

Notice of Meeting

Stronger Communities Select Committee

Thursday, 21 October, 2010 at 6.30pm
in Committee Room 1 Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 13 October 2010

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
e-mail: schard@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at
www.westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Stronger Communities Select Committee to be held on Thursday, 21 October 2010 (continued)

To: Councillors Ellen Crumly, David Holtby, Mollie Lock, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Irene Neill (Chairman), Ieuan Tuck

Substitutes: Councillors George Chandler, Billy Drummond, Adrian Edwards, Roger Hunneman

Agenda

Part I

	Page No.
1. Apologies To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 8 July 2010.	1 - 6
3. Declarations of Interest To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.	
4. Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on actions following the previous Committee meeting.	
5. Playbuilder Programme <i>Purpose: To receive an update on progress with the Playbuilder Scheme.</i>	7 - 12
6. Supporting Small Schools <i>Purpose: To receive a report from the supporting small schools Officer group to assess what further work, if any, is required by the Select Committee.</i>	13 - 32
7. Work Programme <i>Purpose: To consider and prioritise the work programme for the remainder of 2010/11.</i>	33 - 36

Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

West Berkshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity. We will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.

If you require this information in a different format, such as audio tape, or in another language, please ask an English speaker to contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045, who will be able to help.



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 THURSDAY, 8 JULY 2010

Councillors Present: David Holtby, Keith Lock (Substitute) (In place of Alan Macro), Irene Neill (Chairman), Ieuan Tuck

Also Present: Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Group Auditor), June Graves (Head of Housing and Performance), Fenja Hill (Housing Operations Manager), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), David Lowe (Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Ellen Crumly, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Alan Macro

PART I

11. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2010 and 12 May 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Stephen Chard advised the Committee that the report outlining the results of the scrutiny review into the performance of schools in West Berkshire had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, subject to one amendment. This related to the recommendation to strengthen the work of the Standards and Effectiveness Panel and the amendment was as follows:

The Head of Policy and Communication should ensure that key feedback from the Standards and Effectiveness Panel on the performance of schools and support services was reported to the Stronger Communities Select Committee and onwards within the Council's reporting structures. **The work of the Standards and Effectiveness Panel should be considered in light of a more structured approach to school visits in order to improve consistency.**

Members felt that there was already a structured approach to school visits by the Panel, but were nonetheless content to accept this amendment.

RESOLVED that the amendment would be accepted and the report would be sent to the Executive for its consideration.

12. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

13. Greater Greenham Project

The Committee considered a briefing on the work of the Greater Greenham Project (Agenda Item 4).

David Lowe, attending on behalf of Councillor Marcus Franks, made the following points as part of his presentation on the work of the Greater Greenham Project:

- This was a positive example of the work undertaken under the leadership of the West Berkshire Partnership (WBP).

DRAFT

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 8 JULY 2010 - MINUTES

- The WBP was seeking ways to enhance community engagement and empowerment, and to make a sustainable difference at a local level.
- Greater Greenham (defined as the Nightingales and Pigeons Farm Estates) had been selected as the first locality project based on indices of multiple deprivation and the child well-being index. This showed that Greater Greenham was by far the most deprived overall area in West Berkshire and was also low when considered at a national level.
- The aims and objectives of the project were to promote financial inclusion, improve the community's environment, build a safer and stronger community, and improve the reputation of the locality.
- A baseline figure and appropriate targets were to be set for priority outcomes which included increased resident participation and pride in the neighbourhood, increased income and skills, and a reduction in crime and anti social behaviour (ASB).
- The project was run by a steering group which reported to a partnership group, which in turn reported to the WBP. The membership of the steering group included local residents and this was hoped to be widened.
- Achievements of the project included:
 - An increase in communication with residents via the Greenham Grapevine newsletter.
 - The establishment of a youth club with approximately 140 members. This was successfully run by a voluntary sector organisation based in Basingstoke. June Graves advised that this was based on the success of a project in Bishops Green which had been running for a small number of years.
 - The identification of 40 community volunteers.
 - Increased availability of the MUGA (multi use games area).
 - A successful skip day held in October 2009 which was an exercise to clear bulky waste from gardens etc. The importance of the community being able to sustain this type of activity themselves was noted.
- Many of these activities had been achieved at a minimal cost. Funding was available but this was finite. There was however no time limit to the project itself and it was intended to run for as long as was deemed necessary.
- A positive outcome for the community had been a 30% decrease in ASB, as reported by Thames Valley Police.
- Many future activities had been organised as a result of the hard work of volunteers.

Members queried the involvement from the primary school, The Willows, as this was felt to be a key element. David Lowe advised that a new Head Teacher had recently been appointed, she was eager to be involved and for the activities of the school to be integrated with the project.

Councillor Ieuan Tuck described a project he was aware of in London which provided a drop in facility for parents and carers of young children. He queried whether this was

DRAFT

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 8 JULY 2010 - MINUTES

something that could be looked at for Greater Greenham. David Lowe agreed to take back this idea.

RESOLVED that the briefing would be noted.

14. Housing Register

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) which detailed the outcome of the audit into the Housing Register.

Councillor Irene Neill advised that the purpose of the item at this stage was to hear the outcome of the audit and to then consider what future scrutiny activity, if any, was required by the Select Committee.

Shannon Coleman-Slaughter informed the Committee that overall the audit found that the controls within the systems and procedures reviewed were satisfactory. There were some areas of concern and these were being addressed through the action plan. Follow up work would be undertaken in November 2010 to assess progress with these actions and, if actions were completed by that time, it was hoped that the service would be considered to be well controlled or at the least a satisfactory follow up would be carried out.

Members noted that many of the actions related to the IT system, Locata, and the operation of this system was queried. Shannon Coleman-Slaughter advised that the audit found that while required actions were still undertaken, the system could be better utilised by staff and it was not always fully updated.

Fenja Hill agreed that paper files would be more up to date and this could create an issue when running a report from the system as this did not always have the full detail included. June Graves acknowledged that Locata had not been fully utilised but added that the system had recently been upgraded. This made it more user friendly and took into account the fact that the Common Housing Register had been taken back in house and the new initiative to offer choice based lettings. The introduction of this initiative would create more sustainable tenancies.

The Locata system was the sole register of information of those seeking housing but did not contain information on available housing.

Fenja Hill added that the upgrade enabled the production of more informative reports and recorded the progress of each individual going through the system.

It was hoped that the system could be widened to incorporate individuals seeking shared ownerships and privately rented homes.

Members were concerned that there was the potential for the more vulnerable people on the register, particularly the elderly, to be disadvantaged by the need to access services, such as choice based lettings, via the website. Fenja Hill advised that this was an area of particular focus for Officers and individuals who were assessed as being potentially vulnerable were offered additional support. It was also possible to produce a report to see if those assessed as vulnerable and a high priority for a new home were bidding for places and if not contact would be made and assistance offered.

Individuals who had been on the register for some time and only gradually accumulated points were contacted annually to assess whether they wished to remain on the list, which was permissible.

Members queried the level of complaints from residents and asked whether a greater understanding of the processes involved would decrease this. Fenja Hill advised that

DRAFT

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 8 JULY 2010 - MINUTES

while the importance of housing for individual residents was understood there was clearly a need to prioritise those in most need. This was explained to concerned residents to help manage their expectations. However if they were not at the top of the list, but had strong reasons to move, they were encouraged to be as flexible as possible with their requirements to increase their chances of getting a home. June Graves added that additional points were awarded for those in exceptional circumstances. Emergency accommodation was also available for those who were homeless.

It was noted that action 5, which related to the need for clients to have their personal details fully and independently verified, had not been agreed. Fenja Hill advised that this had yet to be agreed as documentation was not always needed in the first instance in certain circumstances. It was hoped that this would be resolved by the time of the review.

Fenja Hill offered Members the opportunity to visit the team to observe their work in practice and to contact her if they had any further queries.

Members then discussed further work on this topic and it was felt that further investigation was required. In terms of timescale it was felt to be appropriate that this work would be returned to by a small working group in September 2010 to assess progress made since the audit, with a report back to the Select Committee at its meeting in October 2010. This would allow more time for the new Housing Operations Manager (Fenja Hill) to incorporate any new processes etc.

Councillor Irene Neill volunteered to participate in the work group and Stephen Chard agreed to seek other volunteers. This would be offered to all Members of the Select Committee in the first instance.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The outcome of the audit and the resulting action plan would be noted.
- (2) A small working group would be formed to assess progress made since the audit and this would be arranged for September 2010.

15. Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for 2010/11 (Agenda Item 6).

Councillor Irene Neill informed Members that the work programme had been reviewed with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and as a result it had been reduced to the items of the highest priority.

Items scheduled for the next meeting being held on 21 October 2010 were noted as:

- An update report on the Housing Register following the working group's meeting in September 2010.
- A review of progress with the Playbuilder Programme.
- Receipt of a report from the supporting small schools Officer group to assess what further work, if any, was required by the Select Committee.

Councillor David Holtby advised that progress had been limited on the joint review with the Greener Select Committee on accessibility of public transport and Stephen Chard agreed to discuss this with the appropriate Officer.

DRAFT

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 8 JULY 2010 - MINUTES

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The updated work programme and items scheduled for the next meeting would be noted.
- (2) Stephen Chard would ascertain progress of the accessibility of public transport review.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.00pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 5.

Title of Report:	Playbuilder
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 st October 2010

Purpose of Report: To update the Stronger Communities Select Committee on Progress with the Playbuilder Scheme

Recommended Action: To note the information.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority(ies):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic downturn – to alleviate the impact on different communities and individuals who find themselves out of work and/or disadvantaged
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement – improving school performance levels
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP3 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime
The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT3 - Affordable Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT4 - High Quality Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT6 - Vibrant Villages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT8 - A Healthier Life
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT10 - Promoting Independence
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT12 - Including Everyone
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT13 - Value for Money
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT14 - Effective People
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT15 - Putting Customers First
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Gordon Lundie - Tel (01488) 73350
E-mail Address:	glundie@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Hogg
Job Title:	Head of Youth Service & Commissioning
Tel. No.:	01635 519072
E-mail Address:	dhogg@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Background

- 1.1 West Berkshire was awarded a Playbuilder Grant of £1,112,808 capital and £44,268 revenue in 2009 with the expectation of building new play facilities or refurbishing existing dilapidated play facilities. We were required to complete at least 11 individual projects in year 1 (financial year 2009/2010) and a further 11 projects in year 2 (financial year 2010/2011).

2. Progress – Year 1

- 2.1 A Playbuilder Steering Group was established to oversee the project (membership provided at Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The revenue grant was used to fund a Project Manager post 2 days per week to coordinate arrangements and assist local partners in planning and implementing their projects in line with the Playbuilder requirements.
- 2.3 Bids were invited from District Councillors, Town/Parish Councils and the voluntary sector.
- 2.4 In year 1, 12 projects were identified and successfully completed within the year at a total cost of £553,448. These completed projects have greatly improved access to play in the local areas and have attracted much positive feedback from local communities (a list of year 1 completed projects is provided at Appendix 2).

3. Current situation – Year 2

- 3.1 In good time for the expected year 2 completion schedule, briefing events were held, bids invited and a further 12 projects agreed for funding (a list is provided at Appendix 3).
- 3.2 On 14th July Michael Gove announced a suspension of the grant, required that an immediate stop be put on any new work and required each local authority to provide details of the progress to date with individual projects. This was so that the DfE could complete a review and decide which projects if any would have their funding honoured. A decision on this was scheduled for the end of August. However, no decision has yet been announced by the 8th October and no response has been given to requests for clarification of the revised timescale for a decision. The announcement on the 14th July also withdrew the revenue grant which had been expected to be paid to the Council partway through the year. This meant that the excellent Project Manager had to be made redundant at short notice. No response has yet been received to a request to the DfE to cover the in-year revenue funding already incurred prior to announcement of suspension of the grant.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This project was highly successful in year 1 in engaging local communities, children and young people and local partners in improving access to high quality play experience. The proposed and potential withdrawal of funding in year 2 has caused great disappointment, frustration and uncertainty in the 12 local

communities who were in the process of implementing their projects. While awaiting a decision the optimum summer months for such building work have passed. Some local projects are now exploring alternative sources of funding pending a Playbuilder decision by the DfE.

Appendices

Appendix A – Membership of the Playbuilder Steering Group

Appendix B – Playbuilder Year 1 Projects completed

Appendix C – Playbuilder Year 2 Projects

Appendix A

Membership of the Playbuilder Steering Group

Barbara Alexander, Councillor
Irene Neill, Councillor
Alan Macro, Councillor
David Hogg, Head of Youth Service & Commissioning, WBC
Andrew Cooch, Sovereign Housing
Deborah Wyatt, Project Manager, WBC
Marcus Franks, Sovereign Housing
June Graves, Head of Housing & Performance, WBC
Janet Scott, Education, WBC
Steward Souden, Countryside and Environment, WBC
Mark Vernon, Youth Service, WBC

Minutes only:

Angela Turton, Education, WBC
April Peberdy, Berkshire NHS
Davy Pearson, YOT, WBC
Elaine Walker, Equalities, WBC
Gary Lugg, WBC
Shelly Hambrecht, CAWB
Jim Holah, Sovereign
Jane Seymour, Education, WBC
Mark Edwards, WBC
Rachel Palin, WBC
Robin Rickard, Thames Valley Police
Sarah Ward, CAWB
Jeremy Speed, Berkshire NHS
Susan Powell, Safer Communities Partnership, WBC

Appendix B

Playbuilder Year 1 Projects completed

Playbuilder Contribution

Boxford Play Area	£50,000
Donnington Recreation Ground Play Area	£50,000
Pangbourne Playground Redevelopment	£49,448
Speen Recreation Ground	£50,000
Bulpit Lane Skatepark, Hungerford	£50,000
Bodin Gardens, Greenham	£50,000
Christie Heights, Greenham	£50,000
Digby Road, Speen	£45,000
Lister Close, Purley	£50,000
Pigeons Farm, Greenham	£50,000
Fred Dawson Memorial, Upper Bucklebury	£9,000
Greyberry Copse, Greenham	£50,000
Year 1 Total	£553,448

Appendix C

Playbuilder Year 2 Projects

	Proposed Playbuilder Contribution
Almond Avenue	£55,000.00
Chieveley Skate Park	£14,000.00
Cromwell Road, Newbury	£27,000.00
Fairground, Stratfield Mortimer	£50,000.00
Fifth Road, Newbury	£50,000.00
Great Shefford Recreation Ground	£50,000.00
Hampstead Norreys Playground	£50,000.00
Siegecross Play Area	£50,000.00
Skatepark at Holybrook	£50,000.00
Stockcross Recreation Ground	£50,000.00
Turnham's Farm Rec	£60,000.00
Victoria Skatepark	£50,000.00
Total Year 2 Planned Spend (Currently on hold pending DfE review of the scheme)	£556,000.00

Agenda Item 6.

Title of Report:	Supporting Small Schools Review
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee
Date of Meeting:	21st October 2010

Purpose of Report: To set out the findings and recommendations of the Supporting Small Schools Review as commissioned by the SCSC on 16th February 2010

Recommended Action: To note the content of the report and approve the proposed recommendations/actions

Reason for decision to be taken: To establish a West Berkshire position on small schools

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority(ies):

- CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic downturn** – to alleviate the impact on different communities and individuals who find themselves out of work and/or disadvantaged
- CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels
- CPP3 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport**
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres**
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing**
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages**
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
- CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning**
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
- CPT12 - Including Everyone**
- CPT13 - Value for Money**
- CPT14 - Effective People**
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First**
- CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management**

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Barbara Alexander - Tel (01635) 201320
E-mail Address:	balexander@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Ian Pearson

Job Title:	Head of Education Service
Tel. No.:	01635 519729
E-mail Address:	ipearson@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	This report will help establish a Small Schools Policy
Financial:	No direct financial consequences If there are any financial implications contained within this report this section must be signed off by a West Berkshire Group Accountant. Please note that the report cannot be accepted by Policy and Communication unless this action has been undertaken.
Personnel:	No direct implications
Legal/Procurement:	N/A
Property:	Consideration of condition issues and support for school projects
Risk Management:	Ensuring effective education for all pupils
Equalities Impact Assessment:	None For advice please contact Principal Policy Officer (Equalities) on Ext. 2441.
Corporate Board's Recommendation:	N/A to be completed after the Corporate Board meeting

Executive Report Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On the 16th February 2010 the Stronger Communities Select Committee agreed a review of small primary schools in West Berkshire with an emphasis on how they might be supported.
- 1.2 In doing so, the Select Committee agreed the following terms of reference:
- To review the leadership, governance, funding and performance of small schools in West Berkshire, in partnership with schools and the Oxford CE Diocese.
 - Small schools in the scope of the Review are those with a roll of one hundred pupils or less in 2008 and/or 2009 (January census). The Review will consider demographics, value for money, asset issues and the contribution schools make to the communities they serve.
 - In addition, the Review will look at successful and innovative ways other authorities support small schools in their areas.
- 1.3 Sixteen primary schools (including one “infant”) were identified as being within the scope of the Review. These schools, their pupil numbers, net capacity/surplus places, forecasts and unit costs are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 Membership of the Review Group is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.5 The Review Group met five times as set out below:
- 26th February 2010
 - 26th March 2010
 - 7th May 2010
 - 21st July 2010
 - 17th September 2010

2. Key Areas of Review

- 2.1 The Review focussed on a number of key areas which are summarised under the following headings:
- Performance
 - Catchment/Demography/School Organisation
 - Finance
 - Leadership and Governance
 - Accommodation
 - Community Contribution/Links

- Local Authority initiatives and New Models

3. Performance

- 3.1 A number of studies have been conducted in England and overseas looking at the perceived advantage of small schools in achieving better attainment results. However, research has so far failed to identify a clear and consistent relationship between school size and performance.
- 3.2 Interestingly, it appears to be class size and organisation above school size that has the potential to influence outcomes. While small schools do not necessarily mean small classes, of necessity they more often than not operate mixed age groups.
- 3.3 For assessment of performance to be meaningful it is important to look at a high level of aggregation across several years in order to create a big enough data pool from which to draw conclusions that are statistically robust. Small school performance is particularly affected by individual pupils within small cohorts (e.g. SEN), movement of teachers, changes of head and funding. All this makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the role played by school size alone on overall performance at each key stage. This is equally true of attendance and exclusions, which tend to be individual pupil circumstance lead, with no obvious pattern other than anecdotally, it can appear disproportionate.
- 3.4 There is no doubt the quality of leadership and teaching/learning are the main determining factors when it comes to academic performance. This is borne out by an analysis of West Berkshire data when comparing a number of key indicators at different Key Stages. A Key Stage 2 analysis of results sharing two levels of progress from KS1 and Level 4 outcomes over a three-year period comparing performance with the West Berkshire and national averages was undertaken. This showed conclusively that small schools were performing well, with one or two exceptions where results remain stubbornly below the West Berkshire average.
- 3.5 The importance of the Headteacher was underlined by inspection evidence and in small schools Heads can have more of a direct influence on the quality of teaching and standards achieved because they nearly always have a teaching commitment and can lead by example.
- 3.6 The most recent Ofsted and Anglican inspection outcomes for the sixteen schools within the Review are attached as Appendices C₁ and C₂.
- 3.7 Another area that was reviewed was transition from small primary schools to much larger secondary schools. The evidence available indicated that there was no discernable difference in pupils either settling in or their academic performance.
- 3.8 Previous national research (LGA/NFER) has raised the issue of whether small schools can provide a broad curriculum and give pupils the same opportunities as larger schools in terms of experiences, resources and specialisms, particularly with the limited cohort sizes. Evidence from West Berkshire schools' Ofsted inspection reports does not support this hypothesis. In terms of breadth, most small schools have developed close working relationships with other schools to share experiences, including through the West Berkshire Small Schools Federation.

- 3.9 Successful small schools remain very popular with parents with advantages cited including high standards, good behaviour, positive ethos, family atmosphere, closeness to parents and importance to the local community/village.
- 3.10 While the Review Group felt it important that this report should remain uncluttered from the wealth of performance data reviewed, an example of school performance (Key Stage 2 results) is summarised in Appendix D.

4. Catchment/Demography/School Organisation

- 4.1 The Review Group looked at the location of small schools in West Berkshire, their catchment areas, secondary feeder links, roll numbers and pupil forecasts.
- 4.2 Of the sixteen schools reviewed five had a roll average of less than fifty over the last five years and one school an average of below forty. Individual school data is set out in Appendices A and E.
- 4.3 The Group also looked at where pupils on roll actually live, to identify those travelling in and out of catchment areas, so providing a view on popularity and travel arrangements. Parental choice plays an important part in the fortunes of small schools with some drawing in significant numbers of pupils from outside their area. Key Stage results and Ofsted reports can greatly influence the attractiveness of an individual school.
- 4.4 Consideration was given to size in relation to educational viability and whether there should be a minimum pupil number. It was also pointed out that numbers in year groups should also be taken into account. It was agreed that number on roll could be one element, amongst others that could trigger an organisational review, arrived at establishing viability and any additional support required.
- 4.5 Should reorganisation be considered this would need to take into account strategic place planning and the consequences of closure e.g. catchment realignment, travel costs, pressure on places in other (receiving) schools etc.
- 4.6 Interestingly, the last National Report that provided a definitive statement on school size was Plowden in 1967, which suggested a minimum school size of 60 with at least 20 in a class on the basis that schools smaller than this would lack the resources to provide “effective education”.

5. Finance

- 5.1 West Berkshire’s Schools’ Funding Formula includes a “primary taper” to cover “fixed costs” (those that have to be met by all schools irrespective of size based on a minimum teaching workforce of 2.2 including Headteacher and a class size of around 17/18) for schools where statutory numbers are below 200 pupils. In addition, there is further funded curriculum protection where pupil numbers are below 60. In 2010/11 around £900k was distributed via small schools factors to 42 schools, with seven schools getting the additional “below 60” allowance. When analysed across small schools within the Review, additional funding support varied between circa £32k and £39k, equating to a budget percentage of between 8.75% and 19.59%.
- 5.2 With only one exception, small schools, retained healthy revenue balances at the end of 2009/10, varying from around £3k to over £58k, the latter specifically to

support a significant capital project. Investment in ICT is another area where schools sometimes save up funds for replacement costs.

- 5.3 Unit costs vary considerably and are listed in Appendix A.
- 5.4 An analysis of small school funding in benchmark authorities, found almost universal protection being used in formulas, with West Berkshire as one of the higher funders.
- 5.5 It is recognised that the next round of work for the Heads' Funding Group/Schools' Forum is to review the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) element of the schools' funding formula and the small schools' funding factor will be a part of this discussion.
- 5.6 Small school representatives on the Review Group raised the issue of "buy back" and the fact this can be disproportionately expensive if calculated on anything other than a pupil number basis.

6. Leadership and Governance

- 6.1 As previously stated, strong and effective leadership is a key component in successful small schools.
- 6.2 The recruitment of Heads, staff and governors is of vital importance, as is retention to maintain continuity and parental/community confidence.
- 6.3 Appointing Headteachers has become more difficult over time as the burdens of the job have grown and deputies in larger primary schools are often remunerated as an equivalent or higher salary. At the same time, and to make the job more attractive and doable, the teaching commitment of heads has reduced and they are now supported by Business/Finance Managers to help spread the administrative burden. Sometimes these posts are beneficially shared between schools.
- 6.4 Filling vacancies can be somewhat unpredictable with some being filled first time, but most having to be advertised two or more times. Looking at data from the last couple of years small school headships application pools have varied between four and no candidates.
- 6.5 Many governors and chairs of governors are long serving and filling vacancies on governing bodies can sometimes take quite some time.
- 6.6 The Review Group considered in some detail the creation of a hard federation between Shefford and Chaddleworth St Andrew's schools, which are managed under a single Head and single governing body to ensure greater viability.
- 6.7 The two schools working as one have enabled staff and resources to be shared and a class structure which means that no more than two age cohorts are grouped together. This is a long term project which provides a structure for other schools to consider.

7. Accommodation

- 7.1 All pupils deserve an accommodation entitlement which supports teaching and learning and enables the national curriculum and early years foundation stage to be taught.
- 7.2 Small schools in West Berkshire vary significantly in age, construction and layout, as do their sites. Many have Victorian origins with rooms of difficult shapes and sizes together with planning restrictions. For many it is difficult to make them DDA compliant and some lack halls and suitable non-teaching space. This said, several schools have benefited from creative thinking and capital investment from a variety of sources. A number, however, remain challenged with specific needs yet to address. For others it is not design and space, but condition that poses the greatest challenge. More details are provided in Appendix F.
- 7.3 All schools receive devolved formula capital (DFC) and some projects have benefited from Council investment, support from the CE Diocese and a significant amount of local fund raising. Where projects have been instigated and delivered locally, the time required to fund raise and project manage should not be underestimated.

8. Community Contributions

- 8.1 All small schools within the scope of the Review were asked to contribute to this section. A summary of the contributions is listed in Appendix G. These contributions highlight the mutual support between schools and their local communities, with many identifying positive church connections. Comment was made on schools within communities underpinning the Council Plan themes of “vibrant villages” and “stronger communities”, adding to a sense of belonging/place and enlivening a sense of community.

9. Other Authorities

- 9.1 Most Local Authorities have school organisation policy documents that emphasise the importance of keeping open small schools, particularly in rural areas. With few exceptions authorities maintain viability by financial formula support (see Section 5 above). In addition, they encourage schools to share resource, such as business managers/admin and joint working/partnerships including more formal structures such as federations.
- 9.2 The Church of England Diocese maintains a position of wishing to keep open small church schools because of the value they add to local communities.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 Following a thorough review of small school provision within West Berkshire the Review Group has come up with a number of outcomes/recommendations for consideration, aimed at strengthening the viability of small schools to deliver high quality education, with a focus on pupil entitlement and outcomes, and community contribution.

11. Outcomes/Recommendations

- (1) Heads' Funding Group/Schools' Forum to review DSG formula and small schools' funding.
- (2) Encourage schools to explore the benefits of affiliations, creative partnerships and federations (structural and non-structural) where appropriate.
- (3) Encourage the sharing of capacity and resources e.g. business managers and curriculum expertise.
- (4) Establish a set of broad criteria that could trigger a support and viability review to consider the best way forward for a school. These criteria would include pupil numbers and trends, standards, finance and Headteacher/staff recruitment issues.
- (5) Develop an accommodation entitlement schedule, and assess schools against this. Deficiency to be added to capital programme criteria.
- (6) Develop a means by which innovative building solutions can be shared and school based projects can be offered project management support.
- (7) Review the feasibility of cooking meals on all sites.
- (8) Work with schools to promote and share community links.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Schools within the Review – (capacity, pupil numbers, budget etc)
- Appendix B – Membership of Review Group
- Appendix C₁ – Ofsted Inspection Outcomes of Schools within the Review
- Appendix C₂ – Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) Outcomes
- Appendix D – School Performance Summary
- Appendix E – Catchment Area Attendance Data
- Appendix F – Accommodation List
- Appendix G – Community Contributions by Schools

Schools in Review											
Schools	Status	Admission number	Numbers on Roll				Net Capacity as at January 2010	Surplus Places No May 2010 Return	Surplus Places % May 2010 Return	Budget £	Unit Cost £
			2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (forecast)					
Beedon CE Primary	VC	7	44	51	51	52	1	2	227,199	4,455	
Beenham Community Primary	LA	15	84	86	89	90	13	12	353,259	3,969	
Brightwalton CE Primary	VA	15	105	102	102	103	3	3	358,495	3,515	
Brimpton CE Primary	VC	9	39	48	43	42	20	32	248,696	5,784	
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE Primary	VC	8	45	44	19	20	32	57	197,995	10,421	
Enborne CE Primary	VA	8	52	52	59	59	1	2	241,714	4,097	
Hampstead Norreys CE Primary	VC	14	99	101	105	106	-4	-4	402,654	3,835	
Inkpen Community Primary	LA	12	51	57	59	59	26	30	302,410	5,126	
Purley CE Infant	VC	17	53	52	55	56	-4	-8	233,573	4,247	
Shaw cum Donnington CE Primary	VC	11	78	68	68	70	8	10	330,011	4,853	
Shefford CE Primary	VC	12	41	45	44	45	50	56	229,112	5,207	
Stockross CE Primary	VA	15	98	98	102	106	3	3	366,850	3,597	
The Isleys Community Primary	LA	12	62	64	72	69	13	15	285,793	3,969	
Welford & Wickham CE Primary	VC	12	51	66	76	77	8	10	311,063	4,093	
Woolhampton CE Primary	VA	15	87	91	95	94	11	10	366,964	3,863	
Yattendon CE Primary	VA	10	61	62	72	71	1	1	302,949	4,208	

Membership of Review Group

Ian Pearson	Head of Education Service (Chairman)
Andy Tubbs	Chief Adviser for School Improvement
Anna Ditchburn	Service Manager, Access*
Jeanne Lapsley	Service Manager, Advice, Information & Training*
Susan Robbins	Interim Manager, Advice, Information, Training & Access**
Caroline Corcoran	Service Manager, Advice, Information, Training & Access***
Andrew Breavington	School Improvement Adviser
Mark Lewis	Education Assets Manager
Janet Scott	Service Manager, Adult & Community Learning, Childcare/Children's Centres, Extended Services
Franco de Mori	Education Data Officer
Julie Mintern	Oxford CE Diocese
David Babb	Oxford CE Diocese
Florence Rostrun	Headteacher, Welford & Wickham Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Kathryn Simmons	Headteacher, Yattendon Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Sue George	Chair of Governors, Beedon Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Linda Curson	Chair of Governors, The Ilsleys Primary School⊗
Patricia Brims	Chair of Governors, Brimpton Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School⊗⊗
Barbara Alexander	West Berkshire Councillor, Portfolio Holder Education
Irene Neill	West Berkshire Councillor, Chairman Stronger Communities Select Committee
Alan Macro	West Berkshire Councillor, Shadow Executive Children & Young People

*, **, *** Posts replaced due to redundancy

⊗, ⊗⊗ LC resigned and now replaced by PB

Ofsted Inspections

School	Date of last / current Ofsted	Overall Effectiveness	Achievement and Standards	Quality of Provision	Personal Development & Well-being	Leadership & Management
Beedon	12.2.09	2	2	2	1	2
Beenham	24+25.1.07	2	2	2	2	2
Brightwalton	5+6.10.06 (22.4.09 – PE) Ofsted letter July '10 deferred to 09.2011 at earliest	2	2	2	1	2
Brimpton	25.2.09	3	3	3	2	3
Chaddleworth St. Andrew's	14-15. 07.10	3	3	3	2	3
Enborne	17.1.08	2	2	2	1	2
Hampstead Norreys	2.10.08	1	1	1	1	1
The Ilsleys	15.5.09	2	2	2	1	2
Inkpen	02-03.12.09	3	3	3	2	3
Purley Infants	08-09.02.10	1	1	1	1	1
Shaw cum Donnington	11-12.05.10	3	3	3	2	3
Shefford	14-15.7.10	3	3	3	2	3
Stockcross	5.12.06 Ofsted letter July '10 deferred to 09.2011 at earliest	2	1	2	1	2
Welford and Wickham	9.3.09	1	1	1	1	1
Woolhampton	7+8.2.08	3	3	3	2	3
Yattendon	12+13.3.09	2	2	2	1	2

Grades

- 1 = Outstanding
- 2 = Good
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 4 = Inadequate

**West Berkshire Small School Review
Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools – SIAS**

School	Date of last / current SIAS	How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners?	What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	How effective is the Religious Education?	How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	Overall judgement
Beedon CE (VC) Primary	19 th March 2009	1	2	n/a	1	1
Brightwalton CE (VA) Primary	30 th April 2007	1	2	3	1	2
Brimpton CE (VC) Primary	30 th April 2009	2	2	n/a	2	2
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE (VC) Primary	10 th 11 th October 2007	1	2	n/a	2	2
Enborne CE (VA) Primary	26 th February 2008	1	2	2	2	2
Hampstead Norreys CE (VC) Primary	13 th November 2008	1	1	1	1	1
Purley CE (VC) Infants	3 rd March 2010	1	2	n/a	1	1
Shaw cum Donnington CE (VC) Primary	11 th June 2010	3	3	n/a	3	3
Shefford CE (VC) Primary	10 th 11 th October 2007	1	2	n/a	2	2

School	Date of last / current SIAS	How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners?	What is the impact of collective worship on the school community	How effective is the Religious Education?	How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	Overall judgement
Stockcross CE (VA) Primary	5 February 2007	1	2	3	2	2
Welford & Wickham CE (VC) Primary	23 rd April 2009	1	1	1	2	1
Woolhampton CE (VA) Primary	28 th March 2008	2	3	2	3	3
Yattendon CE (VA) Primary	8 th May 2009	1	1	2	1	1

1 Outstanding

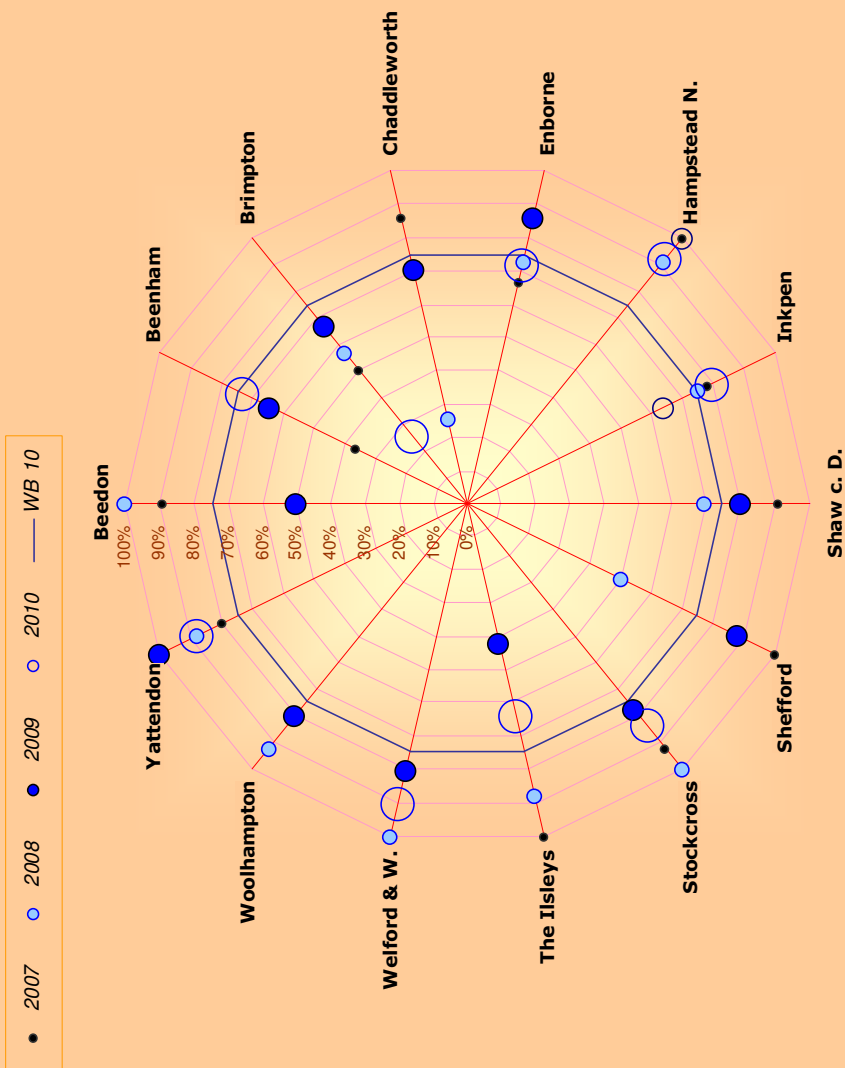
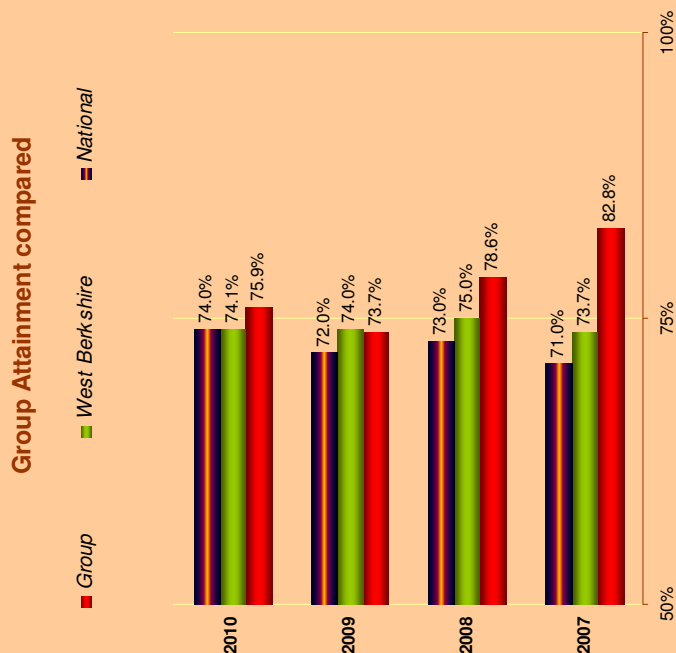
2 Good

3 Satisfactory

COMBINED ATT. TIME CHART 2007-10

Change in percentage of pupils attaining 4+ in E&M at KS2

Small Schools - ENGLISH & MATHS 4+



Catchment Area Attendance Data of Schools in Review						
Schools	Total living in Catchment May-09	Attending Catchment School May-09	Attending Other May-09	Percentage of Catchment Children on Roll May-09	Percentage from Outside Catchment May-09	
Beeton CE Primary	31	23	8	74	26	
Beenham Community Primary	67	56	11	84	16	
Brightwalton CE Primary	41	40	1	98	2	
Brimpton CE Primary	48	21	27	44	56	
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE Primary	80	33	47	41	59	
Enborne CE Primary	50	14	36	28	72	
Hampstead Norreys CE Primary	72	56	16	78	22	
Inkpen Community Primary	35	33	2	94	6	
Purley CE Infant	176	37	139	21	79	
Shaw cum Donnington CE Primary	71	16	55	23	77	
Shefford CE Primary	85	34	51	40	60	
Stockcross CE Primary	81	59	22	73	27	
The Ilsleys Community Primary	71	46	25	65	35	
Welford & Wickham CE Primary	38	29	9	76	24	
Woolhampton CE Primary	78	28	50	36	64	
Yattendon CE Primary	69	48	21	70	30	

Small Schools Accommodation

- Use of village halls for PE and Performance, sometimes providing a stage which would otherwise be unavailable
- Creative solutions developed by schools using devolved capital, including saving up for “bigger” solutions, including recent development of “log cabins” (Beedon and Brimpton)
- Importance of site size, hard play and parking spaces
- Buildings to be DDA compliant
- Mindful of energy usage and carbon reduction, particularly in relation to older buildings
- Sometimes disproportional cost of fire compliance
- Importance of broadband access and appropriate ICT solutions
- Making Victorian designs fit for modern teaching and learning
- Often schools find themselves managing difficult shaped and sized rooms
- For some schools planning restrictions pose significant problems through such issues as listing or AONB
- Important to recognise the requirement for appropriate adult space – Head/Staff/Office/loos/PPA facilities
- Need for appropriate security and obvious and attractive entrance area
- Accommodation for SEN including small withdrawal areas
- Important that spaces reflect the current curriculum, but remain flexible so they can be turned to a variety of uses
- Hall size in relation to delivering the PE curriculum
- Recognition of school meals both in terms of preference and practicalities e.g. cooking on site
- Size and number of classrooms
- Colleagues present then described two project case studies:
 - Welford and Wickham – Florence set out how the vision for accommodation at the school had been developed and the practicalities of a year of building work which had seen the school hall double in size. Space is still at a premium within the school and a further project is planned which would include the attached school house.
 - Beedon – Sue George explained the school’s current project which aims to significantly increase and improve accommodation using the latest timber construction technology which is delivering an advantageous cost effective solution
 - Both projects have required significant time and energy and this input should not be under-estimated.
 - Another point raised was the ability of small schools to access facilities at other schools, either through primary partnerships or working closely with partner secondary schools. Kathryn cited the

positive opportunities provided for Yattendon pupils at Mary Hare
via the Primary Schools Partnership.

- Small areas for withdrawal

Small Schools Contribution to Community

Community Links

Heart of the community goodwill towards school

Awareness of the community in which they live – day to day involvement, local history, traditional events, local enterprises

Community Cohesion

Community supporting school

Children engage with all generations through the community

Local community planning – parish plan Parish council links Parish magazine

Local people provide services to school at good rates

Use of local amenities – village hall, green

Extended services – after school clubs supported by community members

Volunteers support the school with reading, and after school clubs, community governors

School supporting community

Local community events held at school – Fayre, Fetes, polling station

School is an employer of local people

Community lunch in school

Old peoples' homes, links with community harvest baskets

Using school as a base for other services – Police, Fire service, support groups for parents and educational opportunities for life-long learning – use of ICT

Transport for local children

Notice board and website to advertise community event

Community presentations e.g. Corn Exchange, Arlington arts

Links with preschool provision

Church links

Church links

School uses church for celebrations and services

Church benefits from school involvement in local services – school choirs etc

Whole school community benefits from pastoral links with parish priest

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 7.

Title of Report:	Work Programme
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 October 2010

Purpose of Report: To consider and prioritise the work programme for the remainder of 2010/11.

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

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
E-mail Address:	schard@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members are requested to consider the latest work programme of the Select Committee attached at Appendix A, prioritise the items listed and discuss any future areas for scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Officers Consulted: Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager

Trade Union: N/A

STRONGER COMMUNITIES 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/09/24	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 Lyttle - 2638 and Mark Edwards - 2208 Planning & Trading Standards 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/10/77	Housing register To consider the workings of the list, reviews, communication with those on the waiting list.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	To be identified.	SCSC	Start: 08/07/10 End:	June Graves - 2733 Housing & Performance	Councillor Alan Law	As requested by OSMC on 26th January 2010. Agreement to form a working group by SCSC. First meeting 6/9/10.
OSMC/09/39	Playbuilder Programme Assessment of arrangements for improving play provision.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	To improve play provision.	SCSC	Start: 21/10/10 End: 21/10/10	David Hogg - 2815 Youth Services & Commissioning	Councillor Gordon Lundie	High profile activity that addresses concerns raised consistently by local people.
OSMC/09/42	Supporting Small schools To review funding pupil numbers and educational viability.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.		SCSC	Start: 21/10/10 End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Retaining small rural schools is currently Council policy.
OSMC/09/47	Monitor changes introduced to the Youth Service To monitor annually the progress of the changes being introduced to the Youth Service and the impact that they make on an annual basis until 1 year after all changes have been fully introduced.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	SCSC	Start: 27/01/11 End: 27/01/11	Mark Vernon - 2552 Children & Youth Services	Councillor Gordon Lundie	This was a recommendation of the facilities for young people task group that was endorsed by the OSC.
OSMC/10/83	Primary 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: 27/01/11 End: 27/01/11	Malcolm Berry - 2770 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Accepted onto the work programme by OSMC on 25/5

STRONGER COMMUNITIES 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/09/37	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:	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.