

Shaping our District

Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work and learn

West Berkshire
Council Strategy

2015-2019

Refreshed March 2018



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

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*“Working together
to make West
Berkshire an even
greater place in
which to live,
work and learn”*

Foreword

*to adapt to the
changing world
we now live in*

Welcome to our refreshed Council Strategy for 2018/19. Over the following pages you can find out about our plans for the year ahead and what we are doing to continue to meet the needs of our residents, visitors and businesses. Although we have identified six priority areas for improvement we provide hundreds of local services across the District such as rubbish and recycling collections, street cleaning, planning, environmental health, housing, adult social care, children's and leisure services.

The role of this Council is more complex than ever with increasing pressures placed on us in looking after the most vulnerable in our society. Like all other Councils we face significant financial challenges because of the Government's austerity measures which have placed unprecedented pressure on public sector finances. Over the last three years the Council has had to save in excess of £24 million, with the revenue support grant which the Council receives from Central Government having reduced from £16.3 million in 2015/16 to £0.1 million by 2019/20.

This refreshed version of the 2015-2019 Council Strategy provides a reflective update of the achievements and challenges over the first three years of the strategy delivery period and a reviewed list of actions that we will continue to complete during 2018/19.

Reflecting on the level of targets set for our priorities for improvement, work with members of our Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission concluded that some of these targets were challenging (such as closing the educational attainment gap and enabling the completion of 1,000 affordable homes), but that this reflected the ambitions of the Council for West Berkshire residents and in particular for vulnerable groups.

Despite the high demand for our services with depleting resources the Council has had some notable successes over the last year. These include:

- Better safeguarding services for children and young people: these were rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2017;
- Supporting our schools to improve: more than 95% are now assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding';
- Investing in the District's roads: the A339/London Road Industrial Estate junction improvement is one example of enhancements of local roads;
- Completing 62 flood alleviation schemes.

As we enter the last year of this Council Strategy we will continue to focus on our priority areas for improvement whilst continuing to deliver the core services that you value so much.



Graham Jones
Leader of the Council



Nick Carter
Chief Executive

“Despite our successes there is no room for complacency and many challenges remain.”

Summary

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Our Vision:

“Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work and learn”



Our Place

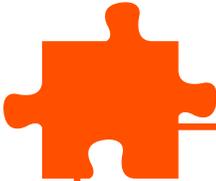
West Berkshire's population will continue to grow and by 2036 that growth will be at its highest for those aged over 65 (50% increase) and especially for over 85s (135% increase).

We have a strong local economy with high levels of employment but we cannot afford to be complacent. West Berkshire needs to remain an attractive place to do business, so continued investment in our infrastructure is vital. We also need to continue to ensure that our local workforce has the appropriate skills and that everyone has access to the labour market.

We will need more housing, in particular affordable housing, whilst at the same time protecting the natural environment that makes West Berkshire such a good place to live.

Our communities are well educated and we have good schools but attainment could be better. We need to be more ambitious for our young people and support them to achieve better education results.

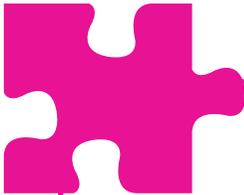
Health and well-being outcomes place the District overall in a comparatively good position nationally. However, there are still evident inequalities that require focus to ensure disadvantaged groups achieve better.



Our Strategic Aims

We have set four strategic aims to support our vision:

- A.** Better educated communities.
- B.** A stronger local economy.
- C.** Protect and support those who need it.
- D.** Maintain a high quality of life within our communities.



Our Priorities for Improvement

We have identified six key priorities for improvement

1. Improve educational attainment.
2. Close the educational attainment gap.
3. Enable the completion of more affordable housing.
4. Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy.
5. Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
6. Support communities to do more for themselves.



Our Approach - A More Effective Council

At the time of producing this strategy in 2015, we were told, and we knew, as an organisation, that we had many strengths. Those strengths alone however were not enough to see us through the subsequent four years of the new strategy because of the financial constraints we were and we are still facing. As we reshaped West Berkshire we also needed to reshape ourselves. In particular, we needed to:

- encourage communities to do more for themselves recognising the Council will have to withdraw from directly supporting some areas of activity where others can be more effective;
- find new ways of commissioning and delivering services;
- learn more from others;
- celebrate our achievements more effectively;
- develop a more modern and flexible workforce.



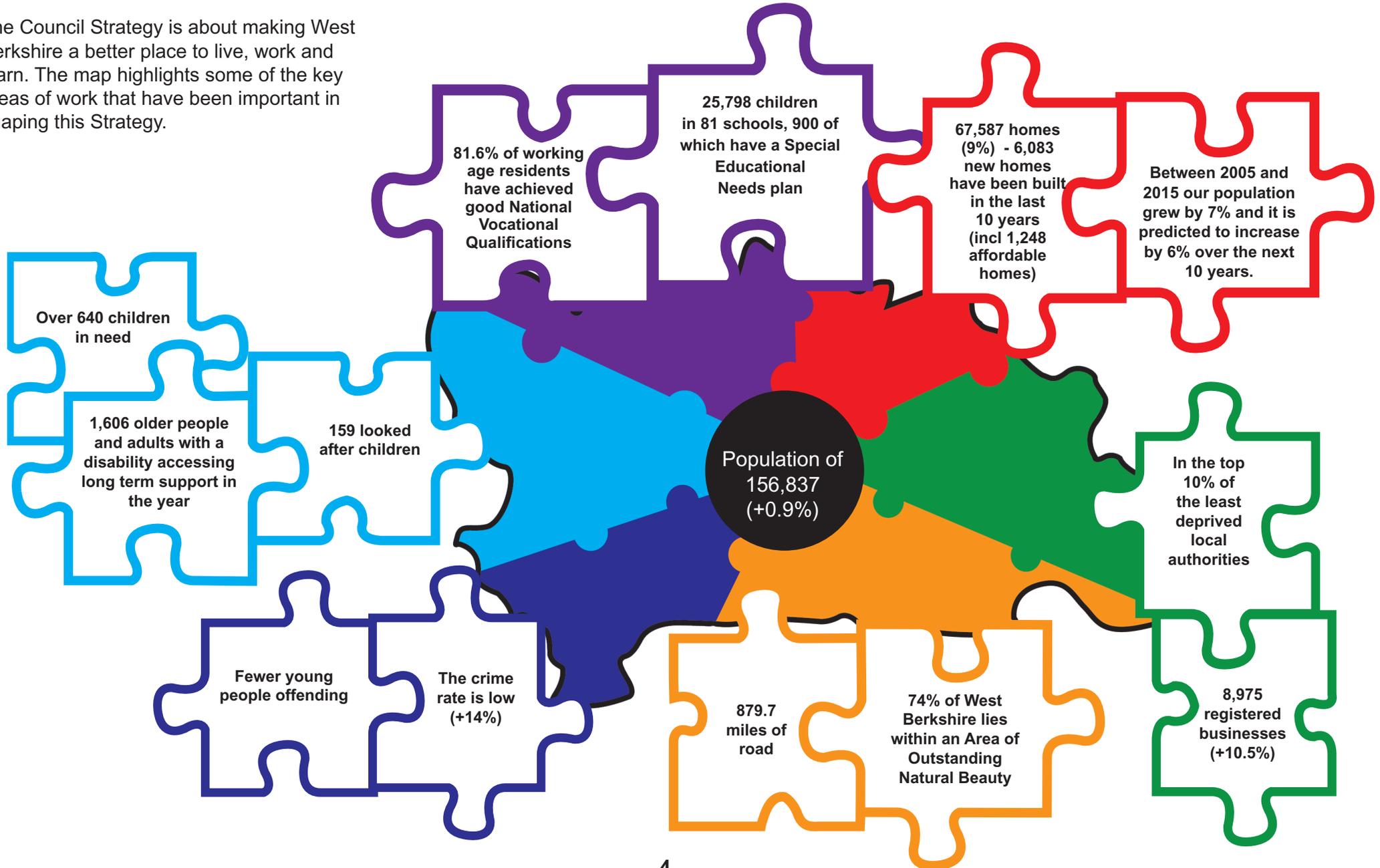
Our Track Record

Since publishing our Council Strategy:

- our Children's Services have improved and are now rated overall 'good' by Ofsted;
- good progress was made with Phase Two of the Superfast West Berkshire Broadband Programme, expecting to place West Berkshire amongst the best connected areas within UK;
- over 95% of district's schools are rated good or better following Ofsted inspections;
- invested £12.5m in our roads; completed 62 flood alleviation schemes;
- the Emotional Health Academy and its partners helped over 1000 children;
- completed building projects at Little Heath School (sixth form block) and at John Rankin Infant and Junior Schools (expansion).

West Berkshire – The Place and its People

The Council Strategy is about making West Berkshire a better place to live, work and learn. The map highlights some of the key areas of work that have been important in shaping this Strategy.



*(figure in brackets represents the % change between 2015 and 2017)

Our Vision, Aims and Priorities for Improvement

Vision Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place to live, work and learn

Aims



Priorities for Improvement

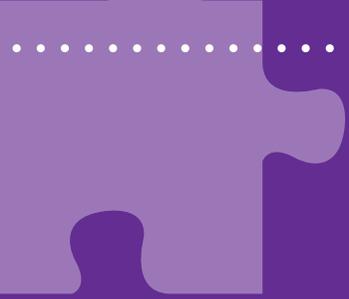


The Council provides a range of core services which it believes are essential for the communities of West Berkshire. These include:

- Protecting our children
- Maintaining our roads
- Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean
- Providing benefits
- Collecting Council Tax and Business Rates
- Ensuring the well-being of older people and vulnerable adults
- Planning and Housing

Given the scale of the financial challenges that lie ahead it is impossible to guarantee that these services will be immune from cuts. We will however, seek to ensure that these services are delivered to a standard that is good for those who receive them.

Aim A Better Educated Communities



Why is this important?

We recognise that children and young people are integral to the future of the area and we have a responsibility to ensure that all of them are given the best possible opportunity to succeed and to enjoy growing up in a safe, secure, healthy and economically prosperous environment.

For an area as affluent as West Berkshire, our educational attainment should be much better and we have made this our priority.

We continue to work positively with all local academies and schools for the benefit of pupils across West Berkshire.



Our priorities for improvement

- Raise the attainment of all our children at every key stage – *specifically we are aiming to be in the top 10% of councils for every key stage by 2020.*
- Close the attainment gap for vulnerable pupils – *we are aiming to eliminate the current attainment gap between disadvantaged children and other children.*

Priority for Improvement: Improve Educational Attainment

Key things we planned to do

1.1. Continue to develop our work with schools to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

1.2. Invest £70m in our schools.

1.3. Implement the refreshed West Berkshire School Improvement Strategy for 2015-17.

1.4. Increase safety, health and well-being support for children and young people in schools.

1.5. Ensure a good start for every child.

1.6. Increase the percentage of schools rated 'good' or better through developing outstanding leaders and governors in our schools.

Progress update

Key measures of educational attainment at different key stages show that, in most areas, the challenging target of being one of the best 10% of local authorities nationally is unlikely to be met by the end of this strategy. The provisional attainment results for 2017 show that only one local authority (Richmond upon Thames) has achieved results in the top 10% nationally at all key stages except for the result at KS1 (Key Stage) expected standard in writing. The Council's results for 2017 and the evolution since 2015 show that results have improved from the previous year for most of the measures but the comparator local authorities have also improved their results. More specifically:

- Five year olds achievement of a good level of development against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile has improved year on year and is within the top 10% nationally.
- The % of Year 1 pupils achieving the required standard in Phonics Decoding continues to be a concern and has slipped within the bottom 25%. Our results have declined in 2017 whilst the national average remained constant from previous year.
- KS1 (for 7 year olds) results show improvements from 2016 to 2017 in all measures (reading, writing, maths). As all comparator groups have also improved their results and West Berkshire improved to a higher degree only in reading, our relative position is only within the top 50% and 75% of authorities in England.
- At KS2 (for 11 year olds), the % of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics shows improvement from 2016 to 2017, is above the national average but only within the top 50% of authorities. It should be noted that writing is a teacher assessment, whereas reading and maths are tests.
- The KS4 results (for 16 year olds pupils) show that the average score across 8 GCSE subjects reached only the top 50% of Local Authorities in England (above the national average). Similarly, pupils in the district made more progress between KS2 and KS4 compared to their peers, ranking West Berkshire amongst top 50% authorities nationally. The comparable measure between 2016 and 2017 is the % of pupils achieving a grade between 9-to-4 in English and maths (2017) and A*-C in English and maths (2016) for which the Council achieved within the top 25% of local authorities.

Actions have been taken to improve the leadership especially for a few schools that had poor performance and impacted on the overall results of the district.

Priority for Improvement: Improve Educational Attainment

Updates on key activities to support education attainment include:

- During 2015 to 2017 a number of Basic Need and school improvement projects were completed. These included expansions to the Willows Primary and Spurcroft Primary Schools and improvement projects at Lambourn and Kennet Valley Primary Schools. Permanent kitchen improvements have been made to all but one school which has enabled meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme to be delivered in an effective way.
- Planning permission for a new school (Highwood Copse Primary) was obtained in June 2017.
- A total of £19.5m was invested over 2015/16 and 2016/17 in our schools, with a further £4.8m expected to be delivered during 2017/18. This investment includes £2.2m on urgent condition works across 35 schools, the creation of additional places for children with a diagnosis of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorders) at Fir Tree Primary School and works over the summer to enable Speenhamland Primary school to admit up to 60 pupils into Reception in September 2017.
- The refreshed West Berkshire School Improvement Strategy for 2015-17 was published in 2015. The associated plans are still being implemented but some notable achievements to date include:
 - **The % of schools judged by Ofsted 'good' or better has risen to 95%.** Leadership and governance are judged as at least good in West Berkshire's schools. The remaining four schools which are not yet good are on an improvement trajectory. Work to develop outstanding leaders and governors in our schools has positively contributed to the increase in the percentage of schools rated 'good' or better by Ofsted from 75% in January 2015 to 95.1% in September 2017.
 - **System leadership** is growing well with three teaching schools and teaching alliances now in place. Solutions have been identified and resources secured to ensure peer reviews across all primary schools, collaboration with current or recent headteachers and delivery of maths Continuous Professional Development programme.
 - **The pupil premium strategy** has resulted in positive comments being included in Ofsted inspection reports about the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- A behaviour review was conducted in primary schools with headteachers and other partners (including Schools Health & Safety Team). This informed an action plan developed to increase teacher skills in managing behaviour, co-ordinate support from a number of agencies and provide a timely response to behaviour concerns.
- A Behaviour Intervention Team has been re-launched and now includes a range of expertise which includes psychological assessment and intervention, leadership support and therapeutic interventions. All referrals to the Behaviour Intervention Team include mental health screening to allow students to be triaged appropriately. A 'circle of adults' intervention is offered to schools to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

Priority for Improvement: Improve Educational Attainment

- Mental Health First Aid courses have been delivered to teachers and school staff. Whole school well-being packages are available to improve well-being support in schools.
- Anxiety screening for cohorts of pupils is available to schools. Pupils at risk or at the early stages of developing an anxiety problem receive a group Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Intervention.
- The Emotional Health Academy (EHA) has made a significant contribution to improve the health and well-being in schools. It has Emotional Health Workers operating in 29 Schools. 1086 children have engaged with the service and the EHA delivered emotional health training to 256 professionals in a variety of settings including the Council, schools and voluntary services. The EHA Clinical Services helped children and young people make positive changes in 60.71% of cases that received an Emotional Health Assessment.
- Our Local Safeguarding Children Board has a dedicated 'School Safeguarding' working group that focuses on ensuring that school staff have the most recent information on how to safeguard children effectively in school.
- The up take of free childcare entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and the additional 15 hours early education is monitored and priority is given to support areas of greatest need. Eligibility for Early Years Pupil Premium (to help support the most disadvantaged children) is robustly supported to ensure all children access the government funded early education.
- Family Hubs have delivered parenting programmes and school readiness work. Support was provided to all relevant children in need and children with a child protection plan.
- All schools provide baseline Early Years Foundation Stage profile data to the Council and this is used to support planning for vulnerable groups. In terms of the quality of provision, more than 95% of the early years providers are assessed as 'good' or better at Ofsted inspections and this supports good end of key stage outcomes.
- 2015/16 academic year pupil absence rates for West Berkshire were low, placing the district amongst the best 25% of Local Authorities in the country. Permanent and fixed term exclusions from school are better than England averages (top 50% nationally).

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(New) Better coordinate and evidence the contribution of relevant services towards attainment levels e.g. housing (security/stability of housing), accessing amenities (transport links etc. particularly in rural areas) and security of income (especially in cases of fluctuating income).

(New) Secure additional resources for school improvement support through the DfE Strategic School Improvement Fund.

Priority for Improvement: Close the Educational Attainment Gap

Key things we planned to do

2.1. Our disadvantaged children will have better results and will be closer to the results of other children.

Progress update

Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remains a high priority across West Berkshire schools. Further improvements in performance are required to the results achieved to date in order to diminish the difference:

- The Early Years achievements, which initially showed an upward trend for disadvantaged pupils, reached a plateau in 2017.
- Phonics attainment for disadvantaged pupils continues to improve.
- KS1 and KS2 attainment for disadvantaged pupils improved in 2017 in all subjects. KS1 to KS2 progress for disadvantaged pupils improved in 2017 in all subjects
- KS4 'progress 8' measure for disadvantaged pupils improved in 2017.
- Disappointingly, the majority of 2017 attainment gaps have increased.
- Ofsted inspections consistently report that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in West Berkshire Schools.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(New) Maximise access to Early Years childcare for vulnerable families.

(New) Encourage Pupil Premium sign up to ensure appropriate support is provided to disadvantaged children.

(New) Develop the system led improvement to ensure Headteachers drive school improvement through the three teaching schools and school alliances.

(New) Use the Strategic School Improvement Fund to provide more targeted activities to support disadvantaged pupils including the appointment of Head Teacher Pupil Premium Champions.

Aim B A Stronger Local Economy

Why is this important?

Having a good job, with a living wage and the resources to pay for the things you need is an essential requirement for a good quality of life, and improves health and well-being.

West Berkshire has traditionally had a healthy local economy and has now emerged strongly through the recent economic recession. The Council has an important role in helping to create the conditions for private sector businesses to prosper and grow. Infrastructure, regeneration and ensuring that our workforce has the appropriate skills remain our focus areas over the coming four years.



Our priorities for improvement

- Enable the completion of more affordable housing – *we are setting an ambitious target of facilitating the completion of 1000 new affordable homes across the district by 2020.*
- Deliver or enable key infrastructure projects in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy:
 - *In relation to roads, our target is to be in the top 25% of councils nationally by 2019 for the condition of our main roads.*
 - *For rail, we will lobby for the extension of electrification from Newbury to Bedwyn.*
 - *We will implement a five year flood prevention programme through local flood forums and with the support of local communities.*
 - *We will take forward the regeneration of the London Road Industrial Estate, Newbury Wharf and Market Street sites in Newbury and support the regeneration of Thatcham Town Centre.*
 - *We will ensure that at least 99% of West Berkshire households have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2017.*

Priority for Improvement: Enable the Completion of More Affordable Housing

Key things we planned to do

3.1. Pursue options to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing in the district.

Progress update

- Affordable housing has continued to be delivered under challenging circumstances.
- The latest available figures show that a total of 241 units of affordable housing were completed between 2015 and 2017. The forecasted delivery of affordable housing over the three years to 2020 is 444 units. This should deliver a total of 685 units and indicates a potential shortfall of 315 units against the target to support the delivery of 1,000 units by 2020.
- The Council has an adopted development plan and a five year supply of suitable land for housing development. However, the Council recognises the challenges of getting affordable housing in the District and is preparing the next local plan which will show developments up to 2036.
- The Council has approved planning permissions for a range of sites which could see 2,900 homes built, of which, 620 would be affordable homes. 630 additional affordable homes have been identified across a range of sites within the Housing Sites Allocation Development Plan Document. This means that there is a potential for 1,250 affordable homes in total to be built over the longer term.
- There is a possibility that some of the 5 year forecasted units could also be delivered sooner (for example the Racecourse development has an outstanding permission to deliver a further 300 affordable housing units).
- A successful legal challenge reaffirmed local planning policy for the delivery of affordable housing on the sites with less than 10 units. This decision has allowed the Council to deliver more affordable housing.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(New) Develop joint working with housing providers to help towards more affordable units.

(New) Increase lobbying of Government to reduce the impact being caused by viability issues.

Priority for Improvement: Deliver or Enable Key Infrastructure Improvements

Key things we planned to do

4.1 Invest £17m in our roads.

4.2 Seek to develop new partnerships with the private sector and local communities to enhance local infrastructure.

4.3 Keep our Community Infrastructure Levy policy under review.

4.4 Invest £5.2m in flood prevention schemes.

4.5 Support and develop Flood Forums.

4.6 Implement the Superfast Broadband Programme for Berkshire and West Berkshire.

Progress update

Good progress has been made in delivering the key activities including:

- £12.5m has been invested in the District's roads between April 2015 and March 2017. Performance results on road conditions remains strong (top quartile nationally). In addition, plans are in place to invest a further £12m in the period April 2017 to March 2019, a total of £24.5m over this 4 year period. Key schemes delivered were: the A339/London Road Industrial Estate junction improvement, and the resurfacing of the A339 Sandford Link and A338 Great Shefford.
- In total around 100 roads are resurfaced each year which has led to an improvement in road condition across all 3 categories (A/B, C Class and Unclassified).
- Progress on key partnerships to enhance local infrastructure include:
 - Market Street Redevelopment - Procurement of contractor to deliver the new bus station is planned to begin in April 2018. The works to the Wharf (which will be the location of the new bus station) is expected to begin in June and be completed by December 2018. The existing bus station and the wider site are expected to be cleared in January 2019.
 - The public/private sector partnership with St. Modwen PLC to deliver urban regeneration including increased employment opportunities and town centre residential housing at London Road Industrial Estate development has been delayed due to on-going legal proceedings.
 - Sterling Cables – The demolition of the Sterling Cables site has commenced and further progress is expected during 2018/19.
- The Council has secured £25,450,100 for transport infrastructure projects that have been or were scheduled to be delivered between 2016 and 2020. This funding was received from Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Great Western Railway, the Association of Train Operating Companies, Department for Transport and Highways England.

Priority for Improvement: Deliver or Enable Key Infrastructure Improvements

- West Berkshire Council was the first Berkshire authority (and one of the first 10 in the country) to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule. This is bringing in additional funds for investment in infrastructure. The Council has received £2,832,217 for the CIL, £464,944 of which has been passed directly to the Parish and Town Councils in West Berkshire. Autumn budget (November 2017) announced that the Government intended to reform the CIL. In West Berkshire, the CIL will be reviewed as part of the new Local Plan due for submission in 2020.
- 45 flood alleviation schemes were completed during the period 2015/16 - 2016/17. In addition, 17 more are planned for completion by the end of March 2018. The investment in flood defence and drainage improvement schemes since 2015/16 totals £3.65m with a further £3.5m planned in 2018/19. Schemes completed include:
 - Winterbourne flood alleviation scheme.
 - Station Road, Woolhampton surface water drainage improvements.
 - Willow Close/Paddock Road, Newbury surface water drainage improvements.
 - Compton Culvert replacement (enlargement of two culverts on the River Pang).
 - Bank strengthening of the ordinary watercourse at Mill Road, Burghfield.
- Work has commenced on site in partnership with Thatcham Flood Forum, Cold Ash Community Partnership and the Environment Agency to complete the Tull Way Attenuation Pond.
- In West Berkshire, there are five flood forums in place: Pang Valley, Lambourn Valley, Newbury, Thatcham and Streatley. The Pang and Lambourn Forums cover whole river systems. Both are led by the local communities.
- 64,124 (87.7%) of West Berkshire premises were able to receive superfast broadband services (24Mb/s or above) as at the end of September 2017. Once the delivery of the Superfast Broadband project is completed, West Berkshire will have extended its superfast broadband coverage to in excess of 99%, becoming one of the best connected areas in the UK.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(Removed) Support and develop Flood Forums – completed

Aim C Protect and Support Those Who Need it

Why is this important?

Supporting the vulnerable, whether they are older people, adults with disabilities or children is at the heart of what the Council is about. The Council has very clear legal duties to support vulnerable people and it is where the majority of its resources are spent. It carries out these duties by working with partners through the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

The implementation of the Care Act 2015 is likely to result in more people being cared for by the Council. Population pressures and other factors will also increase the demand for social care in future years. We see safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities as the most important thing we do and we have therefore maintained this as a priority.

The personalisation of social care and safeguarding adults empowers people to speak out, make informed decisions with support if necessary so that members of our communities can help each other.

Our priorities for improvement

- Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.



Priority for Improvement: Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Key things we planned to do

5.1 Ensure that it is easy for local people to refer their safeguarding concerns to us.

5.2 Where services are independently inspected they are rated at least 'good' and peer reviews of safeguarding rated highly.

5.3 Work in partnership with health, education, police and voluntary and community sector organisations to improve safeguarding.

5.4 Sustain recruitment of qualified and experienced social workers and improve their access to more advanced/recent research intelligence and training for further professional development.

5.5 Implement an effective quality assurance programme for safeguarding services for children and young people.

Progress update

- Children and Family Services have simplified the process of receiving referrals where there is a safeguarding concern. The new approach ensures that families follow one process and use one dedicated phone number. This has seen an increase in the resource at the 'front door' where the Contact, Advice and Assessment Service is able to receive all concerns and, if necessary, share within a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) process to ensure that when a referral is received it is dealt with and responded to in an informed, prompt and proportionate way. This approach has resulted in both an increase in referrals received from the public and other agencies, and improved response rates in regard to timeliness and the level of intervention.
- Where children have told us that they do not feel safe, the Council has worked with internal and partner organisations' services to improve their safeguarding.
- For Adult Social Care, new safeguarding adults online procedures (<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/safeguardingadults>) have been designed to make it easier for members of our communities to get in touch with us if they are concerned about the safety or welfare of an adult.
- The Care Quality (CQ) team has a process of CQ1 notifications which are used where there has been an issue in relation to the quality of a service – anyone can make a CQ1 notification which might result in a safeguarding referral or a complaint (<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/careconcern>). CQ1s are widely used by social care staff and providers within and external to West Berkshire. We have now extended this to as many professionals as possible most recently to include Primary Care settings. The CQ1 process is now also available to the public and the team encourages referrals for all issues.
- Children and Family Services along the other services within the Council's and its key partners have produced and implemented an improvement plan to address challenging areas known by the service and highlighted by the Ofsted inspection in 2017.

Priority for Improvement: Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Key things we planned to do

5.6 Continue to focus on improving our Children and Family Services, aiming to have the improvement notice withdrawn.

5.7 Continue to implement the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' approach by working with people to achieve their stated outcomes from the safeguarding process.

5.8 Improve our approach to 'hearing the voice of the child' within the services and in the way we make our decisions

- The Ofsted inspection in 2017 found that progress has been made in working with partner organisations to improve children's safeguarding including:
 - prompt multi-agency response, information sharing and decision making on the referral of cases of children at risk of suffering or already suffering significant harm following the introduction of a MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub);
 - once a child is assessed as being at risk, multi agency plans to keep children safe are put in place swiftly, ensuring the right intervention and support is provided in a timely fashion;
 - multi agency audits and learning from serious case reviews were used to improve services;
 - leaders have successfully built a more stable workforce and better quality-assurance processes;
 - clear understanding of children's lives and personalities with good listening to what children have to say;
 - effective and well coordinated support for children in need of help and protection (including children with disabilities) to respond to their needs including safety;
 - good focus to ensure there are no delays in ensuring children's welfare and appropriate permanent care.
- Services are continuing their efforts to ensure adequate response to situations when children go missing from home or care, and a consistent approach across all services regarding a small number of children at risk of sexual exploitation. The Council will continue to ensure that focus is given to areas that are not rated as good and that appropriate capacity and resource is maintained to help the Council achieve this.

Priority for Improvement: Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

- Adult Social Care (ASC) – The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has carried out an inspection of the Willow Edge adult social care home and their assessment of the service has now moved to ‘good’ in all areas. Five ASC services are now rated as ‘good’ overall, including in the area of ‘safe’. In June the Council transferred Birchwood Nursing and Residential Home to its portfolio. Following a CQC inspection late October it was rated as ‘inadequate’. The Council is working hard to reverse this ahead of its re-inspection. An action plan has been agreed and staff are responding well to improve practice. Permanent staff appointments have been made which reduced the reliance on agency workers and strengthened the leadership in the home - a key asset in ensuring quick and sustainable improvement.
- At partnership level further work is being done to ensure that strategy discussions (statutory meetings of the partner organisations when a child is seen as ‘at risk’) include the right partners to enable a broad analysis of risk to be undertaken.
- Adult Social Care services have an effective West of Berkshire Safeguarding Partnership Board led by an Independent Chairperson. The Board members are working collaboratively at regional level to share good practice, develop adult safeguarding approaches and inviting scrutiny in the individual localities. We have achieved a consistency of how we are reaching out to people as part of the safeguarding publicity campaigns whilst minimising the costs by working together. Working with other Local Authorities, Probation Service and the police, support is provided to each other in the investigation and learning from safeguarding incidents. The Safeguarding Adult Review processes result in improvements in service by involving the partner organisations as a critical friend.
- The Emotional Health Academy (EHA) is an example of partnership working with the health sector, to reach and support earlier more children that have emotional health needs. In partnership with other specialist mental health providers, voluntary sector counselling and autism focused providers we have implemented a weekly triage meeting. This resulted in referred and self referred cases being considered by looking at the needs of their entire family and identifying who is best placed to help the child or the family. All partners are using the same methods to measure progress and results.
- During 2016/17, the EHA and it’s partners helped over 1000 children and the EHA alone supported over 600 to improve their emotional health outcomes.
- Significant progress has been made to recruit permanent social workers and ensure stability of the workforce. The vacancy rate has improved from 50% in 2015 to 10% in 2017. At the end of December 2017 only 14% of posts in Children and Family Services were filled by agency workers compared to 29.7% in March 2016.

Priority for Improvement: Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

- In 2017, a new, permanent Adult Social Care Principal Social Worker was employed. A number of actions were put in place to focus on recruitment to reduce the use of agency staff. These included the development of a dedicated recruitment website, the introduction of a 'Growing our own' programme resulting in the employment of two Occupational Therapists and development of Approved Mental Health workers and social workers.
- In line with Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) high risk areas, all adult social care staff, with direct contact with service users, receive SAB related training every 12 months to ensure continuous professional development.
- A comprehensive quality assurance programme has been implemented ensuring that the assessment of the services provided is based on multiple perspectives resulting from:
 - in-depth local and partnership level data analysis
 - qualitative information on a case by case basis and on emerging themes from the case audit programme
 - staff supervision
 - staff and service users feedback
- The activity of the quality assurance sub-group of the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) has resulted in better outcomes for children and young people (for example the frequency to complete health and dental checks has improved). Alongside quantitative data, the Children and Family Services' Performance Board considers qualitative information which allows a clear understanding of the strengths of the service and areas for further improvement.
- The Ofsted inspection has acknowledged improved performance and there is an increase in user satisfaction and other professionals' positive feedback.
- Following the improvements made by Children and Family Services, the Department of Education's improvement notice was withdrawn.
- Making Safeguarding Personal is a key improvement area in West Berkshire and a priority for SAB. A key focus of the approach is ensuring the views of adults at risk and their family/carers' are specifically taken into account when making decisions about the provision of services. In 2016/17, 74% of all clients that had a concluded case, were asked about the outcomes they desired (either directly or through an advocate). This is an improvement from 2015/16, and this performance has further improved at Q1 in 2017/18 to 80%. In 2017/18 we extended our improvements further, making sure that adults who were the subject of a Section 42 (safeguarding assessment) had the opportunity to tell us, who spoke to them and how quickly they were contacted, if they received enough information and how involved they felt, in decisions that affected them.

Priority for Improvement: Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

- We are ensuring that where adults lack mental capacity they will be supported by an advocate.
- Improvements have been achieved in more children being consulted in advance of their child protection conferences (97.3% in June 17) and more looked after children (LAC) contributed to their LAC case review (96.6% June 17). The timeliness of child protection and LAC reviews is now considered to be excellent.
- We have introduced the MOMO (Mind of My Own) app that allows young people to give feedback to the service and their views on their care plans.
- We have ensured young people are regular attendees at the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings to ensure Councillors and senior officers hear their views.
- We are working collaboratively with young people to develop new Children and Family Services web pages with a view to these being able to receive feedback and give information in a format that is considered more accessible to young people and which responds to what they have said they wanted.
- Opportunities are provided to young people to inform services' commissioning; children and young people have been consulted as part of the re-tendering of the Here4Me contract (offering independent visitors, advocacy and mentoring to Looked After Children).
- The latest ASC Users' Survey shows that at 91%, West Berkshire has achieved top 25% nationally in terms of the users' perception that the services have made them feel safe and secure.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(New) Continue to develop a dedicated Children and Family Services website which will increase the means of communication/contact from young people.

(Removed) Continue to focus on improving our Children's Services, aiming to have the improvement notice withdrawn. – action completed.

(Amended) Continue our approach to 'hearing the voice of the child' within the services and in the way we make our decisions.

(New) Focus on progressing the family safeguarding model to help reduce the number of children taken into the Council's care.

Aim D

Maintain a high quality of life within our communities

Why is this important?

The Council has four underlying principles which guide how it works;

- (i). **Helping you to help yourself**
- (ii). **Helping you to help one another**
- (iii). **Helping you when you cannot help yourself**
- (iv). **Promoting and acting in the interests of our local community**

The Council recognises that many people see themselves more as part of their immediate local area rather than as part of an administrative area called West Berkshire. As a result our focus has always been on working closely with local communities and parish councils, recognising that local people know what is best for their own community. We will also continue to work closely with communities of interest such as carers and voluntary groups.

We intend to do more work in this area, not only because limited resources mean the Council will be able to do less itself, but also because it is vital that we continue to unlock the potential resources that reside within our communities and identify the most effective way of delivering services.

Our priorities for improvement

- Support communities to do more to help themselves



Priority for Improvement: Support Communities to do More to Help Themselves

Key things we planned to do

6.1 Accelerate the delivery of local services for local communities by local communities.

6.2 Work with local communities to help people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives and improve the health of the poorest fastest.

6.3 Work with communities to enhance existing and develop new volunteering activities.

6.4 Implement new ways of working to develop communities to be more resilient in meeting the needs of vulnerable people.

6.5 Investigate self-service provision and alternative methods of working to support continuation of access to libraries.

6.6 Ensure the continuation of opportunities to participate in leisure activities.

Progress update

The approach to support communities to do more for themselves has and is still evolving. A number of initiatives contributed towards the delivery of this priority including:

- Community conversations were held in Hungerford, Lambourn, Calcot, Thatcham, Mortimer and Burghfield. These also took place in Newbury, at the re-launch of the Newbury Youth Council and at the annual Secondary Schools Peer Mentors Conference.
- Local communities came up with solutions to support: local families with children who had autism, local interventions to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour, development of a peer support group for women in Hungerford (My Monday), and a community support group to help families whose children had been subject to child protection plans to improve their parenting and care of their children. None of these children have required further safeguarding or protecting services from the Council.
- Over 400 children were trained in restorative practices. Some of them presented how they had used these skills to the Department for Education Innovations Director, when he came to visit to see West Berkshire's unique and innovative Building Communities Together scheme and look particularly at the Emotional Health Academy.
- A pool of Trainers has been established who will ensure that schools continue to receive Restorative Practice Training and that partner agencies are able to adopt restorative approaches both within their organisations and importantly with their engagement with communities.
- The Independent Advisory Group has been re-energised and will be further developed to be representative of diverse communities within West Berkshire.

Priority for Improvement: Support Communities to do More to Help Themselves

Key things we planned to do

6.7 Develop opportunities to engage with West Berkshire heritage.

6.8 Support local communities in developing community plans, delivering key local projects and progressing with their Neighbourhood Development Plans.

6.9 Grow community conversations via Building Communities Together Partnership.

6.10 Further support youth employment and employee career development through apprenticeships and a graduate scheme.

Progress update

- A website (the Parish portal) was launched in April 2017 to support the devolution programme to Town and Parish Councils. The portal includes a Prospectus which covers a number of services and provides a wide range of information and advice to get Town and Parish Councils started.
- Initial negotiations have been completed with the Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham Town Councils. In relation to Hungerford the Executive has agreed to the Library building being transferred to them which will see the continuation of the library service but also a greater use of the building by the local community. In relation to Thatcham, negotiations are on-going about the transfer of three playgrounds to them. Work is ongoing to transfer to Newbury Town Council, under licence, a parcel of open space in Victoria Park.
- West Berkshire Council has successfully supported Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council through the neighbourhood development plan process. This has led to the adoption of the plan which provides a more local focus for planning policy when making planning decisions.
- A Voluntary Sector Prospectus was introduced to commission the voluntary sector to deliver services against a range of outcomes for local residents and to help the development of community based services. There were a number of initiatives which were commissioned some of these included: physical activity initiatives, healthy lifestyle courses and free swimming lessons. Outcomes include:
 - Healthy Lifestyles courses for primary school age children - Let's Get Going – using the National Child Measurement programme and targeting to the young people that need it rather than providing it as a universal service. 96% of young people improved their knowledge of healthy eating and physical activity in 2016/17.
 - Free swimming lessons have been organised for pupils in receipt of pupil premium. This increased the opportunity for pupils in this group to take part in physical activities and also helped them develop important life skills. This opportunity is available to 48 children per year.

Priority for Improvement: Support Communities to do More to Help Themselves

Progress update

- A range of initiatives have been delivered by our Public Health Service to work with communities (geographical or communities of interest) and help people live longer and healthier. Examples of such interventions and their results include:
 - Smoking - 12 week smoking cessation support through one-to-one or group sessions with a free weekly supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). Drop-in clinics in local community settings, GP surgeries, supermarkets and other venues. Smoking prevalence in adults aged (18 years and over) reduced in West Berkshire from 14.1% (2015) to 12.8% (2016). Smoking prevalence in adults in routine and manual occupations reduced from 27.9% (2015) to 21.9% (2016), a reduction of 6% (but not statistically significant compared to 2015). The % of women who smoke at time of delivery has reduced from 9.2% (2014/15) to 7% (2015/16). This is significantly below the South East (9.7%) and national average (10.6%).
 - Falls Prevention is a priority and a whole range of initiatives have been implemented to target more people (including fall prevention classes, awareness campaigns, web-pages for help, support and advice, and Facebook pages).
- The total number of people volunteering in cultural services (including Libraries, Shaw House, West Berkshire Museum, Activity Team West Berkshire and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programmes) has increased from quarterly levels of between 200 and 230 in the first year of the strategy to over 500 during summer 2016/17.
- The total number of Appropriate Adults to advocate for our young people when needed increased.
- The Civil Contingencies Team have produced a Vulnerable People Plan, an Information Sharing Protocol and a Major Incident Support Team Plan. These allow the Council, in a Major Incident, to quickly identify the vulnerable people in the community, including those registered with utility companies, Town and Parish Councils, and other agencies and support them to support themselves in the community in a coordinated manner including deploying a multiagency response team.
- Self-service for libraries is being implemented and will develop further over time. The Council's services have worked with local communities and identified solutions to continue to offer a library service whilst realising the required financial savings.

Priority for Improvement: Support Communities to do More to Help Themselves

Progress update

- The number of junior attendances to our sports and leisure centres, at approx. 300,000 for 2016/17 have exceeded our annual targets of over 250,000. Similarly, senior attendances have increased from just over 52,000 before March 2015 to over 61,000.
- The number of unique identified individuals who have used the leisure centres continue to increase (over the last 12 months it increased from 23,000 to 25,000). Approaches implemented to increase participation include an easier booking process by introducing an online system, engaging with social media to promote the opportunities to participate, engagement with key events (e.g. White Collar Boxing) to attract new audiences, all aimed at increasing participation.
- We have continued to promote the leisure activities through the leisure card amongst our Looked After Children.
- During 2016/17, over 4,600 people participated in heritage learning activities (events, activities, walks, talks) at West Berkshire Museum, Shaw House, in schools and all other outreach activities.
- The number of visitors to heritage and other events at Shaw House exceeded 9,800 in 2016/17.
- A Community Garden Space at Shaw House (on the site of the Kitchen Garden) is being created as a means of engaging the community. It gives the opportunity to the local residents to plan and support the process from 'plough to plate', to engage with local schools and link with public health awareness campaigns (healthy eating, physical activity, mental health), involve older people by benefiting of winter packages or enabling them to grow a crop of flowers.
- 11 apprentices had been recruited by the Council by March 2017. Due to changes in the apprenticeship policy from central government we have not recruited an apprentice in quarter 1 in 2017/18 as we are putting systems in place and allowing the funds in the digital account to build.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(Removed) Investigate self-service provision and alternative methods of working to support continuation of access to libraries - completed.

(Amended) Support employment including youth employment.

(New) Gain an improved understanding of what areas of activity communities want to take on themselves and how they can assist the Council (to be developed in liaison with all service areas and relevant external partners).

Become an Even More Effective Council

Why is this important?

Over the previous eight years, West Berkshire Council has had to find over £55m of revenue savings, which has been achieved through finding efficiencies, staff reductions and transforming services.

In October 2016, West Berkshire Council accepted a four year financial settlement offered by Government. Whilst this settlement commits the Council to a continued reduction in Government funding, it provides financial stability from 2016/17 to 2019/20 on which the Council can plan ahead and build other sources of income.

The forecast levels of funding over the next three years, together with provision for budgetary increases, means that West Berkshire Council is facing a funding gap of £21m by 2020/21. Details are provided in our rolling three years financial strategy - the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) - on how we plan to ensure that the financial resources, both revenue and capital, are available to deliver the Council Strategy.

Given the level of savings required, an approach of further trimming of existing services was no longer possible and a more radical reshaping of the Council was started during 2015/16.

In order to coordinate a range of activities aimed at increasing the Council's effectiveness and efficiency, a Corporate Transformation Programme was established in 2016. It brings together initiatives such as:

- Financial Challenge Reviews of all Council's services carried out to identify ways in which the funding gap in the Council's finances can be closed. Approximately, £1.5m of savings has been identified for 2018/19.
- New Ways of Working Reviews looking at how each of the Council's functions are delivered over the next five years to ensure effective services are provided in an efficient way to our residents, making the best of our people, money and digital technology.
- New investment and income opportunities – activities focusing on generating income from property investments and traded services, and investment in solutions that will deliver savings for the Council.

Our Values

We recognise that how we do things is as important as what we do. We have therefore established four values which reflect the culture we are seeking to create in the Council.

These values are:

- **Respect**
- **Ambition**
- **Integrity**
- **Responsibility**

Our Approach

- Become an even more effective Council



Our Approach: Become an Even More Effective Council

Key things we planned to do

- 7.1. Continue to deliver our core services to the agreed standard.
- 7.2. Retain and build on our strengths.
- 7.3. Reshape what we do and how we do it so that we can continue to live within our means.
- 7.4. Improve our partnership working especially with the health sector.
- 7.5. Develop a modern and flexible workforce where staff are recognised and valued.
- 7.6. Senior management will spend more time on strategic rather than operational issues.
- 7.7. Encourage more flexibility and innovation amongst our staff and foster ideas from the 'grass roots'.
- 7.8. Strengthen our leadership capability.
- 7.9. Get better at celebrating our successes and explaining our failures.
- 7.10. Make greater use of other appropriate information to help assess the cost and effectiveness of what we do.

Progress update

Value for money benchmarking analysis against similar local authorities suggests that the Council is efficient in terms of its overall costs. The result of the main initiatives supporting the overarching aim of an Even More Effective Council include:

- The outcomes of the regulatory bodies' inspections of children's services, adult social care, our schools and early year's providers show that these services are provided at a 'good' or better standard.
- All the Council's services have undertaken a financial challenge review, a process to identify discretionary elements of service delivery that can be stopped to be able to generate the necessary savings whilst continuing to deliver and to concentrate on the things that we have to do (statutory services). This has delivered over £1.5 m of savings.
- Contract management for social care services has been strengthened in the last year through the incorporation of this function with Care Quality to provide a more holistic approach to the management of the delivery of commissioned care and support services. In the last year we have worked with Health partners to develop our information and intelligence sharing to ensure we have available to us the most comprehensive set of information about the quality of provider services.
- Establishing the Commissioning Service in 2017 was a targeted piece of work by the Council focusing on building on strengths and extending at overall Council level, a successful approach that worked at service level. In doing so, the set of skills that helps the Council to be as financially efficient as possible is being employed to cover all services of the Council.
- During 2016/17 a senior management review was undertaken. This review focused on the Council's senior management structures and looked at how the Council needed to be structured going forward. This review had regard to the difficult financial challenges facing the Council but also the need to consider delivering services in a different way. As a result the number of senior managers has also reduced.

Our Approach: Become an Even More Effective Council

Progress

- The Council has also been engaged with New Ways of Working and in transforming the way it delivers some of its services. Examples include:
 - Adult Social Care services implemented a new approach focusing on providing an individualised response to requests for support based on people, families and their communities' strengths.
 - A 'step down unit' was created to help support vulnerable people's discharge from hospital more quickly.
 - Children and Family Services were reshaped to increase the efficiency and the quality of response to the identified areas of need. This included strengthening the front door arrangements to deliver a better response to referrals, targeting the work to address children's needs resulting from combined domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health individual or family issues.
 - A review of the Waste service is being conducted aimed at delivering savings whilst continuing to meet the Council's statutory obligations.
 - The Development of the Emotional Health Academy, in partnership with Health, as a means of being able to respond quicker to support children and families' emotional well-being.
 - The joining together of Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards service for Bracknell, Wokingham and this Council into a Public Protection Partnership.
- In response to increasing financial pressures opportunities are being explored to generate income in order to be able to resource the vital services required by West Berkshire residents. One such initiative has been the introduction of a strategy which will see the Council purchasing commercial property as a source of rental income.
- A programme of digital transformation aimed at making the Council's services more accessible (24/7 where appropriate) is being pursued.
- The Council is open to sharing services with other partners and has a number of arrangements already in place. This approach will be one of many initiatives the Council will pursue as it endeavours to become even more effective.

Our Approach: Become an Even More Effective Council

- At a strategic level, the Council and health partners have worked together and refreshed the Health and Well-being Strategy defining the priorities for working together during 2017-2020. The strategy focuses on extending the health and well-being partnership to tackle health inequalities, to reduce harm from alcohol and build community resilience. As an approach the strategy aims to enable working together beyond the boundaries of organisations, professions and sectors in order to be able to deliver outcomes better.
- At operational level activities and initiatives to strengthening partnership working include:
 - Workers from the Council and health taking actions together in the cases of people that are detained under the Mental Health Act.
 - Developed a new agreement to ensure a more effective support for people with mental health needs to move on after a period in hospital. Integration plans resulted in teams being co-located to be able to work around the patients, produce joint care pathways and quicker assessment for patients to help them out of the hospital.
 - Public Health services working with the GP practices to improve the health checks take up. A particular new focus is to deliver targeted health checks to routine and manual workers (identified as more vulnerable and likely to be at risk).
- In 2016/17 the Valuing Each Other project was initiated with a group of staff to find ways of becoming better at valuing each other and to give staff the opportunity to discuss their ideas with Councillors and officers. One immediate result was to amend the staff appraisal system in response to staff's views. Based on the positive feedback from all involved, a broader range of workshops called Let's Chat, are taking place to engage all staff in the Council's change and improvement agenda.
- Strategy Board was established as a mechanism to look in depth at key strategic issues.
- Work began to develop and agree a Vision for the District for 2036.
- New Ways of Working developments, digital transformation, service reviews and Valuing Each Other/Let's Chat workshops are examples of processes that engage staff in changing the way in which the Council provides its services in order to be able to respond to residents' needs.
- Children's Services have been successful in securing Department for Education innovation funding, to pilot the Family Safeguarding Model of service delivery which has been successfully implemented in Hertfordshire. This is an approach based on multi-disciplinary teams using motivational interviewing techniques aimed at supporting more high risk families to remain together safely, improve health and education whilst reducing emotional and physical harm in families.
- Institute of Leadership and Management training programme has been taken up in order to further develop the knowledge and skills of its workforce and to be able to manage the challenges and opportunities presented by the 'day job'.

Our Approach: Become an Even More Effective Council

- The Prevention and Safeguarding services and Children and Family services have managed to establish a permanent management team (reducing reliance on agency staff).
- The Emotional Health Academy (EHA) continues to develop from strength to strength, NHS England have started a cross-departmental discussion with Department of Health and Department for Education regarding West Berkshire's impact on improving children's lives. In parallel KPMG Foundation are in early discussions with West Berkshire about potentially investing in the EHA as a national model, KPMG Trustees convened at the end of October to consider this.
- Financial Challenge Reviews have captured more detailed information to support analysis of individual service's costs.
- A new approach has been implemented to coordinate the production of needs assessment process (e.g. District Profile and Joint Strategic Need Assessment) into a District Needs Assessment and transform the methods to source and present data aiming to increase the accuracy of the data (usually available with a significant time lag) by using a module based approach which is being updated regularly.

Updates

The key things we planned to do at the start of the Strategy remain the same, with the exception of the following:

(New) Conduct benchmarking activity in order to use this data to be able to help to understand how to close gaps in education and health & well-being for disadvantaged families.

(New) To investigate and highlight which areas of Council activity are not as efficient as possible in comparison to other similar areas with a view to identifying areas for improvement.

(Amended) To heighten the focus on developing a modern and flexible workforce via recognising the value of enabling the workforce.

(New) Strengthen the methodology of how performance progress updates are reported at overall priority level.

(New) Produce a new Council Strategy for 2019 – 2023 ready for Full Council's approval in June/July 2019, reflecting a coordinated approach of all Council's services contributions to each priority area.

Refreshed Key Things We Plan to do



Improve Educational Attainment

1. Continue to develop our work with schools to improve outcomes for all children and young people.
2. Invest £70m in our schools.
3. Implement the refreshed West Berkshire School Improvement Strategy for 2015-17.
4. Increase safety, health and well-being support for children and young people in schools.
5. Ensure a good start for every child.
6. Increase the percentage of school rated 'good' or better through developing outstanding leaders and governors in our schools.
7. Better coordinate and evidence the contribution of relevant services towards attainment levels.
8. Secure additional resources for school improvement support through the DfE Strategic School Improvement Fund.



Close the Educational Attainment Gap

1. Our disadvantaged children will have better results and will be closer to the results of other children.
2. Maximise access to Early Years childcare for vulnerable families.
3. Encourage Pupil Premium sign up to ensure appropriate support is provided to disadvantaged children.
4. Develop the system led improvement to ensure Headteachers drive school improvement through the three teaching schools and school alliances.
5. Use the Strategic School Improvement Fund to provide more targeted activities to support disadvantaged pupils including the appointment of Head Teacher Pupil Premium Champions.



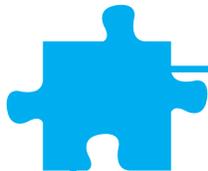
Enable the Completion of More Affordable Housing

1. Pursue options to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing in the district.
2. Develop joint working with housing providers to help towards more affordable units.
3. Increase lobbying of Government to reduce the impact being caused by viability issues.



Deliver or Enable Key Infrastructure Improvements

1. Invest £17m in our roads.
2. Seek to develop new partnerships with the private sector and local communities to enhance local infrastructure.
3. Keep our Community Infrastructure Levy policy under review.
4. Invest £5.2m in flood prevention schemes.
5. Implement the Superfast Broadband Programme for Berkshire and West Berkshire.



Good at Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

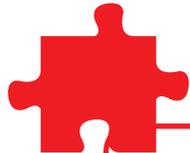
1. Ensure that it is easy for local people to refer their safeguarding concerns to us.
2. Where services are independently inspected they are rated at least 'good' and peer reviews of safeguarding rated highly.
3. Work in partnership with health, education, the police and voluntary and community sector organisations to improve safeguarding.
4. Sustain recruitment of qualified and experienced social workers and improve their access to more advanced/recent research intelligence and training for further professional development.
5. Implement an effective quality assurance programme for safeguarding services for children and young people.
6. Continue to implement the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' approach by working with people to achieve their stated outcomes from the safeguarding process.
7. Continue our approach to 'hearing the voice of the child' within the services and in the way we make our decisions.
8. Continue to develop a dedicated Children and Family Services website which will increase the means of communication/contact from young people.
9. Focus on progressing the Family Safeguarding Model to help reduce the number of children taken into the Council's care.

Refreshed Key Things We Plan to do cont.



Support Communities to do More to Help Themselves

1. Accelerate the delivery of local services for local communities by local communities.
2. Work with local communities to help people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives and improve the health of the poorest fastest.
3. Work with communities to enhance existing and develop new volunteering activities.
4. Implement new ways of working to develop communities to be more resilient in meeting the needs of vulnerable people.
5. Ensure the continuation of opportunities to participate in leisure activities.
6. Develop opportunities to engage with West Berkshire heritage.
7. Support local communities in developing community plans, delivering key local projects and progressing with their Neighbourhood Development Plans.
8. Grow community conversations via Building Communities Together Partnership.
9. Support employment including youth employment.
10. Gain an improved understanding of what areas of activity communities want to take on themselves and how they can assist the Council.



Become an Even More Effective Council

1. Continue to deliver our core services to the agreed standard.
2. Retain and build on our strengths.
3. Reshape what we do and how we do it so that we can continue to live within our means.
4. Improve our partnership working especially with the health sector.
5. To heighten the focus on developing a modern and flexible workforce via recognising the value of enabling the workforce.
6. Senior management will spend more time on strategic rather than operational issues.
7. Encourage more flexibility and innovation amongst our staff and foster ideas from the 'grass roots'.
8. Strengthen our leadership capability.
9. Get better at celebrating our successes and explaining our failures.
10. Make greater use of other appropriate information to help assess the cost and effectiveness of what we do.
11. Conduct benchmarking activity in order to use this data to be able to help to understand how to close gaps in education and health & well-being for disadvantaged families.
12. To investigate and highlight which areas of Council activity are not as efficient as possible in comparison to other similar areas with a view to identifying areas for improvement.
13. Strengthen the methodology of how performance progress updates are reported at overall priority level.
14. Produce a new Council Strategy for 2019 – 2023 ready for Full Council's approval in June/July 2019, reflecting a coordinated approach of all Council's services contributions to each priority area.