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Notice of Meeting

Executive

Thursday, 21st July, 2011 at 6.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 13 July 2011

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Stephen Chard / Linda Pye on (01635) 519462 / 519052
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West Berkshire COUNCIL

To:	Councillors Pamela Bale, David Betts, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Gordon Lundie, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill and Anthony Stansfeld

Agenda

Part I

Page(s)

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).

2. **Minutes** 1 - 12
   To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th June 2011.

3. **Declarations of Interest**
   To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.

4. **Public Questions**
   Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

   (a) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services:**
   "Noting that the priority for highways should be resurfacing and improving accident blackspot areas and at a time when the Lib Dems are calling for more money to be spent in these areas, can the member for highways assure the residents who use Pound Lane bus stop and service 102 that no alterations will be made at the Lower Way / A4 junction that will result in the loss of their bus services?"

   (b) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Culture and Leisure:**
   "With regards to the proposed incinerator at Chieveley, could Cllr Hillary Cole please advise whether AONB designation offers sufficient protection against developments such as the proposed incinerator?"

   (c) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Finance, Property, Health & Safety:**
   "At a time when council employees are losing jobs and services continue to be reduced to meet the challenging funding reductions from central Government, could the member for finance assure taxpayers that no council funds will be allocated to non essential projects such as the Wharf Redevelopment and that such projects must be 100% self funding?"

(d) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development:**
"With electric trains proposed to be introduced between Newbury and Paddington in the coming years and the "Thames Turbo" fleet being removed from the Great Western franchise, what action is the council taking at this point to ensure that regular rail services to and from Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn continue despite the lack of electrification to those stations?"

(e) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Strategy, Performance, Community Safety:**
"Throughout the process of the CCTV transfer, I was very clear that I support the aims of saving money and improving the services and I am pleased that the council are achieving these aims despite misguided quotes that the council had wasted money on this project. Could Cllr Stansfeld provide an update as to how many cameras of the 40 that are being retained are now in operation (no locations required) and when the project is expected to be completed?"

(f) **Question submitted by Mr. Richard Garvie to the Executive Member for Children and Young People, Youth Service:**
"With two of our schools becoming academies and with others expected to follow later, could the member for education advise as to the extent of financial challenges this will present in terms of reduced education funding to the LA and how much (if any) remaining LA controlled school budgets are expected to fall in the next financial year (by percentage)?"

(g) **Question submitted by Mr. Alexander Payton to the Executive Member for Children and Young People, Youth Service:**
"The designated schools for the Newbury Racecourse development are Park House and The Willows - both of them involving either a long and steep climb (relative to other nearby schools) or a car journey through the congested road junctions around Stroud Green or Hambridge Road and A339. How does the Executive Member for Children and Young People reconcile this with the need to encourage sustainable travel, in which the school run plays a key role?"

(h) **Question submitted by Mr. Sam Dibas to the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development:**
"In a local radio interview on 9th July, the Executive Member for Planning said, when asked if the decision to include Sandleford, as well as Newbury Racecourse, in the Core Strategy as a strategic site was 'difficult' that it was 'complex'. In the light of the Inspector's demand for a single document explaining the reasoning behind this decision, how will the Executive Member now set out what those reasons are in a way that isn't complex and which might reassure residents of South Newbury and Greenham that the local infrastructure is not going to be completely overwhelmed?"

5. **Petitions**
Councillors or members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

		Page(s)
6.	**Civil Contingencies Annual Report 2010/11 (EX2058)** (CPT:07) Purpose: To update Members about National and Local Civil Contingencies issues over 2010/11.	13 - 34
7.	**Community Led Planning - Performance Report 2010/11 (EX2126)** (CPP: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15 / CPT: 1, 2) Purpose: To report on community led planning within the district for 2010/11 year end.	35 - 48
8.	**Castle Gate Statement of Purpose (EX2296)** (CPP: 1 / CPT: 11, 13, 14) Purpose: To present Members with a copy of Castle Gate's annual revision of its statement of purpose as required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.	49 - 60
9.	**Accessibility Strategy (EX2306)** (CPP: 2 / CPT: 9, 10, 11, 12) Purpose: To seek agreement to the draft accessibility strategy.	61 - 114
10.	**Annual Report of the West Berkshire Adoption Service and the West Berkshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose (EX2311)** (CPP: 2 / CPT: 8, 10, 11, 12, 14) Purpose: To enable Members to approve the operation of the adoption service.	115 - 156
11.	**Annual Report of the West Berkshire Fostering Service and the West Berkshire Fostering Service Statement of Purpose (EX2312)** (CPP: 2 / CPT: 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14) Purpose: Statutory requirement to annually review the fostering statement of purpose and to report on the work of the fostering service.	157 - 186

12. **Establishment Report for Quarter 4 2010/11 (EX2227)** 187 - 206
(CPT: 14)
Purpose: To note changes to the establishment.

13. **Members' Question(s)**
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

(a) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers:**
"In the Inspector's Agenda for the resumed Core Strategy hearing on 30th June, he suggested that all projected B Class (employment) needs can be more than adequately met from within existing employment land through to 2026, mainly because the Council's own estimate of B1 (office) floorspace required has been reduced by a factor of nearly five. Why therefore is the advice from our planning policy officers, for example on the Travis Perkins site in Mill Lane Newbury - already surrounded by housing - to refuse planning applications for predominantly housing on vacant employment land, even when there is as much employment proposed as there was before?"

(b) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers:**
"What is the latest figure for the cost to this Council of providing accommodation for homeless people in West Berkshire, including costs that are reimbursed by Government?"

(c) **Question to be answered by the Leader of the Council submitted by Councillor Julian Swift-Hook:**
"It seems that Liberal Democrats have so far been excluded from membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board, despite clear indications before May that this new Board would have representation from both the ruling group and the opposition. Advice from the Department of Health South East Regional Lead for Health and Wellbeing Boards suggests that the broadest possible representation should be included on Health and Wellbeing Boards, including all shades of political opinion, so in light of that advice would the Portfolio Holder for Community Care please comment on how Liberal Democrat representation will be included in future?"

(d) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Community Care, Pensions and Insurance submitted by Councillor Julian Swift-Hook:**
"In the light of the announcement on 11th June that Southern Cross is now to be broken up and will cease to be a care provider, what plans does the Council have for ensuring the continuing care of West Berkshire service users currently resident in Southern Cross homes?"

Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

West Berkshire Council Plan Priorities and Themes

Council Plan Priorities:

CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic recession – 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 West Berkshire's carbon footprint – to reduce CO2 emissions in West Berkshire and contribute to waste management, green travel, transportation and energy efficiency

Council Plan Themes:

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
CPO13 - Value for Money
CPO14 - Effective People
CPO15 - Putting Customers First
CPO16 - Excellent Performance Management

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 16 JUNE 2011

Councillors Present: Pamela Bale, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Gordon Lundie, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill and Anthony Stansfeld

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Teresa Bell (Corporate Director - Community Services), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), David Holling (Head of Legal and Electoral Services), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Juliet Penley (Service Manager - Children), Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Roger Hunneman, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Royce Longton, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Gwen Mason, Linda Pye (Policy Officer), Councillor David Rendel, Robin Steel (Group Executive (Cons)), Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, Councillor Quentin Webb, Councillor Keith Woodhams and Councillor Laszlo Zverko

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Margaret Goldie (Corporate Director – Children and Young People)

PART I

120. Welcome

Councillor Graham Jones introduced the meeting by welcoming Councillor Irene Neill to the Executive as Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and the Youth Service.

121. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

122. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared an interest in Agenda Items 6-8, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debates.

123. Public Questions

(a) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Executive Member for Community Care, Pensions, Insurance**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of Adult Social Care budgets was answered by the Executive Member for Community Care, Pensions and Insurance.

(b) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Executive Member for Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of the siting of the Pavilion was answered by the Executive Member for Partnerships, Equality, The Visions and Communities.

(c) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Executive Member for Children and Young People, Youth Service**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of Academy schools was answered by the Executive Member for Children and Young People and Youth Service.

(d) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of condition of the highways was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(e) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Executive Member for Children and Young People, Youth Service**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of provision of Youth Services was answered by the Executive Member for Children and Young People and Youth Service.

(f) **Question submitted by Mr Richard Garvie to Leader of the Council**

A question standing in the name of Mr. Richard Garvie on the subject of the cost base of the Council was answered by the Leader of the Council.

124. Petitions

Councillor Laszlo Zverko presented a petition containing 10 signatures relating to the road calming scheme along Oregon Avenue, Tilehurst. The petition was referred to the Head of Highways and Transport and would be responded to via an Individual Decision.

Councillor Laszlo Zverko presented a petition containing 24 signatures relating to the condition of trees in Skilton Road, Tilehurst. The petition was referred to the Head of Planning and Countryside and would be brought back to a future Executive meeting for consideration.

Councillor Mollie Lock presented a petition containing 140 signatures relating to the introduction of a pedestrian phased crossing at Padworth Lane. The petition was referred to the Head of Highways and Transport and would be responded to via an Individual Decision.

125. Provisional Outturn Report 2010/11 (EX2116)

(Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 by virtue of the fact that he was Chair of West Berkshire Mencap. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate).

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the provisional outturn for the 2010/11 financial year. Councillor Keith Chopping reported that the Council's provisional outturn was an underspend of £686k against its revised 2010/11 budget.

Councillor Chopping revealed that the financial year 2010/11 had been a particularly turbulent one for the Council. In June 2010 there was an emergency budget announced by the new coalition Government which reduced the in-year financial resources available to the public sector by £6.2bn. West Berkshire's share of this reduction was £1.054m to the revenue budget with further reductions due to the abolition of the Planning Delivery Grant and the removal of Local Area Agreement reward funding. Consequently it had been necessary to adopt a recruitment freeze and reduce budgets in areas previously in

receipt of Area Based Grant in order to achieve a break even position at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Chopping stated that Adult Social Care, which was mainly demand led, had overspent significantly for much of the financial year at £1.6m. However, due to a change in accounting standards the Council had been able to capitalise around £1.5m of highways revenue expenditure and this had helped to reduce the overspend in Adult Social Care and finance the necessary restructuring costs. Councillor Chopping felt that it was a great achievement to have an underspend position for the 2010/11 financial year whilst also funding a significant restructuring exercise for the 2011/12 budget, managing over £1m of in-year reductions and maintaining the delivery of Council services, and he thanked all staff who had helped to achieve that result.

Councillor David Rendel stated that the correct overall position was a £1.266m underspend and some of that had been used for the cost of making staff redundant. He questioned how many staff would be in agreement with using savings to pay for redundancy costs which had been unnecessary. Councillor Rendel also queried the departmental reports and the interest and levies line in the budget. There was no report to explain the interest and levies and the Directorate reports set out where the savings had been achieved but not the reasons why and whether they could be achieved again in the future or whether it was a one-off saving. He was also concerned about the lack of explanation as to the difference between Month 9 and year end.

Councillor Graham Jones noted that in order to reduce the national deficit, policies had had to be put in place which had led to a reduction in local government support. It had therefore been necessary to react to the cuts in funding and to plan for difficult times ahead. Councillor Keith Chopping stated that the redundancies had not been unnecessary and would save £2-3m in ongoing revenue costs. In respect of the interest and levies he would ask Officers to provide a fuller explanation in future. The report was an outturn report which set out the figures at the end of the previous financial year and was not a plan for the future.

Councillor Keith Woodhams asked if the Council would consider spending some of the underspend to alleviate the flooding issues along the Bath Road and to provide a right turn for buses into the hospital to avoid the necessity of buses having to take a long detour. The Portfolio Holder for Highways asked if Councillor Woodhams could e-mail him with his requests which would duly be considered.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook noted that Councillor Chopping had stated that the overspend in Adult Social Care had been £1.6m for most of the year but that was untrue as at one stage it was as much as £2m. Councillor Chopping had also stated that services had continued to be delivered but that was also not true as could be seen from the next report on the agenda on the achievement of outcomes in the Council Plan. Councillor Chopping responded that at one time the overspend had been £2m but at Month 10 a grant had been received from the Department of Health which had brought down the overspend to £1.6m. Councillor Joe Mooney clarified that the £1.6m overspend in Adult Social Care had all been attributable to overspends in relation to Learning Disability. This was due to the cost of the high level of care which was required for these clients. Adult Social Care had come in on budget.

In response to a query it was confirmed that underspends of approximately £800k in the Housing Service against its programme of housing repairs and improvements had helped to fund other capital investment priorities for the period 2011 to 2016.

Councillor Graham Jones commended the outturn position and confirmed that West Berkshire continued to have an ageing population together with further cuts which would be required as a result of Government spending cuts. He also expressed his thanks to staff for their continued commitment in a period of uncertainty.

RESOLVED that the Provisional Outturn Report 2010/11 be noted.

Reason for the decision: This report forms part of the Council's performance monitoring framework.

Other Options considered: Not applicable.

This decision is eligible to be 'called-in'. However, if the decision has not been 'called-in' by 5.00pm on 24 June 2011, then it will be implemented.

126. Council Plan Outcomes 2010/11 Year End: Update on Achievement (EX2109)

(Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 by virtue of the fact that he was Chair of West Berkshire Mencap. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate).

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning year end outturns against each of the outcomes identified in the 2010/11 Council Plan and any remedial action that had been or would be taken where achievement had not been met.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld introduced the report by making the following points:

- Of the 107 key activities or measures spread over the 16 different Council Plan themes, 78 (74%) of the targets had been met. This was a similar figure to the previous year and was achieved in a year of considerable disruption to the Council's budgets.
- A number of measures were not wholly within the Council's control or were subject to changes in Government guidelines.

Councillor David Betts was pleased to note that the outcome to maintain the continuing improvement in the condition of the district's roads by ensuring that no more than 5% of the principal road network was in need of repair was achieved. The positive perception of the condition of the local road and footway network was reported as a red indicator, this was based on the results of the 2010 National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey. The survey did show an improved overall satisfaction with Highways and Transport Services, which was particularly commendable when considering that the survey was held post the severe weather experienced in the winter of 2009/10 and the disruption this caused.

Councillor Joe Mooney referred to the two red indicators under the theme of Promoting Independence. The target to further increase the numbers of known carers and carers who were supported to 2,000 had only been missed by approximately 100 and Councillor Mooney felt this was a positive achievement when considering that a reduction in grant funding had reduced the capacity to provide carers services. The target to support 182 people with a learning disability to participate in a work placement was not met. However, a provisional total of 164 had been achieved and again Councillor Mooney felt this was a positive outcome as the availability of work placements had reduced in the past year due to the recession and depressed job market.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that only four work placements were provided through Pathways to Employment (P2E) and was disappointed that the P2E officer role was not

backfilled while the substantive post holder was on secondment. He felt that this work needed to be given more priority.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook also made reference to this target and asked whether the P2E role had been made redundant or whether it was considered as a managed vacancy factor. He also queried the number of clients with mental health problems and with learning disabilities who were engaged in voluntary employment.

Councillor Mooney responded to the points made with regard to P2E by advising that work was still undertaken. However, this was conducted in a different way and across different organisations, i.e. Jobcentre Plus.

Councillor Macro then pointed out that the target had been missed to install 'advanced metering' technology in at least five Council buildings. He questioned the decision to install this entirely in schools rather than in Council buildings which were in the Council's control. Councillor Hilary Cole advised that schools were selected in the first instance as they were high energy users. The technology had been installed in three schools and a further two were planned, but these were on hold until the schools concerned had confirmed a date convenient to them. There were plans to roll this out across Council buildings in due course.

Councillor Macro referred to the failure to meet the target to redevelop the Wharf Area. He felt that a greater level of activity was required to help meet the theme of Thriving Town Centres. In response to this point, Councillor Pamela Bale commented that the Wharf was currently used as a car park and this would remain the case until a car parking survey was conducted post the completion of Park Way to see if the Wharf parking provision could be released. Councillor Bale also advised that the economic situation made it difficult to take this work forward, but the project was still active and a design competition for the future of the Wharf would hopefully be held at an appropriate stage. She acknowledged that work had taken longer than was preferable.

Councillor Swift-Hook referred to the exception report on the red indicator to facilitate a total annual provision of 80 new affordable housing units with 25% of this total as new units in rural areas. He commented that this target was missed by some margin and questioned how many of the 31 units achieved were in rural areas. Councillor Alan Law acknowledged this oversight in the report and agreed to confirm this point outside of the meeting.

Councillor Royce Longton referred to the targets missed under the theme of High Quality Planning. Only 150 new homes had been delivered against a target of 265 with the reason given that the development industry had not recovered from the recession. The reasons given for missing the targets to determine 80% of major planning applications within 13 weeks and to determine 80% of minor planning applications within eight weeks were an increase in planning applications to the highest ever level, together with resource constraints created by the difficult national and local financial position. Councillor Longton asked if steps were being taken to fill the vacant posts to increase the level of resource and ensure that performance against these targets improved. This would also benefit the development industry.

With regard to the build of new homes, Councillor Law advised that this came as a result of a reduced number of planning applications during 2009/10. However, there was positive news as demand was back up and the current level of building was at a higher rate than the peak position in 2007/08.

Councillor Law went on to advise that the level of resource was an issue towards the end of 2010 and early in 2011. However, he was happy to report that staffing levels had returned to almost the previous level and the backlog of applications was being worked through and would hopefully be removed within four months time. Ultimately, Councillor Law felt that the most important measure for planning was the number of decisions made. The number of decisions made in quarter 4 of 2010/11 was above or equal to the position in quarter 4 of 2007/08 and 2008/09, and was almost back to the record levels achieved in 2009/10.

Councillor Longton also made reference to what he viewed as unnecessary repetition within the report. Councillor Stansfeld agreed with this comment and advised that it would be corrected in future reports.

Councillor Keith Woodhams asked what highways contingency plan was in place in the event of another difficult winter. Councillor David Betts gave an assurance that the successful contingency plan from the previous winter, which had been well received by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, would be built upon for this year. He added the positive news that many parishes were opting to purchase their own grit bins.

Councillor Roger Hunneman noted with concern some of the measures that had been deleted. Particularly those relating to work with drug using offenders, attempts to reduce re-offending rates of prolific and priority offenders, and increasing the number of primary school pupils walking and cycling to school. He felt that these were important measures which should be retained in some way. Councillor Stansfeld shared the view that these were important measures and advised that the Safer Communities Partnership, which Councillor Hunneman was a member of, would continue to monitor performance in relation to work with offenders etc.

Councillor Hilary Cole added that a significant level of work had been undertaken to increase the percentage of primary school pupils walking and cycling to school, prior to activity being ceased as a result of in-year savings needing to be made. The continuation of this work was a decision for schools to make.

Councillor Hunneman was also concerned with regard to the performance against the target to prevent 450 people from becoming homeless through early intervention and suggested that funding allocated to the equity loan scheme, which had a low uptake, could be redirected to assist with this work. Councillor Law commented that this was an inappropriate target and suggested that a more sensible measure would be to record the level of success when working with those who had requested help. The number of people presenting as homeless, i.e. sleeping rough, was minimal and this was not a major issue in West Berkshire.

Councillor David Rendel referred to the 13 indicators which had reported red in the final quarter and suggested that there was an awareness that some amber indicators would turn red at the end of the third quarter, but this was not reported at the time. He felt this was a reoccurring theme. Councillor Stansfeld acknowledged that it would have been preferable to be aware of these reds at quarter three if possible. He also added that challenging targets continued to be set and a success rate of 75% was aimed for.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the performance against each of the outcomes identified in the 2010/11 Council Plan be noted;

(2) the remedial action being taken be noted and approved, where achievements had not been met at the end of the municipal year.

Reason for the decision: The Council Plan sets out the purpose and ambition of West Berkshire Council. It defines the Council's main focus of activities and the measures of performance against which it will assess itself.

Monitoring and managing performance within each of these main areas of work is key in making sure the Council delivers what it has set out to achieve – and where this has not happened, in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to mitigate the impact of the target not being met.

Other options considered: Not to report against the Council's stated aims and ambitions.

This decision is eligible to be 'called-in'. However, if the decision has not been 'called-in' by 5.00pm on 24 June 2011, then it will be implemented.

127. Response to the Scrutiny Review into the Council's Common Housing Register (EX2287)

(Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 by virtue of the fact that he was Chair of West Berkshire Mencap. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate).

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) concerning the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Councillor Alan Law, in introducing the report, advised that the Stronger Communities Select Committee had been asked to review the operation of the Common Housing Register. At that time an audit of the Common Housing Register was already scheduled and therefore the scrutiny work was delayed until the completion of the audit. The audit had been 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 is meeting on 8th July 2010. A time limited task group was set up to investigate the communication undertaken with residents on the Common Housing Register and in particular the more vulnerable. The scrutiny review had made six recommendations for the consideration of the Executive. It was proposed that recommendations five and six would be rejected by the Executive.

Councillor David Rendel felt that recommendations five and six should be allowed as Members had the right to that information under the Freedom of Information Act and he would be taking that route if he was unable to obtain the information voluntarily. Councillor Law advised that the Housing Register had changed over the years to a Choice Based Letting system which required those on the Common Housing Register to actively bid for accommodation. Councillor Law felt that it was therefore unnecessary to spend further funding on changing systems in order that Ward Members could see who was no longer on the register.

RESOLVED that:

(1) recommendation one be approved with the deletion of the line "An amendment to the letters should include notification that data will be shared with their Ward Member(s)" (in line with recommendation 5);

(2) recommendation two as presented be approved;

(3) recommendation three to be acknowledged but that this matter would be addressed through an alternative forum;

(4) recommendation four as presented be approved;

(5) recommendation five be rejected for the reasons set out within the report;

(6) recommendation six be rejected.

Reason for the decision: To provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Other options considered: None.

Councillor Irene Neill abstained from voting on this item as she had been a member of the task group who had considered this issue.

128. Charging for West Berkshire Council Home Care Re-ablement Service (EX2285)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning recent statutory guidance on charging for re-ablement services.

Councillor Joe Mooney explained that recent Department of Health guidance had confirmed that work which fell within their definition of intermediate care was required to be provided free of charge for the first six weeks. Officers were of the view that the Council's intake service fell within this definition and therefore proposed that the charge for the service should be removed for the first six weeks, effective 1 July 2011.

RESOLVED that the recommendations for removing the charge for WBC re-ablement services (Home Care Intake) for the first six weeks of service be agreed.

Reason for the decision: To ensure compliance with recent statutory guidance issued by the Department of Health.

Other options considered: None.

This decision is not subject to call in as a delay in implementing the decision this would cause the Council serious financial implications or could compromise the Council's position; therefore it will be implemented immediately.

129. Central Energy Contract

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning a proposal to implement and enter into a Customer Access Agreement under the Buying Solutions Framework for the procurement of the Council's energy supplies with effect from 1st April 2012.

Councillor Keith Chopping advised that the current arrangements for the Council's central energy contract came to an end on 31st March 2012. The Council had originally purchased its energy through the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (PASA) together with the other Berkshire authorities. However, PASA had been dissolved in September 2010 and the responsibilities, along with the framework agreements, transferred to Buying Solutions who were a national procurement partner for all UK public services. The role of Buying Solutions was to maximise the value for money obtained by Government departments and other public bodies through the procurement and supply of goods and services.

The former PASA framework would expire on 31st March 2012 and would not be re-tendered. Instead it was proposed that they would be replaced by the Buying Solutions frameworks from 1st April 2012.

Councillor Roger Hunneman queried whether the Council was achieving the best deal by going through that group. Councillor Chopping responded that it was a big and powerful purchasing organisation who would be able to achieve best value for money. However, the Council would have a choice as to whether it stayed with those arrangements after one year.

RESOLVED that:

(1) it be supported that Buying Solutions be implemented as the Council's expert buying partner for gas and electricity supplies under its Framework;

(2) such energy requirements be provided at a fixed rate rather than a variable rate be approved;

(3) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Environment) to enter into the Customer Access Agreement with Buying Solutions provided that the Corporate Director (Environment) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal & Electoral Services shall have delegated authority to determine the length of the procurement round and make any necessary drafting or other amendments to the terms of the agreement which are necessary to reach final agreement but which do not materially affect the intent and substance of the agreement;

(4) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director, Environment to enter into the Customer Contracts with supplier(s) under the above mentioned Customer Access Agreement.

Reason for the decision: Current arrangements for the Council's energy contract come to an end on 31st March 2012.

Other options considered: None.

This decision is not subject to call in as a delay in implementing the decision this would cause the Council serious financial implications or could compromise the Council's position; therefore it will be implemented immediately.

130. Members' Question(s)

(a) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development submitted by Councillor Adrian Edwards**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Edwards on the subject of an election statement made in respect of the proposed development at Sandleford was answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development.

(b) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of traffic congestion around the Railway Station in Thatcham was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(c) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of parking on and damaging highway verges in residential areas was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(d) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of street lighting in Westland, off Loundyes Close, Thatcham was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(e) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of the policy in place to inspect and empty road drains and metal trash screens was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(f) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of the engagement of a Road Safety Constable and budget and grant information on the Road Safety Team was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services.

(g) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Culture and Leisure submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the number of schools rated as adequate or below in the West Berks Award Scheme for food premises was answered by the Executive Member for Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Culture and Leisure.

(h) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Culture and Leisure submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of warning the public about food premises whose hygiene standards were rated as "bad" or "very bad" was answered by the Executive Member for Environment, 'Cleaner Greener', Public Protection, Culture and Leisure.

(i) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Children and Young People, Youth Service submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of measures the Council had taken to dissuade West Berkshire schools from becoming academies was answered by the Executive Member for Children and Young People and Youth Service.

(j) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Community Care, Pensions, Insurance submitted by Councillor Julian Swift-Hook**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Julian Swift-Hook on the subject of the number of residents in the Hollies, River View and the Hungerford Care Home were currently receiving a service from the Council or who were likely to become eligible in the next six months, was answered by the Executive Member for Community Care, Pensions and Insurance.

(k) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development submitted by Councillor David Rendel**

A question standing in the name of Councillor David Rendel on the subject of the average number of days between the date on which a "minor" planning application was received in the Council offices and the date on which it was formally registered, was answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development.

(l) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development submitted by Councillor David Rendel**

A question standing in the name of Councillor David Rendel on the subject of the average number of days between the date on which a "minor" planning application was formally registered by the Council and the date on which the decision was made, was answered by the Executive Member for Planning, Transport Policy, Housing and Economic Development.

131. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 4.2 of the Constitution also refers.

132. Review of Family Support Services and Future Use of Greenham House (EX2294)

(Paragraph 1 – information relating to an individual)
(Paragraph 2 – information identifying an individual)
(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of a particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 13) concerning the outcome of a review of the Family Support Services and the impact on the service as well as the existing use of Greenham House.

RESOLVED that the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: To make more appropriate arrangements for the delivery of the Family Resource Service following reductions to the budget.

Other options considered: As set out in the report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.18pm)

CHAIRMAN …….

Date of Signature …….

Title of Report:	**Civil Contingencies Annual Report 2010-2011**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2058

Purpose of Report: **To update Members about National and Local Civil Contingencies issues over 10-11.**

Recommended Action:

(1) To note contents of the report
(2) Approve the continued format of self assessment reporting for 11/12.
(3) Encourage continued support by all services to ensure that the Councils plans are up to date and fit for purpose.
(4) Approve and confirm support for the training and exercise programme.

Reason for decision to be taken: To ensure the improvement in the Service and the Councils response to any major incident and continued awareness.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: None

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:
☒ **CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address:	astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	10 June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Carolyn Richardson
Job Title:	Civil Contingencies Officer Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519105
E-mail Address:	crichardson@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	None
Financial:	None
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	None

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The year of 10/11 has been another eventful year in Civil Contingencies terms starting with the continued 'fallout' from the Icelandic volcanic ash and ending with the 'fallout' from the Japanese earthquake and Tsunami.

1.2 Whilst the above incidents were both international events the effects have been experienced more locally either directly with the impact on flights or indirectly due to the lessons coming out of Japan and the effect that may have on the AWE Off-site Emergency Plan.

1.3 In addition to these international events there have been a number of more local or national incidents including 2 fires involving acetylene gas cylinders which resulted in evacuations, the fire at the AWE (Aldermaston) site and snow and low temperatures over December/January.

2. Performance Management.

2.1 There has been progress for civil contingencies over the reporting period. A number of plans have been completed, trained and exercised with others nearing completion. A number of action plans have now been completed including the OSMC Flooding and Severe weather.

2.2 In addition to the work carried out by the Civil Contingencies Team, other services have supported the development of plans and supported exercises and training events.

2.3 There have been some challenges however due to a reduction in staff of 1 FTE and for all services the challenge of keeping plans up to date with all the organisational changes. There have also been a number of incidents which have taken up time resources and the response, debrief and follow up actions. The result of which is that not all actions in the 10/11 action plan have been completed and some services plans are now not valid.

3. Looking ahead

3.1 There are a number of events or issues which will have an impact on this service and the Council as a whole over the forthcoming year:

(1) The changes to services within the Council and of external agencies will have an impact on the service delivery.

(2) Timelord and the final moves of staff out of Faraday Road (the Alternative Emergency Operations Centre)

(3) The build up to the Olympics 2012.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

4.1 Despite the challenges the year has been very busy and productive. The impact of the severe weather did have an impact on workload however, a great deal of progress was made in completing or nearly completing key plans

4.2 It is recommended that the Board:

(1) To note contents of the report

(2) Approve the continued format of self assessment reporting for 11/12.

(3) Encourage continued support by all services to ensure that the Councils plans are up to date and fit for purpose.

(4) Approve and confirm support for the training and exercise programme

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The year of 10/11 has been another eventful year in Civil Contingencies terms starting with the continued 'fallout' from the Icelandic volcanic ash and ended with the 'fallout' from the Japanese earthquake and Tsunami.

1.2 Whilst the above incidents were both international events the effects have been experienced more locally either directly with the impact on flights or indirectly due to the lessons coming out of Japan and the effect that may have on the AWE Off-site Emergency Plan.

1.3 In addition to these international events there have been a number of more local or national incidents including 2 fires involving acetylene gas cylinders which resulted in evacuations, the fire at the AWE (Aldermaston) site and snow and low temperatures over December/January.

2. National, Regional, Thames Valley LRF and Local Priority Updates.

2.1 Throughout the last year the major national focus has been on the issues set out below with details as to how they have affected West Berkshire Council.

(1) **Severe Winter Weather** – following on from the events of 2009/10 many national reports were written at National to local level. This has resulted in a lot of work by all agencies including West Berkshire Council to ensure we are more prepared for the future. In Dec 2010 and Jan 2011 this was tested due to a further period of severe winter weather. In West Berkshire the plans we had in place and activated meant that the knock on impact in the area was less than in the previous year. In addition to the adverse weather plan there is now more work on-going in relation to the A34. This includes Oxfordshire and Hampshire due to the strategic nature of the road and the risks of causing grid lock at times of severe weather.

(2) **Flu** – this was and still is one of the top risks on the national risk register. Whilst the effect in 2010/11 was less than in the year before there was pressure on the health service over the winter. It should be noted that there were over 600 deaths in the UK as a result of 'swine flu' many of which was in the 24 – 64 year old age group. In addition the report regarding lessons identified has only recently been produced. Therefore until the report has been reviewed and plans amended accordingly to reduce the risk/impact on the communities flu will remain a high risk. Work is already ongoing in West Berkshire via the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TV LRF) in relation to developing a new multi-agency plan which covers all infectious diseases including flu.

(3) **Flooding** – Whilst there were no significant flooding events locally there were within the UK and overseas. The work since 2007 has all but been completed with the plans nationally, within the Thames Valley and locally being tested in Exercise Watermark the largest peacetime exercise ever undertaken. The lessons identified form the exercise in March are now being finalised with an action plan being created to be progressed over the next year. This will result in minor changes to the West Berkshire Adverse Weather Plan. Within West Berkshire with the completion of the 2007 flood actions the lead for flood related matters has transferred to Highways & Transportation from Civil Contingencies. There is a Flood Action Group which involves the Environment Agency & Thames Water and officers from a number of services in the Council. The main purpose of the group is to ensure implementation of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010.

(4) **Olympic Planning**- this is gathering pace regardless of whether there is a specific venue or Olympics event taking place in the area. It is anticipated that this will be a major focus of work in the forthcoming year with local organisations being asked to confirm that they are fully prepared. Within West Berkshire planning is underway mainly with respect to support to other Councils if this may be needed and reviewing our plans as a whole. The Civil Contingencies Team is linking in with the Olympics lead for the Council to ensure the activities are joined up.

(5) **Organisational change** – this has been and will be a continuing theme due to the many organisations that are no longer in place (e.g. LACORS) or changing there format e.g. Thames Valley Police, the Health service etc. These changes, no matter how large or small, do pose a risk in the ability for all organisations to be able to respond effectively, particularly in the change period.

2.2 In addition to the above response priorities other key areas of work include:

(1) **Recovery** – often an area not exercised sufficiently is the recovery element of an incident however following on from the floods in 2007 it is very clear it is a critical element of work which is lead by the Local Authorities. As a result in 2010 with West Berkshire Council taking the lead a Thames Valley wide exercise named “Exercise Saturn” took place. This proved to be very successful with minor changes to the recovery plan being put in place.

(2) **Terrorism** – this is always a difficult area due to the sensitive nature of the subject. In Feb 2011 Ex Long Barrow took place specifically looking at a Mumbai style attack in a town centre. This involved a Berkshire town therefore all the Councils were involved in supporting the exercise either directly with staff or working together as per the Berkshire MOU in providing the expertise in relation to Emergency Mortuaries, Assistance Centres and exercise control. The lessons from this exercise are due to be published in June. There was a follow on recovery exercise which took place on 8 June which focussed on the community issues following such an event. These events will help this Council in the development of Town Centre Plans.

(3) **Community Resilience –** this is a continuing and growing theme with a great deal of work now progressing. It was a focus of attention during exercise watermark where a community day was organised to allow local groups to test their plans and learn from other similar groups Locally within West Berkshire, town and parish emergency plans are being compiled, newsletters are going out on a 6 monthly basis to support the communities and let them know of new initiatives. Some other work includes closer working with neighbourhood wardens and neighbourhood watch coordinators.

3. Specific West Berkshire Issues

3.1 The following details projects undertaken in West Berkshire not already covered above:

(1) **AWE.** A number of events took place throughout the year which has meant a few changes to the AWE Off-site Plan. The details are as follows**:**

(a) Aldex 10 was a major Command Post Exercise which took place successfully on 10 November 2010. The exercise involved play and simulation of an incident at AWE Aldermaston, Thames Valley Police Headquarters, local BCU Police Station, a Media Briefing Centre and a number of other partner agency incident rooms including the Local Authorities, the Emergency Services and Government Agencies. The exercise was observed by Elected Members from West Berkshire Council and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council. In addition it was observed by representatives of the Health and Safety Executive Nuclear Installations Inspectorate,(now Office for Nuclear Regulation) the site regulator

(b) Fire at AWE (Aldermaston). This took place in August 2010. It was not however a radiation event and therefore the off-site plan was not activated. Internal investigations into the incident have taken place with the report due soon. However due to the effect on the community outside including the evacuation of some residents and road closures an external debrief was undertaken led by the Council. An action plan was generated as a result of this.

(c) AWE Off-site Plan – as a result of Aldex 10 and the outcomes of the fire as in (ii) above it was agreed that the AWE Off-site plan be amended to include any incident on site that may have an off-site implication. The plan is now in its final stages of consultation and is due to be published in June 2011.

(d) Calldex. This is a regular exercise to test the communication links within the Off-site Plan. It was carried out once in the reporting period with some issues being highlighted. These are now being updated in the plan. This will be a continuing programme of work due to the many organisational changes on going.

(e) Engagement with the Local Community.

(i) Early Years & Schools: Within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone of the AWE sites there are a number of schools. Therefore as a joint project engagement took place with schools and early years settings to establish what plans they had in place and to ensure the communication links were in place. This has resulted in several meetings in West Berkshire and Hampshire to develop and improve processes. There is now a planned programme of awareness training due for staff, PTA's, Governors etc.

(ii) Town & Parish Councils. There has been attendance by officers from West Berkshire and AWE in relation to the sites. There was also the production of an annual newsletter by the off-site planning group.

(iii) Further work in the community is being planned for care homes and businesses.

(2) **Petroleum Storage Depot, Padworth/Aldermaston.** Over the year the off-site plan for this site has been reviewed and completed. Training is now about to take place with an exercise taking place on 29 Feb 2012. Engagement is now ongoing with the local community affected by this site and the plan.

(3) **Out of Hours Contact Centre Contract.** This is a service for reporting emergencies and some other calls out of normal working hours. The council had been with one contractor for over 6 years and whilst the service was good on tendering the contract (Quick Quote) there was a saving to be made with no impact on the service. As a result in March 2011 Careline UK were awarded the contract for the next 2 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. To date the service has been good.

3.2 **Other Civil Contingency Plans**

4. Training

4.1 Over the last year there has been a focus on specific plan and targeted training for officers as set out below. Over 57 officers have been trained in various roles:

(1) Multi Agency Gold in Command (MAGIC) training -.1 x Director

(2) Strategic Emergency Management Training – 3 x Head of Service.

(3) Gold and Silver Training - 6 officers, 2 Heads of Service and 4 Duty Emergency Managers

(4) Scientific Technical & Advisory Cell (STAC) Training - Env Health officers.

(5) Loggist Training – 10 people are now trained.

(6) AWE Off-site plan training over 2 x sessions with over 50 people taking part.

(7) Introduction to Emergency Planning & EOC training – internal – 20 staff.

4.2 There were 5 major exercises which took place over the reporting period with full engagement by West Berkshire Council. Over 44 officers have taken part in the various exercises as set out below:

(1) Ex Saturn: Thames Valley Recovery Exercise (5 Officers)

(2) Aldex 10 - AWE Level 2 Exercise (Over 250 people)

(3) Ex Long Barrow - Thames Valley Counter Terrorism Exercise (1 Officer with several on standby to support)

(4) Ex Burdock – a health lead multiagency exercise relating to an infectious disease outbreak. Env Health, Waste and Civil Contingencies attended

(5) Ex Watermark – National Flooding Exercise:

(a) Fluvial Exercise- Chief Executive, Head of Service, Duty Managers & a 10 person team in the Emergency Operations Centre

(b) Reservoir Exercise – 4 x Officers

4.3 The training & exercise programme for 11/12 is attached at Annex A. It should be noted that the training will involve more in house and local community training in order to ensure West Berkshire and the communities are prepared to respond should an incident arise.

5. Incidents

5.1 Over the year there have been 4 incidents which warranted a response form the Council:

(1) **Acetylene Gas Cylinder fire in Calcot**: this resulted in an evacuation of approx 200 homes and therefore a rest centre being set up. The debrief proved very positive with excellent feedback form residents. This also involved the support from Reading BC due to the location.

(2) **Fire at AWE**- this involved a response from Highways & Transport officers and contractors. The debrief report has resulted in the plan for AWE being amended.

(3) **Acetylene Gas Cylinder fire in a warehouse in Theale:** This resulted in evacuation of office space, the closure of the railway line from Reading to Newbury. Support by way of Highways & transport for road closures and Civil Contingencies in relation to communicating with the public. The debrief is being coordinated by the fire service however a key issue was the fact that this event took place on the day the Vodafone system was lost for several hours. As a result Reading BC provided airwave radio support to allow a relay of information to be sent from the scene back to officers in the Council. The procurement of airwave is now being explored.

(4) **Adverse Winter Weather.** (Dec 10 – Jan 11). This incident, whilst an issue, proved that the work that had been done since the last adverse weather event in 2009/10 meant the response was better with complements being received. The debrief meant that more lessons have been identified to improve the system for the future.

6. Partnership Working

6.1 A key to the capability of the Council to prepare and respond to an incident is through effective engagement with the other responding agencies. The Chief Executive is the lead CEO for Berkshire and the Civil Contingencies Manager is fully engaged in this, representing the Berkshire Councils at the TV LRF (Working Group). She is also the lead with respect to the following subjects as part of the agreement with all Berkshire emergency planning teams.

- Animal Health & Welfare
- Berkshire Resilience Group
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological Nuclear matters incl Radiation Emergency Preparedness & Public Information Regulations & Radiation Monitoring Units.
- Recovery incl Site Clearance
- TV LRF (Working Group)

Other Berkshire Councils lead on other subjects in order to share the workload out, develop better working and reduce duplication.

6.2 Specific joint working in Berkshire that has come to fruition in 2010/11 includes:

(1) Berkshire Emergency Mortuary Plan.

(2) Standardised log books

(3) Standardised rest centre forms

(4) Completion of the mobile ‘bronze’ unit.

(5) Standardised Berkshire Emergency Planning Web pages to be used on each LA website.

6.3 Joint working also is undertaken across the Thames Valley with the following projects coming to fruition in 2010/11.

(1) Preparation and distribution of ‘Are you ready?’ Leaflets

(2) Completion of the TV LRF Multi-agency Flood Plan.

7. Key Performance Indicators

7.1 Currently performance is measured against the following criteria:

(1) Service Self assessment/ Performance Indicator Report forms to monitor service improvements.

(2) Meeting targets set out in the Civil Contingencies section of the Countryside and Environment Service Action Plan, and Team Plan.

7.2 Self Assessment Group Summary.

The results for the quarter for each service and directorate are attached at Appendix B. This appendix also details the breakdown of the how the scores were determined using the self assessment form in Appendix C.

It should be noted that some of the scores are lower than at the end of 2009/10 at the end of the reporting period. This can be attributed to the major changes in services experienced on the whole in the last quarter of 2010/11. In addition there has been a slight dip in the scores for Business Continuity this in part is due to the fact the lead business continuity officer was having to focus on security issues over 2010/11.

It is anticipated that by the end of quarter 2 most of the plans will be up to date and by the end of the year both Emergency Planning and Business Continuity will be more integrated along with Risk.

The amended EPLO and BCLO representation for services is attached at Appendix C. It should be noted that some of the reps cover both EPLO and BCLO roles which is not ideal for when an incident affects internal and external communities; in addition if that person is not available then a clear gap exists in the service knowledge. It is therefore requested that this is reviewed in the first quarter and amended accordingly.

It is proposed to keep the same self assessment for the period 11/12 as in appendix C

7.3 Service Action Plan

(1) The Service Action Plan has progressed well. The details of which are as at Appendix D. There have been some actions which have not been completed which have now been reviewed and carried over to 2011/12 if still valid.

(2) It should be noted that the original action plan was based on the fact that there were at that time 2 FTE's for this service. Throughout the year there has only been 1 x FTE hence, in part, the number of actions that have not been completed in full.

(3) The service action plan for 11/12 is as at Annex E.

(4) The action plan for 11/12 is an ambitious plan and will be reliant upon support from all services and no incidents with the knock on impact on staff resources.

8. Challenges for 11/12

8.1 There are a number of events or issues which will have an impact on this service and the Council as a whole over the forthcoming year. Some are internally generated and others will have an impact from external issues. These include:

(1) The changes to services within the Council and of external agencies will have an impact on the service delivery. This is likely to be an ongoing feature for the next 2 years at least.

(2) Timelord and the final moves of staff out of Faraday Road (the Alternative Emergency Operations Centre). This will be a challenge to complete the work however once completed the resilience of the Council will be improved. There is a piece of work ongoing to bring to Board for approval the suggested changes to the EOC arrangements using the customer services training room (as a low level EOC due to emerging issues); committee room 2 (for full scale major incidents) and Turnham's Green as the alternative EOC.

(3) The build up to the Olympics 2012. The impact for this Council is not known and may be limited. Consideration is being given now to resilience with respect to staff who may be going to the games, volunteering to support it on top of leave requirements. That said there may an impact on this Council with respect to mutual aid.

9. Recommendations for Board

9.1 Despite the challenges the year has been very busy and productive. The impact of the severe weather did have an impact on workload however, a great deal of progress was made in completing or nearly completing key plans

9.2 It is recommended that the Board:

(1) To note contents of the report

(2) Approve the continued format of self assessment reporting for 11/12.

(3) Encourage continued support by all services to ensure that the Councils plans are up to date and fit for purpose.

(4) Approve and confirm support for the training and exercise programme

Appendices

Appendix A – Training Plan 11/12
Appendix B – Self assessment reporting 10/11
Appendix C –Self Assessment reporting format
Appendix D - EPLO and BCLO representatives.
Appendix E – Service Action Plan 10/11 Outcomes
Appendix F – Service Action Plan 11/12

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: N/A

Officers Consulted: Service EPLO's, Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/A

Appendix A Training Plan 11/12

Date	Time	Purpose	Location	Event Type	Organiser
1,11,12,17,18,19 May	All DAY	Bronze Training	Oxfordshire	Training	TV LRF
17-May-11	AM	Calldex AWE	N/A	Exercise	AWE
08-Jun-11	All DAY	Recovery - Longbarrow 2	Oxfordshire	Exercise	TV LRF
08-Jun-11	TBC	Level 1 Ex Aldermaston	AWE	Exercise	AWE
06-Jul	0930 - 1600	Introduction to EP & EOC	CR2	Training	WBC
15-Jul-11	ALL DAY	Strategic Training	Council Chamber	Training	WBC & BGG
27-Jul-11	1000-1300	AWE Plan Training	CR2	Training	AWE & WBC
27-Jul-11	1400 -1700	PSD Plan Training	CR2	Training	WBC & PSD
19-Sep-11	TBC	Pipeline Exercise	Reading	Training	RBC
28-Sep-11	1330 -1630	PSD Plan Training	CR2	Training	WBC & PSD
30-Sep-11	ALL DAY	Strategic Training	Council Chamber	Training	WBC & BGG
05-Oct-11	0930 - 1230 (TBC)	Severe Weather Plan Training	CR2	Training	WBC
11-Oct-11	TBC	Level 1 Ex Burghfield	AWE	Exercise	AWE
26-Oct-11	ALL DAY	Strategic Training	Council Chamber	Training	WBC & BGG
09-Nov-11	0930- 1600	Introduction to EP & EOC	CR2	Training	WBC
16-Nov-11	ALL DAY in 1.5hr slots	Volunteers update sessions re EOC	CR2	Training	WBC
25/01/2012	ALL DAY	Rest Centre	CR2	Training	WBC
29/02/2012	ALL DAY	PSD EXERCISE	CR2	Exercise	WBC & PSD
14-Mar-12	1000 -1200	AWE Plan Training	CR2	Training	AWE & WBC
TBC		AWE SCC LALO	AWE	Training	AWE
TBC		AWE SCC LALO	AWE	Training	AWE

Appendix B Self assessment
Performance Indicator Report – Service Group Summary 2010/11

Environment		Children & Young People		Community Services		Chief Executive	
Planning & Countryside	16	Children & Youth Services	18	Housing & Performance	18	Benefits & Exchequer	20
Highways & Transport	14	Education	15	Adult Social Care	18	Finance	16
Property & Public Protection	17	Customer Services	19	Cultural Services	11	ICT	21
						HR	21
						Legal & Electoral	17
						Policy & Performance	15

G – Green (16 - 21)
A – Amber (10 -15)
R - Red (1-9)
NR – No return this quarter.

Breakdown of scores by service and subject (as per Appendix C)

Service	Service Emergency Response Plan	EP Staff Recruitment Training	EPLO and BCLO	Contact Lists EP & BC	Business Continuity Plans	BC Staff awareness and training/exercises	Integration
Planning & Countryside	*2*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*2*
Highways & Transport	*2*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*2*
Property & Public Protection	*2*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*3*
Children & Youth Services	*3*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*
Education	*3*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*2*
Customer Services	*3*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*3*
Housing & Performance	*2*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*3*
Adult Social Care	*2*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*3*
Cultural Services	*2*	*1*	*2*	*1*	*2*	*1*	*2*
Benefits & Exchequer	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*3*
Finance	*2*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*2*
ICT	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*
HR	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*3*
Legal & Electoral	*2*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*3*	*2*
Policy & Performance	*1*	*2*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*3*
Total from max score of 45	*35*	*35*	*43*	*41*	*35*	*30*	*38*

Appendix C Self assessment format 11/12

Self Assessment Form - Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Performance Indicator Report

Service Groups:	Sub Section	Report by:	Period:	Date issued:

1. Service Emergency Response Plan	*2. EP Staff Recruitment Training*	*3.. EPLO and BCLO*	*4. Contact Lists EP & BC*	*5. Business Continuity Plans*	*6. BC Staff awareness and training/exercises*	*7. Integration*
7 The Service Emergency Response Plan is updated, at least on an annual basis and/or within 3 months of any service structure changes. 6. These procedures and Service Emergency Response Plan are owned, maintained and exercised on at least a 3 yearly basis. Records to be maintained. 5. A copy of the plan is held by the Civil Contingencies Team	8. All key responding service staff have had refresher training in Council EP procedures within the last 3 years. 7. All key service staff have taken part in an exercise or incident within the last 3 years. 6. 100 % of volunteers identified to support the emergency response from within the service area have received basic EP training.	5. An EPLO and BCLO are in position **and** act as each other's Deputy.	4. Checks are made every **3 months** of Service staff contacts, including new staff and plans updated accordingly to both BC and MI plans.	6. All the Service requirements are included in the Directorate Plan and where relevant Critical and Essential BC plans are in place, owned, maintained and exercised. 5. The service BC plan has had an annual revision. 4. Update copies have been sent to the Business Continuity Co-ordinator in ICT	5. All key responding service staff have had refresher training in Council BC procedures within the last 3 years. 4. All Key staff have taken part in a BC exercise or incident within the last 3 years.	3. Emergency response and business continuity are imbedded in the service planning process and are included in Service plans
Green ☐ 3 points	**Green ☐ 3 points**	**Green ☐ 3 points**	**Green ☐ 3 points**	**Green ☐ 3 points**	**Green ☐ 3 points**	**Green ☐ 3 points**
4. Procedures and Service Emergency Response Plan are in place to ensure the Service's ability to support the overarching Councils MIP.	5. 75% of volunteers identified to support the emergency response from within the service area have received basic EP training. 4. 75% of all key staff are trained in Intro and EOC procedures 3. 25% of all key staff have participated in an exercise or incident with in the last 2 years.	4. EPLO and BCLO are not the same person 3. Each attends the respective meetings when called (usually quarterly).	3. New staff contact details for EP and BC designated staff are notified to CC Team and plans updated within **6 months.** 2. Both Service MIP and Service BC Plan contact details updated on a **6 monthly basis.**	3. The service has prioritised all its functions and identified any Critical (4) and essential (3) functions. 2. BC plans are in draft format for Critical and Essential functions.	3. 75% of all key staff have received awareness training covering Service BC plans. 2. 25% of all key staff have taken part in BC exercises within the last 2 years.	2. Training of staff in Emergency Planning & Business Continuity is part of the personal development process
Amber ☐ 2pts	**Amber ☐ 2pts**	**Amber ☐ 2pts**	**Amber ☐ 2pts**	**Amber ☐ 2pts**	**Amber ☐ 2pts**	**Amber ☐ 2pts**
3. Service has identified requirements to support the overarching Council MIP, procedures. 2. Volunteers have been identified to support an emergency response 1. Service Emergency Response Plan in draft format.	2. 50% of key staff are trained in Intro and EOC procedures. 1. 25% of all volunteers identified to support the emergency response from within the service area have received basic EP training.	2. Service has EPLO **or** BCLO in position 1. EPLO or BCLO attendance at meetings is occasional (2 or less per year)	1. Only Service MIP or Service BC Plan contact details updated on an **annual basis.**	1. The Service has prioritised its functions but no plan has been developed.	1. 50% of key staff are trained in Council and service BC procedures	1. This process is not included in the Service plan
Red ☐ 1 Pt	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**	**Red ☐ 1 Pt**
					Service Total =	

RED = less than 9 **AMBER = 10-- 15** **GREEN = 16- 21**

Note:

1. **To achieve the points in full then each item in every section must be completed in full.**
2. **Key staff are staff who are identified by HoS who are important in any incident response whether EP or BC.**
3. **Volunteer Staff are people who within the service have volunteered to take part in any response**

Appendix D EPLO & BCLO Arrangements

EPLO's and BCLO's in Service Units

Apr 11

Directorate and Service	EPLO	BCLO	HoS
Chief Executive		**Carolyn Richardson**	Nick Carter
Benefits & Exchequer	Desre Wicks	Steve Duffin/Desre Wicks (3)	Steve Duffin
Finance	Spencer Scott	Ian Priestley	Andy Walker
Human Resources	Sally Johnson	Jane Milone (4)	Rob O'Reilly
ICT	Jane Holt	Jackie Woodland (4)	Kevin Griffin
Legal & Electoral	David Holling	Laura Copper-Martin Registrars Julie Young (4)	David Holling
Policy & Communications	Sue Broughton	Jo Naylor	Andy Day
Environment		**Stuart Clark**	John Ashworth
Highways and Transport	Melvyn May/ Andrew Reynolds	Andrew Reynolds (3) Traffic – Andrew Garratt (3) Transport Services Catherine Carey(3)	Mark Edwards
Planning & Countryside	Roger Paine	Building Control - Roger Paine/Malcolm Dixon (3) Tree Unit – Stewart Souden (3)	Gary Lugg
Property & Public Protection	Jackie Ward/Holly Palmer	Holly Palmer (4) Jackie Ward – Waste (3) EH – Paul Anstey (4) TS - Sean Murphy (3)	Steve Broughton
Children and Young People		**Caroline Simmonds**	Margaret Goldie
Education Services	Mark Lewis	Caroline Corcoran	Ian Pearson
Children's Services	Caroline Simmonds	YOT Dave Wraight (3) Ed Psych – Cathy Burnham (3) Locality East – Sandy Dopson Locality West & Central - Sonia Harris (4) R&A – Sarah Lewis (4) Family Placement Team June Kemp	Lorna Hunt
Customer Services	Janet Raymond	Marion Mottram (4)	Sean Anderson
Community Services		**Rob Sweetman**	Teresa Bell
Adult Social Care	Stephen Stace	CMHT Elaine Runza (4) Care Homes Debbie Butland (4) Home Care Steven Stace (4) Intermediate care rapid response Ian Dawe (4)	Jan Evans
Housing and Performance	Jo England	Rob Sweetman	June Graves
Cultural Services	Chris Jones/Mike Brook	Duncan Coe	David Appleton

Appendix E Action Plan outcomes 10/11

	Action	Target Date	Progress	Notes	RAG
Admin	Arrange for Equipment in stores to be tested as necessary, and programme of maintenance established.	31-Jul	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
W&I	Introduce an intranet Emergency planning page for staff	31-Jul	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
Finances	Review financial resources system in case of emergency and who has authority to spend.	30-Aug	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
Admin	Review all COSHH assessments & H&S Implications of Response	30-Aug	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
Info Sharing	Review Information sharing protocols	31-Jan	Lack of resources		R
Vol Sector	Engage with Local Voluntary Agencies	31-Jan	Lack of resources		R
Admin	Complete a global emergency Planning Section in IT folders	28-Feb	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
Plan	Assess all rest centres, prioritise the centres depending on nearest to greatest potential risk and strategic locations. Thereafter plan to visit and update top 25 % in 10/11	31-Mar	Lack of resources	refer 11 - 13	R
Admin	Develop a service feedback survey	31-Mar	Lack of resources	Refer 11/12	R
Plan	Finalise the WBC Vulnerable People Plan	31-Jul	Draft in place. Consulting with services and external agencies. Due for completion Aug 2011	Refer 11/12	A
Inf Diseases	Swine Flu Debrief & Action Plan	31-Jul	National review results released in May 2011. Being reviewed at Thames Valley Health EP Group. Outcome may result in additional work in 2011/12	Action outside CCM control. Refer 11/12	A
Plan	WBC Fuel Plan - update and review as necessary	31-Jul	TV plan completed in Nov 11- ex in Jan 11 - will consider WBC position at that stage - Change to 11- 12	Refer 11/12	A
Finances	Complete credit card procurement process	30-Aug	Pending info from Andy Walker	Refer 11/12	A
Plan	Newbury Racecourse - review plans	30-Nov	Initial exercise undertaken - planning started to complete this work in 11-12	Refer 11/12	A
Plan	COMAH plan – review current plans and ensure all upper tier sites are identified	30-Apr	Complete		G
Admin	Complete National Capability Survey 2010	30-Jun	Complete		G
Management	Review equipment for responders	31-Jul	Complete		G
Plan	MIP Update	30-Aug	Complete for 10/11		G
Comms	Review Communications resilience of WBC, determine means by which weaknesses may be resolved and implement as necessary. To include text alert system	30-Aug	Review Complete - actions now need to be progressed		G
Comms	Review Radio system- get new system up and running, apply for a licence, training for personnel	30-Aug	Complete		G

	Action	Target Date	Progress	Notes	RAG
Exercise	Recovery Ex, Debrief and plan amended	30-Aug	Complete		G
Risk	Review Plans in line with local community risk register & TV LRF CRR. Identify gaps in plans and prepare a plan in order to fill the gaps.	31-Mar	Complete		G
W&I	Info in The Place & Parish Planning Newsletter	30-Sep	Complete		G
Admin	Review and list all WBC Service Emergency Plans – plus all specialist plans held by services. Confirm review dates and any exercise dates.	30-Sep	On -going completion		G
Weather	Complete work in relation to OSC flood report	30-Oct	Complete		G
Weather	Identify Flood Wardens and as necessary develop a network across the district	30-Oct	on going with T &PC's		G
Plan	Complete Severe Weather Plan for WBC	30-Nov	Complete except drought plan.	New info re warnings out in April 2011 - plan to be updated Aug 11	G
BCM	Review process of BCM promotion	31-Dec	Complete		G
Contract	OOH Contact Centre	31-Dec	Complete		G
Exercise	Aldex 10 Incl debrief	31-Dec	Complete		G
Exercise	RMU Exercise	31-Dec	as part of Aldex		G
Risk	Review local community risk register incl close border issues	31-Mar	Complete	Basis for next years planning process incl NCS	G
Community Resilience	Link with Parish Councils for creation of Local Parish EP response plans. Initiate planning process. Aim 5 -completed	31-Mar	Complete	Link to Corp. Priority & Link with Sarah Ward	G
Exercise	Animal Disease Exercise	31-Mar	TBC since NI 190 now not applicable	Link to NI 190 - TS lead	G
Plan	Review Rest Centre Plan to include reception centres, rest centres, HAC's.	31-Mar	On going across Berks	Link to recommendation from Gas Debrief	G
Plan	Revise AWE Plan as necessary	31-Mar	Complete		G
Training	Undertake 6 internal training sessions	31-Mar	Complete	Link to Corp Target	G
Misc	To improve the percentage levels of National Indicators relating to the service including NI 188(flood risk issues) and NI 189 (climate change)	31-Mar	Complete	Link to NI 37	G
Weather	OSC actions	TBC	Complete	Link to NI188 & 189 and OSC	G

Appendix F Action Plan 11/12

Note will be dependant on appointment of policy officer to support civil contingencies role and no major incidents**!**

Ser		Action	Target Date
c/o	Admin	Arrange for Equipment in stores to be tested as necessary, and programme of maintenance established.	31-Mar
c/o	Admin	Review all COSHH assessments & H&S Implications of Response	31-Mar
	Admin	Undertake Annual Review and list all WBC Service Emergency Plans – plus all specialist plans held by services. Confirm review dates and any exercise dates.	31-Dec
c/o	Admin	Develop a feedback survey from for stakeholders in order to assess the opinions of service users	31-Dec
	BCM	Review process of BCM promotion	31-Mar
	Budget	Review and Prepare charging regime	31-Mar
	Budget	Complete the process of procurement cards for DEM's	31-Jul
	Budget	Work with the Greenham Common Trust to develop the process for charitable donations at times of emergencies.	30-Nov
	Budget	Review the JD's for the EOC roles in emergencies including a JE process	31-Mar
c/o	Budget	Complete credit card procurement process	30-Aug
c/o	Budget	Review financial resources system in case of emergency and who has authority to spend.	31-Dec
	Comms	Review Radio system- get new system up and running, apply for a licence, training for personnel	31-Jul
	Comms	Review the Berks Comms Report - develop a plan, including resources to close gaps identified - text alerting, airwave and radios.	31-Mar
	Community Resilience	Link with Parish Councils for creation of Local Parish EP response plans. Initiate planning process. Aim 5 - completed	31-Mar
	Community Resilience	Working in partnership with the Flood Action Group undertake a community engagement day in relation to flooding	31-Dec
	Community Resilience	Attend Community Group meetings in relation to developing plans	On-going
	Community Resilience	Undertake a parish development session	31-Oct
	Community Resilience	Work with Schools, early year's settings and other closed communities in developing their own plans with the DEPZ & PIZ's for AWE & PSD sites –providing support and training as needed.	31-Oct
	Contract	To ensure the integration of the OOH Contact Centre following award of contract	30-Jun
	Exercise	Provide 6 internal training sessions for staff	31-Mar

	Exercise	Undertake Exercise for Petroleum Storage Depot as required under COMAH. Provide a PXR for PSD Padworth providing details and an action plan of lessons identified.	31-Mar
	Exercise	Take part in Berkshire Pipeline Exercise	30-Sep
	Exercise	Support Olympics Exercises	31-Mar
c/o	Plan	Review Rest Centre Plan to include reception centres, rest centres, HAC's.	31-Mar
	Plan	Review & revise the Recovery Plan	31-Jul
	Plan	Review & Revise the Adverse Weather Plan	30-Sep
c/0	Plan	Review & revise the Vulnerable People Plan	31-Jul
	Plan	Review and revise the Fuel Plan	30-Aug
	Plan	Review & Revise the Operations Manual	30-Aug
	Plan	Review action cards for SCG/TCG/RWG/STAC etc reps	31-Dec
	Plan	Ensure plans are valid following external agencies organisational changes	31-Mar
c/o	Plan	Assess all rest centres; prioritise the centres depending on nearest to greatest potential risk and strategic locations. Thereafter plan to visit and update top 25 % in 10/11	31-Mar
	Plan	Review Flu Plan in light of National and TV LRF reports and plans Debrief & Action Plan	31-Mar
	Plan	Review and update the Out of hours Manual	Quarterly
	Plan	Review and update the Animal Health Plan	31-Dec
	Plan	Finalise the AWE off-site Emergency Plan	30-Jun
	Plan	To consider any specific plans required in relation to the Olympics planning process	31-Mar
	Plan	Develop a Town Centre Incident plan for Newbury	31-Mar
	Plan	Develop a Racecourse Plan to link with the rest centre and Town Centre Plans	30-Sep
	Plan	Review the RAF Welford response plan	31-Mar
	Plan	Develop an off-site plan for Denison Barracks	31 Sept
	Plan	Develop new plans and manage the progression of these plans in relation to new EOC's in Turnhams Green and alternative options in Market Street and West Point	30-Aug
	Risk	Review local community risk register incl close border issues	31-Mar
	Risk	Review Plans in line with local community risk register & TV LRF CRR. Identify gaps in plans and prepare a plan in order to fill the gaps.	31-Mar
c/o	Vol Sector	Engage with Local Voluntary Agencies	31-Mar
	W&I	Introduce an intranet Emergency planning page for staff	31-Jul
	W&I	Improve the WBC website to inform the public and communities in relation to how they can prepare for emergencies	30-Jun
	W&I	Prepare at least 2 electronic newsletters a year for community groups and local stakeholders	Sept & Mar

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Title of Report:	**Community Led Planning - Performance Report**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2126

Purpose of Report: **To report on progress of Community Led Planning within the District for 2010/11 year end.**

Recommended Action: **For Members to note the actions in the report and recommend further actions as necessary.**

Reason for decision to be taken: This report forms part of the Performance Management Framework

Other Options considered: None

Key background documentation: Community Plan Action Plans and updates provided by individual Communities.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

☒ **CPT1 - Safer Communities** – reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
☒ **CPT2 - A Cleaner and Greener West Berkshire** – a better place to live

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Outcomes:

☒ **CPO1 - Better Roads and Transport**
☒ **CPO3 - Affordable Housing**
☒ **CPO5 - Cleaner and Greener**
☒ **CPO6 - Vibrant Villages**
☒ **CPO7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
☒ **CPO8 - A Healthier Life**
☒ **CPO12 - Including Everyone**
☒ **CPO13 - Value for Money**
☒ **CPO15 - Putting Customers First**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Themes and Outcomes by:
Community Planning enables local communities to take control of projects within their own community and with the mandate of that community.

Community Plans contain projects which support most of the Council Plan Themes and outcomes and also support the Sustainable Community Strategy Themes.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Pamela Bale - Tel (0118) 9842980
E-mail Address:	pbale@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	13th June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Jo Naylor
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer, Community Planning
Tel. No.:	01635 503019
E-mail Address:	jnaylor@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	No implications envisaged.
Financial:	Community Plans impact on Capital Programme, Parish Plan Grant Funding and Vibrant Village Grant Funding.
Personnel:	Considerable resource is needed to support all aspects of the Community Plan process.
Legal:	No implications envisaged
Property:	No implications envisaged
Risk Management:	Risk of implementation of action plans being unachievable due to lack of resource in communities.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	All communities are encouraged to include everyone in their consultation and to think about the impact of their plans on all sections of their communities.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 This report covers progress with the Parish/Community Plan project for the last 6 months of the financial year 2010/11.

2. Number of Communities Involved

2.1 There are currently 43 Community Plans that have been endorsed by West Berkshire Council which cover 45 communities within the District. This reflects the fact that 71% of parishes within the District now have a Community Plan in place.

2.2 At present a further 3 communities have submitted draft plans for consideration by the Council and a further 2 are preparing to refresh plans that were adopted as early as 2003.

3. Parish Plan Grant

3.1 During this reporting period Parish Plan Grants helped support 10 communities with approximately £44k of grant being awarded for community schemes. The following schemes having been successful:

- Boxford - Church boiler
- Streatley - Children's play equipment
- Aldermaston-New lighting for the parish hall and alternative access to Paices Wood
- Padworth – Children's Play equipment next to village hall
- Brightwalton - Gazebos and printer
- Bucklebury PC - BMX cycle track and youth shelter
- Greenham PC - Football posts, outdoor 'Green Gym' and new cooker at 'the Diamond'.
- Shaw-cum-Donnington - Rabbit proof fencing for recreation ground, new bench, waste bins and new salt bins.
- Chieveley Oare and Curridge - Refurbishment of WI Hall in Curridge
- Thatcham -New roof for "Community Connect" at the Porch

3.2 The entire budget allocation for Parish Plan Grant was spent within the financial year.

4. Vibrant Village Funding

4.1 Vibrant Village grants are jointly funded by the Council and Greenham Common Trust (GCT) with most projects receiving a 50:50 funding split from each partner. The total budget available last year was £70k.

4.2 In the latter six months of 2010/11, 19 projects have been funded or partially funded through the Vibrant Village Scheme. This exceeds the Council Plan target of 7 projects to be supported per annum.

The successful projects were:

- Bucklebury St. Martins Club – Coach outings and speakers for meetings
- Burghfield Branch Royal British Legion – Laptop and projection screen
- St Mary's Church, Aldworth – Extension to building
- Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet Cricket Club – Connecting mains water and electricity to the second pavilion
- Kintbury Volunteer Group – Office running costs
- Pangbourne & District Silver Band – Costs of running the youth band
- Hungerford Cricket Club – Financial assistance for coaches
- Bucklebury Memorial Hall – BMX track and youth shelter
- Yattendon Post Office/Village Stores – Improve counters and increasing the range of services
- Tadley Chorus Group – Hall hire fees, expenses, etc.
- Readibus – CCTV camera on two buses
- Welford Park Cricket Club – Tractor mower
- 1st Compton Scout Group – Camping equipment
- Mortimer Village Football Club – Refurbishment of toilets, repair of roof, etc.
- St Mary's Kintbury PCC – Rent and computer consumables
- Play Start Group – Awning for building, staff training and computer equipment.
- Great Shefford Youth Club – Youth worker salary
- Bradfield Village Hall – Interior decoration
- Extra Payment for Hamstead Norreys Shop – community shop costs

5. Links to other Funding Streams – S106 and RASP

5.1 A range of other funding streams have been accessed to bring in a total of over £300k to the District in the 2010/11 financial year.

5.2 Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP) money has supported 5 projects within West Berkshire with £26k awarded over the year. The following projects being grant funded:

- Beenham - infrastructure for allotments
- Frilsham - playground
- Hampstead Norreys – community shop provision
- Beech Hill - community shop provision
- Chieveley - shop and Post Office improvements

5.3 Ongoing funding from RASP will not be possible as this scheme has now closed. Equally some of the more readily accessible funding streams such as Healthy and Active Parishes (HEAP) grant, Playbuilder, Grassroots grants have all closed their programmes on 31 March 2011.

6. Meet the Expert Evenings & Parish Plan Surgeries

6.1 Within this period a second Meet the Expert event was held on 2 December. This supported communities wishing to establish a luncheon club for the elderly in their community. Council officers and Empowering West Berkshire jointly ran the event to give advice on food handling legislation, entertainment licensing and guidance on CRB checks for volunteers working with vulnerable adults. The Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) gave guidance on running community events in village halls.

6.2 A future Meet the Expert session will be a follow-up session to last year's Rural Broadband event due to the general interest in this subject. Other future events are likely to be on Allotments and also a briefing for Parish Councils on the Localism Bill.

6.3 During the latter part of 2010/11 two Parish Plan Surgeries went ahead on 1 Feb and 29 March as planned. The feedback about these events has been very positive and communities are grateful for the time the officers spend to responding to their requests.

7. Plans Endorsed During this Period

7.1 Between October and March four additional plans were endorsed by the Council with Plans submitted from Frilsham, Chieveley, Brightwalton and Beedon. This takes the yearly total to nine since April 2010 and represents the highest number of plans signed-off in any one year. It also exceeds the Council Plan target of three parishes being supported to progress a Community Plan per annum.

8. New Plans

8.1 The Council has currently received draft plans from Aldworth and refreshed plans from Pangbourne and Yattendon. All three are due to be endorsed in the summer.

8.2 Bucklebury and Lambourn are being supported in the refresh process of their original plan and Peasemore Parish has just commenced working on a plan.

9. Localism Bill

9.1 Community planning has positioned itself as an ideal vehicle for delivering a lot of the community empowerment aspirations as outlined within the Localism Bill. The Community Right to Buy and the Community Right to Challenge are two areas of Bill which can be easily incorporated into the existing community planning methodology. In relation to the Community Right to Build, guidance can be provided on this provision and all three "Rights" can be incorporated into the Community Planning Toolkit.

9.2 The process of creating a community plan often provides the catalyst for greater levels of community engagement and volunteering for the benefit of those communities. The consultation that takes place means that everyone is able to have a say on how their community is shaped and has the opportunity to articulate what facilities and services are most important to them.

9.3 The community planning process is already well embedded within the culture of the Council and provides a useful mechanism for supporting communities to achieve their aims. Many Service Areas already recognise the importance and relevance of community plans in shaping their Service Delivery Plans and in the future this approach could be further rolled out to all Service Areas. In short community planning will be a very useful vehicle for delivering aspects of the Localism Bill and also encapsulates the "Big Society" at its best.

10. Issues raised by communities

10.1 In compiling this report communities were asked for feedback on what support they required from West Berkshire Council. Fewer responses were received this time than normal however they show generally positive feedback and few concerns.

10.2 The specific issues reported were as follows:

- Boxford – seeking S106 for new village hall development
- Hamstead Marshall – issues implementing Speedwatch (Thames Valley Police issue)
- Hampstead Norreys – Looking for Council to continue the business rate relief for the community shop.
- Padworth – seeking biennial meetings between the community and Council officers on parish plan issues.

10.3 The above issues will be noted and relayed to the relevant Service Areas so officers are also aware of these.

11. Summary of Achievements

11.1 Significant activity within parishes is continuing to take place with the individual achievements of local town and parish areas being shown at Appendix A.

11.2 Along with the delivery of actions in existing plans, the continued interest in community planning is demonstrated by the number of communities working on plans for the first time or refreshing existing plans. The numbers refreshing plans gives an indication of the value communities place on the community planning process.

12. Recommendations

12.1 It is RECOMMENDED that Management Board considers and notes the performance update on community planning and suggest any improvements as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A – Updates on the Community Plan areas

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:	As part of the pariwsh planning process
Officers Consulted:	David Lowe, Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager, Corporate Board
Trade Union:	N/A

Appendix A

Parish Plan Progress Reporting Year End 2010/11 (Collated in May 2011)

Name of Parish/Town	**Achievements between <u>October 2010 – March 2011</u>** *(a) List in particular those actions within your Parish Plan action plan that have been achieved during this period* ***And*** *(b) Are there any recent additional achievements that have come about as a consequence of producing a parish plan?*	**Grants accessed during this period** *Please describe:* *(a) The name of the grant funder* *(b) The amount awarded* *(c.) The nature of the projects that were funded?*	**Issues for WBC** *(a) Are there any issues that need escalating to senior managers within the Council?* *(b) Is there anything we could do to improve support to communities?* *(c.) Are there issues that require further monitoring?*
Aldermaston	As at April 2011 we have completed 48 of our 55 Actions, i.e. 87% complete. No significant achievements Action Point on Traffic has been closed due to request for inclusion of a relief road in LTP refused by WBC	We obtained £5000 from WBC Parish Plan Grant which has been split: 67% towards refurbishment of electrics in Parish Hall 33% towards new access into Paice's Wood Country Park	None
Boxford	Rebuild Village Hall – a) Design and planning application for the demolition of the old village hall/building of 2 new detached houses on the site & planning application for the building of new village hall at the Recreation Ground	£2000 grant from Boxford Parish Council towards architects' fees	a) Planning applications are currently under consideration by WBC. It is hoped that S106 developer contributions could be mitigated to assist in the development of this Parish Plan item.
"	Renovate St Andrew's Church – a) 2 of 3 phases completed b) use of new facilities by local groups.		
"	Document a Simple Parish History - Boxford History Book is being finalised with designer before going to print.		

Bucklebury	Presentation of Parish Plan questionnaire results to parishioners at public meeting in Nov 2010		
"	Prepared draft Parish Plan Refresh Report which was issued to Bucklebury Parish Councillors for endorsement (completed at April 2011 parish council meeting)		
"	Events committee formed to organise Royal Wedding Day celebrations		
"	Bucklebury Memorial Hall Management Committee has formulated plans for BMX track behind the hall	Greenham Common Trust is donating £5000. Private donation of £10000. Balance from Memorial Hall improvement funds	
Cold Ash	E-mail information service – data base now over 450 – extensively used to disseminate vital information. New service – Community Bulletin issued weekly now operational. Book Exchange - St Mark's Church PCC have agreed to the establishment of a book exchange in the church [for a trial period of a year]. The Group started in February 2011 and has proved to be very popular. Broadband – investigating the problems associated with poor broadband reception in the parts of the Parish served by the Hermitage Exchange. Also in consultations with adjoining Parishes served by Hermitage. (MP involved).	None	None
Great Shefford	To Improve Recreation Area: New Play Area for the Parish Children – now implemented	£74k raised through Greenham, Playbuilder and PC funds	

Great Shefford	Maintenance to the Village Hall (ongoing)	Parish Plan grant obtained £5k	
"	Village Footpath past the Swan Pub linking the village	S106 and CAWB £16k.	
Hermitage	We haven't yet produced our new Parish Plan, we have completed the survey and reported back to the community. We have not received any grants	N/A	
Hamstead Marshall	Regret no change in Hamstead Marshall. They have been trying to implement a Speedwatch scheme in the village in conjunction with the Police but the Police seem to have lost interest, even to the point that they don't even reply to emails.		Thames Valley Police related.
Hampstead Norreys	The complete restoration of the Parish Church Clock that had not chimed or worked for the last 40 plus years.	£1,000 towards the cost of restoring the clock for the Church from the Church Buildings Council.	
"	Improved Parish Playground - Installation Completed in February 2011.	WBC Playbuilder Grant of £50,000 to install new playground facilities – of this the Parish Council supported with £2,467	

Hampstead Norreys	The Hampstead Norreys Community Shop. Opened on 26th March 2011.	Funding of £66,000 attracted to equip the Community Shop from a variety of sources: Leader, Greenham Common Trust, Comma, Awards for All, RASP, Vibrant Villages, Heap, VIRSA and the Co-Op.	The Community Shop has been kindly been given a "ZERO RATES" LEVEL rating by WBC until the end of September 2011. However, due to a change in the law the Community Shop will have to apply again for a ZERO RATE LEVEL rating treatment for the period from October 2011. The Community Shop is an Industrial and Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community and therefore a non-profit organization. As such its viability and future will depend on the continued support of WBC for a "ZERO RATES" rating.
Holybrook	Our Amenities Project has progressed with the completion of a questionnaire asking residents for their views on existing parish amenities and suggestions for improvements. This was printed and distributed to all households in the parish and responses have been coming in over the last four/five weeks. Responses now to be analysed and results to be published in parish newsletter and website.	None relevant to Parish Plan in this period	None at this time
Lambourn	We are currently in the process of renewing our Parish Plan. The questionnaire has been delivered and all replies have either been handed in or completed on-line. We have over 200 questionnaires which need to be inputted before we can start looking at the feedback.		

Padworth	➢ 40mph limit to be introduced on Bath Road ➢ Consideration of a pedestrian phase to be introduced into new traffic lights on Padworth Lane. ➢ Pedestrian crossing to be installed on A340 opposite the Fallows ➢ Double yellow lines added at entrance to Station Road ➢ Discussion under way with developers and WBC re: adoption of roads on the newly developed estates in the Wharf area ➢ Improve flood protection - Work in hand ➢ Waste Site Working Group and Village Hall Committee are monitoring the impact of the integrated waste site on traffic movements and potential environmental impacts & impact on Village Hall - active participation in Liaison Group. ➢ Kennet and Avon Canal Trust shop being renovated and being professionally managed ➢ Steering Group being recruited to prepare a Village Design Statement. ➢ A programme of village walks has been established. ➢ Grants obtained to improve and enhance play equipment at the village hall – this has now been installed.	WBC Parish Plan Grant of £5k towards the playground equipment next to village hall in January 2011.	More formal (perhaps biennial) stocktaking meeting between WBC officers and Parish Plan Groups on a bilateral basis would be helpful.
Pangbourne	Village Hall; disabled access ramp, handrails & replacement rear fire exit doors.	£5,000 WBC Parish Plan Grant Fund	
"	Village Hall; fencing, gate & footpaths in area of land adjacent to new extension. Grass turfing laid & area secured for use by hall users.	£5,000 Vibrant Villages Fund (WBC & GCT)	
"	Installation of new street lighting in Conservation Area has been completed.		

Pangbourne	In April 2011 we joined the West Berks Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme as a result of consultation for our Parish Plan refresh.		
Shaw cum Donnington Parish	Objectives 20 and 4(1) and 24 (2) on environment action plan - letters sent to Royal Mail and Thames Water re increasing number of post boxes in the parish and leaflet on water management - November 2010 Objective 6 environment action plan – new bin and collection arranged for rubbish on the recreation ground – February 2011 Objective 8 environment action plan – new litter picker for the recreation ground appointed – January 2011 Objective 14 on traffic and transport – letter sent to Newbury buses – January 2011 Objective 4 Community and Youth – local events on parish notice boards from December 2010 Objective 2 Traffic and Transport – regular speed checks in Love Lane, latest carried out in April 2011 Objective 3 Traffic and Transport – new gateway marking installed on entering Donnington and speed limit sign March/April 2011	WBC Parish Plan Grant - £3,988 Rabbit fencing Bench Waste Bin Dog Bin Salt Bins	

Sulhamstead	There is renewed interest in the creation of a playpark for young children near the SUN school / in the Ufton Nervet area. A possible petition is being raised. <u>St. Peter's Church.</u> This gets a high profile mention in the plan and we are grateful to WBC for a grant for facilitating the next stage of development. <u>Additional achievements</u> We now produce a thrice yearly parish newssheet that is hand delivered to all 700 plus residences in Sulhamstead. Reaction has been positive. This is an additional activity to supplement "Improve Parish Communication" as listed on page 26 in the Plan.	Plans taking shape and a request for a grant will follow in 2011/12. WBC £5K Contribution towards the cost to convert the interior for community use	
West Ilsley	West Ilsley questionnaire drafted and to be distributed shortly.		

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Title of Report:	**Castle Gate Statement of Purpose**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2296

Purpose of Report: **To present Members with a copy of the Castle Gate's annual revision of its Statement of Purpose as required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.**

Recommended Action: **To agree the revised Statement of Purpose.**

Reason for decision to be taken: To comply with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: The Castle Gate Short Break Service Statement of Purpose 2011/12.

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

☒ **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

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

☒ **CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
☒ **CPT13 - Value for Money**
☒ **CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to provide a stimulating and supportive environment which promotes independence

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – Tel: 0118 9712671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	18 June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Juliet Penley
Job Title:	Service manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519093
E-mail Address:	JPenley@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	None
Financial:	None
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	The Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards and the Children's Home Regulations 2001 require that a residential home have a statement of purpose that is reviewed and agreed annually by elected members
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	See attached

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Castle Gate is a respite centre for young people with disabilities and their families. It provides short breaks for young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities and are living at home with their family; many of the young people also present challenging behaviour. The Castle Gate service is subject to external regulation and is required to produce a Statement of Purpose to the council's Executive Committee on an annual basis. This paper introduces the Statement of Purpose and explains the changes since last year.

2. The Castle Gate Short Break Service

2.1 The Castle Gate is a registered respite unit for six children and young people, two of whom can be under eight years of age. It offers overnight care, day care, after school care and support groups, mostly on a planned basis. It is jointly funded by Berkshire West PCT and West Berkshire Council, and is managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate within West Berkshire Council.

2.2 The Castle Gate service aims to provide the highest quality of care to children and Young People which is tailored to individual need. The service seeks to work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to provide a stimulating and supportive environment which promotes independence.

2.3 The Statement of Purpose is little changed from that approved by members last year. There are a few changes to note. Castle Gate Service is subject to external registration and inspection by Ofsted. Two unannounced inspections have taken place in 2010/11, both with the overall quality rating of Good. Ofsted commented that 'the well managed staff team work hard to ensure that children and young people have a good time whilst staying at the home.' Improvements include the introduction of communication passports containing key information that travel with the child to each setting, and regular consultation events with families.

2.4 Monthly unannounced visits continue to be undertaken to check on different aspects of the care provided and to talk to the children, young people and staff on duty. In West Berkshire this is done by a senior council officer and a Councillor.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The revised Statement of Purpose reflects the changes and improvements in the past year and updates key information.

Appendices

Appendix A – Castle Gate Statement of Purpose
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:	Not consulted
Officers Consulted:	Rachel Palin, Lorna Hunt, Caroline Simmonds, Juliet Penley, Denise Cooke, Sue Adamantos, Corporate Board
Trade Union:	Not consulted

The Castle Gate

Statement of Purpose

Love Lane Newbury Berkshire RG14 2JG
Telephone 01635 43778

Introduction

1. Our aim is to provide an excellent short term break service for Disabled Children and Young people with health and social care needs living in the catchment area of west Berkshire.

2. The service is based at Castle Gate which is a two story building set in the grounds of the castle school about 1.5 miles north of Newbury town centre.

We can provide families with a range of breaks including overnight and day care. Castle Gate has 6 single bedrooms and there are ample bath, shower and toilet facilities. We also have 2 lounge areas, a communal dinning area, kitchen and an upstairs flat for promoting independent living skills.

The building also has an activity and sensory room for play, recreation, relaxation and sensory programs. We have a paved patio area which leads into an attractive and secure garden with adventure playground swings and a sensory planted area.

The Castle Gate has its own mini bus which enables the children and young people to be taken out to local amenities and to promote community presence and participation.

3. The Castle Gate is jointly funded by Berkshire West PCT and West Berkshire Council and is managed by the Children and Young People's Directorate within West Berkshire Council. It registered as a children's home with Ofsted: Reference number SC030677.

Staffing

4. Rachel Palin is the Team Manger. There is a full staffing list with their qualifications and training records available on site.

5. We have approximately 18 staff members all of whom are trained to the minimum requirement of the Diploma in Children and Young People (Replacing the NVQ level 3 program). More senior staff are trained to NVQ level 4, the Registered Managers award level 4 and other management training such as the ILM. The team also include registered nurses and social workers.

6. A comprehensive system is in place to provide support and formal supervision. A training and development program is offered in line with the organisations policy and procedures from management to all staff levels. Each staff member has an annual appraisal and personal development plan.

7 All new staff are provided with a thorough induction and mandatory training courses within the first 6 months. There is a continuous training program for the Diploma in Children and Young People and all staff receive in house training in line with our policies and procedures. All training takes place either in house or by accessing the organisations training calendar.

Referral and Eligibility

8. The Castle Gate provides a service for disabled children aged 8 – 18 years with health and social care needs. We offer overnight stays for children aged between 0- 8 where they have been identified as having complex needs and where no other suitable family based respite is appropriate.

All referrals are received via a multi agency resource panel chaired by the service managers of the Castle Gate and the Special Educational Needs and Disabled Children's team.

9. Children and Young People are referred to Castle Gate via the Disabled Children's Team and the integrated service lead/specialist nurse for children with complex health needs. All children have been assessed and referred for short breaks, to address an identified need. All service users are reviewed six monthly in line with the looked after children and children in need procedures, and this is lead by their social worker.

The Castle Gate does provide occasional emergency care but only to children known to the service.

10. The Castle Gate provides up to six beds in a mixed gender group and we are able to offer two day care opportunities each day.

The Short Break Service

11. The children who use the service are registered with their own family doctor, if they become ill whilst in our care, they will usually visit their own GP. In emergency situations we would ring the out hours NHS support or the emergency services.

12. The children and young people are expected to attend their regular school on a daily basis. The staff team work alongside the teachers to use common learning techniques and ensure consistency of care.

13. A full activity program is organised taking into account the likes and dislikes of the children as outlined in their care plans and in line with our staff ratios. We have extensive activities on site and within the school grounds. We use local community facilities and activities. These activities are varied and reflect real life opportunities for children to promote their social inclusion and cultural awareness, with a focus on developing independent and social skills development.

14. Each young person is allocated a key worker who ensures that the young person's needs are represented in a care plan and/or communication book. Regular children's meetings are held to evaluate our service and we consult at 6 monthly intervals with parents and carers. We also aim to hold at least 2 parent/carer consultation meetings every year and produce an annual evaluation of these findings. The outcome of feedback and consultation is used to constantly improve the quality of the service.

Behaviour and Risk Management

15. There will occasionally be a need for control and restraint and all staff receive training based on the PROACT-SCIP-®-uk, provided by our in-house trainers. Behaviour plans are followed for each child; all incidents are fully recorded, monitored and evaluated by the team manager and our in house instructors.

16. All staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection and we work closely with the social work teams and follow the Berkshire child protection procedures.

Children and young people are booked into the service with peers who are compatible with each other and we have a generous staffing ratio for a group living environment. We continually review the mix of young people

being cared for together, to ensure risks are minimised and to counteract bullying.

17. We have an in-house procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence. Parents or those acting in loco parentis are always informed immediately if their child is missing. Children are supervised in and out of the building but, very occasionally, children could leave unsupervised. The child's care plans will include information about the likelihood of this happening and risk assessments will be completed to ensure this risk is minimised.

If after a local search the young person cannot be found they will be reported to the police as a missing child according to the council procedures, including notifying the Head of Service and the emergency duty team.

18. The Castle Gate does not have any electronic or mechanical means of surveillance.

19. The Castle Gate is fitted with fire and smoke detectors and emergency lighting, all of which are regularly serviced and maintained. Regular staff training is undertaken and weekly and monthly checks are made on the building and equipment, and recorded in the fire log book.

Care Planning

20. The young person's religious instruction or observance is recorded on their individual care plans for all staff to follow and respect in all areas of the service provided.
All staff receive training in managing diversity and we have activities throughout the year which celebrate cultural festivals when parents, carers and significant others are encouraged to attend.

21. The Castle Gate has a complaints procedure which is in line with the council's policy and is overseen by the Team Manager and supported through line managers and the complaints officer.
Young people, parents and carers are positively encouraged to question and comment on practice and to contribute their views on how Castle Gate is run and managed. The Castle Gate publishes this information as part of the annual evaluation report.

22. A formal review of the child's care plan is held every 6 months and recorded by the social worker. The format of this review is dependant on the legal basis of the overnight care. If a child is looked after then the review will be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.
Care plans and risk assessments are updated, as soon as any changes are identified, by the key worker at Castle Gate.

23. Young people do not share bedrooms. All young people are booked in after considering staff dependency levels, individual needs, behaviours, relationship with peers to ensure all who stay get the maximum benefit from the service.

24. The Castle Gate staff team does not provide therapeutic techniques as part of this service.

Aims and Principles of Service

25 The philosophy of care at The Castle Gate is based on guidance in the Children Act 1989, Volume Six, and Children with Disabilities. Our aim is to ensure that children receive a service of the highest standard and tailored to individual need. We work in a manner which respects dignity, privacy and promotes choice and independence and one which is in line with person centred planning. Our reviews are outcome focused and based on the ability and development of the child or young person.

27. The Castle Gate policy is for all staff to work with all disabled children and staff work in accordance with West Berkshire's Equal Opportunity Procedure. The importance to a young person of their gender, disability, ethnic origin and cultural background is recognised, and is fully taken into account within their Care Plans.

The Staff are committed to working in partnership with the young person's family network. We consult with Parents/Carers and encourage participation and involvement in their child's day to day care, living arrangements and recreational or behaviour management programmes. All young people are entitled to high standards of care which includes the right to exercise choice, to have privacy, to be listened to and treated with respect by those that work alongside them.

The Castle Gate staff are committed to the principles of social inclusion, and actively encourage presence and participation in the local community. The Castle Gate operates a West Berkshire cross gender care policy, and works to the principles of providing safe care to children and young people.

Rachel Palin
Team Manager

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Equality Impact Assessment Template – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	Castle Gate Statement of Purpose (SOP)
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	Annual revision of SOP
Owner of item being assessed:	Rachel Palin
Name of assessor:	Juliet Penley
Date of assessment:	27.5.11

1 What are the main aims of the item?

To provide information and details, as prescribed by the Children Homes Regulations, about the Castle Gate Short Break Service.

2 Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Parents of disabled children who may use or want to use resource	Only positive ie this would help with informing them and making decisions and reassuring them.	Feedback from parents/Steering Grp
Children with disabilities	Only positive. Will not disadvantage anyone. Provides information and details of service.	A/A

Further Comments relating to the item:

Annual approval by members is a legal requirement for a SOP.

3 Result (please tick)	
	High Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.
	Medium Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	Low Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
X	**No Relevance** This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4 Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	**X**

Signed: Juliet Penley **Date: 27.5.11**

Title of Report:	**Accessibility Strategy**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2306

Purpose of Report: **To seek agreement to the draft Accessibility Strategy.**

Recommended Action: **Approval of the draft Accessibility Strategy.**

Reason for decision to be taken:	There is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to publish an Accessibility Strategy showing how they plan to increase access to schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes access to the curriculum, access to education and to the physical environment.
Other options considered:	Not applicable
Key background documentation:	Draft Accessibility Strategy 2011-14

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

☒ **CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

☒ **CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning**
☒ **CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
☒ **CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
☒ **CPT12 - Including Everyone**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
The proposals for supporting schools to include children with SEN will help to make them more successful in meeting the needs of all the children in their community, including those with SEN / disabilities.

The proposals will enable children with SEN to achieve greater independence in adult life as if their needs are more effectively met at school they are more likely to be employed and therefore more likely to be able to live independently as adults.

The report recommends actions which will help to ensure that children who are vulnerable because of their disability are given the best possible access to the opportunities which our schools can offer, both academic and extra curricular, and that discrimination against children with disabilities does not occur in our schools.

The proposals will help schools to cater for the needs of children with SEN more effectively. This should reduce the number of children with SEN who are excluded from school and who need to be educated outside of the area in residential schools rather than within their own community.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill - Tel (0118) 971 2671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	18 June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Jane Seymour
Job Title:	Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team
Tel. No.:	01635 519783
E-mail Address:	jseymour@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The Accessibility is consistent with the Council's existing SEN Inclusion Policy.
Financial:	The majority of actions in the Action Plan section of the Accessibility Strategy do not have financial implications and can be delivered within existing resources. The only action in the strategy with any significant financial implications is the proposal to carry out a feasibility study, by 2014, to determine how and at what cost one of the secondary schools in the eastern area of the Authority could be made fully accessible to children with mobility difficulties including wheelchair users. The cost of the feasibility study will have to be met from within the Education Capital Programme. The Accessibility Strategy does not make any commitment to proceed with the necessary works to make a secondary school in the east of the Authority fully accessible; it only proposes at this stage that a feasibility study is conducted.
Personnel:	There are no personnel implications.
Legal/Procurement:	It is a statutory duty for all Local Authorities to publish an Accessibility Strategy. The actions in the Strategy will assist schools in meeting their legal duties towards children with SEN and disabilities under the 1996 Education Act and the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act.
Property:	The property implications are outlined under Financial Implications above.
Risk Management:	Not applicable
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Stage 1 completed

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 There is a legal requirement for all Local Authorities to publish an Accessibility Strategy. The Strategy must show how the Authority plans to increase access to its schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities. It must cover access to the curriculum, access to information and access to the physical environment. The existing Accessibility Strategy needs to be reviewed.

1.2 A Steering Group was set up to oversee the process of creating a new Accessibility Strategy. The group included representatives from schools and voluntary groups, parents and relevant Council officers.

1.3 Data was collected to inform the strategy. An extensive consultation exercise was also undertaken in summer and autumn of 2010. Parents of children with SEN and schools had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire giving their views. Focus groups for parents were also held.

1.4 The draft Accessibility Strategy attached to this report was based on the data collected and the consultation feedback.

2. Proposals

2.1 It is proposed that the attached draft Accessibility Strategy should be adopted by the Council.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Adoption and implementation of the strategy will meet the legal requirement to have an Accessibility Strategy and will improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities by supporting schools to improve access for this group of pupils.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 There is a legal requirement for all Local Authorities to publish an Accessibility Strategy. The Strategy must show how the Authority plans to increase access to its schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities. It must cover access to the curriculum, access to information and access to the physical environment. The existing Accessibility Strategy needs to be reviewed.

1.2 A Steering Group was set up to oversee the process of creating a new Accessibility Strategy. The group included representatives from schools and voluntary groups, parents and relevant Council officers.

1.3 Data was collected to inform the strategy. An extensive consultation exercise was also undertaken in summer and autumn of 2010. Parents of children with SEN and schools had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire giving their views. Focus groups for parents were also held.

1.4 The Accessibility Strategy attached to this report was based on the data collected and the consultation feedback.

2. Accessibility Strategy

2.1 The attached draft strategy includes a range of actions in the Action Plan section of the document which are designed to improve access to the curriculum, to information and to the physical environment of West Berkshire schools. A large number of the proposed actions relate to additional advice, training and guidance for schools.

2.2 It is recommended that the strategy is adopted.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Accessibility Strategy
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:	West Berkshire Schools and PRUs Parents of children with SEN Parent Partnership Service Children's Centres Neighbouring Local Authorities Sensory Consortium Service Primary Care Trust MPs Mencap National Autistic Society, West Berkshire Branch Royal National Institute for the Deaf National Deaf Children's Society Royal National Institute for the Blind Berkshire Blind Society Diocesan Authorities Non maintained and independent special schools
Officers Consulted:	Cathy Burnham, Rhian Ireland, Anne Cooper, Mark Lewis, Valerie Witton, Elaine Walker, Ian Pearson, Jacquie Lynch, Lorna Hunt, Julia Waldman, Andy Tubbs
Trade Union:	Not consulted

DRAFT

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

2011 - 2014

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West Berkshire Council

Accessibility Strategy 2011 – 2014 (DRAFT)

1. Introduction

1.1 Since September 2002 Local Education Authorities have had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. As of 1st October 2010, the Equality Act has replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act. However, the disability equality duties contained in the DDA continue to apply. The three duties are:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to publish and implement an accessibility strategy to increase access to school education for disabled pupils.

1.2 This strategy sets out the proposals of West Berkshire Council to increase access to school education for disabled pupils, in the schools for which it is responsible. The strategy covers the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

1.3 The definition of disability under the DDA is:

A “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. A “physical impairment” includes visual and hearing difficulties as well as physical /mobility problems. “Mental impairment” includes learning difficulties and mental illness. “Long term” means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last 12 months or more. “Normal day to day activities” include mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or move objects; speech, hearing and eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of risk or physical danger. The definition includes some chronic medical conditions, progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV and severe disfigurements.

For the purposes of this Accessibility Strategy, the Council is using this definition of disability.
Schools are more accustomed to using the definition of special educational needs from the 1996 Education Act which is:

"A child has special educational needs if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him.

A child has a learning difficulty if:

a. he has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age,

b. he has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his age in schools within the area of the local education authority, or

c. he is under the age of five and is, or would be if special educational provision were not made for him, likely to fall within paragraph (a) or (b) when of or over that age."

A large proportion of children who are identified by schools as having SEN will meet the definition of disability, although some may not if their difficulties are not long term and do not significantly affect their ability to carry out day to day activities. The majority of children who would be considered disabled under the DDA will also have special educational needs. However, some children will meet the definition of disability but not necessarily have any SEN, eg. children with long term health conditions, cancer or severe disfigurements.

1.4 West Berkshire subscribes to the social as opposed to medical model of disability, ie. society disables people by failing to adapt the environment to meet their needs. It is therefore the responsibility of the Council and of schools to make the environment of schools, their curriculum and the full range of activities they offer accessible to children with disabilities.

1.5 This is the second Accessibility Strategy published by West Berkshire Council. The achievements of the initial Accessibility Strategy have included the following:

- expansion of the SEN Training programme
- guidance and training for schools on Disability Equality Schemes
- development of the Special School Consultancy Service from The Castle and Brookfields Schools as a more consistent Authority wide service
- increase in capacity in the Pre School Teacher Counsellor Service, to provide more support to children under 5 with disabilities, including advice to early years settings

- increase in capacity of the ASD Advisory Teacher Service, to provide more support to mainstream schools on meeting the needs of children with ASD (autistic spectrum disorder)
- creation of two ASD resources at Theale Primary and Theale Green Secondary schools
- creation of a hearing impaired resource at Kennet School
- colocation of The Castle School's Post 16 Department in new purpose built facilities on the Newbury College site
- an extensive programme of building projects to improve access to mainstream schools.

1.6 This strategy builds on the achievements of the first Accessibility Strategy. Evidence has been collected to assess how accessible West Berkshire's schools are at the present time to children with SEN and disabilities, in terms of access to the curriculum, to information and to the physical environment. This has included data on a range of performance indicators as well as consultation with parents and schools. The new Accessibility Strategy seeks to make further improvements to the accessibility of West Berkshire's schools for children with SEN and disabilities.

2. About West Berkshire District

West Berkshire District covers an area of 272 square miles and makes up two thirds of the geographical county of Berkshire. It is a largely rural district with over 70% of its land designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Its main towns are Newbury and Thatcham, with Theale in the east of the district, and Hungerford to the west.

The population currently stands at just under 145,000 people and is projected to grow by 7% by 2028. In line with national trends, the proportion of older people is increasing.

Although West Berkshire remains a relatively prosperous area, there are pockets of real deprivation. Transport issues remain a high concern, particularly for those living in rural areas dependent on public services. The cost of housing is another key issue, and in particular the need for accessible housing for those with disabilities. The ability to provide appropriate services and housing is crucial to maintaining the viability of many of the rural communities.

The Council has undertaken detailed research into the demographic trends, changing lifestyles, work patterns, housing needs, and economic forecasts of the area. This information is captured in our District Profile which can be accessed via the Council's website, www.westberks.gov.uk, or alternatively hard copies can be provided on request.

3. Vision and Values

The Council's vision and values in respect of people with disabilities are set out in the following key documents:-

3.1 West Berkshire Council Plan

The Council Plan 2007–2011 sets out the Council's values. These are:

- respect in all our relationships;
- integrity in everything we do; and
- ambition to deliver continuous improvement.

From these values, the Council Plan sets out a number of desired outcomes for the next four years. One outcome, entitled "Including Everyone", reflects the need to better address areas of social exclusion and to increase equality in terms of opportunity, irrespective of people's race or nationality, religion, age, gender, sexuality or any type of disability.

3.2 West Berkshire Equality Scheme

The Council's Disability Equality Scheme has been replaced by an overarching Equality Scheme which covers race, gender, age, religion and sexual orientation as well as disability. The Council has published the following Equality Statement:
"West Berkshire Council will actively strive to address inequalities through its planning and delivery of services. All Council Members, employees and agents will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and promote equality and good relations within all sections of the community. We will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation."
In the Equality Scheme's Action Plan 2010 to 2013, the Council has made a commitment to:

- monitor access to services and facilities by disabled people
- improve accessibility of the information it provides
- improve access to Council buildings
- ensure libraries provide suitable materials for people with visual impairments
- improve accessibility of footpaths and rights of way
- improve access to public transport
- raise awareness of disability equality issues
- maintain external scrutiny by representatives of disabled groups
- involve disabled service users in the development of services

3.3 West Berkshire Children and Young People's Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan "A Fair and Equal Chance for all Children and Young People" has the following aim:
" to enable all children, young people and their families to maximise their life potential while intervening positively to ensure that the most vulnerable have an equal opportunity to succeed."
Priorities in the plan which are specifically relevant to children with SEN and disabilities include:

- raise the achievement of children in vulnerable groups, including children with special educational needs
- enable vulnerable children and young people to become involved in positive activities, especially those with learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder

3.4 West Berkshire SEN Inclusion Policy

West Berkshire's SEN Inclusion Policy is based on the following key principles:

- Outcomes for children with special educational needs will be improved when statutory and voluntary agencies work together in a coordinated and integrated way. Children's needs should be addressed holistically.
- Children and young people with special educational needs are entitled to prompt identification of their needs, early intervention and high quality support within the context, in the great majority of cases, of a mainstream school environment.
- Children and young people with special educational needs should have access to the same opportunities as their peers, including a broad and balanced curriculum, and full access to the life of the school, including out of school activities.
- Pupils with special educational needs will achieve more if we have high expectations for them. They must be given the opportunity to achieve and reach their potential.
- Parents of children with special educational needs have a unique contribution to make to their child's education. They are entitled to be fully involved, listened to and respected. They are entitled to good quality information, support and independent advice.
- Adults working with children who have special educational needs must establish the child's views and wishes and involve the child where appropriate in decisions which are taken.
- Children with special educational needs will have different needs during the course of their education. They should have access to a flexible continuum of provision which can respond to their particular needs at different times.
- In the small minority of cases where it is not possible to meet a child's needs in their local mainstream school, provision should be as local to the child's home as possible.
- Children with special educational needs depend on good quality support from committed and skilled staff in schools. Good practice in SEN thrives when teachers and support staff are valued and supported and their professional development is given priority.

4. Data/ Evidence used to inform the Accessibility Strategy

In preparing this Accessibility Strategy, the Local Authority has gathered a wide range of data to inform its strategy and action plan.

4.1 Number of children with SEN / disabilities

In September 2010 there were 2192 children in West Berkshire schools identified as having SEN at School Action and 1138 at School Action Plus, giving a total of 3330 at the school based stages of the SEN Code of Practice. The majority, but not all, of these pupils were West Berkshire residents (2932 ie. 88%); the remainder being pupils who attend West Berkshire schools but are resident in another Authority (398 ie.12%).

There were in addition 740 West Berkshire resident pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, plus a further 200 statemented pupils who attend West Berkshire schools but who are resident in another Authority and whose Statement is therefore maintained by that Authority. This gives a total of 4270 children with identified SEN in West Berkshire, or 4070 if the statemented children who are resident in other Authorities are excluded. (It should also be noted that a small proportion of West Berkshire resident statemented children are educated in schools outside of West Berkshire).

Approximately 17% of the West Berkshire school population are identified as having special educational needs. Over the last five years, the percentage of children identified with SEN in West Berkshire schools has varied between 17% to 20%, with the peak at 20% occuring in 2009. The reduction to 17% is accounted for mainly by schools identifying fewer children at School Action and also by a slight reduction in the number of children with statements. In 2010 the percentage of children nationally identified as having SEN was 20%, therefore West Berkshire's percentage is well below the national average.

The percentage of the 0 to 19 population in West Berkshire with a statement in 2010 was 2.1%. This is slightly higher than the national average which was 1.85% in 2009 (2010 national data not available).

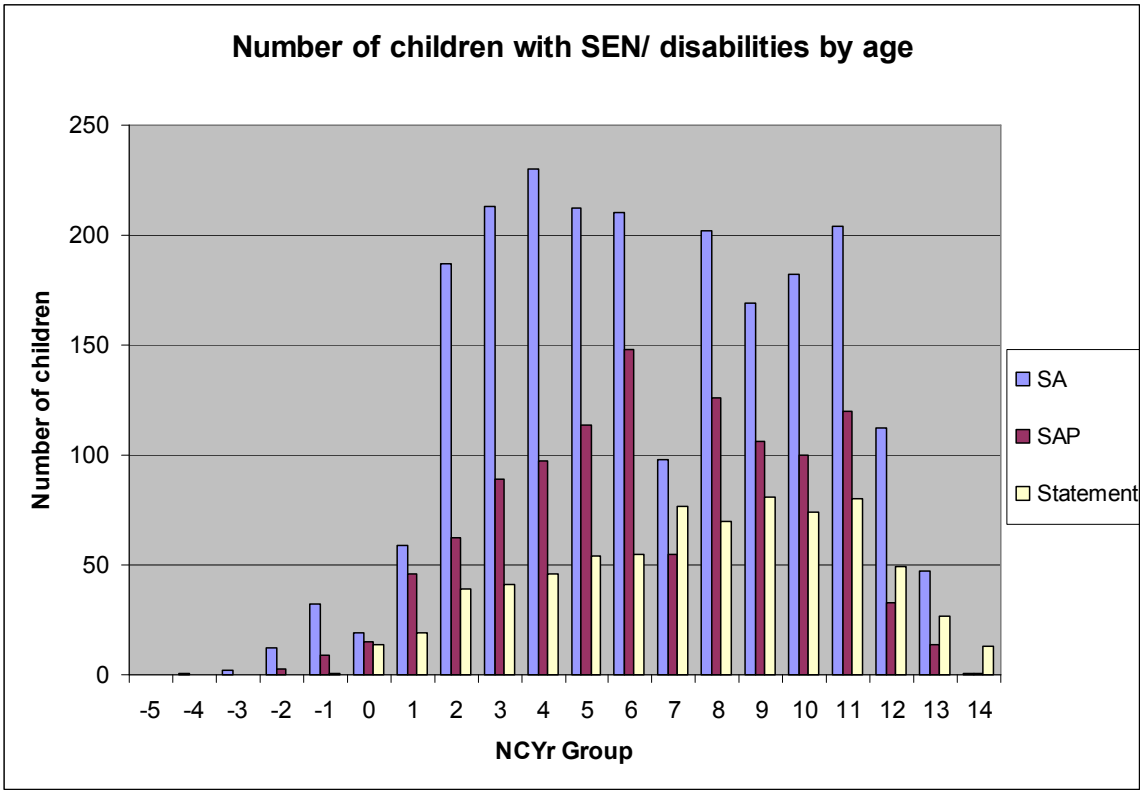
4.2 Number of children with SEN / disabilities by age.

The breakdown by age of all pupils identified with SEN is as follows:

NCYr Group	Age	SA	SAP	Statement	Total
-5	0	0	0	0	0
-4	1	1	0	0	1
-3	2	2	0	0	2
-2	3	12	3	0	15
-1	4	32	9	1	42
0	5	19	15	14	48
1	6	59	46	19	124
2	7	187	62	39	288
3	8	213	89	41	343
4	9	230	97	46	373
5	10	212	114	54	380
6	11	210	148	55	413
7	12	98	55	77	230
8	13	202	126	70	398
9	14	169	106	81	356
10	15	182	100	74	356
11	16	204	120	80	404

12	17	112	33	49	194
13	18	47	14	27	88
14	19	1	1	13	15
TOTAL		**2192**	**1138**	**740**	**4070**

This data is expressed as a bar chart below:



It is noted that numbers of children identified with SEN at the school based stages (School Action and School Action Plus) increase significantly between Year One and Year Two, presumably as children moving through Key Stage One are identified as having SEN. Numbers at the school based stages continue to rise in the primary years, reaching a peak in Year 6 (the final year of primary schooling), reducing dramatically in Year 7 then rising significantly again in Year 8. This data represents just a "snapshot" in September 2010, but if the same age distribution of SEN pupils were to be replicated in previous or future years this could indicate that pupils who are identified as SEN in primary schools are not identified as such by secondary schools in Year 7 on secondary transfer, but are then re identified in Year 8. This could indicate a difficulty with transfer of information between primary and secondary schools about children with SEN, or it could be the result of a deliberate strategy by secondary schools to make their own assessment of which children should be identified as SEN. This needs further investigation.

4.3 Number of children with SEN / disabilities by type of SEN.

4.3.1The breakdown of SEN pupils by type of SEN is as follows:
(Please see Appendix Two for an explanation of the SEN codes).

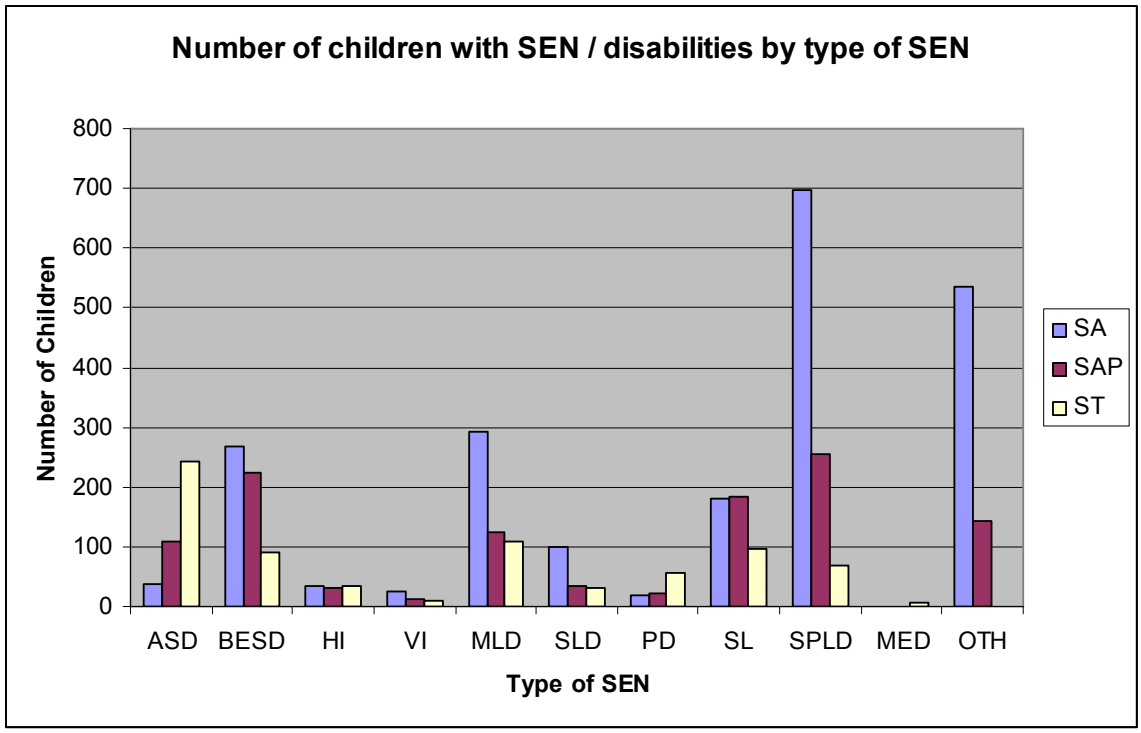
All SEN pupils by type of SEN

	ASD	BESD	HI	VI	MLD	SLD	PD	SL	SPLD	MED	OTH	TOTAL
SA	38	268	33	26	294	101	19	181	698	-	534	2192
SAP	110	223	31	11	125	33	23	183	255	-	144	1138
ST	242	90	33	8	110	30	56	95	70	6	0	740
TOTAL	**390**	**581**	**97**	**45**	**529**	**164**	**98**	**459**	**1023**	**6**	**678**	**4070**
%	**9.5**	**14.2**	**2.3**	**1.1**	**12.9**	**4**	**2.4**	**11.2**	**25**	**0.1**	**16.6**	

Statemented pupils by type of SEN

	ASD	BESD	HI	VI	MLD	SLD	PD	SL	SPLD	MED	OTH	TOTAL
ST	242	90	33	8	110	30	56	95	70	6	0	740
%	**32.7**	**12.1**	**4.4**	**1**	**14.8**	**4**	**7.5**	**12.8**	**9.4**	**0.8**	**0**	

4.3.2This data is expressed as a bar chart below:



4.3.4 It must be borne in mind that this data has limitations in that it only captures each pupil's *primary* special educational need. Many children will have a range of special educational needs; this is not reflected in this data. Moreover, a relatively large number of children with SEN at School Action and School Action Plus have been categorised by schools in the schools census as "other", ie. the type of SEN has not been specified. There will also be some inconsistencies in the way schools use the SEN categories. Generalisations drawn from this data need to be treated therefore with caution.

4.3.5 The most prevalent types of SEN within the School Action group are specific literacy difficulties (32% of the total at School Action), moderate learning difficulties (14%) followed by behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (12%).

4.3.6 The most prevalent types of SEN within the School Action Plus group are specific literacy difficulties (22% of the total at School Action Plus), behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (20%) and speech, language and communication difficulties (15%).

4.3.7 It is unsurprising that these four types of SEN represent the largest proportion of children identified with SEN at School Action and School Action Plus as they would generally be regarded as the highest incidence SEN groups. However, it is noteworthy that by far the greatest number of children within the School Action cohort are identified as having specific literacy difficulties. Similarly, children with specific literacy difficulties are the biggest group within the School Action Plus cohort. Children with specific literacy difficulties make up 25% of the total numbers of children with SEN in West Berkshire. It is possible that some children have been inappropriately identified as having SEN when they are merely underachieving in literacy and require some support to catch up.

4.3.8 Children with autistic spectrum disorder make up the largest proportion of statemented pupils (32.7%), followed by moderate and severe learning difficulties (18.8%), speech and language difficulties (12.8%) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (12.1%).

4.3.9 The most significant change in the SEN population in West Berkshire in recent years is the dramatic increase in the number of children with autistic spectrum disorder. This is consistent with national trends. It is not possible to determine the extent to which this reflects an actual increase in the prevalence of autism as opposed to greater recognition of the condition and better diagnosis. However, the number of children with autism, particularly children in the average range of cognitive ability with ASD, has increased significantly. For example, the number of children diagnosed with ASD who were attending mainstream schools in West Berkshire was 113 in March 2005 and 370 in April 2011, an increase of 227% over 6 years. This increase in numbers is putting pressure on the Authority's provision for children with ASD, which is reflected in increased numbers of children with ASD needing to be placed in independent or non maintained special schools. (See 4.5 below).

4.3.10 Another significant change in the local SEN population is the increase in the numbers of children with very profound and complex needs who are surviving. This appears to be the result of advances in medical science which mean that children born with profound disabilities are surviving where previously they may not have done so. The total number of children in West Berkshire's special schools has not increased significantly, but the profile has altered as a result of reduced numbers of children with more moderate learning difficulties (who are now more likely to be placed in mainstream schools) and increased numbers of children with profound and complex needs.

4.3.11 There is some anecdotal evidence of greater numbers of children with medical needs such as diabetes and epilepsy attending mainstream schools, but it has not been possible to obtain data to support this. Systems are being put in place so that this data can be collected in the future.

4.3.12 Evidence does not exist of an overall increase in the number of children identified with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. However, there does

appear to have been an increase in children with very severe and extreme behaviours, including children with mental health diagnoses. This is reflected in the increase in the number of children with BESD who are requiring placement in independent and non maintained special schools.

4.3.13 The proposal in the Government's SEN Green Paper 2011 to amalgamate the two school based categories of SEN, School Action and School Action Plus, into one school based category, will inevitably impact on future trend analysis.

4.4 School provision for children with disabilities

4.4.1The majority of children with SEN will have their needs met in local mainstream schools. All mainstream schools are bound by the SEN Code of Practice and must make suitable provision for children with SEN. All schools have a Special Educational Needs Coordinator to oversee arrangements for children with SEN. Schools are expected to use a proportion of their main school budgets for children with SEN and in addition have funds delegated specifically for SEN provision.

4.4.2 Children whose needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school may attend a school which has a special resource for children with particular needs. In West Berkshire, the following schools have special resources attached to them:

Speenhamland Primary School, Physical Disability, 10 places
The Winchcombe Primary School, Speech and Language Difficulties, 15 places
Westwood Farm Infant School, Hearing Impairment, 5 places
Westwood Farm Junior School, Hearing Impairment, 10 places
Theale Primary School, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, 12 places
Kennet Secondary School (Academy), Physical Disability, 25 places
Kennet Secondary School (Academy), Hearing Impairment, 10 places
Theale Green Secondary School, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, 12 places
Trinity Secondary School, Specific Literacy Difficulties, 20 places.

4.4.3 West Berkshire Council maintains two special schools, The Castle School in Newbury and Brookfields School in Tilehurst. Both schools cater for children from 2 to 19 with learning difficulties and other associated special educational needs. These could include physical disabilities, sensory impairments, speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural difficulties. In addition, The Castle School has a resource for children with autistic spectrum disorder and Brookfields has a resource for children with sensory impairments. The Castle School's Nursery is collocated with Victoria Park Nursery and Children's Centre and its Post 16 Department is located on the Newbury College site.

4.4.4 Where a child's has needs which cannot be met in a West Berkshire school, the Council will consider placements in specialist provision maintained by other Local Education Authorities or in independent or non maintained special schools.

4.5 School placement of children with disabilities

4.5.1 The following table shows total numbers of statemented children in 2010 broken down by type of placement.

Type of placement	Numbers	Percentage
Early years setting	4	
Maintained mainstream	363	
Maintained mainstream with resource	78	
Independent mainstream	7	
Sub total mainstream	**452**	**62%**
Maintained special	200	
Non maintained special	18	
Independent special	45	
Education Otherwise (PRU)	5	
Sub total special	**268**	**37%**
Education Otherwise (home tuition)	8	
Education Otherwise (parents)	1	
Sub total other	**9**	**1%**
TOTAL	**729**	

If the children who are educated otherwise are treated as being in special provision in the sense that they are not in mainstream schools, the mainstream / special split is currently 62% / 38%.

4.5.2 The table below shows how this compares with previous years:

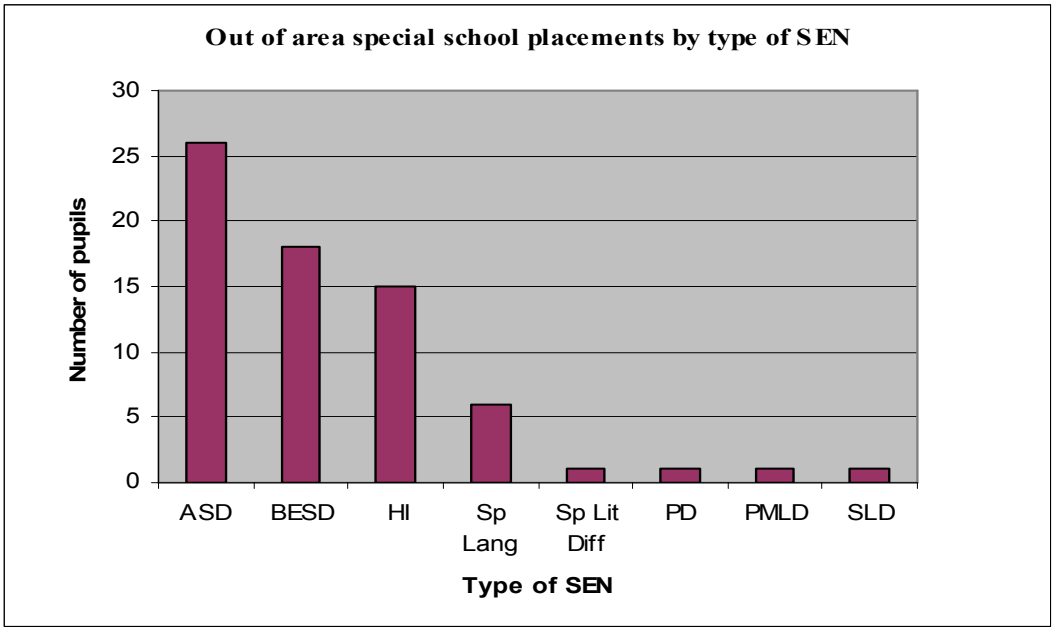
Year	St. pupils in m/s	Percentage	St. pupils in special	Percentage	Total
2007	501	63%	288	37%	789
2008	478	62%	288	38%	766
2009	493	65%	269	35%	762
2010 Jan	489	64%	272	36%	761
2010 Sept	452	62%	277	38%	729

4.5.3 This table demonstrates that the total number of statements has decreased slightly but not very significantly over a three year period. (A reduction of about 7.6%). This reduction reflects changes in the SEN Funding system to allow more resources to be accessed by schools without recourse to a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

4.5.4 The split between mainstream and special placements has not changed significantly over the last three years. Over that period, on average, 63.5% of statemented pupils have been in mainstream provision and 36.5% in special school provision. However, although the total number of West Berkshire children attending special schools has not increased (in fact it has decreased slightly), the number of children in non maintained and independent special schools has increased since 2007, as shown below.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Non maintained special	25	22	15	18	
Independent special	32	44	41	45	
Total	**57**	**66**	**56**	**63**	**69**

4.5.5. Placements in independent and non maintained special schools are shown in the table below, broken down by the child's primary special educational need:



4.5.6 The largest number of placements in independent and non maintained special schools are of children with autistic spectrum disorder, followed by behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and then hearing impairment.

4.6 Access to out of school activities

4.6.1 Access to out of school activities for children with SEN and disabilities has been a priority for West Berkshire Council for several years. The Early Years and Childcare Team has a budget to provide one to one support for children with SEN to enable them to access childcare opportunities. From 2003 to 2006 the Local Authority had a Public Service Agreement Target to increase access to out of school activities for children with SEN and the target was met. Since then there have been significant further developments as a result of the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative which provided additional resources for the development of short breaks for children with disabilities. Most short break activities are commissioned by the Authority and provided by third parties. The voluntary sector is a major provider of short breaks activities.

4.6.2 Data from the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative shows that the number of hours of non specialist (ie mainstream) out of school activities available for children with SEN increased from 5730 to 6239 between 2009-10 and 2010-11. This represents an increase of approximately 9%. There has been a similar increase in the number of hours of out of school activities available in

specialist settings. However, although provision has increased there are still gaps in the provision of out of school activities for children with SEN and disabilities. This will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

4.6.3 There is no data available on access to school trips (day and residential) for children with SEN / disabilities. However, schools quite frequently seek advice from the Local Authority on ways of including children with SEN / disabilities in school trips. Ensuring that children are included in school trips in a way which is safe can create considerable anxiety for schools. Individual enquiries are dealt with on a case by case basis, but the number of requests for advice suggests there is a need for more generic guidance for schools on including children with SEN / disabilities in school trips, in line with Disability Discrimination and Equality legislation.

4.7 Progress made by children with disabilities and outcomes

4.7.1 National Indicator 104 – The SEN / non SEN gap at end of KS2 - % achieving L4 in English and Maths combined

The following table shows the percentage of children with SEN who achieve at expected levels at the end of Key Stage Two (the end of primary schooling), compared to the percentage of children with no SEN who achieve at this level. It also shows the "gap" between the achievement of the SEN and non SEN groups and whether this is getting wider or narrower over time.

	All Pupils			No Identified SEN			SEN			% Gap		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
England	71.1%	73.0%	72.3%	82.7%	84.6%	84.4%	30.9%	33.6%	33.5%	51.8%	51.0%	50.9%
West Berkshire	73.9%	74.6%	73.8%	84.5%	87.1%	85.7%	31.1%	31.7%	35.5%	53.4%	55.4%	50.2%

The table demonstrates that the performance of children with SEN at Key Stage 2 is improving, as the percentage of children with SEN achieving Level 4 in English and Maths has increased. The percentage of children with SEN achieving at this level also compares favourably with the national average. In addition, the gap between the percentage of children without SEN who achieve Level 4 and the percentage of those with SEN who achieve Level 4 is narrowing. Overall this indicates good and improving achievement by children with SEN at the end of the primary phase.

4.7.2 National Indicator 105 – The SEN / non SEN gap – end KS4 - % achieving 5 A* - C including English and Maths

The following table shows the percentage of children with SEN who achieve five A star to C grade GCSEs at the end of Key Stage Four (the end of statutory education), compared to the percentage of children with no SEN who achieve at this level. It also shows the "gap" between the achievement of the SEN and non SEN groups and whether this is getting wider or narrower over time.

	All Pupils			No Identified SEN			SEN			% Gap		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
England	45.5%	48.4%	50.9%	53.9%	57.5%	61.0%	9.4%	11.8%	14.5%	44.4%	45.6%	46.5%
West Berkshire	53.3%	52.9%	54.9%	59.7%	60.9%	64.0%	11.2%	13.6%	17.8%	48.5%	47.2%	46.2%

The table demonstrates that the performance of children with SEN at Key Stage 4 is improving, as the percentage of children with SEN achieving 5 A star to C grades including English and Maths has increased. The percentage of children achieving at this level also compares favourably with the national average. In addition, the gap between the percentage of children without SEN who achieve at this level and the percentage with SEN who do so is narrowing. This indicates good and improving achievement by children with SEN at age 16.

4.7.3 Key Stage 2 - % making at least 2 levels of progress – all pupils compared to SEN pupils

The following table shows the percentage of children with SEN who make at least two National Curriculum levels of progress between the end of Key Stage One (age 7years) and the end of Key Stage Two (age 11 years) in English and Maths, compared to the percentage of non SEN pupils who make at least two levels of progress in these subjects.

	English				Maths			
	All Pupils		Pupils identified with SEN		All pupils		Pupils identified with SEN	
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08
England	83.5%	82.2%	76.2%	76.4%	75.8%	77.8%	60.0%	62.9%
West Berkshire	86.2%	83.1%	78.4%	75.7%	77.2%	78.7%	56.4%	61.7%

The table shows a slight decrease in the percentage of children with SEN making at least two levels of progress between Key Stage One and Key Stage Two in English between 2007 and 2008. However, this is in line with a similar trend for all pupils over that period. In Maths, the percentage of pupils with SEN achieving two levels of progress increased.

4.7.4 Key Stage 4 – of those children classified as SEN at the end of KS2, % making 3 levels of progress to KS4

The following table shows the percentage of children with SEN who make at least three National Curriculum levels of progress between the end of Key Stage Two (age 11 years) and the end of Key Stage Two (age 16 years) in English and Maths.

	English		Maths	
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08
England	38.2%	39.0%	26.8%	28.1%
West Berkshire	40.7%	38.8%	32.4%	31.4%

The table shows a slight decrease in the percentage of children making at least three levels of progress between Key Stage Two and Key Stage Four in English

between 2007 and 2008. Similarly, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of children with SEN making at least three levels of progress in Maths over that period.

4.7.5 Ofsted consider progress made by children with SEN as part of school inspections. Taking all West Berkshire schools' most recent Ofsted reports in to account, 75% of schools were rated good or outstanding for progress made by children with SEN, 21% were satisfactory and 4% were unsatisfactory. (The schools rated unsatisfactory on this measure will have been followed up by the School Improvement Service).

4.7.6 This data shows that achievement and progress of children with SEN in West Berkshire is generally good compared to the national position, and is rated as good or better by Ofsted in a large proportion of the Authority's schools. However, whilst the global picture presented by the data looks quite positive, the possibility that individuals or groups of children with SEN could be underachieving in relation to their potential should not be overlooked. Responses from the local branch of the National Autistic Society and the National Deaf Children's Society referred to national data which indicates that autistic children and deaf children underachieve.

4.7.7 Another issue which needs to be considered is whether children with SEN who attend mainstream schools have sufficient access to alternative courses and schemes of accreditation if they are not able to access GCSE courses. Some parents and schools reported this as an area needing further development, particularly in the light of the proposed raising of the participation age to 17 years.

4.7.8 An important measure of schools' success in meeting the needs of children with SEN is the outcome achieved after young people leave school in terms of access to further education, training or employment. Data from 2008 shows that 6.3% of 16 to 18 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities were NEET (not in education, employment or training).This compares favourably with the national average percentage which was 12.8% at that time. However, it is still a cause for concern that 6.3% of young people with SEN and disabilities are not going in to education, employment or training after leaving school. One of the issues reported by parents and schools as a barrier to employment is lack of access in some cases to suitable work experience and vocational training opportunities.

4.8 Effectiveness of schools' arrangements for children with disabilities

4.8.1 Attainments and progress cannot be used as the only measure of schools' effectiveness for children with SEN / disabilities. It is necessary to consider a number of other indicators, including data on admissions, exclusions, pupil transfers, attendance, pupils withdrawn from school by parents, bullying, physical access, information from schools' Disability Equality Schemes, Annual Review outcomes and parental feedback.

4.8.2 <u>Admissions</u>

Schools are not able to refuse admission to a pupil on the grounds of their special educational needs. The West Berkshire Schools Admissions Policy gives children with statements top priority in the admission criteria. If a pupil with a Statement is seeking admission to a particular mainstream school, (eg. when they reach school age, when they transfer to secondary, or when they are without a school place for other reasons), the Local Authority has to consult the Governors of the school concerned. In the majority of cases children are accepted without question. However, the Governors of a school are able to make a case, if they wish, that admission of the child would not be in the child's best interests or the interests of other children. Unfortunately, data does not exist on the number of cases where objections to admission of statemented pupils are raised, but it is estimated to be a relatively small minority of cases. The Authority in these circumstances has to take a view about whether the school's objections are valid; if so, another school will be approached, if not, the school is expected to admit the child and can be directed to do so if necessary. Experience shows that when schools raise objections to the admission of a statemented pupil it is generally in cases of children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), either as their primary need or associated with other conditions. It is often possible to negotiate a child's admission in such cases, or reach an alternative solution, and direction is rarely necessary. However, a small number of parents reported during the consultation that they never reached the point of making a formal application to their first choice of school because they were made to feel unwelcome and were encouraged to place their child elsewhere. This experience was reported in cases of children with autism, Down's Syndrome and BESD. It must be stressed that only a very small number of parents reported having this experience and this must be seen in the context of nearly 800 statemented pupils. However it does raise potential issues about the ethos and confidence levels of some schools in relation to children with SEN.

4.8.3 Exclusions

The following tables shows the number of children who were excluded, either on a fixed term basis or permanently, from West Berkshire schools in the 2009-10 academic year and the percentage of those with special educational needs.

Permanent Exclusions in 2009-10

School Action	1	
School Action Plus	3	
Statement	0	
Total SEN	4	50%
No SEN	4	
Total	8	

Fixed Term Exclusions in 2009-10

School Action	162	
School Action Plus	405	
Statement	99	
Total SEN	666	67%
No SEN	327	
Total	993	

This data shows that 50% of permanent exclusions in 2009-10 and 67% of fixed term exclusions were of children with SEN. It is not possible at present to break this data down by type of SEN, but investigation of individual cases shows that, almost exclusively, children with SEN who have been excluded are children identified as having BESD rather than other types of SEN, (though it should be acknowledged that children whose primary special educational need is BESD may have additional or associated special educational needs).

4.8.4 Pupil transfers / managed moves

In the 2009-10 academic year, 36 pupils had managed moves from one mainstream school to another. Of these, 30 were identified with special educational needs; 3 at School Action and 27 at School Action Plus. In the majority of cases the identified SEN was behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

4.8.5 Attendance

West Berkshire has relatively low levels of persistent absence. Persistent absence is defined as less than 80% attendance. Of the pupils who were persistently absent in the 2008-9 academic year, 25% were identified by schools as having some degree of special educational need, either at School Action, School Action Plus or Statement. The majority of these pupils were identified as having BESD. Some had medical needs. Whilst the total numbers are small, the percentage with SEN is significant and warrants further investigation.

4.8.6 Elective Home Education

In the summer term 2010 there were 66 children being electively home educated by their parents. In 6 of these cases, ie. 9%, one of the reasons given by parents for originally choosing to home educate their child was the child's SEN. (It needs to be borne in mind that some of these children have been electively home educated for many years so have not been withdrawn from school recently and some may never have attended school). Between 2006 and 2010 the percentage of children on elective home education who have SEN has varied between 6% and 9% This represents pupil numbers of between 3 and 6.

4.8.7 Bullying

It is impossible to get accurate data on bullying of children with SEN. Schools should record data about bullying on a system called "webrisk" but this is not done consistently by schools so data is not reliable. Bullying was not a significant issue raised by parents in the consultation. However, bullying of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder was raised in a study carried out by the West Berkshire branch of the National Autistic Society in 2009. 56% of parents responding to this study reported that their child had been bullied. The National Deaf Children's Society's response to the consultation referred to national evidence about bullying of deaf children (although there is no specific data about this locally).

4.8.8 Physical Access to Schools

Specific capital funding for access projects no longer exists. However, between 2002-3 and 2009-10 the School Access Initiative budget was available to

improve access to mainstream schools for children with disabilities. Schools had the opportunity to bid for funding and bids were prioritised in line with the following criteria: Priority 1: access to site, main entrance and reception; Priority 2: accessible toilets, showers and changing areas; Priority 3: access to specialist curriculum areas. An extensive programme of access works was carried out during this period at a total cost of £1,147,864. In addition, schools have carried out access works independently of the Authority using their own budgets. As a result there has been a general and significant improvement in access to school buildings over the last 10 year period.

However, few schools could yet be regarded as fully accessible. Secondary schools which have relatively good accessibility include Trinity, St. Bartholomew's (recently rebuilt) and Kennet (which has a resource for pupils with physical disabilities). Secondary schools in the east of West Berkshire are less accessible, particularly for children with mobility problems, which can create difficulties.

Access works carried out so far have mostly focused on improving access for children with mobility difficulties. There have been some projects funded by the Authority to improve access for children with other needs, such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and autism, but there is still a lot of scope to improve school environments for children with these particular needs. Schools need to be reminded to consider these groups when addressing physical access issues with their own sites and buildings.

4.8.9 Information from schools' Disability Equality Schemes

In 2006 the Disability Discrimination Act was amended to introduce a new general equality duty. Schools then took on a new responsibility to produce and implement a Disability Equality Scheme, in addition to an Access Plan, which they already had a duty to publish. (It was possible for schools to incorporate their Access Plan into their Disability Equality Scheme). The Equality Act has changed this requirement so that the duty on schools is now to produce an overarching Equality Scheme which addresses disability equality within it. The Authority has, where possible, collected schools' Disability Equality Schemes in order to inform its own strategy. Examination of the schemes which could be obtained shows some common themes. These include SEN training for staff and disability awareness raising for children.

4.8.10 Feedback from Parents

One of the ways in which the Authority can assess schools' effectiveness for children with SEN, or parents' perception of their effectiveness, is the feedback gained from Annual Reviews of statemented children. Where parents express concerns at their child's annual review, this is dealt with on a case by case basis by the school and also, where necessary, by an officer from the Authority's SEN Assessment Team, where necessary. However, there is currently no system for collation of data on parents' overall satisfaction at Annual Review.

Another measure of parents' satisfaction with arrangements to meet their children's needs is the number of appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). There are two types of possible appeal to SENDIST. Firstly, parents of a child with SEN can appeal if the Authority refuses to carry out a statutory assessment of their child's needs; if the parent disagrees with the content of the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs; if the parent disagrees with the provision or placement recommended by the Authority; if the Authority refuses to

amend a Statement following an Annual Review, or makes amendments with which the parent disagrees. In the case of a SEN appeal in one of the situations described above, the appeal would be against the Local Authority. Secondly, parents of a child who has a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (who may or may not have a special educational need) can appeal to the Tribunal if they think that their child has been unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of their disability. In this case the appeal would usually be against the governors of the school. West Berkshire has had no disability discrimination cases going to the Tribunal and has relatively low levels of SEN cases compared to other Authorities. The Department for Education monitors the number of Tribunal cases per Authority expressed as a rate per 10,000 children in the school population. In 2008-9, the rate of cases lodged with the Tribunal was 3.98 per 10,000 children nationally and 1.57 per 10,000 children in West Berkshire, showing that West Berkshire's Tribunal rate is less than 40% of the national average. In the 2009-10 academic year only one West Berkshire SEN case was heard by the Tribunal.
A summary of parents' views expressed through the Accessibility Strategy consultation is included in section 5 of this document.

4.9 LA support for schools to promote participation by children with disabilities

4.9.1 The Local Authority provides a range of support to schools to assist them in making appropriate arrangements for children with SEN.

4.9.2 Every school has an allocated member of the Special Needs Support Team who visits on a regular basis. This support can include advice on differentiation of the curriculum, teaching strategies, interventions and resources; support for and mentoring of SENCOs; support and challenge on progress of children with SEN; advice on the DDA and reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities; support with provision mapping; bespoke SEN training to meet the school's specific needs and assessments of individual children.

4.9.3 SEN advice and support is available to private and voluntary early years settings and also to foundation classes in maintained schools from the Pre School Teacher Counsellor Service (if the setting has a child who is on the Pre School Teacher Counsellors' caseload) or alternatively from the Early Years Advisory Teachers.

4.9.4 Teachers from the ASD Service are available to advise schools on how to meet the needs of children with autism, including advice on teaching strategies and resources and ASD training.

4.9.5 The Sensory Consortium Service provides teachers of the hearing impaired and teachers of the visually impaired who can support pupils in schools on a peripatetic basis. Support includes advice and training for school staff and loan of equipment where appropriate. The service can also provide educational audiology support and mobility training.

4.9.6 The Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS) is run by the special schools on behalf of the Authority. It is complementary to the Special Needs Support Team and other SEN support services and provides support for children in mainstream schools who have significant learning difficulties (and sometimes other associated difficulties). SISS staff can provide advice, training and loan of equipment and resources.

4.9.7. Primary schools can access support for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) through the Behaviour Support Team. Secondary schools have had resources delegated to them to provide this support themselves. In addition, primary and secondary schools can access support with behaviour management from the Authority's Pupil Referral Units which provide an outreach service in addition to part time, full time, short term and longer term placements for pupils.

4.9.8 The Authority maintains two primary Language and Literacy Centres. Pupils with severe specific literacy difficulties can attend these centres, usually for one session per week over a period of a year, in order to have intensive support with their literacy.

4.9.9 Schools can access a range of support from the Educational Psychology Service, including assessments of individual children, advice and training.

4.9.10 The Authority makes available a range of SEN training for schools, including accredited training for SENCOs. Some training is provided directly by the Authority, some is provided by the special schools and some is outsourced to other organisations. In addition, both the special schools and the Special Needs Support Team can provide bespoke training to meet schools' specific needs. Induction training for new Headteachers and for newly qualified teachers includes some SEN content. Regular briefing sessions are held for SEN Governors. There are regular network meetings for SENCOs and an annual SENCO conference.

4.9.11 Where children require an initial assessment by a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist or physiotherapist, this is provided on the recommendation of a health professional by the Primary Care Trust, usually in a clinic. Once the initial assessment has been carried out, if the child has significant needs requiring ongoing support from a therapist, and this is written in to their Statement of Special Educational Needs, the therapy will usually be funded by the Local Authority and will be provided in school rather than in a clinic. As the number of Statements being issued has reduced (due to more SEN funding being delegated to schools), the therapy services have been extended to some non statemented children. Therapists can undertake direct work with children where necessary, but more often they will provide programmes for schools to follow with regular reviews by the therapist. They can also provide general advice and training for staff in both primary and secondary schools.

4.9.12 Advice and training to help early years settings and schools meet the needs of children under five with speech and language difficulties is available from teachers and speech and language therapists through the Every Child a Talker project (ECAT) and the Early Years Language Project. Similarly, advice and training to help settings and schools meet the needs of children in this age

group with motor coordination difficulties is available from teachers and occupational therapists through the Sensory Motor Project.

4.9.12 Schools can obtain advice on improvements to their physical environments for children with SEN and disabilities from the Council's Access Officer. The Authority also provides financial support with access works in schools.

4.10 Impact of Local Authority Policies on participation by disabled children

4.10.1 The Council's SEN Inclusion Policy puts a strong emphasis on inclusion in mainstream schools for children with SEN where parents want it. Since West Berkshire became a unitary authority in 1998 there have been no SEN Tribunal cases as a result of parents being refused a mainstream school place for their child.

4.10.2 The Council's Schools Admission Policy gives top priority within the admission criteria to children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs regardless of where the child lives.

4.10.3 The Council's Home to School Transport Policy provides transport for statemented pupils to resourced and special schools provided the child's address is more than 2 miles from the school (up to age 8) or more than 3 miles from the school (8 years plus). Transport may be provided for children living within these distances in exceptional circumstances. Transport is not provided for statemented children to mainstream schools, unless the nearest school with a place available is more then 2 or 3 miles away (up to age 8 and over 8 years respectively). For post 16 statemented pupils, transport is provided to the nearest FE college with a suitable SEN course. West Berkshire's SEN Transport Policy is similar to policies operated by other Councils. Some parents of children with SEN commented as part of the consultation that their choices were constrained by lack of transport.

5. Views of those consulted during the development of West Berkshire's Accessibility Strategy

5.1 Consultation with parents of children with disabilities

5.1.1 The development of this Strategy was overseen by a Steering Group with broad representation, including parent representatives, so parents have been directly involved in all stages of the development of the Strategy.

5.1.2 The Steering Group decided to create a consultation questionnaire for parents / carers as well as holding open consultation meetings. All parents of children with statements were sent an invitation to the consultation meetings and a hard copy of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also made available for completion on line on the Council's website.

5.1.3 In order to publicise the consultation with parents of non statemented children, the Local Authority wrote to all Headteachers to inform them of consultation arrangements and ask them to publicise the existence of the questionnaire and the consultation meetings. A poster was produced and sent to Headteachers for display in schools. Schools were also sent a batch of parent questionnaires to distribute to parents who wanted one.

5.1.4 Information about the consultation was also placed on the Council's website and on the website of the Parent Partnership Service.

5.1.5 These arrangements appeared to work well for parents of statemented children. They were not as effective for parents of non statemented children. Some parents reported that they did not hear about the consultation meetings until after they had taken place. Two additional consultation meetings were therefore set up.

5.1.6 Three consultation meetings for parents were held, one on 18th June 2010 and two on 15th July 2010. Issues raised by parents included:

- The need for better communication in some cases between schools and parents of children with SEN
- Some schools not making enough "reasonable adjustments"; others have been very proactive and supportive
- Some schools are more welcoming than others to children with SEN. Good and bad experiences reported.
- The attitude of the Headteacher is key in determining how inclusive a school's ethos is
- Importance of early intervention and support in the early years
- Insufficient access to speech and language therapy and occupational therapy
- Some teachers do not fully understand a child's SEN and need more training
- All professionals need to have high expectations of children with SEN
- Sometimes other children need to be made aware of a child's difficulties but this does not always happen
- Schools need more training on the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act. Schools might benefit from a model Equality Scheme.
- Some parents reported that their child had been bullied
- Key workers would be very helpful
- Importance of transition to adulthood
- Difficulties presented by lack of transport

5.1.7 A total of 464 parents completed the questionnaire in full. A further 8 completed it in part, giving a total of 472 responses. 77% of respondents stated that their child had a statement of special educational needs. 70% of respondents regarded their child as having a disability. 6.6% of parents who responded described themselves as having a disability.

5.1.8 The questionnaire was divided into four main sections: accessibility of the curriculum, accessibility of information, accessibility of school buildings and environment and transport.

5.1.9 When asked to provide an overall rating for accessibility of the school curriculum, 43% of parents rated it as excellent and 40% as good. Responses to specific questions about curriculum access were generally positive. Areas where parents registered slightly more concerns than others were in relation to the following statements:

- *"Classroom materials are provided at an appropriate level, and in an appropriate format"*– 20% disagreed or slightly disagreed
- *"All necessary staff are aware of and knowledgeable about my child's disability"*– 22% disagreed or slightly disagreed
- *"My child has access to any specialist equipment he / she needs in school"*– 21% disagreed or slightly disagreed.

5.1.10 In response to a question about access to information provided by schools for families, 90% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that information was provided in an appropriate format and that someone was available to explain it if necessary. Parents saw performance as slightly poorer (but still good) with respect to the accessibility of information provided for their children. 19% did not agree with the statement "*Information is provided by the school clearly and in an appropriate format for my child".*

5.1.11 Responses to questions about access to school buildings were generally very positive. When asked to give an overall rating, 40% regarded accessibility of school buildings as excellent and 48% rated it as good. Slightly less positive responses were received in response to the following statements:

- *"My child is supported where necessary during unstructured times (eg. break times)"*– 20% disagreed or slightly disagreed
- *"There is a safe place for my child to go if anxious / angry / distressed"* – 18% disagreed or slightly disagreed

5.1.12 Parents were only asked to complete the section on transport if their child was in receipt of free transport. A very high proportion of parents were satisfied with the transport arrangements, felt the vehicles were appropriate and the journey time acceptable. However, 47% of respondents said that transport was insufficiently flexible to allow for before and after school activities.

5.1.13 Parents had the opportunity to make any general comments at the end of the questionnaire. These comments tended to echo the issues raised at the consultation meetings.

5.1.14 All responses where parents had ticked "disagree" or "slightly disagree" were analysed by school (where parents had named the school) in order to establish whether there were any particular patterns, eg. any schools which were attracting a significantly larger number of negative responses than others, (taking in to account the total number of responses for a particular school and setting the number of negative responses in this context). This analysis did not reveal any significant patterns.

5.1.15 The results of the parent consultation were considered in detail by the Steering Group and have been used to inform this Strategy.

5.2 Consultation with schools

5.2.1 The Accessibility Strategy Steering Group included primary, secondary and special school representatives who have been fully involved in the development of the strategy.

5.2.2 A questionnaire for schools was devised by the Steering Group and sent out to all West Berkshire schools at the same time as the parent questionnaire. The questionnaire was electronic. Hard copies were not made available. Schools were asked to assess the accessibility of their own school, rate support provided by the Local Authority and its partners to improve accessibility and comment on what the Authority's priorities in its Accessibility Strategy should be. A total of 32 schools responded.

5.2.3 Schools were asked to assess the accessibility of their curriculum for children with different types of special educational need. 68% described their curriculum access as good or excellent. Where schools rated their own curriculum access as only "fair" this tended to be mostly in relation to children with physical, hearing or visual impairments. A very small number of schools rated their curriculum access as poor in relation to children with physical and hearing impairment. These ratings may to some extent reflect schools' concerns about their physical environment. They may also have come from schools with little or no experience of physical or sensory difficulties, who could adapt their curriculum if necessary with support from the relevant agencies.

5.2.4 70% of schools rated the accessibility of their wider curriculum (after school clubs, trips etc) as good or excellent. Where access is described only as fair, or, in a very small number of cases, poor, this was again mostly in connection with children with physical and sensory difficulties. Children with autistic spectrum disorder were also mentioned as potentially more difficult to include in the wider school curriculum than children with other types of SEN.

5.2.5 When asked to assess the accessibility of their teaching resources and materials for children with SEN, 68% of schools described themselves as good or excellent. Where schools showed less confidence about the accessibility of their teaching materials it was, again, mainly in relation to children with sensory and physical impairments and autistic spectrum disorder.

5.2.6 Responses to a question about the accessibility of information provided for parents and for children with SEN, showed that schools appear to be less confident than in relation to previous questions. Only 49% described their provision as good or excellent in this respect. This would therefore appear to be an area where schools may require more support. Some schools gave examples of good practice in this area which could potentially be shared.

5.2.7 Similarly, schools' rating of their physical accessibility was relatively low compared to other aspects of their accessibility. 55% rated themselves as good or excellent. 28% rated themselves as fair. 17% either rated this aspect as poor

or did not comment. Comments included the difficulty of making old buildings and two storey buildings accessible, problems posed by separate classroom units and lack of space for children with medical needs.

5.2.8 Schools were asked to rate support, advice and training provided by the Local Authority and its partners in relation to:

- Making the academic curriculum accessible
- Providing suitable equipment
- Making the wider curriculum accessible
- Making resources / teaching materials accessible
- Making information / documents accessible for parents and children
- Improving the school's physical environment
- Making reasonable adjustments under the DDA
- Producing a Disability Equality Scheme
- Managing transition between phases
- Managing transition to adulthood
- Managing medical needs

5.2.9 Replies were mixed with a significant proportion of "unable to comment" responses where schools had not had the need for or experience of a particular service, which makes the responses difficult to analyse. Where schools did comment, the majority of their responses were in the good category, followed by fair. Responses in the poor category were very low, apart from

- information about and access to financial support to improve the physical environment.

5.2.10 Other areas where responses or comments indicated a need for more or better support were:

- Funding for equipment
- Help with making information accessible for parents and children
- Updated training on the Equality Act and a model scheme

5.2.11 When asked what the Authority's priorities should be in order to help schools improve their accessibility, the two highest rated areas were access to funding for equipment and information about and access to funding to improve the physical environment.

5.2.12 The next highest priorities for schools were advice / guidance on making the curriculum accessible, advice / guidance about suitable equipment, advice / guidance on making teaching resources accessible and advice / guidance about improving the physical environment. Interestingly, schools prioritised advice and guidance on these topics above training on the same topics, perhaps reflecting the difficulties schools have in releasing staff for training and the cost of supply cover.

5.2.13 Schools were asked to identify the main challenges in making their schools accessible to children with SEN / disabilities. The main challenges identified by schools were

- Funding for large scale building adaptations
- Problems with site layout

- Lack of consistent information from feeder schools about SEN
- Increasing numbers of children with challenging behaviour.

5.2.14 The results of the consultation with schools were considered in detail by the Steering Group and have been used to inform this strategy. In addition, the draft strategy will be sent to all headteachers and chairs of governing bodies for comment before it is finalised.

5.3 Consultation with other teams / agencies / stakeholders

5.3.1 In addition to parents and schools, the Steering Group includes representation from:
Sensory Consortium Service (for children with Sensory Needs)
West Berkshire branch of the National Autistic Society
West Berkshire Mencap
Educational Psychology Service
School Improvement Service
School Assets Team
Learning Support Services
SEN Assessment Team
Parent Partnership Service
Council Access Officer

5.3.2 The draft strategy will be sent to the following teams / agencies for comment before it is finalised:

Educational Psychology Service
School Improvement Advisers
Learning Support Teams
Reintegration Service
Attendance and Behaviour Consultant
Parent Partnership Service
Children's Centres
Education Assets Manager
Looked After Children's Team
Service Managers in Children and Young People's Directorate
Council's Access Officer
Council's Equalities Officer
Council's Home to School Transport Team
Elected Members
Neighbouring Local Authorities
Sensory Consortium Service
Primary Care Trust
Voluntary Organisations
Mencap
National Autistic Society, West Berkshire Branch
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
National Deaf Children's Society
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Berkshire Blind Society
Trade Unions

Diocesan Authorities
Non maintained and independent special schools

6. Summary analysis of data

6.1 In very broad terms, the data and consultation feedback is showing the following:

- The total incidence of children with SEN in West Berkshire is reducing slightly, mainly as a result of schools identifying fewer children with SEN at School Action.
- However, numbers of children with particular types of SEN are increasing. Most notably, the number of children with ASD is increasing dramatically. In addition there are increases in children with profound and complex needs and children with severe behavioural problems. There may also be some increase in children with chronic health conditions, but better evidence is needed to substantiate this.
- These increases are putting pressure on resources, particularly on services and provision for children with ASD.
- 62% of statemented children are in mainstream settings and 38% are in special school settings. This split between mainstream and special school placements has remained fairly static over the last three years.
- Placements in independent and non maintained special schools are increasing. The majority of these placements are for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and hearing impairment.
- Numbers of children identified with SEN are very low in Year 7 compared to Year 6 and increase again significantly in Year 8, which may suggest that children are not being identified in Year 7 who should be. Some secondary schools report insufficient data being transferred from primary schools.
- Progress made by children with SEN in West Berkshire is generally good and compares favourably with the national position.
- Some parents reported very good practice by schools in meeting their child's SEN. The majority of parent responses to the questionnaire were mainly positive. However, some parents reported less positive experiences.
- Children with Statements who attend mainstream schools get preference for their first choice of school. However, some parents (a small number) reported not being made to feel welcome by some schools and therefore not pursuing a formal application to the school. This suggests a lack of confidence or less inclusive ethos in some schools.
- There is a wide range of SEN training and take up is good, but some parents felt that staff lacked the necessary knowledge to meet their child's needs
- Access to out of school activities for children with SEN is significantly improved since the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative, though some parents report lack of transport as a barrier.

- Including children with SEN / disabilities in school trips, particularly children with medical conditions, can present particular challenges for schools and raises anxieties about health and safety issues.
- A high proportion of excluded children and children with persistent absence are recorded as having SEN, which is a cause for concern and requires further investigation.
- Some parents reported bullying as a problem. This was a particular issue for parents of children with ASD. Some schools noted in their own Disability Equality Schemes a need for disability awareness raising for children.
- Physical access to schools has improved significantly as a result of a programme, set out in the Authority's initial Accessibility Strategy, to improve access to schools focusing in particular on access to the site and main entrance, provision of accessible toilets and changing facilities and access to specialist curriculum areas.
- However, lack of physical accessibility still presents difficulties in some schools. In particular, there is no secondary school in the east of the Authority which would be readily accessible for a pupil who was a wheelchair user.
- Schools lack confidence and experience of making information accessible for children with SEN.

7. Strategy

7.1 There is much which is positive in the data and the consultation feedback. This reflects the commitment and hard work of staff in schools, and the agencies which support schools to meet the needs of children with SEN. Inevitably there is still scope for improvement in the accessibility of schools in West Berkshire for children with SEN and disabilities.

7.2 In order to make schools more accessible for children with SEN and disabilities, West Berkshire Council's strategic objectives will be:

- **to promote positive attitudes to the inclusion of children with SEN / disabilities in schools**
- **to ensure schools are fully briefed on the relevant disability and equality legislation**
- **to improve continuously the knowledge and skills of all staff in schools, enabling them to meet the needs of children with a range of Special Educational Needs as effectively as possible**
- **to provide support to schools in a variety of ways, including on line training and written guidance, in addition to traditional training sessions**
- **to promote and facilitate the sharing of good practice**
- **to review the role and capacity of SEN support services to ensure they give effective support to schools**
- **to work jointly with other agencies and the voluntary sector to support schools in meeting the needs of children with SEN / disabilities**

- **to work with schools to address bullying and promote disability awareness for children**
- **to empower parents to contribute to their child's development and to work confidently and effectively with schools**
- **to improve information, guidance and training for parents of children with SEN / disabilities**
- **to maintain current levels of provision for out of school activities and to improve access to school trips**
- **to review specific areas of provision which are under pressure and consider whether more local provision could be created**
- **to improve continuously the physical accessibility of school buildings**
- **to support schools with the provision of accessible information**
- **to work with maintained schools, academies and free schools to improve accessibility for children with SEN and disabilities regardless of where they are educated.**

8. ACTION PLAN

The detailed Action Plan to support the Strategy is set out at Appendix One

9. Management, co-ordination and implementation

9.1This Strategy has been developed by a Steering Group with wide representation including school and parent representatives and voluntary bodies.

9.2 The Strategy will be considered for approval by the Council's Executive.

9.3 The Strategy will be overseen and monitored by the Steering Group, with a detailed review (and revision if necessary) every 12 months.

9.4 Data collected in September 2010 to inform this Strategy will be collected every year in September in order to monitor progress.

10. Accessibility of the strategy

10.1 The Accessibility Strategy will be available on the West Berkshire Council website.

10.2 A copy of the Accessibility Strategy will be sent to all schools.

10.3 The existence of the Strategy will be publicised to parents through the West Berkshire Parent Forum, Family Voice

10.4 The Strategy can be made available in alternative formats and different languages on request.

West Berkshire Council Equality Policy Statement

'West Berkshire Council will actively strive to address inequalities through its planning and delivery of services. All Council members, employees and agents will work to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination and to promote equality and good relations within all sections of the community. We will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.'

Appendix One: Accessibility Strategy Action Plan

8.1Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils

Priorities for development

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Guidance and Training for Schools and Other Agencies			
8.1.1 Review SEN training provided by the Local Authority for schools and governors	Review undertaken Training programme in place which meets schools' needs	LSSM / SIA for SEN	April 2012
8.1.2 Audit schools annually on SEN training of staff and training requirements	Audit completed annually Data held centrally on staff training / qualifications Training programme informed by audit	LSSM/ SIA for SEN	From Sept 2011
8.1.3 Develop updated training for all schools and governors on the DDA, reasonable adjustments and the Equality Act	Training delivered Evaluations positive Schools show good awareness of DDA / Equality Act No disability discrimination cases against West Berkshire schools upheld by Tribunal	Learning Hub	April 2012
8.1.4 Review and strengthen the SEN content of Head teachers' induction and Newly Qualified Teacher Training	SEN content of Headteachers' induction and NQT training reviewed with stronger SEN component Training emphasises WB's core values for children with SEN / disability Heads and NQTs show an awareness of core values	LSSM / SIA for SEN	Sept 2012

8.1.5 Update guidance for schools on SEN Funding and LA's expectations about how SEN funding is spent	SEN Funding guidance updated and publicised Schools show awareness of funding system and LA's expectations Schools can demonstrate SEN funding is spent appropriately	Service Manager SEN / DCT	January 2012
8.1.6 Support and encourage the use by schools of costed provision maps (pre populated with SEN budgets)	Schools are aware of costs of their SEN provision in relation to effectiveness Schools can demonstrate SEN funding is spent appropriately	LSSM / SIA for SEN	January 2012
8.1.7 Provide guidance for schools on good practice in primary / secondary transition for children with SEN	Guidance completed and publicised Evidence of good practice in secondary transfer of children with SEN Fewer placements of children with SEN fail in Year 7	Service Manager SEN / DCT	April 2013
8.1.8 Investigate the drop in numbers of children identified with SEN between Years 6 and 7	Investigation completed and findings used to inform guidance on primary / secondary transition for children with SEN	SIA for SEN	April 2013
8.1.9 Explore ways of increasing the capacity of the Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS) to meet demand, eg. by charging schools for parts of the service	Specialist Inclusion Support Service able to meet more of current demand and able to provide more comprehensive service where needed	Service Manager SEN / DCT	April 2012
8.1.10 Analyse referrals to SISS and to other SEN support services to identify any patterns in / reasons for referral which could be	Analysis completed and findings used to inform training programme and guidance for schools if appropriate	LSSM	January 2012

addressed through generic training / guidance			
8.1.11 Use the SENCO Forum meetings to disseminate examples of good practice in schools and to share research evidence on effective practice	Sharing of good practice becomes a regular component of SENCO meetings Evidence of SENCOs implementing good practice from other schools	LSSM / SIA for SEN	From autumn 2011
8.1.12 Continue to provide accredited SENCO training through the Berkshire Consortium	Accredited SENCO training available Positive feedback from SENCOs and Headteachers	LSSM/SNST	Ongoing
8.1.13 Continue to promote the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP)	Evidence of schools using IDP Positive feedback from schools Evidence of improved practice as a result of use of IDP in schools	LSSM / SIA for SEN	Ongoing
8.1.14 Continue to promote on line SEN training	On line SEN training available and take up good Positive evaluations Evidence of improved practice as a result of staff undertaking on line training	LSSM / SIA for SEN	Ongoing
8.1.15 Continue to provide training on literacy interventions eg. Fischer Family Trust	Training available Evaluations positive Evidence of improved literacy skills in participating schools	LSSM / SNST	Ongoing
8.1.16 Provide literacy training targeted at Year 5 and Year 6 teachers	Training available Evaluations positive Evidence of improved literacy in participating	LSSM / SNST	Sept 2011

	schools		
8.1.17 Provide training for schools on working with parents of children with SEN	Training available Evaluations positive Very low level or no complaints about SEN provision in schools	Parent to Parent Coordinator	Sept 2012
8.1.18 Develop training for primary schools by the speech and language therapy service to address needs of children with speech and language delay / disorders	Training available Evaluations positive Staff report improved confidence / skills	LSSM /PSTC	April 2012
8.1.19 Develop training for secondary schools by the speech and language therapy service to address needs of children with speech and language delay / disorders. All secondary SENCOs to be trained.	Training available Evaluations positive Staff report improved confidence / skills	Service Manager SEN /DCT	Sept 2011
8.1.20 Encourage schools to recognise and record incidences of bullying related to disability	More recording of bullying of children with SEN where it occurs Schools show more awareness of potential for bullying of children with SEN	LSSM / EPS	Sept 2011
8.1.21 Support schools to address bullying of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder using National Autistic Society materials	NAS anti bullying materials disseminated to schools Reduced bullying of children with ASD recorded by schools / reported by parents	EPS	Sept 2012
8.1.22 Promote peer mentoring schemes	More use of peer mentoring and disability awareness training for children in schools	EPS	Sept 2012

and disability awareness training for children	Reduced bullying of children with SEN /disabilities recorded by schools / reported by parents		
8.1.23 Provide guidance for schools on including children with SEN in off site activities / trips and include in DDA / Equality Act training	Guidance completed and publicised Very low level / no complaints from parents about children not being appropriately included in off site activities / trips	Service Manager SEN / DCT / SISS	April 2012
8.1.24 Special schools to provide advice and training for mainstream schools on including children with SEN in off site activities (including guidance on risk assessments)	Fewer enquiries from schools to LA about including children with SEN in off site activities / trips Very low level / no complaints from parents about children not being appropriately included in off site activities / trips	SISS	April 2012
8.1.25 Review and update West Berkshire policies on meeting the needs of pupils with diabetes, epilepsy and severe allergies	Policies in place and publicised Schools show more confidence in meeting needs of children with medical conditions	Service Manager SEN % DCT / SEN Manager	April 2013
8.1.26 Review with schools data on performance, attendance and exclusion of children with SEN	Performance of children with SEN improves Attendance of children with SEN improves Exclusions of children with SEN reduce	LSSM / SNST	From Sept 2011
8.1.27 Promote the Progression Guidance and encourage schools to set challenging targets for children with SEN	Schools show awareness of Progression Guidance Evidence of effective target setting for children with SEN	LSSM / SNST / SIA for SEN / EPS	Ongoing

8.1.28 Audit provision of alternatives to GCSE courses in mainstream secondary schools and provide advice and guidance on use of appropriate alternatives	Audit completed Gaps identified Range of suitable courses increases	SIA for SEN	Sept 2012
8.1.29 Provide training for escorts on school transport	Training completed Evaluations positive Parents and schools report satisfaction with quality of school escorts	Access Officer / Senior Transport Officer (Education)	Sept 2012

ACTIVITY	**INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**	**RESPONSIBLE**	**DEADLINE**
Support / training for parents and children			
8.1.30 Improve information for parents on services for children with SEN, including publication of a handbook	Handbook published Parents report greater satisfaction with availability of information on services for children with SEN	Parent to Parent Coordinator / Family Resource UK	March 2012
8.1.31 Update information for parents on Local Authorities' and schools' respective duties towards children with SEN	Information updated and publicised Schools and parents show greater awareness of respective responsibilities of schools and LA	Service Manager SEN / DCT	April 2012
8.1.31 Provide guidance for parents on what to look for when visiting schools, building on existing guidance materials	Guidance completed and publicised Positive feedback from parents	Parent to Parent Coordinator	Dec 2012

8.1.32 Provide guidance for parents on what to do if they have a concern about how their child's special educational needs are being met	Guidance completed and publicised Parent feedback positive Parents show more confidence in dealing with concerns about their child's SEN provision	Parent to Parent Coordinator	Dec 2012
8.1.33 Provide more networks, support groups and information events for parents of children with SEN / disabilities and / or support voluntary groups to provide these services	More events for parents of children with SEN available Positive feedback from parents	Parent to Parent Coordinator	July 2013
8.1.34 Continue to provide training for parents of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder; PAWS 1 and PAWS	Courses available Evaluations positive Parents report improved skills in meeting their children's needs	ASD Development Worker / PSTC	Ongoing
8.1.35 Commission training for parents of children under five and in Key Stage One, so that parents can support their child's language development, through continuation and extension of existing Early Years Language Project	Courses available for parents of children in Key Stage One Evaluations positive Parents report improved skills in meeting their children's needs	LSSM / PSTC	July 2012
8.1.36 Provide access for parents to the on line SEN training courses currently available only to schools	On line SEN courses made available to parents Courses taken up by parents Feedback positive	LSSM / SISS	Sept 2012

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Out of school activities			
8.1.37 Improve information for parents of children with SEN on availability of out of school activities	Improved information on out of school activities Parents report greater satisfaction with information on out of school activities	Service Manager Family Support	March 2012
8.1.38 Repeat audit of parents' needs for out of school / short break services and encourage providers to bid for Early Intervention Grant to fill gaps in services	Audit completed annually Bids from providers match identified gaps in services	Service Manager Family Support	Autumn 2011
8.1.39 Encourage providers of out of school / short break services to include transport in their bids so that children are not excluded through lack of transport to activities	Bids include provision for transport where necessary / appropriate	Service Manager Family Support	Autumn 2011
8.1.40 Encourage flexibility in the use of existing transport services to facilitate children's attendance at after school clubs where this would not occur additional cost	Evidence of transport arrangements being modified to allow access to out of school activities where this would not incur additional cost	HTST Manager	Ongoing

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Specialist Provision			
8.1.41 Review ASD provision, in light of significant increase, to establish whether additional resourced provision or provision in local special schools is required to reduce the need for out of area placements	Review completed Proposals developed for consideration by Elected Members	Service Manager SEN / DCT	July 2012
8.1.42 Work with neighbouring Authorities on the feasibility of a shared provision for children with ASD	Data on demand collated and submitted to Sub Regional Group Joint work with SRG and neighbouring LAs completed Proposals developed if appropriate	Service Manager SEN / DCT	Ongoing
8.1.43 Review the role of special schools to establish feasibility of extending their role to create more local provision for children with very complex needs	Review completed Proposals developed for consideration by Elected Members	Service Manager SEN / DCT	Dec 2012
8.1.44 Review the availability of Family Support Worker provision for children with ASD attending mainstream schools	Review completed Proposals developed if appropriate	Service Manager SEN / DCT	July 2012
8.1.45 Improve access to work experience for young people with SEN through specialist post in Education Business Partnership	SEN post in EBP maintained Evidence of increased access to work experience for young people with SEN / disabilities	Service Manager SEN & DCT/ Transition Officer	Ongoing

8.1.46 Investigate feasibility of establishing Project Search in West Berkshire to create more work experience and apprenticeships for young people with SEN / disabilities	Piece of work with The Castle and Brookfields Schools undertaken to establish whether / how Project Search should be supported by the Local Authority	Service Manager SEN & DCT/ Transition Officer	April 2012

8.2 Improvements to the physical environment of schools

Priorities for development

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Advice, guidance and training for schools			
8.2.1 Promote with all schools (including church aided and controlled schools and academies) the role of the Council's Access Officer and ensure all schools are aware of the need to involve the Access Officer in any building projects which they are undertaking independently of the Authority	Role of access officer explained to schools and publicised Increased contact with Access Officer by schools Evidence of improved accessibility in schools' building projects	School Assets Manager	Sept 2011
8.2.2 Provide guidance for schools on how to make their environments more accessible for children with different types of SEN, including sensory needs, autism and BESD as well as mobility difficulties	Guidance completed and publicised Positive feedback from schools Evidence of improved accessibility in school environments as a result of implementation of the guidance	Access Officer	April 2012

8.2.3 Re-launch the self audit tool for schools to assess the accessibility of their own environments and create action plans	Self audit tool updated and relaunched Evidence of schools using self audit tool Evidence of better planning by schools to improve access as a result of using the self audit tool	Service Manager SEN&DCT/ Access Officer	July 2012
8.2.4 Promote with all schools the use of sound field systems and the benefits which they can have for all children and not just the hearing impaired	Evidence of more schools purchasing and using sound field systems	Access Officer / Sensory Consortium Service	April 2012

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Capital building works			
8.2.5 Ensure access issues are fully taken in to account in all school capital projects and refurbishments, including access for sensory needs and autism as well as mobility problems	Access issues are taken in to consideration early in the planning stages of all capital projects and refurbishments Completed works meet at least minimum access requirements	School Assets Manager	Ongoing
8.2.6 Ensure that at least minimum standards for accessibility, in line with relevant Building Bulletins and the DDA, are incorporated in to project briefs for school projects and are met	Briefs for school building projects fully address access issues Completed works meet at least minimum access requirements	School Assets Manager / Head of Property	Ongoing

8.2.7 Review standards which are applied in new build projects for accessibility and consider feasibility / cost of using a higher specification than minimum DDA /Building Bulletin requirements	Consideration given to use of a higher specification than the minimum required by DDA / Building Bulletins Proposals developed for consideration by Elected Members	School Assets Manager	Jan 2013
8.2.8 Prioritise access for disabled children as part of the criteria for agreeing Education Capital Programme bids	Improved access for children with disabilities is adopted as one of the criteria for prioritising projects for inclusion in the Education Capital Programme	School Assets Manager	Ongoing
8.2.9 Aim to create a fully accessible secondary school in the eastern area of West Berkshire through the Education Capital Programme	Feasibility study completed to determine which school should be identified and the costs of works required	School Assets Manager	Feasibility study by March 2014

8.3 Improving the provision to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled

Priorities for development

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
8.3.1 Produce guidance for schools on	Guidance completed and publicised Positive feedback	Service Manager SEN / DCT	Sept 2012

providing information in different formats and how to get materials adapted	Evidence of schools adapting materials and information in to different formats		
8.3.2 Specialist Inclusion Support Service to provide training for schools on how to make information in the environment more accessible, eg. making use of symbols	Training delivered Evaluations positive Evidence of information in the environment being made more accessible by schools	SISS	Sept 2012

Appendix Two: SEN Codes and Other Abbreviations

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BESD – Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
Hi – Hearing Impairment
VI – Visual Impairment
MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulties
SLD – Severe Learning Difficulties
PD – Physical Disability
SL / Sp Lang – Speech and Language Difficulties
SPLD / Sp Lit Diff – Specific Literacy Difficulties
MED – Medical Needs
OTH – Other
PMLD – Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
SEN – Special Educational Needs
DDA – Disability Discrimination Act
SA - School Action
SAP – School Action Plus
ST – Statement of Special Educational Needs
NC – National Curriculum
Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education
NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training
SENDIST – SEN & Disability Tribunal
SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SISS – Specialist Inclusion Support Service
ECAT – Every Child a Talker
LSSM – Learning Support Services Manager
SIA – School Improvement Adviser
DCT – Disabled Children's Team
SNST – Special Needs Support Team
PSTC – Pre School Teacher Counsellor Service
EPS – Educational Psychology Service
HTST – Home to School Transport Service

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	Accessibility Strategy
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Jane Seymour
Name of assessor:	Jane Seymour
Date of assessment:	26.5.2011

1 What are the main aims of the item?

To request the approval of the draft Accessibility Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to improve the accessibility of West Berkshire schools (their curriculum, information and physical environment) for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

2 Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Disability	Improved access to the curriculum and out of school activities. Provision of more accessible information. Benefit of better more accessible school sites and buildings.	Contained in the Accessibility Strategy
Age	No impact	
Gender	No impact	
Race	No impact	
Religion or belief	No impact	
Sexual orientation	No impact	

Further Comments relating to the item:

This item promotes the Council's equalities objectives by helping schools to improve their provision for children with SEN and disabilities and by supporting schools to ensure that

discrimination against children with disabilities does not occur.

3 Result (please tick)	
	High Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.
	Medium Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	Low Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
√	**No Relevance** This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4 Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	√

Signed: Jane Seymour **Date: 26.5.2011**

Title of Report:	**Annual Report of the West Berkshire Adoption Service and West Berkshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2311

Purpose of Report: **To enable Members to approve the operation of the Adoption Service.**

Recommended Action: **To agree the Statement of Purpose and annual report.**

Reason for decision to be taken: To comply with the Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Adoption Services 2003.
The department has a statutory responsibility to report on the work of the adoption service to Elected members on a six monthly basis and also to agree a Statement of Purpose for the service.

Other options considered:

Key background documentation: None

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

☒ **CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

☒ **CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
☒ **CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
☒ **CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
☒ **CPT12 - Including Everyone**
☒ **CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
Enabling children and young people, who were previously in care, to be adopted into families where all their needs will be met during childhood, adolescence and beyond, resulting in postive outcomes for the children and young people.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – Tel 0118 9712671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	7 July 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Sandra Dopson
Job Title:	Service Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 503155
E-mail Address:	sdopson@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The report is in line with the Council's policies regarding looked after children.
Financial:	None arising from the report.
Personnel:	N/A
Legal/Procurement:	The report complies with the legal requirements of the Care Standards Act.
Property:	N/A
Risk Management:	Ensuring that the Council has access to a high quality service is essential to meet the need, of very vulnerable children locally; without this, placement costs would rise significantly.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	The Adoption Service strives to ensure that the very varied needs of looked after children are appropriately met.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

1.1 West Berkshire Council provides a comprehensive adoption service, operating within the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations. This paper introduces this annual report which is attached as an Appendix A

1.2 In addition, there is a statutory responsibility to update a Statement of Purpose annually and this is attached as Appendix B

2. The Adoption Service

2.1 The Adoption Service is provided by the Family Placement Team. The Service was inspected by Ofsted in February 2011 and was rated as outstanding, one of only 7 Local Authority's nationally to receive this high rating and the only one in the SE region.

2.2 The Service aims to ensure that all children in West Berkshire, who require permanency through adoption, are provided with an adoptive family who can meet their identified needs within a loving, stable and secure environment. It also ensures that there are sufficient approved adoptive families available to meet the needs of the children requiring adoption. It offers a range of support services to adoptive families, and children placed with adopters who live in West Berkshire, to ensure the maximum success of the placements. There are currently 111 adoptive families on our database; over 75 receive regular information and attend events. Approximately 6-10 families receive a higher level of support at any one time.

2.3 West Berkshire has had a busy year in terms of placing children for adoption and in supporting approved adopters who have children placed with them from other areas. The service works towards ensuring that children are placed for adoption within 12 months of best interest decision. Where this does not occur, this has been due to the specific needs of the child or court complications.

2.4 The Adoption Service is staffed by appropriately trained and experienced social workers and managers, a recruitment officer and support workers who work together to recruit, assess, train and support the adopters in their task.

2.5 In order to facilitate the operation of the Adoption Service within a small geographical area, the West Berkshire Adoption Service functions as part of the Berkshire Local Authority Adoption Agencies Consortium, alongside the other five unitary authorities in Berkshire. The consortium members jointly fund the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service, which was set up to provide a range of resources relating to adoption for the individual unitary authorities.

3. Conclusion

The West Berkshire Adoption Service is committed to providing a high quality service for children requiring adoption, valuing diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and working to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and adoptive families. It is a credit to the team and their hard work that they received the highest possible outcome from Ofsted in their recent inspection.

Appendices

Appendix A - Adoption Service Annual Report
Appendix B - Adoption Service Statement of Purpose
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: West Berkshire Adopters

Officers Consulted: Children's Services Management Team

Margaret Goldie, Corporate Director, Children and Young People

Trade Union:

Appendix A

WEST BERKSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

Introduction

West Berkshire Council seeks to promote the upbringing of children within their birth families in accordance with the spirit and provisions of the Children Act 1989. When, following a thorough assessment, (and oversight of the court in the majority of cases) it has been concluded that this is unlikely to be achievable within a time-span that is appropriate for the child(ren) then adoption will be considered as one of a range of ways of achieving permanence for the child(ren).

The Adoption Service recruits adoptive families for children and works to appropriately match children needing adoptive placements with approved adopters. The needs of the children are the agency's paramount consideration.

The priorities of the Adoption Service are:

- To achieve the placement of children being looked after by West Berkshire Council, for whom adoption is part of their care plan, with appropriate approved adopters (whether approved by West Berkshire or another Adoption Agency), matched according to the children's specific needs and circumstances and within appropriate timescales.

- To recruit prospective adopters and prepare and assess adoptive applicants applying to the Service who will meet the placement needs of the children waiting for families both locally and nationally.

- To provide a Post Adoption Support service where appropriate. This will include the counselling of adopted adults and support where appropriate to birth parents and others affected by adoption. (Adoption and Children Act 2002)

All members of the Family Placement Team work across both the Adoption and the Fostering Services. The full establishment of the Family Placement Team is:

1	Team Manager
2	Assistant Team Managers
1	Post-adoption Support Specialist Social Worker
8.5 FTE	Family Placement Social Workers
3.62 FTE	Family Support Workers
1	Publicity and Recruitment Worker
4.09 FTE	Support Services Staff

The Family Placement Team has been stable in complement over the past year although there have been some changes; June Kemp previously Assistant Team Manager has been promoted to Team Manager in the past year and Fiona Crute, previously a social worker in the team has been promoted to Assistant Team Manager. Bonnie Horne, Post Adoption Support Worker has left the team, and Mary Heslin, already a social worker, within the team has taken over this role.

Ananda Bodenstein has taken over the lead responsibility for family finding. We have successfully recruited to the 3 vacant posts and have a new social worker joining the team in June.

All social work staff within the Family Placement Team, who undertake adoption work hold a professional social work qualification, are registered with the GSCC, have a good understanding of adoption issues and regularly attend additional training events to maintain and extend their knowledge base.

The adoption service was inspected in February 2011 when it was rated as "outstanding". West Berkshire is the only LA in the SE region to have this rating and only one of seven nationally

A copy of the inspection report is available on the West Berkshire website as well as the OFSTED website. As a result the adoption service has been granted permission to use the "outstanding" logo on its literature, advertising etc.

Summary of West Berkshire Activity between 01/04/2010 and 31/03/2011

This has again been a busy year in terms of all aspects of adoption.

Over the last year:-

- 16 children have been to panel for best interests
- 5 children have been matched with adopters
- 3 adopters have been approved
- 6 adoption orders have been granted
- 2 inter-country adoption orders have been granted adoption from overseas (Russia)
- 1 step family adoption has been completed
- 4 children from other local authorities have been placed with West Berkshire approved adopters
- 6 adoption orders have been granted on children placed from other local authorities with Berkshire adopters
- 2 Special Guardianship Orders were granted in respect of a sibling pair

In total 21 children have had adoption considered as part of their care planning, (some have been concurrent planning as part of the court care process) but not all of these children have or will be placed for adoption. At least 3 children who have had a plan for adoption will be or have returned home or moved to extended family members. This is testament to the local authority ensuring that adoption is only used as the plan where there is no opportunity for a child to return home.

We have completed 2 adoption information days and 1 adoption preparation group, as part of our consortium arrangement.

We are currently assessing 9 families for adoption who will be presented to adoption panel for approval over the next few months. There are a further 2 families where applications are outstanding.

The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service

The West Berkshire Adoption Service is part of a consortium arrangement between the six Berkshire unitary authorities who jointly fund the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service (BAAS). This was established in 1998 and operates from offices in Windsor.

The BAAS performs the following tasks on behalf of the 6 Berkshire authorities:-

- Manages and administers the 2 Berkshire adoption panels - the West Adoption Panel which includes West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham and the East Berkshire panel which includes Slough, Bracknell and Windsor and Maidenhead
- Recruits & trains adoption panel members
- Provides professional and administrative support for the adoption panels
- Manages the Berkshire Letter Box service between adoptive families and birth families
- Manages direct contact arrangements between adoptive families and birth families
- Provides specialist training on adoption issues and advice and assistance on complex adoption matters for staff in the six unitary authorities
- Provides specialist counselling for adults seeking access to birth records
- Administers, and provides a social work service to the closed looked after children's records and adoption records
- Provides independent support for birth family members when the plan for children is adoption
- Funds and provides support to specific adoption initiatives

The consortium arrangement enables adoptive placements to be made available at reduced cost to member agencies and also enhances opportunities for joint training, adoption support and for developing and improving practice.

In addition to the Adoption Panel activity the following resources have been available to the unitary authorities via the consortium:-

- Training for staff, panel members, adopters and their families
- Post-adoption support forum
- The Berkshire adoption exchange (this enables adopters to meet social workers and discuss children needing placement)
- Life appreciation days and disruption meetings
- The birth parent service
- The indirect contact service (Letterbox Exchange)
- The direct contact service
- Adoption and birth records workshops
- Birth mothers' group
- Birth fathers' group (this is a new development)
- Adoptive fathers' group
- Adopters' newsletter
- Adoption support handbook for workers
- Adopted children's group
- Membership of Adoption UK

- Adopters' conference
- Storage of and access to children's records

A detailed overview of the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service and its activities can be found in the BAAS Annual report for 2010-2011 which will be published shortly.

Inter-country Adoption Arrangements

West Berkshire has a contract with a local voluntary agency PACT (Parents and Children Together) for that agency to provide an adoption service for those seeking to adopt from overseas. This service is currently renewed on an annual basis. PACT provides prospective inter country adopters with information about the overseas adoption process, including an enquiry service so that prospective adopters can make an informed decision as to whether inter country adoption is appropriate for them. In the past year PACT has received 211 enquiries, 53 initial interviews were completed, 19 applications received and 19 adopters approved. There are currently 84 approved adopters waiting for inter country adoption placements. PACT will then assess prospective adopters, who will be presented to the PACT adoption panel for consideration of their application. Post Adoption support is however provided by the local authority in the area in which the adopter resides. As noted above 2 families have been matched with children in the West Berkshire area. West Berkshire Council have processed the adoption under English law for these adoptions and continues to supervise the placements.

Post-adoption Support Services

During the past year there has been a focus on the continued development of post-adoption services for adoptive parents living in West Berkshire, their children and relatives. During the past year there has been a change of post adoption support social worker, this worker is a very experienced social worker and has moved to this role from within the team. She is assisted by a family support worker with specific knowledge and skills in the area of family support and intervention.

Post adoption services also include the counselling of adopted adults and intermediary services for both adopted adults and birth family members and requests for these services have continued to increase significantly following the Adoption and Children Act 2002. This service continues to provide support to a very wide and varied population and includes clients who are in their 60s and 70s.

Post Adoption services range from low level support such as regular newsletters and support groups to specific services which include financial support, support with contact and more direct services such as therapeutic support and support with education. Where more specialist services are required the post adoption support worker can "signpost" adopters to the most suitable resource for support, such as CAMHS.

In addition, we have recently developed a consultation service with Dr Baker, Consultant Psychiatrist for social workers, foster carers and adopters. Dr Baker's services include assessment and support and this can lead to direct work for families who are experiencing difficulties with looked after children or children placed for adoption.

Adopters' support groups include an element of training and this can include training for both the adopters and the adopters' children. There are also activities which involve adopters and their children working together on task centred activities such as the Lasham Activity Centre where families can enjoy such activities as "bushcraft" and supporting each other on the climbing wall! In addition adopters arrange many of their own social events offering informal support to each other. Activities for adopters and their children generally occur outside of office hours to encourage attendance. A support group for children under the age of 5 has been introduced. Attendance at this group is varied but will continue to run as it provides support to new adopters and enables sharing of experiences.

There are 111 families on the post adoption database with 75 of these families receiving regular invites to training, groups and events. Of these families approximately 6 will at any time be receiving a post adoption support service involving social work support, sometimes at quite a high level to prevent adoption breakdown. The authority works with adoptive families to support placements and whilst this may on occasions require individual work the authority's ethos is to work with the family as a whole.

Adoption allowances are being paid in respect of 19 children.

The number of adults receiving a service in relation to access to birth records and intermediary services was 14 this year. Several of these cases are quite complex and the agency continues to support people who have only recently found out that they are adopted, often with quite devastating feelings of loss for the adoptees.

Special Guardianship

The adoption service is involved in the preparation of reports for court in Special Guardianship applications along with the locality social workers (where the child is looked after), and in the provision of special guardian support services once the order has been granted. 1 Special Guardianship application was completed this year and the adoption agency is supporting another 8 Special Guardianship arrangements; 2 currently receive a high level of support and 6 low levels of support.

In-family adoptions

During the past year 1 in-family adoption assessment has been completed and adoption order granted. This is an area which relates primarily to the preparation of reports to court following an application to adopt a specific child who is already living within a family who wish to change their legal status in order to acquire parental responsibility for the child. The child is not 'looked after'.

Due to competing priorities this work is managed via a "waiting list". There are currently 3 in family adoption assessments being undertaken and 2 are on the waiting list for allocation.

Complaints

1 complaint has been received in respect of an adopted child over the last year. This was resolved at stage one.

Conclusion

The adoption service has seen a steady increase in work over the period of 2010/11, particularly in relation to the number of children referred through to our team for family finding and the numbers of families requiring specific support post adoption. In addition West Berkshire adopters are taking a high number of children who are either older or in sibling groups where the potential for requiring post adoption services is higher due to the needs of the young people.

Requests for access to records and intermediary services are high and this is having an impact on resources. We have had adoptees speak at adoption support groups about their experiences of adoption and this has been well received by adopters and professionals alike.

Low level Post Adoption services are well established within the service and run effectively. As there have been no adoption disruptions in the last year this would suggest that the support offered by the department is effective.

There is good liaison between the locality teams and the adoption team and the quality of reports to adoption panel is good. Timescales within adoption are generally being adhered to and most children are being placed within 6 months of the Best Interest decision. Where they are not this is due to the specific needs of the children and/or legal complications. There is currently some delay in cases being heard by the courts which is increasing the length of time that children are in foster care when they could be placed within adoptive families.

Special Guardianship is continuing to be considered as a viable alternative option to children remaining in care and it is anticipated that this will continue.

Over the past year we have developed the following areas:-

- The work around adopted children is now fully integrated into the LACES team. This is the Looked After Children Education Service. The team offers support and focus on education related issues in adoptive placements. The LACES team provide training to schools and graduate trainee teachers on issues affecting adoption.

- There are currently 2 members of staff who have had training in Theraplay, a technique that is designed to help adopters to promote attachments with children. This may be used at the point of placement or if a family needed additional support after a child is in placement. A need for this may be identified at the point of matching or by the child's social worker or supervising social worker in the early stages of a placement.

Looking ahead there are plans for PACT to introduce a new post adoption clinic for all adopters within the consortium with their psychologist one day a month.

The Adoption Service was delighted to receive the rating of Outstanding by Ofsted in February 2011 which is testament to the efficient and effective way of working by The Family Placement Team.

Section 1

Part II: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2011/12

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CONTEXT

West Berkshire District Council through the power delegated to the Director of Children's Services, undertakes to provide a comprehensive adoption service. It seeks to operate within the requirements of:-

- The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (and accompanying regulations and guidance) (Amendment 2011)
- The Children Act 1989 (and accompanying regulations and guidance)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- The Adoption (Intercountry Aspects) Act 1999 (and accompanying regulations and guidance)
- The Care Standards Act 2000 and
- The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Regulations 2003
- National Care Standards Commission (Fees and Frequency of Inspection (Adoption Agencies) Regulations 2003 – England
- National Care Standards Commission (Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Children Act 2004
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Agency Regulations 2011
- The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
- The 1976 Adoption Act – Section 14
- Family Procedure (Adoption) Rules 2005
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (and associated child protection guidance)

- The Framework for the Assessment of children in need and their families
- Other relevant legislation and regulations and guidance

1 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The Adoption Service is provided by the Family Placement Team of West Berkshire District Council. Other services provided by the Family Placement Team are:

- Post-adoption support services
- Special Guardianship services
- The Fostering Service
- Private Fostering services
- Supported accommodation (lodgings)
- Identification and oversight of placements with Independent Fostering Providers

The vision of the team is:-

That West Berkshire will be regarded as having one of the best family placement teams in the country, offering a range of high quality and innovative services that provide safe and stable placements for children and young people. This will be achieved by a skilled, dedicated and motivated team of staff, carers and adopters working together, in partnership with a range of service providers, to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families. The Family Placement Team will be a valuable source of specialist knowledge within Children's Services. It will continually evaluate effectiveness and involve users and carers in planning and development to make sure the highest standards are maintained.

The core values of the team are:-

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process
- Promoting equality and valuing diversity underpins all our practice
- Work is undertaken to achieve the highest professional standards possible

- In determining a child's future through adoption the adoption service will work in partnership with the child, those with parental responsibility, prospective adopters and adoptive families

West Berkshire Council seeks to promote the upbringing of children by their birth families in accordance with the spirit and provision of the Children Act 1989. When it is not appropriate for a child to remain in the care of his/her birth family, a range of other permanency options will be considered, one of which is adoption. When adoption is being considered as part of the child's Care Plan, the Adoption Service undertakes to find a permanent alternative family. This family will give the child the opportunity of a secure and stable environment, taking into account the child's specific needs and circumstances. Where there is a plan for permanency for a child who is looked after the council's first consideration for a child under the age of 10 will be adoption.

The service is committed to ensuring that the adoption services provided for children and their families value diversity and promote equality. Each child and their family will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service seeks to ensure that all children are placed with adopters who provide an environment that respects and preserves each child's unique history and enhances the child's confidence and feelings of self worth.

The aims of the Adoption Service are:-

- To ensure that all children in West Berkshire who require permanency by adoption are provided with an adoptive family who can meet all their identified needs and offer a secure, stable and loving environment throughout their childhood, into adolescence and beyond

- To ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adoptive families approved by West Berkshire to meet the needs of the children requiring adoption

- To ensure that a high standard of post placement support is provided for all West Berkshire children placed with adoptive families and children placed with adopters living in West Berkshire, to ensure the maximum success of the placement

- To ensure that there are effective and reliable systems in place for recording, managing and storing information about children placed for adoption and all those affected by the adoption process

The objectives of the Adoption Service are:

- To prepare and assess prospective adoptive applicants applying to the Service who are likely to meet the placement needs of the children waiting for families both locally and nationally
- To achieve the placement of the children being looked after by West Berkshire Council for whom adoption is part of their Care plan, with appropriate prospective adoptive families within timescales appropriate to the needs of each child
- To support approved and waiting adopters in achieving the placement of appropriately matched children
- To provide a high standard of post placement support, to the children placed for adoption by the agency and to their prospective or legal adopters during the pre adoption period and for the first three years post adoption
- To provide a high standard of post adoption support to all children placed with adopters approved by, and/or living in, West Berkshire
- where the qualifying requirements for support are met
- To provide a range of adoption support services in line with the authority's responsibilities under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Adoption Support Services regulations 2005 and Section 14 of the Adoption Act 1976, in order to minimise the risk of disruption. These support services will look at adoptive families holistically
- To fulfil the authority's duty under the Adoption (Inter Country Aspects) Act 1999 to provide or arrange to provide an inter country adoption service
- To provide post adoption support services to adults affected by adoption, including birth family members
- To provide Schedule 2 counselling services to adopted adults in line with legislation
- To provide effective and efficient systems for recording and storing information about West Berkshire children placed for adoption, their birth families and others affected by the adoption process

The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service

The Adoption Service operates as part of the Berkshire Local Authority Adoption Agencies Consortium together with the other 5 unitary authority adoption agencies in Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough and Bracknell Forest. Catholic Children's Society (Reading) is also an honorary member. The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service (BAAS) is a joint arrangement set up in 1998 and funded proportionately by all 6 unitary authorities in order to provide a range of resources relating to adoption for the individual unitary authorities.

The Advisory Service currently comprises a Service Manager, an Adoption Consultant, a Project Worker, a Letterbox Co-ordinator, a Records Officer one day per week, (based at Darwin Close in Reading) and administrative staff.

The original Contract of Quality Standards set out for the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service was as follows:-

- Manage and service the 2 Berkshire Panels (including attendance by adoption applicants)
- Recruit and train Adoption Panel members
- Provide professional and administrative support for the 2 Adoption Panels
- Manage the Berkshire Letter Box service which facilitates the exchange of information between adoptive families and birth families
- Provide specialist training on adoption issues for staff in the 6 Unitary Authorities
- Provide specialist advice and assistance on complex adoption matters to staff in the 6 unitary authorities
- Provide specialist counselling for adults seeking access to birth records
- Administer the closed children's records and adoption records
- Provide a social work service to the closed children's records and adoption records

These original areas of responsibility have been maintained and many have been further developed, particularly in the light of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

In addition the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service now:-

- Manages the 'Berkshire Adoption Exchange' – twice yearly events that bring together social workers from across the region in an effort to achieve the matching of children with approved adopters
- Facilitates 'Life Appreciation' meetings for children being placed by the Berkshire Unitary Authorities
- In the event of placement breakdown, chairs disruption meetings for children placed by the Berkshire Unitary Authorities
- Co-ordinates development of some pan-Berkshire Adoption Support Services to which all teams have access e.g. Birth Mothers' Support Group, Birth Fathers' Support Group and Birth Records Workshops
- Supervises direct contact arrangements that are set-up for children placed with adoptive families (pre and post Order)
- Facilitates the Berkshire Adoption Agencies Post Adoption Forum
- Organises the adopters' conference
- Hosts a birth parent project (aim – to offer both integrated independent approaches alongside consistent support and information to significant birth family members when adoption has been formally identified as the plan for a child)

The Adoption Panels for East and West Berkshire are shared with Reading Borough Council, Wokingham District Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council, Bracknell-Forest Council and Slough Borough Council

Post placement and post adoption services

The Adoption Service is committed to providing post placement support services to all West Berkshire Council approved adopters who achieve the placement of a child(ren). Where children are placed from another local authority this will be at an advice level initially, and will include support in working with the placing authority.

The Adoption Service is similarly committed to providing Post Adoption services for all those living in the West Berkshire area whose lives have been affected by adoption, recognising the lifelong implications of adoption for adopters, adopted children, birth relatives and adult adoptees.

The Adoption Service is also committed to providing a counselling and support service to:-

- Any person directly affected by adoption who requires counselling or support
- Adopted persons requiring access to birth records
- Persons requiring information as to the use of the Adoption Contact Register, in particular adopted persons, birth parents and other relatives
- Adults seeking to establish contact with birth family members separated via adoption and requesting an Intermediary Service

Inter Country Adoption

The Adoption Service is committed to fulfilling its duty under The Adoption (Inter Country Aspects) Act 1999, to provide, or arrange to provide, an Inter Country Adoption Service. The Service, by arrangement with Parents and Children Together Adoption Agency (PACT Reading), delegates to that Agency the work of providing counselling and services to applicants wishing to adopt from abroad. This service is reviewed on an annual basis.

2 NAME AND ADDRESS OF NOMINATED MANAGER:

June Kemp
Family Placement Team Manager
West Berkshire Council
Family Placement Team
West Street House
West Street, Newbury
Berkshire, RG14 1BZ

The nominated manager reports to Sandra Dopson, Children's Services Manager. The Adoption Service Decision Maker is the Head of Children's Services.

3 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF MANAGER

Certificate in Social Services
PQ1
Practice Teaching Award
ILM level 3

4 STAFFING OF THE ADOPTION AGENCY

The full establishment of the Family Placement Team is:

1 Team Manager

2 Assistant Team Managers

1 Specialist Post Adoption Support Social Worker

8.5 FTE Family Placement Social Workers

3.62 FTE Family Support Workers

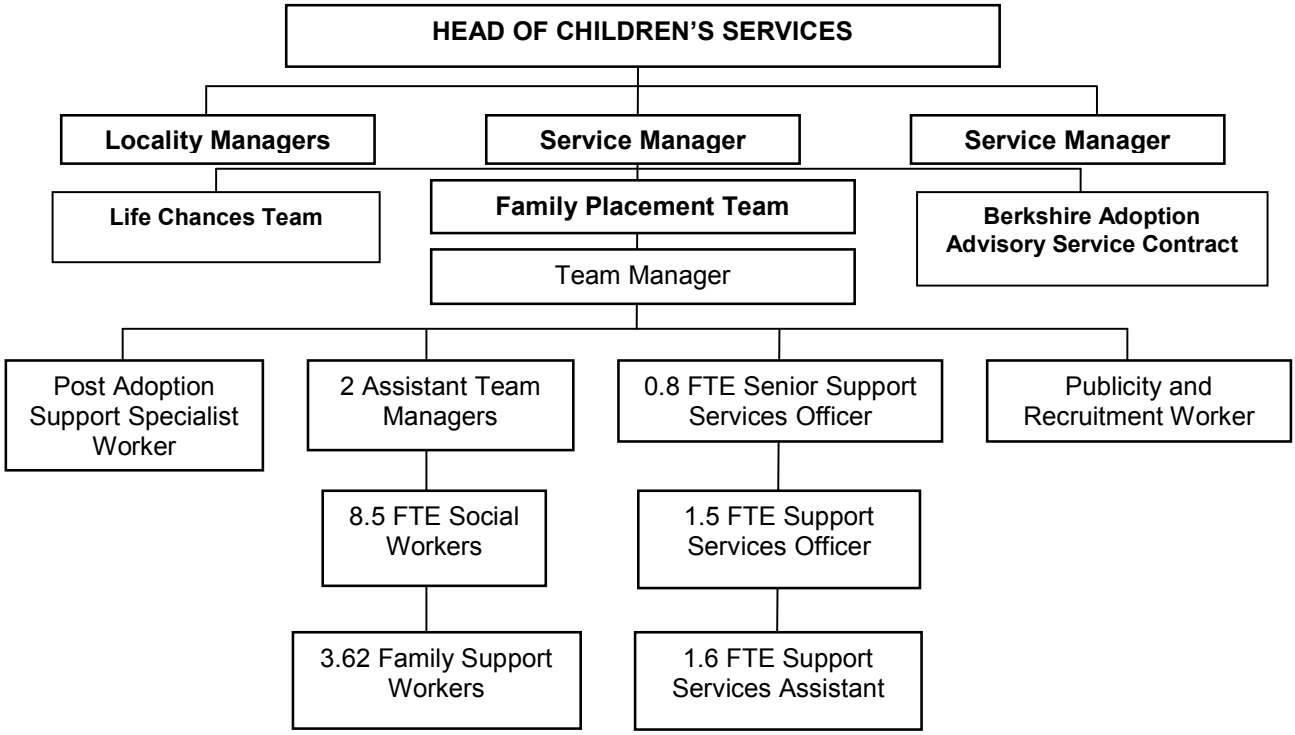
1 Publicity and Recruitment Worker

4.09 FTE Support Services Staff

The Family Placement Team had 1 social work vacancy, which will be filled from the beginning of June 2011 and is otherwise fully staffed.

All members of the team work across both the Adoption and the Fostering Services and other Family Placement Team responsibilities. All Social Workers within the Family Placement Team who undertake adoption work hold a professional social work qualification i.e. CQSW, CSS, DipSw, and are registered by the GSCC. They all have a good understanding of adoption issues and regularly attend additional training events to maintain and extend their knowledge base.

The Organisational Structure of the Adoption Service



5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The Adoption Service recognises the importance of systems being in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of services to ensure that the services provided are effective and the quality is of an appropriate standard. The Service is committed to seeking feedback from all users of the Service including users of the post-adoption support services in order to inform future provision.

The Authority is currently investing in extending its adoption support services and in line with this, systems are in place to seek and monitor feed-back on the services provided to adoptive parents, adopted children, adult adoptees, and birth parents and relatives.

Feedback from the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service

The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service provides annual information about the feedback received from the birth parents/relatives and adopters to whom it

provides services on behalf of West Berkshire District Council's Adoption Agency. Feedback can additionally be sought in relation to a specific case and/or will be provided on specific issues arising if there appears to be reasons for concern about the nature or quality of any service offered or provided.

Feedback from prospective applicants and adoptive parents

At the current time, prospective applicants who request an information pack but who do not then request a home initial visit are not followed up. There are sufficient numbers of applicants proceeding for this to be considered unnecessary. Where applicants decide not to proceed after attending preparation groups, the reasons for this are discussed with the prospective adopters. Where approved adopters decide to withdraw from the adoption process prior to achieving a placement the reasons for this are always discussed with them and recorded.

Adoptive parents are consulted on their view at specific stages of the adoption process as well as having the opportunity to attend the Agency's Adoption Panel when their application to be approved to adopt is first considered and to give feedback on how they experience the panel. They are also able to attend adoption panel when they are being matched to a child for adoption and again are able to feedback on this experience.

All applicants are asked to complete evaluation forms after attending the preparation group. This questionnaire has a number of purposes, one of which is to seek feedback on how applicants have experienced the content and structure/management of the group. All applicants receive a visit from the Team Manager or one of the Assistant Team Managers at the end of the home study process, prior to their application being considered by the Authority's Adoption Panel. This interview (known as a Second Opinion) serves a number of purposes, one of which is to invite applicants to share their views about how the preparation/assessment process has been managed by the Authority and experienced by them. This process whilst not a statutory requirement has been recognised by OFSTED as an example of good practice in the Adoption Agency.

In addition, the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service, which manages the adoption panel on behalf of the Agency, requests feedback from all applicants who attend the panel, via a questionnaire, after their application has been considered at panel.

Post approval reviews are also undertaken with all approved and waiting adopters in line with regulations.

Reviews take place:-

- Whenever the agency considers it necessary
- Not more than 1 year following approval
- At intervals of not more than 1 year until a child is placed with the prospective adopters or the period of time for which approval was originally given expires, or they formally withdraw from the adoption process

Reviews are carried out by the Family Placement Team Manager or Assistant Team Manager and involve a meeting with the prospective adopters. The views of the prospective adopters are always elicited and taken into account. If the prospective adopters wish to continue to be approved to adopt, a review report is compiled which is shared with them and they have the opportunity to comment on its contents.

After the adoption order has been made, the Post Adoption Support Plan which is developed for the adoption panel at the time of matching the child and prospective family is reviewed annually. This annual review is conducted by the post adoption support worker and feedback on the post adoption services delivered is gathered at this time.

Feedback from birth parents

The Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service has a designated staff member who undertakes Birth Parent Counselling on behalf of the 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities, thus removing the role from staff who have any level of involvement in placing the child(ren). This separation of roles appears to have assisted a number of the birth parents of children that the Authority has placed for adoption in accessing appropriate counselling and support.

When the Birth Parents' Project Worker has concluded her involvement, birth parents are asked to give their views on the service that they have received via a questionnaire.

Where birth parents are able to engage with the Authority or with the Birth Parent Project at the stage that plans are being made to place their child(ren) for adoption, their thoughts and wishes are proactively sought, both in terms of the adoption plan and in terms of the type of family they would wish their child(ren) to

be placed in. This information is included in the Child Placement Report which should be signed by the birth family.

Except where birth parents sever all links with the Agency, contact is maintained with birth parents until the adoption of their child(ren) is legally concluded.

The Birth Parent Project Worker re-contacts all birth parents with whom she has been engaged once the legal adoption of their child(ren) has been concluded in order to advise them of the Adoption Support Services available for birth parents both locally and nationally. This provides a further forum for obtaining feedback on services provided which is then formally recorded/monitored.

Adoption Inspection

An Ofsted inspection was completed in February 2011. The outcome of this inspection was "outstanding."

Evaluating and responding to feedback

Where a shortfall in services is identified or an expression of dissatisfaction about a service is received by the Authority, this is referred to/checked out by the relevant Team Manager in the first instance (including where necessary liaison with external agencies/organisations) and where it is reasonable for the Authority to do so, action will be taken to address the issue.

Where the expression of dissatisfaction constitutes a 'complaint' the matter will be referred to the Authority's Complaints Officer (see section 8 below).

Statistical information is maintained on feedback from Service Users.

6 PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

Recruitment of adopters

The Adoption Service has not to date needed to invest heavily in proactive recruitment of adoptive parents, but has continued to co-operate with county wide initiatives aimed at maintaining a level of public awareness of the need for adopters particularly during National Adoption Week usually held in the autumn of each year. An advertisement on the West Berkshire Council website generates a significant response from prospective adopters and in recent years the authority has experienced a fairly steady level of enquiries and applications. The Family Placement Team has developed a strategy for recruitment and retention of adopters and carers across the whole resource. The Family Placement Team has

a designated Publicity and Recruitment Officer who assists with general recruitment of prospective adopters where necessary.

The Adoption Service has always been mindful of the period of time that children with special placement needs may wait for placements. In order to prevent 'undue delay' in placing such children, the Service has always pursued specific initiatives in order to attract interest from appropriate families. Where children are unlikely to be able to be linked via the Berkshire Adoption Consortium, agreement is sought at an early stage for these children to be featured in national journals and publications, and fliers detailing the child(ren)'s specific placement needs are sent to other agencies.

All enquiries from prospective adopters are welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about recruitment, preparation, assessment, approval and the subsequent matching and placing process. The authority's information pack is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Agency is part of the Berkshire Adoption Consortium which for the purposes of recruitment and training involves the areas of Bracknell, Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough. These authorities jointly run Information Days for adopters ensuring that there is a session every 2 months. Prospective adopters are invited to attend these sessions which last for a day to find out about adoption. If after these sessions they wish to proceed with an application they have a visit from a manager in the Family Placement Team who will make a decision at this time as to whether to invite the prospective adopters to attend the adoption preparation group. The prospective adopters are provided with an application form at this time. Once the application is received the agency will make a decision based on its criteria and priorities at the time, as well as the prospective adopter's application to accept or not accept the application.

All adopters are required to have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and from November 2010 will need to be ISA registered before being approved as adopters.

Applications from prospective adopters will be prioritised from applicants who appear to have the potential to meet the parenting needs of:-

- Children who are likely to display significant emotional or behavioural difficulties

- Children from minority ethnic groups

- Children who are significantly developmentally delayed and who may require educational support
- Children who have identified health or medical problems and who are likely to need a significant level of ongoing health/medical care
- Children who have an identified physical or learning disability
- Children whose background histories include having a parent diagnosed as having significant mental health difficulties
- Children aged 5 years or over
- Sibling groups of 2 or more children where the eldest child is aged 5 years or over

All applicants will be expected to be able to accept the placement of children with complex histories and children who have incomplete background and/or health information.

Preparation of Applicants

All prospective adoptive applicants are required to attend a preparation group. The material used is designed to provide prospective applicants with information about the adoption process, information on children both within Berkshire and nationally who need adoptive parents, and about the potential issues involved in raising adopted children. It was revised in 2005 in the light of new training material which became available from British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). The purpose of the group is to enable people to make an informed decision as to whether or not to make an application and to prepare applicants for the home study process and the adoption task.

The Adoption Service works in co-operation with 3 other Berkshire Unitary Authorities regarding preparation groups, each area giving priority to those applicants most able to meet the needs of children requiring placement. All prospective applicants are given the opportunity to meet with existing adopters during the preparation groups.

Assessment of Applicants

Applicants wishing to be assessed by the Adoption Service as prospective adopters are invited to make a full application after being provided with the necessary information upon which to make a decision to proceed. CRB checks

are taken up after receiving a completed application form. They do not need to be completed prior to attending an Information session.

The Adoption Service will prioritise applications that are more likely to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption. If the Service deems an application as being unlikely to succeed, this is acknowledged to the applicants at an early stage and the reasons for this explained.

The Adoption Service's decision as to whether or not to proceed with an application will be based on:-

- The minimum legal and Service criteria
- The Service's priority areas for recruitment applicable at the time

The Service seeks to offer an assessment and approval process that is comprehensive, thorough and fair. Consideration will be given to all the areas of the applicants' lives, detailed within the BAAF Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR). The 'home study' assessment is usually undertaken by a family placement social worker, with a 'second opinion' being provided by one of the managers in the team. Applicants are considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way that meets their health and developmental needs – physical, emotional, intellectual and social.

While the Adoption Service does not subscribe to the pure model of competency based assessments, prospective adopters are assisted, through both the preparation groups and the home study process to provide evidence to support their application. This helps to consider/identify the competences and strengths that they have, and those that they will need to develop, if they are to be able to provide for both a child's short and longer term needs.

A range of status, health and statutory checks as well as personal references are taken up on all prospective adoptive applicants in line with the requirements of the Adoption National Minimum Standards. All information provided by prospective adopters is verified where possible in line with good practice.

Prospective adopters are kept informed of their progress throughout. The Adoption Service seeks to balance the need to give applicants time to consider and adjust to new information and ideas and in some cases to demonstrate a capacity to change, whilst avoiding unnecessary delays. Wherever possible the Service seeks to present the applicants to the Service's adoption panel for consideration, within 8 months of receiving their completed application.

Enquiries from foster carers about adopting a child in their care will be welcomed in the same way as any other enquiry. Foster carers who are interested in adopting children in their care will be entitled to the same preparation and information as other prospective adopters. Foster carers who wish to be approved as agency adopters must complete the same preparation and assessment as any other adoptive applicant. It is expected that such an application would be discussed in full with the appropriate supervising social worker. Generally it is expected that such an application would not be considered where a child had been in placement for less than a year (this is the period of time that court's consider appropriate before they will consider an application from a foster carer to adopt).

All prospective adopters receive a copy of both their assessment report and the second opinion report, at least 10 days before the Adoption Panel that will consider their application and they are invited to send their views in writing to the agency if they wish to do so. These views are incorporated into the report that is presented to the panel.

At the current time the Adoption Service delegates the preparation and assessment of Inter-country Adoption applicants to a local voluntary adoption agency. Please see section 1 above. The contract in place with this agency is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the work undertaken is in line with the requirements of the Adoption (Inter Country Aspects) Act 1999 and the Inter Country Adoption Agency (Hague Convention) Regulation 2003 and accompanying guidance.

Approval Processes

All prospective adoptive applicants seeking approval will have their application presented to the Adoption Service's Adoption Panel for consideration. The Service shares a joint Adoption Panel with Wokingham District and Reading Borough Councils (in accordance with Regulation 3.5 of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005). The composition of the Panel is in line with regulations and is held monthly. Additional Panels are arranged if needed. The overall functioning of the Adoption Panel is managed by the professional adviser (Senior Adoption Consultant, Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service).

Panel members and the Adoption Service's decision maker are supplied with copies of all the reports to be considered by the panel on each agenda item, in the week prior to the panel meeting. The supervising social worker for the applicants, or in her/his absence, her/his family placement line manager will be present when an application is considered to answer the panel's questions and assist them in reaching a decision. Applicants are given the opportunity to attend the panel at

which their application is to be heard. Adopters are also able to attend the panel which hears the match between themselves and a child/ren.

The recommendation of the panel is conveyed to the applicants verbally on the day of panel by the Panel Chair and to the Adoption Service Decision Maker by Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service within 24 hours (draft minutes will be forwarded within four working days). The Decision Maker reaches the final decision in relation to any application within 7 days of the panel meeting.

The Adoption Service Decision Maker will convey their decision in writing (e-mail, fax or memo) to the applicants' supervising social worker and the Family Placement Team Manager. The team manager ensures that letters confirming the Service's decision are sent to the adoptive applicants. In the event of an application being deferred or turned down, prospective adopters are informed of their right to make representation. This can be either to their own agency or to the Independent Review Mechanism operated by BAAF.

Adopters are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they remain suitable to adopt and relates only to the placement of children from within the UK and does not cover placement of children from abroad. Adopters are not approved for a specific age range but must meet the general criteria for adoption. Panel may give advice as to the age range and numbers of children they consider most suitable for the adopters.

All approved adopters are firstly considered for the placement of a child(ren) via the Berkshire Adoption Consortium. However, if a suitable placement is not identified within the first three months of the applicants' approval, approved adopters will, subject to their agreement, be made available for consideration by other placing agencies via the National Adoption Register. This is a national database, operated by BAAF, and contains information both about children waiting to be placed for adoption and approved prospective adopters who are waiting for a match.

Approved applicants whose range of approval suggests that they are unlikely to be 'matched' to a child(ren) via the consortium within the first 3 months of their approval will be referred to the register at an earlier stage to be ‘made live’ (subject to the agreement of the other member agencies).

Support to Prospective Adopters

Approved adopters are given clear information about the matching, introduction and placement process. All approved and waiting adopters have a named supervising social worker who will provide regular support throughout the post

approval period. This social worker will assist applicants in considering the specific placement needs and issues relevant to children awaiting placement and will objectively evaluate whether it is appropriate to pursue possible matches.

Where information about a child(ren) is complex or requires specialist knowledge to evaluate it's implications the Adoption Service will seek to ensure that the prospective adopters have access to people who can help them to clarify and explore the implications of the information and thus to make an informed decision about whether or not to proceed. The Agency makes arrangements for adopters to meet with the Medical Adviser prior to the match at panel as well as the current foster carer of the child, ensuring that the adopters receive all the information that they need prior to the matching panel, in addition to the comprehensive written information that they also receive.

The Adoption Service will assess the risks there may be to the adoptive family in pursuing any identified match, alert the prospective adopters to any risks and give advice on these. The Service will advise and support adoptive parents in preparing children within their household or wider network for the impending placement and adoption.

Where adopters do not directly reflect the ethnicity or heritage of the child to be placed, the Adoption Service will provide advice, training and support aimed at enabling the prospective adopters to promote the child's racial and ethnic identity in a way that is likely to lead to a positive self-image, knowledge about and connection to their origins. The Service will seek to assist adopters to understand the need for, and to develop, strategies to help the child address racism or other forms of discrimination.

The Adoption Service will ensure that adoptive parents are informed, prior to a placement, about support services that are available within the area and how they might access these services, should they or the child require specialist support after the Adoption Order has been made. The Service will also ensure that prospective adopters are aware of what (if any) Adoption Allowances may be payable in respect of the child and the process by which the payment of this allowance will be reviewed. The Service will ensure that adopters are aware of any benefits to which they or the child might be entitled and how they might claim them.

Following the placement of a child, all prospective adopters approved by the Adoption Service will continue to receive supervising social worker support from an identified social worker within the family placement team, until such time as the legal adoption is concluded.

It is the expectation of the Adoption Service that all children placed with West Berkshire Council approved adopters will have a named social worker who will be responsible for supervising the child's welfare and supporting her/him within the placement. Support will be made available to the adoptive parents to help them to establish an open acknowledgement of the child's adoptive situation within the family.

The Adoption Service will encourage adopters to formally sign up to any plan for direct or indirect contact with birth family members if this was agreed at the time of placement and will support them in facilitating these arrangements. The Service will provide advice and support to the prospective adopters on progressing the application to adopt to the appropriate court at the appropriate time. (The Service will negotiate whether the court application fee is to be met by the applicants or by the placing agency).

The Adoption Service recognises that timely and effective support will help to avoid placement breakdowns. However, the complexity of children's needs, the impact of any neglect or maltreatment and the interaction with the adoptive parents' patterns and ways of managing these difficulties, may threaten placements, whatever services have been made available.

Should a placement experience difficulties, whatever the level of severity, the Service will seek to ensure that:-

- Separate support is available to the prospective adopters and the child
- The child's welfare remains the first consideration
- The review process in respect of the placement acknowledges the difficulties within the placement and identifies/agrees interventions and supports, focused on achieving a positive outcome for the child
- The possibility of placement breakdown is acknowledged and planned appropriately
- If a disruption occurs, a disruption meeting is held, chaired by the BAAS, in order to assist the responsible agency in gathering as much information as possible to assist with planning for the child's future

7 POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

The Agency recognises that the Adoption & Children Act 2002 places a duty on every Local Authority to establish and maintain a service designed to meet the needs in relation to adoption of:-

- Children who have been or may be adopted
- The birth relatives of such children (i.e. relatives within the meaning of Section 14.4 (1) of the Act)
- Any person with whom the adopted child has a relationship which appears to the Local Authority to be beneficial to the welfare of the child
- Persons who have adopted or may adopt a child
- Any children of such persons (whether by birth or adoption)

In addition, the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2005, require Local Authorities to make arrangements for the provision of a range of Adoption Support Services and places duties on Local Authorities to carry out assessments of need for Adoption Support Services and having carried out an assessment to decide whether to provide any services. Moreover, Local Authorities must act reasonably in deciding whether to provide Adoption Support Services following an assessment, although there is an assumption that an assessment of need for a service will not automatically result in the provision of that service.

While the Agency recognises the lifelong implications of adoption for adopters, adopted children, birth relatives and adult adoptees, in reaching any decision as to what services to provide the Authority will take into account both the circumstances of each individual case and the resources that are available locally.

West Berkshire District Council is committed to providing the full range of Adoption Support Services that Local Authorities are required by Regulations to provide, following an assessment. These services are:-

- Financial support (ASR 3.1.a)
- Services to enable groups of adoptive children, adoptive parents and natural parents or former guardians or an adoptive child to discuss matters relating to adoption (ASR 3.1.b)

- Assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between an adoptive child and a natural parent, natural sibling, former guardian or a related person of the adoptive child (ASR 3.1.c)

- Therapeutic services for adoptive children (ASR 3.1.d)

- Assistance for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of the relationship between an adoptive child and his adoptive parent, including training for adoptive parents to meet any special needs of the child; and respite care (ASR 3.1.e)

- Assistance where disruption of an adoptive placement or adoption arrangement following the making of an adoption order has occurred, or is in danger of occurring, making arrangements for the provision of mediation services and organising and running meetings to discuss disruptions (ASR 3.1.f)

- Counselling, advice and information

While the Council seeks to ensure provision of the full range of services, the Authority may make arrangements for the services to be provided by others; either other Local Authorities within the Berkshire Consortium, the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service, Voluntary Adoption Agencies or independent providers of adoption services.

The Authority's full range of Adoption Support Services are not available to those involved in adoptions by a step-parent or intercountry adopter. In these cases, services provided are limited to counselling, advice and information.

The Authority is committed to providing Adoption Support Services as part of an overall integrated service for all child(ren) and families who are engaged with the Children's Services and in the context of the local Preventive Strategy, recognising that while there are some services that are specific to adoption, it is essential that adopted child(ren) and their families also have access to mainstream services available to child(ren) and families with particular needs.

The Agency is also committed to providing counselling and support service to:-

- Any person directly affected by adoption who requires counselling or support

- Adopted persons requiring access to birth records

- Persons requiring information as to the use of the Adoption Contact Register, in particular adopted persons, birth parents and other relatives

- Adults seeking to establish contact with birth family members separated via adoption and requesting an Intermediary Service

Adult adoptees

The Local Authority is responsible for providing a birth records counselling service to adult adoptees living in the area, providing on request, advice and counselling about their adoptions, together with any information that is available from adoption records. In the case of persons adopted before 12th November 1975, the Agency provides counselling in line with relevant legal requirements before sharing any information available. Counselling is also provided for adult adoptees adopted after that date if this is requested and the Agency encourages adoptees to make use of this service.

Where an adult adoptee who does not live in the West Berkshire District Council area is seeking information from his/her adoption records and West Berkshire District Council is the Appropriate Adoption Agency, advice and counselling about the process is provided and the Authority co-operates in providing information from its records to any Adoption Support Agency involved or to the Local Authority in whose area the adoptee lives, in order to facilitate him/her accessing his/her adoption records.

When the Agency is approached by another Adoption Agency seeking information from the adoption case records for an adoptee who remains under the age of 18 the Agency will only release information if there are clear reasons to suggest that this would be in keeping with the best interests of the young person and with the consent of the adoptive parent(s).

If an adoptee is seeking to trace a birth relative(s) he/she is informed that the Agency is not able to provide a 'tracing' service, however if he/she is able to provide the name and address of the person who he/she wishes to contact the agency will, where staffing permits, provide an intermediary service. Alternatively the Agency will provide details of other agencies and organisations that provide tracing and/or intermediary services or that might be able to offer additional support appropriate to the individual's needs. All adoptees are provided with details of the Adoption Contact Register and advised as to how they might access it.

Intermediary services for birth relatives

Where a birth parent, sibling or grandparent of an adopted person lives within the West Berkshire District Council Area and is wishing to establish contact with his/her birth child/sibling/grand-child he/she is offered a counselling interview.

The Agency is not generally in a position to undertake tracing on behalf of birth relatives and is not able to provide any identifying information in relation to an adopted person to birth family members, even if the person seeking contact was a sibling and was also adopted him/herself. Birth relatives are provided with a list of Registered Adoption Support Agencies and encouraged to make use of the Adoption Contact Register operated by the Registrar General.

The Agency only routinely provides intermediary services where the following criteria are met:

- The birth relative lives within the West Berkshire District Council Area
- The birth relative is able to provide the name and address of the person who they wish to make contact with
- The birth relative is able to provide evidence of their relationship to the adoptee
- The adopted person is over the age of 18 and lives within the West Berkshire District Council Area

All birth relatives seeking to achieve a reunion are advised to become members of NORCAP.

If the Agency is acting as an intermediary, if contact with the adopted person is established and if he/she wishes to have contact with his/her birth relative(s) all parties are offered support prior to and following any reunion. While the Agency is acting as an intermediary, support will be made available to any involved party if their circumstances suggest that this would be helpful.

8 THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All prospective adopters engaging with the Adoption Service and all birth parents of children for whom the Service is planning adoption are provided with written information about complaints procedures, including contact details for accessing the Complaints and Public Information Manager for Children and Young People's Services. All young people, for whom there is an adoption plan and who are of an

appropriate age and understanding are likewise informed of the complaints procedures and of the role of West Berkshire Council's Children's Rights Officer, and how they can contact her/him should they wish to do so.

Other service users are also provided with details of the complaints process on engagement.

The Family Placement Team Manager monitors all complaints received in respect of any aspect of the work undertaken by the Family Placement Team.

9 DETAILS OF THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel 08456 404045

June Kemp
Team Manager
Family Placement Team
31 March 2011

Equality Impact Assessment, Family Placement

Date if EIA Directorate	June 2011 Children's Services
Part One – Initial Screening Record	
1. Activity to be assessed	Fostering, Private Fostering, Permanency Planning and Adoption for Children's Services.
2. What is the activity?	☒ Policy/strategy ☒ Function/procedure ☐ Project ☐ Review ☐ Service ☐ Organisational change
3. Is it a new or existing activity	☐ New ☒ Existing
4. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Sue Adamantos, West Central Locality Manager
5. Initial screening assessment. If the answer to either of these questions is 'yes' then it is necessary to go ahead with a full Equality Impact Assessment	**1. Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the Council's workforce or the community?** No – the aim of the policy is to ensure that the overall needs of Looked after Children are met in an appropriate and timely way taking into account the specific needs of the individual and taking into account the views of the child and of their parents. The process is transparent and decisions are open to challenge. **2. Does the activity make a positive contribution to equalities?** Yes Policy and Procedures provide guidance to staff involved in placing children in foster carer, permanency planning and Adoption for looked after children who are a vulnerable group. This involves assessing the child's needs and considering a range of options before deciding on the one which will provide the most appropriate match, stability and continuity of care for the child. These options include return to parents' care as well as Fostering Long and Short Term, Adoption, Kinship Care and Special Guardianship. These placements are defined within a framework of emotional, physical, social and legal conditions which are designed to provide placement security and permanence for the child.
6. Did Part 1: Initial Screening indicate that a full EIA was necessary	☒ **Yes – full EIA completed and recorded below**

Part Two – Full EIA Record	
7. Why is a full EIA being completed on the activity? Double click on boxes to check all that apply	**The activity has the potential to have an adverse impact/discriminate against different groups in the community.** ☐ **The activity makes a positive contribution to equalities.** ☒
8. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	The purpose of the activity is to: This activity covers a range of policies and procedures and functions which contribute to the placement of children in foster care and adoptive placements for children who are Looked After by West Berkshire Council. The activity is designed for: Looked After Children.
9. Summarise the information gather for this EIA including research and consultation to establish what impact the activity has on different equality groups.	The following policies and procedures reflect the range of options available to children who require placements. This EIA covers all these policies and arrangements. • The Fostering Services policy and procedures • The Adoption Services policy and procedures • Special Guardianship policy and procedures • Private Fostering policy and procedures The following legislation is relevant: • The Children Act 1989 and associated regulation and guidance • The Adoption and Children Act 2011 • Humans Rights Act 1998 • The Care Standards Act 2000 National Care Standards Commission (Fees and Frequency of Inspection (Adoption Agencies) Regulations 2003 • The National Care Standards Commission (Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – England • The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 • The Adoption (Intercountry Aspects) Act 1999 (and accompanying regulations and guidance) • The Adoption Agency Regulations 2011 • The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 • Fostering Services Regulation 2011

	• Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 **Brief description of the service** The impact assessment covers the whole range of fostering and adoption services. West Berkshire Council's Fostering and Adoption service provides a range of services to Looked after Children and aims to provide quality foster care and adoptive placements to meet the child's individual needs in respect of race, culture, disability and language. The fostering and adoption service has a range of foster carers and adopters to enable us to provide safe, stable and secure family environments in which children and young people can live and be supported in order to achieve their full potential. The Fostering Service exists to provide high quality locally based substitute family care, on either a short or long term basis; to meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents. The service also supports some children within their families of origin by providing regular periods of family-based short breaks care. The service is committed to ensuring that the foster care services provided for children and young people and their families value diversity and promote equality. Each child and their family will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service seeks to ensure that foster carers and adopters provide care that respects and preserves each child's unique history and enhances the child's confidence and feelings of self worth. The service aims to maximise young people's life chances by providing them with positive childhood experiences and the opportunity to reach their full potential as they move towards adulthood. The service provides a Post Adoption Support service where appropriate. This will include the counselling of adopted adults and support where appropriate to birth parents and others affected by adoption. (Adoption and Children Act 2002). Children and young people and their carers are consulted regularly through the statutory review process and a range of feedback is used to ascertain their views and wishes. Children in Court Proceedings have a Children's Guardian appointed to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are represented at Court. The Fostering and Adoption service is regularly inspected by OFSTED.

10. A) With regard to the equalities themes, upon which groups does the activity impact? B) Might any of these groups be adversely impacted?	***A) Groups impacted*** ☒ **Race and ethnicity** ☒ **Disability** ☒ **Gender** ☒ **Age** ☒ **Sexual Orientation** ☒ **Religion or belief** ☐ **Other – please specify**	***B) Groups impacted adversely*** ☐ **Race and ethnicity** ☐ **Disability** ☐ **Gender** ☐ **Age** ☐ **Sexual Orientation** ☐ **Religion or belief** ☐ **Other – please specify**
11. What evidence is there to suggest an impact/adverse impact?	All placements takes place within a statutory framework and all LAC Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/docs/public_lawoutline.pdf Research indicates that nationally LAC do less well than other children but there are national and local plans in place to narrow this gap. No other adverse impact has been identified for LAC in West Berkshire.	
12. On what grounds can impact or adverse impact be justified?	Looked After Children are at risk of poor outcomes due to their social history and status. Fostering and Adoption services ensure that plans are made to minimise disadvantage and improve positive outcomes for this group.	
13. Have any examples of good practice been identified as part of the EIA?	• Work of family placement team to assess foster carers, family and friend foster carers, private foster carers, adopters and those who wish to apply for special guardianship orders. • Work on recruiting and approving a range of quality placements to improve placement stability for LAC. • Use of Special Guardianship and Adoption to give children who cannot live with their parents a permanent and secure living arrangement. • Public Law outline – provides a robust legal framework for children who are subject to Court decision making. Some will move on to permanent placements and some will return home.	

14. What actions are you currently undertaking to address issues for any of the groups impacted/adversely impacted?	• Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. • Assessment of permanent substitute carers is rigorous and the approval of foster carers/kinship foster carers and adoptive carers go through an independent panel. • Support for placements through the CAMHS service, the Life Chances Team, Education Support team and Connexions service all contribute to stability and better long term outcomes. • Outcomes for all LAC are monitored locally and evaluated by an inspection framework.
15. What actions will you take to reduce or remove any differential/adverse impact? Please also list any other actions you will take to maximise positive impacts	No further action required. Service Plans in place. Policies relating to the Fostering and Adoption services will be updated to ensure that meet they meet the requirements of the new Fostering and Adoption regulations.
16. Into which action plan/s will these actions be incorporated?	West Berkshire Council Children and Young People's Plan Family Placement Team Plan

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Title of Report:	**Annual Report of the West Berkshire Fostering Service and the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21 July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2312

Purpose of Report: **Statutory requirement to annually review the Fostering Statement of Purpose and to report on the work of the Fostering Service.**

Recommended Action: **To agree the Statement of Purpose and note the work of the fostering service in it's annual report.**

Reason for decision to be taken: To comply with the Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards for Local Authority Fostering Services 2002. The department has a statutory responsibility to report on the work of the Fostering service to Elected Members on an annual basis and also to agree an annual Statement of Purpose for the service

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: None

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

☒ **CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

☒ **CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
☒ **CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
☒ **CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
☒ **CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
☒ **CPT12 - Including Everyone**
☒ **CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – 0118 9712671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	18 June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Sandra Dopson
Job Title:	Service Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 503155
E-mail Address:	sdopson@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The report is in line with the Council's policies regarding looked after children.
Financial:	None arising from the report.
Personnel:	N/A
Legal/Procurement:	The report complies with the legal requirements of the Care Standards Act.
Property:	N/A
Risk Management:	Ensuring that the Council has access to a high quality fostering service is essential to meet the need, of very vulnerable children locally; without this, placement costs would rise significantly.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	The Fostering Service strives to ensure that the very varied needs of looked after children are appropriately met.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Fostering Service is subject to external regulation, and it is required to report on its activities to the Council's Executive on a regular basis. There are approximately 123 Children and Young People in care, the majority of whom are in foster care. It was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2008 and was rated as Outstanding. The service is due another inspection in the near future.

1.2 This paper introduces the Fostering Annual Report, Appendix A and the Foster Care Service Statement of Purpose, Appendix B.

2. Foster Care

2.1 In March 2011 there were 62 approved fostering households able to provide up to 108 placements, this includes short and long term placements, short breaks care, and placements with relatives. The number of placements that the fostering service is managing has increased over the past year.

2.2 Recruitment of foster carers continues to be a priority with active advertising in the local media. Particular focus has been on recruiting foster carers for teenagers and disabled children.

2.3 Long term stability remains high despite a continuing high demand for placements which in turn, leads to better outcomes for the children and young people in care. All foster carers have access to a comprehensive training programme and are actively supported by the Family Placement Team and the Life Chances Team.

2.4 The numbers of children placed with Independent Fostering Providers is 9% which compares favourably with other local authorities. There is a concerted effort to Keep all young people needing placements ' in house' and living close to their birth families.

2.5 The West Berkshire Foster Care Association (WBFCA) meets monthly and is active in organising events, including an evening for new foster carers, coffee mornings, involvement in recruitment events and training. Representatives meet with senior officers on a bi monthly basis to discuss any issues and to work together to develop services and support for foster carers. The Association is represented by two foster carers sitting on the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel.

2.6 The COT group (carers of tomorrow) is an established well attended group. This is facilitated by staff from the Family Placement Team offering support to the children of foster carers.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Overall the fostering service is performing well with significant efforts being made to maintain placement stability recognising the positive outcomes that stability offers. All placements benefit greatly from the support of the Family Placement Team, Life Chances Team and the Foster Care Association.

Appendices

Appendix A – Fostering Service Annual Report
Appendix B – Fostering Service Statement of Purpose
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:	Foster Panel, West Berkshire Foster Care Association
Officers Consulted:	Children's Services Management Team
	Margaret Goldie, Corporate Director, Children and Young People
Trade Union:	Not consulted

WEST BERKSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

Annual Report – April 2010 to March 2011

Introduction

The panel has continued to meet on a monthly basis, usually on the second Thursday morning of each month. Eleven panels were held throughout the year dealing with a variety of business.

Panel Membership

Panel membership this year has been as follows:

Name	Role	Start date	Resignation Date
Ros Whittaker	Independent Panel Chair	Oct 2008	Continuing
Peter Argyle	Elected Councillor Rep	Sept 2003	Continuing
Keith Langley	Fostering Service Rep	Sept 2008	Continuing
Clare Minchin	Children and Families (inc Disabled Children) Rep	May 2003	Continuing
Dilean Mkwananzi	Children and Families Rep	June 2010	Nov 2010
Sarah Holderness	Children and Families Rep	Feb 2011	Continuing
Kate Pike	Education Service Rep	Jan 2009	Continuing
Chris Cutler	Foster Carer (Independent)	Sept 2008	Continuing
Waheeda Soomro	Community and Diversity Rep (Independent)	Oct 2009	Continuing
June Kemp	Panel Adviser	Oct 2009	Continuing
Helen Benn	Panel Administrator	Feb 2003	Continuing

The Panel membership continues to meet the requirements of the Fostering Regulations 2002. Changes to panel procedures are currently in progress to meet the new Fostering Service National Minimum Standards 2011.

A new social work representative joined the panel in February 2011. We have a panel member who is able to provide ethnicity and diversity expertise. A new panel adviser is now in post who has significant experience of fostering. Recruitment to the panel is ongoing with an emphasis on recruiting a care leaver/independent member.

The new guidance and regulations allow panel members to remain on the panel with no maximum or minimum tenure. This will enable those panel members who choose to remain on the panel the opportunity to do so. Fostering panels no longer need to have fixed membership. Panel members will be drawn from a 'central list' of people with the qualifications and experience to be a panel member.

All panel members approach the task conscientiously, studying the papers in advance and preparing thoroughly for the meetings. The proceedings are ably chaired by Ros Whittaker and excellently organised and recorded by Helen Benn.

Panel members attended one business meeting this year and panel members generally attend one training session once a year. Panel members also have the opportunity to attend training lunchtime seminars or conferences run by the department.

PANEL BUSINESS

Summary of Panel Recommendations (April 10 to March 11)

Number of Panel Meetings	11	
	Cases heard	**Comments**
New approvals		
Long term (non kinship)	3	
Short term	6	
Short Breaks	3	
Family & Friends	2	
Total	**14**	
First Reviews	6	
Changes of Approval	10	
Issues of Concern/CP	2	
Updates	0	
Private Fostering arrangements	2	
LT Match (non kinship)	2	
Supported Lodgings	0	
Relief carers	2	
Interim Kinship Care	2	
Kinship approval	1	
Safeguarding and support	2	
Resignations	12	
Applicants not approved	1	
Total number of items considered	**56**	

Summary of Foster Carer Resignations and De-registrations (April 10 to March 11)

Number of Resignations		12	
Placements became permanent		1	Adoption Order/Special Guardianship Order / Residence Order granted
Specific placement ended		4	Young people reached 18
Kinship care		4	Children to return to parents
Change in carers' circumstances		3	Including where couples split up but one continued fostering
Number of De-registrations		0	
Total		**12**	

WEST BERKSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE DATA

West Berkshire Approved Carers (as at 31 March 2011)

Total of Approved Fostering Households	**62**	
(NB: several households approved for more than one group)		
For specific long term placements (non kinship) number of placements	16	
For short term placements (number of placements)	64	
For short breaks care	12	
For specific relatives or friends (number of placements)	12	
Supported Lodgings	4	
Total Placements	**108**	
Net placement difference March 2010 to March 2011		**+15**

Out of the short term placements 5 are able to offer short breaks care and 7 relief care placements.

Placements with West Berkshire Carers (as at 31 March 2011)

Total number of placements managed by the Fostering Service	**Available**	**In use**
Number of long term placements (non kinship)	16	16
Number of short term placements	64	46
Number of family and friends placements	12	12
Number of supported lodgings placements	4	3
Number of short breaks placements	12	12
Total of full time placements	**108**	**99**

Additional Information

- Carers are often approved for one or a sibling group of two or three children. We currently have 4 carers who are in this situation who are unable to take a second or third placement. Where carers are not full this is usually due to discrepancy in the "fit" between carers' availability and the needs of children already placed. We currently have 4 carers who are unable to take a second placement due to the complex needs of the child who is currently in placement. We have two carers available who provide relief/respite/emergency placements used on a regular basis to provide respite for carers who have very challenging placements. We also have four carers who are currently on hold due to their family circumstances or health issues.

- The number of children requiring fostering placement has continued to increase. This significant increase is putting a lot of pressure on placement availability and this will put additional pressure on current placements. Although we will continue to recruit we may need to place children with Independent Fostering Agencies to meet the demand for placements in the future if this trend continues.

- At the time of writing this report there are no foster carers with temporary variations to their terms of approval. Four carers who needed variations over the past year have all been taken to panel for consideration of a change to their terms of approval.

- Two young people have remained living in their foster placement post 18 but are no longer looked after children. The Leaving Care team has a clear procedure for supporting young people who reach the age of 18, including support for university education.

- During the past year the Fostering Service has received two complaints one of which was a very complex complaint involving a private foster carer. One was satisfactorily resolved. The private foster carer has not requested further consideration of their complaint. The Fostering Service also received two representations which were satisfactorily resolved.

- There have been 4 child protection investigations of which two were in relation to Private Fostering arrangements. There has also been one issue of concern. All of these were satisfactorily concluded, 2 of which were reported to Foster Panel.

Fostering Reviews

The foster carer's annual review of approval addresses all relevant aspects of the Minimum Fostering Standards and Regulations. The reviews are chaired by the off-line family placement assistant team manager to give increased independence and scrutiny to the process. All the completed reviews are further scrutinised by the team manager who monitors compliance with the regulations via both monthly spreadsheets and scrutiny of the overall report before final sign off.

43 of 62 reviews have been carried out within 13 months of the previous review. Where there have been delays these relate to specific issues within the foster care household which needed to be resolved in order to offer a meaningful review e.g. change of household composition, medical issues and section 47 investigation.

Outcome of OFSTED inspection of the Fostering Service

There has been no inspection of the Fostering Service in the 2010/2011 year. The previous annual inspection of the Fostering Service by the Commission for Social Care Inspection was conducted in March 2008. They found that overall the Fostering Service continues to provide excellent outcomes for children and young people. West Berkshire was assessed as having a fostering service with the overall quality rating of **outstanding.** As a result the fostering service has been granted permission to use the "outstanding" logo on it's literature, advertising etc.

The inspection report is available upon request from the Family Placement Team. It is also available on the OFSTED website.

WEST BERKSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES' DATA

Number of Children Looked After by West Berkshire (as at 31 March 2011)

Total number of Looked after Children	**123**	
Total number of Looked After Children placed with West Berkshire carers	**78**	This does not include short breaks, supported lodgings, adult placements or children placed from another local authority using our placements.
Males	49	
Females	29	
Percentage aged 9 and over	63%	
Percentage from black and minority ethnic groups	20.5%	
Number in West Berkshire placements	78	
Number placed with independent fostering agency carers	13	Two of these are young people are UASC, one has a disability.
Number placed with other local authority carers	0	
Number in fostering placements	91	

Summary of relevant National Indicators data for March 2011

- Percentage of looked after children aged under 16 years and in care for 2.5 years or more who have been in their current placement for at least 2 years is 78.3% (NI 63).

- Percentage of looked after children with 3 or more placement moves in the last year 5.7%. (NI 62).

- Percentage of children adopted (and Special Guardianship Orders) from the Authority in the last year is 6.1% (PAF C23).

Short Breaks Care

The authority has 7 carers approved specifically for short breaks care to children with disabilities as well as 5 foster carers who offer short breaks care in additional to foster care.

Recruitment

Short Breaks Care - As part of the Aiming High programme we have stepped up our publicity and advertising activity to include specific Shorts Breaks radio advertisements across West Berkshire. The revamped web site resources (including an on line response form) and targeted newspaper advertisements for information events are specifically aimed at Short Breaks Carers. Short Breaks Care is an integral part of the overall Fostering Advertising and Promotional plan for the coming period and the foreseeable future. As a result of the recent campaign we have approved 3 short break carers. 3 carers are in the process of assessment and 2 are waiting to attend a fostering panel.

Recruitment of foster carers has this year been targeted at those able to consider taking placements of children across all age ranges and across varying timescales with specific consideration to the availability of placement choice. The use of an online web enquiry form together with targeted advertising promotions has proven highly successful in producing a regular level of enquiries for filtering into the preparation and assessment training processes.

Advertising continues to be targeted throughout West Berkshire with particular attention paid to the different requirements of the eastern and central/west regions of the area. Specific radio and press advertising for the eastern region have been run with Reading based resources, this campaign ran until the end of March 2011.

A Private Fostering campaign on radio was also running throughout Jan 2010 together with a micro-site web resource. For the western/central region a radio campaign for foster carer recruitment took place at the beginning of the year and this continued until the end of March 2011. There was also advertising

through the year for fostering recruitment at Newbury Vue cinema across all screens.

For Fostering Fortnight an Ad-Van mobile advertising campaign took place which ran across the area. Additional recruitment activity with the West Berkshire Foster Carers Association includes the Crafty Craft Race in May, The Calcot Fair in June and the Royal County of Berkshire Show in September. Appearances at school summer fetes also took place. In the past year, (April 2010 to March 2011), 124 fostering enquiries were received with 122 information packs sent out. During that period 36 prospective foster carers requested an initial visit and 32 took place. 10 carers went on to complete the fostering preparation group.

3 fostering preparation groups were organised over the year, all arranged for weekends and evenings for the convenience of prospective foster carers. Due to low numbers 1 group was cancelled. We approved 7 new fostering households over the past year and agreed placement support for 2 carers.

The average time taken for a fostering assessment, from formal application to approval following consideration by Fostering Panel is approximately 5 months which compares favourably nationally. 1 assessment where there were issues to resolve took 14 months.

Currently there are no foster carers from ethnic background other than white European. There is a need to recruit foster carers to meet the needs of separated children who are currently arriving from areas such as Afghanistan. We engage with members of the local Black and Minority Ethnic Forum who provide mentors for foster carers who look after children who are a different ethnicity from themselves.

The Fostering Service operates an equal opportunities policy in relation to all its work with carers, children and their families. Matching procedures attempt first to meet as many of a child's needs as possible and second to identify any unmet needs and to put in place measures to address any shortfall in provision. Carers are strongly encouraged to attend training on valuing diversity and there has also been specific training for male carers. As part of preparation for the foster carers annual reviews we always seek the views of the foster carers, the children in placement, their parents, and foster carers' own children, regarding the service provided by the Fostering Service and ways that the service can improve further.

Performance of the team is monitored in a variety of ways, via departmental management information (The Red Book), via team generated spreadsheets updated and circulated on a monthly basis, through staff supervision and regular file audits, in addition to the foster carer annual reviews mentioned above.

Placement Factors

The number of placements that the Fostering Service is managing has increased over the last year.

Our placement stability figures continue to be exceptionally good.

There have been 6 Adoption Orders, 2 Special Guardianship Orders made during the last year in relation to children looked after.

Our use of independent fostering providers for placements has remained consistent, and the concerted effort to keep all young people needing placements 'in house' and living close to where their birth families are from has continued to be successful.

Fostering Support

The Life Chances team of workers from different disciplines (education, education welfare, educational psychology, youth work, health and early intervention) continues to have a key impact both on the recruitment of more locally based carers for formerly 'hard to place' young people and in the decreasing use of Independent Fostering Provider placements. This multi-agency team focuses on improving the life chances of Looked After and Adopted children and has collectively been very successful in supporting both the young people and their foster carers.

The Life Chances Team focus on the needs of the looked after child and is a very important aspect of the fostering services support strategy. All carers have direct access to members of this team.

Panel continue to seek and receive feedback from panel users, both carers and staff, on the panel process and how it is experienced by users, together with suggestions for improvement.

The general feedback is good in relation to the quality of information provided about panel; applicants feeling welcomed and the extent to which they felt important issues are considered. Applicants are also invited to make positive suggestions on how fostering applications are processed or how the panel process can be improved. Any concerns raised in the feedback are addressed individually with the applicant.

Conclusion

This has been another busy year for the Family Placement Team in terms of placements. There has been an increase in the number of children requiring foster care and a significant increase in the number of children needing long term placements as well as referral for family finding for adoption. The team has worked hard to keep young people in local, in-house placements thereby enabling them to maintain the links with their families and communities.

Panel has been busy and has dealt with a number of fairly complex cases, particularly in the area of kinship/family and friends foster care as well as private fostering matters, safeguarding and support.

The fostering panel continues to have a crucial role in the provision and monitoring of foster carers for children. The panel also has responsibility for making decisions about approval and terms of approval and assessing the continuing ability of foster carers and their household to meet the complex

needs of children. The fostering service has an efficient and effective fostering panel that ensures that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of Looked After Children.

June Kemp
Family Placement Team Manager
Fostering Panel Adviser

31 March 2011

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WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2011 – 2012

Aims and Objectives of the Fostering Service

The West Berkshire Fostering Service is run in accordance with the National Minimum Standards which are underpinned by the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the National Care Standards Act 2000. Statutory Guidance for fostering services – Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review sets out the wider context for local authorities as providers and commissioners of fostering services. It also strives to follow the best practice guidance outlined in the UK National Standards for Foster Care and Code of Practice (1999).

The Fostering Service exists to provide high quality locally based substitute family care, on either a short or long term basis; to meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents. The service also supports some children within their families of origin by providing regular periods of family-based short breaks care.

The service is committed to ensuring that the foster care services provided for children and young people and their families value diversity and promote equality. Each child and their family will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service seeks to ensure that foster carers provide care that respects and preserves each child's unique history and enhances the child's confidence and feelings of self worth.

The service aims to provide (either directly or via work with partner agencies) services which meet the individual needs of Looked After Children, as identified through the assessment, care planning, pathway planning and reviewing processes. This includes the identification and provision of necessary additional services and support e.g. education, health, psychotherapeutic and youth work services. The service aims to maximise young people's life chances by providing them with positive childhood experiences and the opportunity to reach their full potential as they move towards adulthood. This work is supported by the new Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations that came into force on 1st April 2011.

The service is committed to consulting with children, young people, their parents, foster carers and carers' birth children, and to ensuring that the views of all relevant parties are taken into account in both individual care planning and in service development. Wherever possible people within the child or young person's network of family and friends are assessed and supported in the same way as stranger foster carers.

The service regards foster carers as members of the professional care team. It is committed to providing foster carers with the support and training necessary to enable them to offer high quality care to all children and young people who are in receipt of family placement services. The service endorses the Foster Carers' Charter putting foster carers at the heart of arrangements for looked after children.

The Family Placement Team

The Fostering Service is provided by the Family Placement Team of West Berkshire District Council.

Other services provided by the Family Placement Team are:

- The Adoption Service
- Post-adoption support services
- Special Guardianship services
- Private fostering services
- Identification and oversight of placements with Independent Fostering Providers

The vision of the team is:

That West Berkshire will be regarded as having one of the best family placement teams in the country, offering a range of high quality and innovative services that provide safe and stable placements for children and young people. This will be achieved by a skilled, dedicated and motivated team of staff and carers working together, in partnership with a range of service providers, to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. The Family Placement Team will be a valuable source of specialist knowledge within Children's Services. It will continually evaluate effectiveness and involve users and carers in planning and development to make sure the highest standards are maintained.

The core values of the team are:

- The needs of the children and young people are always paramount
- Promoting equality and valuing diversity underpins all our practice
- Work is undertaken to achieve the highest professional standards
- To work in partnership with children, birth families and other professionals involved with the care of the children

Services and Facilities provided by the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service currently offers:

Planned and emergency foster care for individual children and sibling groups of all ages, including specialist care for disabled children, across the full range of short and long term placements, and relief care when necessary for established placements.

Planned and emergency family and friends foster care for individual children and siblings of all ages across the full range of long and short term placements.

Family based day and overnight short breaks care for children and young people and their families including specialist care to meet the needs of disabled children.

Mother and baby placements.

The Fostering Service supports this by providing:

Close links with the Department's children and families' teams to ensure integrated planning and provision of services for individual service users and effective service development work.

Skilled staff with the knowledge and experience to help ensure that the service provided is safe and appropriate for all potential service users.

Appropriately trained and experienced social work and support staff to provide all foster carers' with a named supervising social worker. These social workers provide ongoing supervision, support, information and advice to foster carers. They also promote foster carers training and professional development needs.

A proactive recruitment and retention strategy for foster carers that seeks to maximise the number and range of foster carers available locally and thus ensure that there is appropriate local placement choice wherever possible so that children are able to remain close to their home areas.

An effectively administered payments scheme that covers the financial costs of caring for children and young people.

A training programme for all new and existing foster carers, including the NVQ social care programme, an on-line diploma programme for experienced foster carers and an on-line short course programme designed to enable foster carers to meet the relevant CWDC standards for all foster carers. Foster carers are also encouraged to complete the CWDC standards both as part of the initial approval and in the form of ongoing assessment.

The assessments of prospective foster carers that are in line with national standards, including preparatory training in groups and individual assessments of prospective foster carers and their households.

A properly constituted fostering panel with an independent chairperson, administered in line with regulatory requirements. This panel, which meets at least monthly, considers and makes recommendations to the agency decision maker about:

- the approval of all new fostering applicants including family and friends foster care and the approval of connected people
- first reviews after approval
- requests for changes to the approval status of existing foster carers;
- matches of children and foster carers for long term fostering placements;
- Allegations, complaints and issues of serious concern relating to foster carers

- Panel also offers advice in relation to safeguarding arrangements to support approved foster carers.
- It also considers the acceptance of private fostering arrangements

Management and Staffing Structure – 2010

The Manager of the Fostering Service is the Family Placement Team Manager, June Kemp who reports to the Children's Services Manager, Sandra Dopson.

The Agency Decision Maker is the Head of Children and Young People's Services, Lorna Hunt.

All members of the team work across both the Adoption and the Fostering Services and have other Family Placement Team responsibilities. All Social Workers within the Family Placement Team hold a professional social work qualification i.e. CQSW, CSS, Dip Sw, Social work degree and are registered by the GSCC. In addition to this they have a good understanding of fostering issues and regularly attend additional training events to maintain and extend their knowledge base.

The full establishment of the Family Placement Team is:

1	Team Manager
2	Assistant Team Managers
1	Specialist Post-adoption support social worker
8.5 FTE	Family Placement Social Workers
3.62 FTE	Family Support Workers
1	Publicity and Recruitment Worker
4.09 FTE	Support Services Staff

Staffing Position as at March 2010

Position	Name	FT/PT
Team Manager	June Kemp	FT
Assistant Team Managers	Keith Langley	FT
	Fiona Crute	PT
Social Workers	Alison Hynes	PT
	Lucy Hughes	PT
	Peter Field	FT
	Vacant post	FT
	Claire Sherlock	FT
	Selina Beety	PT
	Trudi Vickery	FT
	Susan Tarrant	FT
Post-adoption Support Social Worker	Mary Heslin	FT
Family Placement Support Workers	Alex Wickens	PT
	Andy Blackwood	FT
	Ann Athawes	PT
	Vera Lizunova	FT
Publicity and Recruitment Worker	John North	FT

Snr Support Services Officer	Helen Benn	PT
Support Services Officers	Andrea Martin	PT
	Amy Wheeler	PT
	Alexandra Steward	PT
Support Services Assistant	Karen Hugo	PT
	Linda Burry	PT

Complaints

All foster carers and looked after children and young people and their parents are encouraged to make effective representations about any aspect of the fostering service. They are provided with written information about complaint procedures, including contact details for the Complaints and Public Information Manager for Children and Young People's Services. All complaints and their outcomes are monitored by both the Complaints Manager and the Family Placement Team Manager.

The Children's Guide to the Fostering Service is given to all children and young people at the start of their placement and foster carers also have copies. This includes contact details for the Complaints Manager, the Rights for You service and OFSTED. The West Berkshire Independent Visitor's Scheme is available to all looked after children and young people at their own or their social worker's request.

Evaluation

The Fostering Service is inspected by Ofsted. The most recent inspection, in March 2008, rated the service as "outstanding".

Recruitment of Foster Carers

The Fostering Service has a recruitment and retention strategy designed to maximise capacity, retain foster carers, meet current identified needs, plan for future projected requirements and place children and young people locally wherever possible. This strategy is reviewed annually.

There is a Publicity and Recruitment Worker within the team who has specific responsibility for raising local awareness of the on-going need for foster carers and supported accommodation (lodgings) carers and developing and implementing a targeted recruitment strategy. In particular this focuses on the placement of children and young people aged 11 years and over for whom there is currently a shortage of placements.

Additionally, in line with the Department's broader strategy of maintaining children and young people within their birth family networks whenever possible, the fostering service works to promote and enable the use of families and friends carers wherever appropriate. To achieve this the fostering service takes into account the pre-existing relationships inherent in family and friends fostering arrangements and recognises the particular contribution that family and friends foster carers can make. These factors are taken into account in the assessment process whilst ensuring adherence to the

fostering minimum standards and that care planning, placement and review regulations are maintained.

Approval of Foster Carers

The approval process for foster carers meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Fostering Services 2011.

Assessments of foster carers follow the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering Prospective Foster Carers format. The assessment and approval process involves and considers all members of the applicant's household plus significant others (e.g. birth children living elsewhere) as appropriate.

A range of employment, health and personal references are obtained and verified regarding the applicant's suitability as a foster carer and enhanced Criminal Record Bureau and other government and local authority checks are made. Personal references are obtained and referees are interviewed.

A report is prepared by the assessing Social Worker, with recommendations on the applicant's suitability to be a foster carer(s) and whether s/he should be approved for named children only, or more generally for between 1 and 3 children or 4 if siblings within a particular age range, sex, area of need etc. having regard to her/his assessed abilities experience and the accommodation available.

Applicants are provided with a copy of the non-confidential sections (i.e. everything except the references) of the assessment reports before they are submitted to the Fostering Panel and have the opportunity to make written comments if they wish to do so. The Panel provides information leaflets for new applicants and existing carers whose approval is being considered by Panel, including details of panel membership and processes.

The West Berkshire Fostering Panel considers every application that is presented to it. All applicant(s) are encouraged to attend the Fostering Panel meeting that considers their application, and are informed of the Panel's recommendation and Head of Service's decision both verbally and in writing. A copy of the relevant extract from the Panel minutes is sent to all applicants and carers. A Foster Care Agreement is drawn up and signed with all foster carers both at initial approval and following any changes to their approval.

Training of Foster Carers

The Department arranges and provides training for all foster carers in order to promote the development of foster carers' skills and knowledge, to help them meet the needs of the children and young people placed in their care.

An extensive training programme for foster carers is provided to cover both the basic requirements of new carers, pre- and post-approval, and further training to develop and extend the skills of experienced foster carers, and to address their specific needs relevant to certain situations. This training programme is reviewed annually and foster carers are asked, via contact with their supervising social workers and via the review process to identify training which they would like the agency to incorporate into

its annual programme. There are financial incentives in order to encourage attendance. Wherever possible, training is provided for staff and foster carers together so that learning and understanding is mutually enhanced. Individual training needs are met as far as is practicable within existing budgets. Attendance on this training programme is monitored by supervising social workers via the review process.

Discussion of a foster carer's future training needs forms a key part of the foster carer annual review. Where there are two adults in one household applying or approved as joint carers, both must successfully complete all mandatory training. There is a clear expectation that foster carers will regularly attend training sessions.

CWDC the Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Care are being implemented by the service. The Standards are accompanied by a Guide for Foster Carers, a Workbook and Guidance for Managers, Supervising Social Workers and Trainers. The fostering team is implementing the standards and has developed a tool for assessing competency and planning appropriate training for carers in conjunction with an independent contractor. A review of the placement plan is currently in process to ensure that it meets the care planning, placement and review regulations 2010.

Support for Foster Carers

Supervision and support for individual foster carers is provided by the allocated Family Placement Team supervising social worker, who visits the foster carer(s) at regular intervals, and additionally when required (visits or telephones) at other times. Family Placement Team staff liaise closely with placing social workers and their managers. A Foster Placement Agreement is drawn up with all relevant parties at the start of every placement and a safer caring and risk management agreement is also made in relation to all placements.

A regular newsletter for foster carers is produced and circulated by the Publicity and Recruitment Worker. A telephone support service for all approved foster carers and adopters is provided by members of the team outside of office hours in addition to the Berkshire Emergency Duty Team. Foster carers are also supported by the work of the placing social workers and their managers; and the members of the multi agency Life Chances Team for Looked After Children.

Financial support is provided by the Department through the Fostering Placement Allowance Scheme, details of which are provided separately. All foster carers receive payment at rates that are one and a half times the Fostering Network recommended minimum. Financial provision is made to cover the cost of child sitting to enable all carers to enjoy at least one evening out a month.

All foster carers are automatically enrolled as members of Fostering Network, membership fees being paid by the Department. West Berkshire also actively supports and works in partnership with the local West Berkshire Foster Carers' Association.

Foster carers' children are also offered support from workers within the Family Placement Team and meet together on a regular basis to offer support to each other

and to have some fun. They have named their group COTS (Carers of Tomorrow). Foster carers have access to an out of office hours telephone support service operated by the family placement team, in addition to the services of the Berkshire Emergency Duty Team.

There is support and guidance from Members of the Life Chances Team for Looked After Children and Young People. This is a multi agency team which includes staff whose job is either working full time with Looked After children or where part of their role is allocated to this work. Membership includes a nurse, teachers, a youth worker, education welfare, an educational psychologist, YOT, CAMHS, Family Resource Service, the Family Placement Team, Connexions, early years and the locality teams.

Financial assistance for 'child sitting' is provided to enable foster carers to attend training and have occasional evenings out.

The department supports 'back up' care to assist carers attending training and meetings.

There is support from and close liaison with the West Berkshire Foster Carers' Association.

Reviewing of Foster Carers

All approved foster carers have annual reviews of their performance, training needs, terms of approval and continued registration of their approval as foster carers and their households.

Reviews of a foster carer's approval take place within the first six months of approval and annually thereafter, unless for some reason it is considered appropriate to hold an earlier review. The supervising social worker visits the carer in preparation for the review, and the views of placing social workers, placed children and their families and the LAC Reviewing Officer are also sought. Health and safety checks are repeated annually, and CRB and medical checks are repeated every three years in accordance with regulatory requirements. All reviews are attended by the foster carer(s) and the supervising social worker, and are chaired by a manager from the Family Placement Team. The review form is completed during the review.

The completed review report is signed by the supervising social worker and the review chair before being passed to the Registered Person for West Berkshire Fostering Service, (i.e. the Family Placement Team Manager) who considers the report and decides whether the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable. The carers are notified in writing of this decision which is attached to the review report and forwarded to the carers to sign and add their comments.

The first review after approval is always considered by the Fostering Panel. Subsequent reviews may be referred to the Fostering Panel at the discretion of the Family Placement Team Manager and as directed by the regulations.

If the Fostering Service is no longer satisfied that a foster carer and/or the fostering household continue to be suitable for fostering, the issue is referred for consideration by the Fostering Panel. Following a recommendation by the Fostering Panel to terminate approval, written notice is given to the foster carer(s) that termination of approval is proposed. The foster carer(s) are invited to make representations to the Panel at a subsequent meeting, following which the decision maker, taking into account any recommendation made by the Fostering Panel, makes a decision and written notice is given to the foster carer(s).

Prospective foster carers who are not being recommended for approval and foster carers whose approval is being recommended for termination or variation, are able to **either** make representation to the fostering agency **or** the Independent Review Mechanism.

Documentation

The Fostering Service regularly reviews the Fostering Procedures Manual for Staff and the Foster Carers Handbook to take account of updates in practice issues and legislative changes where appropriate. Both meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Fostering Services 2011, accurately reflect the statement of purpose and are in line with current expectations of good practice.

The statement of purpose will be made available to all staff working for the Fostering Service; a copy will be given to all approved and prospective foster carers and it will be available upon request to all parents of children and young people looked after by the Fostering Service.

Members are regularly appraised of performance via annual reports at the Corporate Parent Panel where membership includes two foster carers.

Details of the Registration Authority

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel 08456 404045

June Kemp
Family Placement Team Manager
April 2011

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Equality Impact Assessment, Family Placement

Date if EIA Directorate	June 2011 Children's Services
Part One – Initial Screening Record	
1. Activity to be assessed	Fostering, Private Fostering, Permanency Planning and Adoption for Children's Services.
2. What is the activity?	☒ Policy/strategy ☒ Function/procedure ☐ Project ☐ Review ☐ Service ☐ Organisational change
3. Is it a new or existing activity	☐ New ☒ Existing
4. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Sue Adamantos, West Central Locality Manager
5. Initial screening assessment. If the answer to either of these questions is 'yes' then it is necessary to go ahead with a full Equality Impact Assessment	**1. Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the Council's workforce or the community?** No – the aim of the policy is to ensure that the overall needs of Looked after Children are met in an appropriate and timely way taking into account the specific needs of the individual and taking into account the views of the child and of their parents. The process is transparent and decisions are open to challenge. **2. Does the activity make a positive contribution to equalities?** Yes Policy and Procedures provide guidance to staff involved in placing children in foster carer, permanency planning and Adoption for looked after children who are a vulnerable group. This involves assessing the child's needs and considering a range of options before deciding on the one which will provide the most appropriate match, stability and continuity of care for the child. These options include return to parents' care as well as Fostering Long and Short Term, Adoption, Kinship Care and Special Guardianship. These placements are defined within a framework of emotional, physical, social and legal conditions which are designed to provide placement security and permanence for the child.
6. Did Part 1: Initial Screening indicate that a full EIA was necessary	☒ **Yes – full EIA completed and recorded below**

Part Two – Full EIA Record	
7. Why is a full EIA being completed on the activity? Double click on boxes to check all that apply	**The activity has the potential to have an adverse impact/discriminate against different groups in the community.** ☐ **The activity makes a positive contribution to equalities.** ☒
8. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	The purpose of the activity is to: This activity covers a range of policies and procedures and functions which contribute to the placement of children in foster care and adoptive placements for children who are Looked After by West Berkshire Council. The activity is designed for: Looked After Children.
9. Summarise the information gather for this EIA including research and consultation to establish what impact the activity has on different equality groups.	The following policies and procedures reflect the range of options available to children who require placements. This EIA covers all these policies and arrangements. • The Fostering Services policy and procedures • The Adoption Services policy and procedures • Special Guardianship policy and procedures • Private Fostering policy and procedures The following legislation is relevant: • The Children Act 1989 and associated regulation and guidance • The Adoption and Children Act 2011 • Humans Rights Act 1998 • The Care Standards Act 2000 National Care Standards Commission (Fees and Frequency of Inspection (Adoption Agencies) Regulations 2003 • The National Care Standards Commission (Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – England • The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 • The Adoption (Intercountry Aspects) Act 1999 (and accompanying regulations and guidance) • The Adoption Agency Regulations 2011 • The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 • Fostering Services Regulation 2011

	• Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 **Brief description of the service** The impact assessment covers the whole range of fostering and adoption services. West Berkshire Council's Fostering and Adoption service provides a range of services to Looked after Children and aims to provide quality foster care and adoptive placements to meet the child's individual needs in respect of race, culture, disability and language. The fostering and adoption service has a range of foster carers and adopters to enable us to provide safe, stable and secure family environments in which children and young people can live and be supported in order to achieve their full potential. The Fostering Service exists to provide high quality locally based substitute family care, on either a short or long term basis; to meet the needs of looked after children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents. The service also supports some children within their families of origin by providing regular periods of family-based short breaks care. The service is committed to ensuring that the foster care services provided for children and young people and their families value diversity and promote equality. Each child and their family will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. The service seeks to ensure that foster carers and adopters provide care that respects and preserves each child's unique history and enhances the child's confidence and feelings of self worth. The service aims to maximise young people's life chances by providing them with positive childhood experiences and the opportunity to reach their full potential as they move towards adulthood. The service provides a Post Adoption Support service where appropriate. This will include the counselling of adopted adults and support where appropriate to birth parents and others affected by adoption. (Adoption and Children Act 2002). Children and young people and their carers are consulted regularly through the statutory review process and a range of feedback is used to ascertain their views and wishes. Children in Court Proceedings have a Children's Guardian appointed to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are represented at Court. The Fostering and Adoption service is regularly inspected by OFSTED.

10. A) With regard to the equalities themes, upon which groups does the activity impact? B) Might any of these groups be adversely impacted?	***A) Groups impacted*** ☒ **Race and ethnicity** ☒ **Disability** ☒ **Gender** ☒ **Age** ☒ **Sexual Orientation** ☒ **Religion or belief** ☐ **Other – please specify**	***B) Groups impacted adversely*** ☐ **Race and ethnicity** ☐ **Disability** ☐ **Gender** ☐ **Age** ☐ **Sexual Orientation** ☐ **Religion or belief** ☐ **Other – please specify**
11. What evidence is there to suggest an impact/adverse impact?	All placements takes place within a statutory framework and all LAC Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/docs/public_lawoutline.pdf Research indicates that nationally LAC do less well than other children but there are national and local plans in place to narrow this gap. No other adverse impact has been identified for LAC in West Berkshire.	
12. On what grounds can impact or adverse impact be justified?	Looked After Children are at risk of poor outcomes due to their social history and status. Fostering and Adoption services ensure that plans are made to minimise disadvantage and improve positive outcomes for this group.	
13. Have any examples of good practice been identified as part of the EIA?	• Work of family placement team to assess foster carers, family and friend foster carers, private foster carers, adopters and those who wish to apply for special guardianship orders. • Work on recruiting and approving a range of quality placements to improve placement stability for LAC. • Use of Special Guardianship and Adoption to give children who cannot live with their parents a permanent and secure living arrangement. • Public Law outline – provides a robust legal framework for children who are subject to Court decision making. Some will move on to permanent placements and some will return home.	

14. What actions are you currently undertaking to address issues for any of the groups impacted/adversely impacted?	• Care Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. • Assessment of permanent substitute carers is rigorous and the approval of foster carers/kinship foster carers and adoptive carers go through an independent panel. • Support for placements through the CAMHS service, the Life Chances Team, Education Support team and Connexions service all contribute to stability and better long term outcomes. • Outcomes for all LAC are monitored locally and evaluated by an inspection framework.
15. What actions will you take to reduce or remove any differential/adverse impact? Please also list any other actions you will take to maximise positive impacts	No further action required. Service Plans in place. Policies relating to the Fostering and Adoption services will be updated to ensure that meet they meet the requirements of the new Fostering and Adoption regulations.
16. Into which action plan/s will these actions be incorporated?	West Berkshire Council Children and Young People's Plan Family Placement Team Plan

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Title of Report:	**Establishment Report for Quarter Four 2010/11**
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	21st July 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2227

Purpose of Report: **To note changes to the establishment**

Recommended Action: **That the report is noted**

Reason for decision to be taken: Not applicable

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation:
HR Resourcelink Database
Q3 Establishment Report 2009/10
Q4 Establishment Report 2009/10
Q1 Establishment Report 2010/11
Q2 Establishment Report 2010/11
Q3 Establishment Report 2010/11
Agresso data
Payroll data

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

☒ **CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address:	astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	01 June 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Robert O'Reilly
Job Title:	Head of HR
Tel. No.:	01635 519358
E-mail Address:	roreilly@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	None
Financial:	None
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not needed

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: ☒	No: ☐

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the changes to the WBC Establishment over quarter four 2010/11.

2. The Total Establishment

2.1 During quarter four 2010/11 the total WBC Establishment decreased by 103.72 FTE. The total Establishment now totals 1628.88 FTE.

3. WBC Funded Establishment

3.1 The WBC funded Establishment decreased by 73.88 FTE in quarter four. The total FTE which is WBC funded now totals 1418.39 FTE.

4. External and Joint Funded Establishment

4.1 The external and joint funded Establishment decreased by 29.84 FTE in quarter four. The total FTE which is externally and jointly funded now totals 210.48 FTE.

5. Proposal

5.1 None – for information only

6. Conclusions

6.1 The total Establishment has decreased over the quarter.

6.2 The total Establishment at the end of quarter four 2010/11 is 1628.88 FTE, a decrease of 103.72 FTE when compared to the total of 1732.59 FTE at the end of quarter three 2010/11.

6.3 The amount of vacant FTE has decreased to 166.72 FTE. At the end of quarter three there was 221.72 vacant FTE.

6.4 The overall vacancy rate was 10.82%, down from 12.80% at the end of quarter three. For comparison the vacancy rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 9.04%.

6.5 The rolling annual turnover rate was 14.69%. For comparison the rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 8.49%.

6.6 The rolling voluntary turnover (excludes redundancies) for 2010/11 was 7.4%. For comparison the rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 4.88%.

On 27/10/10 it was agreed that the full Establishment Report will go through the full Executive cycle (CB, MB and Executive) at the end of quarters two and four only, rather than every quarter. A brief summary of the key information on the Establishment, without comments, is sent to Cllr Anthony Stansfeld, Cllr Graham Jones and Cllr Keith Chopping at end of quarters one and three (copied to Corporate Directors). The summary will be made available to other members of Management Board on request to the Head of HR.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The data used to complete this report is taken from the HR/Payroll system Resourcelink and previous quarterly Establishment reports.

1.2 This report summarises the changes to the WBC Establishment over quarter four of 2010/11.

2. The Total Establishment

2.1 During quarter four 2010/11 the total WBC Establishment decreased by 103.72 FTE.

2.2 The total Establishment now totals 1628.88 FTE.

The total change to the whole Establishment over the past year can be seen in the table below

The Total WBC Establishment						
Q4 FTE 2009/10	Q1 FTE 2010/11	Q2 FTE 2010/11	Q3 FTE 2010/11	Q4 FTE 2010/11	Total difference over the year	% Difference over Year
1743.31	1770.66	1762.08	1732.59	1628.88	-114.43	-6.56

2.3 The quarterly changes are made up as follows:

Chief Executive	-34.86 FTE
Children and Young People	-37.79 FTE
Community Services	-17.51 FTE
Environment	-13.56 FTE

2.4 A summary of total WBC Establishment FTE by service is shown at appendix one.

3. WBC Funded Establishment

3.1 The WBC funded Establishment decreased by 73.88 FTE in quarter four.

3.2 The total FTE which is WBC funded now totals 1418.39 FTE.

3.3 The total change in WBC funded Establishment over the past year can be seen in the table below.

WBC Funded Establishment						
Q4 FTE 2009/10	Q1 FTE 2010/11	Q2 FTE 2010/11	Q3 FTE 2010/11	Q4 FTE 2010/11	Total difference over the year	% Difference over Year
1513.39	1481.69	1506.92	1492.27	1418.39	-95.00	-6.28

3.4 The change in WBC funded Establishment by directorate over the past year can be seen in the table below.

	WBC Funded Establishment						
	Q4 FTE 2009/10	Q1 FTE 2010/11	Q2 FTE 2010/11	Q3 FTE 2010/11	Q4 FTE 2010/11	Total difference over the year	% Difference over Year
Chief Executive	303.69	280.03	279.72	278.54	243.49	-60.20	-19.82
Children and Young People	385.56	366.10	364.22	357.22	335.98	-49.58	-12.86
Community Services	554.40	546.98	573.91	568.43	559.49	5.09	0.92
Environment	269.74	288.58	289.08	288.08	279.44	9.70	3.60
Total	**1513.39**	**1481.69**	**1506.92**	**1492.27**	**1418.39**	**-95.00**	**-6.28**

3.5 The table below shows how the Establishment has changed by service area compared to quarters one, two and three 2010/11. A summary of funding by directorate can be seen at appendix two.

	WBC Funded Establishment			
	Q1 2010/11 FTE	Q2 2010/11 FTE	Q3 2010/11 FTE	Q4 2010/11 FTE
CEO & Support	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42
Benefits & Exchequer	57.09	56.59	58.59	53.59
Finance	57.50	57.69	56.01	53.42
Human Resources	28.32	28.32	28.32	20.79
ICT	53.76	53.76	52.76	49.76
Legal & Electoral Services	26.93	27.93	27.93	26.89
Policy & Communication	49.50	48.50	48.50	32.62
Special Projects	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.00
Total Chief Executive	**280.03**	**279.72**	**278.54**	**243.49**
Children's Services	130.93	130.93	129.39	126.67
Youth Services and Commissioning	66.74	64.23	61.36	48.01
Customer Services	39.63	38.63	38.63	35.99
Education Services	126.79	128.43	125.84	123.31
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Total Children and Young People	**366.10**	**364.22**	**357.22**	**335.98**
Adult Social Care	406.60	428.92	428.93	425.80
Cultural Services	80.14	80.65	77.17	72.99
Housing and Performance	57.24	61.34	59.34	58.70
System Transformation	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Total Community Services	**546.98**	**573.91**	**568.43**	**559.49**
Property and Public Protection	88.61	89.61	89.61	85.76
Highways & Transport	108.99	107.99	106.99	104.90
Planning and Countryside	88.98	89.48	89.48	86.77
Director Support	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Total Environment	**288.58**	**289.08**	**288.08**	**279.43**
GRAND TOTALS	**1,481.69**	**1,506.92**	**1,492.27**	**1,418.39**

4. External and Joint Funded Establishment

4.1 The external and joint funded Establishment decreased by 29.84 FTE in quarter four.

4.2 The total FTE which is externally and jointly funded now totals 210.48 FTE.

4.3 The total change in external and jointly funded changes are summarised in the table below.

Joint and Externally Funded Establishment						
Q4 FTE 2009/10	**Q1 FTE 2010/11**	**Q2 FTE 2010/11**	**Q3 FTE 2010/11**	**Q4 FTE 2010/11**	**Total difference over the year**	**% Difference over Year**
229.91	**288.98**	**255.15**	**240.32**	**210.48**	**-19.43**	**-8.45**

4.4 The change in joint and externally funded Establishment by directorate over the past year can be seen in the table below.

	Joint and Externally Funded Establishment						
	Q4 FTE 2009/10	**Q1 FTE 2010/11**	**Q2 FTE 2010/11**	**Q3 FTE 2010/11**	**Q4 FTE 2010/11**	**Total difference over the year**	**% Difference over Year**
Chief Executive	40.05	39.22	39.22	37.43	37.62	-2.43	-6.07
Children and Young People	124.98	154.76	152.07	140.86	124.32	-0.66	-0.53
Community Services	51.69	59.95	27.82	27.44	18.87	-32.82	-63.49
Environment	13.18	35.05	36.05	34.59	29.67	16.49	125.11
Total	**229.91**	**288.98**	**255.15**	**240.32**	**210.48**	**-19.42**	**-8.45**

4.5 The table below shows how the joint and externally funded posts on the Establishment have changed by service area compared to quarters one, two and three 2010/11. A summary of funding by directorate can be seen at appendix two.

	Joint Funded Establishment				Externally Funded Establishment			
	Q1 FTE 10/11	**Q2 FTE 10/11**	**Q3 FTE 10/11**	**Q4 FTE 10/11**	**Q1 FTE 10/11**	**Q2 FTE 10/11**	**Q3 FTE 10/11**	**Q4 FTE 10/11**
CEO & Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Benefits & Exchequer	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	24.41	24.41	22.78	21.97
Finance	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.81	2.81	2.00	2.00
Human Resources	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.00
ICT	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.81	2.81	2.81	2.00
Legal & Electoral Services	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.65	0.65
Policy & Communication	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.00	4.62	4.62	4.62	3.00
Special Projects	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total Chief Executive	**2.76**	**2.76**	**2.76**	**7.00**	**36.46**	**36.46**	**34.68**	**30.62**

	Joint Funded Establishment				Externally Funded Establishment			
	Q1 FTE 10/11	Q2 FTE 10/11	Q3 FTE 10/11	Q4 FTE 10/11	Q1 FTE 10/11	Q2 FTE 10/11	Q3 FTE 10/11	Q4 FTE 10/11
Children's Services	25.21	25.21	25.71	26.21	9.62	8.41	9.81	8.00
Youth Services and Commissioning	4.77	7.29	6.29	6.29	9.24	8.57	4.62	3.62
Customer Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.62	1.62	1.62	0.00
Education Services	36.21	35.41	27.21	21.79	68.09	65.57	65.60	58.41
Director & Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Children and Young People	**66.19**	**67.91**	**59.21**	**54.29**	**88.57**	**84.17**	**81.65**	**70.03**
Adult Social Care	19.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	11.09	2.26	3.07	0.81
Cultural Services	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.41	2.41	1.41	0.41
Housing and Performance	6.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	13.50	9.50	10.31	7.00
System Transformation	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00
Director & Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Community Services	**28.95**	**10.65**	**10.65**	**9.65**	**31.01**	**17.17**	**16.79**	**9.22**
Property and Public Protection	4.60	4.60	4.60	3.60	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Highways & Transport	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	4.30	4.30	4.30	2.00
Planning and Countryside	1.81	1.81	1.81	1.81	21.34	21.34	19.88	17.26
Director & Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Environment	**6.41**	**7.41**	**7.41**	**7.41**	**28.64**	**28.64**	**27.18**	**22.26**
GRAND TOTALS	**104.30**	**88.72**	**80.03**	**78.35**	**184.68**	**166.43**	**160.30**	**132.13**

5. Directorate Commentaries

5.1 Chief Executive.

(1) The Chief Executive's directorate Establishment decreased by 34.86 FTE over the quarter. This decrease is due to a reduction in funding, budget settings and the MTFS savings programme.

(2) Rolling annual turnover in the directorate: 15.24%.

(3) Vacancy rate in the directorate: 11.02%.

(4) Key points:

(a) Benefits and Exchequer: Three fixed term apprentice posts were deleted, as funding ended (2.43 FTE). Two fixed term posts were created for trainee positions (2.00 FTE).

(b) Finance: Two further posts were deleted as part of the Finance service restructure (1.68 FTE). Three posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MYFS savings programme (2.62 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted, at end of its funding period (0.81 FTE).

(c) Human Resources: FTE was reduced in six posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (5.53 FTE). One post was deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.00 FTE). Two fixed term posts were deleted, one was no longer funded and other temporary one ended (1.81 FTE).

(d) ICT: FTE was reduced in one post as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.00 FTE). One post was deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.00 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted, as funding ended (0.81 FTE).

(e) Legal: Two posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MYFS savings programme (1.04 FTE). One fixed term post was created by future jobs fund scheme (0.65 FTE).

(f) Policy and Communication: The CCTV operator posts were deleted, as service TUPED to alternative provider. FTE was reduced in two posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.66 FTE). Six posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (5.76 FTE). Two fixed term posts were deleted, as no longer funded (1.62 FTE).

(g) Special Projects: Deleted one fixed term post at the end of the contract (0.50 FTE).

(h) There were no Establishment changes in CEO and Support.

5.2 Children & Young People.

(1) The Establishment of the directorate decreased by 37.79 FTE over the quarter. This decrease is due to external grant funding coming to an end for several posts, budget savings and the Budget Monitoring Panel deleting long term vacant posts.

(2) Rolling annual turnover in the directorate: 19.49%.

(3) Vacancy rate in the directorate: 11.49%.

(4) Key points:

(a) Children's Services: FTE was reduced in two posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.93 FTE). FTE was deleted in one vacant post (0.54 FTE). Three posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (2.79 FTE). One post was deleted following reduction in grant funding (0.22 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted, as no longer funded (0.81 FTE). Two new fixed term trainee posts were created and funded by future jobs fund scheme (1.62 FTE).

(b) Customer Services: Four posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (2.64 FTE). Two fixed term posts were deleted, as no longer funded (1.62 FTE)

(c) Education Services: FTE was reduced in five posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.91 FTE). Fifteen posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (11.73 FTE). Seventeen posts were deleted following reduction in grant funding (16.40 FTE). Three posts were deleted as part of the Budget Monitoring Panel's review of long term vacant posts (2.31 FTE). Four new posts were created, as part of 2011/12 budget

build and the restructure in the Children Centres (3.31 FTE). Four posts transferred in from Youth Service and Commission (3.15 FTE).

(d) Youth Services and Commissioning: FTE was reduced in four posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.39 FTE). FTE was reduced in one post due to the withdrawal of external funding (0.50 FTE). Twenty posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (14.36 FTE). Four posts were deleted following reduction in grant funding (3.76 FTE). Four posts transferred to Education Service (3.15 FTE).

(e) There were no Establishment changes in Director and Support.

5.3 Community Services.

(1) The Establishment of the directorate decreased by 17.51 FTE over the quarter. This decrease is due to reduction in grant funding, budget settings and MTFS savings programme and the Budget Monitoring Panel deleting long term vacant posts.

(2) Rolling annual turnover in the directorate: 13.04%.

(3) Vacancy rate in the directorate: 10.36%.

(4) Key points:

(a) Adult Social Care: Two long term vacant posts were deleted by BUMP (2.00 FTE). One post was deleted following reduction in grant funding (0.50 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted, as no longer funded (0.76 FTE) and two other posts were deleted (2.00 FTE). Two posts transferred to Highways and Transport (1.32 FTE). There was a temporary increased in FTE for one post until 31/03/11 (0.19 FTE). Two new fixed term posts were created, one trainee post funded by the future jobs fund scheme (0.81 FTE) and one to assist with the transformation of Adult Social Care and Personal budgets (1.00 FTE).

An increase in enhanced overtime is due to the restructure of Adult Social Care which is now almost complete.

(b) System Transformation: One post was deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.00 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted following reduction in grant funding (1.00 FTE). One post transferred to Housing and Performance (1.00 FTE).

(c) Housing and Performance: FTE was reduced in three posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.44 FTE). Three posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (3.00 FTE). One post was deleted following reduction in grant funding (1.00 FTE). Three vacant fixed term posts were deleted (2.5 FTE) and one other post was deleted (1.00 FTE). Three new posts were created, one post was funded by future jobs fund scheme (0.81 FTE) and the other two were set up to achieve the necessary market re-shaping and development required as part of the implementation and savings delivery for MTFS (2.00 FTE).

(d) There were no Establishment changes in Director and Support.

5.4 Environment.

(1) The Establishment of the directorate decreased by 13.56 FTE over the quarter. This decrease is due to a reduction in funding, budget settings and the MTFS savings programme.

(2) Rolling annual turnover in the directorate: 9.19%.

(3) Vacancy rate in the directorate: 10.40%.

(4) Key points:

(a) Countryside and Environment: FTE was reduced in one post as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.81 FTE). Five posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (3.71 FTE). Two posts were deleted following reduction in grant funding (1.46 FTE). One fixed term post was deleted, as no longer funded (0.81 FTE).

(b) Property and Public Protection: FTE was reduced in five posts as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.86 FTE). Four posts were deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (4.00 FTE)

(c) Highways and Transport: FTE was reduced in one post as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (0.40 FTE). One post was deleted as part of the budget setting and MTFS savings programme (1.00 FTE). Three fixed term posts were deleted, as no longer funded (2.30 FTE). Two vacant posts were deleted by BUMP (2.00 FTE). Two posts transferred in from Adult Social Care (1.32 FTE).

(d) There were no Establishment changes in Director and Support.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The total Establishment has decreased over the quarter.

6.2 The total Establishment at the end of quarter four 2010/11 is 1628.88 FTE, a decrease of 103.72 FTE when compared to the total of 1732.59 FTE at the end of quarter three 2010/11.

6.3 The amount of vacant FTE has decreased to 166.72 FTE. At the end of quarter three there was 221.72 vacant FTE.

6.4 The overall vacancy rate was 10.82%, down from 12.80% at the end of quarter three. For comparison the vacancy rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 9.04%.

6.5 The rolling annual turnover rate was 14.69%. For comparison the rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 8.49%.

6.6 The rolling voluntary turnover (excludes redundancies) was 7.4%. For comparison the rate at quarter four 2009/10 was 4.88%.

6.7 On 27/10/10 it was agreed that the full Establishment Report will go through the full Executive cycle (CB, MB and Executive) at the end of quarters two and four only, rather than every quarter. A brief summary of the key information on the Establishment, without comments, will be sent to Cllr Anthony Stansfeld, Cllr Graham Jones and Cllr Keith Chopping at end of quarters one and three (copied to Corporate Directors). The summary will be made available to other members of Management Board on request to the Head of HR.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Establishment trends Q1 2010/11 to Q4 2010/11 (figures for comparison over the past 4 quarters)
Appendix 2	Trends in funding for established posts Q1 2010/11 to Q4 2010/11
Appendix 3	Overtime, Casual Workers; and Agency Spend by Directorate
Appendix 4	Glossary and Definitions

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:	Corporate Board 31st May 2011
	Management Board 16th June 2011
Officers Consulted:	As above
Trade Union:	Not consulted

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Establishment Trends Q1 2010/11 to Q4 2010/11

The quarter four table below shows Establishment data for West Berkshire Council. This includes Establishment FTE, Occupied FTE, Vacancy details, Headcount and Turnover for the current quarte

Quarter 4 2010/11
Permanent and Fixed Term Establishment as at 31 March 2011

	Current WBC Establishment FTE	Current WBC Occupied FTE	Vacant FTE	Staff Headcount Per Service	Annual Turnover (rolling year) %	Vacancy Rate by Directorate
CEO & Support	2.42	2.42	0.00	3	0.00	
Benefits & Exchequer	80.57	73.23	7.34	82	4.82	
Finance	56.42	49.38	7.04	53	12.39	
Human Resources	20.79	20.98	-0.19	26	31.58	
ICT	52.76	46.97	5.79	51	13.21	
Legal & Electoral Services	27.54	27.99	-0.45	36	17.39	
Policy & Communication	35.62	33.60	2.01	39	29.21	
Special Projects	5.00	5.00	0.00	5	18.18	
Total Chief Executive	**281.11**	**259.57**	**21.55**	**295.00**	**15.24**	**11.02**
Children's Services	160.88	143.53	17.35	168	13.45	
Youth Services and Commissioning	57.92	50.31	7.60	77	38.25	
Customer Services	35.99	33.97	2.02	40	9.64	
Education Services	203.51	179.86	23.65	238	18.59	
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00	2	0.00	
Total Children and Young People	**460.30**	**409.68**	**50.62**	**525.00**	**19.49**	**11.49**
Adult Social Care	429.61	375.39	54.22	459	9.73	
Cultural Services	76.05	69.20	6.85	106	25.00	
Housing and Performance	68.70	60.97	7.74	66	14.39	
System Transformation	2.00	2.00	0.00	2	66.67	
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00	2	0.00	
Total Community Services	**578.36**	**509.56**	**68.80**	**635.00**	**13.04**	**10.36**
Property and Public Protection	92.36	84.40	7.96	92	4.35	
Highways & Transport	108.90	100.50	8.41	107	10.09	
Planning and Countryside	105.84	96.45	9.39	108	12.44	
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00	2	0.00	
Total Environment	**309.10**	**283.35**	**25.75**	**309.00**	**9.19**	**10.40**
GRAND TOTALS	**1628.88**	**1462.15**	**166.72**	**n/a #**	**14.69** ***	**10.82**

Quarter 3 2010/11
Permanent and Fixed Term Establishment as at 31 December 2010

	Current WBC Establishment FTE	Staff Headcount Per Service	Annual Turnover (rolling year) %
CEO & Support	2.42	3.00	0.00
Benefits & Exchequer	81.38	83.00	4.76
Finance	59.01	54.00	11.97
Human Resources	29.14	28.00	13.79
ICT	56.57	54.00	9.26
Legal & Electoral Services	28.58	36.00	14.93
Policy & Communication	53.87	41.00	25.81
Special Projects	5.00	5.00	18.18
Total Chief Executive	**315.97**	**304.00**	**12.10**
Children's Services	164.91	167.00	11.18
Youth Services and Commissioning	72.27	92.00	25.89
Customer Services	40.25	40.00	9.30
Education Services	218.65	248.00	13.04
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00
Total Children and Young People	**498.09**	**549.00**	**13.29**
Adult Social Care	434.99	473.00	7.08
Cultural Services	81.22	103.00	20.44
Housing and Performance	73.65	66.00	13.99
System Transformation	4.00	4.00	22.22
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00
Total Community Services	**595.87**	**648.00**	**10.13**
Property and Public Protection	97.21	92.00	4.32
Highways & Transport	112.28	109.00	4.57
Planning and Countryside	111.17	108.00	14.16
Director & Support	2.00	2.00	0.00
Total Environment	**322.66**	**311.00**	**8.41**
GRAND TOTALS	**1732.59**	**n/a**	**11.18**

The headcount per service should not be totalled to give a total headcount. Some employees may have several posts and this would give an inaccurate figur
*** Represents turnover based on leavers from WBC in past rolling year and calculated through average headcount throughout the year.
Turnover relates to crude turnover only and only measures external leavers not internal movement.
* Turnover is based on actual leavers in Q1 and Q2 2010/11 and is projected for the year (service significantly different from previous year)

Quarter 2 2010/11

Permanent and Fixed Term Establishment as at 30 September 2010

	Current WBC Establishment FTE	Staff Headcount Per Service	Annual Turnover (rolling year) %
CEO & Support	2.42	3	0.00
Benefits & Exchequer	81.00	84	5.92
Finance	61.50	59	11.57
Human Resources	29.14	29	13.33
ICT	57.57	56	3.60
Legal & Electoral Services	27.93	32	3.60
Policy & Communication	53.87	49	19.61
Special Projects	5.50	6	0.00
Total Chief Executive	**318.93**	**318**	**10.63**
Children's Services	164.55	164	12.50
Youth Services and Commissioning	80.08	105	18.43
Customer Services	40.25	42	17.98
Education Services	229.41	262	8.54
Director & Support	2.00	2	0.00
Total Children and Young People	**516.29**	**575**	**10.84**
Adult Social Care	434.18	478	9.51
Cultural Services	85.71	111	15.25
Housing and Performance	74.84	73	10.74
System Transformation	5.00	5	20.00
Director & Support	2.00	2	0.00
Total Community Services	**601.73**	**669**	**10.69**
Property and Public Protection	97.21	93	2.16
Highways & Transport	113.28	113	4.65
Planning and Countryside	112.63	111	14.04
Director & Support	2.00	2	0.00
Total Environment	**325.12**	**319**	**8.82**
GRAND TOTALS	**1762.08**	**n/a #**	**10.36**

Quarter 1 2010/11

Permanent and Fixed Term Establishment as at 30 June 2010

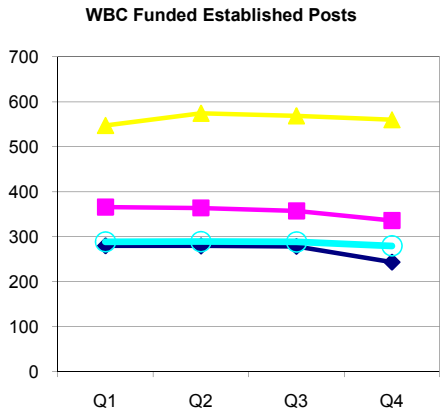
	Current WBC Establishment FTE	Staff Headcount Per Service	Annual Turnover (rolling year) %
CEO & Support	2.42	3	0.00
Benefits & Exchequer	81.50	86	3.51
Finance	60.31	57	13.56
Human Resources	29.14	31	6.45
ICT	57.57	57	3.64
Legal & Electoral Services	27.93	36	12.50
Policy & Communication	54.87	50	15.09
Special Projects	5.50	6	0.00
Total Chief Executive	**319.24**	**326**	**8.33**
Children's Services	165.76	173	9.48
Youth Services and Commissioning	80.75	112	10.71
Customer Services	41.25	44	17.78
Education Services	231.10	261	7.50
Director & Support	2.00	3	0.00
Total Children and Young People	**520.86**	**593**	**10.84**
Adult Social Care	436.99	485	8.91
Cultural Services	85.20	108	11.91
Housing and Performance	76.74	76	5.26
System Transformation	6.00	5	20.00
Director & Support	2.00	2	0.00
Total Community Services	**606.94**	**676**	**9.07**
Property and Public Protection	96.21	92	4.35
Highways & Transport	113.28	112	6.51
Planning and Countryside	112.13	117	10.26
Director & Support	2.00	2	0.00
Total Environment	**323.62**	**323**	**6.50**
GRAND TOTALS	**1770.66**	**n/a #**	**9.06**

Trends in Funding for Established Posts Q1 2010/11 to Q4 2010/11

The figures below show the position over the past four quarters for WBC, joint and external funded posts.
All posts (permanent or fixed term) are included in this report.

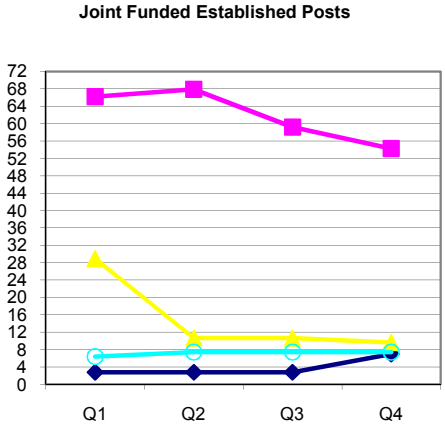
WBC funded post FTE decreased by 63.29 FTE over the year.

	WBC Funded (incl. DSG)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Chief Executive	280.03	279.72	278.54	243.49
Children and Young People	366.10	364.22	357.22	335.98
Community Services	546.98	573.91	568.43	559.49
Environment	288.58	289.08	288.08	279.44
Total	1481.69	1506.92	1492.27	1418.39



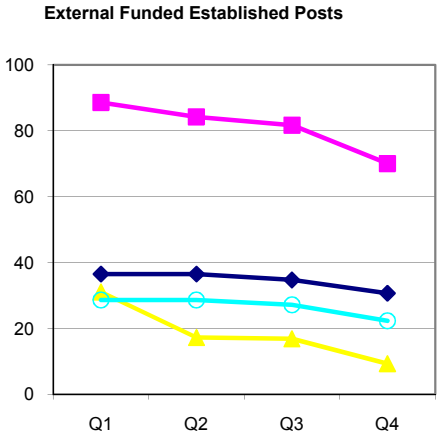
Joint funded post FTE decreased by 25.96 FTE over the year.

	Joint Funding			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Chief Executive	2.76	2.76	2.76	7.00
Children and Young People	66.19	67.91	59.21	54.29
Community Services	28.95	10.65	10.65	9.65
Environment	6.41	7.41	7.41	7.41
Total	104.30	88.72	80.03	78.35



Externally funded post FTE decreased by 52.54 FTE over the year.

	External Funding			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Chief Executive	36.46	36.46	34.68	30.62
Children and Young People	88.57	84.17	81.65	70.03
Community Services	31.01	17.17	16.79	9.22
Environment	28.64	28.64	27.18	22.26
Total	184.68	166.43	160.30	132.13



KEY

Chief Executive	diamond
Children and Young People	square
Community Services	triangle
Environment	circle

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Overtime, Casual Workers, and Agency:
Spend over Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 2010/11 by Directorate

Overtime - flat and enhanced * $

Directorate	Data	* Total £ Q1 10/11	* Total £ Q2 10/11	* Total £ Q3 10/11	* Total £ Q4 10/11
Chief Executive	Overtime - Flat	£6,016.51	£9,622.01	£6,916.25	£8,087.57
	Overtime - Enhanced	£14,146.55	£13,291.63	£7,463.48	£3,337.12
	Total	*£20,163.06*	*£22,913.64*	*£14,379.73*	*£11,424.69*
Children & Young People	Overtime - Flat	£25,848.28	£27,964.82	£18,346.02	£18,450.03
	Overtime - Enhanced	£3,762.02	£4,690.32	£3,706.56	£3,775.34
	Total	*£29,610.30*	*£32,655.14*	*£22,052.58*	*£22,225.37*
Community Services	Overtime - Flat	£67,254.29	£55,353.02	£45,026.90	£42,107.01
	Overtime - Enhanced	£66,699.00	£32,278.40	£16,921.98	£74,245.01
	Total	*£133,953.29*	*£87,631.42*	*£61,948.88*	*£116,352.02*
Environment	Overtime - Flat	£4,643.16	£5,208.34	£11,094.54	£10,382.08
	Overtime - Enhanced	£20,726.18	£21,216.54	£16,025.06	£14,121.14
	Total	*£25,369.34*	*£26,424.88*	*£27,119.60*	*£24,503.22*
Total Sum of Overtime - Flat		**£103,762.24**	**£98,148.19**	**£81,383.71**	**£79,026.69**
Total Sum of Overtime - Enhanced		**£105,333.75**	**£71,476.89**	**£44,117.08**	**£95,478.61**
Total of Overtime		***£209,095.99***	***£169,625.08***	***£125,500.79***	***£174,505.30***

* Data from Payroll

$ From quarter one 09/10 the breakdown of overtime payments is shown as 'overtime - flat' and 'overtime - enhanced'. This change was made to enable clearer reporting.

Casual Workers (not on the Establishment) *

Directorate	* Total £ Q1 10/11	* Total £ Q2 10/11	* Total £ Q3 10/11	* Total £ Q4 10/11
Chief Executive	£4,813.58	£8,630.14	£6,983.74	£4,557.60
Children & Young People	£45,804.65	£69,387.90	£53,429.75	£37,667.47
Community Services	£66,156.26	£78,148.34	£75,639.67	£63,656.68
Environment	£24,329.84	£23,333.61	£11,769.67	£10,185.54
Grand Total	**£141,104.33**	**£179,499.99**	**£147,822.83**	**£116,067.29**

* Data from Payroll

Agency (WBC Revenue only) **

Directorate	* Total £ Q1 10/11	* Total £ Q2 10/11	* Total £ Q3 10/11	* Total £ Q4 10/11
Chief Executive	£89,762	£125,554	£102,822	£160,994
Children & Young People	£147,928	£289,750	£455,490	£375,465
Community Services	£109,603	£105,695	£100,719	£199,726
Environment	£3,844	£27,490	£54,509	£39,243
Grand Total	**£351,138**	**£548,490**	**£713,540**	**£775,428**

** = Data from Agresso supplied by Finance.

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Glossary and Definitions used in the report

Misinterpretation of Establishment data can often occur through an incorrect understanding of the definitions that are used. The attached Appendices include a number of terms and the definitions are shown below.

Definitions

Grouped Posts:

Individual posts with the same criteria against them are sometimes grouped into one generic post with the full time equivalent (FTE) value reflecting the total number of hours from the individual posts. A Grouped Post will have one post number, but each employee allocated to the Grouped Post will retain their individual Employee numbers.

The following information must be the same for every employee within the Grouped Post:

- Job title;
- Grade;
- Reporting Line;
- The team the post is in;
- Location;
- Cost Centre;
- Funding source; and,
- Post status (i.e. Permanent or Temporary).

Establishment:

The number of posts (shown as full time equivalents (FTE)) that are supported by the approved staffing budget, agreed by the Council (through the Policy and Budget Framework) at the annual budget setting meeting. If the Executive subsequently change the staffing budget during the year then the Establishment would be expected to change. Changes in Establishment can also result from restructuring where two lower paid posts could be created from a single higher salaried post or vice versa. In this case the budget does not change but the Establishment will.

The Establishment includes both occupied and vacant posts. In some cases vacant posts within the Establishment may be covered by temporary or agency staff. These are not added to the Establishment.

The Establishment includes Permanent and Fixed Term positions whether they are full or part time.

Casual and Relief staff as well as those on variable hour contracts are not included within the Establishment figures and are reported separately.

The Establishment includes all Permanent, and Fixed Term positions irrespective of their funding source, as long as they are West Berkshire

Council employees. As a result, staff funded by external grants or jointly funded with Partner organisations will be included. At the same time no distinction is made between Revenue and Capital funded positions.

Occupied FTE:

This is the total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts within the Establishment that are occupied at the end of the reporting period. It does not include posts that are being covered by temporary or agency staff. This data includes staff who may not currently be working in their post, but who are still employed e.g. on maternity leave, on sick leave.

Vacant FTE:

This relates to the total Full Time Equivalents that are vacant within the Establishment at the end of the reporting period. Adding the number of vacant and occupied posts together will show the total Establishment. Staff due to start employment will not move a post from 'vacant' to 'occupied', even where an offer of employment has been made.

Staff headcount:

The total number of staff in post as at the end of the reporting period. This is the same as occupied FTE except that the headcount counts people who are not full time equivalents. This data includes staff who may not currently be working in their post, but who are still employed e.g. on maternity leave, on sick leave. Staff headcount is shown per service in this report. The headcount per service should not be totalled as this gives an inaccurate figure as some employees have several posts, sometimes in the same, and sometimes in different, services.

Annualised Turnover:

As quarterly turnover but annualised to show a forecasted annual figure if the level of leavers should be maintained for the rest of the rolling year.

Overtime - Flat:

Any time paid over standard contractual hours paid at flat hourly rate.

Overtime - Enhanced:

Any time paid over standard contractual hours paid at an enhanced hourly rate.

Casual:

Any hours paid for casual staff who do not have a contracted number of hours each period.