

Supplemental Items for Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday, 6 February 2024 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Part I	Page No.
<p>3. Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2024/25 Purpose: To consolidate the investments and borrowing strategy for the year ahead by detailing how and where the Council will invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. This strategy is monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report going to the Government and Ethics Committee as well as an annual report being presented to Members.</p>	3 - 32
<p>4. Medium Term Financial Strategy Purpose: To set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and how these align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that the Council Strategy will be delivered. The MTFs highlights the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances as well as how there are many different scenarios and uncertainty concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.</p>	33 - 50
<p>5. Capital Strategy, Financial Years 2024/25 to 2033/34 Purpose: To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2024/25 -2033/34 and the supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.</p> <p>Decisions made on capital and treasury management have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. Decisions are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework.</p>	51 - 88



Supplemental Items
Scrutiny Commission to be held on Tuesday, 6 February 2024 *(continued)*

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|----|---|-----------|
| 6. | Revenue Budget 2024/25
Purpose: To consider and recommend to Council the 2024-25 Revenue Budget. | 89 - 428 |
| 7. | 2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three
Purpose: To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets and provide a year-end forecast. This report is for Quarter Three of the 2023/24 financial year. | 429 - 458 |

Sarah Clarke

Service Director (Strategy & Governance)

For further information about this/these item(s), or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver on (01635) 519486

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Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at

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West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	29 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member agreed/sent report:	12 January 2024
Report Author:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter
Forward Plan Ref:	C4444

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report seeks to consolidate the investments and borrowing strategy for the year ahead by detailing how and where the Council will invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. This strategy is monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report going to the Governance Committee as well as an annual report being presented to Members.
- 1.2 The report also has a statutory footing under the Local Government Act 2003. The Council must have an approved (by Full Council) Investment and Borrowing Strategy (or similar) for the forthcoming financial year. The Council is also required to comply with other regulatory requirements as highlighted in this report, for example to be a professional investor the Council must have £10 million of liquid investment funds on average during the financial year; the Council must also detail its compliance with the relevant Treasury Management indicators (as highlighted in this report).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council is requested to adopt the following recommendation:
 - (a) To agree and adopt the proposed Investment and Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25.
 - (b) That the Council agrees the revised Commercial Property strategy in appendix D.
 - (c) That the capital receipts generated from disinvestment are applied to offset potential future financing costs or are utilised as part of the flexible use of capital receipts policy.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has and intends to borrow and invest substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
Human Resource:	Not applicable
Legal:	Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
Risk Management:	Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
Property:	The Property Investment Strategy highlights disposals of assets with any future disposals of individual assets in the Property Investment portfolio to be approved by the Executive
Policy:	The Investment and Borrowing Strategy is closely related to the Capital Strategy, as it governs the criteria for borrowing to fund capital spending.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		Not applicable
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				Not applicable
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Joseph Holmes, Executive Director of Resources, s151 Officer			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
- 4.2 Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA TM Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 4.3 In support of the Capital Strategy and financing the Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the Council expects to borrow in 2024/25. The Council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing. The Council has set the authorised limit for borrowing over the duration of the Capital Strategy (2024-2034) as follows:

Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary	2023/24 limit £'000	2024/25 limit £'000	2025/26 limit £'000	2026/27 limit £'000	2027/28 limit £'000	2028/29 limit £'000
Authorised limit – borrowing	£373,621	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	£13,200	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Authorised limit – total external debt	386,821	402,892	402,892	402,892	402,892	402,892
Operational boundary – borrowing	£359,621	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	£11,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Operational boundary – total external debt	370,621	383,892	383,892	383,892	383,892	383,892

Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary	2029/30 limit £'000	2030/31 limit £'000	2031/32 limit £'000	2032/33 limit £'000	2033/34 limit £'000
Authorised limit – borrowing	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892	£382,892
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Authorised limit – total external debt	402,892	402,892	402,892	402,892	402,892
Operational boundary – borrowing	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892	£368,892
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Operational boundary – total external debt	383,892	383,892	383,892	383,892	383,892

- 4.4 Current borrowing levels (forecast to be £186 million as at 31.3.2024) are significantly below the current boundary limits stated above. Capital financing is undertaken a year in arrears, i.e. 2023/24 capital expenditure is financed in financial year 2024/25. This strategy allows for forecast capital financing from 2023/24 and in the longer term the proposed capital programme. The limit and boundary detailed above also allows for potential impacts of the formal adoption of IFRS 16 (leases) on 1st April 2024 and provides headroom should the Council require a capitalisation directive in the near future. West Berkshire as with numerous Council's across the country are in a position of incurring high costs (mainly in relation to the provision of social care) and restrictions of income. The Capital Strategy and the supporting Investment & Borrowing Strategy have been produced with position of the Council's General Fund in mind. This strategy does not seek to fully fund the proposed capital programme but seeks to fund expected

capital expenditure based on historic trends and is mindful of the Council's requirement to generate capital receipts to offset future capital financing costs and support transformation programme under the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy. The assumptions underpinning potential debt funded capital expenditure in future years are detailed within the Capital Strategy 2024 -2034. The Property Investment Strategy which recommends to Council a long-term disinvestment from the commercial property portfolio is included in appendix D.

- 4.5 The economic outlook is a major influence on the Council's Investment & Borrowing strategy. Historically the Council has accessed the majority of its long-term financing from the PWLB Lending facility with average borrowing rates between 1 – 2%. At the time of producing this report a 25-year annuity rate is 4.9%. The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. This strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Over the two past financial years with short-term interest rates lower than long-term rates, the strategy has been in the short-term to borrow short-term loans as the primary financing source. By doing so, the Council has been able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. Moving forward the benefits of short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates have increased.
- 4.6 The Executive Director for Resources (S151 Officer) is confident that the Investment and Borrowing Strategy provides an effective, robust and prudent platform from which to support the Council's strategic objectives as set out in the Capital Strategy and approved Council Strategy.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 CIPFA published the revised Codes on 20th December 2021 and stated that revisions included in the reporting framework from the 2023/24 financial year. The Council, therefore, has to have regard to these Codes of Practice when it prepares its Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy, both strategies are combined within the Investment & Borrowing Strategy.
- 5.2 The treasury management operation is primarily to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low-risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.
- 5.3 The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that it can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet risk or cost objectives.

- 5.4 The contribution the treasury management function makes to the Council is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure liquidity or the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue or for larger capital projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the General Fund Balance.

Proposals

Borrowing:

- 5.5 The Council held £189.9 million of loans at 31.3.2023, with a forecast balance of £186.0 million at 31.3.2024. The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 5.6 Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions, and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; however, the Council is not proposing to undertake any activities that require the purchase of assets primarily for yield. In addition, the Council may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.
- 5.7 The Council's sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- (a) HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
 - (b) HM Treasury's backed UK Infrastructure Bank (in partnership with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).
 - (c) Any institution approved for investments (see below)
 - (d) Any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
 - (e) Any other UK public sector body
 - (f) UK public and private sector pension funds (except The Royal Berkshire Pension Fund)
 - (g) Capital market bond investors.
 - (h) UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other organisations that enable local authority bond issues.

- 5.8 Other sources of debt finance: In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:
- (a) Leasing
 - (b) Hire purchase.
 - (c) Private Finance Initiative
 - (d) Sale and leaseback
- 5.9 Municipal Bonds Agency: UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council. The Council does not hold any Municipal Bonds, it has however previously issued a £1 million community bond in support of green initiatives across the district.
- 5.10 LOBOs: The Council does not hold any LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost).
- 5.11 Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators. The Council has focused on a strategy of financing through short term variable loans in preference to longer term secured debt during the last two financial years.
- 5.12 Debt rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The Council has not rescheduled debt within the past two financial years and there are no plans to reschedule debt proposed in this strategy for financial year 2024/25.
- 5.13 The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) which is wholly owned by the Treasury has been established in partnership with The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BIES). UKIB allows authorities to access funding below PWLB rates for applicable projects. Applicable projects focus on addressing climate change and boosting regional growth and economies. The Council has engaged in initial discussions in support of the proposed solar farm capital project.

Investments:

- 5.14 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.
- 5.15 The Council recognises the increasing risk and low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, however, the period for which funds are invested is determined by the cash flow needs of the Council. Funds are invested for as long as possible, in order to maximise the rate of return, while still ensuring that sufficient funds are available to meet the Council's outgoings. The normal maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed is 12 months. If sufficient funds become available, and market conditions are favourable enough to permit secure longer-term investment, funds may, from time to time be invested for longer periods which will offer a better rate of return. However, in order to minimise risk and ensure liquidity, no more than 40% of the Council's funds will be held at any one time in investments longer than 12 months.
- 5.16 Business models: Under the International Financial Reporting Standard 9 (Financial Instruments), the accounting for certain investments depends on the Council's "business model" for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 5.17 The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types subject to the adopted limits. The historic and proposed individual counterparty limits are detailed in the table below.

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Organisation	Credit Ratings	Individual Counterparty Limit (£000)	Sector Limit (£000)	Time Limit
The UK Government (Debt Management Office)	-	Unlimited	Not applicable	50 Years
UK Local Authorities (including Police, Fire and similar bodies)	-	8,000	Unlimited	25 Years
UK Building Societies (net asset size ranking 1-11)	-	8,000	14,000	13 months
UK Building Societies (net asset size ranking 12-21)	-	6,500		13 months
UK Building Societies (net asset size ranking 22-25)	-	5,000		13 months
UK Banks and other financial institutions	Long term credit rating of A- or higher	8,000	Unlimited	13 months
Money Market Funds (Sterling denominated)	AAA or equivalent	8,000	Unlimited	Not applicable
Other Non-local authority UK public sector body	-	8,000	Unlimited	25 Years
Registered Providers, Charities	-	2,500	5,000	12 months
Council owned companies	-	5,000	5,000	2 Years
Council owned joint ventures	-	5,000	5,000	2 Years
Strategic pooled funds (including cash plus funds)	-	8,000	35,000	Not applicable
Real estate investment trusts	-	8,000	17,500	Not applicable

5.18 Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be considered.

5.19 Government: Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities, and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

5.20 Banks and building societies (unsecured): Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail.

5.21 Money market funds: Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

- 5.22 Registered providers (unsecured): Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.
- 5.23 Strategic pooled funds: Bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.
- 5.24 Real estate investment trusts (REITs): Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.
- 5.25 The Council under section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 can choose to make loans to local enterprises, local charities, wholly owned companies, and joint ventures as part of a wider strategy for local economic growth. The counterparty limits in section 5.17 make provision for these loans.
- 5.26 Exposure to Risk: The proposed investment limits represent the maximum values to be invested with individual organisations. The Treasury Management Group may temporarily reduce these amounts and or shorten the time period of investments in order to spread the exposure to loss from institutions failing. The Council manages its exposure to risk via a series of treasury management indicators. Appendix B provides greater detail on the indicators used to monitor and review the performance.
- 5.27 To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed, the Council ensures it has readily available cash balances in accordance with only placing short term investments and manages capital expenditure on a prudent basis in line with the prudential code indicators.

Non-Treasury Investments:

- 5.28 The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return. At the 31st March 2023 (based on the 2022/23 draft accounts), the Council held £65.3 million of such investments in directly owned property categorised as follows:
- (a) Directly owned property (commercial property) £ 52.2 million. This is property where the Council has borrowed specifically to fund the purchase.

- (b) Directly owned property (investment property) £13.1 million. This is property that the Council holds as an investment property, but the purchase has not been funded by borrowing. In most cases the property has been inherited from Berkshire County Council or Newbury District Council upon the formation of West Berkshire District Council in 1998.

5.29 Full details of property held as non-treasury investments is included in appendix A. Treasury and non-treasury investments such as the commercial property portfolio are held and maintained in order to provide a net contribution to the Council’s revenue budget to support delivery of core services. The Council uses the existing revenue to support the overall budget position. The table below shows the Income and expenditure associated with the commercial property portfolio if there were no asset sales.

Proportionality of investments	2022/23 Actual £'000	2023/24 Forecast £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000
Gross Investment income from Commercial Property	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372
Gross service expenditure	£414,065	£422,346	£430,793	£439,409	£448,197	£457,161
Proportion	0.81%	0.80%	0.78%	0.77%	0.75%	0.74%

Proportionality of investments	2028/29 Budget £'000	2029/30 Budget £'000	2030/31 Budget £'000	2031/32 Budget £'000	2032/33 Budget £'000	2033/34 Budget £'000
Gross Investment income from Commercial Property	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372
Gross service expenditure	£466,304	£475,631	£485,143	£494,846	£504,743	£514,838
Proportion	0.72%	0.71%	0.70%	0.68%	0.67%	0.66%

5.30 The current economic climate has presented an opportunity to review the commercial property portfolio. The challenging economic environment has resulted in declining property valuations. Concurrently the Public Works and Loans Board (PWL) rates has been highly volatile, although appear to be stabilising around 5 – 5.5% for a 25-year annuity, resulting in high capital financing costs. The challenging economic environment paired with the Government currently requesting considerations from the local government sector about different options for the flexible use of capital receipts presents an opportunity with regard to the portfolio. The Property Investment Strategy which directs the commercial property portfolio has made recommendation to Council to approve a phased disinvestment from the portfolio over the long-term and subsequent allocation of resulting capital receipts to either future capital financing or for funding transformational expenditure under the flexible use of capital receipts policy. The revised Property Investment Strategy is included in appendix D.

6 Conclusion

6.1 On 31st March 2023 the Council held £189.9 million of long-term borrowing (excluding PFI and leases) and £20.7 million of treasury investments. Existing levels of Council debt and investments are set out in further detail at appendix C. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table below.

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Balance Sheet Summary	31.3.23 Actual £'000	31.3.24 Estimate £'000	31.3.25 Forecast £'000	31.3.26 Forecast £'000	31.3.27 Forecast £'000	31.3.28 Forecast £'000
Capital financing requirement	£279,896	£291,976	£305,428	£320,395	£336,948	£355,351
Less: Other debt liabilities *	(£10,670)	(£9,807)	(£8,892)	(£7,920)	(£6,890)	(£5,796)
Loans CFR	£269,226	£282,169	£296,536	£312,475	£330,058	£349,555
Less: External borrowing **	(£189,890)	(£185,972)	(£177,240)	(£172,731)	(£168,510)	(£164,225)
Internal borrowing	£79,336	£96,197	£119,296	£139,744	£161,548	£185,329
Less: Balance sheet resources	£100,006	£94,405	£95,405	£96,405	£99,210	£102,086
Treasury investments / (New borrowing requirement)	£20,670	(£1,792)	(£23,891)	(£43,339)	(£62,338)	(£83,243)

Balance Sheet Summary	31.3.29 Forecast £'000	31.3.30 Forecast £'000	31.3.31 Forecast £'000	31.3.32 Forecast £'000	31.3.33 Forecast £'000	31.3.34 Forecast £'000
Capital financing requirement	£364,061	£368,127	£371,737	£375,179	£378,445	£379,523
Less: Other debt liabilities *	(£4,636)	(£3,405)	(£2,099)	(£713)	£0	£0
Loans CFR	£359,425	£364,722	£369,638	£374,466	£378,445	£379,523
Less: External borrowing **	(£159,943)	(£155,665)	(£151,220)	(£141,624)	(£136,855)	(£132,495)
Internal borrowing	£199,482	£209,057	£218,418	£232,842	£241,589	£247,028
Less: Balance sheet resources	£105,033	£108,055	£111,151	£114,325	£117,579	£120,914
Treasury investments / (New borrowing requirement)	(£94,449)	(£101,002)	(£107,266)	(£118,516)	(£124,010)	(£126,115)

* leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

6.2 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council is forecasting an increasing CFR through to financial year 2029/30 at which point the CFR starts to reduce. Based on the proposed capital programme and existing Balance sheet resources, the Council is forecasting an increasing borrowing requirement. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next ten years. The table below demonstrates that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during the longer term.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	31.3.2023 actual £'000	31.3.2024 forecast £'000	31.3.2025 budget £'000	31.3.2026 budget £'000	31.3.2027 budget £'000	31.3.2028 budget £'000
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	£200,560	£195,779	£186,132	£180,651	£175,400	£170,022
Capital Financing Requirement	£279,896	£291,976	£305,428	£320,395	£336,948	£355,351

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	31.3.2029 budget £'000	31.3.2030 budget £'000	31.3.2031 budget £'000	31.3.2032 budget £'000	31.3.2033 budget £'000	31.3.2034 budget £'000
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	£164,579	£159,070	£153,320	£142,338	£136,855	£132,495
Capital Financing Requirement	£364,061	£368,127	£371,737	£375,179	£378,445	£379,523

6.3 To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as the table above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10 million at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Liability benchmark	31.3.23 Actual £'000	31.3.24 Estimate £'000	31.3.25 Forecast £'000	31.3.26 Forecast £'000	31.3.27 Forecast £'000	31.3.28 Forecast £'000
Loans CFR	£269,226	£282,169	£296,536	£312,475	£330,058	£349,555
Less: Balance sheet resources	£100,006	£94,405	£95,405	£96,405	£99,210	£102,086
Net loans requirement	£169,220	£187,764	£201,131	£216,070	£230,847	£247,469
Plus: Liquidity allowance	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,250	£10,506	£10,769
Liability benchmark	£179,220	£197,764	£211,131	£226,320	£241,354	£258,238
Liability benchmark	31.3.29 Forecast £'000	31.3.30 Forecast £'000	31.3.31 Forecast £'000	31.3.32 Forecast £'000	31.3.33 Forecast £'000	31.3.34 Forecast £'000
Loans CFR	£359,425	£364,722	£369,638	£374,466	£378,445	£379,523
Less: Balance sheet resources	£105,033	£108,055	£111,151	£114,325	£117,579	£120,914
Net loans requirement	£254,391	£256,667	£258,487	£260,141	£260,866	£258,610
Plus: Liquidity allowance	£11,038	£11,314	£11,597	£11,887	£12,184	£12,489
Liability benchmark	£265,430	£267,981	£270,084	£272,028	£273,050	£271,098

6.4 Based on the Council's CFR and the liability benchmark, the Council is long term borrower. The Council is required to ensure that capital financing is reasonable and affordable in the long term. The table below details the total financing costs (budgeted) as a proportion of the net revenue stream:

Proportionality of investments	2022/23 Actual £'000	2023/24 Forecast £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000	2027/28 Budget £'000
Gross Investment income from Commercial Property	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372
Gross service expenditure	£414,065	£422,346	£430,793	£439,409	£448,197	£457,161
Proportion	0.81%	0.80%	0.78%	0.77%	0.75%	0.74%
Proportionality of investments	2028/29 Budget £'000	2029/30 Budget £'000	2030/31 Budget £'000	2031/32 Budget £'000	2032/33 Budget £'000	2033/34 Budget £'000
Gross Investment income from Commercial Property	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372	£3,372
Gross service expenditure	£466,304	£475,631	£485,143	£494,846	£504,743	£514,838
Proportion	0.72%	0.71%	0.70%	0.68%	0.67%	0.66%

6.5 In respect of investments, the Council's revenue budget includes net returns from investments in the support of financing delivery of core services. The Council has set a number of quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Council's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

(a) **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Council's total exposure to potential investment losses. The table below assumes the Council as a long-term borrower will need to borrow to fund the £10 million minimum liquidity level.

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

	31.03.2023 Actual £'000	31.03.2024 Forecast £'000	31.03.2025 Forecast £'000	31.03.2026 Forecast £'000	31.03.2027 Forecast £'000	31.03.2028 Forecast £'000
Total investment exposure						
Treasury management investments	£20,670	£10,000	£10,000	£10,250	£10,506	£10,769
Commercial investments: Property	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	£72,960	£62,290	£62,290	£62,540	£62,796	£63,059
Commitments to lend	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Guarantees issued on loans	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL EXPOSURE	£72,960	£62,290	£62,290	£62,540	£62,796	£63,059

	31.03.2029 Forecast £'000	31.03.2030 Forecast £'000	31.03.2031 Forecast £'000	31.03.2032 Forecast £'000	31.03.2033 Forecast £'000	31.03.2034 Forecast £'000
Total investment exposure						
Treasury management investments	£11,038	£11,314	£11,597	£11,887	£12,184	£12,489
Commercial investments: Property	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	£63,328	£63,604	£63,887	£64,177	£64,474	£64,779
Commitments to lend	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Guarantees issued on loans	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL EXPOSURE	£63,328	£63,604	£63,887	£64,177	£64,474	£64,779

- (b) **How investments are funded:** Since the Council does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Council's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure. It should be noted in the table under (a) above that the Council is a long-term borrower and hence will borrow in order to maintain minimum liquidity levels. This borrowing is not disclosed in the table below on the basis that the borrowing is cash to temporarily use in lieu of borrowing and hence not borrowing to fund investment for yield purposes.

	31.03.2023 Actual £'000	31.03.2024 Forecast £'000	31.03.2025 Forecast £'000	31.03.2026 Forecast £'000	31.03.2027 Forecast £'000	31.03.2028 Forecast £'000
Investments funded by borrowing						
Treasury management investments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Commercial investments: Property	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290

	31.03.2029 Forecast £'000	31.03.2030 Forecast £'000	31.03.2031 Forecast £'000	31.03.2032 Forecast £'000	31.03.2033 Forecast £'000	31.03.2034 Forecast £'000
Investments funded by borrowing						
Treasury management investments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Commercial investments: Property	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290	£52,290

- (c) **Rate of return received:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested.

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Investments net rate of return	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast	2027/28 Forecast
Treasury management investments	1.90%	4.43%	4.00%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	2.61%	2.06%	2.03%	1.99%	1.96%	1.92%
ALL INVESTMENTS (weighted average)	2.31%	2.62%	2.29%	2.16%	2.13%	2.10%

Investments net rate of return		2028/29 Forecast	2029/30 Forecast	2030/31 Forecast	2031/32 Forecast	2032/33 Forecast
Treasury management investments		3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%
Service investments: Loans		0	0	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares		0	0	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property		1.89%	1.85%	1.81%	1.77%	1.73%
ALL INVESTMENTS (weighted average)		2.07%	2.04%	2.00%	1.97%	1.93%

6.6 Based on the performance indicators set out within this strategy the Executive Director for Resources and S151 Officer is confident that the Investment and Borrowing Strategy provides an effective, robust and prudent platform from which to support the Council’s strategic objectives as set out in the Capital Strategy and approved Council Strategy.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Non-Treasury Investments: Commercial and Investment Property
- 7.2 Appendix B – Treasury Management Indicators
- 7.3 Appendix C - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position
- 7.4 Appendix D - Revised Property Investment Strategy

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: X No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval. X
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position.
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months.
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Officer details:

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Appendix A

Non-Treasury Investments: Commercial and Investment Property

Directly owned property (commercial property) purchased via borrowing.

Commercial Property	Actual	31.3.2023 actual		31.3.2024 expected	
	Purchase cost £'000	Gains or (losses) £'000	Value in accounts £'000	Gains or (losses) £'000	Value in accounts £'000
Dudley Port Petrol Filling Station, Tipton	£3,510	£645	£4,155	£0	£4,155
79 Bath Road, Chippenham	£9,106	£144	£9,250	£0	£9,250
Lloyds Bank, 104 Terminus Road, Eastbourne	£2,900	(£1,225)	£1,675	£0	£1,675
Aldi/Iceland, Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Gainsborough	£6,048	(£223)	£5,825	£0	£5,825
303 High Street and 2 Waterside South, Lincoln	£5,665	(£2,765)	£2,900	£0	£2,900
3&4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park	£17,760	(£2,810)	£14,950	£0	£14,950
Sainsbury's, High Street, North Allerton	£7,050	(£215)	£6,835	£0	£6,835
Ruddington Fields Business Park, Mere Way, Nottingham	£6,545	£155	£6,700	£0	£6,700
TOTAL	£58,584	(£6,294)	£52,290	£0	£52,290

The valuations above are in line with figures disclosed within the draft financial statements for 2022/23 (31.3.2023). Further changes to valuations are not currently forecast, any actual variations will be disclosed within the 2023/24 financial statements and the 2024/25 Mid Term treasury Report.

Directly owned property (Investment Property) not purchased via borrowing.

Directly Owned Property	Property type	Valuation at 31 March 2023 £'000
The Stone Building, The Wharf, Newbury	Café	£25
Pelican Lane Creche, Pelican Lane	Children's Nursery	£0
Rainbow Nursery, Priory Road, Hungerford	Children's Nursery	£35
Clappers Farm/Beech Hill Farm, Grazeley	Tenanted Smallholding	£1,750
Bloomfield Hatch Farm, Grazeley	Tenanted Smallholding	£1,000
Shaw Social Club, Almond Avenue, Shaw	Community Centre	£70
Swings n Smiles, Lower Way, Thatcham	Children's Day Centre	£375
Units 1 to 7, Kennet Enterprise Centre, Hungerford	Industrial	£520
London Road Industrial Estate, Newbury	Industrial	£9,350
Valuation total per draft 2022/23 Statement of Accounts		£13,125

Appendix B

Treasury Management Indicators

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators:

Liquidity: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity indicators	Target (£m)
Total Cash available within 3 Months	10.0

Interest rate exposures: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The [upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates] based on borrowing to maintain a £10 million minimum liquidity level held in investments will be:

Based on the Balance sheet summary in 6.1 and liability benchmark in 6.3, a 1% variance in interest rates would result in £340k of borrowing costs offset by £100k of interest received on minimum balances:

Increase in rates (upper limit) -£240K

Decrease in rates (lower limit) +£240K

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

Maturity structure of borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk.

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing based on assumed borrowing of £20 million in 2024/25:

Investment & Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2024-25

Maturity Structure of borrowing	2024/25 Lower limit	2024/25 Upper limit
Under 12 months	0%	30%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	30%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	30%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	30%
10 years and within 15 years	0%	30%
15 years and within 20 years	0%	30%
20 years and within 25 years	0%	30%
25 years and within 30 years	0%	30%
30 years and within 35 years	0%	30%
35 years and within 40 years	0%	30%
40 years and within 45 years	0%	30%
45 years and within 50 years	0%	30%

Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year/ Long Term Treasury Management Investments: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Price risk indicator	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£15 m	£15 m	£15 m

The limits above take into consideration the Council's liquidity requirement of £10 million plus contingency for in ear variations due to cash flow timings.

The indicators will be monitored throughout the financial year and compliance reported via the Mid Term Treasury Report and quarterly reporting updates.

Appendix C

Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

Investment & Debt Portfolio	31/10/2023 Actual portfolio £m	31/10/2023 Average rate %
External borrowing:		
Public Works Loan Board	(£183)	£3
Local authorities	(£3)	£6
Community Bond	(£0)	£1
Total external borrowing	(£187)	£3
Other long-term liabilities:		
Private Finance Initiative	(£10)	£6
Total gross external debt	(£197)	£4
Treasury investments:		
The UK Government	£0	-
Local authorities	£0	-
Banks (unsecured)	£3	£3
Money market funds	£5	£5
Total treasury investments	£8	£4
Net debt	(£189)	

Property Investment Board Terms of Reference

Release Date:	March 2021
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1	Background
<p>1. At a full meeting of West Berkshire District Council on 9th May 2017 (C3283) the Council approved the Property Investment Strategy. The Strategy is regularly reviewed and was updated at the March 2020 meeting. The Property Investment Strategy is an appendix to the Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23;</p> <p>2. Delegates to the Service Director : Strategy and Governance in consultation with and having received agreement from the Property Investment Board to dispose of property in accordance with the above Strategy up to a maximum of £15m per transaction where it would not be expedient for the Executive to make this decision;</p> <p>3. Delegates to the Service Director: Strategy and Governance to inform the next available Executive of any disposal decision;</p> <p>4. Delegates to the Service Director for Finance and Property in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Property, authority to appoint suitable consultants in accordance with the Contract Rules of Procedure (Part 11 of the Constitution);</p> <p>5. West Berkshire Council will pause investment at the investment levels as at 31.3.2020 following the outcome of the PWLB consultation on its use.</p> <p>6. West Berkshire will seek to dispose of some of the properties within the commercial property portfolio over the long term.</p>	
2	Purpose
<p>The members of the Property Investment Board (PIB) or their substitutes will collectively be responsible for the recommendations made by them having received reports related to the acquisition (or disposal) of commercial property.</p> <p>The PIB will play a critical role in the governance of the property investment strategy including ongoing monitoring of performance in order to make informed decisions.</p>	

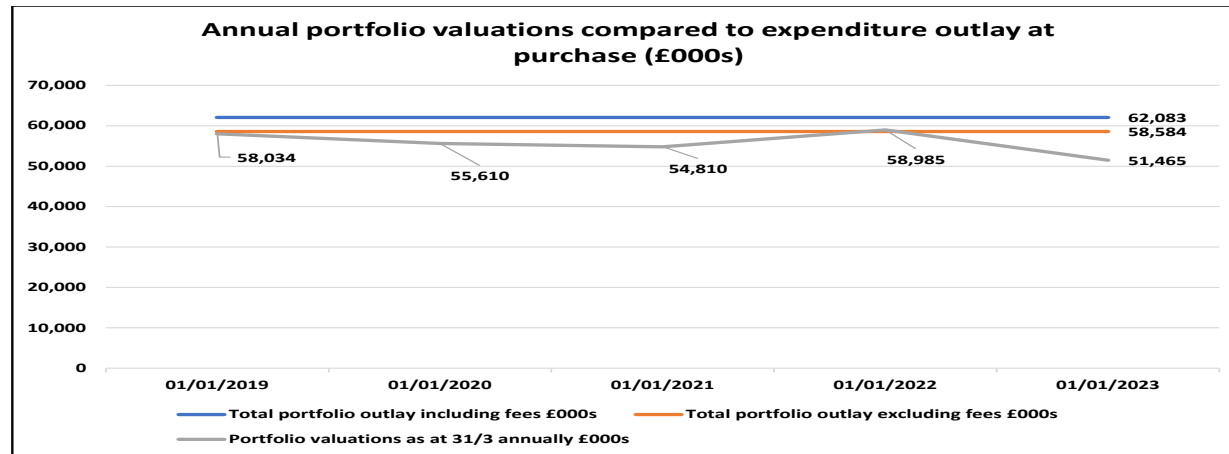
3	Terms of reference
<p>The PIB terms of reference are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In circumstances where a report proposes the acquisition of a property known to be outside the scope of the Delegated Authority criteria, to make recommendation(s) to approve or reject the proposal to progress with the acquisition to the Executive; 2. To make recommendation(s) to approve or reject the proposal to progress with the disposal of an individual property to the Executive. Where it would not be expedient for the Executive to consider a proposal to dispose of an asset authority be delegated to the Service Director Strategy and Governance in consultation with the portfolio holder(s) with responsibilities for finance and property, having received a report from Property Services to do so; 3. To receive quarterly performance reports (including an Annual Review report) conveying information on acquisitions, costs, total capital commitment and performance of the investment. 	
4	Membership
<p>The PIB is to be a joint Officer and Member board formed from the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive Director (Resources) (Chair) 2. Service Director: Strategy and Governance (or substitute) 3. Executive Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance (or alternative Executive member) 4. Executive Portfolio Holder for Finance (or alternative Executive member). 5. Service Director for Finance & Property 6. Opposition member as requested by the Leader. <p>Reporting Officers to the PIB will be the Property Services Manager (or substitute) and the external consultant property agent.</p>	

5	Roles and responsibilities
<p>The members of the PIB will collectively be responsible for the recommendations made by the PIB, having given regard to the knowledge and expertise brought by individual members (such as legal, financial or political).</p> <p>Strategy and Governance will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce agendas and minutes to record the meetings <p>The Property Services Manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meeting dates, venue; • Produce formal reports (for individual acquisition/disposal or reviews); • Produce formal reports for quarterly reporting/monitoring and annual reviews; • Record and maintain property data for acquired property; • Attending PIB meetings; • Liaise with WBC colleagues within relevant teams sufficient to conclude proposals and the satisfactory outcome of recommendations made by the PIB. • With the input of WBC appointed Property Investment Adviser, monitoring performance of the investment, including identifying any issues with the property portfolio. 	
6	Meetings
<p>Scheduled quarterly PIB meetings will be arranged to monitor the implementation of the strategy and performance of investments. Additional ad hoc meetings will be arranged when required as a property acquisition or disposal is proposed.</p>	

Property Investment Portfolio – Assets Valuations

Valuation data as supplied by the Council’s appointed external valuers Avison Young. The current portfolio was fully invested from the financial year ending 31/03/2019.

Asset Name and Address	Property Type	Purchase Price Including Fees	Net Asset Cost	Valuations as at 31/3/2018	Valuations as at 31/3/2019	Valuations as at 31/3/2020	Valuations as at 31/3/2021	Valuations as at 31/3/2022	Valuations as at 31/3/2023
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Dudley Port Petrol Filling Station, Tipton	Petrol Filling Station	3,724	3,510	0	3,720	3,595	3,700	3,765	4,155
79 Bath Road, Chippenham	Retail Warehouse	9,651	9,106	0	9,648	9,200	9,500	11,775	9,250
Lloyds Bank, 104 Terminus Road, Eastbourne	Retail	3,078	2,900	1,845	2,590	2,300	1,800	1,800	1,675
Aldi/Iceland, Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Gainsborough	Retail Warehouse	6,424	6,048	3,655	5,150	5,725	5,725	6,300	5,750
303 High Street and 2 Waterside South, Lincoln	Retail	6,010	5,665	3,419	3,734	3,400	2,850	2,950	2,750
3&4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park	Office	18,802	17,760	0	18,801	17,760	17,435	18,010	14,350
Sainsbury’s, High Street, North Allerton	Retail	7,463	7,050	0	7,460	7,050	7,050	7,185	6,835
Ruddington Fields Business Park, Mere Way, Nottingham	Office	6,931	6,545	0	6,931	6,580	6,750	7,200	6,700
Total Portfolio Expenditure Outlay at Purchase		62,083	58,584	8,919	58,034	55,610	54,810	58,985	51,465



Montagu Evans – Quarter One Financial Year 2023/24 Market Analysis

MARKET UPDATE

UK ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE & IMPACT ON REAL ESTATE

UK GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in April 2023, after a fall of 0.3% in March 2023. Looking at the broader picture, GDP grew by 0.1% in the three months to April 2023, and annual GDP output is estimated to have grown by 4.1% in 2022, following growth of 7.4% in 2021.

The UK narrowly avoided falling into a recession in 2022, which is defined as two three-month periods of GDP shrinking in a row. Although the economy is in a better position than forecasters expected, families and businesses continue to feel the pressure of rising bills.

(UK GDP. Source: ONS)

CPI rose by 8.7% in the 12 months to May 2023, unchanged from April 2023. Despite inflation remaining flat, economists had widely predicted a fall in the inflation rate to 8.5% in the year to May. It is also still four times higher than the Bank of England's 2% target. The IMF predicts that inflation will not return to the target level until mid-2025, which is later than it had forecast previously.

The Bank increased interest rates in June 2023 for the 13th time since December 2021, with rates rising by 50 bps to 5.0% following May's disappointing inflation figures. It is forecast that rates could climb to as high as 6.0% by the end of the year.

The commercial property market witnessed mixed conditions throughout 2022, as the investment and leasing markets adjusted to the changing macro-economic backdrop. Early signs suggest that investors and occupiers still remain active, albeit the reality of the increasing cost of living and rising expenses for businesses mean that disposable incomes and margins will be negatively impacted. As a result, market activity is likely to be adversely affected as businesses look to contain costs, at least until inflationary pressures ease. This will almost certainly impact rental growth in the short term.

SECTOR SPECIFIC OVERVIEW

HIGH-STREET RETAIL

The High Street sector's difficult set of challenges during the course of, and off the back of the pandemic were well-documented as many retailers on the high street were not able to trade during the mandatory national lockdowns, revenues dramatically decreased. Retailer's online platforms boomed throughout this period as a result of changing consumer

patterns which have now settled into an established alternative to in-store retail with a broader consumer base.

Following on from the Covid era, the road to recovery has not been easy with retailers facing a combination of new challenges including the cost-of-living crisis, high wage inflation, industrial action and rapidly increasing energy bills with waning government support. The combination of these challenges in addition to decreased consumer confidence has led to considerable volatility in the relationship between in-store and online retail.

In April 2023, UK retail footfall was 4.7% higher than the same month in 2022, according to Springboard data. Compared to April 2019, footfall was down by 12.0%. High streets saw a 4.6% increase in April footfall on an annual comparison, while shopping centres were up by 6.6% and retail parks by 2.9%. Springboard said footfall on weekdays has suffered due to hybrid working.

KEY STATISTICS

- Footfall figures witnessed an increase of 16.1% year-on-year.
- MSCI retail rental growth index grew by 0.04% in March 2023.
- Retail investment volumes totalled £6.8 billion in the year to March 2023.
- Retail capital values have rebounded in March 2023 with the MSCI index showing a rise of 0.72% month-on-month in March 2023, compared to a fall of 0.45% in February 2023. The return to growth was entirely driven by retail warehouses.

SUPERMARKETS

The food sector has retained a strong, resilient position in the past few years with sales forecasts predicted to grow 3.8% in 2023, reaching £180.6 billion (Source: Retail Economics). Retailers are reporting further shifts in shopper behaviour as consumers shy away from online (a marked change from pandemic-induced lockdown habits), preferring physical stores, including the discounters in order to find best value.

In the occupational market, the return of superstore requirements has emerged as national multiples continue to be acquisition-hungry. Stores offering omnichannel characteristics, including the ability to fulfil online orders, are increasingly important within major retailers' strategies moving forward. The increased occupier demand has translated into rental growth on food stores. This is more evident in London where pressures on land means diminished supply. Increased build costs and weakened yields further pushes rental growth as retailers increase their rental bids so that developers can achieve viability.

In the investment market, where there is long income secured to strong covenants, there is an increasing depth of investor demand, notwithstanding general market uncertainty. However, investors do remain focused on the quality of location, trading fundamentals, sustainable rents, omnichannel capability, alternative use potential covenant strength and

Revised Property Investment Strategy

increasingly the recent takeovers of Asda and Morrisons. The market correction, commencing in May 2022 and intensified in September 2022 as a result of the 'Mini Budget' has had a huge impact on supermarket investment yields. Prime supermarket yields (20+ years, rack rented, RPI indexation, dominant omnichannel stores) are now in the 5.25% NIY territory, compared with 3.75% 12 months ago. A 150bp yield shift at these levels represent a huge loss of value in the order of 25% - 30%.

A buy-side reason for this shift in value is investor's rising cost of capital. Although rates have settled to an extent since the Mini Budget, 10-year gilts and 5-year SWAPS are now trading at c. 3.3% and 3.5% respectively, a huge increase since the beginning of February 2022 where both were trading at around 1.3%. These huge swings in value have led to a step-change in the levels investors are willing to pay for prime supermarket assets, and clearly an appropriate discount for non-prime assets thereafter.

KEY STATISTICS

- From January-April, investment volumes hit £804.1 million.
- Aldi and Lidl have seen greater than double the year-on-year growth of any other UK grocer in May 2023.
- Large supermarkets have seen an average reduction of -15% in business rates.
- Overall profit of major supermarket brands has been affected as operators commit to shielding customers from inflation by keeping prices low.

INDUSTRIAL

The UK Industrial & Logistics Property market has weathered the challenges presented by Covid-19 well over the past 24 months, with positive sentiment and activity continuing to be driven by:

- Acceleration of Online/ E-comm operations
- Desire for overseas operators/ businesses to secure a physical presence in the UK
- Manufacturers' need to hold more inventory within the UK to mitigate any potential future delays at the UK border.

Following a strong economic rebound in 2021, 2022 proved to be a challenging year for both the occupational and investment markets with slowing economic growth, sharp increases in inflation and Bank of England Rates.

During the current market correction, the industrial sector has seen values fall the most out of the three main commercial property sectors since the June 2022 market peak. A predominant factor is the slowdown in the acquisition of Big Box units that was prevalent in 2022 and has continued into 2023 as a result of hindered activity. However, this is not a cause for major concern as the multi-let and mix box market caters for a wide range of

occupiers and in many major urban markets, the stock of land available to meet demand has been in decline for a long time. At the end of March 2023, there was a 7% increase in supply compared to six months ago but 2% down on 12 months ago. This suggests the pressure on occupiers looking for good quality warehouse space will remain, which will subsequently see rents remain robust for prime stock.

Therefore, even as the economy potentially slides into a recession, supply and demand dynamics are still widely expected to underpin growth in the medium-term.

KEY STATISTICS

- Take-up across the UK for Grade A space over 100,000 sq ft reached circa 8 million sq ft in Q1 2023 – a 49% increase compared to the same period last year and 13% ahead of the 5-year quarterly average.
- The MSCI industrial rental growth index grew by 0.73% month-on-month in March 2023 compared to 0.55% in February 2023. This was the strongest rental growth from the main sectors but marks a slowdown on last summer.
- Investment volumes in the industrial sector reached £11 billion in the year to March 2023, down from £13.1 billion in the year to February 2023.

OFFICE

Occupiers are continuing to assess their occupational need as the widespread pandemic-driven hybrid working model transitions into the post-covid working environment. For some, this has seen a return to the office full time whereas as others have chosen to retain remote and flexible working options.

Buyers continue to favour high quality stock, with secondary assets posing significant challenges for buyers, both in terms of tenant attraction/retention, as well as capex risk owing to increasingly stringent environmental legislations imposed by the government. Grade A space accounted for 68% of take-up recorded in 2022, which was the highest proportion since 2018. As such, yield disparity between prime and secondary offices has continued to widen. Additionally, ESG credentials continue to be very high on investor and corporates agendas, whereby assets need to already deliver on these criteria, or it be part of buyers' business plans to deliver best-in-class assets. This is driving a significant polarity in pricing between prime, institutional grade assets, and secondary stock.

Over the next 6-12 months, the following trends are expected to be seen:

- Yields to begin to stabilise as inflation slows and interest rates moderate.
- Experienced cash buyers buying from forced sales at significantly discounted prices.
- UK assets more appealing to overseas buyers due to weaker Sterling.

Revised Property Investment Strategy

- Continued demand for assets that deliver on the ESG agenda from both occupiers and investors – this will drive rental growth and pricing resilience in best-in-class buildings.
- Continued need for an Alternative Use Value (AUV) underpin and repurposing where required.

KEY STATISTICS

- The MSCI Market Rental Growth Index for offices increased by 0.17%, compared to a rise of 0.19% in February 2023.
- Investment volumes in the year to March 2023 totalled approximately £11.1 billion across the UK office market. This is down on the £13.4 billion invested in the year to February 2023.
- The MSCI Capital Growth Index for offices decreased by 0.86% month-on-month in March 2023, compared to the February 2023 figure of -1.11%. This marks the ninth consecutive negative monthly figure, although the rate of decline peaked in October and has slowed since.

RESIDENTIAL

Following tentative signs of improvement in April, annual house price growth softened again in May, falling by 3.4% (from -2.7% in April). However, this largely reflects base effects with prices broadly flat over the month after taking account of seasonal effects. Average prices remain 4% below their August 2022 peak.

The housing market looks set to slow in the coming quarters as pressures on household budgets intensify and labour market conditions start to soften, while mortgage rates remain well above the lows prevailing at this point last year. Over the last few weeks, the average two-year fixed residential mortgage was 6.26% and the average five-year fixed residential mortgage rate was 5.87% as of the 27th June 2023. Increased rates have added to stretched housing affordability at a time when household finances are already under pressure from high inflation.

The housing market looks set to slow in the coming quarters as pressures on household budgets intensify and labour market conditions start to soften, while mortgage rates remain well above the lows prevailing at this point last year.

While activity is likely to remain subdued in the near term, Nationwide are not expecting a dramatic downturn in the housing market, given that labour market conditions remain solid and household.

Property Portfolio 2023/24 Annual Rentals as Reported at Quarter One

Extract from Montagu Evans quarterly performance report.

TOP 10 TENANTS BY RENT

The table below highlights the top 10 tenants within the portfolio which is assessed off their rental income as a percentage of the total portfolio income. The table highlights the level of rental exposure to each of the top 10 tenants and their most recent Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) rating, which comprises a risk indicator for financial covenant strength.

D&B is one of a series of business credit rating agencies and provides in depth information on business financial covenants. The standardised rating system used by D&B assesses a firm's fiscal size and overall creditworthiness, and is split into two parts:

Tenant	Asset	D&B Rating	Rent (pa)	Years to expiry	Years to break option
Wincanton Holdings	79 Bath Road, Chippenham	5A2	£554,250	4.30 years	4.30 years
Computerland UK Ltd	Ruddington Fields Business Park, Mere Way, Nottingham	4A3	£444,174	6.22 years	6.22 years
Sainsburys Supermarkets Ltd	Sainsbury's, High Street, North Allerton	5A1	£437,500	8.47 years	8.47 years
Cirrus Logic (1st)	3&4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park	5A2	£336,708	7.93 years	2.93 years
Mitsubishi HC Capital	3&4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park	5A1	£288,930	6.22 years	6.22 years
Signet t/a Ernest Jones	303 High Street and 2 Waterside South, Lincoln	5A1	£270,000	3.76 years	0.76 years
Aldi	Aldi/Iceland, Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Gainsborough	5A2	£238,956	4.49 years	2.49 years
Rontec	Dudley Port Petrol Filling Station, Tipton	5A1	£220,816	5.75 years	0.00 years
Lloyds Bank Plc	Lloyds Bank, 104 Terminus Road, Eastbourne	5A1	£175,000	3.72 years	0.72 years
Cirrus Logic (GF)	3&4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park	5A2	£160,080	8.00 years	3.00 years

Financial Strength – Based on Tangible Net Worth from a company's latest financial accounts. Financial Strength is denoted by a number and a letter i.e. 5A, 4A, 3A etc. and relates to a range of Tangible Net Worth. 5A reflects a Tangible Net Worth of >£35,000,000, 4A reflects a range between £15,000,000 and £34,999,999, and so on as the scale continues.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	29 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes/Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	C4442

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that Council Strategy will be delivered. The MTFS highlights the overarching key issues facing the Council’s finances as well as how there are many different scenarios and uncertainty concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.
- 1.2 The Council is able to commence the next four years of the MTFS from a strong financial base and this position and future projections are highlighted in the report.
- 1.3 The full MTFS is in the appendix A.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 For members to approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	All finance information is included within the report
Human Resource:	Some potential longer term implications but none specifically
Legal:	None identified
Risk Management:	Scenario planning is identified within the MTFS
Property:	None identified, though clear link to Capital Strategy

Policy:	The MTFS purpose is to link financial resources to deliver the Council Strategy.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT Impact:		x		
Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			See policy comment above – the MTFS should enhance the delivery of the Council Strategy through aligning resources to it.
Core Business:		x		
Data Impact:		x		

Consultation and Engagement:	Portfolio Holder and aligned to the budget simulator; see appendix to the Revenue Budget.
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4 Executive Summary

The MTFS highlights the Council’s medium term financial planning position and is a separate strategy as highlighted in Appendix A.

5 Supporting Information

See the MTFS document set out in the appendix to this covering report.

6 Other options considered

Option of doing nothing and just focussing on the financial position for the year ahead, but this has been disregarded as it would prevent longer term financial planning and have a negative impact on the delivery of the Council Strategy.

7 Conclusion

See the strategy in Appendix A.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – MTFS document

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: *(add text)

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Medium Term Financial Strategy

Document Control

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Author:	Joseph Holmes	Sign & Date:	
Owning Service	Finance & Property		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1.0	28.12.23	Initial Draft from JH/ME	
2.0	10.1.24	Post Corporate Board	
3.0	25.1.24	Post Operations Board	

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1. Foreword

- 1.1 The financial position for Local Government is one of increasing pressure. The recent months have seen an unprecedented number of Councils either issue a s114 report¹ or raise concerns that they will need to do so in the short or medium term. Rising costs from delivering adult social care, where there have been significant inflationary pressures and increased complexity (and so unit cost) in delivering care; growing costs in children's social care, with a care market that has seen major price rises²; increased costs through Home to School Transport and the increased costs to the High Needs Block in the Dedicated School's Grant; and the growing costs of meeting housing needs across the country and especially in respect of homelessness and temporary accommodation provision.
- 1.2 West Berkshire Council (WBC) is not immune to these pressures. As reported during the current financial year, WBC is highlighting an in year overspend of £3.2m. This overspend is almost entirely driven by the cost pressure highlighted above and are seen very much as a part of the national cost pressures on Councils. The difference for WBC is that reserves at the Council are comparatively much lower than other similar Councils. With a significant overspend in 2022-23 where pressures on the General Fund reserve³ were reduced by utilising almost all earmarked reserves, especially risk reserves, to keep the General Fund reserve at £7.2m which is just above the minimum level set (£7m) by the section 151 officer (the Council's Chief Financial Officer).
- 1.3 The in year overspend will put the general fund level below the minimum level set; this is highlighted further in the Revenue Budget papers for 2024-25, but for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the key objective is for financial resilience in the medium term for the Council, to avoid a s114 notice being issued and to ensure that there are sufficient levels of general fund reserves to enable greater financial sustainability to deliver the new Council Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) highlights the financial planning, high level proposals, and sensitivity analysis that underpins the financial resources that deliver the Council Strategy (2023-27). The MTFS is in itself subservient to the Council Strategy, but in its own right attempts to provide the financial planning framework for the coming years as well as act as guide to the organisation in developing projects and schemes to deliver financial balance and the Council Strategy.
- 2.2 The MTFS looks to a four year horizon; enough to provide some stability over an increasingly volatile financial future, but short term enough so that the first year represents the budget proposals for 2024-25, and for the next three years there are a variety of themes included which form the basis of the future savings areas. The MTFS also includes information on financing the capital strategy and how the scale

¹ A report to Full Council by the Council's Chief Finance Officer (s151 officer) that the Council's future financial outflows will exceed resources available

² [Profiteering fears as global investment firms increase stakes in England's child social care | Social care | The Guardian](#)

³ The overall unallocated reserve for the Council

and profile of this strategy has an impact on the overall financial position of the Council.

- 2.3 The longer term outlook for financial planning at WBC is dominated by a range of factors; firstly, the macro-economic position of the country and the impact that this has had, and will have on the UK economy including inflation and interest rates and Government policy on Local Government finance; secondly the impact from any forthcoming Government reforms, and thirdly, the long awaited fair funding review and proposed further business rates retention proposals for 2025-26 and beyond which should have a significant impact on the Council's finances and hopefully provide some longer term financial planning certainty.

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose

- 3.2 The purpose of the MTFS is to set out the financial planning assumptions and resources available to the Council to deliver the Council Strategy. The MTFS includes both revenue and capital implications. The MTFS attempts to balance the resources known, and estimated, to be available with the ambitions of the Council Strategy. There is always a calculation to make to even out the additional and current investment in the Council Strategy objectives against the cost of doing so and the pressure that puts on the MTFS.

3.3 Vision

3.3.1 The Vision of the MTFS is:

"To ensure that the Council has the financial resources available to work together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work and learn".

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 The delivery of the MTFS cannot occur through the Council alone. A significant proportion of the Council's budget is delivered through partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Council's proposals for future financial stability will involve all of these partners including where there are proposals to invest in infrastructure, deliver core services and transform how the Council delivers its services in the future.

- 3.4.2 This fair funding review was originally due to impact on the 2020-21 budget but is now most likely to come into effect from 2026-27 at the very earliest. The following assumptions have been made in the MTFS:

- That the fair funding review and business rate baseline reset does not occur until 2026-27 at the earliest (it has been confirmed that it will not take place for 2024-25) and it is assumed that within the MTFS the impacts are net neutral given there is so little information on what these might incorporate post the forthcoming General Election
- Adult Social care (ASC) funding remains in the longer term with a nil impact on WBC from the proposed care reforms in future years
- New Homes Bonus, Services Grant and the 'funding guarantee' are removed but replaced with a funding system that delivers equivalent levels of reward to 2024-25 in future years

- The assumed permitted Council Tax increases remain at 2.99% and ASC Council Tax precept levels at 2% - any authority proposing an increase above these levels must hold a local referendum
- Inflation remains at 2% in the longer term – this is in line with the latest Office of Budget Responsibility forecasts⁴

4. Medium Term Financial Plan

4.1 The MTFP is supported by a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This MTFP sets out the financial planning assumptions and is included below:

Figure 1.1 – MTFP

2023/24 £m	Line ref	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
2.99%		Council Tax income	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
2.00%		Adult Social Care Precept	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
117.5	1	Council Tax (incl. ASC)	124.2	131.2	138.6	146.3
27.3	2	Retained Business Rates	29.9	30.9	31.8	32.8
7.3	3a	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF ringfenced funding	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.0
6.8	3b	Social Care Grant	8.9	8.4	8.4	8.4
1.2	3c	ASC Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	2.6	1.8	2.4	2.4
0.3	3d	ASC discharge fund	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0
1.1	4a	New Homes Bonus	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
0.7	4b	Services Grant	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
0.3	4c	Other non-ringfenced grants	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.0	4d	Funding floor guarantee grant	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1.8	5	Collection Fund deficit (-)/ surplus	-3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
164.3	6	Funds Available	175.1	181.9	190.9	199.8
141.2	7	Base budget after adjustments	157.9	165.4	172.3	180.1
5.3	8a	Pay inflation	4.6	2.1	2.3	2.3
4.9	8b	Contract inflation and non pay inflation	1.0	1.4	1.9	2.1
10.1	8c	Modelled growth	12.4	5.0	5.0	5.0
0.0	13b	Cost of ASC reforms	0.0	1.8	0.6	0.0
2.3	9a	Investment in Council Strategy priorities	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.8
1.3	9b	Investment due to Covid-19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1.4	9c	Other investment	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.8
0.6	9d	Capital financing	1.6	-0.1	1.4	1.8
-9.1	10	Savings, transformation and income proposals agreed	-14.5	-2.0	-1.0	-1.0
0.0	10b	Savings, transformation and income gap	0.0	-3.0	-4.7	-3.5
157.9	11	Annual Budget Requirement	165.3	172.3	180.1	189.4
0.8	12	One off investment/savings	-0.7	-0.6	0.4	0.4
158.8	13	Net Budget Requirement for Management Accounting	164.6	171.8	180.5	189.8
7.3	14	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF ringfenced funding	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.0
166.1	15	Budget Requirement	173.1	180.4	189.4	198.8
-1.5	16a	Use of Earmarked Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.0	16b	Use of Transformation Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
-0.3	16c	Use of Collection Fund Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.0	16d	Increase in reserves	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.0
164.3	17	Budget Requirement after use of reserves	175.1	181.9	190.9	199.8
		<i>£10k roundings may apply</i>				

4.2 The MTFP highlights the need for cost base reductions of just under £30m over the next four years and is based upon a number of assumptions which are considered below.

⁴ [CP 944 – Office for Budget Responsibility – Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2023 \(obr.uk\)](https://obr.uk)

Figure 1.2

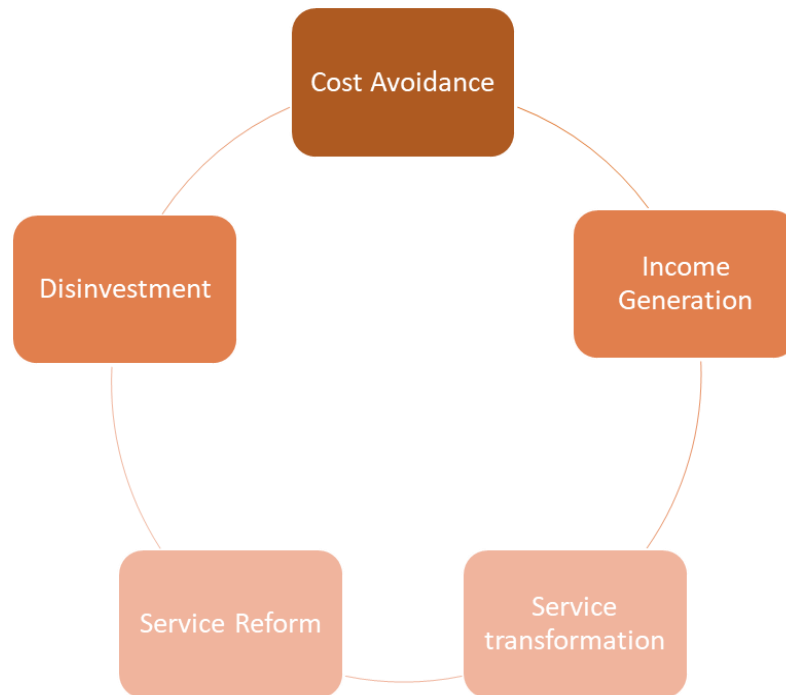
Ref	Item	Commentary
1a	Council Tax Income	This is the amount of Council Tax (excluding the ASC precept, see below) raised. A 1% change in the Council Tax base ⁵ or Council Tax levied equals approximately £1m. Council Tax provides 60% of the Council's funding excluding fees and charges (71% with the ASC precept). Any increase of this number above 2.99% must be the subject of a public referendum.
1b	Adult Social Care Precept	A specific element of Council Tax, with a maximum increase of 2% allowed for 2023-24, to help provide funds for Adult Social Care. It has been assumed the ASC precept is set at a maximum of 2% so an assumption that 2% will be allowed throughout the MTFs period has been made.
2	Retained Business Rates	The Council collects approximately £100m p.a. of business rates, and are allowed to retain some of this through a Government controlled scheme. The amount left over for WBC after payments to the Government is £30m. If business rates increase through new growth in the value of business rates, the Council retains approximately 25%, and retains 100% of all renewable energy schemes.
3a	ASC BCF / I-BCF ring-fenced funding	This is the Adult Social Care (ASC) Better Care Fund (BCF) or Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF). This income is exactly matched by expenditure later in the MTFs and is ring-fenced to support the integration of care services with NHS partners.
3b/c/d	Social Care Grants	Non ringfenced grant from Government (3b) with 3c and 3d implied non ringfenced but with some information to be determined by Government on what activity these support.
4a	New Homes Bonus	The New Homes Bonus is a scheme from the Government since 2010 that allows Councils to keep the equivalent band D Council Tax on all additional homes built in the district for one year.
4b/c/d	Services grant and other non-ringfenced grants	Services Grant – assumed to continue in some form in future years though to be determined by Government.
5	Collection Fund (change to taxbase)	This is the surplus or deficit on 2023-24 Council Tax and business rates income budget versus the expected actual income. Councils do not account for this in the year it occurred, but in the subsequent year.

⁵ the amount of properties in the district adjusted for the Council Tax Reduction scheme and discounts

Ref	Item	Commentary
6	Funds available	Total non-ring-fenced income available, excluding fees and charges.
7	Base budget after adjustments	The budget from the previous year including £385m expenditure, £193m ring-fenced grant income and £33m income from fees and charges.
8a	Pay inflation	Increased costs due to any pay awards (2.5% assumption 2024-25), increased employer pension costs and incremental pay changes.
8b	Contract inflation & non-pay inflation	The amount of funds set aside for key budgets that have a contractual inflation element; the most significant being the Waste PFI (Private Finance Initiative). Non-pay inflation relates to energy costs.
8c	Modelled budget growth	Increases to demand led services through estimated increases in client numbers and/or complexity.
9a	Investment in Council Strategy priorities	Funding investment to deliver the Council Strategy.
9b	Investment – Covid-19	Ongoing future financial pressures relating to the impact of the Covid-19 - this is included for prior years
9c	Investment in other priorities	Investment to ensure the delivery of core services.
9d	Increase in capital financing costs	The revenue funding for additional borrowing that supports the delivery of the Capital Strategy. This is an area under pressure; the <i>future</i> borrowing costs of the Council have more than doubled since setting the 2022-23 budget and so the revenue funding available to finance capital spend will either need to increase in the MTFS to fund previous levels of Council funded programmes or remain/reduce to fund fewer Council funding projects.
10	Savings, transformation and income requirement	Items that reduce cost via the themes identified.
11	Annual budget requirement	Sub-total of the above.
12	One off investments/savings	Investment to support initiatives, on a one-off basis.
13	Net budget for management accounting	Sub-total of the above.
14	ASC BCF / iBCF funding	Expenditure that equals the income from this funding source in line 3a above.
15	Budget requirement	Sub-total of the above.
16	Use of Reserves/ increase in reserves	Use of any earmarked or unallocated reserves to support future budgets, and cover the collection fund deficit. Building back reserves in future years.
17	Budget requirement	The new budget that equates to the funds available in line 6.

4.3 The MTFS considers investment as well as savings. The latter is discussed in further detail below but, importantly, the MTFS does have investment set aside over the next four years. This includes a wide range of areas and remains in line with the Council Strategy ambitions – i.e. investment to achieve the Strategy, continue to build on our strengths and investment in infrastructure to deliver the Council Strategy and other supporting strategies. The savings themes for the MTFS is based on the model below:

Figure 1.3



4.4 The model has been considered to drive different strands of activity and reflect that there are a variety of different ways of delivering a long term balanced budget. The Council has moved to a more outcomes based budgeting approach for this MTFS.

4.5 Below is a summary of the five key themes and some of the proposals that are included in 2024-25 budget and that are being considered for future financial years. For years beyond 2024-25, worked up proposals will be required and will be incorporated into the annual budget for those financial years. There is a gap between proposals at present and the total savings requirement in the MTFS, but this highlights that proposals are being considered in advance of their requirement to ensure greater medium term financial planning. At present there is a requirement for savings of £15.3m from 2025 of which at least £4.0m has been identified in proposals for future budgets.

4.6 Indicative savings proposals across directorates would be per the below; this will be supported by the transformation programme and in the themes below:

Directorate	2025-26 / £m	2026-27 / £m	2027-28 / £m
Savings identified	2	1	1
People	1.6	2.8	1.8
Place	0.9	1.2	1.1
Resources	0.5	0.7	0.6

Cost Avoidance

The projects involving, for example, intervening in service demand early to reduce future modelled costs. This is particularly evident in Adult and Children Social Care where the modelled budget line can be reduced through interventions that either avoid anticipated costs or provide alternative service arrangements at no cost to the Council.

Income Generation

Either new income generating opportunities or through increasing additional revenue from existed income sources from fees and charges.

Service Transformation

Opportunities to transform how services are provided by the Council. Key elements included in this are digital opportunities so that more services are available for those who want to use them online and out of core office hours. The Council is also looking at the physical location of its offices and opportunities to transform how services are delivered and from where to improve customer service and deliver financial savings.

Service Reform

This element is focussed on the improved efficiency and effectiveness of existing services and where incremental adaptations can be made so that they are delivered at a lower cost. Historically, this has been an area of success for the Council but as each year occurs, the scale of the opportunities reduce.

Disinvestment

This is the removal of an existing service or a reduction in the level of service provided without a compensating transformation. This will be the area that the Council prioritises last, but does have to be considered with all other options depending on the overall funding position.

Capitalisation

Review of revenue costs that are capital in nature.

Reserves - £6m contribution

As highlighted in the revenue budget papers, the Council has a level of reserves that are some of the lowest in the country. The Council already in the existing MTFS had a contribution to reserves each year to replenish risk reserves over the life of the MTFS. In light of the in year financial pressures, this contribution has been increased to reflect the replenishing of the risk reserves and also to increase the general fund back to above the minimum level set.

- 4.7 It is also important for the MTFS to consider the different scenarios that relate to the MTFP. Appendix A highlights the detail behind these and is summarised below:

Figure 1.4: Scenario planning

Scenario	Best / highest case	Financial impact	Worst Case	Financial impact
Council Tax base changes	2% growth p.a.	£1.7 extra p.a	0% growth from 2024-25	£0.7m p.a.
Business Rates reset and fair funding review from 2025-26	No reset – keep retaining growth	£1.8m in year 3	Full reset – no transition	£5 to 10m drop from 2025-26 plus impact of fair funding review
Agency costs (staffing) within social care continue on current level leading to an overspend			Growth in agency costs as recruitment activity is unsuccessful	£3m overspend
Inflation and pay award	0.5 % lower	£0.3m p.a.	2% increase	£1.2m
Capital financing costs	Rates drop by 1%	tbc – gilt rates dependent	Increased rates of 1%	£0.2m
ASC finance model	Per 'best' case	£3.9m benefit	Per 'worst' case	£4.1m overspend
CFS finance model	Per 'best' case	£1m benefit	Per 'worst' case	£1.1m overspend

5. **Priorities**

5.1 The overarching priorities of the MTFS are:

- To ensure a balanced financial position over the medium term
- To ensure that there are sufficient resources to deliver the Council Strategy
- To enable longer term decision making by providing financial planning over a four year timeframe

6. **Actions**

6.1 Unlike other strategies that have a clear action plan, the MTFS is slightly different in that it provides an over-arching view of the financial position and the actions to deliver the strategy are contained in other Council strategies – see interaction below:

Council Strategy Framework

The Purpose of the strategy:

Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of

Overarching values:



Integrity

'we act with integrity ensuring all decisions are lawful, transparent and impartial'



Customer focused

'we listen to our customers and do our best for them'



Fairness

'we will always treat everyone fairly'

The Priorities of the strategy:



**Services
We Are Proud of**



**A Fairer West Berkshire
with Opportunities for All**



**Tackling the Climate and
Ecological Emergency**



**A Prosperous and
Resilient West Berkshire**



**Thriving Communities
with a Strong Local Voice**

The Goals for each priority:

- Ensure West Berkshire Council continues to offer good customer service to our residents and businesses
- Transform the way the Council works
- Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making
- Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice

- Prioritise support for those who need it most
- Deliver more homes that people can afford
- Support our Local Authority maintained schools to drive up standards

- West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and improves biodiversity
- Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment
- Help to make the whole of West Berkshire net zero

- Proactively engage with and support businesses to grow and thrive
- Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium
- Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport
- Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities

- Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them
- Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives
- Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages
- Help our villages to remain vibrant long term

6.2 Key actions to take place though include:

- Review of fair funding outcome and future of business rates post 2025-26
- Further savings proposals for years 2 to 4 of the MTFS and review of different budget setting approaches
- Further review of reserves in 2024-25 budget and beyond to ensure that the general fund and risk reserves are replenished through a contribution to reserves
- Investment in a transformation programme for preventative work to support long term cost recovery or avoidance where demonstrable

7. Implementation

7.1 The MTFS is implemented through the revenue budget for the year ahead (2024-25) as well through the oversight of the Budget Board, an internal board at the Council, which considers changes to the financial planning assumptions as well as future options for delivering the MTFS.

7.2 The MTFS also provides a steer for officers on the approach to take and the themes articulated above will help to shape future budgets.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024-25 has only provided certainty for the 2024-25, the other figures are all estimates and will be subject to significant change depending on Government policy. The removal of changes due a fair funding review and hard business rate baseline reset until 2026-27 at the earliest is a base assumption; there could be an implantation for 2025-26, but that there will be a general election by January 2025 puts the timescale for any changes to happen for the 2025-26 financial year less likely. This enables the MTFS, certainly

for the next two years, to have a much greater level of certainty over the income levels assumed, though many Government funding streams remain unclear e.g. Services Grant and New Homes Bonus. The new Council Strategy for 2023-27 provides greater stability on Council policy direction and a redirection of Council funding to those priorities approved by members.

Glossary

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Scenario planning

Other relevant documentation

Previous Medium Term Financial Strategies

Accompanying budget papers for 2024-25

Local Government Finance Settlement 2024-25 (DLUHC) [Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121234/Provisional_local_government_finance_settlement_England_2024_to_2025.pdf)

The below sets out some of the potential changes on the specific lines of the MTFP – all of these are estimates. The amounts show the cumulative position over the MTFS (4 years).

Council Tax Base Changes

A 1% increase in the Council Tax base equates to approximated 650 properties and just over a £1m additional income. The ability to accurately forecast this figure is difficult. The Council has little control over how quickly properties are built across the district on a year by year basis (the local plan can set out the overall quantum over a much longer period) so faster or slower building rates have a large impact in future years. The other determinate of the Council Tax base is how many residents receive the Council Tax reduction scheme; greater levels of take up will mean a smaller taxbase as this affords some protection to residents from paying the full rates of Council Tax.

Council Tax referendum level

This is proposed at 2.99% by the Government for 2024-25 and assumed to remain at this level throughout the MTFS. Councils can increase Council Tax above this level but would need to conduct a referendum with residents first. It is assumed in the MTFS scenario planning that this would not occur.

ASC precept

Similar to the above, with a maximum level of 2% allowable.

Business Rates and Fair funding review

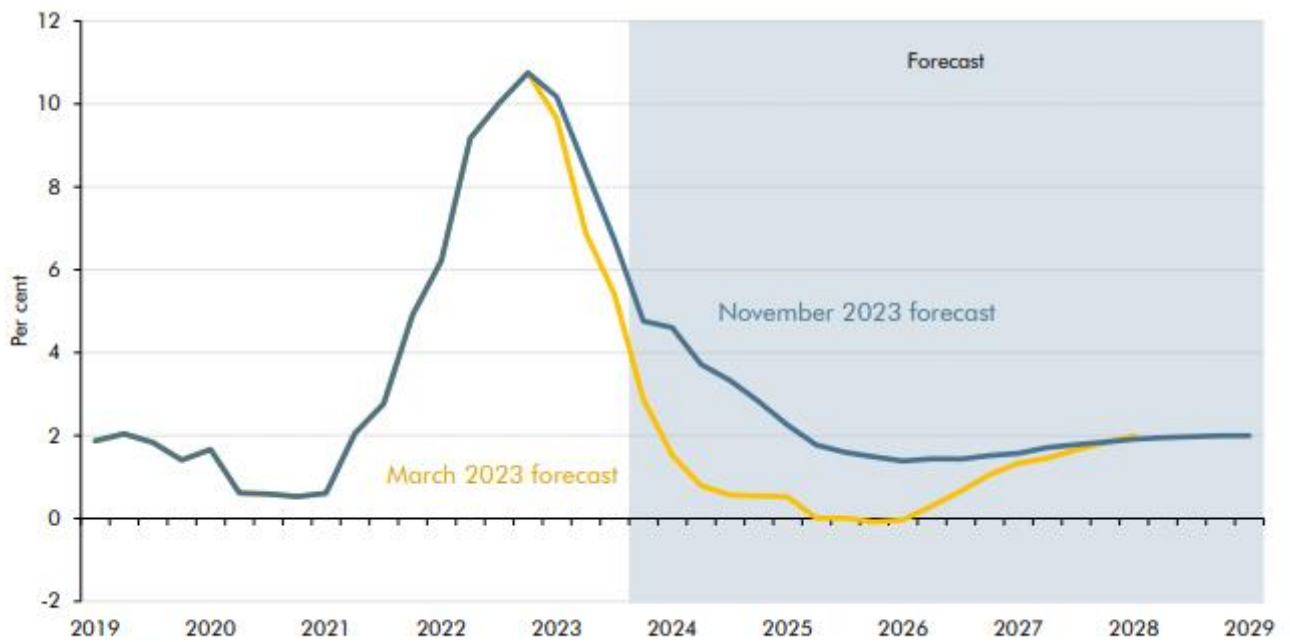
This has been articulated in the MTFS above, but the Council is currently above its 'business rates baseline' by over £5m. This is the amount at which the Government, when creating the retention of business rates in 2013-14 assessed as the amount of business rates the Council collected and then ended up retaining after transfers to the Government. If the Government implemented a reset to the underlying business rates baseline this would cost the Council well over £5m a year as the Council has seen growth in business rates above this baseline level over the past ten years.

Agency costs

The Council is facing significant pressures on recruiting and retaining staff in certain services, especially in adults and children's social care. The additional agency costs required (to cover vacant posts) are substantial and an estimate of £3m has been identified as a worst case additional cost. Steps have been brought in during 2023-24 through the Financial Review Panel to reduce agency costs.

Inflation and pay award

Forecasts for inflation vary significantly but the Office of Budget Responsibility forecast in March 2023 was for an approximate sub 2% inflation figure by the end of 2023-24 (from a high of 11% in 2022-23) with deflation from 2024-25, this has been revised in November 2023 to expect a slower drop in inflation for 2024-25 (though inflation in December 2023 was already lower than the forecast), see below:



Source: ONS, OBR

Capital financing costs

As highlighted above, interest costs have more than doubled during 2022-23; when the budget was set, Public Works Loans Board rates were approximately 2% and are now in excess of 4%, this means that for the same revenue costs, the Council will be able to afford half of the total Council funded capital projects.

ASC finance model

This model is presented to Executive every quarter as part of budget monitoring. The model has best and worst case costs scenarios. The 2024-25 model provides for the expected costs with a 2.5% inflation uplift. The difference between the base and best case is £3.9m and between the base and worst case is £4m. This has been highlighted since 2020-21, where there was a significant underspend on ASC spend and during 2022-23 where there was a significant overspend, which has continued through into 2023-24 even with a substantial funding increase.

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024 - 2034

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	29 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member sent/agreed report:	29 January 2024
Report Author:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter
Forward Plan Ref:	C4443

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2024 - 34 and the supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 1.2 Decisions made on capital and treasury management have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. Decisions are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council is requested to adopt the following recommendations:
 - (a) That the Capital Strategy and supporting Capital Programme for the period 2024 -2034 is approved (appendix A).
 - (b) That the Council approves the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement for 2024/25 and the revised MRP policy for 2023/24 (appendix C).
 - (c) That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy (appendix D) is approved.
 - (d) That the proposed CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Bids for inclusion in the Capital programme (appendix E) is approved.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary

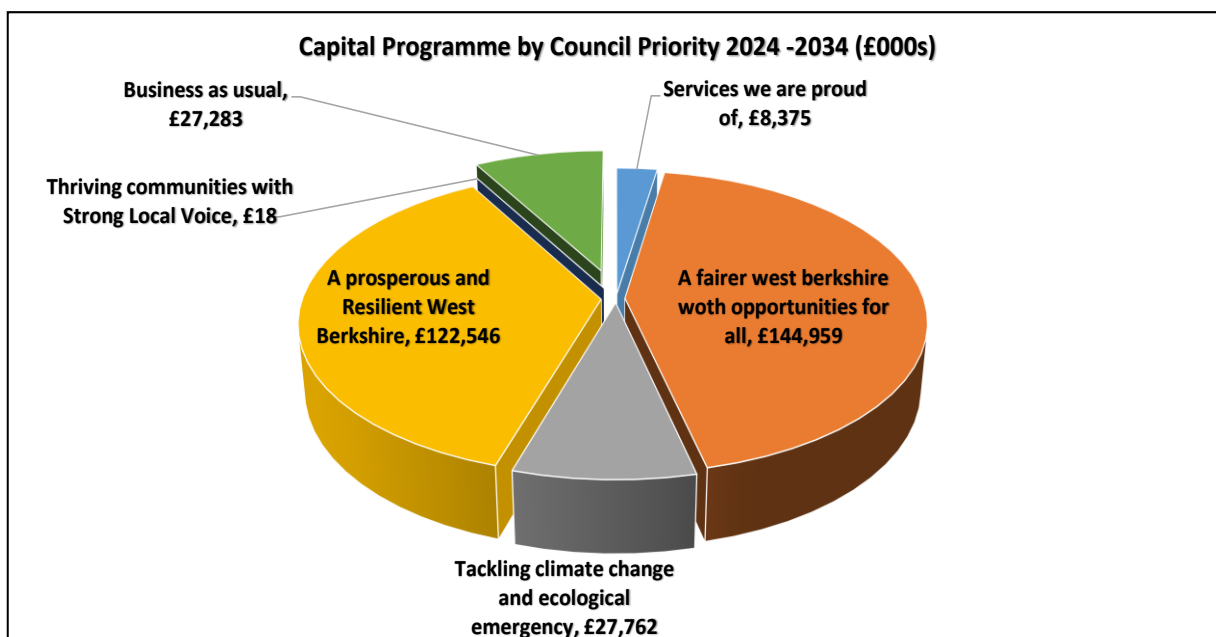
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>£141.1 million of Council debt funding has been applied to the Capital Strategy and supporting programme of work. This level of investment is unsustainable from a capital financing / revenue budget perspective. The MTFs currently assumes a decrease in the current revenue capital financing budget for financial year 2024/25, the proposed programme if delivered in full would generate a significant revenue pressure over and above the budgeted provision. A review has been undertaken to identify a reasonable level of capital financing based on historic programme delivery and annual capital financing based on the Council financial statements. The capital financing budgets and associated Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25 have been built on the basis of these assumptions and not fully funding the proposed programme. See further comments under risk management.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>Part of the Council’s establishment is funded directly by the Capital Programme per annum. Salaries are funded from capital where it can be demonstrated that staff directly support and help to deliver the capital programme.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>The Capital Strategy contains Prudential Indicators that are mandatory under the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. When the final programme has been approved by Council, the budget managers will have the authority to let contracts for the schemes included in the approved programme in accordance with the Council’s Contract Rules of Procedure.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>Assumptions as to the anticipated cost of external borrowing are aligned to current guidance as set out by the Bank of England and potential interest rate changes. Significant / unanticipated rises in borrowing costs over and above those assumed within the budget setting will impact on the affordability of the overall programme. The proposed programme also relies on £183.6 million of external funding. External funding relating to later years of the programme has yet to be confirmed, programme priorities and the availability of funding will therefore need to be kept under review. See further comments under policy.</p>
<p>Property:</p>	<p>The proposed Capital Programme will provide funding for maintenance and improvements to a number of existing Council buildings.</p>
<p>Policy:</p>	<p>The Capital Strategy is closely aligned to the delivery of the Council Strategy through enabling key projects to be financed and delivered. The Council has reviewed two key policies: The</p>

	Flexible Use of Capital Receipts and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy. Both policies have been reviewed with a view to minimising charges against the Council’s General Fund and maximising use of revenue provision, including the existing capital financing budgets. Both policies are appended to this report.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				Any impacts have been assessed and publicly consulted upon where necessary.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				Any impacts have been assessed and publicly consulted upon where necessary. For example, Disabled Facilities Grants are included as part of this programme.
Environmental Impact:	X			There are a number of schemes included to enhance the environmental impact of the Council, for example carbon management, walking and cycling infrastructure and solar energy generation.
Health Impact:	X			Proposals included to encourage more walking and cycling as well as use of the district’s environment.
ICT Impact:	X			Opportunities included in the programme for IT projects to enhance efficiency.

Digital Services Impact:	X			Opportunities included in the programme for improved digital access to services.
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			The planned programme is aligned to supporting the Council Strategy.
Core Business:	X			The planned programme provides funding for projects focused on improving business as usual functions.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Joseph Holmes, Executive Director, S151 Officer Iain Cottingham, Portfolio Holder for Finance Capital Strategy Group			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure and capital financing activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. Decisions made regarding capital and capital financing will have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.
- 4.2 The Council has sought to build on its strengths, focusing on social care, education, and enhancements to local infrastructure (including better roads, flood prevention, and alleviation schemes). The Council has also focused on enhancing the district’s leisure provision offering, with significant capital investment in leisure centre facilities and playing pitch provision across the district. In response to the Climate Emergency, the Council has allocated significant funding into projects over the life of the Capital Strategy with a view to enhancing sustainability and assisting the Council’s long-term objective to move to net zero by 2030. The proposed expenditure on the capital programme over the ten-year period amounts to investment of £330.9 million. The Capital Strategy and supporting Capital Programme are aligned to the Council Strategy. Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of the Capital Programme and the graphic below details planned expenditure over the life of the strategy by Council priority.



4.3 Proposed expenditure is financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue budget, reserves, and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing, and Private Finance Initiative). The proposed programme is built with a forecast £189.8 million of external funding and £141.1 million of debt financing.

4.4 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans, repayments of loans and Minimum Revenue Provision payments are charged to revenue, this is referred to as capital financing. This strategy is appended by a key policy document which include a number of policy changes designed to protect the Council’s General Fund position. West Berkshire as with numerous Council’s across the country are in a position of incurring high costs (mainly in relation to the provision of social care) and restrictions of income. In response the Council has reviewed the policies that support the capital strategy. A key policy is the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts.

4.5 The Council has updated its flexible use of capital receipts policy (appendix D). With assets sales anticipated in 2023-24, there has been an increase in the number of schemes that the capital receipts policy is anticipated to fund. The overarching transformation programme has been expanded in 2023-24, and for the 2024-25 financial year. The Government is currently requesting considerations from the local government sector about different options for the flexible use of capital receipts:

- (a) Option 1: extend capitalisation flexibilities to include a wider set of eligible costs.
- (b) Option 2: extend the flexible use of capital receipts to allow authorities to borrow for the revenue costs of invest-to-save projects.
- (c) Option 3: Allow additional flexibilities for the use of the proceeds of selling investment assets.

4.6 The implementation of any of the above options would be financially beneficial to the Council. The first would “represent a broader agreement to allow a local authority to

deal with immediate pressures on the condition that it will take forward cost reduction and efficiency plans to bring itself back into sustainability". This would be very helpful in light of the context of significant social care financial pressures. The second option would allow for borrowing for existing 'flexible use of capital receipts' rather than having to sell an asset; again, this is benefit from a financial planning point of view as expected asset sales may not always materialise in the year forecasted. The last option would also be very beneficial. This would enable to the Council to immediately improve its reserves position once an investment asset is sold. The Revenue Budget is not based on the above assumptions, though if these did occur, they could make a significant impact on improving the Council's financial resilience position.

- 4.7 In the options, the Government are proposing that an efficiency strategy is produced to be approved by Full Council and include details of payback periods, as well as commission an independent review of the efficiency plans and share these with the Government, and the Government will have the right to commission their own review of the use of any greater flexibilities. All of these options are only considerations by the government at the time of writing (January 2024), they do not represent policy at present. However, the flexible use of capital receipts policy has been written to provide the flexibility implied within these options if there were to come to be Government policy and members are asked to approve the flexible use of capital receipts policy to enable these flexibilities to be undertaken.
- 4.8 A further policy that has been updated is the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (appendix C). In order to recognise the time value of money and the economic benefit of an asset over its lifetime, the Council has obtained advice from its external treasury advisors and moved towards applying weighted average lives and PWLB rates. The benefit of this is a reduction in annual provisions, protecting the Council's General Fund allowing for maximisation of available funding to core Council services.
- 4.9 The capital strategy is set against an uncertain economic backdrop. Historically Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB), rates have been low and stable with average borrowing for a 25-year annuity to fund capital expenditure at between 1 – 2%. At the time of producing this report a 25-year annuity rate is 4.9%. The increased average rate of borrowing has impacted on the scope of the capital programme, however, despite ongoing pressure on the revenue budget, the Council continues to make significant investment in the future of West Berkshire through its Capital Programme. The proposed programme of £330.9 million, with a debt financed element of £141.1 million at current PWLB rates, if fully delivered, would generate a revenue capital financing pressure. A review of historic delivery and capital financing levels has been undertaken, on this basis assumptions as to the likely level of capital financing actually required have been made (outlined in section 6.2 – 6.4), and the statutory prudential indicators have been undertaken on the basis of the assumptions made (section 6.5 – 6.11). Assumptions as to the anticipated cost of external borrowing are set out in the Council's Investment and Borrowing Strategy, any significant / unanticipated rises in borrowing costs over and above those assumed within the budget setting will impact on the affordability of the overall programme.
- 4.10 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing and the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred, the Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer) is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable, and

sustainable on the basis of the assumptions made, and adoption of the revised Use of Flexible Capital Receipts and MRP policies.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.2 Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. The Prudential Code requires the Council to look at capital and investment plans whilst taking into consideration overall organisation strategy and resources to ensure that decisions are made with sufficient regard to the long-term financing implications and risks to the Council. To demonstrate compliance, the code sets out indicators which are reviewed within this report and in the Council’s Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2024/25.

Proposals

5.3 The Capital Strategy proposes £330.9 million of planned capital investment in district wide improvement programmes and allocation of resources to make enhancements to the Council’s existing business systems to deliver long term improvements to services. Planned expenditure is split between General Fund Services (i.e. enhancement and extension of the existing operational asset base) and capital investments (i.e. maintaining the commercial property portfolio). The planned capital investment over the life of the programme is detailed below:

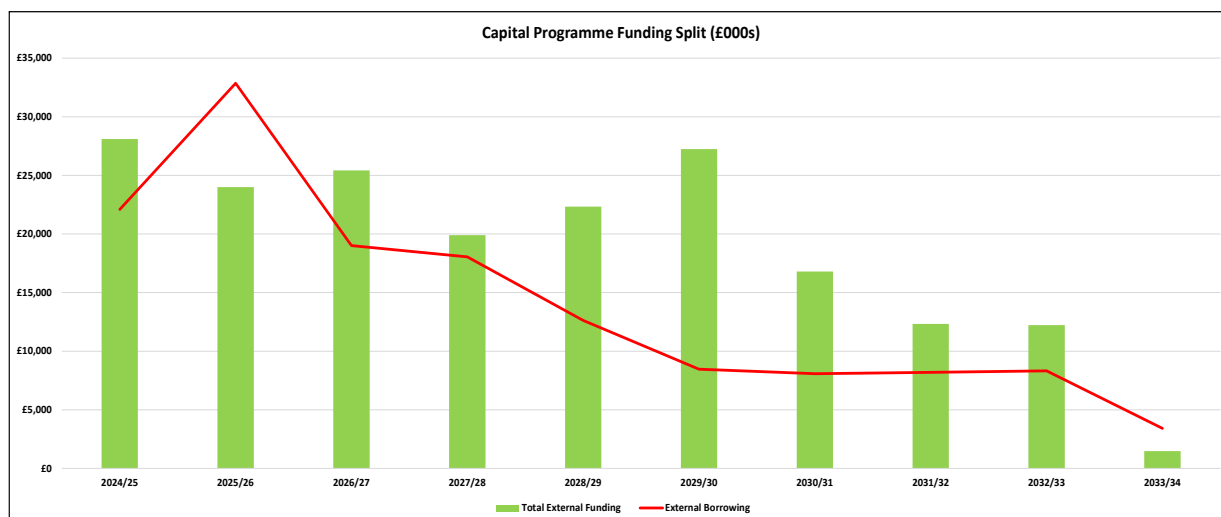
Planned Expenditure	Council Funding	External Grants & Contributions	S106	CIL	Total Planned Expenditure
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
General Fund Items	£119,660	£97,114	£49,549	£43,156	£309,478
Capital Investments	£2,303	£0	£0	£0	£2,303
Invest to Save	£19,160	£0	£0	£0	£19,160
Totals	£141,123	£97,114	£49,549	£43,156	£330,942

5.4 In respect of capital investments, central government financial support for local authorities investing in assets such as commercial property purely or mainly for financial gain has declined. The revised Prudential Code (December 2021) has limited a Local Authority’s ability to access debt financing to make further investment, however, financing can be accessed to maintain existing capital assets subject to a cost benefit analysis of retaining ownership. Total commercial property investments were valued at £52.3 million in the Council’s draft 2022/23 accounts (i.e. as at 31st March 2023). The portfolio annually produces a net revenue contribution (post capital financing costs) of approximately £1.0 million in support of core Council services.

5.5 Five key projects with a focus on supporting the Council’s journey to net zero have been included as invest to save projects within the proposed programme. The four projects focus on development of a solar farm on the Council’s estate, installation of solar photovoltaics across key Council sites and creation of a re-use shop. Total allocated investment of £19.1 million is proposed to be Council funded, i.e. debt funded. The solar farm and solar photovoltaics are proposed to be self-financing in the longer-term through creation of income streams and reducing the Council’s dependence on purchased energy.

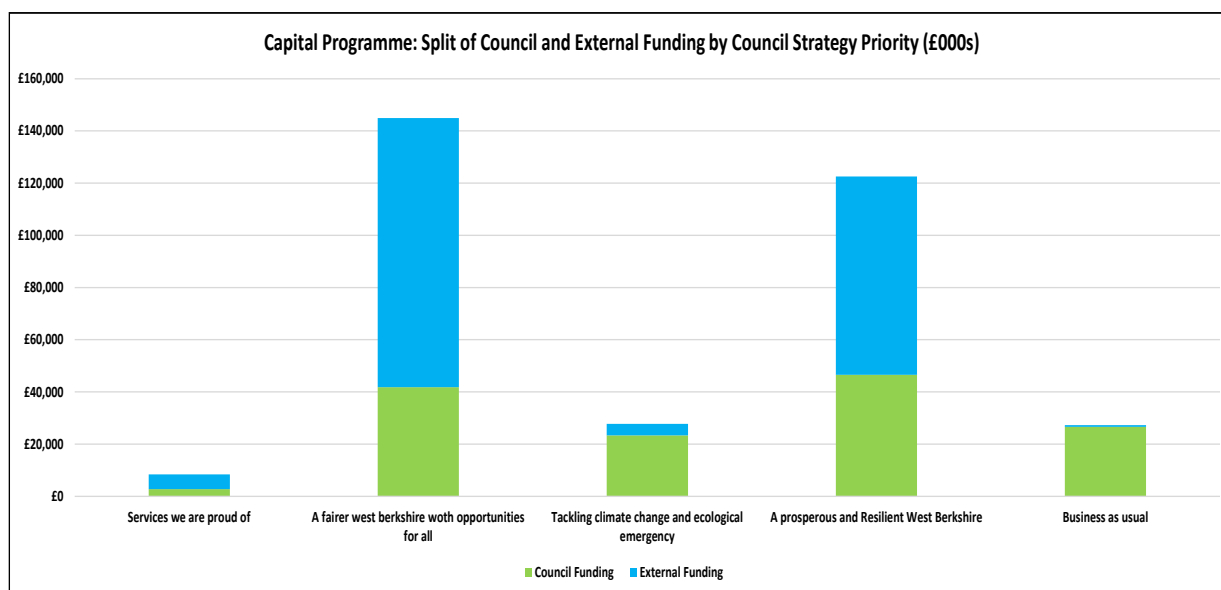
- 5.6 93.5% of the proposed programme is planned expenditure in support of General Fund Services. The Council has sought to build on its strengths, with planned expenditure focused on enhancing investment across the district. Key areas of investment include:
- (a) £139.5 million across the Education estate, focusing on provision of school places in response to new housing developments across the district and enhancing accessibility to existing provision.
 - (b) £137.3 million in support of infrastructure across the district (road, bridges, flood alleviation, drainage, cycle paths, countryside access).
 - (c) £8.7 million in support of the development of a leisure strategy for the district. Investment includes redevelopment of the Northcroft Leisure Centre, Kennet Leisure Centre and various modernisation projects across the district's current leisure offering.
- 5.7 To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has an Asset Management Strategy in place. The Strategy seeks to convey both the context of the West Berkshire Council estate and the drivers and deliverables to ensure that Council assets are utilised to their optimum capability, both in delivering quality services and in economic terms, focusing on:
- (a) Operational efficiency and effectiveness across the estate with financial efficiency, opportunity to generate income in accordance with related investment strategies, and alignment of the estate with other new or emerging council strategies such as the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 and Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030.
 - (b) Ensuring an efficient estate, continuing to commit to maintaining the condition of assets through the capital programme, developing new income streams through the estate and potential for joint working with partners.
- 5.8 Once an asset is identified as surplus to operational requirements a capital disposal is pursued with a view to utilising capital receipts. At present capital receipts can only be utilised for new assets, repay debt or finance transformation projects under the flexible use of capital receipts policy (appendix D).
- 5.9 In respect of the funding of the overall programme, £189.8 million of funding is forecast to be sourced from a combination of section 106, Community Infrastructure, and external grant receipts. The majority of external funding receipted from developers and central government is ring-fenced infrastructure and educational provision. The level of external grant funding, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy included in the financing of the programme are forecasts. Funding is applied where applicable to projects that support the Local Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP). Section 106 in contrast is a dwindling funding stream with allocations predominately relating to past payments and ongoing projects where funding has been receipted and is held by the Council. The graphic below details the forecast trend of external funding versus external borrowing over the life of the capital programme.

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024 -2034



5.10 The proposed programme forecasts application of £141.1 million of debt funded Council resources. The planned capital programme assumes any capital receipts from asset rationalisation are applied to fund the Council’s corporate transformation programme as opposed to financing the main capital programme. Appendix D details a list of approved programmes to be funded through the application of the flexible use of capital receipts legislation. However, the Investment and Borrowing Strategy which supports this paper does recommend that if the Council agrees to disinvest from the commercial property portfolio (Property Investment Strategy), then associated capital receipts are applied to offset future capital financing costs or are utilised as part of the flexible use of capital receipts policy.

5.11 The proposed programme is aligned to the revised Council Strategy and its key deliverables. External funding is predominately ringfenced to infrastructure and educational expenditure, whilst debt funding is utilised to support business as usual activities (leisure, corporate buildings, and ICT systems). Programme funding is split as follows:



5.12 The full ten-year capital programme is detailed in appendix A, a detailed 2024/25 capital programme is included in appendix B of this report.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Capital Strategy proposes £330.9 million of planned capital investment, all capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative).
- 6.2 43% of the planned programme is proposed to be funded through application of Council resources over the next ten financial years, i.e. borrowing. Councils are required to ensure that planned capital programmes are affordable. The proposed programme, associated capital financing requirement and available revenue budget provision for capital financing over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is detailed below:

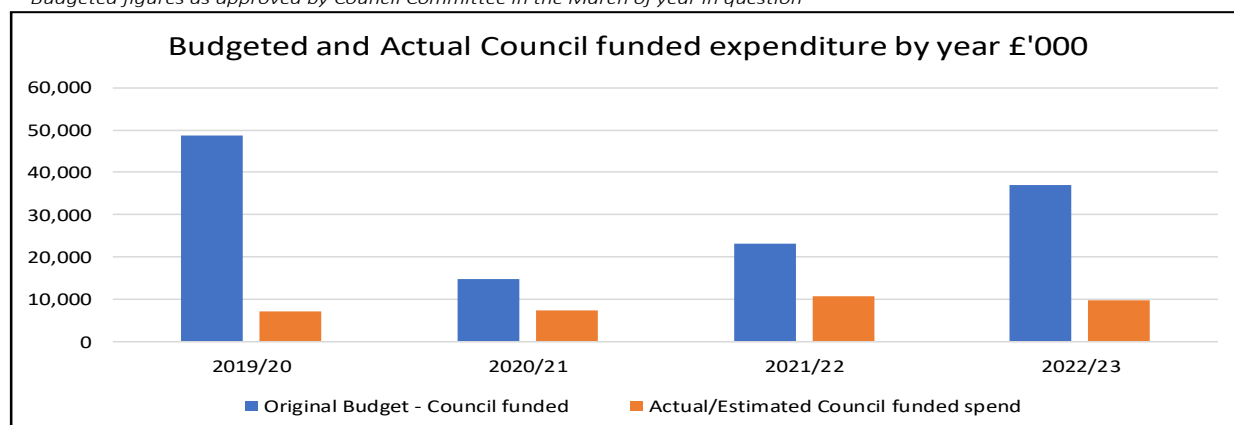
Planned Expenditure	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Debt Funded Expenditure	£22,100	£32,859	£19,010	£18,044
Capital Financing Requirement	£12,807	£14,355	£16,301	£17,360
Revenue Budgets	(£13,794)	(£12,394)	(£12,294)	(£13,694)
Forecast Budget Pressure / (Saving)	(£987)	£1,961	£4,007	£3,666

- 6.3 Capital is financed a year in arrears, i.e. capital expenditure incurred in financial year 2023/24 is financed in financial year 2024/25. In respect of the proposed capital programme commencing in financial year 2024/25, the costs associated with delivery of the programme will be incurred in financial year 2025/26. The table above demonstrates that in the current national environment with Council’s having constrained revenue resources the programme will generate a significant financial pressure in future years. Historically the capital programme has incurred reprofiling of expenditure between financial years, usually the result of supply chain delays, availability of resources or reprioritisation of projects. The graphic below shows the level of Council debt financing incurred in respect of in year delivery compared to the Council debt funded programme approved by Council:

Budgeted & Actual Council Funded Expenditure by year*

Council Funded Capital Expenditure	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Original Budget - Council funded	48,769	14,799	23,156	36,922
Actual/Estimated Council funded spend	7,177	7,526	10,744	9,835
As %	14.7%	50.9%	46.4%	26.6%

* Budgeted figures as approved by Council Committee in the March of year in question



6.4 Historically the Council has had access to capital receipts to offset capital financing costs, in 2022/23 approximately £4.3 million of receipts were utilised to finance capital expenditure, generating a total Council funded capital programme in the region of £14 million. Based on historic data trends and the proposal to disinvest from the Property Investment Strategy (re Investment & Borrowing Strategy for Financial Year 2024/25), the anticipated level of capital expenditure requiring debt financing in relation to the proposed 2024/25 programme is £18.7 million, this value is then increased by roughly 10% on an annual basis over the life of the proposed capital programme. These expenditure assumptions are aligned to the anticipated cost of external borrowing guidance as set out by the Bank of England supplied by the Council’s external treasury advisors Link Group. Significant deviation in borrowing costs over and above those assumed within the budget setting will impact on the affordability of the overall programme. To compare the Council’s actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10 million at each year-end. This benchmark is currently forecast to be £197.8 million at 31.3.2024 and will increase to £271 million over the life of the capital programme.

Liability Benchmark	2022/23 actual £'000	2023/24 forecast £'000	2024/25 budget £'000	2025/26 budget £'000	2026/27 budget £'000	2027/28 budget £'000
Outstanding borrowing	189,890	185,972	177,240	172,731	168,510	164,225
Liability Benchmark	179,220	197,764	211,131	226,320	241,354	258,238

Liability Benchmark	2028/29 budget £'000	2029/30 budget £'000	2030/31 budget £'000	2031/32 budget £'000	2032/33 budget £'000	2033/34 budget £'000
Outstanding borrowing	159,943	155,665	151,220	141,624	136,855	132,495
Liability Benchmark	265,430	267,981	270,084	272,028	273,050	271,098

6.5 The Council is required to ensure that capital financing is reasonable and affordable in the long term. The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit. The table below sets out the Council’s borrowing limits inclusive of all debt financing. Allowance has been made within both the operational boundary and authorised limit to allow to debt financing of the planned capital programme, existing financing, PFI liabilities and further lease financing when IFRS 16 Leases is formally adopted in April 2024. The Councils Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for debt is detailed within the Investment & Borrowing Strategy for Financial Year 2024/25.

6.6 The Council’s cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP / loans fund repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £13.5 million during 2024/25. The forecast CFR over the life of the proposed capital programme is anticipated to increase by £87.5 million.

Capital Financing Requirement	2022/23 actual £'000	2023/24 forecast £'000	2024/25 budget £'000	2025/26 budget £'000	2026/27 budget £'000	2027/28 budget £'000
General Fund services	227,606	239,686	253,138	268,105	284,658	303,061
Council housing (HRA)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital investments	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290
TOTAL CFR	279,896	291,976	305,428	320,395	336,948	355,351

Capital Financing Requirement	2028/29 budget £'000	2029/30 budget £'000	2030/31 budget £'000	2031/32 budget £'000	2032/33 budget £'000	2033/34 budget £'000
General Fund services	311,771	315,837	319,447	322,889	326,155	327,233
Council housing (HRA)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital investments	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290	52,290
TOTAL CFR	364,061	368,127	371,737	375,179	378,445	379,523

6.7 Council expenditure, particularly in relation to debt financing must be prudent and appropriate. A regulatory framework is in place monitored through prudential indicators to ensure reasonableness of capital financing assumptions. How much a Council intends to utilise of its available revenue streams to finance debt is key. The table below sets out the percentage allocation of the Council's assumed net revenue stream over the life of the capital programme will be required to service debt (both historic from previous capital programmes and the proposed capital programme).

Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream	2022/23 actual	2023/24 forecast	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Financing costs (£'000)	15,469	12,800	12,516	13,320	14,125	15,024
Proportion of net revenue stream	9.39%	7.61%	7.30%	7.62%	7.92%	8.26%

Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream	2028/29 budget	2029/30 budget	2030/31 budget	2031/32 budget	2032/33 budget	2033/34 budget
Financing costs (£000)	15,181	15,282	15,356	15,328	15,304	15,100
Proportion of net revenue stream	8.18%	8.07%	7.95%	7.78%	7.62%	7.37%

6.8 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP) / loans fund repayments. Local Authorities are required by statute to make a charge to their revenue account to provide for the repayment of debt resulting from capital expenditure, known as Minimum Revenue Provision ("MRP"). The Council is required to determine a level of MRP it considers to be prudent, whilst having regard to MRP Guidance. The Guidance provides suggested methods for the calculation of MRP; however, the guidance and legislation do not define what is prudent. It is for each Authority to determine a prudent repayment based on its own individual circumstances, considering the medium and long-term financial plans, current budgetary pressures, future capital expenditure plans and funding needs.

6.9 In conjunction with the Council's external treasury advisors (Link Group), a review of the Council's current MRP policy and practices has been undertaken. It is therefore proposed that the existing policy is amended. The revised policy approach looks to provide a prudent MRP sum considering the time value of money and use of resources, whilst also protecting the Council's General Fund allowing for provision of core Council

services. The revised policy is included in appendix C which also sets out the planned MRP payments over the proposed capital programme.

6.10 The Council’s main objectives when borrowing is to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher. Projected levels of the Council’s total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, and leases) are shown in the table below, compared with the capital financing requirement.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	2022/23 actual £'000	2023/24 forecast £'000	2024/25 budget £'000	2025/26 budget £'000	2026/27 budget £'000	2027/28 budget £'000
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	200,560	195,779	186,132	180,651	175,400	170,022
Capital Financing Requirement	279,896	291,976	305,428	320,395	336,948	355,351

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	2028/29 budget £'000	2029/30 budget £'000	2030/31 budget £'000	2031/32 budget £'000	2032/33 budget £'000	2033/34 budget £'000
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	164,579	159,070	153,320	142,338	136,855	132,495
Capital Financing Requirement	364,061	368,127	371,737	375,179	378,445	379,523

6.11 Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from the table above, the Council expects to comply with this.

6.12 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. Based on the proposed expenditure and planned financing of that expenditure the Executive Director of Resources (s151 Officer) is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable, and sustainable.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Capital Programme 2024 - 2034

7.2 Appendix B – Capital Programme 2024/25

7.3 Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

7.4 Appendix D – Efficiency Plan - Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

7.5 Appendix E – Community Infrastructure Levy Bids

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: X No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval. X
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position.
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months.
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Officer details:

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Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
1	Occupational Therapy Equipment	Annual provision for essential aids & equipment for vulnerable people.	£741,000	£741,000	£741,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,223,000
2	Social Services - Planned Enhancement Works	Enhancements of Care Homes and Resource Centres	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
3	Building Work :Fostering	To enable more children to be fostered in West Berkshire	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£60,000
5	Additional Places - Secondary Basic Need	Accommodation solution to secondary Basic Need in School Organisation Planning Area 12.	£5,630	£592,500	£80,830	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£678,960
6	SEMH/ASD Resourced Provision - Primary	Creation of resourced provision for primary aged pupils with SEMH/ASD to meet demand and reduce pressure on the High Needs Block.	£1,661,240	£610,640	£2,044,790	£64,130	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,380,800
8	Calcot Schools Remodelling	The remodelling, refurbishment and rationalisation of accommodation to align with change of Admission Number.	£0	£2,205,030	£3,592,990	£1,074,960	£179,160	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,052,140
10	North Newbury - New primary school	Additional primary provision to meet the impact from the North Newbury Housing Development.	£60,650	£683,510	£3,677,550	£842,340	£124,620	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,388,670
12	Project Management - Education	Capital element of the Place Planning & Development Team	£418,750	£429,219	£439,949	£450,948	£462,222	£473,777	£485,622	£494,477	£506,794	£510,206	£4,671,964
13	Highwood Copse	To cover retention contract costs following build of new 1FE Primary school.	£104,390	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£104,390
14	Park House - Impact of new housing	Impact at Park House school of additional pupil numbers from Racecourse and Sandleford new housing developments.	£0	£0	£683,770	£5,736,280	£4,917,890	£269,730	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,607,670
15	Schools Statutory Compliance Surveys	5-year rolling programme to undertake Asbestos, Condition, Fire and Legionella surveys.	£16,770	£17,440	£18,140	£18,860	£19,620	£20,400	£21,220	£22,070	£22,950	£0	£177,470
18	i-college Integration	Provision of new accommodation for iCollege Integration to address suitability and sufficiency issues.	£47,480	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£47,480
20	Aids & Adaptions for special educational needs and disabilities	Provision of special equipment for children with disabilities, including proportion of occupational therapists' time	£65,510	£67,470	£69,480	£71,550	£73,670	£76,000	£76,000	£76,000	£76,000	£0	£651,680
24	Falkland Primary School - Classroom Replacement	Modular building replacement to address poor condition, poor environmental performance and limited external space.	£0	£4,015,790	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,015,790
25	Education - Capital Enhancement Programme	Capital Enhancement works as identified by current condition survey data.	£2,677,230	£2,685,000	£2,280,000	£2,363,200	£2,453,730	£2,547,880	£2,645,800	£2,747,630	£2,853,530	£0	£23,254,000
27	Disabled Facilities Grant	Mandatory grant for disabled adaptations, to enable local residents to live independently in their own homes.	£1,300,000	£1,300,000	£1,300,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3,900,000
28	Temp Accommodation Refurbishment	Refurbishment of temporary accommodation	£50,000	£18,390	£18,850	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£87,240
29	Playing Pitch Action Plan	Provision to support the delivery of the Playing Pitch Strategy through provision of additional facilities	£858,933	£286,312	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,145,245
30	Refurbishment of Kennet Leisure Centre	Refurbishment of Kennet LC	£200,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200,000
34	Library Service - self service kiosk replacement	Replacing the current self-service kiosks in libraries when they reach the end of their useful life.	£0	£0	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
35	Expansion of Berkshire Records Office. Reading	Project to extend the building to increase storage capacity for the county's historic archives. Partner funded with other Berkshire Councils	£2,508,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,508,000
36	Libraries Book Stock	Replenishing book stock	£123,000	£122,760	£122,760	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£368,520
37	Berkshire Records Office Enhancements	Planned improvement works to building and plant. All six Berkshire local authorities contribute their share to the Berkshire Records Office	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£30,000
38	Planned enhancement of library buildings	Provision for improvement works	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£300,000
42	Leisure Centre Compliance & Modernisation	Capital Investment in Leisure Provision required to maintain and enhance existing sites.	£200,000	£200,000	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
44	Hampstead Norreys Flood Alleviation Scheme	Subject to DEFRA funding - Flood alleviation scheme for Hampstead Norreys.	£0	£0	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
48	Car Park Improvements	Capital works to improve and enhance useful life of Council's public car parks	£0	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£0	£520,000
49	Access Improvements: Visitor Access Improvements	Delivering infrastructure improvements at sites in West Berkshire that will offer improved provision, for able bodied and for those who find access difficult and for people who rely on wheelchairs.	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£55,430	£0	£498,870
50	Environment Strategy - Minor projects and improvements	To develop and deliver a range of projects that will fulfil the aims of the Environment Strategy and the Environment Delivery Plan.	£50,000	£250,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£0	£1,350,000
51	Village Speed Limits	Assessment and implementation of speed limits resulting from the speed limit review process.	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£0	£270,000

Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
52	Accident Reduction Works	Road safety improvements as a result of accident investigations	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£0	£675,000
53	Footway Improvements Existing & New	Footway improvement schemes	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£245,000	£0	£2,205,000
54	Recreational Walk Route	To improve selected pedestrian rights of way in order to increase their recreational value	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£0	£125,010
55	Street Lighting	Ongoing capital replacements of lighting columns and lanterns	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£900,000
56	Signing Improvements	Signing improvements in the district.	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£0	£270,000
57	Traffic Signal Upgrades	Modernisation and capital maintenance of the Council's traffic signal assets.	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£630,000
58	Active Travel Infrastructure	Developing and implementing active travel solutions for West Berkshire	£979,420	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£700,000	£0	£6,579,420
59	Rights Of Way Volunteer	To undertake rights of way maintenance work by the use of volunteers	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£0	£22,500
60	Improvements To Pedestrian Routes	Improve the condition of pedestrian routes	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£0	£125,010
61	Disabled Access To Countryside	Improve selected rights of way in order to increase their usability and recreational value for less able users.	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£0	£63,000
62	Bridleway Improvement for Pedestrians	To improve selected rideable and cycle able rights of way in order to increase their recreational and/or utilitarian value	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£13,890	£0	£125,010
63	Ridgeway Trail	To maintain the trail at the standard required by Natural England	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£0	£117,000
64	Recreational Cycle ways	To improve selected cycle able rights of way in order to increase their recreational and/or utilitarian value.	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£13,880	£0	£124,920
65	Rural Signing	Improvement of direction signage on rural rights of way	£10,540	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£5,270	£0	£52,700
67	Land Drainage	Capital Land Drainage and Flood Risk Management works	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£0	£2,700,000
68	Future Programme Development	Assessment and feasibility of works to support bids for grant, S106, CIL, LDF and LTP3.	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£900,000
69	School Safety Programme	Annual programme of safety improvements in the vicinity of schools.	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£450,000
70	Essential Improvement work - Bridges	Essential capital improvements of the Council's bridges and other structures	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£0	£2,700,000
71	Preventative Works - Bridges	Proactive works to prevent the need for substantive future works	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£900,000
72	Travel Plans (Transport Planning)	Includes transport model and transport policy officer	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£52,800	£0	£475,200
73	Public Transport Infrastructure	Real Time Passenger Information and other public transport infrastructure.	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£450,000
74	Highway Improved Programme	Annual Carriageway Treatment Schemes	£4,000,000	£4,000,000	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£3,981,710	£0	£35,871,970
75	Chieveley Depot Improvements	Set-up and resources costs for improvement works identified under the Term Maintenance contract	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£775,500	£0	£6,979,500
76	On Street Electrical Charge Point / Decarbonising Transport	Plan and deliver infrastructure for zero emission vehicles (for example placing a requirement on local authorities to allocate 20% of their parking spaces, including on-street, to be converted to electric vehicle charge points by 2025)	£532,000	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,532,000
77	Carriageway patching	Annual hand patching programme.	£938,000	£938,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£438,000	£0	£4,942,000
78	Signs & Road Markings	Annual road sign and road marking replacement programme.	£0	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£25,000	£1,105,000
79	Drainage Improvements	Annual highway drainage improvement works	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£4,500,000
80	Planned road network Enhancements	DFT Grant application for planned maintenance & enhancements	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£132,000	£0	£1,188,000
81	Transport Services Fleet Upgrade	Replacement of one fleet minibus each year	£477,630	£350,000	£350,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£1,777,630
82	Community Transport Capital Grant	Funding that Community Transport providers can bid for the upkeep of their vehicles. Community Transport providers mainly tend to be voluntary organisations and this funding ensures these essential providers can continue.	£50,000	£0	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000

Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
84	Open Space Improvements	Improvement of Open spaces including Pump Tracks in Goldwell & Linear Parks, improvements to footpaths in Greenham House Gardens, replacement of Snelsmore Common Storage and replacement of Litter and Dog Bins	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£0	£225,000
85	Council Carbon Management Plan	Schemes to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in Council buildings	£26,600	£78,600	£52,600	£52,600	£52,600	£52,600	£52,600	£52,600	£52,600	£0	£473,400
86	BBOWT Capital Projects	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford Wildlife Trust capital works funded from S106.	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£900,000
87	Urban tree fund	Capital required for investigation, design and implementation of urban trees	£0	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£0	£320,000
88	Playground Equipment	To refurbish existing children's' play areas that are now reaching the end of their recommended life span to ensure their compliance with relevant modern safety standards	£95,000	£180,000	£180,000	£180,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£635,000
91	Infrastructure Design and Delivery	Annual Salaries for Projects Team - part funded by s.106	£1,769,120	£1,813,348	£1,989,682	£2,036,149	£2,083,778	£2,132,597	£2,182,637	£2,211,754	£2,263,627	£2,286,501	£20,769,194
92	Geographic Information Systems	Funding for development of the Council's Graphical Information System	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£240,000
93	Corporate IT Replacement	Re-provision of WBC ICT equipment and software (Predominately PCs) on an ongoing basis.	£339,000	£484,000	£494,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,317,000
95	Upgrade of Print Room	Replacement of Large format printer	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
96	Network / App Performance Monitoring	Introduce a network / application performance monitoring tool	£0	£25,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£25,000
97	Project Management - ICT	Capitalise proportion of ICT Staff salaries for those who work on Capital projects	£184,920	£189,543	£194,282	£199,139	£204,117	£209,220	£214,451	£218,894	£224,345	£225,307	£2,064,217
98	VMWare Hardware Refresh	Replace physical servers (hosts) as they reach end of life.	£88,540	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£88,540
99	Public Services Network Accreditation	Essential security enhancement to maintain compliance with Government Connect requirements.	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£120,000
100	Members ICT	Members ICT	£0	£0	£85,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£85,000
102	Remote Working Infrastructure	Improvements to WBC's remote working infrastructure (currently Citrix, but may change in future)	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£60,000
103	Network Infrastructure (Core Switches)	Replace core switches at end of life	£90,000	£0	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£120,000
105	Planning Service Upgrade	System upgrades for planning systems	£0	£0	£11,250	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,250
106	Server Windows Licensing	Upgrade Windows Server Operating System to Windows Server 2012(Costs are largely resource to do the work)	£0	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£80,000
108	Virtual Private Network Firewall Replacements	IPSEC/ VPN Firewall Replacement	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
109	Corporate Storage Systems & Attached Network	Existing Hitachi SAN reaching end of product life.	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£150,000
111	Disaster Recovery Facility	Replace DR equipment at Turnham's Green when it reaches end of life	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£150,000
112	Refresh Multi Functional Device Fleet	Refresh the MFD Fleet as they fail or go end of life	£170,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£170,000
113	Corporate Database Server Replacement	Replace the Corporate database server when it goes end of life	£75,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£85,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£160,000
115	Building Enhancements Total Provision	Annual capital works to be undertaken on Council buildings - will be allocated to individual services in year using Condition Survey data	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£450,000
116	Project Management - Property	Capitation Costs of Property Project Managers	£708,340	£726,049	£744,200	£762,805	£781,875	£801,422	£821,457	£838,099	£858,969	£863,044	£7,906,258
117	Condition and Asbestos Measured Surveys	Condition/Measured Surveys - Annual Programme	£38,000	£24,500	£49,750	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£112,250
118	Unallocated Buildings	Planned improvement works of other corporate buildings	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£60,000
121	Corporate Furniture Replacement	Corporate Furniture Replacement	£5,300	£5,300	£5,300	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£15,900
122	CL community infrastructure funding bids	One off £500k for infrastructure bids	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
123	Parish Planning	Grants to Parish Councils and other community groups to support community based capital projects.	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£90,000
124	Digitalisation Infrastructure/ ICT Allocation	Migrate and Upgrade the Council's Digital Platform	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£450,000

Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
125	Adaptations for Disabilities	Essential adaptations for WBC staff and service users	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£30,000
126	Members Bids	Matched funding to support local community schemes	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£400,000
127	Renewable energy provision	Provision of green energy infrastructure in line with the Council's Environment Strategy. To develop opportunities and expertise to take advantage of the production, storage and utilisation of green energy	£2,500,000	£11,500,200	£2,000,000	£400,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£16,400,200
129	Four Houses Corner	Refurbishment of the sixteen pitches at Four Houses Corner, Ufton Nerve	£2,112,175	£2,112,175	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,224,350
137	Local S106 Highway Improvements	A selection of network and road safety improvements to mitigate the impact of developments throughout the District.	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£900,000
138	Pay Machine Replacement	Replacement/modernisation of the Pay on Foot Equipment	£20,000	£150,000	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£320,000
140	The Diamond Greenham. Changing facilities improvement.	Replacement and upgrade of changing facilities	£0	£0	£120,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£120,000
142	Establishment of re-use shop.	Creation of a re-use shop to upcycle items brought to the HWRC's	£0	£0	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
143	Theale Station Improvements	Upgrade to Theale Rail Station - LEP Funded in partnership with FGW & NR	£3,469,560	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3,469,560
145	Landlord fitout works in commercial properties	Fit outs linked with commercial property voids (at breaks and lease expiry). Capital expenditure beyond that from tenant dilapidation liabilities.	£0	£213,700	£434,530	£1,655,160	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,303,390
147	Cyber Security Enhancements	Continued existing bid scheme and added allocations to fund new Data Leakage Protection System (Egress), and licencing costs for new Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system.	£31,200	£31,850	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£63,050
148	Web Filtering	Extension of web filtering licences on firewalls and switches (Sonicwalls / Fortigate)	£0	£16,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£16,000
149	Backup / Security products for O365 data	Purchase of additional backup protection to a hosted environment to ensure that data will always be retrievable.	£25,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£25,000
150	Refresh DC A/C & Generator	Replace chillers and generator supporting the MSO Data Centre	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
152	Northcroft Leisure Centre (Dryside Refurbishment)	Refurbishment and remodelling on the Leisure Centre	£1,750,000	£2,750,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,500,000
156	Thatcham Library - New Build	Build a new and larger library in Thatcham as outlined in the council's Infrastructure Development Plan (2022-27).	£1,200,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,200,000
159	Robin Hood Roundabout & A4	Network capacity improvements at the Robinhood Roundabout in Newbury.	£0	£1,484,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,484,000
161	A4 Faraday Road Improvements	CLL funded capacity improvements and signals upgrade at the A4/Faraday Road junction.	£0	£320,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£320,000
164	Sandleford Park Development - Primary (1)	Additional primary provision to meet the impact from the Sandleford Park Housing Development.	£0	£508,600	£5,824,150	£1,456,050	£195,620	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,984,420
165	Sandleford Park Development - Primary (2)	Additional primary provision to meet the impact from the Sandleford Park Housing Development.	£0	£0	£0	£0	£381,820	£5,465,390	£146,850	£0	£0	£0	£5,994,060
166	Natural Carbon Reduction Measures	Investment in measures to naturally capture and reduce carbon dioxide. Examples of natural measures could include large scale tree planting, natural regeneration, wetland regeneration (subject to feasibility and cost/benefit analysis).	£100,000	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000	£120,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,020,000
185	Thatcham Park - Early Years	Expansion of EYs accommodation to meet demand for 3 and 4 year olds and to provide nursery provision for vulnerable two year olds from the local community.	£645,760	£14,740	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£660,500
190	Shop Mobility	Provides electric wheelchairs for use by people with mobility problems visiting Newbury town centre	£11,000	£11,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,000
192	London Road Industrial Estate Planning and Development	Planning and consultancy to help deliver LRIE projects	£305,000	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£405,000
208	Aldermaston Footways	Repair and reconstruction of footpaths	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£150,000
209	Theale Bypass Noise Investigation Feasibility	Road noise reduction scheme	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
215	Sovereign Joint Venture	Repayable capital support to Joint Venture with Sovereign Housing to increase supply of affordable housing in the District	£334,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£334,500
216	Digital Infrastructure	Provision of full fibre broadband to schools	£280,000	£280,000	£280,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£840,000
217	Museum Collections	A capital budget to purchase items for the West Berkshire Museum Collection	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
218	Supported Living (Freedom to Thrive)	The project will source the use of current West Berkshire Council (WBC) asset/Land, this will then be held by Adult Social Care (ASC). The land will be invested on and will then be let on a commercial lease to an external provider providing an income to cover any capital costs and provide additional revenue to ASC. The property will then have a higher asset value and will also support the reduction in ASC long term budget pressures.	£0	£0	£1,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,000,000

Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
221	Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP)	This is an agreed programme of works with the Department for Transport to improve public transport in West Berkshire. It will include improvements to the bus infrastructure across West Berkshire, and enable contactless bus payments and fare capping.	£1,598,823	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,598,823
222	Expansion of Primary provision - Newbury	Provision of 1FE of additional provision to mitigate the impact of an additional 650 new homes in Newbury, spread across six different development sites. These homes are planned as part of the latest iteration of the Council's planning policy, which is not yet adopted, are were included in the 2022 update of the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan.	£0	£0	£0	£158,310	£1,533,730	£4,385,010	£561,750	£170,220	£0	£0	£6,809,020
224	SEND Strategy Infrastructure Delivery	Provision of suitable and sufficient specialist accommodation to meet the wide spectrum of local need under the new SEND Strategy.	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,469,410	£5,282,390	£187,570	£0	£0	£0	£7,939,370
225	Dolphin Centre - Dilapidations	To upgrade the Dolphin Centre building for use of the Adventure Dolphin Charity	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
226	Downs School Modular Replacement	The replacement of dilapidated modular buildings at The Downs School.	£0	£30,000	£205,870	£2,323,985	£2,221,045	£121,820	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,902,720
228	Theale Primary 2FTE Expansion	Provision of 0.5FE of additional provision to mitigate the impact of an additional 270 new homes in Theale, spread across three different development sites.	£0	£0	£0	£171,170	£1,969,760	£492,440	£67,520	£0	£0	£0	£2,700,890
229	Brookfields Expansion	To expand Brookfields Special School to provide a new classrooms for both early years and KS3	£699,400	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£699,400
231	Kennet PDR Expansion and Remodelling	To provide suitable and sufficient space within the PDR unit at The Kennet School to meet the changing needs of the pupils.	£30,000	£85,000	£716,630	£18,380	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£850,010
232	Modular Building Replacement	To replace modular units across the community, VC and Foundation school estate where they have been assessed as having significant condition and/or environmental performance issues.	£65,000	£973,000	£1,000,000	£1,050,000	£1,100,000	£1,140,000	£1,185,000	£1,230,000	£1,280,000	£0	£9,023,000
233	NE Thatcham Primary	Creation of additional primary provision to mitigate the initial impact of the proposed new housing development.	£0	£0	£0	£0	£462,510	£2,015,860	£6,437,980	£825,000	£249,770	£0	£9,991,120
234	NE Thatcham Secondary	Creation of additional secondary provision to mitigate the impact of the proposed new housing development.	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,816,220	£2,328,490	£0	£4,144,710
235	Adjustment of Surplus Places	Adjustment of surplus places to align future capacity with forecast numbers.	£0	£29,900	£314,020	£4,553,200	£2,198,090	£181,160	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,276,370
237	School Streets Capital Investment	Project Overview: To pay for ANPR enforcement cameras, signage and physical cycling/walking infrastructure to support the School Streets programme.	£34,350	£46,717	£38,803	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£119,870
238	Sewerage Treatment Plants	To undertake capital repairs to Council Owned Sewerage Treatment Plants.	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000	£550,000
240	Verge Parking Improvements	Conversion of verges to permeable parking areas in residential roads.	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
241	Project Management - Strategy & Governance	Salaries for project management of the Capital Programme	£174,530	£178,893	£183,366	£187,950	£192,648	£197,465	£202,401	£205,136	£210,251	£212,648	£1,945,288
242	Sheffield Bottom Lock Visitor improvements	The site needs investment to make it a facility that local people can be proud of and provides a welcome to visitors to the K and A Canal which passes close by. Works involve surfacing improvements, path repairs and security improvements.	£0	£65,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£65,000
246	118 Bartholomew Street	Design fees, and construction costs for the rebuilding of a gable wall abutting 118 Bartholomew Street, Newbury.	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
247	Moorside Community Centre Sports Hall	Detailed surveys/investigation and partial demolition and rebuilding of sports hall walls.	£85,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£85,000
250	Newbury Sports Hub (PPS)	Provision to support the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy through provision of additional facilities	£2,325,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,325,000
251	Social Care Case Management System Replacement	Procurement of a new social care case management system to replace car director V6	£679,000	£611,444	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,290,444
252	IFRS 16 Software	Purchase of IFRS 16 software	£20,000	£20,000	£20,400	£20,400	£20,400	£20,800	£20,800	£20,800	£21,200	£21,200	£206,000
253	Speenhamland Outdoor Area	To refurbish the existing outdoor area with a more suitable space that meets the needs of the pupils attending the Keevil Unit at Speenhamland School.	£147,540	£3,600	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£151,140
254	Thatcham memorial fields FAS	Re-shaping of Thatcham Memorial Fields to provide a flood storage area as identified in the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan.	£1,800,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,800,000
255	IT License costs	Capitalisation of ICT licenses	£822,000	£836,000	£851,000	£521,000	£539,000	£558,000	£579,000	£601,000	£625,000	£651,000	£6,583,000
256	Henwick Worthy Sports Facility	Capital sum to address various structural issues with the current pavilion and to improve the outdoor sports area for disabled users and other members of the local community.	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£90,000
257	Prevention of Access Works	A capital sum which can be used to secure land against unauthorised access. A budget was previously available for works agreed with communities and the police to secure vulnerable open spaces. There has been no capital budget since 2021/22. Works include the installation of fencing, gates, bollards and soil 'bunds'.	£0	£33,340	£16,670	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£50,010
258	B4009 footway link	Complete a missing link on B4009 of tarmacked footway	£9,350	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£9,350
259	Beedon byway phase 2&3	Improve accessibility for all users to an important route. Sensitively improving the environment with vegetation management and re-use of local materials to achieve the result.	£9,500	£8,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£17,500
260	Byway Lambourne	Upgrade surface to be suitable for all users. Improve drainage to prevent future damage. Vegetation work to reduce maintenance.	£42,080	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£42,080
261	Byway Winterbourne	Upgrade the surface to be suitable for all users	£34,680	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£34,680

Project No.	Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total 2024-34
			Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure	Total Planned Expenditure
262	Footpath Ashmore Green	Install drainage to remedy waterlogging. Resurface to make usable by all.	£11,800	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,800
263	Kintbury footpath resurfacing	Resurface a popular route to make it suitable for less able users.	£13,650	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£13,650
264	Speen moors walk	Improve surface to be accessible to all. Vegetation works to improve route width, improve biodiversity and reduce long term maintenance.	£117,200	£3,250	£1,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£121,950
265	Micro hydro investment	The Council wishes to undertake a feasibility study and implement micro-hydroelectricity generation plants	£140,000	£520,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£660,000
266	Padworth Solar PV	This project involves undertaking feasibility and delivery of rooftop and ground-mounted solar panels to generate renewable energy at the Council's Padworth facility	£700,000	£900,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,600,000
267	Canal Bank restoration	A capital sum is required to replace the sheet piling on the canal bank in Newbury from the A339 bridge to the Peace Garden by the Wharf bridge	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
268	Improving key parks	Increased capital sums for the next 3 years for the purchase of equipment which provides activity for children, young people, and families	£25,000	£75,000	£75,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£175,000
269	Satellite Network of Special Provision - Primary	The project aims to provide accommodation for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Significant Learning Difficulties (SLD) on satellite sites that will be managed by either The Castle School or Brookfields on a mainstream school site.	£137,500	£1,206,570	£30,940	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,375,010
270	Satellite Network of Special Provision - Secondary Phase 1	This projects aim is to meet the urgent need for additional places through the provision of two satellite settings, one in the East and one in the West of the District. This will provide a total of 20 places on each site and will managed by one of the existing special schools on mainstream school sites.	£153,450	£2,833,080	£346,750	£76,730	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3,410,010
271	Satellite Network of Special Provision - Secondary Phase 2	This projects aim is to meet the urgent need for additional places through the provision of two satellite settings, one in the East and one in the West of the District. This will provide a total of 20 places on each site and will managed by one of the existing special schools on mainstream school sites.	£0	£0	£107,420	£2,200,340	£1,148,070	£70,030	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3,525,860
273	Wash Common Circular West Project 1 & 2	Drainage and surface improvements to be suitable for all users	£18,245	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£18,245
274	Capital Funding Request Climate Change - Drainage, Watercourse protection, attenuation and aquifer recharge	Drainage, Watercourse protection, attenuation and aquifer recharge	£0	£9,500	£9,500	£9,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£28,500
			50,202,066	56,864,010	44,426,481	37,938,895	34,969,145	35,702,751	24,872,418	20,513,660	20,557,285	4,894,906	330,941,618

Project Title	Description of Project	2024/25				Total Planned Expenditure
		Council Funding	External Grants & Contributions	S106	CIL	
Occupational Therapy Equipment	Annual provision for essential aids & equipment for vulnerable people.	£100,000	£641,000	£0	£0	£741,000
Social Services - Planned Enhancement Works	Enhancements of Care Homes and Resource Centres	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
Building Work :Fostering	To enable more children to be fostered in West Berkshire	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
Additional Places - Secondary Basic Need	Accommodation solution to secondary Basic Need in School Organisation Planning Area 12.	£0	£5,630	£0	£0	£5,630
SEMH/ASD Resourced Provision - Primary	Creation of resourced provision for primary aged pupils with SEMH/ASD to meet demand and reduce pressure on the High Needs Block.	£56,360	£1,159,310	£0	£445,570	£1,661,240
North Newbury - New primary school	Additional primary provision to meet the impact from the North Newbury Housing Development.	£0	£0	£60,650	£0	£60,650
Project Management - Education	Capital element of the Place Planning & Development Team	£418,750	£0	£0	£0	£418,750
Highwood Copse	To cover retention contract costs following build of new 1FE Primary school.	£0	£100,000	£4,390	£0	£104,390
Schools Statutory Compliance Surveys	5-year rolling programme to undertake Asbestos, Condition, Fire and Legionella surveys.	£16,770	£0	£0	£0	£16,770
i-college Integration	Provision of new accommodation for iCollege Integration to address suitability and sufficiency issues.	£3,990	£0	£0	£43,490	£47,480
Aids & Adaptions for special educational needs and disabilities	Provision of special equipment for children with disabilities, including proportion of occupational therapists' time	£65,510	£0	£0	£0	£65,510
Education - Capital Enhancement Programme	Capital Enhancement works as identified by current condition survey data.	£100,000	£2,577,230	£0	£0	£2,677,230
Disabled Facilities Grant	Mandatory grant for disabled adaptations, to enable local residents to live independently in their own homes.	£100,000	£1,200,000	£0	£0	£1,300,000
Temp Accommodation Refurbishment	Refurbishment of temporary accommodation	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
Playing Pitch Action Plan	Provision to support the delivery of the Playing Pitch Strategy through provision of additional facilities	£858,933	£0	£0	£0	£858,933
Refurbishment of Kennet Leisure Centre	Refurbishment of Kennet LC	£200,000	£0	£0	£0	£200,000
Expansion of Berkshire Records Office. Reading	Project to extend the building to increase storage capacity for the county's historic archives. Partner funded with other Berkshire Councils	£461,000	£2,047,000	£0	£0	£2,508,000
Libraries Book Stock	Replenishing book stock	£123,000	£0	£0	£0	£123,000
Berkshire Records Office Enhancements	Planned improvement works to building and plant. All six Berkshire local authorities contribute their share to the Berkshire Records Office	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
Planned enhancement of library buildings	Provision for improvement works	£59,000	£41,000	£0	£0	£100,000
Leisure Centre Compliance & Modernisation	Capital Investment in Leisure Provision required to maintain and enhance existing sites.	£200,000	£0	£0	£0	£200,000
Access Improvements: Visitor Access Improvements	Delivering infrastructure improvements at sites in West Berkshire that will offer improved provision, for able bodied and for those who find access difficult and for people who rely on wheelchairs.	£0	£0	£0	£55,430	£55,430
Environment Strategy - Minor projects and improvements	To develop and deliver a range of projects that will fulfil the aims of the Environment Strategy and the Environment Delivery Plan.	£0	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000
Village Speed Limits	Assessment and implementation of speed limits resulting from the speed limit review process.	£0	£30,000	£0	£0	£30,000
Accident Reduction Works	Road safety improvements as a result of accident investigations	£0	£25,000	£0	£50,000	£75,000
Footway Improvements Existing & New	Footway improvement schemes	£0	£195,000	£0	£50,000	£245,000
Recreational Walk Route	To improve selected pedestrian rights of way in order to increase their recreational value	£0	£0	£0	£13,890	£13,890
Street Lighting	Ongoing capital replacements of lighting columns and lanterns	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	£100,000
Signing Improvements	Signing improvements in the district.	£0	£30,000	£0	£0	£30,000
Traffic Signal Upgrades	Modernisation and capital maintenance of the Council's traffic signal assets.	£0	£20,000	£0	£50,000	£70,000
Active Travel Infrastructure	Developing and implementing active travel solutions for West Berkshire	£0	£479,420	£0	£500,000	£979,420
Rights Of Way Volunteer	To undertake rights of way maintenance work by the use of volunteers	£0	£0	£0	£2,500	£2,500
Improvements To Pedestrian Routes	Improve the condition of pedestrian routes	£0	£0	£0	£13,890	£13,890

Disabled Access To Countryside	Improve selected rights of way in order to increase their usability and recreational value for less able users.	£0	£0	£0	£7,000	£7,000
Bridleway Improvement for Pedestrians	To improve selected rideable and cycle able rights of way in order to increase their recreational and/or utilitarian value	£0	£0	£0	£13,890	£13,890
Ridgeway Trail	To maintain the trail at the standard required by Natural England	£0	£0	£0	£13,000	£13,000
Recreational Cycle ways	To improve selected cycle able rights of way in order to increase their recreational and/or utilitarian value.	£0	£0	£0	£13,880	£13,880
Rural Signing	Improvement of direction signage on rural rights of way	£10,540	£0	£0	£0	£10,540
Land Drainage	Capital Land Drainage and Flood Risk Management works	£0	£300,000	£0	£0	£300,000
Future Programme Development	Assessment and feasibility of works to support bids for grant, S106, CIL, LDF and LTP3.	£0	£50,000	£0	£50,000	£100,000
School Safety Programme	Annual programme of safety improvements in the vicinity of schools.	£0	£20,000	£0	£30,000	£50,000
Essential Improvement work - Bridges	Essential capital improvements of the Council's bridges and other structures	£0	£300,000	£0	£0	£300,000
Preventative Works - Bridges	Proactive works to prevent the need for substantive future works	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	£100,000
Travel Plans (Transport Planning)	Includes transport model and transport policy officer	£52,800	£0	£0	£0	£52,800
Public Transport Infrastructure	Real Time Passenger Information and other public transport infrastructure.	£0	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000
Highway Improved Programme	Annual Carriageway Treatment Schemes	£1,134,260	£2,865,740	£0	£0	£4,000,000
Chieveley Depot Improvements	Set-up and resources costs for improvement works identified under the Term Maintenance contract	£500,000	£275,500	£0	£0	£775,500
On Street Electrical Charge Point / Decarbonising Transport	Plan and deliver infrastructure for zero emission vehicles (for example placing a requirement on local authorities to allocate 20% of their parking spaces, including on-street, to be converted to electric vehicle charge points by 2025)	£0	£382,000	£0	£150,000	£532,000
Carriageway patching	Annual hand patching programme.	£438,000	£500,000	£0	£0	£938,000
Drainage Improvements	Annual highway drainage improvement works	£175,000	£325,000	£0	£0	£500,000
Planned road network Enhancements	DFT Grant application for planned maintenance & enhancements	£0	£132,000	£0	£0	£132,000
Transport Services Fleet Upgrade	Replacement of one fleet minibus each year	£477,630	£0	£0	£0	£477,630
Community Transport Capital Grant	Funding that Community Transport providers can bid for the upkeep of their vehicles. Community Transport providers mainly tend to be voluntary organisations and this funding ensures these essential providers can continue.	£0	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000
Open Space Improvements	Improvement of Open spaces including Pump Tracks in Goldwell & Linear Parks, improvements to footpaths in Greenham House Gardens, replacement of Snelsmore Common Storage and replacement of Litter and Dog Bins	£0	£0	£25,000	£0	£25,000
Council Carbon Management Plan	Schemes to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in Council buildings	£26,600	£0	£0	£0	£26,600
BBOWT Capital Projects	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford Wildlife Trust capital works funded from S106.	£0	£0	£100,000	£0	£100,000
Playground Equipment	To refurbish existing children's play areas that are now reaching the end of their recommended life span to ensure their compliance with relevant modern safety standards	£0	£0	£30,000	£65,000	£95,000
Infrastructure Design and Delivery	Annual Salaries for Projects Team - part funded by s.106	£556,230	£945,191	£107,700	£160,000	£1,769,120
Geographic Information Systems	Funding for development of the Council's Graphical Information System	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	£80,000
Corporate IT Replacement	Re-provision of WBC ICT equipment and software (Predominately PCs) on an ongoing basis.	£339,000	£0	£0	£0	£339,000
Upgrade of Print Room	Replacement of Large format printer	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
Project Management - ICT	Capitalise proportion of ICT Staff salaries for those who work on Capital projects	£184,920	£0	£0	£0	£184,920
VMWare Hardware Refresh	Replace physical servers (hosts) as they reach end of life.	£88,540	£0	£0	£0	£88,540
Public Services Network Accreditation	Essential security enhancement to maintain compliance with Government Connect requirements.	£40,000	£0	£0	£0	£40,000
Remote Working Infrastructure	Improvements to WBC's remote working infrastructure (currently Citrix, but may change in future)	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
Network Infrastructure (Core Switches)	Replace core switches at end of life	£90,000	£0	£0	£0	£90,000
Virtual Private Network Firewall Replacements	IPSEC/ VPN Firewall Replacement	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000

Corporate Storage Systems & Attached Network	Existing Hitachi SAN reaching end of product life.	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£150,000
Disaster Recovery Facility	Replace DR equipment at Turnham's Green when it reaches end of life	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
Refresh Multi Functional Device Fleet	Refresh the MFD Fleet as they fail or go end of life	£170,000	£0	£0	£0	£170,000
Corporate Database Server Replacement	Replace the Corporate database server when it goes end of life	£75,000	£0	£0	£0	£75,000
Building Enhancements Total Provision	Annual capital works to be undertaken on Council buildings - will be allocated to individual services in year using Condition Survey data	£150,000	£0	£0	£0	£150,000
Project Management - Property	Capitation Costs of Property Project Managers	£708,340	£0	£0	£0	£708,340
Condition and Asbestos Measured Surveys	Condition/Measured Surveys - Annual Programme	£38,000	£0	£0	£0	£38,000
Unallocated Buildings	Planned improvement works of other corporate buildings	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
Corporate Furniture Replacement	Corporate Furniture Replacement	£5,300	£0	£0	£0	£5,300
CIL community infrastructure funding bids	One off £500k for infrastructure bids	£0	£0	£0	£500,000	£500,000
Parish Planning	Grants to Parish Councils and other community groups to support community based capital projects.	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£30,000
Digitalisation Infrastructure/ ICT Allocation	Migrate and Upgrade the Council's Digital Platform	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
Adaptations for Disabilities	Essential adaptations for WBC staff and service users	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
Members Bids	Matched funding to support local community schemes	£200,000	£0	£0	£0	£200,000
Renewable energy provision	Provision of green energy infrastructure in line with the Council's Environment Strategy. To develop opportunities and expertise to take advantage of the production, storage and utilisation of green energy	£2,500,000	£0	£0	£0	£2,500,000
Four Houses Corner	Refurbishment of the sixteen pitches at Four Houses Corner, Ufton Noret	£2,112,175	£0	£0	£0	£2,112,175
Local S106 Highway Improvements	A selection of network and road safety improvements to mitigate the impact of developments throughout the District.	£0	£0	£100,000	£0	£100,000
Pay Machine Replacement	Replacement/modernisation of the Pay on Foot Equipment	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
Theale Station Improvements	Upgrade to Theale Rail Station - LEP Funded in partnership with FGW & NR	£0	£3,469,560	£0	£0	£3,469,560
Cyber Security Enhancements	Continued existing bid scheme and added allocations to fund new Data Leakage Protection System (Egress), and licencing costs for new Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system.	£31,200	£0	£0	£0	£31,200
Backup / Security products for O365 data	Purchase of additional backup protection to a hosted environment to ensure that data will always be retrievable.	£25,000	£0	£0	£0	£25,000
Refresh DC A/C & Generator	Replace chillers and generator supporting the MSO Data Centre	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
Northcroft Leisure Centre (Dryside Refurbishment)	Refurbishment and remodelling on the Leisure Centre	£1,750,000	£0	£0	£0	£1,750,000
Thatcham Library - New Build	Build a new and larger library in Thatcham as outlined in the council's Infrastructure Development Plan (2022-27).	£0	£0	£0	£1,200,000	£1,200,000
Natural Carbon Reduction Measures	Investment in measures to naturally capture and reduce carbon dioxide. Examples of natural measures could include large scale tree planting, natural regeneration, wetland regeneration (subject to feasibility and cost/benefit analysis).	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
Thatcham Park - Early Years	Expansion of EYs accommodation to meet demand for 3 and 4 year olds and to provide nursery provision for vulnerable two year olds from the local community.	£0	£44,330	£18,530	£582,900	£645,760
Shop Mobility	Provides electric wheelchairs for use by people with mobility problems visiting Newbury town centre	£11,000	£0	£0	£0	£11,000
London Road Industrial Estate Planning and Development	Planning and consultancy to help deliver LRIE projects	£305,000	£0	£0	£0	£305,000
Aldermaston Footways	Repair and reconstruction of footpaths	£0	£150,000	£0	£0	£150,000
Theale Bypass Noise Investigation Feasibility	Road noise reduction scheme	£0	£10,000	£0	£0	£10,000
Sovereign Joint Venture	Repayable capital support to Joint Venture with Sovereign Housing to increase supply of affordable housing in the District	£334,500	£0	£0	£0	£334,500
Digital Infrastructure	Provision of full fibre broadband to schools	£40,000	£240,000	£0	£0	£280,000
Museum Collections	A capital budget to purchase items for the West Berkshire Museum Collection	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£10,000
Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP)	This is an agreed programme of works with the Department for Transport to improve public transport in West Berkshire. It will include improvements to the bus infrastructure across West Berkshire, and enable contactless bus payments and fare capping.	£0	£1,598,823	£0	£0	£1,598,823

Dolphin Centre - Dilapidations	To upgrade the Dolphin Centre building for use of the Adventure Dolphin Charity	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
Brookfields Expansion	To expand Brookfields Special School to provide a new classrooms for both early years and KS3	£0	£699,400	£0	£0	£699,400
Kennet PDR Expansion and Remodelling	To provide suitable and sufficient space within the PDR unit at The Kennet School to meet the changing needs of the pupils.	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£30,000
Modular Building Replacement	To replace modular units across the community, VC and Foundation school estate where they have been assessed as having significant condition and/or environmental performance issues.	£65,000	£0	£0	£0	£65,000
School Streets Capital Investment	Project Overview: To pay for ANPR enforcement cameras, signage and physical cycling/walking infrastructure to support the School Streets programme.	£0	£0	£0	£34,350	£34,350
Sewerage Treatment Plants	To undertake capital repairs to Council Owned Sewerage Treatment Plants.	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000
Project Management - Strategy & Governance	Salaries for project management of the Capital Programme	£174,530	£0	£0	£0	£174,530
118 Bartholomew Street	Design fees, and construction costs for the rebuilding of a gable wall abutting 118 Bartholomew Street, Newbury.	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
Moorside Community Centre Sports Hall	Detailed surveys/investigation and partial demolition and rebuilding of sports hall walls.	£85,000	£0	£0	£0	£85,000
Newbury Sports Hub (PPS)	Provision to support the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy through provision of additional facilities	£2,325,000	£0	£0	£0	£2,325,000
Social Care Case Management System Replacement	Procurement of a new social care case management system to replace car director V6	£679,000	£0	£0	£0	£679,000
IFRS 16 Software	Purchase of IFRS 16 software	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
Speenhamland Outdoor Area	To refurbish the existing outdoor area with a more suitable space that meets the needs of the pupils attending the Keevil Unit at Speenhamland School.	£147,540	£0	£0	£0	£147,540
Thatcham memorial fields FAS	Re-shaping of Thatcham Memorial Fields to provide a flood storage area as identified in the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan.	£0	£1,800,000	£0	£0	£1,800,000
IT License costs	Capitalisation of ICT licenses	£822,000	£0	£0	£0	£822,000
Henwick Worthy Sports Facility	Capital sum to address various structural issues with the current pavilion and to improve the outdoor sports area for disabled users and other members of the local community.	£0	£0	£30,000	£0	£30,000
B4009 footway link	Complete a missing link on B4009 of tarmacked footway	£0	£0	£0	£9,350	£9,350
Beedon byway phase 2&3	Improve accessibility for all users to an important route. Sensitively improving the environment with vegetation management and re-use of local materials to achieve the result.	£0	£0	£0	£9,500	£9,500
Byway Lambourne	Upgrade surface to be suitable for all users. Improve drainage to prevent future damage. Vegetation work to reduce maintenance.	£0	£0	£0	£42,080	£42,080
Byway Winterbourne	Upgrade the surface to be suitable for all users	£0	£0	£0	£34,680	£34,680
Footpath Ashmore Green	Install drainage to remedy waterlogging. Resurface to make usable by all.	£0	£0	£0	£11,800	£11,800
Kintbury footpath resurfacing	Resurface a popular route to make it suitable for less able users.	£0	£0	£0	£13,650	£13,650
Speen moors walk	Improve surface to be accessible to all. Vegetation works to improve route width, improve biodiversity and reduce long term maintenance.	£0	£0	£0	£117,200	£117,200
Micro hydro investment	The Council wishes to undertake a feasibility study and implement micro-hydroelectricity generation plants	£140,000	£0	£0	£0	£140,000
Padworth Solar PV	This project involves undertaking feasibility and delivery of rooftop and ground-mounted solar panels to generate renewable energy at the Council's Padworth facility	£700,000	£0	£0	£0	£700,000
Canal Bank restoration	A capital sum is required to replace the sheet piling on the canal bank in Newbury from the A339 bridge to the Peace Garden by the Wharf bridge	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
Improving key parks	Increased capital sums for the next 3 years for the purchase of equipment which provides activity for children, young people, and families	£0	£0	£0	£25,000	£25,000
Satellite Network of Special Provision Primary	The project aims to provide accommodation for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Significant Learning Difficulties (SLD) on satellite sites that will be managed by either The Castle School or Brookfields on a mainstream school site.	£0	£137,500	£0	£0	£137,500
Satellite Network of Special Provision Secondary Phase 1	This projects aim is to meet the urgent need for additional places through the provision of two satellite settings, one in the East and one in the West of the District. This will provide a total of 20 places on each site and will managed by one of the existing special schools on mainstream school sites.	£0	£153,450	£0	£0	£153,450
Wash Common Circular West Project 1 & 2	Drainage and surface improvements to be suitable for all users	£0	£0	£0	£18,245	£18,245
		22,100,418	23,149,084	476,270	4,476,295	50,202,066

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023/24 & 2024/25

This document sets the Council's proposed approach to the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2024/25. It is proposed that this policy will also be adopted in respect of the 2023/24 financial year, in place of the policy previously approved by Council Committee on 2 March 2023.

Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The *Local Government Act 2003* requires the Council to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the MHCLG Guidance) in determining a prudent annual provision of MRP.

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Council to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the MHCLG Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods:

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008, the Council will apply the asset life method for MRP using an annuity calculation. The charge will be determined using a fixed annuity rate of 4.91%, equal to the relevant PWLB annuity certainty rate at 1st April 2023 for the residual 35-year asset life at that time.
- For capital expenditure incurred after 31st March 2008 MRP will be determined using a single annuity calculation for all outstanding historic unfinanced capital expenditure at 31st March 2023, which combines each historic year on a weighted average life basis.
 - The annuity rate will be fixed to the relevant PWLB annuity certainty rate prevailing at 31st March 2023 (in respect of pre-2023/24 unfinanced capital spend).
 - Unfinanced capital expenditure incurred in 2023/24 and future financial years will be applied using the PWLB annuity certainty rate prevailing at 31st March of the financial year in question.
- Where applicable, repayments included in annual private finance initiative (PFI) or finance leases are applied as MRP.
- For capital expenditure loans to third parties that are repaid in annual or more frequent instalments of principal, the Council will make nil MRP, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement. In

years where there is no principal repayment, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational. While this is not one of the options in the MHCLG Guidance, it is thought to be a prudent approach since it ensures that the capital expenditure incurred on the loan is fully funded over the life of the assets.

- Where the Council receives a capital receipt upon disposal of an asset previously acquired through borrowing, the Council may apply the receipt arising in year to offset the charge to revenue (either in full or in part) which would otherwise apply, in respect of the element of the Council's aggregate Capital Financing Requirement which pertained to the disposal.
- MRP overpayments – The MHCLG Guidance allows that any charges made in excess of the statutory MRP, i.e. voluntary revenue provision or overpayments, can be reclaimed in later years if deemed necessary or prudent. In order for these sums to be reclaimed for use in the budget, this policy must disclose the cumulative overpayment made each year. The amount of VRP overpayments up to 31st March 2024 was £nil.
- MRP will commence in the year following the year in which capital expenditure financed from borrowing is incurred, except for any assets under construction where the MRP may be deferred until the year after the asset becomes operational.
- Where the Council incurs unfinanced capital expenditure in 2024/25 on assets which remain under construction by 31st March of the financial year in question the Council may opt to apply nil MRP on those items until the financial year following that in which those assets become available for use.

Based on the Council's latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31st March 2024, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

Replacement of Prior Year's Debt Finance	2022/23 actual £'000	2023/24 forecast £'000	2024/25 budget £'000	2025/26 budget £'000	2026/27 budget £'000	2027/28 budget £'000
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	8,347	5,248	5,633	6,047	6,497	6,983
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	8,347	5,248	5,633	6,047	6,497	6,983

Replacement of Prior Year's Debt Finance	2028/29 budget £'000	2029/30 budget £'000	2030/31 budget £'000	2031/32 budget £'000	2032/33 budget £'000	2033/34 budget £'000
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	6,983	7,425	7,852	8,301	8,772	8,921
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6,983	7,425	7,852	8,301	8,772	8,921

Appendix D

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy (Efficiency plan)

The Government (Dept. Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – DLUHC) have published guidance on the flexible use of capital receipts. This guidance provides the use of the disposal of specified capital receipts to be used for transformation and invest to save related activity.

The Government does not prescribe the type of costs that can be included, but have provided some guidance per the below¹:

“There are a wide range of projects that could generate qualifying expenditure and the list below is not prescriptive. Examples of projects include:

- Sharing back-office and administrative services with one or more other council or public sector bodies;
- Investment in service reform feasibility work, e.g. setting up pilot schemes;
- Collaboration between local authorities and central government departments to free up land for economic use;
- Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation;
- Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more efficient public services and how the public interacts with constituent authorities where possible;
- Aggregating procurement on common goods and services where possible, either as part of local arrangements or using Crown Commercial Services or regional procurement hubs or Professional Buying Organisations;
- Improving systems and processes to tackle fraud and corruption in line with the Local Government Fraud and Corruption Strategy – this could include an element of staff training;
- Setting up commercial or alternative delivery models to deliver services more efficiently and bring in revenue (for example, through selling services to others); and
- Integrating public facing services across two or more public sector bodies (for example children’s social care or trading standards) to generate savings or to transform service delivery.”

Capital receipts

The Council can only use capital receipts that directly come to Council and where the Council does not have any residual interest, for example if the Council disposed

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-guidance-on-flexible-use-of-capital-receipts>

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

of an asset to a company which the Council had an interest in, for example a joint venture or local authority owned housing company.

The Council is proposing, through other elements of the budget papers, to commence the disposal of commercial property and is expecting to dispose of West Street House, which was previously used as a corporate office, during the current financial year.

One of the key projects within the Transformation Programme agreed by Executive in September 2023 is a review of assets to identify where further asset sales or consolidation could be achieved and to seek to improve the customer service experience when attending the Council's buildings. Likely opportunities in this project include cost mitigation in the provision of court-mandated family time by making better use of existing assets and seeking ways to co-locate services with other public sector partners in order to realise revenue savings and capital receipts.

At present, the Council does not have sufficient funding to fund all of the activities included in the below tables, but will do so once capital receipts have been received. These are expected in 2023-24, but there is a risk of assets not being sold in 2023-24, and the sale occurring in 2024-25 instead. If this is the case, the 2023-24 figures will not be able to be funded in full – as per the quarterly budget monitoring reports to the Executive, at least £443k has allocated funding from capital receipts in place.

As highlighted in the main capital strategy, the Government is looking at different options around the use of capital receipts. One area is looking at the option to sell commercial property to improve Council's reserves position where these are demonstrably low and..."the intent is to encourage divestment of assets held only for revenue and not for the delivering the objectives of the local authority, and providing additional incentives to recognise that local authorities selling such assets will likely be foregoing future revenue income". The full options being reviewed can be found at [Call for views Capital measures to improve sector stability and efficiency.pdf \(levellingup.gov.uk\)](https://levellingup.gov.uk)

The Council need to have an Efficiency Plan to access any changes through the above potential new measures, though details have not been fully released.

Use of capital receipts and schemes during the 2023-24 financial year

The table below sets out the potential eligible schemes that the Council is proposing, subject to capital receipts being available, to allocate the flexible use of capital receipts. This is a summary of the potential schemes, not necessarily all of the schemes that will receive funding through this flexible use of capital receipts.

Item	Description – how will this reduce costs	Value / £m	Saving	Payback period / years
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Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

Children services recruitment and retention payments	Funding payments to attract employed staff and reduce agency costs within the service – net 12 additional permanent staff emp	0.79	Cost avoidance of £0.48m	2 years
Adult Social Care staffing costs for market management, business & project management, and transitions	Part funding of posts where undertaking cost saving activity e.g. re-negotiation of lease payments and contracts to reduced ongoing costs	0.36	0.2	2.5
Adult Social Care posts for Continuing Health Care and care homes	Posts to review and ensure contributions are made from health partners to fund health costs	0.03	Costs associated with CHC and transformation project to reduce costs and/or ensure that health are paying accordingly for the relevant client packages	1 year
Environment transformation projects	Including development of Biodiversity Net Gain and Natural Solutions Delivery, Consolidation of water supply contract, Digitising pitch bookings / problem reporting system, Rural Demand Response transport & Home to School Transport and Waste Strategy Development	0.26	0.05	6 years
Procurement post	Aggregating procurement costs through category	0.19	0.5	Ongoing

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

	management approach			
Financial Review Panel costs	Costs of staffing to review and reduce in year agency and staffing costs	0.14	Focus on expenditure. Contribution to the reduction in agency spend (£0.4m in Q3). Cost avoidance.	1 year
HR / payroll systems post	Fixed term post to deliver transformation through new HR/Payroll system, rationalising number of systems being used and offsetting future revenue cost increases	0.07	Contribution towards project saving and cost avoidance of 0.35	1 year
Review of capital finance costs	Review of capital financing policy with options to deliver ongoing savings	0.13	4.1	< 1 year
Talent attraction post	linked to children's services recruitment and retention – posts to decrease agency costs	0.12	0.12	< 1 year
Service Director – transformation and project manager	Posts funded to find ongoing revenue savings through the new transformation programme e.g. asset review	0.19	0.1	< 2 years
Project management posts in project management office	Funded posts for service redesign and reconfiguration through new systems / procurement review etc	Up to 0.26	All team contribute to transformation projects of the council.	Continuous
Digital services team	Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more	Up to 0.47	All team activity contributes to	Continuous

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

	efficient public services and how the public interacts with the Council		transformation projects in the council.	
Restructuring costs	Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation	n/a	Provided restructuring leads to reduced ongoing costs	If it occurs
Total		Up to 3.01	6.3	

Proposed use of capital receipts during the 2024-25 financial year

This is a summary of the potential schemes that can have funding applied, not necessarily all of the schemes that will receive funding through this flexible use of capital receipts.

Item	Description – how will this reduce costs	Value / £m	Saving	Payback period
Children services recruitment and retention payments	Funding payments to attract employed staff and reduce agency costs within the service - MSP, transformation way of working to retain colleagues due to the impact on salary forcing colleagues to leave WBC and move to agency positions, this transformational work has reduced colleagues leaving the service and reduced impact to the revenue pressures	0.79	See above	2 years
Adult Social Care staffing costs for market management, business & project management, and transitions	Part funding of posts where undertaking cost saving activity e.g. re-negotiation of lease payments and contracts to reduced ongoing costs	0.3	Costs associated with CHC and transformation project to reduce costs and/or ensure that health are paying	2 years

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

			accordingly for the relevant client packages	
Adult Social Care posts for Continuing Health Care and care homes	Posts to review and ensure contributions are made from health partners to fund health costs	0.1	Costs associated with CHC and transformation project to reduce costs and/or ensure that health are paying accordingly for the relevant client packages	2 years
Talent attraction post	linked to children's services recruitment and retention – posts to decrease agency costs	0.12	Reduction in agency spend	1 year
Service Director – transformation and project manager	Posts funded to find ongoing revenue savings through the new transformation programme	0.19	0.12	< 2 years
Project management and procurement posts in project management office	Funded posts for service redesign and reconfiguration through new systems / procurement review etc	Up to 0.26	All team contribute to transformation projects of the council.	Continuous
Digital services team	Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more efficient public services and how the public interacts with the Council	Up to 0.47	All team contribute to transformation projects of the council.	Continuous
Learning disabilities review	Review of Learning Disability (LD) placements to reduce costs in a more appropriate placement. We now have LD clients living into their 80's and their LD needs are now being taken over by older people needs e.g. dementia and general	0.11	0.22	< 1 year

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

	<p>nursing.</p> <p>In recent years we have seen requests for large increases from LD providers. In some cases this increases have been as high as 40%.</p> <p>Many of our older LD clients could have their needs met in different, less expensive placements.</p>			
Childcare lawyers	Funding increased costs of childcare lawyers and a new legal post to review cases before they go to the childcare lawyers team to reduce costs in the medium and long term.	0.1 ²	0.05	2 years
Children in Care Mental Health Support	A joint project between three Local Authorities with Berks. Health Foundation Trust to provide a Mental Health Team for Children in Care. This team focusses on providing consultation and support for children and their carers to avoid placement breakdown and promote positive change and development, and leverage in contributions from other partners.	0.08	To be determined.	
Voluntary Community Sector	The Voluntary and Community Sector provide a wide range of diverse services that are complimentary to those statutory and non-statutory services provided by the Council. Through collaboration	0.1	To be determined	< 8 years

² total increase in budget cost is £0.7m for 24-25 which this post will seek to avoid as much as possible

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

	with our Voluntary and Community Sector we enable residents and communities to thrive, and reduce costs for the Council.			
Recruitment of Foster Carers	Increase the number of foster carers to ensure the best outcome for the increased number of children coming into care and offset the more expensive IFA and residential placement costs	0.1	0.52	< 1 year
Options review – Shaw House	Market appraisal of feasibility of using of heritage assets for generation of visitor income.	0.01	To be determined	< 5 years
Walnut Close	Refurbishment and use for service in the interim	0.1	0.1 cost avoidance	1 year
S117 review	Residential placement costs review	0.05	0.16 (cost avoidance)	3 years
Strategic Asset Review	Review of assets to free up land for economic use or to integrate services	0.1	To be determined	< 2 years
Supporting the Adult Social Care market	To fund cost changes in the social care market	Tbc	To be determined	< 5 years expectation
Review & utilisation of existing ICT systems	Review and use / explore opportunities for existing ICT systems to consolidate activity and deliver efficiencies	0.1	To be determined subject to the review	< 5 years expectation
Children's service prevention work	Children's Services would seek to prioritise earlier intervention to prevent escalation of need before issues become entrenched or more complex.	Tbc	To be determined	< 5 years expectation
Homelessness prevention	Business case to invest in staff in housing to prevent and reduce the increase housing costs.	0.2	To be determined	< 5 years expectation
Restructuring costs	Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or	n/a	Provided restructuring leads to	If it occurs

Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024-2034

	rationalisation where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation		reduced ongoing costs	
Total		Up to 3.28		

Implications on the Council's prudential indicators

The future capital receipts have not yet been allocated against the future capital programme, so there is no immediate impact on the Council's prudential indicators. Any in year amendment will need to be reported in future iterations of this document and on the prudential indicators.

If the Government option of allowing the sale of assets to increase reserve, where these are demonstrably low, then this would have positive impact on the Council's prudential indicators and financial resilience.

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Appendix E

Community Infrastructure Levy Bids

In previous years the Council had invited local community groups and town and parish councils to bid for funding for schemes to provide infrastructure to local communities. 2023/24 was the final year of a three-year scheme which offered access to such Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

£500k of funding has provisionally been made available for CIL bid applications in financial year 2024/25. The bidding process and criteria will be published on the Council's internet page.

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Revenue Budget: 2024-25

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	29 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	C4441

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Full Council must set a balanced budget for the 2024/25 year ahead by the 11th March 2024. This is to ensure that the Council has the resources set aside to achieve its objectives and to ensure that Council Tax bills can be issued to residents across the district before the start of the new financial year. This report details the budget proposals for the year ahead that form the basis of the 2024-25 revenue budget and detail the respective Council Tax proposals and resolutions.
- 1.2 The report includes various appendices to support members in the decisions on the recommendations included in the below. In advance of this budget paper the Council has been running a budget consultation exercise (further information is in Appendix J) where, following a meeting of the Executive on the 23rd November 2023, a range of proposals have been consulted upon. Other appendices to the report include the overall savings proposals, budget investment, fees and charges and changes and items relating to the setting of Council Tax. There are appendices on levels of reserves, which are particularly important for this revenue budget given they are forecast to be below the minimum level set by the s151 officer.

2 Recommendations

1. That Council approves the 2024-25 Council Tax requirement of £124.2 million, requiring a Council Tax increase of 2.99% with a 2% Council Tax Precept ring-fenced for adult social care.
2. That the Fees and Charges are approved as set out in Appendix G and the appropriate statutory notices be placed where required.
3. That the Parish Expenses of £xx,xxx are approved as set out in Appendix H.
4. That it be noted that the following amounts for the year 2024-25 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (by the Localism Act 2011):-
 - (a) 67,867.50 being the amount calculated by the Council, (Item T) in accordance with regulation 31B of the Local Authorities (Calculation of

Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), as its council tax base for the year (the number of properties paying council tax).

- (b) Part of the Council's area as per Appendix K being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates.
5. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024-25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £124,203,641.
6. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2024-25 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act:-
 - (a) **£393,450,213** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2), (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish councils.
 - (b) **£270,969,869** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3), (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - (c) **£122,480,344** being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R).
 - (d) **£1,817.42** being the amount at 7(c) above (Item R), all divided by 5(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the 'basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts)'.
 - (e) **£5,007,963** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Appendix K).
 - (f) **£1,743.11** being the amount at 7(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 7(e) above by the amount at 5(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relates.
7. That it be noted that for the year 2024-25, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley & the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Councils area as indicated in Appendix K.
8. That the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables in Appendix K as the

amounts of Council Tax for 2024-25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

9. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act contains a provision to amend the definition so that from the financial year 2024-25 a long-term empty home only needs to be empty and substantially unfurnished for one year to be liable for a premium. The Bill also contained provision that an unoccupied and furnished home (second or holiday home) only needs to be unoccupied for one year before being liable for a premium providing that one year's notice has been given. The recommendations are therefore as follows:
 - (a) The ability to charge the additional 100% premium from 1st April 2024 once the property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than one year.
 - (b) The ability to charge the additional 100% premium from 1st April 2025, having given one years notice in March 2024, once a second/holiday home has been unoccupied and furnished for more than 1 year.

For Executive only

10. For the Executive to approve a further consultation on options for the opportunity for all WBC-run care homes to be run by external providers rather than through our in-house provision.
11. That the Executive approves the fees and charges as set out in appendix G.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>The financial implications are detailed throughout the report given its place as the budget for the year ahead.</p> <p>The key implications are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposed 4.99% Council Tax increase (including the Adult Social Care precept) • A significant savings programme proposed for approval of £14.5m • Investment in the social care model to protect the most vulnerable residents in the district of £12.4m • To note the forecast General Fund balance of £4.0m and that the Council holds some of the lowest comparable reserve balances in the country
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>Individual changes to staffing from budget proposals, including investment are included in individual proposals in appendices to the report.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>There is a requirement to produce a Revenue Budget under the various Local Government Finance Acts.</p> <p>The savings proposals have been consulted upon as appropriate, and further consultations may be required prior to implementing certain proposals.</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty (149 (1) requires a Local Authority in exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act. (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

	The Council consulted on a variety of specific savings and income proposals between 27 th November 2023 and 11 th January 2024. A summary of the outcome of these consultations is included in Appendix J to this report.			
Risk Management:	<p>As part of the 2024-25 financial monitoring, savings proposals will be kept under monthly review to ensure they are deliverable. Appendix F sets out how the impact of increased volatility in Local Government finance will be managed and considers the impact on levels of reserves.</p> <p>As highlighted in the appendix on reserves and the s151 officer statement on estimates, the Council has significantly lower levels of reserves compared to other Councils. At a time of significant financial pressure on the Council, and more widely the Local Government and public sector, it is crucial that the Council is able to increase its reserve balances to provide greater levels of financial resilience.</p>			
Property:	Significant amendments to the property and infrastructure portfolio are included as part of the capital strategy which is funded through revenue financing. Transformation activity will be funded through the flexible use of capital receipts via future asset sales.			
Policy:	Specific investment in the Council Strategy is included as part of this budget. These areas are highlighted separately in the budget paper.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		<p>Individual savings have been subject to Equalities Impact Assessments where required – please see further in the budget consultation exercise (Appendix J)</p> <p>An overarching EqIA on the budget has been completed and is included in Appendix A</p>

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		See above
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			There is funding within the budget (including within the capital budget which is funded by the revenue budget) to help the delivery the Council priorities as set out in the Council Strategy.
Core Business:		X		There are some enhancements to core business included within the budget as well as a range of savings proposals that reduce costs in core business
Data Impact:		X		

<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>There has been a consultation on the specific budget savings that require an equalities impact assessment between late November and the 11th January 2024. The outcome of this is included in the appendix J and within the report.</p> <p>There was district parish conference with representatives from town and parish Councils on the 30th January 2024. Many parishes and town Councils have responded to the budget consultation exercise conducted, and the following points were raised by attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Concern on timing of reductions to the litter and dog waste bins to ensure that parish councils could ensure continuity of service- A parish representative expressed concern if there were to be any reductions to the planning enforcement service- A parish representative questioned the future of Willows Edge and considerations on the Adult Social Care market <p>The budget papers will have been subject to engagement of the Scrutiny Commission on the 6th February 2024</p>
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this paper is to consider and recommend to Council the 2024-25 Revenue Budget, which proposes a Council Tax requirement of £124.6m, requiring a 2.99% Council Tax increase and an adult social care precept of 2%. The proposed Council Tax increase will raise £3.5m, the precept will raise an additional £2.4m and an increased taxbase will raise a further £1.2m. The ASC precept has been levied to reflect the increased demand and financial costs within the Adult Social care system.
- 4.2 In order to arrive at a balanced budget for 2024-25, £14.5m of savings and income generation proposals have been recommended.
- 4.3 The Council is forecasting an over spend position of £3.2m in 2023-24 after using £0.6m of earmarked reserves in-year. The ongoing effect of any budget pressures and future investment in the Council Strategy priorities has been factored into the 2024-25 budget; this is indeed the key driver for the significant savings requirement for the 2024-25 financial year. With inflation during the current financial year running consistently above 10% the Council needs to fundamentally reset its cost base to align to these new higher costs; inflation rises are starting to fall (it stood at 3.9% for CPI in November 2023) but costs are still increasing and for much of the past two years, inflation has been far above the Bank of England target rate of 2%. With social care being the majority of Council spend, and the waste contract representing the largest overall revenue contract of over £20m, these two areas are seeing major rises that must be included within the Council's budget for the year ahead. In order to fund this the Council has chosen to increase Council Tax by 2.99% and levy a 2% adult social care precept and find savings or income generation of £14.5m. West Berkshire Council has a strong track record of delivering on its savings proposals and of reacting to ongoing pressures in order to minimise the budgetary impact.
- 4.4 Proposals
- (a) That Council approve the 2024-25 Council Tax requirement of £124.2 million, requiring a 2.99% Council Tax increase and a 2% Adult Social Care Council Tax Precept ring-fenced for adult social care.
 - (b) That the Fees and Charges be approved as set out in Appendix G and the appropriate statutory notices be placed where required.
 - (c) That the Parish Expenses be approved as set out in Appendix H.

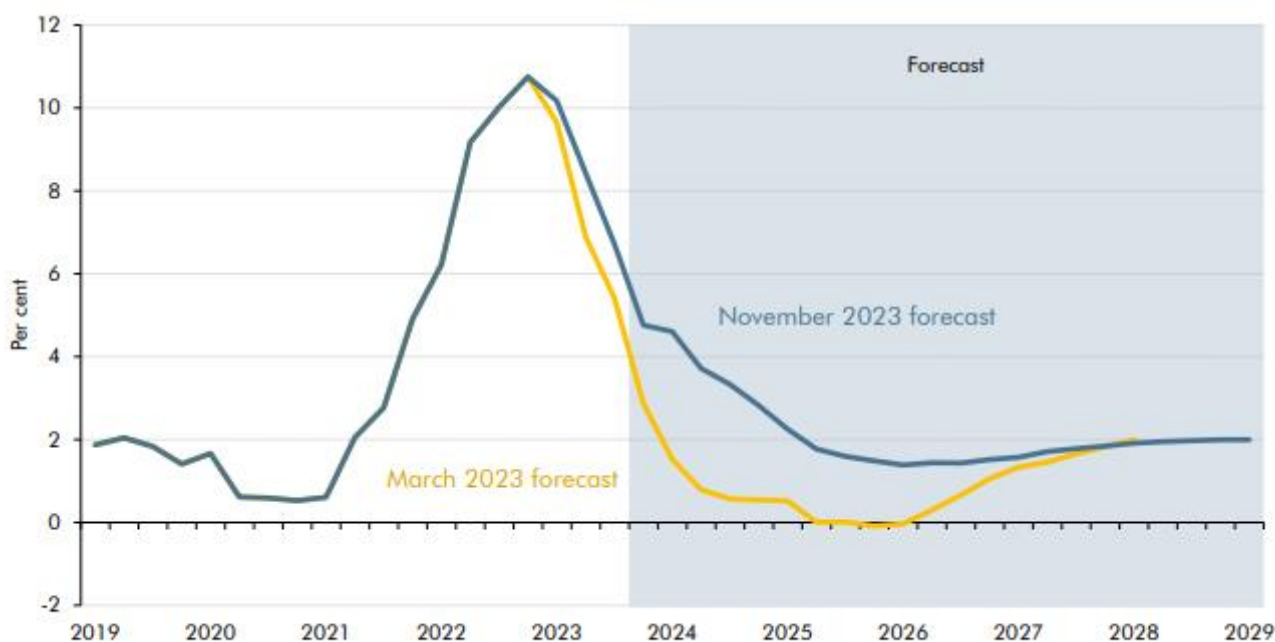
5 Introduction

- 5.1 The purpose of this paper is to consider and recommend to Council the 2024-25 Revenue Budget, which proposes a Council Tax requirement of £124.2m, requiring a Council Tax increase of 2.99% and a 2% Adult Social Care (ASC) Council Tax Precept. The Council Tax will raise £3.5m, the ASC precept will raise a further £2.4m and an increased taxbase will raise a further £0.9m.
- 5.2 In order to arrive at a balanced budget for 2024-25, £14.5m of savings and income generation proposals have been recommended.
- 5.3 This report also proposes the Fees and Charges for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix G, the Parish Expenses of £xxxxx as set out in Appendix H, and recommends the level of General Reserves as set out in Appendix F.

6 Implications of the 2023-24 financial year

- 6.1 The 2023-24 financial year has seen the highest level of inflation in the United Kingdom for over 40 years¹. Indeed, since the formation of West Berkshire Council inflation has not risen above 5.2% before the current financial year. The Council's ability to consume such a large re-alignment of its cost base are severely constrained. Council Tax is set based on information from October to January of the previous financial year and cannot be re-adjusted during the year, and represents approximately 71% of the Council's income stream. Retained business rates are a significant source of Council funding (@£29.9m) yet the Council has no control over the rate being set. Lastly, the Government funding through New Homes Bonus, Services Grant, Funding guarantee and Social Care Grant, are all fixed and beyond the control of the Council to increase.
- 6.2 This backdrop of constrained income sources and rising inflation has been compounded by the effect of increasing demand for Council services; social care services seeing an increase in clients, in both adults and children's whilst Special Education Needs Home to school Transport Costs have risen through a combination of inflation and greater numbers of users. At the same time, there has been a rise in housing costs, especially through temporary accommodation costs as a result of homelessness presentations to the Council.

Table 1.1. Office of Budget responsibility inflation forecast



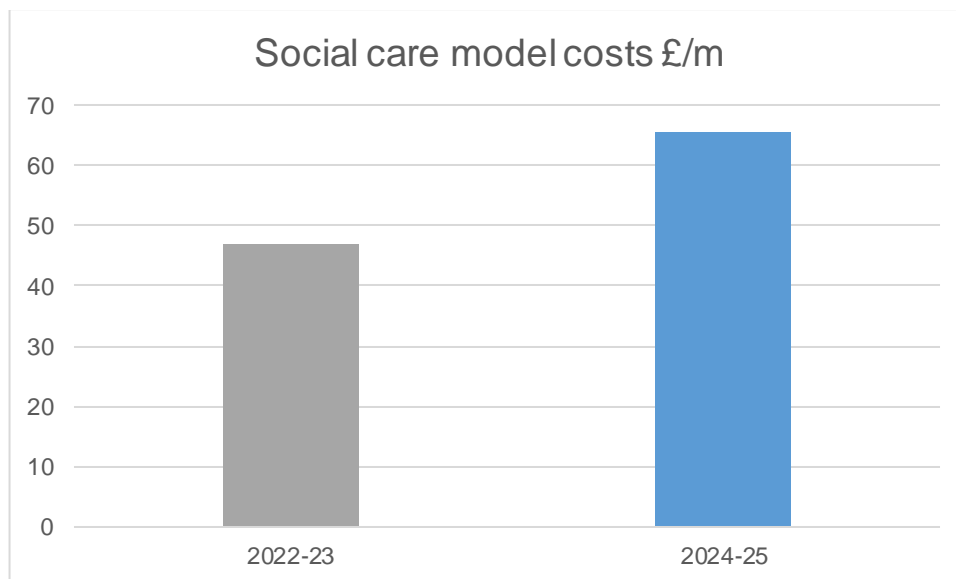
Source: ONS, OBR

- 6.3 The adjustment to the 2024-25 budget is substantial. The social care models are showing an increase of £12.4m. In 2021-22, the Council budget for adult's, children's

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/consumerpriceinflationhistorical estimatesandrecent trendsuk/1950to2022#:~:text=and%20April%202022,-.The%20average%2012%2Dmonth%20growth%20rate%20of%20the%20Consumer%20Prices,and%20April%202022%20was%202.5%25.>

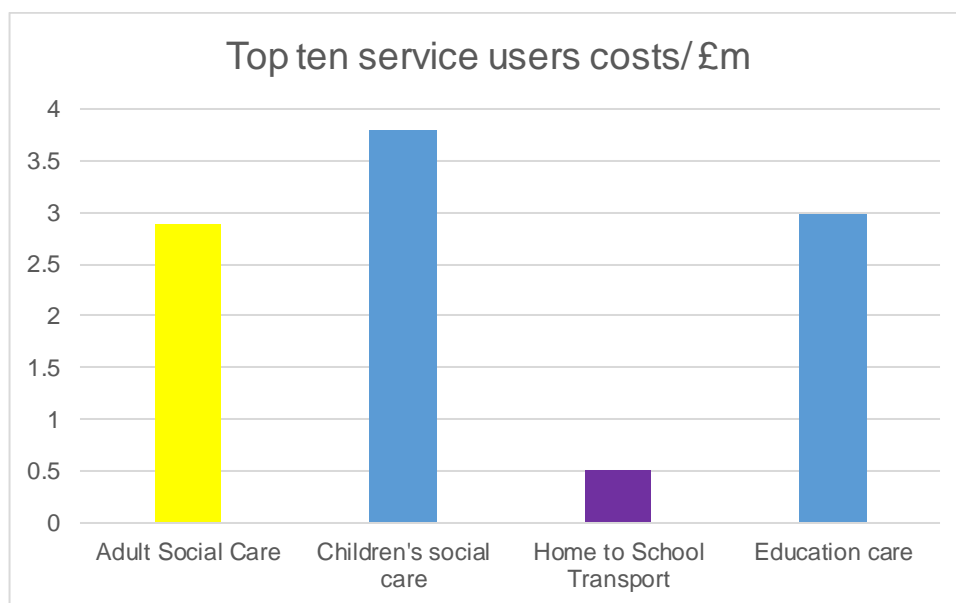
social care and education (WBC funded) was £76.9m. For 2024-25 this figure is forecast to be £105m, a rise of almost £30m or 38% in just three financial years. It is this major growth in these budgets that is driving the Council’s financial position and need to make substantial savings. Though these budgets are spending on a very small minority of the Council’s residents, and so often are not as obvious areas of spend to the majority of residents, protecting those who are the most vulnerable in our district is the main reason for the Council needing to make such significant savings and having very low levels of reserves.

Chart 2.1: Modelled social care (Adults and children) costs 2022-25



6.4 Unit costs have risen from £544 to £608 (12%) in adult social care for example, with inflation provided during 2023-24 being adjusted to be included in the 2024-25 model with an assumed increase of 2.5% to Adult Social Care to support the market. To illustrate the cost pressures that the Council faces, the top care placement costs in the Adult Social Care, Children’s & Families, Education and home to school transport costs are shown in the table below; this budget is very much focussed on continuing to provide services to the most vulnerable, and this table highlights the cost, and difficult decisions required to ensure that these services continue to be provided. The total cost of these 40 individuals is £10m:

Chart 2.2: Cost of service delivery



- 6.5 As highlighted above, inflation has been a significant factor in increased budget pressures recently. These are expected to reduce in the level of pressure on the Council's budget, but costs are still increasing with inflation still above the Bank of England target rate of 2%. The waste contract is based on the RPIx inflationary measure in January for the year ahead, this is an estimated rise of 3% which equates to a further £0.65m in next year's budget.
- 6.6 The other area of growing expenditure is on housing costs. The Council has helped a large number of displaced persons from across the world to live in West Berkshire during the current financial year. With the support of the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund, the Council is buying 22 additional properties that will initially be used for displaced persons and that can be used for general needs housing in the future. The Council does face a growing number of housing costs with 55 households in temporary accommodation as at January 2024, this is a significant rise compared to the previous year. This puts a substantial cost for the Council to fund.
- 6.7 The Council is forecasting an overspend of £3.2m at Quarter Three for the financial year and this would reduce reserves down to £4m. The Council, as referenced in quarterly budget monitoring papers, has created a financial review panel to review expenditure and recruitment activity weekly. This has helped to stabilise the overspend position, with a strong focus on agency costs. This has reduced agency spending during the year per the graph below:

Chart 2.3: Agency monthly expenditure / £



7 The 2024-25 Local Government Finance Settlement

7.1 The 2024 Government department budgets were announced in November 2023 at the Autumn Statement, with a draft finance settlement announced on the 18th December 2023 with subsequent individual notifications of specific grant allocations. The final settlement figures were received on **xth** February 2024. In advance of the final settlement, the Government indicated on the 24th January 2024 further funding for West Berkshire Council as part of a £600m additional funding allocation for 2024-25. The Council will not know its allocation of funding until the final settlement, but additional estimates of funding have been included in the below. The key points are:

- (a) That there is a one year spending period; 2024-25 and the finance settlement only covered the 2024-25 financial year.
- (b) That the increase in Spending Power for West Berkshire is 6.7% and that includes the Government assumption that the Council takes the maximum increase in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept that they can without triggering a referendum (4.99% overall for West Berkshire Council).
- (c) For Council Tax, a core principle of up to 2.99% increase was announced, together with a further 2% increase in council tax through the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept.
- (d) Business rates bills are calculated by multiplying the rateable value of a property by either the small business multiplier or the standard multiplier and subtracting any relevant reliefs. Multipliers usually rise with Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) inflation, but for 2024-25 Government has frozen the small business multiplier keeping it at 49.9 pence but have uprated the standard multiplier by 6.7% (September's CPI) to 54.6 pence. To support high street properties for the fifth year running, government is extending the 75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief scheme to 2024-25 up to £110,000 for each business.
- (e) It has been announced that negative Revenue Support Grant will not be charged in 2024-25. Negative RSG is the name given to a downward adjustment of a local authority's business rates tariff, as a consequence of changes to distribution methodology adopted in 2016-17.
- (f) Social care grant funding of £8.9m (to be confirmed), plus a share of NHS funding for Local Government to support the Adult Social Care discharge relief for the NHS of £1.6m for West Berkshire Council including an allocation from the Integrated Care Board (Council element of £0.48m), and a further £2.2m announced for ASC market sustainability and improvement.
- (g) There will be a new round of New Homes Bonus payments in 2024-25 which will not attract new legacy payments. For West Berkshire this amounts to £0.7m compared with £1.1m in the previous year.
- (h) Service Grant funding of £0.1m.
- (i) Other non-ringfenced grant funding of £2.4m (to be confirmed), which includes £2m from the 4% Funding Guarantee.

- (j) Public Health grant allocation estimated allocation of £6.5m
- (k) The Council does not expect to receive a further tranche of the Household Support Fund for 2024-25; as announced in the Autumn Statement 2023 this funding has not been provided an allocation for 2024-25. The Household Support Fund provides over £1m of funding per year that the Council distributes to support households with cost of living pressures, is provided for some free school meals in the holiday period and funds provided to local voluntary organisations.
- (l) The Government is seeking views on the ability of Councils to use capital receipts² in a wider manner. The paper is only seeking views at present, but presents three options:
 - Option 1: extend capitalisation flexibilities to include a wider set of eligible costs
 - Option 2: extend the flexible use of capital receipts to allow authorities to borrow for the revenue costs of invest-to-save projects
 - Option 3: Allow additional flexibilities for the use of the proceeds of selling investment assets

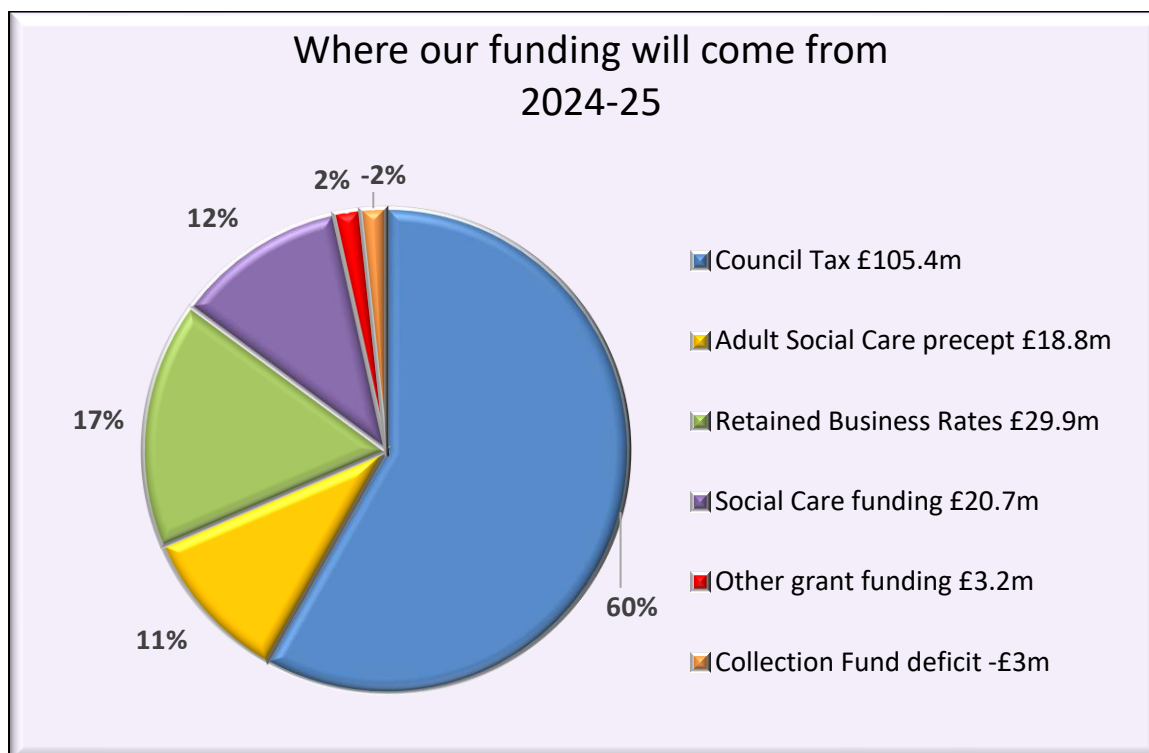
The implementation of any of these options would be financial beneficial to the Council. The first would “represent a broader agreement to allow a local authority to deal with immediate pressures on the condition that it will take forward cost reduction and efficiency plans to bring itself back into sustainability”. This would be very helpful in light of the context of significant social care financial pressures. The second option would allow for borrowing for existing ‘flexible use of capital receipts’ rather than having to sell an asset; again, this is benefit from a financial planning point of view as expected asset sales may not always materialise in the year forecasted. The last option would also be very beneficial. This would enable to the Council to immediately improve its reserves position once an investment asset is sold. The Revenue Budget is not based on the above assumptions, though if these did occur, they could make a significant impact on improving the Council’s financial resilience position.

² [Call for views Capital measures to improve sector stability and efficiency.pdf \(levellingup.gov.uk\)](#)

8 Revenue Funding

8.1 The main sources of funding for the 2024-25 revenue budget are shown in the following chart.

Chart 2.4: Revenue budget funding sources



8.2 West Berkshire Council's main source of funding is from Council Tax including the ASC precept, see later (71% of income). Council Tax is collected from local residents based on the value of the property in which they live. This report recommends a Council Tax increase of 2.99% for 2024-25. Income from Council Tax is also expected to increase by a further 0.7% as a result of growth in the tax base (the number of properties paying Council Tax). Total Council tax increases will raise £6.7m. This is based on a collection rate of 99.75%.

8.3 The Council is proposing a 2% Adult Social Care Precept for 2024-25, which will raise £2.4m. The maximum allowed is a 2% precept. The previous precepts raise annual funds of £15.8m. Adult social care makes up over a third of the Council's net revenue expenditure budget. Whilst efficiencies are being made in the way the Council operates this Service, the precept has helped to fund the pressures faced in the areas of learning disability, demographic increases, increased costs and additional staffing requirements.

8.4 Retained Business Rates represents the Council's share of the actual business rate collected in West Berkshire. The Government has paused the further retention of business rates to 75% until 2025-26 at the earliest; therefore West Berkshire continues to receive 50% of business rates less a significant tariff to Government meaning the overall amount of business rates retained by the Council is 25% of the total business rates collected.

- 8.5 Social care funding via the Better Care Fund (BCF) and Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) is to be spent locally on health and care with the aim of achieving closer integration and improved outcomes for patients and service users and carers. A Social Care Grant is also received. Both of these funds have been increased for the 2024-25 year.
- 8.6 Other grant funding consists of New Homes Bonus and other non ring-fenced grants.. In addition to the funding above, the Council also receives ring-fenced funding which must be spent on specific areas, and raises fees and charges. These income streams are shown within individual service budgets where the expenditure occurs. The largest of these are detailed below:
- (a) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is a ring-fenced grant which can only be spent on school/pupil activity. The DSG consists of four funding blocks: Schools, Central Schools Services, Early Years and High Needs. The DSG settlement for 2024-25 was announced by Government in December 2023. The following table sets out the 2024-25 DSG settlement for each block.

Categories	(£'m)
Schools block	134.02
Central school services block	0.96
High needs block	27.61
Early years block	17.37
DSG allocation	179.96

DSG budgets are discussed in detail at the School Forum. The Forum has agreed to transfer 0.25% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024-25, totalling £335k.

The DSG had a deficit balance of £4.8m as at 31st March 2023, and in 2023-24 the deficit is forecast to increase to £9.5m by 31st March 2024. The deficit has arisen largely in high needs but also in early years. The Government has confirmed that the accounting treatment of the High Needs Block deficit will continue until 2025-26 which means some relief from the risk of the deficit of £9.5m going against the General Fund. If this had happened, the Council would receive a s114 notice (in effect where the Council has no money left in reserves) from the s151 officer as there would likely be a negative general fund reserve, which cannot occur. In the next two years, the Council needs to adopt new proposals to reduce

this deficit. The Council is part of the Department for Education's, Delivering Better Value in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) programme, which commenced earlier this year. This programme aims to support local authorities to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable.

- (b) Public Health Grant. West Berkshire Council receives a £6.5m (TBC) ring-fenced grant to fund public health functions.
- (c) Fees and Charges: There are generally two types of fees and charges; statutory and discretionary. The rationale behind the proposed increases to each Directorates' fees and charges are included in detail in Appendix G. A review of all fees and charges took place by the (then) Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2023. The Council also continues to receive income from its investment in commercial property, which generates net income of £1.2m per year. The majority of fees and charges included in this budget are due to rise by the September CPI figure of 6.7%.

9 Revenue Expenditure

The Revenue funding outlined above, funds the 2024-25 revenue budget as follows:

Table 1.2: Directorate budgets

Directorate	Base budget	Growth and inflation	Ongoing Investment	Savings & income generation	Annual budget requirement 2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
People	97.79	14.61	1.44	-6.68	107.16
Place	32.92	1.94	0.64	-2.68	32.83
Resources	11.83	1.45	0.12	-1.09	12.30
Chief Executive	0.54	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.60
Capital Financing / Corporate	14.85	0.00	1.55	-4.00	12.40
Total	157.94	18.06	3.74	-14.45	165.29

- 9.1 **Base budget £157.94m:** This is the ongoing budget requirement for the three Directorates together with the ongoing revenue cost of the capital programme.
- 9.2 **Growth and inflation £18.06m:** This is the budget increase required for the Council to perform existing services each year. As part of the budget setting process, the Council provides for general inflationary pressures such as salary increases (2.5% assumption) based on the established number of posts, together with salary increments and increases to National Insurance and pension contributions. Any pay award above the assumptions would need to be funded from reserves.

Budgets are inflated where a contract is in place and is subject to annual inflationary increases. The largest single item of contract inflation is from the waste PFI contract. This contract increase is based on the RPIx measure in January of each year and amounts to £0.65m (3% assumption) for 2024-25. Full details of contract inflation is given in Appendix B.

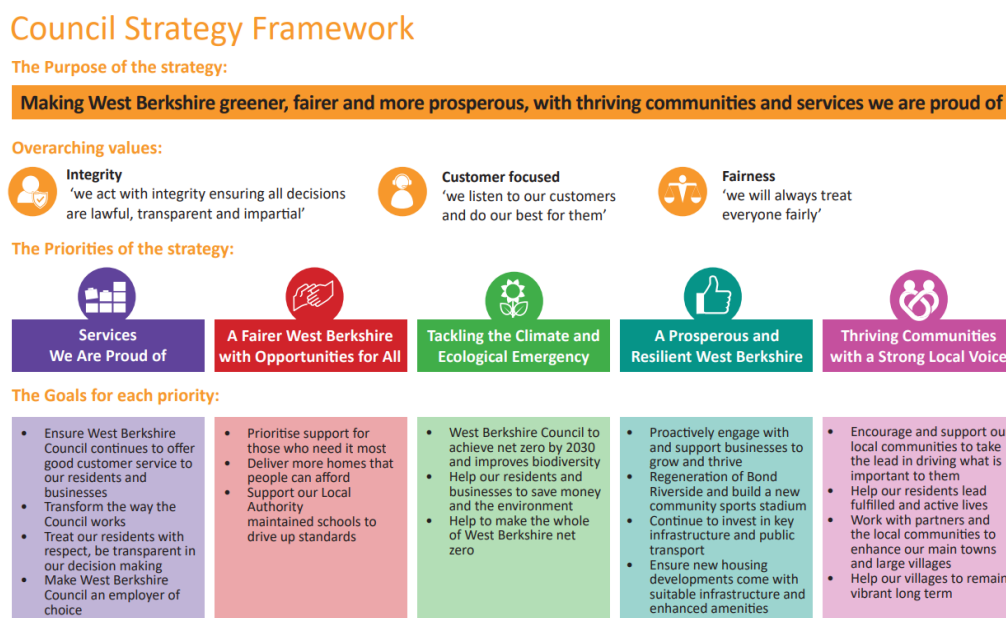
The majority of growth has arisen in supporting social care, and it has been necessary to invest £12.4m into the budget due to rising demand and price increases. Financial modelling has been undertaken in demand led budgets which tracks client numbers, demand for services and pricing. The modelling produces a financial impact range between low cost, most likely and high cost. The growth in the budget has been funded at the most likely figure with there being no balance provided for in the Service Risk Reserve due to it being utilised in 2022-23. The model inflation is at 2.5%, reflecting increases expected in costs balanced against increases already in place. The Extracts from the models are shown in Appendix C.

- 9.3 **Ongoing Investment £3.74m:** Each year new service investment is required to be built into the revenue budget and in 2024-25 this amounts to £2.2m. Investment in the Council's operational assets is funded from external borrowing and this requires an increase of £1.6m in the revenue budget in order to fund the additional revenue costs for Council funded capital programme.
- 9.4 The MTFs currently assumes an overall decrease in the current revenue capital financing budget for financial year 2024-25. The proposed programme of £330.1 million

(2024-34), partially funded through debt of £140.3 million, if delivered in full would generate a significant revenue pressure over and above the budgeted provision. A review has been undertaken to identify a reasonable level of capital financing based on historic programme delivery and annual capital financing based on the Council financial statements. The capital financing budgets and associated Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2024-25 have been built on the basis of these revised assumptions. Details as to the breath and scope of the capital programme are included in the Capital Strategy. Although the Council has revised its financing assumptions there is still significant investment earmarked across the Council's Education estate and infrastructure across the district, alongside a continued focus on developing the district's leisure offering and achievement of the 2030 net zero target.

Full details of the Council revenue investments are given in Appendix D.

Chart 2.5: Council Strategy



9.5 As part of this strategy, the Council is setting to more closely align financial resources to invest in the priority outcomes included in the strategy (see the Medium Term Financial Strategy for an overview). This investment started from 2020-21 with £0.68m of investment, through to this year, 2024-25, showing £1.4m.

Table 1.3 – Priority investments

No	Council Strategy priority	Item	Amount £k
1	Services we are proud of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road sign cleaning • Elections staffing 	25 81
2	A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home to School Transport costs • Family Support Workers • Adoption services • Other adult and child welfare investment 	700 143 79 109
3	Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden waste reduced charge 	100
4	A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire		
5	Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Community Sector • Faraday Road football pitch 	100 9
	Business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Experience officer 	60
	TOTAL COUNCIL STRATEGY INVESTMENT		1,406

9.6 The following chart shows how the budget is split by Directorate.

Chart 2.6 – Directorate budget



9.7 In order to achieve a balanced budget, £14.5m of savings and income generation proposals have been made.

10 Reserves

- 10.1 As part of the financial planning process, the Council considers the establishment and maintenance of reserves. Reserves are categorised into unusable and usable reserves. Unusable reserves includes those reserves which are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, retirement and employee benefits. These do not represent usable resources for the council. Usable Reserves consist of the General Reserve and Earmarked Reserves.
- 10.2 The General Reserve exists to cover a number of non-specific items and risks. The Council s151 officer recommends that the General Reserve is a minimum £7m. Earmarked Reserves are held for specific future projects or service risks (and during 2020-22 were significantly higher due to Covid grant funding).

Table 1.4: Reserves

Reserve	Balance as at 31.3.21	Balance as at 31.3.22	Balance as at 31.3.23	Forecast balance as at 31.3.24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund (unallocated) including specific risk reserves	12.1	12.9	7.2	4.0
Earmarked reserves	38.5	23.8	4.4	3.7
WBC General Fund total	50.6	36.7	11.6	7.8
School balances	8.0	11.0	14.0	14.0
General Fund total	58.6	47.8	25.6	21.7

- 10.3 During 2023-24 the main changes to reserves were where there were some small levels of funding from residual reserves, but the vast majority of Council reserves were depleted during 2022-23. For 2024-25, the Council is proposing to support the budget with a £1.5m contribution from the flexible use of capital receipts funding through the sale of assets. The 2024-25 budget also shows a contribution to general fund reserves of £2m to start to rebuild the general fund reserve, with further contributions being made over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.4 Further information can be found in Appendix Fi and Fii.

11 Funding Statement

The Funding Statement for 2024-25 shows the funding available to the Council which can be used to fund the budget requirement.

Table 1.5: Funding statement

2024-25 Funding Statement				
Ref	Income	£m	£m	Appendix
1a	Council Tax	105.40		
1b	Adult Social Care precept	18.80		
	Total Council Tax income		124.20	
2	Retained Business Rates		29.94	
3a	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF	8.51		
3b	ASC Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	2.62		
3c	Social Care grant	8.95		
3d	ASC delayed discharge funding	0.67		
	Total Social Care funding		20.74	
4a	New Homes Bonus	0.70		
4b	Services Grant	0.12		
4c	Funding floor guarantee grant	1.99		
4d	Other non-ringfenced grants	0.40		
	Total other grant funding		3.21	
5a	Collection Fund deficit (-)/ surplus - Council Tax	-1.93		I
5b	Collection Fund deficit (-)/ surplus - NNDR	-1.10		
	Total Collection fund deficit		-3.03	
6	Funds Available		175.07	
	Expenditure	£m	£m	Appendix
7	Opening base budget*		157.94	
8a	Inflation	4.72		
8b	Contract inflation	0.93		B
8c	Modelled growth	12.41		C
	Total growth and inflation		18.06	
9a	Investment in Council Strategy priorities	1.25		
9b	Other investment	0.95		
9c	Increase in capital financing costs	1.55		
	Total ongoing Investment		3.74	D
10	Savings, transformation and income		-14.45	
11	Annual Budget Requirement		165.29	
12	One off savings/investments		-0.68	E
13	Net Budget Requirement for Management Accounting		164.61	
14	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF		8.51	
15	Budget Requirement		173.12	
16a	Use of Earmarked Reserves	1.95		
16b	Use of Collection Fund Reserves	0.00		
	Total one off funding		1.95	F
17	Budget Requirement after use of reserves		175.07	
	<i>£10k roundings may apply</i>			

Revenue Budget: 2024-25

* Opening Base budget		£m
Income from fees and charges		-32.55
Ring-fenced grant income		-193.42
Internal recharges and interest received		-1.39
Gross Operating Expenditure		385.29
Base budget		157.94
Opening adjustments		0.00
Opening base budget		157.94

12 Proposals

12.1 That Council approve the 2023-24 Council Tax requirement of £124.6 million, requiring a Council Tax increase of 2.99% with a 2% Council Tax Precept ring-fenced for adult social care.

13 Consultation and Engagement

13.1 A range of engagement and consultation events were held. The Council consulted on a range of savings that required equality impact assessments from the 27th November 2023 to the 11th January 2024. Drop-in events also took place during this period at leisure centres in person as well as an online event. Almost 2,500 responses were received online to the consultation page as well as a number of separate comments including through the in person events. The full consultation information can be found in appendix J. Comments were also received at the District Parish Conference on the 30th January 2024.

13.2 As a result of the consultation responses, a range of alternative proposals are proposed to be included within this budget and are summarised below:

- (a) The consultation exercise which took place from November 2023 - January 2024 sought views as to whether Willows Edge Care Home should be closed or whether an alternative provider should be sought for the facility. The responses received suggest that the prospect of seeking an alternative provider for both Willows Edge and the remainder of the Council's existing care home estate may be favourable as this option would provide security of accommodation for residents, would retain market capacity and would assist with the remediation of the Council's budgetary position. It is therefore recommended that a further consultation exercise is undertaken, commencing after Executive on the 8th February, to seek views on this proposal. Saving to be changed to £250k on the basis of a transfer by 1st October 2024. If there is insufficient market interest, then the proposal will revert to the closure of the care facility.
- (b) Reduce contributions to community transport – saving is proposed to be removed and the budget retained.
- (c) Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance – to reduce this saving from £220k to £55k.
- (d) Reduce funding for gully emptying - £50k – saving is proposed to be removed and the budget retained.

- (e) Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins – saving is proposed to be removed and the budget retained.
- (f) Reduce weed spraying treatment - £20k saving reduced to £0k.
- (g) Reduce the ASC transport saving from £200k to £170k.

14 Other options considered

14.1 The budget proposal contains a blend of savings options and Council Tax changes. The Council could go to a Council Tax referendum to put substantially more money into the budget, though this has been rejected due to the increased burden on local taxpayers that could have a negative local economic impact, the cost of the referendum and the likely unsuccessful vote response.

15 Conclusion

15.1 The Council is forecasting a current in year over spend of £3.2m in 2023-24. The ongoing effect of any budget pressures and future investment in the Council Strategy priorities has been factored into the 2024-25 budget. In order to fund this the Executive has chosen to propose an increase in Council Tax by 2.99%, raise a 2% adult social care Council Tax Precept, and find savings or income generation of £14.5m. This is against a backdrop of the Council having amongst the lowest levels of reserves in the country; it is crucial that strong financial management is exercised to ensure that the Council avoids having a s114 report issued.

16 Appendices

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Contract inflation

Appendix C – Modelled growth

Appendix D – Investment

Appendix E – Savings and income proposals

Appendix Fi) – Reserves Statements

Appendix Fii) – Adequacy of reserves and robustness of budget

Appendix G – Fees and charges

Appendix H – Parish Expenses (Council only)

Appendix I – Council Tax Collection Fund

Appendix J – Budget Consultation responses

Appendix K – Council Tax Resolution (Council only)

Appendix L – Risk Register

Background Papers:

Provisional and final local governance finance settlement – see DLUHC website
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities>

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" 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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected:

All

Officer details:

Name: Melanie Ellis
Job Title: Interim Head of Finance and Property
Tel No: 01635 519619
E-mail: melanie.ellis@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Overview for Revenue Budget

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:*
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:*
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;*
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.*
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?

- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To approve the Revenue Budget
Summary of relevant legislation:	Local Government Act 1972, Local Government Act 2000, Local Government Act 2003, Local Government Act 1999, Local Government Finance Act 1989
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation
Name of Budget Holder:	Melanie Ellis
Name of Service/Directorate:	All
Name of assessor:	Joseph Holmes
Date of assessment:	22.1.2024
Version and release date (if applicable):	V1.0

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To ensure that the Council has sufficient financial resources to deliver its objectives
Objectives:	To deliver a balanced budget that supports the Council Strategy and Council core business
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice • Delivery of core business
Benefits:	The Council is able to provide services we are proud of to the population of the district and businesses, helping to make West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
<i>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)</i>		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	There may be positive and negative impacts on this group	See the EqIAs relating to the specific savings proposals, the individual budget consultation summary report and the overview of responses and recommendations. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Disability	There may be positive and negative impacts on this group	See the EqIAs relating to the specific savings proposals, the individual budget consultation summary report and the overview of responses and recommendations. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.

Gender Reassignment	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqlAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqlAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqlAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Race	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqlAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Religion or Belief	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqlAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.

Sex	There may be negative impacts on this group	See the EqIAs relating to the specific savings proposals, the individual budget consultation summary report and the overview of responses and recommendations. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Sexual Orientation	No evidence of any impact	Budget proposals across a large range of services – see individual budget consultation summary report, the overview of responses and recommendations and the EqIAs. The Budget Consultation response summary is also relevant.
Further Comments:		
Details of the potential adverse impacts of the proposals are contained within the Budget Consultation response summary, the proposal specific Equality Impact Assessments, the Consultation Summary Reports, and Overview of Responses and Recommendations, which are all produced.		

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The budget contains a variety of savings and investment proposals. Those that have a direct impact on residents have been consulted upon as part of the budget consultation exercise between November 2023 and January 2024. Each individual scheme had an individual equality impact assessment published as part of the budget consultation exercise. The responses to these budget proposals have been included in appendix J to the Revenue Budget papers.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of budget savings proposals do not contribute overall to inequality in the district. There are a balanced range of savings proposals that will impact across many different groups across the district e.g. car parking charge increases, Adult Social Care home fee increases, and changing the hours at Household Waste and Recycling Centres. There is not a significant cumulative impact to service users as a whole across the district that would increase inequality.</p> <p>Some of the budget consultation proposals have not been taken forward into the final budget papers.</p>	

1. ASC Care Home Fees

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To increase the fees in our care homes above the rate of inflation.
Summary of relevant legislation:	The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package and what services the Council does not need to provide. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Marion Angas
Name of Service/Directorate:	Adult Social Care
Name of assessor:	Jo England
Date of assessment:	15.11.2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(5) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To charge full cost individuals, other Local Authority and Health funded clients nearer what it costs us to provide the service
Objectives:	
Outcomes:	To reduce the subsidy and increase income by £78k
Benefits:	It will mitigate the need to reduce expenditure on some statutory services that are currently funded by Adult Social Care.

(6) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	<p>This proposal could affect any client over the age over of 18 who receives a service from Adult Social Care service as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p> <p>These individuals are liable to pay the full cost based on the level of their savings and assets.</p>	
Disability	<p>This proposal could affect any client who receives a service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p> <p>These individuals are liable to pay the full cost based on the level of their savings and assets.</p>	
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		

Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		

(7) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Some individuals who already receive an Adult Social Care service may be required to pay an increased contribution towards the cost of their service. These individuals are liable to pay the full cost based on the level of their savings and assets.	

(8) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	Jo England
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	15 November 2023

Name: Jo England

Date: 15 November 2023

2. ASC Care Home Fees – Stage 2

Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA 2)

What is the proposed decision?	To increase the fees in our care homes above the rate of inflation.
Summary of relevant legislation	The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package and what services the Council does not need to provide. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the council's key strategic priorities?	No
Name of budget holder	Marion Angas
Name of assessor	Jo England
Name of Service and Directorate	Adult Social Care, People
Date of assessment	30/01/2024
Version and release date (if applicable)	1.0
Date EqIA 1 completed	15/11/2023

Step One – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

1. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EqIA 2?			
Service targets		Performance targets	
User satisfaction		Service take-up	
Workforce monitoring		Press coverage	
Complaints & comments		Census data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous EqIA	✓	Staff survey	
Public consultation	✓	Other (please specify) Stakeholder consultation – we wrote to all of the individuals that would be affected	✓

2. What are the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above?
<p>No equality issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one. The main point raised in the consultation was that this proposal would impact the more vulnerable residents of West Berkshire – the elderly and disabled.</p> <p>The protected characteristics of age and disability would see the greatest impact if residents are affected, as all of the users are elderly and have health and social care needs.</p>
3. What additional research or data is required, if any, to fill the gaps identified in question two? Have you considered commissioning new data or research e.g. a needs assessment?
N/A

Step Two – Involvement and Consultation

4. How do the findings from the evidence summarised in Step One affect people with the nine protected characteristics?	
Target Groups	Summary of responses and type of evidence
Age – relates to all ages	The responses indicate that this proposal could affect any client over the age over of 65, as this is the age

	<p>requirement for West Berkshire Council Care Homes.</p> <p>Individuals will be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p>
<p>Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>The response indicate that this proposal could affect any client with health and social care needs due to the nature of the service that thy receive.</p> <p>Individuals will be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership – .protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>
<p>Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic or national origin or nationality.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>
<p>Religion or belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>

a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	
Sex - applies to male or female.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sexual orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other

5. Who are the main stakeholders (e.g. service users, staff) and what are their requirements?

The main stakeholders are the service users who have a placement in one of West Berkshire Council's three care homes who have been assessed to pay the full cost based on the level of their savings and assets.

6. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?

Service users who have a placement in one of West Berkshire Council's three care homes who have been assessed to pay the full cost based on the level of their savings and assets will be required to pay more.

Step Three – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

7. What are the impacts and how will you mitigate them?

Some individuals may choose to move to alternative placements.

Individuals will be subject to a financial assessment to ensure that they still have the funds to pay the full cost.

Step Four – Procurement and Partnerships

8. Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

N/A

Step Five – Making a Decision

**9. What are your recommendations as a result of the EqIA 2?
In making your recommendations please summarise your findings.**

There are two particular characteristics that could be disproportionately impacted. However, there are a range of opportunities to mitigate the impact on service users

which include that financial assessment process to identify any one who's capital has decrease below the upper capital threshold and the Good Practice Forum.
It is therefore recommended that the decision is put forward for approval.

Step Six – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

10. How will you monitor the impact on the nine protected characteristics once the change has taken place?

Continuous interaction and communication with the service users will highlight any impacts.

Step Seven – Action Plan

Categories	Actions	Target date	Responsible person
Involvement and consultation	No further work required.	N/A	N/A
Data collection	No further work required	N/A	N/A
Assessing impact	Continuous interaction and communication with the service users will highlight any impact. The financial assessment process will help identify specific financial issues.	Ongoing	Jo England
Procurement and partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	Monitoring, evaluation and review will take place regularly.	Ongoing	Jo England

Step Eight – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

Contributors to the EqIA 2

Name: Emma Jameson	Jo England	Date: 30/1/2024
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Service Director

Name: Jo England	Date: 30/1/2024
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3. ASC Transport Services – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To charge for transport provided by Adult Social Care as a flat rate charge.
Summary of relevant legislation:	The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package and what services the Council does not need to provide. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Marion Angas
Name of Service/Directorate:	Adult Social Care
Name of assessor:	Jo England
Date of assessment:	9.11.2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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(9) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	To reduce the expenditure on transport, provide by Adult Social Care
Objectives:	
Outcomes:	To reduce expenditure by £200k per annum
Benefits:	It will mitigate the need to reduce expenditure on some statutory services that are currently funded by Adult Social Care.

(10) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	This proposal could affect any client over the age over of 18 who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care service as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.	
Disability	This proposal could affect any client who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.	
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		

Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		

(11) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Individuals who already receive an Adult Social Care transport service may be required to pay an increased contribution towards the cost of their transport. These individuals will not have an increase in their income and will have already have budgeted for how they use their limited income.</p> <p>Some individuals may choose to reduce or cancel their transport and attendance at day services due to financial hardship. This may lead to a need for alternative care provision.</p>	

(12) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	Jo England
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	9 November 2023
Name:	Jo England
	Date: 9 November 2023

4. ASC Transport Services – Stage 2

Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA 2)

What is the proposed decision?	To charge for transport provided by Adult Social Care (ASC) as a flat rate charge.
Summary of relevant legislation	The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package and what services the Council does not need to provide. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the council's key strategic priorities?	Yes. It is likely to lead to reduced access to facilities as a result of charging a flat rate charge for ASC transport services, which may increase social isolation. The Council's key priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice
Name of budget holder	Marion Angas
Name of assessor	Jo England
Name of Service and Directorate	Adult Social Care, People
Date of assessment	30/01/2024
Version and release date (if applicable)	1.0
Date EqIA 1 completed	9/11/2023

Step One – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

11. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EqIA 2?			
Service targets		Performance targets	
User satisfaction		Service take-up	
Workforce monitoring		Press coverage	
Complaints & comments		Census data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous EqIA	✓	Staff survey	
Public consultation	✓	Other (please specify) Stakeholder consultation – we wrote to all of the individuals that would be affected	✓

12. What are the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above?	
<p>No equality issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one. The main point raised in the consultation was that this proposal would impact the more vulnerable residents of West Berkshire – the elderly, disabled, and those living in rural areas. Charging differently for the transport could lead to more isolation.</p> <p>The protected characteristics of age and disability would see the greatest impact if residents are affected, as the ASC transport supports a high percentage of users from the older generation and those social care and/or health needs including mobility issues.</p>	
13. What additional research or data is required, if any, to fill the gaps identified in question two? Have you considered commissioning new data or research e.g. a needs assessment?	
N/A	

Step Two – Involvement and Consultation

14. How do the findings from the evidence summarised in Step One affect people with the nine protected characteristics?	
Target Groups	Summary of responses and type of evidence

<p>Age – relates to all ages</p>	<p>The ASC transport supports a high percentage of older adults.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation have highlighted concerns from some users that this proposal could lead to increased isolation if they could not afford to pay.</p> <p>If users are required to pay a flat rate charge, then this could impose increased financial hardship on individuals.</p> <p>Alternatively, if users cease using the transport service, then the cost/demand on other services within social care and/or the health sector could increase.</p>
<p>Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>The ASC transport supports a high percentage of users with learning and/or mobility difficulties.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation have highlighted concerns from some users that this proposal could lead to increased isolation if they could not afford to pay.</p> <p>If users are required to pay a flat rate charge, then this could impose increased financial hardship on individuals.</p> <p>Alternatively, if users cease using the transport service, then the cost/demand on other services within social care and/or the health sector could increase.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership – .protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>

Pregnancy and maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic or national origin or nationality.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Religion or belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sex - applies to male or female.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sexual orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other

15. Who are the main stakeholders (e.g. service users, staff) and what are their requirements?

The main stakeholders are the service users who use the service to get to West Berkshire Council Resource Centres or externally commissioned day services.

Their requirements vary significantly depending on the type of service that have commissioned.

Some service users use West Berkshire Council transport and some individuals have a taxi service commissioned.

16. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?

Individuals who already receive an Adult Social Care transport service will be required to pay an increased contribution towards the cost of their transport. These individuals will not have an increase in their income and will already have budgeted for how they use their income.

Step Three – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

17. What are the impacts and how will you mitigate them?

Some individuals may choose to reduce or cancel their transport and attendance at day services due to financial hardship.

This may lead to a need for alternative care provision.

Service Users will continue to be financially assessed for their contribution towards the rest of their care services, and any cost for transport that exceed the mobility element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment can be included as Disability Related Expenditure.

Step Four – Procurement and Partnerships

18. Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

There are some transport services that are commissioned with external providers.

Step Five – Making a Decision

19. What are your recommendations as a result of the EqIA 2?

In making your recommendations please summarise your findings.

There are two particular characteristics that could be disproportionately impacted. However, there are a range of opportunities to mitigate the impact on service users which include that financial assessment process to identify any financial hardship and the Good Practice Forum.

It is therefore recommended that the decision is put forward for approval.

Step Six – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

20. How will you monitor the impact on the nine protected characteristics once the change has taken place?

Continuous interaction and communication with the service users and day services providers will highlight any impacts.

Step Seven – Action Plan

Categories	Actions	Target date	Responsible person
Involvement and consultation	No further work required.	N/A	N/A

Data collection	No further work required	N/A	N/A
Assessing impact	Continuous interaction and communication with the service users and day services providers will highlight any impact. The financial assessment process will help identify specific hardship.	Ongoing	Jo England
Procurement and partnership	Some transport services are commissioned from external providers.	Ongoing	Jo England
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	Monitoring, evaluation and review will take place regularly.	Ongoing	Jo England

Step Eight – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.		
Contributors to the EqIA 2		
Name: Emma Jameson	Jo England	Date: 30/1/2024
Service Director		
Name: Jo England		Date: 30/1/2024

5. Community Transport – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Reduce the annual community transport operator revenue grant by £10,000.
Summary of relevant legislation:	Local authorities do not have a statutory duty with regard to providing, or funding, community transport. Nevertheless, they do have a duty under section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985 to: “ <i>secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose</i> ”.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced access to facilities as a result of the removal or reduction of community transport services, which may increase social isolation.
Name of Budget Holder:	Emma Jameson
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment/Place
Name of assessor:	Emma Jameson
Date of assessment:	15/11/2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	1.0

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(13) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To reduce Council spending.
Objectives:	To reduce Council spending.
Outcomes:	A reduction in Council spending.
Benefits:	A reduction in Council spending.

(14) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Reduced access to facilities as a result of the removal or reduction of community transport services, which may increase social isolation.	Annual returns from operators indicate that a high percentage of users are from the older generation.
Disability	Reduced access to facilities as a result of the removal or reduction of community transport services, which may increase social isolation.	Annual returns from operators indicate that a high percentage of users have additional mobility needs.
Gender Reassignment	None	Whilst services may be affected in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None	
Pregnancy and Maternity	None	
Race	None	
Religion or Belief	None	
Sex	None	
Sexual Orientation	None	
Further Comments:		
If any (additional) adverse impacts in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.		

(15) Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consideration will be given when launching the consultation to producing hardcopies of the questionnaire, so that those without access to IT services, will also still be able to submit comments.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing the available community transport revenue grant may impact some users, however, it is anticipated that community transport capital grant will be available in 2024/25 which may enable operators to invest in capital assets to assist with transition.	

(16) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	Emma Jameson
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	31/01/2024

Name: Emma Jameson

Date: 15/11/2023

6. Community Transport – Stage 2

Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA 2)

What is the proposed decision?	To reduce the annual funding for community transport operator revenue grants by £10,000, from £55,280 to £45,280 from 2024/25.
Summary of relevant legislation	Local authorities don't have a statutory duty with regard to providing, or funding, community transport. Nevertheless, they do have a duty under section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985 to: "...secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose".
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the council's key strategic priorities?	Yes. It is likely to lead to reduced access to facilities as a result of the removal or reduction of community transport services, which may increase social isolation. The Council's key priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice
Name of budget holder	Emma Jameson
Name of assessor	Emma Jameson
Name of Service and Directorate	Environment, Place
Date of assessment	15/01/2024
Version and release date (if applicable)	1.0

Date EqIA 1 completed	15/11/2023
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Step One – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

21. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EqIA 2?			
Service targets		Performance targets	
User satisfaction		Service take-up	
Workforce monitoring		Press coverage	
Complaints & comments		Census data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous EqIA	✓	Staff survey	
Public consultation	✓	Other (please specify) Stakeholder consultation	

22. What are the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above?
<p>No equality issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one (or had been identified through historical equality impact assessments for Community Transport revenue grant changes). The main point raised in the consultation was that this proposal would impact the more vulnerable residents of West Berkshire – the elderly, disabled, and those living in rural areas. Reduced access to transport could lead to more isolation.</p> <p>With previous budgetary savings in this area (from FY2019/20), operators have been proactively (and in many cases successfully) seeking grant/sponsorship funding from other sources and/or widening the scope of their organisation to generate additional patronage.</p> <p>However, where mitigating activities are not able to be put in place, the impact of the grant reduction could be felt on residents – either through the need to increase fares or through the withdrawal of services.</p> <p>The protected characteristics of age and disability would see the greatest impact if residents are affected, as the community transport sector supports a high percentage of users from the older generation and those with mobility and/or health needs.</p>
23. What additional research or data is required, if any, to fill the gaps identified in question two? Have you considered commissioning new data or research e.g. a needs assessment?
N/A

Step Two – Involvement and Consultation

24. How do the findings from the evidence summarised in Step One affect people with the nine protected characteristics?	
Target Groups	Summary of responses and type of evidence
<p>Age – relates to all ages</p>	<p>The community transport sector supports a high percentage of older adults.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation have highlighted concerns from some community transport groups with regards to the continued delivery of services to their users. If it is necessary for groups to request higher contributions from users to keep services financially viable, then this could impose increased financial hardship on individuals. Alternatively, if operations need to cease, then the cost/demand on other services (e.g. adult social care) could increase.</p>
<p>Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>The community transport sector supports a high percentage of users with mobility difficulties.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation have highlighted concerns from the community transport groups with regards to the continued delivery of services to their users. If it is necessary for groups to request higher contributions from users to keep services financially viable, then this could impose increased financial hardship on individuals. Alternatively, if operations need to cease, then the cost/demand on other services (e.g. social care and/or the health sector) could increase.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>

requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.	
Marriage and civil partnership – .protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Pregnancy and maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic or national origin or nationality.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Religion or belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sex - applies to male or female.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sexual orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other

25. Who are the main stakeholders (e.g. service users, staff) and what are their requirements?
<p>The main stakeholders are the community transport groups who deliver the service to the residents of West Berkshire.</p> <p>Their requirements vary significantly depending on the type of scheme they operate. Car schemes typically have lower running costs with fixed costs including renting office space, utilities, insurance and phone line/s; minibuss groups (and some car schemes) have the additional costs for leased/owned vehicles (for</p>

example - scheduled servicing in inspections, vehicle insurance, tax and driver training). One minibus group has paid drivers (others have volunteers).

26. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?

With the distributing model, the reduction in total grant is expected to lead to each group seeing a reduction in grant allocation. The exact allocation they will receive will be subject to the number of single passenger journeys carried out by each group in the preceding year and the collective total of journeys carried out by all groups. It has been calculated that the impact of this proposal would be a reduction in funding (based on this year's allocations) of between £3 and £37 per group each week, or 29 pence per passenger journey provided.

Within the consultation, responders also advised that:

- A reduction in funding could lead to reduced reimbursement of volunteer expenses, which would lead to a reduction in volunteers.
- One volunteer car scheme requested the cut be made for only one year otherwise they would not be able to survive.

Step Three – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

27. What are the impacts and how will you mitigate them?

The proposed grant reduction to the individual groups could impact on the residents in terms of geographical location, as each community transport operator covers a specific area of West Berkshire, and the resulting impact may be different for each group.

There may be opportunities for groups to seek funding from additional sources, if these have not already been explored, including:

- Funding opportunities for voluntary sector organisations through <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/voluntary-organisation-grants>;
- For community organisations through Connecting Communities in Berkshire <https://ccberks.org.uk/2024/01/04/new-year-funding-opportunities-for-community-groups/>;
- Tendering as a supplier for Council-contracted transport services <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/guidance-school-transport-operators>;
- Town/parish councils;
- Community transport capital grant funding (alternate years).

Promotional activities continue, with leaflets promoting the community transport organisations, social media and website publicity, all with a view to increasing awareness and patronage, so ultimately to generate additional income from fares.

In any year, if operators decline part or all of the grant offered, the returned funding will then be made available to all operators for mid-year hardship requests. (However, there has been no returned/unrequired funding in FY2023/24).

Step Four – Procurement and Partnerships

28. Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?
No

Step Five – Making a Decision

29. What are your recommendations as a result of the EqIA 2? In making your recommendations please summarise your findings.
There are two particular characteristics that could be disproportionately impacted. However, there are a range of opportunities to mitigate the impact on residents (e.g. through the sharing of good practice, continuing to foster the close working relationship between the community transport groups, identifying other sources of funding, using promotional activities and grants). It is therefore recommended that the decision is put forward for approval.

Step Six – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

30. How will you monitor the impact on the nine protected characteristics once the change has taken place?
Continuous interaction and communication with the community transport groups will highlight any impacts.

Step Seven – Action Plan

Categories	Actions	Target date	Responsible person
Involvement and consultation	No further work required.	N/A	N/A
Data collection	No further work required	N/A	N/A
Assessing impact	Continuous interaction and communication with the community transport groups will highlight any impact. Annual returns will be requested from each operator through the grant application process to help identify specific hardship.	Ongoing	Emma Jameson

Procurement and partnership	N/A – no contractors required.	N/A	N/A
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	Monitoring, evaluation and review will take place annually upon receipt of the annual returns from operators.	Ongoing	Emma Jameson

Step Eight – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.		
Contributors to the EqIA 2		
Name: Emma Jameson	Job Title: Transport & Parking Services Manager	Date: 15/01/2024
Service Director		
Name: Jon Winstanley		Date: 15/01/24

7. Gully Bridge Maintenance – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Reduction in Gully emptying and Bridge Maintenance budgets
Summary of relevant legislation:	Highways Act 1980
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Spending less on gully emptying and bridge maintenance could impact the condition of the Council's roads.
Name of Budget Holder:	Andrew Reynolds
Name of Department/Directorate:	Environment / Place
Name of assessor:	Peter Walker
Date of assessment:	17 November 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	1.0

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(17) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To reduce Council spending.
Objectives:	To reduce Council spending.
Outcomes:	There will be a reduced bridge maintenance service, as well as well as less spent on gully emptying.
Benefits:	None.

(18) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	No effect anticipated.	This is just a service reduction that will not impact differently on different residents or service users.
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		

Further Comments:

The proposed service change is not expected to specifically affect any of the groups listed above. There are no group-specific impacts expected that are relevant to Equality Act 2010 considerations. However, if any adverse impact in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.

(19) Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?

Yes No

If implemented, this will impact on all equally.

Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?

Yes No

Spending less on gully emptying may impact some users, however additional capital funding is being sought for drainage and flood investment.

(20) Identify next steps as appropriate:

EqIA Stage 2 required

Yes No

Owner of EqIA Stage Two:

n/a

Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:

n/a

Name: Peter Walker

Date: 23 November 2023

8. HWRC Opening Hours – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Public Consultation: Reduction of HWRC (Household Waste Recycling Centre) Opening Hours
Summary of relevant legislation:	Not applicable. The relevant legislation including EPA (Environmental Protection Act) 1990 requires waste disposal authorities to provide places for the disposal of household waste. However, there is no specification of the required opening days or hours.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please indicate which priority and
Name of Budget Holder:	Daniel Warne
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment Department
Name of assessor:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Date of assessment:	16 November 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	N/A

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(21) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	Reduction in Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) opening hours
Objectives:	We are proposing to reduce the opening times of both HWRCs by two hours per weekday from 9am to 6pm to 11am to 6pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holiday Mondays). Weekend opening and bank holidays hours would remain the same at 9am to 6pm. We are also proposing to remove the late-night opening hours during the summer months at Newtown Road. This will create an estimated annual saving of £59,000.
Outcomes:	Reduced opening hours at the Council's two HWRCs.
Benefits:	This will create an estimated annual saving of £59,000.

(22) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Not applicable.	
Disability	Not applicable.	
Gender Reassignment	Not applicable.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not applicable.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Not applicable.	
Race	Not applicable.	
Religion or Belief	Not applicable.	
Sex	Not applicable.	
Sexual Orientation	Not applicable.	
Further Comments:		
The proposed service change is not expected to specifically affect any of the groups listed above. There are no group-specific impacts expected that are relevant to Equality Act 2010 considerations. However, if any adverse impact in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.		

(23) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The proposed reduction in hours is not significant enough to adversely impact employees and service users. It is worth noting that some contractor staff will see a reduction in the working hours and earnings.	

(24) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

Date: 17 November 2023

9. Litter and Dog Waste Bins – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Reduction in Number of Litter and Dog Waste Bins
Summary of relevant legislation:	Not applicable. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that the public highway (and any other relevant land they are responsible for such as parks and open spaces) is, in so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. We comply with this through the litter picking and street cleansing operations we run. The provision of litter bins and dog waste bins is not a statutory requirement and therefore we are not duty bound to provide them to the extent currently available.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Daniel Warne (Waste) and Paul Hendry (Countryside)
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment Department
Name of assessor:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Date of assessment:	16 November 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	N/A

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(25) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	Reduction in Number of Litter and Dog Waste Bins
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remove approximately 490 litter bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 60% of the total number). • To remove all dog waste bins from residential areas and public rights of way. • Dog and litter bins for dog waste disposal will be retained at all Council parks, recreational open spaces, playgrounds and at visitor attractions, for example, Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre, Snelmore Common Country Park, Greenham Common and Wokefield Common. However, we will seek to reposition some bins on existing open spaces to those locations where demand is greatest. • To reduce the frequency of emptying some dog waste bins and litter bins in parks and open spaces from three occasions per week to two but to keep this. <p>Our street cleansing and litter picking service, and Town and Parish Council-maintained litter and dog waste bins are not affected by this proposal.</p>
Outcomes:	Significant reduction in the number of litter and dog bins available across the district.
Benefits:	This will create an estimated annual saving of up to £85,000.

(26) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Not applicable.	
Disability	Not applicable.	
Gender Reassignment	Not applicable.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not applicable.	

Pregnancy and Maternity	Not applicable.	
Race	Not applicable.	
Religion or Belief	Not applicable.	
Sex	Not applicable.	
Sexual Orientation	Not applicable.	
Further Comments:		
<p>The proposed service change is not expected to specifically affect any of the groups listed above. There are no group-specific impacts expected that are relevant to Equality Act 2010 considerations. However, if any adverse impact in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.</p>		

(27) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The implementation of the change will be applied uniformly across the district. The change is not expected to contribute to inequality. Care will be taken to ensure that suitable provision is in place for Council parks, recreational open spaces and visitor attractions.</p>	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where there are no litter bins, service users will be encouraged to take their waste home for suitable disposal and recycling through their domestic waste collections. It is worth noting that some contractor staff may see a reduction in the working hours and earnings.</p>	

(28) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

Date: 17 November 2023

10. Parks, Open Spaces and Verge Maintenance – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Reduction in Frequency of Grass Cutting
Summary of relevant legislation:	There is no statutory legislative requirement for the delivery of grounds maintenance. The service does have a responsibility under the various highways acts to maintain a safe urban and rural verge network.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Paul Hendry
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment Department
Name of assessor:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Date of assessment:	16 November 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	N/A

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(29) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	Reduction of Grass Cutting Frequency.

Objectives:	<p>The main proposals are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the number of cuts on urban residential grass verges from 7 to 2 cuts. To reduce grass cutting on residential open space grass areas from 7 to 4. To reduce the collection of litter on parks and open spaces, and to remove Saturday collections of litter in our main parks. To reduce maintenance of shrub beds across the district.
Outcomes:	Reduced grass cutting frequency across the district as set out above.
Benefits:	Increased biodiversity, wildlife and pollinator populations. This will create an estimated annual saving of up to £220,000.

(30) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Not applicable.	
Disability	Not applicable.	
Gender Reassignment	Not applicable.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not applicable.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Not applicable.	
Race	Not applicable.	
Religion or Belief	Not applicable.	
Sex	Not applicable.	
Sexual Orientation	Not applicable.	
Further Comments:		
<p>The proposed service change is not expected to specifically affect any of the groups listed above. There are no group-specific impacts expected that are relevant to Equality Act 2010 considerations. However, if any adverse impact in relation to any of the groups</p>		

listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.

(31) Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?

Yes No

The implementation of the change will be applied uniformly across the district. The change is not expected to contribute to inequality. Care will be taken to ensure that pavements are safe and accessible, and road sightlines are not obstructed.

Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?

Yes No

It is worth noting that some contractor staff will see a reduction in the working hours and earnings.

(32) Identify next steps as appropriate:

EqlA Stage 2 required

Yes No

Owner of EqlA Stage Two:

Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:

Name: Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

Date: 17 November 2023

11. Parking Fees and Charges – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To amend the Parking Fees and Charges for 2024/25
Summary of relevant legislation:	Parking Services are governed by The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Road Traffic Act 1991, the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions Regulations 2022 and the Transport Act 2000.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Emma Jameson
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment/Place
Name of assessor:	Emma Jameson
Date of assessment:	14/11/2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	1.0

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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(33) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	Increased income from parking fees and charges.
Objectives:	<p>To establish suitable and robust parking fees and charges, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the draft Parking Strategy for 2024-2034 and associated feedback. • Continue to positively influence the environmental impact of travel in West Berkshire, and in conjunction with our place-making strategies, protect and enhance the economic vitality of our town centres. • Increase income.
Outcomes:	Increased income and a fees and charges structure that reflects the draft Parking Strategy.
Benefits:	The additional income generated will continue to secure expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic, sustainable transport systems and provide suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the public highway.

(34) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Disability	Some positive and negative	<p>Through the national scheme blue badge holders are allowed to park without charge or time limit in otherwise restricted on-street parking environments and allows them to park on yellow lines for up to three hours, unless a loading ban is in place.</p> <p>Free parking will be available in Council car parks for first 3 hours for blue badge holders. Charging applied</p>

		<p>thereafter. (Currently there is no time limit).</p> <p>50% discounts will be available for blue badge holders on permit costs.</p> <p>These changes reflect the proposals in the draft parking strategy which overall seeks to deliver improved services for disabled users, by seeking to introduce more disabled parking bays where demand exceeds supply and upgrading key car parks to meet the Park Access standard.</p>
Gender Reassignment	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Pregnancy and Maternity	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Race	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Religion or Belief	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Sex	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.
Sexual Orientation	None	Whilst parking charges may increase in some areas, no particular group will be disadvantaged.

Further Comments:

If any (additional) adverse impacts in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.

(35) Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?

Yes No

Consideration will be given when launching the consultation to producing hardcopies of the questionnaire, so that those without access to IT services, will also still be able to submit comments.

Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?

Yes No

Service users in general may need to pay more if they use the Council's parking services, - although in specific car parks (e.g. Northbrook multi-storey car park), parking charges are being reduced. Blue badge holders will continue to be able to park in Council car parks for free for the first 3 hours but will need to pay thereafter as part of the draft Parking Strategy proposal that users of facilities contribute to the costs of operation.

(36) Identify next steps as appropriate:

EqlA Stage 2 required

Yes No

Owner of EqlA Stage Two:

Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:

Name: Emma Jameson

Date: 14/11/2023

12. Weed Spraying Treatment – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	Reduction of Weed Spraying from Two Cycles to One a Year
Summary of relevant legislation:	Not applicable. There is no legislative requirement to spray weeds.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Budget Holder:	Daniel Warne
Name of Service/Directorate:	Environment Department
Name of assessor:	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi
Date of assessment:	16 November 2023
Version and release date (if applicable):	N/A

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(37) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	Reduction of Weed Spraying from Two Cycles to One a Year.
Objectives:	The Waste Management team currently undertake two rounds of weed spraying along relevant sections of the

	public highway throughout West Berkshire on annual basis. We are proposing to reduce the annual application of weed sprays containing glyphosate solution, from two application cycles to one.
Outcomes:	Reduced weed spraying. Higher weed prevalence across parts of the district. Increased biodiversity and pollinator populations. The current approach of weed spraying is based on applying a solution containing glyphosate, which can have adverse impacts on bees and other pollinators if not applied in the appropriate dose by trained professionals.
Benefits:	Increased biodiversity and pollinator populations. This will create an estimated annual saving of £12,000.

(38) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Not applicable.	
Disability	Not applicable.	
Gender Reassignment	Not applicable.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not applicable.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Not applicable.	
Race	Not applicable.	
Religion or Belief	Not applicable.	
Sex	Not applicable.	
Sexual Orientation	Not applicable.	
Further Comments:		
The proposed service change is not expected to specifically affect any of the groups listed above. There are no group-specific impacts expected that are relevant to Equality Act 2010 considerations. However, if any adverse impact in relation to any of the groups listed above should arise from the upcoming public consultation exercise, the service will review this assessment.		

(39) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The implementation of the change will be applied uniformly across the district. The change is not expected to contribute to inequality. Care will be taken to ensure that pavements are safe and accessible, and road sightlines are not obstructed.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The proposed service change is not significant enough to adversely impact employees and service users.	

(40) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

Date: 17 November 2023

13. Willows Edge Care Home – Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	<p>There are two options being considered for the future of Willows Edge Care Home.</p> <p>Option 1 - would close the home and relocate its residents to alternative provision, including another of the Council's own care homes.</p> <p>Option 2 - will transfer the operation of the existing care home to an alternative provider.</p>
Summary of relevant legislation:	Care Act (2014) Mental Capacity Act (2005) Equality Act (2010) Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations (2014)
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's key strategy priorities?	<p>The proposal is in line with the Council's priority of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults
Name of assessor:	John Carpenter
Date of assessment:	13/11/2023

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To maximise the efficiency of care provided and reduce costs, in line with significant budgetary constraints.
Objectives:	<p>To provide a high standard of care for West Berkshire residents.</p> <p>To ensure the financial sustainability of the delivery of council services.</p>

Outcomes:	<p>Option 1 - Improved accommodation for those requiring Care, at a lower cost.</p> <p>Option 2 – Lower cost provision will be achieved without the disruption to residents, but accommodation will not improve</p>
Benefits:	<p>Improved environment in which residents live and are cared for.</p> <p>More cost-effective delivery of care</p>

Note which groups may be affected by the proposed decision. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	<p>It is anticipated that the new care provision will be an improvement on the current site. For example, Willows Edge does not have en suite bathroom facilities. This in turn creates difficulties in the management of infectious diseases including Covid-19, C-Diff and 'flu.</p>	<p>This view is derived from a combination of sources including Care Quality Commission Inspection reports, Infection Control reports and the views of Registered Managers.</p>
Disability	<p>Option 1 - It is anticipated that the new care provision will be an improvement on the current site. For example, Willows Edge does not have en suite bathroom facilities. This in turn creates difficulties in the management of infection diseases including Covid-19, C-Diff and 'flu.</p> <p>Dementia clients may not respond well to changing environment. Due to the higher level of need and varying stages of dementia the impact upon these</p>	<p>This view is derived from a combination of sources including Care Quality Commission Inspection reports, Infection Control reports and the views of Registered Managers.</p> <p>Various national studies have shown the impact that moving environments can have upon a person with Dementia, including disturbed sleeping patterns, loss of appetite, an</p>

	residents may be different to those of the Walnut Close residents who were moved to Birchwood. Option 2 will remove this impact	increase in negative behavioural issues and a permanent decline in their baseline presentations.
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex	Most of the Council's care home staff are female so this will need to be taken into account when supporting staff who may also have carer and parental responsibilities. It is unclear what the effects will be. The impact may be different for some staff depending on which option is followed	According to our full list of care staff across the services, 85% of care staff in the Council's care homes are female (HR data) and traditionally it is more likely that these staff also have caring responsibilities.
Sexual Orientation		
.Further Comments relating to the item:		

Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
There is no reason why throughout the consultation process that all involved parties cannot be included within the process if the time and care is taken to ensure that they are able to.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
There is potential for some adverse impacts both to residents and staff. It is anticipated, though, that the positive benefits will outweigh the negative impacts.	

Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	Yes
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	Maria Shepherd
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	

Name:

John Carpenter

Date: 13/11/2023

14. Willows Edge Care Home – Stage 2

Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA 2)

What is the proposed decision?	To either close Willows Edge Care Home (Option 1) or seek to transfer the home to a care provider other than West Berkshire Council (Option 2)
Summary of relevant legislation	Local authorities have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure there is sufficient provision of care in their area and to fund the care of those who meet the relevant criteria. There is no legislative requirement for a council to provide the care provision directly and most do not.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the council's key strategic priorities?	<p>The Council's key priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services we are proud of • Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all • Tackling the climate and ecological emergency • A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire • Thriving communities with a strong local voice <p>Closing the home would reduce local provision in West Berkshire and mean that residents would have to move to another setting, which has a c50% probability of being outside West Berkshire.</p>
Name of budget holder	Jo England/Maria Shepherd
Name of assessor	John Carpenter
Name of Service and Directorate	Adult Social Care
Date of assessment	30/01/2024
Version and release date (if applicable)	1.0
Date EqIA 1 completed	15/11/2023

Step One – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

31. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EqIA 2?			
Service targets		Performance targets	
User satisfaction		Service take-up	
Workforce monitoring		Press coverage	
Complaints & comments		Census data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous EqIA	✓	Staff survey	
Public consultation	✓	Other (please specify) Stakeholder consultation	✓

32. What are the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above?
<p>The protected characteristics of age and disability would see the greatest impact from this proposal, as all residents are elderly and most have some disabilities. Sex is also an aspect, as the workforce is predominantly female.</p> <p>Although no new issues were raised relative to the EqIA1, a very large number of respondents to the consultation raised strong concerns regarding the mental and physical impacts on the elderly people who would be moved if Option 1 (Close home) were adopted. This was particularly emphasised by those with relatives at Willows Edge.</p>
33. What additional research or data is required, if any, to fill the gaps identified in question two? Have you considered commissioning new data or research e.g. a needs assessment?
N/A

Step Two – Involvement and Consultation

34. How do the findings from the evidence summarised in Step One affect people with the nine protected characteristics?	
Target Groups	Summary of responses and type of evidence
Age – relates to all ages	All residents of Willows Edge are aged 65+ so the impact is entirely on this group. There would be a significant

	<p>disruption to their lives if they were required to move to another location and this could be exacerbated if it is outside West Berkshire as it may be less accessible for visitors, increasing feelings of isolation.</p> <p>An alternative provision is likely to have better facilities such as en-suite rooms.</p> <p>All would also be affected by option 2, but the impact is likely to be limited as residents would remain in their current setting and many of the staff are likely to stay as well</p>
<p>Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>Many of the residents have some form of disability, with over half (17) of current residents assessed to have a cognition/memory disability. The consultation responses emphasised particular concerns about the impact of changing environments for these residents if Willows Edge were to close. Few concerns on this issue were raised in for Option 2</p>
<p>Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership – .protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place</p>	<p>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other</p>

Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic or national origin or nationality.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Religion or belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other
Sex - applies to male or female.	As noted in the EqlA1, the workforce is predominantly female so the impact of either option will have a higher impact on this group. This point was not specifically raised in the consultation responses.
Sexual orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other

35. Who are the main stakeholders (e.g. service users, staff) and what are their requirements?
<p>The main stakeholders are the residents and staff of Willows Edge Care Home.</p> <p>The residents need a safe and secure setting that allows them to enjoy their lives and be looked after to the extent that their individual needs require, in a place that feels as 'homely' as possible, given the constraints.</p> <p>Staff require stable and appropriately remunerated employment, with the opportunity to deliver care in an appropriate manner.</p>

36. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Option 1 is adopted, residents will be moved to new homes. In most cases the physical aspects of the new home may be an improvement, as Willows Edge is relatively old and does not have en-suite facilities • Under Option 1, residents would suffer some disruption as they will have to move home. At this stage we do not know where they would all move to. We would seek to place in West Berkshire where possible and affordable, but some may be relocated out of area. This may make it more difficult for visitors and risks increasing isolation • Under Option 1, we would seek to place staff in other roles where possible, but it is likely that there would be a number of redundancies

- Under Option 2, the impact on residents will be relatively limited, as an agreement with a new provider would ensure that the level of provision would be of at least equal standard and would be overseen by Care Quality, as now
- Staff would be offered the option to transfer to a new provider under Option 2, following TUPE terms.

Step Three – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

37. What are the impacts and how will you mitigate them?

Under option 1, the principal impact on residents would be the need to ensure a safe transition to a new care home. The Council has experience in this, having closed Walnut Close Care Home in 2021 and moved residents successfully to other homes. We would ensure that the plans are developed building on this experience and would include planned communication to residents and families.

The Council has extensive experience in staff redeployment and redundancy and would apply well-established HR practices to optimise fairness and reduce the negative impacts on staff.

Under Option 2, residents would not be moving and it is likely that many staff would also remain under TUPE. Therefore the impact on residents should be very much lower.

For staff, well-established processes regarding the transfer of a service to a private sector provider would be followed.

Step Four – Procurement and Partnerships

38. Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Not at this stage. However under Option 1 we would need to acquire beds in private sector homes. This would follow current bed procurement processes.

Under option 2 we would develop and Invitation to Tender and identify a preferred supplier

Step Five – Making a Decision

39. What are your recommendations as a result of the EqIA 2?

In making your recommendations please summarise your findings.

For residents there are two characteristics that could be disproportionately impacted. These impacts are substantially less under Option 2 and we therefore recommend that Option 2 is adopted. We recognise that if an alternative provider cannot be found, we will have to revert to Option 1 and manage the higher impact on residents.

Step Six – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

40. How will you monitor the impact on the nine protected characteristics once the change has taken place?
<p>Under Option 1, we will adopt a planned communication and migration plan, building on the successful Walnut Close experience.</p> <p>Under Option 2, we would ensure that the terms of any agreement ensured a high quality of care from the provider.</p> <p>In both options, our Care Quality team would continue to monitor the quality of care provided and highlight any issues to the provider, who would then be required to address these issues.</p>

Step Seven – Action Plan

Categories	Actions	Target date	Responsible person
Involvement and consultation	No further work required.	N/A	N/A
Data collection	No further work required	N/A	N/A
Assessing impact	<p>ASC review team to assess plans for closure (Option1) or transfer of provider (Option 2) and identify where additional mitigation is needed</p> <p>Care Quality to monitor on-going provision of care</p>	30/06/2024	Jo England/Maria Shepherd
Procurement and partnership	ASC and Commissioning top develop Invitation to Tender for an alternative provider, highlighting the need to minimise impacts on individuals with protected characteristics	30/04/2024	Karen Felgate/Jo England/Maria Shepherd
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	Reviews for individuals will take place in line with current processes	Ongoing	Marian Angas Jo Bateman

	Care Quality will monitor quality of care, in line with current processes		
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Step Eight – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.		
Contributors to the EqIA 2		
Name: John Carpenter	Job Title: Market Management Lead	Date: 30/01/2024
Service Director		
Name: Jo England		Date: 30/01/24

Appendix B

Contract Inflation

Contract Inflation			2024/25	Rate used
Directorate	Service	Description	£000	
Corporate	All	Cleaning contract	5	2.0%
Corporate		Total	5	
People	ASC	Birchwood Nursing Home lease	20	3.5%
People	ASC	Supported Living schemes and floating support for Adults with Learning Disabilities and / or Autism	25	0.9%
People	CFS	Supported Lodgings for young people in care and leaving care - Step by Step contract extension	7	2.0%
People		Total	53	
Place	ENV	Waste contract (at RPIX)	646	3.0%
Place	ENV	Waste - Tax Base adjustment	44	0.0%
Place	ENV	Henwick Worthy sports ground maintenance (CPI)	4	2.0%
Place	ENV	Grounds Maintenance (CPI)	10	2.0%
Place	ENV	Winter service software licence uplift	1	2.0%
Place	ENV	BBOWT partnership (CPI)	24	5.1%
Place	ENV	Tree maintenance contract	5	2.0%
Place	ENV	Highways term maintenance contract (set %)	64	4.0%
Place	ENV	Home to School Transport software / Licence	8	As per contract
Place	ENV	Newbury Bus Contract inflation	4	2.0%
Place		Total	808	
Resources	F&P	Corporate insurance	50	
Resources	ICT	Licences	11	2.0%
Resources	ICT	Performance Management Software	1	5.0%
Resources		Total	62	
Total contract inflation			929	

N.B. Rounding may apply to £10k

Inflation on the waste contract will be confirmed on 14th February 2024. Any difference will be funded by a base budget amendment and will be adjusted for in future years.

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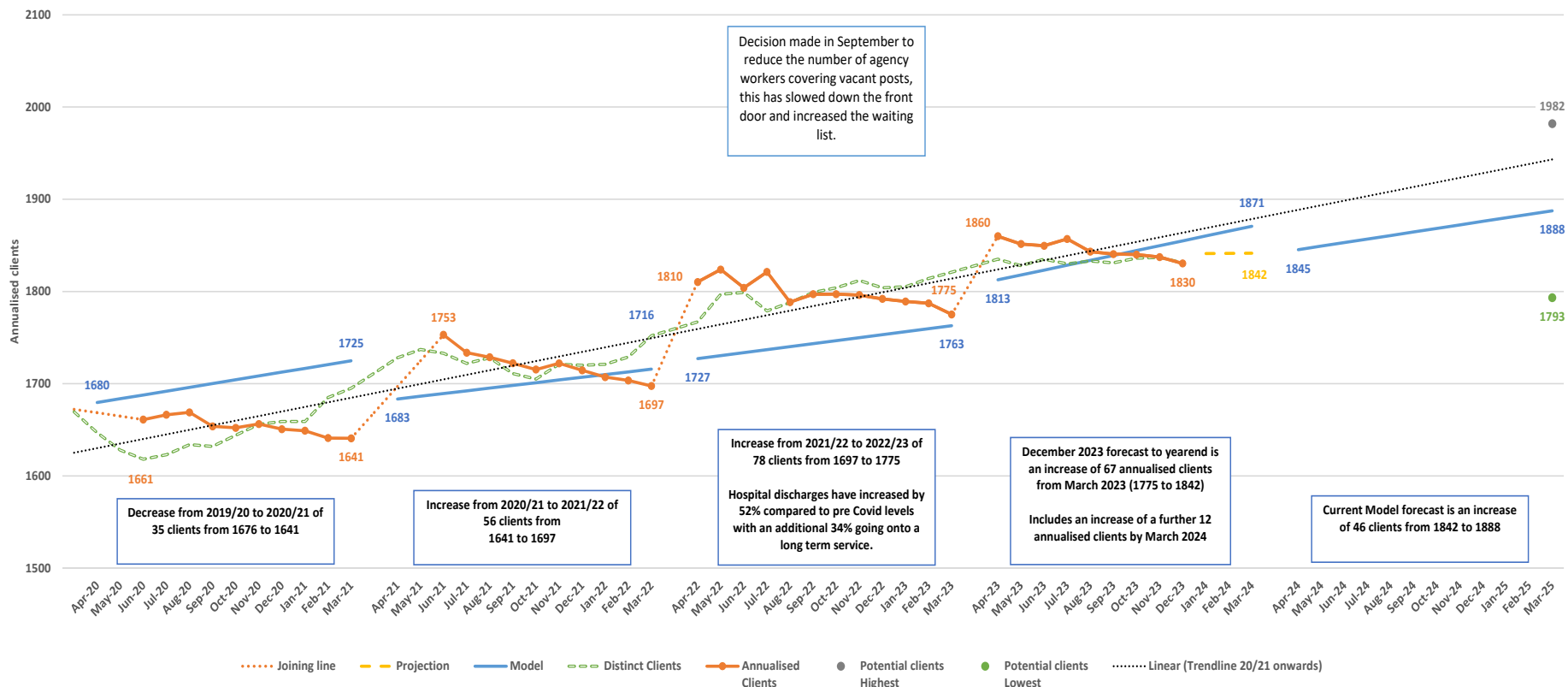
Appendix C

Modelled Growth

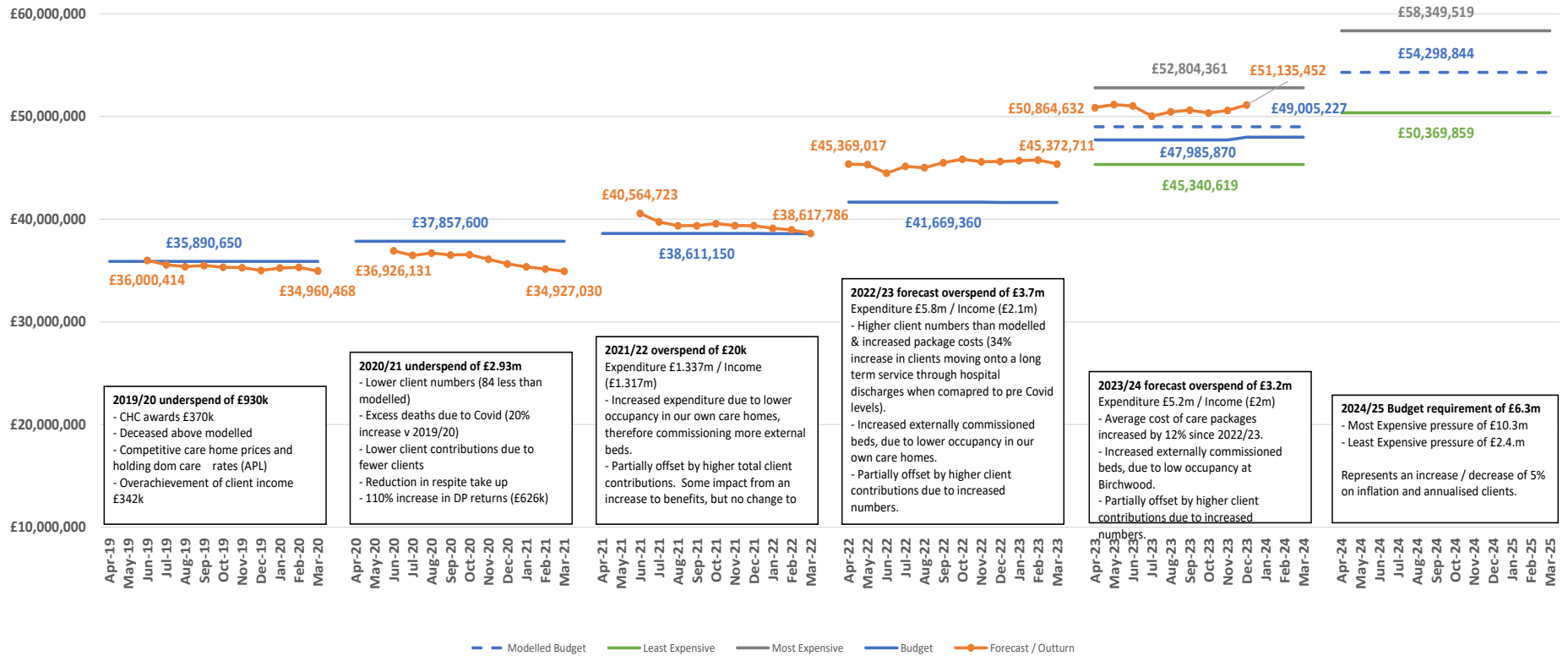
The table below shows the amount of budget growth required for 2024-25 from the modelling undertaken in Adult Social Care, Children & Family Services and Education. Modelling graphs are also shown for the ASC and CFS models.

					2024-25
					Modelled Growth
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000
A1	People	ASC	1	Learning Disability Transitions from education and children's services to adult social care	2,903
A2	People	ASC	1	Commissioning Budgets demographic increases - long term services demand	5,214
A3	People	ASC	1	Commissioning Budgets demographic increases - long term services inflation	1,374
CF1	People	CFS	1	Placement budgets increased demand	1,810
CF2	People	CFS	1	Placement Budgets inflation	263
ES1	People	ES	1	Modelled growth relating to one high cost placement	842
.	People	.		Total	12,406

Adult Social Care Annualised client numbers for Long Term Services



Adult Social Care Net Expenditure for Long Term Services



2019/20 underspend of £930k
 - CHC awards £370k
 - Deceased above modelled
 - Competitive care home prices and holding dom care rates (APL)
 - Overachievement of client income £342k

2020/21 underspend of £2.93m
 - Lower client numbers (84 less than modelled)
 - Excess deaths due to Covid (20% increase v 2019/20)
 - Lower client contributions due to fewer clients
 - Reduction in respite take up
 - 110% increase in DP returns (£626k)

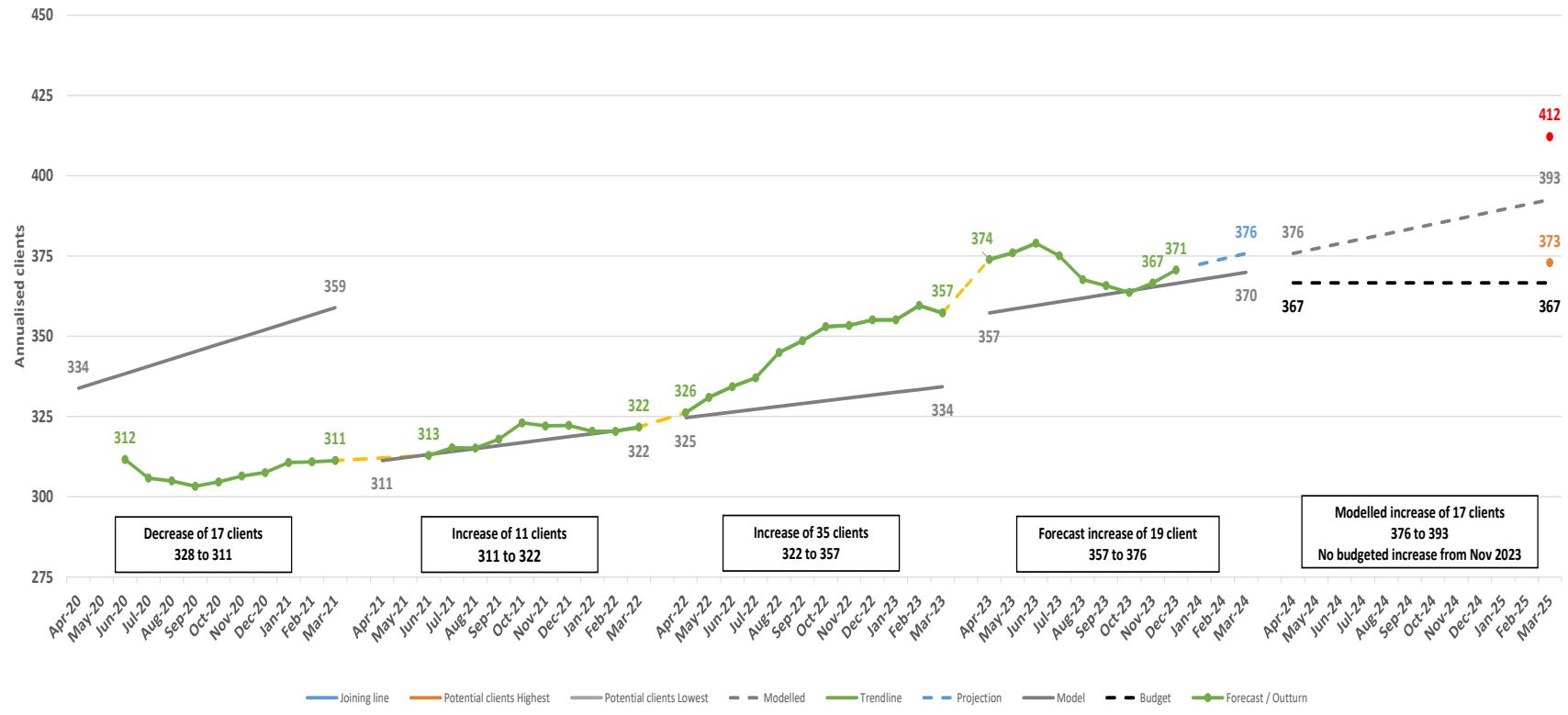
2021/22 overspend of £20k
 Expenditure £1.337m / Income (£1.317m)
 - Increased expenditure due to lower occupancy in our own care homes, therefore commissioning more external beds.
 - Partially offset by higher total client contributions. Some impact from an increase to benefits, but no change to

2022/23 forecast overspend of £3.7m
 Expenditure £5.8m / Income (£2.1m)
 - Higher client numbers than modelled & increased package costs (34% increase in clients moving onto a long term service through hospital discharges when compared to pre Covid levels).
 - Increased externally commissioned beds, due to lower occupancy in our own care homes.
 - Partially offset by higher client contributions due to increased numbers.

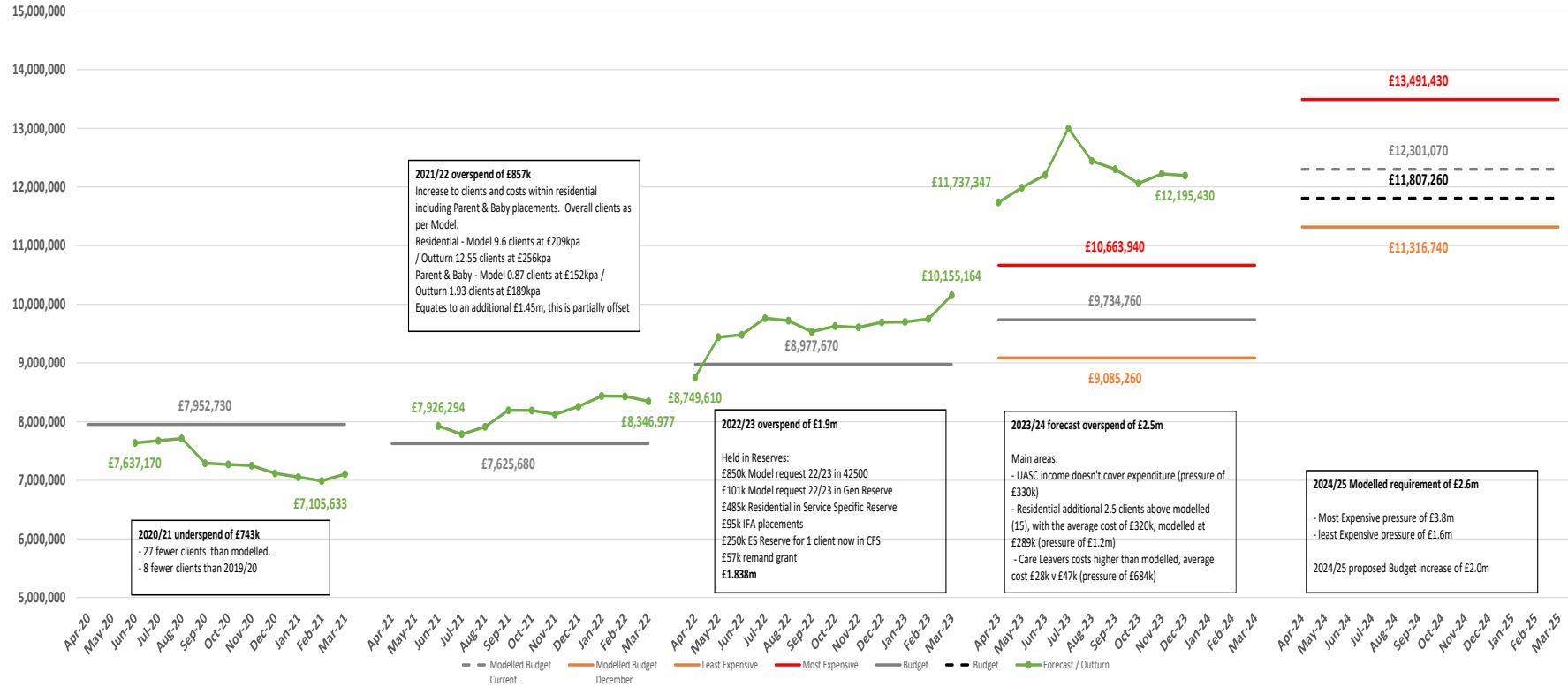
2023/24 forecast overspend of £3.2m
 Expenditure £5.2m / Income (£2m)
 - Average cost of care packages increased by 12% since 2022/23.
 - Increased externally commissioned beds, due to low occupancy at Birchwood.
 - Partially offset by higher client contributions due to increased numbers.

2024/25 Budget requirement of £6.3m
 - Most Expensive pressure of £10.3m
 - Least Expensive pressure of £2.4m
 Represents an increase / decrease of 5% on inflation and annualised clients.

Children & Family Services annualised client numbers (includes UASC)



Children & Family Services Net Expenditure (includes UASC)



2021/22 overspend of £857k
 Increase to clients and costs within residential including Parent & Baby placements. Overall clients as per Model.
 Residential - Model 9.6 clients at £209kpa / Outturn 12.55 clients at £256kpa
 Parent & Baby - Model 0.87 clients at £152kpa / Outturn 1.93 clients at £189kpa
 Equates to an additional £1.45m, this is partially offset

2022/23 overspend of £1.9m
 Held in Reserves:
 £850k Model request 22/23 in 42500
 £101k Model request 22/23 in Gen Reserve
 £485k Residential in Service Specific Reserve
 £95k IFA placements
 £250k ES Reserve for 1 client now in CFS
 £57k remand grant
£1.838m

2023/24 forecast overspend of £2.5m
 Main areas:
 - UASC income doesn't cover expenditure (pressure of £330k)
 - Residential additional 2.5 clients above modelled (15), with the average cost of £320k, modelled at £289k (pressure of £1.2m)
 - Care Leavers costs higher than modelled, average cost £28k v £47k (pressure of £684k)

2024/25 Modelled requirement of £2.6m
 - Most Expensive pressure of £3.8m
 - least Expensive pressure of £1.6m
 2024/25 proposed Budget increase of £2.0m

Legend:
 - Modelled Budget Current (grey line)
 - Modelled Budget December (orange line)
 - Least Expensive (orange line)
 - Most Expensive (red line)
 - Budget (grey line)
 - Budget (dashed grey line)
 - Forecast / Outturn (green line with markers)

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					2024-25					2024-25		
					Ongoing					One off		
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	Investment in Council Strategy (Transformation) £000	Core service Improvement (Transformation) £000	Unmet saving £000	Budget requirement £000	Total Ongoing unavoidable investment £000	Fund from Reserves (Transformation) £000	Fund from MTFS £000	Total One-off unavoidable investment £000
A5	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Shared Lives Officer To enable the recruitment of more carers and reduce care costs	44				44			0
A6	People	ASC	1	Care Homes Nourish Electronic Record System with eMAR Electronic recording and auditing system annual fee, originally funded from Covid Infection Control grant.		38			38			0
A16	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Care Packages CHC, S117 and double handed care		84			84			0
A27	People	ASC	1	Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board increased cost	6				6			0
A29	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Learning Disability Reviews					0	113		113
CF3	People	CFS	1	Emergency Duty Service Out of hours cover for Children and Families, Housing, Mental Health and Adults. Increase in demand for these services being experienced across the whole of Berkshire and cost pressures due to increase in salaries.	12				12			0
CF4	People	CFS	1	Child Care Lawyers The Joint Legal Team provide legal services to all Children's Services in Berkshire, there is an increase in use of these services as more children are in court proceedings than was previously the case in addition to additional costs due to inflation.	0				0	70	600	670
CF5	People	CFS	1	Children in Care Mental Health Support A joint project between three Local Authorities with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust to provide a Mental Health Team for Children in Care. This team focusses on providing consultation and support for children and their carers to avoid placement breakdown and promote positive change and development.					0	82		82

					2024-25					2024-25		
					Ongoing					One off		
					Investment in Council Strategy (Transformation)	Core service Improvement (Transformation)	Unmet saving	Budget requirement	Total Ongoing unavoidable investment	Fund from Reserves (Transformation)	Fund from MTFS	Total One-off unavoidable investment
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CF6	People	CFS	1	Family Support Workers 3 Family Support Worker posts were previously taken as a saving, however, those posts are vital for the work of the Family Safeguarding Service delivering court ordered family time.	143				143			0
CF8	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Section 117 There are a small number of children who are in residential placements where there should be S117 funding in place given their mental health needs.		53.56			54			0
CF9	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Additional commissioning support To increase capacity to form relationships with the local care providers to manage the market locally and reduce the costs.		18			18			0
CF10	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Foster Care recruitment Increase the number of Foster carers to ensure the best outcome for the increased number of children coming into care and offset the more expensive IFA and residential placement costs.		17			17			0
CF14	People	CFS	1	Adopt Thames Valley increased costs Adoption services for West Berkshire with other LA's across the Thames Valley. Cost is based on a 3 year rolling average of useage.	79				79			0
CF15	People	CFS	1	Independent Visitor, Children's Rights and Advocacy Service				18	18			0
ES3	People	ES	1	Child Missing Education staffing requirement - one post	47				47			0
ES7	People	ES	1	Home to School Transport increased costs net of savings made	700				700			0
CW1	People	C&W	2	Voluntary Community Sector					0	100		100
CW3	People	C&W	6	Northcroft expansion project - unmet saving			103		103			0

					2024-25					2024-25		
					Ongoing					One off		
					Investment in Council Strategy (Transformation)	Core service Improvement (Transformation)	Unmet saving	Budget requirement	Total Ongoing unavoidable investment	Fund from Reserves (Transformation)	Fund from MTFS	Total One-off unavoidable investment
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CW4	People	C&W	6	Leisure centre repairs and maintenance/management fee				40	40			0
CW16	People	C&W	BAU	Uplift to the budget for Royal Berkshire Archives (Berkshire Records Office)				33	33			0
.	People	.		Total	1,031	211	103	91	1,436	365	600	965
D2	Place	D&R	4	Local Plan Review - Development of the Local Plan - awaiting political decision					0		250	250
D4	Place	D&R	4	Planning Fees investment				180	180			0
D5	Place	D&R	4	Biodiversity Net Gain Compensation Income not achievable			265		265			0
E1	Place	ENV	BAU	Ash die back pressure				60	60			0
E18	Place	ENV	BAU	Faraday Road Football Pitch Maintenance	9				9			0
E35	Place	ENV	5	Chargable Garden Waste	100				100			0
E38	Place	ENV	4	Road Sign Cleaning	25				25			0
.	Place	.		Total	134	0	265	240	639	0	250	250
R4	Resources	F&P	BAU	West Street House/West Point/Turnhams Green closure					0			0
R8	Resources	S&G	2	Workforce Development - Wellbeing Business Partner, currently funded by Public Health				30	30			0
R11	Resources	S&G	6	Elections Team Staffing	81				81			0
R12	Resources	S&G	6	Digital Platform - System Admin / Customer Experience Officer					0	60		60
R22	Resources	S&G	BAU	Resident's Survey					0		18	18
R23	Resources	S&G	BAU	Resident's Newsletter				5	5			0

					2024-25					2024-25		
					Ongoing					One off		
					Investment in Council Strategy (Transformation)	Core service Improvement (Transformation)	Unmet saving	Budget requirement	Total Ongoing unavoidable investment	Fund from Reserves (Transformation)	Fund from MTFS	Total One-off unavoidable investment
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
R24	Resources	F&P	BAU	RAAC Surveys - Non Education Buildings					0		80	80
	Resources			Total	81	0	0	35	116	60	98	158
				Total	1,246	211	368	366	2,191	425	948	1,373

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
C1	Corporate	All	BAU	Corporate energy saving and efficiency review	(875)	
C2	Corporate	All	BAU	Managed recruitment process	(1,200)	
C3	Corporate	All	BAU	Temporary training budget reduction	(200)	
A4	People	ASC	1	Fees and charges increases	(22)	
A5	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Shared Lives Officer To enable the recruitment of more carers and reduce care costs	(118)	
A9	People	ASC	BAU	Hillcroft House Termination of the lease with staff moving to Market Street office	(77)	
A11	People	ASC	1	ASC transport provision charging - up to 3 round trips pw (consultation item)	(170)	
A12	People	ASC	1	Reablement Decommission the Inhouse Night Warden service (3.59fte)	(104)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
A13	People	ASC	1	Reablement Delete vacant posts	(107)	
A14	People	ASC	1	Reablement Remove vacant posts and reduce external commissioning	(807)	
A15	People	ASC	1	Resource Centre Manager Removal of 1 fte	(58)	
A16	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Care Packages CHC, S117 and double handed care	(1,000)	
A17	People	ASC	1	Sensory Needs Team Re-structure service and remove Team Leader Post (1fte)	(48)	
A18	People	ASC	1	WBC care Home transformation (Consultation item)	(250)	
A22	People	ASC	1	Integrated Care Partnership transformation work	(40)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
A24	People	ASC	1	Reallocation of recruitment and retention budget focussing on attracting permanent staff	(462)	
A25	People	ASC	1	Shared Lives Income Management fees from other LA's	(29)	
A26	People	ASC	BAU	Birchwood lease reduction	(98)	
A28	People	ASC	BAU	Fees and charges Own Care Home fee increases (Consultation item)	(100)	
A29	People	ASC	1	Invest to Save: Learning Disability Reviews		(220)
CF7	People	CFS	1	Contact Time - reduced costs through use of internal provision	(120)	
CF8	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Section 117 There are a small number of children who are in residential placements where there should be S117 funding in place given their mental health needs.	(214)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
CF9	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Additional commissioning support To increase capacity to form relationships with the local care providers to manage the market locally and reduce the costs.	(590)	
CF10	People	CFS	1	Invest to Save: Foster Care recruitment Increase the number of Foster carers to ensure the best outcome for the increased number of children coming into care and offset the more expensive IFA and residential placement costs.	(521)	
CF11	People	CFS	1	Houses of multiple occupation saving	(17)	
CF12	People	CFS	1	Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service part post removal Social Worker 0.13 fte	(6)	
CF13	People	CFS	1	Youth Offending Team posts Use of grants and reduced hours	(69)	
ES2	People	ES	1	Home to School Transport Review	(100)	
ES4	People	ES/CFS	1	CFS/ES efficiency review	(147)	
ES11	People	ES	BAU	Fees and charges increases	(25)	
ES12	People	ES	2	Aids & Adaptations capitalisation	(27)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
ES13	People	ES	1	Residential Disability - invest in commissioning post to save on high placement costs	(300)	
ES14	People	ES	BAU	Castlegate restructure and review	(20)	
ES15	People	ES	BAU	Retirement Costs reduction	(30)	
ES16	People	ES	1	Children In Public Care Restructure	(51)	
ES17	People	ES	1	Central Family Hub - supplies and services review	(9)	
ES19	People	ES	1	Service Manager reduction in post (0.2fte)	(20)	
ES22	People	ES	BAU	Reduction of 0.2fte vacant post in Emotional Health Academy	(10)	
ES23	People	ES	BAU	Restructure of Safeguarding/Education Welfare	(4)	
ES24	People	ES	BAU	Savings on Supplies and Services	(8)	
ES26	People	ES	BAU	Reduction in need for Disability Support	(15)	
ES28	People	ES	2	Reduction of 1.0fte post in Emotional Academy	(45)	
CW10	People	C&W	2	Reduction of vacant posts	(21)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
CW12	People	C&W	2	Building Communities Together Service restructure of posts & supplies and services	(61)	
CW13	People	C&W	BAU	Removal of lease car costs	(7)	
CW14	People	C&W	BAU	Reduction by 0.5fte vacant post - Leisure	(18)	
CW15	People	C&W	BAU	Fees and charges increases	(14)	
.	People	.		Total	(5,957)	(220)
D1	Place	D&R	4	Reduction in Planning Enforcement Resource	(46)	
D3	Place	D&R	4	Local Authority Housing fund income (displaced persons housing scheme)	(200)	
D6	Place	D&R	4	Town Centre Programme review and seek alternative funding opportunities	(87)	
D7	Place	D&R	4	Economic Development Staffing Review	(38)	
D11	Place	D&R	BAU	Fees and charges increases - registrars	(4)	
D12	Place	D&R	4	Four Houses Corner - Housing Management & Security	(59)	
E3	Place	ENV	5	Grazeley Green Solar Farm	(100)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
E6	Place	ENV	5	Capitalisation of Streetworks Staffing	(80)	
E7	Place	ENV	4	Temporary Traffic Regulation Order and Skips / Scaffold Licence fee increases	(140)	
E10	Place	ENV	4	Parking fee restructure (Consultation item)	(500)	
E20	Place	ENV	4	Advertising Income	(20)	
E21	Place	ENV	5	Reduction in Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) opening hours (Consultation item)	(59)	
E23	Place	ENV	5	Reduction in New Household Bin Delivery Service	(40)	
E25	Place	ENV	5	Stop Printing and Issuing Bin Stickers for Garden Waste	(43)	
E26	Place	ENV	5	Seek contribution from town/parish councils for environmental services	(20)	
E30	Place	ENV	5	Reduction in Grass Cutting Frequency for Open Spaces & Parks (Consultation item)	(55)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
E31	Place	ENV	5	Removal of Remaining Kennet & Avon Canal Budget	(26)	
E32	Place	ENV	5	Capitalisation of Climate Change Role	(27)	
E33	Place	ENV	BAU	Fees and charges increases - other	(4)	
E34	Place	ENV	4	Capitalisation of Various Highways and Network Management posts	(49)	
E36	Place	ENV	4	Energy Efficiencies for Street Lights	(50)	
E39	Place	ENV	4	Bridge Maintenance Reduction		(80)
.	Place	.		Total	(1,747)	(80)
R1	Resources	F&P	BAU	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) review	(4,000)	
R2	Resources	RES	BAU	Legacy / Crowdfunding	(10)	
R3	Resources	F&P	BAU	Finance & Property - Vacant Staffing & Efficiency review	(57)	
R5	Resources	ICT	BAU	ICT Infrastructure Team - Restructure	(22)	
R6	Resources	ICT	BAU	Mobile Telephony	(70)	

					2024-25	2024-25
					Ongoing	One off
					Saving or income proposal	Saving or income proposal
Ref	Directorate	Service	Council Priority	Description	£000	£000
R7	Resources	COM	BAU	Commissioning & Procurement - Efficiency Savings	(11)	
R9	Resources	S&G	BAU	Digitisation of Customer Services	(50)	
R10	Resources	S&G	BAU	Customer Engagement & Transformation Team Funded from Transformation Funding (One off)		(250)
R15	Resources	S&G	BAU	Fees and charges increases	(20)	
R16	Resources	ICT	BAU	Capitalisation of ICT Licences	(90)	
R20	Resources	F&P	BAU	Utilisation of the flexible use of capital receipts in line with existing guidance		(1,500)
.	Resources	.		Total	(4,471)	(1,750)
.	.	.		Total	(14,450)	(2,050)

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Reserves Statements

The Statement of Accounts that are produced each year details all the Council's reserves and explains why they are held. Reserves are reported in two categories: unusable and usable reserves. Unusable reserves include those reserves which are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, retirement and employee benefits. Unusable reserves cannot be used to provide Council services. Usable reserves are those reserves that a Council may use to provide services or reduce local taxation, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use.

The level of usable reserves the Council holds is reviewed each year as part of the budgetary process. Consideration is given to the current financial standing of the Council, the funding outlook into the medium term and the financial risk environment the Council is operating in.

Councils generally hold usable reserves for a number of reasons:

- To use at a later date to support investment projects
- To temporarily hold unused portions of grants that can be legally used at a later date
- To insure themselves against major unexpected events such as flooding
- To guard against general risk
- To smooth the impact of funding reductions
- To guard against emergent specific risks, such as business rate appeals, increased demand, and the impact of social care reform.

The Council's usable reserves are as follows:

- General Reserve: held for non-specific items and risks
- Earmarked Reserves: amounts held for specific schemes and for specific purposes e.g. self-insurance

During 2023-24, General Fund reserves are expected to reduce due to the in year forecast overspend. The level of Earmarked reserves held is the lowest compared to other Councils and highlights the financial risk that the Council has through having little 'buffer' for unforeseen events due to the overspend position in 2022-23.

A summary is shown in the following table:

Reserve	Balance as at 31.3.21	Balance as at 31.3.22	Balance as at 31.3.23	Forecast balance as at 31.3.24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund (unallocated) including specific risk reserves	12.1	12.9	7.2	4.0
Earmarked reserves	38.5	23.8	4.4	3.7
WBC General Fund total	50.6	36.7	11.6	7.8
School balances	8.0	11.0	14.0	14.0
General Fund total	58.6	47.8	25.6	21.7

The General Reserve

The purpose of the General Reserve is to act as a fund to be used in emergencies and to protect council taxpayers from any steep rises in future Council Tax if the Council over spends against its budget. The s151 officer, Executive Director (Resources) recommends that the General Reserve totals, as a minimum, £7m of the Council's net revenue expenditure.

The calculation of the £7m is based on the below. It is very unlikely that all of these risks would occur at the same time. There is a cumulative risk of a number of these factors taking place over a short period of time, as seen in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years. The purpose of the general reserve is enable the Council to continue to function and perform its services without significant impediment. If the reserve was to be at £0 or forecast to be at that level, then the Council would need to be issued with a s114 notice by the s151 officer:

Item	Rationale	Amount
Pressure on demand and significant income budgets	A 5% movement on demand budgets and on reduced income	£5.7m
Pressure on traded budgets	A 10% movement on traded budgets,	£0.2m
General risks to cover the items below	See items below	£1.1m
Total minimum required General Reserve		£7m
Forecast General Reserve (including service specific risks) as at 31.3.2024	Service specific risks are part of general reserves	£4.0m

The General Reserve is expected to cover any of the following risks should they arise:

- The impact of significant increases in demand
- Lack of delivery of all savings targets
- Economy measures and service reductions always contain some degree of uncertainty as to whether their full effects will be achieved
- Unforeseen events such as the flooding during January 2014 or Covid-19 in 2020-21
- Litigation
- Changes from specific grants to the non ring fenced government grants
- Grants being introduced or removed mid-year
- Unforeseen circumstances
- General day to day cash flow needs and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing
- Reduced income due to deferred income and social care clients' property decreasing in value

Schools balances

This is an amalgamation of unspent and overspent balances.

Earmarked Reserves

The Council has other reserves which are earmarked for specific purposes. The main items are as follows:

Parish special expenses

These are explained in detail in Appendix H.

Self-insurance fund

This fund has been established to ensure that costs to the Council in relation to claims can be met whilst limiting the impact of higher premiums on the Council's revenue budget. The fund is used to pay the first £250k of any property claim and the first £100k of other claims. External insurance covers the balance of claims.

Collection Fund volatility - to support the volatility associated with taxbase estimates upon which the Council Tax is collected, and business rates in relation to estimates, appeals and timing. As per other elements of previous budget papers, there has been significant volatility in the collection fund, especially in respect of business rates, and a three year spread of the deficit from 2021-22 across the period 2021-24 has been taken. This reserve has now been depleted due to the ending of the spreading of the Collection Fund deficit.

Transformation - In order to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy to deliver its transformation plans, the Executive established a Transformation Reserve. This will ensure that the Council has the resources to pursue plans outlined in the MTFs and to invest in strategies that will bring future benefits to the organisation. The reserve was increased during 2019-20 to support future transformation projects but now has a very low balance which will be increased with the proposed flexible use of capital receipts (see the Capital Strategy). The Council is forecasting to dispose of assets in late 2023-24 and during the 2024-25 financial year so this reserve is expected to be increased to enable transformation activity.

Service risk reserves: Within the Earmarked Reserves are Service Specific Risk Funds, however, these are all but depleted – ideally, the following levels would be set:

Risk Reserve	Forecast as at 31.3.2024	Ideal level of reserve / £m
Adult Social Care	0	2.0
Children and Families	0	1.5
Education	0	0.5
Legal disbursements	0	0.1

There are significant risks in social care at present for 2023-24; if inflation rises above the budget provision of 3%, it would have an impact, with further pressures on staffing and placement costs.

There is a Displaced persons¹ fund of £1.5m forecast for year end from the Council's work and Government funding supporting displaced persons.

The MTFs has provision for an increase of reserves of £6m at present by 2028; this would enable the general fund reserve to be increased to the minimum level and with much of the above risk reserves enhanced to closer to the ideal level.

Commutated sums: Ring-fenced for specific schemes and cannot be added into general fund reserves.

Other

Other specific earmarked reserves are in place to support specific service requirements or projects.

¹ The Council has received Government funding for pressures from displaced persons; this funding is reducing but costs in the future are being included as part of wider housing and other service pressures.

A full list of the Council's reserves are disclosed in the Council's financial statements 2022-23 available on our website. Please note that these reserves estimates are before any changes from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial year end which will be reported in the Council's financial statements once they have been audited.

Adequacy of Reserves and Robustness of Budget Estimates (Section 25 statement)

s151 Officer Statement

1. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer, Executive Director (Resources) to formally report to Council as part of the tax setting report his view of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the Council Tax at its meeting on the 29th February 2024. CIPFA has recently published a statement on how the section 25 statement has evolved and this document is cognisant of the work completed by CIPFA [CIPFA Insight reports | CIPFA](#) .

2 Adequacy of Reserves

2.1 This statement focuses upon the unallocated general reserve and excludes schools' budgets and schools' unspent balances, which will be reviewed by the schools funding forum when Governing Bodies have submitted their budgets. The minimum prudent level of reserves that the Council should maintain is a matter of judgement and cannot be judged merely against the current risks facing the Council as these can and will change over time.

2.2 The consequences of not keeping a prudent minimum level of reserves can be serious. In the event of a major problem or a series of events, the Council would run a serious risk of a deficit or of being forced to cut spending during the year in a damaging and arbitrary way, or having to issue a section 114 report.

2.3 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) have issued a notification from the LAAP (Local Authority Accounting Panel) stating that there should be no imposed limit on the level or nature of balances required to be held by an individual Council (except under section 26 where this has been imposed by ministers). West Berkshire Council policy had consistently kept a prudent historic minimum level of balances, and this analysis has been updated for more specific demand and general risks with a minimum level set out for the 2024-25 budget, see further below.

It is recommended that general reserve balances be set at a minimum of £7m.

Before the 2023-24 outturn is reported, the general reserves stood at just over £7.2m based on estimated use of reserves for the 2023-24 budget, and this ensures that the Council has a sufficient level of reserves to support it in the immediate future. These reserves are expected to reduce to £4m by the end of the 2023-24 financial year due to the in year budget monitoring forecasts at Quarter Three.

As can be seen from the previous appendix (Fi) the forecast is for almost all other earmarked reserves and risk reserves have been eradicated. This puts even greater importance on ensuring the adequacy of a minimum level of reserves as any that have been build up in recent years have been used to support the 2023-24 budget at both budget setting and due to the in-year overspend.

Any improvement in the 2023-24 in-year position by outturn will be used to replenish any risk reserves and these risk reserves will be an area to enhance in future

financial years to improve the Council's financial resilience; at present it is looking highly unlikely that this will be the case.

3 Robustness of Estimates

3.1 The treatment of inflation and interest rates

The 2024-25 pay award for staff has been estimated at just above the forecast prevailing inflation rate of 2.5%. The 2023-24 staff pay award was announced in November 2023 and was slightly above the 3.5% assumption (the final pay award was 3.88% rising to higher percentages below certain grades); this has been adjusted for in the budget for 2024-25.

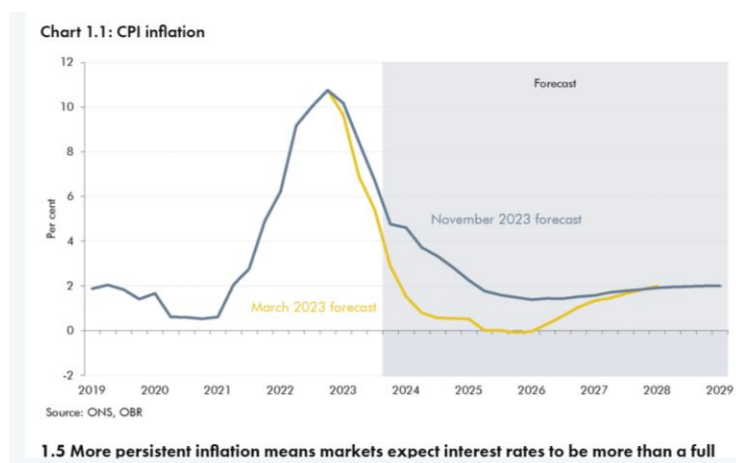
Non pay related budgets have been inflated at the contractually committed rate of inflation or where services can demonstrate a requirement to do so to maintain service delivery levels. The impact of higher inflation (which have decreased significantly during the 2023-24 financial year), higher interest rates, and uncertainty in the economic outlook, on capital financing is detailed in the Investment & Borrowing Strategy. Increases to fees and charges have been set in line with inflation where appropriate based on the September 2023 level of CPI in the main (6.7%).

The large overspend in the 2022-23 financial year has eradicated almost all of the specific earmarked reserves and risk reserves that the Council held; this clearly has reduced the Council's financial resilience at a time of substantial pressure on Councils finance across the country and here in West Berkshire. This puts even greater focus on in year budget monitoring in the future as there is very little in reserves above the minimum level set, and the focus for 2024-25 will be to ensure that the historic strong financial stewardship is continued to enable a break even position as at 31.3.2025.

Social Care provider costs remain an area of significant financial pressure. The budget takes into account inflationary pressures from 2023-24 into 2024-25. These services have seen the greatest overspend forecast during 2023-24, driven by increased complexity of demand and inflation, leading to significant average unit cost pressures. During 2023-24, it has been children's social care costs that have risen substantially and crucially where demand has had a major increase. The main budget papers included the children's (and adult's) social care models.

A further inflationary pressure of 2.5% has been assumed for adult social care providers in the budget, along with detailed modelling of expected client numbers for 2024-25. The Government has delayed the major Adult Social Care reforms to 2025 at the earliest, but has provided additional funding for social care more widely, as well as for Adult Social Care hospital discharges. This later funding has been included in the ASC budget through the Better Care Fund for West Berkshire's element of £0.1m with further funding due through the BOB ICS of £1.4m that has been included in budgets.

Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) inflation forecasts as at November 2023



Overall inflation levels have risen significantly since early 2022, but the inflation model above assumes a decrease down to the Government's target for the Bank of England of 2% by the end of the 2024-25 financial year. This substantial inflationary pressure over the period 2021-23 has increased costs to the Council and, though inflation is falling, this means a new, and much higher cost base, has been established for the Council's contracts and procurement arrangements.

The September CPI figure stood at 6.7%, and this is the basis for future fees and charges increases proposed in the budget; there is a of risk of reducing overall income through these price increases, though they reflect the overall cost base rises the Council is facing through its own contracts. The main risk area, beyond social care noted above, is in respect of energy price inflation. There has been a saving compared to the 2023-24 budget for energy inflation, though recent history has shown significant shocks to the wholesale energy markets that have had a large financial cost to the Council.

3.2 Efficiency savings, productivity gains and Government reform

The budget contains proposals to deliver £14.5m of ongoing savings or income and just over £2m of one-off savings. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes a four year savings or income programme to ensure that future revenue budgets remain in financial balance to ensure the Council has adequate resources to deliver its Council Strategy outcomes.

Government reforms continue to have an impact on the budget. The Autumn Statement provided some ability to increase planning fees for major applications to ensure full cost recovery, though the bulk of Government financial reforms or 'fair funding reforms' have been assumed to not impact on this budget as confirmed by the 2024-25 Local Government Finance Settlement.

3.3 Budget and Financial management and the impact of Covid-19

West Berkshire has an excellent record of budget and financial management, though the 2022-23 outturn showed a significant overspend for the first time, and major financial pressures continue to impact the Council for 2023-24. The level of under and overspends in recent years is as follows:

Year	Over/ -under spend £m	% of net budget
2012/13	-0.62	0.50%
2013/14	-0.45	0.37%
2014/15	0.03	0.02%
2015/16	0.12	0.10%
2016/17	0.01	0.01%
2017/18	0.28	0.23%
2018/19	-0.08	0.15%
2019/20	-1.50	-1.16%
2020/21	-4.60	-3.54%
2021/22	-0.20	-0.15%
2022/23	4.70	3.62%
2023/24 est	3.20	2.46%

This level of control is achieved by significant management and policy action to ensure that spending is kept within budgets each year. All relevant reports to the Executive have their financial effects identified and Operations Board keeps any emerging budget pressures under review during the year. Quarterly Performance reports are received by Corporate Board, Operations Board, the Executive, and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. These reports detail both budgetary and performance indicators. A traffic light system of indicators is used.

The Council has a number of demand led budgets. The Council has historically been able to manage changes to demand to ensure a sound financial standing at the end of the financial year, 2022-23 was a clear outlier to this historical performance.

There has also been a significant impact on business rates. In 2020-21 the Council passported almost £40m of business rates reliefs to businesses across the district, with further business rates relief provided in 2021-22 as well as for the future financial year. The accounting for this will mean a significant move through reserves on the NNDR1 (government return for business rates) and on the collection fund. The collection of the residual business rates in 2020-21 and 2021-22 remained constrained and the estimates in the NNDR1 reflect this. The Council spread the Collection Fund deficit (for business rates and Council Tax) over a three year period, 2022-23 being the last year of this spreading. Significant uncertainty remains around, especially on business rates but to a lesser extent Council Tax, the amount of tax collected and what will need to be written off in future years, especially due to the national Revaluation of Business Rates in 2023 which has seen a significant increase in the total business rates bill for businesses across the district. The impact of the pandemic should now have all moved through the Council's collection fund, though collection rates of Council Tax are being reduced (as at October 2023 by approximately a 0.66% in year reduction) through the cost of living impacts on our

residents. It is expected that the overall Council Tax collection rate will be achievable over a four year period.

3.4 Adequacy of insurance and risk management

Strategic risk management is being embedded throughout the Council to ensure that all risks are identified, ameliorated and managed appropriately. The Council's insurance arrangements are a balance of external insurance premiums and internal funds to self-insure some areas. As well as an internal risk manager the Council also make use of an external consultant to advise on the level of funds required to underpin those risks not externally insured.

3.5 Overall financial standing of the authority

West Berkshire Council borrows money to support the Council's capital programme. It has calculated its capacity for borrowing within the provisions of the prudential framework and budgeted accordingly. The assumed Council Tax collection rate is 99.7% and this is an achievable if demanding target. Each 1% uncollected amounts to approximately £1.1m and any surplus or deficit on the collection fund is apportioned between the Council and its major precepting bodies the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Thames Valley Police Authority.

The Council can increase Council Tax (including the ASC precept) by 4.99% in the current year and is proposing to do so for 2024-25.

As part of the consideration of the financial standing of the Council, CIPFA have released a financial resilience index. The indicators included are relatively small in number, they do provide a comparative (versus other unitary councils) snapshot of the previous year's position. The summary below (for 2022-23) is highlighting that the Council's reserve position is, compared to others Councils, much lower. Other analysis from, for example OFLOG (Office of Local Government) supports the analysis below and highlights West Berkshire as having some of the lowest reserves as a percentage of revenue spend nationally; this was before the 2022-23 outturn. The revenue budget includes an increase in reserves of £2m, and the MTFs has a rise throughout of £6m to bring reserves back above the minimum level and increase these further to improve financial resilience.

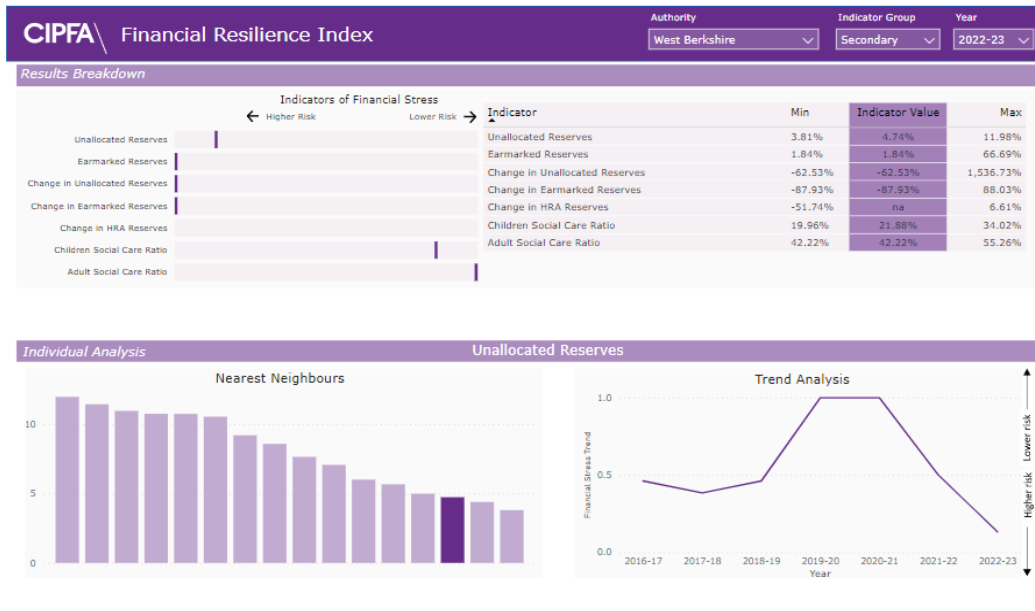
Specifically on the reserves position it shows that the Council has the lowest level of earmarked reserves against comparator Councils and in respect of the unallocated reserves, far lower levels than other Councils.

The Council has less comparable levels of debt and lower social care ratios versus other unitary authorities. The Council spends a comparably high level of revenue expenditure on interest repayment. Some of the savings proposals for 2024-25 are seeking to reduce this as the Council has much higher levels of capital financing than comparator Councils.

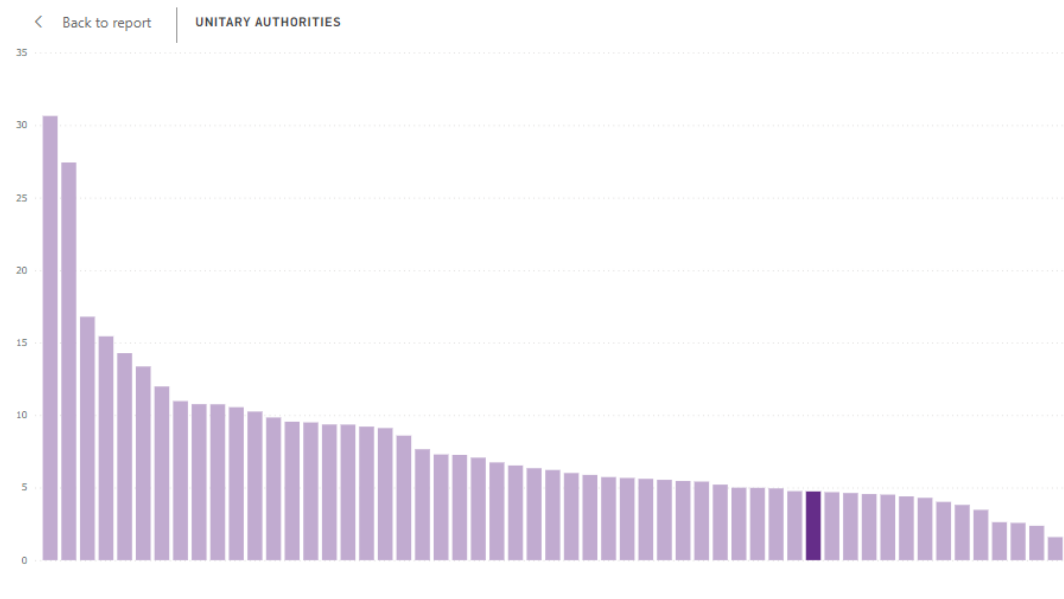
As part the above, general fund reserves are just above the minimum level set out in this appendix and appendix Fi **before** any overspend in 2023-24; as highlighted elsewhere in the revenue budget papers and Q3 paper to the Executive, the Council will have general reserves **below** the recommended level. The Council has the lowest level of earmarked reserves compared to other similar authorities in the

country. The below also highlights some risk around taxbase growth and this has been adjusted for across the financial papers in this budget cycle.

CIPFA Financial resilience index – 2022-23 summary



CIPFA Financial resilience index – unallocated reserves comparison vs other unitaries



3.6 The Council has an audited set of financial statements from 2020-21. Grant Thornton (the Council’s external auditors) did commence some work on the 2021-22 financial statements but have ceased to do any further work for many months. The Council prepared its 2022-23 financial statements on time (to the May 2023 deadline) and was one of only approximately 30% of Councils to meet this deadline. However, Grant Thornton have completed no work on the audit of the 2022-23 financial statements. The Council has undertaken a self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code and against the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities published Best Value standards from Summer 2023. These

Appendix Fii)

assessments will feed into the Annual Governance Statement¹ for the 2023-24 financial year, which is likely to continue having financial resilience as the primary governance risk for the Council.

4 Maintaining balances

4.1 The balance of the in year budgetary position against the proposed budget will be managed against the General Reserve and service specific reserves. If budget pressures emerge then it is first for the Service to contain, then the Directorate and finally a corporate issue. If there is still a pressure at year end then General Reserves and service specific reserves will reduce. If the General Reserve falls below the minimum recommended level, it would need to be replenished to restore the minimum level. This helps ensure that the Council is in a position to maintain its service provision without drastic actions.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General fund	8.2	8.0	12.1	12.9	7.2	4.0

4.2 If an event occurs that is so serious it depletes the Council reserves to below the limit set, then the Council will take appropriate measures to raise general fund reserves to the recommended level in as soon a timeframe as possible without undermining service provision.

4.3 Due to the significant pressures on the Council's budget in 2022-23 and in 2023-24, almost all earmarked reserves except for the General Fund balance of £4m have been deployed either in 2022-23 or 2023-24. If the Council's financial position by Quarter Four of 2023-24 improves, this will release the pressure on reserves, but at present the forecast is for an in-year overspend of £3.2m and the general fund reserve being at £4m and this is £3m lower than the minimum level required. It is expected that, compared to other Councils, West Berkshire's size of reserves will have declined in respect of 2022-23. The Council does not expect to have the minimum level of reserves set aside in the General Fund for year end in 2023-24, this leaves very little buffer through general reserves and other earmarked reserves which increases the risk of the general fund reserve being further depleted. This puts even greater focus on ensuring the need for all budget holders to exercise the maximum in financial control and stewardship of funds to protect the General Fund reserve in 2024-25.

4.4 The 2024-25 budget does include an increase to general fund reserves of £2m to bring reserves up to £6m. This still remains below the minimum level required but is significantly narrowing the gap between the forecast level of reserves and the minimum level required.

5 Future risks

5.1 The analysis above, is solely focussed on what the current position and looking to the 2024-25 budget. Major pressures are emerging though on the some of the underlying assumptions that will be made beyond 2024-25. There are three key areas of focus and concern:

¹ See the 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement at [6. AGS 2022-23 SCS revised.pdf](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/AGS-2022-23-SCS-revised.pdf) ([westberks.gov.uk](https://www.westberks.gov.uk))

- Per the above, the declining overall reserve position and the need to maintain the utmost financial control for the financial years ahead to ensure that the Council does not go below its minimum level of General Fund reserve is the key risk for the budget ahead and beyond. The Annual Governance Statement highlights financial resilience as the key risk for the Council.
- The post 2025 financial position. The short term funding mechanisms put in place by Government provide an overall 6.7% increase in core spending power for 2024-24. This is welcome, but is far lower than the growth in costs for West Berkshire. The issue the Council needs to be most aware of in the latest Government spending plans is the post 2025 funding. This is forecast to be a real terms cut to 2028² and Government reform of business rates baselines, overall funding and utilising updated census figures are all likely to be detrimental to the Council's financial position.
- High Needs Block Deficit – at present the Council is allowed, along with all other upper tier Councils, to treat any overspends on the High Needs Block (HNB) within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as an accumulated deficit that does not count towards the General Fund reserve. This accounting treatment has now been extended to 2025-26 but raises further the importance of proposals to address this deficit in future Council activity. If this accounting treatment does not continue, the Council would have little option, with an accumulated DSG deficit at 31.3.23 of £4.8m which is forecast to reach £9.5m by 31.3.24, of issuing a s114 report.

6 Proposals to increase reserves to the minimum level

6.1 The s151 officer has a recommendation as to the minimum level of reserves, however, the budget for the year ahead is a member decision, where members shall regard to the report when making decisions about the calculations and the budget on which members vote for the year ahead.

6.2 There is a gap between the minimum level set and the project level of general fund reserve. Within the budget, there are proposals and opportunities to close this gap; for example:

- There is a contribution of £2m to increase the general fund reserve (this leaves a gap of £1m to the minimum level of general fund reserve, though the minimum level of reserves may need to rise in the future as the budget increases)
- There is investment of £2.2m of ongoing or one off investment. Where this investment is not linked to savings / income generation, then some of these investments could be delayed especially where they are new staffing posts, services, or reducing income options
- Some of the savings options could be re-considered to be increased in size though being aware of the risk associated with these, and income raised in line with inflation (where not set nationally)
- A further in year (2024-25) savings plan to reduce establishment costs

² <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/english-councils-core-spending-power-set-grow-11-real-terms-over-next-two-years>

- The Government is currently³ “inviting local authorities, sector representatives and other stakeholders to provide views on a set of options with respect to capital flexibilities and borrowing, to be managed locally, that could be used to encourage and enable local authorities to invest in ways that reduce the cost of service delivery and provide more local levers to manage financial resources” – *if* proposals come forward in line with the Government document, the Council would have the opportunity to replenish reserves (where they are demonstrably low, which West Berkshire’s are) through the sale of commercial property assets. At the time of writing, the implementation date is unknown, as is the extent to which Government implements any of the ideas included in the document.

6.3 It is for members when setting the budget to consider all options and reports as part of the overall approval of the budget.

Joseph Holmes
Executive Director (Resources) and s151 Officer
January 2024

³ [Call for views on new local authority capital flexibilities - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - Citizen Space](#)

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People Directorate Fees & Charges Proposals 2024/25

1 Adult Social Care

- 1.1 Councils have the power to charge for certain social care services and are required to have a charging policy that is demonstrably fair and does not undermine the overall objectives of social care – that is, to promote both independence and social inclusion of service users. It is recognised that the level of fees and charges can have a direct impact on usage and take up, and in some instances work against the Council’s social inclusion agenda by effectively discriminating against those who are less able to pay.
- 1.2 The Council’s policy is therefore to charge service users an ‘affordable’ amount, which is uplifted by inflation each year where appropriate. However, where other local authorities, or Health organisations, are purchasing Council services on behalf of their service users, the charges made to these organisations are designed to reflect the actual costs of the service.
- 1.3 West Berkshire Council’s Charging Policy for Adult Social Care services, introduced in 2015, states the individual will have one assessed charge for all services. All services will be added together before a service user is financially assessed.
- 1.4 The guidance allows for a prescribed list of allowances, for example, rent, mortgage, council tax, buildings insurance etc plus disability related costs, for example, community alarm system, extra heating costs that meet an individual’s presenting care needs.
- 1.5 These allowances are then deducted from the total income to give an assessable income when an individual is receiving care in a non-residential setting.
- 1.6 From April 2012 any new or reviewed eligible individual requiring support from Adult Social Care receives this in the form of a Personal Budget through which they can arrange their support. As of 1st April 2011, individuals have been charged for each day they have booked at a Resource Centre and only in exceptional circumstances will charges be waived for non-attendance.
- 1.7 There are generally two types of charges – discretionary and statutory:

- **Discretionary Charges**

Unless otherwise stated, the fee increases for 2024/25 is by the annual September CPI of 6.7%. The charge to other local authorities and Health organisations for places in West Berkshire Resource Centres will also be increased by 6.7% for 2024/25.

Community Based Services will be charged at the actual cost of the service, including administration costs.

Other Day Centre and Transport will be charged at the actual cost.

Some fees have been increased by more than 6.7% to ensure that the cost covers the work being undertaken.

- **Statutory Charges**

The method of assessing contributions from clients in long-term residential care is covered by section 14 of the Care Act 2014, the Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014, the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and the Council's ASC Charging Policy 2015.

The charges to full cost payers in WBC Homes, and to other Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards who access services run by West Berkshire Council, are based on current information in respect of cost and the estimated number of clients using the service.

Deputyship Fees are set by the Court of Protection.

CHARGE	UNIT	2022/23 INCOME	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25	NOTES	
RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING CARE:							
*	Residential and Nursing Care in Independent sector homes	Per Week	£6,280,078	527	Actual cost	Actual cost	Maximum charge subject to financial assessment
*	Residential Care in WBC Home - Notrees	Per Week	£211,688	28	971.00	1,068.10	
*	Residential Care in WBC Home - Willows	Per Week	£543,001	44	971.00	1,068.10	
*	Residential Care in WBC Home - Birchwood	Per Week	£731,176	53	1,007.70	1,209.20	
*	Nursing Care in WBC Home - Birchwood	Per Week			1,007.70	1,209.20	
*	Residential and Nursing care in WBC Homes - charge the assessed contribution whilst in hospital if bed retained at the home	Per Week	Included in above income	Included in above numbers	Assessed Charge	Assessed Charge	
*	Residential and Nursing care in WBC Homes - charge the assessed contribution from date of admission even if client subsequently decides to leave the home during the review period	Per Week			Assessed Charge	Assessed Charge	

Statutory charge *

CHARGE	UNIT	2022/23 INCOME	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25	NOTES
COMMUNITY SUPPORT:						
* Day activities and transport	Per Day / Per Journey	£247,887	256	Actual cost	Actual cost	Maximum charge subject to financial assessment
Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Monitoring and Response Service	Per Day			£0.63	£0.63	
Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Monitoring only	Per Day			£0.46	£0.46	
* Direct Payments (DP)	Per DP	£412,492	154	Actual cost	Actual cost	
* Personal Care	Per Hour	£3,178,376	639	£23.90	TBC Feb 2024	
* Live-In Care	Per Week			Actual cost	Actual cost	
* CommunitySupport	Per Hour	£1,216,889	529	£18.60	TBC Feb 2024	
* Extra Care Housing (ECH) at Alice Bye Court for CommunitySupport and Personal Care	Per Hour			Actual cost	Actual cost	
* Extra Care Housing (ECH) at Alice Bye Court for Core Care charge for on-site response service	Per Week			£30.22	£32.20	
* Extra Care Housing (ECH) at Audrey Needham House & Redwood House for Community Support and Personal Care	Per Hour			Actual cost	Actual cost	
* Extra Care Housing (ECH) at Audrey Needham House & Redwood House for Core Care charge for on-site response service	Per Week			£29.00	£30.90	
* Sleep In Care	Per Night			Actual cost	Actual cost	
* Waking Night cover	Per Night			Actual cost	Actual cost	
* Respite Care	Per Night	£26,228	26	Actual cost	Actual cost	
* WBC Resource Centre	Per Day	£306,535	166	£57.70	£61.60	
* WBC Resource Centre outreach workers	Per Hour			£22.90	£24.40	
* WBC Resource Centre transport	Per Journey			£10.30	£11.00	
* WBC Resource Centre meals	Per Meal	£45,888	120	£6.10	£6.50	
WBC Resource Centre to other LA's and ICB's - Older People	Per Day	£15,798	2	£80.20	£85.60	
WBC Resource Centre to other LA's and ICB's - Learning Disability	Per Day			£130.30	£139.00	
WBC Resource Centre to other LA's and ICB's - Physical Disability	Per Day			£121.00	£129.10	

Statutory charge *

CHARGE	UNIT	2022/23 INCOME	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25	NOTES
ADMINISTRATION FEES:						
* Administration fee for commissioning care for full cost clients	Per Annum	£31,925	256	£268.00	£286.00	
* Set up fee for deferred payers	Set Up	£179,461	251	£174.00	£186.00	
* Administration fee for deferred payers	Per Annum			£291.00	£310.00	
Support in making a Lasting Power of Attorney application	Per Application			£181.00	£193.00	
* Next of kin support administration following the death of a Deputyship client	Per Hour			£119.80	£127.80	
Support in making a Deputyship application	Per Application			£408.00	£435.00	
* Work up to the date that the Deputyship order is issued	Per Annum			£745.00	Fees are set by the Court of Protection	
* Deputyship - Annual management fee first year	Per Annum			£775.00		Dependent on client's capital
* Deputyship - Annual management fee for subsequent years	Per Annum			£650.00		
* Deputyship - Property management fee	Per Annum			£300.00		
* Deputyship - Prepare and lodge of annual return to OPG	Per Return			£216.00		
* Deputyship - Preparation of a basic HMRC income tax return	Per Return			£70.00		
* Deputyship - Preparation of a complex HMRC income tax return	Per Return			£140.00		
* Deputyship - travel	Per 1.5 hours			£40.00		
Support in making a Appointeeship application	Per Application			£151.00	£161.10	
Completion of Mental Capacity (COP3) application	Per Application	Fee introduced 2023/24	£50.00	£53.40		

Statutory charge *

CHARGE	UNIT	2022/23 INCOME	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25	NOTES
ADULT PLACEMENTS:						
* Band 1 - Full time placement	Per Week	£264,074	60	£259.61	£264.63	Maximum charge subject to financial assessment
* Band 2 - Full time placement	Per Week			£290.52	£295.54	
* Band 3 - Full time placement	Per Week			£321.43	£326.45	
* Band 1 - Respite	Per Night			£73.56	£74.96	
* Band 2 - Respite	Per Night			£80.76	£82.16	
* Band 3 - Respite	Per Night			£96.22	£97.62	
* Band 1 - Over Night	Per Night			£51.92	£52.91	
* Band 2 - Over Night	Per Night			£62.22	£63.21	
* Band 3 - Over Night	Per Night			£72.53	£73.52	
* Band 1 - Day support	Per Hour			£10.42	£11.44	
* Band 2 - Day support	Per Hour			£12.63	£13.87	
* Band 3 - Day support	Per Hour			£13.87	£15.11	
* Management fee - Full time placement	Per Week			£27,875	10	
* Management fee - Respite	Per Week	£38.00	£40.50			
* Management fee - Day support	Per Hour	£5.00	£5.30			

Statutory charge *

Phoenix Resource Centre	2022/23
Total Income	23,171
Number of transactions	83

CHARGE	UNIT	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
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PHOENIX RESOURCE CENTRE:

Ground floor Theatre (with lighting and audio system) from	Per Day	£101.50	£108.30
	Per Half Day	£53.10	£56.70
	Per Hour	£25.20	£26.90
Ground floor Theatre (with lighting and audio system) to	Per Day	£177.60	£189.50
	Per Half Day	£95.20	£101.60
	Per Hour	£45.70	£48.80
Audience seating (setting up and taking down)	Per Day	£83.30	£88.90
	Per Half Day	£83.30	£88.90
	Per Hour	£83.30	£88.90
First floor Theatre office	Per Day	£19.00	£20.30
	Per Half Day	£19.00	£20.30
	Per Hour	£19.00	£20.30
Ground floor frailty and dementia suite (Lilac Lounge)	Per Day	£101.00	£107.80
	Per Half Day	£53.00	£56.60
	Per Hour	£17.70	£18.90
Ground floor physical disability suite (Sunshine Room)	Per Day	£67.10	£71.60
	Per Half Day	£34.20	£36.50
	Per Hour	£12.00	£12.80
Ground floor sensory cooking room	Per Day	£67.10	£71.60
	Per Half Day	£34.20	£36.50
	Per Hour	£12.00	£12.80
Ground floor sensory room	Per Day	£67.10	£71.60
	Per Half Day	£34.20	£36.50
	Per Hour	£12.00	£12.80
Ground floor optimusic room	Per Day	£67.10	£71.60
	Per Half Day	£34.20	£36.50
	Per Hour	£12.00	£12.80
Ground floor dining room	Per Day	£101.50	£108.30
	Per Half Day	£53.10	£56.70
Ground floor dining room and kitchen	Per Day	£114.10	£121.70
	Per Half Day	£59.70	£63.70
Ground floor small activity room	Daily Rate	£33.30	£35.50
	Per Half Day	£17.10	£18.20
	Per Hour	£7.60	£8.10
First floor TT activity room	Per Day	£67.10	£71.60
	Per Half Day	£34.20	£36.50
	Per Hour	£12.00	£12.80

Statutory charge *

CHARGE	UNIT	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
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PHOENIX RESOURCE CENTRE CONTINUED:

First floor Moving and Handling training room 1	Per Day	£149.00	£159.00
	Per Half Day	£121.10	£129.20
	Per Hour	£41.20	£44.00
First floor Moving and Handling training room 1 - room only	Per Day	£74.40	£79.40
	Per Half Day	£61.90	£66.00
	Per Hour	£21.40	£22.80
First floor large meeting room without equipment	Per Day	£41.90	£44.70
	Per Half Day	£21.60	£23.00
	Per Hour	£8.80	£9.40
First floor large meeting room with equipment	Per Day	£54.60	£58.30
	Per Half Day	£26.60	£28.40
	Per Hour	£10.60	£11.30
First floor small meeting rooms	Per Day	£25.20	£26.90
	Per Half Day	£13.20	£14.10
	Per Hour	£4.90	£5.20
Accessible shower facility and personal care rooms	Per Hour	£11.30	£12.10

Statutory charge *

Hungerford Resource Centre	2022/23
Total Income	0
Number of transactions	0

CHARGE	UNIT	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
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HUNGERFORD RESOURCE CENTRE:			
Ground floor main activity room	Per Day	118.00	125.90
	Per Half Day	59.70	63.70
	Per Hour	20.90	22.30
Ground floor computer suite	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
Ground floor quiet room	Per Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Half Day	15.80	16.90
	Per Hour	6.20	6.60
Ground floor hairdressing salon	Per Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Half Day	15.80	16.90
	Per Hour	6.20	6.60
First floor meeting room 1	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
First floor meeting room 2	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
Accessible shower facility and personal care rooms	Per Hour	11.30	12.10

Statutory charge *

Greenfield Resource Centre	2022/23
Total Income	0
Number of transactions	0

CHARGE	UNIT	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
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GREENFIELD RESOURCE CENTRE:

Atrium	Per Day	118.00	125.90
	Per Half Day	59.70	63.70
	Per Hour	20.90	22.30
Computer suite	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
Highview room	Per Day	88.80	94.70
	Per Half Day	45.00	48.00
	Per Hour	15.80	16.90
Shaw room	Per Day	88.80	94.70
	Per Half Day	45.00	48.00
	Per Hour	15.80	16.90
Windmill room	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
Sensory room	Per Day	60.20	64.20
	Per Half Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Hour	10.60	11.30
Small office	Per Day	30.30	32.30
	Per Half Day	15.80	16.90
	Per Hour	6.20	6.60
Accessible bath facility and personal care rooms	Per Hour	11.30	12.10
Security opening and locking building at weekends	Per Day	21.60	23.00

Statutory charge *

Social Care Training

1.8 The Government provides funding for care sector training, and we use this funding to deliver a comprehensive joint training programme for staff and people working in the private and voluntary care sector. Anyone can access the training. The grant funding enables charges to local and accredited social care providers to be subsidised, hence the lower rate fee. Charging is essential to make the funding go further and ensure people book on courses and turn up. An increase of 6.7% has been applied to these charges for 2024/25, in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

1.9 The Department of Health requires Councils to work closely with its partners on joint training and to facilitate improved standards of care through training initiatives; therefore, some joint training will have the same charges as the partners involved and will sit outside this charging policy.

Social Care Training	2022/23
Total Income	22,031
Number of transactions	33

CHARGE	UNIT	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
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ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S COURSES:			
Personal Assistants	Full Day	£50.00	£53.40
	Half Day	£30.00	£32.00
Private Social Care and all others	Full Day	£104.00	£111.00
	Half Day	£58.00	£61.90
Voluntary / Associated Social Care	Full Day	£58.00	£61.90
	Half Day	£30.00	£32.00
CORPORATE COURSES:			
Personal Assistants	Full Day	£50.00	£53.40
	Half Day	£30.00	£32.00
Private Social Care and all others	Full Day	£104.00	£111.00
	Half Day	£58.00	£61.90
Voluntary / Associated Social Care	Full Day	£104.00	£111.00
	Half Day	£58.00	£61.90
FOSTER CARE COURSES:			
Personal Assistants	Full Day	£50.00	£53.40
	Half Day	£30.00	£32.00
Private Social Care and all others	Full Day	£104.00	£111.00
	Half Day	£58.00	£61.90
Voluntary / Associated Social Care	Full Day	£58.00	£61.90
	Half Day	£30.00	£32.00
OTHER COURSES FOR PRIVATE, VOLUNTARY, AND INDEPENDENT SECTOR:			
Associated Organisations	Full Day	£181.00	£193.10
Non Associated Organisations	Full Day	£469.00	£500.40

2 Education: Family Hubs

2.1 The Family Hubs may enter into hire agreements in order to deliver services to children, young people, families and the local community. Family Hubs are non-profit making organisations and as such it is agreed that West Berkshire Family Hubs have a reduced charge for statutory providers for use of the Centres' facilities where they are delivering services for families with children 0-5 years that fall within the remit of Family Hubs e.g.

- Family Groups and contact visits held by Children Services
- Clinics and drop-in's held by Health Professionals

2.2 The Family Hubs started to charge for activity sessions provided to the general public in 2018/19. These activities are pre-booked via an online booking system. Activities are allocated to a pricing band, depending on their nature.

Family Hubs Fees and Charges (charges per hour)

Family Hubs						
	Fees 2023/24			Proposed Fees 2024/25		
Room Hire	Non profit Organisation	Profit Organisation	Statutory Services	Non profit Organisation	Profit Organisation	Statutory Services
East District - Calcot	£11.50	£22.50	£7.00	£12.25	£24.00	£7.50
Central District - Thatcham Park Lane	£11.50	£22.50	£7.00	£12.25	£24.00	£7.50

Note: contributions are accepted for Stay and Play activities towards refreshments.

Family Hubs Additional Fees and Charges (Out of hours)

**Charges after 6pm Weekdays and on Saturdays

	Fees 2023/24		Proposed Fees 2024/25	
Room Hire	**Caretaker Opening Charge	**Caretaker Waiting Time Charge	**Caretaker Opening Charge	**Caretaker Waiting Time Charge
1 Hour	£11.50	N/A	£12.25	N/A
2 Hours	£11.50	£8.00	£12.25	£8.50
3 Hours	£11.50	£12.00	£12.25	£12.80
4 Hours	£11.50	£16.00	£12.25	£17.00
5 Hours	£11.50	£19.50	£12.25	£20.80
6 Hours	£11.50	£23.50	£12.25	£25.00
Fees for after hours bookings	£4.00		£4.25	

Family Hubs Activity Sessions

	Fees 2023/24	Proposed Fees 2024/25
Band	£	£
A	£0 - £3.50	£0 - £3.70
B	£3.51 - £11.50	£3.71 - £12.25
C	£11.51 - £22.50	£12.26 - £24.00

Name of session/Group	Charging Band	Basis
All Stay, Play & Learn Groups	A	Per family per session
Messy Play	A	Per family per session
All Baby Groups	A	Per family per session
Post Natal Group	A	Per family per session
Family Learning Courses	A	Per learner per session
Baby massage	B	Per family per session
Paediatric First Aid	C	Per adult one off session

3 Education: Home to School Transport

The Standard Rate has increased by £42 per year from £930 (academic year 2023/24) to £972 (academic year 2024/25) to reflect increasing transport cost. The Rate represents £5.17 for a return journey per school day. The Rate applies across West Berkshire so that rural communities are not disadvantaged with a higher price.

Home to School Transport Fees and Charges

Home to School Transport		
Banding	Fees 2023/24	Fees 2024/25
Standard rate	£930	£990
Replacement bus pass admin fee	£15	£15
Rail pass admin fee	£20	£20

4 Communities & Wellbeing: Culture and Libraries Proposed Fees and Charges

Culture			
Description		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
Shaw House			
		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
Shaw House - Room Hire Charges:			
Registered Charity	per hour	£22.00 - £36.00	£23.50 - £38.50
Public Sector and Community use	per hour	£29.00 - £43.00	£31.00 - £46.00
Commercial use	per hour	£37.00 - £57.00	£39.50 - £60.00
Museum			
		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
West Berkshire - Archaeological Archive Box Fee			
Fieldwork Fee This charge covers the fieldwork notification and processing of the Archaeological deposit and includes issuing of an accession number and subsequent administration. Non-refundable.		£50.00	£50.00
Deposit Fee This charge includes the provision of up to three standard size boxes and the ongoing care and management of the archaeological deposit. Non-refundable.		£105.00	£105.00
Additional Boxes			
Full Box 0.4 x 0.25 x 0.22m =0.022m ³		£74.00	£74.00
Half Box 0.4 x 0.25 x 0.11 =0.011 m ³		£32.00	£32.00
Quarter Box 0.4 x 0.125 x 0.11 =0.00275 m ³		£21.00	£21.00
Eighth Box 0.2x 0.125 x 0.11 m= 0.00275m ³		£10.00	£10.00
Sixteenth Box 0.1 x 0.125 x 0.11 m oe 0.2x0.63x0.11 = 0.001375m ³		£0.00	£0.00
Skull Box = 1/2 Box 0.2 x 0.2 x0.25 = 0.012m ³		£35.00	£35.00
Human Bone = 1 1/2 Box 0.6 x 0.25 x 0.25 = 0.039m ²		£107.00	£107.00
Map Rolls per 100 grams ³		£2.00	£2.00
Archive Box deposit charges		£0.00	£0.00
Full Box 0.4 x 0.075 x 0.27m =0.0081m ³		£26.00	£26.00
Half Box 0.4 x 0.045 x 0.27 =0.0049 m ³		£16.00	£16.00
Heritage Service - Use of Image Collection			
If supplied for private personal use only the image production fee is payable. Images supplied for publication incur both an image production fee and a reproduction charge.			
Image Production Fee			
Photo Print - up to A6		£6.40	£6.85
Photo Print - up to A5		£11.00	£11.75
Photo Print - up to A4		£19.00	£20.30
Laser Scan - up to A4		£6.40	£6.85
Digital Scan - to CD		£19.00	£20.30

Digital Scan - to CD - Discounted rate for West Berkshire non-profit making organisations		Free	Free
		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
Reproduction Charges			
Commercial Publication:			
Up to full page, B&W or Colour		£49.00	£52.50
Up to Full Page B&W or Colour - Discounted rate for the promotion of culture in West Berkshire		£16.50 one image; £5.50 for all subsequent images	£17.50 one image; £6.00 for all subsequent images
Cover (front or back)		£90.00	£96.00
Cover (front or back) - Discounted rate for the promotion of culture in West Berkshire		£33 one image	£35.00 one image
Local Publication		£19.00	£20.00
Local Publication - Discounted rate for West Berkshire non-profit making organisations		£16.50 one image; £5.50 for all subsequent images	£17.50 one image; £6.00 for all subsequent images
Academic Publication		£34.00	£36.50
Academic Publication, etc. - Discounted rate for West Berkshire non-profit making organisations		£16.50 one image; £5.50 for all subsequent images	£17.50 one image; £6.00 for all subsequent images
Magazine or Newspaper		£49.00	£52.00
Advertising or Brochure		£90.00	£96.00
Exhibition Use		£49.00	£52.00
Exhibition Use - Discounted rate for West Berkshire non-profit making organisations		£33.00 one image £11.00 for all subsequent images	£35.00 one image £12.00 for all subsequent images
Website (3-year use)	Per 3 Years	£90.00	£96.00
Website (3-year use) - Discounted rate for West Berkshire non-profit making organisations	Per 3 Years	£33.00 one image £11.00 for all subsequent images	£35.00 one image £12.00 for all subsequent images
Supply fee			
Image already in our catalogue and supplied in a physical format	Plus Postage	£18.00	£19.00
New photograph required taken in-house and supplied digitally	Per Object	£58.00	£62.00
New photograph required taken in-house and supplied in a physical format	Per Object, plus postage	£76.00	£81.00
Copying and laminating charges			
These charges are common with the library service			
A4 Photocopy b/w		£0.10	£0.15
A4 Photocopy colour		£0.60	£0.65
A3 Photocopy b/w		£0.30	£0.35
A3 Photocopy – colour		£1.00	£1.20

Libraries			
Description		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
Reservation Charges			
Items available in SELMS libraries		£3.00	£3.00
Overdue Charges			
Overdue Books for children	per day	£0.10	£0.10
Overdue Books for Adults	per day	£0.25	£0.30
Admin fee for debt recovery process		£14.00	£15.00
Printing and Photocopying charges			
A4 B&W		£0.10	£0.15
A4 Colour		£0.60	£0.65
A3 B&W		£0.30	£0.35
A3 Colour		£1.00	£1.20
Microfilm Copying		£0.20	£0.25
Other Charges for Library Services			
Lost Tickets		£3.00	£3.00
Reference and Research enquiry charges		NWN enquiries: £22 per half hour, (WB library members get first half hour free). Copying charges are additional and there is a £3 admin charge for postage.	<u>NWN enquiries: £23,50</u> per half hour, (WB library members get first half hour free). Copying charges are additional and there is a £3 admin charge for postage.
Book group service (per annum)		£30.00	£32.00
Vocal Scores		£6 per month per set of 20 scores from SE region. (Loans in multiples of 20.)	£7 per month per set of 20 scores from SE region. (Loans in multiples of 20.)
Orchestral sets from SE region	per month	£18.00	£19.00
Play sets from SE region	per month	£7.00	£7.50
Room Hire			
Newbury Library - Carnegie Lounge (reduced rate available for charities/ local non-profit organisations).	per hour	£21.00	£22.40
Newbury Library - Advice point -small meeting room (reduced rate available for charities/ local non-profit organisations).	per hour	£12.00	£12.80
Theale Library (reduced rate available for charities/ local non-profit organisations).	per hour	£20.00	£21.30
All other libraries	per hour	£11.00	£11.70

Culture for the purposes above, includes the arts in all its forms, events and festivals, tourist attractions, the historic and “natural” landscape (buildings, places, open spaces), parks and gardens, libraries, museums and museum collections, local customs and folklore, the culture of food and the diversity of the people who live here.

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Place and Resources Fees & Charges Proposals – 2024-25

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The starting point for the base budget for the 2024-25 budget build is that fees and charges should increase at least in line with inflation in order to maximise income accepting that:
- Fees and charges can have a direct impact on usage and take up.
 - In some circumstances the Council is providing services in direct competition to the private sector. Where this is the case, price is likely to have a direct link with demand and it is important that the Council does not price itself out of the market. In some areas benchmarking has taken place to ensure West Berkshire can compete with other authorities.
 - Raising fees and charges can in some instances work against the Council's social inclusion agenda by effectively discriminating against those who are less able to pay.
 - For some services there is a clear expectation that fees and charges will reflect the costs incurred in providing the service; the Council may be subject to legal challenge if increases in fees and charges cannot be justified.
- 1.2 Statutory fees are not set by the council and may be subject to change during the year.
- 1.3 Fees below are correct at the time of publication, some may change during the year for operational reasons, subject to the appropriate authorisations.

2. Proposals – Place Directorate

2.1 Development and Regulation

(1) Housing

Temporary accommodation is charged in line with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates which have not yet been released for 2024-25.

Properties which are managed under lease agreements for Registered Providers or private landlords are capped at 90% 2011 LHA level.

Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) leases will be increased in line with the Social Rent Cap.

The Council also charge for homeless households placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Households will need to claim Housing Benefit, or will be charged up to the amount Housing Benefit would pay, if they were eligible. In addition households will need to pay the ineligible charges, mainly breakfast. These charges are proposed to increase in line with inflation for 2024-25.

The Council may also charge applicants placed in emergency bed provision at Two Saints Hostel. Applicants are unable to claim Housing Benefit when placed in an emergency bed. A charge of £1 a night may be made for emergency bed provision for people who are not

employed and £5 a night for people who full or part time employment. However the process for charging for emergency accommodation at Two Saints Hostel is under review with a view to bringing the process in line with that for other types of temporary accommodation.

In some instances, the Council provides transport to temporary accommodation for households who have no other means of getting to that accommodation. The cost of providing the transport will be recharged, in full to the client.

The Council can assist with providing removals and/or storage for homeless applicants. The full cost of providing this service will be recharged to the client.

The Council can assist with securing cattery or kennel provision for homeless applicants in temporary accommodation, as pets are not permitted in temporary accommodation. The full cost of providing this service will be recharged to the client.

The Council provides repairs and maintenance to a small supply of temporary accommodation, including an out-of-hours service. In the event that a tenant or licensee uses the emergency service for a non-emergency repair, or fails to attend an appointment for a contractor to attend to a repair, a charge will be made to the tenant to cover the call-out costs. Where repairs arise as a result of neglect or damage caused by the tenant or licensee, or a member of their household, or a visitor to their home, the full cost of the repair will be recharged to the tenant or licensee.

Housing related support services will be charged at the actual cost of the service received.

The Council charges Registered Providers for advertising properties through its Choice Based Lettings Scheme. The current rates are:

- Sovereign - £26,000 flat rate (based on scale)
- Other Registered Providers - £50 per advert (billed quarterly in arrears)

Proposal to increase Sovereign rate to £27,500 pa for 24/25.

For 2024-25 the council will charge an agency fee of 12% to any application for grants or loan where these are overseen and managed by the Home Improvement Agency.

DESCRIPTION	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Copy of housing assessment	No Charge	No Charge
Average rent for temporary accommodation per week	In Line with Local Housing Allowance Leased accommodation capped at 90% 2011 LHA level	In Line with Local Housing Allowance Leased accommodation capped at 90% 2011 LHA level
Do It Yourself Ownership rent (DIYSO) rent	Social Rent Cap applied to individual contracts	Social Rent Cap applied to individual contracts
Transport costs to temporary accommodation (TA)	Actual cost	Actual cost
Gypsy Traveller rent (Per week, per plot)	£98	£98
Home Improvement Agency (HIA) fee for private adaption work	12% of total cost of works to eligible clients	12% of total cost of works to eligible clients
Choice Based Letting billing Sovereign	£26,000 pa	£27,500
Choice based Letting billing Other Registered Providers	£50 per advert placed (billed quarterly in arrears)	£50 per advert placed (billed quarterly in arrears)
Failed call out charges	Actual cost	Actual cost
B&B charging		
Ineligible Charges for Bed and Breakfast Accommodation:		
Heating, lighting and hot water per week per Family Unit*	£46.55	£46.55
Breakfast per person, per week	£4.00	£4.18
* Family Units Include: Single person, Couple - no children, Couple with 1-4 children, Single person with 1-4 children.		

(2) Development Control

(a) Pre-application advice

The fees & charges for Pre-Application Advice have been uplifted by an average of 10%, with the introduction of bespoke fees for requests that form Planning Performance Agreement. The service have taken the opportunity to remove fees & charges which have not been used in the previous two financial years.

Pre-Application Advice	2022/23
Total income	£53,191

Pre-Application Advice: Minor Operations			
APPLICATION TYPE	TYPE OF ADVICE	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
Householder	Written Advice Only	£178	£196
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£285	£314
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£285	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£387	£426
Adverts	Written Advice Only	£278	£306
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£385	£424
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£385	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£493	£542
Listed Building Consent Advice	Written Advice Only	£198	£218
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£305	£336
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£305	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£405	£446
Change of Use (Land only)	Written Advice Only	£198	£218
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£333	£366
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£333	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£451	£496
Telecommunications (including prior notifications/approvals)	Written Advice Only	£206	£227
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£314	£345
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£314	n/a*
	Written Advice after S/Visit + meeting	£440	£484
Shopfronts	Written Advice Only	£245	£270
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£326	£359
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£326	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£406	£447
Agricultural and Forestry development (including prior notifications / approvals)	Written Advice Only	£246	£271
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£493	£542
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£493	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£615	£677
Renewable Energy Development under 1 hectare	Written Advice Only	£178	£196
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£285	£314
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£285	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£387	£426
Renewable Energy Development over 1 hectare	Detailed Advice	£4,400	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£755	£831
Discharge, vary or remove a condition	Detailed Written Advice only	50% of equivalent type of development	
Engineering Operations under 0.5 hectare	Written Advice Only	N/A	£196
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	N/A	£314
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	N/A	£426

APPLICATION TYPE	TYPE OF ADVICE	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
Engineering Operations over 0.5 hectare	Detailed Advice	N/A	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	N/A	£831
*due to lack of customer take up, this service is no longer being offered			

Pre-Application Advice: Residential Development (including new build houses, changes of use to houses/flats, mobile homes for residential use)			
APPLICATION TYPE	TYPE OF ADVICE	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
1 new residential dwelling	Written Advice Only	£266	£293
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£333	£366
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£333	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£422	£464
	Advice in Principle only	£133	£146
2-4 new residential dwellings	Written Advice Only	£533	£586
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£599	£659
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£599	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£710	£781
	Advice in Principle only	£266	£293
5-9 new residential dwellings	Written Advice Only	£1,066	£1,173
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£1,199	£1,319
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£1,199	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£1,443	£1,587
	Advice in Principle only	£533	£586
10-25 new residential dwellings	Written Advice Only	£1,865	£2,052
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£2,065	£2,272
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£2,065	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£2,242	£2,466
	Advice in Principle only	£932	£1,025
26-49 new residential dwellings	Detailed Advice	£3,663	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£1,066	£1,173
50-99 new residential dwelling	Detailed Advice	Initial payment of £4,995	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£1,332	£1,465
100-199 new residential dwelling	Detailed Advice	Initial payment of £6,105	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£2,220	£2,442
200-499 new residential dwelling	Detailed Advice	Initial payment of £8,325	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£2,775	£3,053
500+ new residential dwelling	Detailed Advice	Initial payment of £9,435	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£3,330	£3,663
*due to lack of customer take up, this service is no longer being offered			

Pre-Application Advice: Non-residential Development			
APPLICATION TYPE	TYPE OF ADVICE	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
Less than 249sqm	Written Advice Only	£294	£323
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£389	£428
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£389	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£551	£606
	Advice in Principle only	£142	£156
Between 250 – 499sqm	Written Advice Only	£533	£586
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£599	£659
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£599	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£910	£1,001
	Advice in Principle only	£266	£293
Between 500 - 1000sqm	Written Advice Only	£1,066	£1,173
	Written Advice after a Site Visit.	£1,199	£1,319
	Written Advice with a meeting – No SV	£1,199	n/a*
	Written Advice after Site Visit + meeting	£1,332	£1,465
	Advice in Principle only	£400	£440
Between 1000 - 2,499sqm	Detailed Advice	£2,664	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£533	£586
Between 2,500 – 4,999sqm	Detailed Advice	£3,663	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£599	£659
Between 5000 – 9999sqm	Detailed Advice	£4,884	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£755	£831
Greater than 10,000sqm	Detailed Advice	£6,105	Bespoke service and fee agreement provided through PPA
	Advice in Principle only	£899	£989

*due to lack of customer take up, this service is no longer being offered

(b) Planning

Planning Application Fees are set centrally by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in line with 'The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2023' (and any subsequent amendments).

These were uplifted on 6th December 2023. Please refer to website for details of the scale of fees at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/planningfees>

Planning Fees	2022/23
Total income	£968,007

	PROPOSED FEE 2023/24 (including VAT)	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 (including VAT)
Planning history search	£50 each	Customers referred to website as search can be done online
General Planning Policy Advice	£150 per hour	n/a*
Ecology Advice	£150 per hour	n/a*
Conservation Advice	£150 per hour	n/a*
Senior Manager attendance	£150 per hour	n/a*
Discretionary Work	N/A	£165 per hour
Technical Specialist Document Review	N/A	£165 per hour
*This work is now included under Discretionary Work		

	PROPOSED FEE 2023/24 (including VAT)	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 (including VAT)
Duty Planning Officer Advice	Free. Refer to website for full details/limitations of service at https://www.westberks.gov.uk/contact-duty-planning-officer .	
Confirmation of compliance with a S106/ compliance with a notice	£100	£150 per hour
Pre-Validation Checking Service:	£60 per hour	n/a*
A technical officer will check the following for common errors, omissions or disclaimers: - Application Form - Location/Block Plan - CIL Form - Plan(s)	Householder, advertisement and prior notification applications – 1 hour	n/a*
	Minor and similar applications – 2 hours	n/a*
	Major and similar complex applications – 4 hours	n/a*
Two Strikes – Invalid submissions (if an application is not validated in two successive submissions)	25% of Application fee	25% of Application Fee
Charging for invalid applications (that have not been made valid within 28 days)	Householder, advertisement and prior notification applications – £60	25% of Application Fee
	Minor and similar applications – £110	
	Major and similar complex applications – £250	
Advice which is not covered by any of the above Categories	£150 per hour	£165 per hour
Copy of Decision Notice, TPO, Appeal Decision Notice, Enforcement Notice	£30	n/a*
*due to lack of customer take up, this service is no longer being offered		

(3) Archaeology

Archaeology	2022/23
Total income	£9,245

Archaeology and Historic Environment Record Charges	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
A4 computer print out (b/w) HER Data	£0.22	£0.15*
A4 computer print out (colour) HER data	£0.66	£0.65*
A3 computer print out (b/w) HER Data	N/A	£0.35
A3 computer print out (colour) HER Data	£1.10	£1.20
Research charges for staff time dealing with HER enquiries	Hourly rate of £150 exc. VAT with a minimum of £75 exc. VAT for the first half hour.	£165 per hour with a minimum charge of £100.
Providing archaeological information and advice for agri-environment scheme in line with nationally agreed service standards	Scale of charges, depending on the type of scheme and the area covered, in line with nationally agreed service standards	Scale of charges, depending on the type of scheme and the area covered, in line with nationally agreed service standards
Discretionary Work	n/a	£165 per hour
*fee aligned with Culture & Library charges for photocopying		

(4) Public Protection Partnership

The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) provides chargeable services on behalf of West Berkshire Council and Bracknell Forest Council. The proposed fees for 2024-25 have been agreed by the Joint Public Protection Committee and the relevant licensing committees of the two councils.

PPP chargeable services can be found in Appendix Giii.

(5) Registration Services

Registration fees are largely controlled by statute. It is proposed to increase all discretionary fees in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

Registration Service Fees	2022/23
Total income	£400,054

Registrars				
		FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT	
*	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership	£35	£35
		Additional fee for Saturday appointment	£28	£30
*	Register Office	Available Wednesday morning. Fee paid at time of notice and includes fee for a certificate	£46	£46
	Shaw House Ceremony Room - Up to 46 guests	Monday - Friday	£308	£329
		Saturday	£342	£365
	Shaw House Great Hall - Up to 100 guests	Monday - Friday	£433	£453
		Saturday	£467	£498
	Ceremonies at approved premises	Mon-Fri	£539	£575
		Saturday	£573	£611
		Sunday & Bank Holiday	£655	£699
	Additional Ceremony Hall Decoration	Great Hall	n/a	£1.00 per chair
	Approved Premise Licence - any number of rooms		£2,373	£2,532
	Celebratory Services - Baby Naming / Affirmation of vows - Shaw House	Monday to Friday	£303 + VAT	£323
		Saturday	£384 + VAT	£410
	Celebratory Services - Baby Naming / Affirmation of vows - At approved premises	Monday - Friday	£361 + VAT	£385
		Saturday	£432 + VAT	£461
		Sunday & Bank Holiday	£484 + VAT	£516
	Private Citizenship ceremony Mon to Sat		£142	£152
	Marriages & Civil Partnerships Booking Fee (non refundable)		£29	£31
	Ceremony Amendment Fee (Change of date/time)		£15	£16
	Additional Registrar Fee	Superintendent Registrar	£19	£20
		Registrar	£16	£17
	Marriages & Civil Partnerships Cancellation Fee	More than 4 months before ceremony	Fees refunded minus £111	£118
		1-4 months before ceremony	50% refund	50% refund
		Less than 1 month before ceremony	No refund	No refund
*	Certificates	All Certificates	£11	£11
		Priority service within 24 hours	£35	£35

* Statutory fee

	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
Additional Fees:		
* Consideration by a Superintendent Registrar of a divorce/civil partnership dissolution obtained outside of the British Isles	£50.00	£50.00
* Consideration by the Registrar General of a divorce/civil partnership dissolution obtained outside of the British Isles	£75.00	£75.00
* Forename added within 12 months of birth registration	£40.00	£40.00
* Consideration by a Registrar/Superintendent Registrar of a correction application to a register entry	£75.00	£75.00
* Consideration by the Registrar General of a correction application to a register entry	£90.00	£90.00
* Reduction in 28 day notice	£60.00	£60.00
* Consideration of correction by RG	£90.00	£90.00
* Consideration of divorce/CP dissolution by RG	£75.00	£75.00
* RG licence	£15.00	£15.00
* Statutory fee		

Additional Fees:	FEE 2023/24 - including VAT	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25 - including VAT
Proof of Life Forms	£20	£20

2.2 Environment

- 1) **Car Park Charges** – There has been a restructure in the fees and charges for Car Parking as part of the 2024-25 budget setting process. The purpose of each car park has been reviewed in line with the draft parking strategy with the proposed fees reflecting this. Charges to permit fees are also proposed, and a higher charge will be applied to second permits from 2025/26. For 2023/24 Car Park charges, please see the Fees & Charges report from last year: [Fees & Charge 23/24](#)

Car Parking	2022/23
Total Income	£3,031,939

		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Newbury - Car Park Charges (Monday to Sunday including Bank Holidays):		
A - Central KFC, Central (N) Library, Corn Exchange, Kennet Centre, Pelican Lane, West Street (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.70
	Up to 2 hours	£3.00
	Up to 3 hours	£4.20
	Up to 4 hours	£5.50
	Up to 6 hours	£7.50
	Up to 8 hours	£9.00
	Over 8 hours	£13.00
	Evening Charge	£2.50
B - Eight Bells, Northcroft Lane, Wharf (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.70
	Up to 2 hours	£3.00
	Up to 3 hours	£4.20
	Up to 4 hours (maxstay)	£5.50
	Evening Charge	£2.50
C1 - Northbrook Multi-storey (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.50
	Up to 2 hours	£2.50
	Up to 3 hours	£3.50
	Up to 4 hours	£4.50
	Over 4 hours	£5.50
	Evening Charge	£2.50
C2 - Northcroft Lane West (Monday to Sunday, 01 October to 31 March) Football Club (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£2.00
	Up to 3 hours	£3.00
	Up to 4 hours	£4.00
	Over 4 hours	£5.00
	Evening Charge	£2.50
E - Northcroft Lane West (Monday to Sunday, 01 April to 30 September)	Up to 2 hours	Free
	Up to 3 hours	£1.00
	Up to 4 hours	£2.00
	Over 4 hours	£4.00
	Evening Charge	£2.50
C2 - Football Club (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£2.00
	Up to 3 hours	£3.00
	Up to 4 hours	£4.00
	Over 4 hours	£5.00
	Evening Charge	£2.50
D - Goldwell Park, Northcroft Leisure Centre (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 3 hours	Free
	Up to 4 hours	£1.00
	Up to 6 hours (maxstay)	£2.00
	Evening Charge 7pm	£1.00
F - Newbury Station (Monday – Friday including bank holidays)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£2.00
	Up to 3 hours	£3.00
	Up to 4 hours	£4.00
	Peak daily charge (arrive before 10am) Ticket expires 23:59	£7.30
	Off Peak daily charge (arrive after 10am) Ticket expires 23:59	£4.40
F - Newbury Station (Saturday & Sunday)	Up to 2 hours	£2.00
	Up to 4 hours	£3.50
	Daily Charge	£4.40

		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Out of Newbury Car Park Charges (Monday to Sunday including Bank Holidays):		
G - Church Street (Hungerford), River Meadow (Pangbourne), Station Road (Pangbourne) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£1.50
	Up to 3 hours	£2.00
	Up to 4 hours	£2.50
	Over 4 hours	£6.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
H - Station Road (Hungerford) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£1.50
	Up to 3 hours	£2.00
	Up to 4 hours	£2.50
	Over 4 hours	£3.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
I - Burdwood Centre (Thatcham) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 2 hours	Free
	Up to 3 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours	£1.60
	Over 4 hours	£3.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
J - Gilbert Court (Thatcham) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	Free
	Up to 2 hours	£0.80
	Up to 3 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours	£1.60
	Over 4 hours	£3.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
K - Kingsland Centre (Thatcham) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£1.50
	Up to 3 hours	£2.00
	Up to 4 hours	£2.50
	Over 4 hours	£3.50
	Evening Charge	£1.00
L - Theale Main (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£0.80
	Up to 2 hours	£1.20
	Up to 3 hours	£1.60
	Up to 4 hours	£2.00
	Over 4 hours	£3.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
M - Theale West (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 1 hour	£0.80
	Up to 2 hours (maxstay)	£1.50
	Evening Charge	£1.00
N - High Street (Lambourn) (Monday to Sunday)	Up to 4 hours	£1.00
	Over 4 hours	£2.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
O - Station Road (Thatcham) (Monday to Sunday)	After 10am Monday-Friday, and Weekends	£2.20
	Before 10am Monday-Friday	£3.60
P - Kennet Leisure (Thatcham) (Monday to Friday 7:30am to 5:30pm)	Up to 2 hours	Free
	Up to 3 hours	£1.00
	Over 3 hours	£10.00

		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
On-street Parking Charges (Monday to Sunday including Bank Holidays):		
OA - Newbury: Bartholomew Street, Broadway, Cheap Street, Northbrook Street	Up to 30 mins	Free
	Up to 1 hour (max stay)	£1.20
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OB - Newbury: Kings Road West, Pelican Lane, West Mills	Up to 30 mins	Free
	Up to 1 hour	£1.20
	Up to 2 hours (maxstay)	£2.20
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OC - Newbury: Newtown Road (North)	Up to 30 mins	Free
	Up to 2 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours (maxstay)	£2.20
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OD - Newbury: Newtown Road (South)	Up to 4 hours	£1.00
	Over 4 hours	£1.50
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OE - Newbury: Catherine Road, Link Road	Up to 2 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours	£2.20
	Over 4 hours	£4.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OE - Newbury: Station Road	Up to 2 hours (all day)	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours (all day)	£2.20
	Over 4 hours (all day)	£4.00
OF - Newbury: Old Bath Road	Up to 2 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours	£1.70
	Over 4 hours	£2.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OG - Newbury: Faraday Road, Ampere Road, Kelvin Road & Marconi Road	Up to 30 mins	Free
	Up to 2 hours	£1.20
	Up to 4 hours	£1.70
	Over 4 hours	£2.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OH - Hungerford: High Street	Up to 1 hour	£1.00
	Up to 2 hours	£1.50
	Up to 3 hours	£2.00
	Up to 4 hours	£2.50
	Over 4 hours	£6.00
	Evening Charge	£1.00
OJ - Thatcham: Pipers Lane, Aylesford Way	Up to 4 hours (all day)	£1.00
	Over 4 hours (all day)	£1.70

		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Parking Season Tickets		
ST1, ST2 and ST3 - Newbury (Central KFC, Library, Kennet Centre, Pelican Lane)	Annual	£1,040.00
	Quarter	£325.00
	Month	£130.00
ST4 - Newbury(Northbrook)	Annual	£440.00
	Quarter	£137.50
	Month	£55.00
ST5 - Newbury(Newbury Station)	Annual	£585.00
	Quarter	£180.00
	Month	£75.00
ST6 and ST7 - Hungerford (Station Road) and Theale (Main)	Annual	£240.00
	Quarter	£75.00
	Month	£30.00
ST8 - Pangbourne (Station Road)	Annual	£480.00
	Quarter	£150.00
	Month	£60.00
ST9 - Thatcham (Kingsland Centre)	Annual	£280.00
	Quarter	£90.00
	Month	£35.00

		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Resident Parking Permits		
Tier 1 - Hungerford – High Street (HHS), Newbury – Park Terrace (PT)		£80.00
Tier 2 - Newbury (except Park Terrace) (C1, E1, N1, NW1, SE1, SW1, SW2, W1)		£50.00
Tier 3 - Hungerford (except High Street) (H1), Pangbourne (P1), Thatcham (TM), Theale (TE)		£40.00
Tier 4 - Chieveley (CH), Lambourn (L1)		£30.00

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Resident Visitor Permits			
Hungerford – High Street (HHS), Newbury – Park Terrace (PT)		n/a	n/a
1 – 100 Permits	Per permit	n/a	£1.00
101+ Permits	Per permit	n/a	£1.50
Visitor (Special Parking) Permit	Per annum	£30.00	£30.00
All Zone Permits (for professional carers)			
Medical professionals and non-profit care companies only		Free	£10.00
Commercial care providers		Free	£50.00

Other Charges		FEE 2023/24		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25		
Blue Badge (new application)		£10.00		£10.00		
Replacement Blue Badge		£10.00		£10.00		
Parking Dispensation		Per Day		£15.00		
Parking Suspensions		Per application		£15.00		
		Per 5m bay per day		£10.00		
		FEE 2023/24		PROPOSED FEE 2024/25		
Council owned EV Charge Points (these are the base charges and will be subject to increase/decrease in line with the Council's 2022/23 electricity costs).		Min	Max	Min	Max	
Slow (7kWh) Charger		per kWh	40p	79p	35p	75p
Fast (22kW AC) Charger		per kWh	45p	50p	40p	50p
Rapid (50kW DC) Charger		per kWh	50p	60p	45p	60p
Overstay fee (for Rapid charger).		per hour after 2 hours	£10.00		£10.00	

2) Licence Fees, Permits and Other Charges

Fees are charged for a range of services e.g. where Highway Authority approval is required to place items or to work on the public highway. These include vehicular crossings, skips, scaffolds, table and chairs on the highway, issuing permits for and inspecting utility operations, temporary or permanent traffic regulation orders. It is proposed to increase these charges in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

Licence Fees, Permits and Other Charges			
		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Tree Preservation Order		£31	£33
Michaelmas Fair		£4,444	£4,742
Public Rights of Way	Search fees	£86	£92
	Path order fees	£1,670 - £4,277	£1,782 - £4,564
Statutory Declarations		£253 flat rate with rights to increase if the work required is onerous	£270 flat rate with rights to increase if the work required is onerous
Highways Act Charges:			
Land charges		£60	£64
Vehicular Crossing (S.184)	Approval	£173	£185
Skips on the Highway (S.139)	Initial fee	£53	£57
	per week	£62	£66
Scaffold/hoarding on the Highway (S.169/172)	Initial fee	£107	£114
	per week	£61	£65
Tables and Chairs on the Highway (based on number of Chairs) (S.115)	1 to 10	£270	£288
	10 to 27	£443	£473
	27+	£887	£946
Storing Materials on the Highways (S.171)	Initial fee	£101	£108
	per week	£33	£35
EV charging duct across footpath (S.171)	Approval	£170	£181
Temporary Excavation in the highway (S.171)		£134	£143
Cranes, machinery, structure on the highway (S.178)		£194	£207
S142 Licence to plant in the highway		£161	£172

Permits under SI 2014 No. 3110 Highways, England and the Traffic Management (West Berkshire Council) Permit Scheme Order 2014 (Maximum Permissible Charge)

These are maximum charges, pending consultation on changes to the West Berkshire Permit Scheme.

	FEE 2023/24				PROPOSED FEE 2024/25			
	Main Roads			Minor Roads	Main Roads			Minor Roads
	0, 1 and 2	3 and 4		3 and 4	0, 1 and 2	3 and 4		3 and 4
Reinstatement category of street	0, 1 and 2	3 and 4		3 and 4	0, 1 and 2	3 and 4		3 and 4
Street designated as traffic sensitive or not	All streets	Traffic sensitive at some times/locations		Non traffic sensitive at any time or location	All streets	Traffic sensitive at some times/locations		Non traffic sensitive at any time or location
Time and location of activity	Any time and location	Any part within traffic sensitive times / locations	Wholly within non traffic sensitive times / locations	Any time and location	Any time and location	Any part within traffic sensitive times / locations	Wholly within non traffic sensitive times / locations	Any time and location
* Provisional Advance Authorisation	£69	£69	£49	£49	£69	£69	£49	£49
* Major Works - over 10 days and all major works requiring a traffic regulation order	£156	£156	£98	£98	£156	£156	£98	£98
* Major works - 4 to 10 days	£156	£156	£98	£98	£156	£156	£98	£98
* Major works - up to 3 days	£156	£156	£98	£98	£156	£156	£98	£98
* Standard Activity	£85	£85	£49	£49	£85	£85	£49	£49
* Minor Activity	£43	£43	£30	£30	£43	£43	£30	£30
* Immediate Activity	£39	£39	£26	£26	£39	£39	£26	£26
* Permit Variation	£30	£30	£23	£23	£30	£30	£23	£23

* Statutory fee

	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Other Licences and Charges:		
Licence to place advertising sign on public highway (A board or similar).	£63	£67
Streetworks licence (S.50 NRSWA)	£303	£323
* Utility Works Inspection (NRSWA/TMA)	£57	£50
* Fixed Penalty Charge (Utility Companies) NRSWA/TMA	£120/£80	£120/£80
* Working on the highway without a valid permit	£500 (£300 if paid within 29 days)	£500 (£300 if paid within 29 days)
* Follow up Inspection (utility works)	£68	£120
Permanent Traffic Regulation Order for Developer	£999.00	£1,066
** Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders Section 14(1)	£2,000	£2,334
Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders Section 14(1) - Cancellation fee for applications withdrawn less than four weeks prior to Order coming into force (equal to 50% of the fee)	n/a	£1,146
Re-use and/or re-notification of a pre-existing Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (equal to 50% of the fee)	n/a	£1,146

**	Emergency Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders Section 14(2)	£2,000	£2,434
**	Retrospective Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders Section 14(2)	£2,000	£2,434
		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
	Extension of Temporary Traffic Regulation Order or Notice (equal to 25% of the fee)		£573
	Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders Section 16A where appropriate & Section 21 of TPCA	£90	£96
	Cutting through signal loops and not informing LA	£600 plus cost of recutting loops	£640 plus cost of recutting loops
	Tourist / Direction signs	£617 application and design fee, plus cost of actual sign installation. No charge for unsuccessful applications.	£658 application and design fee, plus cost of actual sign installation. 50% rebate for unsuccessful applications.
	Traffic Signs / Signals Equipment damaged by Road Traffic Accident or other event	Cost of repairs plus 10% administration charge.	Cost of repairs plus 10% administration charge.
	Use of permanent Traffic Regulation Order for railway crossing works	£93	£99
**	Access Protection Marking (single standard width dropped kerb driveway)	£250	£267
	Sewerage treatment property charge	£450	£480
*	Cycle Training (non-schools)	£42	£60
	Cycle Training (schools)	£10	£10
	Road Safety Training: School Streets online course (cost per place)	n/a	£20
	Road Safety Training: Biker Down (cost per place)	n/a	£15
	Road Safety Training: Rider Down (cost per place)	n/a	£15
	Road Safety Training: Mountain Bike Skills (cost per place)	n/a	£15
	Road Safety Training: DriveStart (cost per place)	n/a	£15
	Recovery and storage of unauthorised signs	£161	£172
*	Street Works Core Sampling - Charge per failed core test	£200 (this is an average cost - actual cost calculated from the Coring Advice Note published by SEHAUC)	£200 (this is an average cost - actual cost calculated from the Coring Advice Note published by SEHAUC)
	Switch out / Switch on of permanent traffic signals	n/a	£550.00
	* Statutory fee		
	** Benchmarked fee		

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Provision of Data:			
**	Highway search enquiries		
	One A4 plan covering 100 metres of highway	£75	£80
	Additional 100 metres	£25	£27
	Additional question	£25	£27
	Provision of recorded injury accident Data	£161 + £52 per additional block of up to 10 accidents	£172 + £55 per additional block of up to 10 accidents
	Provision of Traffic Data, per request per site:		
	data up to 1 year old	£161	£172
	data up to 3 years old	£129	£138
	data over 3 years old	£94	£100
	* Statutory fee		

** Benchmarked fee

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Charges in relation to works occupying the carriageway during period of overrun (S74) (maximum fee)			
Item	Description of street	Amount (£) (each of first three days)	Amount (£) (each subsequent day)
* 1	Traffic-sensitive or protected street not in road categories 2,3 or 4	10,000	10,000
* 2	Other street not in road categories 2,3 or 4	2,500	2,500
* 3	Traffic-sensitive or protected street in road categories 2	8,000	8,000
* 4	Other street in road category 2	2,000	2,000
* 5	Traffic-sensitive or protected street in road category 3 or 4	750	750
* 6	Other street in road category 3 or 4	250	250
*Statutory fee			

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Charges in relation to works outside the carriageway during period of overrun (S74) (maximum fee)			
Item	Description of street	Amount (£)	Amount (£)
* 1	Street not in road category 2, 3 or 4	2,500	2,500
* 2	Street in road category 2	2,000	2,000
* 3	Street in road category 3 or 4	250	250
* Statutory fee			

3) Public Transport

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Public Transport			
Charge per departure		£0.60	£0.60
Bus stands 0400-1800	up to 20 minutes	£0.00	£0.00
	20 minutes to 1 hour (max stay)	£1.20	£1.20
Coach stands 0400-1800	up to 90 mins (max stay)	£4.00	£4.20
Bus/coach stand and Bays B-F Mon-Sat 1800-0400 and all day Sunday	up to 3 hours	£3.00	£3.10
	over 3 hours	£6.00	£6.30
Additional charge for breaches		£25.00-£50.00	£25.00-£50.00
Temporary bus stop closure	Per stop	£180.00	£192.00
	Per pair of opposite stops	£210.00	£224.00
Provision of information at bus stops for services not subsidised by WBC	Per stop	£11.20	£12.00
Concessionary bus pass replacement fee		£16.50	£16.50
Fares on Council-supported bus services (Single, return, adult, child and multi-journey tickets)	Differing fares for each start-destination combination and bus route, with prices for single and return journeys, adult and child rates, in addition to multi-journey tickets. Details on multi-journey tickets can be found at Transport Tickets and Fares - West Berkshire Council . Details on single/return/adult/child fares can be found on bus stops or by contacting transport@westberks.gov.uk		

4) Highways Development Control & Pre-Planning Application Advice

Fees are charged to developers for design checking, supervision and inspection of new roads under construction and off site highway improvements. The charges proposed have been benchmarked with other authorities. It is proposed to increase these charges in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Highways Development Control Fees			
Street naming and numbering - Property name change		£101	£108
Changes to new addresses due to the development changing after the schedule has been issued.	Per plot	£101	£108
Street Naming and Numbering - New Developments	One address / plot	£97	£103
	2 - 5 addresses / plots	£151	£161
	6 - 10 addresses / plots	£280	£299
	11 - 20 addresses / plots	£445	£475
	21 or more addresses / plots	£23	£25
S115 E Fee		£601	£241
Provision of Pre-Planning Application Advice			
Transport Assessment Scoping Note		£188	£201
Draft Transport Assessment		£635	£678
Provision of Private Access		£117	£125
Highway Advice for New Developments	Less than 5 dwellings	£188	£201
	5 to 25 dwellings	£424	£452
	26 to 79 dwellings	£551	£588
	80 to 200 dwellings	£635	£678
	More than 200 dwellings	£718	£766
	0 to 249 sqm	£154	£164
	250 sqm to 999 sqm	£271	£289
	1,000 to 9,999 sqm	£424	£452
Meeting charge	per hour per officer	£157	£168

5) Sustainable Drainage Pre-Application Advice Fees

It is proposed that the fees for sustainable drainage advice and meeting charges are to increase these charges in line with CPI inflation at September 2023

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Sustainable Drainage Pre-Application Advice Fees			
SuDS advice for Major sites (written responses only).	Up to 20 dwellings	£278	£297
	Over 20 dwellings	£500	£534
Meeting charge	Per hour per officer	£157	£168

		FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Ordinary Watercourse and Land Drainage Consent Pre-application Advice			
Written advice for a general site enquiry or flood risk assessment enquiry.	Per enquiry	£300	£320
Meeting charge	Per hour per officer	£157	£168
Further written advice after meetings		£180	£192
Any additional correspondence/advice required upon application	Per hour per officer	£157	£168

6) Hire of Sports Facilities

Sports facilities at Henwick Worthy, Holy Brook, Northcroft, Moorside and The Diamond at Greenham. It is proposed to increase the charges for use of our sports facilities in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

Sports Pitches	2022/23
Total Income	£88,983

Sports Facilities					
		Fees and Charges 2023/24		Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25	
		Single Booking	Block Booking	Single Booking	Block Booking
Henwick Worthy Sports Ground:					
Cricket – 1 st Hand Wicket (per match)	Adult	£121.10	£100.88	£129.00	£108.00
	Junior	£55.77	£46.55	£60.00	£50.00
Cricket – 2 nd Hand Wicket (used grass)	Adult	£89.66	£74.66	£96.00	£80.00
	Junior	£43.55	£36.33	£46.00	£39.00
Cricket – Artificial Wicket	Adult	£80.55	£67.10	£86.00	£72.00
	Junior	£41.11	£34.22	£44.00	£37.00
Cricket – 2 nd (Reserve) Artificial Wicket	Adult	Free	Free	Free	Free
	Junior	Free	Free	Free	Free
Football – Grass (per game)	Adult	£91.66	£76.44	£98.00	£82.00
	Junior	£44.88	£37.44	£48.00	£40.00
Football - Mini Pitch	Adult	£51.88	£43.22	£55.00	£46.00
	Junior	£25.89	£21.66	£28.00	£23.00
Rugby – Grass (per game)	Adult	£91.66	£76.44	£98.00	£82.00
	Junior	£44.88	£37.44	£48.00	£40.00
Rugby Training	Cost Per Hour	£24.89	£20.78	£27.00	£22.00
Use of Portable Lights	Cost Per Hour	£24.89	£20.78	£27.00	£22.00
Full Pitch Artificial Grass - peak	30 Mins	£49.66	£41.44	£53.00	£44.00
	1hr Only	£99.32	£82.77	£106.00	£88.00
	1hr 30mins (11 a side)	£149.10	£124.21	£159.00	£133.00
Half Pitch Artificial Grass - peak	30 Mins	£27.78	£23.11	£30.00	£25.00
	1hr Only (5 a side)	£55.55	£46.33	£59.00	£49.00
	1hr 30mins	£83.33	£69.44	£89.00	£74.00
Full Pitch Artificial Grass – off-peak	30 Mins	£23.11	£19.33	£25.00	£21.00
	1hr Only	£46.33	£38.66	£49.00	£41.00
	1hr 30mins (11 a side)	£69.44	£57.88	£74.00	£62.00
Half Pitch Artificial Grass – off-peak	30 Mins	£12.00	£10.11	£13.00	£11.00
	1hr Only (5 a side)	£24.22	£20.11	£26.00	£21.00
	1hr 30mins	£36.22	£30.22	£39.00	£32.00
Hardcourt Activities:					
Netball (per court per hr) (OUT OF ORDER AT TIME OF PUBLICATION)	Adult	£25.89	£21.55	£28.00	£23.00
	Junior	£13.00	£10.78	£14.00	£11.00
Tennis (per court per hr) (OUT OF ORDER AT TIME OF PUBLICATION)	Adult	£7.78	£6.44	£8.00	£7.00
	Junior	£4.22	£3.44	£5.00	£4.00
Basketball Hardcut and BMX Pump Track	Adult	Free	Free	Free	Free
	Junior	Free	Free	Free	Free
Moorside:					
Football - Grass (Per Game)	Adult	£76.77	£63.88	£82.00	£68.00
	Junior	£38.00	£31.77	£41.00	£34.00
The Diamond -Greenham:					
Football - Grass (Per Game)	Adult	£76.77	£63.88	£82.00	£68.00
	Junior	£38.00	£31.77	£41.00	£34.00
Holybrook Park:					
Football – Grass (per game)	Adult	£76.77	£63.88	£82.00	£68.00
	Junior	£38.00	£31.77	£41.00	£34.00

		Fees and Charges 2023/24		Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25	
		Single Booking	Block Booking	Single Booking	Block Booking
Northcroft Recreation Ground:					
Football - Grass (per game)	Adult	£76.77	£63.88	£82.00	£68.00
	Junior	£38.00	£31.77	£41.00	£34.00
Open space hire for coaching/ community use/festivals/other entertainment.		P.O.A		P.O.A	
Peak Rate – Weekday evenings after 6pm and all day Saturday, Off-Peak Rate – Weekdays before 6pm and all day Sunday, Block Booking: 10 games and over, Schools Rate: £22.41 Per Hour (£26.89 inc vat if applicable)					

7) Charges to Householders for Sewage Treatment

Approximately 150 properties, mainly in rural areas, are connected to small sewage treatment plants. These are the responsibility of West Berkshire Council to maintain, having previously been the ownership of Newbury District Council from when the housing stock was transferred to Sovereign Housing Association. The householders pay a fee to the Council which contributes to the maintenance costs.

8) Waste

Following a change in legislation, the government has announced a ban on charging for 'DIY'-type waste from households. Charging is allowed by exception if visits are more than the specified thresholds. In addition there is a reduction in the charge for the 1st Garden Waste Bin in line with Council Executive requests.

As part of the government's Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, The Environmental Offences Regulations 2023 was passed on the 31 July 2023 increasing the maximum penalty for Fly tipping related offences from £400 to £1,000 and the maximum penalty for Duty of care offences was raised from £400 to £600. It is therefore proposed to set our penalty for fly tipping to £1,000 and for Duty of Care offences to £400. All other fees where possible are proposed to increase in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

Waste Services			
		Fees and Charges 2023/24	Proposed Fees and Charges 2024/25
Special Collection Charges (Bulky Household Collection)	Normal (within 7 days)	£50	£60
	Within 7 days by appointment outside property	£67	£77
	Within 7 days by appointment inside property	£78	£88
Provision of wheelie bin		£30	£35
Collection of garden waste for year (scheduled) - for 1st green bin (new subscriptions or renewals).		£58	£55
Garden Waste service charge for 2nd to 5th green bins (For renewals only where one off set up payment has already been made).		£44	£50
Removal of fly tipping on private land		Price on Application	Price on Application
Removal of graffiti up to 2m ² area		Price on Application	Price on Application
Section 33 Fixed Penalty Notice for Fly Tipping		£200	£1,000
Section 34 Fixed Penalty Notice for Duty of Care Offences		£200	£400
HWRC non-household waste charges:			
Soil and Rubble	Less than two 50 litre bags or a single item no larger than 2000mm x 750mm x 700mm in size.	£2.70	£0.00
	Per 25-litre bag or its equivalent, or for a single item exceeding the free limit above, or if a household makes over four visits within a four-week period.	n/a	£3.00
	Standard Car/Hatchback	£15.30	£17.00
	Trailer	£25.80	£28.00
	Small Van /Estate Car	£31.60	£34.00
	Transit van or similar	£105.70	£113.00
Plasterboard	Less than two 50 litre bags or a single item no larger than 2000mm x 750mm x 700mm in size.	£2.33	£0.00
	Per 25-litre bag or its equivalent, or for a single item exceeding the free limit above, or if a household makes over four visits within a four-week period.	n/a	£2.50
	Standard car / Hatchback	£14.32	£16.00
	Trailer	£23.75	£26.00
	Small Van / Estate car	£28.65	£31.00
	Transit Van or similar	£95.00	£102.00
Tyres	Motorised mini bike / motorised go-kart	£2.61	£3.00
	Standard tyre off rim (car / motorcycle)	£5.55	£6.00
	Standard tyre on rim (car / motorcycle)	£7.77	£9.00
	Medium tyre off rim (large 4 x4 / large van)	£10.00	£11.00
	Medium tyre on rim (large 4 x 4 / large van)	£12.20	£14.00
	Miscellaneous tyres	£2.78	£3.00
Gas canisters		£6.66	£0.00
Charges for Non WBC Residents:			
Use of HWRCs	Charge per visit	£7.77	£9.00

3) Proposals – Resources Directorate

1) Electoral Services

These charges are statutory and the Council has no discretion to vary the level.

2) Local Land Charges

Following a benchmarking exercise the Con29 searches will have different charges for Residential & Commercial Categories, with the charge amount increasing above inflation. All other fees have been uplifted in line with CPI inflation at September 2023.

To note: LLC1 searches (searches made on the local land charging register) are due to move from Local Authorities to the Land Registry this project is due to be completed in the first quarter of 2024-25, therefore income for these searches will cease for West Berkshire Council. Maintenance of the LLC1 remains with the Council.

Land Charges	2022/23
Total Income	£223,623

	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
LLC1	£60.00	£64.00
Solicitors Additional Questions	£54.00	£58.00
LLC1 additional parcel	£48.00	£51.00

	FEE (including VAT) 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE (including VAT) 2024/25
Con29 - Residential*	£87.00	£150.00
Con29 - Commercial**	£87.00	£192.00
Con29 extra questions	£30.00	£31.20
Con29 additional parcel	£64.00	£66.00
*Residential definition	An individual residential property, including any garden and associated parking/garage	
**Commercial definition	Shops, offices, factories, warehouses, business premises, farms, fields and land	

3) Legal Services Fees

Fees & Charges for Legal Services have been uplifted in line with CPI inflation at September 2023, with the exception of Landowners Statements which has remained the same following benchmarking work by the Service.

Legal Services	2022/23
Total Income	£195,076

CHARGE	RATE	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Solicitors, Barristers, Chartered Legal Executives of 8 Years + PQE	Hourly	£173	£185
Solicitors, Barristers and Chartered Legal Executives between 4 and 8 year PQE	Hourly	£159	£170
All other fee earners (including Paralegals and Legal Executives but excluding Trainee Solicitors)	Hourly	£147	£157

Trainee Solicitors	Hourly	£123	£131
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Provision under, or for the purpose of which, the application is made	Purpose of application	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
Section 15A of the Commons Act 2006; section 15 Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013	Landowners' Statements	£1,200	£1,200
Section 15(1) of the Commons Act 2006	Registration of a new Town or Village green, other than by the Owner	No Fee	No Fee
Section 15(8) of the Commons Act 2006	Registration of a New Town or Village Green by Landowner	No Fee	No Fee
Section 19 of the Commons Act 2006	Correction, for the purpose of Section 19(2)(a) and [c]of a mistake made by the Registration Authority	No Fee	No Fee
Section 19 of the Commons Act 2006	Correction, for a purpose described in section 19(2)(b) or (e)	£200	£213
Section 19 of the Commons Act 2006	Correction, for a purpose described in section 19(2)(d) – payable per register unit	£30	£32
Schedule 2, paragraph 2 or 3 to the Commons Act 2006	Non-registration of Common Land or Town or Village Green	No Fee	No Fee
Schedule 2, paragraph 4 to the Commons Act 2006	Waste Land of a Manor not Registered as Common Land	No Fee	No Fee
Schedule 2, paragraph 5, to the Commons Act 2006	Town or Village Green wrongly registered as Common Land	No Fee	No Fee
Schedule 2, paragraphs 6 9 to the Commons Act 2006	Deregistration of certain land registered as common land or as a Town or Village Green	£1,000	£1,067

4) Council Tax & Business Rates Fees

Fees relating to recovery of unpaid Council Tax & Business Rates are set in consultation with the Ministry of Justice. There are no planned changes in the fees for 2023-24, other than a £2 reduction by the Magistrates Court for the cost of a Summons for non-payment.

	CHARGE	INCOME 2022/23	FEE 2023/24	PROPOSED FEE 2024/25
**	Summons cost	£529,962	£57.50	£55.50
**	Liability Order cost		£50.00	£50.00
*	Penalty charge		£70.00	£70.00
*	Committal fee (Council Tax only)		£330.00	£330.00
*	Enforcement Agent compliance fee		£75.00	£75.00
*	Enforcement Agent visit fee		£235.00 + if debt is above £1,500 then 7.5% of the amount above £1,500 is added	£235.00 + if debt is above £1,500 then 7.5% of the amount above £1,500 is added
	* level set by government			
	** level set by Local Authority			

PUBLIC PROTECTION PARTNERSHIP FEES AND CHARGES 2024/2025

The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) provides chargeable services on behalf of two authorities, Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council.

Fees effective from 1 April 2024

Please Note:

- All Statutory Fees and those linked to national schemes are based on fees published on 08 September 2023 and may be subject to change by Central Government or the management of the schemes.
- The Hourly rate is **£67 ph** for 2024/25, if there is a minimum number of hours or it is capped it is indicated in the text below.
- Class A Statutory Fees are marked with **Pale Gold** and Class B Discretionary Fees are headed **Blue**
- There are some additional fees which will be due when making an application, these are listed separately (if known) and with a note if varied amounts
- If you have any questions regarding our fees and charges please contact PPP Partnership Support Customer Care team using our [Make an enquiry form](#).

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LICENCES, REGISTRATIONS AND CONSENTS

Pre Application Advice

We provide chargeable pre-application advice for the following licenses and consents:

License/Consents	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Gambling Act	£64ph	£67ph
Licensed Premises Notifications	£64ph	£67ph
Licensing Act 2003	£64ph	£67ph
Scrap Metal	£64ph	£67ph
Sex Establishments	£64ph	£67ph
Skin Piercing & Dermal Treatments	£64ph	£67ph
Street Trading Consents	£64ph	£67ph

Animal Licences

Animal Licences – (Class A – Fee Discretionary)			
*The granting fee includes initial inspection and mid-term inspection totalling 4 hours (unless stated differently). Inspections required beyond this due to additional visits and aborted visits will be charged at an additional fee **Additional vets fee payable		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
NEW - Animal Boarding Establishment - combined (dogs and cats)	Application Fee	£192	£201
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£448 minimum	£469 minimum
RENEWAL - Animal Boarding Establishment - combined (dogs and cats)	Application Fee	£160	£167.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£416 minimum	£435.50 minimum
NEW - Animal Boarding Establishment - single species (dogs or cats))	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£384 minimum	£402 minimum
RENEWAL - Animal Boarding Establishment - single species (dogs or cats))	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£352 minimum	£368.50 minimum
NEW - Home boarder (midterm inspections removed for 2024)	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Minimum 2 hours at £128*	Minimum 2 hours at £134*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£256 minimum	£268 minimum
RENEWAL - Home boarder (midterm inspections removed for 2024)	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 2 hours at £128*	Minimum 2 hours at £134*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£224 minimum	£234.50 minimum

NEW - Home Boarder - Franchisee arrangers licence (excludes inspection fee per host)	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Per inspection at hourly rate	Per inspection at hourly rate
	Total Fee (minimum)	£128 + host inspection fee	£134 + host inspection fee
RENEWAL - Home Boarder - Franchisee arrangers licence (excludes inspection fee per host)	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Per inspection at hourly rate	Per inspection at hourly rate
	Total Fee (minimum)	£96 + host inspection fee	£100.50 + host inspection fee
Assessment of hobby host as part of a franchisee licence	Host inspection fee	£128	£134
NEW - Dog Day Care	Application Fee	£192	£201
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£448 minimum	£469 minimum
RENEWAL - Dog Day Care	Application Fee	£160	£167.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£416 minimum	£435.50 minimum
NEW - Dog Breeding Establishment (**excluding vet fee)	Application Fee	£192	£201
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£448 minimum	£469 minimum
RENEWAL - Dog Breeding Establishment	Application Fee	£160	£167.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£416 minimum	£435.50 minimum
NEW - Dog Breeding Establishment (in domestic dwelling)(**excluding vet fee)	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£384 minimum**	£402 minimum **
RENEWAL - Dog Breeding Establishment (in domestic dwelling)	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£352 minimum	£368.50 minimum
NEW - Pet Vending / Sale of pets	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£384 minimum	£402 minimum
RENEWAL - Pet Vending / Sale of pets	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£352 minimum	£368.50 minimum

NEW - Animal for Exhibition	Application Fee	£192	£201
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£448 minimum	£469 minimum
RENEWAL - Animal for Exhibition	Application Fee	£160	£167.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£416 minimum	£435.50 minimum
Riding Establishment - Inspections are carried out annually, regardless of the star rating or length of licence, by a qualified Veterinarian Officer. **Vets fees will be recharged separately.			
NEW - Main inspection fee, plus fee per horse (**excluding vets fee)	Application Fee	£128	£134
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£416 minimum**	£402 minimum**
RENEWAL - Main inspection fee, plus fee per horse (**excluding vets fee)	Application Fee	£96	£100.50
	Granting Fee	Minimum 4 hours at £256*	Minimum 4 hours at £268*
	Total Fee (minimum)	£352 minimum**	368.50 minimum**
Fee per horse, for the first 10 horses		£16	£16.75
Fee per horse, for next 11-50 horses		£11	£11.50
Fee per horse, for every horse 51 & over		£9	£9.50
Other Fees			
Additional mid licence visit		£128	£134
Variation to the licence fee (inclusive of one visit)		£192	£201
Replacement licence fee (lost or stolen paperwork, change of name, etc.)		£32	£33.50
Re-evaluation of star rating (inclusive of one visit)		£128	£134
Transfer due to death of licensee	Admin cost	£32	£33.50

Wild Animals and Zoos

Wild Animals & Zoos	Duration	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
NEW - Dangerous Wild Animal Consent (** excluding vets fee)	2 years	£512	£536
RENEWAL - Dangerous Wild Animal Consent (** excluding vets fee)	2 years	£320	£335
NEW and RENEWAL - Zoo Licences Periodical inspections (** excluding Vets Fees)	Up to 6 years	£2240	£2345

Explosives Licences – Statutory

Description	Duration	All Council Areas
New licence for explosives below 250kg Net Explosive Content (NEC)	1 year	£113.00
	2 years	£147.00
	3 years	£181.00
	4 years	£215.00
	5 years	£248.00
Renewal of licence for explosives below 250kg Net Explosive Content (NEC)	1 year	£56.00
	2 years	£90.00
	3 years	£125.00
	4 years	£158.00
	5 years	£193.00
New licence for explosives above 250kg Net Explosive Content (NEC)	1 year	£193.00
	2 years	£253.00
	3 years	£317.00
	4 years	£390.00
	5 years	£441.00
Renewal of licence for explosives above 250kg Net Explosive Content (NEC)	1 year	£90.00
	2 years	£153.00
	3 years	£215.00
	4 years	£277.00
	5 years	£340.00
Varying the name of licensee or address of site		£38.00
Any other kind of variation		Cost Recovery
Transfer of licence		£38.00
Replacement Licence		£38.00
Full year registration for sale of fireworks (capped fee)		£500.00

Gambling Act 2005 – Statutory

Description	Type	All Council Areas
Casinos (regional)	New Application	£15,000
	Provisional Statement	£15,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£8,000
	Variation	£7,500
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£6,500
	Annual Fee	£15,000

Casinos (large)	New Application	£10,000
	Provisional Statement	£10,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£5,000
	Variation	£5,000
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£2,150
	Annual Fee	£10,000
Casinos (small)	New Application	£8,000
	Provisional Statement	£8,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£3,000
	Variation	£4,000
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£1,800
	Annual Fee	£5,000
Bingo Clubs	New Application	£3,500
	Provisional Statement	£3,500
	Application with Provisional Statement	£1,200
	Variation	£1,750
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£1,200
	Annual Fee	£1,000
Betting Premises	New Application	£3,000
	Provisional Statement	£3,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£1,200
	Variation	£1,500
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£1,200
	Annual Fee	£600
Tracks	New Application	£2,500
	Provisional Statement	£2,500
	Application with Provisional Statement	£950
	Variation	£1,250
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£950
	Annual Fee	£1,000
Family Entertainment Centres	New Application	£2,000
	Provisional Statement	£2,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£950
	Variation	£1,000
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£950
	Annual Fee	£750
Adult Gaming Centres	New Application	£2,000
	Provisional Statement	£2,000
	Application with Provisional Statement	£1,200
	Variation	£1,000
	Transfer/Reinstatement	£1,200
	Annual Fee	£1,000
Lotteries & Amusements	New Application	£40
	Annual Fee	£20
All licences	Notification of change	£50
	Copy of licence	£25
Club gaming or machine permit	New Application	£200
	Existing holder	£100
	Renewal	£200
	Annual Fee	£50
	Variation	£100
	Copy of licence	£15

Club Gaming or Machine Permit (holds a club Premises Certificate under Licensing Act 2003)	New Application	£100
	Renewal	£100
Licensed Premises Notifications		All Council Areas
To make available up to 2 gaming machines on premises which hold on-premises alcohol licence	Notification of intention	£50
Gaming Machine Permit (more than 2 machines) on-premises which hold on premises alcohol licence	Application (existing holder)	£100
	New Application	£150
	Annual Fee	£50
	First Annual Fee (payable within 30 days of date permit takes effect)	£50
	Variation	£100
	Transfer	£25
	Change of name	£25
	Copy of permit	£15

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences

Vehicle Licences		Bracknell Forest 2023/24 Fee	West Berkshire 2023/24 Fee	All Council Areas (where applicable) 2024/25 Fee
Hackney Carriage Vehicle – NEW		£288	£288*	£301.50*
Hackney Carriage Vehicle – RENEWAL		£256	£256*	£268*
Private Hire Vehicle – NEW		£288	£288	£301.50
Private Hire Vehicle – RENEWAL		£256	£256	£268
Home to school – NEW and RENEWAL		£160	-	£167.50
Private Hire Vehicle with Dispensation - NEW		£288	£288	£301.50
Private Hire Vehicle with Dispensation - RENEWAL		£256	£256	£268
Temporary Vehicle Licence	Up to 3 months	£256	£256	£268
Driver Licences				
Driver – NEW	3 year Includes initial tests, safeguarding and disability trainings	£328	£328	£340
Driver – RENEWAL	3 year Includes initial tests, safeguarding	£296	£296	£306.50

	and disability trainings			
Home to school – NEW & RENEWAL	3 year Includes initial tests, safeguarding and disability trainings	£225	-	£233
Conversion of driver licence to another type	1.5hrs (inc retaking tests)	£96	£96	£100.50
* It was agreed at the Executive meeting on the 22 September 2022 that West Berkshire Council would offer a fee based remittance scheme, subsidised by the Council and that it be introduced from 01 April 2023 for both electric (100%) and hybrid (50%) vehicles that met the agreed criteria.				

Private Hire Operators (PHO)

Private Hire Operator	Number of Vehicles	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
NEW Per vehicle calculation of 3.5 hours (at £67.00 hourly rate) plus an hour per year (years 2-5) for first vehicle, plus 15 minutes per additional vehicle per years (years 1-5) up to a maximum of 20 vehicles	1	£480	£502.50
	2	£560	£586.25
	3	£640	£670.00
	4	£720	£753.75
	5	£800	£837.50
	6	£880	£921.25
	7	£960	£1005.00
	8	£1040	£1088.75
	9	£1120	£1172.50
	10	£1200	£1256.25
	11	£1280	£1340.00
	12	£1360	£1423.75
	13	£1440	£1507.50
	14	£1520	£1591.25
	15	£1600	£1675.00
	16	£1680	£1758.75
	17	£1760	£1842.50
	18	£1840	£1926.25
	19	£1920	£2010.00
	20	£2000	£2093.75
20+	£2000	£2093.75	
Private Hire Operator	Number of Vehicles	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
RENEWAL Per vehicle calculation of 1.5 hours (at £67 hourly rate) plus an hour per year (years 2-5) for first vehicle, plus 15 minutes per additional vehicle per	1	£352	£368.50
	2	£432	£452.25
	3	£512	£536.00
	4	£592	£619.75
	5	£672	£703.50
	6	£752	£787.25
	7	£832	£871.00
	8	£912	£954.75
	9	£992	£1038.50
	10	£1072	£1122.25
	11	£1152	£1206.00

years (years 1-5) up to a maximum of 20 vehicles	12	£1232	£1289.75
	13	£1312	£1373.50
	14	£1392	£1457.25
	15	£1472	£1541.00
	16	£1552	£1624.75
	17	£1632	£1708.50
	18	£1712	£1792.25
	19	£1792	£1876.00
	20	£1872	£1959.75
	20+	£1872	£1959.75

Other Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Charges

Other charges		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee All Council Areas (where applicable)
Transfer of vehicle to new owner		£64	£67
Change of vehicle		£80	£83.75
Replacement Licence		£32	£33.50
Replacement Badge		£32 + Badge Costs (£5)	£33.50 + Badge Costs (£5)
Replacement Vehicle Licence Plate		£32 + Plate Costs (£26)	£33.50 + Plate Costs (£26)
Knowledge Test	First attempt in initial fee	£80	£83.75
Missed Appointment		£32	£33.50
Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS)		£70	At cost
Advertising on a Hackney carriage - NEW	Bracknell Only	£64	£67
Advertising on a Hackney Carriage - RENEWAL	Bracknell Only	£32	£33.50
Change of address (PH & HC)		£11.50	£16.75
Backing Plate		£26 at cost	£26 at cost
Medical Exemption		£32	£33.50
Refund Processing Fee		£32	£33.50
Change of vehicle registration	Including	£32 + sticker and licence costs (£31)	£33.50 + sticker and licence costs (£31)
Age of vehicle Inspection – initial & renewal	Bracknell Only	£64	£67
Pre-application advice, hourly rate	Min 1 hour	£64	£67

Hairdresser Registration

Description	2023/24 Fee All Council Areas (where applicable)	2024/25 Fee All Council Areas (where applicable)
Hairdresser/barber registration	£32	£33.50

Licensing Act 2003 – Statutory

Premises Licence – “one off” fees set by statute based upon rateable value (RV) of premises (Class B – Statutory Fee)	PPP Areas
Band A – RV up to 4,300	£100
Band B – RV 4,300 to 33,000	£190
Band C – RV 33,001 to 87,000	£315
Band D – RV 87,001 to 125,000	£450
Band E – RV 125,001 and above	£635
Pre-application advice, hourly rate	£67
Premises Licence – Annual Fee (Class B – Statutory Fee)	
Band A	£70
Band B	£180
Band C	£295
Band D	£320
Band E	£350
Personal Licence - (Class B – Statutory Fee)	£37
Temporary Event Notices (TENs) - (Class B – Statutory Fee)	£21
Application for copy licence	£10.50
Application to vary DPS/transfer licence/interim notice	£23
Application for making a provisional statement	£315
Minor variation	£89
Application to disapply mandatory DPS condition	£23
Pre-application work, hourly rate	£67

Petroleum Licences – Statutory

Petroleum Licences	All Council Areas
Not exceeding 2,500 litres	£46
Not exceeding 50,000 litres	£62
Exceeding 50,000 litres	£131

Scrap Metal

Description		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Scrap Metal site –NEW	3 Years	£512	£536
Scrap Metal site - RENEWAL	3 Years	£480	£502.50
Scrap Metal mobile collector - NEW	3 Years	£256	£268
Scrap Metal mobile collector - RENEWAL	3 Years	£224	£234.50
Scrap Metal - Variation of Licence		£256	£268
Scrap Metal - change of site manager		£64	£67
Scrap Metal - copy of licence		£16	£16.75
Scrap Metal - Change of Name		£32	£33.50

Sex Establishments – Statutory

Description	Type	All Council Areas
Sex Establishments - (Class A – Fee Discretionary)	Cinema	min £3,100 to max £5,150
	Shop	min £3,100 to max £5,150
	Entertainment Venue	min £3,100 to max £5,150

Skin Piercing & Dermal Treatments

Description	Type	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Skin piercing Registrations (one off registration) - (Class A – Fee Discretionary)	Individual (4hrs)	£256	£268
	Premises (5hrs)	£320	£335
	Joint application (7hrs)	£448	£469
Pre-application work, hourly rate	Min. 1 hour	£64	£67

Street Trading Consents

Description	Type	Bracknell 2023/24 Fee	Bracknell Forest 2024/25 Fee	West Berkshire 2023/24 Fee	West Berkshire 2024/25 Fee
	Daily	£64	£67	£64	£67
Street Trading Consents - (Class A – Fee Discretionary)	1 Week	£156	£163.50	£156	£163.50
	Monthly Rate	£262	£275	£262	£275
	3 months	£699	£732.50	£699	£732.50
	6 months	£875	£917	£875	£917
	Annual Fee	£1487	£1558.50	£1487	£1558.50
	6 months max. 2 trading days a week incl. Fri, Sat & Sun	£699	£732.50	N/A	N/A
	6 months max. 2 trading days a week Mon-Thurs only	£525	£550	N/A	N/A
	Ice cream van (per van) 6 month	£781	£818.50	£875	£917
	Ice cream van (per van) 1 month	£202	£212	£262	£275
Variation fee		£96	£100.50	£96	£100.50
Refund for Street Traders	In the event that following consultation the application is refused or deemed withdrawn by officers, a sum of 50% of the application fee is payable as a refund. If the application is refused by a Panel, no refund of the application fee is payable.				
Pre-application work, hourly rate	Min. 1 hour	£64	£67	£64	£67

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Abandoned vehicles – Statutory

Description		Bracknell Forrest Only
Removal (prescribed fee)	Less than 3.5 tonnes	£150
Daily Storage (prescribed fee)	Less than 3.5 tonnes	£20
Enforcement Disposal costs (prescribed fee)	Less than 3.5 tonnes	£75
Fixed Penalty Notice	Reduced to £120.00 if paid within 7 days	£200
Enforcement invoice costs		£77

Fly Tipping Environment Protection Act 1990

Description		Bracknell Forest Only	Bracknell Forest Only
		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990	Fixed Penalty Notice	£400	£400
Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990	Fixed Penalty Notice	£300	£300

Anti-Social Behaviour Act

Description		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Anti-Social Behaviour Act	High Hedges Fee (Class A – Fee Discretionary)	£1310	£1373

Dog Warden Services

Description	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Stray Dogs – not taken to kennel	£80	£83.75
Stray Dogs – taken to kennel	£80 plus Cost recovery and Vets fees separate.	£83.75 plus Cost recovery and Vets fees separate.
Kennels cost	Recharge based on cost	Recharge based on cost
Dog fouling fixed penalty charge	£75	£75
Miscellaneous stray dog activities e.g. taxi, relocating, microchipping	Cost recovery charged at £64ph	Cost recovery charged at £67ph

Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 – Statutory

Scheduled Processes – (Class B – statutory Fee)		All Council Areas
Standard Process		£1,650
Additional fee for operating without a permit		£1,188
Service Stations (PVR 1 & PVR II combined)		£257
Service Station (PVR 1)		£155
Dry Cleaners		£155
Vehicle Refinishers		£362
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant		£1,650
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant for the 3 rd to 7 th applications		£985

Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant for the 8 th and subsequent applications		£498
Substantial changes		
Standard Process		£1,050
Standard process where substantial change results in a new PPC activity		£1,650
Reduced Activities		£102
Annual Subsistence Charge (Statutory)		
Standard Process	Low	£772
	Medium	£1,161
	High	£1,747
Service stations PVR II	Low	£113
	Medium	£226
	High	£341
VR and other reduced fees	Low	£228
	Medium	£365
	High	£548
Dry cleaners/PVR1	Low	£79
	Medium	£158
	High	£237
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant	Low	£626
	Medium	£1,034
	High	£1,506
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant for 2 nd permit	Low	£646
	Medium	£1,034
	High	£1,506
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant for 3 rd to 7 th permit	Low	£385
	Medium	£617
	High	£924
Mobile Screening & Crushing Plant for the 8 th and subsequent permits	Low	£198
	Medium	£316
	High	£473
Late payment charge	If invoice issued & not paid within 8 weeks	£52
Transfer and Surrender		
Transfer		£169
Partial Transfer		£497
Surrender		£0
Transfer Reduced fees		£0
Partial Transfer Reduced Fees		£47

Private Sector Housing

Description	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Inspection of Housing Premises for Immigration purposes (Class A – Fee Discretionary)	£435	£456
Enforcement Notices served under Housing Act 2004	Hrly Rate	Hrly Rate
HMO Licence NEW - assisted application	£1280	£1340
HMO Licence RENEWAL	£865	£907
Caravan Site Licences		
Site licence new (plus additional fee per pitch)	£480	£502.50
New licence additional fee per pitch	£17	£16.75
Transfer of licence	£192	£201

Alteration of conditions	Hrly Rate	Hrly Rate
Annual inspection fee – per pitch	£15	£16
Enforcement action -per hour	£64	Hrly Rate
Deposit, vary or deleting site rules	£128	£134
Mobile Homes Regulations 2020		
Application Fee – Fit and Proper Test (any application taking more than two hours to process will be charged at an additional hourly rate of £67/ph or part thereof)	£128	£134
Annual Check Fee – Fit and Proper Test	Hrly Rate	Hrly Rate
Where the authority has to assist with appointing a site manager the costs will be specified in the agreement between the parties		

Private Water Supplies

Description		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Risk assessment (for each assessment)	Every 5 years. Min. charge 1 hour, simple risk assessment and report typically 5 hours	£64 hourly rate	At Hrly Rate
Sampling visit (for each sampling visit) *	Charge for a visit, taking a sample and delivery to the laboratory. Typically 2.5 hours	£64 hourly rate	At Hrly Rate
Investigation	Carried out in the event of a test failure, can be substituted by the risk assessment - this does not include any required analysis costs.	£128	At hrly rate
Regulation 9 Supply Analysis of Group A Parameters		Hourly Rate + Laboratory Costs	Laboratory Costs **
Regulation 9 Supply Analysis of Group B Parameters		Hourly Rate + Laboratory Costs	Laboratory Costs **
Regulation 10 Supply Parameters		Hourly Rate + Laboratory Costs	Laboratory Costs **
Analysis of Single Dwelling Supplies (upon request)		Hourly Rate + Laboratory Costs	Laboratory Costs **

* A local authority should not charge for a sample that is taken and analysed solely to confirm or clarify the results of a previous sample. A local authority can charge for a sample visit to verify the effectiveness of improvements, e.g. following completion of actions specified in a Notice.

** Laboratory fees set annually

Other Fees

	Hourly rate applies minimum of 2 hours	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Environmental Information Request - Individual, Non-Commercial	Hourly rate applies minimum of 2 hours	£128 minimum	£134 minimum
Environmental Information Request - Commercial and Government	Hourly rate applies minimum of 2 hours	£128 minimum	£134 minimum
Civil Actions (Class A – Fee Discretionary)		£128 minimum	£134 minimum
Safety Certification and administration	Hourly rate applies minimum of 2 hours	£128 minimum	£134 minimum
Pre-Application Advice, hourly charge		£64	£67

TRADING STANDARDS

Buy with confidence

Description	Employee numbers	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Application Fee (set nationally by Buy with Confidence scheme)	1-5 employees	£136	£145
	6-20 employees	£182	£200
	21-49 employees	£226	£250
	50+ employees	POA	POA
Annual fee (set nationally by Buy with Confidence scheme)	1-5 employees	£272	£270
	6-20 employees	£408	£405
	21-49 employees	£545	£540
	50+ employees	POA	POA
Members before 2017/18 Annual Fee (Bracknell Forest legacy members only)	1-5 employees	£136	£136
	6-20 employees	£206	£206
	21-49 employees	£274	£274

* West Berkshire & Wokingham schemes administered by Hampshire County Council

Primary Authority

Description	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Primary Authority Work hourly chargeable rate	£64 Hourly Rate	£67 Hourly Rate
Annual charge - previous year usage 10 hours or less	£576	£603
Annual charge - previous year usage 20 hours	£1,158	£1206
Anything likely to be in excess of 20 hours	Individually assessed	Individually assessed

Assured Care and Support

Description	Employee numbers	2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Application fee	1-5 employees	£64	£67
	6-20 employees	£130	£134
	21+ employees	£327	£343

Weights and Measures

Description		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Weights and Measures Fees	Includes the cost of maintaining calibration of equipment annually (Based on ACTSO guidance)	£64 p/h	£67 p/h

Other Fees

Description		2023/24 Fee	2024/25 Fee
Food export certificates	Full cost recovery based on hourly rate	£64 minimum	£67 minimum
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme rescore	2 hours	£128	£134
General Business Advice (Non-Primary Authority)	Hourly rate (first 30 minutes free)	£64	£67
Resident Request for Advice	Hourly rate	£64	£67

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**WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION FUND - 2023/24**

	£	£	£
Opening surplus/(deficit)			(1,777,446)
Income			
Net Council Tax Debit	149,255,459		
Council Tax Relief	(6,858,102)		
MOD contribution (estimate)	611,285		
Council Tax Receivable		143,008,642	
Adjustments to Council Tax Hardship/Discretionary relief		(135,568)	
Contributions to previous year estimated deficit			
West Berkshire Council	1,413,293		
Thames Valley Police	195,974		
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	60,188		
		1,669,455	
Total Income			144,542,528
Expenditure			
Precepts and demands from major preceptors			
West Berkshire Council	(117,472,381)		
Parishes	(5,007,963)		
Thames Valley Police	(17,271,327)		
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	(5,320,631)		
		(145,072,302)	
Provision for w/o or non-collection	18,628	18,628	
	0		(145,053,674)
Anticipated Collection Fund surplus/(deficit)			(2,288,591)

SIGNED:



DATE: 15.01.2024

DISTRIBUTION OF ESTIMATED DEFICIT

Total	WBC	Police	Fire
(2,288,591)	(1,932,191)	(272,464)	(83,936)

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Appendix J - Budget Consultation response summary

The Council undertook a budget consultation on a range of proposed savings between the 27th November 2023 and the 11th January 2024. Overall, the Council received 2,491 responses to the online consultation per the below:

Name of Proposal	Number of responses
Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home	280
Reduce contributions to community transport	84
Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance	165
Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance	279
Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins	986
Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)	190
Reduce weed spraying treatment	136
Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges	54
Restructure funding for Adult Social Care transport services	59
Restructure parking fees and charges	258
Total	2,491

The Council also received other responses, some during the in person sessions at leisure centres attended by members of the public during the consultation period as well as other individual responses. All of the responses are taken into account in the individual responses included as appendices to this paper.

As a result of the consultation exercise, the following changes or continuation with the proposals have been made to the proposed savings for Full Council to consider as part of the Budget setting recommendations. A further equality impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of the Community Transport saving. Where savings are lower than the proposed amount, this places a need for further savings to be delivered elsewhere across the Council and are included within the overall budget papers:

Proposal	Original saving proposed / £k	Revised savings proposed / £k	Summary from the consultation exercise	Further Equality Impact Assessment?

<p>Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home</p>	<p>Up to £500k</p>	<p>Up to £500k – part year effect of £250k</p>	<p>C80% of respondents are against Option 1, closing Willows Edge, with 73.2% strongly disagreeing. While c 43% disagree or strongly disagree with Option 2, transferring to another provider, c43% agree or strongly agree with this option and c14% neither agree nor disagree. Given this response and also the supply and demand challenges that have further developed in the last few months, we recommend pursuing Option 2.</p> <p>We are aware that two potential providers have already expressed an interest, one via the consultation.</p> <p>We recommend developing an Invitation to Tender to identify and select potential providers. Given the budgetary pressures, we recommend that we should aim to select a provider by 20th June 2024. If we are unable to proceed with Option 2 at this point, we should seek to close the home unless there has been a very material change in circumstances.</p> <p>We recommend that subject to legal review, we should seek to include Birchwood and Notrees in the ITT, with providers given an option to bid for provision at 1,2 or all 3 homes.</p>	<p>N</p>
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Reduce contributions to community transport	10	0	The impact of this proposal would be a reduction in funding (based on this year's allocations) of between £3 and £37 per group each week, or 29 pence per passenger journey provided. Although the overall view of this proposal was negative, measures suggested by respondents should enable providers to recoup lost Council funding. It is therefore recommended to accept this proposal.	Y
Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance	220	55	Most of the respondents are against this proposal. Concerns raised include the likelihood of areas looking unkempt and the potential to attract antisocial behaviour, risk of litter, dog poo and other hazards being lodged in long grass. On the positive side, there will be benefits for local biodiversity at a time where there is a local and national ecological emergency. Adoption of this proposal will come with some operational challenges as the contractor staff remaining may not have enough spare capacity to respond quickly to non-routine tasks or urgent requests e.g. to clear specific sightlines. This option is still available to decision makers because of the challenging financial situation. Officers have noted the risks	

			associated with this proposal and will be ready to implement the changes if approved.	
Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance	130	80	Given the largely negative views on reducing spend on gully emptying, and the impacts this could exacerbate, this is not recommended. Although reducing bridge maintenance spend was also mostly negative, very few comments were received and it is recommended that this budget is reduced for a limited time of one to two years.	N
Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins	90	0	It is noteworthy that this proposal has garnered the largest number of responses out of all the budget proposals consulted on, indicating a significant level of community engagement with this topic. The overwhelming majority of these responses expressed strong opposition to the proposal. There is significant concern that the proposal will lead to increased instances of littering and dog fouling. Nonetheless, this remains an option that decision makers can approve because of the Council's challenging financial situation. Officers wish to recommend this option for consideration by decision makers. If	

			approved, suitable mitigation will be put in place to manage stakeholder expectation through communications and ensuring the areas with highest footfall are suitably provided for.	
Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)	59	59	The predominant sentiment from respondents indicates substantial support for the proposed change. There were a few concerns raised about whether the proposed hours would impact more on selected users such as those who prefer to visit the sites earlier in the day. Having considered the range of respondent feedback, officers wish to recommend this proposal to decision makers.	
Reduce weed spraying treatment	20	0	Most respondents strongly support the proposal, primarily motivated by environmental considerations. However, some concerns were raised including worries about the potential negative impacts on disabled and vulnerable individuals, as well as those with allergies, if the weed growth becomes excessive. Other concerns raised were about the loss visual amenity within the district, potential hazards for drivers and pedestrians, and the perception that cost	

			savings might be outweighed by increased road repairs. The officer recommendation is to proceed with the planned reduction of weed spraying along sections of the public highway, transitioning from two applications to one per year, effective from 1 April 2024 (which result in a £12k saving).	
Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges	78	78	It is appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who can pay the full cost and other Local Authorities that use our care homes. The recommendation is to proceed with this proposal.	N
Restructure funding for Adult Social Care transport services	200	170	The recommendation of Adult Social Care is to proceed with this proposal.	N
Restructure parking fees and charges	500	500	Given the fairly even split between those in favour and those against the proposal, and the fact that this is seen as the least painful of the ten proposals within the public consultation, it is recommended that this proposal is accepted, with the amendment to allow the first hour of parking in Lambourn car park to be free of charge.	N

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Adult Social Care (ASC) wrote to all of the individuals that would be affected by this proposal and we had no direct contact with anyone in relation to this proposal.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council's (WBC) Adult Social Care Service currently has three care homes and while most of the residents are funded by the council, a small number of residents pay the full cost, or are funded by another local authority or the NHS.

The cost to the council of purchasing a bed in a privately run care home is currently an average of £1,133.00 per week.

Birchwood has 60 beds available, and currently has 40 residents. 9 of which pay the full cost or funded by another local authority.

Notrees has 18 beds available, and currently has 13 residents. 3 of which pay the full cost or funded by another local authority.

Willows Edge has 37 beds available, and currently has 31 residents. 8 of which pay the full cost or funded by another local authority.

To date we have not charged these individuals what it actually costs us to provide the placement. Details of the current and actual costs are as follows:

WBC care home	Current charge per week	Actual cost per week	% difference
Birchwood	£1,007.70	£2,572.00	-61%
Notrees	£971.00	£1,496.00	-35%
Willows Edge	£971.00	£1,598.00	-39%

The cost to the council of purchasing a bed in a privately run care home is currently an average of £1,133.00 per week.

Legislation Requirements

The Care Act 2014 governs what services the council should provide as part of an individual's care package and what services the council does not need to provide.

Currently, the council does not have to provide a placement to individuals that would be considered self-funders, but as a council we have chosen to do this.

Proposal Details

To increase how much we charge for a bed, as detailed below for each home. This is above the normal annual inflationary rate (4.6% in 2024/25).

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

WBC care home	Proposed charge per week	Proposed % increase
Birchwood	£1,209.20	20%
Notrees	£1,068.10	10%
*Willows Edge	£1,068.10	10%

Based on the current numbers of residents this would generate £78,000 per year.

**Please note: Willows Edge Care Home is subject to another budget proposal to either close or find an alternative provider to run it.*

Following the consultation, if the decision is taken to close the home, this income will be lost. If an alternative provider is found, then the charge may be different than proposed here.

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 54 responses were received.

We also received no petitions.

Summary of Main Points

The general view from the respondents was that it was appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who could pay.

There was a lack of understanding from some respondents as to how individuals are financial assessed and how much most individuals contribute towards their care.

Summary of Responses by Question

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	4	7.41
A resident of West Berkshire	48	88.89
A visitor to West Berkshire	0	0
A West Berkshire business owner	0	0
Employed by a West Berkshire business	4	7.41
Employed by West Berkshire Council	3	5.56
A Parish/Town Councillor	3	5.56
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	0	0
A West Berkshire Council service provider	1	1.85
Other	1	1.85

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase how much we charge for a bed at each of our care homes?

i. Birchwood (£1,209.20 per week / 20% increase)

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	33.33
Agree	18	37.50
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2.08
Disagree	4	8.33
Strongly disagree	9	18.75

ii. Notrees (£1,068.10 per week / 10% increase)

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	15	31.91
Agree	18	38.30
Neither agree nor disagree	3	6.38
Disagree	5	10.64

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

	Number	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	12.77

iii. *Willows Edge (£1,068.10 per week / 10% increase)*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	33.33
Agree	16	33.33
Neither agree nor disagree	4	8.33
Disagree	6	12.50
Strongly disagree	6	12.50

The majority of the respondents felt that the fees should be increased, and some respondents felt the fees should be increased to the actual cost.

Some respondents felt that the fees should also be inline with those charged by private providers.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

Mainly the respondents felt that it would affected older people more than anyone else and that there was the possibility that it would affected individuals families as well as the individuals themselves.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

The main suggestion to reduce the impact were to:

- outsource all of the homes
- lobby government to make significant changes to the system
- give plenty of notice of the change

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

The main suggestions to save money or increase income were:

- Review all contracts
- Sell the old Newbury Day centre site
- Close the 3 day centres owned by the Council

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

- Sell all 3 care homes
- Replace the Council's fossil fuel vehicles with electric ones
- Eliminate transport subsidies for everyone but pensioners
- Reduce agency staff
- Review all of the nice to have proposed spending
- Charge for bin replacements

6. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.

None

7. Any further comments?

"Important to ensure the decision to increase costs has been scrutinised"

"This proposal seems to clash with the proposal to close Willows Edge. Moving patients from a facility costing £1.6k pw to one costing £2.5k will be the opposite of cost-saving..."

"I am not particularly interested in "volunteering" for the Council as I already volunteer for other organisations. If I can help review and restore order on the costs in your care homes, I should be happy to help. (I know that staff shortages are an issue across the sector and possibly account for the under-utilisation of Birchwood and, thus, some of its overblown cost base; putting up wages and improving the facility could have the effect of making it a net contributor to WBC)."

"Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council do not know the impact that this will have."

"Review all "nice to have proposed spending such as: Greening, net zero initiatives including LTNs and other "halo initiatives" unless they show a net saving in spend locally with payback within a three year timescale or positive annual contributions in the immediate future. New cycle lanes and pedestrian zones including consultation experiments. New speed limit reduction initiatives where these are not evidenced as necessary through increasing traffic injuries. Potential for staffing cuts associated with initiative creation and spends that will be reduced or delayed."

"West Berkshire provision for elderly care is apparently one of the worst in the country."

"I think this needs much more significant long-term structure change. The current system is not sustainable, and tinkering round the edges - although I can see why you're doing it - just won't be the answer."

"It is a tough time, unfortunately."

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges

Consultation Summary Report

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Jo England
Joint Interim Service Director
ASC
14.1.24

Please note: In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

i <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ii <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)													
Proposal:	To increase how much we charge for a bed, as detailed below for each home. This is above the normal annual inflationary rate (4.6% in 2024/25).																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>WBC care home</th> <th>Proposed charge per week</th> <th>Proposed % increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Birchwood</td> <td>£1,209.20</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Notrees</td> <td>£1,068.10</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*Willows Edge</td> <td>£1,068.10</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					WBC care home	Proposed charge per week	Proposed % increase	Birchwood	£1,209.20	20%	Notrees	£1,068.10	10%	*Willows Edge	£1,068.10	10%
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<p><i>*Please note: Willows Edge Care Home is subject to another budget proposal to either close or find an alternative provider to run it.</i></p> <p>Following the consultation, if the decision is taken to close the home, this income will be lost. If an alternative provider is found, then the charge may be different than proposed here.</p>																	
Total budget 2023/24:	£2,009,260	Initial expected income 2024/25:	£20,000	Expected income 2024/25:	£20,000												
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 54 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 - A user of the service • 48 - A resident of West Berkshire • 0 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 0 - A West Berkshire business owner • 4 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 3 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 3 - A Parish/Town Councillor 																

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - A District Councillor • 0 - A partner organisation • 1 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 1 - Other <p>We also received no petitions.</p>		
Key issues raised:	<p>The general view from the respondents was that it was appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who could pay.</p> <p>There was a lack of understanding from some respondents as to how individuals are financial assessed and how much most individuals contribute towards their care.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Outsource all of the homes	<p>There is another proposal considering the closure or outsourcing of Willows Edge and Notrees was subject to consultation a couple of years ago and it was decided to retain it.</p> <p>Adult Social Care is currently reviewing its Care Strategy and its Market Position Statement.</p>	
	Lobby government to make significant changes to the system	This is ongoing and the recent Charging Reforms have been paused by central government until October 2025	
	Give plenty of notice of the change	If the proposal goes ahead then individuals will be given 4 weeks notice of the change.	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Review all contracts	Contracts are regularly reviewed when they are due to renewal.	
	Close the 3 day centres owned by the Council	These 3 day centres are not over spending and do generate an income for the Council.	
	Sell all 3 care homes	There is another proposal considering the closure or outsourcing of Willows Edge and Notrees was subject to consultation a couple of years ago and it was decided to retain it. Adult Social Care is currently reviewing its Care Strategy and its Market Position Statement.	
	Review all of the nice to have proposed spending	All spending is currently being reviewed but some projects are capital or grant funded not revenue funded.	
	Reduce agency staff	We are reducing agency staff wherever possible but in some areas like the care homes we do have to use agency staff to provide cover sometimes.	
	Replace the Council's fossil fuel vehicles with electric ones	This is happening as and when vehicles are due for replacement.	
	Eliminate transport subsidies for everyone but pensioners	Reducing spend on community transport is one of the other proposals being considered.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Sell the old Newbury Day centre site	A review of all Council owned assets is taking place.	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Charge for bin replacement	We're not convinced it's worth it at the moment, as we don't think it will generate a significant amount of revenue (particularly given the effort and investment required to set it up) and it can be seen as counterintuitive. Even so, we have started to look at it in more detail recently given the financial situation the Council finds itself.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>It is appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who can pay the full cost and other Local Authorities that use our care homes.</p> <p>The recommendation is to proceed with this proposal.</p>		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Adult Social Care (ASC) wrote to all individuals who currently had transport that would be affected to advise them of the consultation proposal, and we also had direct contact from 5 individuals or their families either by email or phone to discuss the impact of the proposal.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council's Adult Social Care Service currently provides a transport service to 196 clients, either through the in-house service or taxis. This is normally to attend day services, which provide care and support for disabled, vulnerable and older people.

Many clients receive the mobility element from either the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which is paid to support any additional cost for transport due to their illness or disability. This benefit can't be included in the financial assessment process when assessing an individual's contribution towards the cost of their care package.

Of the clients that currently receive a transport service:

- 46 clients aren't in receipt of either the mobility element of DLA or PIP, this is mainly because they are in receipt of Attendance Allowance (AA) that has no mobility element
- 28 clients are in receipt of the low rate of the mobility element, which is currently £26.90 per week
- 117 clients are in receipt of the high rate of the mobility element, which is currently £71.00 per week

The remaining 5 individuals receive transport under the Mental Health Act 2007 and aren't affected by this proposal.

Legislation Requirements

The Care Act 2014 governs what services the council should and should not provide as part of an individual's care package. Transport doesn't have to be provided as part of an individual's care package, and we are one of the few local authorities that still does.

Proposal Details

- To remove transport to and from the day services as part of an individual's care package and to offer a transport service that will be charged at a flat rate of £5.00 per journey (one way) for those individuals that are unable to get to the day services by another means, for example, taken by family or public transport.

This proposal will save the council approximately £200,000 per year.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 68 responses were received, 59 responded through this proposal.

There were no petitions and 9 people inadvertently responded through the community transport proposal.

Summary of Main Points

The main points raised were that it would adversely impact individuals financially and could lead to increased social isolation.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	17	28.81
A resident of West Berkshire	37	62.71
A visitor to West Berkshire	0	0
A West Berkshire business owner	1	1.69
Employed by a West Berkshire business	3	5.08
Employed by West Berkshire Council	2	3.39
A Parish/Town Councillor	2	3.39
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	2	3.39
A West Berkshire Council service provider	1	1.69
Other	8	13.56

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove transport to and from the day services as part of an individual's care package, and to offer a transport service that will be charged at a flat rate of £5.00 per journey (one way) for those individuals that are unable to get to the day services by another means?

	Number	Percentage
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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

Strongly agree	13	23.03
Agree	5	8.47
Neither agree nor disagree	6	10.17
Disagree	10	16.95
Strongly disagree	25	42.37

Those individuals that strongly disagreed or disagreed to the proposal did so on the basis that it would have an adverse financial impact on individuals and individuals may choose to not go to the day centre that could lead to social isolation or carers could go into crisis.

Those individuals who strongly agreed or agreed considered it reasonable for those individuals who were in receipt of a mobility element of either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment to be charged a flat rate fee for the transport they used.

There were several suggestions of either a lower flat rate fee each way or that the fee proposed should be for a return journey and not each way.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

Some of the respondents felt that the proposal would affect older people less than it would affect younger people with either a learning disability or Autism, whereas other respondents felt that this was the other way around.

There was also concern that it would stop vulnerable individuals from having contact with other people and would lead to social isolation or carer breakdown.

There was also a suggestion that carers would have to give up working if this proposal went ahead as they would have to look after the vulnerable individual rather than them going to the day centre.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

Suggestions to reduce the impact were to either reduce the cost proposed, transition the change and give plenty of notice or to look at using minibuses instead of taxis.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

Suggested alternatives to save money or raise income are:

- Privatised the 3 West Berkshire owned Day Centres
- Consider not doing other projects like the Wharf
- No more bikes lanes
- Ensure individuals that have Motability cars use them instead of the transport
- Reduce the amount of unnecessary staff
- Reduce the heating in offices and schools
- Charge more Council Tax
- Reduce home to school transport

6. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.

- The Yume Project – lisaflackyume@hotmail.com 07884334334
- Interackt – tsippy@interackt.otg.uk 07900867704

7. Any further comments?

“The LA could meet with members of the LDPB to discuss this further.”

“I work in LD day care. It took me 2 hours this evening to get a single, challenging client from the retail park to Thatcham. I have over 25 years experience as a carers. Is WBC suggestion that all I can charge for that is £5? That’s disgusting, I’m shocked. That’s an insults to me, my profession and carers everywhere.”

“If you are going to go ahead with charging £5 per journey each way please ensure this is done for ALL JOURNEYS NO MATTER WHICH DAY SERVICE PROVIDER PEOPLE GO TO. Otherwise people will have no choice but to use more expensive WBC dayservices and smaller private organisations will not afford to stay open. In the long term this will cost WBC more.”

“The Learning Disability Partnership Board brings together members across West Berkshire. Membership is for anyone with a learning disability, their families, parents, carers, community groups, supporter, professionals, day service providers, and in fact anyone who has an interest in adults with a learning disability in WB.”

“Please think twice about this as if the vulnerable adults are forced to cut there usage of day services this could be enough to make the day service unviable which would have huge effects on west berks budget if it has to provide individual carers to cover these hours everyday”

“Individuals mental health will suffer if they cannot access day services leading to further increases to council finances”

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

"My husband uses the transport to get to and from the day centre we already pay £30 a month for him to be able to go to the centre. And if the proposes to pay £5 per journey one way comes in that will be an extra £80 a month we will need to find. Since Gareth has started going to the day centre he has made friends that are in the same position as himself. When Gareth had his brain injury he lost alot of friends and his independence and if he has to start paying more he will have to stop going. Its not just his time going to the centre doing things with people the same as him it's my respite having a little bit of time to myself. As for him going on public transport that would be a NO go we would have to leave at 8am and have to get 2 buses to and from the centre. Our daughter works full time so she is unable to take him and pick him up. This is a rural / semi rural area, with reduced transport links. Transport to services is an important part of people's care plans & should continue."

"Personally, I think I already save WBC a fortune by keeping my daughter at home and caring for all her needs."

"You are focussing only on the financial aspect of this proposal and completely ignoring the welfare aspects of it. I need consistent and stable arrangements in order to stay well; my mother/carer is already very worried about both her and my futures as our household costs increase, and you and the Health Departments are progressively washing your hands of us. We really struggle to see how we will balance the budget as Mum cannot increase her income because of the requirement for her to be able to work very flexibly because of my extreme vulnerability. If the progressive tightening of our budget goes on and Mum becomes unable to look after me, I will die."

"Cant make it any worse for me if the proposal goes ahead and the PIP is unable to cover everyhighn your beleive as not on full pip."

"Disgusting and outrageous proposal hitting those who really need it."

"Just that I would ask that you do look into the specific cases, especially those of poeple like my mother, and 80 year old lady with Dementia and COPD and is already struggling on Pension Credits."

"It's very regrettable ans upsetting having state the following, i understadm trying to safe money, the miss management of managing budgeting wasting on flimsy projects with foresight. That don't have the flexibility that demanding in income to pay for transport. Already unpaid carer while disabled seam keep cutting budgets and become norm as acceptable which come to a tipping point hurting multiple disabled people and no reality on pip or esa, I rather be at work, but have multiple diabilty and pain issues. That uk central govnrment saying it doing more for disabled, it just some speaking with no credibility and this givnrment done more to hurt disabled people, push suicide rate up and say doing everything help. Certainly something going to say on scope website"

"FIND ANOTHER WAY SO SICK PEOPLE WILL NOT SUFFER"

"Please don't do this. The disabled are the most vulnerable in any community, and a wealthy community like West Berkshire ought to be able to prioritise funding so that the most vulnerable are the most protected and supported rather than targeted for further marginalisation through the imposition of prohibitive and possibly discriminatory costs"

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services

Consultation Summary Report

“Review all “nice to have proposed spending such as: Greening, net zero initiatives including LTNs and other “halo initiatives” unless they show a net saving in spend locally with payback within a three year timescale or positive annual contributions in the immediate future. New cycle lanes and pedestrian zones including consultation experiments. New speed limit reduction initiatives where these are not evidenced as necessary through increasing traffic injuries. Potential for staffing cuts associated with initiative creation and spends that will be reduced or delayed.”

“Employ people who understand needs rather than naive wokes who have an agenda to follow and as much experience as a dead cow.”

“only those who get the higher allowance to use against transport should be entitled to use it.”

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Jo England
Joint Interim Service Director
Adult Social Care
13.1.2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of ‘those who responded’, rather than reflective of the wider community.

ⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	To remove transport to and from the day services as part of an individual's care package and to offer a transport service that will be charged at a flat rate of £5.00 per journey (one way) for those individuals that are unable to get to the day services by another means, for example, taken by family or public transport.				
Total budget 2023/24:	£410,000	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£200,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£200,000
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 59 responses were received via this proposal. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 - A user of the service • 37 - A resident to West Berkshire • 0 – A visitor to West Berkshire • 1 - A West Berkshire business owner • 3 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 2 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 2 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 0 - A District Councillor • 2 - A partner organisation • 1 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 8 - Other <p>We also received no petitions, and 9 responses were inadvertently responded to via the community transport proposal.</p>				
Key issues raised:	Those individuals that strongly disagreed or disagreed to the proposal did so on the basis that it would have an adverse financial impact on individuals and individuals may choose to not go to the day centre that could lead to social isolation or carers could go into crisis.				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>Those individuals who strongly agreed or agreed considered it reasonable for those individuals who were in receipt of a mobility element of either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment to be charged a flat rate fee for the transport they used.</p> <p>There were several suggestions of either a lower flat rate fee each way or that the fee proposed should be for a return journey and not each way.</p> <p>Some of the respondents felt that the proposal would affect older people less than it would affect younger people with either a learning disability or Autism, whereas other respondents felt that this was the other way around.</p> <p>There was also concern that it would stop vulnerable individuals from having contact with other people and would lead to social isolation or carer breakdown.</p> <p>There was also a suggestion that carers would have to give up working if this proposal went ahead as they would have to look after the vulnerable individual rather than them going to the day centre.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Reduce the proposed cost	Reducing the proposed cost, you reduce the amount of income we could generate, and we would have to find savings elsewhere	
	Transition the change and provide plenty of notice	If the proposals go ahead then individuals will be given 4 weeks notice of the proposed changes. Transitioning the change will reduce the amount of income generated.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Use minibuses instead of taxis	This could reduce the costs but due to where individuals live and their needs we often have to use taxis as shared transport is not an option.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Privatise the 3 West Berkshire owned Day Centres	The 3 day centres owned by the Council do not run at a loss and already bring in an income	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Consider not doing other projects like the Wharf	This project is funded by capital not revenue money and the initial phase is grant funded	
	No more bikes lanes	Most highways work is either capital or grant funded and is part of National Policy.	
	Ensure individuals that have Motability cars use them instead of the transport	This would be part of the new proposal.	
	Reduce the amount of unnecessary staff	Adult Social Care has already removed any unnecessary posts.	
	Reduce the heating in offices and schools	Many of the Schools in West Berkshire manage their own finances so we have no control over what they spend their money on. In the last 18 months we have reduced our office accommodation to save money with many staff now working from home.	
	Reduce home to school transport	This is already being reviewed.	
	Charge more Council Tax	In order to charge more Council Tax, the Council would have to do a referendum as Council Tax is already increased by the maximum amount each year.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation	While some people disagree with this proposal it is not a statutory duty to provide transport as part of an individual's care package and we are not proposing to stop the service. If individuals do not have then appropriate benefit to pay for transport, then the additional expenditure they occur can be taken into account in the financial assessment for their contribution towards their care package.		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services	Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
as a result of the responses:	The recommendation of Adult Social Care is to proceed with this proposal.	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Each community transport group was contacted to give them an indication of the likely impact on their individual grants, to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage them to respond. The budget savings poster was also emailed to doctor's surgeries.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

Community transport is a not-for-profit local passenger transport service, which is often, but not always, run by volunteers. There are 14 community transport operators in West Berkshire, collectively providing minibuss and car scheme operations to residents across the district.

12 of these operators apply for annual revenue grant funding from West Berkshire Council. The available annual revenue grant is distributed by formula to operators, with each one receiving an initial base payment reflecting their operating model. The remainder of the grant is distributed based upon the number of single passenger journeys provided by the operators in the previous year. In 2022/23, the number of single passenger journeys was 34,229.

Since 2019/20, the total available revenue grant has been set at £55,280 per year. Capital community transport grant funding of £50,000 is also made available on alternate years to assist operators with capital assets, including vehicles, and is due in 2024/25.

All grants issued over £5,000 are accompanied by a Service Level Agreement, which sets out the expectations between the service provider and the council and describes the services to be delivered.

Legislation Requirements

Local authorities don't have a statutory duty with regard to providing, or funding, community transport. Nevertheless, they do have a duty under section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985 to:

"...secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose".

Proposal Details

To reduce the annual funding for community transport operator revenue grants by £10,000, from £55,280 to £45,280 from 2024/25.

The available community transport capital grant is unaffected by this proposal.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 84 responses were received through the survey, although 13 were clearly aimed at 'restructure funding for Adult Social Care transport services' and have therefore been included in within the paperwork for that proposal. We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP and Tilehurst Parish Council. We received no petitions.

Summary of Main Points

There appeared to be confusion between this proposal and that to restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services, with at least 13 responses relating to the ASC proposal. Because the proposals are different, comments specifically relating the ASC transport have been excluded as they are not relevant to the funding of community transport. Some respondents also appeared to confuse community transport with rural bus services.

The main point raised was that this proposal would impact the more vulnerable residents of West Berkshire – the elderly, disabled, and those living in rural areas. Reduced access to transport could lead to more isolation.

It has been suggested that this reduction could be made up by community transport providers seeking contributions from other parties, or that users could pay more. The Council could even review how it spreads the funding amongst the groups. It was noted that this affects only low numbers in comparison to the population of West Berkshire.

The alternative view is that a funding reduction could lead at least one provider to stop operations, and that the level of savings sought from this proposal is insignificant compared to the £14.2m required, but it could have huge implications for those affected.

It is noted that only a relatively small percentage of service users have responded to the survey.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	13	18.31
A resident of West Berkshire	62	87.32
A visitor to West Berkshire	0	0
A West Berkshire business owner	1	1.41
Employed by a West Berkshire business	7	9.86
Employed by West Berkshire Council	4	5.63
A Parish/Town Councillor	2	2.82
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	2	2.82
A West Berkshire Council service provider	0	0
Other	10	14.08

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the annual funding for community transport operator revenue grants by £10,000 from £55,280 to £45,280 from 2024/25?

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	15.15
Agree	9	13.64
Neither agree nor disagree	8	12.12
Disagree	14	21.21
Strongly disagree	25	37.88

A few comments were in support of the proposal. Users should pay for the service. Alternative funding sources should be sought, e.g. the NHS should be paying transport costs for some users. A £10,000 reduction is better than total removal. It is not a statutory service. Bus services should be improved.

Many comments though were against the proposal. These focussed on the users, and how without this support they could become isolated or miss access to vital services. It was also noted that the small saving proposed is insignificant in the savings being sought but could have huge implications for those affected. It was also noted that this reduction could lead to reduced reimbursement of

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

volunteer expenses, which would lead to a reduction in volunteers. It was even suggested that the service needs to be expanded and improved.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

Most comments referred to the elderly and disabled as already identified in the Equality Impact Assessment. There was also a suggestion that rural dwellers may be more adversely affected than those in the urban areas. It was noted that this affects only low numbers in comparison to the population of West Berkshire.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

Suggestions included the groups seeking alternative funding, and the users (who are able) contributing more for use of the service. Remaining Council funding could be tailored more to individual groups based on their customer needs. One volunteer car scheme requested the cut be made for only one year otherwise they would not be able to survive. Finally it was suggested that bus services could be improved, perhaps by more use of on-demand bus services.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

In relation to community transport, user donations could be increased, additional funding sought from parish councils, grants sought for environmentally friendly vehicles, or all this funding should be put into better bus services. One suggestion was that Council boundaries be realigned so that Tilehurst residents become part of Reading council.

General options for saving money: Reduce staffing costs (management, staff, agency staff, contractors, consultants, dealing with underperforming staff and sickness, administration). Reduce councillor expenses. Sharing resources with other councils. Remove funding for fringe groups. Stop vanity projects (cycle lanes, Net Zero initiatives, pedestrian zones, speed limit reductions). Reduce costs for environmental services (weed spraying, HWRC hours). Other suggestions were to shop local, reduce support to social activities, and to remove security at a traveller camp.

Options for income: Increase council tax. Adequate government funding. Increase fees for large developers. Encourage increased compost through free garden waste collections to be able to sell on. Means-test free bus passes.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport

Consultation Summary Report

6. **If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.**

8 responses were received.

7. **Any further comments?**

Many responses repeated earlier comments. There was a final plea that this will increase social isolation, and that the service is a lifeline for many older and disabled residents. Labour responded that “it is ironic that the Lib Dem administration should be proposing these measures when they previously campaigned against cuts to the funding of ReadiBus”.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Peter Walker
Service Lead – Highways & Transport Innovation
Environment Department
16 January 2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

i <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ii <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	To reduce the annual funding for community transport operator revenue grants by £10,000, from £55,280 to £45,280 from 2024/25.				
Total budget 2023/24:	£55,280	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£10,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£10,000
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 84 responses were received through the survey, although 13 were clearly aimed at ‘restructure funding for Adult Social Care transport services’ and included within that paperwork. The breakdown of responses for the remaining 71 responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 - A user of the service • 62 - A resident of West Berkshire • 0 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 1 - A West Berkshire business owner • 7 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 4 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 2 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 0 - A District Councillor • 2 - A partner organisation • 0 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 10 - Other <p>We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP and Tilehurst Parish Council. We received no petitions.</p>				
Key issues raised:	There appeared to be confusion between this proposal and that to restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services, with at least 13 responses relating to the ASC proposal. Because the proposals are different,				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>comments specifically relating the ASC transport have been excluded as they are not relevant to the funding of community transport. Some respondents also appeared to confuse community transport with rural bus services.</p> <p>The main point raised was that this proposal would impact the more vulnerable residents of West Berkshire – the elderly, disabled, and those living in rural areas. Reduced access to transport could lead to more isolation.</p> <p>It has been suggested that this reduction could be made up by community transport providers seeking contributions from other parties, or that users could pay more. The Council could even review how it spreads the funding amongst the groups. It was noted that this affects only low numbers in comparison to the population of West Berkshire.</p> <p>The alternative view is that a funding reduction could lead at least one provider to stop operations, and that the level of savings sought from this proposal is insignificant compared to the £14.2m required, but it could have huge implications for those affected.</p> <p>It is noted that only a relatively small percentage of service users have responded to the survey.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one. An EqIA stage two has been completed to explore the previously identified equality issues.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Community transport providers could seek alternative funding.	Community transport providers already do this and are not dependent solely on Council funding. Further details on funding opportunities for voluntary sector organisations can be found through https://www.westberks.gov.uk/voluntary-organisation-grants and/or for community organisations through Connecting Communities in Berkshire through https://ccberks.org.uk/2024/01/04/new-year-funding-opportunities-for-community-groups/ .	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Users (who are able to) could contribute more.	That would be a matter for the individual community transport providers. They would be unlikely to reject higher contributions from users able, and willing, to make them, and would be able to confirm to users how those donations could be made.	
	Remaining Council funding could be tailored more to individual groups based on their customer needs.	The Council revised how it allocated funding to groups in 2019 to ensure that providers received funding in line with the service that they were delivering. The model allows for tweaking of values if appropriate.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Cut could be made for one year only.	There is no specific information to indicate that West Berkshire Council will be in an improved financial position in one year's time.	
	Funding could be used to improve bus services.	The Council treats community transport as part of the overall transport solution for West Berkshire, and it is included in the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme. For many users of community transport, bus services are not appropriate due to accessibility issues. Community transport provides greater benefit than could be achieved for the same level of funding of bus services. The Council are introducing on-demand bus services that may become a suitable alternative for some community transport users.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Contributions sought from town and parish councils.	Many town and parish councils already provide contributions to the community transport providers.	
	Grants sought for environmentally friendly vehicles.	Grants are not available for environmentally friendly community transport vehicles. The Council's capital funding for community transport providers has been used to support Downlands Volunteer Group to upgrade their minibus with an electric, wheelchair-accessible minibus.	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce contributions to community transport		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Increase fees for large developers.	This is a matter for Development and Regulation to consider.	
	Encourage increased compost through free garden waste collections to be able to sell on.	Plans to phase out the green bin charge form part of the Council Strategy.	
	Means-test free bus passes.	This is a national scheme and the Council are unable to charge for applications (only replacement passes).	
	Increase council tax. Receive adequate government funding.	Levels are set by government.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	The impact of this proposal would be a reduction in funding (based on this year's allocations) of between £3 and £37 per group each week, or 29 pence per passenger journey provided. Although the overall view of this proposal was negative, measures suggested by respondents should enable providers to recoup lost Council funding. It is therefore recommended to accept this proposal.		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Proposal Background

Under the 1980 Highways Act, as Highway Authority we have a duty to maintain the local road network of 1,280 km.

To achieve this, we have a budget of approximately £3.6 million, covering activities such as street lighting, gully emptying, bridge maintenance, winter gritting and dealing with highway emergencies such as flooding, road traffic accidents, fallen trees and other storm or adverse weather damage.

The current budget for gully emptying and bridge maintenance is £384,050.

Gullies are emptied on a risk-based approach, informed by the type of road on which they are situated, the potential to impact 3rd party property and based on surveys undertaken over a number of years which identified those gullies that tend to fill more frequently than others. Based on this information, gullies have been placed on a 6 month, annual, 2 year or 4 year emptying programme.

We have 327 highway structures which require inspection every other year. Many of the structures require special access for inspections and require routine maintenance (drainage clearance, removal of foliage, minor repairs, pump servicing) as part of, or following the inspection process.

We have a team of officers and a Term Maintenance contract with Volker Highways Ltd in place to deliver the full range of highway maintenance services.

Legislation Requirements

Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

Proposal Details

To reduce the annual funding by:

Programme	Budget reduction (£)	% of budget
Bridge maintenance	£80,000	44%
Gully emptying	£50,000	25%
Total	£130,000	32%

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 279 responses were received through the survey. We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP, Thatcham Town Council, and Tilehurst and Basildon Parish Councils. We received no petitions.

Summary of Main Points

The focus of most comments was on gully emptying, the increased risk of flooding, and the impacts that is likely to have. These include damage to roads and properties, increased insurance claims, impacts on mental health and possible loss of life. Whilst there were fewer comments on bridge maintenance, it was noted that this would have to be managed carefully for safety reasons. The proposal to reduce gully emptying and bridge maintenance was considered most likely to increase future costs. Weather experienced this year has already demonstrated that drainage needs improving.

Over 96% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (84%) with the proposals for gully emptying, whereas it was 72% for bridge maintenance.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A resident of West Berkshire	263	94.27
A visitor to West Berkshire	6	2.15
A West Berkshire business owner	11	3.94
Employed by a West Berkshire business	12	4.30
Employed by West Berkshire Council	6	2.15
A Parish/Town Councillor	15	5.38
A District Councillor	1	0.36
A partner organisation	1	0.36
A West Berkshire Council service provider	0	0
Other	13	4.66

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to reduce the annual funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance?

i. Gully emptying (£50,000 / 25%)

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	0.74
Agree	5	1.86
Neither agree nor disagree	3	1.12
Disagree	33	12.27
Strongly disagree	226	84.01

ii. Bridge maintenance (£80,000 / 44%)

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	0.80
Agree	11	4.42
Neither agree nor disagree	55	22.09
Disagree	68	27.31
Strongly disagree	113	45.38

Most comments related to gully emptying and the adverse effects this will have on flooding of roads, homes and businesses, which is already seen by many as a real issue. It would negate the impacts of the flood alleviation schemes, lead to more potholes, and increase pollution of watercourses.

Reductions in both areas would be a false economy, as they would lead to increased costs in the short-term from flood damage, and the longer-term for maintenance and insurance claims. It was also noted that there could be significant consequences if a bridge collapsed due to poor maintenance.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

They will particularly impact people in areas that are prone to flooding. Flooded roads and footpaths could adversely impact cyclists and motorcyclists, those with less mobility or with small children, and those in rural areas where there are fewer alternative routes. Flooded property could cause significant damage

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

and inconvenience. Flooding in general could cause isolation and impact mental health.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with one of these proposals, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

Consider different gully designs. Maintain gully emptying where there is a risk of flooding, where most people would be adversely affected, and when storms are forecast. Allow residents to clear gullies, or parish councils to award private gully cleaning contracts. Ensure surface water road drains are cleared regularly. Provide a better response to public identification of blocked gullies. Increase road sweeper activity to remove leaves and debris.

Provide more flood defences and better drainage. Ensure land owners clear their ditches. Issue sandbags and install traffic lights where roads are likely to flood. Limit HGV movements and consider weight limits for heavier vehicles. Do not allow development in flood plains.

Better communication.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

A few suggestions for savings were received. The saving could be taken for one year only. The contract could be renegotiated or brought back into the Council. The contractor could do a better job. Surface water road drains should be cleared regularly. Parish councils could contribute. Local farmers may be cheaper than contractor. For bridge maintenance, look at technological advancements and monitoring techniques.

General options for saving money: Reduce staffing costs (management, staff, agency staff, contractors, consultants, dealing with underperforming staff and sickness, freeze staff pay, administration). Reduce councillor expenses. Remove funding for fringe groups. Stop vanity projects (cycle lanes, Net Zero initiatives, pedestrian zones, speed limit reductions). Reduce costs in social care (including reviewing management). Reduce costs for environmental services (maintenance of verges and parks, bin collections, street lighting, grass cutting, HWRC hours). Other suggestions were to reduce office space, use IT more, reassess council house users, reduce spend on large budget items, think more about long-term finances, and to reduce the fund ward councillors have for local initiatives.

Options for income: Increase council tax. Adequate government funding. Introduce speed cameras. Increase charges for use of community spaces and halls. Ensure full occupancy of Council-run care homes. Keep the green bin

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

subscription and increase with inflation. Charge for discretionary services. Allow more housing. Generate solar energy from roofs and above car parks.

6. **If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of these proposals, if the decision is taken to proceed with one of them, please provide your contact details below.**

40 individuals provided contact details.

7. **Any further comments?**

Many responses repeated earlier comments. It was pointed out that this year's weather has repeatedly demonstrated the inadequacy of roadside drainage. It was suggested that there is a need for better top level Government knowledge and aptitude for rural affairs, but that the Council should be making the case to the Government that funding needs to be improved. There should also be a wider debate about all areas of spend.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Peter Walker
Service Lead – Highways & Transport Innovation
Environment Department
15 January 2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

ⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	To reduce the annual funding by:				
	Programme	Budget reduction (£)	% of budget		
	Bridge maintenance	£80,000	44%		
	Gully emptying	£50,000	25%		
	Total	£130,000	32%		
Total budget 2023/24:	£384,050	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£130,000 (32%)	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£80,000
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 279 responses were received through the survey. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 263 - A resident of West Berkshire • 6 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 11 - A West Berkshire business owner • 12 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 6 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 15 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 1 - A District Councillor • 1 - A partner organisation • 0 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 13 – Other <p>We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP, Thatcham Town Council, and Tilehurst and Basildon Parish Councils. We received no petitions.</p>				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Key issues raised:	<p>The focus of most comments was on gully emptying, the increased risk of flooding, and the impacts that is likely to have. These include damage to roads and properties, increased insurance claims, impacts on mental health and possible loss of life. Whilst there were fewer comments on bridge maintenance, it was noted that this would have to be managed carefully for safety reasons. The proposal to reduce gully emptying and bridge maintenance was considered most likely to increase future costs. Weather experienced this year has already demonstrated that drainage needs improving.</p> <p>Over 96% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (84%) with the proposals for gully emptying, whereas it was 72% for bridge maintenance.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Consider different gully designs.	There are no alternatives.	
	Maintain gully emptying where there is a risk of flooding, where most people would be adversely affected, and when storms are forecast.	Works would be prioritised where most risk has been identified.	
	Allow residents to clear gullies, or parish councils to award private gully cleaning contracts.	Residents and parish councils can keep gullies clear of leaves.	
	Ensure surface water road drains are cleared regularly. Increase road sweeper activity to remove leaves and debris.	Additional clearing will cost more money.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Provide a better response to public identification of blocked gullies.	The Council has invested in a new reporting tool which is working well.	
	Provide more flood defences and better drainage.	The Council has invested in flood alleviation schemes across West Berkshire in partnership with the Environment Agency. Another is underway in Thatcham, and further schemes are being considered.	
	Ensure land owners clear their ditches.	Although we have powers, this is resource-intensive and takes time.	
	Issue sandbags.	The Council policy is not to issue sandbags as they are generally not very effective, and there are considerable environmental issues with their use.	
	Install traffic lights where roads are likely to flood.	The cost of installation, operation and maintenance would not be efficient use of resources for temporary problems. Emergency lights may occasionally be installed.	
	Limit HGV movements and consider weight limits for heavier vehicles.	Where bridges are deemed to be at greater risk, weight limits are introduced.	
	Do not allow developments in flood plains.	All developments are considered against Council policies.	
	Better communication.	The Council has provided improved communication regarding flooding including how to register for warnings and owners' responsibilities.	
Alternative options for applying the	Suggestion	Council response	
	Saving could be made for one year only.	There is no specific information to indicate that West Berkshire Council will be in an improved financial position in one year's time.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
saving in this area:	The contract could be renegotiated or brought back into the Council.	The contract is currently under review and will need to be retendered by 2026.	
	The contractor could do a better job.	Contract performance is monitored regularly, and the contractor is meeting Key Performance Indicators.	
	Surface water road drains should be cleared regularly.	Additional clearing will cost more money.	
	Parish councils could contribute.	We would welcome any contributions.	
	Local farmers may be cheaper than contractor.	They are unlikely to have the required specialist equipment, and there would also be issues with insurance.	
	Look at technological advancements for monitoring.	The Council are already looking at, and introducing, technological advances.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Introduce speed cameras.	Income from speed cameras goes to the Police.	
	Charge for discretionary services. Generate solar energy from roofs and above car parks.	These are already being actively happening, or in progress.	
	Increase council tax. Receive adequate government funding.	Levels are set by government.	
Increase charges for use of community spaces and halls. Ensure full occupancy of Council-run care homes. Allow more	These are matters for other parts of the Council to consider.		

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce funding for gully emptying and bridge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	housing. Keep the green bin subscription and increase with inflation.		
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	Given the largely negative views on reducing spend on gully emptying, and the impacts this could exacerbate, this is not recommended. Although reducing bridge maintenance spend was also mostly negative, very few comments were received and it is recommended that this budget is reduced for a limited time of one to two years.		

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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Services to add any other specific engagement exercises here e.g. any in-person conversations.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

As a Waste Disposal Authority, West Berkshire Council provides householders within the district access to two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) where they can recycle, compost, or dispose of their own household waste.

Our HWRCs are located at:

- Newtown Road, Newbury
- Padworth Lane, Padworth

Both sites are currently open from 9am to 6pm, 7 days a week, 362 days a year (closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day). On Thursdays, between 1 April and 30 September, we offer late night opening at the Newtown Road site from 6pm to 8pm. Both sites have appointment booking system in operation. Appointments can be booked online or by calling our Customer Services team on 01635 551111. Last year 188,347 appointments were made by householders.

Over the past 12 months, 55% of all available appointments have been used. Over the weekend and bank holiday Mondays this increases to 79%. During the last late-night opening period, 60% of available appointments were booked.

Businesses, charities and sole traders are not permitted to dispose of their waste at either of the HWRCs and must arrange a commercial collection.

Householders from outside the district can access both sites by paying an entry fee upon arrival.

Legislation Requirements

Under the Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978, Waste Disposal Authorities are required to provide residents with reasonable access to places to dispose of their household waste. There is no requirement on how long HWRCs are open for or the number of facilities that residents have access to.

Proposal Details

- To reduce the weekday (Monday to Friday) opening times, currently 9am to 6pm, of both HWRCs by two hours to 11am to 6pm
- To remove the late-night opening hours (6pm to 8pm - Thursdays only) during the summer months at Newtown Road

Overall, this would create an estimated annual saving of £59,000.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 190 responses were received.

We also received 3 additional written responses from:

- Labour Party, Basildon Parish and Tilehurst Parish Council

Summary of Main Points

The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals. There was some debate over what the best adjustment to the available opening hours would be, but most respondents seemed to agree that they could make the proposals work for them. Suggestions included opening from 9am - 4pm or 10am - 5pm instead. Concerns were raised that we were making it harder for residents to visit the sites especially those who worked full time and thus could increase fly tipping.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	158	83.16%
A resident of West Berkshire	161	84.74%
A visitor to West Berkshire	0	0.00%
A West Berkshire business owner	8	4.21%
Employed by a West Berkshire business	11	5.79%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	7	3.68%
A Parish/Town Councillor	9	4.74%
A District Councillor	0	0.00%
A partner organisation	2	1.05%
A West Berkshire Council service provider	0	0.00%
Other	3	1.58%

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposals?

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

- i. To reduce the weekday (Monday to Friday) opening times, currently 9am to 6pm, of both HWRCs by two hours to 11am to 6pm*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	62	33.88
Agree	55	30.05
Neither agree nor disagree	12	6.56
Disagree	24	13.11
Strongly disagree	30	16.39

- ii. To remove the late-night opening hours (6pm to 8pm - Thursdays only) during the summer months at Newtown Road*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	52	28.73
Agree	49	27.07
Neither agree nor disagree	25	13.81
Disagree	34	18.78
Strongly disagree	21	11.6

In response to the question regarding agreement or disagreement with the proposed changes in opening hours at both HWRCs, the predominant feedback indicated that the proposed reduction of weekday opening times by two hours (from 9am to 6pm, to 11am to 6 pm) and the removal of late-night opening hours (6pm to 8pm on Thursdays only) at Newtown Road would have either no or minimal impacts.

Additionally, alternative suggestions for varying opening hours and days were proposed by some respondents who believed it could be more effective. There were individuals expressing a desire to retain the late-night opening hours. Concerns were raised about potential difficulties for residents to visit the sites, possibly leading to increased fly-tipping.

Several minor points were also raised, including concerns about the impact on staff, health and safety issues for staff working in the evening, suggestions to eliminate the booking system, and proposals to increase bulky waste charges. There was also anticipation of longer queues leading to increased pollution, and concerns that the changes might reduce recycling rates.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

The prevailing view highlighted concerns about the potential impact on workers who might find it challenging to adhere to the proposed opening times. Many respondents expressed the opinion that there would be little to no impact on residents. Additional points raised included the possibility of increased traffic volumes during the evening rush hour, considerations for Veolia staff working at the site, concerns about a potential reduction in recycling rates, and the need for effective communication to mitigate impacts.

Several respondents also expressed worries that the changes could lead to an increase in fly-tipping and suggested potential disparate impacts on retired or ill individuals. It was noted by some that the effects would be widespread, affecting everyone to varying degrees.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with one of these proposals, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

A diverse range of suggestions emerged. The most suggested approach was to advertise and promote the changes extensively to ensure residents are well-informed. Additional responses included proposals to open another site, implement a priority booking system, maintain the existing booking system, retain late-night opening hours, consider opening six days (instead of the current seven days) a week, and adjust operating hours to 9am – 4pm or 10am – 5pm.

Other suggestions encompassed maintaining the status quo, enhancing kerbside waste collections, eliminating the garden waste charge, reviewing the Veolia contract, introducing a charge per booking slot, redeploying affected staff, introducing more mini recycling centres, reducing staffing levels, improving the efficiency of the site, and exploring variations of the opening hours. Some innovative ideas included having an unmanned section of the site for residents to drop off items when the site is closed and exploring collaboration with Reading Council to utilise their site.

5. Do you see any benefits or opportunities that may arise from these proposed changes? If so, please provide details.

The most prevalent response was a perception that there would be no discernible benefits. However, a notable proportion of respondents identified the potential for the proposed changes to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the sites. Additional responses suggested that it could lead to a reduction in staff costs, contribute to easing morning rush-hour traffic, provide an opportunity to further reduce operational hours, result in overall efficiencies in site management and slot utilisation, and potentially eliminate the existing booking system. Some respondents also anticipated a positive outcome in terms of reducing waste sent to landfill.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

6. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

The most frequently recommended options included reducing WBC management, staff, and overall expenses, as well as exploring the possibility of reducing operating hours at HWRCs. Here is a summarised overview of the suggestions:

Personnel and Management:

- Reduce WBC management, staff, and overall expenses.

Waste Management (HWRCs and Recycling):

- Reduce operating hours at HWRCs.
- Increase mini HWRCs.
- Introduce charges for HWRC slots and commercial waste.
- Eliminate the food waste service.
- Increase bulky waste charges.
- Retain the garden waste charge.
- Implement ANPR to monitor vehicles at the HWRC.

Infrastructure and Utilities:

- Make road repairs last longer.
- Turn off street lights.

Administrative Efficiency:

- Less printing.
- Review all discretionary spending.

Income Generation:

- Sell things.
- Sell compost.
- Start a reuse shop.
- Charge for HGVs in town.
- Explore privatisation of certain services.
- Use volunteers more effectively.

Transportation and Planning:

- Increase kerbside recycling.
- Establish a reuse shop.
- Stop putting in unnecessary cycle lanes.

Financial Measures:

- Become a unitary authority.
- Increase Council Tax.
- Sell unused property.

Miscellaneous:

- Scrap the booking system.
- Don't sell off property.
- Stop putting in unnecessary cycle lanes.
- Privatised services.
- Discontinue discounted bus travel.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Consultation Summary Report

- Reduce spending on consultants.
- Reduce grass cutting.
- Discontinue security services at Four Houses Corner.

7. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of these proposals, if the decision is taken to proceed with one of them, please provide your contact details below.

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8. Any further comments?

Additional comments encompassed a variety of suggestions. Some respondents proposed variations in the opening hours, advocating for in-house cost reductions, and recommending the expansion of kerbside and mini recycling centres. Others suggested the establishment of reuse shops, introducing charges for commercial waste, improving communication, and enhancing staff efficiency by optimising the use of ANPR technology. Further recommendations included discontinuing charges for DIY waste, conducting a trial period for reduced operating hours, and offering voluntary redundancy to staff affected.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Daniel Warne
Waste Manager
Environment
18/01/2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

ⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the weekday (Monday to Friday) opening times, currently 9am to 6pm, of both HWRCs by two hours to 11am to 6pm To remove the late-night opening hours (6pm to 8pm - Thursdays only) during the summer months at Newtown Road 				
Total budget 2023/24:		Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£59,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£59,00
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 190 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 158 – A user of the service 161 - A resident of West Berkshire 0 - A visitor to West Berkshire 8 - A West Berkshire business owner 11 - Employed by a West Berkshire business 7 - Employed by West Berkshire Council 9 - A Parish/Town Councillor 0 - A District Councillor 2 - A partner organisation 0 - A West Berkshire Council service provider 3 - Other <p>We received 0 petitions.</p>				
Key issues raised:	<p>The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals. There was some debate over what the best use of the opening hours would be, but most respondents seemed to agree that they could make the proposals work for them. Suggestions included opening from 9am - 4pm or 10am - 5pm instead. Concerns were</p>				

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	raised that we were making it harder for residents to visit the sites especially those who worked full time and thus could increase fly tipping.		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Advertise and promote the changes.	We agree that this is an important component of reducing the impact from this change and will look to do so if the proposal is passed and implemented. An advantage of the booking system is that it will only allow customers to book appointments when the site is open, thus reducing and near removing any risk of people turning up to use the site when it is closed.	
	Open another site.	Unfortunately, this suggestion is not financially feasible. The investment and ongoing cost required to build and operate another recycling centre will outweigh a large majority of all of the proposals put forward for consultation.	
	Have a priority booking system.	We do not believe that this suggestion will reduce the impact of this change as there is capacity within the amount of appointment already available within the new proposed opening hours. A priority system may also negatively impact residents who do not qualify or afford.	
	Remove the booking system	Since the implementation of the booking system in 2020, queues on the A339 leading into Newbury have disappeared over weekends and busy periods where tailbacks of up to 800m where a frequent occurrence. It has also reduced the time it takes for residents to enter and exit site, as they no longer need to queue while on site. It has also allowed us to maintain a good level of customer service with complaints from residents considerably reducing as has abuse toward site operatives. We have also seen residents make better use of each visit, by making fewer visits but bringing more with them each time, which	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)								
		has a positive effect on vehicle movements and the environment. As such, we are not planning to remove the booking system.									
	Keep the late-night opening.	We have monitored utilisation of the late-night Thursday opening, which has shown that only 60% of appointments were booked over the past 12 months, we have also received a positive response to the consultation proposing to remove this.									
	Open 6 days a week.	This was an initial option discussed with before this proposal was put forward. It was decided that this would have a bigger impact on residents and site staff, without generating a significant increase in savings.									
	Open from 9-4 or 10-5 instead.	This was an initial option discussed with before this proposal was put forward. We felt that 11am - 6pm was the better option as it still allows people who work during the daytime to visit in the evening, whereas opening 9am - 4pm or 10am - 5pm removes that opportunity. Data from our booking system show that appointments later in the day are better utilised when compared to those in the morning.									
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Newtown Road</th> <th>Padworth</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9 - 11am</td> <td>63%</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 - 6pm</td> <td>72%</td> <td>54%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Newtown Road	Padworth	9 - 11am	63%	46%	4 - 6pm	72%	54%
	Newtown Road	Padworth									
9 - 11am	63%	46%									
4 - 6pm	72%	54%									
	Increase kerbside recycling.	We are always looking at options to increase kerbside recycling and have plans to increase the amount of plastic we collect from the kerbside in line with Simpler Recycling measures announced by the Government at the end of 2023.									
	Keep the booking system.	We plan to keep the booking system as queues on the A339 leading into Newbury have disappeared over weekends and busy periods where tail backs of up to 800m were a frequent occurrence. It has also reduced the time it takes for residents to enter and exit site, as they no longer need to queue while on site. It has also allowed us to maintain a good level of customer service with									

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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		complaints from residents considerably reducing as has abuse toward site operatives. We have also seen residents make better use of each visit, by making fewer visits but bringing more with them each time, which has a positive effect on vehicle movements and the environment.	
	Get rid of the garden waste subscription charge.	The Council is currently assessing options for phasing out the garden waste charge over time.	
	Charge per booking slot.	We cannot charge residents of West Berkshire to use the HWRCs. We do charge non-residents a fee per visit, currently £7.77.	
	Renegotiate the Veolia contract.	Our current contract with Veolia, with which HWRCs falls, expires in 2032.	
	Redeployment of staff affected.	All staff employed at the HWRCs are employees of Veolia, the Council does not have control as to how the changes impact staff affected by this proposal, however we will work closely with Veolia to minimise any impact as much as possible.	
	Install more mini recycling centres.	We are always actively looking for appropriate sites within the district. We encourage landowners to come forward if they have any suitable land within the district that could be considered.	
	Improve efficiency of the site by better traffic management.	The sites operate a one-way system so cars can navigate through the sites safely and quickly. The booking slots are each 30 minutes long, but many cars pass through the site a lot quicker than this. We are not aware of any traffic management issues on site.	
	Have an unmanned part of the site open when closed for resident to drop items off.	This would incur additional cost to implement as changes would need to be made to the sites to facilitate this. We would also have to restrict types of waste available to drop off, like at the mini recycling centres, as we cannot accept all waste types without suitable trained staff on site. As such we do not see this as a feasible solution.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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	Agreements with other councils to use their sites	This would come at a financial cost to the Council and as such will not generate any saving. We are in regular contact with our neighbouring authorities, there is currently no appetite for cross-border arrangements. We are fortunate to have 2 HWRCs within a short driving distance for most residents (Estimate of under 30 minutes for majority of residents).	
	Change nothing.	Savings need to be found for the Council to help us balance our books and to continue providing essential services.	
	Review the changes periodically	We will continue to monitor the availability of booking slots quarterly to see how this change impacts the service and users.	
	Reduce staffing levels	Staffing levels need to be at a certain level to ensure the health and safety of the site is not compromised.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Identified benefits or opportunities	Suggestion	Council response	
	Remove booking system	Since the implementation of the booking system in May 2020, queues on the A339 leading into Newbury have disappeared over weekends and busy periods where tail backs of up to 800m where a frequent occurrence. It has also reduced the time it takes for residents to enter and exit site, as they no longer need to queue while on site. It has also allowed us to maintain a good level of customer service with complaints from residents considerably reducing as has abuse toward site operatives. We have also seen residents make better use of each visit, by making fewer visits but bringing more with them each time, which has a positive effect on vehicle movements and the environment. As such we are not planning to remove the booking system.	
	Reduce hours even more	If implemented, we will review this proposal quarterly and monitor utilisation of slots to see if this is beneficial. However, we feel that this proposal offers the right balance in terms of availability and impact on residents and staff.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Personnel and Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce WBC management, staff, and overall expenses. 	The Council regularly undertakes reviews of staff structure and costs, to ensure that ratepayers are getting suitable value for money. Spending restrictions have been in place for several months.	
	Waste Management (HWRCs and Recycling): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce operating hours at HWRCs. Increase mini recycling centres. Eliminate the food waste service. Scrap the booking system. 	<p>If implemented, we will review this proposal quarterly over the next couple of years monitoring utilisation of slots to see if a further reduction in opening hours is beneficial. However, we feel that this proposal offers the right balance in terms of availability and impact on residents and staff.</p> <p>While we are open to increasing the number of mini recycling centres, doing so will increase costs, so is not a suitable alternative option to find savings.</p>	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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		<p>All Waste Collection Authorities will have to provide a weekly food waste service by 2026, as per The Environment Act 2021 section 57. So, we will not be removing it. It is also having a positive impact on the amount of waste we recycle.</p> <p>We do not believe that scrapping the HWRC booking is an alternative option for finding this saving.</p>	
	<p>Infrastructure and Utilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make road repairs last longer. • Turn off street lights. 	These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.	
	<p>Administrative Efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less printing. • Review all discretionary spending. 	These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.	
	<p>Transportation and Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop putting in unnecessary cycle lanes. • Discontinue discounted bus travel. 	These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.	
	<p>Financial Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a unitary authority. 	We are already a unitary authority.	
	<p>Miscellaneous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't sell off property. • Privatise services. 	Comments noted. These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce spending on consultants. • Reduce grass cutting. • Discontinue security services at Four Houses Corner. 		
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Waste Management (HWRCs and Recycling): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce charges for HWRC slots and commercial waste. • Increase bulky waste charges. • Retain the garden waste charge. • Start a reuse shop. • Increase recycling. • Sell compost. 	<p>We cannot charge residents of West Berkshire to use the HWRCs. We do charge non-residents a fee per visit, currently £7.77.</p> <p>The feasibility of introducing commercial waste at our HWRCs is being investigated.</p> <p>We are always looking at options to increase kerbside recycling and have plans to increase the amount of plastic we collect from the kerbside in line with Simpler Recycling measures announced by the Government at the end of 2023.</p> <p>We have investigated selling compost, unfortunately it is not deemed feasible due to investment required (bagging machine, additional staff etc.) and the low market value of compost.</p> <p>We are looking into increasing charges for bulky waste collections, as we are aware we do not charge as much as many of our neighbouring councils.</p>	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRs)		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
		<p>We could retain and increase the garden waste charge, this would be easily implemented and generate a significant amount of income to cover the financial shortfall if the instruction is given by decision makers. The Council is currently considering options for phasing out the garden waste charge over time.</p> <p>A reuse shop is being considered for the future, however it will require significant investment as well as a feasibility study into its viability.</p>	
	<p>General Income Generation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell things. • Charge for HGVs in town. • Explore privatisation of certain services. • Use volunteers more effectively. 	<p>These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.</p>	
	<p>Financial Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Council Tax. • Sell unused property. 	<p>These suggestions have been noted and will be shared with relevant teams for consideration.</p>	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>The predominant sentiment from respondents indicates substantial support for the proposed change. There were a few concerns raised about whether the proposed hours would impact more on selected users such as those who prefer to visit the sites earlier in the day. Having considered the range of respondent feedback, officers wish to recommend this proposal to decision makers.</p>		

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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

In total, West Berkshire Council maintains and empties approximately 785 litter bins and 255 dog waste bins throughout the district. This includes locations along the public highway, within town centres, residential areas, selected laybys, and parks and open spaces.

Our waste contractor empties litter bins along the public highway, within town centres, residential areas and selected laybys when they are full or nearly full based on their own inspections, checks done by council staff or following reports from members of the public.

Litter bins and dog waste bins in parks and open spaces are emptied by our grounds maintenance contractor up to three times per week. The grounds maintenance contractor also empties a total of 105 litter and dog bins on behalf of 19 parish councils in the district.

It is not possible to recycle waste placed within our general litter bins due to the amount of non-recyclable waste placed within them. Waste placed within our recycling litter bins is recycled as often as possible, depending on the level of contamination within the bin when it is emptied.

Dog waste is no longer considered to be a biohazard and therefore it can be deposited in any public litter bin or your black wheeled bin at home.

Legislation Requirements

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that the public highway (and any other relevant land they are responsible for such as parks and open spaces) is, in so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. We comply with this through the litter picking and street cleansing operations we run. The provision of litter and dog waste bins is not a statutory requirement and therefore we are not duty bound to provide them to the extent currently available.

Proposal Details

- To remove approximately 340 litter bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 44% of the total number)
- To remove approximately 230 dog waste bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 90% of the total number)
- To reduce the frequency of emptying some dog waste bins and litter bins in parks and open spaces from three occasions per week to two
- To cease emptying dog waste bins and litter bins on behalf of a number of parishes; we will work with them to identify an alternative contractor

Our street cleansing and litter picking service, and Town and Parish Council maintained litter bins are not affected by this proposal.

In order to allow for the increased capacity the council will, over time, seek to replace dog waste bins with covered litter bins.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

These proposals will have a combined annual saving of approximately up to £90,000.

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 986 responses were received.

We received 0 petitions.

Summary of Main Points

The overwhelming majority of responses strongly disagreed with the proposed changes. Concerns were voiced regarding the potential adverse impacts on the environment, as well as the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly younger, older, and more vulnerable individuals. The prevailing sentiment conveyed a strong belief that the proposal offers no benefits, would affect everyone, and could lead to an increase in litter and dog waste in the environment. Consequently, there was a resounding call not to proceed with this proposal.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A resident of West Berkshire	874	88.64
A visitor to West Berkshire	26	2.64
A West Berkshire business owner	40	4.06
Employed by a West Berkshire business	49	4.97
Employed by West Berkshire Council	46	4.67
A Parish/Town Councillor	32	3.25
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	2	0.2
A West Berkshire Council service provider	2	0.2
Other	12	1.22

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposals?

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

- i. To remove approximately 340 litter bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 44% of the total number)*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	14	1.48
Agree	21	2.22
Neither agree nor disagree	16	1.69
Disagree	119	12.58
Strongly disagree	776	82.03

- ii. To remove approximately 230 dog waste bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 90% of the total number)*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	19	2.01
Agree	19	2.01
Neither agree nor disagree	18	1.91
Disagree	50	5.3
Strongly disagree	837	88.76

- iii. To reduce the frequency of emptying some dog waste bins and litter bins in parks and open spaces from three occasions per week to two*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	1.91
Agree	102	10.83
Neither agree nor disagree	88	9.34
Disagree	131	13.91
Strongly disagree	603	64.01

- iv. To cease emptying dog waste bins and litter bins on behalf of a number of parishes; we will work with them to identify an alternative contractor*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	17	1.81
Agree	34	3.62

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

Neither agree nor disagree	72	7.66
Disagree	131	13.91
Strongly disagree	724	77.02

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

There is a widespread perception among respondents that these proposals will have a broad impact, affecting everyone, as voiced by the majority of participants. Notably, there is a genuine concern that the safety and wellbeing of children and young families will be compromised, posing risks to public health. Additionally, respondents expressed apprehension about the potential harm to the environment, anticipating an increase in litter and dog waste on the ground. Some participants also highlighted the potential impact on the elderly and less mobile individuals, emphasising concerns about slip and trip hazards.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with one of these proposals, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

A significant portion of respondents, forming the majority, strongly advocated against its implementation (41%). Additionally, a notable percentage expressed the belief that reducing the impact was not feasible.

On a positive note, a considerable number of participants suggested that effective communication and education about the proposal could help mitigate its impact. Furthermore, a notable percentage recommended increased enforcement against littering and failure to pick up dog waste, while another group suggested leaving bins in identified hot spot areas as a practical solution.

5. Do you see any benefits or opportunities that may arise from these proposed changes? If so, please provide details.

The overwhelming majority of respondents, accounting for 88%, expressed the view that there are no benefits associated with this proposal. Additionally, a smaller percentage acknowledged the only perceived benefit to be the cost saving mentioned as part of the proposal.

6. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

A notable portion of respondents expressed the view that it wasn't their responsibility to provide suggestions, as it falls under the purview of Council staff. Other respondents suggested reducing Council staff numbers or adjusting

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins

Consultation Summary Report

the wages and benefits of current staff to achieve savings. Another recommended that the Council should manage its finances more efficiently.

Overall, there were over 70 suggestions, with a prevailing theme urging the Council to enhance financial management and reduce spending on non-statutory services/schemes such as Faraday Road football, pedestrianisation, Newbury Wharf, 20mph speed limits, and cycleways.

7. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of these proposals, if the decision is taken to proceed with one of them, please provide your contact details below.

108 people or organisations provided contact details.

8. Any further comments?

In response to the invitation for further comments, a significant portion of respondents, constituting approximately 25% of the total, emphatically stated that the proposal should not proceed. Many among this group emphasised the need for more litter and dog bins, not fewer.

Additional comments expressed strong disapproval, with terms such as 'disgraceful,' 'madness,' and 'irresponsible' used to characterise the proposal. A prevailing sentiment in this subset of respondents was the belief that the proposed changes would exacerbate the situation rather than improve it.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Paul Hendy
Countryside Manager
&
Daniel Warne
Waste Manager
Environment
18/1/2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry & Daniel Warne		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To remove approximately 340 litter bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 44% of the total number) To remove approximately 230 dog waste bins on a permanent basis (equivalent to 90% of the total number) To reduce the frequency of emptying some dog waste bins and litter bins in parks and open spaces from three occasions per week to two To cease emptying dog waste bins and litter bins on behalf of a number of parishes; we will work with them to identify an alternative contractor <p>Our street cleansing and litter picking service, and Town and Parish Council maintained litter bins are not affected by this proposal.</p> <p>In order to allow for the increased capacity the council will, over time, seek to replace dog waste bins with covered litter bins.</p>				
Total budget 2023/24:		Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	Up to £90,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	Up to £80k (subject to contractor negotiations)
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 986 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 874 - A resident of West Berkshire 26 - A visitor to West Berkshire 40 - A West Berkshire business owner 49 - Employed by a West Berkshire business 46 - Employed by West Berkshire Council 32 - A Parish/Town Councillor 				

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry & Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - A District Councillor • 2 - A partner organisation • 2 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 12 - Other <p>We received 0 petitions.</p>		
Key issues raised:	The overwhelming majority of responses strongly disagreed with the proposed changes. Concerns were voiced regarding the potential adverse impacts on the environment, as well as the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly younger, older, and more vulnerable individuals. The prevailing sentiment conveyed a strong belief that the proposal offers no benefits, would affect everyone, and could lead to an increase in litter and dog waste in the environment. Consequently, there was a resounding call not to proceed with this proposal.		
Equality issues:	One respondent stated that the proposed decision will have a highly adverse and detrimental impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users, despite what the EqIA states.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Not possible/Don't do it.	It is accepted that the proposal could be unpalatable to many and will have impacts. However, we need to find substantial savings to be able to balance our budget for 24/25.	
	Provide a communication and education programme, including signs and equipment to loan.	Agreed that sound communications and stakeholder engagement will be essential if this proposal goes ahead.	
	Remove fewer bins, leaving them in hot spots and consider a trial.	It may be possible to phase in the reduction in the number of bins, but this won't realise a saving in the financial years required. We will look to keep bins in 'hot spot' locations where	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry & Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
		possible, using data provided by contractors and reports received by residents.	
	Take enforcement action against people who litter (includes dog mess).	The Council does have a dog warden service who try to work with the dog owning public, encouraging them to become more responsible. We agree that increased enforcement action may help reduce the impact. However, it will not be feasible to increase our staffing resource while we are looking to make savings.	
	Provide bigger bins for dog mess.	This is an option we have explored before. However, there is a Health & Safety issue as larger dog bins can accommodate for greater quantities of waste and the bags can be extremely heavy for operatives to empty.	
	Undertake more litter picking	That incurs an additional cost in both contracts.	
	Sponsor bin or pass over to the Parish Councils.	Parish councils have in the past taken on the responsibility for dog and some litter bins and some have expressed an interest in taking on some dog bins if this proposal goes ahead. Generally, parishes haven't engaged with the devolution process as much as we might have expected. We are keen to explore this further with parish councils. We are beginning to investigate how the Council can increase sponsorship of assets across the district.	
	Keep all the bins but reduce frequency of emptying.	That is a part of the proposal we have presented regarding dog bins. It may be possible to reduce emptying of some bins or rationalise numbers where usage is lower. This however	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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		increases the risk of bins becoming full. We only empty the litter bins along the public highway when they are full.	
	Reduce Council staff pay and number of staff.	Recruitment across the council is under review.	
	Increase collection of remaining bins.	This will not be possible if we are to achieve the saving figures.	
	Reduce Council Tax.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Merge dog and litter bins.	This could be an option in some locations but requires capital investment.	
	Use community service to empty the bins.	This option doesn't provide any continuity of service, individuals on reparation activities change from week to week.	
	Reduce frequency of emptying the bins during the winter.	Yes, seasonal emptying is perhaps an option to look at in some areas but won't provide a significant cost saving across the services.	
	Manage Council finances better.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Increase Council tax.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Install fenced dog areas in green spaces.	Possible but there aren't enough parks or open spaces to deal with demand. Also requires capital investment.	
	Install compactor bins.	These are generally expensive to purchase and maintain.	
	Introduce Dog/Pet License.	Unworkable in the sense that any income would have to cover salary and overhead costs.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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Identified benefits or opportunities	Suggestion	Council response	
	None.	We agree that there aren't many benefits from this proposal, but it will provide a saving to help the Council balance its budget.	
	Cost savings already identified.	Agreed.	
	Passing responsibility onto community/parish Councils.	Parish council have in the past taken on the responsibility for dog and some litter bins and some have expressed an interest in taking on some dog bins if this proposal goes ahead. Generally, parishes haven't engaged with the devolution process as much as we might have expected. We are keen to explore this further with Parish Councils.	
	Increased personal responsibility.	Agreed and this will be promoted further.	
	Increased recycling.	This is something that the council is pursuing. This will encourage the public to take their litter home and recycle it.	
	Restructure Council Management.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	More work for litter pickers.	There could be an associated cost for this.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Management and Efficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form County Council/share costs/ideas with other Local Authorities (LAs). Better financial control/be more efficient and effective. 	<p>The council does share services with other councils, where practicable, in order to provide economies of scale.</p> <p>Other suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.</p>	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry & Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage contracts better/re-tender/procurement/have fewer contractors. • Use technology better. <p>2. Council Structure and Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Councillors Allowance. • Reduce the number of Councillors. • Don't employ agency/contractors/bring in house. • Council leadership should be operational only, not strategic to save spend on wages. 		
	<p>3. Communication and Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more and better communications and education. 	We agree, this will have to be part of the process should this proposal go ahead.	
	<p>4. Social Services and Community Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with volunteers (DWP/local groups) & Parish Councils. • Pay local residents to empty the bins. • Stop the bus service to Oxford. • More help from Govt/keep all rates collected. • Spend less money on the 10% and more on the 90%. Do not let social care swallow the majority of your budget. 	<p>We have a number of supported volunteer groups in the council, and they carry out valued work. It would not be appropriate to rely on volunteers in this work, disposal of litter bags would be an issue alone.</p> <p>Generally, parishes haven't engaged with the devolution process as much as we might have expected. We are keen to explore this further with parish councils.</p>	
	<p>5. Waste Management and Environment:</p>	Collecting the litter and dog bins using the black bin collection vehicles is an interesting point but unlikely to be feasible on an	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure collections/collect litter and dog bins with household black bins. • Provide different recycling bins for household collections. • Introduce a Deposit Return Scheme. • Remove new food waste service. • Use wheely bins for dog poo, sticker those happy to accept dog waste in their bin. • QR to scan when a litter/dog bin is full. • Reduce frequency of emptying/increase size rather than number of bins. • Change some litter bins to dual/recycling bins. • Only empty the litter/dog bins when they are full. • Reduce HWRC opening hours. • Stop cutting verges/weed spraying. Sow wildflowers, plant more trees/rewild. • Introduce an emissions tax in town centres for vehicles. 	<p>ongoing basis where bins are not on collection routes or visited frequently enough to keep the bin usable.</p> <p>Reducing frequency and size of bins has been considered, however there is a H&S issue as larger dog bins provide for greater quantities and the bags can be extremely heavy. Reduction in dog bin servicing from 3 to 2 times per week is part of this consultation process. Litter bins along the highway are only emptied when full.</p> <p>We will be looking at the bins we provide to household for recycling collection as part of our new Waste strategy, however any change will require significant investment.</p> <p>As part of the measures introduced in the Government's Resource and Waste Strategy, a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) system is due to be implemented across England in 2025.</p> <p>All Waste Collection Authorities will have to provide a weekly food waste service by 2026, as per The Environment Act 2021 section 57. So, we will not be removing it. It is also having a positive impact on the amount of waste we recycle.</p>	

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		Using black wheely bins is an interesting point which can be explored further although it would need community buy in – it is not expected that there would be a lot of enthusiasm for this.	
		Reduction in grass cutting and reducing HWRC hours are some of the proposals we are consulting on.	
	Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop bodge fixing potholes - reduce insurance claims. • Fix the online report a problem issue • Replace streetlights with LEDs. • Stop doing unnecessary road works. • Routine drain clearance • Turn off streetlights late at night. 	<p>The Council has already replaced streetlights with LEDs.</p> <p>Changes to the gully cleansing/drain cleaning service has also been consulted on. Other suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.</p>	
	6. Infrastructure and Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell/develop Council property. • Close Council Office/Libraries/Museum. • Don't develop Four Houses Corner. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
7. Public Services and Amenities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove funding to other groups/organisations. • Don't provide tea/coffee at Council meetings. • Put on fewer events in Newbury. • Stop wasting money on pavement resurfacing/cycle lanes. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.		

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce litter bins and dog waste bins		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry & Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>8. Miscellaneous Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut other non-statutory services and activities. Stop wasting money on Faraday Road/20mph/Newbury Wharf/Pedestrianisation. • Turn off lights in the office. • Post planning notices rather than sending officers to put up. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	<p>1. Bin and Asset Sponsorship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce sponsorship of bins and other assets. 	The council does operate a sponsorship scheme, we will explore how to expand this.	
	<p>2. Waste Management Charges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase garden waste charge. • Better and increased enforcement of litter/dog fouling. 	<p>We could retain and increase the garden waste charge; this would be easily implemented and generate a significant amount of income to cover the financial shortfall if the instruction is given by decision makers. However, the Council is currently exploring potential options for phasing out the garden waste charge over time.</p> <p>We agree that increased enforcement action may help reduce the impact. However, it will not be feasible to increase our staffing resource while we are looking to make savings.</p>	
	<p>3. Revenue and Permit Increases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Council tax. • Increase street work permit charge. 	We are consulting on increased parking fees.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parking charge/have more CEOs. • Revalue households Council Tax band after extensions are built, not when sold. • Fine people parking on pavements 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	4. Property and Development Income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent out/sublet council property to local business and groups not used or out of hours. • Increase income from developments S106/CIL/Planning applications. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	5. Pet/Dog-Related Charges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge for access to dog parks. • Charge for dog waste bins (like Garden Waste). • Introduce a pet/dog licence. 	<p>There is a significant capital costs relating to introducing dog parks as well as administrative fees related to charging.</p> <p>Charging for dog waste collection is an interesting idea, we will undertake some investigation to see if it is feasible.</p>	
	6. Social Care and Translation Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase social care fees. • Stop providing or charge for translation services. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	7. Boat Mooring Charges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a charge for boats to moor at Pangbourne Meadow/Thames. 	The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	

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	<p>8. Community Fundraising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based 'honesty box' for residents and dog walkers to raise income/ask for donations. • Run a local lottery. 	<p>The Council already run a local lottery.</p> <p>The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.</p>	
	<p>9. Leisure and Cultural Facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase prices at Leisure centres/Theatres/Library/Museum/build better facilities. 	<p>The suggestions have been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.</p>	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>It is noteworthy that this proposal has garnered the largest number of responses out of all the budget proposals consulted on, indicating a significant level of community engagement with this topic. The overwhelming majority of these responses expressed strong opposition to the proposal. There is significant concern that the proposal will lead to increased instances of littering and dog fouling. Nonetheless, this remains an option that decision makers can approve because of the Council's challenging financial situation. Officers wish to recommend this option for consideration by decision makers. If approved, suitable mitigation will be put in place to manage stakeholder expectation through communications and ensuring the areas with highest footfall are suitably provided for.</p>		

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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

West Berkshire Council's Countryside Service manages grounds maintenance services across the district. The current grounds maintenance contract, which commenced in January 2023, provides for the grass maintenance of several hundred small open spaces, large public parks and open spaces, and highway grass verges. It also covers litter collection, including dog waste bins and litter bins in these areas. Other services provided include sports pitch maintenance and the management of Henwick Worthy Sports Ground.

These services impact directly on our residents and communities. Many residents will use our parks, open spaces and sports facilities, and almost all will benefit from having green open spaces and verges with trees within the streets where they live.

The grounds maintenance contract currently delivers:

- an average of 7 cuts a year of urban residential grass verges
- an average of 7 cuts a year of residential open space grass areas
- weekly collection of litter from parks and open spaces

This is comparable to services provided by other councils, albeit many councils are currently reviewing their service levels.

The Countryside Team is also responsible for local delivery of biodiversity services, such as the management of rural grass verges and urban nature reserves. Increasingly we are working with communities to improve urban areas and parks for wildlife. Over the last two years, the council has been working with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to identify verges on the rural road network which can support wildflowers.

Legislation Requirements

There is no statutory requirement for the delivery of grounds maintenance services. The council has a responsibility under the various highways acts to maintain a safe urban and rural verge network.

Proposal Details

- To reduce the number of cuts on urban residential grass verges from 7 to 2 per year
- To reduce grass cutting on residential open space grass areas from 7 to 4 per year

As a consequence of reduced grass cutting there will also be a reduction in the frequency of litter picking on grass verges and open spaces across the district, as this is carried out as part of the grass maintenance operation.

This should realise a saving of up to £220,000.

Consultation Response

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Number of Responses

In total, 165 responses were received.

Summary of Main Points. (Those against the proposal).

The majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposals. The responses against the proposal to reduce grass cutting frequencies were both many and varied but in general a summary of the main points raised can be set out against the following headings: Safety issues, social impacts, impacts on children and youth, health impacts, damage to infrastructure, local economic impacts, and ongoing maintenance issues.

Safety issues:

A number of concerns were raised about the impact of reduced cutting on the urban highway verge network particularly sightlines. There is concern that sightlines will be obscured given the reduction to 2 annual cuts potentially leading to an increased number of road traffic accidents due to obscured vision. Impacts on the disabled, disabled vehicle users and those with restricted movement were mentioned.

Respondents also considered that residents will not be able to walk on the verges which are a safe place to avoid footways and road issues and so add to safety concerns. Vulnerable groups were identified as being: the disabled, sight impaired, pushchair and wheelchair users. Many respondents raised concerns about increased litter and glass which will gather on verges. Similarly, concerns were raised about the amount of dog poo which will be left on verges due to the difficulty that dog owners will experience picking up dog poo in long grass. Some respondents made a correlation between this issue and the proposed reduction in dog and litter bins.

Less commonly mentioned concerns relate to the likely increase in less desirable plant species which can prove harmful to children, giant hogweed being a stated example. It is suggested that this was the outcome of similar proposal in Oxfordshire.

Social Impacts:

A number of respondents expressed concerns about reduced grass maintenance making the District look uncared for leading to further social decline and antisocial behaviour. According to one respondent who gave a more detailed response, Oxford City Council and also Oxfordshire County Council embarked upon a similar reduction in grass cuts in 2021 to present. This change has reportedly resulted in compromised infrastructure, large rise in crime and reduction in community wellbeing, for the following reason: "place people in a disorderly environment, then you are more likely to see a rise in disorderly behaviour". We are advised by the respondent that after 2 years the effects of the reductions there have seen an adverse consequence in many areas, some of which were completely unforeseen. The respondent referred

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Consultation Summary Report

to the experience of Brighton and Hove City Council who received local and national criticism for open space maintenance reductions (this criticism related to reduction in weeding and pesticide application).

Comments received suggested that there is a danger that volunteers within the community would not offer themselves for duties, for community litter picking and footpath maintenance etc, due to the task being “overwhelming”. Some responses suggested that if the council appears not to be concerned about the condition of residential areas, then why should communities.

It was noted by a number of respondents that the cutting of verges and open spaces has already been reduced over several years resulting in residential areas becoming less “welcoming, clean, safe, attractive and accessible” and any further reduction would be detrimental to “your own stated aims”.

Impacts on children and youth:

Many respondents raised concerns about the impacts of long grass on open spaces on play opportunities for children and on informal sport. Long grass makes the use of open spaces by children and youths much more difficult. Respondents consequently stated that physical activity would be reduced due to the local environment being less attractive and with open spaces, paths and footways being encroached upon by long grass and vegetation. One respondent observed: *“we already suffer from a lack of open spaces and a lack of sports facilities and this will be another blow to keeping children active”*

Health impacts:

Increased prevalence of rats, ticks etc. were quoted by some respondents as being likely to cause health issues. Many respondents raised concerns about locally increased incidence of pollen and so hayfever.

Some respondents raised concerns about flowering grasses and grass seeds blowing around which can be a hazard for dogs and cats, as grass seeds can get in the fur of their feet and inside ears.

Some respondents referred to the likelihood of detrimental impacts on residents’ mental health as a result of locations looking unsightly and as a consequence of some of the social concerns set out by others above. Concern was raised about the risk of adults and children twisting ankles on open spaces and other uneven ground concealed by long grass.

Structural damage:

Many respondents pointed out the likelihood of damage to highway gutters where grasses will establish as a consequence of long grass falling onto the carriageway edge, affecting the flow of water in the channels. Many also pointed out the impacts of grass cuttings falling into ditches and drains leading to blocked drains, and causing or exacerbating localised flooding.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

Respondents were concerned that footways will be narrowed and damaged at the edges due to the increased vigour of hardy grass species breaking up tarmac and kerbs at the edges.

Local environment:

Apart from the general observations of increased litter, fly tipping, dog poo and the resulting community impacts of this, some respondents offered the opinion that the ecological and environmental benefits would not be achieved, stating that biodiversity needs spaces which are managed properly so as to have a positive impact. One respondent pointing out that “wildflowers won’t just appear”.

Local economy:

There was concern about the local economy of a local environment that looks uncared for. West Berkshire towns e.g. Newbury continue to attract new residents and businesses and thus income from business rates etc. partly because it is such a pleasant well-kept district.

Ongoing maintenance issues:

Some respondents stated that a reduction from 7 to 2 cuts is drastic and asked if the cutting regime could be evened out between verges and open spaces i.e. resulting in 4 cuts on all grass areas.

Concerns were raised that the reduced number of cuts would not be achieved due to climatic conditions, heavy rain for example, or at other times when grass growth is vigorous. This would make the stated cutting schedules much more difficult to achieve. Many respondents raised concerns about the large amounts of grass cuttings which will be left on verges with an increased likelihood of fire.

Summary of Main Points Raised by Respondents

The responses against the proposal were much less varied but nevertheless well presented.

Many of those responding in favour of the proposal considered that this was a sensible cost cutting measure which will, or could, bring about ecological and carbon reduction benefits. Some responses pointed out that this was the lesser of all evils and when considering the council’s budget and affordability and that the council must find ways to protect social care services. Comments included: “good cost cutting measure but grass maintenance needs to be timed properly”, “let nature do its job for more wildflowers or scatter wildflower seed”, “saving made in an ecologically friendly way, with less verge cutting the biodiversity does improve”, and “It can look beautiful if everyone understands your ideology”.

There was a general presumption that reduced grass cutting would bring about increased wildflowers, and numbers and diversity of invertebrates including insects. There was some caution around this from a number of respondents however. A very clear case was made for appropriate scheduling of cuts so as to promote the development of wildflower verges. Managing cutting frequencies and timing

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

and also the process was an overriding theme in the responses, supporting the view elsewhere that flowers will not just appear naturally. One response asked and that the programme should also involve the collection of cuttings so that over time this reduces the soil fertility (wildflowers prefer less fertile soils), and therefore the volume of growth. This might then result in verges only needing to be cut once in the future.

One respondent provided more specific and detailed comment, seeing no reason why the verges needed to be cut more than twice a year and proposed the two cuts should be in March/April and August/September/October. This would leave the grass uncut in May, June and July, allowing biodiversity to increase.

Some respondents proposed that the council should scatter wildflower seed on verges and open spaces too, in order to bring about greater diversity of flowering plant species.

There were many responses which were supportive of increasing the information provided to the public, and increased public relations to go alongside the reduction in grass cutting frequency, so as to address any concerns raised about the proposal.

Other more general comments made comparisons between the urban and rural settlements. It was stated that as some rural parishes have very few open spaces, and very few urban residential grass verges, this proposal could be seen as a form of levelling up.

Some respondents acknowledged other difficulties particularly relating to open space use by the public for recreational purposes, suggesting that perhaps some of the marginal open spaces could be cut just twice a year alongside the verges as a compromise. They suggested that where there is limited recreational use then cutting paths through the open space might suffice, leaving the majority of the open space to be cut just twice.

Finally, there were some responses suggesting that as in some years the vast majority of the general public may see little impact from the reduction in open space maintenance from 7 cuts down to 2, especially in areas where many residents manage their own verges.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A resident of West Berkshire	154	93.33
A visitor to West Berkshire	7	4.24
A West Berkshire business owner	3	1.82
Employed by a West Berkshire business	9	5.45

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Employed by West Berkshire Council	7	4.24
A Parish/Town Councillor	10	6.06
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	0	0
A West Berkshire Council service provider	1	0.61
Other	3	1.82

There were also 7 responses from organisations and groups including parish councils, Friends of the Earth and someone stated to be an Active Pensioner.

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposals?

- i. To reduce the number of cuts on urban residential grass verges from 7 to 2 per year

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	24	15
Agree	29	18.13
Neither agree nor disagree	9	5.63
Disagree	25	15.63
Strongly disagree	73	45.63

- ii. To reduce grass cutting on residential open space grass areas from 7 to 4 per year

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	25	15.92
Agree	23	14.65
Neither agree nor disagree	6	3.82
Disagree	22	14.01
Strongly disagree	81	51.59

The reasons for these responses is set out above in the section titled '*Summary of Main Points*'.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

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There were many interesting responses addressing this question, these are summarised below:

- Those periodically affected by flooding will be impacted more as roadside gutters become overgrown with grass, and drains become blocked more often as a consequence.
- Those with mobility issues and the disabled who may be more restricted when negotiating the junctions and sightlines.
- Disabled residents and those with mobility difficulties who cannot easily negotiate pavements narrowed by vegetation on verges and open spaces.
- Pushchair users, as weeds at footway edges clog axle-bearings.
- Motorists in general as a consequence of dangerous reduction of clear sightlines.
- Children and youths who can no longer use the open spaces for informal play and sport.
- Dog walkers who will find it difficult to act responsibly and clean up after their pets.
- It will impact on everyone equally, everyone suffers because other key services, which serve a narrow section of the population, is becoming increasingly more expensive.
- Those on low incomes who have children who need these open spaces for play. They have no other recreational options.
- Young children playing in grass areas contaminated with long grass, dog poo and broken glass.
- Those who suffer mental health issues such as depression, looking out on land which no one cares for.
- Homeowners as there will be an impact on house prices as a consequence of a local environment no one cares about.
- Asthma sufferers due to pollen levels.
- Everyone but children especially due to increased likelihood of ticks/Lyme disease etc.
- Vulnerable communities due to long grass being set on fire or catching fire naturally.
- Youths with few positive outlets encouraged to engage in anti-social activity by unkept residential areas.
- People without gardens who otherwise enjoy parks and open spaces.
- For those who enjoy and understand wildlife, there will be more flowers and insects.
- Everyone gains from the enhanced biodiversity and the improved aesthetics of the local environment. Children in particular can benefit from the development of "urban meadows".
- If it is managed correctly, it should not have a negative impact on anyone. We have wrecked untold damage on our environment by wanting everything to look neat and tidy.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with these proposals, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

Publicity:

A lot of the responses spoke about the need for focussed promotion before going ahead. Also, that there needs to be strong messaging to promote the benefits of long grass for biodiversity. The public need to be directed to the council's website so that they clearly know what the council will deliver and the expected outcomes and that requests for service and complaints are directed to a website that clearly explains the cutting regime.

Improving verges:

Some respondents spoke about sowing wildflower seeds. Others mentioned the importance of scheduling the cutting of verges and open spaces properly to as to make sure wildflowers were not being cut unnecessarily. There were some requests for the regime to include a 'cut and collect' so as to promote wildflowers by reducing soil fertility, and to address complaints about clumps of long cut grass being left on the grass surface.

Promoting 3rd party maintenance:

Some respondents asked that volunteers or the public should be encouraged to take on maintenance (although caveated by saying that overall they realised this was probably unrealistic). Further they asked that the council provides clear guidance to the public as to safe ways to maintain verges.

Prioritisation:

One respondent said that we should focus our cutting regime on verges which are essential for vision. Other comments received asked that we look at an alternative regime which would see the verges and open spaces cut to the same frequency.

General comments:

There were few suggestions, those that were offered asked the council to publicise the remuneration packages of senior managers in the council and cut costs there. To consider a wage freeze rather than make redundancies within services. Whilst several responses asked the council to cease expenditure on non-essential projects, management activities, socials, training, and entertainment. Other general comments included, "prevent car parking on verges so they can get cut", "tarmac everything"

5. Do you see any benefits or opportunities that may arise from these proposed changes? If so, please provide details.

Those in support of the proposal provided responses which were much less expansive on the benefits but nevertheless there was agreement that benefits included:

- More space for nature to thrive;

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance

Consultation Summary Report

- Greater biodiversity in urban spaces that will be important for overall biodiversity and feeding of urban dwelling species that may inhabit or be on feeding routes such as bats and red kites;
- Reduced carbon footprint; and
- Cost savings.

6. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.

18 individuals provided their names against this question.

7. Any further comments?

Most of the comments in this section are set out above and have just been repeated including concerns about dog mess, litter, glass, dangerous sightlines, and welcoming the proposal in terms of increasing local biodiversity. Overall, however the responses were negative and unhelpful. The more helpful responses reiterated the request for information, and particularly information on what land would be subject to what cutting regime. Other responses asked the council to lobby government for more assistance stating that the situation the council currently faces is unacceptable.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Paul Hendry
Countryside Manager
Transport and Countryside
15/01/2023

Please note: In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

ⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the number of cuts on urban residential grass verges from 7 to 2 per year To reduce grass cutting on residential open space grass areas from 7 to 4 per year <p>As a consequence of reduced grass cutting there will also be a reduction in the frequency of litter picking on grass verges and open spaces across the district, as this is carried out as part of the grass maintenance operation.</p>				
Total budget 2023/24:	£367,000	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	Up to £ 220,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£90k (final amount TBC)
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 165 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 154 - A resident of West Berkshire 7 - A visitor to West Berkshire 3- A West Berkshire business owner 9- Employed by a West Berkshire business 7- Employed by West Berkshire Council 10 - A Parish/Town Councillor 0- A District Councillor 0 - A partner organisation 1- A West Berkshire Council service provider 3- Other 				
Key issues raised:	<p>The majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposals (62% against reductions in verge management and 66% against reductions in open space management). The responses against the proposal were both many and varied but in general a summary of the main points raised can be set out against the following headings: safety issues, social impacts, impacts on children and youth, health impacts, damage to infrastructure, local economic impacts, and ongoing maintenance issues.</p>				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance	Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>Most of those against the proposal are concerned about the safety at road junctions and have concerns about the impact of long grass on sightlines obscuring vision. Responses also raise concerns about negative impacts on the visual amenity of residential areas, and local pride. One respondent referred to this as social ecology, the study of how individuals interact with and respond to the environment around them, and how these interactions affect society and the environment as a whole. There is concern among respondents that residential areas which look unsightly will experience further issues with antisocial behaviour and criminality.</p> <p>The majority of respondents are very concerned about long grass, increased litter and litter hazards hidden in long grass, and increased dog fouling. There are concerns about the damage caused to pavements and carriageway edges as a consequence of grass growing into the tarmac and breaking up path edges. There are concerns that this will also impact on the effectiveness of drainage systems exacerbating flooding in some areas whilst increasing highway maintenance costs. There are concerns about the impact on vulnerable individuals. It was suggested that there will be increased risk to disabled drivers, or those with mobility or other health problems. Concerns were raised regarding wheelchair users and pedestrians with pushchairs who may not be able to use highway footways and footpaths.</p> <p>Other respondents have cautioned that the reductions may not realise some of the environmental benefits anticipated, pointing out that wildflowers don't just appear in long grass without very specific cutting schedules with timings to avoid flowering periods. There are also concerns that the impacts of adverse weather, particularly heavy rain, making cutting of very long grass much more difficult and reducing progress of the cutting teams. There are health concerns for humans and pets alike, hayfever being a particular concern but also Lyme disease due to ticks breeding in the grass sward, and grass seeds which can embed in dogs' ears. Safety concerns expressed also included the increased risk of fire from long dry grass.</p> <p>There are concerns about the loss of leisure and recreational amenity on open spaces, and long grass discouraging use of these areas by children and youths.</p>	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>Many of those responding in favour of the proposal considered that this was a sensible cost cutting measure which will, or could, bring about ecological and carbon reduction benefits for all members of the community. Some responses pointed out that this was the lesser of all evils considering the council's difficult budget-related decisions. Other respondents made a very clear case for appropriate scheduling of cuts so as to promote the development of wildflower verges and cautioned that timing is critical. One respondent provided more specific and detailed comment, seeing no reason why the verges needed to be cut more than twice a year and proposed the two cuts should be in March/April and August/September/October. This would leave the grass uncut in May, June and July, allowing biodiversity to increase.</p>		
Equality issues:	<p>The implementation of the change will be applied uniformly across the district. The change is not expected to contribute to inequality. If approved for implementation, reasonable care will be taken to ensure that pavements are safe and accessible, and road sightlines are not obstructed.</p>		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	A lot of the responses spoke about promotion and the need for promotion to be focussed before going ahead with effective messaging to promote the benefits of long grass for biodiversity.	If the proposal goes ahead this can be dealt with by our PR team and with updated information on the council's website. The website will have detail on the proposal and a proposed schedule of cutting so that the general public have information on when cutting is likely to be carried out in each area. This schedule could be impacted by weather conditions and other factors and can never be guaranteed.	
	A number of respondents spoke about sowing wildflower seeds to bolster what nature can provide.	Wildflower seed will not germinate if sown directly onto grass. The land would need preparation first and this is not feasible nor appropriate.	
	There were some requests for the regime to include a 'cut and collect' so as to promote wildflowers by reducing soil fertility and grass vigour, and to	This would be an ideal scenario but is not deemed feasible as 'cut and collect' takes much more time and is significantly more expensive. Not only would there be no saving, but the practice would also involve a budget pressure overall.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	address complaints about heavy grass arisings being left on the grass surface.		
	Some respondents asked that volunteers or the public should be encouraged to take on maintenance. Further they asked that the council provides clear guidance to the public as to safe ways to maintain verges.	In some areas across the district residents do carry out their own maintenance but this is not openly promoted by the council. Perhaps, there could be an opportunity to promote that option more widely.	
	Focus our cutting regime on verges which are essential for vision. Other comments received asked that the council considers at an alternative regime which would see the verges and open spaces cut to the same frequency.	In order to meet a savings target the numbers of employees proposed to be assigned to grass has been reduced by more than 50% to 5 full time staff. This is extremely lean. This does not allow for tailoring of cutting/strimming to suit locations/situations or highway requirements. Harmonising the cutting frequency across open spaces and verges will increase the volume of grass cutting and consequently the level of saving will be significantly reduced.	

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Identified benefits or opportunities	Suggestion	Council response	
	Greater biodiversity in urban spaces that will be valuable to the whole community.	Agreed and supports the Environment Strategy priorities and helps to address the climate and ecological emergency, which have been declared by the council.	
	Will be beneficial for children who can experience nature close at hand.	Agreed	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Pass open space and urban verges management responsibilities to the relevant parishes.	It may well be that some of the parishes may want to employ a small local contractor to cut grass in their area. There are some merits in this as the cutting can be better tailored to suit local need (and promote ecology). Not many local authorities have truly engaged with 'devolution' however.	
	Cut remuneration packages of senior managers in the council to save costs. To consider a wage freeze rather than make redundancies within services. Also for the council to restrict management activities; socials, training, and entertainment.	The council has taken steps to restrict recruitment. There has never been significant expenditure on socials or entertainment, this was never a part of staff retention policies. Training budgets were previously reduced across the council other than mandatory and career-related training.	
	Several responses asked the council to cease expenditure on non-essential projects	This is already being considered as a consequence of restrictions on council-funded capital schemes.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce frequency of parks, open spaces and verge maintenance		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Paul Hendry	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Try to increase sponsorship of open spaces and parks	This is currently a consideration being explored.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>Most of the respondents are against this proposal. Concerns raised include the likelihood of areas looking unkempt and the potential to attract antisocial behaviour, risk of litter, dog poo and other hazards being lodged in long grass. On the positive side, there will be benefits for local biodiversity at a time where there is a local and national ecological emergency. Adoption of this proposal will come with some operational challenges as the contractor staff remaining may not have enough spare capacity to respond quickly to non-routine tasks or urgent requests e.g. to clear specific sightlines. This option is still available to decision makers because of the challenging financial situation. Officers have noted the risks associated with this proposal and will be ready to implement the changes if approved.</p>		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

The service had recently completed a consultation on the proposed new Parking Strategy. Anyone from that consultation that requested to be kept informed were emailed details of this consultation. Posters were also put up in car parks.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

Proposal Background

There are 27 council-operated car parks in West Berkshire and 469 designated parking spaces available on-street in Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham. Our Car Parks team, oversee these parking facilities and provide a civil enforcement function, in addition to managing the Blue Badge scheme and administering our concessionary fares scheme.

Our 2023/24 revenue budget for car parks is minus £1.1 million (with expenditure £2.0 million and income £3.1 million). Income generated from parking services enables us to continue to provide a broad range of functions including public transport services, traffic schemes, speed management and civil enforcement as well as different types of parking facilities.

Parking charges at council car parks were increased in 2018 following a period of public consultation. Since then, despite high inflation levels, charges have remained relatively unchanged, in part with a view to supporting residents and businesses with the impact of the pandemic.

We have just completed a public consultation on a draft Parking Strategy for 2024-2034, which included a number of proposals to map our parking provision for the next 10 years. The strategy and proposals included restructuring some of the fees and charges associated with parking services, which have been reflected in the new charges proposed, with consideration of consultation feedback received.

Legislation Requirements

Local authorities have powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Road Traffic Act 1991, the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions Regulations 2022, and the Transport Act 2000 to manage and enforce parking provision.

Any surplus revenue from parking charges must not exceed spending on relevant Environment functions following the High Court ruling against the London Borough of Barnet ('the Barnet case') on 22 July 2013.

The proposed changes to the fees and charges will be advertised under Section 35C of the Road Traffic (Regulation) Act 1984.

Proposal Details

To amend the parking fees and charges for 2024/25. The specific proposed changes to car parks are:

- introduce a 20p increase on most one hour (or shortest stay) tickets for car parks across the district

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

- to align Goldwell and Northcroft Leisure Centre (and, seasonally for 1 April to 30 September, Northcroft Lane West) charges to provide consistency for the users attending Northcroft Leisure Centre and support use of the Newbury Lido
- ensure parking charges, where they apply, are implemented all day, every day, across West Berkshire unless there is a good justification for not doing so
- introduce evening and Sunday charges in some places where these don't currently exist
- introduce charges in Lambourn, which will require the installation of a ticket machine
- adjust Station Road, Hungerford charges to be competitive with the nearby APCOA facilities
- reduce charges at Northbrook multi-storey car park due to current underutilisation and to help free up capacity at other Newbury parking facilities

For our other parking fees and charges, the main changes are:

- season tickets have been modelled to offer annual, quarterly and monthly options, based on equivalent daily charges for 80, 25 and 10 days respectively
- resident permits have been modelled to be charged in four tiers: Tier 1 - where resident permit bays are in parking charge areas; Tier 2 - where there are good bus and rail services and car club availability; Tier 3 - reasonable bus and rail services; and Tier 4 - bus services only
- it is proposed, for 2025/26, to charge second (or additional) residential permits at a higher rate, and that early notification of this intention is being given at this time
- to introduce an administrative charge for All Zone permits, which are currently provided free of charge (but extend their validity from 1 hour to 2 hours); it is anticipated that some medical and care professionals will review their need for the permit

Please refer to the summary of parking fees and charges for 2024/25.

Please refer to the detailed document, which illustrates the current and proposed charges, identifies the relevant strategy proposals, incorporates local benchmarking data, and provides a comparison between the proposed charges and a blanket inflationary increase (of 32% from 2018).

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

This proposal will save the council up to £500,000 per year.

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 258 responses were received through the survey. We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP, Thatcham Town Council, and Tilehurst and Basildon Parish Councils. We received no petitions.

Summary of Main Points

Views expressed were both in favour and against the proposal, and it was a fairly even split excluding Lambourn. This was seen as the most palatable of the ten proposals.

Those in favour explained that people who could afford cars could afford parking charges, and that the proposals would support a move to active and sustainable travel.

Those against were critical of the impacts, especially on shops, as people were less likely to come into Newbury in particular.

A number of suggestions were made to improve the offer, with the most practical already included within the Parking Strategy 2024-2034 and have been considered when proposing the fees and charges for 2024/25.

Lambourn residents were concerned that introducing charging would make the High Street more dangerous and there could be a potential loss of trade for high street shops.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	154	59.69
A resident of West Berkshire	225	87.21
A visitor to West Berkshire	3	1.16
A West Berkshire business owner	10	3.88
Employed by a West Berkshire business	18	6.98
Employed by West Berkshire Council	6	2.33
A Parish/Town Councillor	15	5.81
A District Councillor	0	0
A partner organisation	0	0
A West Berkshire Council service provider	0	0
Other	5	1.94

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to amend parking fees and charges for 2024/25?

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	32	13.22
Agree	41	16.94
Neither agree nor disagree	24	9.92
Disagree	23	9.50
Strongly disagree	122	50.41

Comments made ranged across all views. Some suggested that charges could be higher than proposed. There were calls for more investment in bus services and improved cycling facilities to offset higher charges, and suggestions that this will encourage walking and reduce congestion. It was also noted as the least painful option of the ten proposals.

A number of respondents wanted a lower charge or free parking option for the first 30 minutes.

Others complained that charges were already too high and that increasing charges further will adversely affect town centres or lead to more on-street or pavement parking. There was considerable opposition to charges in Lambourn.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

Many were concerned that this would further impact businesses and town centre vibrancy. Also, the increases will particularly impact low income households, blue badge holders, and those without suitable public transport options. Residents in Lambourn and Pangbourne were concerned about increased parking on-street or on pavements making it difficult both for traffic and pedestrians.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

Suggestions included giving discounts to West Berkshire residents, reduced rates for the elderly and those on benefits, or just reduce the Council tax. A short period of parking could be free or at a reduced rate, or businesses could reimburse the first hour of parking. Introducing a discounted pre-payment rate, offering reduced price weekly tickets, or season tickets based on the number of days used and not a specific time period. There were also calls to remove the cliff edge parking charges between day and night rates, and to introduce transferable tickets to allow those with less mobility to park nearer their destinations.

Other suggestions included better signposting of Northbrook multi-storey, incentivising bus use and improving bus services, and introducing a north-south park and ride.

There were calls to retain cash and card payment options; to remove parking from Lambourn High Street; and to provide better district-wide enforcement of illegal parking. Thatcham Town Council requested free parking in the vicinity of Thatcham Station after midday, and no charges for school streets permits.

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

In terms of parking charges, options to save money were to get businesses to pay some or part of their customers parking charges, use ANPR technology, or get rid of traffic wardens.

There were many more suggestions for raising income. Raise charges further. Better enforcement and increased fines. Allow cash payments only in £1 increments. Introduce pre-payment which would bring money in earlier. Trial low cost car parks to see if it increases use. Fix broken parking barriers. Attract big retailers to town centres.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

General options for saving money: Reduce staffing costs (management, staff, agency staff, contractors, consultants, dealing with underperforming staff and sickness, freeze staff pay, administration). Reduce councillor expenses. Amalgamating councils in Berkshire. Remove funding for fringe groups. Stop vanity projects (cycle lanes, Net Zero initiatives, pedestrian zones, speed limit reductions). Reduce costs in social care (move resources to preventative services, joint case management, remove separate budgets in children's services). Reduce costs for environmental services (remove or food recycling, reduce HWRC hours, use smaller buses on routes with lower passenger numbers, fix potholes to reduce claims, better strategy for long term road maintenance view). Other suggestions were to reduce or improve the library service, fewer costly events in Newbury Town Centre, and not to add to reserves when times are hard.

Options for income: Increase council tax. Adequate government funding. Sell some investment properties for a profit. Convert old council buildings to flats for rent. Use libraries to provide fingerprints and photos for visa applications. Increase brown bin fees. Run cafes in parks. Allow installation of EV charging stations but with council taking a percentage of revenue. Charge for concessionary bus passes. Introduce speed cameras. Build more houses.

6. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.

26 responses were received.

7. Any further comments?

Many responses repeated earlier comments, including both supportive and unsupportive views. Newbury Velo are happy to provide cycling sessions for those who would like a refresher on road riding safely. The Council needs to be more visible. Don't charge in Lambourn. More parking spaces required in Bartholomew Street and for disabled.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Peter Walker
Service Lead – Highways & Transport Innovation
Environment Department
15 January 2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges

Consultation Summary Report

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

i <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ii <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Proposal:	<p>To amend the parking fees and charges for 2024/25. The specific proposed changes to car parks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• introduce a 20p increase on most one hour (or shortest stay) tickets for car parks across the district• to align Goldwell and Northcroft Leisure Centre (and, seasonally for 1 April to 30 September, Northcroft Lane West) charges to provide consistency for the users attending Northcroft Leisure Centre and support use of the Newbury Lido• ensure parking charges, where they apply, are implemented all day, every day, across West Berkshire unless there is a good justification for not doing so• introduce evening and Sunday charges in some places where these don't currently exist• introduce charges in Lambourn, which will require the installation of a ticket machine• adjust Station Road, Hungerford charges to be competitive with the nearby APCOA facilities• reduce charges at Northbrook multi-storey car park due to current underutilisation and to help free up capacity at other Newbury parking facilities <p>For our other parking fees and charges, the main changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• season tickets have been modelled to offer annual, quarterly and monthly options, based on equivalent daily charges for 80, 25 and 10 days respectively• resident permits have been modelled to be charged in four tiers: Tier 1 - where resident permit bays are in parking charge areas; Tier 2 - where there are good bus and rail services and car club availability; Tier 3 - reasonable bus and rail services; and Tier 4 - bus services only• it is proposed, for 2025/26, to charge second (or additional) residential permits at a higher rate, and that early notification of this intention is being given at this time• to introduce an administrative charge for All Zone permits, which are currently provided free of charge (but extend their validity from 1 hour to 2 hours); it is anticipated that some medical and care professionals will review their need for the permit		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges			Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Total budget 2023/24:	Expenditure £2m Income £3.1m	Initial proposed additional income 2024/25:	Up to £0.5m	Recommended proposed additional income 2024/25:	Up to £0.5m	
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 258 responses were received through the survey. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 154 - A user of the service • 225 - A resident of West Berkshire • 3 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 10 - A West Berkshire business owner • 18 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 6 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 15 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 0 - A District Councillor • 0 - A partner organisation • 0 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 5 - Other <p>We also received direct responses from Reading West & Mid Berkshire CLP and Newbury CLP, Thatcham Town Council, and Tilehurst and Basildon Parish Councils. We received no petitions.</p>					
Key issues raised:	<p>Views expressed were both in favour and against the proposal, and it was a fairly even split excluding Lambourn. This was seen as the most palatable of the ten proposals.</p> <p>Those in favour explained that people who could afford cars could afford parking charges, and that the proposals would support a move to active and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Those against were critical of the impacts, especially on shops, as people were less likely to come into Newbury in particular.</p>					

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>A number of suggestions were made to improve the offer, with the most practical already included within the Parking Strategy 2024-2034 and have been considered when proposing the fees and charges for 2024/25.</p> <p>Lambourn residents were concerned that introducing charging would make the High Street more dangerous and there could be a potential loss of trade for high street shops.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Discounts for West Berkshire residents, elderly, those on benefits.	Discounts are available for regular users through season tickets. Some car parks will charge lower rates.	
	Short-term parking free, reduced rate, or paid for by businesses.	Evidence suggests that short-term free parking leads to less economic activity in town centres. This will be kept under review.	
	Discounted pre-payments, improved season ticket options. Introduce transferable tickets. Better signposting of Northbrook multi-storey. Retain cash and card payments. Improve district-wide enforcement.	These are included in the Parking Strategy 2024 to 2034.	
	Remove cliff edge parking charges between day and night rates.	Current technology restricts this. Evening charges could be removed but this would result in day charges applying at all times, which would ultimately have a higher financial impact on residents and visitors and a detrimental effect on evening trade.	
	Incentivise bus use.	The Council are already doing this through the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Introduce a park and ride service.	This is not currently considered a cost-effective solution.	
	Remove parking from Lambourn High Street.	There are some bays on the High Street (on-street) which still allow for existing traffic movements. We acknowledge that introducing charges in the car park may put additional pressure on-street. Removal of all charges from the car park would result in a forecast potential loss of income of £2,300 each year. It is therefore proposed to amend the Charging Policy to allow one hour free parking in the car park which is forecast to reduce the potential income by up to 50%. This would continue to encourage drivers to use the car park and minimise on-street congestion.	
	Remove parking charges in the vicinity of Thatcham Station after midday.	The charging hours are proposed to align with Pipers Lane where charges apply at all times. Charges should apply equally to all users using the same facilities. Reduced off-peak rates are already in operation at Station Road car park.	
	Do not charge for school streets permits.	There are currently no plans to charge for these permits.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Encourage businesses to cover at least part of their customers parking charge.	We would be happy to explore this where technology, parking provision and business demand exists.	
	Use ANPR to reduce costs.	Councils are currently not legally allowed to enforce parking charges through the use of ANPR cameras.	
	Get rid of traffic wardens.	Civil enforcement officers are a vital part of the service. Without them, the Council would need to close its car parks.	
	Suggestion	Council response	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Suggestions for income generation:	Increase charges more than proposed.	The proposals represent a balance. Increasing charges further at this time would more likely lead to reduced income as usage would decrease.	
	Better enforcement.	This would require additional resources (staffing and associated costs) and would be unlikely to result in overall savings.	
	Increase fines.	Fines are set nationally.	
	Allow cash payments only in £1 increments.	This would disadvantage those that need to pay by cash and would be unlikely to result in any meaningful additional income.	
	Introduce pre-payment options.	This is included in the Parking Strategy 2024 to 2034.	
	Trial low-cost car parks.	Some car parks do charge lower fees to stimulate demand. Within the proposals, charges at Northbrook would be reduced for longer-stay parking.	
	Fix broken barriers.	This is a network issue which we are actively seeking to resolve.	
	Charge for concessionary bus passes.	This is a national scheme and the council are unable to charge for applications (only replacement passes).	
	Introduce speed cameras.	Income from speed cameras goes to the Police. The Council does not have the legal power to use speed cameras.	
	Increase council tax. Receive adequate government funding.	Levels are set by government.	
	Attract big retailers to town centres. Sell some investment properties for a profit. Convert old council buildings into flats for rent. Use libraries to provide fingerprint and photos for visa applications. Increase brown bin fees. Run cafes in parks. Allow	These are matters for other parts of the Council to consider.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure parking fees and charges		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Peter Walker	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	installation of EV charging stations but with Council taking a percentage of the revenue. Build more houses.		
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	Given the fairly even split between those in favour and those against the proposal, and the fact that this is seen as the least painful of the ten proposals within the public consultation, it is recommended that this proposal is accepted, with the amendment to allow the first hour of parking in Lambourn car park to be free of charge.		

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

For more information please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 27 November 2023 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 January 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hubⁱⁱ.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

West Berkshire Council currently undertakes two rounds of weed spraying along sections of the public highway throughout the district on an annual basis. The areas sprayed includes town centres, residential areas and roads with a kerb and selected rural roads. Our waste contractor, Veolia, is responsible for this service, which is usually provided by a sub-contractor.

Legislation Requirements

There are no legal requirements to spray and remove weeds.

Proposal Details

To reduce the weed spraying treatment from two applications per year to one application per year during the summer months. The council has recently enhanced our Climate Emergency declaration to include an Ecological Emergency. It is anticipated that reduced weed spraying can help improve local biodiversity and the abundance of wildlife.

The proposed change would also result in an annual saving of up to £20,000.

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 136 responses were received.

We also received 3 separate written responses from:

- Labour Party, Basildon Parish and Tilehurst Parish Council.

Summary of Main Points

The responses to this consultation were mainly positive with people highlighting the environmental and health benefits of reduced weed spraying along sections of the public highway. Concerns were raised over the impact on elderly and vulnerable residents if the weeds got too high. In addition, concerns were raised over the increase in spending that may be needed to repair the highway if the weeds started to cause damage. There was also support for more manual weed removal which could lead to the stopping of chemical weed sprays particularly glyphosate in the future.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A resident of West Berkshire	126	92.65%

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

A visitor to West Berkshire	7	5.15%
A West Berkshire business owner	6	4.41%
Employed by a West Berkshire business	6	4.41%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	3	2.21%
A Parish/Town Councillor	8	5.88%
A District Councillor	0	0.00%
A partner organisation	0	0.00%
A West Berkshire Council service provider	1	0.74%
Other	6	4.41%

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce weed spraying treatment from two applications per year to one application per year during the summer months?

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	88	66.67%
Agree	17	12.88%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	2.27%
Disagree	8	6.06%
Strongly disagree	16	12.12%

The majority of comments in this section expressed support for the proposal to reduce weed spraying treatments from two applications per year to one application during the summer months, primarily citing biodiversity and environmental concerns related to the use of glyphosate along sections of the public highway in West Berkshire. Some respondents went further by suggesting that the district should refrain from spraying altogether, proposing alternatives such as physical removal of weeds or encouraging residents to manage their own areas. Consequently, they argued that the funds allocated for weed spraying could be more effectively utilised elsewhere in the Council.

However, there were dissenting opinions, with some expressing reservations about the proposal. Concerns included the potential for the district to appear unattractive, coupled with the perception that any cost savings from the reduced spraying would be overshadowed by increased expenses for road network repairs. A minority of respondents emphasised the need for two weed spray applications a year, citing current inadequacies in the application process. They highlighted potential negative impacts on anti-social behaviour, safety concerns for older individuals using walkways, and risks for drivers and pedestrians, as well as potential negative effects on those with pollen allergies.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

A few comments suggested the necessity of implementing a proactive plan to prevent weed growth in the first place.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

The responses to this question indicated that the proposed changes would either have negligible impacts on people or minimal effects. While several respondents believed that the proposals wouldn't significantly affect individuals, concerns were raised regarding potential challenges for disabled and vulnerable individuals, as well as those with pushchairs. It was noted that if the weeds were to reach an exceptionally high or problematic level, it could hinder the mobility of these groups within the district.

Additional considerations included the potential impact on the overall aesthetics of West Berkshire, with concerns that an overgrowth of weeds could diminish its attractiveness. Furthermore, it was suggested that if weeds were allowed to grow too high, it might impede the visibility of drivers and pedestrians, posing potential safety hazards. Some respondents mentioned minor concerns, such as the impact on individuals with hay fever allergies and the possibility of increased road repairs due to weed damage.

On a positive note, respondents acknowledged the potential benefits of the proposals, anticipating positive impacts on wildlife, biodiversity, and air quality.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

In response to the question, two primary suggestions emerged. First, a significant number of respondents expressed the view that the proposal would not have a negative impact. Alternatively, there was a prevalent suggestion to engage volunteers for the weed spraying activity as a means of reducing the impact on affected individuals.

Additionally, it was proposed that efforts should be made to communicate the benefits of using less weed killer to residents. Some minor suggestions included physically removing weeds, implementing weed spraying on request, or refraining from the activity altogether.

5. Do you see any benefits or opportunities that may arise from this proposed change? If so, please provide details.

Respondents' opinions clustered into a few main categories. The primary benefit identified by a majority was the potential for increased pollinators, wildlife, and wildflowers. This was often linked to the anticipated reduction in chemicals and pollution, emphasising the environmental advantages of the proposal.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

Another significant category highlighted the cost savings associated with the proposed change. Additionally, some respondents saw an opportunity for community engagement, particularly if volunteers or residents took an active role in clearing their own communities. On the contrary, a segment of respondents expressed the belief that there would be no discernible benefits resulting from the proposed change.

6. Are there any areas of the district which you believe do not need to be sprayed at all? If so, please provide details.

The most prevalent response was a general sentiment that most or all of the district did not require spraying. The following two popular suggestions were that individuals should be allowed to handle the spraying themselves, and that the verges did not need to be treated.

Other specific areas identified as not needing spraying included area that we do not spray such as bases of trees, on kerbed rural areas, verges. Other area mentioned include areas deemed non-essential for highway safety, locations within 5 meters of water courses, roundabouts, the A4, areas where council members reside, areas near houses, conservation areas, zones adjacent to schools, high-traffic areas, spots near allotments, close to playgrounds, roadside nature reserves and East Garston.

7. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

We received a diverse range of proposals emerged from respondents. Here is a summarised overview of the suggestions:

Operational Efficiency:

- Reduce the use of consultants.
- Cut down on postage expenses.

Community Engagement:

- Increase community work or involve volunteers.

Service Adjustments:

- Abandon the 20mph rollout.
- Implement means testing for care homes.
- Reduce the use of weed spraying.
- Cap council salaries and bonuses.
- Reduce grass cutting.
- Reduce waste.

Financial Measures:

- Consider charging more council tax.
- Increase garden waste charges.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

- Increase parking charges.
- Increase planning charges.
- Allow people to pay for parking with credit cards instead of an app.

Cost Control:

- Turn off lights outside Mortimer library.
- Cap council salaries and bonuses.
- Use the best value contractor.
- Reduce staff salaries or consider staff reorganization.
- Stop WBC employees from working from home.

Miscellaneous Suggestions:

- Eliminate unnecessary expenses labeled as "stop wasting money."
- Implement selective hedge cutting/grass cutting.
- Reduce the number of dog poo bins.
- Stop putting exercise machines in parks.
- Reevaluate and potentially halt green initiatives.

8. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your contact details below.

26 individuals or groups provided the contact details.

9. Any further comments?

The predominant sentiment expressed was in favour of the proposal. Additional comments included observations about the two quoted savings figures in the proposal and suggested actions such as bringing weed spraying in-house.

Other ideas put forth encompassed encouraging dog walkers to take their dog poo home, enhancing wildflower planting, fostering greater involvement from community groups, providing more advice on weed management, considering an increase in council tax for larger properties, and maintaining the green bin charge.

Overall, the majority of comments reiterated support for the proposal, while diverse suggestions were made to refine and enhance its implementation.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Daniel Warne
Waste Manager

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments

Consultation Summary Report

Environment
18/01/2024

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

i <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ii <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments			Service Director: Jon Winstanley		8 February 2024	
			Author: Daniel Warne		Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	To reduce the weed spraying treatment from two applications per year to one application per year during the summer months.					
Total budget 2023/24:	£50,000	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£20,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£12,000	
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 136 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 126 - A resident of West Berkshire • 7 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 6 - A West Berkshire business owner • 6 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 3 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 8 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 0 - A District Councillor • 0 - A partner organisation • 1 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 6 - Other <p>We received 0 petitions.</p>					
Key issues raised:	The responses to this consultation were mainly positive with people highlighting the environmental and health benefits of reduced weed spraying along sections of the public highway. Concerns were raised over the impact on elderly and vulnerable residents if the weeds got too high. In addition, concerns were raised over the increase in spending that may be needed to repair the highway if the weeds started to cause damage. There was also support for more manual weed removal which could lead to the stopping of chemical weed sprays particularly glyphosate in the future.					
Equality issues:	Impact on elderly and people with reduced mobility or partially sighted if the weeds started to impact on pavements.					

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Explain the benefits to people, advertise it and increase education.	We agree that this is an important component of reducing the impact from this change and will look to do so if the proposal is passed and implemented.	
	Engage with volunteers to clear weeds.	We would welcome volunteers to look after their own local community. However, currently we would not have the resource to suitably support this in terms of engagement and provision of materials. There are also serious health and safety aspects that need to be considered when working on or near the highway and with handling weed spray substances, therefore we would suggest that volunteers do not clear weeds from the public highway.	
	Physically remove the weeds and/or weed spray on request.	While we do undertake physical removal of weeds where required between the current 2 weed spray applications, relying in this method solely is unlikely to produce any savings due to an increased workload and demand on the contractor. Likewise, weed spraying on request will increase workload, demand and required equipment at the contractor, increasing costs, not reducing them.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Identified benefits or opportunities	Suggestion	Council response	
	Engage with the community to look after certain areas.	We would welcome volunteers to look after their own local community. However, currently we would not have the resource to suitably support this in terms of engagement and provision of materials. There are also serious health and safety aspects that need to be considered when working on or near the highway and with handling weed spray substances, therefore we would suggest that volunteers do not clear weeds from the public highway.	
	Less chemicals and pollution into the environment.	We agree there would be an environmental benefit to this proposal.	
	More pollinators, wildlife and wildflowers.	We agree there would be an environmental benefit to this proposal.	
	There would be financial savings.	We agree this would provide an immediate financial saving to the Council. However, the long-term costs are harder to estimate in terms of impact on the highway network and increase demand on contractors to remove weeds manually.	
	Environmental benefit.	We agree there would be an environmental benefit to this proposal.	
Suggested areas which might not need to be sprayed	Suggestion	Council response	
	Most or all the district.	If the proposal is implemented, we will monitor the impact of how this proposal affects the district to see if it would be possible to decrease weed spraying further.	
	Base of trees, rural areas (without a kerb), Wildflower verge scheme.	We do not currently spray these areas as part of this service.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>Areas along the highway such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-essential for highway safety. • Roundabouts • The A4 • Areas near houses • High traffic areas • East Garston • Near schools • Within 5 metres of a water course <p>Other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadside Nature Reserves • Conservation areas • Near allotments 	If the proposal is implemented, we will monitor the impact of how this proposal affects the district to see if it would be possible to decrease weed spraying further.	
	Areas where council members live	We do not base our weed treatment schedule on where Council members live.	
	Parks	This proposal only includes weed spraying carried out along sections of the public highway and does not include parks and green spaces managed by the Council.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Increase garden waste charge	This could be easily implemented and generate a significant amount of income to cover the financial shortfall, if the instruction is given by decision makers.	
	No weed spraying	We would prefer to do this in a phased approach. By reducing the weed spraying from two to one application per year we will be able to monitor and identify any impacts over the coming years. We would then look to see if we can reduce the weed spraying further or completely.	
Suggestion for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Charge more council tax.		
	Increase parking charges.	This suggestion has been consulted on at the same time as this proposal.	
	Means testing for care homes.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Cap council salaries and bonuses.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Reduce postage cost.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Turn off lights outside Mortimer library.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Better financial control.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Reduce waste.	The Council are committed to reducing waste production by residents as part of our priority to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. This includes increasing education around recycling and its benefits, and by working with schools and communities.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Increase planning charges	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Stop West Berkshire Council employees working from home.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Reduce dog poo bins	This suggestion has been consulted on at the same time as this proposal.	
	Parking- allow people to pay with credit card not on app.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Use the best value contractor.	Our current contract with Veolia, with which weed spraying of a selection of public highway falls, expires in 2032.	
	Reduce grass cutting	This suggestion has been consulted on at the same time as this proposal.	
	Reduce staff salaries/staff reorganisation.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Stop putting exercise machines in parks.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Selective hedge cutting/grass cutting.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Stop with green initiatives.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Reduce use of consultants.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
	Use of community work/volunteers more.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Reduce weed spraying treatments		Service Director: Jon Winstanley Author: Daniel Warne	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Abandon 20mph roll out.	This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	Most respondents strongly support the proposal, primarily motivated by environmental considerations. However, some concerns were raised including worries about the potential negative impacts on disabled and vulnerable individuals, as well as those with allergies, if the weed growth becomes excessive. Other concerns raised were about the loss visual amenity within the district, potential hazards for drivers and pedestrians, and the perception that cost savings might be outweighed by increased road repairs. The officer recommendation is to proceed with the planned reduction of weed spraying along sections of the public highway, transitioning from two applications to one per year, effective from 1 April 2024.		

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Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

Why did we consult?

The council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. From historically high inflation increasing contract costs, to rising housing costs and through to large increases in cost and demand in supporting our most vulnerable residents with social care, the council has some major cost increases.

In 2024/25, we need to find £14.2 million in savings or income generation. This figure is based on the assumption that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £12.2 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.75 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified 10 proposals.

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Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

A meeting was held with residents' families and staff was held on 5th December 2023

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 28 November 2023, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries and family hubs and made them available to WBC Councillors to put up in the wards/parishes.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council is currently developing its Care Home Strategy to ensure we can deliver value for money and meet the needs of our residents. We currently run three care homes for older people: Birchwood, Notrees and Willows Edge. We aim to provide a high standard of care with dedicated staff who we support to gain specialist knowledge.

- **Birchwood** is a large care home (60 beds) in Newbury that delivers both residential and nursing care and is around 13 years old; there are currently around 40 residents and 81.5 full time equivalent staff posts - a refurbishment of the home took place in 2023 and all rooms are en-suite
- **Notrees** is a small home (18 beds) in Kintbury that is over 40 years old; the residents have generally lower levels of need than those in Birchwood and Willows Edge - there are currently 13 residents and 19.4 full time equivalent staff posts; most bedrooms are equipped with en-suite toilets, and there are purpose-built bathrooms for safe and accessible bathing
- **Willows Edge** is a medium size home (37 beds) in Newbury that is over 50 years old - the care is focused on people with dementia; there are currently about 31 residents and 37 full time equivalent staff posts - none of the rooms are en-suite

Many local authorities do not operate their own care homes, due to the rising cost of maintaining older homes and the availability of lower cost, quality provision by private providers.

We have experienced challenges over the past few years in recruiting staff for our care homes which has resulted in the employment of a high number of agency staff, at a higher cost than directly employed staff. We have worked to reduce this reliance on agency staff, with numbers reducing substantially in recent months, but the cost of a council provided bed remains approximately 20% higher than one in the private sector.

The Adult Social Care Management team and the council's Executive has assessed our current provision as follows:

- **Birchwood** provides the type of care which we expect to be in high demand in the coming years - the building is relatively new, in a good location and has recently had dementia-friendly adaptations installed
- **Notrees** provides the type of care for which there is a reducing demand, but it is relatively low cost to run - a consultation was held on a potential closure in 2022 and the decision was taken at that time to continue operating the home

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

- **Willows Edge** provides the type of care which is in high demand; however, it is being delivered in an older building which does not meet modern expectations, for example, most rooms are not en-suite - the maintenance requirements are also higher, due to the age of the building; alternative beds can be found at Birchwood and in private sector care homes in West Berkshire and neighbouring districts

Legislation Requirements

As a local authority, we have a duty to arrange the provision of nursing and residential care for eligible people in our area under the Care Act (2014). This can be provided either through the independent/external care homes market or directly by the council.

We also have a duty to ensure that the care provided in West Berkshire is of good quality and meets the requirements of the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Proposal Details

To cease operating Willows Edge as a care home from 1 April 2024. There are two options:

- option 1 - to close the home and relocate residents to Birchwood, other private care homes in West Berkshire and, if required, care homes in neighbouring districts; the site would be available for other uses, for example, conversion to housing or being sold as a freehold for redevelopment, resulting in a capital income for the council
- option 2 - to source an alternative provider to continue to operate Willows Edge, with a cost of provision more aligned to that in the private sector; this could include an agreement on investment to improve the service and/or no investment from the provider to operate the business

For both options, we would expect to save between £250,000 and £500,000 per year, depending on occupancy and staffing ratios.

**Please note that Willows Edge Care Home is subject to another budget proposal about the restructuring of care home fees, alongside our other care homes.*

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 280 responses were received.

We also received 2 petitions signed by a total of 1852 people:

- An online one had 1786 signatures of which 722 (40%) had an 'RG' postcode
- A hand-collected one had 65 signatures of which all but one was 'local'

Summary of Main Points

Overall respondents are strongly against closing Willows Edge, with c80% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing and c15% agreeing/strongly agreeing. Of the 180 comments on Question 3 (What impact could this have), 103 (60%), raised concerns about the stress, distress and negative physical and mental health impacts on residents who would be moved. 24 (13%) commented negatively on the increased distance families would have to travel to alternative accommodation. Whilst a direct comparison cannot be made, this equals the number of service users who responded.

Opinion on option 2, seeking another provider is split, with 43% for the idea and 43% against. 7 respondents commented on this, of which 6 were positive and 1 negative.

Many of the comments from relatives of service users commented positively on the quality of care from the staff the attitude of the staff towards. A number of comments acknowledge that the facilities are old and not en-suite, but felt these issues were outweighed by the sense of community built up by residents and staff.

In terms of minimising impact, the most common response was to not go ahead with closure. 51 (33%) of comments stated that good communication and planning, involving residents, families and staff, would be key to reducing the impact of any change.

On the broader question of reducing costs and saving money, responses were diverse, with the most common being to reduce spending on non-core activities. Projects cited included several references to bike lanes. Other reductions suggested included cutting posts in the council and reducing/freezing high salaries.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Which of the following best describe you? Please select all that apply.

	Number	Percentage
A user of the service	25	8.93%
A resident of West Berkshire	209	74.64%
A visitor to West Berkshire	14	5.00%
A West Berkshire business owner	3	1.07%
Employed by a West Berkshire business	8	2.86%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	27	9.64%
A Parish/Town Councillor	6	2.14%
A District Councillor	2	0.71%
A partner organisation	1	0.36%
A West Berkshire Council service provider	3	1.07%
Other	27	9.64%

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposals?

i. To close the Willows Edge care home and relocate residents

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	19	7.6%
Agree	20	8.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	3.6%
Disagree	19	7.6%
Strongly disagree	183	73.2%

ii. To source an alternative provider to continue to operate Willows Edge care home

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	59	24.38%
Agree	46	19.01%
Neither agree nor disagree	33	13.64%
Disagree	30	12.4%
Strongly disagree	74	30.58%

Summary

73.2% of respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal to close Willows Edge. The majority cited the disruption, stress and potential health impacts on residents, with some noting the stress on families of residents as well. This point was emphasised by respondents who have or had family members in Willows Edge. A significant number of comments, especially from families, commented on the commitment and quality of care from staff. Other topics raised included:

- Wider concerns about the availability of care home beds in the area if Willows closed, given the trend in aging populations
- Concerns over potential alternative uses for the site
- From staff members, challenging why we are proposing to close Willows given that it has a 'Good' rating compared to Birchwood's 'RI' and is cheaper to run
- Rather than closing, the home should receive investment to improve facilities

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

For option 2, respondents were split 50/50 for agree/disagree. Comments focussed on this being a preferable option as it would reduce stress for residents and families and keep the staff in place. There were fewer comments on this point. Those who disagreed challenged why a private provider's cost would be lower and whether the quality could be maintained. Those who agreed were comfortable with the change.

3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how these proposals might impact people? For example, do you think they will affect particular individuals more than others?

181 answered

The responses mirrored those comments made for question 2 to a large extent. The dominant issue was concern over the negative impact on the physical and mental wellbeing and mortality of residents if Willows Edge were closed. These points were particularly emphasised by residents' family members, who frequently cite that their relative was now settled and receiving good care. Concerns were also raised over distance to travel for visiting.

Keeping the home open and transferring to another provider received a more positive response, although concerns over maintaining care quality were raised and some challenged the view that this would save money. A few respondents noted that Birchwood is rated 'Requires Improvement' compared to the 'Good' rating at Willows Edge, which historically has had fewer issues.

4. If the decision is taken to proceed with one of these proposals, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

153 answered

There was a wide variety of comments. 42 (27%) made comments to the effect that closure should not happen, again usually linking to the negative impact on residents, although some also identified the wider supply issues for beds. 51 (33%) commented that any change should be carefully planned with strong communication with residents and families. 15 (10%) felt that engaging a new provider would be positive, as long as there was good planning and communication. 5 (3%) commented on the need for further investment to improve the setting.

Several respondents referred to the need to ensure the impact on staff was mitigated and that they were treated fairly.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

5. Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.

141 Responses were made

The suggestions were very diverse, but among the most common were:

- Reduce spending on less essential projects such as bike lanes, free buses, Christmas lights, new cafes, lower salaries for senior staff, reducing posts and agency staff
- Increase income through raising council tax, selling other assets, sponsorship, charitable fund raising, privatisation of care homes
- Promote volunteering more

6. If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of these proposals, if the decision is taken to proceed with one of them, please provide your contact details below.

37 people responded with names and email addresses. No organisations were named and nearly all are personal email addresses. One response was from Hartford Care, who have expressed an interest in operating Willows Edge if option 2 is selected.

7. Any further comments?

83 people commented. The majority re-emphasised their opposition to closure because of the impact on residents, with several stating very positively about the quality of care. Several responses expressed over employment prospects for the staff. A few respondents recognised that difficult decisions needed to be made, but more questioned whether this cut was needed, when other local and national areas of expenditure seemed less necessary.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

John Carpenter
Market Management Lead
Adult Social Care
17/01/2024

Please note: In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home

Consultation Summary Report

i <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget>

ii <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	<p>To cease operating Willows Edge as a care home from 1 April 2024. There are two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 - to close the home and relocate residents to Birchwood, other private care homes in West Berkshire and, if required, care homes in neighbouring districts; the site would be available for other uses, for example, conversion to housing or being sold as a freehold for redevelopment, resulting in a capital income for the council • Option 2 - to source an alternative provider to continue to operate Willows Edge, with a cost of provision more aligned to that in the private sector; this could include an agreement on investment to improve the service and/or no investment from the provider to operate the business 				
Total budget 2023/24:	£	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	Between £250,000 and £500,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£TBD
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 280 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 - A user of the service • 209 - A resident of West Berkshire • 14 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 3 - A West Berkshire business owner • 8 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 27 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 6 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 2 - A District Councillor • 1 - A partner organisation • 3 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 27 - Other 				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home	Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	<p>We also received 2 petitions signed by a total of 1852 people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An online one had 1786 signatures of which 722 (40%) had an 'RG' postcode ○ A hand-collected one had 65 signatures of which all but one was 'local' 	
Key issues raised:	<p>Overall respondents are strongly against closing Willows Edge, with c80% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing and c15% agreeing/strongly agreeing. Of the 180 comments on Question 3 (What impact could this have), 103 (60%), raised concerns about the stress, distress and negative physical and mental health impacts on residents who would be moved. 24 (13%) commented negatively on the increased distance families would have to travel to alternative accommodation. Whilst a direct comparison cannot be made, this equals the number of service users who responded.</p> <p>Opinion on option 2, seeking another provider is split, with 43% for the idea and 43% against. 7 respondents commented on this, of which 6 were positive and 1 negative.</p> <p>Many of the comments from relatives of service users commented positively on the quality of care from the staff the attitude of the staff towards. A number of comments acknowledge that the facilities are old and not en-suite, but felt these issues were outweighed by the sense of community built up by residents and staff.</p> <p>In terms of minimising impact, the most common response was to not go ahead with closure. 51 (33%) of comments stated that good communication and planning, involving residents, families and staff, would be key to reducing the impact of any change.</p> <p>On the broader question of reducing costs and saving money, responses were diverse, with the most common being to reduce spending on non-core activities. Projects cited included several references to bike lanes. Other reductions suggested included cutting posts in the council and reducing/freezing high salaries.</p>	
Equality issues:	<p>No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.</p> <p>OR</p>	

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
	Summarise additional issues raised during the consultation and refer to EqIA stage two where these have been picked up.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Don't close the home	The council is taking a considered decision and the impact on residents and staff is a key consideration. The council has recent experience of successfully closing a home (Walnut Close) and transferring residents and believes that experience would ensure a safe transfer	
	If closed or transferred, have clear plans and ensure good communication with all those affected	As noted above, the council has tried and tested plans and communications to minimise the impact of any change.	
	If transferred to another provider, ensure staff are looked after	The council would comply with all relevant legislation and ensure staff are transferred in accordance with TUPE or offered alternative roles in the council.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Reduce spend on agency staff	The council has been actively recruiting permanent staff over the last 6 months and has significantly reduced the amount of agency staff in Willows Edge. Despite this, costs are still higher than can be obtained on the open market	
	Invest to create a more efficient home	The council has explored options to invest in a more modern home, but budgetary constraints restrict this and we assess that due to economies of scale a larger private provider could operate at a lower cost	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Close or find an alternative provider to run Willows Edge Care Home		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England	8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Seek sponsorship and charitable support	The council supports this approach in many areas, but feels that this may be less appropriate in what is effectively someone's home	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>C80% of respondents are against Option 1, closing Willows Edge, with 73.2% strongly disagreeing. While c 43% disagree or strongly disagree with Option 2, transferring to another provider, c43% agree or strongly agree with this option and c14% neither agree nor disagree. Given this response and also the supply and demand challenges that have further developed in the last few months, we recommend pursuing Option 2.</p> <p>We are aware that two potential providers have already expressed an interest, one via the consultation.</p> <p>We recommend developing an Invitation to Tender to identify and select potential providers. Given the budgetary pressures, we recommend that we should aim to select a provider by 20th June 2024. If we are unable to proceed with Option 2 at this point, we should seek to close the home unless there has been a very material change in circumstances.</p> <p>We recommend that subject to legal review, we should seek to include Birchwood and Notrees in the ITT, with providers given an option to bid for provision at 1,2 or all 3 homes.</p>		

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Appendix L – Risk Register

Appendix L – Risk Register			Gross Rating			Current Rating					Further Actions Required		Expected Net Rating (if/when actions completed)			
Issue of Concern (Risk Title)	Cause / Trigger (Likelihood)	Consequences (Impact)	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Controls (Already Put In Place)	Likelihood	Impact	Score	RAG	Estimated Current Financial Loss/Cost (if any) (£)	Additional Actions e.g. planned activities and requests to Corporate Board, or NFA	Target Date, if applicable (mmm-yy)	Likelihood	Impact	Score
Issuance of s114 notice due to 2023-24 overspend	2023-24 budget overspend increases by over £3m at year end	Highly restrictive financial controls are brought in leading to reduced Capital expenditure on infrastructure	4	4	16	Introduction of financial review panel Monthly monitoring of highest cost demand led budgets Quarterly monitoring reporting Mitigations put in place by services	2	4	8	A	£3.2m	Deliver additional spend reduction put in place by services	31/03/2024	2	4	8
Transformation funding unavailable for 2024-25	Lack of capital receipts (sales)	Funds are not available to fund proposed investments and transformation schemes in line with the flexible use of capital receipts guidance ¹	2	4	8	Properties are currently on the market with further opportunities expected early in the new financial year	1	4	4	G	£1.75m	Progress with disinvestment from commercial properties	30/9/2024	1	4	4
Issuance of s114 notice due to 2024-25 financial pressures	2024-25 financial pressures lead to overspend in the new year	Reserves are depleted below £4m	2	4	8	Investment of over £10m into social care model in the 2024-25 and other service investments in overspending services In year budget monitoring Forecast inflation expected to drop to 2% in 2024-25	1	4	4	G	n/a	Extension of the Financial Review Panel's remit Move to statutory only services / legal review Request for exceptional financial support from Central Government	01/06/2024 01/06/2024 by 31.12.24	1	4	4

¹ Before any potential government changes in February 2024

Issue of Concern (Risk Title)	Cause / Trigger (Likelihood)	Consequences (Impact)	Gross Rating			Controls (Already Put In Place)	Current Rating			RAG	Estimated Current Financial Loss/Cost (if any) (£)	Further Actions Required		Expected Net Rating (if/when actions completed)		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score		Likelihood	Impact	Score			Additional Actions e.g. planned activities and requests to Corporate Board, or NFA	Target Date, if applicable (mmm-yy)	Likelihood	Impact	Score
Issuance of s114 notice due to not delivering planned savings	Savings proposals for 2024-25 are not delivered – the scale of the savings proposals is much higher than previous budgets	Overspend occurs leading to reserves being depleted	3	4	12	Regularly monitoring of savings proposals Proposals reviewed by CMT and Corporate Board / Budget Board for deliverability	2	4	8	A	£0	Commence month 1 monitoring of savings Extension of the Financial Review Panel's remit Move to statutory only services / legal review Request for exceptional financial support from Central Government	01/05/2024 01/06/2024 01/06/2024 by 31.12.24	2	4	8
Increased financial risk into 2025-26 due to collection deficit and/or higher social care demand	Collection Fund pressure due to lower levels of Business Rates and/or Council tax properties Modelled social care growth continues to increase	Collection Fund deficit and/or social care growth leads to an increased savings target for 2025-26	3	4	12	Regular review of the social care model	2	3	6	A	£0	Introduce new review measures for quarterly budget monitoring on the collection fund providing earlier warning	1/6/2024	2	3	6

2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	8 February 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4364

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is Quarter Three for the 2023/24 financial year. The report is highlighting the financial position at each quarter of the financial year and impact on the Council's General Fund position. This allows the Executive and Scrutiny Commission to consider the implications and the actions being taken to mitigate and manage the position.
- 1.2 The Council has been forecasting a significant overspend across many services, especially in the People Directorate. This is due to increasing demand on services, continued inflationary cost pressures and additional staffing costs through the use of agency workers.
- 1.3 To mitigate the financial pressures, the Council implemented measures from July 2023 to provide greater oversight and scrutiny of financial decisions and financial commitments, as well as additional approval mechanisms for staffing and agency arrangements across the Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the £3.2m forecast overspend, a reduction of £0.1m from Quarter Two.
- 2.2 To note the implementation of measures included in the report around recruitment, staffing and agency.
- 2.3 To note the continuation of Financial Review Panel (FRP) meeting weekly to ensure the spending limits are being adhered to.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary

Financial:	<p>The forecast position at Q3 of a £3.2m overspend has significant financial implications. The General Fund is at £7.2m, with a minimum recommended level of £7m. If the £3.2m overspend remains at year end, it would leave a General Fund of £4m. This is a very low level of general fund balance and actions in place will be closely monitored to ensure that the in-year financial position improves.</p> <p>The minimum level of general fund balance recommended by the s151 officer is £7m and this would put the Council at significantly below this for future budget setting; this would mean an increase in future year's budget savings over and above initial forecasts for 2024-25 to replenish the level of reserves in the future. The 2024-25 budget assumptions currently include a forecast contribution to reserves of £2m.</p>			
Human Resource:	None as part of Quarter Three. The FRP (Financial Review Panel) implications have been reviewed by Service Lead (HR) as a member of the panel.			
Legal:	None as part of Quarter Three. The FRP (Financial Review Panel) implications have been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer.			
Risk Management:	Measures have been included in the report to provide greater levels of scrutiny on much lower levels of expenditure and recruitment costs.			
Property:	Review of assets has been undertaken with a view to possible sales that could be utilised for reduced capital financing costs and / or funding for a range of transformational activity across the Council to reduce costs.			
Policy:	None directly			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		y		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		y		The proposal aims to continue to protect those characteristics
Environmental Impact:		y		Unlikely to have any long-term environmental impact.
Health Impact:		y		
ICT Impact:		y		N/A
Digital Services Impact:		y		N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:			y	The proposal could reduce spend on some areas of council priority.
Core Business:		y		
Data Impact:				No impact
Consultation and Engagement:	Service Directors, Executive Directors.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Quarter Three forecast is showing a substantial financial pressure for the Council. Primarily driven through cost pressures in the People directorate, with growing demand for social care services, additional staffing costs through the use of agency staff and

inflationary pressures, the People directorate alone is forecasting an overspend in excess of £8.3m, an increase of £2m from last quarter. There are other financial pressures in the Place directorate Development and Regulation Service, in planning services, unachieved income and delayed additional planning income charges via Government changes leading to a forecast overspend of £1m.

4.2 The General Fund reserve is currently at £7.2m (per the 2022/23 Financial Statements), which is only £0.2m above the S151 officer's minimum recommended level, as set out in the 2023/24 budget papers. As a result, the Council cannot end 2023/24 with a significant overspend, without reserves being depleted far below the recommended minimum level.

4.3 There have been a large number of Councils in recent weeks and months highlighting significant financial pressures for the 2023/24 financial year. Though it is difficult to analyse every Council's in year position due to timing of respective committees across the country, as at early August through to October 2023, the following Councils have reported significant in year financial difficulties with mention of a s114 report or exceptional financial support;

- Medway Council
- Leeds City Council
- Hastings BC
- Guildford BC
- Shropshire Council
- Brighton & Hove
- Southampton Council
- Kent County Council
- Bradford Council
- Kirklees Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Stoke Council

4.4 To reduce the financial pressure and forecasts, the Council has taken rapid pro-active steps to reduce the overspend position from July 2023, these steps include:

- Greater scrutiny and approval of expenditure over £1,000, subsequently changed to £2,000
- Greater scrutiny and approval of recruitment activity and agency expenditure
- Finance led reviews on reviewing accruals policies and capital financial expenditure
- Review of action plans by overspending services to provide further mitigations to reduce overspends
- Review of the flexible use of capital receipts and seek to raise funding through capital receipts to fund eligible transformation spend

- Greater in year budget monitoring review of overspending services
- 4.5 Some of the mitigations may have an impact on service delivery, though it is expected that these will be kept to a minimum as posts and expenditure that affect the most vulnerable are being prioritised and the Council is continuing to operate all services.
- 4.6 The implication of an overspend in excess of £0.2m in 2023/24, would be to take the general fund reserve below the s151 officer's minimum level. In order to replenish the general fund reserve, greater levels of savings than currently forecast for 2024/25 would be required, or Full Council would need to consider accepting a budget with even greater risk for future financial years with lower than recommended reserves.
- 4.7 If the Council was to overspend by more than £7.2m the Council would need to consider what options are available for exceptional financial support. Most likely, the Council would need to formally approach the Government for a capitalisation directive. A capitalisation directive would allow the Government to provide the Council with one off funding as capital, which could be used to fund revenue. To enable this, the Government would require a form of intervention through a formal review of the Council as a likely minimum. Other Councils have been provided with this funding by the Government in recent years. This is looking less likely as an option due to the improvement in the overall Quarter Three forecast, following the rapid deployment of actions in the summer and autumn 2023, compared to the Quarter One forecast for 2023/24.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exceptional-financial-support-for-local-authorities-capitalisation-directions>

This would provide short term financial relief, if approved, though the Council would remain with a challenging longer term financial position that would require additional savings, alongside the additional cost of repaying the capitalisation directive. At present, the Council is not proposing to request a capitalisation directive, but this cannot be ruled out in the current financial year until the in-year financial position is brought down to much closer to a break even position.

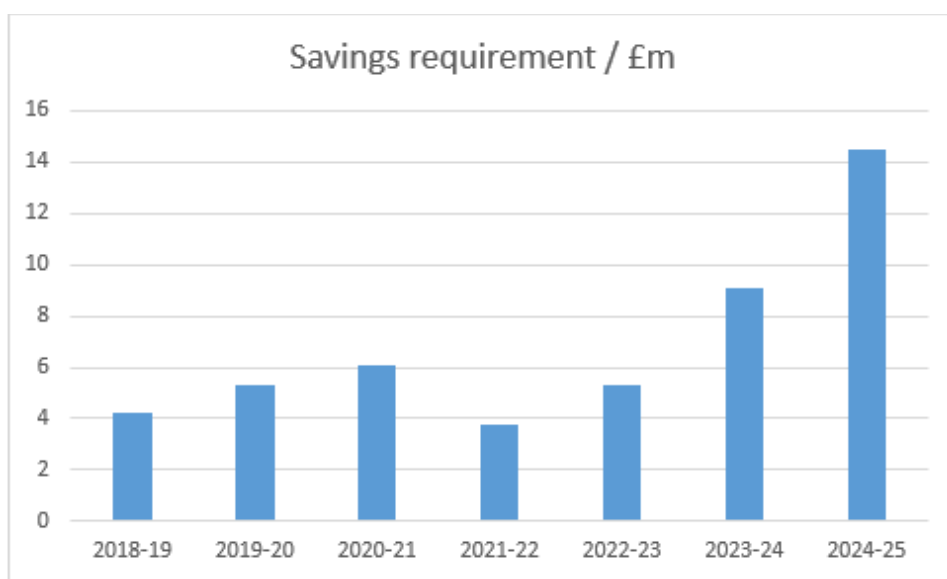
- 4.8 If in the longer term the financial pressure is not reduced, the Council's s151 Officer would need to consider issuing a section 114 notice; this is not being considered in the short term due to the mitigations being put in place at present in the 2023-24 financial year to mitigate the in year pressure. Any formal Section 114 notice would flow from the section of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 states:

"The chief finance officer of a relevant authority shall make a report under this section if it appears to him that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure"

- 4.9 The notice would need to go to Full Council who would have to respond within 21 days on what steps it will take. The issuance of a section 114 notice must be subject to consultation with the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer. This still remains a rare issuance in Local Government, and at present, the s151 is not seeking to issue one of these notices.

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4.10 The background to the financial position of the Council is that the Council has historically had low levels of reserves, at approximately half of the average of similar Councils. The Council has a track record of strong financial control and stewardship, and though (the Covid-19 pandemic excepted) reserves have remained comparatively low, the Council has achieved financial balance as well as delivered significant financial savings programmes. The savings and investment programme over recent years is highlighted below; on top of this, the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) highlights a savings requirement of £14.5m in 2024/25 and a further £15m over the following three years. This is heavily weighted to 2024/25 given uncertainties over future fair funding reviews – this totals £40m over a seven year period per the below. The figure for 2024/25 is forecast to be at £14.5m due to increased demand pressures that are referenced in this report:



4.11 The Council has also commenced its Transformation programme. This programme seeks to identify longer term financial savings, but will of course highlight any shorter term opportunities to help support the Council's in year financial position.

4.12 The Quarter Three forecast is an overspend of £3.2m as summarised below:

2023/24 Directorate Summary	Net Budget £000	Net Income/ Expenditure £000	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three								Change from Last Quarter £000
			Year end forecast variance £000	Year end forecast variance £000	Budget Manager Forecast Variance £000	Use of Earmarked Reserves £000	Impact on General Fund £000	Year end forecast variance £000	Mitigation £000	Pre-agreed Transform- ation £000	New Transform- ation £000	Year end forecast variance £000	
People	98,595	107,498	5,840	6,297	10,391	(89)	0	10,302	(748)	0	(1,201)	8,354	2,056
Place	33,763	34,429	597	(47)	1,025	(358)	(1,435)	(768)	(11)	0	(255)	(1,035)	(988)
Resources	12,269	12,914	24	26	1,243	(186)	0	1,057	(128)	(445)	(263)	221	195
Chief Executive	550	545	(5)	(10)	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	15
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	14,443	14,286	(157)	(3,002)	(4,178)	0	0	(4,178)	(130)	0	0	(4,308)	(1,305)
Total	159,620	169,671	6,298	3,264	8,486	(633)	(1,435)	6,418	(1,017)	(445)	(1,719)	3,237	(27)

4.13 It is therefore vital that the Corporate Board and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) continue to reduce expenditure / increase income to reduce the forecast overspend.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.2 The 2023/24 net revenue budget of £159m was set in March 2023, using £157m revenue funding and £1.8m of reserves. During the 2023/24 budget build, inflationary pressures were identified in demand led services, but not all pressures were built into the budget, with some being held as a risk against the general reserve.
- 5.3 The Council brought in a strategy for managing the in-year financial pressures at Quarter One, where the overspend was forecast to be £6.3m. This was after some initial mitigations against pressures being seen. Since the Quarter One (Q1) forecast was made, actions have been undertaken as highlighted in the Q1 report to the Executive in September. Progress against the strategy for managing the overspend are set out below:

Action	Progress	Financial benefit
1) Implementation of a Financial Review Panel (FRP)	a) Review of all expenditure for overspending services over £2,000.	Included within Q3 forecasts.
	b) Review of all agency expenditure and incorporating all staff within the Council's Comensura ¹ contract.	Reduced agency staff expenditure in Comensura from £2.38m in Q3 2022-23 to £1.87m in Q3 in 2023-24 ² - a reduction of £2m over a twelve month rolling forecast if maintained.
	c) Review all recruitment activity, pausing some activity.	Included within Q2 forecasts where posts are being held vacant or delays to recruitment.
	d) Enhanced recruitment activity	28 posts moved from agency to permanent staff – full year saving of £0.38m.
2) Review of accrual policy	Review has been complete and already included in the forecast for Q3.	Already taken into account in the Q3 forecast.

¹ Overarching provider of agency staff for WBC

² Average of first 4 week of 23-24 vs average of 4 weeks of September (end of Q2)

3) Review of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy	The Council has been provided with a report from Link (the Council's Treasury Management advisors) that highlight a range of options for review. This will require a change of policy to MRP at Full Council ³ (and this will be included in the February budget papers with a request for a revision to in year treatment).	In year benefit of £4m with a 2024-25 benefit
4) Review of opportunities for asset sales	The November Executive meeting approved the sale of capital assets owned by the Council. These can be used to fund Transformational activity per the below and will also reduce MRP, but will reduce investment income in future years.	See below
5) Review the flexible use of capital receipts	Initial review of activities that fit within the Government guidance for the flexible use of capital receipts total £2.3m. These are short term benefits but will benefit the in year position.	Up to £2.3m
6) S151 officer to discuss position with the Government (DLUHC)	Conversations have taken place and further action (for example a capitalisation request) to occur if required	n/a

5.4 The strategy will continue for the rest of the financial year, with additional focus on delivering in year savings targets for directorates through progress against action plans.

5.5 The Government will wish to consider the financial position of Councils facing significant financial pressures and in recent years have provided capitalisation directives to a small number of Councils, see the link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exceptional-financial-support-for-local-authorities-capitalisation-directions>.

In these cases, the Government have provided specific sums of funding to Councils through a capitalisation directive whereby the Council repays the Government (with additional financial costs) and the Council will be required to have a formal external assurance review on their financial position. This will then be published by the DLUHC

³ This review is still ongoing at the time of writing

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(Department of Levelling Up and Communities) and subject to progress and updates on improvement to the Council's financial position.

5.6 If the mitigations included in the current forecasts, *including* a capitalisation directive if it was sought, were not to come forward and be delivered, the Council would need to consider issuing a s114 report; this is not the current proposal. Very few Councils have issued section 114 notices (Woking BC, Slough BC, Croydon and Thurrock being the most recent), and most of those have taken place where there have been significant commercial / property / company purchases with a lack of capital financing repayments, rather than from inflationary pressures. More information on the practicalities of a section 114 notice are included in this link from Woking BC <https://www.woking.gov.uk/section114> or this from Thurrock Council <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/government-intervention/section-114-notice> .

Quarter Three 2023/24

5.7 The Quarter Three forecast is an overspend of £3.2m, representing 2% of the net revenue budget. The Quarter Three forecast is after use of £0.6m of specific earmarked reserves, £0.9m service mitigations, and £2.2m of flexible use of capital receipts for transformational activity.

2023/24	Net Budget	Net Income/ Expenditure	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three							Quarter Four	Change from Last Quarter	
			Year end forecast variance	Year end forecast variance	Budget Manager Forecast Variance	Use of Earmarked Reserves	Impact on General Fund	Forecast variance after Reserves	Mitigation	Pre-agreed Transformation	New Transformation	Year end forecast variance		Final variance
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		£000
Adult Social Care	63,055	64,652	791	575	3,036	0	0	3,036	(633)	0	(364)	2,038	0	1,463
Children & Family Services	21,249	26,683	3,721	3,719	4,678	(89)	0	4,590	(114)	0	(787)	3,688	0	(31)
Executive Director	448	454	7	(3)	54	0	0	54	0	0	(49)	4	0	8
Education DSG funded	(444)	(444)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education	10,708	12,572	1,321	2,020	2,697	0	0	2,697	0	0	0	2,697	0	677
Public Health & Wellbeing	346	346	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communities & Wellbeing	3,234	3,234	0	(14)	(75)	0	0	(75)	0	0	0	(75)	0	(61)
People	98,595	107,498	5,840	6,297	10,391	(89)	0	10,302	(748)	0	(1,201)	8,354	0	2,056
Executive Director	213	197	(21)	(25)	(29)	0	0	(29)	0	0	0	(29)	0	(4)
Development & Regulation	5,637	6,057	618	612	1,127	(33)	(1,435)	(341)	(11)	0	0	(352)	0	(964)
Environment	27,912	28,174	0	(634)	(74)	(325)	0	(399)	0	0	(255)	(654)	0	(20)
Place	33,763	34,429	597	(47)	1,025	(358)	(1,435)	(768)	(11)	0	(255)	(1,035)	0	(988)
ICT	2,437	2,524	(87)	(36)	(34)	0	0	(34)	0	(23)	0	(56)	0	(20)
Executive Director	317	275	(42)	(50)	(134)	0	0	(134)	0	0	0	(134)	0	(84)
Commissioning & Procurement	448	526	(78)	(113)	82	0	0	82	0	(145)	(50)	(113)	0	0
Finance & Property	1,562	1,784	201	245	890	(177)	0	712	(128)	0	(139)	446	0	201
Strategy & Governance	7,505	7,702	(197)	(20)	313	(9)	0	304	0	(151)	(74)	79	0	99
Transformation	0	103	103	0	127	0	0	127	0	(127)	0	0	0	0
Resources	12,269	12,914	645	26	1,243	(186)	0	1,057	(128)	(445)	(263)	221	0	195
Chief Executive	550	545	(5)	(10)	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	15
Capital Financing	14,851	14,694	(157)	(3,002)	(4,178)	0	0	(4,178)	(130)	0	0	(4,308)	0	(1,305)
Risk Management	(407)	(407)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	14,443	14,286	(157)	(3,002)	(4,178)	0	0	(4,178)	(130)	0	0	(4,308)	0	(1,305)
Total	159,620	169,671	6,298	3,264	8,486	(633)	(1,435)	6,418	(1,017)	(445)	(1,719)	3,237	0	(27)

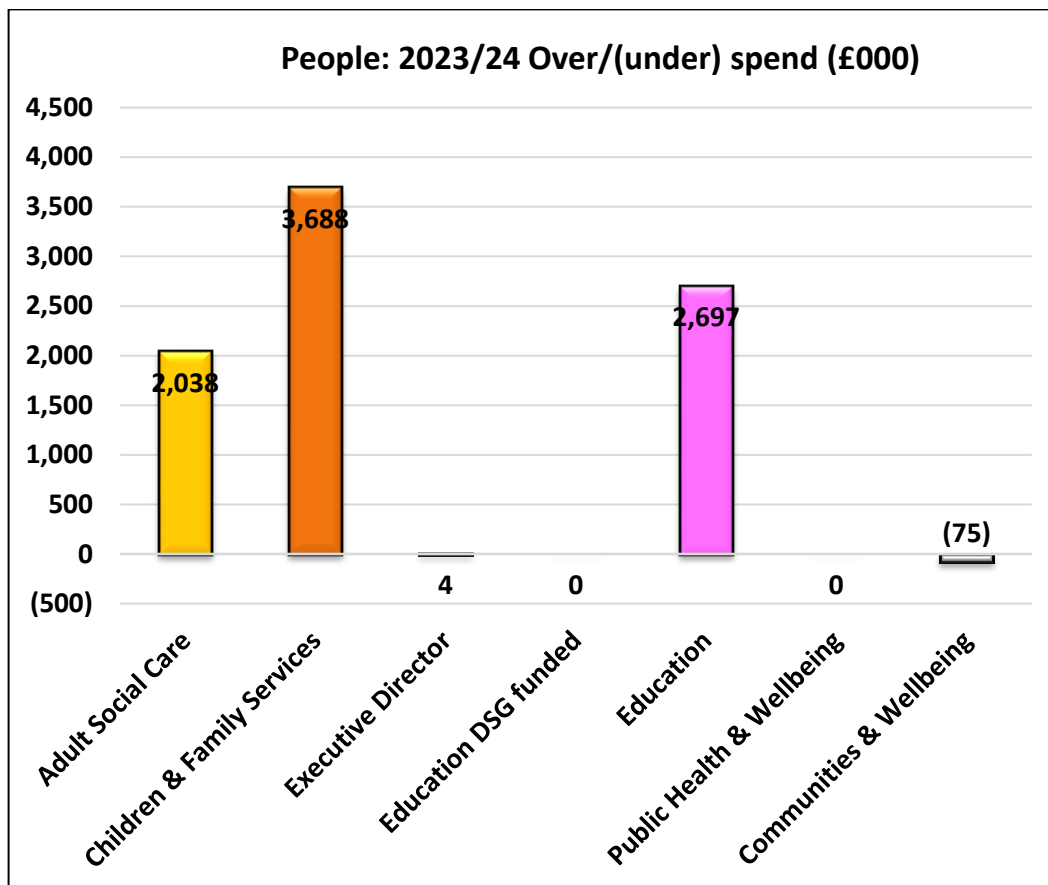
NB: Rounding differences may apply to the nearest £k.

Impact on Reserves

5.8 The general fund would be reduced to £4m if the current forecast overspend remained at year end. This is significantly below the recommended level for future budget setting as outlined in the report.

People Directorate

5.9 The People Directorate forecast is an over spend of £8.4m against a budget of £99m, representing 8.5% of budget. The overspend has increased by £2m from last quarter.



5.10 In ASC, the overspend is £2m, which is 3.2% of the net budget of £63m. This is after £0.6m of mitigations and £0.4m use of transformation funding. The overspend has increased by £1.5m since last quarter largely due to increased care in Memory & Cognition, Learning Disability and Mental Health and in-year savings not yet being achieved. The pay award has also impacted the forecast by £0.5m.

5.11 The modelled investment request for Adult Social Care packages for 2023/24 was reduced by £1m and held as a risk. This has led to a higher level of overspend. The overspends before mitigations are outlined below.

5.12 ASC long term services (LTS) are £3.2m over spent.

- There is an increase in the cost of care packages, due to inflation, complexities and challenges in the external workforce market. This equates to an average increase of 12% per client package since 2022/23.
- There has been lower than modelled occupancy in our own three care homes due to refurbishment and admissions restrictions resulting in clients being placed in externally commissioned beds costing more.

5.13 Short term services are £0.5m under spent due to the additional funding for Hospital Discharge and changes to some clients packages moving onto long term services.

5.14 Other overspends is ASC total £0.3m.

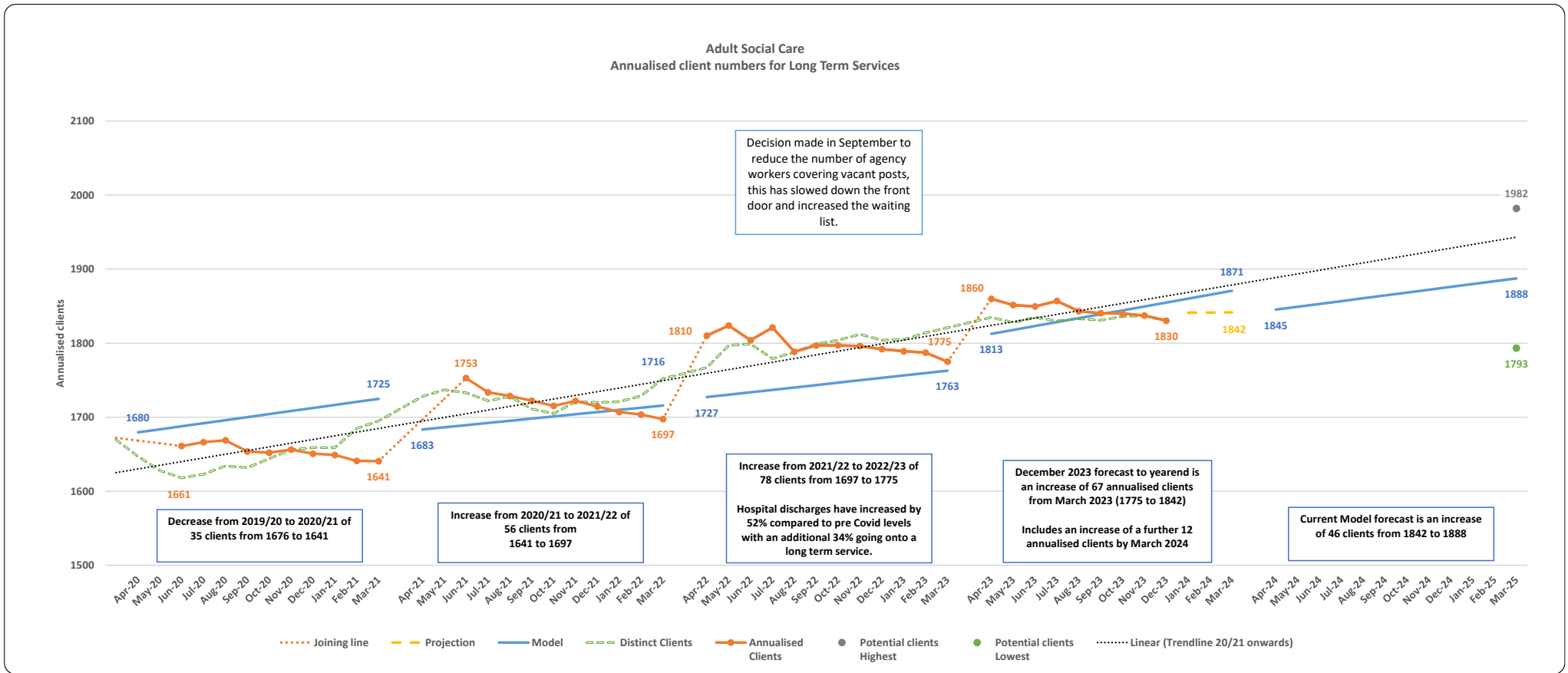
- There is a £1.2m overspend in our own care homes due to a shortfall of income and agency staffing requirements from recruitment difficulties.
- Underspends have arisen in Shared Lives £0.1m due to lack of carer availability and in Reablement £0.5m due to vacancies. Other underspends are in Maximising Independence, Resource Centres and staffing.

5.15 The 2023/24 savings target of £2.3m is £0.1m red, £1.2m amber and £1m green. The red is due to fee increases that require consultation before they can be implemented. The amber savings are on track to largely be achieved.

5.16 Mitigations of £3m are underway including in house services and additional grant funding. Other actions include a review of 2024/25 savings proposals to see if they can be started early, stopping recruitment where possible, review of agency requirements, utilisation of external funding and a review of year end accruals. The service continues to take action to suppress market demand.

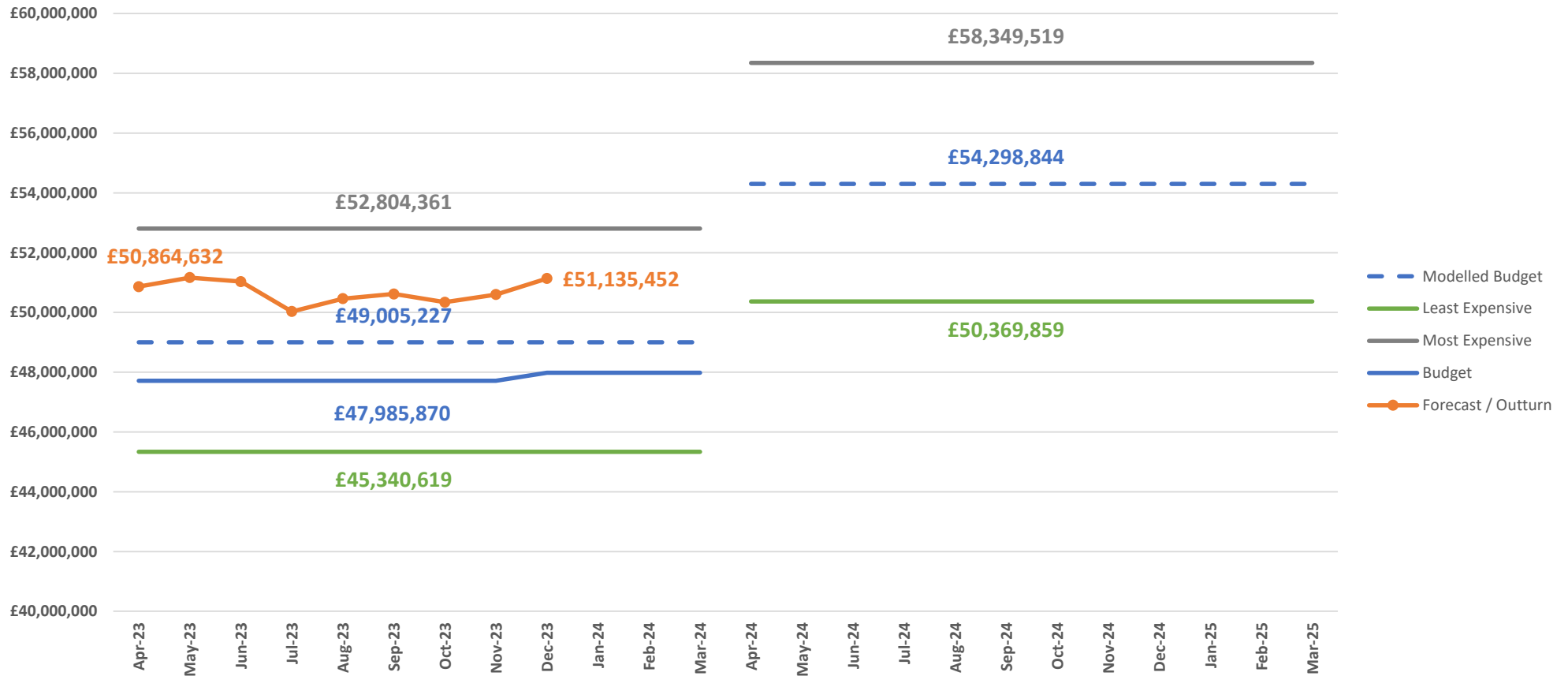
5.17 ASC are seeing an aging population as well as increased costs. The ASC Model for long term services is updated monthly, with assumptions reviewed and agreed by the ASC Financial Planning Steering group and reported at the ASC Financial Planning meeting.

2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three



2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three

LTS Net Expenditure
Model V Forecast



5.18 In CFS, the forecast is a £3.7m overspend, which is 17.4% of the net budget of £21m. This is the same as last quarter. The forecast is after the use of Earmarked Reserves of £89k, £114k mitigations and use of transformation funding of £787k.

- There is a £2.5m over spend in placements before mitigation. The children in care population has increased by 20%. This is in addition to increased complexity, mental health and emotional wellbeing needs, and provision for teenagers. There is a small cohort of young people with very high care needs requiring specialist residential provision and a national shortage of suitable residential placements.
- The Family Safeguarding teams are overspending by £1.4m due to agency costs. This has been required to cover vacancies and maternity leave and increased demand. Childcare lawyers has a £0.9m overspend due to an increase in the number of cases in court.

5.19 The 2023/24 savings target of £0.5m is £250k red, £13k amber and £271k green. The red is due to a target for not filling posts immediately upon becoming vacant not being met due to the level of demand for statutory intervention and for placement cost reductions which were planned at a point when a rise in the care population was not as great as now being seen.

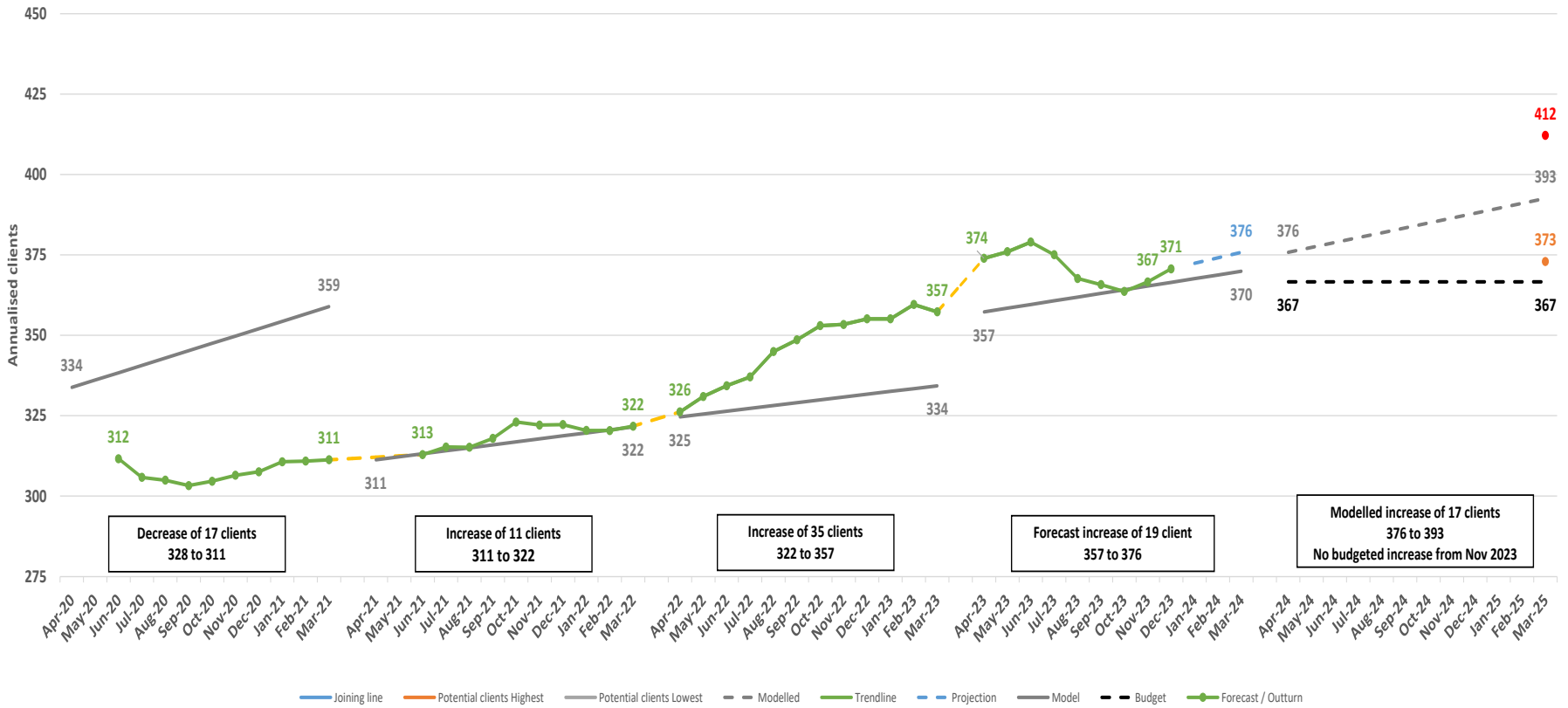
5.20 The service continue to effectively manage placements as part of the Children and Family service Accommodation & Resources Panel. There is a robust plan in place for some children to appropriately safely step down from costly residential care. Additional in house supports to foster carers (fostering hub, mental health team) will enable increasing numbers of children to live in lower cost 'In house' placements.

5.21 There is active recruitment taking place for qualified staff to fill vacancies. The national picture is one of acute shortage of social workers. The recruitment and retention package has been renewed.

5.22 The model for placements has been refined and is updated monthly. Client numbers and net expenditure are shown in the graphs below.

2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three

Children & Family Services annualised client numbers
(includes UASC)



5.23 Education forecast is a £2.7m overspend, which is 25% of the £10.7m budget. This has increased by £0.7m from last quarter. There have been increases in residential disability costs, but in addition, a number of mitigations identified at Quarter Two have not been achieved.

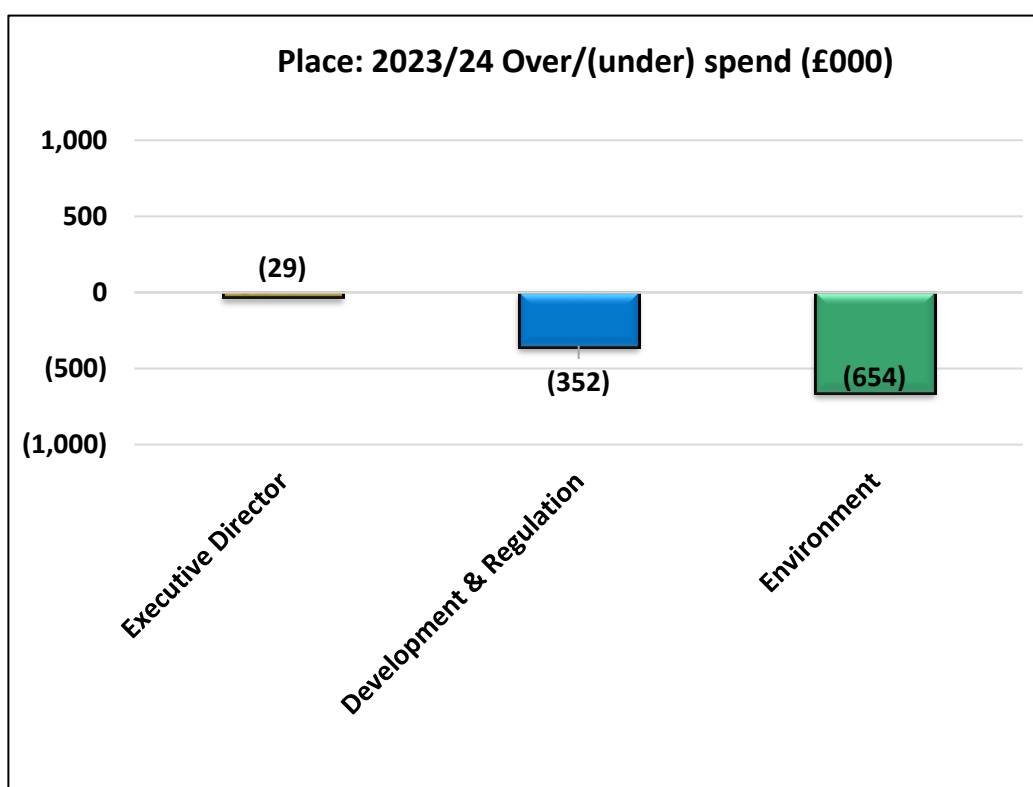
- £1.3m of the overspend is in Home to School Transport (HTST), an increase of £0.2m. The service is engaged in looking for ways to reduce HTST costs.
- £1.2m overspend is forecast in disability support packages residential. There have been two new high cost placements arranged at short notice. Work is being done to find longer term placements at more reasonable cost.
- Other pressures are from agency costs.

5.24 Public Health forecast is a £120k underspend which will transfer to the Public Health Reserve at year end.

5.25 Communities and Wellbeing is reporting a £74k underspend. There are pressures in library income due to Parishes not contributing, but there are savings in leisure offsetting this.

Place Directorate

5.26 The Place Directorate budget manager forecast is a £1m over spend, representing 3% against a budget of £34m. After use of reserves of £0.3m, flexible use of capital receipts for transformation of £0.3m and moving unspent grants to reserves, there would be an underspend of £1m. The table below shows the forecast after the mitigations.



5.27 In Development and Regulation, the £1.1m overspend before use of reserves represents 20% of the £5.6m budget. This is an increase of £0.5m since Quarter Two. The increase has been mainly due to demand on temporary accommodation.

- There is a £0.7m pressure on Planning Application fee income, of which £0.4m is from a national fee uplift which was anticipated to start at the beginning of this financial year, but has yet to be introduced.
- There is a £0.3m pressure on Bio-Diversity Net Gain income, where income was expected to be generated through activity linked to developments delivering a 10% uplift in Bio-Diversity Net Gain. It is clear that there is no opportunity to generate income from the scheme.
- There are £1m pressures in Housing from temporary accommodation repairs and emergency accommodation for homeless families. However there is a £0.7m underspend on the main housing staffing cost centre from vacancies and supplies and services.
- There are areas of underspend from staffing vacancies and reduced spend on consultants.

5.28 The 2023/24 savings target of £1.5m is £1m red, £0m amber and £0.4m green. The red is due to the income targets outlined above not being achievable and for fees and charges increases and holding posts vacant.

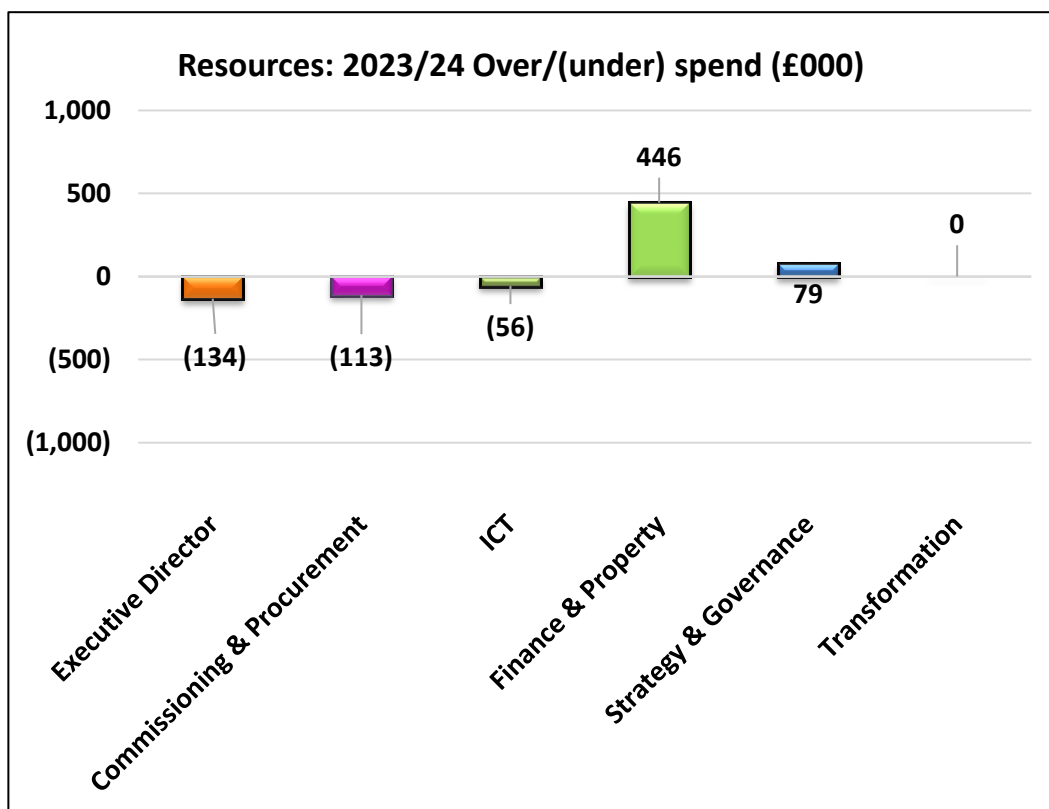
5.29 The planning service is working on maximising income generation and housing are monitoring demand for emergency accommodation and looking for cost efficient options for housing.

5.30 In Environment, the forecast is an underspend of £645k after mitigations and use of reserves. There are pressures in highways emergencies and car parks but the garden waste subscriptions are over achieving income.

5.31 The 2023/24 savings target of £1.2m is £50k red, £30k amber and £1.1m green. The red is from biodiversity and carbon credits as legislation has not been forthcoming. The amber is for pre-application income.

Resources Directorate/Chief Executive

5.32 The Resources Directorate forecast is an overspend of £195. This is after use of reserves of £0.2m, mitigations of £0.1m and transformation of £0.7m. The Chief Executive Service is an overspend of £5k. The combined forecast overspend of £210k represents 0.2% of the net budget of £12.8m.



5.33 In Commissioning & Procurement, the £113k surplus is largely due to additional income from the agency contract rebate, although this has reduced slightly from last quarter as a result of the reduced agency usage. Transformation funding has supported staff working on the Procurement Strategy and can further support time spent reducing agency reliance. The £350k savings are forecast as green.

5.34 In ICT is forecasting a £56k under spend. The £110k savings target is £35k red and £75k green.

5.35 In Finance and Property, the £446k overspend has arisen from unachieved savings from the accommodation review project, RAAC surveys, delayed property disposals and recruitment difficulties necessitating the use of agency. The £1.1m savings target is £152k red, £24k amber and £1m green.

5.36 Strategy and Governance is £79k underspent. The £420k savings programme is £101k red, £25k amber and £294k green. The red is from grant funding that is not available.

5.37 The Transformation Service is forecast online after use of transformation funding.

5.38 Mitigations for overspends include review of the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for capital expenditure. The outcome of this review has identified a net reduction in the annual charge of £4m for 2023/24, which is shown in the capital financing service area. Other mitigations include reviewing vacant posts and agency arrangements, use of transformation funding and review of vacant properties.

Capital Financing and Risk Management

5.39 Capital Financing has an underspend of £4.3m, as described above relating to the review of the MRP provision.

Employee and Agency Spend

5.40 At Quarter Three, total employee spend including agency was £54.9m against a budget of £51.6m, an overspend of £3.4m. The overspend at Quarter Two was £1m, and the increase is due to the back dated pay award.

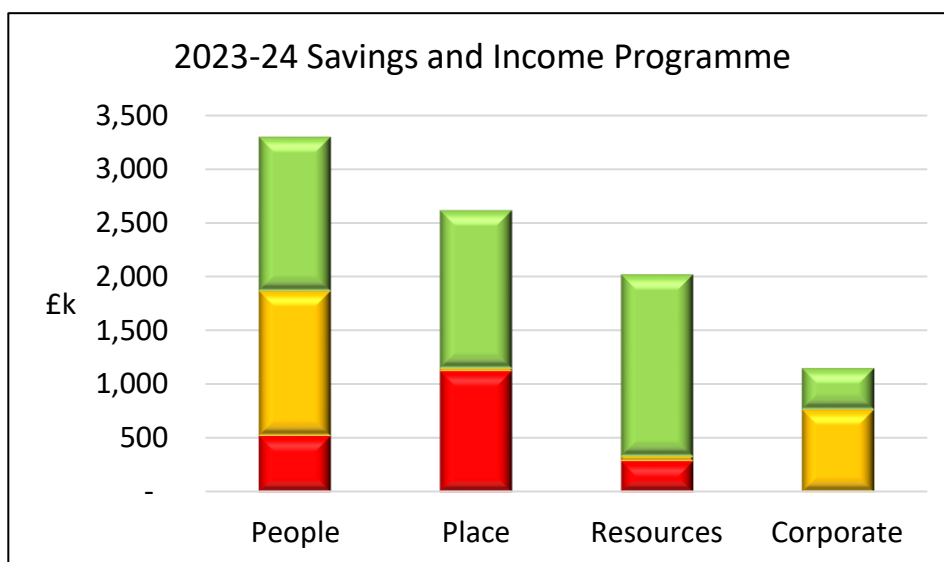
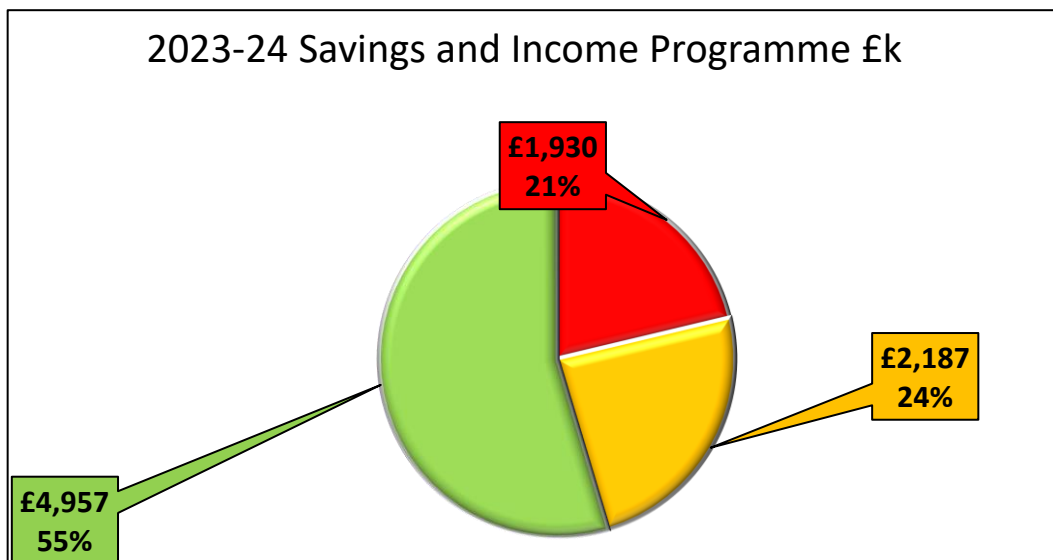
5.41 The chart shows the profiled budget to 31 December 2023. It should be noted that invoices will often be received in the month after the cost is incurred, so not all costs to date will be captured. Outstanding invoices are only accrued for at year end.

5.42 Within employee costs, agency spend to Quarter Three was £7.2m. The amount spent per quarter on agency is reducing. The Financial Review Panel which started at the end of July, have been making progress to reduce agency spending.

Service Summary	Employee Budget to Q3	Q1 Employee spend	Q2 Employee spend	Q3 Employee spend	Over/ (under) spend	% over spend	Q1 Agency spend	Q2 Agency spend	Q3 Agency spend	Q1 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend	Q2 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend	Q3 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend
		(including agency)										
Chief Executive	377,333	141,004	120,802	141,144	25,617	7%	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%
Adult Social Care	13,713,893	4,900,972	4,641,898	5,160,266	989,243	7%	1,101,964	913,384	713,248	22%	20%	14%
Children & Family Services	7,497,143	2,436,995	2,790,879	2,966,818	697,550	9%	805,261	907,343	739,538	33%	33%	25%
Communities & Wellbeing	1,444,620	536,901	518,228	599,373	209,882	15%	2,608	2,379	-	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director - People	297,908	66,534	114,593	116,391	(390)	0%	-	-	14,442	0%	0%	12%
Education	4,339,853	1,773,103	1,680,920	1,904,920	1,019,091	23%	230,573	276,477	239,964	13%	16%	13%
Public Health & Wellbeing	1,233,435	110,779	118,362	191,707	(812,587)	-66%	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director - Place	141,803	40,748	36,906	49,582	(14,567)	-10%	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%
Development & Regulation	7,429,343	2,536,378	2,514,459	2,838,651	460,146	6%	269,596	250,966	215,937	11%	10%	8%
Environment	4,205,783	1,370,288	1,409,163	1,615,468	189,137	4%	34,529	34,159	38,974	3%	2%	2%
Commissioning & Procurement	961,260	358,700	334,953	318,872	51,265	5%	917	917	-	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director - Resources	146,423	40,161	39,776	48,825	(17,661)	-12%	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%
Finance & Property	3,289,703	1,197,445	1,124,448	1,307,945	340,136	10%	103,186	87,054	75,316	9%	8%	6%
ICT	1,634,648	553,716	522,213	579,060	20,342	1%	17,132	7,624	-	3%	1%	0%
Strategy & Governance	4,851,360	1,634,094	1,631,717	1,799,031	213,482	4%	27,957	40,147	62,391	2%	2%	3%
Total	51,564,503	17,697,818	17,599,317	19,638,052	3,370,684	7%	2,593,723	2,518,616	2,099,810	15%	14%	11%

2023/24 Savings and income generation programme

5.43 In order to meet the funding available, the 2022/23 revenue budget was built with a £9m savings and income generation programme. The programme is monitored using the RAG traffic light system. The status is shown in the following charts:



Red items are as follows:

Service	Saving item	Impact on 2023/24
ASC	£81k fees and charges increase.	Unable to increase fees above 11.1% without consultation. Consultation has taken place in line with setting the fees for 2024/25.
ASC	£26k RAS software reducing provision.	This is dependent on an upgrade going live.
CFS	£184k recruitment lag on new posts.	With the unprecedented level of demand for statutory intervention it is unsafe to not fill social work posts given the caseloads already exceeding safe levels.

2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three

CFS	£66k actions to reduce cost of care	The anticipated reduction in placement costs were planned at a point when a rise in the children in care population was not rising to the extent that it has and when the residential market was not under the strain that it is currently.
C&W	£165k from income generation and transformation work	£151k has been achieved in year but not on a permanent basis which is why this remains red. There are discussions underway to achieve this in 2024/25.
D&R	£265k place shaping and delivery.	Income was originally expected to be generated through activity linked to Biodiversity Net Gain and Conservation Area Appraisals. The requirement for developments to deliver a 10% uplift in Biodiversity Net Gain is set to become law in January 2024, however, it is now clear there is no opportunity to generate income other than through cost recovery through pre-apps and PPAs or by the sale of BNG credits. The sale of credits is represented by a £50k income target in the Environmental Delivery team
D&R	£63k premium service for pre application advice and determination of householder applications.	A trial of the Premium Service took place in October 2022. This service is currently not being offered, therefore the income target is not currently being realised.
D&R	£390k uplift in planning fees	Planning fees are set nationally by DLUHC. The saving proposal was based on the new fees starting from April; however they only came into effect from December 2023. Although there is the benefit of higher rates for the final 4 months of the financial year, there is still a pressure on the income target of £751k, therefore none of the saving target has been achieved.
D&R	£25k financial contribution from registered providers for use of Council's choice based letting system	There is currently a £55k income target for choice based lettings, of which only £26k is forecasted to be achieved. Currently there has not been the anticipated uptake in demand for providers to advertise through the letting system - this is linked with issues in the current demands on in the rental market.
D&R	£131k review of systems processes and resources	This saving is linked with the implementation of the Planning Service Staffing Restructure which is in the process of being implemented. Although

		<p>there is an in year pressure on achieving this, once the new structure is implemented then the saving will be achieved for future years.</p> <p>In year there are posts being held vacant in Minerals & Waste and Planning Policy which are helping offset / mitigate this pressure</p>
D&R	£100k planning white paper/levelling up and regeneration bill service efficiencies	<p>This saving is linked with the implementation of the Planning Service Staffing Restructure. Although there is an in year pressure on achieving this, once the new structure is implemented then the saving will be achieved for future years.</p> <p>In year there are posts being held vacant in Minerals & Waste and Planning Policy which are helping offset / mitigate this pressure</p>
D&R	£96k holding posts vacant	The service has not identified specific posts which are to be held vacant to meet this saving in 2023/24.
Env	£50k for biodiversity and carbon credits	No income to date has been achieved. Legislation is set to become law in January 2024, at which stage it will become clearer whether this income is achievable long term.
F&P	£96k from savings on surplus accommodation	This remains a pressure on the Council's revenue budget as this saving was based on a property being disposed of. The saving should be achieved long term.
F&P	£56k from accommodation review	There is a forecast pressure as one of the properties is still fully occupied.
ICT	£35k print and postage savings	Although there have been reductions in printing levels across the Council, the cost of paper has almost doubled over the past few years. As part of the capital programme, new printers are due to be purchased, which will provide more efficient printing and additional management information to target a reduction in printing.
S&G	£101k grant funding of elections staff	There is no ongoing grant funding for the restructure of the Elections Team, an investment bid to remove this is part of the 2024/25 budget proposals.

Expenditure Guidance from 24.7.23

- 5.44 The Quarter One level of overspend meant that we needed to immediately introduce additional controls on all revenue spend within the Council. Agresso authorisation limits were changed accordingly. Non Agresso systems have alternative restrictions in place.
- 5.45 Spending controls will need to remain in place for the foreseeable future. Any circumnavigation of the rules will be a disciplinary matter per the financial rules of procedure.
- 5.46 Spending controls will be overseen by the Financial Review Panel (FRP) consisting of the Chief Executive, Executive Director Resources, Service Director Transformation, Heads of Finance & Property, Legal and HR representatives plus the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Measures for All Services

- 5.47 All services will need to do the following:
- (a) All spend up to £500 to be approved by Service Director/Head of Service, and only to be approved if statutory or unavoidable.
 - (b) Spend between £501 and £2000 to be approved by Executive Director, and only to be approved if statutory or unavoidable.
 - (c) Spend over £2000 to go to Spending Review Panel (SRP) members to approve. The SRP consists of Executive Director Resources and the Heads of Finance & Property.
 - (d) Recruitment pause with exceptions submitted for consideration by the FRP. Any jobs currently out to advert will be reviewed by the FRP to consider whether recruitment should proceed.
 - (e) Reduction in the use of agency staff. All current agency to be reviewed and terminated where possible. Any new agency requests to continue to use the current request forms, but these will come to FRP for approval.
 - (f) Overtime to be stopped, and only paid if approved in advance by the FRP with a supporting business case.
 - (g) Review of honorariums. These should cease unless linked to specific acting up arrangements.
 - (h) All job re-evaluations for existing roles will cease (unless the request forms part of a department restructure or is directly linked to a savings proposal).
- 5.48 All services to attend an FRP to review the following:
- (a) Statutory/discretionary areas of spend.
 - (b) Unachieved savings and mitigation plans.

Measures for Overspending Services

- (a) Spend over £2000 to be approved by the FRP from the week commencing 24th July. Purchase orders over £2000 will need to have an Expenditure Request Form emailed to the FRP in order to be approved (see attached).
- (b) The FRP will review every Thursday morning:
 - Purchase Orders (POs) and other expenditure requests approved in the preceding week by Service.
 - Expenditure Request Forms for outstanding POs over £2000.
- (c) Recovery plans were required by 15.8.23 to demonstrate the action being taken to deliver a breakeven position by year end and these have been reviewed by FRP.

Allowable expenditure

5.49 We will continue to spend on the following:

- Existing staff payroll and pension costs
- Goods and services that have already been received
- Provision of statutory services at a minimum possible level
- Urgent need to safeguard vulnerable citizens
- Existing legal agreements and contracts where the spend is within the agreed and existing budget AND the spend is necessary to meet a statutory service OR a contractual obligation.
- Areas funded by ring-fenced grants (although these will need to be reviewed to ascertain where these are being fully utilised to cover costs/rebadging of expenditure).

Actions Underway

5.50 Finance Service to review 2022/23 year end accruals and make recommendations about the accrual policy for 2023/24.

5.51 Minimum Revenue Provision review: the Council's external treasury advisors have been commissioned to review the MRP policy. Finance Service leading on this and it has been reflected in the Quarter Three forecast.

5.52 Review of the opportunities for the flexible use of capital receipts funded through the sale of assets; the Council has little funding left for further transformational activity via the flexible use of capital receipts, though the opportunity to fund a range of work at the Council is there if asset sales occur e.g. digital, projects teams etc. This has been included in the Quarter Three forecasts.

5.53 S151 Officer has contacted DHLUC and had an informal discussion on the financial position.

Proposals

5.54 To note the £3.2m overspend.

5.55 To note the implementation of measures included in the report around recruitment, staffing and agency.

5.56 To note the continuation of Financial Review Panel (FRP) to meet weekly to ensure the spending limits are being adhered to.

6 Other options considered

6.1 None

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Council is facing an unprecedented level of financial pressures due a range of factors. The Council is taking proactive steps to reduce this expenditure as highlighted in this report, but the Quarter Three position is placing a significant pressure on the Council's financial resilience. This position will be monitored very closely in the coming days, weeks and months to measure progress on reducing expenditure whilst mitigating the impact on frontline services.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Quarter Three position

8.2 Appendix B – Budget Changes

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

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	Budget				Forecasted Performance											
	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Changes in year 2023/24 £	Funding Released from Reserves 2023/24 £	Revised Budget 2023/24 £	Expenditure			Income			Net					
					Annual Expenditure Budget for 2023/24 £	Annual Expenditure Forecast for 2023/24 £	Expenditure Variance for 2023/24 £	Annual Income Budget for 2023/24 £	Annual Income Forecast for 2023/24 £	Income Variance for 2023/24 £	Net Variance £	Use of Earmarked Reserves £	Mitigation £	Pre-agreed Transformation £m	New Transformation £m	Year end forecast Variance £
Adult Social Care	62,898,690	26,090	130,000	63,054,780	85,891,860	91,956,210	6,064,350	-22,837,080	-25,865,130	-3,028,050	3,036,300					3,036,300
Children & Family Services	21,222,570	26,090	0	21,248,660	24,181,650	29,207,190	5,025,540	-2,932,990	-3,280,140	-347,150	4,678,390	-89,000	-633,500		-364,000	3,591,890
Executive Director - People	369,810	2,050	75,750	447,610	447,610	501,150	53,540	0	0	0	53,540		-114,000		-787,000	-847,460
Education (DSG Funded)	-444,000	0	0	-444,000	126,348,550	135,973,660	9,625,110	-126,792,550	-136,417,660	-9,625,110	0				-49,000	-49,000
Education	10,687,990	0	20,000	10,707,990	14,759,630	17,626,450	2,866,820	-4,051,640	-4,221,300	-169,660	2,697,160					2,697,160
Public Health & Wellbeing	-80,000	0	426,310	346,310	6,874,780	6,754,040	-120,740	-6,528,470	-6,407,730	120,740	0					0
Communities & Wellbeing	3,256,850	-30,000	6,940	3,233,790	4,269,040	4,003,480	-265,560	-1,035,250	-844,200	191,050	-74,510					-74,510
People	97,911,910	24,230	659,000	98,595,140	262,773,120	286,022,180	23,249,060	-164,177,980	-177,036,160	-12,858,180	10,390,880	-89,000	-747,500	0	-1,200,000	8,354,380
Development & Regulation	5,343,890	0	293,520	5,637,410	14,649,360	18,170,160	3,520,800	-9,011,950	-12,840,850	-3,828,900	-308,100	-33,000	-11,000			-352,100
Executive Director – Place	213,130	0	0	213,130	213,130	184,580	-28,550	0	0	0	-28,550					-28,550
Environment	27,942,440	-30,000	0	27,912,440	38,783,500	39,758,700	975,200	-10,871,060	-11,920,090	-1,049,030	-73,830	-325,000		-255,000		-653,830
Place	33,499,460	-30,000	293,520	33,762,980	53,645,990	58,113,440	4,467,450	-19,883,010	-24,760,940	-4,877,930	-410,480	-358,000	-11,000	-255,000	0	-1,034,480
ICT	2,436,570	0	0	2,436,570	3,169,610	3,087,910	-81,700	-733,040	-685,000	48,040	-33,660				-23,000	-56,660
Executive Director - Resources	317,170	0	0	317,170	317,170	260,450	-56,720	0	-77,400	-77,400	-134,120					-134,120
Commissioning & Procurement	448,480	0	0	448,480	14,529,810	16,093,520	1,563,710	-14,081,330	-15,562,840	-1,481,510	82,200				-195,000	-112,800
Finance & Property	1,468,220	93,880	0	1,562,100	33,263,660	35,570,250	2,306,590	-31,701,560	-33,118,440	-1,416,880	889,710	-177,000	-128,000		-139,000	445,710
Strategy & Governance	7,288,880	7,820	208,080	7,504,780	8,587,150	9,344,440	757,290	-1,082,370	-1,527,500	-445,130	312,160	-9,000			-225,000	78,160
Transformation	0	0	0	0	0	126,730	126,730	0	0	0	126,730				-126,730	0
Resources	11,959,320	101,700	208,080	12,269,100	59,867,400	64,483,300	4,615,900	-47,598,300	-50,971,180	-3,372,880	1,243,020	-186,000	-128,000	0	-708,730	220,290
Chief Executive	540,710	-2,050	11,040	549,700	549,700	616,950	67,250	0	-62,600	-62,600	4,650					4,650
Chief Executive	540,710	-2,050	11,040	549,700	549,700	616,950	67,250	0	-62,600	-62,600	4,650	0	0	0	0	4,650
Capital Financing & Management	14,850,640	0	0	14,850,640	15,360,640	11,670,030	-3,690,610	-510,000	-996,970	-486,970	-4,177,580		-130,000			-4,307,580
Risk Management	0	-93,880	-313,520	-407,400	-407,400	-407,400	0	0	0	0	0					0
Capital Financing and Management	14,850,640	-93,880	-313,520	14,443,240	14,953,240	11,262,630	-3,690,610	-510,000	-996,970	-486,970	-4,177,580	0	-130,000	0	0	-4,307,580
Total	158,762,040	0	858,120	159,620,160	391,789,450	420,498,500	28,709,050	-232,169,290	-253,827,850	-21,658,560	7,050,490	-633,000	-1,016,500	-255,000	-1,908,730	3,237,260

Service	Original Net Budget £000	Budget B/F from 22-23 released from reserves £000	Grants/ funding released from reserves £000	FAGG approved release from reserves £000	Budget changes not requiring approval £000	Approved by S151 & Portfolio Holder £000	Approved by Executive £000	Budget C/F to 2023-24 £000	Final Net Budget £000
Adult Social Care	62,899		130		26				63,055
Children and Family Services	21,223				26				21,249
Executive Director	370		76		2				448
Education DSG funded	(444)								(444)
Education	10,688	20							10,708
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)				426				346
Communities & Wellbeing	3,257				(23)				3,234
People	97,912	20	206	0	457	0	0	0	98,595
Executive Director	213								213
Development & Regulation	5,344	294							5,637
Environment	27,942				(30)				27,912
Place	33,499	294	0	0	(30)	0	0	0	33,763
ICT	2,437								2,437
Executive Director	317								317
Commissioning & Procurement	448								448
Finance & Property	1,468				94				1,562
Strategy & Governance	7,289	192		16	8				7,505
Resources	11,959	192	0	16	102	0	0	0	12,269
Chief Executive	541		11		(2)				550
Capital Financing & Risk	14,851	(314)			(94)				14,443
Total	158,762	192	217	16	433	0	0	0	159,620
Quarter One	158,762	192							158,954
Quarter Two	158,954			16	7				158,977
Quarter Three	158,954		217		426				159,620
Quarter Four	158,954								159,620
Total	158,762	192	217	16	433	0	0	0	159,620

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