

# Individual Decisions

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The attached reports will be taken as an  
Individual Portfolio Member Decisions on:

27<sup>th</sup> July 2006

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Portfolio Member</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
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# Individual Decision

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Environment Directorate Plan</b>		
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Councillors Keith Chopping/ Geoff Findlay</b>	<b>on:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> July 2006</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID1145		

**Purpose of Report:** To seek approval for the Environment Directorate Plan for 2006/07.

**Recommended Action:** That the Directorate Plan be approved

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To set out the key objectives and work programme for the Directorate for 2006/07

**List of other options considered:** n/a

**Key background documentation:** West Berkshire Council Community Plan and Corporate Plan

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## Supporting Information

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Service planning plays a vital part in assisting with corporate planning, and service performance management and monitoring across Council Services.
- 1.2 The Directorate Plan articulates how the Environment Service Grouping supports the Corporate priorities flowing from the Community and Corporate Plans.

### **2. Structure of the Service Plan**

- 2.1 The Directorate Plan runs for three years from 2005-2008, but will be refreshed each year to reflect changes regarding achievements for the services and key priorities and targets to support the Corporate and Community Plan objectives.
- 2.2 The first section of the Plan articulates the national framework within which the Council works. The Corporate Priorities for Environment are then listed separately, showing the way in which the Service delivers against the priorities.
- 2.3 Service Action Plans for each service also support the Directorate Plan. These plans show the targets for the services that support the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and service led priorities and how they will be delivered. These feed down into individual performance objectives for staff via the supervision and appraisal system.
- 2.4 Members are asked to approve the Environment Directorate Plan for 2005-2008.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Environment Directorate Plan 2005-2008.

## Consultation Responses

### **Members:**

**Leader of Council:** Graham Jones

**Overview & Scrutiny  
Commission Chairman:** Not applicable

**Ward Members:** Not applicable

**Opposition Spokesperson:** Not applicable

**Policy Development  
Commission Chairman:** Not applicable

**Local Stakeholders:** Not applicable

**Officers Consulted:** John Ashworth, Gary Lugg, Mark Edwards, Bill Jennison, Carole Ruse and Environment Service Managers.

**Trade Union:** Not applicable

# **Environment Directorate Plan**

**2005 - 2008**

**April 2006 Revision**

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**Appendix A - Policy Framework**

**If you wish to see any of the documents referred to in this Plan, or require any further information, please contact Carole Ruse, Policy Executive, Environment on 01635 519972 or email [cruse@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:cruse@westberks.gov.uk)**

## **Introduction**

This is the first revision of **West Berkshire Council's Environment Services Directorate Plan 2005 - 2008**. The Plan provides an overview of the way in which we will deliver and develop our services over the next two years. It sets out our vision and priorities, linked to a strategy for how we propose to deliver them.

The Directorate Plan is a key part of our strategic framework. The Directorate Plan is an integrated part of the **Corporate Plan<sup>1</sup>** that contains a detailed explanation of the Council's vision and priorities for 2003 - 2008. The Council's key priorities underpin delivery of Environment Services. These include ensuring that the street environment is clean, well maintained and safe, improving transportation, enhancing the sustainability of the West Berkshire Community and preserving the local environment through improving environmental resource management. The Directorate also contributes to the creation of attractive and vibrant town centres and social inclusion.

The Corporate Plan supports the **Community Plan** developed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which works towards actions on the key themes of housing, transport, rural issues and learning. The LSP framework has been developed in conjunction with private and voluntary sector partners as well as other public sector organisations.

We measure our progress in meeting priorities through monitoring of **Service Action Plans**. These are drawn up each year and contain detailed actions and targets for each of our service areas: Highways and Engineering, Public Protection, Countryside and Environment and Planning and Transport Strategy. The action plans inform team and individual work plans, which are monitored through our **Performance Management framework**.

A change for the Directorate this year is an alteration of name. From the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006 the Environment and Public Protection Directorate will be named Environment. The service names have also been changed to Countryside and Waste Management, Planning, and Highways and Transport.

The services that we are responsible for have a direct impact on the quality of life for the people of West Berkshire in their daily lives and also for the people who work in and visit the area. We are committed to ensuring that all of these planning documents, including this Directorate Plan, are real working tools.

**John Ashworth**  
**Corporate Director**

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<sup>1</sup> Corporate Plan Update 2006 "Empowering Communities; Providing Quality Services"

## How this Plan is Set Out

This plan shows how all the services within the Environment Directorate contribute, not only to the Corporate Priorities that they have direct responsibility for, but also to cross cutting priorities for the Council as a whole. The plan also shows where we feel we are now, in terms of service delivery and where we are aiming to take the services. Plans are set out for how to achieve this delivery and the measures in place to ensure that our targets have been achieved. Priorities are clearly set out and opportunities and constraints are considered in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Section One of this plan concerns national and Governmental drivers for the Directorate, such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), national indicators and our own Performance Management Framework, which supports measures to enhance our CPA score.

Section Two looks at how we deliver our services and support or contribute to the Corporate Plan Priorities, showing what we feel we have achieved to date and what are our priorities for delivery over the next three years.

## The Locality

West Berkshire has a population of just over 144,900. Just over half 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 Town. Other significant towns in the district are Hungerford with about 5,000 residents and Theale with a population of about 2,500.

	Population
Newbury/Thatcham	48,782
Hungerford	5,559
Calcot, Purley, Birch Copse and Westwood	26,548
West Berkshire	144,900

Source; Midyear Population Estimates, 2004, ONS.

The remainder of the population are dispersed in small rural settlements across the district. West Berkshire has by far the most dispersed population of the unitary authorities in Berkshire - 206 people per km<sup>2</sup>, compared to 637 km<sup>2</sup> for Berkshire as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> District Profile - [www.westberks.gov.uk/districtprofile](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/districtprofile)



West Berkshire shares in the overall affluence of the South East. It is home to a number of well-known national and international companies. A strong commercial base, characterised by new technology industries with a strong service sector and some manufacturing and wholesale organisations, combine to give West Berkshire one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country at less than 1%. This affluence affects the propensity for people to travel further distances to get to work, and people travel more frequently to access services and leisure, putting pressure on the transport network.

Against this, West Berkshire also has areas of deprivation. Serving these areas is a challenge in terms of targeting "hard to reach" groups within the community.

## **National Context for the Environment Directorate**

Whilst listening to the community and working in partnership to achieve our goals to deliver quality services to our customers, the Environment Directorate, like all other Local Government Services, has nationally set targets and responsibilities. The Government is promoting the key modernisation themes for public sector services of:

- Delivery of prompt and responsive services
- Ensuring equal access to services
- Setting and measuring performance targets
- Securing better value
- Achieving better outcomes for service users

These themes guide the work we do and have an impact on how we balance our resources in order to achieve against the standards set.

## **Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Gershon Review**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2006/07 - 2008/09 seeks to:

- summarise the financial context within which the Council is working
- provide a stable financial framework for the Council over the period of the Corporate Plan, taking into account the need to address new statutory requirements, known financial pressures, and new Government initiatives;
- to ensure within that framework, through a variety of means, that financial resources are made available to deliver the Council's Strategic Priorities and Development Themes as set out in the Corporate Plan.

The MTFS proposes delivering savings through a range of initiatives, some of which involve extending the current boundary of our Efficiency Programme. These are:

- establishing a new 'Value for Money Programme' which ensures that resources follow our priorities and that in low priority areas we are delivering services at a low unit cost;
- reviewing our management costs to ensure they are kept to a minimum;
- renewing our focus on procurement savings;
- looking to 'share services' with neighbouring authorities so we can increase our own capacity and performance and look to further reduce our costs;

- continuing to develop partnerships with other local agencies both to improve local services efficiency and reduce costs;
- seek opportunities to develop third party business and thereby improve our income stream; and;
- providing incentives to managers to improve efficiency and deliver savings.

It is planned to invest just over an additional £6.2 million in supporting the delivery of our Corporate Priorities over the life of this new Strategy. Decisions on where these resources are to be allocated will be set out in the Corporate Plan and subsequent refreshes. The precise allocation of funding will be agreed through the annual Revenue Budget.<sup>3</sup>

### **Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) and e-government**

The Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) initiative is about delivering services electronically and supporting local governance generally by improving the quality of services and strengthening community leadership.

IEG seeks to structure services around the needs and convenience of the customer, delivering first point of contact outcomes wherever possible. IEG also seeks to harness the power of e-government to positively tackle social exclusion and services and communities.

The following table shows the priority outcomes for IEG projects applicable to Environment.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Online receipt and processing of planning and building control applications	Head of Planning and Transport Strategy
Sharing of trading standards data between councils for business planning and enforcement purposes	Trading Standards Manager
Online facilities to be available to allow the public to inspect local public transport timetables and information to be available providing links to "live" systems for interactive journey planning.	Planning and Transport Policy Manager Transport Services Manager
Online public e-consultation facilities for new proposals on traffic management, including publication of consultation survey results.	Traffic Manager
E-forms for parking "contravention mitigation" including email notification of form receipt and appeal procedures.	Traffic Manager
GIS-based presentation of information of form receipt and appeal procedures.	Highways Manager

<sup>3</sup> "Delivering Value for Money" A Medium Term Financial Strategy 2006/07 – 2008/09

## **Freedom of Information (FoI)**

The Council prepared well for the introduction of the new legislative requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and was "ahead of the game" when the Act came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. The act created a general right of access to recorded information held by the authority and placed a duty on the authority to adopt and maintain an approved "Publication Scheme" relating to the publication of recorded information and to publish information in accordance with the scheme.

The Environment Directorate has dealt with 137 requests for information during the year. All information requests have been provided within the time stipulated. Existing procedures and systems have proved reliable in this respect. The Council website has a dedicated area listing recent FoI requests, giving ease of access and saving time on duplicate requests for information.

## **Licensing**

The key changes to entertainment and alcohol licensing legislation reported in the 2005 Directorate Plan are now in place and continue to bring significant challenges for the Council and the Licensing Team.

Working in conjunction with partners within and outside the Council, the Licensing Team are completing the major administrative processes of timely issuing of personal and premises licences. The next task is to work with the trade to ensure problems do not arise from noise, safety and antisocial behaviour. This involves co-operative working with the trade and also targeting the minority of trouble spots with firm action, particularly when under age drinking or sales to those already drunk are recurring problems.

The new Licensing laws have introduced new requirements for temporary events. The team anticipates dealing with several thousand Temporary Event Notifications (TENs) each year. As well as the administrative burden this brings, TENs work to a tight timescale and events can only be stopped by the Police on grounds of crime and disorder. Considerable problems may arise therefore when a TEN poses safety or amplified noise problems.

Running parallel with these new Licensing laws are those linked to Gambling reform. For the first time, the Council will be responsible for licensing gambling premises such as casinos, arcades and betting shops. This process is still at an early stage but steps are already being taken to draw up a local Gambling Policy for Council approval during 2006.

## Equalities

The Environment Directorate applies the aims and values of the Council's Equalities Strategy to all areas of its work. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has required all public organisations to carry out Equality Impact Assessments on their policies and services to ascertain whether there are any adverse (or positive) impacts on Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. The Council has widened the remit to cover the needs of disabled people in assessing these impacts.

The timetable for Equality Impact Assessments within Environment runs on a three-year rolling programme as follows: Impact Assessments due in the Directorate in 2006 are listed below.

<b>Countryside and Environment</b>	<b>Year</b>
Waste, Grounds Maintenance.	2005-06 (3)
<b>Highways and Engineering</b>	<b>Year</b>
Project Management	2005-06 (3)
Highways	2005-06 (3)
Traffic Management	2005-06 (3)

Corporately, the Council is working with the Commission for Racial Equality in Reading, to refine and improve our work on Impact Assessments and to improve our consultation procedures with the BME and other communities within West Berkshire.

Results of completed Equality Impact Assessments can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

## Risk Management

Effective risk management provides West Berkshire Council with a means of improving strategic, operational and financial management. It also assists in minimising financial losses, service disruption, bad publicity, and threats to public health or injury to employees or members of the public, which may result in claims for compensation.

As part of the service planning process, the Environment Directorate reviews risks associated with service delivery and has embedded actions that are required to mitigate those risks within Service Action Plans.

## **Parish Planning**

In 2006 West Berkshire Council was awarded Beacon Status for its community involvement role around Parish Planning. The Environment Directorate has major involvement with both the development of Parish Plans and also the delivery of projects with Parishes and their other partners. Examples include protocols for Villages Design Statements and highway improvements, particularly relating to traffic speed and road safety issues.

## **New legislation**

### Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005

This Act gives local authorities wide ranging powers to deal with issues covering the following areas;

- Crime and Disorder - anti-social behaviour measures
- Fixed penalty notices - gives Parish Councils power to issue fixed penalties for litter, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling
- Nuisance and Abandoned Vehicles - gives the Council powers to impose fixed penalties for repairing vehicles on a road or exposing vehicles for sale on a road.
- Litter
- Graffiti and fly-posting
- Waste - fly-tipping
- Dogs - dog fouling measures and power to ban dogs from certain areas
- Noise nuisance
- Architecture and the Built Environment - establishes the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment on a statutory basis
- Other miscellaneous powers e.g. recovery of costs of dealing with abandoned shopping trolleys from the owners of the trolleys

Much of the Act came into force in 2005; other elements are being phased in during early 2006. The Act has a potentially significant impact on the Environment Directorate in terms of resource to enforce its provisions.

## National Government objectives for Environment

### Countryside and Waste Management

#### **Waste**

Nationally, the Government has set tough targets through the EU Landfill Directive for reducing waste to landfill, increasing levels of recycling and composting aimed at ensuring that waste management follows sustainable practices

These National UK targets cover the next fifteen years [to 2020] and are primarily set to achieve the reduction in waste being sent to landfill.

- To recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005;
- To recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010;
- To recycle or compost at least 33% of household waste by 2015.

In reviewing Waste Strategy 2000 (the government national waste strategy), the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit recommended even higher targets should be met - 35% of household waste to be recycled or composted by 2010 and a target of at least 45% by 2015. These higher targets have not yet been implemented.

National energy recovery targets were also set:

- To recover value from 40% of municipal waste by 2005;
- To recover value from 45% of municipal waste by 2010;
- To recover value from 67% of municipal waste by 2015<sup>4</sup>.

West Berkshire needs to respond to this challenging agenda for waste modernisation and this will be achieved through the implementation of its Waste Management Strategy. Our policies for waste management involve minimising waste through education and awareness and to significantly increase levels of recycling and composting. To do this, the Council will develop an integrated approach to waste management and work towards ensuring that waste is managed locally.

### **The Countryside and Rights Of Way Act**

This is the most important piece of countryside legislation to affect local government for 60 years. The essential elements of the act are as follows:

- **Open Access.** New public rights of access to mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. In West Berkshire some important land has been opened up to the public to supplement that owned and managed by the Council, voluntary sector organisations and landowners. To advise the Council in the management of

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<sup>4</sup> Figures cited in Waste Scrutiny Task Group Report - September 2004

Access Land, a new statutory body (The Mid and West Berkshire Local Access Forum) was created in November 2003.

- **Rights of way legislation.** The Act introduces new rights of way legislation, which is complex and wide-ranging. The Act also provides that within five years, Highway Authorities must publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan to be reviewed every ten years. This Plan should link with other Plans such as the LTP. Good progress has been made in 2005/06 with the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan; a full public and user group consultation exercise has taken place and is currently being evaluated. This aspect of the Improvement Plan is essential, as the major outcome is a document, which takes full account of the future needs of the public.
- **Nature Conservation.** The legislation places greater responsibility on local authorities and other landowners to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest in their ownership, providing increased powers for the protection and management of SSSIs. The provisions extend powers for entering into management agreements, place a duty on public bodies to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs, and increase penalties on conviction where the provision are breached, with a new offence whereby third parties can be convicted for damaging SSSIs.
- **Landscape conservation.** Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have been described as the "*jewels of the English landscape*" and along with National Parks are nationally important and legally protected landscapes. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act introduces new powers to manage Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). These include a requirement for local authorities to prepare and publish management plans for their AONB and provide for the establishment of Conservation Boards. The North Wessex Downs was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1972. It is the largest AONB in South East England and the third largest AONB nationally (out of a total of 37 AONBs in England).
- **Parks** In 2002 the government's Urban Green Spaces Task Group delivered the 'Green Spaces, Better Places' report. This recognised that a national decline in the quality of urban parks had occurred over the last 25 years. The report reiterated the social, economic and environmental benefits of this resource and noted that re-investment was needed. It was recommended that re-investment be achieved through external sources wherever possible and that local authorities develop a strategic approach to ensure delivery of higher standards. In addition to this a new national agency to champion and support urban parks was required. This body, CABE Space, is now in place. It is providing a good practice framework for local authorities at national level.



- CABE Space recommends that all local authorities develop a green space strategy to set out a vision for how green space is to be used and how this is going to be achieved. The strategy should support national and local policy objectives. The strategy should be based on an assessment of local needs and should compliment the preparation of the local development framework in terms of local provision standards. It is recommended that future quality standards be based on BV199 and the Green Flag standard, the Civic Trust's Award Scheme. West Berkshire Council has assessed the public perception of the existing provision in accordance with the requirements of PPG17 as recommended by CABE Space, but has yet to link this to an audit of the existing provision. This information will drive future policy relating to the provision of public open space. The Green Flag for parks award scheme compliments the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 whereby good standards of maintenance and the cleanliness of parks is a priority.
- CABE Space also recommends that local authorities produce management plans for all of their major parks and has produced best practice guidance for this. A management plan is now in place for Northcroft and Goldwell Parks in Newbury and is currently being implemented. A similar plan for Holybrook Linear Park in Calcot is planned for 2006.

## Planning

- Our target of production of a final **Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2)** by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 was met. Together with work on the **Delivery Report**, to be submitted to Government by July 31<sup>st</sup> 2006, this will determine the level of expenditure the Government considers is appropriate to meet targets and goals. The LTP2 sets out the issues we face around transport and highways and provides a framework for decision making to address the issues identified.
- The new planning system demands that all authorities work toward a **Local Development Framework (LDF)** to replace existing Local Plans. This framework consists of a number of documents (**Development Plan Documents**) to guide development in the area in order that sustainable development that provides opportunity for all in the locality takes place.
- Submission of the **Core Strategy** of the LDF to Government by August 2006, following Full Council in July 2006 is proposed in accordance with our **Local Development Scheme (Project plan)**. Thereafter the **Core Strategy** will be subject to an Examination in Public with the soundness of the plan in delivering a sustainable pattern of development that facilitates community aspirations being tested. A number of other DPD's are proposed to address particular issues or areas. The first of these is the **Newbury Town Centre DPD** that should be submitted to Government by the end of the year, and be subject to the same procedures as set out above

- To process major, minor and other planning applications to nationally set Government targets

## Highways and Transport

- **Local Transport Plan (LTP2)** - the Council has agreed an extensive programme of highway and transport improvements over the five-year life of the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011. These are identified in the capital strategy and programme and will contribute significantly to national objectives of reducing road casualties, reducing congestion and improving accessibility.

LTP2 sets out key outcomes and performance indicators in the field of highways and transport including improvement targets for road condition and street lighting. It is now also a requirement that all highway authorities develop a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). The Council has set out how it intends to achieve this in Chapter 7 of LTP2.

- **Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA)** - This relatively new legislation places a Network Management Duty on the Council requiring it to appoint a 'Traffic Manager'. The Head of Highways and Transport will fulfil this statutory position and the Council's delegated powers have been amended accordingly.

The TMA is an important piece of legislation in many ways. The Network Management Duty requires the Council to 'manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network'. If it fails to achieve this, then the Government can intervene and appoint a Traffic Director, although the regulations relating to intervention are unlikely to come into force until early 2007.

Other elements of the TMA, which will have an impact on the Highway and Transport Service, include civil enforcement of traffic contraventions (sometimes referred to as decriminalised enforcement), bus lane and moving traffic offences and blue badge inspection. Although the Council is moving towards the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) it should be noted that the TMA contains a 'fallback power' to allow the National Authority to force any authority which continues to choose not to adopt civil enforcement of parking offences to do so.

## Public Protection

Government expectations are measured by;

BV 166 a & b; ensuring that Local Authorities have the procedures in place to carry out their enforcement duties effectively.

BV 216 a & b - Identification of the number of "sites of potential concern" with respect to land contamination. Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of land is necessary, as a percentage of all "sites of potential concern".

BV217 -Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations (EPA part A2 and B installations) completed on time.

Implementation of

- high hedges provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- licensing provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 and
- provisions of the Gambling Act 2005.

## **The Performance Management Framework within Environment**

### **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)**

The major external test of our services is an inspection known as Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The Audit Commission carries out the inspections, the CPA looking at how well Councils deliver their services. It also considers how well the Council is run, focussing on financial management and use of resources to ensure that budgets are well managed and that they are used to support priorities.

Overall, West Berkshire Council has been assessed by the Audit Commission as "an authority that is improving well and demonstrating an overall 2 star performance".

The Environment Service Block has maintained a score of 2 this year, which supports this 2 star category. The CPA inspection methodology has been revised during the course of 2005 and has presented an even greater challenge to the Environment Grouping.

From 2006, special rules will apply for inspections, where pass or fail criteria will be set. The overall assessment under the new methodology will measure how well the Council serves its local population. "Key lines of enquiry" will assess the Council's effectiveness in terms of efficiency, and value for money. The new methodology<sup>5</sup> will comprise a "rule driven system" where special rule Best Value Performance Indicators will be used against the service blocks to ascertain a pass or fail rate.

The Environment Directorate's performance management framework is developed and promoted within the broader context of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

### **Why have a Policy and Performance Framework?**

As outlined in the introduction to this Plan, a comprehensive performance framework is in place across the Council. It comprises the Corporate Plan, Community Plan, Directorate or Service Plans and Service Action Plans.

These plans incorporate challenging targets to develop a culture of continuous improvement and best practice, to ensure that all plans are integrated and linked to achieve the same goals and to enable community and corporate priorities to be delivered and to measure and monitor success.

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on the CPA visit the Audit Commission website [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

Level One Indicators comprise top-level strategic indicators, which show progress against Strategic Priorities within the Corporate Plan. They are reported to Members via the Executive on a quarterly basis. Corporate Health Indicators are used to address the next level of performance management and reporting. These indicators support priorities and measure the effectiveness of major cross-cutting initiatives within the Council. It is expected that these indicators are managed by the Corporate Directors with their Heads of Service and reported quarterly to Corporate Board where "out of line" measures are reviewed and actioned. The Corporate Health indicators have been selected and grouped into 10 categories where each category has a number of indicators with similar characteristics or common focus.

### **BVPIs and Operational Indicators**

These are made up of all the remaining measures used within the Council and its Services and consist of a basket of Best Value Performance Indicators, Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators and Local indicators. These indicators are managed by the Heads of Service with their Senior Management Teams and are reported regularly to the Corporate Director, where out of line measures are reviewed and actioned. They are incorporated into Service Action Plans. As mentioned previously in this Plan, there will be an emphasis on working to improve on the CPA special rule indicators for 2006/07.

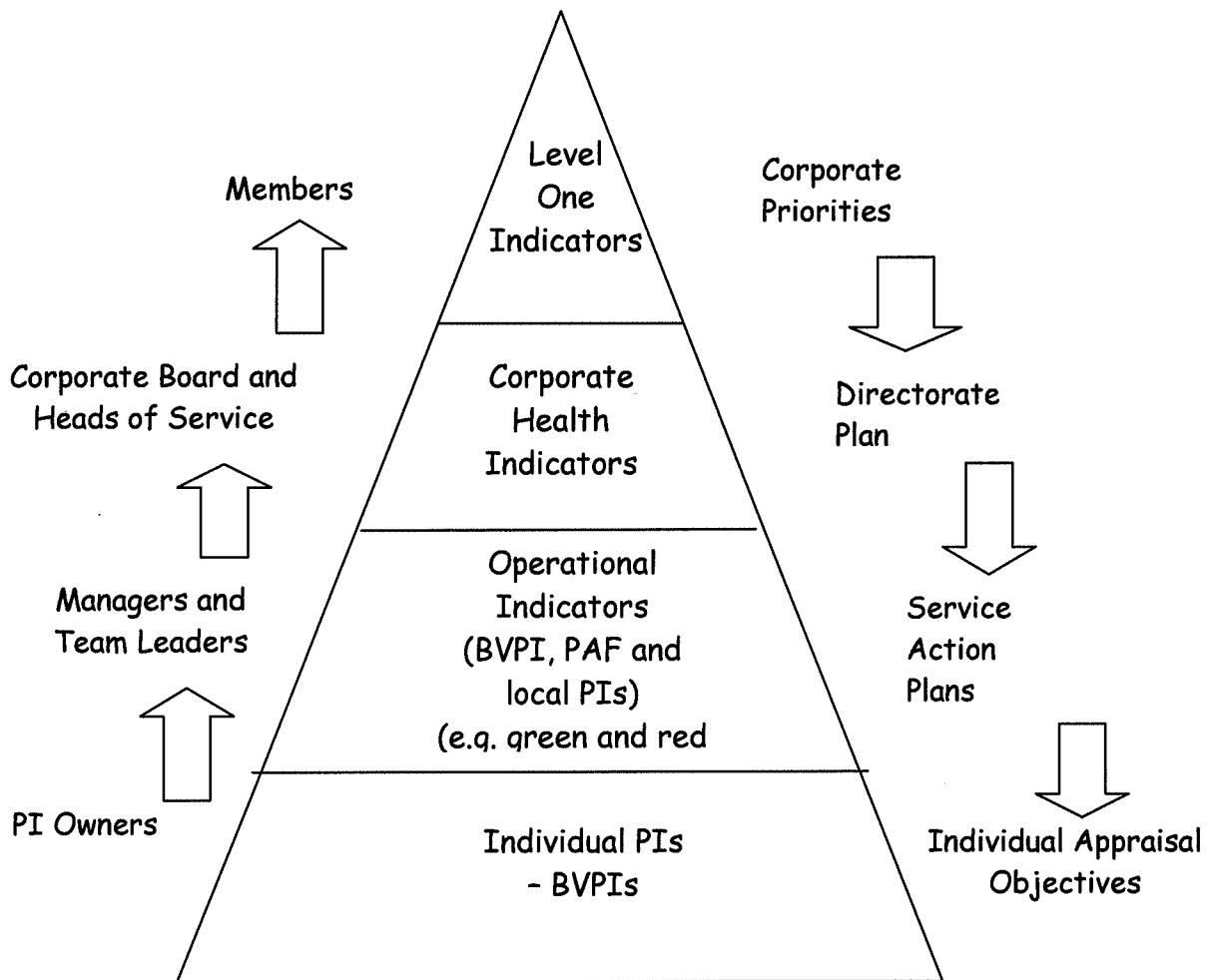
During 2006 a Programme Group, chaired by the Corporate Director for Environment is reviewing the Performance Management framework for the Council as a whole. Updates on this review will be incorporated into future Directorate Plans and Service Plans.

### **Individual Appraisal Objectives**

As part of the appraisal process each member of staff is set personal objectives, which are aligned to the Corporate Priorities and also help the Service to achieve its goals. The process is designed to help staff identify how well they are doing and to improve performance through development and training.

Appraisals take place on an annual basis and are supported by mid-year reviews at which performance against objectives can be assessed, and training needs reviewed. The process helps to shape the corporate training and management development programme.

The following diagram shows the performance management framework.



Review Process

## **What are we already doing?**

We measure the effectiveness and quality of our services through a range of methods, including:

- User consultation. Listening to what people have to say about their experience of us and using this to develop and plan services<sup>6</sup>. Examples of this include the annual satisfaction survey, Planning user satisfaction survey, and other individual service user surveys
- Systematic reporting on targets and performance indicators - as described in our Performance Management Framework
- Monthly in-depth Portfolio Holder briefings with the Corporate Director
- Scrutiny by elected Members (see paragraph on Scrutiny overleaf)
- Staff consultation and information - with regular briefing sessions from the Corporate Director and the Chief Executive
- Key messages relayed to staff via Management and Team meetings.

Within our performance management framework, this range of measurements and assessment sit alongside:

- a responsive and accessible complaints process
- performance management which makes an explicit link between Corporate Priorities; service action plans and individual employee targets, as well as financial planning
- focussed and effective training and development for staff and managers which supports and promotes continuous improvement

## **Workforce Development Plan**

Effective people management and development is fundamental to achieving improvement. Unless the authority can attract, retain, develop, and manage skilled people, it will find it difficult to keep pace with the increasing demands for high performance, improvement, modernisation and efficiency.

The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy 2005 set out five strategic priorities summarising the organisational and managerial changes that need to be made within authorities to ensure targets can be achieved and services improved within planned budgets. These are as follows:-

- Developing the organisation - to achieve excellence in people and performance management, process redesign, job redesign, equality and diversity in service delivery and partnership working.

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<sup>6</sup> Details of the Council in the Community and community needs can be found in the Corporate Plan Update 2006 "Empowering Communities; Providing Quality Services".

- Developing Leadership capacity - among both officers and members, including attracting effective leaders into local government from outside the sector.
- Resourcing Local Government - ensuring that authorities recruit, train and retain the staff they need.
- Pay and Rewards - having pay and reward structures that attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce while achieving both value for money in service delivery and fairness.

## **Policy and Development Commissions**

During the latter half of 2005 a new structure was put in place and the Scrutiny function stands alongside three new Policy Development Commissions. The purpose of these Commissions is for Elected Members to work on Policy Development across a wide range of services; themes being based around the Local Area Agreement blocks of Healthier Communities, Children and Young People and Safer, Stronger and Sustainable Communities.

The Commissions will undertake up to three policy reviews each per year to advise and inform the Executive in its decision-making powers.

Reviews in the Environment Area to date this year have been Vibrant Villages (a pilot project to grant aid ideas for sustainability of shops and small business enterprises within villages) and Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act - a review into the impact of this Act on policy development within the Council.

## **Scrutiny**

Select Committees provide the scrutiny and overview function. They have no decision-making powers but help develop policy and can "call in" decisions taken by the Executive where they feel it is necessary. They also undertake a broad scrutiny role for the Council in respect of public service provision within the wider community. Elected Members have set up specific scrutiny task groups to review and make recommendations on service delivery within the Environment Directorate. Recent examples include Countryside Access. The recommendations from this scrutiny review have resulted in an action plan for improvements to be developed.



## Environment Services in West Berkshire 2005 -2008

### **Managing Our Services**

The Environment Directorate is striving for continuous improvement. As explained earlier, Councils are subject to rigorous external inspection to ensure services perform well for the customers and we welcome this external challenge. Such challenge is one of the tools we use to help improve the functions in our services. Continuous improvement means setting priorities and having clear goals, identifying those goals and having a clear plan as to how to achieve them. However, the services need to be flexible enough to divert resources and to re-prioritise when necessary.

### **Matching Resources to Priorities**

The Service Group's net revenue budget (excluding support service recharges and capital charges) for 2006/2007 is £24.112m and is an 11.4% increase from the previous year. The revenue budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, which forms part of the Authority's Policy and Budget framework. This Strategy aims to use efficiency savings as the means of identifying new resources for investment. The Service Grouping has identified £0.527m of efficiency savings towards Corporate objectives.

Within the budget setting process Council approved £0.393m of investment to meet new statutory central government initiatives, £0.803m for super-inflation and an additional investment of £0.903m that directly links to the Council's Priorities and Development Themes, which includes £0.77m for the Council's Waste Strategy. Specific grants and contributions funds of £1.755m are anticipated for FY 06/07. It is anticipated that key services will continue to improve in line with Corporate Priorities and achieve CPA requirements, whilst remaining within the Directorate cash limit.

### **Capital Programme and Strategy<sup>7</sup>**

Environment Services business cases are submitted to the Council's Capital Group for initial consideration and potential inclusion in a long term Capital Programme. This ensures that money is being spent on the Council's Strategic priorities and the priorities that are important for our customers, the people of West Berkshire. However, this does present financial challenges and in a climate where finances are tight, tough decisions need to be made about where money is spent. Bids are made

<sup>7</sup> Capital Strategy and Programme 2005/06 - 2009/10 published January 2005

against a single capital pot over a three-year strategy. Through sound management practices, we endeavour to ensure money can be moved to support new or changing priorities as they emerge to make best use of new funding streams. Key priorities for Environment are highways, LTP/APR delivery and waste management.

**The key Corporate Priorities for Environment are -**

- **S5 Ensuring that the Street Environment is clean, well maintained and safe**
- **S8 Improving Transportation**
- **S9 Enhancing Sustainability and Improving Environmental Resource Management**

**In addition;**

- **The Public Protection Service also contributes to S7 Promoting Safer Communities**
- **The Highways and Transport Service also contributes to S10 Creating attractive and vibrant town centres.**

Key Targets for delivering improvements against the above key Corporate Priorities are listed in the Service Action Plans.

### **Customer Focus**

This is a cross-cutting theme for the whole authority and a priority for the Environment Directorate. The Council recognises that we have a diverse population in West Berkshire and endeavours to provide services that support and meet the needs of that diverse population. The Council tests its services by undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments to check that we are not excluding certain groups within society and that we are tailoring our services to their needs (the impact assessments being carried out within Environment were listed under the "Equalities" section of this Plan). We consult widely with all sections of the community. We welcome customer comment and feedback. We are working to continuously improve in this area and the Council continues to work with the Commission for Racial Equality to further improve the way in which we engage with the Black and Minority Ethnic community and other sections of the population of West Berkshire. For the Environment Directorate, this will be progressed by the work of the four Equalities representatives from Environment that sit on the Corporate Equalities Working Group.

The next section of this plan shows our Corporate Priorities in detail and how we intend to achieve targets against these priorities.

## **S5: Ensuring that the street environment is clean well maintained and safe**

### **What are the issues?**

One of the main environmental issues for West Berkshire is around implementing a sustainable system for waste and resource management, coupled with need to improve environmental quality in the community.

Annual satisfaction survey results clearly demonstrate that the condition of roads and footways is a high priority for residents.

Local traffic management and road safety issues such as parking, rat running and speed of traffic are also a high priority for communities across West Berkshire.

### **What are our key objectives?**

There are a range of initiatives that are being developed to improve environmental quality in the community. This is being spearheaded by a Cleaner Greener programme that is currently being developed with a number of environmental improvement projects to launch the programme in 2006/2007.

Whilst the condition of the principal road network has improved year on year since 2002 and is now rated as 'above average' by the Audit Commission, the condition of unclassified roads, particularly in rural areas, remains a concern. Through our 5-year highway improvement programme we will be targeting this important element of the road network with a view to bringing about a noticeable improvement in road condition by 2010. Expenditure on roads over this period is currently planned to be £11.1m.

### **What have we already achieved?**

- Street tree surveys have now been completed in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford and Tilehurst.
- All hazards identified in these surveys have been removed in the interests of highway safety.
- Street tree surveys in Burghfield Common and Purley will be undertaken in 2006.
- In 2005 a new tree maintenance contract commenced. The new contract provides a more responsive service with 24-hour emergency cover provided whenever required. Officers are investigating the possibility of procuring software that would allow all tree survey information to be digitised. This would allow this information to be better monitored and more accessible than the current paper records.

In addition we have:

- Met our PSA target of ensuring that the average number of individuals killed or seriously injured on our roads each year for the three-year period 2003-2005, did not exceed 83.
- In partnership with our contractor, we have introduced an emergency response vehicle equipped to deal with all types of highway incident 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- We have delivered an extensive capital programme, totalling some £3m in 2005/06, resulting in improvements to the road network including bridges and street lighting
- We have continued to produce regular road safety newsletters, which are distributed to more than 600 businesses in the region.
- We have published our annual 'safer driving' leaflet to advise road users of our plans for road gritting in winter and to offer road safety advice
- Used the Speed Indicator Device (SID) at numerous locations across the district, in partnership with Parish Council colleagues, in response to local concerns regarding speeding

#### **What will we do in the next three years?**

- We will maintain the current number of volunteers working on countryside projects.
- We will provide guidance and training in order to further the success of the ROAR project.
- We will maintain the improving performance in respect of road condition.
- We will continue to improve the road safety record in West Berkshire through improved education, engineering and enforcement techniques
- We will deliver remaining schemes in the Newbury Vision including Market Place improvement
- We will continue to deliver the Highways Capital Programme to agreed timescales
- We will produce a Capital development plan to replace the control rooms for CCTV
- We will produce a three-year development plan for deployment of CCTV
- We will implement a programme of clean and green initiatives
- Tackle localised environmental problems such as abandoned vehicles, graffiti and fly-tipping
- We will use new powers to enforce illegal vehicle sales on the highway
- We will develop and introduce a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) to more effectively manage the highway network, both in terms of its value and how the network is used

## **S7: Promoting Safer Communities**

### **What are the issues?**

The promotion of safer communities is a concern for all and working in partnership through the LSP and through Parish Planning and corporately through our Community Safety Team, work is being carried out to make West Berkshire a safer place. The Environment Directorate contributes directly to this through many of the services it provides.

### **What are our key objectives?**

- To reduce the incidence of illegal sales of age restricted products including alcohol, knives and solvents to young people
- To raise awareness of issues regarding doorstep crime
- To work in conjunction with partners to reduce the incidence and fear of crime by providing an effective CCTV service
- To contribute to the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum community risk register and ensure that we are prepared to respond in the event of a major incident
- To raise awareness of home safety issues

### **What have we already achieved?**

- We have instigated a programme of enforcement and education with respect to the sales of age restricted products
- We have carried out education and awareness initiatives with respect to doorstep crime
- We have introduced a rapid response capability to assist residents who are at risk of doorstep crime
- We have worked with Police and other partners to ensure effective use of the CCTV system
- We have kept under review the Major Incident Plan and instigated a major programme of staff training to enhance our ability to respond to incidents and emergencies
- We have carried out over 1000 home safety visits including the fitting of smoke alarms and provided free smoke alarms to over 1000 other West Berkshire properties
- Within the parks service, play areas are inspected weekly, with safety specific engineering inspections conducted quarterly. A programme of safety audits for all major parks is underway. Risk assessments for all major activities or events in parks are in place. In 2006, a new CCTV system has been installed at Henwick

Worthy Sports Ground to deter and protect the public from crime at this popular site.

**What will we do in the next three years?**

- As part of the LAA, we will develop work on age-restricted sales of cigarettes and alcohol with a view to reducing consumption in young people. This will include working with young people, schools and enforcement authorities.
- We will work with Banks and Building Societies to raise awareness amongst staff of issues associated with doorstep crime
- We will work with other authorities in the South East on building the intelligence database with respect to doorstep crime
- We will install new cameras onto the CCTV system and renew the control room as part of the Capital Programme
- We will continue to review and develop our preparedness to respond to incidents and emergencies

## **S8: Improving Transportation**

### **What are the issues?**

Accessibility to services by means other than car

Congestion in specific locations and the need to balance economic buoyancy with adequate transport networks to maintain and improve quality of life

### **What are our key objectives?**

- To implement our LTP2 strategies aimed at improving accessibility to identified services
- To provide and promote sustainable modes of transport
- To address congestion hotspots to improve journey times and quality of life
- To address freight movement concerns
- To continue our work in improving the standards of car parking across the district
- To make better use of available road space
- To reduce breaches of environmental weight restrictions and incidence of overloaded goods vehicles
- To deter and prevent the sales of unroadworthy and unsafe vehicles

### **What have we already achieved?**

- We submitted our LTP2 on time in order to foster a co-ordinated approach and framework for assessment and delivery of transport initiatives.
- We work in partnership with a variety of groups such as the Transport Action Group, RUAT, the Cross-Border Working Party with Hampshire County Council and the Cycle Forum
- Legal proceedings were instigated on a number of occasions in respect of breaches of weight restrictions and overloaded goods vehicles
- Spot checks of used car vendors were carried out
- Complaints in respect of sales of unsafe vehicles were responded to
- We made cycling improvements in Greenham common using existing and proposed cycle routes in the area and also those to and from centres of population.
- Our Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2004/05 secured an improved score of 79%, up from 72% the previous year. In its decision letter, GOSE commented that 'delivery this year has been strong and very well resourced'
- Nationally West Berkshire has been recognised by the Department for Transport as the most improved highway authority in England for cycling. This recognition resulted in an award being presented to the authority at the House of Commons in October 2004.

- We introduced a "Demand Responsive" bus service from Lambourn to Hungerford and integrated that service with 'home to school' transport in 2004.
- We designed accessible bus timetables for the district. These are provided on our website and ensure ease of use with online ordering.
- We had our Cycle Forum singled out as an example of Best Practice for others to follow by the English Regions Cycling Development Team in 2004.

### **What will we do in the next three years?**

- We will complete the consultation exercise on the public rights of way improvement plan
- We will improve cycle routes across Greenham Common to provide links between employment locations and centres of population
- We will produce the LTP1 Delivery Report for 2000/01 - 2005/06. This will identify progress towards achieving the transport goals set out in our previous APR.
- We will develop an LDF core strategy, which supports the objectives of LTP2
- We will continue to work with other transport authorities to address strategic transport issues and learn from best practice
- We will deliver transport improvement schemes identified in the Capital Programme<sup>8</sup> and the Local Transport Plan<sup>2</sup>, having regard to the objectives of that Plan and linked indicators.
- We will act on the transport studies that have been commissioned, including the introduction of measures as identified in the A4 Corridor Studies and the Rail Interchange Study
- We will develop a co-ordinated approach to parking across the District and a car-parking regime for Newbury Town Centre
- We will develop a Freight Route Network with associated measures to deliver the Freight Strategy
- We will consolidate the work around the CROW Act, and review countryside services to ascertain where we can re-focus on to priority areas and strengthen partnerships that we have established.
- We will continue with the car park improvement programme with the aim of introducing pay on exit at Northbrook multi-storey car park in 2006/07
- We will continue to give high priority to reports of unroadworthy vehicles
- Renew the weight restriction enforcement equipment at Langley Hill, Tilehurst
- Continue to enforce legislation aimed at reducing breaches of weight restriction and the incidence of overloaded goods vehicles

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<sup>8</sup> See Capital Strategy and Programme 2005/06 - 2009/10



## **S9: Enhancing sustainability and improving environmental resource management**

### **What are the issues?**

- To manage resource in an environmentally responsible manner, namely;
- The need to reduce the quantities of waste sent to landfill
- The need to improve levels of recycling and composting
- The need to implement more sustainable waste management practices
- The need to establish new waste management facilities in the district
- The need to raise awareness of waste issues within the district
- The need to educate on waste minimisation
- The need to further the sustainable management of the West Berkshire countryside with increasingly limited financial resources.
- The need to site-manage and protect sensitive ecological interests, given the increasing demand for countryside recreational access. One of the positive aspects of the CROW Act is that it has legally recognised the importance of countryside access to the health of the Nation. The Councils' major challenge is managing the expectation that the CROW Act has instilled in the general public.
- The need to protect and enhance the Social, Economic & Environmental well being of West Berkshire by preparing and implementing planning policies accordingly.
- The need to processing planning applications within the national, regional and local planning policy framework.
- The need to administer and enforce the Building Regulations to ensure the use of power is minimised.
- The need to avoid valuable resource usage e.g. excessive packaging

### **What are our key objectives?**

The main environmental objective for the next couple of years for waste management is to award a long-term contract to manage West Berkshire's waste in a sustainable manner and to also secure the much needed facilities to ensure that we reduce the quantities of waste sent to landfill.

For all services a key objective is to foster a sustainable environment for the future.

### **What have we already achieved?**

- We have developed and adopted a 20 year plan for waste management development
- We have secured £30 million of government funding to implement our waste management strategy

- We have put together a project management team to implement the Council's waste policies and objectives
- Through improvements to the Pinchington Lane civic amenity site we have improved the rate of recycling waste in the District.
- The new tree maintenance contract that commenced in 2005 now allows all green waste produced to be incinerated at Slough for power generation. This is a highly sustainable use of green waste.
- The grounds maintenance contract, which commenced in 2003, requires all recyclable litter collected from parks to be recycled and all green waste to be composted.
- The use of peat is prohibited.
- The parks service aims to plant 50 trees per annum to replace any tree removed for safety reasons and so sustain the Council's treestock and the quality of the local landscape.
- Progress on the West Berkshire LDF in accordance with current LDS
- Input into and agreement with other authorities in relation to SE Plan, now submitted to Government

### **What will we do in the next three years?**

- We are currently in the process of tendering for a new 25 year Integrated Waste Management Contract funded under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), which aims to implement our Waste Strategy. This new Waste contract is due to be completed by spring 2007 and will be phased in over 2-3 years.
- We will further improve levels of recycling and composting across the district
- We will reduce the quantities of waste sent to landfill
- We will erect stock fencing at Padworth common local nature reserve and extend the conservation-grazing project to this site.
- We will develop the West Berkshire LDF in accordance with the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- We will submit to the Government Inspectorate the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF) by August 2006 and following examination, adopt the Core Strategy in 2007. The LDF also contributes to delivery under Corporate Priorities S1, S2, S3, S5, S6 S8 S9 and S10.
- We will process Planning applications within the national targets by 31 March 2007.
- We will continue to process Building Regulations within the national targets
- We will work with the other five Berkshire Unitary Authorities in taking forward a joint Berkshire Minerals and Waste LDF
- We will input into the development of the South East Plan at regional and sub-regional level
- We will introduce recycling targets in new highway maintenance contract from 2006

- We will increase the use of aluminium street lighting columns
- We will increase the use of sustainable materials in highway construction and resurfacing
- We will aim to minimise traffic disruption and congestion levels through improved co ordination of works
- We will join with other authorities in the SE region to enforce the provisions of the legislation banning the use of excess packaging.
- We will develop and implement a Council wide Travel Plan as part of the Council's commitment to reduce its ecological footprint
- We will increase the number of roadside pollution points and improve the way we keep the public informed

## **S10: Creating Attractive and Vibrant Town Centres**

### **What are the issues?**

A long-term "Vision for Newbury" has been developed that will take Newbury forward over the next two decades. West Berkshire Council has developed this Vision in partnership with stakeholders. Services in Environment and Public Protection have played a key role in this process; Planning and Transport Strategy producing the Vision for this group and Highways and Engineering delivering the schemes in the action plan<sup>9</sup> through various projects such as the environmental enhancements to Bartholomew Street and residents' parking schemes.

"A strong partnership ethos has been established during the preparation of the Vision and our consultation has demonstrated a clear consensus across the local community on how we should move forward. With our future direction now mapped out the emphasis must now turn to delivery. We have produced an Action Plan which seeks to set out what we will do and when. Our Action Plan also highlights who will lead each project and where the resources will come from. The Council will be working jointly with the Town Centre Management Steering Group to help ensure the Action Plan is delivered and regularly reviewed"<sup>10</sup>.

### **What are our key objectives?**

- To create an attractive leisure experience that caters for all sectors of the community and respects existing assets
- To create ease of movement for public and private modes of transport and appropriate parking to facilitate access
- To increase the range and provision of experiences within towns whilst ensuring continued economic success for traders and the commercial sector across the range of facilities offered

### **What have we already achieved?**

- The Vision for Newbury has been adopted
- The selection of a Preferred Developer for the Parkway development
- The Parkway development to be part of the renaissance of Newbury Town Centre
- Facilitated the production of the Hungerford Town Plan 2110 and the emerging Thatcham Vision

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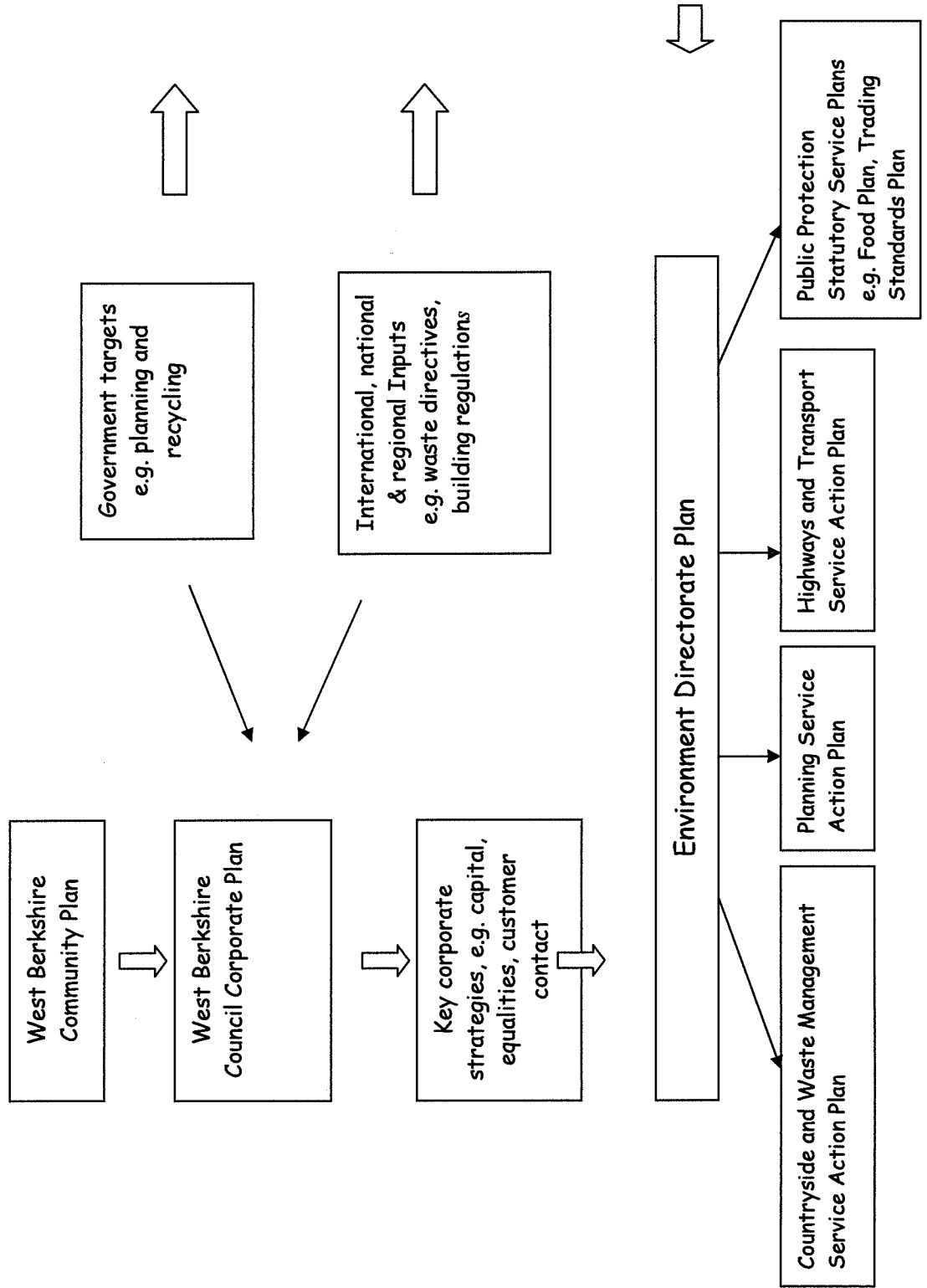
<sup>9</sup> Newbury 2025 - Action Plans

<sup>10</sup> Quotation from the Foreword by Leader of Council, Councillor Royce Longton - "Newbury 2025 - a Vision for Newbury Town Centre"

### **What will we do in the next three years?**

- We will implement the future phases of Newbury Vision, including the refurbishment of the Market Place during 2006.
- We will implement the remaining phases of Newbury Parking Project
- We will introduce other town centre improvements, including pay on foot facilities at multi storey car parks as described elsewhere in this plan.
- We will develop the West Berkshire LDF in accordance with the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- We will submit to the Government Inspectorate the Newbury Town Centre Plan by September 2006 and following examination, adopt the Town Centre Plan by 2007
- We will implement the various strategies and adopt the framework for decision making incorporated within LTP2, which supports Newbury Vision 2025 and access to other West Berkshire town centres.
- We will produce and implement planning and transport policies that support the creation of attractive and vibrant town centres.
- We will invest from the programme of improvements to be delivered from S106 contributions that will help to enhance parks in Town Centres.
- The Countryside and Waste Management service aims to apply and achieve the Green Flag Award for parks for Northcroft and Goldwell Parks and Holybrook Linear Park over the next 3 years to ensure these parks are vibrant and attractive places to visit within the District's more built up areas. The local character and attractiveness of the area is also preserved by the Tree Officers working to help to protect the treescape by advising planning colleagues and administering the Council's powers to serve Tree Preservation Orders.

# Appendix A - Policy Framework



- ❖ Statutory, Local & Multi-Agency Plans
- ❖ Structure Plan
- ❖ Local Plan
- ❖ LTP
- ❖ Waste Strategy
- ❖ Winter Maintenance Plan
- ❖ Manual of highway policies and standards
- ❖ Parking Strategy
- ❖ Berkshire Minerals Plan
- ❖ Waste Local Plan
- ❖ Major Incident Plan
- ❖ Food Enforcement Plan
- ❖ Air Quality Strategy
- ❖ Land Contamination Strategy
- ❖ Animal Health Plan
- ❖ Trading Standards Plan
- ❖ Corporate Health & Safety Policy

## Individual Decision

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Directorate Plan</b>		
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Councillor Graham Pask</b>	<b>on:</b>	<b>27th July 2006</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	<b>ID1146</b>		

**Purpose of Report:** To set out the key priorities for services for Children and Young People for 2006/07.

**Recommended Action:** That the Directorate Plan be approved.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** To confirm the priorities for Children and Young People's Services for 2006/07

**List of other options considered:**  
N/A

**Key background documentation:**

- Children and Young People's Strategic Plan and Action Plan (available in Members' Room)
- Service Plans:
  - Education Services
  - Culture and Youth Services
  - Children's Services
  - Commissioning and Quality

<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Graham Pask
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## **Supporting Information**

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### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The overarching strategic plan for the Children and Young People's Directorate in the Children's Strategic Plan, a statutory document which encompasses the whole of the key strategic and policy direction for the service, together with all of the performance indicators. This Directorate Plan summarises the key themes, achievements and future priorities for children and young people. It does not attempt to repeat the very detailed information in the statutory plan. Each service area takes the key overarching strategic themes and translates these into a Service Plan and Team Business Plans. These are not reproduced here; rather, a summary is given of the main themes and key priorities.

## **Appendices**

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Children and Young People's Directorate Plan  
Children's Services Structure Chart – PART 2  
Children's Commissioning Structure Chart– PART 2  
Culture and Youth Services Structure Chart– PART 2  
Education Services Structure Chart – PART 2

## **Implications**

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<b>Policy:</b>	The Plan is aligned to the Council's Strategic Priorities.
<b>Financial:</b>	N/A
<b>Personnel:</b>	N/A
<b>Legal:</b>	N/A
<b>Environmental:</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities:</b>	All of the actions outlined in the report are designed to provide inclusion for all children.
<b>Partnering:</b>	The majority of services for children and young people are delivered in partnership.
<b>Property:</b>	N/A
<b>Risk Management:</b>	N/A
<b>Community Safety:</b>	Many of the actions outlined in the report will contribute to increasing community safety.

## **Consultation Responses**

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### **Members:**

<b>Leader of Council:</b>	None received
<b>Select Committee Chairmen:</b>	None received



<b>P&amp;L Committee Chairman</b> (where appropriate):	None received
<b>Ward Members:</b>	None received
<b>Opposition Spokesperson:</b>	None received
<b>Advisory Members:</b>	None received
<b>Local Stakeholders:</b>	Consulted as part of the development of the Children and Young People's Plan
<b>Officers Consulted:</b>	Consulted as part of the development of the Children and Young People's Plan
<b>Trade Union:</b>	To be advised

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE PLAN

## Introduction

The Council continues to prioritise services for children and young people and to invest additional resources to meet growing demand in some areas of service. This will allow for the ongoing development of early intervention and preventive services to support families, as well as responding to the care needs of children with very complex conditions.

Continuing its lead in developing an integrated approach to meeting the needs of children, young people and their families, the Children's Strategic Partnership formally established its Children's and Young People's Trust on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2006. The key Trust development for the coming year is the formation of integrated Locality teams, which are planned to be in place by April 2007. Revised partnership governance arrangements are also being developed, which will incorporate changes the Council will make in response to the changes in PCT structures outlined in *Commissioning a Patient Led NHS*.

## The Structure of the Directorate Plan

There are a number of key issues affecting schools, social care and the youth service which will impact over the next two-three years. These include new legislation regarding schools, increasing expectations in relation to youth services, and changes to the way in which Councils undertake their Safeguarding responsibilities and duties towards Looked After Children. Each service has set out a detailed overview of these issues, together with a resume of key achievements in 2005/06, and key priorities for 2006/07, in their Service Plans.

This plan provides a summary of these issues.

## Overview of the Directorate

The Directorate comprises social care services for children and their families, education services to support pupils and schools and youth and community services. Changes to the management of the latter are underway following the Council's Senior Management Review, which will result in the Head of Culture and Youth joining the Community Services Directorate. However, youth and culture services will continue to play a key part in the delivery of services for children, and it is planned that youth services will become part of the integrated teams, albeit in a second phase.

The Directorate works in close conjunction with schools and other partners, including Connexions, the PCT, the Police and community safety organisations, voluntary sector groups, children, young people, their parents and carers. It adopts an integrated approach to meeting needs, and promotes an inclusive culture focussed on maximising the potential of all children.

All services within the Directorate contribute to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Additional funding from the Local Area Agreement from 2006 – 07 will enable closer attention to be paid to attainment at some specific Key Stage levels and to meeting the needs of young people not in education, employment or training. The development of the Children's Trust is seen as the key to ensuring that children requiring additional support in order to access mainstream services can do so easily, and staff will be working across professional disciplines so that children and their families have just one point of contact. Within the district, schools continue to perform well, with targeted support offered to those few that are experiencing difficulties. Youth services in

both urban and rural areas provide a wide range of opportunities for young people, designed to be challenging, supportive and exciting.

### **Key issues to address over the next three years**

West Berkshire Council took the decision to move to an integrated Directorate some five years ago now, and therefore joint working across the different services has reached a mature level, contributing to the excellent performance acknowledged by DfES at the end of last year. The time has now come to move on to the next stage of development and create three multi-professional teams that will undertake support to families and statutory work across the whole area. This agenda will create significant change and will require the close attention of senior and middle managers in order to be implemented successfully.

The Education and Inspections Bill is expected to become law shortly, and will have major ramifications for both schools and local authorities. The main aims of the legislation are to increase parental choice, improve standards overall, develop partnership working in schools through the creation of Trusts and federations and simplify the national regulatory framework. This legislation, together with radical changes to the 14-19 curriculum, will drive closer working between schools and other partners, and give a sharper focus to the role of local authorities as commissioners of services. Additionally and for the first time, West Berkshire is in receipt of funding to develop extended schools and children's centres, which will allow schools to develop their role as a focal point in their community, meeting the wider range of needs of all children through the joint delivery of care and education, as well as offering services at the beginning and end of the school day, and to families and the wider community. In spite of the fact that previous tranches of funding have not been available in our area, some schools have already made great strides in developing a whole range of services to meet local needs. Work is also underway on the development of a flagship scheme to reprovide three schools and associated leisure provision on the site of Denefield School in Tilehurst.

Social care services for children will not be subject to the same degree of legislative change, but nevertheless policy guidance regarding safeguarding and other statutory work is expected. The challenge for social care within the integrated teams will be to maintain high standards of practice to ensure that children are safeguarded, whilst contributing fully to the preventive and early intervention agenda that has already been successfully developed through the family group conferencing and kinship care approach. The need to implement integrated processes for information sharing, including the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), the Children's Information Index and the Lead Professional role will also require attention.

With regard to the Youth Service, in addition to implementing *Youth Matters*, changes to the delivery of the Connexions service will impact locally, alongside the new leisure centre procurement and a number of capital projects to refurbish youth provision. The Youth Service itself is currently being reconfigured in line with the locality team model.

In 2007, the Council will be subject to a Joint Area Review of its children's services. This will focus on the outcomes achieved for children locally, together with the contribution made by other Council services and those of its partner organisations. Preparing for this comprehensive assessment will be an intensive exercise.

West Berkshire is well placed to meet these challenges. The arrangements for the Children's Trust already place greater emphasis on informed commissioning to meet local needs, and the mature partnerships between the Council the NHS and other statutory and voluntary organisations mean that a "whole-system" approach is taken to service delivery and improvement. The development of locally agreed specific performance targets in the Local Area Agreement strengthen this approach. The proposed Change for Children Boards will also allow much greater community involvement in decision-making.

## Achievements in 2005 – 06

The Council's Children's Services received a three star rating for performance in December 2005, reflecting all of the work to improve services and outcomes that has been underway for some time; West Berkshire is one of only two unitary Councils to be rated as three stars. The Public Service Agreement (PSA) concluded in March 2006, with education and social care services showing improvement in school attendance and kinship care. A joint appointment with the PCT to the post of Head of Children's Commissioning and Quality has enabled our partnership working with health to be strengthened.

Key achievements in specific services include:

### *Education Services*

- Sustained GCSE results and improved A level results published
- All pupils leaving KS4 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) did so with a nationally recognised qualification
- School attendance improved to above the national average
- Two new (merged) primary schools have opened – Thatcham Park and Winchcombe
- Two new Autistic Spectrum Disorder resource bases opened at Theale Green Community School and Theale CE Primary School
- Two extended schools partnerships in place; eight more being planned
- An increase of 674 child care places during the year
- Successful DfES funding bid for co-location of Denefield, Long Lane and Brookfields Schools; Brookfields recognised by DfES/Ofsted for outstanding achievement
- Connexions funding secured for Intensive Personal Advisers, and for an activity programme for care leavers during the summer
- Successful bid for funding to deliver advice sessions on adult learning, for Neighbourhood Learning Centres and for study support activity in three schools

### *Children's Social Care*

- Multi-agency team to support looked after children established
- Successful implementation of a new IT system
- Established the first fully-integrated children's health and social care respite unit in the country
- Very positive annual inspection of the fostering service
- Continued very high performance from the Youth Offending Team

### *Youth Service*

- Successful completion of Two Prince's Trust Teams, with over 20 young people engaged in 12 week programmes to enhance their life chances
- 126 young people completed their Duke of Edinburgh's award, of whom 19 achieved the Gold Award
- Launch of Buzz Mk 2 in Greenham, engaging young people who would not normally access youth clubs

### *Commissioning and Quality*

- Completion of two major consultations on the development of the Children's Trust
- The development of new child protection procedures in the light of revised government guidance
- Continued expansion of the family group conferencing and community conferencing activities
- MATCh team implemented as a pilot of interagency, preventive working
- Common approach to information sharing arrangements agreed with Reading and Wokingham Councils

## **Cross Cutting Themes**

### **Sustainability**

Much of the work of the early years, extended schools and children's centre initiatives contributes to the sustainability of local communities, as does the work undertaken in and around schools themselves. Strengthening families through the Family Group conferencing and family support initiatives such as MATCH contribute similarly.

### **Equalities and Social Inclusion**

The Directorate places a key priority on helping all children and young people to achieve their potential, and supporting families who need to access additional help to resolve difficulties. This in turn helps to reduce isolation and marginalisation, and over time ensures that young people grow up to live independent, occupied and successful lives. The principles of equity of access to services and equality in provision, together with a focus on empowering individuals and families, are fundamental in the approach of the Directorate. Some specific groups – children with disabilities, and unaccompanied asylum seekers for example – require very special kinds of services to help them access the kinds of everyday opportunities most people take for granted.

### **Community Safety**

Much of the work within the Directorate contributes directly or indirectly to improving community safety, in particular that of the Youth offending Team. Children's social care teams take the lead in work to Safeguard children, and all services contribute as appropriate to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel and the Anti Social Behaviour Panel.

### **Use of Resources/Value for Money**

The Directorate has worked hard to reduce the costs of its external communications, largely through the use of electronic means. Effort has also been placed on developing new forms of partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector to improve Value for Money. Better procurement practice, and reductions in the use of external placements for looked after children, has also secured efficiency savings.

### **Priorities and targets for 2006 – 2007**

Detailed priorities are set out in the Children's Strategic Plan and Action Plan under the Every Child Matters outcomes. The following are the key priorities for the Directorate for the coming year:

- Set up integrated locality teams
- Improve safeguarding through the work programme of the LSCB and its sub groups
- Agree governance arrangements for the Children's Trust
- Determine schools admission arrangements for 2008/09
- Refine pupil number forecasting model
- Reduce exclusions and the numbers of young people not in education, employment and training
- Revise nursery admissions policy
- Ensure that 80% of early years providers offer 38 weeks of education
- Continue to implement extended schools and children's centres
- Review SEN funding and implement SEN Development Plan
- Establish Area Curriculum Boards to manage the 14 – 19 developments

- Implement the provisions of the Education and Inspection Act
- Prepare for the Joint Area Review
- Prepare for the Adult Learning Inspection (spring 2007)
- Achieve better engagement of children and young people and their parents/carers in planning and developing services through the establishment of the Change for Children Boards
- Engage with primary care practices as they prepare to implement Practice Based Commissioning

### **Customer Service**

Children and young people and their families are the ultimate customers of the services provided by the Directorate. This involves direct service delivery in the Family Group Conferences, Community Conferences and the Child Protection and LAC review services. For other areas within the Directorate, the immediate customers are managers and front line staff whose effectiveness is improved by service arrangements arising from commissioning activity. The engagement of children and young people in service development has been achieved through the work of the Involving Young People Group, which has ably managed the wide consultation and involvement of young people in a range of service developments.

### **Structure Charts – Part 2**

*Attached – please note that these are Part 2 and should be treated accordingly.*