

Individual Decisions

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

13 March 2008

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Individual Decision

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Forward Plan – April 2008 to July 2008		
Report to be considered by:	Leader of Council	on:	13 March 2008
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1366		

<u>Purpose of Report:</u>	To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next 4 months.
<u>Recommended Action:</u>	That the Leader of the Council agrees and where appropriate amend the West Berkshire Council Forward Plan.
Reason for decision to be taken:	It is a statutory requirement that a Forward Plan be produced.
List of other options considered:	N/A
Key background documentation:	None

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 The Forward Plan attempts to cover all decisions, not just those made by the Executive, which the Authority intends to make over the next 4 months. The Forward Plan, attached as Appendix A, also shows the decision path of each item so far including Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 As part of the continuing development of the Forward Plan we have now incorporated all Plans and Policies which are required to be approved by the Council under the Constitution. These items have been linked to the appropriate meetings of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

Appendix A – Executive Forward Plan – April 2008 to July 2008

Implications

Policy: As set out in the report
Financial: There are no financial implications for the Council

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Leader of the Council

**Overview & Scrutiny
Commission Chairman:** OSC Chairman

Ward Members: N/a

Opposition Spokesperson: Opposition Leader

**Policy Development
Commission Chairman:** N/a

Local Stakeholders: The West Berkshire Council Forward Plan will be published the first working day after the Individual Decision is signed.

Officers Consulted: Nick Carter, John Ashworth, Margaret Goldie, Teresa Bell, Group Executives and there has been widespread consultation with senior managers across the Authority on the content of the Forward Plan. Given its rolling nature this consultation will be ongoing.

Trade Union: Not sought

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – April to July 2008

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Service Area	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member	Part II	Date Report Published	Notes
APRIL 2008									
EX1543	Review of Policy and Communication Unit and Staffing Structure - Consultation Draft <i>To update the Executive on the conclusions drawn from the recent staff consultation exercise on the proposed new Policy and Communications structure.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Nick Carter (2101)	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	Yes	09/04/08	
EX1553	Office in the East of District <i>To consider future accommodation needs for the Eastern Locality Team and Care Management Team.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Amanda Dennis	Councillor Graham Jones		09/04/08	
EX1538	Review of the West Berkshire Overview and Scrutiny Commission <i>To consider recommendations in respect of the Scrutiny Function following the IDeA Mini Peer Review.</i>	EX	17/04/2008 EX	Chief Executive	Nick Carter (2101)	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		09/04/08	
EX1542	Accommodation Update <i>Update on accommodation.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Martyn Powers	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		09/04/08	delayed following the accommodation group meeting on the 08/02/08
EX1386	Risk Management Strategy <i>To present the Council's Risk Management Strategy.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Ian Priestley (2253)	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		09/04/08	
EX1387	Strategic Risk Register <i>To approve the Council's Strategic Risk Register.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Ian Priestley (2253)	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		09/04/08	
EX1528	Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Action Groups <i>To consider the recommendations from OSC</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX 05/02/08	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor (3019)	Councillor Emma Webster		09/04/08	delayed due to rescheduling on OSC agenda

The items included in the Forward Plan were correct at the time of publication. The Forward Plan may, however, change and you are advised to contact:
David Cook – Tel: 01635 519475 e-mail: dcook@westberks.gov.uk in Policy & Communication to confirm the contents of any agenda before attending a meeting.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MAY BE TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE ACTING AS A COLLECTIVE BODY OR BY OFFICERS ACTING UNDER DELEGATED POWERS.

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – April to July 2008

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Service Area	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member	Part II	Date Report Published	Notes
EX1539	Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Outside Schools in West Berkshire	EX	17/04/2008 EX	Chief Executive	Joanna Richardson/ Mark Edwards	Councillor Keith Chopping		09/04/08	
EX1397	Annual Satisfaction Survey <i>To inform Members of the opinions of residents of West Berkshire with regard to their quality of life and the services they receive from the Council.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Chief Executive	Jessica Broom (2591)	Councillor Graham Jones		09/04/08	
EX1505	Home to School and College Transport Policy 2009-10 <i>To go out to consultation</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Children and Young People	Malcolm Berry	Councillor Barbara Alexander		09/04/08	
EX1396	School Term Dates for 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/2012 <i>To advise the Executive of the proposed term dates for West Berkshire Schools and to seek approval for the 2009/10 term dates and the provisional dates for 2010-11 and 2011-2012.</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Children and Young People	Jeanne Lapsley (2030)	Councillor Barbara Alexander		09/04/08	
EX1592	Nursery Admission Policy 2009-10 <i>To approve consultation on the policy</i>	EX	17/04/08 EX	Children and Young People	Malcolm Berry	Councillor Barbara Alexander		09/04/08	
ID1367	West Berkshire Forward Plan - May 2008 to August 2008 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	17/04/08 ID	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser (2045)	Councillor Graham Jones		09/04/08	
ID1594	Modification to Newbury Town Centre Parking Project	ID	09/04/08 ID	Environment	Andrew Garrett (2491)	Councillor Keith Chopping		28/03/08	

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – April to July 2008

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Service Area	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member	Part II	Date Report Published	Notes
MAY 2008									
EX1527	Scrutiny Review of Flooding <i>To consider the recommendations from OSC</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX 08/01/08	Environment	John Ashworth	Councillor Geoff Findlay		21/05/08	
EX1582	Partnership Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan <i>To provide information on the development of the Partnership Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan 2008/09</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Chief Executive	Susan Powell	Councillor Emma Webster		09/04/08	delayed in order to support alignment with other strategic documents including the LAA and SCS
EX1589	HCOP PDC Review of Eligibility Criteria <i>To advise the Executive of the outcomes of the HCOP PDC review of eligibility criteria.</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Chief Executive	Jessica Broom	Councillor Joe Mooney		09/04/08	delayed from April Exec to allow time to consider additional evidence that has been submitted.
C1569	Member Development Strategy 2006-2009 - Update <i>To provide an update on the Member Development Strategy 2006-2009.</i>	C	08/05/08 C 04/02/08	Chief Executive	Jo Watt	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		22/02/08	
EX1318	Annual Employment and People Strategy Refresh Report including Establishment Monitoring - Year End <i>To report on the year end position in respect of the Council's Establishment for 2006/07.</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Chief Executive	Robert O'Reilly	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		21/05/08	
EX1593	People Strategy Refresh <i>To report on the refresh of the People Strategy 2008-2012</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Chief Executive	Robert O'Reilly	Executive Member for Strategy and Performance		21/05/08	
ID1556	West Berkshire Forward Plan - June 2008 - September 2008 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	15/05/08	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		08/05/08	

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – April to July 2008

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Service Area	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member	Part II	Date Report Published	Notes
EX1552	Youth Justice Plan - 2008-09 <i>For approval</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Children and Young People	Davy Pearson	Councillor Barbara Alexander		21/05/08	delayed at officers' request
C1580	Review of the Constitution <i>To consider any proposed changes to the Constitution.</i>	C	08/05/08 C	Chief Executive	David Holling	Councillor Graham Jones			
EX1382	Priority Outcomes for the LAA <i>To seek approval for the 2008/09 refresh of the Local Area Agreement.</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Chief Executive	Andy Day (2459)	Councillor Graham Jones		21/05/08	
EX1395	Home to School Transport <i>To determine a Home to School Transport Policy for the 2008/09 Academic Year.</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Children and Young People	Malcolm Berry (2770)	Councillor Barbara Alexander		21/05/08	
EX1551	Youth Service Review <i>To consider the recommendations made in the report on the review of the Youth Service.</i>	EX	29/05/08 EX	Children and Young People	Mark Vernon (2552)	Councillor Barbara Alexander		21/05/08	
JUNE 2008									
ID1557	West Berkshire Forward Plan - July 2008 - October 2008 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	12/06/06	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		05/06/08	
JULY 2008									
EX1545	Developer Contribution for Education and Social Care <i>To present the findings following the consultation process.</i>	EX	10/07/08 EX	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Councillor Keith Chopping		02/07/08	
ID1558	West Berkshire Forward Plan - August 2008 - November 2008 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	17/07/08	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		10/07/08	

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EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MAY BE TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE ACTING AS A COLLECTIVE BODY OR BY OFFICERS ACTING UNDER DELEGATED POWERS.

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Living Landscape Partnership Project		
Report to be considered by:	Cllr Geoff Findlay	on:	13 th March 2008
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1577		

Purpose of Report:

To approve a partnership agreement between West Berkshire Council and Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) for the management of the area of high biodiversity from Greenham Common to Thatcham Reedbeds.

Recommended Action:

To approve a 10-year Partnership Agreement between West Berkshire Council and BBOWT for the management of the area shown on the map at Annex A (Greenham Common through to the Thatcham Reed Beds) to ensure the conservation and enhancement of this important area of high biodiversity

Reason for decision to be taken:

The Partnership proposal provides increased resources, including staffing, for the future management of this important landscape.

List of other options considered:

There are no other options available which have the potential to deliver the same outcomes.

Key background documentation:

"A Living Landscape – a call to restore the UK's battered ecosystems, for wildlife and people." The Wildlife Trusts 2006.
www.wildlifetrusts.org

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Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The landscape area involved comprises land from Greenham Common northwards to Thatcham Reedbeds (see map attached). This has long been recognised for its high nature conservation value and rich diversity of plant species. This biodiversity is without doubt a valuable resource for the district. Within the total area of 2,400 hectares, which is characterised by lowland heath, ancient woodland and reedbeds, there are 3 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is the highest European nature conservation designation.
- 1.2 In recognising the need to protect, expand and enhance this unique and diverse landscape, West Berkshire Council and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) have explored the benefits of partnership working. BBOWT is a significant landowner in the area and manages Baynes and Bowdown Woods on the edge of Greenham Common. The Council owns Greenham and Crookham Commons, the Nature Discovery Centre and manages the reedbeds.
- 1.3 The protection afforded to important nature conservation sites by their designation as SSSIs has helped to slow the decline in nature conservation and wildlife. An important aspect of this is the need to assure protection to large enough areas of sufficient scale to be capable of sustaining and encouraging species to develop and thrive. This approach is increasingly supported by government policy and is very much in keeping with the approach proposed by the Living Landscape Partnership Project.
- 1.4 A key aim of the project will be to increase the number of national and local important species of wildlife and their populations, including Nightjar, Skylark, Woodlark, Bittern, Linnet, Song Thrush, Dormouse, Pipistelle, Stag Beetle, Freshwater Crayfish and Great Crested newt.
- 1.5 A draft partnership agreement has been jointly prepared, which sets out the aims and objectives of the 'Living Landscape Partnership Project' and the terms of the working relationship. This commits both organisations to work together to secure additional external funding for joint projects to enhance and develop opportunities for the living landscape in the project area.
- 1.6 The Partnership will provide a flagship landscape conservation project for the Council and will further the Council's aim to deliver services through key partnerships. It will provide opportunities for additional resources and expertise for the enhancement of Biodiversity. The Living Landscape Project will consider heritage, access, leisure, education, and the involvement of local residents to achieve long term enhancement of the biodiversity of the area.

2. Background information on BBOWT

- 2.1 BBOWT is one of 47 Wildlife Trusts working across the British Isles who together have:
 - over 600,000 members
 - more than 26,700 active volunteers
 - 2,400 nature reserves spanning 80,000 hectares of land
- 2.2 BBOWT owns or manages more than 88 nature reserves across the three counties. In West Berkshire BBOWT owns Hungerford Marsh, Inkpen Common and Baynes and Bowdown wood adjacent to Greenham Common.

2.3 BBOWT is able to receive income from a range of sources, including membership subscriptions, grants, fundraising, legacies, business support and trusts. They do not receive any core governmental funding. The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who give their time voluntarily.

3. Living Landscape Area

3.1 The Project area is shown in detail on the map attached. The area includes all the key habitat conservation priorities within the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan, including lowland heath, ancient woodland, reedbed and river corridor. Substantial areas of these important habitats are in the ownership of either West Berkshire Council or BBOWT, but some are in private ownership. Existing funding schemes present opportunities to work with private landowners to bring other important habitats into appropriate management as part of Living Landscape Project.

4. West Berkshire Living Landscape Partnership Project and Summary of the Agreement

4.1 The Vision of the Project is:

“To protect, expand and enhance this unique and diverse landscape of West Berkshire; creating an environment richer in Wildlife for everyone.”

4.2 The Objectives of the Project will:

- Contribute to Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets for the south east
- Develop and deliver an integrated land management plan for the area
- Increase opportunities for people to get involved and learn about their local landscape
- Protect the area for the enjoyment of future generations

4.3 The Project will focus firstly, on the core area of land owned by BBOWT and the Council where the Partners will work together to deliver integrated, high quality conservation management and enhancement. Secondly, BBOWT will facilitate the delivery of conservation management advice to private landowners.

4.4 Whilst the Council and BBOWT will continue to own and manage their current landholdings, BBOWT will seek to acquire additional land when opportunities arise for added biodiversity enhancement. BBOWT would be solely responsible for the management of such additional areas.

5. Resources

5.1 Both parties will contribute resources in the form of staff time, equipment and knowledge. West Berkshire will provide a minimum of the existing level of site-based staff at the time of making the agreement. BBOWT will provide 1 member of staff, plus 2 others subject to funding, dedicated to the Project and working on all areas of activities outlined below.

6. Activities

6.1 West Berkshire and BBOWT staff will work closely to implement a plan developed and agreed by both parties as the Project progresses. The plan will include the delivery of a range of activities falling into the following four broad areas:

1. Habitat management, advice, enhancement and re-creation. A single overall conservation plan for the core area will be developed together with *Natural England*.
2. A plan will be developed with the partnership to improve appropriate recreational access to and through the area.

3. An enhanced programme of activities, education and involvement such as volunteering will be developed jointly.
4. Promotion and protection of the Project area through future planning strategies and other policy documents.

7. Future Funding

- 7.1 Both organisations have considerable experience in raising funds for conservation management. Greenham Common and Thatcham Reedbeds are managed under the Government's Countryside Stewardship Scheme which provides long-term funding for ongoing management. BBOWT have a designated fundraising team who are committed to bringing additional funding for the partnership objectives. Consequently West Berkshire Council will benefit from this in the long term. The partnership, involving the Public and Voluntary sectors, will have considerably greater chance of achieving long term funding and grant aid objectives. It is intended that the agreement will be for a ten year period with a review after two years.

Appendices

Appendix A - Map – Living Landscape Project Area

Policy:	The Project makes a significant contribution to the Cleaner and Greener objectives within the Council Plan
Financial:	The Project has the potential to generate significant funding from external organisations to meet objectives.
Personnel:	None
Legal:	The Council will enter into a 10 year agreement with BBOWT.
Environmental:	There are significant long-term and large scale environmental benefits for the area.
Equalities:	The project would assist in delivering opportunities for access and volunteer work in the Countryside.
Partnering:	The Project creates a partnership with the Council and landscape management in the long term
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Community Safety:	None

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Cllr Graham Jones
Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman:	Cllr. Brian Bedwell
Policy Development Commission Chairman:	Cllr. Quentin Webb

Individual Exec Member Decisions taken on 13 March 2008

Ward Members: Cllr Owen Jeffery, Cllr Irene Neill, Cllr Terry Port, Cllr Keith Woodhams, Cllr Jeff Brooks, Cllr Billy Drummond, Cllr Julian Swift-Hook

Opposition Spokesperson: Cllr. Royce Longton – 'I am extremely enthusiastic about this project, which will bring to fruition a long-standing objective of developing and implementing a comprehensive conservation management plan for the area concerned.'

Local Stakeholders: The Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission

Officers Consulted: Annette Thomas, Bill Jennison and
Jeremy Davy

Trade Union: Rosemary Culmer

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

West Berks Living Landscape Project Area

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire

