

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 1 March, 2011 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Friday, 18 February 2011

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Stephen Chard on (01635) 519462
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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 1
March 2011 (continued)**

To: Councillors Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman),
Geoff Findlay, Irene Neill, David Rendel, Quentin Webb and
Emma Webster

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Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

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West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 1
March 2011 (*continued*)**

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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Geoff Findlay, Irene Neill, David Rendel, Andrew Rowles (Substitute) (In place of Emma Webster), Quentin Webb, Keith Woodhams (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks)

Also Present: Councillor Roger Hunneman, Councillor Alan Law, Councillor Tony Vickers, Mel Brain (Housing Strategy Manager), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Jason Teal (Performance, Research & Consultation Manager), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), David Lowe (Partnerships & Scrutiny Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Brooks and Councillor Emma Webster

PART I

109. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

110. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Irene Neill, David Rendel, Tony Vickers and Keith Woodhams declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 13, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

111. Actions from previous Minutes

The Commission received an update on actions following the previous meeting (Agenda Item 4).

Severe Winter Weather

The Commission were informed that the Education Service had been contacted to request that school severe weather plans were provided. No feedback had been received to date on this point.

The possibility of a teacher working in another West Berkshire school nearer to their own home during severe weather was being investigated by the Education Service.

Quarter 2 budget report

It was pointed out that while the Resource Management Select Committee considered the Quarter 2 budget report at its last meeting, the report had not been formally approved by the Executive. Nick Carter agreed to ensure that the necessary action was taken on this report.

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Stronger Communities Select Committee Common Housing Register Task Group

Councillor David Rendel informed Members that he had volunteered to participate in a pilot project during discussions of this task group, which would involve him making contact with residents in his Ward, who had been removed from the Register, to establish whether they were aware of this and whether they still had a housing need. He questioned when such an arrangement could be made as it was advised at one of the meetings that providing housing data to Ward Members on these residents was not restricted by Data Protection and therefore assistance could be offered. He advised that this was contrary to information he was provided with when making a Freedom of Information request for this data when he was advised that it was restricted.

Councillor Irene Neill, Chairman of the task group and the Select Committee, advised that a response to the report and its recommendations would first be needed from the Executive before any such action could take place. Once the report was approved by the Select Committee and then the Commission (due at its next meeting on 1 March 2011), it would be sent to the Executive to request a response.

Councillor Rendel was eager for this access to be granted prior to the report approval process described and Councillor Brian Bedwell suggested that, as restrictions were not in place, he should pursue this through an alternative approach separate to the committee process.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The issues relating to the severe winter weather and schools would be pursued when this topic was discussed in more detail at the next meeting.
- (2) Nick Carter would ensure that the Quarter 2 budget report received the necessary approval.

112. Items Called-in following the Executive on 13 January 2011

No items were called-in following the last Executive meeting.

113. Item Called-In following an Individual Decision: Review of First Step West Berkshire

(Councillors Irene Neill, David Rendel, Tony Vickers and Keith Woodhams declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 by virtue of the fact that they held accounts with Newbury Building Society. As their interest was personal and not prejudicial they were permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Commission considered the call-in of the Individual Decision relating to amendments to First Step West Berkshire (Agenda Item 6).

Councillor Tony Vickers, one of the Members that had called the decision in and Opposition Spokesperson for Housing, made the following points in support of the reasons for calling-in the Individual Decision:

- He firstly apologised for not commenting as part of the consultation process for the Individual Decision.
- There was no confidence that changes to the scheme would result in a higher take up. This view was supported by the failure of similar schemes operated in other local authorities and in some areas the scheme had been brought to a close. Difficulties with the economy had been named as the primary cause of these problems.

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- The modifications proposed to the scheme made it less targeted on the most vulnerable in the district. This could lead to the exclusion, for example, of families on benefit and those on the Common Housing Register.
- The option of ending the scheme had not been detailed within the report and it was felt that this option should have been given greater consideration. This was the main reason for the call-in.
- When considering the limit to resources, the scheme was not felt to be a high priority and did not merit the use of valuable officer time which should be concentrated on assisting residents in greater need. This was only making a small impact and was another reason why ending the scheme should have been given further consideration.
- The flexible home improvement loan scheme was a success and it was suggested that the resources given to First Step West Berkshire should be transferred to this scheme in order to improve the housing stock.

Councillor Roger Hunneman, also one of the Members that had called the individual decision in, added that he felt the scheme was a disappointment and would like to have seen the Section 106 funding allocated to this scheme utilised for building affordable homes.

Councillor Alan Law, Portfolio Member for Housing, circulated a response to the call-in and made the following points:

- He felt the call-in was inappropriate and only made for political gain.
- No response was made by the Opposition Spokesperson as part of the Individual Decision consultation process.
- Call-in reasons two to five were inappropriate as they opposed the principle of the scheme, whereas the Individual Decision was to review the working of the scheme and not its principle.
- No positive suggestions had been made for the improvement of the scheme, the only suggestion made was to bring it to a close.
- Call-in reason one (no confidence that changes to the scheme would result in a higher take up) was a matter of opinion. The schemes referred to in other local authorities did contribute to the formation of West Berkshire's scheme, but there were differences. It was accepted that the scheme had been a disappointment, but the reasons for the slow take up had been analysed and in his opinion the following changes would result in a higher take up:
 - The size of the equity loan would be increased from £10k to £20k.
 - The scheme would be extended to include residents wishing to purchase shared ownership homes and current or previous homeowners as long as appropriate safeguards and checks were in place.
 - The requirement for applicants to be on the Common Housing Register would be removed and the First Step application amended so that an assessment of housing need could be undertaken at that stage. This would help simplify the application process and avoid duplication of effort.
 - A new public relations campaign would be launched to promote the scheme.

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- The first time buyers market was at an all time low and increasing the size of the equity loan and widening the acceptance criteria would help to address this issue.
- In terms of the remaining reasons for calling the decision in, the more vulnerable people in the community were already offered assistance with housing through separate initiatives. This scheme, which was aimed at middle market residents, was therefore in accord with the Council's priorities as people in this category were included within the definition of social housing.
- The work undertaken in partnership with Newbury Building Society (NBS) was seen as an innovative approach to help this sector of the housing market. NBS actively promoted the scheme, but first time buyers were not coming forward at this time.
- Approval was sought from the Commission to accept the Individual Decision as it stood and avoid further delay to making the proposed changes.

Reference was made to the fact that the First Step scheme was created as part of a response to the recession and was approved by the Executive on 8 October 2009 partly on that basis. A six month review was agreed to by the Executive, this had been undertaken and new initiatives were proposed. Councillor Quentin Webb then proposed to accept the suggested changes as set out in the Individual Decision. This included the need for a further review of progress in six months time when it was hoped that an increased uptake would be seen. This would allow an opportunity for the scheme to improve.

In response to some of these comments the Members that had called the Individual Decision in advised that:

- The call-in was not politically motivated as only two applications to the scheme had been completed. Ending the scheme was therefore felt to be a valid option as it would enable limited resources to be concentrated on those residents with the highest need.
- It was accepted that these changes could lead to an increased uptake, but it could also lead to financial assistance being given to residents in a better position than others in greater need. The proposed changes would increase the potential for this beyond the existing scheme. Priority should be given to the most vulnerable.
- The principle of the scheme should have been a consideration of the review.

It was pointed out that those targeted by the scheme were not necessarily wealthy and assistance offered to them could prevent future housing needs.

Councillor Brian Bedwell reiterated his view given in the report that he was happy to accept the report and proposals for improvement.

Councillor David Rendel made a proposal to only accept the amendment to remove the need for applicants to be registered on the Common Housing Register and to reject all the other proposed amendments. This was seconded by Councillor Keith Woodhams.

Councillor Law felt that the proposed amendments should be taken forward in their entirety as it was not viable to only pursue one of them.

Councillor Rendel's proposal was put to the vote and was rejected by the Commission.

Councillor Webb's proposal to accept the Individual Decision was then put to the vote and was accepted by the Commission.

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RESOLVED that the Individual Decision be accepted without amendment.

114. **Councillor Call for Action**

No new Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) items were raised for discussion.

115. **Petitions**

No petitions were brought to the Commission for consideration.

116. **Council Plan Outcomes 2010/11 - Quarter 2 Performance Update**

The Commission considered the Quarter 2 Council Plan outcomes performance report (Agenda Item 9).

Jason Teal introduced the report by advising that of the 97 indicators reported at Quarter 2, 79% were reported green, 12% amber and the remaining 9% reported as red.

It was queried how the Better Roads and Transport indicator to improve the perception of footways could be measured. Jason Teal advised that the Highways Service was part of a national benchmarking club which had commissioned an external agency to run a residents' survey on this issue.

It was noted that the number of red indicators had increased when compared to this time last year (6% to 9%). This was concerning as it was felt that the number of red indicators was likely to increase during the course of the year. Efforts were therefore needed to prevent this. Discussion then followed on some of the red indicators as follows:

CPAH03 - Award 85 new grant loans to bring properties up to a safe and decent standard

The exception report indicated that consideration was being given to launching a campaign to improve performance in November 2010. Members were interested to find out if this took place and the effect that it had. This information would be requested.

Jason Teal informed Members that it would be beneficial to discuss progress against red indicators at Commission meetings. Councillor Brian Bedwell asked Members to indicate if there were particular indicators they wished to focus on in advance of future performance discussions. This would enable the officer(s) concerned to be invited to attend the meeting and provide additional information.

CPAH06 - Facilitate a total annual provision of 80 new affordable housing units with 25% of this total as new units in rural areas

A reason given for this indicator turning red was the impact of the recession. This included developers making an economic viability case and having the requirement to contribute to affordable housing waived. Members voiced concerns on this point as developers could continue to make this case, potentially leading to further losses of affordable housing in future.

It was therefore agreed that a Planning officer would be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss this indicator in more detail.

CPHQ07a – Ensure that performance in relation to the speed in which planning applications were determined was maintained above the Government's targets

The section detailing the risks associated with new remedial actions was referred to. The risks described were not felt to relate to the remedial actions, but rather the risk of this indicator not being achieved. Nick Carter advised that this would be amended in future reports.

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It was advised that there were staff shortages in Planning and this was felt to contribute to the reduced performance levels. Therefore permission had been granted to recruit to some posts in the service and it was hoped that performance would improve when these positions had been filled.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Further information would be requested on indicator CPAH03.
- (2) Members, on receipt of future performance reports, would indicate if there were particular indicators they wished to focus on so that additional information could be provided.
- (3) A Planning officer would be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss indicator CPAH06 in more detail.
- (4) Information on the risks associated with new remedial actions would only relate to those actions in future reports and not risks from failing to achieve the indicator.

117. The Council's response to the severe weather of winter 2010/11

The Commission considered Terms of Reference and scope for a short review into the Council's response to the severe weather experienced during the winter of 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 10).

This item was felt to be a timely opportunity to assess the success of the Winter Plan and other initiatives throughout the current winter. There had been national press coverage of difficulties in some local authorities with waste collections, however this area was felt to be well managed in West Berkshire.

Members then raised some of the areas that needed to be covered as part of this review, as follows:

- Were grit levels adequate during the period of low temperatures in December 2010?
- Supply, positioning and replenishment of grit bins. Ways to avoid improper use of the grit needed to be discussed.
- Information on school closures and school related activity.
- Whether concerns of legal implications for individuals clearing their own footways etc were resolved.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference would be approved and the review would take place at the Commission's next meeting.

118. School Academies

The Commission considered Terms of Reference and scope for a review into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority (Agenda Item 11).

The Commission agreed that this piece of work should be conducted by the Stronger Communities Select Committee. Councillor Irene Neill, Chairman of the Select Committee, advised that the approach to this work would be fully confirmed at the next meeting on 7 February 2010. This was likely to take the form of a task group consisting of some or all of the Select Committee Members. In addition, the Terms of Reference had been shared with the Head of Education who felt the points raised could be

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responded to, but some concern had been expressed that allocating officer time to this work would be difficult in the short term due to other pressures on staff.

It was suggested that the Headteacher of Kennet School be invited to participate as consideration was being given by Kennet to applying for Academy status.

Members felt that consideration needed to be given by schools to the services they would need to purchase from the Council should they become Academies and the cost of these. This was an area of discussion for the Select Committee.

There were some concerns raised about the length of time taken between a task group agreeing its report and that report being considered by the Executive. Councillor Neill was hopeful that a report would be presented to the Commission in the not too distant future. This would be helped by the fact that the task group would essentially be the Select Committee and this would remove a step in the approval process.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference would be approved and that the Stronger Communities Select Committee would conduct the review.

119. Greener Select Committee

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 12) on the work of the Greener Select Committee.

Members raised the following points from within the minutes:

Fly tipping

- The different ways in which fly tipping was recorded by the Council and Sovereign Housing were noted. Sovereign were reporting an increase, but this was felt to be due to their recording of bulky waste items left on an individual's own property. The Council did not consider this to be fly tipping and was therefore not recorded. The Council's data showed no noticeable change in the level of fly tipping since the introduction of the new waste management contract.
- The Select Committee was asked to help seek a resolution on the recording of data between the Council and Sovereign. It was suggested that the position of the Environment Agency should be considered as part of this.
- Some concern was then raised that the Council ceasing to offer free bulky waste collections was increasing Sovereign's figures and more importantly having a detrimental impact on communities. It was then pointed out that if a public health issue was caused by this issue then it would be the responsibility of Sovereign to resolve the matter where they were the landlord.

Other issues

- Paint pots were not accepted by recycling centres and there was some suggestion that larger supermarkets/retail outlets should be contacted to see if something could be arranged. It was agreed that the Select Committee should be asked to investigate this further.
- While detailed discussions were held on both the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and renewable energy, it was felt that some resolutions/potential recommendations had not been included. It was agreed that the Select Committee would be asked to give consideration to this.
- An arrangement was to be made for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee to scope a potential review into planning policy and waste management.

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- As Councillor Emma Webster had sent her apologies to this meeting it was difficult to receive a detailed update on the work of the Select Committee. It was therefore agreed that, where possible, substitutes should be from the appropriate Select Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Select Committee should undertake further activity as described on fly tipping, recycling of paint pots, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and renewable energy.
- (2) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee should scope a potential review into planning policy and waste management.
- (3) Where possible, substitutes for Commission meetings should be from the appropriate Select Committee.

120. Healthier Select Committee

(Councillor David Rendel declared a personal interest in Agenda item 13 by virtue of the fact that his wife was a GP in West Berkshire. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 13) on the work of the Healthier Select Committee.

A confidential item had been scheduled for the next meeting of the Select Committee on 20 January 2011 to receive a briefing on the new working arrangements for the Strategic Health Authority and NHS Berkshire West.

RESOLVED that the update would be noted.

121. Resource Management Select Committee

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 14) on the work of the Resource Management Select Committee.

A number of actions and resolutions had been agreed at the last meeting following discussion on the Corporate Property Asset Management Plan (AMP). One of these was for a review of the Highways AMP to be added to the Select Committee's work programme. Members felt that an important issue to be resolved as part of this work related to where the responsibility lay for grass verges, as there was felt to be some uncertainty between Countryside and Highways. A contributing factor to this issue was that while ownership was with Highways, the contract was managed by Countryside. There was also a need to establish who owned the land concerned to help identify responsibility.

In addition, monthly and quarterly budget reports would detail below the line budget information as well as Directorate reports. This followed a resolution of the Select Committee.

RESOLVED that the update would be noted.

122. Safer Select Committee

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 15) on the work of the Safer Select Committee.

The last meeting was held on 6 December 2010 where the following items were discussed:

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- The Council's Gating Orders protocol was reviewed and was found to be adequately robust.
- Discussions on community empowerment were deferred pending receipt of national legislation and guidance.
- The item on the Integrated Offender Management Scheme was also deferred pending further work on this by the Safer Communities Partnership. Nick Carter, Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership, informed Members that this scheme was looking at ways to avoid reoffending among people recently released from prison.
- The policy in place for designing out crime from new developments was felt to be adequate. This was evidenced at a recent Planning Committee when insufficient detail on this point led to this being a reason for refusing an application.
- No new items were suggested for the work programme at this time. Although a suggestion was made that the new proposals of the Secretary of State for the Home Department could be considered at some stage.

RESOLVED that the update would be noted and consideration given to future agenda items.

123. Stronger Communities Select Committee

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 16) on the work of the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

The next meeting of the Select Committee was scheduled for 7 February 2011. Items for the agenda were as follows:

- School admissions
- School Academies
- Receipt of the Common Housing Register Task Group report.
- Receipt of reports from the Standards and Effectiveness Panel. This was in line with a recommendation agreed as part of the scrutiny review into school standards. It was not believed that the Government intended to reduce the current inspection regime of schools.

RESOLVED that the update would be noted.

124. West Berkshire Forward Plan - February - May 2011

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 17) for the period covering February to May 2011.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan would be noted.

125. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and Select Committee Work Programme

The Commission considered its work programme and that of the Select Committees for the remainder of 2010/11 (Agenda Item 18).

The items added to the work programme on the severe winter weather of 2010/11 and school academies were suggested by Councillor Jeff Brooks. A third item was proposed which related to the way in which the Council conducted its business. This was felt to pre-empt the work of the Executive and officers on the Committee structure post the local

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elections and was therefore not added to the work programme. It was asked that the comments made at this meeting on timeliness of reporting be fed into these discussions. It was noted that the future Committee structure could be dependent on Government guidance and the content of the Localism Bill.

Concerns were raised with the time taken for the review into the accessibility of public transport. This was being conducted by a joint task group formed by the Greener and Stronger Communities Select Committees. This would be progressed with the appropriate officer.

RESOLVED that the work programme would be noted and progress be chased on the task group review into the accessibility of public transport.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.30pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Title of Report:	The Council's response to the severe weather of winter 2010/11
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To review the Council's response to the severe weather experienced during the winter of 2010/11.

Recommended Action: To note the response and consider recommendations for improvement, if appropriate.

Key background documentation: OSMC report dated 02/11/10, the purpose of which was to:

1. Inform of the response to the Commission's recommendations following its review into the severe winter weather of 2009/10.
2. Provide an update on the activity undertaken since the review.
3. To highlight the preparations in place for the coming winter.

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Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission approved terms of reference for a review into the Council's response to the severe weather of the winter of 2010/11, and specifically to:

- (1) compare and contrast the experience of the 2010/11 winter with previous severe winter weather events;
- (2) assess the effectiveness of the recommendations arising from the previous OSMC review;
- (3) identify further action for possible improvements; and
- (4) report to the Executive with recommendations for further development.

2. Previous recommendations

2.1 The recommendations formed by the OSMC following the review of the 2009/10 winter weather were as follows:

- (1) The Civil Contingencies Manager should establish a policy and process to allow drivers of 4x4 vehicles to assist the Council when required in severe weather. Drivers of these vehicles might be private individuals, taxi operators or farmers. The mechanism should cover:
 - The arrangements to safeguard vulnerable people.
 - How help can be offered.
 - How help can be requested.
- (2) The Civil Contingencies Manager should formulate a contingency plan specifically to respond to severe weather.
- (3) The Civil Contingencies Manager should strongly encourage Parish and Town Councils to develop their own severe weather emergency plans.
- (4) The Civil Contingencies Manager should articulate, develop and communicate the valuable community engagement role for district and town/parish councillors. If necessary training for those involved should be given.
- (5) Working with the Head of Legal and Electoral Services, the Civil Contingencies Manager should seek clarification on the insurance and other legal liability of individuals and businesses clearing snow from their property or public areas. If a real risk of liability exists then steps should be taken through the national infrastructure to obtain its removal. If no risk exists then a plan to communicate this to the public should be developed and delivered.
- (6) Working with her counterparts in other organisations, the Civil Contingencies Manager should establish a mechanism for the pooling of resources, such as vehicles or staff, available to local organisations

during severe weather. The arrangements should include procedures for the notification of both supply and demand to be made.

- (7) The Head of Highways and Transport should review the Winter Service Plan, specifically examining:
- The policy in place for the gritting of frequently used pavements, cycle ways and car parks.
 - The amount, type and location of roads to be treated, when and how. Factors to be taken into consideration might include gradient and access to key public services.
 - The appropriateness of contingency plans in place.
- When revised, Ward Members, Parish and Town Councils, other public sector service providers and private sector transport companies should be consulted and encouraged to give their views.
- (8) The Head of Highways and Transport should increase the Council's salt storage to 4,000-5,000 tonnes.
- (9) The Head of Highways and Transport should review the Council's grit bin policy. Consideration should be given to the views of Ward Members and Parish and Town Councils. The policy should address the number, size and location of the salt bins, the arrangements for replenishment and acceptable use of them by the public. The monitoring by Parish and Town Councils of the state and use of bins should also be considered.
- (10) The Head of Highways and Transport should develop and implement an appropriate communication strategy to advise members of the public on the use of salt provided in bins by the Council. Measures might include use of the website and labelling on the bins.
- (11) The Head of Highways and Transport should establish a mechanism to allow the engagement of local farmers to provide assistance in the clearance of roads, particularly in rural environments.
- (12) Working with the Civil Contingencies Manager, the Head of Highways and Transport should establish procedures to allow the redirection of staff from their normal duties to snow clearance in the event of severe winter weather. Staff should be drawn from waste collection teams and assistance may be available externally from Neighbourhood Wardens, the fire service and elsewhere.
- (13) The Head of Adult Social Care should establish a mechanism to allow the authority to provide assistance to vulnerable people not already in receipt of help from the Council. This might include:
- Identifying those in need, for example through Parish and Town Councils or GPs.
 - Advising them how to request help and when.
 - Identifying and recording the details of those in local communities able and willing to provide assistance.

- The measures that should be taken to ensure the safety of the vulnerable is maintained.

- (14) Building on the good work undertaken during the severe weather, the Head of Adult Social Care should examine the opportunities for further provision of mutual aid between the authority and private sector social care providers. A protocol governing the arrangements should be agreed and put in place.
- (15) The Head of Education should share with all schools the results of the consultation undertaken to identify what worked well in schools and what lessons could be learnt.
- (16) The Head of Education should examine the opportunities for schools to adopt a mutual aid scheme that would allow members of staff who are unable to reach their usual place of work in severe weather to report to their nearest school. Advice on the practical application of the scheme might be obtained from Thames Valley Police.
- (17) The Head of Education should encourage all schools to adopt a severe weather plan. The plans might include:
- A resource plan.
 - Mutual aid.
 - Communications with the public
- (18) The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission should write to the Secretary of State for Health to request that any financial penalties applied to the South Central Ambulance Service in respect of their failure to meet attendance time targets arising from the severe weather be dropped.
- (19) In order to avert gridlock caused by many organisations simultaneously sending home their employees early in the event of severe weather, Thames Valley Police should develop and when necessary implement procedures to ensure that the numbers of vehicles entering the road network are appropriately controlled.

2.2 The Commission's recommendations and the response to them were noted by the Executive and supported in their completion. Further detail was shared with the Commission at its meeting on 2 November 2010. This included the response from Thames Valley Police to recommendation 19. A response has since been received from the Department of Health to recommendation 18, this is attached at Appendix A for the Commission's information.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Council's Civil Contingencies Manager and Heads of Service, including Education, Highways & Transport and Property & Public Protection have been invited to the meeting to give evidence and answer questions, as have relevant Portfolio Holders.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Commission notes the response and considers recommendations for improvement, if appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A – Response from the Department of Health to recommendation 18.

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From Simon Burns MP
Minister of State for Health

POLICY AND COMMUNICATION



Your Ref: SC

25 OCT 2010

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 4850

PO00000545490

WEL...
Councillor Brian Bedwell
Policy and Communication
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

21 OCT 2010

Dear Cllr. Bedwell

Thank you for your letter of 20 September to Andrew Lansley about response times of the South Central Ambulance Service. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I note the concerns you raise on behalf of the SCAS about the impact of last winter's severe weather on the Ambulance Trust's performance. The ambulance contract was agreed by the NHS management board and is applicable to all service providers.

We appreciate that from time to time there will be adverse weather events that will hinder performance. As a result, we expect providers delivering healthcare to have sufficiently robust plans and contingencies in place to cope with the worst conditions.

The ambulance service contracts are between local commissioning primary care trusts (PCTs) and the ambulance providers. The framework for the contract contains those provisions that are fixed national priorities and locally agreed requirements. There are provisions in the contract that allow for extreme events to be taken into account and this is for the local provider and commissioner to discuss.

The ambulance performance times are to be seen as a whole year performance, so it would be expected that the provider will try to over-perform when

conditions are good to allow for performance slippage when the weather or another event adversely affects the service.

Whilst I therefore appreciate SCAS' concerns, the Trust did sign up to the targets set out in the contract. It would therefore not be appropriate for me to intervene in this issue, or to support the Trust's application. However, I am aware that the Care Quality Commission has upheld the Trust's application for extenuating circumstances and has written to South Central Strategic Health Authority (SHA) to that effect. You may therefore wish to contact the SHA directly for further information.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Burns', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

SIMON BURNS

Agenda Item 5.

Title of Report:	Actions from previous minutes
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.

Recommended Action: To note the update.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 9420196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the last Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission further information was requested following some of the discussions held. This report provides Members with the additional information requested.

2. Quarter 2 budget report

- 2.1 This report was considered by the Resource Management Select Committee (RMSC) at its meeting on 14 December 2010. This was received prior to Executive approval as an exception. It was queried by the Commission whether this report would be formally approved by the Executive.
- 2.2 It was agreed by the Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and Head of Finance that as the Quarter 2 budget report was made public at the RMSC it did not need to be presented to the Executive. It was agreed at the RMSC in January that the Head of Finance would forward any relevant comments made by the RMSC to the Executive when the Quarter 3 report is discussed.

3. Performance Indicator – Award 85 new grant loans to bring properties up to a safe and decent standard

- 3.1 The exception report discussed at the previous meeting referred to a campaign being launched in November 2010 in an attempt to improve performance against this indicator. Members asked for an update.
- 3.2 The campaign was launched at the end of January 2011, this was later than planned due to capacity issues. It is hoped that the results of the campaign will begin to be visible by the end of the fourth quarter, but interest has already been expressed by Parish Councils and voluntary organisations who wish to promote it. Work on distributing the publicity is still in progress, but that should be complete by the end of February.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Title of Report:	Performance Indicator – affordable housing units
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To explore factors causing this indicator to be reported as red, including the impact of the recession, and the remedial action being taken.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 9420196
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The performance indicator to 'facilitate a total annual provision of 80 new affordable housing units with 25% of this total as new units in rural areas' was discussed at the last Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission. A reason given for this indicator turning red was the impact of the recession. This included developers making an economic viability case and having the requirement to contribute to affordable housing waived. Members were concerned that developers could continue to make this case, potentially leading to further losses of affordable housing in future.
- 1.2 It was resolved that a Planning officer would be invited to this meeting to discuss this in more detail. Gary Lugg, the Head of Planning and Countryside and Bryan Lyttle, Planning and Transportation Policy Manager will be in attendance at the meeting and have provided the following information.

2. Background

- 2.1 CPAH06 seeks to facilitate a total annual provision of 80 new affordable housing units with 25% of this total being provided in rural areas.
- 2.2 The quarter two performance report was reported as being Red as Officers in the Housing Department considered that the target would not be met by year end due to:
- delivery of housing being severely impacted by the recession,
 - delays in the implementation of extant permissions, and
 - the loss of affordable housing contributions due to economic viability.
- 2.3 Members have expressed concerns that developers can continue to claim viability issues in the future to further reduce the provision of affordable housing within the district.

3. Past Delivery

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010 included a target to facilitate the provision of 130 units each year. This was revised in 2008 to reflect the concern that the then difficult economic conditions might continue, consequently when the Council was negotiating National Indicator 155 it agreed with the Government Office that an annual target of 80 units per annum was more realistic.
- 3.2 Table 1 below shows the delivery of affordable housing and total housing provision in West Berkshire since the 1st April 2005.

	Affordable Housing			All Housing	New Affordable Housing as % of New Total Housing
	Target	Achieved	Average	Completions	
2005/06	130	142	142	1,071	13%
2006/07	130	289	215	1,064	27%

	Affordable Housing			All Housing	New Affordable Housing as % of New Total Housing
2007/08	130	135	189	683	20%
2008/09	130	231	199	528	44%
2009/10	130	75	174	246	30%
2007/08	130	135	135	683	20%
2008/09	180	231	183	528	44%
2009/10	80	75	147	246	30%

Source: West Berkshire Annual Monitoring Report 2010, December 2010

- 3.3 The importance of the above table is that it shows that housing has a cyclical nature with peaks and troughs and that the delivery of affordable housing will also be subject to the same cycle.
- 3.4 In addition it is important to note that currently the Council seeks the provision of a range of type and tenure of affordable housing units on sites not allocated through the local plan process. It is suggested “as a starting point” applicants should consider the provision of at least 30%. Furthermore it should be noted that this only applies to housing developments of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares or more.

4. Future Planning Policy on Affordable Housing

- 4.1 The West Berkshire Submission Core Strategy which is currently being examined by an Independent Inspector includes a new policy on affordable housing provision, Policy CS7.
- 4.2 This policy which has been examined with only minor changes being made for clarification states:

“Subject to the economics of provision, the following levels of affordable housing provision will be sought by negotiation:-

On development sites of 15 dwellings or more (or 0.5 hectares or more) 30% provision will be sought on previously developed land, and 40% on Greenfield land;

*On development sites of less than 15 dwellings a sliding scale approach will be used to calculate affordable housing provision, as follows:-
30% provision on sites of 10 – 14 dwellings; and
20% provision on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings.*

Proposed provision below the levels set out above should be fully justified by the applicant through clear evidence set out in a viability assessment (using an agreed tool kit) which will be used to help inform the negotiated process”. (extract only)

- 4.3 The supporting text of the policy also states: “The Council recognises that in some circumstances there may be exceptional costs of development which need to be acknowledged and that the policy may represent the starting point for negotiation. The council will carefully scrutinise proposals which appear to fall artificially below the required thresholds which may indicate a possible attempt to avoid making the appropriate contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing. Such proposals

are likely to be refused planning permission where they fail to make efficient use of land". (para 5.20)

5. Development Control Process

National

- 5.1 PPS 4 states the Governments overarching objective is sustainable economic growth and the premise of the planning system is a general presumption in favour of development unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In such circumstances it may be possible to make acceptable development proposals which might otherwise be unacceptable, through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations (S106).
- 5.2 Circular 05/2005 "Planning Obligations" provides the guidance to authorities on this issue and states that "the use of planning obligations must be governed by the fundamental principle that planning permission may not be bought or sold. It is therefore not legitimate for unacceptable development to be permitted because of benefits or inducements offered by a developer which are not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms". (Annex B paragraph 6)
- 5.3 The circular goes on to say "planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision or secure contributions to the achievement of wider planning objectives that are not necessary to allow consent to be given for a particular development.
- 5.4 Therefore any developer has the right to challenge the level of obligations they are being asked to pay and the Council has a duty to consider that request.

West Berkshire

- 5.5 When a developer says that the level of contributions being sought means that the development proposal is not viable the case officer will ask for "proof of non viability". If, it is agreed that the non-viability case is proven and the development is acceptable in all other planning aspects then this issue will need to be resolved.
- 5.6 The top three S106 contributions sought are always: Affordable Housing, Education, and Highways. However, highway contributions are often linked to safety issues and therefore are excluded from any non contribution as to exclude them would result in permitting an unsafe development.
- 5.7 The case officer will need to balance the difference in contributions sought by the Council with the amount of contribution the development can provide. If the difference is not very large then depending on site characteristics and scale of development the contribution for libraries or public open space might be removed. If however the scale of difference is quite wide then the officer will be forced to look at the larger contributors or an amalgamation of all the other contributions.
- 5.8 The proposed resolution to the differences in viability will be included in the report to committee or delegated report (Signed off by Team Leader, Development Control Manager in consultation with legal).
- 5.9 If members disagree with the officers' report then they have the ability to amend the decision at planning committee.

5.10 Since 2009, no application for residential development which met the threshold outlined above for affordable housing contributions has been approved without an affordable housing contribution.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

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Agenda Item 10.

Title of Report:	Proposal for a review – CCTV
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To allow Members to consider a proposal for a review into the recent transfer of the West Berkshire Council CCTV control room to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Recommended Action: To determine whether to conduct the review and, if so, agree the proposed Terms of Reference.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
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Contact Officer Details	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Councillor Roger Hunneman has requested that an urgent review of the project to transfer the Council's CCTV system to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) be undertaken. He would like to have the Three Towns CCTV project subject to examination at the same time as he states that has also caused concern.
- 1.2 This report outlines proposed Terms of Reference and presents a suggested methodology.

2. Proposed Terms of Reference

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission conducts a review into the project to transfer the Council's CCTV system to RBWM, and specifically to examine:
- (1) the project plan
 - (2) the way procurement was handled
 - (3) the public communications plan
 - (4) what level of uptime was expected/planned for during transition
 - (5) whether the Council's standard project methodology was used for the project.
- 2.2 On completion, the Commission will report to the Executive with recommendations.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 It is proposed that the review is carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission either through examination at a scheduled meeting or by the establishment of a task group.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Commission considers the acceptance of the CCTV transfer project for review and, if so, agrees the Terms of Reference.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Title of Report:	Scrutiny review into the Council's Common Housing Register
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To outline to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission the draft recommendations arising from a task group review into the operation of the Council's Common Housing Register.

Recommended Action: To agree the recommendations for the consideration of the Executive.

Key background documentation: Common Housing Register report to the Stronger Communities Select Committee on 8 July 2010 and the minutes from that meeting.

Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman	
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Contact Officer Details	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) held on 26 January 2010 an item was added to the work programme of the Stronger Communities Select Committee (SCSC) to review the operation of the Common Housing Register (CHR).
- 1.2 At that time an audit of the CHR was already scheduled and therefore the scrutiny work was delayed until the completion of the audit. The audit was conducted in March 2010 and the terms of reference for the audit, the audit report and the resultant action plan were presented to the Stronger Communities Select Committee at its meeting on 8 July 2010.
- 1.3 It was noted at that meeting that the audit found the controls within the systems and procedures reviewed were satisfactory. Areas of concern were being addressed through the action plan.
- 1.4 However, Members of the SCSC resolved to arrange a time limited task group to investigate the communication undertaken with residents on the CHR, particularly the more vulnerable.
- 1.5 This report provides the rationale for the review, sets out how it was conducted, outlines the review's findings and the resultant recommendations.

2. Rationale for the review

- 2.1 The task group agreed that Members should develop a greater understanding of the review process, particularly:
 - (1) Communication undertaken with residents on the CHR, especially the more vulnerable, as part of annual reviews and on an ongoing basis.
 - (2) Data protection restrictions on whether Ward Members could access data to offer assistance in the review process and, if possible, the mechanisms for doing so.
- 2.2 It was agreed that the task group would report to the OSMC with draft recommendations for onward submission to the Executive.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Members of the cross-party task group were Councillors Mollie Lock, Irene Neill and Ieuan Tuck. Councillor Neill, as Chairman of the SCSC, was elected as Chairman of the task group.
- 3.2 Councillors David Rendel (who requested this item be reviewed) and Tony Vickers (Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing) also participated in the review meetings.

4. Review methodology

- 4.1 The task group worked with officers from the Housing and Performance, Policy and Communication, and ICT service areas. Meetings were held as outlined in the table below:

Srl	Meeting date	Meeting focus
01	Monday 27 September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of activity in response to the Internal Audit Action Plan• Clarification of the review rationale• Workings of the CHR
02	Friday 5 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information sharing, including Data Protection restrictions and IT capability
03	Tuesday 14 December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation of findings• Formulation of draft recommendations

- 4.2 The minutes from the meetings of 27 September 2010 and 5 November 2010 are shown at Appendices A and B.

5. Acknowledgements and thanks

- 5.1 The Chairman and Members of the task group would like to acknowledge and thank all those who supported and gave evidence to the review.

6. Background

- 6.1 Prior to 2006, West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Sovereign Housing operated their own housing lists. These were brought together under one list into a CHR in 2006.
- 6.2 The CHR lists people who want a home from one of the housing associations in West Berkshire. It is managed by the Housing Operations Team at WBC. In order to access social housing and shared ownership properties, residents need to be on the CHR.
- 6.3 WBC does not own any properties available through the CHR. The properties available belong to housing associations, who are partner organisations of WBC.
- 6.4 In West Berkshire, a Choice Based Lettings system is used, for the processing of applications, called Homechoice West Berkshire. This was introduced in June 2007 and is managed by WBC. This system allows residents on the CHR to see all the properties that are available each week and submit bids for properties that they wish to be considered for.
- 6.5 Annual reviews are required to ensure that applications are up to date and correct details are held.

7. Findings of the review

- 7.1 The Task Group's findings are outlined below:

- (1) A comprehensive review of the CHR was undertaken in April 2009. This was the first time a review had been conducted since 2006 and

led to approximately 1300 people being removed from the CHR. Reviews involve sending people on the CHR a letter asking if they wish to remain on the CHR. The letter does advise that failure to respond will result in removal from the CHR. The only follow up with non respondents is via one further letter informing them of their removal and that they have the right to ask for a review.

- (2) Since April 2009 cases are now able to be reviewed as part of a monthly rolling programme which is based on the annual date of a resident's registration. The approximate number removed on an annual basis is 800 per year (approximately 20% of those on the CHR).
- (3) Those removed from the CHR can be reinstated if they request to do so and if they are eligible, with their point allocation re-established. No complaints have been received from residents as a result of their removal from the CHR.
- (4) An action identified as part of the audit was to upgrade Locata, the CHR database. This will enable review activity to be undertaken more efficiently, an up to date record of contact details to be kept and letters to be automatically generated.
- (5) People are advised of their point allocation but the onus is on them to monitor their progress and submit bids for housing. However, bidding is encouraged and individuals do not need to be at the top of the CHR in order to bid.
- (6) The circumstances of applicants identified as vulnerable but not bidding regularly were reviewed in January 2010. This included identifying those who had sufficient priority to be successful if they were bidding. These applicants, and new applicants who state they require assistance in bidding and who have sufficient priority to bid successfully, are contacted and offered support. However, approximately 50% of those identified as vulnerable are not submitting bids, but many of these are not considered high priority cases.
- (7) Resource limitations mean it is difficult for the activities described above to be extended. For example, making additional contact to assess whether a person, who did not respond to a review letter, wished to remain on the CHR.
- (8) Data protection does restrict the use of personal information collected for one purpose being used for another within WBC. However, data can be legally shared between Housing and elected Members, but certain conditions need to be met. Included in this is a need for Members to be registered with the Information Commissioner in order to process data as WBC's registration does not cover Members in their constituency role. If data is shared then an audit trail is required to evidence that it has been lawfully done.
- (9) Investigations are needed to assess whether the current version of Locata allows data to be filtered by Ward and shared with Ward

Members. If this is found to be not possible then an upgrade of the Locata system may allow this. This would enable Ward Members to assist with the review process by establishing if the individual was still at the recorded address and if they still required housing. If this proves to be possible, the task group feel that all Members should participate as part of their role in assisting and acting on behalf of their constituents. An upgrade is likely to have a cost implication.

- (10) The Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) not only holds the postal address of all properties in West Berkshire, but also has ward and parish information for each. This information is not restricted by data protection. If Locata does not hold or is unable to extract ward information, a manual data matching exercise with the LLPG will allow the relevant ward information to be added to the extract and the data to then be utilised by Ward Members in assisting with the review process described in finding 9.
- (11) There was felt to be potential to explore the wider issue that some databases are not compliant with the LLPG. As this was out of the scope of the review it was agreed that this subject would be forwarded to the Resource Management Select Committee for consideration.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In developing a greater understanding of the review process undertaken with those on the CHR, it was understood that the level of resource limits the amount of additional activity that can be undertaken. However, Members of the task group feel that there is room for some fine tuning and this is outlined in recommendations 1 and 2.
- 8.2 Members were eager to establish if they could assist with this work and, as data protection does allow data to be shared subject to conditions, it is hoped that arrangements can be made to allow this to happen to enable Ward Members to participate. This is captured in recommendations 5 and 6.
- 8.3 Members were conscious of the resource pressures that could potentially be caused by implementing recommendations 5 and 6 and therefore feel it would be sensible for proposed initiatives to be accurately investigated and costed by the service areas concerned, and the impact on resources assessed to help inform a decision.

9. Suggested actions for the Executive

- 9.1 The suggested actions (recommendations) for the Executive are outlined below.
 - (1) To ensure that people are not wrongly removed from the CHR, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager should consider amendments to the review process including changes to the letter/follow up letters, an improved form and provision of a pre paid envelope. An amendment to the letters should include notification that data will be shared with their Ward Member(s) (in line with recommendation 5).

- (2) The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager should examine whether the support offered to vulnerable people on the CHR is adequate and effective.
- (3) The Head of Policy and Communication should recommended to elected Members, post the May 2011 local elections, that they register with the Information Commissioner in order to process data as WBC's registration does not cover Members in their constituency role.
- (4) The Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager should arrange for data protection training/a briefing to be held for Members, post the May 2011 local elections, to help raise awareness.
- (5) The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager should arrange for Ward data to be included on Locata which can then be shared with Ward Members to allow them to assist in the review process, possibly through a pilot project in the first instance. As part of this, Ward Members will need to be briefed on the process for this activity.
- (6) The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager should arrange for Locata to be upgraded to allow data to be filtered by Ward, if investigations find that the current version of Locata does not allow for this.

10. Recommendation for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission agree the suggestions outlined in section 9 for the Executive's consideration.

Appendices

Appendix A – Minutes of the task group meeting of 27 September 2010

Appendix B – Minutes of the task group meeting of 5 November 2010

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE TASK GROUP

COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

MINUTES

27 September 2010

Present: Councillor Irene Neill (Chairman), Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Ieuan Tuck, Councillor David Rendel, Councillor Tony Vickers, Mel Brain (Housing Strategy and Operations Manager), Elizabeth Wallington (Housing Register Officer), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer)

Apologies: None

1. Review of SCSC minutes of 8 July

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2010 were approved as a true and correct record.

2. Review of activity in response to the Internal Audit Action Plan

It was noted that the actions recommended in the Internal Audit Action Plan had been agreed by Housing Officers.

3. Workings of the Common Housing Register (CHR)

Councillor David Rendel outlined the reasons behind his request that the item be scrutinised:

- He was made aware at a meeting of the Executive that the number of residents on the CHR had fallen following a comprehensive review. The review involved an exercise whereby people on the CHR were sent a letter asking if they wished to remain on the CHR.
- Approximately 1300 people had been removed from the CHR as a result, but there was a concern that some people who did not respond might not have realised the importance of the letter and be removed against their wishes or without their knowledge. Specific examples of this could not be identified due to data protection.
- The methods for following up these letters, when resources allowed, included a reminder sent to those already identified as vulnerable and those who had been in contact within the last six months. A single telephone call could be made to non respondents, but following these up in the event of no response was a resource pressure. These methods were not felt to be fully satisfactory, but it was understood that this was all the existing resource allowed for.

Members shared concerns regarding the communication sent to residents as part of this review. This could mean that the letters were not responded to and it was felt that this activity should be reviewed to ensure that people were not wrongly

removed and amendments considered to the letter as part of this to encourage more responses, as well as provision of a pre paid envelope and an improved form. There were particular concerns for the more vulnerable people on the CHR and those who could be away from home for a period of time, i.e. in hospital.

In response to the concerns raised, Mel Brain made the following points:

- The concerns were accepted, but it was difficult to find an alternative method to ensure contact was made. Resource implications meant it was not possible for Housing Officers to attend peoples' homes.
- However, cases were now reviewed on an annual basis as the backlog of applications had been removed. Phone calls were made in advance of letters being sent as part of this process.

At this stage Elizabeth Wallington provided the following points by way of an operational overview:

- Her first role, when commencing her post in June 2008, was to reduce the backlog of applications received. This was brought to a manageable level within three months and applications were turned around within a 10 day period.
- The comprehensive review referred to was undertaken in April 2009. This was a large task for the team of three Officers as the CHR had not previously been reviewed since 2006. This resource limitation contributed to the decision to remove non respondents to the letter if there was no evidence to suggest they were vulnerable. Follow up was undertaken for those individuals believed to be vulnerable if resources allowed. She would be willing to consider amendments to the letter.
- Letters were also sent to residents if the decision was taken to remove them from the CHR.
- Since the workload had been brought up to date, it was possible to increase the level of engagement with vulnerable people on the CHR when resources allowed. This could include the allowance of time to follow up review letters with telephone calls etc, as was agreed following the Audit. Those removed from the CHR could be reinstated if they requested to do so and if they were eligible.
- Reviews were no longer conducted as a one off annual task, rather this was conducted on a monthly programme based on the date of a resident's registration. This kept the workload more manageable.
- There was agreement following the Audit to upgrade the Locata system which enabled review activity to be carried out more efficiently. This included keeping an up to date record of contact details and gave the ability for letters to be automatically generated.
- Very few complaints were received in relation to the workings of the CHR.

A suggestion to help with the review process was to establish if a resident had

moved by accessing the electoral register. Mel Brain pointed out that it was often the case that letters were returned in such an instance and it was the responsibility of the individual themselves to provide up to date information to Housing to help manage their application.

The sharing of information between services and organisations was another avenue which could be explored to improve on the data held, particularly on vulnerable residents. There was a view given that different databases would not link well to one another, but it was agreed that this issue would be covered at the next meeting. **Action: Stephen Chard to invite the relevant IT Officer for this discussion.**

The potential for Ward Members to assist with the review process was discussed. However, it was believed that data protection issues meant this was not possible, although Members felt they had a need to know in order to assist residents. It was agreed that the Information Management Officer would be invited to the next meeting to aid clarity on this matter and to understand whether it could be resolved. **Action: Stephen Chard.**

Discussion then turned to the support offered to vulnerable people. Clarity was sought on the information provided in paragraph 1.4 of Appendix C which related to the priority given/support offered to, and the lists held on, vulnerable people. **Action: Elizabeth Wallington to provide clarity on this point.**

Mel Brain advised that new people on the register were assessed to identify whether they required support and additional points could be awarded as part of this. They could then be added to the list of people identified as vulnerable who were offered support when making bids for housing. This list was reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Each Housing Officer held a small caseload of vulnerable people who they contacted on a weekly basis to discuss their situation, offer support etc.

Members acknowledged the assistance that was offered to vulnerable residents, but there were some views that this was limited and more should be done in ensuring that contact was made when necessary. An issue raised was the fact that it was difficult to be aware of all residents on the CHR who were vulnerable in some way.

A concern was raised that an individual could lose their right to bid if they were removed from the CHR. This was particularly concerning if they were not aware of their removal. Another issue raised was where an individual remained on the CHR, but was not aware when they reached the top of the list and therefore lost a housing opportunity or at the very least a delay was caused. Mel Brain confirmed that people were not contacted when they reached the top of the CHR and the onus was on them to bid for housing, but it was felt that those with an urgent need would monitor their progress and submit bids.

Elizabeth Wallington added that bidding was encouraged and individuals were not required to be at the top of the list to bid for housing as point requirements varied, although those with the highest number of points bidding for a suitable property would be successful. A number of bids could potentially be submitted for one available home, but overall a number on the CHR were not submitting bids.

There was a view among some Members that consideration should be given to informing an individual in the instance where they were top of the CHR and were not submitting bids.

Some specific scenarios were then raised by Members and in response Elizabeth Wallington made the following points:

- If two individuals held two separate properties and wished to live together then assistance would be offered to help them do so, they could then form a joint tenancy if they wished.
- Action could be taken in an instance where two properties were held, but only one regularly occupied by both parties. Both this and the above activity could potentially make a home available.
- If a couple separated and the tenancy was in one person's name, they would keep the tenancy. If it was jointly held then the tenancy would remain with, for example, the parent with the main responsibility for childcare, if applicable. Work would be undertaken with appropriate agencies to assist someone without a home as a result of such an occurrence.
- There was only one right of succession per social tenancy. I.e. a parent signing the property over to their child.
- Applications for sheltered housing for non West Berkshire residents would be considered on a case by case basis and would be dependent on vulnerability/need against West Berkshire residents.

4. Future meeting dates and activity

Stephen Chard agreed to arrange a further meeting, ideally prior to the next full meeting of the Select Committee on 21 October 2010.

This meeting would include giving attention to data protection issues and the potential to share information/access to databases.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE TASK GROUP

COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

MINUTES

5 November 2010

Present: Councillor Irene Neill (Chairman), Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Ieuan Tuck, Councillor David Rendel, Councillor Tony Vickers, Mel Brain (Housing Strategy and Operations Manager), Elizabeth Wallington (Housing Register Officer), David Lowe (Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager), Sue Broughton (Information Management Officer), Phil Parker (GIS Projects Analyst), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer)

Apologies: None

5. Minutes of 27 September

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2010 were approved as a true and correct record.

6. Information Sharing

At the last meeting, the task group was informed of the review process which involved individuals on the CHR being sent a letter asking if they wished to continue and removed if they did not reply. This was only followed up with non respondents by sending 1 further letter informing them of their removal. Elizabeth Wallington advised that additional contact would be made with people identified as vulnerable if capacity allowed. Members were concerned that some vulnerable people could be removed without their knowledge and therefore be disadvantaged.

Members acknowledged that it was difficult to be aware of the changing movements of single people on the CHR, but of more concern for Members was monitoring the whereabouts of families to ensure children were safeguarded and appropriately housed. Sue Broughton advised that the Children's Act did permit data to be shared in such circumstances. Elizabeth Wallington added that updates regarding housing could be provided by Children's Services, who had primary responsibility for safeguarding children. From a Housing perspective, checks were undertaken on those living within a home. A way of identifying if children were living within a home was, for example, receipt of child benefit.

The potential for data on the CHR to be filtered by Ward and shared with Ward Members to offer assistance to Housing Officers and local residents was also discussed last time, but it was felt that data protection restrictions meant this was not possible and there was agreement to explore this further.

The ability for different IT systems to link together to improve information sharing was also discussed last time.

These issues were then discussed in further detail at today's meeting.

Data protection did restrict the use of personal information collected for one purpose being used for another within West Berkshire Council (WBC), but this did not include address data contained on the Electoral Register (ER). However, those on the ER had the choice to opt out of having their information shared with the Council or sold to credit rating agencies. Approximately 60% opted out. The full list could only be accessed for particular enquiries, i.e. proof of life.

David Lowe advised that the ER, and the information contained within it, was covered by electoral legislation and not data protection. The ER was in fact not legally owned by the Council, this aspect of the ER Officer's role was technically outside of their duties as a Council employee.

For the specific purpose discussed, i.e. sharing of data between Housing and Elected Members, data could be legally shared but the legislation was very complex.

A list of the data protection principles, an extract of the notification from the Information Commissioner (IC) relating to property management, including for social housing, and conditions for the lawful processing of personal data were circulated to the group. The points raised within these papers needed consideration and David Lowe highlighted the following points in particular:

- Personal data should be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purpose, and should not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose. This was intended to help safeguard privacy.
- Personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully and should not be processed unless at least one of the conditions in Schedule two was met, and in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Scheduled three was also met. This meant that the data subject did not necessarily need to give their consent to the processing of their data as this was only one condition.
- If a complaint were to be received as a result of data being shared, then it would need to be proved that the Council had acted fairly and lawfully.
- The data processed for any purpose should not be kept for longer than was necessary for that purpose. The Council's 'Retention Schedule' advised that if the data was inactive, it should be destroyed after a set period. Precise timings were available within the Schedule.
- If data was shared then an audit trail was required to ensure that it was done in a lawful way.
- Both David Lowe and Sue Broughton offered to provide advice to Members in case of any doubt.
- In the instance where a Ward Member was to register a complaint on behalf of a constituent, confidential information could be shared in relation to that complaint as the Ward Member's contact made it clear that consent had been

given by the data subject.

- It was recommended that Members be registered with the IC to process data. The current cost was £35 per individual per year. The Council's registration did not cover Ward Members in their constituency role. Guidance had been sent to Members in this regard.

Officers advised and Members agreed that the conditions in Schedule two allowed data to be shared, even if consent had not been given by the data subject. Most particularly:

- The processing was necessary in order to protect the vital interests of the data subject.
- The processing was necessary for the exercise of any functions conferred on any person by or under any enactment.
- The processing was necessary for the exercise of any other functions of a public nature exercised in the public interest by any person.
- The processing was necessary for the purposes of legitimate interests pursued by the data controller or by the third party or parties to whom the data was disclosed, except where the processing was unwarranted in any particular case by reason of prejudice to the rights and freedoms or legitimate interests of the data subject.

The task group felt that it would be useful for data protection training/a briefing to be held post the May 2011 local elections to help raise awareness among Members.

The ways in which data could be shared in practice were then discussed, i.e. at what stage and at what level of data.

Elizabeth Wallington gave the view that assistance from Ward Members would be beneficial, but raised a concern that different approaches in different Wards could lead to challenge/complaints.

Members felt this would not be an issue as the only assistance that would be offered was to establish if the individual was at the recorded address, understand whether they wished to remain on the CHR, if their needs had changed etc. The information obtained would be forwarded to Housing. If implemented, Ward Members would need to be informed of this approach and they would need to decide the level at which they participated in this work. The task group felt that all Members should participate in assisting and acting on behalf of residents.

Elizabeth Wallington pointed out that the process for enabling this to happen could be an additional burden to the small team of staff who worked on the CHR. The team was already working at capacity. Copying final letters sent to those removed from the CHR to Members was not straightforward. Although it was suggested that a sentence could be added to this letter to advise that the data would be shared with their Ward Member, if this proved to be possible. Locata (the CHR database) would need to be revised to include Ward information and to allow it to be filtered and then shared with Ward Members. This would have a cost implication. If

Members were to contact the Housing Service directly, then help would be offered where possible with assisting a resident.

Phil Parker then advised that the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) held the information contained within the ER, which included road names and Wards, and allowed properties to be matched to their Ward without knowing an individual's name. Unfortunately, Locata was not linked to the LLPG and this was the case for all non Council maintained systems. However, the potential to add a tag to identify the Ward a person lived in could be investigated and, if so, the cost of doing so and the work required to populate it could be explored. **Action: Phil Parker/Elizabeth Wallington.**

If investigations proved it would be possible for Ward information to be included, then Councillor David Rendel offered to act as a pilot for his Ward (Thatcham North).

The number removed from the CHR was approximately 800 per year (20% of those on the CHR). The high number experienced in April 2009 was due to a full review not being conducted previously since 2006. However, Elizabeth Wallington pointed out that these removals had not caused a major issue and no complaints had been received. Any requests to rejoin the CHR after removal had been met and the individual's number of points re-established as this was kept on record.

Housing Officers did contact individuals on the CHR to make them aware of their point allocation when their application was initially accepted and each time the application was updated for some reason, but not to advise them to bid for properties as the requirement varied when bidding for alternative housing. If someone had been removed they would be unable to access their details and would make contact in that instance, this was not a frequent occurrence. The concern remained among some Members that a lack of awareness could still lead to a missed opportunity for housing and a loss of contact with the individual.

7. AOB

There was felt to be potential to explore the wider issue that some databases were not compliant with the LLPG. It was accepted that there would be upfront costs, but benefits and savings would be found at a later date. Phil Parker added that replacement systems would have to be procured for this to be achieved, incurring a further cost. **Action: Councillor David Rendel to suggest this be added to the work programme of the Resource Management Select Committee.**

Elizabeth Wallington circulated the information requested at the previous meeting. This covered:

- further information on annual reviews;
- support offered to those individuals identified as vulnerable;
- data on those individuals identified as vulnerable for a variety of reasons and the proportion of those who were bidding for housing. This showed that approximately 50% were not submitting bids, but many were not high priority cases. If capacity allowed then work could be undertaken to assess why these individuals were not submitting bids.

8. Future meeting dates and activity

It was agreed that the task group would meet once more to finalise the report, before presenting it to the Stronger Communities Select Committee for approval.

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Title of Report:	Greener Select Committee
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Select Committee.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Greener Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Emma Webster – Tel (0118) 9411676
E-mail Address:	ewebster@westberks.gov.uk
Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Cook
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519475
E-mail Address:	dcook@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on the work undertaken by the Greener Select Committee since the report made at the last OSMC meeting.

2. Progress made

2.1 At the meeting of Council on 31 January 2011 Members considered the Greener Select Committee's response to two petitions regarding renewable energy.

2.2 Members of Council requested that the Greener Select Committee hold a special meeting to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2010 relating to the renewable energy report to clarify the recommendations being proposed.

2.3 A special meeting of the Greener Select Committee was called by the Head of Policy and Communication and held on 16 February 2011.

2.4 The minutes of the Greener Select Committee held on 14 December 2010 were signed as a true and correct record.

2.5 As the minutes were signed as a true and correct record the renewable energy report would be considered by Council on 3 March 2011 as previously presented.

2.6 At the special meeting of the Greener Select Committee Members agreed that they could propose an amendment to the renewable energy report at Council.

2.7 It was proposed that an amendment could be made to recommendation 4 of the Council report to include community groups.

2.8 The proposed new recommendation would therefore read 'That the Council investigates introducing a loan scheme to assist schools *and community groups* undertaking renewable energy projects'. The Chairman and Vice Chairman indicated that they would be happy to propose and second the Amendment.

3. Update on OSMC minutes

3.1 As the Chairman of the Greener Select Committee had to give her apologies, the Chairman of OSMC requested that a reply be given to the comments raised at the meeting.

3.2 The following points are made to clarify the issues raised by OSMC with regards to the Greener Select Committees deliberations:

- (1) There had been no noticeable change in the level of fly tipping since the new waste management contract was introduced. The statistics showed that the previous year had seen a reduction in fly tipping.
- (2) Items left by the owner / occupant of a property on that property were not classed as fly tipping.

- (3) The Council recorded incidents of fly tipping whilst Sovereign Housing recorded the number of items dumped, this is why there was a difference in the level of fly tipping reported. Officers from both organisations were already discussing how incidents are reported.
- (4) Recycling centres did accept paint pots as long as the paint had been solidified. This could easily be done by adding sand or soil.

4. Discussion items scheduled for the next meeting

- 4.1 The next meeting of the Greener Select Committee is scheduled to take place on 8 March 2011.
- 4.2 The Committee will no longer be receiving an update on renewable energy due to the delay in Council resolving the recommendations of the renewable energy report.

5. Work Programme

- 5.1 The latest work programme for the Select Committee is contained within Appendix A of item 18 of this agenda.

Appendices

Minutes of the Special Greener Select Committee 16 February 2011 will be tabled at the meeting.

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Agenda Item 13.

Title of Report:	Healthier Select Committee
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Healthier Select Committee.

Recommended Action: To note for information.

Greener Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Geoff Findlay – Tel: (01635)871992
E-mail Address:	gfindlay@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Jo Naylor
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Healthier Select Committee met on 20 January 2011.
- 1.2 The meeting involved a general briefing on the wide ranging reforms to the NHS and gave details of the functions that would be transferred to the Local Authority.
- 1.3 Members were briefed on the latest information from the Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust in relation to maternity services and the electronic patient booking system, 'Choose and Book'.
- 1.4 Scrutiny of local health performance indicators was also completed.
- 1.5 Issues around social care pressures were explored as a Part 2 item on this agenda.

2. 7 April 2011 meeting

- 2.1 The meeting on 7 April will seek to conclude many items on the work programme. An update is due on delayed transfers of care (DTC) from the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the West Berkshire Community Hospital.
- 2.2 Members will also receive an update regarding deprivation and child poverty within West Berkshire and the statutory requirement to produce a Needs Assessment.

3. Work Programme

- 3.1 Several of the work programme items were reviewed and removed at the last meeting. These were; 'Choose and Book', Local Area Agreement (LAA) health targets and the review of social care eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 The latest work programme for the Select Committee is contained within Appendix A of Item 18 of this agenda.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft minutes of the Healthier Select Committee held on 20 January 2011

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

HEALTHIER SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Geoff Findlay (Chairman), Tony Linden, Gwen Mason, Andrew Rowles and Julian Swift-Hook (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present: Councillor Hilary Cole, Teresa Bell (Corporate Director, WBC Community Services), Beverley Searle (Director of Partnerships & Joint Commissioning, NHS Berkshire West), Jeremy Speed (Public Health Locality Lead, NHS Berkshire West), George Lawrence (Principal Environmental Health Officer) and Jo Naylor (Principal Policy Officer).

Councillor(s) Absent: Councillor Paul Hewer

PART I

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th October were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared a personal interest in all Agenda Items by virtue of the fact he is the Chairman of West Berkshire Mencap. Councillor Geoff Findlay declared a personal interest in all Agenda Items by virtue of the fact he was Governor of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. They both reported that, as their interests were personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matters.

26. Changes to the NHS Policy Landscape

Mrs Bev Searle (Director of Partnerships and Joint Commissioning, NHS Berkshire West) provided an overview of the complex changes taking place in the NHS (Agenda Item 4). She described how the Health and Social Care Bill 2011, published on 19th January 2011, would require further analysis to understand how the changes would be delivered.

Mrs Searle described how local GP consortia would work together to commission health care services in the future. At the moment four GP commissioning groups operated in the Berkshire West area and these seemed to be effectively functioning and served as a good foundation for future proposals.

She described how the public health function of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) would become a responsibility for the local authority. She drew Members attention to the consultation document "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" which gave a useful summary of how the functions would be split in the future.

Mrs Searle described the need for a good balance between local arrangements and effective working across boundaries. She also explained how the PCTs were merging to form PCT clusters to provide some resilience in the system whilst the NHS was under going these reforms. It was explained how staff departures did make maintaining statutory functions difficult at times

HEALTHIER SELECT COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2011 - MINUTES

Members enquired about the GP commissioning focus and the need for strong GP leads within West Berkshire. Members also described concerns about losing services e.g. sexual health clinics. Mrs Searle confirmed that there were no plans to change existing services at the moment but that there was a general focus on providing services in a community setting wherever possible, but this did not constitute a withdrawal of a service.

Concerns were expressed about the risk of losing core staff from within the PCTs. Mrs Searle explained there was a risk during such times of transition but that patient safety was still critical along with the monitoring of quality and meeting financial targets. The Strategic Health Authorities still maintained a role in ensuring that all statutory and non-statutory functions were maintained.

Mrs Teresa Bell (Corporate Director for Community Services) explained that in future Health and Well Being Boards would be established to monitor activity. This included locally responsive outcome measures and included the monitoring of performance. Work to establish the board would begin now with a target of them being in place by the end of 2011/12.

RESOLVED that the update regarding the changing NHS policy landscape be noted.

27. Health Performance Indicators

Mr Jeremy Speed (Public Health Locality Lead, NHS Berkshire West) presented an update report in relation to the health performance indicators for West Berkshire (Agenda Item 5).

He described the 3 main priorities for health as listed in the former Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. These were around circulatory diseases (NI 121), alcohol related hospital admission (NI 39) and obesity in primary school children in year 6 (NI 56). He explained how although the LAA was no longer in existence these public health issues remained key concerns.

Mr Speed described the significant reduction in people dying from cardiovascular disease and how numbers had more than halved in a 15 year period. This was attributable to advances in technology and public health interventions such as a reduction in smoking rates and adult obesity.

He described the cardiac rehabilitation programme for those who had a diagnosed heart condition. He also mentioned the exercise referral scheme "Activity for Health" which offered primary prevention to people at risk of diabetes or hypertension as well as the important links with the Council's Trading Standards Service to restrict young peoples' access to tobacco.

Mr Speed outlined the numbers of hospital admissions as a consequence of alcohol related harm. He described how there was an upward trajectory since 2002 and an LAA target had been set inline with this. The latest figures had shown a reduction in the anticipated number of cases.

Members felt it would have been helpful to have the data broken down by age to understand more about young people's drinking. Mrs Bev Searle confirmed that the admissions figures for young people in relation to alcohol related harm were low but it

HEALTHIER SELECT COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2011 - MINUTES

was possible that higher numbers of attendances at Accident & Emergency Departments might be seen.

Members raised the issue that there might be a correlation between changes to the alcohol licensing laws in 2003 and the increasing trend of alcohol related hospital admissions.

Mr Speed explained the early screenings for hazardous and harmful drinking through opportunistic interventions at GP surgeries and in other health settings. The numbers screened were significantly higher during Q1 and Q2 of 2010/11 than the previous figures for the whole of 2009/10. This was seen as a positive in terms of people being identified and treated sooner. This equally applied to Tier 2 alcohol services and where Turning Point, were reported as achieving good results locally.

The need for early intervention was identified several years ago and Members were pleased to see greater GP awareness and how this process had been better systematised and embedded.

Childhood obesity figures had changed little from 2005 to 2010. In order to achieve a more marked difference targeted interventions would be required with specific individuals and communities. The current interventions had a focus on encouraging fitness and healthy living as well as greater education for primary school children around cooking healthy meals.

Members discussed the branding issues of intervention programmes to avoid any stigma associated with being from a low income family.

Members also asked for reasons as to why the rates of obesity were static and whether this was a reflection that interventions had been unsuccessful or the lack of availability of places on schemes. Mr Speed responded by explaining how uptake of the schemes was low in the first few years but this had now improved.

Mrs Searle explained that childhood obesity rates might continue to increase in the next few years. She stressed that importance of childhood patterns in influencing adult behaviour. Starting interventions with very young children was necessary in order to see long-term change in the adult population.

Members welcomed the work underway at the Children's Centres to promote healthy eating with children from the age of 3 and their parents.

RESOLVED that the update on performance against health related targets in West Berkshire be noted.

28. Update from the Royal Berkshire Hospital on Maternity Services and 'Choose and Book'

Members received an update from the Royal Berkshire Hospital (Agenda Item 6) in relation to Maternity Services and 'Choose and Book'. This provided the latest position on two issues listed as part of the Select Committee's work programme.

Significant changes to the maternity services at the Royal Berkshire Hospital were being made to include a midwife led unit and a high dependency unit as part of the service.

HEALTHIER SELECT COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2011 - MINUTES

Members were surprised that the birth rate was now steady over the last two years, when previously the pressure on the service resulted in women being diverted to other hospitals. Members remained concerned about future incidents of diverting women to alternative hospitals. Other Members accepted that demand would fluctuate and the unit was unlikely to be able to operate and be financial viable with excess capacity.

Member discussed whether a midwife led service at the West Berkshire Community Hospital (WBCH) might be considered. Mrs Searle clarified that there were not any immediate plans for this. The new midwife unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital was provided alongside obstetricians, available for the more complicated deliveries, and this model provided the best option in relation to mother and baby safety.

Members view was that this issue was of significant concern to the community and that a progress update should be received in 12 months time.

The Chairman provided an update on the 'Choose and Book' online booking system for making appointments. He stressed the importance of password access to be able to enter the system and alter any bookings. The system gave patients a better understanding of appointment waiting times and comparisons of the quality of services. Technical issues in terms of online availability of the site appeared to be resolved.

RESOLVED that the 'Choose and Book' update be noted and that the maternity services progress report be received in 12 months time.

29. Work Programme

Members considered the Work Programme (Agenda Item 7) and discussed which items should remain on the work programme. Several items were altered or removed from the work programme, including LAA health performance indicators, review of the Council's eligibility criteria for accessing social care and the 'Choose and Book' online booking system.

It was agreed the issue of delayed transfers of care from hospital would remain on the work programme, maternity services would be considered in 12 months time and child poverty would be considered at the April meeting.

RESOLVED that the work programme be amended as agreed.

30. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the [Local Government \(Access to Information\)\(Variation\) Order 2006](#). [Rule 9.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.](#)

31. Community Services Update

Mrs Teresa Bell (Corporate Director) provided a verbal update to Members on this Council's Community Services function (Agenda Item 9). This covered the background to the current pressures on services provided by this Council and those at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the West Berkshire Community Hospital. The age profile and

HEALTHIER SELECT COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2011 - MINUTES

demographics of the West Berkshire population significantly contributed to the huge demand on services. Actions to ameliorate the problem were being put into effect.

RESOLVED that Members noted the update.

(The meeting commenced at 6.35pm and closed at 8.25pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Agenda Item 14.

Title of Report:	Resource Management Select Committee
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Select Committee.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Resource Management Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Jeff Brooks – Tel (01635) 47391
E-mail Address:	jbrooks@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee met on 25 January 2011 and the draft minutes are attached at Appendix A. A summary of the main discussions held are as follows:

Corporate Property Asset Management Plan (AMP)

- 1.2 The Committee were advised that detail on asset disposals would not be included in the AMP. Members felt that this information should be included where disposal of an asset was under consideration. This view has been forwarded to the Head of Property and Public Protection.

Car Park Budgets

- 1.3 A number of questions were raised in relation to the information provided on car park budgets. Additional information has been requested for further discussion at the next meeting.

Adult Social Care Budget

- 1.4 The budget pressures in Adult Social Care were discussed at length. Those causing the greatest concern were reported as the £830k pressure identified due to the number and complexity of need of older residents, and the rising number of capital depleters and the unpredictability of this budget.
- 1.5 The detailed budget modelling work conducted between officers in Adult Social Care and Accountancy was described. The intention of which was to significantly increase the budget from 2011/12 onwards. The Head's of Adult Social Care and Finance were both of the view that an appropriate sum of money had been identified for the coming year, this included provision for an additional number of capital depleters. Members were concerned that the modelling work did not take into account the additional cost incurred as an individual's capital reduced. This was accepted for inclusion in future.
- 1.6 Members also suggested extending work on local demographics based on the age profile of residents and this is to be explored by the Head of Service.

Financial Performance Report (Month 8)

- 1.7 The month 8 budget report was received and discussions held/further information requested in relation to the Youth Service budget, pressures in Property and Public Protection and in Highways and Transport.

Establishment Report (Quarter 2)

- 1.8 Members felt there would be a benefit in including a year end projection of both Council and joint/externally funded posts in future reports to make the future position as clear as possible. This request has been forwarded to the Head of Human Resources.

2. Discussion items scheduled for the next meeting

2.1 The following items are on the agenda for the next meeting being held on 15 March 2011:

- (1) To explore pressures reported with car park budgets.
- (2) To investigate the potential to increase the level of data accessible through the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.
- (3) To consider the work undertaken and the methodology in place to assess and ensure value for money.
- (4) To consider the Month 10 revenue budget position.

3. Work Programme

3.1 The latest work programme for the Select Committee is contained within Appendix A of item 18 of this agenda.

Appendices

Appendix A – Resource Management Select Committee draft minutes from 25 January 2011.

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Jeff Beck (Substitute) (In place of Richard Crumly), Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Dave Goff, David Rendel, Laszlo Zverko (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present: Jan Evans (Head of Adult Social Care), Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Richard Crumly and Councillor David Holtby

PART I

42. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. Declarations of Interest

Councillors David Rendel and Jeff Beck declared an interest in Agenda Item 5, but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

44. Actions from previous Minutes

The Committee considered a report providing the information requested at the previous meeting (Agenda Item 4).

Policy and Communication Budget

Information was provided as requested at the last meeting, when concerns were raised that Policy and Communication were delivering budget underspends year on year. It was noted that the majority of savings consistently came from freezing posts, with examples provided for four posts in 2010/11. These posts had been deleted with effect from 1 April 2011.

A view was given that as the decision to freeze posts was taken early in the year then perhaps not all the posts were necessary. A concern was added that this was inflating the budget unnecessarily with a view to using savings to offset overspends elsewhere.

(Councillor David Goff joined the meeting at 6.35pm).

The post of Economic Development Officer had been filled on a secondment since June/July 2010 to the end of the financial year. There was some concern expressed that this post would not be continuing, particularly in the current economic climate. Further information was requested on the saving delivered from this post as it was only frozen in the first quarter and whether a saving had been made from the seconded member of staff's substantive post.

Andy Walker assured Members that there was a business case for each of these posts and there was no unnecessary budgeting. This would continue to be the case for future budget discussions.

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It was suggested that the post of Civil Contingency Officer became less of a need when relevant plans and policies had been produced.

Legal and Electoral Service Budget

This had been added to the work programme for discussion at a future meeting.

Corporate Property Asset Management Plan (AMP)

The valuations of properties listed in the Asset Register were based on existing use and not open market value. Andy Walker explained that this was not an issue when/if the Council sought to borrow money as this would not be done against existing assets.

It was believed that a property holding needed to be of a certain value for it to be considered. It was agreed that this amount would be requested.

The potential for the timings of condition surveys and valuations to be linked was being considered.

It had been advised that further detail on disposals could be provided on request, but had not been included in the AMP. Members felt that detail should be included in the AMP for properties where disposal was under consideration. It was agreed that this view would be communicated to the Head of Property and Public Protection and Portfolio Holder for Property.

An update was requested on whether the Asset Register could be appended to the AMP.

The potential to remortgage properties/release equity was queried last time and Andy Walker advised that there were no restrictions to enter into such an arrangement. There would however need to be reasons for doing so and, while all financing streams were explored, this was not seen as the best financial option available. It was the Council's policy to acquire properties freehold as this was felt to strengthen the balance sheet and making mortgage rather than rental payments was seen as preferable.

Releasing capital in this way was not felt to be necessary for the Council as the Public Works Loan Board saw local authorities as a secure third party to loan money to.

Property Contracts and Contractors in Schools

The Committee noted that the need for the potential issue of a school building being allowed to fall into disrepair being added to the Risk Register was being progressed.

Q2 Financial Performance Report

The Q2 report was received by the Committee at the last meeting prior to Executive as an exception and it was queried whether it would still be approved by the Executive. Andy Walker advised that he had discussed this point with the Portfolio Holder and the Chief Executive and it was not felt necessary to take the Q2 report to the Executive. The Q3 report was due to be discussed at the March meeting of the Executive.

It was pointed out that a benefit of the Committee discussing the Q2 report could have been the potential for comments to be forwarded to the Executive for when they discussed the report. Andy Walker agreed to forward comments made by the Committee to the Executive when Q3 was discussed.

Andy Walker advised that guidance had been received with regard to the capitalisation of highways revenue expenditure and detail on the outcome of this would be clearer in the Q3 report. Andy Walker added that he would also discuss this with the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder.

Car Park Budgets

Members raised a number of points/questions in relation to the information provided on car park budgets. These were as follows:

- The cost increase between 2008/09 and 2009/10 was expected due to the employment of Civil Enforcement Officers, but the additional income generated as a result was not sufficient to increase the net surplus to the required level. An increase in income was also expected from the raised tariff, but this was given as a potential reason for the forecasted income failing to materialise.
- Comparison with previous years was difficult to analyse due to the number of variables and it was suggested that this could be aided by a more detailed breakdown of income and expenditure to help identify budget trends.
- Another reason for the forecast income not materialising was given as the closure of some Newbury Town Centre car parks and it was felt that an understanding of the number of car parking spaces available over recent years would help with analysis. The impact of the recession was noted as a further reason for the shortfall.
- Questions were also asked as to how the budget was actually decided. The level of income was expected to rise between 2009/10 and 2010/11, but the tariff was unchanged and the same number of tickets were expected to be sold. It was also pointed out that the percentage increase in the expected budget in recent years did not appear to be in line with the increased charges which had a higher percentage increase. A view was given that this was poor value for money.
- Whether the current charges would be retained in 2011/12. However any increase could reduce ticket sales as already indicated.

It was agreed that the Head of Highways and Transport would be asked to provide further detail on the above points in advance of the next meeting to allow Members the opportunity to request more information if required. This information would then be discussed in detail at the next meeting with the Head of Service invited to attend.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Further information would be requested on the savings found in Policy and Communication as a result of freezing the post of Economic Development Officer.
- (2) The minimum value of a property holding would be requested.
- (3) The Head of Property and Public Protection and the Portfolio Holder for Property would be informed of the Committee's view that detail should be included in the AMP for properties where disposal was under consideration.
- (4) An update would be requested on whether the Asset Register could be appended to the AMP.
- (5) Andy Walker would forward comments made by the Committee to the Executive when the Q3 budget report was discussed.
- (6) The Head of Highways and Transport would be asked to provide further detail on the car park budgets in advance of the next meeting to allow Members the opportunity to request more information if required. The Head of Service would then be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss this in detail.

45. Community Services Directorate budget

(Councillors David Rendel and Jeff Beck declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5 by virtue of the fact that they had relatives living in a care home in West Berkshire. As their interest was personal and not prejudicial they were permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning the budget pressures within Adult Social Care.

Jan Evans introduced the item by highlighting the following points made in the report:

- The month 8 budget position was little changed from that reported at month 7, with a forecast overspend of just over £2m.
- Negotiations with NHS Berkshire West with regard to Continuing Health Care cases did not achieve the level of savings hoped for.
- A pressure of £830k had been identified due to the number and complexity of need of older residents and those with a physical disability. An example of this was where an elderly individual, who was perhaps very frail, was discharged from hospital with substantial needs to be met to allow them to stay in their own home. Two carers often had to be employed in this circumstance.
- The option of ceasing to offer new nursing home placements was considered, but there was concern that the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) would fine local authorities for delayed transfer of care which removed this possibility. The Council had not been fined by the RBH as any delays had been kept to a minimum. However, the North Hampshire Hospital had fined the Council a sum of £12k.
- NHS Berkshire West had funded 14 nursing home placements up to 31 March 2011 to help reduce the immediate pressure, this amounted to savings of around £150k. These placements were in the budget build for next year.
- A total of 8 capital depleters were identified in 2009/10 and these were still being funded. This had risen by a further 14 in the current financial year and the Client Financial Services Team had identified a further 6 that could potentially be added in the coming months. This would continue to be a pressure in 2011/12 and provision for 28 capital depleters had been built into the budget. The recession was felt to be a factor in the increase in capital depleters. This and other pressures had been included in budget modelling work undertaken with Accountancy which, it was hoped, would lead to a significant increase in the budget from 2011/12 onwards.
- A difficulty with managing the capital depleters budget was the fact that many clients were self funding when they originally moved into a nursing home, however this meant they were not known to the Council when they came forward for assistance. This became an option when an individual's capital had depleted to the threshold level of £23.5k (this covered total cash assets as well as property). It was however possible to estimate the length of time a client would reside in a nursing home, which meant some turnover was expected in the next year.
- Approximately 36% of clients did not contribute to their care, the remainder contributed up to £100 per week.
- People were living longer, but with a greater degree of frailty and need than was previously the case. They could be at significant risk if they were not appropriately assisted. The level of assistance required was based on eligibility criteria.

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Members felt there was some scope based on the awareness of the age profile of clients, services required and cost etc to help manage future service provision and budgets. Jan Evans described modelling work in place to achieve this. The work covered all the major commissioning budgets, gave consideration to strategies for supporting people and analysed activity data over the previous 3 years to help identify trends, all alongside knowledge of the service. The fact that client cost was increasing was also considered as was national demographic data. This linked to the budget modelling work undertaken with Accountancy which was soon to be endorsed. Jan Evans agreed to look at ways of extending work on local demographics based on the awareness of the number of over 85 year olds currently in the system and expected in future who were more costly to support.

It was then queried whether there was any software available that could assist with modelling and Jan Evans was not aware of such a system elsewhere in the country at this time.

Returning to the subject of capital depleters, it was noted that this became more expensive as an individual's capital reduced below the £23.5k threshold until it reached the level when care was fully funded. This level of detail had not been covered in the modelling and Councillor Jeff Brooks proposed that it should be included.

A comparative analysis of other Berkshire local authorities had commenced. An issue in West Berkshire was its level of rurality compared to elsewhere. Differing levels of affluence impacted on the number of clients requiring financial assistance with their care, i.e. numbers in Wokingham were fewer than West Berkshire.

It was then questioned whether the figure arrived at from the budget modelling exercise was sufficient for the coming financial year. Jan Evans advised that while this could not be completely accurate, the figure produced was based on the detailed information already described, many variables were taken into account, external and internal accountancy advice was sought and as a result this was felt to be sufficient to meet current demand. Contingency was factored into the risk fund.

Andy Walker added that the model for 2011/12 was an improvement and he was confident that an appropriate sum of money had been identified. The model would continue to be monitored and modified for future years.

While this work was acknowledged, concern remained for some Members that overspends could continue as in previous years. I.e. the budget for 2010/11 was found to be insufficient early on in the financial year, although it had remained fairly steady since that time. Under budgeting could lead to savings again needing to be found from elsewhere in the budget.

In response, Andy Walker advised that there was significant financial challenge in the medium term and it was therefore vital to keep budgeting accurate and tightly managed.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Jan Evans would look at ways of extending work on local demographics based on the age profile of residents.
- (2) The need for future modelling to include the increasing costs of capital depleters be recommended.

46. Financial Performance Report (Month 8)

The Committee considered the month 8 financial performance report (Agenda Item 6).

The point was made that this report compared to the position in month 7 and it would be preferable for the Select Committee to consider changes made since the previously

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received report (in this case month 6). Andy Walker agreed to look at accommodating this in some way.

The significant impact made by the levies and interest budget line was noted. This was detailed in the Part II report. Andy Walker advised that only a small fraction was as a result of treasury management.

Andy Walker informed Members that an application had been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government asking to capitalise costs of staff redundancies in the longer term. This was for staff funded from specific grants whose costs could not be met from within the grant. The outcome of this would be reported in February 2011, hopefully by the time the Executive met on 17 February 2011.

At this stage these redundancy costs of circa £320k were set against the Economic Downturn Provision included in specific earmarked reserves. This £1.4m provision was established in the 2010/11 financial year.

Only 29% of the recruitment freeze target had been achieved across Children and Young People. Reduced turnover meant achieving this target was challenging. This contributed to the increased overspend in the Directorate.

The income target for the Youth Service of £1.2m was queried and further detail requested to explain how it was generated. It was noted that this target covered the entire Youth Services and Commissioning service area.

Pressures in the Property and Public Protection budget were partly due to the running costs of West Street House and West Point. It was agreed that further information would be requested on this as it was pointed out that the move to these buildings was intended to reduce costs. Andy Walker explained that this cost would be spread across the service areas making use of the buildings and they would be recharged at year end.

A reduction was planned in highway maintenance of £250k. However, Members were concerned that this would have come under pressure as a result of the severe winter weather conditions experienced in December. Further information would therefore be requested to explain if this budget had come under pressure. The winter maintenance budget was forecast to be £175k overspent and it was queried whether additional costs encountered in December and potentially further into the winter were covered in this overspend. A view was given that the increased salt stock would have been budgeted for, but might not have taken into account the need to replenish stocks if necessary.

Savings were being found from the concessionary fares budget and this was believed to be due to a reduced usage of bus passes. Further information was requested on the reasons why this had reduced.

Savings were also being found from a lower than anticipated spend on sewage treatment works of £50k. The question would be asked as to how this was found.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Andy Walker would look at amending the budget reports presented to the Select Committee so that they made reference to the previously reported position.
- (2) Further detail would be requested on the following points:
 - Where the income was generated from for the Youth Service.
 - The budget pressure caused by the running costs of West Street House and West Point.
 - The reduction in highway maintenance expenditure and the pressures in the winter maintenance budget.

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- The reduced usage of bus passes.
- The lower than anticipated spend on sewage treatment works.

47. Work Programme

The Committee considered the Resource Management Select Committee Work Programme (Agenda Item 7).

The following items were noted for the agenda of the next meeting being held on 15 March 2011:

- Financial Performance Report (Month 10)
- Value for Money
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer
- Car parks budget

RESOLVED that the work programme and the items scheduled for the next meeting would be noted.

48. Establishment Report Quarter 2 2010/11

The Committee considered the Quarter 2 Establishment Report (Agenda Item 8).

The decrease in the Council funded establishment was noted as was the increase of 60 joint and externally funded posts during the course of the last 12 months.

Councillor Jeff Brooks proposed that the inclusion of a year end projection for both Council and joint/externally funded posts would be a benefit to the report. This was supported by Members in making the future position as clear as possible as it was not expected that there would be any increase to the establishment in 2010/11 and a projection would give detail on this.

RESOLVED that the Head of Human Resources and the Portfolio Holder would be asked to give consideration to including a year end projection in the report for both Council and joint/externally funded posts.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.05pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Title of Report:	Safer Select Committee
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Safer Select Committee.

Recommended Action: To note for information.

Safer Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Quentin Webb – Tel (01635) 202646
E-mail Address:	qwebb@westberks.gov.uk
Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Safer Select Committee has not met since the report made at the last OSMC meeting.

2. Installation of Automatic Fire Suppression Systems

- 2.1 The Select Committee's report was presented at the Executive meeting on 13 January 2011. The Executive endorsed all the recommendations, listed below for reference:

- (1) The Head of Property and Public Protection develop a policy in relation to the installation of automatic fire suppression systems in all new buildings and buildings undergoing major refurbishment within the Council's property portfolio.
- (2) The basis of establishing the need to install automatic fire suppression systems is to be a fire risk assessment, the same or similar to that currently used for school projects. The risk assessment process should include the ability to recognise the comparative savings that would be achievable with the installation of such a system, for example through altered building design or the use of different materials.
- (3) The policy is to indicate an assumption that automatic fire suppression systems will be installed unless the completed risk assessment provides sufficient argument against.
- (4) The policy is to state that consideration be given early in the design stages of a project as to where the components of an automatic fire suppression system would be located in order to reduce installation costs.
- (5) Further discussion be held with the Council's property insurers with the aim of achieving further savings.

3. Work Programme

- 3.1 There are no new items proposed for the Select Committee 's work programme at this time.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 16.

Title of Report:	Stronger Communities Select Committee
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Select Committee.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – Tel (0118) 9712671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee met on 7 February 2011 and the draft minutes are attached at Appendix A. A summary of the main discussions are as follows:

2. Demand for Primary School Places

- 2.1 It was reported that 75% of West Berkshire resident applications were offered their first choice of place in 2010. 71% of the total number of applicants were offered their first choice. Although there was an adequate number of places across the District, immediate action was required in some schools to help meet a shortfall of places.
- 2.2 The School Place Plan has been updated. An outcome of this work is agreement to conduct area reviews for each of the 6 areas identified across West Berkshire. Changes to place planning could be incorporated as a result. The prediction model for places is also used to help understand demand in individual schools.
- 2.3 Changes to some catchment areas are being planned in time for the 2012 admissions round. These changes and changes to school numbers are felt necessary to help further meet parental preference. Efforts are being made to increase the number of places in some schools without incurring additional costs.
- 2.4 An update report was requested once the current round of admissions has completed. The item is therefore retained on the work programme.

3. School Academies

- 3.1 Terms of Reference for a review into this subject were agreed subject to some minor amendments. Two meetings will be held in the near future.

4. Scrutiny review into the Council's Common Housing Register

- 4.1 A lengthy debate was held on the draft recommendations formed as a result of the review. Some concern was expressed by Councillor Alan Law, Portfolio Holder for Housing in attendance for the item, that work had not been adequately conducted to assess the resource implications of some of the recommendations and the benefits they could bring. Councillor Law believed that enabling Ward Members to access data was not possible with existing software and therefore costs would be incurred.
- 4.2 Committee Members accepted that the recommendations should be fully investigated and costs identified to help inform decisions. However, there was agreement to not significantly amend the report as it was felt that efforts should be made to empower Ward Members to assist residents where possible.
- 4.3 The report is contained under item 11 of this agenda for the Commission's consideration.

5. Standards and Effectiveness Panel

- 5.1 An exempt report was received which detailed the work of the Panel. This was in response to a recommendation of a previous scrutiny review.
- 5.2 A common thread was noted in the reports of concerns in relation to the work of Property Services and its contractors. This has been the subject of a detailed review conducted by the Resource Management Select Committee. It was agreed that the circulation of these reports would be extended to ensure that concerns were identified and, where possible, addressed.

6. Discussion items scheduled for the next meeting

- 6.1 Two meetings will be arranged in the near future to conduct the review into School Academies.

7. Work Programme

- 7.1 The latest work programme for the Select Committee is contained within Appendix A of item 18 of this agenda.

Appendices

Appendix A – Stronger Communities Select Committee draft minutes from 7 February 2011.

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Roger Hunneman (Substitute) (In place of Mollie Lock), Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Irene Neill (Chairman), Ieuan Tuck

Also Present: Councillor Barbara Alexander, Councillor Alan Law, Caroline Corcoran (Education Service Manager), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Ellen Crumly and Councillor Mollie Lock

Councillor Absent: Councillor David Holtby

PART I

22. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

24. Actions from previous Minutes

The Committee received an update on actions following the previous meeting (Agenda Item 4).

Councillor Barbara Alexander advised that work was proceeding with the Playbuilder Programme as discussed at the previous meeting, with the first project shortly due for completion. Councillor Irene Neill added that a Members Bid for signage for these projects had been approved.

RESOLVED that the update would be noted.

25. Demand for Primary School Places

The Committee received a briefing on the actions being taken in relation to primary school places in West Berkshire (Agenda Item 5).

Caroline Corcoran presented her report and highlighted the following points:

- 75% of West Berkshire resident applications were offered their first choice of place. 71% of the total number of applicants were offered their first choice. It was hoped that this could be improved upon in future years.
- There was an adequate number of places across the District for all West Berkshire pupils, but immediate action was required in Thatcham Park CE Primary School and three schools towards the east of the District to help meet a shortfall of places in those areas in the current year. It was expected that these pressures would

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continue and formal consultation would take place in relation to the pupil numbers in these schools in the longer term.

- The School Place Plan had been approved. This had been enhanced beyond the existing good model for school place planning and took into account best practice. The Plan identified six areas within West Berkshire which were based on geographical and secondary provision, these were Mortimer, Calcot, Newbury, Thatcham/North Newbury, West and Downs. An area review had been conducted of Thatcham/North Newbury which had led to changes being made, the next review was scheduled for Newbury. These reviews helped to forecast numbers for the next seven years.
- Changes to catchment areas were being planned in time for the 2012 admissions round. The changes to school numbers and catchment areas were necessary to help further meet parental preference. Initially, efforts were being made to increase the number of places in some schools while avoiding additional costs.
- A prediction model was used for individual schools to help understand demand. This took into account historical number on roll for seven years, a popularity index (which included parental preference, performance data, waiting lists, local school factors), birth data and information on housing developments and building programmes. This work produced very accurate forecasting which would continue, but there was a need to publicise the value of this work beyond the Admissions Team.

Members queried the point at which a decision was made to look at longer term solutions to school places, i.e. building work, beyond the modest increases described. Caroline Corcoran advised that this was considered, but it depended on the site layout of individual schools and, as already described, the first option was to consider increasing numbers within the existing layout. This was not an option for schools located in and around Newbury Town Centre because of the nature of the area and this was a reason why an area review of Newbury had been scheduled, along with the annual pressure for places.

It was added that any capacity in Newbury schools was likely to be affected by the Newbury Racecourse development.

The impact of a school taking Academy status on school admissions was then discussed. It was advised that an Academy would act as their own admission authority, but they would need set criteria for admissions. All admission authorities currently had a catchment area of some form, but an Academy could establish a separate criteria. However, no indication had been given to date that this was likely.

Applications for a place at an Academy would still be processed through the Local Education Authority as with all schools and a request to attend an Academy would be considered as one of the three preferences available to parents/carers.

There was a wider need for responsibilities to be made clear between the LEA and schools seeking/taking Academy status.

Members felt it would be useful to receive a further report once the current round of admissions had completed as an update.

RESOLVED that a further report would be received once the current round of admissions had come to a close.

26. School Academies

The Committee received Terms of Reference and scope for a review into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority (LEA) (Agenda Item 6). These had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Ian Pearson had requested a minor amendment to point three of the Terms of Reference. This made reference to the wider Council impact of schools becoming Academies beyond the Education Service, which would encourage discussion on how services would be exchanged with schools across the Council, and gave consideration to the responsibility for land/building assets. An aspect of the discussion on assets would be a need to understand whether community use of school buildings would continue. This would not be guaranteed as buildings would be in the ownership of an Academy Trust. Schools' use of, for example, a Leisure Centre was another factor to consider as part of taking Academy status.

Members agreed that an additional point would be added to the Terms of Reference to incorporate the detailed discussions required on assets. Stephen Chard would amend the Terms of Reference and send them for approval to the Committee.

It was agreed that the review would be conducted by the Committee over two meetings. The first to receive detailed information from Ian Pearson on the viewpoint of the LEA. Shiraz Sheikh would also be invited to discuss any legal implications. It was suggested that Paul Dick, Headteacher of Kennet School, (currently applying for Academy status) be invited to attend the second meeting along with Ian Pearson to discuss, among other issues, a service exchange with the Council.

Councillor Barbara Alexander felt this was a timely review as it would link with ongoing work within the Children and Young People Directorate.

RESOLVED that Stephen Chard would amend the Terms of Reference and send them to the Committee for approval, along with potential meeting dates.

27. Scrutiny review into the Council's Common Housing Register

The Committee considered the draft recommendations arising from the task group review into the Council's Common Housing Register (CHR) (Agenda Item 7).

Recommendation three was queried. This was for all elected Members to be registered with the Information Commissioner in order to process data as the Council's registration did not cover Members in their constituency role. Councillor Alan Law supported this recommendation, but advised that the Council's current registration would need to be changed. This would help resolve any data protection concerns.

Councillor Irene Neill referred to a finding of the review which stated that data could be accessed by Ward Members if it was in a constituent's interest to do so. Councillor Law acknowledged this view, but referred to another finding which stated that data protection did restrict the use of personal information collected for one purpose being used for another within the Council.

It was suggested that recommendation three could be amended to reflect whether a change of the Council's registration would be necessary and Stephen Chard agreed to discuss this with the relevant officer and circulate an amendment if it was felt to be needed.

Councillor Law then circulated a written submission to the Committee, this requested that recommendations five and six were not forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) or the Executive. He also asked that the submission

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be presented to the OSMC if needed. Discussion then followed on some of the points made.

Members raised a concern that approximately 50% of those identified as vulnerable were not submitting bids for housing. Residents might believe they were on the list without being aware of a need to actively bid for a home. This was the way the Choice Based Letting system operated.

Councillor Law advised that many of the people identified as vulnerable on the CHR were elderly and would be unable to bid should they be in hospital. If residents were unaware of the requirement to bid, then this related to a different failing within the system to adequately inform members of the public and consideration could be given to conducting a communications exercise to promote this need.

The letter sent to residents on the CHR advised them that failure to respond within 28 days meant they would automatically be placed on a removal list. This list made allowance for a check to be run to assess whether an individual was vulnerable, in which case further work would be done on their application. Safeguards were in place, but any further efforts to make contact were limited by resources. This approach was in line with a recommendation of the audit undertaken in March 2010. If a resident was actively bidding then they would not be sent a letter. Councillor Neill added that it was likely that a person identified as vulnerable would be accessing some form of support from the Council. A further view was given that there could be a number of reasons why someone was not bidding and reliance on a single letter was not adequate.

Councillor Neill went on to say that the resource implications of recommendations five and six were discussed at the meetings and officers were tasked with identifying the impact on financial and human resources. If this proved to be an issue, then it was suggested that the recommendations could be considered at a convenient time, i.e. to coincide with an upgrade of the Locata system, as recommendations needed to be realistic. Councillor Law raised the importance of conducting a cost benefit analysis if it was felt that the recommendations were worth pursuing. Locata held detailed data but it was not identified by Ward, therefore a budget pressure would arise should the recommendations be approved.

Members went on to discuss whether they wished to amend the recommendations. A view was expressed that it would be preferable to empower Ward Members to assist residents and the Council, and therefore the recommendations should be retained.

Councillor Law questioned the value of these recommendations and added that people were only removed from the CHR if they were inactive. If this was the case then it might be that their situation was not serious and their removal would not cause an issue. People were advised of their removal and would be reinstated at their request without the loss of any points, assuming their circumstances were unchanged. This included any points that might have accrued in the meantime. Councillor Neill added that she was fairly confident that those in the most need and at most risk were actively involved.

Councillor Neill felt that if data could be made accessible to Ward Members relatively easily, then they could offer some basic assistance. However, additional clarity was needed to assess what the software requirements were and the subsequent resource implications to help inform a decision. Councillor Law advised that he would be more willing to accept the recommendations if data was easily accessible, but he did not believe this to be the case.

A view was given that the report should not be subject to significant changes at this stage of the review and Members agreed that the report and its recommendations should be presented to the OSMC for approval without significant amendment. However, an

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amendment was agreed to recommendation six to remove the option to conduct a manual data matching exercise as this was felt to be too time consuming.

An additional sentence was also requested to ensure that the proposed initiatives were accurately investigated and costed, and the impact on resources assessed to help inform a decision.

RESOLVED that Stephen Chard would investigate whether an amendment was required to recommendation three, would amend recommendation six and add the sentence requested in relation to the implications of the recommendations. Amended paragraphs would be circulated to the Committee for approval before the report was taken to the OSMC.

28. Work Programme

The Committee considered the outstanding items on the work programme for the remainder of 2010/11 (Agenda Item 8).

Big Society – it was noted that work on the Big Society was being undertaken by the West Berkshire Partnership Management Board and it was therefore suggested that feedback should be provided to the Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission at an appropriate time, rather than duplicate work.

Partnership activity in response to the recession – it was again agreed that an update should be provided by the Partnership to the Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission at an appropriate time.

Accessibility of public transport – this review had been conducted by a joint task group formed between this Committee and the Greener Select Committee. It was believed that a report was being drafted.

Work on School Academies would commence as described earlier.

RESOLVED that the work programme would be noted.

29. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the [Local Government \(Access to Information\)\(Variation\) Order 2006](#). [Rule 4.2 of the Constitution](#) also refers.

30. Standards and Effectiveness Panel

The Committee received an exempt report detailing the work of the Standards and Effectiveness Panel (Agenda Item 10).

Receipt of this information was in response to a recommendation of the Committee following its review into the performance of schools in West Berkshire.

It was noted that Ward Members were invited to attend school visits, but it was also requested that a copy of the school report be forwarded to them so they became aware of any concerns.

Members highlighted a common thread within the reports of concerns raised regarding the work of Property Services and its contractors. This had been the subject of a detailed review conducted by the Resource Management Select Committee. The reports were shared with Nick Carter so he was made aware of any concerns. Members requested

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 7 FEBRUARY 2011 - MINUTES

that the concerns raised in relation to Property would be forwarded to the Portfolio Holder.

A further concern raised in relation to this point was the risk incurred by those schools who arranged work independently.

Reports were also forwarded to the School Improvement Team to progress issues and contact was made with other Council services if a trend was identified. It was agreed that the appropriate Select Committee and Portfolio Holder should also be informed of any concerning trends highlighted within the reports.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Councillor Irene Neill would ensure that school reports were forwarded to Ward Members.
- (2) Councillor Irene Neill would ensure that the concerns raised in relation to Property would be forwarded to the Portfolio Holder.
- (3) The appropriate Select Committee and Portfolio Holder would be informed of any concerning trends highlighted within the reports.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.05pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Forward Plan
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from March to June 2011 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the plan.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission considers the West Berkshire Council Forward Plan for March to June 2011 and recommends further action as appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 9420196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Graham Jones – Tel (01235) 762744
E-mail Address:	gjones@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Forward Plan attempts to cover all decisions, not just those made by the Executive, which the Authority intends to take over the next 4 months. The Forward Plan, attached at Appendix A, for the months of March to June 2011, also shows the decision path of each item including Council, Executive and Individual Decisions.
- 1.2 In order to hold the Executive to account, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Members are asked to identify any forthcoming decisions which may be appropriate for scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March to June 2011

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
March 2011											
ID2216	Petition for HGV ban on Mill Lane and Boundary Road, Newbury	ID	01/03/11	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational) & ICT		TBC			01 March 2011
ID2217	Petition for action to stop speeding traffic through Eastbury	ID	01/03/11	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational) & ICT		TBC			01 March 2011
ID2166	Hampstead Norreys - Proposed 40mph speed limit <i>To consider the responses received during statutory consultation</i>	ID	01/03/11	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational) & ICT		TBC	Statutory consultees, general public, Parish Council and Ward Members		01 March 2011
ID2081	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/03/11	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions		TBC			01 March 2011
ID2082	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/03/11	Chief Executive	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Housing, Transport Policy		TBC			01 March 2011
ID2225	Museum Acquisition and Disposal Policy	ID	01/03/11	Community Services	Steph Gillett	Children & Families, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure		TBC			01 March 2011
OS2111	Financial Report (Revenue and Capital) Month 10 2010/11	OSMC	15/03/11	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		08/03/11			01 March 2011
ID2080	West Berkshire Forward Plan - April 2011 to July 2011 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	17/03/11	Chief Executive	Moir Fraser	Leader of the Council		09/03/11		Not subject to call in.	01 March 2011

The items included in the Forward Plan were correct at the time of publication. The Forward Plan may, however, change and you are advised to contact Moira Fraser – Tel: 01635 519045 or e-mail: mfraser@westberks.gov.uk to confirm the contents of any agenda before attending a meeting. Executive decisions may be taken by the Executive acting as a collective body or by officers acting under delegated powers.

KEY:
 ID = Individual Executive Member Decision
 EX = Executive
 C = Council
 GA = Governance & Audit Committee
 S = Standards Committee
 PC = Personnel Committee

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
GA2212	IFRS Policy changes and Re-statement of the major Statements <i>To approve elements of the 2010-11 financial statements in advance of the June 2011 Governance & Audit committee meeting.</i>	GA	28/03/11 GA	Chief Executive	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		18/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2206	Report and Action Plan of the Annual Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral & Assessment Arrangement within West Berkshire	EX	31/03/11 EX	Children and Young People	Lorna Hunt	Education		23/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2207	Community Led Planning - Performance Report	EX	31/03/11 EX	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions		23/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2205	Traffic Management & Road Safety Programme 2011/12 <i>To advise Members of the Traffic Management & Road Safety Works Programme 2011/12</i>	EX	31/03/11 EX	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational) & ICT		23/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2108	Council Plan Outcomes 2010/11: Quarterly Performance Update - Q3 <i>To report quarterly performance against each of the outcomes identified in the 2010/11 Council Plan and to report remedial action being taken, where targets were not projected to be met</i>	EX	31/03/11 EX	Chief Executive	David Cook	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		23/03/11	Performance officers, EPMG/IPG		01 March 2011
EX2191	Scrutiny Review on the use of local resources - Local Food <i>To consider the findings of the Greener Select Committee review into local food</i>	EX	31/03/11 EX	Environment	Adrian Slaughter	Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Customer Services		23/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2210	Child Poverty Strategy	EX	31/03/11 EX	Children and Young People	Julia Waldman	Children & Families, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure		23/03/11			01 March 2011

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
EX2219	Implementation Plan for the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 <i>To seek approval of the LTP Implementation Plan</i>	EX	31/03/11 EX	Environment	Jenny Graham	Planning, Housing and Transport Policy		23/03/11			01 March 2011
EX2224	Childrens Social Care Complaints Report <i>To inform Members on the complaints activity in this service area during the year 2009-10</i>	EX	31/03/11 EX	Children and Young People	Yvette Jones	Children & Families, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure		23/03/11			01 March 2011
C2195	Amendments to the Constitution - Changes to the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee and Governance and Audit Committee <i>To amend the terms of reference of the two committees in line with the recent recommendations arising from an Internal Audit of the Management of the Constitution.</i>	C	17/01/11 STDS 14/02/11 GA 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Maira Fraser	Leader of the Council		04/02/11			01 March 2011
C2192	Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 <i>To seek approval for the new Local Transport Plan</i>	C	03/03/11 C	Environment	Jenny Graham	Planning, Housing and Transport Policy		22/02/11	Parish and Town Council, All Memembers, Transport Operators, Local Interest Groups, Representatives of national organisations, GOSE. Neighbouring Local Highway Authorities. Emergency Services, LSP.		01 March 2011

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
C2178	Revenue Budget 2011-12	C	17/02/11 EX 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		09/02/11			01 March 2011
C2179	MTFS	C	17/02/11 EX 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		09/02/11			01 March 2011
C2180	Local Government Act 2003 - Borrowing Limits and Annual Investment Strategy 2011/12	C	17/02/11 EX 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		09/02/11			01 March 2011
C2181	Capital Strategy and Programme	C	17/02/11 EX 03/03/11 C	Environment	John Ashworth	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		09/02/11			01 March 2011
C2199	Council Governance	C	14/02/11 GA 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Andy Day	Leader of the Council		03/02/11			01 March 2011
C2104	Amendments to Part 1, 2, 10 and 11 of the Council's Constitution	C	14/02/11 GA 03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Andy Walker/ David Holling	Leader of the Council		03/02/11			01 March 2011

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

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C2184	Sustainable Community Strategy Update 2011/12 <i>To agree the Sustainable Community Strategy</i>	C	03/03/11 C	Chief Executive	Sam Shepherd	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions		22/02/11			01 March 2011
C2220	Sex Establishments Licensing <i>To consider the adoption of Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act.</i>	C	03/03/11 C	Environment	Brian Leahy	Environment, "Cleaner Greener", Public Protection		22/02/11			01 March 2011
April 2011											
ID2053	West Berkshire District Council Order, Station Road, Kintbury, 40mph speed limit	ID	01/04/11	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational) & ICT		04/06/10			01 April 2011
ID2084	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/04/11	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions		TBC			01 April 2011
ID2085	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/04/11	Chief Executive	Paula Amorelli (2233)	Planning, Housing, Transport Policy		TBC			01 April 2011
ID2083	West Berkshire Forward Plan - May 2011 to August 2011 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	14/04/11	Chief Executive	Moirra Fraser (2045)	Leader of the Council		06/04/11		Not subject to call in.	01 April 2011
GA2218	Financial Statements: 2010-11 <i>To inform members of the financial statements 2010-11 prepared in accordance with CIPFA's IFRS code</i>	GA	18/04/11 GA	Chief Executive	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		08/04/11			01 April 2011
May 2011											
C2155	Report to Consider the Recommendations of the IRP	C	12/05/11 C	Chief Executive	Jo Watt	Leader of the Council		09/05/11			01 May 2011

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West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2011 – June 2011

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact & Ext. No.	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
June 2011											
GAC2056	Internal Audit Q4 2010/11	GA	01/06/11 GA	Chief Executive	Ian Priestley	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		24/05/11			01 June 2011
GAC2118	Strategic Risk Register Q4 2010/11	GA	01/06/11 GA	Chief Executive	Ian Priestley	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		24/05/11			01 June 2011
EX2116	Financial Report Q4 2010/11	EX	16/06/11 EX	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Property, Health and Safety		09/06/11			01 June 2011
EX2121	Establishment Report Q4 2010/11	EX	16/06/11 EX	Chief Executive	Robert O'Reilly	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		09/06/11			01 June 2011
EX2124	Council Plan Outcomes Q4 2010/11	EX	16/06/11 EX	Chief Executive	David Cook	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		09/06/11			01 June 2011
EX2109	Council Plan Outcomes 2010/11: Quarterly Performance Update - Q4 <i>To report quarterly performance against each of the outcomes identified in the 2010/11 Council Plan and to report remedial action being taken, where targets were not projected to be met</i>	EX	16/06/11 EX	Chief Executive	David Cook	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		09/06/11	Performance officers, EPMG/IPG		01 June 2011

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Title of Report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and Select Committee Work Programme
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 March 2011

Purpose of Report: To receive, agree and prioritise the Work Programme of the Commission and Select Committees for the remainder of the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Recommended Action: To consider the current items and any future areas for scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 9420196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Stephen Chard
Job Title:	Policy Officer (Scrutiny Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519462
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An updated version of the Work Programme is attached at Appendix A for the Commission's consideration. Members are also asked to consider any future areas for scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and Select Committee Work Programme

Consultees

Officers Consulted: Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager, Principal Policy Officers

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AND SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/10/79	Council motion on renewable energy To consider action required to stimulate renewable electricity generation within West Berkshire and related targets.			GSC	Start: 14/12/10 End: 14/12/10	Adrian Slaughter - 2424 Property & Public Protection	Councillor Hilary Cole	Agreed Council Motion - 4/3/10
OSMC/09/24	Accessibility of public transport Review accessibility of public transport in West Berkshire for all residents.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	For review.	GSC/SC SC	Start: 19/01/10 End:	Bryan Lytle - 2638 and Mark Edwards - 2208 Planning & Countryside and Highways & Transport	Councillor Alan Law & Councillor David Betts	Joint work between GSC and SCSC to review accessibility of public transport and contribute to the work on Local Transport Plan 3. Item 68 merged with this item
OSMC/09/17	Capacity of maternity services at the Royal Berkshire Foundation Hospital. Fact finding report to establish the current capacity to meet demand for services.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Monitoring item	HSC	Start: 17/11/10 End:	Chief Executive and Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust	Councillor Joe Mooney	Investigation of the reported pressures on the maternity unit.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AND SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/	Delayed discharges from hospital To determine the causes of delayed discharges from hospitals affecting West Berkshire residents.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Investigate ways to improve the current system, and improve patient experience.	HSC	Start: TBC End:	Chief Executive of the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust and Bev Searle - NHS Berkshire West. Royal Berkshire NHS Trust & NHS Berkshire West	Councillor Joe Mooney	
OSMC/10/85	Investigation deprivation and child poverty in the ten most deprived wards in the District. To investigate what work is being done to tackle deprivation and how this can be applied to improve the quality of life across the District's most deprived wards.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Investigate ways to improve outcomes, and make recommendations to partner agencies.	HSC	Start: 12/10/10 End:	Julia Waldman Children & Young People	Councillor Gordon Lundie	
OSMC/09/02	Performance Report for Level One Indicators To monitor quarterly the performance levels across the Council and to consider, where appropriate, any remedial action.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Monitoring item	OSMC	Start: 14/09/10 End:	Jason Teal - 2102 Policy & Communication	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	Quarterly item.
OSMC/09/04	Representation of the Council on outside bodies To assess the value of the representation of Councillors on outside bodies	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	To understand the benefits.	OSMC	Start: End:	Maira Fraser - 2045 Policy & Communication	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	Will allow a critical evaluation of where Councillors can have most effect when dealing with outside bodies.
OSMC/09/58	Communications Strategy refresh To consider the refresh of the Strategy.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer.	To consider the Strategy and make suggestions for improvement.	OSMC	Start: End:	Keith Ulyatt - 2125 Policy & Communication	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	Following discussion at OSMC on 28th July 2009 and the item to consider the Place Survey results on 15th September 2009.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AND SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/09/67	West Berkshire Partnership performance report To monitor quarterly the performance levels across the Partnership and to consider, where appropriate, any remedial action.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers and partners via in meeting review	Monitoring item	OSMC	Start: 26/01/10 End:	Sam Shepherd - 3041 Policy & Communication	Councillor Pamela Bale	Quarterly item.
OSMC/10/76	Shared service arrangements To receive further detail on shared services, the work ongoing to review shared service arrangements and progress with the production of a register of shared services.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer.	To be identified.	OSMC	Start: 29/06/10 End:	Steve Duffin - 2594 Benefits and Exchequer		As requested by OSMC on 26th January 2010.
OSMC/10/78	Activities for teenagers To identify the work undertaken and future action planned in the Children and Young People Directorate to improve activities for teenagers, following its identification as the top priority for improvement in the annual resident survey.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		OSMC	Start: 25/05/10 End: 09/06/11	Julia Waldman - 2815 Children and Young People	Councillor Gordon Lundie	As requested by OSMC on 2nd March 2010.
OSMC/11/101	The Council's response to the severe weather of winter 2010/11 To review the Council's response to the severe weather experienced during the winter of 2010/11	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		OSMC	Start: 01/03/11 End: 01/03/11	Various		Terms of Reference approved by OSMC on 18/01/11
OSMC/11/102	Planning Performance Indicator - affordable housing units To explore factors causing this indicator to be reported as red, including the impact of the recession, and the remedial action being taken.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		OSMC	Start: 01/03/11 End: 01/03/11	Gary Lugg - 2617 Planning and Countryside	Councillor Alan Law	Requested as part of the discussion on the Q2 performance report.
OSMC/09/55	Value for Money Consideration of the work undertaken by the Council and the methodology in place to assess and ensure value for money.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Consider work undertaken to assess and ensure value for money and make suggestions for improvement.	RMSC	Start: 15/03/11 End: 15/03/11	John Ashworth - 2870/Steve Duffin - 2594 Benefits & Exchequer	Councillor Keith Chopping	An appropriate subject that meets the acceptance criteria. Previously undertaken in April 2009.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AND SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/09/57	Revenue and capital budget reports To receive the latest period revenue and capital budget reports and consider any areas of concern.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	RMSC	Start: 13/09/10 End:	Andy Walker - 2433 Finance	Councillor Keith Chopping	May lead to areas for in depth review.
OSMC/09/63	Establishment Reports To receive the latest report on the changes to the Council's establishment.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	RMSC	Start: 13/09/10 End:	Robert O'Reilly - 2358 Human Resources	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	May lead to areas for in depth review.
OSMC/10/96	Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) To investigate the potential to increase the level of data accessible through the LLPG.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		RMSC	Start: 15/03/11 End: 15/03/11	Phil Parker - 2133 ICT	Councillor David Betts	Item forwarded by the Stronger Communities Select Committee Common Housing Register Task Group.
OSMC/11/103	Car park budgets To explore budget pressures reported in this area.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		RMSC	Start: 15/03/11 End: 15/03/11	Mark Edwards - 2208 Highways & Transport	Councillor David Betts	Requested by RMSC on 25 January 2011.
OSMC/11/98	Legal and Electoral Services Budget To discuss budget pressures within this service area.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		RMSC	Start: End:	David Holling Legal & Electoral Services		Requested by RMSC on 14 December 2010.
OSMC/11/99	Highways Asset Management Plan To review the AMP and the highways land contained within it.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		RMSC	Start: End:	Mark Edwards - 2208 Highways & Transport	Councillor David Betts	Requested by RMSC on 14 December 2010.
OSMC/09/37	Partnership activity in response to the recession. Assessment of the impact of the measures taken by the West Berkshire Partnership to mitigate the local effects of the recession.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	Monitoring item	SCSC	Start: End:	Jayne Mills - 2972 Policy & Communication	Councillor Pamela Bale & Councillor Keith Chopping	High profile activity that is very topical that will give visibility to the work that the Council and its partners are doing on behalf of residents and businesses.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AND SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/10/83	School admissions To identify whether the difficulties reported by a number of local authorities with primary school placements had an effect in West Berkshire.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	To gain an understanding of the issue.	SCSC	Start: 07/02/11 End: 07/02/11	Caroline Corcoran - 2030 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Issue discussed 070211. Review to be scheduled.
OSMC/10/95	Big Society To explore the initiative as a way of enabling people and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own communities.	Initial briefing followed by in meeting review.		SCSC	Start: End:	Andy Day - 2459 Policy & Communication		Item to be scheduled at a later date once further detail known.
OSMC/11/100	School Academies To review the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the LEA.	Task group review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers and external partners.		SCSC	Start: 07/02/11 End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Terms of Reference approved by OSMC on 18/01/11
OSMC/10/92	Integrated Offender Management Programme To review how the Council can support the Integrated Offender Management Programme in the future.	Update provided by Chairman of work being presented to the Safer Communities Partnership on 13/12/10.		SSC	Start: 06/12/10 End:	Susan Powell - 264703 Policy and Communication	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	

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