

If you wish to post your form, please send to:

Elaine Walker,
Strategic Support
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury RG14 5LD

or email to: ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue

Note on proposed scrutiny task for Resource Management Working Group, by Cllr Tony Vickers.

1. There are currently hundreds of empty spaces at all times in the Council's Newbury town centre multi-storey car parks. Meanwhile there is a serious shortage of on-street parking spaces for town centre residents, such that if residents entitled to a permit in the town centre (and nearby) zones were to obtain one they could rarely find a space in which to use it within 400m of their homes – which is the furthest that many residents can walk.
2. Newbury town centre is unique in West Berkshire District in its mix of employment types and associated travel patterns of private car use. Despite requests to have a 'holistic' look at all aspects of parking in this area, within the context of a review of overall parking policy that has long been promised, the only reviews undertaken by the parking service have been to modify the residents parking zones and to extend on-street parking charges. These reviews have not included the potential for residents to use their permits in nearby off-street car parks nor for shoppers and commuters to move from off-street to multi-storey car parks.
3. The purpose of this scrutiny task is to see if there is any way in which the council owned car parking assets (multi-storey, off-street surface and on-street) can be used to maintain (or even increase) net revenue from parking, while at the same time maintaining or improving service to all categories of user.
4. In justification, the criteria ticked on the form were (1) public concern; (3) value for money; and (5) corporate priority.
5. **Public Concern.** Constituents of Northcroft and Victoria Wards have become increasingly unhappy, as officers in the parking service can confirm, at the reduction in available road space for parking near their homes. These are not residents of newly developed properties but live in established streets, where the impact of nearby developments (both residential and non-residential) with inadequate parking has harmed their amenity in terms of ability to park near their homes. Meanwhile since the electronic displays of available spaces in the pay-on-exit car parks has been introduced, it has been very evident to residents that the Council owns a very under-used parking resource which is denied to them, as council tax-payers.
6. **Value for Money.** It would seem likely that by displacing some commuters and shoppers from off-street car parks in or near residential areas into nearby multi-storey car parks (e.g. Eight Bells to Market Street M/S, or West Street into Northbrook Street M/S), with some adjustment – even a reduction - to hourly rates of charging and by allowing residents with parking permits – possibly for an increased annual charge – to have unrestricted use of certain off-street car parks, a better use of council-owned assets could be achieved, with increased net revenue.

7. **Corporate Priority.** The vibrancy of Newbury Town Centre is a key priority. Many businesses support a holistic review of parking policy of the kind described: Newbury BID recently expressed concern at the on-street parking charges proposals that the Council is advertising. At present there is friction between some residents and some businesses because the latter are seen to be using (or in the case of M/S car parks not using!) the former's assets: car parks which they are paying to maintain empty.

8. [A related issue which causes friction between residents and the Council corporately is the temporary use of vacant sites as privately run car parks which under-cut the Council-owned ones and meanwhile pay little or nothing into the Council's coffers and are not available to council-tax-paying residents for parking. However it would require change of national policy to address this.]

Suggest a topic for scrutiny

About you – contact details	
Title	Cllr
Firstname*	Tony
Surname*	Vickers
House No./Name*	62
Address (Line 2)	Craven Road
Address (Line 3)	
Address (Town/City)	Newbury
Postcode*	RG14 5NJ
Email Address	tonyvickers@phonecoop.coop
Telephone Area Code/Number*	01635 230046

* These details must be filled-in.

Your suggested topic(s)	
Your suggested topic for scrutiny:	
Asset disposal involving Community Right to Bid	
Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered: <i>(Please include your reasons for suggesting the topic and include details of any evidence you may have)</i>	
new policy with resource management implications	
Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria. Please click the appropriate box(es):	
(1) The issue is an area of key public concern (e.g. as identified through Members surgeries, constituents' concerns, the Annual Satisfaction Survey, raised in the local media, etc).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) There is evidence of poor performance within the activity (i.e. through performance indicator data, experience of Members, internal or external auditor findings, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) It is a corporate priority for the Council as published within the Council Strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) It has an external focus (e.g. scrutiny of the Council's partners, government agencies, utility providers, private sector companies, etc)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(7) It is a Central Government priority area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) It is an area of new Government legislation that has significant implications for the Council or its partners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The outcomes you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve:

transparency and endorsement of implemented new policy

If you have already raised this issue with a Member or Officer of West Berkshire Council, please provide details here:

briefly discussed at RMWG 23/4/13, where it was supported, under 'work programme'

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Whilst we cannot guarantee that your suggestion for scrutiny topics will always result in a scrutiny project, every suggestion or comment will be carefully considered.

If you wish to post your form, please send to:

Elaine Walker,
Strategic Support
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury RG14 5LD

or email to: ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Title of Report:	Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To consider the strategy for managing school organisation that ensures there are sufficient school places and in the right locations to meet demand.

Recommended Action: To note the report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 18 September 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission resolved to receive information relating to the Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy.
- 1.2 The Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy 2013-2018 and it's accompanying report are shown at Appendices A and B.

Appendices

Appendix A – Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy Report

Appendix B – Schools and Early Years Placement Strategy 2013-2018

Title of Report:	Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	May 9 2013
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2491

Purpose of Report: To outline the Council's approach to school place planning.

Recommended Action: To approve the Schools Place Strategy for consultation with stakeholders.

Reason for decision to be taken: The recommended approach provides a strategic framework for school place planning, and a robust modelling tool to support the provision of pupil number projections.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Paper to Corporate Board 8/5/2012
Paper to Corporate Board 4/12/2012
Paper to Management Board 24/01/2013

<p>The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSP3 – Improving education</p> <p>The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:</p>
--

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill - Tel (0118) 971 2671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	24/04/2013

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Caroline Corcoran
Job Title:	Service Manager (Access, Planning, Governance and Trading)
Tel. No.:	01635 519030
E-mail Address:	ccorcoran@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: The Schools Place Strategy provides a clear strategic direction for the provision of school places, against which future decisions will be considered

Financial: The School Place Strategy has implications for the capital budget. All works required to meet basic need provision are considered and prioritised within the capital budget for Education. However, an increase in basic need provision, whether for changes to existing schools or for new schools will have significant financial implications. The proposed Capital Strategy and Programme for 2013 - 2018 allows for the expected impact of basic need provision, including the potential costs of a new primary school for Newbury. However, depending on the amount of growth in pupil numbers over the next five years and the level of government funding, which is currently expected to reduce and to be inadequate for our basic need costs, it may be necessary to postpone or delete other schemes currently included in the programme in order to meet in full the budget pressures arising from basic need.

Personnel: N/A

Legal/Procurement: N/A

Property: N/A

Risk Management: The planning of school places carries the following risks:

- Impact on our ability to meet the statutory requirements for the provision of school places
- Impact on the placement of children in schools which are not near their home due to lack of places in their geographic locality (increased Home to School transport costs, poor publicity for the Council, dissatisfied resident parents).
- Increased and urgent pressure on capital budgets to cover off basic need requirements at short notice.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Appendix A

Corporate Board's Recommendation: To be completed after the Corporate Board meeting.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A paper was brought to Corporate Board in May 2012, outlining the importance of accurate medium and long range forecasting of the demand for school places across West Berkshire.
- 1.2 As a result of the paper in May 2012, Corporate Board requested that plans were put in place to review and update the place projection model in the light of national and local contextual changes.

2. Place Projection Model

- 2.1 The applications for September 2012 exceeded not only the projected pupil numbers, but also exceeded the maximum number of places available. To achieve this increase in capacity, a number of schools have been allocated additional pupils (but without breaking class sizes legislation), and in a small number of schools, significant numbers have been allocated above the agreed Admissions Number using our exceptional circumstances powers and resulting in a capital financial impact of meeting these basic need requirements.
- 2.2 It is vitally important that projections for September 2013 and beyond are as accurate as possible and are based on a range of data sources, with transparent modelling and reporting. Council Officers have been working with EC Harris to develop a new and robust modelling tool. EC Harris has experience in this field, having worked with other LA including Bracknell Forest. The model is now ready to use and has provided initial projection data, which has been shared with schools and has been tested against the last four years actual data.

3. Schools Place Strategy

- 3.1 The Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018 summarises the position to date, and outlines the strategic principles and actions underpinning the planning of school places. The Strategy encompasses all West Berkshire schools and academies, except independent schools, as per the statutory responsibility for the provision of school places in West Berkshire, and addresses the complex balance of creating sufficient places whilst operating within tight capital constraints, without over-provision.
- 3.2 The Schools Place Strategy will be approved for consultation through the corporate cycle, with final approval at Executive in May 2013. The strategy would be published and a formal consultation would be launched in June 2013 with the public and with stakeholders such as schools and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
- 3.3 Census 2011 data at a smaller than district (i.e. SOA) level will be released by the Office for National Statistics in late January 2013. Population estimates are made by the Office for National Statistics on an annual basis; however making estimates at a relatively small geographic level, based on increasingly out of date base data will mean an increasing margin of error. A tool to translate SOA data to school catchment data has been developed as an interim solution.

- 3.4 However, it is recommended that the Council should continue to try to gain access to the GP data which would form a more robust evidence base on which to ground subsequent projections moving forward.
- 3.5 Following the incorporation of the data sets and the consultation process, a subsequent paper would be brought through the corporate cycle in September 2013, outlining the outcome of the refresh and consultation and highlighting any resultant suggested changes. After consideration through the corporate cycle, the updated strategy would then be approved and published.
- 3.6 Going forwards, there would then be an annual refresh of the Strategy each Summer. Further work is being done to ensure that, by the next annual refresh in Summer 2014, the Strategy will include Early Years Place Planning.

4. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 4.1 The new arrangements do not create any equal opportunities issues.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The recommended approach provides a strategic framework for school place planning, and robust modelling tools to support the provision of pupil number projections.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A paper was brought to Corporate Board in May 2012, outlining the importance of accurate medium and long range forecasting of the demand for school places across West Berkshire.
- 1.2 As a result of the paper in May 2012, Corporate Board requested that plans were put in place to review and update the place projection model in the light of national and local contextual changes.

2. Place Projection Model

- 2.1 The applications for September 2012 exceeded not only the projected pupil numbers, but also exceeded the maximum number of places available. 2018 primary school places were allocated, against a previously agreed maximum capacity for West Berkshire of 1876. This represents 142 additional school places above the (previous) West Berkshire maximum capacity, and 320 places above the school place data projections.
- 2.2 To achieve this increase in capacity, a number of schools have been allocated additional pupils (but without breaking class sizes legislation), and in a small number of schools, significant numbers have been allocated above the agreed Admissions Number using our exceptional circumstances powers and resulting in a capital financial impact of meeting these basic need requirements.
- 2.3 It was clear that the current method of producing pupil place projections was not as effective as it needed to be, in terms of providing robust figures to inform school place planning and school organisation decisions.
- 2.4 At place allocation time, there is always publicity about the number of West Berkshire children who were allocated their first preference school; and how many were allocated their catchment school. These are key indicators in the Education Service Plan.
- 2.5 It is vitally important that projections for September 2013 and beyond are as accurate as possible (within a small tolerance of variation e.g. 1%) and are based on a range of data sources, with transparent modelling and reporting. To that end, the Service Manager (Access, Planning, Governance and Trading in the Education Service) and the Performance, Research and Consultation Manager (in Strategic Support) have been working with the EC Harris to develop a new and robust modelling tool.
- 2.6 EC Harris has experience in this field, having worked with other LAs including Bracknell Forest. The model has been developed. Testing has shown the data to be robust, based on historical data sets and outcomes.
- 2.7 The following tools have been developed and will support greater accuracy of forecast in due course. The tools have provided initial projection data, although the data comes with caveats and is currently subject to further checking and refinement:

- Population models/workbooks for each planning area – offering individual primary school and planning area data
- A secondary model/workbook – offering individual secondary school and overall area data.
- A population translation workbook – taking ward data and translating this, through a series of processes within the model, into individual school and planning area population data.
- % increase data model – A worksheet which identifies the % rise in population over a 10 year period based on forecast v actual data provided annually.
- GP models/workbooks for each planning area – offering individual primary school and planning area data (future proofing for the point when GP data is available)

2.8 These tools will enable West Berkshire to identify initial core data (first level forecasting) quickly, ensuring that there is time to re-assess and review to achieve greater accuracy.

2.9 A Strategic Place Planning Group has been established to engage the wider team who have input into planning (education assets, housing, early years).

2.10 Engagement with neighbouring authorities has taken place via EC Harris and all are interested in greater communication regarding planning issues.

3. Schools Place Strategy

3.1 The Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018 summarises the position to date, and outlines the principles and actions in relation to the planning of school places. The Strategy encompasses all West Berkshire schools and academies, except independent schools, as per the statutory responsibility for the provision of school places in West Berkshire, and addresses the complex balance of creating sufficient places whilst operating within tight capital limits, without over-provision. The provision of robust and accessible data is a key component which supports the principles of the Schools Place Strategy.

3.2 The Schools Place Strategy will be approved for consultation through the corporate cycle, with final approval at Executive in May 2013. The strategy would be published and a formal consultation would be launched in June 2013 with the public and with stakeholders such as schools and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

3.3 Population estimates are made by the Office for National Statistics on an annual basis, however making estimates at a relatively small geographic level, based on increasingly out of date base data will mean an increasing margin of error (the ONS only release SOA population estimates as 'experimental statistics' and as such, do not suggest a large degree of weight in placed on them).

3.4 The census 2011 data at a localised (SOA) level is being released by the Office for National Statistics at the end of January 2013. Short of GP data, this is the closest thing to a 'count' that the Council will have - although is only relevant to a particular point in time (now 2 years ago). There is no annual refresh of this data, and any further information would be based on population estimates. A tool to translate SOA data to school catchment data has been developed as an interim solution.

- 3.5 For more accurate forecasting, it will be necessary to continue to seek to acquire additional 0-4 data from which to enable comparison of forecasts. **It is strongly recommended that the Council continue its efforts to engage with the PCT and try to gain access to GP data.** This could be used as part of the refresh of the strategy.
- 3.6 Following the incorporation of the data sets and the consultation process, a subsequent paper would be brought through the corporate cycle in September 2013, outlining the outcome of the refresh and consultation and highlighting any resultant suggested changes. After consideration through the corporate cycle, the updated strategy would then be approved and published.
- 3.7 Going forwards, there would then be an annual refresh of the Strategy each Summer. Further work is being done to ensure that, by the next annual refresh in Summer 2014, the Strategy will include Early Years Place Planning.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The recommended approach provides a strategic framework for school place planning, and a robust modelling tool to support the provision of pupil number projections.

5. Recommended Action

- 5.1 To approve the Schools Place Strategy for consultation with stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – Stage 1
Appendix B – Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: *

Officers Consulted: Ian Pearson, Mark Lewis, Jason Teal, Gabrielle Esplin

Trade Union: *

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	Schools Place Strategy
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Caroline Corcoran
Name of assessor:	Caroline Corcoran
Date of assessment:	23/04/2013

1. What are the main aims of the item?
To agree a strategic framework for the planning of school places

2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Pupils	<p>Pupils may not be able to get a place at the school of their choice.</p> <p>Pupils may have to travel further to the school that they are allocated.</p> <p>Pupils may not be able to get into the same school as their sibling(s) or friends,</p>	<p>Popular schools may be full.</p> <p>Waiting lists for places.</p>
Parents	<p>Parental preference varies from year to year and parents expect the Council to ensure there are sufficient places in popular schools, even though popularity changes constantly</p> <p>Parents may find that they have children in different schools, and this can impact on their ability to drop off and collect children in two places at the same time.</p>	<p>Complaints, feedback and admission appeals</p>

Further comments relating to the item:

There is an expectation that the Council will accommodate parental preference and that a high percentage of pupils will get their choice of school. The figures are reported in the press each year.

3. Result (please tick by clicking on relevant box)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	High Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Relevance - This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

Name: Caroline Corcoran

Date: 23/04/2013

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SCHOOLS PLACE STRATEGY

2013 - 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available within their area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one; to promote diversity, parental choice and high educational standards; to ensure fair access to educational opportunity; and to help fulfil every child's educational potential.

The Schools Place Strategy shows local communities, and those interested in their development, how we expect school provision to change over the next few years.

The Strategy brings together information from a range of sources, sets out the issues the Council will face and clearly outlines the framework for, and approach towards, the provision of places. This will ensure that the Council can meet its statutory duties for providing school places up to 2017/18.

The purpose of this document is to:

- set out the policies and principles of West Berkshire Council to ensure that there is a sufficient and diverse supply of suitable and good school places to meet statutory requirements for primary and secondary age provision;
- provide information on the current organisation of school places, and the existing capacities and number of pupils attending those schools;
- provide information about the capacity of existing school sites and identify opportunities that may exist for further expansion where required to meet housing demands; and
- provide forecasts of future pupil numbers, and how any increases might be accommodated, or how any surpluses could be addressed.

The Strategy includes data about present and predicted future pupil numbers, together with information about population estimates, mobility, school capacity, and changes to existing housing/new housing. It analyses changes in the number of school places and suggests where other changes may be necessary in the future. The Strategy also sets out the statutory framework for making changes such as opening, closing, amalgamating or enlarging schools.

The process of commissioning school places aims to achieve a balance between the number of places available and the number of pupils for whom they are required. In its strategic role, the Council must ensure there is a response to changes in demand over time by securing the increase or removal of capacity, which can be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- working in partnership to engage others in the provision of free schools or academies;
- extending the capacity at existing schools, either by the use of permanent extensions or, in exceptional cases, by modular buildings; or through changing the use of spaces;
- reducing places at existing schools, for example by removing or relocating modular buildings or changing the use of spaces;
- promoting the reorganisation of schools, including amalgamating, relocating or closing schools, changing the age range or range of special needs of the school;
- reviewing and re-aligning catchment areas

Many of these changes take time to achieve, bearing in mind the need to consult the school (governors, staff and parents) and the community, secure relevant approvals, obtain capital

resources, plan, design, seek tenders and carry out building work. There is likely, therefore, to be a significant planning period that has to be included in the forward planning process.

Also, short term solutions are sometimes required.

In making decisions, the Council works closely with other stakeholders to ensure that there is a balance of provision between community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, Free Schools and Academies.

The range of educational provision for children and young people is now both broad and complex in terms of the number of providers involved, and also their roles. Indeed the Council has parallel responsibilities as both direct provider and also as commissioner of other providers.

2 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION

Our vision is to keep West Berkshire a great place in which to live, learn, work and do business.

To achieve this, we want the vulnerable in our communities to be cared for and supported. We want to promote a vibrant district and our economy to prosper. We want our young people to fulfil their potential. We want people to be able to enjoy our towns, villages, green spaces and countryside.

The Schools and Early Years Place Strategy 2013 – 2018 contributes to the West Berkshire Council vision, and to the key priority area in relation to enabling children and young people in West Berkshire to fulfil their potential.

3 CONTEXT

West Berkshire has previously experienced steady pupil numbers with minimal growth, except in specific urban areas such as Newbury and Thatcham. However, the Local Authority (LA) experienced a significant increase in applications for places for September 2012. In common with other LAs across the Country, the numbers applying for places exceeded expected levels and required urgent pro-active measures to ensure that the Council's statutory responsibilities to offer places by the April 2012 deadline could be achieved.

The context for place planning has shifted over the last 12-18 months, due to the complex interaction of a range of factors, including:

- rapid growth in the number of children approaching statutory school age;
- the economic downturn and its effect on child yield from housing;
- children who previously used private education returning to maintained provision;
- returning service families from abroad; and
- impact of sudden growth on neighbouring LAs reducing the success of cross-LA border applications, and resulting in pupil numbers which previously went out of LA remaining within the LA area.

These factors have had a significant impact on school place planning and the existing model was no longer fit for purpose. Following a project to develop a new model and methodology,

the Schools Place Strategy has been developed and provides an essential framework for effective planning within this context, and provides key partners, in particular schools, with trends and data to inform their future decision-making. It is the intention to update the Appendices to the Strategy every year and review the continuing relevance of the over-arching principles.

Judgements about how best to manage school places across West Berkshire are not only concerned with ensuring that there are sufficient places available, but also about enhancing the quality of provision where surplus places are considered for removal and promoting the highest possible standards where additional places are required. **Effective school organisation ensures the right number of good schools, which are educationally and financially viable, of the right size and in the right locations.**

This document is not intended to identify changes that are required in specific schools. However, within the framework provided by it, the Local Authority and other providers can subsequently develop specific proposals to address the priorities that have been identified.

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE MANAGING THE SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES

3.1 Population of West Berkshire

The 2011 Census puts the population of West Berkshire at 153,800 people. The previous (2001) census counted the population of West Berkshire to be 144,483. Therefore, the population of West Berkshire has grown by 6% over the last decade (or just over 9,000 people). This is slightly lower than the regional and national rate of growth and broadly similar to the Berkshire average.

Significantly for school and early years planning, the growth includes a rise of just over 1,500 people aged 0-19 between 2001-2011.

% change in population 2001-11			
Age	West Berkshire	Berkshire	South East
0-4	14%	24%	13%
5-11	-3%	1%	-4%
12-16	3%	2%	4%
17-19	4%	7%	15%
20-39	-10%	0%	-1%
40-64	16%	15%	15%
65+	23%	13%	13%
Total	6%	8%	8%

Almost two thirds of the population live in settlements on the western Reading fringe and along the Kennet valley. The largest urban area in the district is Newbury / Thatcham, where a third of West Berkshire residents live. Just under a fifth of people live in the suburban area to the west of Reading borough. Other significant towns in the district are Hungerford and Theale.

3.2 Schools in West Berkshire

There are 82 schools in West Berkshire

Schools	Local Authority	Academy	Free school
Nursery (3-4)	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Primary – infant (4-7)	8	0	0
Primary – junior (8-11)	7	0	0
Primary – all through (4-11)	51	0	0
Sub-total	66	0	0
Pupil Referral Unit	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Secondary	5	5	0
Sub-total	5	5	0
Special (2-19)	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Total	77	5	0

West Berkshire has a diverse range of provision. Of the 82 schools, 34 have a religious character:

Schools	Church of England	Roman Catholic
Voluntary Controlled schools (primary)	20	
Voluntary Aided schools (primary)	11	3
Total	31	3

There is one secondary Voluntary Aided school, without a religious character, and there is also a secondary Foundation school.

All secondary schools have a 6th form.

All secondary schools have a specialism (see table 10)

3.3 Summary of the School Population

The table below shows the number of pupils in the different types of schools (as at 30 July 2012). Appendix D shows the location of maintained schools and academies in West Berkshire.

Type of School	Count	%
Academy	5111	22.89%
Infant	1127	5.05%
Junior	1263	5.66%
Nursery	65	0.29%
Primary	8200	36.72%
Pupil Referral Unit	53	0.24%
Secondary	6221	27.86%
Special	293	1.31%
Total	22333	100.00%

- The number on roll at West Berkshire's primary schools was 22,333, comprising 10,774 pupils at primary school, 9,604 pupils at secondary school, and 1,955 pupils in 6th form (see Table 1 for more detail).
- The largest group is primary school pupils in maintained schools (36.72%). Secondary pupils in maintained secondary schools (27.86%) and in secondary academies (22.89%) make up over half of the pupil population. (see Table 2)
- There is a broadly equal split between girls (49.64%) and boys (50.36%) (See Table 3).
- Appendix A shows the number of pupils by the National Curriculum Year Group and by Gender.
- There are 3,630 children with Special Educational Needs, comprising 1808 pupils at primary schools, 1,662 pupils at secondary schools and 160 pupils in 6th form. (See Table 4)
- Appendix C shows the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs by National Curriculum Year Group.
- There are 60 Looked After Children in the care of the LA (See Table 5)
- There are 2,735 children receiving free school meals (see Table 6)
- There are 224 children from Service Families (See Table 7).
- In terms of ethnicity, 88.95% of pupils are white. The next largest ethnic group is mixed/dual background (4.04%) and Asian/Asian British (2.31%). (See Table 8)
- Appendix B shows the ethnicity of groups of pupils by type of school
- There are 63 pupils with Gypsy, Roma Traveller heritage (See Table 9).
- There are also 13 independent schools in West Berkshire, covering primary, secondary and special education. Their pupil numbers are not reflected in this report.

- There are no single sex maintained schools or academies in West Berkshire. Some independent schools are single sex schools.
- There are no grammar schools in West Berkshire.

4 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The White Paper *The importance of teaching* states that the Local Authority has a key role to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools and should focus on supplying enough good spaces rather than reducing surplus places.

4.1 New schools

The Education Act 2011 made changes to the arrangements for the establishment of new schools by introducing a presumption that when local authorities set up new schools they will be Academies or Free schools.

The key points are:

- LAs must continue to plan for and secure sufficient schools for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.
- Where the LA identifies the need to establish a new school, the Education Act 2011 includes a 'presumption' for an academy/Free School, and requires LAs to seek proposals to establish an academy/Free School in the first instance. The LA is also required to notify the DfE at the outset of its intention to seek proposals.
- LAs should assess the proposals they receive against the criteria before forwarding all of the proposals to the Secretary of State, who will take into consideration any preference they indicate. If the LA is unable to identify a suitable Academy provider, the Secretary of State will work with them to find one.
- LAs can no longer hold a school competition without the Secretary of State's consent, nor enter their own community or foundation school proposals into a competition.
- Despite the academy/Free School presumption, in certain exceptional circumstances it is still possible to publish proposals for a new maintained school outside of a competition, under sections 10 or 11 of the EIA 2006.
- The Secretary of State's consent is no longer required to publish certain proposals, including those for the establishment of new voluntary aided schools, primary schools resulting from infant/junior amalgamations, and new schools resulting from the reorganisation of existing faith provision.
- 'Academy' is the legal term which also includes Free Schools of all types, University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and some Studio Schools, including 16 to 19 and alternative provision (PRU) establishments. 'Academy/Free School' is the collective term for these types of schools.
- 'Proposer' refers to the body or group that is proposing the new school.

This legislation will have a significant impact on the role of the LA as the strategic commissioner of school places. Academies are responsible for setting their own admission number, and thus capacity, with the agreement of the Secretary of State. The LA will seek to

work in partnership with existing and new providers to secure a wide range of education options for parents and families, whilst ensuring that there are sufficient good school places.

The legislation will also have significant financial implications, in that the 'presumption' for an academy/Free School also includes an expectation that the LA will provide the site and all of the capital funding needed to establish the school. It is also clear from recent Government reviews and announcements that the overall level of capital funding to support strategic educational and school organisation priorities will be greatly reduced and will need to be focussed on the condition of schools and addressing basic need for places.

The Academies Act 2010 enabled more schools to convert to Academies, without always needing a sponsor. The Education Act 2011 expands the programme to allow the establishment of 16-19 Academies and alternative provision Academies.

Capital funding for the basic need for new pupil places in all government-funded schools, including academies, because of local demographic changes, is allocated to LAs according to the relative need for new places, based on forecast data provided by LAs. In deciding where to use basic need funding to provide additional places, LAs are expected to consider fairly both their maintained schools and local academies, and where the additional places will be of greatest benefit to their children.

West Berkshire has 5 secondary academies (as at September 2012).

5 FACTORS AFFECTING DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES IN WEST BERKSHIRE

5.1 Current School demand and capacity (September 2012 intake)

The primary school applications for September 2012 exceeded not only the projected pupil numbers, but also significantly exceeded the maximum number of places available. 2018 primary school places were allocated, against a previously agreed maximum capacity for West Berkshire of 1876. This represents 142 additional school places above the (previous) West Berkshire maximum capacity, and 320 places above the school place data projections.

To achieve this increase in capacity, a significant number of schools have been allocated additional pupils (but without breaking class sizes legislation), and in a small number of schools, significant numbers have been allocated above the agreed Admissions Number using our exceptional circumstances powers and resulting in a capital financial impact of meeting these basic need requirements.

In secondary schools, 2012 saw a smaller cohort than usual, representing a drop in secondary aged pupils to 1603, compared to 1686 in 2011. Overall, therefore in September 2012, there were 186 surplus secondary spaces in West Berkshire. Early indications (taken from initial applications) are that the 2013 cohort will also be smaller.

The increases at primary level in September 2012, if sustained, would lead to considerable pressure in secondary places in due course. The section on housing developments (6.5) also highlights how housing developments will impact on secondary places.

5.2 Primary School Planning Areas

There are 10 primary school planning areas in West Berkshire (listed in Appendix E). The areas are based on an historical analysis between the geographical area where children live, and the schools they attend. Each planning area is relatively small with between 4 and 8

schools. This allows the LA to closely monitor pupil projections at a local level as well as looking at the overall West Berkshire demographic picture. Data Dashboards are available for each Planning Area. Each data dashboard shows:

- School capacity compared to admissions and projected admissions (with housing and without housing developments) for 2013-2018.
- Capacity versus admissions
- Cross border movement
- Individual school forecasts (with housing)
- Comparison of Number on Roll (NOR) with and without housing.

5.3 Secondary School Place Planning

There are 10 secondary schools in West Berkshire. There is not a direct correlation between the primary school Planning Areas and a secondary school, and pupils from multiple planning areas comprise the cohort for secondary schools. However, there are some strong correlations between an individual primary school and a local secondary school, due to location.

5.4 Housing growth

The Core Strategy sets out a long term vision for West Berkshire to 2026 translated into spatial terms, setting out proposals for where development will go, and how this development will be built. An aim of the Core Strategy is to deliver 10,500 homes across West Berkshire by 2026 in accordance with the South East Plan.

The Education Infrastructure Development Plan considers the educational impact of the potential sites within the Core Strategy and outlines how growth in housing, and the number of children that might come from housing developments (known as child yield) would be educated.

There are issues throughout West Berkshire related to the ability of existing school infrastructure to cope with the proposed increase in population. The provision of appropriate education infrastructure has become a significant issue in determining where new housing development is located. Many primary and secondary schools in West Berkshire are at capacity or nearing capacity and this issue is being carefully considered through the Core Strategy process to ensure additional school capacity to accommodate development

Housing development data is based on planning applications. Developments may have permission but may not be initiated, and sometimes planning permission can be renewed for a number of years before building commences. Sometimes planned developments are never enacted.

Due to the fluidity to any housing development plans, and taking account of the lead-in time required for school place provision, the data dashboards allow a comparison of projections which shows both scenarios – with or without the planned developments. The complexity is in balancing the probability of developments coming online, and the estimates of child yield affecting education provision over the period of the Core Strategy.

Potential development areas	No. of potential dwellings (period to 2026)	Child yield (potential number of pupils to 2026)
Newbury	2100-2400	1020
Thatcham	180-300	133
Eastern Urban areas	500-600	266
Theale	80-120	53
Burghfield Common	140-180	80
Mortimer	140-180	80
Woolhampton	20-40	18
Pangbourne	140-180	80
Lambourn	140-180	80
Hungerford	250-500	222
Chieveley	20-40	18
Cold Ash	20-40	18
Compton	100-150	66
Great Shefford	20-40	18
Hermitage	20-40	18
Kintbury	20-40	18
Total		2188

5.5 Cross Border Movement

Cross border movement refers to the distances and patterns of transportation undertaken by West Berkshire resident children to attend schools on a daily basis.

	Pupils coming in to West Berkshire to attend school	Pupils going to schools outside of West Berkshire
Hampshire	85	189
Oxfordshire	25	67
Reading	777	154
Wokingham	11	32
Total	898	442

West Berkshire has a significant level of inward mobility, notably from Reading and notably in our secondary schools on that border. There is a reliance on this cross-border provision by Reading Council and as the increase in primary numbers in West Berkshire translates to secondary places over time, both Councils need to plan for the potential that the inward mobility patterns may change. This is a serious risk which will be addressed as a priority.

The numbers in relation to outward migration are also significant. For example, if pressure on pupil places meant the West Berkshire resident children could not get their choice of place outside our borders, West Berkshire would still have a statutory responsibility to find a school place. In some areas, such as Hungerford, this would create a significant problem as places may have been planned taking into account the balance in numbers of historical inward and outward mobility.

5.6 Troop movement in and out of West Berkshire

There are plans for troop movement in relation to the cohort residing in Hermitage. This will result in a drop in pupils and, depending on the timing and how that links to the allocation of

budgets under the new Funding regime for schools, this could have a significant effect on the small schools in that area. However, a different cohort of personnel may move into Hermitage within a relatively short time, and assessment is underway to determine whether the likely child yield from a new cohort will result in a change from the existing child yield numbers for that housing development.

5.7 Changes in the pattern of participation in state school education

The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning, requiring them to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015.

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does not mean young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

It is likely that there will be some increase in young people staying on in secondary schools. When considering how the Council would accommodate the current increase in primary age children into the secondary sector in due course, the potential increase in post-16 pupils and the accommodation requirements associated with their provision also needs to be taken into account.

There is also some evidence that a higher percentage of children are being educated in the state sector rather than independent schools. This appears to be affecting some schools more than others: in particular, some are reporting that previous patterns of children transferring from the state to independent sector at key ages have changed.

5.8 School Size

School size is becoming an increasingly important factor in discussions concerning school effectiveness, particularly those concerning cost-effectiveness. School sizes are often referred to in terms of a number of Forms of Entry (FE). Each Form of Entry is regarded as referring to a group of 30 pupils admitted as a single year group; therefore a 1FE school would admit and contain a maximum of 30 pupils at the normal point of entry and in each year group. Schools, depending on their capacity, may be able to admit multiples of this figure each year, including half forms of entry where appropriate (i.e. 1.5 FE = 45 pupils).

The rural / urban split across the West Berkshire area means that there is not a standard pattern of provision in terms of size of school. This allows for variability and flexibility to match number of school places to local conditions. In recent years, some schools have expanded slightly to accommodate more numbers, within the constraints of the school site, and taking into account the need to maintain the standards and ethos of the school.

The size of a school is aligned to the Pupil Admission Number based on the net capacity of the school. The emphasis is on the provision of schools of sufficient size for financial sustainability, and which deliver the high quality educational provision.

The Council promotes all through primary schools (4-11 years) in order to provide smoother transitions between the primary phases of education. An all through school provides for:

- A fully integrated curriculum;

- Fully integrated arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision;
- A smooth transition for pupils transferring from infant to junior departments;
- A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two.
- Greater opportunity for staff development

Special schools need to be of a sufficient size to provide the necessary opportunities for the needs of the range of pupils they admit, and to be able to act as resource/outreach centres for other schools and pupils. Their optimum size will depend on the age range of pupils and the types of special educational needs that they cater for. The LA has two special schools which take children with severe/profound/multiple learning difficulties across the age range of 2-19 years. In cases where the type of special educational needs cannot be met within the LA, the appropriate special school or special setting is sourced in other Local Authorities.

6 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

West Berkshire's strategic principles for place planning and school organisation are:

- To respond to **parental preference** and, where feasible, to enable popular and successful schools to expand
- To respond to predicted numbers and ensure an **appropriate number of places** are available in the **right locations**
- To recognise the rural nature of West Berkshire, and to **maintain small rural schools** where it is educationally and financially viable to do so.
- To **review the future of schools that are at risk** of becoming unviable due to low pupil numbers and the impact on financial sustainability and/or with low standards

6.1 Parental Preference

In 2012, of the West Berkshire resident applicants for primary places were offered, with 84% being offered their first preference (compared to 79% in 2011). This was despite the significant increase in applications for places for September 2012.

Total West Berkshire Applicants	%
Offered 1st Preference	84
Offered 2nd Preference	8
Offered 3rd Preference	3
Offered a Preference	95
Diverted to a non preference school	5

The secondary place figures for September 2012 were:

Total West Berkshire Applicants	%
Offered 1st Preference	90
Offered 2nd Preference	7
Offered 3rd Preference	1
Offered a Preference	98
Diverted to a non preference school	2

Parental preference is very fluid and can be influenced by a range of factors including recent Ofsted Inspection outcomes, change of headteacher or other key staff, or community view about the ethos of the school. Therefore, parental choice trends are difficult to predict.

However, there are some schools which are historically popular, and wherever possible the Council supports popular schools to expand. Decisions about expansion are not solely based on pupil demand, though and also take account of the impact of expansion on the culture and ethos of the school and on the delivery of high quality education.

We will seriously consider and explore the expansion of popular schools with the school's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, where it is feasible to do so, and where the expansion relates to basic need provision.

6.2 Appropriate number of places in the right locations

Empty school places are a problem because they can lead to the wasting of scarce resources that could otherwise be invested in teaching and learning facilities. This impacts differentially on schools' viability, so that those that are seen as unpopular, decline in numbers and their budgets reduce accordingly. This in turn, may affect their ability to raise standards and effectively manage resources.

West Berkshire Council aims to minimise the number of surplus or empty places by keeping the level of places as close as possible to the current and forecast number of pupils. Some spare capacity may be retained where we expect to see a rise in pupil numbers in the medium term.

Pupil numbers on roll that exceed capacity by 10% or more can lead to large class sizes, overused specialist spaces and dissatisfied parents. Overcrowding does not tend to arise at Infant or key stage one level because Infant Class Size legislation (Standards and Framework Act 1998) has capped their class sizes at no more than 30 pupils.

The adverse effects of overcrowding will be more acutely felt in schools with undersized classrooms and more challenging pupils. One result of schools filling to or beyond capacity is the pressure this places on the space at the school, which disproportionately impacts on the ability to provide designated quiet zones for children with additional needs. This can sometimes be balanced by greater budget flexibility to meet need.

In April 2012, there were 1,993 applications for places for the primary school intake for September 2012. This number exceeded the existing capacity in West Berkshire schools, and a number of additional measures had to be put in place to accommodate the children applying for a place. This included negotiating with headteachers on intake numbers and using available accommodation across all schools to meet demand. A place for every new pupil was

achieved without breaking the statutory rules on class sizes. However, there were just 25 surplus places remaining at the time of allocation. By September 2012, due to late applications the cohort had risen to 2018 pupils.

To retain an efficient balance between the demand and supply of school places, the Audit Commission's recommends aiming to fill at least 90% of the overall number of places and 90% of places within each planning area. Where there are 25% or more surplus places in any school this problem should be addressed.

We will maintain a sufficient level of surplus places to accommodate minor fluctuations in pupil numbers. This is defined as between 5-10% overall surplus places across West Berkshire maintained schools and academies, and between 5-10% in each planning area for primary provision. This may include changes to the published admission number for annual pupil intake, and the development of new schools to accommodate basic need provision.

6.3 Maintain small rural schools

Due to its rural nature West Berkshire has a significant number of small schools. The Council recognises the value that these schools bring to their local communities and is committed to maintaining these schools, where it is financially viable to do so. Many small schools are working collaboratively to enhance the range of educational opportunities which are available to their pupils.

The Audit Commission defines a small primary school as one with less than 100 pupils and a small secondary school as one with fewer than 600 pupils or fewer than 700 if it has a sixth form. Smaller schools tend to be more expensive to run than larger ones as they generally have higher unit costs. On the basis of the Audit Commission's definition, 20 primary schools (30%) in West Berkshire would be considered small schools. There is only one small secondary school in West Berkshire.

The Council conducted a Small Schools Review in 2010 for primary schools with less than 100 registered pupils. The outcomes of the review were:

- Review of the funding formula and small schools' funding
- Encourage schools to explore the benefits of affiliations, creative partnerships and federations (structural and non-structural) where appropriate.
- Encourage the sharing of capacity and resources e.g. business managers and curriculum expertise
- Establish a broad set of criteria that would trigger a support and viability review to consider the best way forward for a school. These criteria would include pupil numbers and trends, standards, finance and Head teacher/staff recruitment issues.
- Develop an accommodation entitlement schedule, and assess schools against this. Deficiency to be added to capital programme criteria
- Develop a means by which innovative building solutions can be shared and school based projects can be offered project management support
- Review the feasibility of cooking meals on all sites

- Work with schools to promote and share community links

The implications of the Government Funding Review on small schools, which comes into effect in April 2013, will be significant, as some of the protections that were previously in place are no longer allowable,. This makes pupil numbers even more critical as the majority of funding is generated in the formula through pupil numbers, rather than other factors.

We will work in partnership with small schools (and the diocese where appropriate as many are CE schools), in order to determine arrangements which will support the school to remain viable and offer a high quality education to children in rural locations. This may include collaborative working with other schools, such as the use of Executive Headteacher across more than one school, small school federations, or sharing of expertise and resources.

6.4 Review the future of schools that are at risk

Due to the factors outlined in Section 6 and 7, the demand for places in an individual school, or in a place planning area, can fluctuate. This could be purely due to demographics, or affected by parental preferences or other factors such as the outcome of an Ofsted Inspection. Whilst minor fluctuations can often be accommodated, trends which show a falling number or a stagnant low number of pupils on roll, and/or a large number of surplus places can be a cause for concern.

A school could be at risk of becoming unviable due to continuing low pupil numbers which would impact on the financial sustainability of the school. Equally, where a school's standards are low in comparison to West Berkshire and national averages, the Council would provide intensive support to improve the quality of education that is provided.

Where a school is at risk due to low pupil numbers or low standards, the Council will undertake a formal review to determine the most appropriate solution to ensure that pupils in that community receive a high quality education.

7 SCHOOL FORECAST METHODOLOGY

The purpose of forecasting pupil numbers is to satisfy statutory obligations to meet Basic Need (demand for additional school places) and to assess the extent to which a surplus or deficit of places is likely to exist throughout the county in the future. Forecasts for individual schools also enable the headteacher and governors of a school to plan for the future both financially and on a curriculum basis.

Pupil numbers in West Berkshire schools are closely monitored. Schools are required to complete a census return for the Department for Education (DfE) each October, January and April. This provides a description of numbers of pupils on roll and the October census is used to generate school budgets.

Pupil forecasts predict numbers on roll at each school for five years into the future. Forecasts are updated annually through the use of a statistical place planning model, and are based on a range of factors including School Census data, population forecasts (which include

calculations of the number of children which may be generated by planned housing developments), migration and mobility patterns and recent patterns of parental choice. The Council is pursuing access to GP data which has the potential to improve the accuracy of place planning projections.

The Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018 summarises the position to date, and outlines the strategic principles and actions underpinning the planning of school places. The Strategy encompasses all West Berkshire schools and academies, except independent schools, as per the statutory responsibility for the provision of school places in West Berkshire, and addresses the complex balance of creating sufficient places whilst operating within tight capital constraints, without over-provision. Further work is being done to ensure that, by the next refresh in Spring 2014, the Strategy will include Early Years Place Planning.

8 DATA PROJECTION HEADLINES AND KEY ACTIONS

Primary

- Overall – There is capacity when assessed across all year groups between 2012/2013 and 2015/2016, although the capacity is shrinking and there is little tolerance for any differences between projections and actuals.
- Overall - Shortfall of places from September 2016 onwards
- Overall – the shortfall of places increases when housing is taken into account
- Without housing - 6 of the 10 Areas have less than 5% surplus places for the whole planning period.
- With housing – the lack of capacity increases in the same 6 Areas
- There are plans already in place to increase capacity in some of the Areas highlighted, such as Thatcham.
- It is expected that the Sandleford development will include two primary schools, and therefore this will increase capacity within the Newbury area, but the expected child yield from the development will use up the capacity that has been generated. Newbury will also be affected by the Racecourse development, and this will remove surplus places.
- The lead-in time for increasing capacity means that action need to be taken urgently to plan to resolve the issues which will surface by the middle of the planning period.
- For 2012 and 2013, there are larger cohorts for September intake than before.
- The total capacity for primary schools for the September intake is 1882, which was not sufficient in 2012 or 2013. However, overall projections for the tail end of the planning period show the numbers reducing to within capacity.
- Within this total capacity there will be Planning Areas which have significant pressure for places, and this may affect the ability of the Council to meet parental preferences. The issue would be that there are enough spaces overall, but they may not be in the right locations, and therefore pupils may have to travel to a school which does have spaces. Not only does this affect parental confidence, but it has the potential to increase home to school transport costs.

- The increase in pupil numbers over the planning period will mean that careful attention is required of the likely primary and secondary pupils from 2018/2019 onwards.

Secondary

- Overall – There is capacity when assessed across all year groups, although numbers do rise over the planning period
- Large numbers of Reading pupils access West Berkshire secondary provision, and more work will be done with Reading Council to assess the likely impact from their place planning projections.
- The number of 6th form pupils continues to rise over the planning period, possibly in response to the Raising the Participation Age agenda,
- As with primary schools, there are popular schools which will have significant pressure for places, and this may affect the ability of the Council to meet parental preferences. The issue would be that there are enough spaces overall, but they may not be in the right locations, and therefore pupils may have to travel to a school which does have spaces. Not only does this affect parental confidence, but it has the potential to increase home to school transport costs.

Once the refresh of the data has been completed, an Action Plan will be put in place to address the confirmed issues arising from the analysis and in line with the strategic principles of this Strategy. Throughout any change process within a Place Planning Areas, schools (including governors) will be fully included in the discussions and be able to comment on and influence proposals at an early stage.

9 REFERENCE

9.1 Table 1 - Number of Pupils on Roll (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Number on Roll	%
Foundation	2403	10.76%
Year 1	1780	7.97%
Year 2	1283	5.74%
Year 3	1720	7.70%
Year 4	1703	7.63%
Year 5	1566	7.01%
Year 6	319	1.43%
Sub-total	10774	
Secondary		
Year 7	1954	8.75%
Year 8	1939	8.68%
Year 9	1964	8.79%
Year 10	2017	9.03%
Year 11	1730	7.75%
Sub-total	9604	
6th form		
Year 12	1244	5.57%
Year 13	706	3.16%
Year 14	5	0.02%
Sub-total	1955	
TOTAL	22333	100.00%

9.2 Table 2 - Numbers of Pupils on Roll, by Type of School (as at 30 July 2012)

Type of School	Count	%
Academy	5111	22.89%
Infant	1127	5.05%
Junior	1263	5.66%
Nursery	65	0.29%
Primary	8200	36.72%
Pupil Referral Unit	53	0.24%
Secondary	6221	27.86%
Special	293	1.31%
Total	22333	100.00%

9.3 Table 3 - Number of Pupils on Roll, by Gender (as at 30 July 2012)

Gender	Count	%
Male	11248	50.36%
Female	11085	49.64%
Total	22333	100.00%

9.4 Table 4 - Children with Special Educational Needs (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	255	7.02%
Year 1	240	6.61%
Year 2	220	6.06%
Year 3	313	8.62%
Year 4	329	9.06%
Year 5	354	9.75%
Year 6	97	2.67%
Sub-total	1808	49.81%
Secondary		
Year 7	366	10.08%
Year 8	375	10.33%
Year 9	353	9.72%
Year 10	327	9.01%
Year 11	241	6.64%
Sub-total	1662	45.79%
6th form		
Year 12	100	2.75%
Year 13	59	1.63%
Year 14	1	0.03%
Sub-total	160	4.41%
TOTAL	3630	100%

9.5 Table 5 - Looked After Children (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	1	1.67%
Year 1	6	10.00%
Year 2	3	5.00%
Year 3	3	5.00%
Year 4	5	8.33%
Year 5	2	3.33%
Year 6	0	0.00%
Sub-total	20	33%
Secondary		
Year 7	4	6.67%
Year 8	8	13.33%
Year 9	9	15.00%
Year 10	5	8.33%
Year 11	11	18.33%
Sub-total	37	62%
6th form		
Year 12	3	5.00%
Year 13	0	0.00%
Sub-total	3	5%
TOTAL	60	100%

9.6 Table 6 - Children receiving Free School Meals, by Type of School (as at 30 July 2012)

Type of School	Count	%
Academies	576	21.06%
Infant	120	4.39%
Junior	182	6.65%
Nursery	16	0.59%
Primary	1056	38.61%
Pupil Referral Unit	16	0.59%
Secondary	666	24.35%
Special	103	3.77%
Total	2735	100.00%

9.7 Table 7 - Children from Service Families (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	32	14.29%
Year 1	24	10.71%
Year 2	9	4.02%
Year 3	26	11.61%
Year 4	13	5.80%
Year 5	16	7.14%
Year 6	1	0.45%
Sub-total	121	54.02%
Secondary		
Year 7	22	9.82%
Year 8	21	9.38%
Year 9	24	10.71%
Year 10	15	6.70%
Year 11	13	5.80%
Sub-total	95	42.41%
6th form		
Year 12	7	3.13%
Year 13	1	0.45%
Sub-total	8	3.57%
TOTAL	224	100%

9.8 Table 8 - Pupils on Roll, by Ethnicity and Gender (as at 30 July 2012)

Ethnicity Group	Female	Male	Total
Asian or Asian British	1.11%	1.20%	2.31%
Black or Black British	0.64%	0.60%	1.24%
Chinese	0.17%	0.19%	0.36%
Mixed / Dual Background	2.07%	1.97%	4.04%
Information Not Yet Obtained	1.07%	0.89%	1.96%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.21%	0.26%	0.46%
Refused	0.35%	0.32%	0.67%
White	44.02%	44.93%	88.95%
Total	49.64%	50.36%	100.00%

9.9 Table 9 - Pupils with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage (as at 30 July 2012)

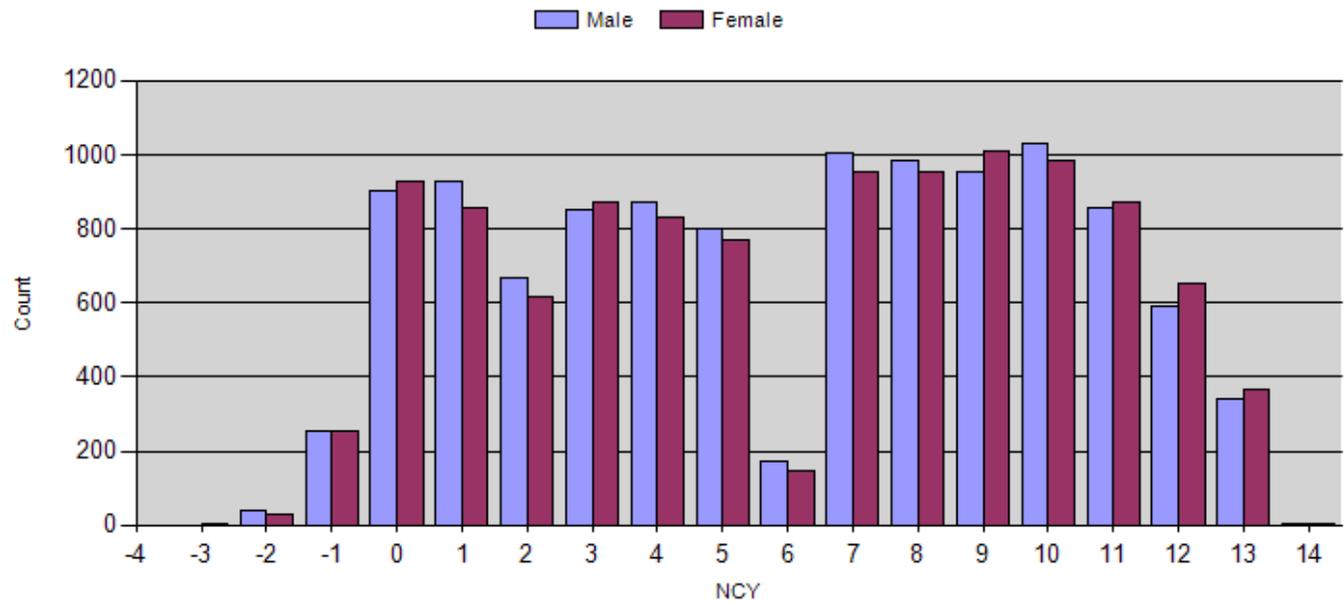
Primary	Count	%
Foundation	16	25.40%
Year 1	6	9.52%
Year 2	2	3.17%
Year 3	4	6.35%
Year 4	8	12.70%
Year 5	7	11.11%
Year 6	2	3.17%
Sub-total	45	71.43%
Secondary		
Year 7	4	6.35%
Year 8	6	9.52%
Year 9	5	7.94%
Year 10	1	1.59%
Year 11	1	1.59%
Sub-total	17	26.98%
6th form		
Year 12	1	1.59%
Year 13	0	0.00%
Sub-total	1	1.59%
TOTAL	63	100%

9.10 Table 10 – Secondary School Specialist Status

School	Specialist Status
Denefield School	Technology and Training
The Downs School	Languages
John O’Gaunt Community Technology College	Technology
Kennet School	Technology, Theatre Arts and Modern Foreign languages
Little Heath School	Science and Maths
Park House School and Sports College	Sports
St Bartholemew’s School	Business and Enterprise
Theale Green Community School	Arts and Science
Trinity School	Performing Arts
The Willink	Languages

10 APPENDIX A – No. of pupils by National Curriculum Year Group and Gender

School Population by Year Group and Gender



As at 30 July 2012

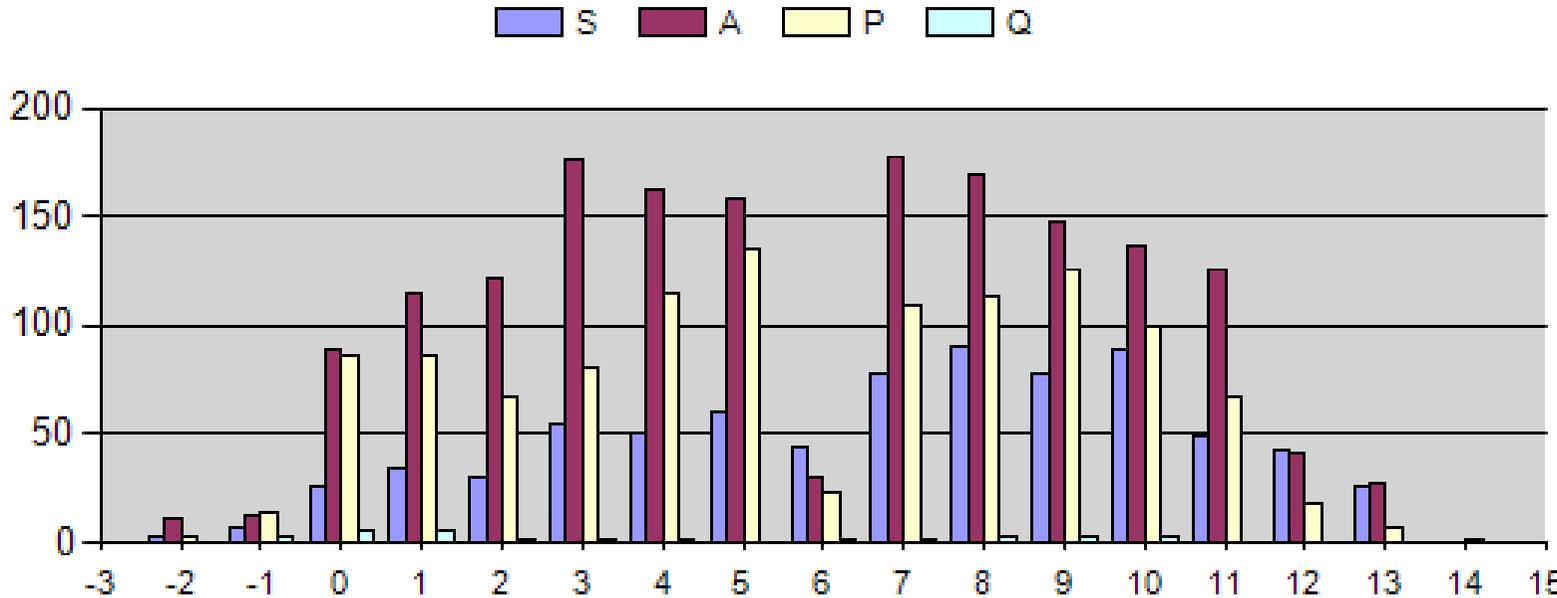
11 APPENDIX B – Ethnicity Group of Pupils by Type of School

Ethnicity Group	Academy	Infant	Junior	Nursery	Primary	Pupil Referral Unit	Secondary	Special
Asian or Asian British	0.51%	0.10%	0.10%	0.03%	1.00%	0.00%	0.48%	0.09%
Black or Black British	0.36%	0.07%	0.06%	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%	0.37%	0.04%
Chinese	0.12%	0.03%	0.02%	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.08%	0.00%
Mixed / Dual Background	0.72%	0.26%	0.23%	0.00%	1.62%	0.00%	1.15%	0.06%
Information Not Yet Obtained	0.41%	0.13%	0.03%	0.05%	0.67%	0.01%	0.66%	0.00%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.09%	0.04%	0.03%	0.01%	0.14%	0.00%	0.15%	0.01%
Refused	0.13%	0.04%	0.05%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00%	0.21%	0.03%
White	20.55%	4.39%	5.14%	0.20%	32.62%	0.23%	24.75%	1.08%
Total	22.89%	5.05%	5.66%	0.29%	36.72%	0.24%	27.86%	1.31%

As at 30 July 2012

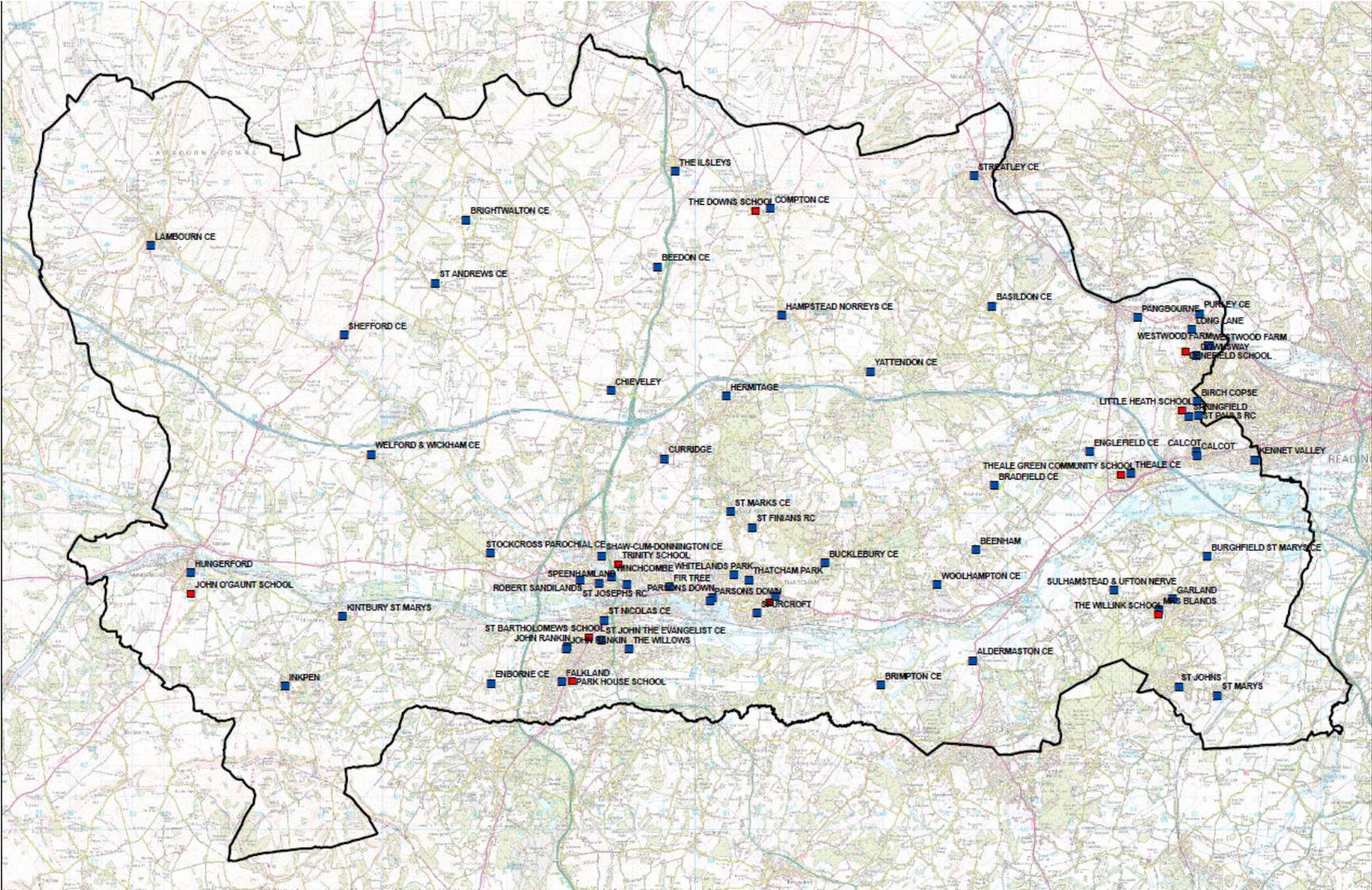
12 APPENDIX C – No. of pupils with SEN by National Curriculum Year Group

Numbers on Roll by NCY and SEN Stage



As at 30 July 2012

13 APPENDIX D – Map of location of Maintained schools and academies in West Berkshire



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14 APPENDIX E – Planning Areas for Primary Schools

Planning Area No.	No. of schools	School Names
1	4	Hungerford, Inkpen, Kintbury St Mary's, Lambourn
2	7	Brightwalton, Bucklebury. Chaddleworth, Shefford, Stockcross, The Ilsleys, Welford & Wickham
3	7	Enborne, Falkland, John Rankin Infant, John Rankin Junior, St John's, The Willows, St Nicolas
4	8	Cold Ash St Mark's, Francis Baily, Parsons Down Infant, Parson Down Junior, Spurcroft, Thatcham Park, Whitelands Park, St Finians
5	6	Fir Tree, Robert Sandilands, The Winchcombe, Shaw cum Donnington, Speenhamland, St Joseph's
6	8	Beedon, Chieveley, Compton, Curridge, Hampstead Norreys, Hermitage, Streatley, Yattendon
7	6	Burghfield St Mary's, Garland, Mortimer St John's, Mortimer St Mary's, Mrs Bland's, Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet
8	6	Birch Copse, Calcot Infant, Calcot Junior, Kennet Valley, Springfield, St Paul's
9	6	Downsway, Long Lane, Pangbourne, Purley, Westwood Farm Infant, Westwood Farm Junior
10	8	Aldermaston, Basildon, Beenham, Bradfield, Brimpton, Englefield, Theale, Woolhampton

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Title of Report:	Development of the Housing Allocations policy – progress report
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To update the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on the activity to date on the development of the Council's Housing Allocations policy.

Recommended Action: Note the contents of the report.

Task Group Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Dominic Boeck – Tel (01635) 869248
E-mail Address:	dboeck@westberks.gov.uk
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a request by the Executive, at its meeting of 10 January 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreed to assist in the development of a new policy for the allocation of social housing. This followed a significant shift in central government policy. On 21 February 2012, the OSMC further agreed that a small task group would be established to take forward the work.
- 1.2 This report sets out the work that has been undertaken to date by the task group, the intended time line for future activity and invites comment on the draft policy.

2. Task Group membership

- 2.1 The task group comprises Councillors Dominic Boeck, Garth Simpson and Tony Vickers. Councillor Boeck has been elected Chairman.

3. Activity to date

- 3.1 Whilst officers in the Housing Service have been carrying out most of the work in the development of the new policy, the task group has been engaging with them at key points and has provided both challenge to and opinion on officers' proposals.
- 3.2 As previously advised, the task group met three times and have assisted in developing a detailed draft Housing Allocations Policy. This policy is at Appendix 1 for Members' comment. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the key changes proposed in the draft policy.

4. Future activity

- 4.1 The consultation on the draft Housing Allocations Policy commenced on 24th April 2013 and closes on 21st July 2013.
- 4.2 All applicants on the Common Housing Register have received or will receive a letter or e-mail advising them of the consultation and the links to the relevant web pages to find the policy documents and on-line survey. Hard copies can be provided upon request.
- 4.3 Similarly, all relevant agencies and organisations, for example, Social Services, Housing Associations and other stakeholders, have received an e-mail explaining about the consultation. The consultation is on the Council's Homechoice web page and has also been loaded onto Consultation Finder.
- 4.4 During the consultation period, officers will work with Locata to ensure that the system is capable of delivering the housing register and choice based lettings in line with the new policy. In addition, testing will be undertaken of the proposed housing needs pointing system to ensure that it achieves the outcomes anticipated by the new policy.
- 4.5 A further meeting of the task group will be held in August to review the consultation responses, along with the outcomes of the testing, with the final draft due for consideration and approval at Executive in October 2013.
- 4.6 Subject to Executive approval, the new Housing Allocations Policy will be implemented between November 2013 and January 2014.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission note the progress of the policy's development and comment on the draft as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Housing Allocations Policy

Appendix B – Allocations Consultation Summary

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Housing Allocations Policy

Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Created:	17 October 2012
Version:	2.0	Date Modified:	
Revision due			
Author:	Mel Brain	Sign & Date:	
Owning Service	Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding		
Equality Impact Assessment: (EIA)	Date undertaken:		
	Issues (if any):		

Chief Executive	Sign & Date:	
Corporate Director (Community Services)	Sign & Date:	
Corporate Director (Children & Young People)	Sign & Date:	
Corporate Director (Environment)	Sign & Date:	

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	16/01/2013	Amendments following officer and Member comments	
2			
3			



Contents

(NOTE: Update the contents list by right clicking anywhere over the text below – select ‘update field’ – select ‘update entire table’ – DELETE THIS NOTE BEFORE PRINTING)

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6. Failure to comply with WBC * Policy.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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Part One: Purpose and Context

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to explain the framework by which the Council will allocate social and affordable rent homes in West Berkshire. There are large numbers of people looking for accommodation in West Berkshire. The Council can only offer practical help to a very limited number of households. This document sets out the Council's priorities for assistance with finding a home.
- 1.2 The Executive approved the Housing Allocations Policy on [DATE TO BE INSERTED].

2. Applicability

- 2.1 This Policy applies to:
 - All applicants or potential applicants seeking housing through the Council's Common Housing Register (CHR) in West Berkshire
 - All Council Officers, Elected Members, Consultants, Agency staff and Contractors working for the Council, and external organisations working with the Council, who are involved in administering the Council's CHR or who are supporting applicants to make applications for housing through the CHR.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of each CHR applicant, employee and other person mentioned in Section 2.1 to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this Policy.
- 2.3 This document is published and is publicly available for reference and viewing.
- 2.4 This Policy has had consultation with applicants on the CHR, West Berkshire residents, relevant stakeholders, including Registered Providers; Social Services, and other agencies who are engaged in supporting applicants on the CHR; Elected Members; and relevant Council Officers.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The overall responsibility for the allocation of social and affordable rented accommodation through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system within WBC rests with the Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding. Whilst this Housing Allocations Policy provides an over-arching framework, it should be noted that each Registered Provider (RP) will have their own Allocations Policy which they will have regard to when deciding whether or not to make an offer of accommodation.
- 3.2 The responsibility for day-to-day management of the Housing Allocations Policy throughout West Berkshire Council rests with the Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding. They are also responsible for maintaining this Policy, for reviewing all other security policies and procedures and for providing advice and guidance on their implementation.

- 3.3 All managers are directly responsible for implementing this Policy and any sub policies and procedures within their service areas, and for the adherence of their staff and others (See Section 2.1).
- 3.4 All personnel detailed at 2.1 have an individual responsibility to adhere to this Policy and any relevant Standards and/or Procedures.

4. Review

- 4.1 WBC will review this Allocations Policy every five years or sooner if there is a legislative or policy impetus to do so. All material changes (i.e. changes that are not minor but constitute a significant change that could have an adverse impact on applicants) will be subject to formal consultation and Executive approval.

5. Housing in West Berkshire

- 5.1 West Berkshire is a very popular place to live. There are many different types of homes in the district, including homes to buy on the open market or through affordable home ownership schemes; homes to rent from a private landlord or housing associations; homes designed for particular groups, for example, sheltered housing for older people, or housing with on-site support.
- 5.2 Many people are looking for housing provided for rent by social landlords. We have an extremely limited supply of social and affordable rented housing: each year we expect there to be fewer than 10% of households on the CHR housed into social or affordable rented housing. There is also high turnover on the CHR, with around 50% of applications being removed every year and a similar number of new applications being added.
- 5.3 Of the properties let each year, usually many are suitable only for single people and couples, and there is a shortage of family homes with three or more bedrooms. The majority of people on the register will unfortunately not be offered a social housing tenancy, however long they wait; for them, waiting for a social or affordable rented home is unrealistic, and other options must be considered. This might include privately rented property, or moving out of the district.
- 5.4 West Berkshire is a non-stockholding local authority and we work with a variety of RPs. In order to allocate the properties fairly, West Berkshire operates a Common Housing Register (CHR), called Home Choice West Berkshire. All of the RPs participate in Home Choice West Berkshire so there is a single point of access for social and affordable rented accommodation within the district.
- 5.5 Affordable homes in West Berkshire are allocated through a choice based lettings (CBL) system This advertises vacant homes and applicants can then bid for properties that they are interested in. Bids are then shortlisted according to assessed housing needs points.
- 5.6 This Housing Allocations Policy aims to ensure West Berkshire District Council's Common Housing Register meets the needs of the housing applicants across the district. The scheme will be open and transparent allowing applicants to express choice and preference over where they live, which will promote the development of safer and more sustainable communities.

- 5.7 This Policy meets the legal requirement for the Council to provide a statement on choice and it adheres to the “Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England” (CLG, June 2012). For more information, go to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/allocationaccommodationguide>
- 5.8 The West Berkshire Housing Allocations Policy also sits within the framework of the West Berkshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Strategy.

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Part Two: Eligibility and Qualification

6. Eligibility to join the register

6.1 Eligibility for an allocation of accommodation is set nationally. The Secretary of State has the power to determine who is an eligible person and the regulations setting out which classes of person from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are set out in the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No. 1294) (the Eligibility Regulations)

6.2 The following categories of people are currently **ineligible**:

- A person subject to immigration control, unless s/he comes within a class prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State
- A person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control.

6.3 Persons Subject to Immigration Control

A 'person subject to immigration control' is defined in s.13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 as a person who requires leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom under the Immigration Act 1976 (whether or not such leave has been given).

6.3.1 The following categories of people do NOT require leave to enter or remain in the UK:

- i. British Citizens
- ii. Certain Commonwealth citizens with right of abode in the UK
- iii. Irish citizens who are not subject to immigration control in the UK because the Republic of Ireland forms part of the Common Travel Area
- iv. EEA nationals (i.e. nationals of any EU state (except the UK) and nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), and their family members, who have the right to reside in the UK derived from EU law. Whether an EEA national has the right to reside in the UK (or another Member State) will depend upon the circumstances, particularly their economic status (e.g. whether s/he is a worker, self-employed, a student or economically inactive)
- v. Persons exempt from immigration control under the Immigrations Acts, including diplomats and their family members based in the UK, and some military personnel

6.3.2 All other people will be a person subject to immigration control and will be ineligible for an allocation of accommodation unless they fall within a class of persons prescribed by regulation 3 of the Eligibility Regulations as set out below:

- i. *A person granted refugee status: granted five years limited leave to remain in the UK*
- ii. *A person granted exceptional or discretionary leave to enter or remain in the UK without condition that they or any dependents should make no recourse to public funds: granted for a limited period where there are compelling humanitarian or compassionate circumstances for allowing them to stay.*
- iii. *A person with current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation and who is habitually resident in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (the Common Travel Area: such a person will have indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or indefinite leave to remain (ILR) and is regarded as having settled status. However, where the ILE or ILR is granted as a result of an undertaking that a sponsor will be responsible for the applicant's maintenance and accommodation, the person must have been resident in the Common Travel Area for five years since the date of entry, or the date of sponsorship undertaking, whichever is later. Where all sponsors have died within the first five years, the applicant will be eligible.*
- iv. *A person who has humanitarian protection granted under the Immigration Rules: a form of leave granted to persons who do not qualify for refugee status but would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to their state of origin.*

6.4 Other persons from abroad who may be ineligible for an allocation

A person who is not subject to immigration control but who falls within one of the following descriptions is to be treated as a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation of accommodation:

- I. A person who is not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area unless they are:
 - i. An EEA national who is in the UK a worker
 - ii. An EEA national who is in the UK as a self-employed person
 - iii. A person who is treated as a worker for the purposes of regulation 6(1) of the EEA Regulations, pursuant to the Accession (Immigration and Worker Authorisation) Regulations 2006 (i.e. nationals of Bulgaria and Romania required to be authorised by the Home office to work until they have accrued 12 months uninterrupted authorised work)
 - iv. A person who is a family member of one of the three categories i-iii above
 - v. A person with a right to reside in the UK by virtue of Regulation 15(c), (d), or (e) of the EEA Regulations

vi. A person who left Montserrat after 1 November 1995 because of the effect of volcanic activity there

vii. A person who is in the UK as a result of his deportation, expulsion or other removal by compulsion of law from another country to the UK.

II. A person whose only right to reside in the UK is derived from his status as a jobseeker (or his status as the family of a jobseeker).

III. A person whose only right to reside in the UK is an initial right to reside for a period not exceeding three months under Regulation 13 of the EEA Regulations

IV. A person whose only right to reside in the Common Travel Area is a right equivalent to one of the rights mentioned in II or III above and which is derived from EU Treaty Rights.

6.4.1 A person who is no longer working or no longer in self-employment will retain his or her status as a worker or self-employed person in certain circumstances. Accession state workers requiring authorisation will generally only be treated as a worker when they are actually working as authorised and will not retain 'worker' status between jobs until they have accrued 12 months continuous authorised employment. 'Family member' does not include a person who is an extended family member who is treated as a family member by virtue of regulation 7 (3) of the EEA regulations.

6.4.2 The term 'habitual residence' is intended to convey a degree of permanence in the person's residence in the Common Travel Area. It implies an association between the individual and the place of residence and relies substantially on fact. Where it is suspected that an applicant has not been habitually resident in the Common Travel Area, the Housing Service will carry out an Habitual Residence Test to determine eligibility for an allocation of housing.

6.5 Further detail and information relating to eligibility can be found in the "Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England" (CLG, June 2012). For more information, go to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/allocationaccommodationguide>. The Housing Service will have regard to this guidance, and any subsequent guidance, when determining an applicant's eligibility for acceptance onto the CHR.

7. Qualification

7.1 As a result of the high demand for housing in the district, set against the limited supply, the Council has chosen to make use of the freedoms offered in the Localism Act 2011. In particular, the Council wishes to increase access for households who have a defined local connection to West Berkshire and who have insufficient financial resources to secure accommodation in the private sector themselves (whether in rented, part-owned or full home ownership).

7.2 *Qualifying households*

Subject to being eligible for an offer of accommodation (see Section 8 above), a household will qualify for the CHR if:

- They have been resident in West Berkshire for 6 months out of the last 12 months OR they have been resident in West Berkshire for 3 years out of the last five OR they have a parent or sibling who has lived in West Berkshire for 6 months out of the last 12 months OR they have a parent or sibling who has lived in West Berkshire for 3 years out of the last 5 year OR they have been employed in meaningful paid employment within the district, for 16 hours or more a week, for at least the last 6 months

AND

- They have insufficient resources to secure accommodation, whether rented, part-owned or owned in the private sector. This will normally mean that the household has an income of £60,000 or less and capital of £16,000 or less. Owner-occupiers will be considered to have sufficient resources to secure accommodation unless they are able to provide appropriate evidence that this is not the case

AND

- They are assessed as having a housing need that places them within one of the reasonable preference categories (see Section 11)

7.3 For the purposes of reporting, it is the Council's intention only to report on the number of applicants who are classed as 'qualifying applicants'.

7.4 *Deferred Households*

The Council has decided not to close the CHR, however, households who do not meet the qualifying criteria above will be classed as deferred households. They will be accepted onto the CHR and will be pointed, however, they will not be considered for an offer of accommodation until, and unless, all qualifying applicants have been exhausted on any particular shortlist.

7.5 *Sanctions*

The Council wishes to encourage financial responsibility and good neighbourliness. It will therefore apply the following sanctions in the following circumstances:

7.5.1 *Behaviour serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant:* If an applicant, or a member of their household, has committed an indictable offence in, or in the locality of, their home or have admitted (or have a finding of act made against them in a civil Court) that they have behaved in a way which is capable of causing nuisance and annoyance to other people in the locality, the application will be deferred. The applicant will need to demonstrate that there has been a significant change in circumstances, and be able to evidence that their behaviour has been suitably amended over a reasonable period of time (usually 12 months or five years in serious circumstances) and that there have been no repeat occurrences in order for the deferment to be lifted.

- 7.5.2 *Money is owed to the Council for a Rent-In-Advance and/or Rent Deposit Guarantee where no regular payments are being made:* if the applicant has been given financial assistance by the Council to facilitate access to private rented accommodation and is failing to adhere to the repayment plan, their application will be deferred. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have made and adhered to an agreed payment plan for a period of at least three months before the deferment will be lifted.
- 7.5.3 *Rent arrears that exceed eight weeks rent OR where no regular repayments are being made:* if the applicant has rent arrears that exceed eight weeks, or has rent arrears below eight weeks rent but has failed to enter into and adhere to a repayment plan, their application will be deferred. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have made and adhered to an agreed payment plan for a period of at least three months and/or that the arrears have been cleared or have been reduced below eight weeks rent before the deferment will be lifted.
- 7.5.4 *Deliberate Worsening of Circumstances:* where it is considered that an applicant has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances, their application will be pointed in accordance with the circumstances applicable before the worsening took place and will be deferred for a period of 12 months. At the end of the 12 month period, the application will be reassessed in accordance with the current circumstances and the deferment will be lifted.
- 7.5.5 *Refusal of three reasonable offers of accommodation:* where an applicant is made three reasonable offers of accommodation and refuses each offer, the application will be deferred for 12 months. An applicant is considered to refuse the property if they made the bid for it (either themselves or upon request via a member of staff) and a) they have been made a formal offer of accommodation which they then decline; or b) they would receive the formal offer of accommodation but tell the RP they do not wish to be considered, whether or not they have attended a viewing, before the RP has an opportunity to make the offer.
- 7.5.6 *Violence and Abuse Towards Staff:* Violence and abuse towards staff is not acceptable. If a customer, or someone acting on their behalf, abuses or harasses a member of staff in any way, including using offensive language, the Housing Service will stop dealing with them, or will restrict the types of contact that they have. In addition, the application will be deferred for a minimum of 12 months or, in extreme circumstances, removed.
- 7.5.7 *Providing false or misleading information:* If an applicant provides false or misleading information on their housing application in order to gain an advantage over other applicants, the Council will remove their application. The applicant will be entitled to reapply after a minimum of 12 months. In addition, consideration will be given to whether prosecution or other legal action is appropriate.

7.6 *Exceptions to Qualifying Criteria*

In order to comply with the provisions of the legislation and in order to make provision for exceptional circumstances, the following exceptions to the qualifying criteria will be applied:

7.6.1 *Armed Forces Personnel*: subject to verification, the following groups will be exempt from the local connection qualifying criteria and will be treated as qualifying applicants, subject to meeting all of the other qualifying criteria:

- Those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years preceding their application to the CHR'
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouses or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service;
- Existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

7.6.2 *Fleeing violence and/or threats of violence*: in exceptional circumstances, an applicant may be fleeing violence, or threats of violence. In such cases, the Council may decide to exempt the household from the local connection criteria, and treat them as qualifying applicants, subject to meeting all of the other qualifying criteria. This could be due to domestic abuse or racial violence, for example. This will normally be the case where the applicant is working with the Housing Options Service to resolve their issues and will be in accordance with homelessness provisions under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

7.6.3 *Witness programmes*: in exceptional circumstances the housing authority may be approached to assist a household who are witness in a serious criminal case and who need to be moved to an alternative area for their own protection. In such cases, the housing authority will seek to cooperate with the relevant agencies and may decide to exempt the household from any or all of the qualifying criteria.

8. Treatment of applicants in specific circumstances

8.1 *16 and 17 year olds*

Applicants who are 16 or 17 years of age are able, subject to meeting the the eligibility and qualifying criteria, to join the CHR. However, they will not normally be granted a tenancy by a RP without a Guarantor, usually an adult relative or friend acceptable to the RP, or the Head of Children's Services if the applicant has been looked after, accommodated or fostered by West Berkshire Council Social Services. In addition, if a tenancy or Deed of Trust accompanied by a Guarantor is offered by the RP, the young person may still need to agree to engage with an agreed support plan. Please refer to individual RPs for individual allocations policies regarding 16 and 17 year olds.

8.2 *Applicants who are residing in HM prisons*

Applicants who are residing in HM prison are able, subject to meeting the eligibility and qualifying criteria, to join the CHR but will be unable to bid for properties until one month before their release. To manage this process, their application will be

registered from the date of receipt but will be deferred until the Housing Service is notified of the release date and it is one month before the notified date. Any bids made during the deferral period will be disregarded until the release notification period is activated.

8.3 *Applicants subject to MAPPA*

Serious offenders, including applicants who are the subject of MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) will be allowed onto the housing register, subject to meeting the eligibility and qualifying criteria, but will only receive an offer of accommodation after an appropriate risk assessment, which will take account of all factors, not just the legal conditions they may be subject to. This may restrict the choice of locations for which they can bid. Bids made for properties that are deemed inappropriate following risk assessment will be disregarded.

9. **Transfer Applicants**

- 9.1 Existing tenants of RPs or local authorities are entitled to apply to the CHR, subject to meeting the qualifying criteria and will be subject to the same rules as non-tenants.
- 9.2 Existing social tenants will be identified on the CHR as 'Transfers'. Non-social tenants will be identified as 'Homeseekers'. All applications will be assessed using the housing needs assessment.
- 9.3 The Housing Service may approach the applicant's landlord for a reference, particularly to confirm that the social tenant is not in breach of their tenancy agreement, either for reasons of behaviour or rent arrears, and to confirm the household details in order to verify over- or under-occupancy.
- 9.4 All RPs participating in the scheme will complete a landlord's reference form for all their tenants applying for re-housing, upon request. This is to ensure applicants are correctly pointed but also to reduce void times and former tenant arrears. In the majority of cases the applicant will not be made active on the register until the landlord reference has been completed. In exceptional circumstances, the Housing Service may point an applicant without a landlord's reference
- 9.5 Where a RP is seeking to make an offer to a Transfer applicant, they are responsible for seeking a reference from the current landlord, at the point of offer, to confirm:
- The current property is in a good state of repair and cleanliness
 - The property has a well maintained garden (if applicable)
 - There is a clear rent account
 - There is no outstanding possession action for breach of tenancy (notice seeking possession or notice to quit served, or a suspended possession order) injunction, ASBO or acceptable behaviour agreement
 - No other outstanding debts are owed to the landlord (e.g. rechargeable repairs) or the Council (e.g. Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme)
- 9.6 Offers will not be made if there is an issue with any of the above.

9.7 The Housing Service, in discussion with the relevant RPs, may give its consent to an offer of accommodation proceeding in circumstances where the above conditions are not met if there is a good management reason or exceptional circumstance (e.g. racial harassment, domestic violence). The Housing Service will consider each case on its merits.

10. Homebuy/Keyworker Accommodation

10.1 Various products are available for applicants that wish to buy or part-buy their home. These products are often branded as 'homebuy' but include a variety of options from traditional shared ownership (where the purchaser buys part of the property and pays rent on the remainder) to equity loan models.

10.2 All homebuy and keyworker living schemes are managed by the Zone Agent for West Berkshire and monitored by the Housing Operations Team at West Berkshire. Catalyst Housing Group is the Zone Agent for West Berkshire.

10.3 All applicants applying for homebuy/keyworker accommodation must also be registered and assessed on the Common Housing Register to be eligible for assistance.

10.4 The exception is the Council's 'First Step, Next Step' equity loan deposit scheme. Further information on this scheme can be found on the Council's website www.westberks.gov.uk or by contacting the Council's Housing Strategy Department.

11. Reasonable and Additional Preference

11.1 The Council operates a points-based housing needs assessment (see Appendix One). The assessment awards points for specific housing needs and each application is assessed in accordance with their specific circumstances.

11.2 The housing needs assessment has been framed to ensure that certain applicants, as defined in the Housing Act 1996, are given 'reasonable preference'. In addition, the Council has determined that some applicants should receive 'additional preference'.

11.3 The Housing Act 1996 provides that applicants who fall within the following groups should be given 'reasonable preference':

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need)
- People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under s.192(3)
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions

- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

11.4 In addition to those groups of people to whom the Council must give reasonable preference, the Council believes that priority should be given to households who do not have the financial resources to secure accommodation in the private sector, whether rented, part-owned or owned and to applicants who have a defined local connection to West Berkshire.

11.5 The Council has determined that the following groups of people who fall within the reasonable preference groups should receive 'additional preference':

- Households who currently occupy social or affordable housing within West Berkshire that is too large for their current needs and who have expressed a desire to move
- Witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remain in their current homes
- Households that contain a member who needs to move as a matter of child or adult protection
- Households who need to move urgently because a member of the household requires substantial care that cannot be provided or received unless they move or who requires adaptations that cannot be made unless they move
- Households who are experiencing multiple problems, which can only be resolved by a move, and who have a care or support plan in place supported by relevant agencies

11.6 Where two or more households have the same level of assessed housing need (i.e. they have the same number of housing need points) priority between them will be determined by their CHR registration date.

12. Additional Preference & the Armed Forces

12.1 The Government has published regulations requiring local housing authorities to give certain groups of the Armed Forces additional preference where they fall within a reasonable group and have an urgent housing need. To give effect to this, the Council will make an award of housing need points to members of the Armed Forces who fall within the following groups and who are in a reasonable preference group and who are deemed to have an urgent housing need:

i) is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service,

(ii) formerly served in the regular forces,

(iii) has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or

(iv) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

12.2 For this purpose "the regular forces" and "the reserve forces" have the meanings given by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006.

12.3 In order to be awarded the additional housing need points, the applicant must either be homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) OR be owed a duty under section 190(20, 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act OR have overcrowding or disrepair points OR have medical or social needs points AND need to move urgently due to a life threatening illness or disability or be statutorily overcrowded or be homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of violence or threats of violence.

13. Adjusting Preference

13.1 In certain circumstances, some applicants may be given more or less preference than others. The following are examples of the circumstances in which the preference given for a property may be adjusted:

13.2 Rural Exception Sites

Rural Exception Sites are small developments in rural settlements that have been developed as an exception to normal planning policy. To qualify as a rural exception site, a local housing need must be established via the results of a recent local housing needs survey and occupancy of the dwellings must be reserved for local people. The scheme must be available for affordable housing in perpetuity and must not adversely affect the rural character of the area. All households who wish to be considered for housing in a rural exception site will be required to register on the West Berkshire Common Housing Register.

13.3 To ensure that the occupancy of rural exception sites is prioritised for local people, the following cascade mechanism is applied:

1. Applicants who meet the following criteria who require the bedroom size available and would not under-occupy, namely:

Applicants who are resident within the Parish and have lived there for at least the last three years continuous residence or five years out of previous ten

OR

Applicants who have immediate family or close dependents resident in the Parish who have lived there for at least the last three years continuous residence or five years out of the previous ten and intend to remain in the parish. "Immediate family" means parents, child, children, and siblings.

OR

Applicants who were resident in the Parish for the last three continuous years, or five years out of the previous ten but were unable to remain due to affordability

OR

Applicants who have been in paid employment within the Parish for at least 6 months, for a minimum of 16 hours each week.

2. Applicants currently living and/or working in the Parish who require the bedroom size available and would not under-occupy, but who do not fulfil the criteria detailed in 1 above in respect of length of residency or minimum hours of work.
3. Applicants who meet the criteria detailed in (1) above but who do not require the bedroom size available and would therefore under-occupy by 1-bedroom.
4. Applicants who meet the criteria detailed in (2) above but who do not require the bedroom size available and would therefore under-occupy by 1-bedroom.
5. Applicants living and/or working in named adjacent Parishes who require the bedroom size available and who would not under-occupy, and who fulfil the following criteria, namely:

Applicants who are resident within the adjacent named Parishes and have lived there for at least the last three years continuous residence or five years out of previous ten

OR

Applicants who have immediate family or close dependents resident in the named adjacent Parishes who have lived there for at least the last three years continuous residence or five years out of the previous ten and intend to remain in the named adjacent Parishes. "Immediate family" means parents, child, children, and siblings.

OR

Applicants who were resident in the named adjacent Parishes for the least the last three continuous years, or five years out of the previous ten but were unable to remain due to affordability

OR

Applicants who have been in paid employment for at least 6 months for a minimum of 16 hours each week, within a named adjacent parish.

6. Any other applicants resident in West Berkshire registered on the Common Housing Register with a housing need.
7. Any other households registered on the Common Housing Register.

13.4 There are a number of older Section 106 Agreements that apply a different cascade mechanism. Where this is the case, the shortlist will be worked in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement rather than the above policy.

13.5 The cascade mechanism allows for under-occupation in certain part of the cascade. Given the welfare benefit reforms that restrict occupation of social tenancies on the basis of household need, and the potential financial implications that this will have for tenants, RPs will carry out a financial appraisal for the household before an offer of accommodation is made that allows under-occupation. Where it is deemed that the household may be eligible but could not afford the accommodation, a bypass will be applied.

13.6 Local Letting Plans

Local Letting Plans serve to achieve agreed objectives, such as reducing high levels of anti-social behaviour, reducing family densities in certain areas or to improve the success rate of integrating young or vulnerable people into general needs housing.

13.7 Local Letting Plans are developed on a site by site basis to address the requirements of that specific area, development or block of accommodation.

13.8 Where these plans are in place, the lettings will be carefully monitored by the Housing Service to ensure that allocations across the whole Allocations Scheme continue to give reasonable preference to the identified categories and that the policies do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on racial or other equality grounds. Information about particular local letting schemes will be available from the relevant RP and will appear on the CBL advert for individual properties.

13.9 A Local Letting Plan will identify particular needs of a small area within West Berkshire, or of a new housing scheme or redevelopment, and seeks to use the allocation of housing to ensure that the community will be as sustainable as possible, for example, that there will be a mixture of ages of children.

13.10 The Council will work with RPs across the District to identify neighbourhoods, areas and schemes which would benefit from a Local Letting Plan.

13.11 Local lettings may be used to:

- Enable new schemes to be allocated to a mixture of tenants in order to develop a sustainable community

- Enable an existing community to become more sustainable, for example, by encouraging more working families to move into the area
- Enable sensitive lettings on schemes which have had high levels of anti-social behaviour
- Enable households to return to an area they left for redevelopment to take place.

13.12 This list is not exhaustive and Local Letting Plans may be agreed in other circumstances where there is evidence that the local community would benefit from such a plan and there is no significant adverse impact on other communities. The equalities impact of local lettings schemes will be considered before they are agreed.

13.13 All Local Letting Plans will have clear criteria, which are openly published. When a property which is being advertised under the Home Choice scheme is subject to a Local Letting Plan, this will be stated clearly on the advert.

13.14 The adoption of this Policy has delegated authority to agree Local Letting Plans to the Head of Care Commissioning, Housing and Safeguarding, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

13.15 Any Local Letting Plan will be agreed for a limited time, after which it will be reviewed, and lettings will revert to the main policy if possible.

13.16 *Sensitive Lets*

Occasionally, an individual property may be identified as a 'sensitive let'. This may be because the landlord is seeking to address the balance of occupants in the local area in order to create a sustainable community or it could be due to the need to protect and enhance the local demographic. For example, if there has been significant anti-social behaviour in the locality and a property becomes available for re-let, it may be advertised as a sensitive let to try and prevent further issues arising. The reasons are likely to be similar to those applied for a Local Letting Plan but are applicable just to one property.

13.17 The Housing Service will seek to develop a Local Letting Plan that specifically allows for sensitive lets, however, until this is completed, a RP may, with the Housing Service's prior agreement, advertise a property as a sensitive let, giving preference to particular households, where there is evidence that this would be beneficial to the neighbourhood. The property advert will clearly state that the property is being treated as a sensitive let.

13.18 *Adapted Homes*

If a property becomes available for let and has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person, it will be advertised as giving preference to a household who have need of those adaptations.

Part Four: Housing Need Assessments

14. Housing Need Assessment

- 14.1 The assessment of housing need is made upon receipt of an application, in accordance with the published housing needs assessment (Appendix One). Section 11 explains how the housing needs assessment has been framed. This section provides additional detail on each specific housing need identified within the housing needs assessment.
- 14.2 Assessments of housing need are primarily based upon the information provided within the application. However, further information may be sought from the applicant and/or relevant professionals. The Housing Service may also undertake visits to verify information.
- 14.3 Overcrowding
This assessment is included as it relates to the reasonable preference groups. The Council uses a bedroom standard as an appropriate measure of overcrowding for allocation purposes. The bedroom standard allocates a separate bedroom to:
- ~ every adult couple (married or unmarried)
 - ~ any other adult aged 16 or over
 - ~ any two children of the same sex aged 16 or under
 - ~ any two children aged under 10
 - ~ any other child.
- 14.4 The assessment will be made on the basis of the rooms available for use as a bedroom, regardless of how the household chooses to use those rooms. For example, it may be reasonable to class a dining room as a room usable as a bedroom.
- 14.5 Points are awarded for each bedroom that a household is short of, as determined by the bedroom standard, capped to a maximum of two bedrooms short.
- 14.6 Under-Occupancy
The Council has decided that applicants who currently occupy social or affordable rented housing within West Berkshire that is too large for their current needs and who have expressed a desire to move should be given additional preference.
- 14.7 The reasons for this are two-fold: firstly, the Government is introducing under-occupancy sanctions for social tenants of working age and the consequence of them being unable to move may be increased rent arrears and potentially, eviction; secondly, the Council wishes to free up family-sized accommodation which is in short supply and high demand, thus making best use of existing resources.
- 14.8 A set award of housing needs points is applied to anyone who meets the criteria set out in 14.6 above, regardless of the number of rooms that they are over-accommodated by.
- 14.9 Lacking or Sharing Amenities
Households that occupy insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory living circumstances are expected to be given reasonable preference. Lack of access to essential

amenities, for example, a toilet, bath or shower, kitchen, clean drinking water or electricity, would fall within this category.

14.10 If an applicant is completely lacking one or more of the above-named essential amenities, they will be awarded a set amount of 'lacking' points. In order to be awarded these points, a verification visit will need to be completed.

14.11 If an applicant has access to the essential amenities but has to share them with persons who are not on their housing application, they will be awarded a set amount of 'sharing' points.

14.12 Security of Tenure

The reasonable preference groups include applicants who may be subject to a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and in addition, the Council focuses on the prevention of homelessness through its housing options work. The award of Security of Tenure points reflects both of these requirements.

14.13 Security of Tenure points are awarded in four categories, dependent upon the level of security that the applicant has:

14.13.1 *At Risk of Homelessness*: this includes applicants who are in private rented, forces or tied accommodation who have been served notice that will expire within the next 2 months and where the local authority believes the Landlord will act; owner-occupiers who have been issued with a possession order by the court; Care leavers who are ready to move on and whose current accommodation will end within the next two months, as confirmed by Childrens Services. Wherever possible, Childrens Services are encouraged to provide Housing Services with 6 months notice that a young person will be leaving care and to ensure that the young person has a Leaving Care Plan.

14.13.2 *Homeless or Supported Housing*: this includes applicants to whom a housing authority owes a duty under section 190(2), 193(2) or (195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); applicants who are occupying accommodation secured by a housing authority under section 192(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); applicants who are 'homeless at home' (subject to confirmation by the Housing Options Team); applicants who live in a hostel, supported lodgings, refuge; applicants who live in supported independent living who are ready for move-on; applicants who are awaiting discharge from hospital but whose home is not longer suitable and cannot be made suitable either through a care package or adaptations; applicants who are street homeless (subject to verification).

14.13.3 *Family & Friends or NFA*: this includes applicants who are living with family or friends or who are deemed to be no fixed abode (potentially sofa-surfing).

14.13.4 *Other*: applicants who live in private rented accommodation, armed forces accommodation, social or affordable rented (whether Council or RP) and owner-occupiers (whether shared or full) who are not subject to a notice and who do not fall into one of the groups identified above.

14.14 Applicants can only receive one award of security of tenure points. Each category has a set award of points.

14.15 Families

It is recognised that for some families, particularly those with young children, some accommodation may make day-to-day life difficult. This does not fall within either the reasonable or additional preference groups. It should be noted that whilst these awards are made and whilst such accommodation may not be ideal, given the prevailing housing circumstances of the district, it is still deemed reasonable and suitable for a family with young children to be accommodated in such accommodation.

14.15.1 *Accommodation with no garden:* families with children aged under 10 years, living in accommodation with no garden, will be made a small set award of points. Families with children aged 10 or over, or who have children aged under 10 but who have shared access to a garden, will not be awarded these points.

14.15.2 *Accommodation above or below ground floor:* families with children aged under 5, living in accommodation that is above ground floor level, or which has external access and is below ground floor level (e.g. a basement flat), will be made a small set award of points. Families with children aged 5 or above will not be awarded these points.

14.16 Medical Needs

The Council is required to give reasonable preference to people who need to move due to their health, disability or access needs.

14.17 Points in this category not awarded simply because an applicant has a medical condition. The assessment will consider:

- The degree to which the health condition of the applicant, or a member of their household, affects their ability to cope with normal daily living activities in relation to his/her housing circumstances
- The degree to which a change in housing circumstances would enable the applicant, or a member of their household living with mental distress, to maximise their recovery potential and achieve enhanced social inclusion

14.18 Medical needs points will be assessed and awarded by the Housing Register Supervisor and countersigned by another Housing Manager. Where appropriate, evidence will be sought from the applicant's GP or other medical practitioner who has knowledge of their health condition. The award of medical needs points may be accompanied by a condition that the applicant is only considered for certain types of accommodation (for example, ground floor or adapted accommodation).

14.19 A medical form may be submitted for each member of a household who has a health condition that would be relieved by a move to alternative accommodation.

14.20 Welfare & Social Needs

The Council is required to give reasonable preference, and in some cases would

wish to give additional preference, to people who need to move on welfare grounds, for example, to allow someone to give or receive care or support, to address child or adult protection concerns, to move-on from supported housing where support is no longer required, or to address urgent multiple issues that can only be resolved by a move.

- 14.21 Applicants who consider that they may fall into the category of welfare and social needs should discuss this with their Housing Options Officer or other professional with whom they are working. A separate Welfare & Social Needs Form must be completed by the Housing Options Officer or other appropriate professional (including but not limited to social workers, family support workers and CMHT staff) and should have evidence attached where appropriate. Forms that are incorrectly completed will not be assessed and will be returned to the submitting officer for correction: this is due to the high volume of applications received and the additional work that an incorrect form creates for housing staff.
- 14.22 Where Medical Needs Points may be appropriate, Welfare & Social Needs will only be considered after the Medical Needs assessment has been completed.
- 14.23 Welfare & Social Needs applications will be assessed by a panel of two Housing Managers. Points are awarded on a scale from 0 points to 50 points. Due to the reasons for which Welfare & Social Needs points may be applied, the award of points may be time-limited or include conditions (for example, that the applicant can only be considered for property in a certain area or for ground floor/adapted accommodation).
- 14.24 Disrepair
Households that occupy insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory living circumstances are expected to be given reasonable preference. A set award of points is given for disrepair.
- 14.25 Applicants who consider that their home is in disrepair should send photographs and any other relevant evidence (for example, if they have had an enforcement notice served by Environmental Health) to the Housing Register Team, who will review it and determine whether an award is appropriate.
- 14.26 One of the most common issues raised by applicants is damp and mould. In the majority of cases, this is due to lifestyle and the Housing Register Team will send advice to the applicant on how to manage this. Disrepair points will not be awarded for damp and mould arising from lifestyle but if the problem is extreme, the Housing Register Team may consult with Environmental Health to confirm whether it is a more serious underlying problem that would warrant an award.
- 14.27 Time in Housing Need
Due to the high demand and low turnover of social housing in West Berkshire, it is possible that households in housing need may have to wait considerable time for an offer of accommodation. The Council therefore makes a small set award of points on the annual anniversary of the application to reflect the time that they have waited.
- 14.28 Armed Forces Personnel
This additional preference award is made to applicants who meet the criteria set out in Section 10.

14.29 Discretionary Points

The Service Manager, in consultation with the Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding, is able to award discretionary points to an application in exceptional circumstances only. This would usually be in rare and extreme circumstances, for example, if a household needed to be urgently moved as part of a witness programme.

14.30 Discretionary points are not awarded at the request of applicants and will usually be requested by a relevant professional for circumstances that cannot be ordinarily be covered by the housing needs assessment.

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Part Five: Management of Allocations

15. Who can be included on a CHR Application?

- 15.1 We will only consider applications to house the applicant, their partner, their immediate family, and anyone else with an exceptional need to live as part of the household. This is because we have such shortage of larger properties, so families need to consider whether other people living in their household could move into smaller properties of their own. All applicants must be currently living in the Common Travel Area at the time of, and for the duration of, the application.
- 15.2 Partner means someone who lives with the applicant as a partner, or who would live with them if they were able to. This includes mixed-gender and same-sex couples, whether or not they are married or in a civil partnership.
- 15.3 Immediate family means the applicant's children or their partner's children, aged 20 or less, who live with the applicant all the time, or for four or more nights every week. If a child is living with a partner or has his/her own children, s/he may not be included on the application unless they have an exceptional need to live with the applicant. Young people living away from home as students will not be included on the application. If you have children aged 21 or over who are living at home, we can advise them on housing options. They may apply to the Housing Register in their own right, but may have low priority, in which case they will need to consider all other options (see Section 2 on housing options).
- 15.4 Applicants who have shared responsibility for children will only have them considered as part of their household if it is determined that the children reside with them for at least 50 per cent of the week or more. In particular, the Housing Service will seek to confirm with which parent the children have their main or principle home and the children will only be considered on the application of this parent. Where the 'main carer' cannot be identified, the Council will have regard to which parent receives benefits in respect of each child. Each case will be assessed on its own merits and determined alongside current legislation and case law.
- 15.5 If members of the immediate family live elsewhere in the UK, they can be included on the application, but we encourage families to consider applying to be re-housed where they live, especially if the demand for housing is lower there.
- 15.6 Immediate family does not include the applicant's (or their partner's) parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, or lodgers, unless they have an exceptional need to live as part of the household. If the applicant and partner are separating, they must provide us with evidence of who is legally allowed to remain in the property, such as a court property order detailing to whom the property is assigned. Accommodation for children will be allowed for with only one parent, on whom the children are dependent.
- 15.7 People who have an exceptional need to live with you means people who are not included in the definition of 'immediate family', but who have a real need to live as part of the household in order to give or to receive care or support. This may include:

- A child (of the applicant or partner) aged 21 or over, who cannot live independently because of a disability or care need
- A carer, if someone in the household needs full-time care and no one in their immediate family is able to provide this
- An adult (or elderly) relative who needs to receive care. For some elderly people, moving to sheltered or extra care accommodation is the best alternative.

15.8 If you wish to include people not in your immediate family on your housing application, you must explain on your application why it is necessary for them to live with you. We may also require you to provide evidence such as: a court order, a social services or occupational therapy assessment, or evidence that you are in receipt of carer's allowances. If you have not had a care assessment for a relative, we may require you to arrange one. If the person coming to live with you is moving from abroad, we will require evidence that they have recourse to public funds or of a sufficient sponsorship undertaking in place.

15.9 Where a household has been accepted as statutorily homeless by the Council, the application can include anyone who we accepted as part of the original homelessness application. For families with adult children, the Council will encourage them to seek independent housing if possible, to increase the chance of the applicant being re-housed in a reasonable time.

15.10 If you are a social housing tenant, and we agree to re-house your immediate family but not everyone who is currently living with you, you will be asked to make sure that none of them remain in the property once you have left.

16. Eligible property sizes:

16.1 The policy on property size (bedroom allocation), is as follows:

You are entitled to one bedroom for:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex aged 16 or under
- any two children aged under 10
- any other child

16.2 For households that include a pregnant woman, the calculation will not make allowance for the baby until it is born and the birth certificate has been provided.

16.3 Housing Benefit provisions permit an extra bedroom to be included in the Housing Benefit assessment for tenants in the private rented sector who have care provided by someone who lives elsewhere. This will apply where a customer or their partner has a recognised need for overnight care and has a bedroom that is used by a carer, or carers, for overnight stays as part of caring for the customer or partner. The Housing Allocation Policy makes provision for an extra bedroom to be awarded in exceptional circumstances, in line with this policy, and only after discussion with the Benefits Service. All such exceptions will be approved by a Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding Service Manager in consultation with the Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding.

17. Assessment of Application

- 17.1 Upon verification of a new application or receipt of an Update Form or Annual Review Form, the applicant's housing need will be assessed and priority awarded by means of the housing needs assessment scheme (Appendix One). The applicant's living circumstances, security of tenure, medical and social needs, condition of property, length of time in housing and local connection will be taken into account.
- 17.2 It should be noted that points may be time limited or have conditions attached. If conditions are not met, they may be removed.

18. Notification of points awarded

- 18.1 All applicants will be verified, assessed and entered onto the Home Choice Register. The applicant will be notified in writing of this and will be told of the outcome of the assessment, including whether or not their application is eligible, qualifying or deferred, what points they have and any information about bidding, the registration date and details about how to bid.
- 18.2 Applicants on the CHR have a right to request certain general information such as whether the application will fall into the reasonable preference category, whether a bid is likely to be successful, and the likely waiting time. This information will be available through the reporting function on the bidding process and included on the weekly advert sheets.

19. Changes in circumstances

- 19.1 Applicants are required to keep their application up to date. Some minor changes can be made online by the applicant, other changes need to be notified to the Council, and the applicant will need to complete an update form.
- 19.2 If an applicant's circumstances change, for example, they move house, have a baby, or someone moves in/out of their home, they must update their application. If the Housing Service needs more information to reassess the applicant's housing needs, they will contact the applicant. The Housing Service will not reassess needs if it is unlikely to change the applicant's points level: for example, medical needs will not be reassessed if the applicant has developed another minor illness but will be reassessed if the applicant has moved to alternative accommodation.
- 19.3 If the Housing Service becomes aware, or have reason to believe, that an applicant's circumstances have changed, the application will be suspended until the Housing Service has been able to verify the applicant's circumstances or an update form is received.
- 19.4 If the update form is not received, or verification has not been possible, within 28 days of the Housing Service becoming aware of a change in an applicant's circumstances, the application will be removed..

20. Annual Re-Registration

- 20.1 Applicants will be contacted annually on the anniversary of the date of their application and asked to complete an Annual Review Form confirming their basic details and any changes in their circumstances. They will be advised to return the

completed Annual Review Form within 28 days and that if they fail to do so, their application will be cancelled and removed.

20.2 Removed applications can be re-instated for up to 3 months after removal, upon contact from the applicant, subject to the applicant being able to provide a reasonable explanation of their failure to return the Annual Review Form.

20.3 If applicants wish to cancel their application at any time, they must submit this in writing to the Housing Service.

21. Homeless Households

21.1 Applicants who have been accepted under the Housing Act 1996, amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, as being homeless or threatened with homelessness will qualify to join the register, subject to meeting the other criteria.

21.2 Applicants will not be considered for accommodation whilst any homelessness application is being investigated and the CHR application will be suspended pending a decision on the homelessness application.

21.3 The allocation of non-secure accommodation under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (s195(2)) (providing temporary accommodation to accepted homeless families) is outside the scope of this policy.

21.4 The Housing Service reserves the right to place bids on behalf of applicants to whom it owes a s.193 Homelessness Duty, in order to discharge the duty. In making such an offer, the Housing Service will need to be satisfied that it is suitable for the applicant and that it is reasonable for the applicant to occupy. Applicants have the right to request a review of suitability of accommodation made to discharge a s.193 duty and are therefore advised to accept the offer, rather than refuse it, and to request a review if they do not consider it to be suitable or reasonable to occupy.

21.5 The Housing Service will consider all options to discharge s.193 duties, including discharge into the private rented sector. This will not prevent an eligible and qualifying applicant from remaining on the CHR.

22. Decanting

22.1 The Housing Service will seek to agree a decant programme with the relevant RP where tenants have to leave their existing accommodation permanently because it is being demolished for redevelopment or significantly refurbished. The terms of any moves will be set out in a separate offer to affected tenants and leaseholders. Decanting tenants will be supported to find alternative accommodation, and where necessary direct offers of accommodation will be made. If the tenants is on an assured shorthold tenancy with the RP, rather than an assured tenancy, the Housing Service will seek to find the tenant alternative private rented accommodation.

23. False or misleading information and fraud prevention

23.1 It is an offence to make a false statement and/or knowingly withhold information when making an application for the Housing Register. The maximum fine is £5,000

- 23.2 Any failure to include relevant information, to hide material facts or to attempt to obtain housing through false information will be treated as fraud. The Council treats housing fraud seriously and will take legal action against applicants found to have committed fraud.
- 23.3 The Housing Service may visit applicants at home to verify details of an application. Visits may be undertaken without notice. If an applicant cancels or misses two or more pre-arranged appointments for verification visits, the application will be awarded nil points and deferred until the Housing Service is able to verify the application.
- 23.4 Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by Section 146 of the Housing Act 1996 enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or person acting at the tenant's instigation.
- 23.5 If an applicant provides false or misleading information on their housing application in order to gain an advantage over other applicants, the Council will defer their application for a minimum of 12 months. In addition, consideration will be given to whether prosecution or other legal action is appropriate

24. Cancelling, Suspending and Deferring Applications

24.1 A housing application may be cancelled and removed if the applicant:

- has asked in writing for it to be cancelled
- has been housed by a RP in an assured or an introductory tenancy
- has moved and not informed the Housing Service of any new address or circumstances, and the Housing Service is unable to contact the applicant
- has not responded to a written request for information needed to assess the application, within 28 days
- has given false or misleading information on the application form
- has not replied to an annual review letter
- has provided false or misleading information

24.2 A housing application may be suspended, if the applicant

- has asked for it to be suspended until a later date
- is temporarily unable to move, for example due to be admitted to hospital
- requires housing with support and is refusing a support package required to sustain the tenancy
- has had a change in circumstances and the Housing Service are awaiting an update form
- has made a homelessness application that is pending a decision

24.3 A housing application may be deferred, if the applicant

- does not meet the qualifying criteria
- or a member of their household is deemed to have displayed behaviour serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant

- owes money to the Council for a Rent-In-Advance and/or Rent Deposit Guarantee where no regular payments are being made
- has rent arrears that exceed eight weeks rent OR where no regular repayments are being made
- has deliberately worsened their circumstances
- has refused three reasonable offers of accommodation
- is in HM Prison, until one month prior to release date
- has been violent or abusive to staff

25. Advertising Properties

25.1 Properties will be advertised on a weekly basis, with new properties advertised on a Thursday and bidding closing at noon on the following Wednesday.

25.2 The adverts will be placed:

- On the website
- In the advert sheet
- In the reception areas of West Berkshire Council and Registered Providers with office space within the district
- Other local facilities, as appropriate

25.3 Applicants have the right to request general information from local housing authorities that will enable them to assess whether accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available. To facilitate such requests, the weekly Property Sheets will provide information on previous adverts, including:

- The date of the property sheet
- The advert reference
- The property type
- The location
- The number of bids received
- The number of points on which the property was let
- The registration date of the successful applicant.

26. Bidding

26.1 The Council seeks to offer applicants on the CHR a choice over the areas and properties in which they wish to live. In order to be considered for an allocation of a particular property, applicants must bid via Choice Based Lettings. In certain circumstances, for example, where the Council has accepted a homelessness duty to an applicant or where a risk assessment is required (e.g. for an applicant subject to MAPPA), choice may be restricted.

26.2 Applicants can only register bids for properties or which they meet the eligibility criteria specified in the advert. Any bids that are ineligible for the property advertised will be disregarded.

- 26.3 Applicants can make as many bids as they wish in any weekly cycle, subject to being eligible for the properties advertised. There is no need to bid more than once for any one property.
- 26.4 Applicants must view the advert prior to placing a bid and should be sure that they would accept an offer if made. Applicants who refuse three reasonable offers of accommodation will be deferred for 12 months (see Section 7.4.5).
- 26.5 In the case of new developments where there are a number of properties with the same characteristics only one advert will be placed, and each applicant will need to submit one bid only.
- 26.6 The bidding cycle will start at 12.00 noon on a Thursday and close on 12.00 noon on the following Wednesday. Bids received after this deadline will not be accepted.
- 26.7 Applicants (or the applicant's advocate) can register a bid for the property by:
- Telephoning the Housing Office (during office hours)
 - Telephoning 0870 727 6919 (7p per minute)
 - Using the website www.homechoicewb.org.uk
 - In person at West Berkshire District Council Offices
- 26.8 To register a bid, the applicant will need to supply the following information:
- Registration number
 - Name
 - Date of birth
 - Property reference number

27. Assisted Bidding

- 27.1 Vulnerable applicants will be identified from the application process. Housing Service staff will contact potentially vulnerable clients and seek to establish what their support needs are in relation to bidding for properties, and identify ways of enabling the applicant to participate in the bidding process.
- 27.2 Vulnerable applicants will be able to nominate a person to bid on their behalf or to help them bid for suitable properties. The applicant can also nominate a family member or friend to receive correspondence or make applications for vacancies on their behalf.
- 27.3 If an applicant is receiving support from another professional or voluntary agency or organisation, the Housing Service will, with the applicant's agreement, contact the worker to ensure that they understand the procedures and that necessary support is provided. All agencies funded through Supporting People should be able to provide their clients with help on housing issues. If appropriate, training will be given to external agencies that would also be in a position to help their clients with bidding.
- 27.4 Applicants can also receive support from Housing Services staff with bidding by:
- Visiting the reception desk at the West Street House Offices, open from 10am-2pm each weekday.

- Phoning the Housing Office between 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays

28. Assessment of Bids

- 28.1 Once bidding has closed, a shortlist will be produced that lists applicants in order of the highest housing need points followed by registration date.
- 28.2 Where an advert has been advertised with adjusted preference (see Section 11), the shortlist will prioritise those applicants who meet the preference criteria by order of housing needs points and then registration date, followed by those who do not meet the preference criteria by order of housing needs points and registration date. The Housing Service may verify applicants' circumstances prior to forwarding the shortlist to the RP. The RP will be expected to carry out their own verification checks prior to making an offer.

29. Making an offer

- 29.1 The relevant RP will contact the top three applicants for each property, arrange a home visit as necessary to complete a pre-tenancy assessment, and offer the applicant a viewing date and time. The offer of a viewing does not constitute an offer of accommodation.
- 29.2 The RP will ensure each applicant is aware of their priority place i.e. 1st, 2nd or 3rd and the applicant must inform the RP at the viewing whether they are interested in the property. The RP will then send a formal offer to the applicant with highest priority who has expressed an interest in that property.
- 29.3 Applicants who advise a RP that they no longer wish to be considered for a property, and who would potentially have been made an offer, should be aware that this will be classed as a refusal. If three reasonable offers of accommodation are refused, the applicant may be deferred (see Section 7.4.5).

30. Bypassing Applicants

- 30.1 In all cases when a RP elects not to offer a property to the highest priority applicant on the shortlist, who has expressed their interest in the property, the landlord must seek agreement from the Local Authority to bypass the applicant.
- 30.2 The RP must give the reason for requesting the bypass and have received agreement by the Local Authority prior to offering the property to the next applicant on the short list.
- 30.3 Bypassing reasons cannot be blanket policies (e.g. applicants with alcohol problems). However, where there is an agreed sensitive letting policy or local lettings plan or s.106 exception sites prior to advertising the property, this is acceptable but only if this information formed part of the advertised criteria.

31. Refusals

- 31.1 Where an applicant is made three reasonable offers of accommodation and refuses each offer, the application will be deferred for 12 months. An applicant is considered to refuse the property if a) they have been made a formal offer of accommodation which they then decline; or b) they would receive the formal offer of accommodation

but tell the RP they do not wish to be considered, whether or not they have attended a viewing, before the RP has an opportunity to make the offer.

- 31.2 Applicants should therefore be sure that they are interested and would be willing to accept the property, if offered, prior to placing a bid. A refusal will not be counted as such if the property can be shown to be unsuitable. This could include: medical grounds, social grounds (including potential harassment or violence), or financial hardship.

32. Discharge of Duty

- 32.1 The Council will seek to allow applicants, to whom a full homelessness duty is owed, the opportunity to exercise choice and bid in the normal way. However, given the shortage of accommodation and the pressures on the Housing Service, the Council retains the right to place bids on applicant's behalf for accommodation that is considered to be suitable and reasonable to occupy.
- 32.2 If a property is offered and then refused, the Local Authority may discharge its homelessness duty if the property is held to be suitable for the applicants needs. The right to occupy temporary accommodation would be brought to an end.

33. Housing for applicants in need of specialist accommodation

- 33.1 The district benefits from a number of supported housing schemes. These are managed by a range of agencies and have individual referral and allocation criteria, depending upon the client group and the level of support offered.
- 33.2 Given the specialist nature of these schemes, it will not be appropriate to advertise such vacancies for general needs occupation. For access to supported accommodation, applicants will be considered through the relevant housing and support panel
- 33.3 Individuals with special needs who wish to apply for accommodation should complete the Home Choice West Berkshire registration form. This will be assessed and a separate arrangement will be made specifically for supported housing.
- 33.4 To ensure that households are aware of supported housing schemes, and the need to register with the West Berkshire Home Choice scheme, general adverts will be included within the website advert sheets.

34. Equality and Diversity

- 34.1 The Council is required by Section 166 of the Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), to ensure advice and information about the right to make an application for housing and to provide assistance to anyone likely to have difficulty making an application.
- 34.2 West Berkshire Council is home to people from a wide range of backgrounds. We are committed to equal opportunities in housing. This means that we seek, subject to the nationally prescribed eligibility criteria, to ensure that priority for housing is based on housing need and that housing policies are fair to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

- 34.3 Where required, the Housing Service will provide translation and interpretation, large print or signing services to ensure that applicants and potential applicants have advice and assistance to make an application.
- 34.4 All applicants for housing or re-housing will be asked to provide details of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation. This is to allow us to assess the application properly as well as to monitor who is allocated housing, and to ensure that properties are being offered and allocated fairly.

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Part Six: Reviews and Complaints

35. Right to Review

35.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of a decision that his or her CHR application:

- Is ineligible for an allocation of accommodation
- Does not qualify for an offer of allocation
- Has been suspended from the CHR
- Has been deferred from the CHR
- Has been removed from the CHR.

35.2 The Housing Service will advise an applicant in writing, with the reasons, if any of the above affects their CHR application.

35.3 Applicants will be notified of their right to request a review of these decisions. Anyone wishing to do so must advise the Authority in writing within 21 days of the decision date (a standard form will be provided), giving their reasons for doing so.

35.4 As evidence is taken in written form it is very important that, when making the request for a review, the applicant, or someone acting on their behalf:

- Brings to the Council's attention any new information, not already on file, that they wish to have considered
- Addresses the reasons for the decision in their case set out in the decision letter
- Explains why they think the decision is wrong.

35.5 If no written representations are received the matter will be decided on the facts already known.

35.6 An officer senior to the officer who made the original decision, and who has not been involved in the original decision, will carry out the review and respond to the applicant.

35.7 The Council will determine the review within eight weeks (56 days). If there is a delay with the review decision the applicant will be advised in writing of the reason for the delay and a revised timescale.

35.8 A copy of the senior officer's decision, and the reasons for it, will be sent to the applicant as soon as possible after the decision is made.

35.9 If the applicant disagrees with the review decision, they can seek judicial review or take their case to the Local Government Ombudsman.

36. Complaints

36.1 Where an applicant considers that they have been treated unfairly or believes that there has been maladministration of the scheme, they can make a formal complaint

to the Council. This is distinct from the procedure to request a review of a decision that has been made in accordance with the West Berkshire Home Choice policy. The complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge the outcome of reviews.

36.2 The Council's complaints procedure is detailed in the leaflet 'How to complain' and copies can be obtained from the Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury.

36.3 There is a simple three stage process for corporate complaints.

36.3.1 Informal – Stage 1

The applicant may write a letter, use the form on the website, email us or use the paper form to complain. The complaint should be sent to the Service Manager - Housing Strategy & Operations or to the Complaints Officer. The Council will acknowledge the complaint once received and a senior officer will investigate and respond within 10 working days. If the Council needs more time to investigate the complaint, the investigating officer will write to the applicant advising of when they hope to provide a final response. If it is found that Council has failed to provide the level of service the applicant should expect, the Housing Service will apologise, and seek to put things right. The applicant is welcome to put forward views of what needs to be done to resolve any problem.

36.3.2 Formal investigation – Stage 2

If the applicant is still unhappy once the investigation at Stage 1 has finished, they can ask to have their complaint investigated more formally by a senior manager in another service – usually the Policy & Scrutiny Manager in Policy & Communication. The response at Stage 1 will advise the applicant how to do this. The Council will acknowledge the applicant's request for a review, and seek to respond within 20 working days. . If the Council needs more time to investigate the complaint, the investigating officer will write to the applicant advising of when they hope to provide a final response.

36.3.3 An Ombudsman Review – Stage 3

The Council will try to resolve most complaints internally, but if the applicant is still unhappy after their complaint has gone through the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Council processes, they may then refer the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who will carry out an independent review.

To make a complaint to the Ombudsman, contact the Advice Team on:

Tel: 0300 061 0614 8.30-5 Mon-Fri

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Or write to: The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH.

www.lgo.org.uk

36.3.4 The Ombudsman's office suggests that complainants provide a daytime telephone number so they can contact them to discuss the complaint. The Ombudsman will investigate the complaint and suggest ways to resolve it. This may include a local settlement (the Council taking some action to put things right). If the Ombudsman considers there has been maladministration by the Council he may also suggest ways to improve our processes in future.

36.4 If the complaint is against the RP, the applicant should contact the RP, in order to discuss their Complaints Process. If this fails, the Independent Housing Ombudsman should be contacted.

36.5 The Council is committed to responding quickly and effectively to any complaints and comments, and to use these and any compliments about the service to review and improve ways of working.

37. **Monitoring**

37.1 Members of the Housing Service do undertake regular checks to verify details on the CHR to prevent fraud.

37.2 The scheme will be closely monitored by the Housing Service to ensure that it is operating equitably and fairly.

37.3 Other information will be collected in order to complete the P1E returns on performance required by central Government and in order to assess any additional areas of unmet housing need, as appropriate.

37.4 The policy will be reviewed every 5 years. The review will include an Equality Impact Assessment on the Policy as a whole. Should any significant amendments be required, consultation would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders including elected members prior to a decision being made.

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Glossary

Additional Preference	Groups of people who are within a Reasonable Preference Group and to whom a local authority may give additional preference for an allocation of social housing under the Housing Act 1996
Affordable Rent	Tenancies let by Registered Providers on rent levels of up to 80% of open market rents
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour order – a civil order made by the Court against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. The ASBO will usually restrict behaviour in some way, for example, it may state that they are not to be abusive to neighbours or are not to enter a certain area
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	A system to advertise available social housing that enables applicants to bid on properties that they wish to be considered for. Once the advert closes, a shortlist is run and the property is allocated to the applicant with the highest housing need
Common Housing Register (CHR)	A single waiting list for all social housing in West Berkshire, managed by the Council
Common Travel Area	The United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland
Homesekers	Applicants who do not currently live in social housing but who wish to move into social housing
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	A statutory process through which the Responsible Authorities (Probation, Police and Prison Services) work together with Duty to Cooperate Agencies such as Mental Health/YOS/Housing/Social Care (children and adults) Job Centre Plus/Health to manage the Risk and help reduce the re-offending behaviour of Sexual and Violent Offenders in order to protect the public including the victims from serious harm
Reasonable Preference	Groups of people to whom preference must be given for an allocation of social housing under the Housing Act 1996
Registered Providers (RPs)	Housing providers who are registered with the Homes & Communities Agency
Section 106 Agreement	A legal agreement under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 that sets out planning obligations that the developer is required to meet as part of the planning consent. A Section 106 Agreement can be used to require the developer to provide affordable housing and,

in the case of rural exception sites, to restrict occupancy of that social housing to people with a specified local connection

Social Rent

Tenancies let by Registered Providers on rent levels set at 'target' rents (usually 40-50% of open market rents) set by the Homes & Communities Agency. These are traditionally the cheapest rents in the market

Transfers

Applicants who are currently living in social housing but who wish to move to alternative social housing

Other Relevant Documentation

Appendix One – Housing Needs Assessment

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Appendix One Housing Needs Assessment

Each application is assessed in accordance with the housing needs assessment, which awards points for each housing need issue.

General Needs Applications	Notes	Points awarded
Overcrowding	<p>A separate bedroom is deemed to be needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ every adult couple (married or unmarried) ~ any other adult aged 16 or over ~ any two children of the same sex aged 16 or under ~ any two children aged under 10 ~ any other child. <p>Child only counts if born and birth certificate has been submitted.</p> <p>Assessment is based on the basis of the rooms available for use as a bedroom, regardless of how the household chooses to use those rooms.</p>	10 points for each bedroom short of this target, up to a maximum of 20 points
Under Occupancy	Only applicable to transfer tenants in social or affordable rented housing in West Berkshire, who wish to move to smaller, more suitable accommodation.	50 points
Lacking or sharing any amenities listed Toilet, Bath or shower, kitchen, living room, water, electricity	<p>Sharing with people who are not on the applicant's CHR application</p> <p>Lacking, subject to verification visit by the Housing Service</p>	<p>10 points</p> <p>20 points</p>
Security of Tenure	<p><i>At Risk of Homelessness:</i> this includes applicants who are in private rented, forces or tied accommodation who have been served notice that will expire within the next 2 months and where the local authority believes the Landlord will act; owner-occupiers who have been issued with a possession order by the court; Care leavers who are ready to move on and whose current accommodation will end within the next two months, as confirmed by Childrens Services. Wherever possible, Childrens Services are</p>	20 points

	encouraged to provide Housing Services with 6 months notice that a young person will be leaving care and to ensure that the young person has a Leaving Care Plan	
	<i>Homeless or Supported Housing:</i> this includes applicants to whom a housing authority owes a duty under section 190(2), 193(2) or (195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); applicants who are occupying accommodation secured by a housing authority under section 192(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); applicants who are 'homeless at home (subject to confirmation by the Housing Options Team); applicants who live in a hostel, supported lodgings, refuge; applicants who live in supported independent living who are ready for move-on; applicants who are awaiting discharge from hospital but whose home is not longer suitable and cannot be made suitable either through a care package or adaptations; applicants who are street homeless (subject to a verification visit).	10 points
	<i>Family & Friends or NFA:</i> this includes applicants who are living with family or friends or who are deemed to be no fixed abode (potentially sofa-surfing).	5 points
	<i>Other:</i> applicants who live in private rented accommodation, armed forces accommodation, social or affordable rented (whether Council or RP) and owner-occupiers (whether shared or full) who are not subject to a notice and who do not fall into one of the groups identified above.	0 points
Families	With children under 10 years and no access to a garden	5 points
	With children under 5 years and living in accommodation above ground floor level or in accommodation with a external access that is below ground floor (e.g. a basement flat).	5 points

<p>Medical</p>	<p>A Medical Assessment form must be completed and submitted for each household member who may qualify for medical needs points.</p> <p>Assessed by the Housing Register Supervisor or another Housing Manager.</p> <p>Application must demonstrate how the condition is affected by the current accommodation and how it would be relieved by a move to alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence from the applicant's GP or other medical practitioner may be sought prior to assessment.</p> <p>Conditions may be attached to award of points.</p>	<p>10 points for the first household member.</p> <p>5 points for each subsequent household member</p>
<p>Welfare & Social Needs Factors</p>	<p>Awarded to reflect circumstances where people need to move on welfare grounds, for example, to give or receive care or support, to address child or adult protection issues, to move-on from supported housing where support is no longer required or to address urgent multiple issues that can only be resolved by a move.</p> <p>A Welfare & Social Needs form must be completed by an appropriate professional on behalf of the applicant. The form will be returned if it is completed incorrectly.</p> <p>Assessed by a Panel of two Housing Managers.</p> <p>Conditions or time limits may be placed on awards.</p>	<p>0/5/10/20/30/40/50 points.</p>
<p>Disrepair</p>	<p>Applicants must submit photographic and documentary evidence.</p> <p>Assessed by the Housing Register Team.</p> <p>Disrepair points will not be awarded for damp and mould arising from lifestyle.</p> <p>EH guidance may be sought in</p>	<p>10 points</p>

	extreme cases.	
Time in Housing Need	Yearly on anniversary of application	5 points
Armed Services Personnel in Urgent Need	<p>Must meet the criteria for Service personnel (Section 12) AND</p> <p>either be homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) or be owed a duty under section 190(20, 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act or have overcrowding or disrepair points or have medical or social needs points</p> <p>AND</p> <p>need to move urgently due to a life threatening illness or disability or be statutorily overcrowded or be homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of violence or threats of violence.</p>	5 points
Discretionary Factor	<p>To be agreed by Service Manager in consultation with the head of care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding</p> <p>Only awarded on advice of a professional in rare and exceptional cases (for example, public protection) that cannot be covered by the usual housing needs assessment.</p>	0-100 points as appropriate

Summary of proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Consultation

The main proposed amendments to the policy are as follows:

- (a) To maintain an 'open' housing register but to apply qualifying criteria, meaning those who qualify will be considered for an allocation of housing before those who are classed as 'non-qualifying'
- (b) To implement local criteria meaning that only applicants with a defined local connection to West Berkshire, who are in housing need and who are unable to afford to secure their own accommodation in the private sector (whether owned, part-owned or rented) are classed as 'qualifying' applicants. All other applicants will be 'deferred' and will not be considered for an allocation of housing before those who are classed as 'qualifying'
- (c) To defer households, who would otherwise have qualified, if:
 - ~ They owe money from the Threshold Loan Scheme or have failed to keep to rent arrears repayment plan schedules
 - ~ They are people who have been excluded for bad behaviour
 - ~ They are people who have supplied false or misleading information on their application for housing
 - ~ They have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances
 - ~ They have refused three reasonable offers of accommodation
 - ~ They are violent or abusive towards staff.
- (d) To apply the ability to exempt households from the qualifying criteria in exceptional circumstances
- (e) To apply additional assessments to applicants that are subject to Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), such that they will only receive an offer of accommodation after an appropriate risk assessment, which will take account of all factors, not just the legal conditions they may be subject to
- (f) To identify applicants either as 'Homeseekers' or as 'Transfer' applicants and to allow the ability for a property to be advertised for either or both groups
- (g) To allow additional preference to be given to members of the Armed Services in accordance with recently published regulations
- (h) To recognise under-occupation of social tenancies within the housing needs assessment and to increase the points awarded to facilitate move-on to smaller sized accommodation
- (i) To amend the housing need assessment for Security of Tenure to make it clearer and easier to understand
- (j) To introduce an age restriction on the children, and amend the definitions, for the housing need assessment for 'families with accommodation above or below ground-floor level' and 'families without gardens'
- (k) To amend the housing need award for medical assessments from a scale of points to a single award of points, assessable by the Housing Service. The definition of medical needs has also been amended to make it clearer
- (l) To amend the housing need award for disrepair from a scale of points to a single award of points, assessable by the Housing Service, retaining the ability to involve

Environmental Health in the most serious cases

- (m) To allow conditions and time-limits to be attached to awards of social needs points
- (n) To provide clearer guidance on who can, and cannot, be included on a Common Housing Register application
- (o) To introduce the ability for the Housing Service to immediately place bids on properties, rather than allowing a three-month time period during which they can exercise choice, for applicants to whom a full homelessness duty has been accepted
- (p) To introduce a clear Right to Review for certain decisions made under the Housing Allocations Policy
- (q) To have a clear complaints process for issues that are not covered by the Right to Review.

DRAFT DOCUMENT Agenda Item 12.

Title of Report:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 May 2013

Purpose of Report: To detail the Commission of scrutiny activity undertaken during the municipal year 2012/13.

Recommended Action: To note the contents of this report.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the scrutiny activity undertaken by the authority in the municipal year 2012/13. It contains an overview of the year and gives detail on each of the activities undertaken. It includes a commentary, where it is possible to give it, on the value that the activity has added.

2. Overview of the last twelve months

- 2.1 The scrutiny structure within West Berkshire Council consists of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC), Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP) and Resource Management Working Group (RMWG).
- 2.2 Over the course of the last year, the three Committees have conducted scrutiny reviews across all areas of the Council, and have regularly reviewed and challenged financial and performance information.
- 2.3 3 decisions were called in to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission for review. These decisions were:
- (1) Item Called-In following an Individual Decision: The introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the A4 Bath Road, Padworth. This decision was referred back to the Portfolio Holder for reconsideration.
 - (2) Item Called-In following an Individual Decision: The introduction of parking charges at the Burdwood Centre Car Park, Thatcham. This decision was upheld.
 - (3) Item Called-in following an Executive Decision: To agree the procedure for Healthwatch commissioning. This decision was upheld.
- 2.4 Four time limited Task Groups were established during the year to consider the following:
- (1) *The Processes in Place for the Repair of Pot Holes.* A Task Group was established following receipt of a Motion to Council by Councillor Keith Woodhams on 22 September 2011 to review the approach of West Berkshire Council to the repair of pot holes in the district.
Added Value: Eight recommendations were formulated for submission to the Executive.
 - (2) *Domestic Abuse.* A Task Group was established to conduct a review into the approach by statutory and other agencies to reported domestic abuse in West Berkshire.
Added Value: Information and views were able to be shared between a broad range of agencies. Twenty-five recommendations were formulated for submission to the Executive.
 - (3) *Housing Allocations Policy.* A Task Group was established following the Commission's wish to see Member involvement in the development of the

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Housing Allocations policy which is required by law. The review is not yet complete.

Added Value: Members are able to scrutinise the content of the proposed policy during its development.

- (4) *Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria.* A Task Group was established from the Health Scrutiny Panel to assess whether in setting its eligibility criteria at 'critical' the Council's operation of the Fair Access to Care Services policy still allows it to meet its statutory duties, and whether the eligibility criteria should continue to be set at critical. The review is not yet complete.

Added Value: The Task Group is providing external scrutiny of the process as it occurs to ensure a robust outcome.

- 2.5 The Commission discussed the merits of undertaking scrutiny training during the 2013/14 municipal year and subsequently agreed for this to be arranged.

3. Activity in Detail

3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

- (1) *Preparations for the London 2012 Olympics.* The Commission received two updates on West Berkshire's preparations for the Olympic Games, including information about the Olympic torch route through the district and Cultural Olympiad.

Added Value: The Commission was provided with information on the wide ranging activities required to be undertaken by the Council in preparation for and during the Olympic Games and were able to question the approach in a public arena. Members also gained knowledge of the expected activities which were then able to be communicated to a wider audience.

- (2) *Youth Clubs.* The Commission considered how the transfer of youth clubs from local authority control to local communities had been managed.

Added Value: Activities for young people have been shown to be a consistently high priority for residents in local surveys up until 2009, and the consideration of youth clubs allowed the Commission to explore an element of this priority in a public arena.

- (3) *GCSE Results.* The Commission considered information regarding attainment levels in GCSE English and Mathematics undertaken in 2012.

Added Value: The Commission were also able to discuss the issues arising from the national controversy around the grading of GCSE English papers and consider the subsequent activity that the Council was involved in.

- (4) *Homelessness.* The Commission conducted a review into the approach by statutory and other agencies to homelessness in West Berkshire. The review formed part of a wider consultation being undertaken by the Housing Service.

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Added Value: Information and views were able to be shared between a broad range of agencies, both local and national. Twelve recommendations were formulated; four were incorporated into further consultation by the Housing Service, and eight were allocated for specific activity.

- (5) *Youth Justice.* The Commission received an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Youth Restorative Disposal and Youth Cannabis Warning schemes introduced by the police in 2009 and which had proven to be a contributory factor in the drop in the number of young people entering the youth justice system.

Added Value: The Commission were able to satisfy themselves of the success of the schemes, and discuss them in a public forum.

The following items were also reviewed by the Commission:

- (6) *Quarterly Performance Reports.* The Commission reviewed the Council's performance reports each quarter, enabling issues to be examined, and recommendations to be made.

Scrutiny reviews initiated and due for completion during 2012/13.

- (7) *Schools and Early Years.* The Commission will contribute to the development of the strategy for managing school organisation that ensures there are sufficient school places and in the right locations to meet demand
- (8) *Fire Service coverage of the West Berkshire area.* The Commission expressed a desire to consider how the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service ensure appropriate coverage of the West Berkshire area following reports that target response times were not being met sufficiently.

3.2 Health Scrutiny Panel

- (1) *Anti Child poverty Strategy.* The Health Scrutiny Panel received an information update on the West Berkshire Anti-Child Poverty Strategy, which was published alongside a needs assessment in March 2012 to meet the duties of the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Added Value: The Panel were able to consider and question the activities being undertaken in a public forum providing assurance that appropriate steps are being taken to address child poverty.

- (2) *Dignity and Nutrition at RBH.* Following the failure of the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) to take part in the earlier patient survey operated by LINKs, the Panel received assurance that the RBH would undertake this survey in October 2012. The results of the survey were received by the Panel in March 2013.

Added Value: The Panel were able to contribute to and provide direction to this public review.

- (3) *Health and Wellbeing Board.* The Panel received information as to the steps being taken to ensure the successful establishment of a Health and Wellbeing Board in West Berkshire.

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Added Value: Information about the introduction of the Health and Wellbeing Board was able to be explored and clarified in a public forum.

- (4) *Continuing Healthcare.* The results of an independent review of continuing healthcare in West Berkshire undertaken by South Central Health Authority were received following concern that patients in Berkshire receive some of the lowest levels of continuing healthcare funding when compared to other Primary Care Trusts nationally.

Added Value: The Panel were able to review the progress of activities resulting from the review in a public forum and make appropriate recommendations to ensure the action plan is appropriately monitored.

- (5) *PCT Quality Handover.* The Panel examined the PCT's arrangements for the handover of its responsibilities to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The information included an overview of healthcare services in Berkshire and set out for successor organisations the key risks, challenges, achievements and ambitions for quality and patient safety in Berkshire, in preparation for handover from the Berkshire PCT on the 31 March 2013.

Added Value: The Panel were able to examine the method of transition in a public forum, and question the activities being undertaken to mitigate identified risks.

- (6) *Changes to the West Berkshire Health Service.* The Panel received an update on the role and purpose of CCGs in West Berkshire.

Added Value: The information was heard in a public forum.

3.3 Resource Management Working Group

- (1) *Asset Management.* The Group received information to explain how the management of the Council's assets was undertaken.

Added Value: The Group were able to consider and question the Council's approach in a public forum, making recommendations as appropriate.

- (2) *Financial Monitoring.* Members examined financial reports throughout the year as reported across the Council.

Added Value: Members were able to explore and challenge areas of concern in a public forum and provide suggestions directly to officers.

- (3) *Establishment Monitoring.* The RMWG regularly examined the figures reported across the Council on staffing establishment.

Added Value: The exercises provided challenge to officers and allowed examination of the Council's establishment in public.

- (4) *Strategic Risk Register.* The RMWG examined the assessment of risk for individual items on the register.

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Added Value: The review enabled identified risks to be explored in a public setting. The Group recommended that the risk register be scrutinised on an annual basis.

- (5) *Sickness Absence:* Members received information relating to the management of sickness absence due to stress.

Added Value: Members were able to question the approach taken by the Council to this issue.

- (6) *School Academies.* The RMWG considered the effect of local authority maintained schools becoming academies on Council finances.

Added Value: The Group were able to consider issues arising from the transfer of schools to academy status in a public forum.

- (7) *Fleet Management.* Members considered the service provided in respect of Fleet Management, assessing the broad spectrum of provision and value for money it offered.

Added Value: The provision of the service was able to be discussed in a public forum.

- (8) *Shaw House:* The Group considered the current and potential future use of Shaw House with a view to increasing income generated through its use.

Added Value: A number of suggestions for increasing income were made and would be considered by a Task Group established to consider the issue.

- (9) *Blue Badge Scheme.* The RMWG reviewed the operation of new procedures, criteria and rules for the Blue Badge Scheme that were introduced in January 2012.

Added Value: The impact of the changes to the Blue Badge Scheme was reviewed in a public forum.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Corporate Board notes the contents of this report.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.