

Individual Decisions

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

8 April 2008

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Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Review of Parking Permits Issued to External Organisations		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Keith Chopping	on:	08 April 2008
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1576		

Purpose of Report: To inform the Executive Member for Planning and Highways of the results of consultations with those external organisations receiving parking permits from the Council to park in the Newbury car parks; and to seek authority to amend the existing arrangements.

Recommended Action: That the Executive Member for Planning and Highways resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in Section 5 of the report.

Reason for decision to be taken: To facilitate further the Council's Transitional Parking Strategy for Newbury, 2006-2010.

List of other options considered: To take no action.

Key background documentation: Consultation letter to external organisations and their replies.

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 The existing arrangements for the provision of permits to external organisations have been in place for many years. There is no specific Council policy in place on these arrangements and it would seem that historically West Berkshire Council has provided free or heavily subsidised parking to these organisations.
- 1.2 It is considered that it is now appropriate to review the existing arrangements and to recommend changes to the allocation of parking permits to these external organisations.

2. Factors for Consideration

- 2.1 Following a period of extensive consultation, the Council has recently implemented a Travel Plan that aims to achieve an ongoing and permanent reduction in car travel to and from work by Council staff by encouraging:-
- (a) Car sharing under which there are designated car sharer parking bays nearest to the offices that may only be used by car sharers;
 - (b) Use of public transport by way of interest free loans for season tickets;
 - (c) Alternative methods of travel, especially by cycle (changing facilities have been provided for cyclists).
- 2.2 The Travel Plan will also see the end of the automatic issue of free parking permits to new Council employees unless they meet certain eligibility criteria. When existing permit holders who do not meet the new permit eligibility criteria leave the Council's service, their permit will be extinguished. Through these ongoing measures, the Council aims to achieve a process of ongoing erosion that will, over time, substantially reduce the overall number of permits issued to staff; see a modal shift away from car dependency to alternative methods of travel to and from work; and reduce the overall volume of carbon emissions attributable to Council activities.
- 2.3 The Travel Plan has been implemented just before the period of Town Centre redevelopment commences which involves closing some existing popular shopper car parks. The users of these car parks will now use the other car parks nearest to the shops and while the incremental effects of the Travel Plan will ultimately make more parking spaces available for shoppers, the remaining holders of staff parking permits will be relocated to those car parks least favoured by shoppers. This will ensure that the parking nearest to the shops is more available for shopper parking.
- 2.4 Currently, there are 123 parking permits issued to external organisations including voluntary organisations. It is considered that those organisations receiving parking permits issued by the Council should also be encouraged to review their staff travel arrangements with a view to achieving the same ongoing and permanent reduction in car dependency and hence, the number of parking permits they will in future require.

- 2.5 The list of external organisations receiving parking permits is shown in Table A below.

Table A: External Organisations Receiving Parking Permits from WBC

Name of Organisation	No. of Free Permits	No. of Subsidised (£50) Permits
Citizens Advice Bureau	40	10
Corn Exchange	0	7
Coroners Office	1	0
Newbury Town Council	3	0
Fire & Rescue Service	5	0
Resolve	10	0
Samaritans	3	0
Mencap	6	1
West Berks Training Consortium	18	0
West Berks Volunteer Bureau	14	0
Community Action West Berkshire	5	0
Total	105	18

3. Consultation with External Organisations

- 3.1 On 9 July 2007 these organisations were consulted by letter on proposals for the future management of parking permits. The letter is available as background documentation if required. In summary, the external organisations were informed that:

- Set against the impending Town Centre developments and the consequential loss of parking spaces, the Council would give priority to shopper parking.
- The Council had agreed to implement a Travel Plan that would encourage a modal shift in the transport methods used by Council staff with the overall aim of reducing car dependency as the primary means of travel to and from work.
- That the Council would shortly cease issuing parking permits to new Council employees, unless they met specific eligibility criteria.
- The Council planned to end issuing parking permits to external organisations. Instead, it would offer them the opportunity to purchase season tickets at half the current price. To ameliorate the financial effects in the first financial year the season tickets should be available at a quarter of the current price and increase to half the prevailing price in the second and subsequent financial years. The maximum number of season tickets that could be bought would be capped at the same level as the number of permits the organisations currently hold.

- 3.2 The current full prices for season tickets in the Newbury car parks are shown in Table B:

Table B: Price of Season Tickets in the Newbury Car Parks from April 2008

Car Park / Duration of Season Ticket	Kennet Centre MSCP (£)	Northbrook MSCP (£)	Newbury Surface (£)
Annual Season Ticket	N/A	£700.00	£800.00
Quarterly Season Ticket	£220.00	£220.00	£230.00

- 3.3 The organisations consulted were asked to reply by 30 September 2007 and a summary of their replies is given in Table C.

Table C: Summary of Replies from External Organisations Receiving Parking Permits

Name of Organisation	Summary of Response
Citizens Advice Bureau	They have 17 part-time staff. The proposal will cause very real problems as they rely heavily on 58 volunteers for support and as CAB cannot afford to buy season tickets, they cannot find the resources to pay for their own parking. Mornings are always busiest and up to 16 volunteers may be at work, but the rota is flexible and changes daily. The bureau is open Monday to Thursday and for 3 out of 4 Saturdays. If they have to pay for parking then some elements of the service would have to close, most probably a Tuesday closure.
Corn Exchange	Ask that at the very least they retain the permits for the remainder of this financial year (until 31 March 2008). After that time, increased parking costs would form part of financial negotiations with WBC. Will be developing their own Travel Plan over the next six months to reduce car dependency. On-site parking used for deliveries and by artists.
Coroners Office	Permit used about twice each month. If permit withdrawn then the cost of a season ticket or other parking will be claimed back from WBC by Reading Borough Council who are the co-ordinating authority for Berkshire.
Newbury Town Council	Understand the issues facing the Town, but " are strongly and fundamentally opposed to your proposal ". The three permits currently issued date back to 1974. They have launched their own successful travel plan to reduce car travel. They want one of the bays in the Bear Lane car park allocated to the Museum to be given over to the Town Council for the Mayor's car and to reduce the risk of carrying regalia long distances.

Fire & Rescue Service	Permits used by officers undertaking enforcement duties in the Town. Only used for official business and officers must provide a vehicle to undertake their duties. Requests that the Council reconsiders the decision to withdraw the permits.
Resolve	Moved offices to Reading and only use their permit when on business within West Berkshire. Annually, their overall parking costs can be a substantial expense for a charity as they have to attend a large number of meetings. If permit is withdrawn, could they be given free parking when attending meetings and panels within West Berkshire?
Mencap	If the season tickets were transferable between vehicles then one ticket could be purchased in the first year. The situation would then be reviewed. Could not afford more than one ticket.
West Berks Training Consortium	Registered Charity set up by Newbury District Council and the Chamber of Commerce in 1984 it supports young, unemployed persons and has over 300 clients per annum. Originally, NDC provided accommodation, but upon relocation and the cessation of free premises, they were supported by way of free parking permits. Asks that permits continue for 2 more years while they develop a Travel Plan and that at the very least they retain the permits for the remainder of this financial year (until 31 March 2008).
West Berks Volunteer Bureau	The existing arrangement has operated since 1974 and has benefited the charity as volunteers are not "out of pocket" and running costs are reduced. Permits are only used for work purposes. Normally, 3 permits are in use on any day for about 3 hours. Willing to reduce voluntarily by one permit. Strongly opposed to charging for permits, which would undermine partnership working.
Community Action West Berkshire	The 5 permits issued to CAWB are used by four paid staff (2 x F/T and 2 x P/T) and by the Chief Executive of CAWB. Total current usage is 79.5 hours per week. The new proposals mean an imposed travel plan that is more stringent than the WBC or Vodafone travel plan. The volunteers who support the individual Voluntary Community Organisations (VCOs) get their expenses paid and if permits are withdrawn then this parking cost would devolve to the individual VCOs. Parking permits given to staff working for charities would be part of their terms and conditions of employment and if withdrawn the cost of continuing to provide them will devolve to the individual employer. This cost could be invoiced to WBC. Extremely disappointed by the Council's proposal and will oppose if implemented.
Samaritans	No reply received.

3.4 The full replies received are not appended to this report, but are available as background documentation if required.

4. Conclusions

4.1 There is no surprise in the summary of replies received from the external organisations. Free parking has become an accepted norm of everyday working

and adjusting to a new regime where free parking is either completely or substantially curtailed will be difficult for them to accept.

- 4.2 The Council recognises and supports the work of the voluntary sector and of the other organisations who receive parking permits each year. However, they should not be immune from a very real need to introduce their own travel plans with an aim of permanently reducing car travel dependency and encouraging a modal shift in the transport methods used by their staff and volunteers. The Council has already begun an ongoing process of permanently reducing the overall number of parking permits issued to Council staff through the Travel Plan and this process of permit reduction must now be implemented by those external organisations who receive parking permits from the Council each year. The parking permits received by the external organisations have become an accepted annual event and the proposed withdrawal of the permits has caused them consternation, but it is reasonable to expect them to adjust their working practices and to give thought to alternative transport methods. The modal shift in transport choices and a reduction on car dependency must be permanent and not transitory. The removal of free parking permits will add impetus to the need for the recipients of the permits to make the choices needed in a timely manner.
- 4.3 Through the consultation process, the Council has identified the weekly parking needs of Community Action West Berkshire who require 80 hours parking each week: and the West Berkshire Volunteer Bureau, who require 60 hours parking each week. This parking need may best be fulfilled by issuing the two organisations with pre-stored value parking cards, which are decremented by each parking action. To minimise the risk from loss of the parking cards, they will be issued each calendar quarter, with a value of 13 weeks parking. While the actual number of cards to be issued may be decided by the individual organisation, the overall value will not exceed 13 weeks at 60 hours for the West Berkshire Volunteer Bureau: and 13 weeks at 80 hours for Community Action West Berkshire. These cards may be freely transferred between vehicles and volunteers although only one vehicle may be parked with any one card at any time.
- 4.4 The organisations Mencap; The Samaritans; and Resolve have not specified their exact parking needs on a weekly or monthly basis. This may be because such parking need will ebb and flow with their volume of work and cases within the area. In order that their work is not disadvantaged, it is proposed to provide each of the organisations with one pre-stored value card with an annual value of £100.00. Newbury Town Council will receive one free parking permit from May 2008, while free or subsidised parking permits will no longer be issued to The Corn Exchange; West Berkshire Fire and Rescue; West Berkshire Training Consortium; and The Coroner's Office.
- 4.5 It is clear that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) will be very hard-hit if all or most of their parking permits are withdrawn. The service provided by CAB is fully supported and admired by the Council and it may be claimed that they are a "special case". Any reduction in the service they offer will hit the most vulnerable section of the West Berkshire community. While it is considered that there is scope for some rationalisation in the permits issued, there appears to be limited opportunity for a large-scale reduction.

- 4.6 The ongoing process of parking permit reduction by both the Council and those external organisations receiving parking permits will ultimately provide more spaces in the car parks for shopper parking. To support the economic vitality of Newbury, particularly the retail sector, during the forthcoming period of Town Centre redevelopment the Council has adopted a Transitional Parking Strategy for Newbury, 2006-2010.
- 4.7 To enable a period of adjustment it is proposed that any changes in the issue of parking permits to the external organisations that would be applicable from April 2008 should not be implemented until 1 May 2008. Thereafter it is proposed that the parking permit allocations shown in Table D should be made.

Table D: Allocation of Parking Permits to External Organisations from April 2008

Name of Organisation	No. of Free Permits	Limit on Total No. of Reduced Price Season Tickets
Citizens Advice Bureau	To be Agreed	50 less agreed no. of free permits
Corn Exchange	0 (0)	7
Coroners Office	0 (1)	0
Newbury Town Council	1 (3)	2
Fire & Rescue Service	0 (5)	5
Resolve	1 card for £100.00 (10)	9
Samaritans	1 card for £100.00 (3)	2
Mencap	1 card for £100.00 (6)	5
West Berks Training Consortium	0 (18)	18
West Berks Volunteer Bureau	Cards for 60 hours parking per week (14)	12
Community Action West Berkshire	Cards for 80 hours parking per week (5)	3

Note: () denotes current allocation

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That from 1 May 2008, the free parking permits issued to external organisations will be in accordance with Table D above.
- 5.2 That from 1 May 2008;-
- Newbury Town Council will be issued with one free parking permit;
 - The Samaritans; Mencap; and Resolve will each be issued with one pre-stored value parking card to a value of £100.00 to enable parking in the Northbrook multi-storey car park;

- The West Berkshire Volunteer Bureau will be issued with pre-stored value parking cards totalling 60 hours per week to enable parking in the Northbrook multi-storey car park;
- Community Action West Berkshire will be issued with pre-stored value parking cards totalling 80 hours per week to enable parking in the Northbrook multi-storey car park.

5.3 That the £50 subsidised parking permit be withdrawn completely.

5.5 That discussions continue with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Newbury to achieve a reduced number of permits issued annually from April 2008 without diminishing the level of service provided.

5.6 That in addition to the free permit allocations shown in Table D above, those external organisations that are registered charities shall be able to purchase reduced price season tickets for the Newbury car parks at:-

(a) One quarter of the prevailing price (as shown in table E below) for the period April 2008 to March 2009; and

(b) One half of the prevailing price (as shown in table E below) from April 2009 onwards.

Table E: Cost of Half-Price and Quarter-Price Season Tickets in the Newbury Car Parks from April 2008

Car Park / Duration of Season Ticket (based on Current Season Ticket prices)	Kennet Centre MSCP (£)	Northbrook MSCP (£)	Newbury Surface (£)
Half-Price Annual Season Ticket	N/A	£350.00	£400.00
Half-Price Quarterly Season Ticket	£110.00	£110.00	£115.00
Quarter-Price Annual Season Ticket	N/A	£175.00	£200.00
Quarter-Price Quarterly Season Ticket	£55.00	£55.00	£57.50

Note: These discounted prices will vary following any review of full-price season tickets

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Responses from Ward Member Consultation and Officers' Comments.

Implications

Policy:	The proposals within this report to curtail the number of parking permits issued to external organisations are wholly consistent with the Council's agreed Travel Plan objectives and with the Transitional Parking Strategy for Newbury, 2006-2010.
Financial:	There are no negative financial implications. Some of those who previously received parking permits may now pay for their parking or purchase season tickets, which could increase income slightly.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	Legal Services will be consulted to ensure that the recommendations within this report do not breach any of the current Service Level Agreements with the voluntary sector.
Environmental:	These proposals may lead to a reduction in car travel and promote a small modal shift in transport use.
Equalities:	None arising from this report. Blue Badge holders will still be able to park free of charge in the Council's car parks.
Partnering:	Removal of the free and subsidised parking permits will not be well received by some of the external organisations with which the Council works in partnership.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	None arising from this report.
Community Safety:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:	
Leader of Council:	Councillor Graham Jones was consulted at a meeting on 28 February and he supports the recommendations in the report.
Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman:	See Appendix A.
Policy Development Commission Chairman:	Not applicable.
Ward Members:	See Appendix A.
Opposition Spokesperson:	See Appendix A.

Local Stakeholders: Consultation has been carried out with the external organisations that would be affected by the proposed changes to permit arrangements and their responses are detailed in section 3 of this report.

Officers Consulted: Nick Carter; John Ashworth; Mark Edwards; Mark Cole.

Trade Union: Not applicable.

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: X	No
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<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"/>

Appendix A: Summary of Responses from Member Consultation

Every post holder and Ward Member was consulted by an e-mail dated 14 December 2007. They were asked to reply by 4 January 2008. By the end of the consultation period, replies had been made by Councillor Brian Bedwell; Councillor Keith Woodhams; and Councillor Adrian Edwards

The reply from each Councillor and the officer comment is:-

(a) Councillor Brian Bedwell:

"I think you are being very severe on the Volunteer Centre, these people operate the mobility scheme and undertake a vital job within the district, perhaps initially reduce by half and restrict validity to the times the Centre is open. We really do need volunteers."

Officer Reply:

The comments made by Councillor Brian Bedwell will be fully and carefully considered by the Portfolio Member. Officers will advise that instead of issuing 14 free permits to the West Berkshire Volunteer Bureau quarterly pre-stored value parking cards will be issued that will permit up to 60 hours of parking per week. The cards will be issued every 13 weeks to minimise the risk of loss. These cards may be freely transferred between vehicles and volunteers although only one vehicle may be parked with any one card at any time. The number of cards issued may be decided by the Bureau but the combined overall value will not exceed 13 weeks at 60 hours for each quarter. Further parking provision may be purchased up to a maximum of 12 reduced price season tickets if required. This is explained in more detail in section 4 of the report.

(b) Councillor Keith Woodhams

"Volunteer organisations harmed by the cost of parking permits, who play a vital role in the community, should be given transferable free parking permits."

Officer Reply:

The comments made by Councillor Keith Woodhams will be fully and carefully considered by the Portfolio Member. No-one can deny the essential role played by the voluntary sector in defending and maintaining the social well-being of many West Berkshire residents. Officers will advise that while it is proposed that the number of free permits issued in total to the listed organisations will be reduced, alternative parking provision is proposed by means of pre-stored value parking cards. This will provide more flexibility and will allow the use of the parking permits to be optimised. This is explained in more detail in section 4 of the report.

(c) Councillor Adrian Edwards:

"Please may I refer you to your email to all members on Friday 14 December 10.37 hrs relating to review of parking permits issued to external organisations when you asked for comments. As also a Town Councillor and current Mayor, may I also ask you to refer to a very relevant paragraph in Graham Hunt's letter to Martyn Baker of 24 July 2007 relating to the need for a parking place for the Mayor/Mayor's Attendant? This aspect was not

mentioned in your report and it is a very important one as it relates to the historic and very valuable regalia which the Town Council inherited.

Graham Hunt would be happy to use one of the Town Council's free parking permits to facilitate this. A dedicated marked bay as near to the museum as possible would be appreciated.

I, or Graham Hunt, would be happy to speak further with you on this if necessary.

Officer Reply:

The comments made by Councillor Adrian Edwards will be fully and carefully considered by the Portfolio Member. Officers will advise that the parking bays behind the museum fall within the Bear Lane car park, which is very heavily used by a mix of long-term and short-term parkers. This car park will convert from pay and display to pay on foot parking within the next few months. To isolate one parking bay for occasional use by the Town Council is not practicable and it is suggested that the Town Council make use of their one proposed permit to access the Bear Lane car park and park the Mayoral vehicle. The civic regalia will not be carried at all times, but when the civic regalia is being transported special parking arrangements can be made, if required, to ensure that there is a minimum distance to carry it from the security of the building to the vehicle and vice versa.

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Purley on Thames Parking Strategy		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Keith Chopping	on:	8 April 2008
Forward Plan Ref:	ID 1531		

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Executive Member for Planning and Highways of the responses received during the statutory and public consultation on the introduction of waiting restrictions within Purley on Thames and to seek approval of officer recommendations.

Recommended Action:

That the Executive Member resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in section 4 of this report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

To enable the Purley on Thames Parking Strategy to be progressed to implementation.

List of other options considered:

Not applicable.

Key background documentation:

- Purley on Thames Parking Study report dated December 2006.
- Plans Nos. PoT/01/001-004.

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 A Parking Study was undertaken in Purley on Thames during 2006, which reviewed the parking situation within the parish and recommended a number of changes to address the problems identified.
- 1.2 The study formed the basis of the Purley on Thames Parking Strategy which was designed to address road safety concerns, resolve parking issues related to bus movements and review the suitability of the existing parking arrangements within the parish.
- 1.3 Purley Parish Council was consulted on the study recommendations and to determine a number of local residents views the Parish Council undertook their own informal consultation. The responses received were discussed with Officers and the proposals were revised to reflect these comments.
- 1.4 Statutory consultation and advertisement of the proposals was undertaken between 24th January and 14th February 2008.

2. Responses to statutory consultation

- 2.1 At the end of the statutory consultation and advertisement period a total of three responses had been received. The objections are listed below.
 - (i) One respondent who currently parks on Purley Village whilst walking their dogs, objected to the whole length of Purley Village having no waiting at any time restrictions.
 - (ii) A local resident opposed the introduction of double yellow lines on St Mary's Avenue immediately east of its junction with Colyton Way, on the basis that the remainder of St Mary's Avenue is a cul-de-sac and that it would be detrimental for relatives and friends when visiting.
 - (iii) A resident of Purley Village objected to the reduction in length of the school keep clear markings as it would allow vehicles to park on the road making it difficult to enter and exit their driveway.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 It is considered that the consultations with the Parish Council and the Parish Council's own informal consultation was able to satisfactorily address the majority of parking concerns by local residents.
- 3.2 The respondent in (i) above misunderstood the parking proposal as parking would still be permitted on Purley Village. The objector was contacted about the extent of the waiting restrictions and as they are still permitted to park on Purley Village they indicated that they would withdraw their objection. However the objection has not yet been withdrawn.
- 3.3 In response to (ii) above, the restrictions at the junction are the minimum length necessary to provide junction protection and improved visibility for vehicles emerging onto St Mary's Avenue from Colyton Way. The restrictions will not have any detrimental impact for visitors to nearby properties.
- 3.4 In response to (iii) above, the school keep clear marking can be retained in its current position which would link with the proposed prohibition of waiting restriction. This would create an uninterrupted parking restriction on the south side of Purley Village at the bend with Purley Lane.

3.5 Due to the nature of parking schemes it can often be difficult to predict where any displaced parking may occur. Therefore the parking restrictions are monitored to determine their effectiveness and should any amendments be required these can be introduced, subject to the standard consultation procedure being followed.

4. Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the proposed restrictions be introduced as advertised, with the amendments described in section 3.4 of this report.

4.2 That the objectors be informed accordingly.

Appendices

N/A

Implications

Policy:	The consultation is in accordance with the Council's Consultation procedures.
Financial:	The implementation of the physical works will be funded from the approved Capital Programme. The costs of the Statutory Consultation and Traffic Regulation Order processes are funded from the Capital Programme.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	The sealing of the Traffic Regulation Order will be undertaken by Legal Services.
Environmental:	The proposals make best use of available road space for parking, balancing wherever possible the needs of residents and visitors. Consequently they provide environmental benefits for residents of the area.
Equalities:	None arising from this report
Partnering:	The Council is working in partnership with the Police to ensure that the project operates as it should.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	None arising from this report.
Community Safety:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: To date no response received from Councillor Graham Jones. However any comments will be verbally reported at the individual decision meeting

Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman: Councillor Brian Bedwell has no comment.

Policy Development Commission Chairman: N/A

Ward Members: Councillors Tim Metcalfe and David Betts fully support the recommendations.

Opposition Spokesperson: To date no response received from Councillor Keith Woodhams. However any comments will be verbally reported at the individual decision meeting.

Local Stakeholders: Have been consulted as part of the public and statutory consultation process.

Officers Consulted: Mark Edwards, Mark Cole

Trade Union: Not applicable.

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"/>	