

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 21st February 2012 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Friday, 10 February 2012

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact David Baker on (01635) 519083
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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Virginia von Celsing, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, David Holtby, Mike Johnston, David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster
- Substitutes:** Councillors Jeff Beck, Adrian Edwards, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Graham Pask, Andrew Rowles, Julian Swift-Hook and Keith Woodhams

Agenda

Part I

Page No.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
2. **Minutes** 1 - 6
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 10 January 2012.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.
4. **Actions from previous Minutes** 7 - 14
To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.
5. **Items Called-in following the Executive on 09 February 2012**
To consider any items called-in by the requisite number of Members following the previous Executive meeting.
6. **Councillor Call for Action**
Purpose: To consider any items proposed for a Councillor Call for Action.
7. **Petitions**
Purpose: To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.
8. **West Berkshire Forward Plan February 2012 to May 2012** 15 - 22
Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from February 2012 to May 2012 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.



**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on
Tuesday, 21 February 2012 (continued)**

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| 9. | Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme
<i>Purpose: To receive, agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission, the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Resource Management Working Group for the remainder of 2011/12.</i> | 23 - 26 |
| 10. | GCSE Maths Results
<i>Purpose: To clarify to the Commission the previously reported performance information on GCSE maths results in the District's schools.</i> | 27 - 30 |
| 11. | Preparations for the London 2012 Olympics
<i>Purpose: To update the Commission on the preparations being made in West Berkshire to celebrate the Olympics.</i> | 31 - 36 |
| 12. | Housing Allocation Policy
<i>Purpose: To provide the Commission of the actions arising from previous meetings.</i> | 37 - 52 |
| 13. | Health Scrutiny Panel Update
<i>Purpose: To provide an update on the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel and provide information on the meeting held on 17 January 2012.</i> | 53 - 54 |
| 14. | Resource Management Working Group Update
<i>Purpose: To provide an update on the work of the Resource Management Working Group and provide information on the meeting held on 17 January 2012.</i> | 55 - 56 |

Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2012

Councillors Present: Jeff Beck (Substitute) (In place of Virginia von Celsing), Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Marcus Franks, Mike Johnston, Graham Pask (Substitute) (In place of David Holtby), David Rendel, Andrew Rowles (Substitute) (In place of Dave Goff), Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive) and Jason Teal (Performance, Research & Consultation Manager), David Lowe (Partnerships & Scrutiny Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Virginia von Celsing, Councillor Dave Goff and Councillor David Holtby

PART I

71. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(Note: 6.33pm – Councillors Tony Vickers and Andrew Rowles joined the meeting.)

Councillor Tony Vickers questioned whether more action could be taken by the Council to represent parents of pupils at academies, as recorded on page 2 of the minutes. It was agreed that a letter would be sent from the Chairman to the Department for Education outlining the Commission's previously expressed concern.

Members requested an update on the recommendation to circulate to all Elected Members the plan template in order that they promote with their local school governors its adoption, regardless of whether the Member was a governor or not.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) A letter would be sent from the Chairman of the Commission to the Secretary of State for Education outlining the Commission's concerns about representation of the views of parents of pupils at academies.
- (2) An update on progress would be provided on the recommendation to circulate to all Elected Members the plan template in order that they promote with their local school governors its adoption, regardless of whether the Member was a governor.

72. Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Items 8 and 10, but reported that, as his interest was personal but not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Marcus Franks declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, but reported that, as his interest was personal but not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as his interest was personal but not prejudicial, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

73. Actions from previous Minutes

No follow up actions from previous Commission meetings were reported.

74. Items Called-in following the Executive on 15 December 2011

No items were called-in following the last Executive meeting held on 15 December 2011.

75. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action although Councillor Brian Bedwell was able to advise the Commission that the Underwood Road shopping centre which had previously been dealt with as a Councillor Call for Action had resulted in work now beginning on the site. Councillor Bedwell thanked the Members of the Commission for their co-operation in achieving a good result for the people in the area.

76. Petitions

No petitions were received at the meeting.

(Note: 6.36pm – Councillor Jeff Brooks joined the meeting.)

77. Key accountable measures and activities 2011/12. Update on progress: Q2 outturns.

In introducing Item 8 Jason Teal advised that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress against the Council's key accountable measures and activities for Quarter 2 of the Municipal Year 2011/2012.

Jason Teal informed the Commission that of the 39 key measures, (33 of which were reported quarterly) 7 were signposted as amber – i.e. behind anticipated performance, but expect to achieve the target by year end. These were:

- Children's social care assessments conducted on time;
- The level of commissioned early intervention services in the Children and Young People directorate;
- People presented as homeless who were prevented from being homeless;
- The proportion of young people who were *not* in education, employment or training
- The proportion of upheld planning appeals;
- Calls to the Contact Centre answered within 30 seconds;
- Users' ratings of the Contact Centre.

Three targets were reporting as red (would not be achieved) in Quarter 2:

- The proportion of adult social care service users receiving self directed support;
- Pupils gaining 5+ high grades at GCSE;
- Adopting the Local Development Framework by March 2012.

The following specific returns were discussed:

- *The number of people presenting as homeless who were prevented from being homeless.* The Commission was of the collective view that this indicator should have been reported as red.
- *Young people 16 – 19 who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).* The data was provided from the Connexions Service but Members were of the view that

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this data would be difficult to track and wished to know whether the expected drop in the number of NEETs predicted for November actually occurred.

- *The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ GCSE grades A* - C including English and Mathematics.* Clarification was required as to whether there was a correlation between the recognised national shortage in skilled mathematics teachers and the drop in performance in the subject locally and whether the actions taken to address the matter were likely to be effective. These actions should be able to be tracked in future years.
- *The number of service user and carers receiving Self Directed Support (including Personal Budgets).* The cost of amending the RAISE system to provide electronic records for Personal Budgets was not articulated.
- *The level of commissioned early intervention services in the Children and Young People Directorate.* The figures quoted in the return were unclear and clarification was required.
- *The number of people entering the Youth Justice system.* It was accepted that the low numbers being reported were part of a national trend but it was not clear to Members the reasons for it.
- *Adoption of the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy.* It was understood that the Core Strategy would not be re-examined in public until March which made the achievement of this target impossible. Although the achievement of the target was outside the Council's direct control, at the time the target was set it was believed that it was.
- *The proportion of planning appeals which were upheld compared to the national average.* The return did not show whether the actual number of appeals was reducing.
- *The number of planning applications determined within the government guidelines.* Although the Commission recognised that the Head of Planning and Countryside had previously given an explanation about the causes of the drop in performance and Members understood the action that had been taken, it was not clear from the report whether performance could be sufficiently recovered to achieve the set targets by year-end.
- *Contact Centre calls answered within 30 seconds.* The cause of the dip in performance was understood to be an increase in call volumes relating to benefit claims and the move to an alternate weekly bin collection service. The Commission sought reassurance that the target was still achievable within the Municipal Year.
- *Proportion of customers rating Contact Centre customer care as 'good' or 'excellent'.* Clarification was sought on the methodology used to determine performance and the quantum of the sample size as it appeared as if a small number of adverse comments were apparently able to skew the results disproportionately.

Members of the Commission then discussed the process for the examination of the performance reports. Nick Carter explained that Corporate Board collectively considered performance reports on a quarterly basis, although individual directors would have updates on their directorate's indicators more frequently. Heads of Service reported to Corporate Board which then determined whether to accept any proposed actions that might be taken to address under-performance or whether the reporting officer should be directed to re-think their proposals. All the decisions were, in the end, judgements by either the Heads of Service or Corporate Board. The Chief Executive recognised that there was scope for more realism in the returns and more recognition of the impact of external factors.

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As a relatively long period of time had elapsed between the production of the statistics and their examination by the OSMC, it was agreed that more value would be added to its participation if more current updates could be received. In order to avoid creating an undue bureaucratic burden, the focus should be on those targets which the reports highlighted were at 'amber' and consequently could still be influenced to get back on track. This would be particularly true where insufficient detail was provided in the returns by officers.

The Chairman thanked Jason Teal for his participation in helping the Commission understand the information presented and its role in monitoring performance. He reminded the Commission that its role was not only to highlight where performance was poor but it was also to suggest the actions that might be taken to gain improvement. He concluded that it should be borne in mind that most of the indicators were in fact 'green.'

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Head of the Education Service should advise the Commission whether the anticipated November drop in the number of NEETs actually happened;
- (2) the Head of the Education Service should be invited to attend the Commission to explain the causes of and effect of the measures taken to address the drop in performance in GCSE mathematics;
- (3) the Head of Adult Social Care should advise the Commission of the costs associated with the required upgrade to the RAISE system and the progress made on the introduction of Personal Budgets;
- (4) the Head of Children's Services should advise the Commission of the reasons behind the drop in numbers of young people entering the Youth Justice System.
- (5) the Head of Planning and Countryside should advise the Commission:
 - (a) of the actual numbers of planning appeals, in comparison to previous reporting periods; and
 - (b) the likelihood of achieving the set target for determining planning applications within the government guidelines.
- (6) The Head of Customer Services should update the Commission on:
 - (a) whether the target for the percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds was still likely to be achieved; and
 - (b) the methodology in use for determining the rating of the Contact Centre.
- (7) The Performance, Research and Consultation Manager should verify the figures reported at Q1 and Q2 for the level of early intervention services in the Children and Young People directorate and advise the Commission of his findings.
- (8) The Chief Executive should take steps to ensure that Heads of Service provided sufficient detail in their exception reports to allow the Commission and others to fully assess the impact where there was a risk of targets not being achieved.
- (9) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman to identify, prior to the receipt of future performance monitoring reports, those officers to be invited to attend Commission meetings at which they were considered, in order that they could provide greater detail.

78. Assessing and assuring the 2012/13 performance 'scorecard'

Jason Teal introduced Item 9 by stating that his accompanying report outlined a proposal for Scrutiny to be involved in the development and adoption of appropriate targets for the new Council Strategy.

The suggested objective for the activity would be to ensure that measures and targets were an appropriate reflection of priorities as set out in the Council Strategy and the resources available to be committed to them, and that they were logical and robust.

The Commission welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this important work, particularly in light of the discussion held on the previous item.

Councillor Rendel wondered whether in future years, targets might be developed and then resources allocated to the achievement of them, rather than the targets being set and then having to be constrained by a lack of available resources. Jason Teal was able to advise that in practice the current system usually resulted in targets being made more rather than less demanding after they had been independently reviewed. Nick Carter informed the Commission that the Community Strategy was developed in tandem with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Resources were first allocated to high priority activity and then to things that were less important.

It was agreed that a small group of two Conservative and one Liberal Democrat Members would be created to take forwards the work. Councillors Quentin Webb and Emma Webster volunteered to sit on the group.

RESOLVED that a working group of three Councillors will be established to help develop the measures and targets to be incorporated into the Council Strategy.

79. Health Scrutiny Panel

In respect of Item 10 Councillor Quentin Webb advised the Commission that although there had been no formal meetings of the Panel since the Commission last met, it had held a briefing in preparation for its next meeting, scheduled for 17th January 2012.

The substantive agenda item for 17th January was the investigation into Continuing Healthcare, as approved by the Commission. Evidence was to be received from Charles Waddicor and Bev Searle, respectively the Chief Executive and Director of Commissioning at NHS Berkshire West, as well as a representative from the Newbury and District Commissioning Group (Dr Abid Irfan).

The Chairman thanked Councillor Webb for the update and for the important work that the Panel was doing, particularly on Continuing Healthcare.

RESOLVED that the report would be noted.

80. Resource Management Working Group

In introducing Item 11 Councillor Tony Vickers informed the Commission that the Working Group was due to meet next on 17th January 2012, having not met since the last meeting of the Commission.

Councillor Vickers advised that the Parkway development and car parking, along with revenue outturn reports, were items to be considered.

RESOLVED that the report would be noted.

81. West Berkshire Forward Plan November - February 2012

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 14) for the period covering November 2011 to February 2012.

Councillor Jeff Brooks commented that there was considerable interest from Thatcham Town Council in Item EX2350 (the redevelopment of Taceham House), which he, as one of the District Councillors for the Ward, shared. He was concerned that the building had been vacant for a significant period and action was apparently only now being taken. He stated that he would be interested in seeing the Executive report and hoped that it

reflected the history of the property. He also wanted to know when it would be considered by the Executive.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Forward Plan be noted.
- (2) the Executive report on Taceham House would be passed to Councillor Brooks, along with information about its passage through the Executive Cycle.

82. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered its work programme and those of the Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group.

The Chairman advised that Corporate Board had suggested that the Housing Allocations policy, which was being reviewed following a significant shift in government policy, might be considered by the Commission. As this presented a big opportunity for the Council to change the way that housing allocations were considered, there was agreement that it would be appropriate for the Commission to consider the matter.

Members were concerned that the task group review of processes to repair pot holes was being delayed unduly by a shortage of staff available to support the work from the Policy and Communication service. This led to the Commission discussing more generally its workload and the resources at its disposal. Concern was expressed that sufficient numbers of officers from Policy and Communication were not available to support the amount of activity that Members wished to undertake. Nick Carter reminded the Commission that significant cuts had been made to staffing across the Council and the approach taken by the Executive was that frontline areas would be protected. This policy came at the expense of back office or support services, such as Policy and Communication, which had had a number of posts removed from its establishment.

The Chief Executive gave an undertaking that he would review the amount of staff resource available to support Scrutiny activity. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman also agreed that they would review the Commission's work programme to ensure that it was appropriately focussed.

In order to make progress on the pot holes review, it was suggested that a possible solution was for Members to conduct the scrutiny without support from Policy officers. Councillor Emma Webster volunteered to participate in the review of this topic.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) a review of the Housing Allocations policy will be added to the work programme;
- (2) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman will review the Scrutiny work programme;
- (3) the Chief Executive will review the resources available in the Policy and Communication service to support Scrutiny.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 10.26 am)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Agenda Item 4.

Title of Report:	Actions from previous meetings
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012

Purpose of Report: To advise the Commission of the actions arising from previous meetings

Recommended Action: To note the report

Health Scrutiny Panel Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission with an update on the actions arising from its previous meeting.

2. Resolutions

- 2.1 **Resolution:** A letter would be sent from the Chairman of the Commission to the Secretary of State for Education outlining the Commission's concerns about representation of the views of parents of pupils at academies.

Action/response: A letter was sent to the Secretary of State on 26 January 2012.

- 2.2 **Resolution:** An update on progress would be provided on the recommendation to circulate to all Elected Members the plan template in order that they promote with their local school governors its adoption, regardless of whether the Member was a governor.

Action/response: Mark Lewis circulated the model plan to all Members by e-mail on 20 January.

- 2.3 **Resolution:** The Head of the Education Service should advise the Commission whether the anticipated November drop in the number of NEETs actually happened.

Action/response: The Head of Education has advised that West Berkshire NEET figures dropped to 4.5% in November 2011, falling across September and October, from a summer 'high' of 19%. In December they fell again to 4.4%.

- 2.4 **Resolution:** The Head of the Education Service should be invited to attend the Commission to explain the causes of and effect of the measures taken to address the drop in performance in GCSE mathematics;

Action/response: This item is covered by a separate item on the agenda.

- 2.5 The Head of Adult Social Care should advise the Commission of the costs associated with the required upgrade to the RAISE system and the progress made on the introduction of Personal Budgets.

Action/response: The Head of Adult Social Care has advised that the only cost associated with upgrading the Raise system for Personal Budgets is staff time and capacity working with practitioners to ensure the system supports the required workflow and processes.

Jan Evans also reports that feedback from staff and service users is that the Personal Budget process is still lengthy and complicated. A new simplified version will be available from 1 April 2012. All new assessments and reviews will then be automatically given a Personal Budget thus increasing take up.

2.6 **Resolution:** The Head of Children's Services should advise the Commission of the reasons behind the drop in numbers of young people entering the Youth Justice System.

Action/response: The Head of Children's Services reports that there are two reasons for the drop in first Time Entrants. Firstly, over the last decade the Children's fund (2002) and Youth Justice Board (2006) invested in early intervention with those at risk of offending. Locally we established an Early Intervention Team based within the Family Resource Service designed to work with young people at high risk of offending, and this has contributed to preventing some young people offending. Young people entering the youth justice system for the first time dropped from 272 in 2005-6 to 207 in 2008-9.

In addition to this, in 2009 the police introduced some informal disposals for young people committing low level crime - the Youth Cannabis Warning and the Youth Restorative Disposal – and these no longer count in the figures for first time entrants. Thus, although this is not a reduction in offending behaviour, it is reduction in the numbers of young people who enter the formal youth justice system. As a result first time entrants reduced to 123 in 2010-2011, although with 106 informal disposals (NB some informal disposals will be given for some behaviour which would not previously have been adjudged to be an offence).

Both of these factors are replicated nationally. The YOT screens young people receiving informal disposals to ensure that interventions are offered to those at highest risk.

In conclusion there has been a drop in the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time, which will partly be explained by effective prevention services, but partly explained more recently by police responses to low level offending behaviour. This is a strategy designed to keep young people out of the the Youth Justice system, partly in recognition of the negative impact it can have on young people.

2.7 **Resolution:** The Head of Planning and Countryside should advise the Commission:

1. of the actual numbers of planning appeals, in comparison to previous reporting periods; and
2. the likelihood of achieving the set target for determining planning applications within the government guidelines.

Action/response: The Head of Planning and Countryside has advised that the local target for the % of upheld planning appeals is set at "below" the national average for 2010/11 of 35%. Current performance, based on Quarters 1 through to 3, is 28% and so is Green.

The actual number of appeals does fluctuate considerably from quarter to quarter but tends to average out to about 86 per year.

This years appeals figures are as follows:

	No. of appeals	No. Upheld	No. Dismissed	% upheld
Q1	28	8	20	40%
Q2	31	8	23	37%
Q3	33	4	29	14%
Year to Date	92	20	72	28%

Based on the above the current year end forecast is as follows:

	No. of appeals	No. Upheld	No. Dismissed	% upheld
Year to Date	122	27	96	28%

Previous Year's Appeal Numbers and performance:

Year	No. Of Appeals	% Upheld
2006 / 07	152	36%
2007 / 08	98	27%
2008 / 09	77	29%
2009 / 10	84	33%
2010 / 11	87	33%
2011 /12 Estimate	122	28%

The number of appeals that are submitted is beyond any control by the Authority. Having reviewed the appeals submitted in the last 9 months there are no obvious reasons for the increase and so it can reasonably be expected that the actual number will reduce to the usual average of about 86 in 2012 / 13.

For Planning Applications Performance, Gary Lugg advises that at the time Development Control (DC) performance targets for 2011 / 2012 were set in February 2011 there was a considerable backlog (approximately 1,000) planning applications waiting to be processed and determined. Approval had been given to recruit to the 10 vacant posts in DC and the Planning Registration teams and to bring in additional resource. At the time it had been hoped to recruit to the vacant posts and bring in temporary resource within two months.

The recruitment process resulted in a number of internal appointments so creating further unforeseen vacancies within DC. It was hoped to cover all the vacant posts using temporary resource but this also proved more difficult than anticipated with very few suitably experienced temporary planners being available. 17 were interviewed only 4 were considered suitable. One of these left for another appointment shortly after starting work with the Council. This lack of resource

slowed performance improvement in Q2 and Q3 particularly in the Minor and Major categories.

In Q3 the majority of vacant posts were recruited to, with only 3 remaining vacant at the end of the quarter. It is hoped to recruit to these posts in the coming month. Temporary planners also joined the Council in August helping reduce the backlog from then.

At the time of writing it is anticipated that the performance target for quarter 4 will be achieved.

The table below summarises planning performance including quarter 3 outturn and forecast performance for quarter 4.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 (Qtr End)
<u>Majors</u>				
Target	30%	50%	60%	60%
Actual	33%	50%	16%	60% Qtr end forecast
<u>Minors</u>				
Target	0%	0%	35%	35%
Actual	1%	1%	13%	40% Qtr end forecast
<u>Others</u>				
Target	70%	60%	70%	75%
Actual	83%	84%	81%	80% Qtr end forecast

2.8 **Resolution:** The Head of Customer Services should update the Commission on:

1. whether the target for the percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds was still likely to be achieved; and
2. the methodology in use for determining the rating of the Contact Centre.

Action/response: The Head of Customer Services reports that he anticipates being unable to meet this target by a small margin by year end.

During 2011-2012 the service has reduced its establishment and at the same time increased its portfolio through the addition of libraries and free school meals. Simultaneously there has been pressure due to an increase in demand caused by a compulsory data matching exercise between Housing Benefit and Working Families Tax Credit which suspended a significant number of benefit claims and caused lengthy enquiries. Also there was an increase in call volumes as a

consequence of queries about Council Tax Direct Debits and in relation to the 'new' waste collection arrangements.

Housing Benefit claims and debt recovery arrangements for residents in arrears with Council Tax have increased due to the economic climate, and just recently weather conditions have also added to call volume. Internally incidents of I.T. down time have caused back logs of calls resulting in short duration high demand.

Whilst many of the above have been unanticipated they do constitute a level of consistent and over profiled demand - previously these could have been reasonably responded to but with a reduction in establishment of 6 fte and a broader service provision this target is by necessity testing the resilience of the service.

Target achievement could be realised - however this could only be through 'pushing' enquiries to the 'back offices'. This would negatively impact on their capacity and be contrary to the principles that created Customer Services e.g. 80% of enquiries being dealt with at the first point of contact (currently 83% against a target of 80%). It would, by consequence, create a light touch service which would undoubtedly lead to the double handling of information and increase workload.

Operationally Customer Services has been working actively to broaden the knowledge and skills of Customer Services' advisors - this provides a flexible workforce that can be mobilised to those high demand areas. This ability has however been diminished as referred to above but we continue to work towards increasing the skills of customer advisors to maintain flexibility and responsiveness.

In measuring the quality of the service, Sean Anderson advises that this is captured both externally and internally – the reported indicator relates to external satisfaction scoring only. Externally this is achieved by way of customer feedback gathered through survey forms - however it is acknowledged despite recording high levels of satisfaction it does have a low participation rate despite active encouragement to complete survey forms.

Internally, staff have their telephone call 'silently monitored'. This measures both their soft customer care skills and their technical accuracy – this information is then used during 1-2-1's and Annual Appraisal.

With a reduction in resource and uplift in demand both targets will remain a significant challenge for the service. The quality of our response will remain the priority – along with the recognition that responsiveness is also a desired outcome. Given that set out above, we would look to review both these targets for 2012/13, with a view to capturing a rounded balance of measures around responsiveness and quality of service.

If adopted this action would balance the requirement for a responsive and effective service.

- 2.9 **Resolution:** The Performance, Research and Consultation Manager should verify the figures reported at Q1 and Q2 for the level of early intervention services in the Children and Young People directorate and advise the Commission of his findings.

Action/response: The Performance, Research and Consultation Manager reports that within the commissioning cycle, needs identification will result in the need for new or different provision. Some of this will be more cost-effective through purchasing services. Part of the committed budget for early intervention allowed for development of new provision (this was an expectation set out by the Government in its Early Intervention Grant guidance). This in turn supports local capacity building, diversification and market growth in the third sector, also part of the Government's policy agenda. Examples of services commissioned so far include, the domestic abuse referral team, co-delivered by A2 dominion with WBC. FiP Edge of care intervention again a partnership, with sovereign housing.

For 2011/12 a target was set of 10% of the early intervention money to be commissioned (£1,172,600). As per Q2, £1,066,000 of this pot had been allocated. This was reported as amber as some of this money may need to be diverted in order to meet in year savings targets. The implications of not delivering on this measure are a slower diversification of provision.

- 2.10 **Resolution:** The Chief Executive should take steps to ensure that Heads of Service provided sufficient detail in their exception reports to allow the Commission and others to fully assess the impact where there was a risk of targets not being achieved.

Action/response: Heads of Service have been advised to comply with the direction when making their returns for Quarter 3.

- 2.11 **Resolution:** A working group of 3 Councillors will be established to help develop the measures and targets to be incorporated into the Council Strategy.

Action/response: Councillor David Rendel will join Councillors Quentin Webb and Emma Webster on the working group.

- 2.12 **Resolution:** The Executive report on Taceham House would be passed to Councillor Brooks, along with information about its passage through the Executive Cycle.

Action/response: The report was e-mailed to Councillor Jeff Brooks on 31 January.

- 2.13 **Resolution:** A review of the Housing Allocations policy will be added to the work programme.

Action/response: This item is now on the work programme and forms part of the agenda for the meeting.

- 2.14 **Resolution:** The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will review the Scrutiny work programme.

Action/response: The work programme was reviewed on 25 January and a number of items were removed or re-prioritised.

- 2.15 **Resolution:** The Chief Executive will review the resources available in the Policy and Communication service to support Scrutiny.

Action/response: The Chief Executive has reviewed with the Head of Policy and Communication and the Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager the staffing resource available for Scrutiny. Redeployment of staff from other activities is not currently possible but staffing levels and deployment will be regularly reviewed.

Appendices

There no appendices to this report.

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – February 2012 to May 2012

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Portfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
FEBRUARY 2012											
ID2324	Speed Limit Review January 2012 (& response to petition regarding Clayhill Road, Burghfield) <i>To approve the statutory consultation for altering the speed limit on a number of roads following a meeting of the speed limit task group</i>	ID	01/02/12	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		TBC	Local ward members		01 February 2012
ID2405	Easton Village - Proposed 30mph Speed Limit <i>To consider the responses received during the statutory consultation.</i>	ID	01/02/12	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		TBC			01 February 2012
ID2406	Sulham Village - Proposed 30mph Speed Limit <i>To consider the responses received during statutory consultation.</i>	ID	01/02/12	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		TBC			01 February 2012
ID2407	Kintbury Road, Inkpen - Proposed 30mph Speed Limit <i>To consider the responses received during statutory consultation</i>	ID	01/02/12	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		TBC			01 February 2012

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ID2413	West Berkshire Bid to the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund <i>To approve a funding bid of approximately £3.9million for submission to DfT</i>	ID	01/02/12	Environment	Phil Crockford	Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development		TBC	Oxfordshire County Council, Science Vale UK, AWE, Vodafone, West Berkshire Partnership, CTC, Sustrans, Berkshire NHS Trust, Job Centre Plus, Go Ahead Group, Newbury & District Buses, Transport Policy Task Group		01 February 2012
ID2254	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/02/12	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 February 2012
ID2256	West Berkshire Forward Plan - March 2012 to June 2012 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	16/02/12	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		08/02/12	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	01 February 2012
GA2388	Internal Audit - Interim Report for 2011/12 <i>To update the Committee on the outcomes of work performed by Internal Audit during 2011/12.</i>	GA	20/02/12 GA	Chief Executive	Ian Priestley	Finance, Property, Health and Safety		10/02/12			01 February 2012
EX2350	Proposal for Redevelopment of Taceham House (Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person) <i>To consider the options for Taceham House and agree best course of action.</i>	EX	09/02/12 EX	Community Services	Mel Brain	Planning, Housing, Transport Policy and Economic Development	Yes	31/01/12			01 February 2012

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EX2403	School Meals Procurement	EX	09/02/12 EX	Children and Young People	Amerie Bailey	Children and Young People, Youth Service		31/01/12			01 February 2012
EX2402	Building Cleaning Contract Procurement	EX	09/02/12 EX	Children and Young People	Amerie Bailey	Children and Young People, Youth Service		31/01/12			01 February 2012
EX2393	<p>Implementing the Recommendations of the Munro Review of Child Protection - A Child Centred System</p> <p><i>The Munro report was commissioned by the Government in June 2010. It was written by Professor Eileen Munro of LSE after she was commissioned to review the circumstances leading up to the death of Peter Connelly (Baby P) and other high profile child abuse cases. The final report was produced in May 2011 and the Government produced their response accepting the majority of recommendations made in July 2011. Munro's recommendation will require a sea change in the delivery of child protection services. They will impact on all aspects of service delivery including training, procedures, ICT systems, leadership and governance. The purpose of this report is to set out the process for making the changes proposed in West Berks</i></p>	EX	09/02/12 EX	Children and Young People	Mark Evans	Children and Young People, Youth Service		31/01/12			01 February 2012
EX2290	Finance Report - Quarter 3	EX	09/02/12 EX	Chief Executive	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Property, Health and Safety		31/01/12			01 February 2012

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EX2414	Local Enterprise Partnership Membership	EX	09/02/12 EX	Chief Executive	David Lowe	Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development		31/01/12			01 February 2012
MARCH 2012											
PC2400	Draft Pay Policy Statement	PC	PC -March 2012	Chief Executive	Jane Milone	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		TBC			01 March 2012
N/A	LSP Governance	LSP	LSP in March	Chief Executive	Andy Day	Leader of Council		TBC			01 March 2012
ID2257	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/03/12	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 March 2012
ID2258	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/03/12	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 March 2012
ID2412	Hambridge Road/Boundary Road Junction Improvements <i>To consider the responses to the consultation of the above scheme and make a decision as to how to proceed</i>	ID	01/03/12	Environment	Neil Stacey	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		TBC	Ward Members, Town Council, local residents, road users		01 March 2012
ID2378	School Admission Arrangements 2013-14 <i>To determine the School Admission Arrangements for 2013-14</i>	ID	09/03/12	Children and Young People	Mwazwit a Mundang epufu	Children and Young People, Youth Service		01/03/12			01 March 2012

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ID2259	West Berkshire Forward Plan - April 2012 to July 2012 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	15/03/12	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		07/03/12	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	01 March 2012
ID2410	Highway Asset Management Plan 2012-16 <i>To approve the Highway Asset Management Plan</i>	ID	30/03/12	Environment	Melvyn May	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		22/03/12	Council Members		01 March 2012
EX2320	Funding Arrangements Framework for Domiciliary Care (Paragraph 6 - information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority) <i>To seek approval for this policy change</i>	EX	29/03/12 EX	Community Services	Jan Evans	Community Care, Pensions, Insurance	Yes	21/03/12			01 March 2012
EX2408	Fairer Contributions Policy (Paragraph 6 - information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority) <i>To seek approval for this policy change</i>	EX	29/03/12 EX	Community Services	Jan Evans	Community Care, Pensions, Insurance	Yes	21/03/12			01 March 2012
EX2409	London Road Industrial Estate	EX	29/03/12 EX	Chief Executive	Les Gaulton	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities		21/03/12			01 March 2012
EX2395	Key accountable measures and activities 2011/12. Update on progress: Q3 outturns	EX	29/03/12 EX	Chief Executive	Jason Teal	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		21/03/12			01 March 2012
EX2415	Traffic Management & Road Safety Programme 2012/13 <i>To advise Members of the Traffic Management & Road Safety works programme for 2012/13</i>	EX	29/03/12 EX	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		21/03/12			01 March 2012

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C2334	Revenue Budget: 2012-13 Financial Year <i>To consider and recommend to Council the 2012-13 revenue budget.</i>	C	09/02/12 EX 01/03/12 C	Chief Executive	Nick Carter/Andy Walker/Robert O'Reilly	Finance, Property, Health & Safety		31/01/12 EX 22/02/12 C			01 March 2012
C2337	Capital Strategy and Programme 2012-2017	C	09/02/12 EX 01/03/12 C	Chief Executive	Andy Walker	Finance, Property, Health & Safety		31/01/12 EX 22/02/12 C			01 March 2012
C2335	Medium Term Financial Strategy	C	09/02/12 EX 01/03/12 C TEB 18/01/12	Chief Executive	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Property, Health & Safety		31/01/12 EX 22/02/12 C			01 March 2012
C2373	Corporate Strategy 2012-2016 <i>To define the strategic direction for the Council over the next four years.</i>	C	09/02/12 EX 01/03/12 C	Chief Executive	Jason Teal	Leader of Council		31/01/12 EX 22/02/12 C	All staff will be formally consulted over the autumn, partners and the general public (via the website) will also be consulted.		01 March 2012
C2336	Local Government Act 2003 - Borrowing Limits and Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13	C	09/02/12 EX 01/03/12 C	Chief Executive	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Property, Health & Safety		31/01/12 EX 22/02/12 C			01 March 2012

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C2401	Draft Amended Terms of Reference for Personnel Committee	C	01/03/12 C	Chief Executive	Jane Milone	Strategy, Performance, Community Safety		22/02/12			01 March 2012
APRIL 2012											
ID2260	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/04/12	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 April 2012
ID2261	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/04/12	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 April 2012
ID2263	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/04/12	Chief Executive	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 May 2012
ID2264	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/04/12	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Transport Policy, Housing, Economic Development		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		01 May 2012
ID2411	St. John's Road Zebra Crossing and Cycle Lanes <i>To consider the responses to the consultation of the above scheme and make a decision as to how to proceed</i>	ID	02/04/12	Environment	Neil Stacey	Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services		23/03/12	Ward Members, Town Council, local residents, road users		01 April 2012
ID2262	West Berkshire Forward Plan - May 2012 to August 2012 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	12/04/12	Chief Executive	Maira Fraser	Leader of Council		04/04/12	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	01 April 2012

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MAY 2012											
ID2265	West Berkshire Forward Plan - May 2012 to August 2012 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	17/05/12	Chief Executive	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		09/05/12	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	01 May 2012
EX2307	Annual Scrutiny Report 2011/12 <i>To report to the Executive the scrutiny work over the past year</i>	EX	17/05/12	Chief Executive	Elaine Walker	Leader of Council		09/05/12			01 May 2012

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/11/102	Day Centres To examine the provision of day centres across the District.	Task group review with information supplied by, and questioning of,		HSP	Start: TBD End: TBD	Jan Evans – 2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	To be scheduled	
OSMC/11/104	Anti-Child Poverty Strategy	To monitor the strategy	Monitoring item	HSP	Start: On-going End: April 2012	Julia Waldman – 2815 Children and Young People	Cllr Irene Neill	In Progress	
OSMC/11/105	Dignity and Nutrition – Hospitals To review the Care Quality Commission report on Dignity and Nutrition - Hospitals	To survey and hold focus groups detailing information		HSP	Start: July 2011 End: April 2012	Nigel Owen, West Berkshire LINK, Age UK	Cllr Joe Mooney	In Progress	Update report received. To be presented at the next meeting
OSMC/11/106	Update on the Health and Wellbeing Board To receive updates from the Health and Wellbeing Board	To update members on Health and Wellbeing Board	Monitoring item	HSP	Ongoing	Teresa Bell/June Graves	Cllr Joe Mooney	In Progress	
OSMC/11/107	Update on the Health Service in West Berkshire	To update members on the changes to Health Service in West Berkshire	Monitoring item	HSP	Ongoing	Bev Searle - Director Joint Partnerships and Commissioning	Cllr Joe Mooney	In Progress	
OSMC/11/119	Continuing Healthcare (CHC) To examine the operation of the NHS CHC scheme in the NHS Berkshire West area	In meeting review		HSP	Start: Jan 2012 End: April 2012	Jan Evans – 2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	In Progress	
OSMC/09/02	Performance Report for Level One Indicators To monitor quarterly the performance levels across the Council and to consider, where appropriate, any	In meeting review with information supplied by, and	Monitoring item	OSMC	Start: each Q End: OSMC 01/11/11	Jason Teal – 2102 Policy & Communication	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	In Progress	Quarterly item.
OSMC/10/78	Examination of facilities in place for younger people	By Task Group - Information supplied by, and questioning of,		OSMC	Start: 20/09/11 End: 2/12 OSMC 4/12	Julia Waldman – 2815 Children and Young People	Councillor Irene Neill	In Progress	Investigation completed, Report due to April 2012 meeting

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/11/103	Olympics and Diamond Jubilee Events 2012. To review and monitor events in West Berkshire	In meeting review.		OSMC	Update 1: 2/12 Update 2: 5/12	David Appleton 2578 Culture & Youth	Carol Jackson-Doerge		Updates following briefing in November 2011.
OSMC/11/120	Potholes To examine the methodology in operation for the repair of pot holes	Task group review with information supplied by, and questioning of,		OSMC	Feb-12	Mark Edwards – 2208 Highways & Transport	Councillor David Betts		Item to begin following the completion of Item 78, Councillors Brian Bedwell, Emma Webster, Keith Woodhams participating
OSMC/11/121	Housing Allocations policy To contribute to the development of a new policy	In meeting policy development		OSMC	Feb-12	Mel Brain - 2403 Social Care Commissioning and Housing	Councillor Alan Law		Added to work programme at the 10 January 2012 meeting, following a suggestion by Corporate Board
OSMC/09/57	Revenue and capital budget reports To receive the latest period revenue and capital budget reports To consider any areas of concern.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	RMWG	Start: 13/09/10 End: Each Quarter	Andy Walker – 2433 Finance	Councillor Keith Chopping	In Progress	May lead to areas for in depth review.
OSMC/09/63	Establishment Reports To receive the latest report on the changes to the Council's establishment.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	RMWG	Start: 13/09/10 End: Each Quarter	Robert O'Reilly – 2358 Human Resources	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld	In Progress	May lead to areas for in depth review.
OSMC/11/99	Highways Asset Management Plan To review the AMP and the opportunities arising from exploiting the information contained within the Asset Register.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		RMWG	Start: 28 Feb 2012 End: 28 Feb 2012	Mark Edwards – 2208 Highways & Transport	Councillor David Betts	To be scheduled	
OSMC/11/109	Timelord To receive an update on the benefits realised following the changes introduced in the Timelord Phase 3 post implementation.	In meeting review and update Members of the Timelord Phase 3 development		RMWG	Start: 28 Feb 2012 End: 28 Feb 2012	Jackie Jordan	Councillor Pam Bale	In Progress	the Closure Report to Timelord Programme Board in late November

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/11/110	Energy Saving To review the Council's policies and procedures for Energy Saving.	In a meeting review the Council's procedures to Energy Saving		RMWG	Start: April 2012 End: April 2012	Adrian Slaughter	Councillor Hilary Cole	In Progress	Report to meeting on 28/02/12
OSMC/11/111	Risk Register To scrutinise individual items on the Risk Register on an annual basis.	In meeting review and scrutinise individual items	Monitoring item	RMWG	Ongoing	Ian Priestley	Councillor David Betts	In Progress	Next request Sept 2012
OSMC/11/112	Medium Term Financial Strategy To review the role and format of the MTFS	In meeting review of the MTFS		RMWG	Start: Oct 2012 End: Oct 2012	Andy Walker	Councillor Keith Chopping	In Progress	Requested by RMWG on 26 July 2011
OSMC/11/113	Procedures for Blue Badge Holder To review the operation of the new procedures, criteria and rules of use for Blue Badge holders following the introduction of them in January 2012.	In meeting review.		RMWG	Start: Jan 2013 End: Jan 2013	Mark Edwards	Councillor David Betts	In Progress	Requested by RMWG on 26 July 2011
OSMC/11/117	Managed Vacancy Factor (MVF) To understand the aims and operation of the MVF in its budget management and monitoring	In meeting review.		RMWG	Start April 2012 End April 2012	Robert O'Reilly HR	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld		

Key:

OSMC Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
 HSP Health Scrutiny Panel
 RMWG Resource Management Working Group

Scheduled meeting dates

10/01/12	21/02/12	17/04/12	29/05/12
06/12/11	17/01/12	27/03/12	
17/01/12	28/02/12	24/04/12	

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Title of Report:	Briefing note on GCSE Maths performance
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 st February 2012

Purpose of Report: To clarify to the Commission the previously reported performance information on GCSE maths results in the District's schools

Recommended Action: To note the report

Resource Management Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 942 0196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Ian Pearson
Job Title:	Head of Education Service
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Overall, GCSE results in West Berkshire were relatively flat as measured by those achieving 5 + A* - C grades, including English & Maths. 60.10% achieved this measure, in comparison to a national figure of 58.20%. When the measure is reduced to simply 5 + A*-C the West Berkshire figure increases to 60.8%, in comparison to 58.7% nationally.
- 1.2 When GCSE 'equivalent' qualifications are stripped out of the statistics, West Berkshire's GCSE 5 A* - C including English and Maths percentage pass is 58.40%, some 6% above the national figure of 52.40%
- 1.3 As well as absolute score, another key measure is the progress students make i.e. the journey they have made from the end of KS2 to GCSE results at the end of KS4.
- 1.4 Using this measure, 2011 progress in West Berkshire is as set out below in English and Maths.

	% making expected progress	
	English	Maths
England	71.80%	64.80%
West Berkshire	76.30%	68.60%

- 1.5 As can be seen, nationally, progress in Maths is below that in English, though on both measures, West Berkshire scores well above the national average.
- 1.6 Last year's GCSE Maths results varied across secondary schools, with some delivering a significant improvement. Unfortunately however, two larger schools slipped back, which had a negative impact on overall performance.
- 1.7 Key factors identified in both schools as contributing to lower performance include:
- Leadership and management of Maths
 - Quality of teaching and learning in some groups
 - Ineffective monitoring and evaluation of student progress
 - Unreliable data, including weak moderation
 - Lack of appropriate intervention for those students at risk of underachievement

- A significant number of students capable of achieving a C grade actually achieved a D grade

1.8 While Maths remains a shortage subject that is difficult to recruit to, it should be noted that in both the schools cited above the subject was taught by Maths specialists. Not to underplay however, the importance of recruiting high quality Maths teachers and heads of department. In terms of measures taken to address the drop in performance outlined above, these vary depending on the circumstances of each individual school. However, School Improvement interventions include:

- Deployment of the part-time LA Maths Advance Skills Teacher (AST) to support the Head of Department and staff to improve the quality of teaching.
- AST, supported by the School Improvement Partner (SIP) working with staff on tracking, progression and intervention programmes.

1.9 The Government have recognised how important it is to recruit good graduates into teaching maths and has set out incentive measures in its recently published teacher recruitment strategy 'Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers'. Maths is categorised as a 'high priority specialism' with training bursaries on offer from £11,000 to £20,000 depending on class of degree.

1.10 Overall in West Berkshire, support for maths has reduced due to the loss of a full-time Mathematics Consultant post in December 2010 (due to the removal of Government grant). This has had a negative impact on the LA's ability to monitor and evaluate performance and build capacity – particularly for new leaders, and to provide training for maths teachers.

1.11 We recognise the importance of sharing good practice across schools; the AST leads a Head of Maths Network, where the current focus is on Leadership and Management. The most recent meeting included a presentation from Trinity School, to share how did they did so well in last year's KS4 results, and from a Birmingham school who have been doing some intervention work.

1.12 Training for Teaching Assistants (TAs) who support secondary classes, was identified by Maths Heads of Department as a need. The LA is currently in the process of organising this training.

1.13 The importance of a good grounding in Maths at Primary level is key to raising standards in secondary schools. In support of this, West Berkshire has enthusiastically embraced a national programme to train Primary Maths Specialists. The first cohort completed their 18 month training programme in December 2011. This has provided 16 trained specialists, who will now be deployed across primary schools in West Berkshire to champion, inspire and support Maths teaching. A further cohort is currently being trained too, to build even greater capacity.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 While 2011 GCSE maths results were undoubtedly disappointing in a small number of schools, overall West Berkshire maintained positive added value and it is hoped particular issues will have been addressed successfully, reflected in 2012 outcomes.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Title of Report:	Update on preparations for the Olympic Games
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012

Purpose of Report: To update the Commission on the preparations being made in West Berkshire to celebrate the Olympics.

Recommended Action: To note the report.

Health Scrutiny Panel Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 942 0196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Lowe
Job Title:	Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519817
E-mail Address:	dlowe@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 22 November 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) received a presentation from the Head of Cultural Services (David Appleton) on the preparations underway to celebrate the 2012 London Olympics.
- 1.2 At the meeting of 21 February 2012 David Appleton will update the Commission on progress since November.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 22 November 2011

- 2.1 The minutes of the OSMC meeting of 22 November 2011 record that:

The Head of Cultural Services, David Appleton, introduced Item 9 by stating that the West Berkshire Partnership was co-ordinating the delivery of a programme of local activities designed to allow the residents of West Berkshire to meet the potential of the opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. He then showed the Commission a short film that showed in general terms the route of the Olympic Torch from its arrival in Britain.

(Note: 7.17pm: Councillor Andrew Rowles joined the meeting).

After the film Mr Appleton informed the Commission that there were three strands to the programme, with the passage through West Berkshire of the Torch Relay providing one of the links between each strand. The strands were:

- Education, Sport and Community;
- Delivered by schools themselves with Park House and Theale Green taking a lead role as the employers of the “School games organisers”;
- Local Economy;
- Suppliers to London 2012;
- Visitor Economy;
- Community Celebration;
- Mainly led by town and parish councils or voluntary and community groups supported by WBC arts and leisure staff.

In amplifying the Education, Sport and Community strand, Mr Appleton was able to advise that school games were being organised and that Park House and Theale Green schools had funding for two years to employ School Games Organisers. The games would be structured into 4 levels:

- Level 1 - Competitions organised within the school;
- Level 2 - Ongoing and regular inter school competition;
- Level 3 - County of Berkshire School Games;
 - Primary Festivals 19/20 April (Berkshire) and 26th June 2012 (West Berkshire);
 - Secondary Festival 27/28 June 2012 (Berkshire);
- Level 4 - National Event. Participation by invitation only.

There would also be curriculum activity, led by Park House School which had been grant aided to support other schools in the area. The aim was to create a 'cross curricular Olympic and Paralympic Values resource' available for all West Berkshire Schools. Independent schools would need to buy into the Schools Sports Partnership to be included.

Finally there was a link with an International Learning Programme. This formed part of the British Council Connecting Classrooms Partnership. Other schools involved were St. Nicholas (Woolhampton), The Castle (Theale Green), Falkland Primary and The Willows.

The Local Economy stand was broken down into two elements, 'Compete For...' and The Visitor Economy.

'Compete For...' encouraged local businesses to bid for the some of the many contracts arising directly from the games. Although awareness had previously been raised, through the Chamber of Commerce, and some local companies had been successful (IFP Forest and Paper Products (Newbury), Berkshire Consultancy (Beech Hill) and Tony Ridley Hyperbaric Associates Ltd (Westridge Green by Basildon) were cited as examples) many local companies had not registered and had no intention of doing so.

The main impact on the Visitor Economy was likely to be on the retail footfall figures resulting from event's programmes across the district. Some work was still needed to bring together the performance outcomes of the event's organisers with benefits of increased footfall. There had been no visible effect on accommodation enquiries at this stage. There was however likely to be a late surge when visitors to the rowing and flat water canoeing events at Eaton Dorney found that Windsor and the surrounding area did not have sufficient capacity.

The final strand, Community Celebration, was focussed on local groups deciding how they wanted to celebrate and being supported by the information and know-how of the Council. Support would be face to face and on-line through the 'Enjoy!' website. Mr Appleton advised that many communities were linking Jubilee celebrations with London 2012. There were likely to be a limited number of major events, mainly led by others, but where the Council was expected to be a key stakeholder and facilitator, for example the Newbury Outdoor Events programme. The Torch Relay was scheduled for Wednesday 11th July, 2012. The general approach taken to Community Celebration was that the Council would 'build the stage, local Communities put on the show' through Local Community Task Groups. There was extensive co-ordination needed between Council Services and external groups such as Thames Valley Police, schools, town and parish councils and the business community. It was expected that there would be local torch bearers.

The Council had a number of contractual obligations with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). These were to:

- Provide a named individual for liaison with LOCOG;
- Establish Community Task Force(s);
 - Local Community;
 - District Wide;
- Issue permits, licences, consents, road closures, Traffic Orders etc. (6 months in advance);

- Conduct risk assessments;
- Organise stewarding;
- Be responsible for street cleansing and waste management;
- Ensuring that site dressing met with the Games' official look and feel; and
- Marketing and Communication.

In support of the meeting these obligations the Thames Valley Police 2012 Forum had been established to focus on highways matters and had met for the first time on 17th November 2011. Overall responsibility for the Torch Relay security rested with the Metropolitan Police. A first briefing for West Berkshire Council Officers had also taken place on 17th November 2011.

LOCOG had provided a time line for major announcements and Mr Appleton was able to advise the Commission that the names of the Torch Bearers would be announced in February. The Council was working on the publication of a West Berkshire 2012 Events Calendar and communications strategy to support it. Mr Appleton drew Members' attention to the LOCOG webpages for 'local leaders', which outlined what communities might do to celebrate the games, and the Council's West Berkshire Enjoy! pages, which gave information on local activities. These could be seen at the links below:

<http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/local-leaders/>

<http://www.westberksenjoy.org.uk/>

In response to questions from Members of the Commission Mr Appleton was able to clarify that:

- The Council was in communication with some communities and was trying to determine the numbers of people likely to turn out and watch the Torch Relay. The actual route of the Relay was not known in detail and had yet to be determined by LOCOG.
- Responsibility for organising and funding events rested with communities, although the Council would carry out some co-ordination of activities, through its West Berkshire Enjoy! website, and by facilitating economies of scale for purchasing where appropriate.
- Decisions on the deployment of pedestrian barriers would be based on local risk assessments, yet to be completed. Again, communities would be liable for any costs incurred.

The Commission supported the proposal by Councillor David Holtby that the Council could organise a 'welcome back' for West Berkshire athletes returning from the games.

The Chairman thanked David Appleton for a useful, interesting and informative briefing. Members of the Commission agreed that as the games grew closer it would be useful for them to receive further updates.

RESOLVED that

1. David Appleton should investigate the viability of organising a recognition event for West Berkshire athletes returning from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

2. David Appleton would be invited to update the Commission on the preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in February and May 2012.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members of the Commission note the update and consider any further action as appropriate.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

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Title of Report:	Review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012

Purpose of Report: To provide the Commission of the actions arising from previous meetings.

Recommended Action: To note the report.

Health Scrutiny Panel Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 942 0196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	David Lowe
Job Title:	Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519817
E-mail Address:	dlowe@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 10 January 2012, the Commission agreed to incorporate into its work programme an examination of the review of the Housing Allocations policy, which was due to take place following a significant shift in government policy.

2. Agreement of the scrutiny activity to be undertaken

- 2.1 Shown at Appendix A is the report of the Strategy and Operations Manager to Management Board which provides an overview of the scope and activity associated with the review being undertaken by officers.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager will outline to the Commission the key points from the report and will seek from the Commission its views on how best it might contribute to the review and the development of the policy. Options for consideration might include:
- (1) The establishment of a task group to work with Housing officers.
 - (2) Public examination of the issues, in-meeting, as part of the development process.
 - (3) Examination of the revised policy, after wider consultation but prior to approval by the Executive.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members of the Commission are recommended to:
- (1) note the report and the amplifying points made by the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager; and
 - (2) agree the most appropriate way for Scrutiny to support the revision of the Housing Allocations policy.

Appendices

- Appendix A Report of the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager to Management Board

Title of Report:	Consultation on the Housing Allocations Review
Report to be considered by:	Management Board
Date of Meeting:	
Forward Plan Ref:	

Purpose of Report: To seek approval from Management Board to proceed with a consultation on amendments to the Allocations Policy.

Recommended Action: Management Board approve the proposed consultation on the Housing Allocations Policy review.

Reason for decision to be taken: The Allocations Policy has not been reviewed since it was introduced in 2007. There have been a number of policy and benefit reforms at national level, along with greater freedoms on allocations in the Localism Act, which mean it is timely to review the existing Allocation Policy.

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: "Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing", CLG, November 2010
 Communities and Local Government (CLG) 'Fair and Flexible' statutory guidelines 2009
 Code of guidance on Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings, Communities and Local Government 2008.
 Comprehensive Spending Review
 'Universal Credit: welfare that works', DWP, February 2011
 Emergency Budget 2010

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

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

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

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport**
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres**
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing**
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages**
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**

<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT8 - A Healthier Life
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT10 - Promoting Independence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT12 - Including Everyone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CPT13 - Value for Money
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT14 - Effective People
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT15 - Putting Customers First
<input type="checkbox"/>	CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
 reviewing the Allocation Policy to ensure that affordable homes are allocated to those households in the greatest need and to ensure that best use is made of available stock.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Alan Law - Tel (01491) 873614
E-mail Address:	alaw@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 December 2011

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Mel Brain
Job Title:	Housing Strategy & Operations Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519403
E-mail Address:	mbrain@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The paper explains proposed changes to the West Berkshire Housing Allocations Policy.
Financial:	Printing costs and Officer resource - to be accommodated within existing resources.
Personnel:	N/A
Legal/Procurement:	The Council is required to publish an Allocation Policy under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Within that Allocations Policy, the Council is required to give reasonable preference to certain groups of people, and has a power to give some people additional preference within those reasonable preference groups. The Localism Act 2011 introduces new flexibilities for local authorities, who can apply additional factors when determining the priority of those within the reasonable preference groups, including the financial resources available to a person to meet his housing costs; any behaviour of a person (or of a member of his household) which affects his suitability to be a tenant; and any local connection which exists between a person and the authority's district
Property:	N/A

- Risk Management:** The paper highlights some areas that the Council will need to give consideration to. In particular, it highlights the increased approaches to the Council for social housing and the need to review the Policy and procedures utilised in the allocation of available social housing in the District, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this service.
- Equalities Impact Assessment:** An EIA will be completed as the full draft policy is formulated, taking into account responses received to this consultation
- Corporate Board's Recommendation:** Suggested that a recommendation be added that a small Member Task Group should be setup to oversee the work of developing and approving the new allocations policy.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the Coalition Government formed in May 2010, there has been a series of reforms and changes to housing policy.
- 1.2 Some of these reforms are related to the reform of social housing tenure, reform of social housing allocations and changes to the regulation of social housing. These reforms were brought forward in the Localism Act which received Royal Assent in November 2011.
- 1.3 This paper seeks the approval of Management Board to publish, for consultation, proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 West Berkshire Council's current Allocation Policy was published in July 2007. The Policy has not undergone a comprehensive review since its implementation. The national policy changes and reforms, along with the increasing pressure on the demand for, and availability of, affordable housing, makes it timely for review.
- 2.2 Section 167(7) of the Housing Act 1996 states that before adopting a new allocations scheme, or altering an existing scheme in a way which reflects a major change of policy, a local authority must send a copy of the draft scheme to every

Registered Social Landlord with which it has nomination rights and must also ensure that recipients have a reasonable opportunity to comment.

- 2.3 This consultation is proposing to consult on the principle amendments that are being suggested, and will be followed by a further consultation on the full draft policy.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 This report sets out the West Berkshire Council Housing Allocations Policy Review process and potential changes and gives consideration to the impacts, opportunities and risks that they may bring, from the perspective of the West Berkshire Council Housing Service

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the Coalition Government formed in May 2010, there has been a series of reforms and changes to housing policy.
- 1.2 Some of these reforms are related to the reform of social housing tenure, reform of social housing allocations and changes to the regulation of social housing. These reforms were brought forward in the Localism Act which received Royal Assent in November 2011.
- 1.3 This paper seeks the approval of Management Board to publish, for consultation, proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current Allocations Policy was adopted in 2007 and has not been subject to a full review since. There have been a number of housing and benefit reforms nationally, as well as the Localism Act, which introduces new flexibilities for local authorities in setting their Allocations Policies. It is therefore considered timely for a review.
- 2.2 In accordance with section 167 Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Allocations Policy determines the West Berkshire Council's priorities and procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. It is framed to ensure that reasonable preference is given to a number of defined categories, as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). In addition, there is a statutory Code of Guidance published in November 2009.
- 2.3 The review of the Allocation Policy aims to continue to address key issues of local context, as well as specific local issues. In determining the appropriate level of points for each individual circumstance, the scheme as a whole targets resources to those in greatest need and gives a clear, realistic message to applicants about their chances of being re-housed.

3. Housing Reforms

- 3.1 In November 2010, the Government published a consultation paper, "Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing", setting out their intended reforms to social housing.
- 3.2 The most significant of these reforms related to reform of social housing tenure, reform of social housing allocations, changes to the way in which local authorities are able to discharge homelessness duties and changes to the regulation of social housing. In addition, local authorities will be required to publish a Tenancy Strategy. These reforms were brought forward in the Localism Act which received Royal Assent in November 2011.
- 3.3 The purpose of the housing reforms is to make best use of social housing by increasing flexibility in the system, increase mobility for tenants and to change the way in which social housing is financed.

4. The Common Housing Register

- 4.1 The Common Housing Register Team provides a vital front line service for applicants, in line with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), managing West Berkshire's Common Housing Register (CHR) (waiting list) and administering the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme for the district.
- 4.2 The CHR is experiencing increasing numbers of applicants. As at 1st April 2010, there were 3346 applicants registered on the CHR. On 1st April 2011, there were 4849 applicants, an increase of 44%. Around half of the applicants on the CHR would fall within one of the defined reasonable preference groups.
- 4.3 The average wait time for applicants on the CHR ranges from 15 months for sheltered accommodation to 32 months for 3-bed accommodation, although some applicants wait for much longer periods of time.
- 4.4 The Allocations Policy explained how homes are allocated through the Common Housing Register (CHR). The 2010 audit of the service concluded that the service was satisfactory. It is hoped that the review of the Policy will identify how the service can be further developed and improved.

5. Proposed Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

- 5.1 Under current legislation, the Council is required to hold an 'open' housing waiting list, meaning that anyone can apply, whether they are in need of housing or not. As social housing is in great demand and priority is rightly given to those most in need, many applicants have no realistic prospect of ever receiving a social home. The current arrangements encourage false expectations and large waiting lists.
- 5.2 The Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies about who should qualify to go on the waiting list for social housing in their area. This means that they will be able, if they wish, to prevent people who have no need of social housing from joining the waiting list. In framing their Allocation Policy, local authorities will be able to have regard to the applicant's level of vulnerability, medical needs, financial ability to secure their own housing, their suitability to be a tenant and their local connection to the district. The 'reasonable preference groups' will still be prescribed nationally, to ensure that social homes go to the most vulnerable in society and those who need it most.
- 5.3 In addition, transfer applicants will be removed from the main Allocation provisions, unless the applicant who wishes to transfer has a housing need that falls within the reasonable preference groups. This opens up the opportunity to deal with transfers in a different way and free up larger properties for local families in the District.
- 5.4 The high level changes that are being proposed to amend the Allocation Policy, and on which we wish to consult, are as follows:

Policy criteria:	Proposed Change:
Eligibility	<p>To extend the locally tested eligibility criteria for people who do not qualify, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Those who owe money from the Threshold Loan Scheme and Rent Arrears Repayment Plan schedules ~ People who have been excluded for bad behaviour ~ People who have supplied false or misleading information on their application for housing. <p>Households falling into these categories may not be accepted onto the Common Housing Register, or may be suspended for a period of time or may not be given preference for allocation of housing.</p>
Open/Close Register	<p>The Council currently operates an open housing register which allows anyone, from anywhere in the country, to apply, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The Council is proposing moving to a closed housing register. In future, only people who have a defined local connection to West Berkshire, and who do not have adequate financial resources to secure accommodation in the private sector (whether rented, owned or part-owned), will be able to join the housing register.</p>
Applicants owed a full Homelessness Duty	<p>Limit or remove the period during which applicants can exercise choice and refuse offers without bringing Homelessness Duty to an end.</p> <p>Make provision for the Council to bid on suitable properties on behalf of the applicant as soon as a homelessness duty is accepted, in order to discharge that duty.</p>
Social Needs	<p>Make provision for Social Needs points to be awarded on a time limited basis or to have conditions attached. If conditions are not met, points may be removed.</p>
Financial Resources	<p>When local rents for a suitable property equates to 35% or less of household income, applicants may not be eligible for Social Housing.</p>
Bedroom Assessment	<p>Amend the Allocations Policy so that applicants are entitled to one bedroom for: Every adult couple (married or unmarried), any other adult aged 16+, any two children of the same sex aged 16 or under, any two children aged less than 10 years, any other child. This brings the policy in line with Housing Benefit regulations for private rented accommodation and addresses the proposed changes in Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants who are 'underoccupying'.</p>
Health and Disability Assessment (Medical)	<p>Review the points assessment to allow one award of a set number of points instead of having a scale of points. This will still be applicable to each person in the household with a medical need.</p>

Policy criteria:	Proposed Change:
Transfers	To bring the transfer scheme for existing social housing tenants into the Common Housing Register and to advertise homes for transfer applicants through Choice Based Lettings
Under-occupancy	To amend the housing needs assessment to give preference to households who are current social housing tenants in West Berkshire and who wish to move to smaller accommodation, freeing up family accommodation.
Condition of Property	Review the points assessment to allow one or two awards of a set number of points instead of having a scale of points. One award per application. Evidence of disrepair required.
Bidding Cycle	Offer a daily rather than weekly bidding cycle.

6. Consultation Process

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Council publishes these high level proposals for consultation, to inform the development of the detailed Allocations Policy. A newsletter, explaining the proposed changes has been developed to facilitate the consultation.
- 6.2 It is proposed that every CHR applicant will be sent a copy of the newsletter, as will all relevant stakeholders, for example, Registered Providers, statutory agencies and relevant voluntary organisations. Respondents will be encouraged to complete a survey on-line, but hard copies will be sent to people upon request. In addition, the newsletter will be accessible via the webpages and in West Berkshire offices and other suitable locations.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that consultation will start in February 2012 and will run for a period of 12 weeks. It is estimated that a draft version of the full Allocation Policy will be produced for June 2012 and made available for consultation in July/August 2012, with the adoption of the Policy in the Autumn and implementation from January 2013 (subject to amendments required to the Locata system). A full EIA will be developed alongside the draft policy, using the outcomes from this consultation exercise.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council is under a statutory obligation to have an Allocation Scheme for determining priorities between qualifying persons and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. Procedures include all aspects of the allocation process, including the people or descriptions of people by whom decisions are taken. The Policy must be framed so as to secure that 'reasonable preference' is given to the statutory categories, within section 167(2) Housing Act 1996. The Council must allocate all housing in accordance with its Allocation Scheme.
- 7.2 Before making an alteration to its Policy effecting a major change in policy, the Council must consult with every registered social landlord with whom it has a nomination arrangement and consider the comments received. Further, anyone likely to be affected by an alteration to the Policy which reflects a major change of

policy must be notified of it. Statutory guidance also recommends that in addition to notification, the Council should consider its wider duty to involve and should consult with those who are affected by or interested in the way social housing is allocated. When making changes to its Allocation Policy the Council must also have regard to the statutory guidance on the allocation of accommodation and choice based lettings, and give applicants the opportunity to express preferences about the accommodation they are allocated.

7.3 As set out in the body of this Report, officers consider that the proposed consultation approach complies with the legal requirements set above.

8. Conclusion

8.1 A full review of the Allocation Policy is a significant piece of work and requires full consultation with residents and stakeholders to ensure that the Council meets its legal duties. However, the Allocation Policy is overdue a review, and the recent reforms and flexibilities that are being introduced make a review timely.

8.2 It is recommended that Management Board approve the publication of the attached newsletter, asking for views on the principle proposals for amendment of the Allocation Policy, with the commencement of the consultation in February 2012.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Housing Allocations Policy Consultation Newsletter

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: All Registered providers were invited to attend a workshop day and a steering group was established to conduct the review. This was attended by Sovereign Housing Association and One Housing group. This report sets out proposals to consult with residents.

Officers Consulted: June Graves, Head of Social Care Commissioning & Housing
Cathy Dodson, Housing Options Team Leader
Elizabeth Wallington, Housing Register Officer
Roz Haines, Finance Manager, Community Services

Trade Union: N/A

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West Berkshire Council Housing Allocations Service



IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ALL HOUSING REGISTER

The system of choice based lettings (CBL) which allocates affordable housing to households who have applied through the Common Housing Register, has been in operation in West Berkshire since 2007.

There is a very high demand for a limited supply of affordable housing within West Berkshire. We need to ensure that we are making best use of this stock and allocating it to households who have the most need for it. To do this we are currently undertaking a full review of the Allocations Policy and the way that we administer the service.

As part of the review, we wish to understand the views of residents who may be affected by

the changes that we are proposing. This Newsletter provides you with an opportunity to comment on the key principles of the Allocations Policy that we are seeking to change. A more detailed consultation will be held in the future, on the full draft Allocations Policy.

We are keen to hear your views so please complete the questionnaire attached and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided, or complete on line at www.westberks/housingconsultation. We will take account of your views as we draft the final version of the Policy

Why are we reviewing the Housing Allocations Policy and improving the service to you:

The Allocations Policy has not been reviewed since 2007. Given the high level of demand for affordable housing, we need to ensure that the limited homes that become available are allocated to households who are most in need of them. There have also been a number of national policy changes that the Council needs to consider in the drafting of the Allocations Policy.

What is the Benefit to you?

We are hoping to draft a simpler, clearer policy so that applicants can easily see and understand the reasons for their assessed level of housing need.

"we need to ensure that the limited homes that become available are allocated to households who are most in need of them"



The Aims of the Housing Allocations Service are:

- To help meet the housing needs of households across West Berkshire in the most effective way;
- To meet the statutory requirements of the West Berkshire Council within the current legislative framework;
- Work genuinely in partnership with partner housing providers;
- To give preference to those who have a local connection to West Berkshire;
- To provide and promote a quick, simple to use, customer-friendly lettings service for social housing vacancies;
- To investigate opportunities to maximise efficiencies in the provision of the service.

Policy criteria: Eligibility	Proposed Change: To extend the locally tested eligibility criteria for people who do not qualify, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Those who owe money from the Threshold Loan Scheme and Rent Arrears Repayment Plan schedules ● People who have been excluded for bad behaviour ● People who have supplied false or misleading information on their application for housing. Households falling into these categories may not be accepted onto the Common Housing Register, or may be suspended for a period of time or may not be given preference for allocation of housing.
Open/Closed Register	The Council currently operates an open housing register which allows anyone, from anywhere in the country, to apply, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria. The Council is proposing moving to a closed housing register. In future, only people who have a defined local connection to West Berkshire, and who do not have adequate financial resources to secure accommodation in the private sector (whether rented, owned or part-owned), will be able to join the housing register.
Applicants owed a full Homelessness Duty	Limit or remove the period during which applicants can exercise choice and refuse offers without bringing Homelessness Duty to an end. Make provision for the Council to bid on suitable properties on behalf of the applicant as soon as a homelessness duty is accepted, in order to discharge that duty

Social Needs	Make provision for Social Needs points to be awarded on a time limited basis or to have conditions attached. If conditions are not met, points may be removed.
Financial Resources	When local rents for a suitable property equates to 35% or less of household income, applicants may not be eligible for Social Housing.
Bedroom Assessment	Amend the Allocations Policy so that applicants are entitled to one bedroom for: Every adult couple (married or unmarried), any other adult aged 16+, any two children of the same sex aged 16 or under, any two children aged less than 10 years, any other child. This brings the policy in line with Housing Benefit regulations for private rented accommodation and addresses the proposed changes in Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants who are 'under-occupying'.
Health and Disability Assessment (Medical)	Review the points assessment to allow one award of a set number of points instead of having a scale of points. This will still be applicable to each person in the household with a medical need.
Transfers	To bring the transfer scheme for existing social housing tenants into the Common Housing Register and to advertise homes for transfer applicants through Choice Based Lettings
Under-occupancy	To amend the housing needs assessment to give preference to households who are current social housing tenants in West Berkshire and who wish to move to smaller accommodation, freeing up family accommodation.
Condition of Property	Review the points assessment to allow one or two awards of a set number of points instead of having a scale of points. One award per application. Evidence of disrepair required.
Bidding Cycle	Offer a daily rather than weekly bidding cycle.





What do I do next?

In order to inform us what you think about our reviewed Allocations Policy and how it might be improved, please either:

- Complete the attached **questionnaire**
- Complete the survey at **www.westberks.com/housingconsultation**
- Give us a call on **01635 519214** to discuss. **Jayne Mills**, Project Manager for the review will be happy to talk with you.

Title of Report:	Health Scrutiny Panel Activity Report
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012

Purpose of Report: To advise the Commission of the Health Scrutiny Panel's recent past and future activity.

Recommended Action: To note the report.

Resource Management Working Group Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Quentin Webb – Tel (01635)
E-mail Address:	gwebb@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission with information on the activity undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP) since the Commission last met. It also highlights the activity likely to take place in the near future.

2. Recent activity

- 2.1 The HSP last met on 17 January 2012. The main item on this agenda was the scrutiny of Continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding in West Berkshire. Evidence was gathered from NHS Berkshire, the South Central Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and the Newbury & District Clinical Commissioning Group. The Review will continue once the written evidence from Mr Waddicor (Chief Executive, NHS Berkshire) and the SHA benchmarking data has been received.
- 2.2 Two items were removed from the Work Programme as completed actions, these were:
- (1) The "Six Lives Review" of those with Learning Disabilities
 - (2) Future GP commissioning arrangements in West Berkshire

3. Planned Work

The HSC is next due to meet on 27 March 2012 when it will receive further updates on:

- (1) continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding in West Berkshire;
- (2) the interim findings of the West Berkshire Local Involvement Network's review of "Dignity and Nutrition in Local Acute Hospitals".

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members of the Commission are recommended to note the contents of this report.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted: Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager

Trade Union: N/A

Title of Report:	Resource Management Working Group Activity Report
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 February 2012

Purpose of Report: To advise the Commission of the Resource Management Working Group's recent past and near future activity.

Recommended Action: To note the report.

Health Scrutiny Panel Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission with information on the activity undertaken by the Resource Management Working Group (RMWG) since the Commission last met and highlights activity likely to take place in the near future.

2. Recent activity

- 2.1 The Working Group last met on Tuesday 17 January 2012. The following Items were discussed at the meeting.
- (1) The Head of Highways and Transport was questioned about the financial impact of season ticket sales and the collection of fines associated with car park Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).
 - (2) The Month 7 Revenue Budget figures were presented by the Head of Finance.
 - (3) The Chief Executive and Head of Legal and Electoral Services, along with the Housing Strategy Team Leader (in place of the Head of Social Care Commissioning and Housing) and the Head of Highways and Transport, gave a briefing at Part II of the meeting on the financial arrangements for car parking and affordable housing at the Parkway development.

3. Planned work

- 3.1 The RMWG is next due to meet on 28 February 2012 when it will receive Items on:
- (1) The Highways Asset Management Plan.
 - (2) The Timelord programme.
 - (3) The Quarter 3 Establishment Report.
- 3.2 The Group will also assess whether its Terms of Reference are still fit for purpose. Should any changes be necessary, a report seeking approval to make them will be submitted to the Commission.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members of the Commission are recommended to note the contents of this report.:

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.