

# Notice of Meeting

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## **Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Monday, 7th February, 2011 at 6.30pm**  
in Committee Room 1 Council Offices  
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Thursday, 27 January 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 - Stronger Communities Select Committee to be held on Monday, 7 February 2011 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Ellen Crumly, David Holtby, Mollie Lock, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Irene Neill (Chairman) and Ieuan Tuck
- Substitutes:** Councillors George Chandler, Billy Drummond, Adrian Edwards and Roger Hunneman
- Other Invitees:** Councillor Barbara Alexander (Portfolio Holder for Education) and Caroline Corcoran (Service Manager (Advice, Information, Training and Access))
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## 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 21 October 2010. 1 - 6
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.
4. **Actions from previous Minutes**  
*Purpose: To receive an update on actions following the previous Committee.*
5. **Demand for Primary School Places**  
*Purpose: To brief Members of the actions taken in relation to primary school places in West Berkshire. .* 7 - 14
6. **School Academies**  
*Purpose: To outline the proposed Terms of Reference and scope for a review into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority.* 15 - 16
7. **Scrutiny review into the Council's Common Housing Register**  
*Purpose: To outline to the Stronger Communities Select Committee the draft recommendations arising from a task group review into the operation of the Council's Common Housing Register.* 17 - 32



**Agenda - Stronger Communities Select Committee to be held on Monday, 7 February  
2011 (continued)**

8. **Work Programme** 33 - 36  
*Purpose: To consider and prioritise the work programme for the remainder of 2010/11.*
9. **Exclusion of Press and Public**  
**RECOMMENDATION:** That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. Rule 9.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

## **Part II**

10. **Standards and Effectiveness Panel** 37 - 60  
*Purpose: To note reports from the Standards and Effectiveness Panel.*

Andy Day  
Head of Policy and Communication

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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, 21 OCTOBER 2010**

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

**Also Present:** David Hogg (Head of Youth Services and Commissioning), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer)

#### **PART I**

##### **16. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

##### **17. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### **18. Actions from previous Minutes**

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

The first meeting of the Housing Register Task Group was held on 27 September 2010 and a further meeting scheduled for 5 November 2010.

Much of the discussion at the first meeting related to the contact made with people on the Common Housing Register (CHR) as part of reviews. A particular concern for the task group was the more vulnerable people on the CHR who could potentially be removed from the CHR as a result of this process. The next meeting had an item on the agenda to explore ways for Ward Members to assist with the process of making contact with residents, but there were data protection restrictions. It was hoped that a report could be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the update would be noted.

##### **19. Playbuilder Programme**

The Committee considered a report providing progress with the Playbuilder Scheme (Agenda Item 5).

David Hogg presented his report and made the following points:

- West Berkshire was awarded a grant of £1.1m capital and £44k revenue in 2009 with the expectation of building new play facilities or refurbishing existing dilapidated play facilities.
- There was a requirement for at least 11 individual projects to be completed within 2009/10 and 2010/11.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 21 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES**

- 12 highly successful projects were completed in 2009/10 which brought significant improvements to play facilities. Positive feedback had been received from the local communities involved.
- Based on the tight timescales experienced in 2009/10, the process for 2010/11 commenced as early as possible and a further 12 projects were agreed.
- However, it was announced on 14 July 2010 by the Secretary of State that the funding was not guaranteed and local authorities were instructed to cease activity until a review of the funding had been completed.
- Information was provided to the Department for Education (DfE) to advise that ground work had started for two projects and that all 12 had binding agreements with West Berkshire Council to commence work.
- Some time passed before any feedback was received. This was a difficult situation for those with projects in hand and other sources of funding were being considered, but no feedback had been received on these to date.
- A letter received today (21 October 2010) was circulated to the Committee which advised that West Berkshire Council would be awarded the full capital amount requested of £585k. This was a higher figure than that stated in the report as it included an additional amount to cover a project that was already completed.
- It was hoped that this good news could be communicated to those with projects as soon as possible, but a decision had been taken to delay this until the full terms of reference had been received from the DfE. This would ensure that there was no reason why the funding could not be distributed, i.e. time restrictions to complete work. In addition, the ring fence attached to this grant had been removed and there was the potential to reconsider its spend, although it was hoped that commitments would be fully honoured. The Select Committee shared this view and felt it should be protected as capital money.
- No mention had been made as to whether revenue funding would be received. This was stopped at the same time as the capital funding and as a result the Project Manager's fixed term contract had to be ended. This member of staff was in a position to recommence work at short notice and discussions were ongoing to confirm if revenue funding was available and to seek a way to restart the post without significant delay.

**RESOLVED** that the update would be noted and David Hogg thanked for his efforts in ensuring this funding was received in full.

### **20. Supporting Small Schools**

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 6) detailing the findings and recommendations of the Supporting Small Schools Review.

Ian Pearson introduced the item by making the following points:

- This extensive piece of work commenced in February 2010 when the Select Committee approved terms of reference for a review. The review membership included Councillors Irene Neill and Alan Macro as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee. Its terms of reference were as follows:
  - To review the leadership, governance, funding and performance of small schools in West Berkshire, in partnership with schools and the Oxford Church of England (CE) Diocese.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 21 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES**

- Small schools in the scope of the review were those with a roll of one hundred pupils or less in 2008 and/or 2009 (January census). The review would consider demographics, value for money, asset issues and the contribution schools made to the communities they served.
- In addition, the review would look at successful and innovative ways other authorities support small schools in their areas.
- The review focussed on a number of key areas and the findings for each of these areas was detailed as follows:

### **Performance**

Efforts were made to establish whether there was any correlation between school size and performance levels, but this was inconclusive.

It could be more challenging for smaller schools to achieve good results due to the need for mixed age classes. It was also true that due to the small numbers of pupils, performance when recorded as a percentage could be negatively skewed by one pupil. The high number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in some small schools could also affect performance.

When considering the results of Ofsted inspections, it was found that all the small schools were rated as being satisfactory or higher. There were some cases where schools were considered satisfactory in many areas, whereas others were seen as having outstanding or good practices. Similar results were provided following Statutory Inspections of Anglican Schools, which were conducted for the small CE schools.

Attainment levels in English and Maths at KS2 showed a range of performance across small schools. Some achieved consistently above the West Berkshire average, some performed at a similar level and others below the average. This meant that it was not easy to consider small schools as single group in terms of performance levels.

Successful small schools remained very popular with parents with the result that they were often at capacity. This often included a number of pupils attending from outside the catchment area.

### **Catchment/Demography/School Organisation**

Of the 16 schools reviewed five had a roll average of less than 50 over the last five years and one school an average of below forty. School popularity was changeable, but it took time for an unpopular school to recover and be viewed more favourably by parents.

The review group felt that viability was an issue if numbers dropped below a certain level. No view had been taken on a particular number, but it was a factor that could trigger an organisation review.

There was no recent national guidance to help identify a minimum number of pupils across a school and in a class.

### **Finance**

Low pupil numbers did not mean that small schools became financially unviable as West Berkshire's Schools' Funding Formula ensured that fixed costs incurred by all schools, i.e. staffing, were met, in addition to funding received per pupil. This funding protection was also utilised by benchmark local authorities.

A decision on whether or not a small school continued to operate would not therefore be based solely on funding viability. However, low numbers could cause high unit costs. The average unit cost across West Berkshire in 2010 was £3.4k and all 16 schools considered in the review had a higher unit cost of varying degrees. The highest was

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 21 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES**

Chaddleworth St Andrews (school with the smallest number on roll) with a unit cost of £10.4k. This was a factor when considering educational viability and a potential need for an organisational review.

With only one exception, small schools retained healthy revenue balances at the end of 2009/10. The one school outside of this was saving towards a significant capital project.

Since West Berkshire Council was formed in 1998 it had aimed to support and maintain small schools and none had closed. There had been some reconfiguration of schools but this was aimed at supporting small schools. An example of this was the federation that had formed between Shefford and Chaddleworth St Andrew's schools, the benefits of which enabled both schools to remain open. The effectiveness of this, and other federations, was monitored on an ongoing basis.

Ian Pearson made it clear that while the review was about supporting small schools, the focus was not just about keeping them all open. Of most importance was ensuring that children educated in small schools in West Berkshire received the best education possible. Although it was the Council's policy to support small schools, it might be necessary to make difficult decisions in future based on their viability.

Members noted with concern that the percentage of catchment children on roll was low at some schools and schools were therefore not seen to have full local support. It was questioned whether the catchment areas were a factor in this and Members were advised of forthcoming reviews of some catchment areas. Ian Pearson advised that it was the intention for all village schools to provide sufficient places for children living in the village.

The efforts made to encourage parents to send their children to catchment schools were then discussed. Ian Pearson explained that some schools were more proactive in this regard and suggested that this could be increased by including a section in admissions material on the benefits of choosing a local school. However, this would not be an option for some schools as places were not sufficient for all pupils living in the catchment. In addition, parents considered a range of factors when choosing a school including Ofsted reports and transport, and if a place was available they would send their child to a preferred school outside of their catchment.

### **Leadership and Governance**

Strong and effective leadership was a key component in successful small schools.

Recruiting Headteachers to small schools had caused difficulties, as was the case in many other schools. Efforts had been made to make these posts more attractive by reducing the teaching commitment of Headteachers and by recruiting Business/Finance Managers to reduce the administrative burden (these posts were often shared between schools). Experienced Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers had been willing to cover vacancies, but only on a short term basis. Filling Governor vacancies could also present difficulties.

### **Accommodation**

Due to the different ages, layout etc of small schools the building facilities varied. Many approaches had been taken to try and deliver solutions, but some schools remained accommodation deficient and not all were DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant. There was therefore a need to look at the potential for remedying some of these issues through the capital programme. An offer of project management assistance might need to be offered to support schools with building projects.



### Community Contributions

Headteachers involved in the review gave feedback on the ways in which schools contributed to its community and vice versa. Many of these initiatives supported Council Plan themes, including vibrant villages and stronger communities. Positive initiatives would be promoted to schools who were less engaged.

### Other Authorities

It was found that similar approaches were undertaken in other local authorities to support small schools.

The CE Diocese maintained a position of wishing to keep open small church schools because of the value they added to local communities.

### Recommendations

Eight recommendations for improvement were identified as a result of the review, aimed at strengthening the viability of small schools to deliver high quality education, with a focus on pupil entitlement and outcomes, and community contribution. These were discussed by the Select Committee with amendments requested/comments made as follows:

Recommendation one – Heads Funding Group/Schools Forum to review DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) formula and small schools funding **to help support and strengthen small schools.**

Recommendation two - Encourage schools to explore the benefits of affiliations, creative partnerships and federations (structural and non-structural) where appropriate **with schools of all sizes.** It was felt that positive benefits from an affiliation with a larger school would include support to gifted/talented pupils and for involvement in sports activities.

Recommendation seven to review the feasibility of cooking meals on all sites was not specifically identified as part of the review, but the majority of schools were keen to explore this as an alternative to buying meals in.

In conclusion, the Select Committee felt this was a comprehensive piece of work and, subject to minor amendments, the recommendations of the small schools review were accepted in their entirety. Members added that they were pleased with the efforts being made to continue to support small schools.

Members made one additional request that the finalised report be circulated to all small schools as participants in the review.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- (1) Subject to minor amendments the recommendations of the small schools review would be accepted in their entirety.
- (2) The amended report would be circulated to the Select Committee and to Ian Pearson for approval prior to its being presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC).
- (3) The finalised report would be circulated to all small schools as participants in the review.

## 21. Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for the remainder of 2010/11 (Agenda Item 7).

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE - 21 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES**

Councillor Irene Neill advised of a seminar she attended recently on the Big Society and felt this was an initiative that could be explored by the Committee. This was supported by Members who felt it was opportune to look at enabling people and encouraging them to take responsibility in their own communities. The need to better share existing facilities was felt to be an important factor to consider, as was the potential to improve transportation links for those living in rural areas.

Stephen Chard agreed to discuss this piece of work with colleagues in Policy and Communication to help form a proposed way forward. This would be agreed with Committee Members before the proposal was taken to the OSMC for approval. It was then hoped that the topic could be added to the work programme and work commenced at January's meeting.

An item was on the work programme for January's meeting to monitor the changes being introduced to the Youth Service. However, it was agreed that the need for this item would be reviewed after the OSMC had conducted its wider review on activities for teenagers in December 2010.

The joint review conducted with the Greener Select Committee into the accessibility of public transport continued. It was hoped that an update would be provided on this work at the next OSMC.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (1) Stephen Chard would form a proposal for conducting a piece of work on the Big Society. This would be agreed with Committee Members before the proposal was taken to the OSMC for approval.
- (2) The need for the item regarding the changes being introduced to the Youth Service would be reviewed after the OSMC had conducted its wider review on activities for teenagers in December 2010.
- (3) The work programme would be noted.

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

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

# Agenda Item 5.

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Demand for Primary School Places</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Stronger Communities Select Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	07/02/2011

**Purpose of Report:** To brief Members of the actions taken in relation to primary school places in West Berkshire

**Recommended Action:** To note the report

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement</b> – improving school performance levels
The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning</b>
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by: achieving a workable balance between the number of places available in the LA and the number of pupils for whom the LA will need places

Portfolio Member Details	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Barbara Alexander - Tel (01635) 201320
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	balexander@westberks.gov.uk
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	26/01/11

Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	Caroline Corcoran
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## Implications

**Policy:** N/A

**Financial:** Changes to the capacity of schools are carefully considered within the resources available, for example, some works are included within the Capital Programme, although this is reducing. 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.

<b>Personnel:</b>	N/A
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	N/A
<b>Property:</b>	The implication of any changes to school place planning are discussed with the Education Assets Team, who in turn liaise with Property as and when this is necessary.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	Where a decision is required, Policy and Communication are not able to accept your report without an EIA being completed. These should be sent to P&C along with your report and should be copied to the Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity). For advice please contact Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity) on Ext. 2441.
<b>Corporate Board's Recommendation:</b>	To be completed after the Corporate Board meeting.

# Executive Summary

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to provide enough places for pupils resident in its area. In addition, the LA has a strategic planning role for the provision of sufficient places over time. The planning of school places therefore aims to achieve a workable balance between the number of places available in the LA and the number of pupils for whom the LA will need places. To meet this duty, the LA monitors and adjusts the number and type of places for pupils through forward planning.
- 1.2 During the 2010 Admissions allocation round, it was noted that other Authorities, including Kent and Hampshire, were experiencing difficulties with the demand for pupil places. This report provides information on the actions taken since February 2010 to review and improve the process in relation to the demand for school places.
- 1.3 In 2010, there were 2126 applications for primary school places. Of these 1858 related to West Berkshire residents (87.4%) with the remainder being out of area applicants.
- 1.4 Of the 1858 West Berkshire resident applications, 1398 (75.2%) were offered their first choice of place.
- 1.5 Of the total number of applicants, including out of area applications, 1510 out of 2126 applications were offered their first choice of place (71.0%)
- 1.6 It is too early to comment on the outcomes of the 2011 Admissions Round, as this information will not be available until March/April 2011.

## 2. Proposals

- 2.1 The following activities have taken place to address the concerns regarding the planning for the demand for school places
  - (a) Development of the School Place Plan (high-level summary).
  - (b) Area Review of Thatcham/North Newbury to address specific school place issues.
  - (c) Development of an improved model for school place planning, building on good practice from other LAs, whilst retaining the strengths of the existing West Berkshire system.
  - (d) Interim arrangements, where this is appropriate to meet the need for places, and fits within the overall strategic view.
- 2.2 The following will be implemented from April 2011:
  - (e) Implementation of a Rolling Programme of Area Reviews.
  - (f) Plans to improve the information outputs for school place planning.

## 3. Conclusion

- 3.1 During 2010, there has been considerable activity to ensure that the Council is best positioned, going forward, to deal with the changing patterns of parental preference

and the demand for pupil places, within the current challenging financial constraints.

# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of West Berkshire Council's stated aims is "to enable all children and young people to maximise their potential while intervening positively to ensure that the most vulnerable have an equal opportunity to succeed". To achieve this the Council provides high quality education through a diverse provision of school types giving a wide selection of school places in order to maximise meeting parental preferences as much as possible.
- 1.2 The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to provide enough places for pupils resident in its area. In addition, the LA has a strategic planning role for the provision of sufficient places over time. The planning of school places therefore aims to achieve a workable balance between the number of places available in the LA and the number of pupils for whom the LA will need places. To meet this duty, the LA monitors and adjusts the number and type of places for pupils through forward planning.
- 1.3 During the 2010 Admissions allocation round, it was noted that other Authorities, including Kent and Hampshire, were experiencing difficulties with the demand for pupil places. This report provides information on the actions taken since February 2010 to review and improve the process in relation to the demand for school places.

## 2. Admissions Round 2010

- 2.1 In 2010, there were 2126 applications for primary school places. Of these 1858 related to West Berkshire residents (87.4%) with the remainder being out of area applicants.
- 2.2 Of the 1858 West Berkshire resident applications, 1398 (75.2%) were offered their first choice of place.
- 2.3 Of the total number of applicants, including out of area applications, 1510 out of 2126 applications were offered their first choice of place (71.0%).
- 2.4 One example of an area where there were issues related to the broad geographical location serving Theale, Aldermaston, Mortimer, Sulhampstead, Burghfield and Mrs Blands. In this area, there were 220 applicants from catchment area children and 208 places, representing a shortfall of 12 places. This was addressed by three of the schools admitting additional pupils above their standard admission number.
- 2.5 It is too early to comment on the outcomes of the 2011 Admissions Round, as this information will not be available until March/April 2011.

## 3. School Place Plan

- 3.1 During the latter half of 2010, a West Berkshire School Place Plan was completed and contains the principles of school place planning, with an Area by Area summary analysis.

3.2 There are 6 Areas within West Berkshire Council, based on geographical and secondary provision:

Area 1 – Mortimer  
Area 2 – Calcot  
Area 3 – Newbury

Area 4 – Thatcham/North Newbury  
Area 5 – West  
Area 6 – Downs

3.2 The current pupil place planning system focuses on forecasting:

- total pupil numbers for all schools, for all Primary schools and for all Secondary schools
- pupil forecasts for individual schools

3.3 Forecasting for all schools uses historical data and survival rates as a basis for the numbers. This is then modified using local intelligence and data such as birth data, housing developments and building programmes.

3.4 Forecasting for individual schools uses historical Number on Roll (NOR) for 7 years and a popularity index (parental preferences, application, school performance information, waiting lists, local school factors) as well as birth data and information on housing developments and building programmes.

3.5 As we move forward, future projections will need to include academies and take account of sufficiency calculations and basic need considerations.

#### **4. Area Review of Thatcham/North Newbury**

4.1 During the Autumn 2010, an Area Review was undertaken covering Thatcham/North Newbury. The intake for September 2010 exceeded the capacity within the Thatcham catchment area. Temporary measures were put in place, with an additional 15 pupils being placed at Thatcham Park CE Primary School, increasing the size of the year group from the normal Admissions Number of 45 to 60 pupils.

4.2 As a result of this increase in pupil place requirements, an Area Review was undertaken, to enable a strategic view to be taken on whether this increase in numbers is likely to be sustained in coming years, and, if so, to deliver recommendations on how this could be managed.

4.3 As a result of the Area Review, the following recommendations were made:

a) The admission number for Thatcham Park School was increased. This recommendation was based on:

- The balance of children within the catchment area compared to the places available at the school shows that potential demand outstrips current provision.
- General demand for school places within the locality under review is exceeding demand.
- Potential on the school site to accommodate additional pupils.

b) The catchment areas for Francis Baily and Spurcroft schools were reviewed, in consultation with the schools, to establish a better balance between parental preferences and available places, whilst maintaining viability of school provision at both schools.



## 5. Development of a revised model for School Place Planning

- 5.1 During Autumn 2010, a study was undertaken to:
- Develop a strategic approach for the delivery of robust pupil place planning information which meets the school place planning needs of the LA and ensures effective engagement with schools.
  - Implement a structured process which produces high quality and robust information to inform decision-making in relation to school place management, with the objective of fulfilling West Berkshire parental preferences in relation to pupil places.
  - Ensure that LA responsibilities for delivery of statutory requirements are met, including delivering to statutory timelines and adherence to quality standards.
- 5.2 The study included liaison with representatives of schools to ascertain their needs, liaison with existing staff to understand the processes which currently exist in West Berkshire Council and researching the business outcomes and methods used in other LAs. This was especially useful in terms of looking at how much larger LAs operate and examining the potential for creating a model which takes account of existing good practice.
- 5.3 The strengths of the existing system were:
- Pupil projections are created using a structured methodology and appropriate source data.
  - Information is extracted to support decision-making.
  - Projections are compared with the January census and May count of pupils numbers to allow a retrospective review of whether the projections reflect reality over time, and to explore whether the pupil projection tool needs further refinement.
  - There is movement towards an Area Review model and a more structured approach.
- 5.4 Based on a robust analysis of the strengths and areas for development in the current system it has been proposed that three core components are delivered through the revised School Place Planning model, bringing a structured approach to activity which is currently happening on an ad hoc/emerging need basis, and clarifying the outputs which will be produced. These will feed into an annual planned programme of activity.
- 5.5 The primary benefits to this structured approach are:
- A level of confidence that the views of schools are being sought within a stated timeframe and all schools have an opportunity to be heard.
  - The opportunity for the assumptions underpinning projections to be scrutinised and intelligence gathered, allowing projections to be further refined.
  - Clear expectations for LA staff and schools about outputs, timeframes and availability of information.
- 5.6 Components of the model are:
- A rolling Planned Programme of Area Reviews with stakeholders. The rolling programme would be the primary mechanism for determining any changes

to admission numbers, net capacities etc. There would be a set process and timeline so that it was clear when an Area Review would take place, and the timeframe for the final report.

- The annual refresh of the School Place Plan, combining the outcomes of the Area Reviews into a single Plan which includes WBC principles and priorities and provides a retrospective review of actual pupil numbers in the recent allocation round and an outline of the future projections and decisions/actions which are being taken as a result.
- Clear information outputs, which would include the place planning spreadsheet, analysis of social deprivation and pupil mobility and individual school “dashboard” showing actual and projected pupil places.

- 5.7 The School Place Plan would provide an overview of school places at whole-Council level. It is also noted that the main content of the School Place Plan is the Area analyses, which would have been produced through the Planned Programme of Area Reviews (and, therefore, would include more detail than the summaries in the current School Place Plan).
- 5.8 The improvement in information outputs and engagement with stakeholders are key aspects of the model. Data analysis was already being done, and research has shown that the methods used were as robust as those used by other LAs. The new model addresses the need for clarified outputs, accessibility of information and greater transparency.
- 5.9 This new model will be implemented by April 2011. The rolling programme of Area Reviews will begin shortly, and the stakeholders will include the relevant Ward Members.

## **6. Interim Arrangements**

- 6.1 In addition to formal reviews, a number of interim arrangements have been put in place for September 2011. This has been especially important to ensure that, despite reductions in capital funding, and taking into account the removal of the national focus on surplus places, every opportunity to maximise the number of places available to West Berkshire residents is explored.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 During 2010, there has been considerable activity to ensure that the Council is best positioned, going forward, to deal with the changing patterns of parental preference and the demand for pupil places, within the current challenging financial constraints.

## **Appendices**

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There are no Appendices to this report.

## **Consultees**

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**Local Stakeholders:** Representative headteachers via consultative groups

**Officers Consulted:** Ian Pearson, Head of Education

# Agenda Item 6.

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>School Academies</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Stronger Communities Select Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 February 2011

**Purpose of Report:** To outline the proposed Terms of Reference and scope for a review into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority.

**Recommended Action:** To agree the proposed Terms of Reference.

<b>Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman</b>	
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<b>Contact Officer Details</b>	
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# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Academies Act 2010 aims to make it possible for all publicly-funded schools in England to become academies, still publicly-funded but with a vastly increased degree of autonomy in issues such as the setting of teachers' wages and diverging from the National Curriculum.
- 1.2 This report proposes that a review be carried out into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority. It outlines proposed Terms of Reference and presents a suggested methodology.

## 2. Proposed Terms of Reference

- 2.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission gave its agreement to a review being conducted by the Stronger Communities Select Committee into the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority, and specifically to:
- (1) understand the scope and range of the powers allowed to schools under the Academies Act 2010;
  - (2) assess the immediate and likely take up within West Berkshire;
  - (3) evaluate the effect of schools' action on the capacity and capability of the Local Education Authority; and
  - (4) report to the Executive with recommendations.

## 3. Methodology

- 3.1 It is proposed that the review is carried out by the Select Committee, either through examination at a scheduled meeting or by the establishment of a task group.

## 4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Select Committee agrees the Terms of Reference for the review.

## Appendices

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There are no Appendices to this report.

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Scrutiny review into the Council's Common Housing Register</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Stronger Communities Select Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 February 2011

**Purpose of Report:** To outline to the Stronger Communities Select Committee 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 Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

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

<b>Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman</b>	
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# Executive Report

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## 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:

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

- 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.

## **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.

Or, if Locata does not hold or is unable to extract ward information:

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager, in conjunction with the GIS Projects Analyst, should conduct a manual data matching exercise between an extracted version of Locata and the LLPG which will allow relevant ward information to be added to the extract for use by Ward Members.

## **10. Recommendation for the Stronger Communities Select Committee**

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Committee agree the suggestions outlined in section 9 for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission. Once endorsed these will be forwarded for the Executive's consideration.

## **Appendices**

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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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# Agenda Item 8.

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Work Programme</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Stronger Communities Select Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 February 2011

**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.

<b>Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman</b>	
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## Executive Report

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### 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.
- 1.2 At the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission an item has been added to the work programme to review the effect of schools becoming Academies on the capacity of the Local Education Authority. The Terms of Reference for this work is being discussed under item 6 of this agenda.
- 1.3 As already confirmed, the meeting that was scheduled for 28 April 2011 has been cancelled. This is due to the close proximity of that date to the local elections.

### Appendices

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Appendix A – Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme

### Consultees

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**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/10/77	Common Housing Register To consider the workings of the register, 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: 07/02/11	June Graves - 2733 Housing & Performance	Councillor Alan Law	As requested by OSMC on 26th January 2010. Agreement to form a working group by SCSC. Two meetings held.
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	Accepted onto the work programme by OSMC on 25/5
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/10/95	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/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.
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 & 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

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