

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 26 February, 2013 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Friday, 15 February 2013

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Elaine Walker on (01635) 519441
e-mail: ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

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



**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 26
February 2013 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, David Holtby, Mike Johnston, David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster
- Substitutes:** Councillors Peter Argyle, Jeff Beck, 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 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 11 December 2012 and 4 February 2013.	1 - 12
3. Declarations of Interest To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.	
4. Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	13 - 14
5. West Berkshire Forward Plan March to June 2013 <i>Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from March to June 2013 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.</i>	15 - 26
6. 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.</i>	27 - 32
7. Items Called-in following the Executive on 14 February 2013 To consider any items called-in by the requisite number of Members following the previous Executive meeting.	
8. Councillor Call for Action <i>Purpose: To consider any items proposed for a Councillor Call for Action.</i>	



**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 26
February 2013 (continued)**

9. **Petitions**
Purpose: To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.
10. **Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2012/13: Quarter Two Results** 33 - 50
Purpose: To scrutinise quarter two outturn against the key accountable measures and activities.
11. **Homelessness Mystery Shopper Report** 51 - 72
Purpose: To present to the Commission the findings of and response to a mystery shopper exercise conducted by the charity Shelter.
12. **Proposed review - Fire Service Response Times** 73 - 76
Purpose: To consider and agree the proposed terms of reference for reviewing the reported Fire Service response times.
13. **Housing Allocations Progress Report** 77 - 78
Purpose: To receive an update on the development of the Housing Allocations Policy
14. **Overview and Scrutiny Training** 79 - 80
Purpose: To propose that members of the Commission attend overview and scrutiny training.
15. **Health Scrutiny Panel** 81 - 82
Purpose: To provide an update on the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel.
16. **Resource Management Working Group** 83 - 86
Purpose: To provide an update on the work of the Resource Management Working Group.
17. **Scrutiny Recommendations Update** 87 - 94
Purpose: To provide the Commission with an update on the progress of recommendations resulting from scrutiny reviews.

Andy Day
Head of Strategic Support

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

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact
Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.



This page is intentionally left blank

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, 11 DECEMBER 2012

Councillors Present: Jeff Beck (Substitute) (In place of David Holtby), Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Richard Crumly (Substitute) (In place of Dominic Boeck), Dave Goff, Mike Johnston, David Rendel, Tony Vickers and Quentin Webb

Also Present: Mel Brain (Service Manager - Housing Strategy and Operations), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Mark Cole (Traffic Services Manager), Mark Edwards (Head of Highways and Transport), June Graves (Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding), Councillor Keith Chopping (Planning, Property, Highways, Transport), Councillor Roger Croft (Strategy, Performance, Council Plan, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal), David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager) and Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer)

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

Councillor(s) Absent: Councillor Marcus Franks and Councillor Emma Webster

PART I

72. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2012 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Commission considered the minutes of the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission held on 26 November 2012.

David Lowe advised the Commission that Councillor Vickers had submitted a number of proposed changes to the draft minutes and that it was for the Commission to agree whether to accept any of the amendments. The Chairman reminded the Commission that minutes were not intended to be verbatim. Nick Carter advised that the correct procedure was for the Commission to consider whether the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting, and the Commission was not entitled to redraft the minutes.

Councillor Webb suggested that where numerical or other factual information had been presented publicly, this need not be included in the minutes also. Councillor Webb proposed that the minutes be agreed subject to changes already agreed. Councillor Beck seconded the proposal and at the vote the proposal was carried.

The Minutes of the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission held on 26 November 2012 were therefore approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

- **Page 9, bullet 5:** Prefix the sentence with 'The Homeless Prevention Grant is not ring-fenced money, however';
- **Page 7, paragraph 1:** Add 'and the Council has to match funds from Government.' to the end of the paragraph;

73. Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Items 11 and 13, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

74. Actions from previous Minutes

The Commission received an update on actions from the previous meeting and made the following comments:

Paragraph 2.6: Councillor Jeff Beck requested that the word 'office' be amended to read 'officer'.

Paragraph 2.16: Councillor Tony Vickers requested clarification as to whether the South East Region of the National Housing Federation had been invited to the special Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission review into homelessness. David Lowe responded that they had been invited but had been unable to attend. Councillor Vickers went on to ask what provision would be made to consider evidence from those witnesses who had not been able to attend on the day. Councillor Mike Johnston responded that a scrutiny review could not remain open indefinitely; and that the absence of some witnesses did not detract from the value of the recommendations. The Chairman suggested that the progression of the review and resulting recommendations should be considered during the main discussion of the item.

Paragraph 2.17: Councillor Vickers asked whether the homelessness mystery shopper report would be circulated for consideration alongside the existing findings of the homelessness scrutiny review. The Chairman responded that the report remained with Officers at present.

75. West Berkshire Forward Plan December 2012 to March 2013

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan from December to March 2012.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

76. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered its work programme and that of the Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group for 2012/13.

Resolved that the work programme be noted.

77. Items Called-in following the Executive on 29 November 2012

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

78. Item Called In following an Individual Decision: Proposed parking charges at Burdwood Centre car park, Thatcham

The Commission considered a report concerning the Call in item ID2518 – Petition for removal of proposed parking charges at Burdwood Centre car park, Thatcham, which was presented for consideration by Individual Decision on 8 November 2012.

Councillor David Rendel presented the reasons for calling in this item, raising the following points:

- The proposed increase in parking charges had been objected to by Thatcham Town Council;

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 11 DECEMBER 2012 - MINUTES

- By considering the effect at the Gilbert Court Car Park after a similar increase in parking charges was implemented there, it could be assumed that parking would be displaced to other areas. For the Burdwood Centre Car Park, Councillor Rendel believed that the displaced vehicles would park in nearby free spaces that currently served local retail traders. The concern was raised that if drivers chose to use these spaces for all day parking, the local traders might be adversely affected;
- If vehicles were displaced, it was expected that the income from the Burdwood Centre car park would not justify the expense of installing the ticket system. In addition, Councillor Rendel did not believe that the expected income of approximately £2,000 would be considered of value to the Council and would therefore not be missed if the charges were not implemented.

The Chairman asked if any evidence had been gathered to illustrate the extent to which retailers might be affected by the increase in parking charges. Councillor Rendel responded that this was not possible to quantify. Councillor Vickers reported that retailers near Bartholomew Street had reportedly experienced a reduction in trade following the introduction of charges for a residents' parking area there.

The Chairman reminded the Commission that the proposal included a two hour free parking period, and suggested that this would be sufficient time for people to shop in the area without incurring a charge. Councillor Johnston added that it was common practice for supermarkets to allow a two hour free period for parking and that this was adequate time for shoppers. Councillor Rendel responded that drivers might not be aware of the requirement to obtain a ticket during the two hour free parking period.

The Chairman invited Mark Cole to introduce his response to the reasons for the Call In. Mark Cole explained that all of the issues that had been raised had been addressed in the report that was circulated with the agenda. However Mark Cole drew the Commission's attention to an error in the report on page 59 of the agenda where 'first seven months' should read 'first five months'. Mark Cole highlighted the following points:

- Many shops in West Berkshire were located in areas with paid for parking, and it was not considered that users of this car park should be exempt from charges;
- The two hour free parking was suitable for the type of retail trade in the area and would be expected to allow shoppers adequate time to complete their business without a negative effect on retailers;
- If the Co-operative Food store became affected by the displacement of vehicles to their car park, the Council would work with them to address the issue;

The Chairman asked what response had been received from the surgery in relation to the proposed charges. Mark Cole responded that although they had initially been against the proposal, following the amendments that were made and with the inclusion of ten parking permits for use by the surgery, they were now fully in support of the proposal.

Mark Cole confirmed that 'Zeag' and 'Metric' referred to in the report, were the makes of the ticketing machines.

Councillor Richard Crumly asked about the cost of running the car parks, in particular, whether extra staff would be required to enforce parking regulations in the Burdwood Centre Car Park. Mark Cole responded that existing CEOs (Civil Enforcement Officers) would manage the car park and that changes to the CEOs' routines were not uncommon as changes were made to car park and on street parking arrangements. Mark Edwards added that the car park contained approximately 60 spaces and in comparison to the existing 2000 car parking spaces in 24 car parks, this would not represent a significant increase in work load.

Councillor Dave Goff asked whether the retailers in the area had raised any concerns. Mark Cole responded that they had not.

Councillor Goff asked whether the requirement for a ticket for the two hour free parking period was commonplace across West Berkshire and whether it worked successfully. Mark Cole confirmed that this arrangement was commonplace across the country including in West Berkshire, and that the majority of drivers would be familiar with it, however it would be necessary to ensure good signage in the Burdwood Centre Car Park.

Councillor Johnston expressed his view that limiting the free parking to two hours would be beneficial to retailers in the area, as the parking spaces would not be used by commuters. Councillor Johnston reminded the Commission that it was possible to pay for parking via a mobile phone, and therefore the absence of a ticket in a car did not indicate that the driver had not paid.

Councillor Beck stated that the revised proposal did appear to take into consideration the concerns of those affected, and in particular those of the surgery who were now in support of the proposal, and advised the Commission that the Ward Members for the area were also in support of the scheme. Councillor Beck proposed that the Individual Decision to accept the proposed parking charges at the Burdwood Centre car park be upheld.

Councillor Rendel asked whether the information relating to income from the car parks included fines for non payment. Mark Cole responded that it did not.

Councillor Rendel asked what cost had been calculated for the time spend by a CEO in patrolling the Burdwood Centre Car Park as this would represent the opportunity cost of the CEO being elsewhere. Mark Cole responded that this had not been calculated but that if the CEO was not at the Burdwood Centre Car Park, he would be patrolling another area.

Councillor Mike Johnston seconded the proposal put by Councillor Beck, and at the vote the proposal was carried.

Resolved that the Individual Decision to accept the proposal for parking charges at Burdwood Centre car park be upheld.

79. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

80. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

81. Homelessness Scrutiny Review

(Councillor Rendel declared a personal interest in Agenda item 11 by virtue of the fact that his wife was a GP in West Berkshire. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Chairman introduced three reports related to the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission held on 26 November 2012. Since the meeting, a sub group of the Commission had met on 3 December 2012 in order to formulate draft recommendations for consideration by the Commission. The Chairman advised the Commission that Councillor Vickers had amended the proposed recommendations, and that these had been circulated and would be the version under consideration for agreement.

(7:18pm - Councillor Jeff Brooks joined the meeting)

The Commission discussed the proposed recommendations from the review into homelessness and agreed the following:

1. "The Executive Member for Housing should work with other local agencies to agree an accepted methodology for the counting of rough sleepers. A report outlining the production process and count should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission within 6 months of agreement."
2. "The Executive Member for Housing should advise the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions of the genuine concerns held locally that the impending changes to the benefits regime will have an adverse effect on homelessness in West Berkshire."
3. "The Executive Member for Housing should establish how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) plans to deliver Universal Benefits (which include Housing Benefit) locally and report by 31 March 2013 on plans for transferring Housing Benefit payment to DWP."
4. "The Executive Member for Housing should consider the production, either as part of the Homelessness Strategy or separately, of a 'reconnection' policy, to ensure that homeless people who have no local connection to West Berkshire are able to sustainably relocate to those places outside of the district with which they do have a link."
5. "The Executive Member for Strategic Support should ensure that time is made available at a District Parish Conference for Housing officers to explain to Councillors the content of, and rationale for, the Homelessness Strategy when agreed."
6. "At the next revision of the Council's Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Executive Member for Strategic Support should consider the offer by SHELTER to assist with housing advice, so as to ensure that the document contains the requirement for the Bureau to provide a dedicated housing advisor."
7. "Performance monitoring reports received from the Citizens Advice Bureau relating to homelessness (including all financial advice), which are sent to the Executive Member for Strategic Support should be routinely made available to the Executive Member for Housing and his Shadow."
8. "The Executive Member for Housing should work, through the Local Government Association, the Government and especially the Valuation Office Agency, to achieve transparency of the factors and values taken into consideration by VOA when setting the Local Housing Allowance and, if possible, an appeal mechanism."
9. "The Executive Member for Housing should develop and implement a plan to heighten awareness of the causes and impacts of homelessness, particularly how it might be prevented and what help is (and is not) available. Consideration might be given to the following aspects
 - Raising the awareness of all those whose work may bring them in contact with homelessness on the role of other organisations
 - The location of leaflets, including with partner organisations (for example Newbury Town Council, Thames Valley Police, libraries and detached youth workers)
 - The engagement of young people from before they enter the workforce, including through secondary schools, in financial and housing-related education
 - The content and language of leaflets. Assistance is available through Two Saints from people who have previously been homeless."

10. "The Executive Member for Housing should ask Newbury Town Council to consider the provision of lockers to allow rough sleepers to store their possessions (for example sleeping bags) securely during the day."
11. "The Executive Member for Housing should ask the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to establish closer links with Loose Ends to ensure that any shortages of volunteers and other resources to enable them to provide a better service to their clients are met urgently and effectively."
12. "Further investigation should be undertaken into the reasons why West Berkshire seems to have a very large proportion of young families facing homelessness whose friends and extended family are unwilling or unable to provide them with temporary housing/accommodation."

The following proposed recommendations were not agreed:

- "The Executive Members for Housing and Planning should work together, with commercial property agents and Two Saints (as possible prospective short-term tenants), to endeavour to urgently secure temporary emergency cold weather accommodation for street homeless people in one or more empty office buildings in and around Newbury Town Centre (such as Avonbank House) where permission has been granted for redevelopment for housing. The possibility of exemption from empty property rates for owners of these properties should be investigated, along with other incentives to make use of suitably located empty properties, including long-term empty homes, for those waiting for accommodation at Newtown Road."

The Chairman suggested that the evidence had shown sufficient accommodation was available to cope immediately with those presenting as homeless. June Graves confirmed that there were currently 10-12 wayfaring spaces available of which two or three were typically occupied. June Graves reminded the Commission that a severe weather plan existed, for both cold and hot nights, when Two Saints would accept anyone through their doors for the night. There was therefore no indication that current provision was inadequate. The Chairman further considered the assertion made at the special meeting that increasing the provision of accommodation would be likely to attract more homeless people to the area. Councillor Vickers believed that sufficient evidence had been presented to show that there were people sleeping on the streets who were in need of additional emergency accommodation.

- "The emerging Housing Allocations policy should include measures to ensure that applicants who have friends and family able and willing to provide temporary housing for families on the CHR are not disadvantaged by being removed from the register when they are provided with such accommodation as a short-term solution to threatened homelessness, for example by having their application suspended and their points preserved."

Mel Brain responded that currently those who were able to stay with friends or family would receive additional points. However Mel Brain advised that it would not be possible to operate effectively if a housing applicant could not be suspended or amended or their points adjusted when necessary. Councillor Vickers agreed that the current review of the Housing Allocations Policy could consider this point.

The Chairman advised the Commission that the recommendations would be fed directly into the consultation being undertaken by the Housing Service.

Councillor Brooks thanked the Chairman for the way in which the review had been held, but reminded the Commission that there was further information to be considered that might enable a successful outcome for homeless people, such as empty homes, health visitor information and the mystery shopper report conducted by Shelter.

Councillor Roger Croft asked that the Commission acknowledge the good work being undertaken within the Council in dealing with homelessness.

Resolved that the recommendations be submitted to the Housing Service for inclusion in their consultation activity.

82. Review into Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria - Proposed Terms of Reference

The Commission considered the proposed scoping document for a review into Adult Social Care eligibility criteria.

Resolved that the review be undertaken in line with the scoping document.

83. Health Scrutiny Panel

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

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 13) on the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP).

Councillor Webb reported that at the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel held on 4 December 2012 the following topics had been discussed:

- Continuing Healthcare had been the main item as it had been established that further investigation would be required and this was being progressed;
- Dignity and nutrition in hospitals, the initial responses from a survey carried out had proven to be encouraging.

Resolved that the report be noted.

84. Resource Management Working Group

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 14) on the work of the Resource Management Working Group (RMWG).

Councillor Vickers reported that at the meeting of the RMWG held on 6 November 2012 the RMWG had agreed to consider whether they should routinely assess individual items on the risk register where they were related to assets. The Commission discussed the issue to ensure that the item would not be discussed at more than one forum. Nick Carter confirmed that the Governance and Audit Committee owned the risk register and had an overview of it, but did not review individual items. The Commission agreed that if the terms of reference for the Group allowed for this discussion, then the request should be submitted on the scrutiny topic proposal form.

(Post Meeting Note: Following the meeting it was noted that the Constitution stated that: 'The overall purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is to provide effective challenge across the Council and independent assurance on the risk management and governance framework and associated internal control environment to members and the public, independently of the Executive.')

Resolved that the verbal report be noted.

85. Scrutiny Recommendations Update

The Commission considered a report updating the progress of scrutiny recommendations.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 11 DECEMBER 2012 - MINUTES

Councillor Webb asked when the recommendations from the scrutiny review into domestic abuse were to be presented to the Executive. David Lowe advised the Commission that the report would be viewed by Management Board on 20 December 2012, and would thereafter be presented to the Executive.

Councillor Johnston requested that the report include the date that each set of recommendations were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Resolved that the date that each set of recommendations were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission be added to future reports.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

DRAFT

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 MONDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2013

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

Also Present: Tandra Forster (Contracts & Commissioning Manager - Housing Services), June Graves (Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding), Shiraz Sheikh (Solicitor), Mike Sullivan (Contracts and Procurement Officer), Councillor Graham Jones (Health and Well Being, Community Safety), David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager) and Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Marcus Franks, Councillor David Holtby, Councillor Mike Johnston, Councillor Joe Mooney and Councillor David Rendel

PART I

86. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

87. **Items Called-in following the Executive on 17 January 2013**

The Commission considered a report concerning the Call in item EX2582 – Healthwatch Commissioning, which was presented for consideration at a meeting of the Executive on 17 January 2013.

Councillor Jeff Brooks presented the reasons for calling in this item. Councillor Brooks commented that whilst it was expected that due process had been followed in arriving at the recommendations in the report, this information had not been presented to the Executive. The paucity of information meant that he did not believe the Executive had been able to make a fully informed decision on the matter. Councillor Brooks believed that information had been available that could have demonstrated the process undertaken and provided relevant information to the Executive to support their decision but had been omitted from the report. Councillor Brooks remarked that the Executive should be presented with sufficient information regarding the process and the outcome to enable them to reach a robust decision. There was a desire to see further information in relation to this item, for example an explanation of how any submitted bids would be reviewed, and who by, and what service levels would be set, etc. In addition, Councillor Brooks explained to the Commission that Appendix B had not been included in the report.

Councillor Brooks further commented that several points had been repeated a number of times through the report.

June Graves advised that the process undertaken had been robust and information was available as suggested.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 4 FEBRUARY 2013 - MINUTES

Mike Sullivan provided an explanation of the Council's processes with regard to tendering. He explained that the default position for the Council was to operate a 'restricted procedure' whereby, following the advertisement of a contract notice, any expressions of interest received would be filtered using a published evaluation methodology and only selected suppliers would be invited to submit a tender.

Mike Sullivan went on to explain that in the case of Healthwatch commissioning, it had been anticipated that competition would be low, and therefore an 'open procedure' was employed whereby all interested suppliers were able to submit a tender with no pre-filtering. A risk associated with the 'open procedure' was that many tenders might be required to be evaluated, however in this case just three were received.

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked how often the 'open procedure' had been used. Mike Sullivan responded that it was used infrequently; in the past year it had been used twice relating to the procurement of local bus services, and for this procurement.. He added that it required the permission of the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services to instigate and that the 'Open Procedure' was a well established procurement process..

Councillor Brooks asked for further information about how the process had been advertised. Mike Sullivan replied that the advert had been issued via the Council's procurement portal on 29th October 2012, and additional work had been undertaken to inform potentially interested parties. He confirmed that the advert was available outside West Berkshire.

The Chairman requested information regarding the relationship between Healthwatch and the existing Local Involvement Network (LiNK). Tandra Forster responded that LiNK were the predecessor to Healthwatch and that there were fundamental differences in the functions expected to be undertaken by Healthwatch.

Councillor Gwen Mason was concerned that information currently held by LiNK might be lost in the transfer to Healthwatch. Tandra Forster confirmed that agreement had been sought from LiNK to ensure that all information would be transferred to the new body. June Graves added that an assessment had been undertaken to establish which of LiNK's activities would be outstanding at the point of transfer to Healthwatch in order that these could be managed.

Councillor Jeff Beck enquired as to whether any indication had been forthcoming from central government regarding future funding levels, and whether Public Health funding could be used. June Graves responded that no indication had yet been given as to future funding, and that Public Health funding was a separate issue that could not be used for Healthwatch.

Councillor Vickers expressed sympathy for Officers acknowledging that the Health and Welfare reforms had been undertaken at a fast pace necessitating a quick response from local authorities. Councillor Vickers advised that there was no desire to delay the implementation of the decision, but that it was important to ensure that adequate information was available to support the decision.

Councillor Brooks agreed that there had been no intention of delaying the decision, and that the Call In had arisen to reassure Members that the process had been robust as this had not been apparent in the report.

Councillor Quentin Webb asked whether the relevant Executive Member had been involved throughout the process. Tandra Forster confirmed that there had been full involvement in the process.

Councillor Beck asked what safeguards were in place to protect the Council should future funding be inadequate to continue the service. Shiraz Sheikh explained that provision had been made in the contract to extend only when future funding levels were known.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 4 FEBRUARY 2013 - MINUTES

Councillor Brooks asked what service levels had been included in the contract. Tandra Forster explained that a number of performance measures had been developed in relation to how the successful bidder would operate and fulfil their obligations. This included their approach to consulting with the public. Tandra Forster reminded the Commission that Healthwatch were an independent consumer watchdog for local health issues, and so it was not possible, or appropriate, to set measures relating to their specific activities as these were required to be responsive to local public needs.

Councillor Brooks advised the Commission that he was satisfied that the process and resulting decision had been appropriate, and proposed that the Executive decision in relation to Healthwatch commissioning be upheld. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Webb. At the vote the proposal was carried.

Councillor Brooks additionally proposed that a recommendation be put to the Executive to advise that decisions should not be made until they were fully informed of how the proposed decision had been reached. Councillor Webb requested that papers put forward to the Executive should not contain excessive detail.

The Chairman invited Councillor Graham Jones to address the Commission on the points made. Councillor Jones reminded the Commission that the process with regard to Healthwatch commissioning had commenced with Councillor Joe Mooney as Portfolio Holder, and concluded with himself as Portfolio Holder. Councillor Jones went on to comment that the introduction of local Healthwatch was a key part of NHS reform, and thanked the Commission for upholding the decision made by the Executive. With regard to the proposal to include full information of the process undertaken to reach a decision, Councillor Jones suggested that it might be more appropriate to request an appropriate level of information, however he acknowledged that this remained subjective.

Following discussion, Councillor Brooks proposed that the following recommendation be made to the Executive: 'The Executive ensure that sufficient information is available in every report to allow a robust decision to be made.' The proposal was seconded and at the vote was carried.

RESOLVED that:

- The Executive decision (EX2582) in relation to Healthwatch commissioning be upheld;
- A recommendation be made to the Executive as follows: 'The Executive ensure that sufficient information is available in every report to allow a robust decision to be made.'

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 4.

Title of Report:	Actions from previous meetings
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

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

Recommended Action: To note the report

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

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

Resolutions from 11 December 2012:

- 2.1 **Resolution:** The Individual Decision to accept the proposal for parking charges at the Burdwood Centre car park be upheld

Action / response: The decision to implement parking charges at the Burdwood Centre car park will be carried out following the necessary statutory procedures, for example advertisement of the scheme.

- 2.2 **Resolution:** The recommendations (arising from the homelessness scrutiny) be submitted to the Housing Service for inclusion in their consultation activity.

Action / response: Complete. The recommendations have been passed to the Housing Service for progression.

- 2.3 **Resolution:** The review (into Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria) be undertaken in line with the scoping document.

Action / response: The review has commenced and is due to be completed in the summer of 2013.

- 2.4 **Resolution:** The date that each set of recommendations were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission be added to future reports.

Action / response: Complete.

Resolutions from 4 February 2013

- 2.5 **Resolution:** The Executive decision (EX2582) in relation to Healthwatch commissioning be upheld;

Action / response: Complete.

- 2.6 **Resolution:** A recommendation be made to the Executive as follows: 'The Executive ensure that sufficient information is available in every report to allow a robust decision to be made.'

Action / response: The recommendation has been communicated directly to the Leader of the Council and will be raised with all Heads of Service at their Corporate Management Team meeting by the Head of Strategic Support.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 5.

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Forward Plan
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from March 2013 to June 2013 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the plan.

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

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

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Forward Plan attempts to cover all decisions, not just those made by the Executive, which the Authority intends to take over the next 4 months. The Forward Plan, attached at Appendix A, for the months of March 2013 to June 2013, also shows the decision path of each item including Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.
- 1.2 In order to hold the Executive to account, Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Members are asked to identify any areas of forthcoming decisions which may be appropriate for future scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – West Berkshire Council Forward Plan – March 2013 to June 2013.

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
MARCH 2013											
ID2557	Zebra Crossing on Bridge Street, Hungerford - Petition <i>To respond to a petition that has been submitted to the Council.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport			Ward Members		March 2013
ID2556	Station Road, Aldermaston - proposed 7.5 Tonne weight limit <i>To approve the statutory consultation and advertisement of a 7.5 tonne weight limit.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport			Statutory consultees, general public, Parish Council and Ward members as part of the statutory consultation and advertisement.		March 2013
ID2438	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		March 2013
ID2450	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		March 2013
ID2601	Public Rights of Way Case Programmes <i>To request approval for the rights of way case programmes for path orders, maintenance/improvement and enforcement.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Environment	Elaine Cox	Environment, 'Cleaner Greener,' Public Protection, Customer Services, Culture & Leisure		TBC			March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
ID2608	Traffic Management & Road Safety Programme 2013/14 <i>To advise Members of the Traffic Managemnent & Road Safety works programme for 2013/14.</i>	ID	01/03/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC			March 2013
ID2609	Annual Highway Improvement Programme 2013/14 <i>To seek the approval of the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and ICT to impliment and proceed with the Draft Annual Highway Improvement Programme for 2013/14.</i>	ID	05/03/13	Environment	Melvyn May	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		28/02/13			March 2013
ID2426	West Berkshire Forward Plan - April 2013 to July 2013 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	14/03/13	Resources	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		06/02/13	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	March 2013
ID2613	West Berkshire Admission Arrangements 2014-15 for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools <i>To determine the 2014-15 Admission Arrangements.</i>	ID	18/03/12	Communities	Mwazwita Mundange pfupfu	Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education		08/03/13			March 2013
EX2604	Supplementary Planning Document - Sandeiford Park Strategic Site <i>To seek Member approval for a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Sandeiford Park Strategic Site for a six week period of consultation in accordance with the West Berkshire Statement of Community Involvement.</i>	EX	21/03/13 EX	Environment	Liz Alexander	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		13/03/13			March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
EX2606	Public Health Transition Report	EX	21/03/13 EX	Resources	Andy Day	Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		13/03/13			March 2013
EX2537	Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2012/13. Update on progress: Q3 outturns	EX	21/03/13 EX	Resources	Jason Teal	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		13/03/13			March 2013
EX2580	Adoption of the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 <i>For Executive to approve and adopt the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 for West Berkshire.</i>	EX	21/03/13 EX	Communities	Mel Brain	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		13/03/13			March 2013
EX2610	WBC/BBOWT Partnership for the Future Management of the WBC Countryside Estate <i>To seek approval to enter into a formal partnership with the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).</i>	EX	21/03/13 EX	Environment	Paul Hendry	Environment, 'Cleaner Greener,' Public Protection, Customer Services, Culture & Leisure		13/03/13			March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
EX2612	Local Transport Body <i>To approve the founding document for Thames Valley Berkshire Local Transport Body and to agree the Council's representative (and substitute) for this Body.</i>	EX	21/03/13 EX	Environment	Jenny Graham	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		13/03/13			March 2013
C2504	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013-17 <i>To agree the Council's Strategy for the next four years.</i>	C	14/02/13 EX 05/03/13 C	Resources	Joseph Holmes	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		06/02/13			March 2013
C2502	Revenue Budget: 2013-14 <i>To consider and recommend to Council the 2012-13 revenue budget.</i>	C	14/02/13 EX 05/03/13 C	Resources	Nick Carter/Andy Walker/Robert O'Reilly	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		06/02/13			March 2013
C2503	Capital Strategy and Programme 2013-2018 <i>To agree the Capital Strategy and Programme for the next five years.</i>	C	14/02/13 EX 05/03/13 C	Resources	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		06/02/13			March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
C2506	Borrowing Limits and Annual Investment Strategy 2013/14 <i>In compliance with The Local Government Act 2003, this report summarises the Council's borrowing limits as set out by CIPFA's Prudential Code, and recommends the Annual Investment Strategy for the coming year.</i>	C	14/02/13 EX 05/03/13 C	Resources	Andy Walker	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		06/02/13			March 2013
C2544	West Berkshire Council Strategy Refresh 2013/17 <i>To present the refreshed 2013-17 Council Strategy.</i>	C	14/02/13 EX 05/03/13 C	Resources	Jason Teal	Council Strategy and Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		06/02/13			March 2013
C2597	Statutory Pay Policy Statement <i>To present a pay policy statement to be published from 1st April 2013 for approval.</i>	C	05/03/13 C 19/02/13 PC	Resources	Jane Milone	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		11/02/13	Corporate Board, Heads of Service		March 2013
C2581	Health and Wellbeing Strategy <i>To adopt the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</i>	C	05/03/13 C	Resources	Andy Day	Health and Wellbeing, Community Safety		25/02/13	Health and Wellbeing Board, PCT, CCGs and other stakeholders		March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
C2611	Localisation of Council Tax Support - detailed administration of the West Berkshire Scheme <i>To clarify the detail of the Council's Scheme.</i>	C	05/03/13 C	Resources	Bill Blackett	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		25/02/13			March 2013
ID2642	Access to Information Policy Revision <i>To approve the revised Access to Information Policy.</i>	ID	26/03/13	Resources	Sue Broughton	Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		18/03/13			March 2013
ID2643	Corporate Complaints Policy Revision <i>To approve the revised Corporate Complaints Policy.</i>	ID	26/03/13	Resources	Sue Broughton	Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		18/03/13			March 2013
ID2644	Records Management Policy Revision <i>To approve the revised Records Management Policy.</i>	ID	26/03/13	Resources	Sue Broughton	Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Services, Strategic Support, Legal		18/03/13			March 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
APRIL 2013											
ID2439	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/04/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		April 2013
ID2451	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/04/13	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		April 2013
ID2607	Parking Amendment No.13 <i>To consider the responses received during statutory consultation</i>	ID	01/04/13	Environment	Andrew Garratt	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Statutory consultees, general public, Parish Council and Ward members		April 2013
ID2427	West Berkshire Forward Plan - May 2013 to August 2013 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	11/04/13	Resources	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		03/04/13	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	April 2013
MAY 2013											
ID2440	Adoption of Parish Plans <i>To adopt Parish Plans.</i>	ID	01/05/13	Resources	Jo Naylor	Partnerships, Equality, The Visions, Communities, Emergency Planning		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		May 2013
ID2452	Approval of Village Design Statements <i>To approve Village Design Statements.</i>	ID	01/05/13	Environment	Paula Amorelli	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC	Local Members and Stakeholders		May 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
ID2428	West Berkshire Forward Plan - June 2013 to September 2013 <i>To advise Members of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council over the next four months.</i>	ID	16/05/13	Resources	Moira Fraser (2045)	Leader of Council		08/05/13	All Members, published on website for local residents	Not subject to call in.	May 2013
C2508	Standards Committee Annual Report 2012/13 <i>To inform Members and residents of the activity undertaken by the Standards Committee over the past Municipal Year.</i>	C	14/05/13 C	Resources	Moira Fraser	Chairman of the Standards Committee		06/05/13			May 2013
C2512	Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees <i>To consider the appointment of and allocation of seats on Committees and associated bodies for the 2013/14 Municipal Year and to agree the Council's Policy Framework for 2013/14.</i>	C	14/05/13 C	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		06/05/13			May 2013
C2509	Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2013/14 <i>To elect a Chairman of the Council for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.</i>	C	14/05/13 C	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		N/a			May 2013
C2510	Appointment of Vice Chairman for the 2013/14 Municipal Year <i>To appoint a Vice Chairman for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.</i>	C	14/05/13 C	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		N/a			May 2013
C2511	Announcement of Executive <i>To receive notification from the Executive Leader on the Members appointed to the Executive.</i>	C	14/05/13 C	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		N/a			May 2013

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

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

West Berkshire Council Forward Plan - March to June 2013

Reference	Decision and Purpose	Decision Body	Decision Path	Directorate	Contact	Lead Member (Porfolio Holder for . . .)	Part II	Date Report Published	Consultee(s)	Notes	Decision Month
JUNE 2013											
ID2517	Appointment of Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Representative <i>To appoint the Council's representative on this Outside Body.</i>	ID	06/06/13	Resources	Moira Fraser	Leader of the Council		29/05/13			June 2013
EX2481	Annual Employment Report 12/13 <i>To provide information on staffing trends.</i>	EX	20/06/13 EX	Resources	Robert O'Reilly	Finance, Economic Development, Health and Safety, Pensions, Human Resources		12/06/13			June 2013
C2585	Community Infrastructure Levy - Draft Charging Schedule <i>To consider and approve the Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC		Special Council	June 2013
C2586	Supplementary Planning Document for Developer Contributions - Adoption of updated Topic Papers <i>To adopt the updated Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC		Special Council	June 2013
C2599	Greenham Control Tower <i>To report back on the deliberations of the Planning Policy Task Group following the referral of a motion to the group at Full Council on the 13 December 2012.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC		Special Council	June 2013
C2600	GAMA Site <i>To report back on the deliberations of the Planning Policy Task Group following the referral of a motion to the group at Full Council on the 13 December 2012.</i>	C	TBC	Environment	Caroline Walsh	Planning, Property, Highways, Transport		TBC		Special Council	June 2013

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6.

Title of Report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To receive, agree and prioritise the Work Programme of the Commission, Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group.

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

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell – Tel (0118) 9420196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk
Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group is attached at Appendix A for the Commission's consideration. Members are also asked to consider any future areas for scrutiny.

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/11/105	Dignity and Nutrition – CQC Standards To review the standards of dignity and nutrition in local hospitals - survey evidence to be provided by West Berkshire LINK (HealthWatch).	To survey and hold focus groups detailing information		HSP	Start: July 2011 End: March 2013	LINK, Age UK	Cllr Graham Jones	In Progress	Additional survey of the Royal Berkshire Hospital outpatients being undertaken in October 2012. Update from LINKs required at March 2013 meeting.
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	Julie Curtis - Interim Director Joint Commissioning	Cllr Graham Jones	In Progress	Julie Curtis to be contacted about attendance at the next meeting.
OSMC/11/119	Continuing Healthcare (CHC) assess the effect of the CHC operations policy and procedures in practise	In meeting review		HSP	Start: March 2013 End: March 2013	Jan Evans – 2736 Adult Social Care	Cllr Graham Jones	In Progress	Monitoring of the CHC independent review action plan. Update against actions required at next meeting.
OSMC/12/122	Home Care To understand and critically appraise the processes in place for the provision of Home Care.	TBD		HSP	Start: TBD End: TBD	Jan Evans–2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	To be scheduled	The remit of review work to be explored with June Graves/Jan Evans in October 2012.
OSMC/12/133	PCT Quality Handover To examine the PCT's arrangements for the handover of its quality responsibilities to Clinical Commissioning Groups	In meeting review	Members satisfied with arrangements	HSP	Start: March 2013 End: March 2013	Sam Otoropec, PCT	Cllr Graham Jones		Presentation to be made at March 2013 meeting.
OSMC/12/143	Adult Social Care Eligibility Criteria To conduct a review of the Council's Fair Access to Care Services policy			HSP	Start: December 2012 End: Summer 2013	Jan Evans–2736 Adult Social Care	Councillor Joe Mooney	In Progress	Terms of Reference for the review agreed to take place across five sessions.
OSMC/09/02	Performance Report for Level One Indicators To monitor quarterly the performance levels across the Council and to consider, where appropriate, any remedial action.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Monitoring item	OSMC	Start: each Q End:	Jason Teal – 2102 Policy & Communication	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	Quarterly item. Q2 2012/13 to February meeting
OSMC/11/129	Housing Allocations policy To contribute to the development of a new policy	In meeting policy development supported by task group and individual Member activity.		OSMC	Finish May 2013	Mel Brain - 2403 Social Care Commissioning and Housing	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	- Added to work programme at the 10 January 2012 meeting, following a suggestion by Corporate Board - Following consultation exercise by Housing Service, expected to return to OSMC in early to mid 2013
OSMC/12/128	Youth Justice To review the outcomes being achieved following the changes made to police interventions with young people and the resultant drop in people entering the youth justice system.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.		OSMC	Start: TBD End: TBD	Susan Powell, Robin Rickard	Councillor Graham Jones	To be scheduled	- Item raised in response to performance reported at Q2 2011/12. See agenda and minutes of 21/02/12.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
OSMC/12/130	Consultation The effectiveness of consultation undertaken by the Council	Task group review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers and external partners.		OSMC	Start: TBD End: TBD	Jason Teal – 2102 Strategic Support	Councillor Roger Croft	To be scheduled	item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 2012-04-17
OSMC/12/135	Annual target setting To examine the annual targets being set for 2013/14.	Task group working directly with PM officers	Annually recurring	OSMC	Start: September End:	Jason Teal – 2102 Strategic Support	Councillor Roger Croft	In Progress	Independent work, unsupported by scrutiny officers. Output directly into the following year's Council Plan.
OSMC/12/139	Schools and early years To contribute to the development of the strategy for managing school organisation that ensures there are sufficient school places and in the right locations to meet demand	In meeting review		OSMC	Start: 21 May 2013 End: 21 May 2013	Ian Pearson - 2729 Head of Education	Councillor Irene Neill	In Progress	Agreed at the meeting of 18 September 2012
OSMC/12/140	Schools Performance To discuss progress in school performance, particularly in English and Mathematics.	in meeting review		OSMC	Start: TBD End: TBD	Ian Pearson - 2729 Head of Education	Councillor Irene Neill	To be scheduled	- Item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 30/10/12. - Schedule for early 2013.
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	Latest report to each meeting	Andy Walker – 2433 Finance	Councillor Alan Law	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	Consider quarterly reports. Q1/3 summary rept. Full rept for Q2/4	Robert O'Reilly – 2358 Human Resources	Councillor Alan Law	In Progress	May lead to areas for in depth review. Q1 - October. Q2 - Feb (following Exec in Jan)
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 2014 End: April 2014	Adrian Slaughter	Councillor Hilary Cole	Complete	Completed in April 2012. Review to be undertaken in April 2014.
OSMC/11/111	Risk Register To scrutinise individual items on the Risk Register on an annual basis. Annual recurrence	In meeting review and scrutinise individual items on Risk Register.	Monitoring item	RMWG	Start: TBD End: TBD	Ian Priestley	Councillor Roger Croft	To be scheduled	Annual Item for November
OSMC/11/112	Medium Term Financial Strategy To review the role and format of the MTFS Annual recurrence	In meeting review of the MTFS		RMWG	Start: Oct 2013 End: Oct 2013	Andy Walker	Councillor Alan Law		Annual item for October

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Reference	Subject/purpose	Methodology	Expected outcome	Review Body	Dates	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area	Portfolio Holder(s)	Status: In Progress Completed	Comments
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: 12 Mar 2013 End: 12 Mar 2013	Mark Edwards	Councillor Keith Chopping	In Progress	Requested by RMWG on 26 July 2011
OSMC/12/144	Shaw House To understand the utilisation and income generated	in meeting review		RMWG	Start: Feb 2013 End: Feb 2013	Steve Broughton - 2837 Head of Culture & Environmental Protection	Councillor Hilary Cole	Scheduled	Item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 11/12/12.
OSMC/12/145	Risk Register Examination of the management of risk for internal resources	in meeting review		RMWG	Start: Feb 2013 End: TBD	Ian Priestley - 2253 Chief Internal Auditor	Councillor Alan Law	Scheduled	- Item incorporated at OSMC meeting of 11/12/12. - Initial meeting to identify specific items for further, more detailed, examination

Key:

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 10.

Title of Report:	Key Accountable Measures and Activities 2012/13. Update on Progress: Quarter Two.
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To present to the Commission the quarter two outturn against the key accountable measures and activities 2012/13.

Recommended Action: To note the quarter two outturn against the key accountable measures and activities, and make recommendations as appropriate.

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Jason Teal
Job Title:	Performance, Research and Consultation Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519102
E-mail Address:	jteal@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's progress in quarter 2 against its key accountable measures and activities for 2012/13. In doing so, it provides assurance to the Executive that objectives laid out in the Council Strategy and other areas of significance / importance across the Council are being delivered.
- 1.2 Across this reporting framework as a whole, 49 key accountable measures and activities are captured.
- 1.3 Of this 49, 11 measures / activities are reported on an annual basis as they are only available once a year (for example, annual survey results, school attainment etc). Most of these relate to the education arena. In Q2, data is still awaited from Thames Valley Police for 3 of the reported measures / activities at the time of print. Therefore, Q2 outturns are available for 35 measures.
- 1.4 Of the reported measures / activities, 31 (89%) are reported as 'green' – or are on track to be delivered / achieved by the end of the financial year. 3 are listed as 'amber': behind schedule but anticipate achieving the target by year end. 1 measure is being reported in Q2 as unachievable.

Service Area	Priority	Measure / activity	Target	YTD outturn
Children's Services	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Reduce the proportion of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	20%	29%
Adult Social Care	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Increase the number of carers receiving a service	300	102
Care Commissioning, Housing and Safeguarding	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Maintain the percentage of people presenting as homeless where the homelessness has been relieved or prevented	78%	75%
Planning & Countryside	Promoting a Vibrant District	Ensure that the number of upheld planning appeals is less than the national average (35%: 2011/12).	< 35%	36%

- 1.5 More information – outturns and commentary - on all reported measures / activities is contained in the main body of the report.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 2.1 There is no decision to be made and therefore no Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

Appendices

Appendix A – Quarter 2 Performance Report: key accountable measures and activities 2012/13. Update on progress: Jul-Sep.



Quarter 2 Performance Report:

Key accountable measures and activities 2012/13

Update on progress: July - September 2012

compiled by:

Research, Consultation & Performance

Strategic Support Unit

westberks.gov.uk/performance

Oct 2012

For queries contact: Jason Teal (01635 5192102 or jteal@westberks.gov.uk)

This table pulls together a number of socio-economic measures to contextualise what is happening in the wider context of West Berkshire which will help identify issues around which Council may need to act.

State of the District measures	2011/12					2012/13		Comment
	2011/12 Q1	2011/12 Q2	2011/12 Q3	2011/12 Q4	YE 2011/12	2012/13 Q1	2012/13 Q2	
All Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants rate	1,874	1,795	1,730	1,859	1,859	1,799	1,724	4% decrease on YTD and compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Total claimant count (aged 18-24)	415	470	485	460	495	460	460	4% increase on YTD 2011/12. 2% decrease compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Notified job vacancies in West Berkshire	815	1,047	910	765	765	1,492	1,122	40% increase on YTD 2011/12. 7% increase compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Unfilled job vacancies in West Berkshire	697	866	728	656	656	1,255	963	42% increase on YTD 2011/12. 11% increase compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Average house price	£206,227	£205,784	£205,342	£207,450	£228,767	£228,366	£229,051	11% increase on YTD and compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Number of households accepted by the local authority as eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need in accordance with the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1996.	14.0	22.0	13.0	12.0	61.0	19	dna	Q2 data available in Q3. Data is delayed by 3 months due to time taken to collate application data.
Newbury footfall	20,900 (May '11)		20,870 (Oct '11)			27,150 (May '12)		
Hungerford footfall	4,950 (May '11)					4,740 (May '12)		
Thatcham footfall	5,730 (May '11)					5,890 (May '12)		
Number of crime reported (All)	2,719	2,465	2,318	2,373	9,875	2,099	2,051	20% decrease on YTD 2011/12. 17% decrease compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Nos. of serious acquisitive crime incidents reported	413	301	388	428	1,530	348	dna	16% decrease in Q1 for the same period last year. Q2 data available by Q3.
Number of ASB incidents reported	1,118	1,105	714	688	3,625	769	847	27% decrease on YTD 2011/12. 31% decrease compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Domestic burglaries (dwellings)	167	103	133	157	560	115	106	18% decrease on YTD 2011/12. 3% increase compared to same quarter 2011/12.
Number of people killed or seriously injured on West Berkshire roads (incl. Highway Agency roads)	24	17	20	19	80	16	dna	

Demand for services provided by the Council

The range of activities the Council performs is varied – providing more than 300 different services or functions. These are not static and we have seen demand for – and people’s use of – services change. For example, compared to the same period last year we have seen:

Measures of Volume	2011/12 Q2	2012/13 Q2	% change
Communities			
Nos. of clients aged 18 - 64 receiving an on-going care packages as at the end of the quarter	908	983	+ 8%
Nos. of clients aged 65 plus receiving an on-going care packages as at the end of the quarter	1,595	1,527	- 4%
Nos. of social care assessments and reviews completed in the last 12 months	5,885	5,761	- 2%
Nos. of live applicants on the Common Housing Register in the reasonable preference group	2,128	1,643	- 23%
Nos of safeguarding referrals received	-	57	-
Nos. of Looked After Children cases	131	127	- 3%
Nos. of children and young people subject to a child protection plan	85	93	+ 9%
No of adult learners	558	403	- 28%
No of families accessing Children’s Centres	1,398	1,790	+ 28%
Environment			
Nos of planning applications (received)	703	703	-
Nos of visits to library venues	134,999	132,221	- 2%
Nos of visits to sports and leisure centres	206,918	237,393	+ 15%
Resources			
Nos. calls received through contact centre	86,368	79,459	- 8%
Nos of calls received by ICT Help Desk (Incidents)	5,274	-	-
Nos of local authority searches completed	488	519	+ 6%
Nos unique visitors to website (excl. staff)	220,990	250,332	+ 13%
Nos of Freedom of Information requests	190	235	+ 24%

Purpose of this report

To provide an update on progress against the Council's key accountable measures and activities for quarter two, 2012/13.

The key measures / activities within this report have been distilled from those routinely monitored and managed through individual service plans to focus more singularly on those which are of particular importance / significance key in delivering the strategic objectives in the Council Strategy and to the ongoing work of the Council as a whole. This report therefore:

- provides assurance to the Executive that the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy are being delivered;
- provides assurance to the Executive that areas of significance / particular importance are performing;
- acts as an early warning system, flagging up areas of significance / particular importance which are not performing - or are not expected to perform - as hoped;
 - and therefore ensures that adequate remedial action is put in place to mitigate the impact of any issues that may arise.

Conventions used in this report

Throughout the report we have used a RAG 'traffic light' system to report progress:

- ★ means we have either achieved / exceeded - or expect to achieve / exceed - what we set out to do;
- ◆ means we are behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure / activity by year end;
- indicates that we have either not achieved – or do not expect to achieve - the activity or target within the year;

indicators reported as Ⓢ are annual indicators that can only be reported at a particular point in time – i.e. GCSE results or the road condition survey, whilst;

indicators reported as U are where the quarterly data is not yet available.

Where measures / activities are reported as 'amber', a brief supporting commentary is provided. Where measures / activities are reported as 'red', a more comprehensive exception report is provided providing a description of why the measure / activity will not be achieved / completed, but also detailing the remedial action in place in order to mitigate the consequence of this not being achieved.

In total, there are 49 key measures or activities which are appraised by the Executive through this reporting mechanism. These are aligned to the strategic priorities laid out in the Council Strategy.

The main body of the report presents these in more detail. Along with a description of the measure, the table also provides:

- *Column 2*: an indication of whether or not the Council has direct / complete control over the measure.
- *Column 3*: an indication of the impact on either, service users or the community more generally, should the measure not be achieved.
- *Column 4*: the previous year's outturn.
- *Column 5*: the current year's target,
- *Column 6*: quarterly outturn and RAG rating.
- *Column 7*: any supporting commentary provided.

Commentary on Performance

Across this reporting framework as a whole, 49 key accountable measures and activities are captured in total.

Of this 49, 11 measures / activities are reported on an annual basis as they are only available once a year (for example, annual survey results, school attainment etc). Most of these relate to the education arena. In Q2, data is still awaited from Thames Valley Police for 3 of the reported measures / activities at the time of print. Therefore, Q2 outturns are available for 35 measures.

Of the reported measures / activities, 31 (89%) are reported as 'green' – or are on track to be delivered / achieved by the end of the financial year.

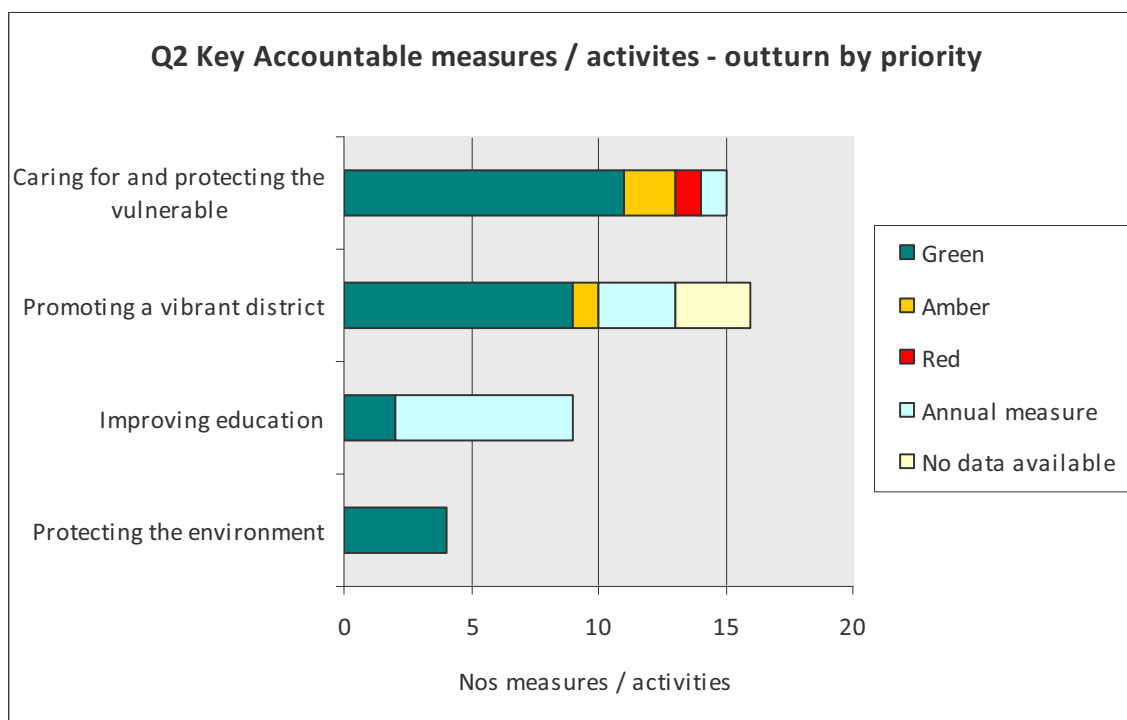
3 (9%) are listed as 'amber': behind schedule but anticipate achieving the target by year end.

Therefore, 1 measure is being reported in Q2 as unachievable.

The summary table below shows Q2 outturns by directorate.

Overview of performance outturns	2011/12	2012/13 Q2 outturns			
	Year End	Overall	Communities	Environment	Resources
Green	27	31	16	9	6
Amber	0	3	2	1	0
Red	12	1	1	0	0
Annual (yet to be reported)	0	11	8	2	1
Unavailable at time of publication	0	3			3
Total	39	49	27	12	10

The graph below summarises the same data (minus the Customer Focus measures) against the Council's priorities.



The table below lists those measures / activities reporting as 'amber' or 'red' in Q2.

Service Area	Council Strategy Priority	Measure / activity	Target	YTD outturn
Children's Services	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Reduce the proportion of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	< 20%	29%
Adult Social Care	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Increase the number of carers receiving a service	300	102
Care Commissioning, Housing and Safeguarding	Caring for and Protecting the Vulnerable	Maintain the percentage of people presenting as homeless where the homelessness has been relieved or prevented	78%	75%
Planning & Countryside	Promoting a Vibrant District	Ensure that the number of upheld planning appeals is less than the national average (35%: 2011/12).	< 35%	36%

More information – outturns and commentary - on each of these measures is contained in the main body of this report.

This report is published at westberks.gov.uk/performance.

2012/13 West Berkshire Council key accountable measures – Quarter 2

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG	Supporting commentary
Older people and vulnerable adults								
Maintain the percentage of vulnerable people maintaining independent living through the provision of a housing related support service	Y	High	98%	98%	99.7%	★	99.5%	★ YTD outturn: 591 / 595 Provisional data, the monthly Supporting People Provider Survey, which supplies the data will be completed during Q3.
Maintain 80% of benefits assessments within 3 weeks of referral from Children's Services	Y	High	86%	80%	100%	★	99%	★ YTD outturn: 67 / 68
Increase the number of carers receiving a service	Y	Medium	208	300	64	★	102	◆ Slippage due to staff vacancies and sickness and the need to reprioritise activities accordingly. Management action has been taken to: increase resource through using Crossroads to assist in carrying out assessments; agency reviewers and allocating additional PCT funding to provide support service. WBC and PCT grants have been given to outside agencies, such as Age UK, to provide direct services. Year end position is estimated at 300.
Increase number of service users receiving a personal budget, either commissioned, cash or a mixture of both	Y	High	628	800	532	★	576	★ Changes in national guidance as to who should receive a Personal Budget (PB) has meant that the number of eligible service users has reduced from 1,600 to 990. The initial target of 80% remains, although the absolute number of clients we are working with to receive a personal budget is now 800. It is estimated, we will achieve this by year
Increase the number of people receiving a telecare service by 20 people per year	Y	Medium	30	50	10	★	33	★ Q2 outturn: 23
Place 50 clients into Extra Care Housing	Y	Medium	-	50	39	★	51	★ Achieved in Q2.

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG		Supporting commentary
Maintain the percentage of people presenting as homeless where the homelessness has been relieved or prevented	Y	High	78%	78%	73%	◆	75%	◆	Q2 outturn: 123/159 = 77%. The Housing service is facing increased demand for homelessness services, reflecting a national trend. The Council has no other option but to take a homeless application. Nationally, we have seen a 13% increase in homelessness compared to last year, and this is mirrored in West Berkshire. Restructuring staff team to reflect increase in demand for support is underway and the Allocations Policy is being reviewed to ensure that social housing is available to those who need it most. Staff have also attended a 4 day training course run by Shelter to develop the knowledge base of a relatively new staff team on providing effective homelessness advice and guidance.
Maintain the number of people supported to move on from short term accommodation into independent living in a planned way	Y	Medium	60%	60%	91%	★	90%	★	YTD outturn: 94 / 104 Provisional data, the monthly Supporting People Provider survey, which supplies the data, will be completed in Q3.
Vulnerable children and young people									
To maintain a low percentage of child protection plans that last for 2 years or more	Y	Medium	2%	< 5%	6%	◆	4%	★	YTD outturn: 2 / 46
To reduce the proportion of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	Y	High	20%	< 20%	38%	◆	29%	■	YTD outturn: 17 / 59. Audit and Ofsted inspection led to re-evaluation of some cases. See exception report for further details.
To maintain low numbers entering the youth justice system	Y	High	55	80	19	★	31	★	Q2 outturn: 12
To maintain the number of children accessing Short Breaks	Y	Medium	450	450	579	★	600	★	

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG		Supporting commentary
To increase the number of families engaged in West Berks Personalised Budgets Pilot	Y	Medium	New	5	Annual	⊙	Annual	⊙	The pilot will commence in early 2013.
To increase the number of new looked After Children (LAC) placed within 20 miles of their home wherever possible.	Y	Medium	82%	80%	80%	★	86%	★	YTD outturn: 12 / 14
Maintain the percentage of Child Protection Reviews carried out on time	Y	High	100%	98%	100%	★	100%	★	YTD outturn: 51 / 51
Infrastructure									
Ensure that no more than 5% of the principal road network (A roads) is in need of repair	Y	High	5%	5%	Annual	⊙	Annual	⊙	Annual survey - reports Q4
Ensure that no more than 10% of the classified non-principal road network (B and C roads) is in need of repair	Y	High	10%	10%	Annual	⊙	Annual	⊙	Annual survey - reports Q4
Assist the Environment Agency with completion of Year 1 of the Newbury Flood Alleviation Scheme	N	Medium	New	Mar-13	On track	★	On track	★	Work began in the Northcroft area on 29 October 2012.
Review and upgrade the Thatcham Scoot traffic signal system.	Y	Medium	New	Dec-12	On track	★	On track	★	Site meetings held with contractor, Siemens, and upgrading works programmed.
Adopt a new Tenancy Strategy for WBC by 31/03/13 to meet statutory requirement	Y	Medium	New	Mar-13	On track	★	On track	★	Tenancy strategy has been drafted and will be going through to MB for approval to consult shortly
Approve 95% of high priority Disabled Facilities Grants within 9 weeks of receipt of full grant application	Y	High	97%	95%	95%	★	97%	★	YTD outturn: 36 / 37
Bring 30 empty homes back into use for by 31/03/13 using the Council's framework for engaging with identified empty home owners	N	Medium	30	30	12	★	18	★	Q2 outturn: 6

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG		Supporting commentary
Number of West Berkshire premises able to receive standard broadband services 2Mb/s or above (Target 67,614 100% by 2015)	Y	Medium	27,260 (40%)	40,711 (60%)	Annual	⊙	Annual	⊙	Reports in Q4
Planning									
Ensure that the number of upheld planning appeals is less than the national average of 35% (2011/12).	Y	Medium	(29/123) 24%	< 35%	40%	◆	36%	◆	Planning appeal decisions are made by independent Planning Inspectors. However an analysis of this year's appeals does not show an underlying policy or process weakness and so we are confident that performance will improve to a level below the national of average of 35%. Performance in Q2 was 29%. YTD outturn: 13.5 / 38.
60% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks.	Y	High	(15/53) 28%	60%	79%	★	78%	★	YTD outturn: 21 / 27
65% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks.	Y	High	(81/503) 16%	65%	82%	★	77%	★	YTD outturn: 186 / 243
75% of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks.	Y	High	(355/1479) 24%	75%	94%	★	91%	★	YTD outturn: 736 / 806
Community Safety									
Work with our partners to ensure that the ratio of repeat anti-social behaviour calls in West Berkshire does not exceed the Thames Valley Police Force (TVP) average ratio.	N	High	New	Q1 outturn to be <TVP outturn of 32%	+2%	◆	no data available	U	Awaiting on Q2 data to be confirmed by Thames Valley Police
Work with our partners to ensure that the rate of change of repeat instances of domestic abuse in West Berkshire does not exceed the Thames Valley Police Force (TVP) average	N	High	New	< TVP outturn (<+1.10% increase YTD)	TVP=+1.1% : WBC=- 1.1%	★	no data available	U	The performance against this target was incorrectly reported in Q1, due to a change in the way the police data was analysed. This has now been corrected. A newly appointed co-ordinator was put in post during Q2. Awaiting on Q2 data to be confirmed by Thames Valley Police.
Work with our partners to reduce domestic burglaries by 5%	N	High	560	(-5%) 532	-31%	★	-22%	★	

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG	Supporting commentary
Reduce the average cost of serious acquisitive crime per IOM offender compared to baseline at 31/3/12 (based on conviction data for static IOM cohort).	N	Medium	dna	-5%	£1,855.33	★	£1,856.33	U Q1 outturn: £1,856.33 per IOM offender. Awaiting on Q2 data to be confirmed by Thames Valley Police.
Vulnerable Pupils								
Narrowing the achievement gap between SEN/non SEN scoring level 4 or above in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 2	N	High	55%	54.5%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
Increase the proportion of children eligible for free school meals who achieve 5+A*-C grades at GCSE (incl English and Maths)	N	High	18.1%	25%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
Higher and Adult Education								
Reduce the proportion of young people in academic Year 12 who are NEET at January 30th each year	N	High	5.2%	5.0%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q4
Increase take-up of 16-18 apprenticeships	N	Medium	320 p/a	325 p/a	data not available	U	348	★ Number of young people starting an Apprenticeship (August 2011 - April 2012)
Working with Schools								
Increase the proportion of pupils gaining 5+A*-C at GCSE, including English and Maths to 63%	N	High	61%	63%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
Increase the proportion of pupils scoring level 4 or above in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 2	N	High	Eng 82% Maths 80%	82.5% 80.5%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
To reduce the number of primary schools below the floor standard at the end of KS2 for more than 2 of the previous 3 years	N	Medium	6	4	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
Improve the number of pupils making 2+ levels of progress from KS1 to the end of KS2 in English and Maths	N	High	Eng 84% Maths 79%	84.5% 81.0%	Annual	◎	Annual	◎ Reports in Q3
Maintain / increase the number of schools judged good or better by Ofsted under the new Framework (harder test)	N	High	61	61	61	★	62	★ To be reviewed during Q3, in the context of Ofsted's introduction of proportionate inspection.

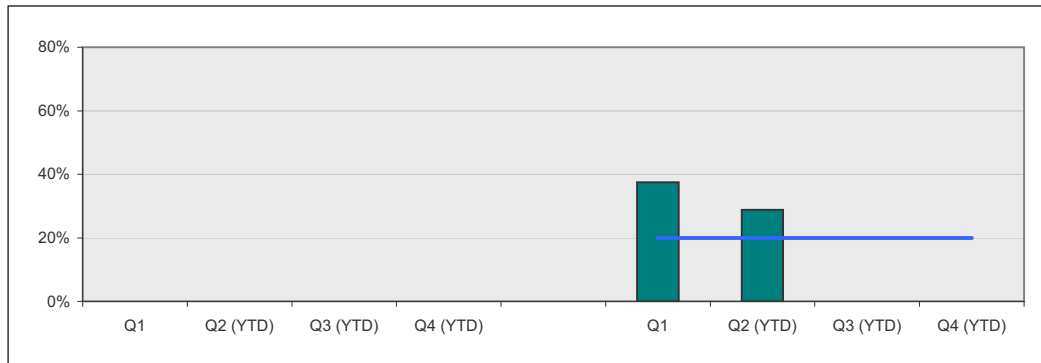
Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG		Supporting commentary
Environmental and historic protection									
Adopt the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.	Y	High	Not adopted	Adopted	On track	★	Adopted	★	Adopted by the Council in July 2012.
Cleaner and greener									
Maintain the proportion of waste recycled/composted/reused	Y	High	46%	46%	53%	★	54%	★	Q2 result is an estimate based on partial availability of July/Aug/Sept 12 data and will not be finalised until Dec 2012. This result is also subject to change once figures are validated by DEFRA. Please note: this data is seasonal and will fall over winter months. Q1 outturn has been confirmed.
% of Waste landfilled	Y	High	20.9%	<25%	23%	★	17%	★	Q2 result is an estimate based on partial availability of July/Aug/Sept 12 data and will not be finalised until Dec 2012. This result is also subject to change once figures are validated by DEFRA. Q1 outturn has been confirmed.
Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators).	Y	High	Good	Satisf.	Reports Q2	U	Good	★	

Measure / activity	Direct influence	Community / service Impact	2011/12 Year end outturn	2012/13 Target	Q1 outturn		Q2 (YTD) outturn / RAG		Supporting commentary
Customer Focus									
The average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Benefit claims	Y	High	18 days	<18.5 days	15.6 days	★	18.17	★	
The average number of days taken to make a full decision on changes in a Benefit claimants circumstances	Y	High	8 days	<8.0 days	9 days	◆	7.6	★	
Telephone calls dealt with at the first point of contact	Y	High	83%	80%	86%	★	86%	★	Q2 outturn: 35523 / 41474
Calls to Customer Services answered within 30 seconds	Y	High	76%	75%	75%	★	79%	★	Q2 outturn: 32927 / 39231
Average queuing time for personal customers	Y	High	4 mins	<8 min	5.8 mins	★	4.85 mins	★	

VULN.1: Modernise services to vulnerable children, focussing child protection resources on those children who are at most risk and working in partnership with schools, health and other partners to provide high-quality, evidence-based preventative support

Red

Priority 1.2 To reduce the proportion of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time



Directorate: Communities
 Director: Margaret Goldie
 Service: **Children's Services**
 HoS: Mark Evans

Polarity: Lower is better
Units of measure: Percentage
Frequency: Reported quarterly
Significance: High
Reports to: Public

	2011/12				Current year			
	Q1	Q2 (YTD)	Q3 (YTD)	Q4 (YTD)	Q1	Q2 (YTD)	Q3 (YTD)	Q4 (YTD)
YTD outturn	No historical data provided.				37.5%	28.8%		
Target					20%	20%	20%	20%
YTD numerator					6	17		
YTD denominator					16	59		
YTD RAG					♦	■		

Commentary

Updated: 10 December 2012

REASON FOR RED:

This is a complex performance indicator designed to identify cases where poor quality assessments lead to children being made subject to multiple child protection plans.

Typically a child protection plan is kept in place for 6-12 months and ends when parents have either made the changes required to address the professional concerns or other action is taken to protect the child/ren (e.g. legal intervention). If a plan ends and it becomes necessary to implement a subsequent plan within 12-24 months it strongly suggests the decision to end the previous plan was premature and the assessment flawed.

However, there are some circumstances where it is entirely appropriate to make a child subject to more than one CP plan. The current performance indicator has no time limitation. Nationally this measure is being revised as part of the Munro proposals to consider subsequent Child Protection Plans within 2 years. This will be introduced nationally for 2013/14. If applied for 2012/13 our outturn would be just below 20%. It is proposed to adopt the national measure next year; so a child who was made subject to a plan as an unborn baby or young infant could entirely appropriately become subject to a second plan much later in their childhood for new and unforeseeable reasons. For this reason 'good' performance in relation to this indicator does not represent 0%, this is recognition that for some children it is appropriate to be subject to more than one CP plan.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ACHIEVING TARGET:

The consequence will vary, in the most serious cases, failure against this indicator can result in children potentially being left in unsuitable situations longer than is necessary, whilst in others it will have minimal impact. In terms of the Council's performance it is unlikely to be subject to further scrutiny as it was fully explored in our recent OFSTED.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN :

Unfortunately there is no 'quick fix' as the remedy is good quality decision making in all cases. We are working hard to provide staff with the supervision, training and support to improve practice in this area. We are also developing a much more cautious approach to remove children from child protection plans to ensure that change made by parents is enduring and sustainable before a plan is ended. Problems with our performance against this indicator were first picked up in March 2012 and an audit was undertaken to discover the reasons. There is a comprehensive action plan in place from this audit. It contains detailed recommendations for social workers, managers in children's services and child protection conference chairs. For example:

- *For every child coming to ICPC for a second or subsequent time, Chairs must (using a standard set of questions) audit the file prior to conference, to enable them to understand the background to the case (as well as the situation at previous conferences). Wherever possible the new Chair will talk with the previous CP Chair (if this was someone different)*
- *Both Children's Services managers and CP Chairs at the point of C.P. Consultation need to be clear in what ways a CP Plan for an older child is going to take the child's views and preferred methods of engagement into account. It needs to be considered whether a CP Conference will improve the safety of the child in question better than other means of planning / intervention.*

IMPACT OF REMEDIAL ACTION / ESTIMATED YEAR END OUTTURN:

The recommendations of the action plan are being put in place, but this is not an issue that can be rectified quickly. Consequently the remedial action will only have limited impact within the Q3 & Q4 timescale. The end of year position is likely to be between 25-30%, it is difficult to be precise as it depends on which children who have previously been subject to CP plans re-present and require a subsequent plan. It is also important to note that this represents a 5-10% deficit in achieving the planned outcome (rather than 25-30% of cases seen as been inappropriately subject to more than one plan). The target was set on the basis of data from comparator authorities from previous years.

There is some evidence that nationally there are increased numbers of children subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time. However it is accepted by all that some children will inevitably be subject to plans on more than one occasion. Consequently good performance is not simply about a lower figure, it is recognised that high performing authorities tend to be in the range of 10-20%. Our recent OFSTED inspection has highlighted the need for us to reassess some children's situations which may lead to higher levels of re-registrations for a period of time.

End of report

Agenda Item 11.

Title of Report:	Homelessness mystery shopper exercise
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To present to the Commission the findings of and response to a mystery shopper exercise conducted by the charity Shelter.

Recommended Action: To consider the Shelter report and the response provided by the Housing Service and comment as they determine appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission 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 In 2012 the charity Shelter was commissioned by the Council to carry out a telephone, email and face to face mystery shopping exercise to assess the standard with which the initial contact by people with a housing problem is handled.
- 1.2 This report sets out the response by the Housing Service to the recommendations of the report and provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC), which has previously requested sight of the document, with the opportunity for comment.
- 1.3 Shelter's full report is shown at Appendix A and the Housing Service's commentary on it is shown at Appendix B.

2. Exercise methodology

- 2.1 The exercise was carried out by the charity's Business Support Team, which:
 - Made a total of 20 telephone contacts, attempted during a period from mid July to mid August. A range of typical advice scenarios with varying levels of urgency were used. These were tailored with local information for authenticity.
 - Sent five emails, with a range of typical advice service problems.
 - Three face to face mystery shops were undertaken.
 - Conducted a review of the Housing/Housing options section of the West Berkshire Council Website. This review was conducted by a BST staff member who has experience in conducting reviews of local authority websites.
- 2.2 Each element of the exercise was assessed against objective criteria and ratings given for each.
- 2.3 The exercise took place at the time when the Housing Team had a relatively new team of Housing Options Officers. These officers had been in post for only two weeks and were in the process of receiving initial training in how to deal the range of issues clients presenting to the service.

3. Recommendations arising from Shelter's report

- 3.1 The charity's report made four recommendations which are shown below, along with the response from the Housing Service.

Recommendation 1	A standard approach be adopted to establish the basic details of the [homelessness] problem and providing some outline advice about the full range of options so that this is covered at the point of initial contact.
Response	The Housing Service introduced a prompt sheet in October, unaware of the Shelter report – this should resolve the issues about structure of initial contacts.

Staff who answer the phones and work on Pod [enquiry desk] attended Shelter's 'Foundation A' training in September. This has given them a more in-depth understanding of the housing issues that they might be confronted with

Recommendation 2

Use telephone and e-mail services as effective prevention opportunities.

Response

The Housing Service would welcome the opportunity to review the e-mails sent so that it can consider the improvements suggested in Shelter's report

Shelter do not offer suggestions on a better way of running the existing triage service within existing staff resources. The Housing Service would welcome the opportunity to discuss the opportunities to review the structure of operations with Shelter in more detail.

Recommendation 3

Introduce a proper appointment system whereby a client is informed of a date and time to attend the council offices or when they will be contacted by telephone without having to wait for a call back

Response

The Housing Service would need to review how the service is delivered and would welcome advice from Shelter on best practice. Housing Service standards could be developed to address this issue.

Recommendation 4

Improve information on web services and provide self-help tools

Response

As soon as resources allow, the Housing Service will review the web pages, in line with both Shelter's recommendations and corporate guidelines

Locata, the Council's housing software, does have a housing options module that could deliver on-line housing options advice to clients. There are also other software providers offering similar products. There would be a cost implication to introducing such a system but it could potentially reduce the number of people who go on to access face-to-face advice services.

3.2 In addition to Shelter's recommendations, the Housing Service has advised that it would welcome:

- An examination of the broader service using the Department of Communities and Local Government's Self Diagnostic Toolkit, to ensure that it is offering quality housing advice and achieving the right outcomes for clients.
- Input from Shelter on the best model for delivering services within existing resources.

- Exploration of the potential for Shelter to offer a housing advice surgery from within West Street House to complement the work undertaken by the Housing Options Officers.

3.3 Explanations and the rationale for each of the recommendations is shown at Appendix A.

3.4 Context and comment on Shelter's report is provided by the Housing Service at Appendix B.

4. Recommendations for Members of the OSMC

4.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission consider the Shelter report and the response provided by the Housing Service and comment as they determine appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A Shelter report

Appendix B Housing Service response to the findings and recommendations of the Shelter report

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: None

Officers Consulted: June Graves

Trade Union: N/A

Shelter

West Berks Housing Operations

August 2012

Final Report of Findings

Business Support Team

1. Introduction

Shelter's Business Support Team (BST)

Since 2001, Shelter has worked with over 70 local authorities throughout England on a range of consultancy exercises focussed on homelessness and housing advice service delivery.

We have considerable experience of undertaking quality audits, mystery shopping, service user feedback exercises and other quality assessments for local authorities, of both their own provision and that of contracted agencies such as RSLs and CABx.

We have also recently started to provide a comprehensive homelessness and housing advice review service with Acclaim Consulting, which combines Shelter's expertise in conducting quality reviews with Acclaim's expertise in cost and performance benchmarking to provide a review service focussed on establishing value for money.

Brief

Shelter's Business Support Team was asked by West Berkshire Council to carry out a telephone, email and face to face based mystery shopping exercise to assess the standard with which initial contact by people with a housing problem is handled.

The council expected the consultancy exercise to provide a robust, independent challenge to identify areas of strength and areas where improvements may be made.

This brief was limited to mystery shopping and therefore did not encompass an assessment of the full client journey of someone presenting with a housing problem at West Berkshire Housing Services. Assessments of housing options and homelessness files enable a comprehensive review of the standards applied in handling the customer enquiry from 'case open' through to 'case closure' and therefore provide a complete diagnosis of the advice provided and housing options discussed. As the brief unusually was undertaken without a service profile or discussion with the Housing Service Manager it has not been possible to contextualise the findings to reflect key factors that may have impacted on the handling of the initial contact (for example staff absences, staff capacity, training needs, new staff etc).

2. Method

Telephone/Email Based Mystery Shopping & Website review

A total of 20 telephone contacts were attempted during over a period from mid July to mid August. A range of typical advice scenarios with varying levels of urgency were used. These were tailored with local information for authenticity.

Five emails were sent with a range of typical advice service problems. Three face to face mystery shops were undertaken.

A review was conducted of the Housing/Housing options section of the West Berkshire's Council Website. This review was conducted by a BST staff member who has experience in conducting reviews of local authority websites.

All calls and emails were made by either BST staff or Shelter Advice staff who have considerable experience in Mystery Shopping type exercises both internally to Shelter and externally to other Local authorities and external agencies.

Each Telephone mystery shopper was asked to call the West Berks Council telephone contact number or use the website email link and rate their experience on a five-point scale – see table below, against a number of assessment criteria that covered:

Telephone /Email

- Was it easy it was to get through on the telephone
- Was an email response received & how promptly
- How polite, friendly and helpful was the person who handled the call
- Whether sufficient time was given for the caller to explain why they were calling
- Whether the key points of the problem /situation/circumstances were established
- Whether an accurate and appropriate outline explanation of what the service might be able to do to help was given
- Whether the suggested next steps were timely, appropriate and clearly explained? (E.g. timescales/urgency/appointment/drop-in arrangements/paperwork to bring etc.)
- Was the email response written in clear, plain language?
- An overview of how well the call/email was handled from the customer perspective
- An overview of how well the call/email was handled from a business perspective

Website

- How accessible was the website?
- Would a user would find the website intuitive and make finding information and advice easy?
- Does the website provide access to accurate, useful and comprehensive information about housing options?
- Are there a range of useful self-help tools/packs available for download?
- Does the website have a comprehensive suite of relevant policy, performance and strategic documents?
- Are there links to other websites to help users access further information and advice and is there useful details of local/National contacts?
- Does it detail how to contact services & clearly set out what a customer can expect when making contact?
- Does the website have functionality to support on-line applications and self-management of updates?
- An overview of how useful & useable the website is from the customer perspective
- An overview of how well the website was efficiently and effectively engaging with its customers from the business perspective

Face to Face

- Were the environment and facilities at the council offices a welcoming and friendly atmosphere? Availability of private interview areas, comfortable waiting areas, useful display and customer information
- Easy to find where to go to make a housing query and seek advice
- What was the duration of waiting time to see someone at the initial point of contact?
- Able to discuss query in a private interview area
- Polite, friendly and helpful staff dealing with the query
- Given sufficient time to explain why visiting the council's offices
- Key points of the problem(s)/situation and circumstances established
- Given an accurate and appropriate outline explanation of what the service might be able to do to help
- Next steps timely and appropriate and clearly explained

Scoring

The scoring system used within the assessments are based on a 5 point scale (see table).

Rating	Points	Assessment
Excellent	4	The standard meets all designated requirements, and there is no or very little scope for improvement.
Good	3	The standard is high and meets most designated requirements, but there is still some scope for improvement.
Fair	2	The standard meets the minimum necessary designated requirements but no more; there is considerable scope for improvement.
Poor	1	The standard does not meet minimum designated requirements.
Failing	0	The standard does not meet any designated requirements, or the work is not done at all.

The 'Fair' level reflects the minimum threshold of acceptable work and is therefore a "pass."

3. Results

The full breakdown of the results and supporting comments are available by clicking on the following link to the Survey Monkey reports: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/WestBerksResults>

Password: West Berkshire 1

These reports are set to show all results however, the tool provides the facility to filter results, (e.g. particular question) and also to browse responses one by one. Some guidance on how to use the Survey Monkey tool is attached in the document Shelter Survey Monkey guide.

4. Summary of Findings:

The service is easy to access as demonstrated by the prompt answer of calls, emails and triage interviews. On the whole, staff members are friendly and polite.

However, the service operates a triage system which does not routinely enable customers to obtain advice on housing options easily at the first point of contact. Priority for advice and assistance is given to homelessness which is positive but this is narrowly defined to anyone who is homeless the same or next day and means that early prevention work is limited. Comments by mystery shoppers also indicate that customers felt less confident about the help they would receive given the lack of information gathered about their circumstances and the narrow range of options mentioned. As the mystery shopping exercise did not go beyond this first point of contact, Shelter was not able to experience the level of advice and support that clients would receive upon attending a diagnostic interview.

Some recommendations for improvement are listed in section 5 below.

Telephone Mystery Shopping

Making the call

An excellent score of 100% (all 20 calls) was achieved by the Housing Operations Team answering the phone on first attempt by the mystery shoppers. Housing officers tend to provide their names; where a caller spoke to reception first they were less likely to get a name.

40% of calls fell into the required call duration of 5 – 10minutes. However, 25% were less than 5minutes, which would indicate less effective handling of initial contact with little information gathering and or advice. 35% were over 10minutes, which would indicate unstructured approach to handling the initial contact in relation to information gathering and advice.

Ease of access to someone who could help with the housing query

Only 35% (7 out of the 20) of calls were rated as Good or Excellent for ease of access to someone who could provide help with the query. 40% (8 out of 20) of calls were rated as Fair and 5 calls were rated as Poor.

Some positive ratings related to scenarios where the callers presented with homelessness or threatened with homelessness and the caller was able to provide enough information about their situation. For example one scenario concerned a caller with a dependent child having fled her home due to violent parents, another about a single homeless person recovering from drug abuse. Some positive ratings were achieved where a housing options officer answered the phone rather than reception/non housing advice staff.

Poor ratings were given where shoppers were told that someone would call back with little information gathered about the caller's circumstances which indicates missed opportunities to provide timely and efficient advice.

A frequent comment was that the duty housing officer is not available or busy with an emergency. Shoppers also reported that priority of call tends to be assessed on the basis of 'Are you homeless tonight?'

One scenario where a shopper was told that someone would call back concerned a single female having fled domestic violence and experiencing mental distress. Another scenario concerned a single person with mobility difficulties and suffering depression had been asked to leave by a friend – the call back took place one day later at which point the officer asked for a few more details and informed the shopper they do not have a local connection and should make a homelessness application in the area they recently left. This example illustrates that the initial point of contact could have been more effective if the shopper had been referred to online information about different options including homelessness or could have been dealt within one call.

How polite friendly and helpful was the person who handled the call?

80% of ratings (15 out of 20 calls) were Good or Excellent with the remainder being Fair, which is a good result overall. "Polite, friendly and helpful" were frequent comments in a number of responses and some highlighted that the officers showed a genuine interest in wanting to help and understand the caller's circumstances.

Where there were less positive comments these indicated that the call handler or officer lacked interest, kept them on hold or simply said someone would need to call back.

Sufficient time was given for the caller to explain why they were calling

13 calls (65%) of ratings were either Good or Excellent, with the comments supporting the fact that sufficient time was allowed for explaining the situation.

Three calls were rated as Poor. These calls recorded that little information was obtained by the call handler and quickly were offered a call back, therefore missing an opportunity to properly identify the priority of the call, for example one scenario concerned a homeless 16year old after her parents asked her to leave due to relationship breakdown, another concerned a caller having fled their private rented property as a result of threats and harassment from their landlord.

Key points of the problem /situation/circumstances were established

It should be possible within a structured call, of 5 to 10 minutes duration, to obtain sufficient key details that will help establish the client's situation/circumstance. The results show inconsistency in collecting sufficiently detailed information: 10 calls were rated either Good or Excellent, with 4 rated as Fair and 5 achieving Poor or Failing.

This is largely due to the fact that there were a high number of call backs and appointments offered so only in about half the scenarios callers reported that an officer made sufficient enquiries to gather information. A common theme was that the officers do not follow a structured approach and would often ask further questions only when the shopper volunteered information. Therefore, it should be recognised that the 10 calls at Good/Excellent may to some degree have been achieved due to some prompting by the shoppers.

An accurate and appropriate outline explanation of what the service might be able to do to help was given

A significant proportion of scores for this aspect were Poor or Failing (11 calls) with 6 rated as Fair and comments reflect that this was due to the limited range of options outlined, even when shoppers managed to speak to a duty officer.

There was, however, no evidence to suggest officers are reluctant to discuss a homeless application in scenarios where this should have been considered. The general theme was that only one option would be discussed so even where a shopper was advised that a homelessness application might not be successful (i.e. no local connection), alternative options were not being recommended or were briefly mentioned.

The comments also reflect a lack of evidence that officers would provide proactive advice and assistance for example no suggestions were made by officers that 'we may be able to assist you with private rented; we may be able to negotiate with your Landlord'

Suggested next steps were timely, appropriate and clearly explained? (E.g. timescales/ urgency/ appointment/ drop-in arrangements/paperwork to bring etc)

Approx 14 calls were rated Fair or Poor with only 3 rating this section as Good.

Key points were:

- Next steps were largely that a duty officer will call back, yet a lack of clarity about when this would happen (ranged from 'later today to 'sometime next week').
- There was little consistency in the information provided to callers about the information they would need to provide (ID, address, medical information etc)
- Little or no information is provided about drop-in arrangements, other ways to access information, or what a caller should do if their circumstances change – again the emphasis is that the appointment/drop in service is only available if someone is in an emergency situation (i.e. homeless tonight).

An overview of how well the call was handled from the customer perspective

12 callers rated the overall handling of the call from a customer perspective as Poor. This is a high level of dissatisfaction and again reflects the comments made that the routine approach to call handling is to take very basic information to assess whether a client is homeless on the day/tomorrow, otherwise a shopper is left waiting for a call back.

Positive scores were allocated where a shopper received some basic advice, clear next steps and in some cases a call back within a day or two of first contact.

An overview of how well the call was handled from the business perspective

8 calls were rated as Fair, and 8 as Poor or Failing from a business perspective (how effectively and efficiently the calls were handled).

Key themes based on the findings are:

- Calls were not routinely handled as part of an efficient and effective customer service approach. Officers demonstrated inconsistent interview techniques in information gathering and ability to provide a concise outline of options and next steps. The approach was generally lacking good structure. Some mystery shoppers used the same scenario and found their call was handled differently.
- Calls can take over 10minutes and yet little or no advice or options are discussed indicating an inefficient use of time
- Using imminent homelessness to assess priority of cases and therefore entitlement to appropriate advice is a restrictive approach and presents a barrier to early intervention and advice in cases where clients are only likely to return because the situation has reached crisis.

Email Mystery Shopping

3 emails were rated as excellent in regards to the promptness of the replies (within 1 working day). 4 emails received were also rated as 'Good' or above for clarity and use of plain English.

However, of these responses only 1 was rated as Fair, with the remaining being rated as Poor with regards to receiving an accurate and appropriate outline explanation of the help that might be available. The main concern, again, was the lack of details within the email response, as is noted in this comment:

"No details about what the service might be able to do help. Has said that can she can look into the matter further and asks for additional information including the details of the Landlord and contact number for the Landlord - but given I have no explanation about what can be done to help I would be reluctant to provide details of the LL"

With regards to whether next steps were explained all email (100%) were rated as Poor. This is a consistent score that shows significant improvement is needed in the handling of enquiries by email. Lack of details about self help resources or contact details for other agencies (CAB, JobCentre/Benefits), no links to the housing register online, all impacted on the scores. No information was provided about the Housing Operation Team's own service for example drop-in, telephone advice, opening or closing times etc.

In respect of how well the email was handled from a client's perspective, 3 emails were rated as Fair and this was largely due to the promptness of a reply.

An area for improvement is that each email presented an opportunity to provide some advice - even if only in outline or reference to leaflets, online guidance etc – but this was not really taken as such by the service. Even where a shopper was asked to contact the service no or little explanation was given as to what the service could do to help.

Poor ratings reflect that opportunities were missed to give some basic housing options information and as such it was not an efficient nor effective service as clients would have to either re-contact by other means, e.g. drop in,

appointment, or go away with little knowledge of what the council may be able to do to help, or what other services are available to them.

There were also no links within email responses to sections of West Berkshire's own website. This is a waste of a good resource as there is some basic information about homelessness and housing options and links to other organisations that may be able to help.

Website Review

Overall 90% of ratings were Excellent, Good or Fair which indicates that this is a good website that engages well with its users.

Key positive features were:

- Excellent accessibility with a variety of features built in to assist this
- There were good navigation aids, e.g. search/skip options on the site and it was easy to navigate specifically to the housing option pages from the home page.
- The level of detail within the housing options section was reasonable but perhaps lacking in detail.
- The housing pages are enhanced by having additional links to other external agencies such as night shelters/ hostels, Connexions, Shelter.
- Some downloads are available for leaflets and forms throughout various pages. There were some options to self help with features like applying for the housing register online.
- Some local /national contact numbers were available throughout the site.
- There is a 'contact us' on the home page which remains through any page you visit. It was extremely easy to contact the council by email.

Key points to consider on the Poor ratings and some further suggestions for improvements:

- Consider having a housing page with menus within the page rather than having the housing pages split into different sections.
- To have a central area where all websites/downloads listed through the different pages could be found in one place.
- To have a central directory of useful local/national contact numbers.
- More prominence on applying to the housing register.
- Service standards for the housing department are not available on the website and there is no information on how well the department has performed against these standards with the addition of several customer survey reports.
- The Contact page does not list opening or closing time and does not explain that the service operates a triage/appointment system.
- To extend the use of A-Z within each section, e.g. by introduction of A-Z searches for the housing section.

Face to Face

All three face to face shops rated the environment and facilities at the council offices as Poor – this was specifically in relation to the West House office. Postitive comments indicate that there was a comfortable waiting area but no useful display and customer information and there was no availability of private interview areas.

All three shoppers reported that it was not easy to find where to go to make a housing query and seek advice – there is no public information (at council offices or on the website) that a person seeking housing advice must go to West House. There is no signposting in the area directing a person towards West House and at West House itself, again there is no visible sign that a person can seek housing advice.

In relation to the duration of waiting time, one shopper positively reported that they were seen within 5minutes. Two shoppers reported having to wait longer and in once case 30minutes.

The interview area is publicly located by the entrance door at West House and next to the reception desk with only a mini screen. All shoppers reported that the reception area was busy with people and others were able to hear their conversation as they disclosed personal information. This was particularly a negative experience for one shopper who presented with a domestic violence scenario and was having to discuss the breakdown of her relationship and partner's abusive behaviour. The officer was apologetic and tried to speak more quietly but still it was not an appropriate environment to discuss a domestic violence case.

Only one shopper reported that the staff member dealing with the query whilst not impolite or unfriendly seemed disinterested and confusing in the help offered.

A Fair rating was given by the three shoppers for sufficient time to explain why they were visiting the council's offices and reported that they did not feel rushed. Nevertheless the officers lacked a structured approach and shoppers were not clear about how much information was relevant. This clearly impacted on the scores for the next section relating to whether 'key points of the problem/situation and circumstances had been established'. Two shoppers rated this as Poor because the officer dealing with the query missed key information.

Within the assessment section on whether the shoppers were given an accurate and appropriate outline explanation of what the service might be able to do to help, two shoppers rated this as poor as they experienced contradictory information or a lack of information as well as uncertainty about when someone would contact them about an appointment. It is unclear why officers are not able to provide details of an appointment whilst the customer is present.

Each shopper reported a different rating for whether next steps were timely and appropriate and explained. This indicates an inconsistency in the approach of the officers and it is clear from the comments that the positive score was based on the shopper asking for clarity.

From a client's perspective it seems the face to face experience is not that different to a telephone query and could be more frustrating for a genuine customer who makes an effort to visit the Council to be informed that someone will contact them to arrange an appointment.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

West Berkshire Council's housing operations team - whether contacted by phone, email, or face to face – generally handle calls with a triage approach which can lead to a reasonable assessment of needs at the initial point of contact.

There are some positives to be taken from the exercise which is reflected in the range of Good and Excellent ratings through some of the assessments. In conclusion our findings are that:

- Most staff were courteous and engaged well with callers by introducing themselves and comments such as polite, friendly and helpful were terms frequently used.
- Mostly clients were allowed to explain their situation followed by some basic details being collected
- The service does not appear to be reluctant to discuss or mention homelessness where facts of the housing situation are established and show that this would be an option. However, a range of options (homelessness application being one) are not routinely discussed and there were some scenarios had the officer established the facts that homelessness application should have been outlined. A review of a selection of housing options files would provide further insight as to whether homelessness is routinely explained as an option or only in select cases.

However, there is also scope for improvement as indicated by the high level of Poor and Failing ratings:

- There could be more consistency and time spent on collecting crucial details to establish a client's situation on first contact. The service may want to consider introducing a triage /prompt sheet supported by training in effective handling of initial contact.
- A triage or diagnostic process should enable the service to effectively assess priority, level of need and allocate resource. From the results and findings of the mystery shopping it is recommended that further work is needed to improve the triage and diagnostic process to ensure advisers are better able to manage throughput.
- Offering advice and assistance without delay only to those clients that are imminently homeless is a restrictive approach and means that opportunities for early prevention work are being missed.
- An outline of options and providing self help resources at the earliest opportunity would be a more effective way of handling initial contact so that clients can access information and advice more efficiently and effectively rather than having to wait for call backs one to two weeks later (would also enable better utilisation of staff time). This in turn may help the service manage the demand for advice and assistance if customers are empowered with information and enables them to take proactive steps before their circumstances reach crisis point.
- Private interview rooms are made available for sensitive cases.
- Improvements to housing options and steps that customers could take to help their situation on the website would make it a more effective tool.

We therefore recommend that:

- A standard approach be adopted to establishing the basic details of the problem and providing some outline advice about the full range of options so that this is covered at the point of initial contact.
- Use telephone and email services as effective prevention opportunities.
- Introduce a proper appointment system whereby a client is informed of a date and time to attend the council offices or when they will be contacted by telephone without having to wait for a call back.
- Improve information on web services and provide self-help tools.

Shelter Report – West Berks Housing Operations, August 2012

Housing Service Response – 14th December 2012

The Housing Service welcomes the opportunity to be audited by a credible external body and view this as an opportunity to improve the service that is offered, in a positive and proactive way.

Process

The Housing Service was unaware of the exercise and there were no prior discussions with the Housing Service to set context and provide details on how the Service operated or the current staffing situation.

Staffing

At the time the mystery shopping was undertaken the Housing Team had a relatively new team of Housing Options Officers. These officers had been with the team for a couple of weeks and received initial training but were undertaking telephone work to try and get them used to answering calls, understanding the range of issues that clients phoned in with and taking information from clients to inform the advice that would then be offered. This is a necessary step in the training process. Of the 20 mystery telephone calls that were taken, 9 have been identified as being taken by staff in training and a further 4 have not identified the officer, but it is likely, given the dates, that these were the new staff. This is of particular importance when considering comments on the structure of information-taking and the way in which the phone call was dealt with.

At the time of the mystery shopping, the Housing Options Officers were carrying case loads of between 80 to 100 active cases each. This is significantly higher than the recommended case loads of 25 to 30 cases. In addition, July and August are holiday periods where there are inevitably fewer staff available to meet customer demands.

Telephone Mystery Shopping

Making the Call

The Housing Service is pleased to find that callers find it easy to make contact with staff and that 100% of phone calls were answered on the first attempt by the mystery shoppers. This is achieved by having a fixed bank of six desks, with calls answered by two Housing Options Officers and both administration and Housing Register staff. This is pertinent to note in light of subsequent findings of the survey, as only the Housing Options Officers would be able to offer housing advice to a client who was phoning in, hence the triage system that is in place.

Shelter have suggested that initial contacts are unstructured with little information gathering or advice offered. As identified, most staff who are available to take phone calls are not trained to offer housing advice. They take very basic details which are referred to qualified Housing Options Officers who then carry out a diagnostic interview (either face to face or by telephone).

Ease of access to someone who could help with the housing query

Overall, 75% of the calls were taken by someone who could provide help with the query. Given that only one third of the staff handling telephone calls are trained to offer advice, this is a positive outcome.

Shelter have suggested that taking basic information and asking a Housing Options Officer to call back results in missed opportunities to provide timely and efficient advice. No evidence to support this claim is provided, and reviewing the cases, it is evident that Housing Options Officers have taken time to follow up on cases etc. although this information would not be known to the mystery shopping staff.

Shelter also comment that the Duty Officer was “not available or busy with an emergency”. Part of the role of the Duty Officer is to see clients who present as homeless tonight. Ensuring that they receive assessment, advice and potentially an offer of accommodation that day will always be a priority for the Duty Officer. Both assessment and sourcing accommodation can be a timely exercise.

How polite friendly and helpful was the person who handled the call?

The Housing Service is extremely pleased to see that staff were rated as “polite, friendly and helpful” and are thus a welcoming service.

Sufficient time was given for the caller to explain why they were calling

The Housing Service is extremely pleased that Shelter found that clients are allowed sufficient time to explain their situation. This demonstrates that, despite significant case loads and pressures on their time, staff take time to listen to what the client is saying and to ensure that they do not feel rushed, particularly given the difficult and traumatic circumstances they often find themselves in.

Key points of the problem/situation/circumstances were established

Overall, the Housing Service was found to obtain sufficient key details about the clients situation. Noting the comment made above, two-thirds of staff answering calls are not trained to offer advice and whilst taking on board the client’s perspective, it is better for the Housing Options Officer to take the detailed information from clients to inform their assessment. This also prevents clients from having to repeat their circumstances which may be quite traumatic.

An accurate and appropriate outline explanation of what the service might be able to do to help was given

Shelter found that an accurate and appropriate outline explanation was only offered in about half of the cases. In particular, they note that only one option would be discussed or suggestions about negotiating with landlords or assisting with private rented accommodation were not made. Having reviewed the case summaries in detail, the Housing Service has found examples that provide detailed housing advice and offer the options that Shelter suggest were not offered.

In particular, it would be for the Housing Options Officer to offer tailored advice and the cases were not carried through to the stage at which such advice would be offered, Given the way on which the Housing Service is structured and the range of staff who answer phones, the Housing Service would not expect such options advice to be offered on initial contact. Indeed, as the staff are not trained to do this, there is a risk that they would receive incorrect advice. It would have been beneficial for Shelter to have had the context of the Service prior to mystery shopping to inform them of the structure.

Suggested next steps were timely, appropriate and clearly explained

Shelter have presented this section as though it were failing, However, 'fair' is presented as being the pass mark but has been linked with 'poor'.

The Housing Service would agree that timescales for call backs are not always clear. This is partly because it depends on a particular officer's caseload and organisation and therefore other staff are reluctant to commit to a timescale that they have no control over.

Staff do not, on the whole, advise clients of information they may need to provide. This approach has been used in the past but the majority of clients would still not bring the information with them to their housing options interview. The Housing Service therefore finds it more effective to discuss what needs to be provided during the interview and then follow this up after the interview.

There is no 'drop-in' service for housing advice. The Housing Service have a reception desk (the Pod) open between 10-2 every day, however, this is really for CHR queries e.g. handing in ID, assistance with bidding etc. The exception to this is for households who are homeless tonight, who will always be seen by the Duty Officer on the day.

An overview of how well the call was handled from the customer perspective

This is a subjective rating and Shelter's findings appear to be based less on how the call was handled and more on the advice offered. For example, in one of the cases, the caller was given detailed advice on his housing options but rated the call handling poor as he did not feel the options available were feasible for him. However, in practice, they were the only options available to him and the Housing Options Officer could not have offered him any more. This reflects the situation that clients perception of the Service is often influenced by whether they receive the answers they want to hear.

An overview of how well the call was handled from the business perspective

Again, this is a reflection of Shelter's view of the triage system that is in place. The Housing Service has tried different models of working within the resources available to them and is keen to make improvements where possible. The purpose of the triage system is to prioritise calls based on the urgency of the caller's situation. It is disappointing that the report has not

made any suggestions on how initial contact could be better provided within the resources available.

E-mail Mystery Shopping

The Housing Service have not seen the e-mails that were sent so is not able to comment on the way in which they were responded to or the comments made by Shelter.

Whilst Shelter is quite critical, the Housing Service would need to see the e-mails to assess whether the response was reasonable given the level of information required. It can be quite timely to draft an e-mail offering advice and signposting to leaflets/services if only limited information is provided and could miss an important prevention opportunity.

Website Review

The Housing Service is pleased that, overall, the website is good and engages well with its users.

When the Housing Service has the resources to do so, it will consider the suggestions for improvement, however, it should be noted that the Housing Service operates within a corporate template for the web pages and as such, some of the suggestions may not be feasible.

Face-to-Face

The Housing Service would agree that the environment and facilities for housing clients at West Street House are poor for the following reasons:

- The external signage is not clear that Housing are based in West Street House – signage is not the responsibility of the Housing Service and is a corporate issue
- The Pod is exposed to other customers who are standing at reception and who can over-hear– the Housing Service have been trying to address this through Property Services for over a year but the space is constrained and the opportunities for redesign are limited
- The display boards in Reception are dominated by Childrens Services and there is no clear allocation of space for Housing Services

Private interview facilities are available and are used as appropriate, If a client asks to be seen in a private interview, regardless of the query, their request is accommodated. All housing options interviews are conducted in private interview facilities.

There is no 'drop-in' service for housing advice. The Housing Service have a reception desk (the Pod) open between 10-2 every day, however, this is really for CHR queries e.g. handing in ID, assistance with bidding etc. The exception to this is for households who are homeless tonight, who will always be seen by the Duty officer on the day.

Each Housing Options Officer manages their own diary and arranges their own appointments, This allows them to manage workloads in an appropriate way and ensure that they see clients at a time and place convenient to them, hence why appointments are not offered by other staff at the Pod.

Comment

The mystery shopping was essentially a customer service exercise and it is evident that staff are friendly and welcoming and that clients are easily able to access the service. It is not possible from the exercise to assess the quality or appropriateness of housing advice and options offered.

As the exercise was carried out without the knowledge of the Housing Service, it has, in retrospect, created some operational issues that could have been avoided had there been a designated contact for Shelter within the Housing Service. In particular, this included a scenario involving a 16 year old girl. When the Housing Options Officer contacted the 'aunt' back, she felt the aunt's response on the girl's resolution to her housing situation was 'evasive'. Consequently, a referral was made to Childrens Services and both the Housing Service and Childrens Services were involved in work to try and identify the child and confirm her whereabouts. The Housing Service has also identified that as real addresses were used, letters have subsequently been sent out to try and follow up on clients and then received by the actual occupiers of the home who have not contacted the Service in any way..

This page is intentionally left blank

Title of Report:	Proposed review – Fire Service Response Times
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To propose to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission a review into the failure of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to achieve their target response times in 2011/12.

Recommended Action: Amend, if necessary, and approve the scope of this review.

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 19 December 2012, the Newbury Weekly News published an article (Appendix A) stating that more than 40% of Berkshire fires were not being attended within the Fire Service's target time.
- 1.2 The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website states that its target is to reach dwelling fires with a first appliance within 10 minutes, and with a second appliance within 12 minutes, and confirms the information provided in the news article.
- 1.3 This issue represents an area of public concern.

2. Proposed Terms of Reference for the review

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission undertake a full in-meeting review to:
 - (1) Establish the reasons why the target for attending dwelling fires is not being met;
 - (2) Suggest recommendations for improvement as appropriate.
- 2.2 A representative from the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service should be invited to provide the Commission with relevant information.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members of the Commission amend, if necessary, and approve the scope of this review.

Appendices

Appendix A – Article from the Newbury Weekly News

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: None

Officers Consulted: None

Trade Union: N/A

Fire service fail to reach its own 999 response targets

Wednesday, 19th Dec 2012



Reporter: Ellis Barker *Newbury News Reporter*
Email: ellis.barker@newburynews.co.uk
Contact: 01635 886639

MORE than 40 per cent of Berkshire fires are not being reached within target response times, according to the latest figures released by the fire authority.



Each blaze should be attended within eight minutes of a 999 call, with a second appliance within ten minutes to meet optimum response targets, however this was only achieved by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) 58 per cent of the time between April 2011 and March 2012.

However, the first pump was in attendance within eight minutes in over 80 per cent of incidents.

Standard response targets of 10 minutes for the first appliance and 12 minutes for the second were also met in 75 per cent of cases in the same period.

Overall, incidents attended within the optimum targets have dropped by 10 per cent in the past decade, with 68 per cent being attended within the allotted time in 2002.

Deputy chief officer for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Olaf Baars said traffic conditions and the rural location of many fires are partly to blame, adding that part-time, on-call firefighters in rural locations are at a shortage.

“These response times are some of the most stringent in the country,” he said. “Although dwelling fires have reduced by 49% in Berkshire ratios have changed in the proportion of urban to rural fires.

“The latter can take longer to get to as they are more remote.”

He added that measures are in place to reduce times, having established Retained Support Units (RSU) in Ascot and Newbury.

“The RSU’s support retained fire stations by crewing fire appliances where necessary and assisting with operational training,” he said. “Since the RSU was put in place in April 2012, we have already seen an improvement in response times.”

Newburytoday.co.uk

Title of Report:	Development of the Housing Allocations policy – progress report
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To update the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on the activity to date on the development of the Council's Housing Allocations policy.

Recommended Action: Note the contents of the report.

Task Group Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Dominic Boeck – Tel (01635) 869248
E-mail Address:	dboeck@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 Following a request by the Executive, at its meeting of 10 January 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreed to assist in the development of a new policy for the allocation of social housing. This followed a significant shift in central government policy. On 21 February 2012, the OSMC further agreed that a small task group would be established to take forward the work.
- 1.2 This report sets out the work that has been undertaken to date by the task group and the intended time line for future activity.

2. Task Group membership

- 2.1 The task group comprises Councillors Dominic Boeck, Garth Simpson and Tony Vickers. Councillor Boeck has been elected Chairman.

3. Activity to date

- 3.1 Whilst officers in the Housing Service have been carrying out most of the work in the development of the new policy, the task group has been engaging with them at key points and has provided both challenge to and opinion on officers' proposals. The following meetings have been held:

Monday 14 May 2012. The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager (Mel Brain) briefed the members of the task group on the background and rationale for the work to be undertaken. The process for the policy development was explained, including the two stage consultation (firstly with statutorily required and other stakeholders and then more broadly with the public), and the points within the process at which the task group would engage were agreed.

Members examined the changes proposed in the revised allocations policy and their comments were taken into consideration for the first consultation draft.

25 September 2012. The task group examined the results obtained from the consultation exercise undertaken since the 14 May meeting. A number of changes were proposed which will be reflected in future documents.

Comment and direction were also given on how the national guidance for housing former members of the armed forces might be reflected locally.

16 October 2012. This meeting concluded the work begun on 25 September.

4. Future activity

- 4.1 The task group will meet again to inform the final draft after the views on the policy of the general public have been received by the Housing Service. It is expected that the full Commission will also have the opportunity to comment on the document prior to its adoption by the Executive in June or July 2013.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission note the progress of the task group.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 14.

Title of Report:	Overview and Scrutiny Training
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To propose that overview and scrutiny training be undertaken by members of the Commission.

Recommended Action: Consider and agree the proposal.

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission has suggested that it would be beneficial for members of the Commission, the Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group to undertake training in Overview and Scrutiny.
- 1.2 It is anticipated that the skills gained through training would assist with the effectiveness and productivity of the scrutiny process, and provide consistency of approach across the three bodies.

2. Overview and Scrutiny Workshops

- 2.1 The Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham (INLOGOV) offer interactive in-house workshops to local authorities that can be tailored to need and might include:
 - (1) Planning and Scoping: Agreeing the purpose, range and outcome of a review;
 - (2) Questioning Skills: Planning lines of questioning and using different types of questions in order to effectively explore an issue;
 - (3) Weighing up Evidence: Making use of direct and indirect, written, visual and verbal evidence to investigate below the surface of policies and strategies.
- 2.2 Full and half day courses are available (six hours and three and a half hours respectively) for up to 20 participants.
- 2.3 Should Members agree that training such as that set out above is desirable then the necessary and appropriate checks and processes will be undertaken to ensure that INLOGOV offers value for money and that procurement rules are being followed.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that members of the Commission agree the proposal to undertake training.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 15.

Title of Report:	Health Scrutiny Panel
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Health Scrutiny Panel.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Health Scrutiny Panel Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Quentin Webb – Tel (01635) 201435
E-mail Address:	qwebb@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Charlene Myers
Job Title:	Strategic Support Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519695
E-mail Address:	cmyers@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel (HSP) last met on 4 December 2012. The main items for discussion were:

(1) Findings of the Independent review of Continuing Health

The report and action plan was received and noted.

(2) Dignity and Nutrition in Local Hospitals.

A verbal update was received and noted.

2. Next Meeting

2.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel is due to meet next on 19 March 2013. The agenda items are yet to be confirmed.

3. Work Programme

3.1 The latest work programme for the Health Scrutiny Panel is contained within item 6 of this agenda.

3.2 The following items have been considered by the Panel over the past year:

(1) NHS Continuing Healthcare Programme

(2) Anti Child poverty Strategy

(3) Dignity and Nutrition at RBH

(4) Health and Wellbeing Board update

(5) Home Care

(6) PCT Quality Handover

(7) The effect of health service reorganisation on local provision and private finance initiatives (PFI).

(8) Adult social care eligibility criteria

(9) RBH appointment system

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 16.

Title of Report:	Resource Management Working Group
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the work of the Resource Management Working Group.

Recommended Action: To note the information.

Resource Management Working Group Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Tony Vickers – Tel (01635) 230046
E-mail Address:	tvickers@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Charlene Myers
Job Title:	Strategic Support Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519695
E-mail Address:	cmyers@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Resource Management Working Group (RMWG) last met on 18 December 2012. The main items for discussion were:

(1) Fleet Management

Officers from the Integrated Transport Team presented information regarding utilisation and management of the West Berkshire Council commercial fleet.

(2) Month 6 financial update

2. Next meeting

2.1 The meeting scheduled for 5 February 2013 was cancelled and the next meeting of the Group is due to be on 12 March 2013. The agenda items are yet to be confirmed.

3. Work Programme

3.1 The latest work programme for the Working Group is contained within item 6 of this agenda.

3.2 The following items have been considered by the Group over the past year:

(1) Day Services Reconfiguration Review

(2) Energy Saving Programme

(3) Financial Update

(4) Managed Vacancy Factor

(5) Asset Management

(6) Establishment Report Q4

(7) Financial Outturn Report

(8) Management of sickness absence due to stress

(9) School Academies

(10) Asset Management

(11) Medium Term Financial Strategy

(12) Financial Performance Month 4

(13) Establishment Report Q1

(14) Financial Update Revenue Budget

- (15) Risk Register
- (16) Financial Performance Month 6
- (17) Fleet Management

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 17.

Title of Report:	Scrutiny Recommendations Update
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 February 2013

Purpose of Report: To provide an update on the progress of scrutiny recommendations made over the previous year.

Recommended Action: To note the report

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

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Elaine Walker
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519441
E-mail Address:	ewalker@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The recommendations put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission that have arisen from scrutiny reviews over the past year, are presented in Appendix A. Information is provided to inform the Commission of the progress of these recommendations.
- 1.2 The Commission are asked to note the report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Recommendations Update

Review title	Recommendation	Date Agreed by OSMC	Date Adopted by Executive	Link to Exec Report	Implemented within 12 months?
Facilities Available for Young People	a. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and Youth Service should work, including through the networks available to Elected Members, to encourage schools to enable community groups to access the use of their facilities	17/04/12	19/07/12	http://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/eListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=1826&Ver=4	
	b. The Executive Member for Finance, Property and Health and Safety should take steps to allow and promote the use of Council property by community groups. This should include through tenancy agreements for let assets.	17/04/12	19/07/12		
	c. The Executive Member for Partnerships, Equality, the Visions and Communities should encourage town and parish councils to allow the use of their property by community groups.	17/04/12	19/07/12		On Track
	d. The Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services should critically examine the opportunities for the Council to allow the public use of the Council's own transport fleet, particularly in locations where there is an expressed need for community transport, working to remove bureaucratic burdens and obstacles where they exist.	17/04/12	No		
	e. The Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT, Customer Services should introduce a mechanism to assess the extent to which Council transport assets are being utilised by community groups.	17/04/12	No		
	f. The Executive Member for the Environment, "Cleaner Greener", Public Protection, Culture and Leisure should identify measures to encourage and increase the use by community groups of the Council's leisure facilities, for example sports and leisure centres.	17/04/12	19/07/12		On Track
	g. When considering change of use applications by and for community groups, the Executive Member for Planning and Housing should ensure that planning policies to allow favourable weighting and consideration of the wider societal benefits that their activities usually generate.	17/04/12	No		
	h. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Youth Service should continue to support organisations, such as the Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People, that enable community groups to operate effectively, for example through the provision of training and CRB checks.	17/04/12	19/07/12		yes
	i. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Youth Service should implement a comprehensive plan, which includes the use of social media, to communicate to young people the wealth of spare time opportunities and activities that are available to them.	17/04/12	19/07/12		yes
	j. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Youth Service should create and promote guidance on the key steps to be taken on the establishment of youth community groups. This might take the form of a 'Youth Club Starter Pack'.	17/04/12	No		
	k. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Youth Service should take steps to identify and the remove those Youth Service practices that prevent or obstruct the use of its facilities by community groups.	17/04/12	No		
	l. The Executive Member for Partnerships, Equality, the Visions and Communities should establish a mechanism to allow the sharing across community groups of resources such as training opportunities, skills, expertise and knowledge.	17/04/12	19/07/12		yes
	m. The Executive Member for Partnerships, Equality, the Visions and Communities should encourage communities developing parish plans to consider items and activities that have a lower purchase/build cost but provide better value than more expensive but less flexible items such as Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).	17/04/12	19/07/12		On Track

Review title	Recommendation	Date Agreed by OSMC	Date Adopted by Executive	Link to Exec Report	Implemented within 12 months?
	n. The Executive Member for Strategy, Performance and Community Safety should ensure that budgets allocated for the provision of Community Wardens, across all contributing organisations, are protected to enable their invaluable work to continue.	17/04/12	19/07/12		yes
	o. The Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Youth Service should ensure that budgets allocated for the provision of detached youth workers are protected to enable their invaluable work to continue.	17/04/12	19/07/12		yes
Pot Holes	1 Comply fully with the recommendations arising from the Department for Transport's report <i>Prevention and a Better Cure</i> .	18/09/12	29/11/12		On Track
	3 Develop and deliver a communications plan to engage the public in the reporting of potholes. This might be achieved through the publication of leaflets, through the Council's website or through advertising. Any materials should be written in ways that do not required prior technical knowledge.	18/09/12	29/11/12		yes
	4 Arrange for the authority's approach to the handling of potholes to be explained to parish councils at the District/Parish Conference.	18/09/12	29/11/12		yes
	5 Arrange for the authority's approach to the handling of potholes to be explained to Members of Thatcham Town Council.	18/09/12	29/11/12		yes
	6 Arrange for the authority's approach to the handling of potholes to be explained to Members of the Council at a Member Development Seminar.	18/09/12	29/11/12		
	7 Produce and distribute to all Member of the Council guidance on the methodology in place for pothole maintenance.	18/09/12	29/11/12		yes
	8 Give consideration to the introduction of a permanent 'find and fix' team to complement the existing proactive schemes already in place.	18/09/12	29/11/12		
	9 Give consideration to the Council taking part in the national MORI survey every two years, in order to monitor the public's satisfaction with the Council's pothole maintenance activities.	18/09/12	29/11/12		yes
Domestic Abuse	(1) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should take steps to secure the attendance at the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Forum representatives from schools and General Practitioners, to ensure that all appropriate agencies are represented.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(2) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Children and Young People should secure the necessary funding to make permanent the Domestic Abuse Response Team in order to ensure that its effective work continues.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(3) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Children and Young People should consider increasing the resources available to the Domestic Abuse Response Team in order to improve its resilience.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(4) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should take steps to ensure that the incoming Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) fully understands the value of the West Berkshire Independent Domestic Violence Adviser. The desired outcome would be for funding, which will move from the Home Office to the PCC's control, to be maintained at existing levels.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(5) In the event that the desired outcome at recommendation (4) cannot be achieved, the Council would need to review the implications of this decision.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(6) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing should make available funding to reduce the gap for Independent Domestic Violence Advisers in the district from the current 0.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to the 2.5 FTE recommended by the charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA).	30/10/12	14/02/13		

Review title	Recommendation	Date Agreed by OSMC	Date Adopted by Executive	Link to Exec Report	Implemented within 12 months?
	(7) In order to raise and maintain the profile of domestic abuse, the Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should publish a domestic abuse strategy, for which appropriate governance and delivery mechanisms should be established.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(8) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should review the 'Making Changes' programme to ensure that it is effective and fit for purpose.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(9) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should seek from HM Court and Tribunal Service that the Special Domestic Violence Court be reinstated in Newbury, in order to ensure that victims from West Berkshire receive justice expediently.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(10) Following the success of previous campaigns, the Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should develop and deliver a media and communications plan to maintain or improve the level at which domestic abuse is reported.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(11) The Chief Executive of the Royal Berkshire Hospital should develop, deliver and review the effectiveness of packages of training and support for all staff working in maternity, post-natal and accident and emergency units to ensure that they have the requisite skills and confidence to be able to identify, record and deal effectively with domestic abuse.	30/10/12	No		
	(12) The Chief Executive of the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust should provide assurance to the Safer Communities Partnership that funding for the post of Specialist Practitioner Domestic Abuse remains a priority, in order that her important and valued work continues.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(13) The Chairman of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board should critically examine the appropriateness and effect of the action taken in response to Recommendation 11 of the Pemberton Domestic Homicide Review, in order to ensure that its desired outcome is achieved.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(14) The Portfolio Holder for Housing should write to the Home Secretary requesting that she give consideration to the establishment of a national system for refuge provision, in order to ensure that there is an appropriate number and mix of accommodation type available.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(15) In order that professionals working with domestic abuse are able to understand the composite picture and manage resources accordingly, in conjunction with A2Dominion the Portfolio Holder for Housing should establish a mechanism to capture data on the total number of referrals being made to refuges, whether within the district or elsewhere. After six months of data collection, an assessment should be made as to the appropriateness of both the number and type of refuge accommodate provided.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(16) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing should develop and deliver a media and communications plan to counter negative perceptions of refuges held by the public, in order that those perceptions do not prevent, dissuade or otherwise deflect female victims of domestic abuse from seeking help from them when they need it.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(17) In order that all professionals with a need to know, do know, the Local Police Area Commander should take the necessary steps to ensure that data captured on the I-DASH can be shared with schools.	30/10/12	No		
	(18) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Children and Young People should ensure that there is no further reduction in the staffing of the West Berkshire YOT, in order to enable it to continue its valued work on Domestic Abuse.	30/10/12	No		
	(19) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Education should take steps to train Emotional Literacy Support Assistants as 'domestic abuse champions' in schools, in order to support all other school staff in dealing with domestic abuse.	30/10/12	14/02/13		

Review title	Recommendation	Date Agreed by OSMC	Date Adopted by Executive	Link to Exec Report	Implemented within 12 months?
	(20) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Education should take steps to make training in domestic abuse mandatory for all schools' staff, in order to ensure that they have the requisite skills and confidence to be able to identify, record and deal effectively with the effects in children of domestic abuse.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(21) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Safer Communities should ensure that a timetable is developed and that appropriate resources are made available in order to ensure that the domestic abuse tiered training system is delivered by no later than April 2013.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(22) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Children and Young People should, through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, consider re-running domestic abuse awareness and other training for voluntary organisations, in order to ensure that they have an appropriate level of understanding. The West Berkshire Volunteer Centre may be able to provide assistance in the promotion of the courses.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(23) The Chairman of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board should commission the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) scheme for adoption by the West Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, in order to improve the awareness of and responsiveness to domestic abuse by GP practices.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(24) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Corporate Services should ensure that levels of awareness of domestic abuse are increased amongst all staff, with specific training provided for those in identified posts.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
	(25) The Portfolio Holder responsible for Corporate Services should produce domestic abuse guidance for all Council staff, irrespective of status, in order that all are aware of the actions that might be taken in the event of another member of staff disclosing to them that they are experiencing domestic abuse.	30/10/12	14/02/13		
Homelessness	1. "The Executive Member for Housing should work with other local agencies to agree an accepted methodology for the counting of rough sleepers. A report outlining the production process and count should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission within 6 months of agreement."	11/12/12			
	2. "The Executive Member for Housing should advise the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions of the genuine concerns held locally that the impending changes to the benefits regime will have an adverse effect on homelessness in West Berkshire."	11/12/12			
	3. "The Executive Member for Housing should establish how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) plans to deliver Universal Benefits (which include Housing Benefit) locally and report by 31 March 2013 on plans for transferring Housing Benefit payment to DWP."	11/12/12			
	4. "The Executive Member for Housing should consider the production, either as part of the Homelessness Strategy or separately, of a 'reconnection' policy, to ensure that homeless people who have no local connection to West Berkshire are able to sustainably relocate to those places outside of the district with which they do have a link."	11/12/12			
	5. "The Executive Member for Strategic Support should ensure that time is made available at a District Parish Conference for Housing officers to explain to Councillors the content of, and rationale for, the Homelessness Strategy when agreed."	11/12/12			
	6. "At the next revision of the Council's Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Executive Member for Strategic Support should consider the offer by SHELTER to assist with housing advice, so as to ensure that the document contains the requirement for the Bureau to provide a dedicated housing advisor."	11/12/12			

Review title	Recommendation	Date Agreed by OSMC	Date Adopted by Executive	Link to Exec Report	Implemented within 12 months?
	7. "Performance monitoring reports received from the Citizens Advice Bureau relating to homelessness (including all financial advice), which are sent to the Executive Member for Strategic Support should be routinely made available to the Executive Member for Housing and his Shadow."	11/12/12			
	8. "The Executive Member for Housing should work, through the Local Government Association, the Government and especially the Valuation Office Agency, to achieve transparency of the factors and values taken into consideration by VOA when setting the Local Housing Allowance and, if possible, an appeal mechanism."	11/12/12			
	9. "The Executive Member for Housing should develop and implement a plan to heighten awareness of the causes and impacts of homelessness, particularly how it might be prevented and what help is (and is not) available. Consideration might be given to the following aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the awareness of all those whose work may bring them in contact with homelessness on the role of other organisations • The location of leaflets, including with partner organisations (for example Newbury Town Council, Thames Valley Police, libraries and detached youth workers) • The engagement of young people from before they enter the workforce, including through secondary schools, in financial and housing-related education • The content and language of leaflets. Assistance is available through Two Saints from people who have previously been homeless. 	11/12/12			
	10. "The Executive Member for Housing should ask Newbury Town Council to consider the provision of lockers to allow rough sleepers to store their possessions (for example sleeping bags) securely during the day."	11/12/12			
	11. "The Executive Member for Housing should ask the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to establish closer links with Loose Ends to ensure that any shortages of volunteers and other resources to enable them to provide a better service to their clients are met urgently and effectively."	11/12/12			
	12. "Further investigation should be undertaken into the reasons why West Berkshire seems to have a very large proportion of young families facing homelessness whose friends and extended family are unwilling or unable to provide them with temporary housing/accommodation."	11/12/12			
Call In - Healthwatch Commissioning	The Executive ensure that sufficient information is available in every report to allow a robust decision to be made.	04/02/13		No report - emailed directly to the Leader of the Council.	Yes

This page is intentionally left blank