

Notice of Meeting



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Executive

Thursday 25 March 2021 at 5.00pm

This meeting will be held in a virtual format in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday 17 March 2021

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Democratic Services Team on (01635) 519462

e-mail: executivecycle@westberks.gov.uk

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



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 25 March 2021 (continued)

To:	Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, Ross Mackinnon, Richard Somner, Jo Stewart and Howard Woollaston
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Agenda

Part I

Pages

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
- 2. Minutes** 5 - 16
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 11 February 2021.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).
- 4. Public Questions** 17 - 18
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the list of public questions is shown under item 4 in the agenda pack.
- 5. Petitions**
Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

Pages

- 6. New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty (EX4022)** 19 - 38
Purpose: To inform the Executive of the new duty placed on local authorities as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before Parliament, which includes a new duty for the Council to assess the need for support and prepare strategies to provide support for victims and their children [who need to reside] in relevant accommodation (also referred to as safe accommodation throughout this report).



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 25 March 2021 (continued)

Preparations have been undertaken in order to meet the new legal requirements and the Executive must agree how best the Council implements the new duty from April 2021 (if the Bill receives Royal Assent).

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7. **Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan (EX3833)** 39 - 92
Purpose: To seek approval for the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2020 - 2036.
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8. **Response to Council Motion - Scrutiny of Community Infrastructure Levy Payments (EX4004)** 93 - 100
Purpose: To provide a response to the Motion presented to the 3 December 2020 Council meeting.
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9. **Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse (EX4005)** 101 - 114
Purpose: To provide the response to the Motion presented to the 3 December 2020 Council meeting.
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10. **Capital Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2020/21 (EX3912)** 115 - 122
Purpose: The financial performance report provided to Members on a quarterly basis reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget. This report presents the Quarter Three financial position.
-
11. **Key Accountable Performance Report 2020/21: Quarter Three (EX3885)** 123 - 172
Purpose:
To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures (Council Strategy 2019-2023) are being managed effectively.
To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.
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12. **Members' Questions** 173 - 176
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
Please note that the list of Member questions is shown under item 12 in the agenda pack.
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Sarah Clarke
Service Director: Strategy and Governance

West Berkshire Council Strategy Priorities

Council Strategy Priorities:

PC1: Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

PC2: Support everyone to reach their full potential

OFB1: Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire

GP1: Develop local infrastructure to support and grow the local economy

GP2: Maintain a green district

SIT1: Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Stephen Chard on telephone (01635) 519462.



DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2021

Councillors Present: Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, Ross Mackinnon, Richard Somner, Jo Stewart and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance)), Sue Halliwell (Executive Director - Place), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Shiraz Sheikh (Legal Services Manager), Councillor Adrian Abbs, Councillor Phil Barnett, Councillor Jeff Brooks, Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Carlyne Culver, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Steve Masters, Councillor Erik Pattenden, Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Martha Vickers and Councillor Tony Vickers

PART I

78. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader, subject to the following amendments:

Item 75 – Members’ Questions – urgent questions (j) and (k) had been omitted:

- (j) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden on the supply, take-up and contents of food parcels distributed during the current lockdown to children at West Berkshire schools was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (k) The question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs on whether people who had paid for the Garden and Food Waste Service would receive a rebate while the service was suspended was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Environment.

It was also noted that the website links to the full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions needed to be enabled. Further, the published question and answer document for the Executive meeting held on 14 January 2021 only included the public questions and the Member questions needed to be included.

79. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

However, for the purpose of transparency, the Monitoring Officer announced that all Members had been granted a dispensation to participate in the debate in relation to those items concerned with the setting of Council Tax for the District. In particular, those Members with a beneficial interest in land within the Authority’s area which would otherwise be a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

80. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions will be available from the Council’s website in due course.

- (a) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of seeking external or internal advice on the closure of the football pitch would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

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- (b) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee on the subject of the online business case document for the A339 widening and London Road Industrial Estate access scheme was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (c) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee on the subject of what could be indicated by an Environmental Impact Assessment for the LRIE was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (d) The question submitted by Mr Darren King on the subject of public meetings to discuss topical issues was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (e) The question submitted by Mr Gary Puffett on the subject of laying off of staff in the midst of a national health emergency would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (f) The question submitted by Mr Graham Storey on the subject of changes in eligibility to join the housing list was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (g) The question submitted by Mr Thomas Tunney on the subject of proposed redundancies at the Council would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance.
- (h) The question submitted by Mr Mark Beach on the subject of investment in communications and public relations would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (i) The question submitted by Mr Simon Pike on the subject of the Grazeley site was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (j) The question submitted by Mr Simon Pike on the subject of AWE Burghfield and the Grazeley site would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (k) The question submitted by Mr Simon Pike on the subject of consultation on the AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (l) The question submitted by Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the need to use the Faraday Road football ground as a recreation space was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (m) The question submitted by Mr John Stewart on the subject of a redeveloped or a new football ground on the London Road Industrial Estate was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (n) The question submitted by Mr Jason Braidwood on the subject of reopening the Faraday Road football ground for the summer for local youth football was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (o) The question submitted by Mr Jack Harkness on the subject of proposals for the Rugby Club and/or the Diamond field was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (p) The question submitted by Mr Paul Morgan on the subject of the current timescales/plans to submit a planning application to build flats on the Newbury Faraday Road football ground was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

81. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

82. Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2021/22 (C3980)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code which set out the Council's proposed Investment and Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to adopt the following recommendations:

- (1) To agree and adopt the proposed Investment and Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22;
- (2) To agree and adopt the revised 2021 Property Investment Strategy.

Other options considered: Not applicable.

83. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 (C3981)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and which were aligned with the Council Strategy to ensure delivery of that strategy. The MTFS highlighted the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances as well the many different scenarios and uncertainties concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.

The Council was able to commence the next four years of the MTFS from a strong financial base and this position together with future projects were set out in the report. The report was seconded by Councillor Lynne Doherty.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that in the discussion on the Medium Term Financial Statement in the previous year he had asked for a retrospective look over the last couple of years to see how accurate the Council had been in its forecasting and modelling. Councillor Ross Mackinnon did recall such a conversation. However, he advised that although the MTFS was a forward looking document he would see what could be done to provide the information that Councillor Brooks had requested.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to page 62 of the agenda and in particular paragraph 3.4.1. He asked if more detail could be provided for the public in relation to the significant proportion of the Council's budget which was delivered through partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors and how much of the Council's spend it had no control over.

RESOLVED that approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be recommended to Council.

Other options considered: Option of doing nothing and just focussing on the financial position for the year ahead, but this had been disregarded as it would prevent longer term financial planning and would have a negative impact on the delivery of the Council Strategy.

84. Capital Strategy and Programme 2021/22 - 2023/24 (C3982)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) concerning the Capital Strategy which covered financial years 2021/22 – 2023/24 together with the supporting funding framework, which provided a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The approval route for the Asset Management Strategy (Appendix D to the report) was questioned as being a decision of the Executive or a Council function.

(Post meeting note: the Asset Management Strategy was confirmed as forming part of the Council's Budget Framework and as such could be put to Council for approval).

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RESOLVED that Council be recommended to adopt the following recommendations:

- (1) That the Capital Strategy and supporting Capital Programme for the period 2021/22 – 2023/24 be approved.
- (2) That the supporting Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (Appendix C) for the period 2021/22 – 2023/24 be approved.
- (3) That the supporting Asset Management Strategy (Appendix D) be approved.
- (4) That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy (Appendix E) for the period 2021/22 be approved.
- (5) That the proposed CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Bids for inclusion in the Capital programme 2021/22 (Appendix F) be approved.

Other options considered: Not applicable.

85. **Revenue Budget 2021/22 (C3983)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning the 2021-22 Revenue Budget, which proposed a Council Tax requirement of £104.32m, requiring a Council Tax increase of 1.99%. The Council Tax increase would raise £2.04m. The Council was not proposing any use of the Adult Social Care precept and there would therefore not be any increase in the precept. The overall Council Tax increase was intended to balance the financial impact of the pandemic on residents, mitigating the financial pressures they faced, as well as the cost pressures that the Council faced.

The budget detailed the investment for the year ahead to deliver the Council Strategy and support core Council Services. This included investment in Adult Social Care, economic development and prevention work. The budget also allocated revenue funding to deliver the Capital Strategy that had a substantial amount of investment in infrastructure for the year ahead, included savings proposals, other income sources and £3.2m of support from Government for Covid-19 costs. The Council was proposing to support the budget with a £2.2m contribution from reserves; it was rare that the Council would use such a sizeable level of one-off support for the budget but the impact of the pandemic on the current year budget, allied to Government financial support, had led to an expected underspend in the current year that was being proposed to partially be used to support the 2021-22 budget.

This report also proposed the Fees and Charges for 2021-22 as set out in Appendix F and the Parish Expenses as set out in Appendix G and recommended the level of General Reserves as set out in Appendix E.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon in introducing the report highlighted that information on Parish precepts was still awaited, as was the norm at this stage of the financial year. This information would however be incorporated for the debate on the Revenue Budget at the Council meeting on 2 March 2021.

Councillor Mackinnon then drew Members' attention to the consultation and engagement section of the report. This section was incomplete as the consultation process was still ongoing. Further consultation included an online consultation meeting with local businesses and a Facebook Live event taking place on 16 February 2021 where residents could ask questions on the budget.

Councillor Mackinnon next referred to the recommendations of the Licensing Committee from its meeting on 8 February 2021. The response to these recommendations would be considered in time for the Council meeting.

A response would also be provided at the March Council to the Motion presented by Councillor Martha Vickers at the Council meeting in December 2020 regarding the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

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It was confirmed to Councillor Martha Vickers that she would be able to speak in support of her Motion on 2 March 2021.

RESOLVED that Council was recommended to resolve as follows:

- (1) That Council approves the 2021-22 Council Tax requirement of £104.32 million, requiring a Council Tax increase of 1.99% with a 0% increase in the Council Tax Precept ring-fenced for adult social care.
- (2) That the Fees and Charges are approved as set out in Appendix F and the appropriate statutory notices be placed where required.
- (3) That the Parish Expenses of £xxxx are approved as set out in Appendix G.
- (4) It is proposed to again provide a £150 reduction to Council Tax for claimants receiving Council Tax Reduction falling within a working age category during the 2021-22 financial year. Where the balance to pay for a working age claimant is less than £150, we will credit all the remaining liability through this hardship scheme. The remaining funding from the allocation of £838k will be utilised to support the Collection Fund and consideration of the further impact on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as well as the overall Collection Fund.
- (5) That it be noted that the following amounts for the year 2021-22 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (by the Localism Act 2011):
 - (a) £65,343.65 being the amount calculated by the Council, (Item T) in accordance with regulation 31B of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), as its council tax base for the year (the number of properties paying council tax).
 - (b) Part of the Council's area as per Appendix K being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates.
- (6) Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021-22 (excluding Parish precepts) is £xxxxxxx.
- (7) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2021-22 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act 2011:-
 - (a) £xxxxxxx being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2), (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish councils.
 - (b) £xxxxxxx being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3), (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - (c) £xxxxxxx being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R).
 - (d) £xxxx being the amount at 7(c) above (Item R), all divided by 5(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the 'basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts)'.
 - (e) £xxxxx being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Appendix K).
 - (f) £1596.41 being the amount at 7(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 7(e) above by the amount at 5(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relates.
- (8) That it be noted that for the year 2021-22, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley & The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have issued

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precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Councils area as indicated in Appendix K.

- (9) That the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables in Appendix K as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021-22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- (10) To consider the motion presented at the Council meeting of 3rd December 2020 regarding the Citizen's Advice Bureau and to reject or approve.

Other options considered: The budget proposal contains a blend of savings options and Council Tax changes. The Council could go to a Council Tax referendum to put substantially more money into the budget, though this had been rejected due to the quality of Council services that were able to be provided within the existing budget and that the increased burden on local taxpayers could have a negative local economic impact.

86. Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2020/21 (EX3911)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the in-year financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets as at Quarter Three of 2020/21.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon advised that usually the Revenue and Capital Quarterly Monitoring reports would be brought together but it had been decided to bring the Revenue report through earlier prior to the Council meeting on 2 March 2021. The Quarter Three forecast was an under spend of £3.4m which was 2.7% of the Council's 2020/21 net revenue budget of £131m. This was mainly due to underspends in the People Directorate of £3.2m – Adult Social Care (£1.8m), Children and Family Services (£1m) and Education (£360k). It was recognised that it was a significant change from the previous quarter. At year end there would be a further reconciliation between the Covid-19 non-ring fenced Government grant where the Council would apportion as much cost and income losses to the Government funding as appropriate which would then mean any under spend would flow into the Council's general reserve. Further discussions on the budget would take place at the Council meeting on 2 March 2021.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that he had tried to understand the difficulties in managing the budget and he felt that people would rather see the Council using the under spend. It was a tragedy that Covid was having a positive impact on the budget particularly in Adult Social Care but Councillor Brooks had mentioned at the last Executive meeting that he could see an overspend of at least £3m being reported at year end. The budget position had changed considerably in a matter of three weeks and he felt that the forecasting needed to improve which was why he wanted to look back at the MTFs outturn for the previous year. Councillor Ross Mackinnon responded that it was not down to inaccurate modelling but the second wave of Covid had had an unfortunate impact on the budget. The MTFs was built over a four year period and Officers and Members would continually monitor the budget position over that period and make any necessary changes to the model.

Councillor Dominic Boeck felt that Councillor Brooks had made some good points but the Council had faced and continued to face uncertainty due to the effects of Covid. Some of the things which had been anticipated to happen over the last year had not actually arisen, such as the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, and therefore there would always be a degree of uncertainty around the process.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to the graph on page 206 of the agenda and the fact that the vertical axis was showing dates rather than numbers. He felt that the number of

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excess deaths had been made worse by the Conservative Government's actions, inactions and the reluctance to impose lockdowns. For every person who died there was a family who was grieving. Councillor Graham Bridgman agreed that the number of deaths in care homes in particular had been tragic but a large majority of the homes were not in the Council's control. In respect of the Government's role he admitted that there had been difficulties and problems at the outset but these had been addressed and that the Government had done well particularly around testing and vaccinations. Every death was a tragedy for both that person's family and the staff who had been treating them and it was not appropriate to lay the blame on the Government in the midst of a pandemic.

Councillor Erik Pattenden referred to the £1m under spend in Children and Family Services and asked what could be done in a short space of time to help address the problems the young people were experiencing in West Berkshire at present. Councillor Dominic Boeck was not sure that it would be possible to use the £1m under spend without defining exactly what projects it would be supporting. It would be a matter for the budget discussion at Council on 2 March.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to recent e-mails he had received about funding of early years settings and he wondered whether the Council would be in a position to support them. Councillor Dominic Boeck thanked Councillor Vickers for raising this issue and advised that a letter would be going out in the next couple of days to all early years settings advising them of how they could apply for grant funding.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Other options considered: None.

87. **Potential Redundancies - Strategy and Governance (EX3976)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 11) concerning a restructure in the Strategy and Governance Department resulting in the creation of 21.5 new posts, including investment into an additional 7.5 posts (one of which was fixed term for 12 months), 14 post were to be deleted. This resulted in the potential for some redundancies and the report sought authority for redundancy payments to be made if necessary. The overarching purpose of the new structure in Strategy and Governance was to:

- Improve the delivery of services to the Council's customers;
- Enhance and consolidate the council's governance arrangements;
- Deliver more effective digital and transformation solutions that provided better services;
- Continue to provide effective support services to the Council.

Councillor Jo Stewart was pleased to have the opportunity to present this Part I version of the report so that she could give further insight into the reasoning of officers for this restructure.

A reorganisation in any organisation could never be entered into lightly. They were both very time consuming and had an unsettling effect on those involved. A reorganisation was of course most difficult when it involved redundancies. Councillor Stewart did make it clear that not all deleted posts would result in redundancies being made. It was anticipated that some of those officers identified as being at risk of redundancy would be redeployed into a new role.

However, a reorganisation was at times necessary as all organisations needed to grow and adapt with the times, especially to meet the requirements of their customers.

Councillor Stewart then stated that strong and effective governance was vital for any local authority. Therefore, the new roles included bringing in additional legal expertise

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and experience that would work, for example, on ensuring that residents' information remained secure and that key services were able to provide information to residents as soon as possible.

The new structure would also help to deliver transformational initiatives and introduce more effective digitisation solutions that would benefit both officers and residents.

Communication had become of even greater importance than before, as evidenced throughout the pandemic. It was important to build on the work undertaken to date. The new structure would help to deliver the Communication and Engagement Strategy, and find ways to engage more with young people.

The reorganisation also offered career development and career pathways to officers. This was an area highlighted by officers as being a need.

Councillor Stewart advised that she had been questioned on the timing of the restructure during a pandemic. In response to that point she highlighted two particularly key areas.

There was, in some areas of work, a reliance on paper based processes which were very difficult to deliver when it had been necessary to work remotely. This was not sustainable.

Neither should there be an over reliance on individuals. This was not sustainable for either the individual concerned or their colleagues. Greater resilience was needed.

Councillor Stewart concluded by stating she had every confidence in officers to deliver a renewed and reinvigorated structure that would help the Council deliver the transformation needed for the Digital Strategy and the Community and Engagement Strategy in particular.

In seconding the report Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that as Leader of the Council it was her duty to ensure that the valued services provided by the Council to residents continued to improve into the future. This could result in the need to take difficult decisions that impacted on individuals. However, the Council primarily existed to support the communities of West Berkshire with services run in the interest of residents. Services should be delivered in the most effective and efficient ways possible. West Berkshire Council was committed within the Council Strategy to do so and provide sustainable services through innovation and partnerships. It was therefore important to review ways of working and embrace changes and opportunities made possible by technology. Councillor Doherty was pleased that the restructure would help to improve services provided to residents via digital and transformation solutions.

The restructure unfortunately meant that some existing posts would be deleted, but she pointed out that the Council would be following its organisational change policy which meant that dedicated support would be provided to help those at risk of redundancy find suitable redeployment within the Council. The policy provided salary protection for a period of up to 18 months if an officer was redeployed to a post that was a grade lower than their previous role.

Redundancies were a worse-case scenario and she understood the difficulties this created for individuals. However, there were times when a reorganisation was necessary and these proposals were driven by business need.

Councillor Graham Bridgman commented that it was useful to reflect upon the progress being made by the Council. Each of the three Directorates had an Executive Director in place. This enabled the Chief Executive a more strategic role. Service Directors had also been created and it was important to allow those officers the ability to make decisions on the structure of their service in liaison with their Executive Director and the Chief

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Executive. This report was an example of this. The restructure had been through a lengthy consultation process.

It was regrettable that staff could be lost, but the restructure was needed to reflect the needs of the organisation and the needs of residents. He was supportive of the restructure and stated that more people would be employed in the service than before.

Councillor Lee Dillon explained that he was grateful for the briefings he had received from the Service Director on this restructure which were helpful in understanding its aims. He had noted changes to the structure post these briefings.

He agreed that it was for Service Directors to lead on restructures, but this was an area of the Council where Councillors had regular interaction and greater involvement was therefore appropriate.

Greater digitisation of services should be aimed for and it was right that this was part of the restructure. Councillor Dillon recognised however that this was at an early stage and time should be allowed for the new structure to be implemented, but he requested that progress be reviewed in perhaps one year's time to assess if the efficiencies being aimed for were being achieved.

Councillor Carolyne Culver felt that the timing of this proposal was terrible. She acknowledged that new jobs were being created as well as being deleted, but this was at a time when the labour market was poor and Councillor Culver was concerned that should people be made redundant at the end of this process then they could struggle to find work.

She then sought reassurance that existing staff could apply for the newly created jobs and had the necessary skills to do so. If there was a skills gap then would officers be trained to enable them to stay with the Council?

Councillor Stewart acknowledged the point around timing. She was in a position where she was able to emphasise with the difficult circumstance this had put some staff in. However, the timing of a restructure would always be difficult.

Councillor Stewart then confirmed that efforts would be made to fill any skills gaps to enable an officer to apply for a new role. The workforce should be empowered to improve their skills base.

Councillor Culver then referred to paragraph 5.5 of the report which mentioned single points of failure. She requested further information on that and particular areas where this was the case. In response, Councillor Stewart stated that an over reliance on some roles/individuals was not sustainable at this or indeed at any other time. She gave Land Charges as an example of an area of work that was primarily run on a paper based process and stated that the opportunity should be taken to make use of technology to improve the service provided and make it more efficient for residents using sustainable solutions.

Paragraph 5.14 stated that the Council would support staff in being redeployed, but Councillor Culver asked for clarification on whether staff would be compelled to be redeployed into a lower grade role. Would an employee still be entitled to redundancy if they did not take a lower grade role that had been offered to them?

Councillor Stewart offered to respond to this query external to the meeting once she had consulted Human Resources Officers.

Councillor Steve Masters referred to the points made around a lack of resilience. However, he was concerned that this could be a result of previous redundancies and cost

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savings, and therefore the issue of a lack of resilience was perhaps one of the Council's own making.

He highlighted the importance of investing in training for officers to enable them to maintain their role or move up to another role, rather than being redeployed to a lower grade post with only 18 months' salary protection. Posts were being created, but Councillor Masters felt that existing staff should be invested in so they could be redeployed and more done to avoid redundancies.

Councillor Stewart was not easily able to comment on past decisions as being relatively new as a Council Member, a point acknowledged by Councillor Masters. She did however give her understanding that there had been very few redundancies in recent years.

As already stated, resilience would be improved via the restructure and the new posts.

In terms of training, this was a topic she regularly discussed with officers. Officers should be helped to perform their role to the best of their ability and training was an important part of that.

Efforts would continue to be made to redeploy staff at risk of redundancy as soon as possible.

Councillor Dominic Boeck confirmed the point made by Councillor Stewart that there had been very few, if any, redundancies in this part of the Council in recent years. He added his view that it was the right time to take advantage of rapidly changing technology to improve service delivery.

Councillor Masters made the point that reduced resource could have come as a result of departing staff not being replaced rather than from redundancies.

RESOLVED that the redundancy payments detailed in the Part II report be authorised.

Other options considered:

Consideration was given to not proceeding with the restructure. This option was ruled out as there was a clear business need to ensure that the new Department could function efficiently and effectively and the existing structure did not support this.

Consideration was also given to delaying the implementation of the restructure. This option was not considered viable due to the need to ensure that the new Department could function efficiently and effectively as noted above, and in order to meet current business need and even more so now in light of the impact and new learnings following Covid-19.

88. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions will be available from the Council's website in due course.

- (a) The question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of capitalising on the increase in outdoor country exercise on foot around major settlements was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (b) The question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers on the subject of the development of a Health and Wellbeing Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (c) The question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers on the subject of problems with dog fouling on streets and open spaces was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.

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- (d) The question submitted by Councillor David Marsh on the subject of a debate and decision over the proposed new sports ground at Newbury Rugby Club by full Council was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (e) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of proposed facilities for the Plan B site of the Diamond Field and the impact on local residents was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (f) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of funding and resources for organisations supporting children’s physical and mental health was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (g) The question submitted by Councillor Phil Barnett on the subject of the number of extra housing units created by a change in use from office blocks to residential accommodation over the last three years was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.

89. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

90. Potential Redundancies - Strategy & Governance (EX3976)

(Paragraph 1 – information relating to an individual)

(Paragraph 2 – information identifying an individual)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

(Paragraph 4 – information relating to terms proposed in negotiations in labour relation matters)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 14) which sought authority for redundancy payments to be made, if necessary, following a restructure in the Strategy and Governance Department.

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

Other options considered:

Consideration was given to not proceeding with the restructure. This option was ruled out as there was a clear business need to ensure that the new Department could function efficiently and effectively and the existing structure did not support this.

Consideration was also given to delaying the implementation of the restructure. This option was not considered viable due to the need to ensure that the new Department could function efficiently and effectively as noted above, and in order to meet current business need and even more so now in light of the impact and new learnings following Covid-19.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 7.20pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 March 2021.

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

(a) **Question submitted by Gareth Beard to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:**

"Some councils are doing trials of electric refuse collection vehicles. What aspirations do West Berks have of introducing these types of vehicles to achieve net zero and when and how might you achieve this aspiration?"

(b) **Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Leader:**

"Is there anything in conservative ethos that makes it wrong for a person or institution to try and protect any asset that they have legally obtained?"

(d) **Question submitted by Stuart Gourley to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

"Based on the indicative plans in your approved Master Plan for the LRIE, which involves demolishing the rest of an Asset of Community Value, and based on current CIL rates; what is the West Berks Council forecasted income from CIL funds due to the redevelopment of the LRIE?"

(e) **Question submitted by Alison May to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:**

"When will the council release details of their Carbon Sequestration and Storage Performance Management plans into the public domain?"

(f) **Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"Has the council considered the Show Ground at Hermitage as a potential ground for housing?"

(g) **Question submitted by Ian Morrin to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

"How much budget is assigned to the education team and how is their effectiveness measured?"

(h) **Question submitted by Graham Storey to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"How many people tried to apply for the new housing register and what proportion of the old register (qualifying and non-qualifying) does that number represent?"

(m) **Question submitted by Alex Pulley to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:**

"Will West Berkshire Council agree to a 'moratorium on incineration' with immediate effect?"

Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 March 2021.

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

(c) **Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"I was recently told by a council housing officer that there was a surplus of 2 bed flats to rent in the area. has there been any planning into the size and distribution of the numerous new flats being built in the area?"

(i) **Question submitted by Graham Storey to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"How many people, who were assessed as qualifying under the old system, were accepted onto the new register and how many were rejected?"

(l) **Question submitted by Stuart Gourley to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

"If the Rugby Club proposal gets the go ahead from the Executive will the Council withdraw its planning application 20/02402/REG3 to demolish the clubhouse at Faraday Road?"

(j) **Question submitted by Graham Storey to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"How many people, who were assessed as non-qualifying under the old system, were accepted onto the new register and how many were rejected?"

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

Committee considering report:	Executive on 25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Howard Woollaston
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	9 February 2021
Report Author:	Jade Wilder
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4022

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report has been produced to inform the Executive of the new duty placed on local authorities as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before Parliament, which includes a new duty for the Council to assess the need for support and prepare strategies to provide support for victims and their children [who need to reside] in relevant accommodation (also referred to as safe accommodation throughout this report).
- 1.2 Preparations have been undertaken in order to meet our new legal requirements and the Executive must agree how best the Council implements the new duty from April 2021 (if the Bill receives Royal Assent).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the role of our Domestic Abuse Strategy Group is revised to enable it to become the 'West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board' in order to fulfil the new requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill and accompanying statutory guidance. *Please refer to Appendix B and C for the draft Terms of Reference and Procedure note.*
- 2.2 It is also being recommended that, once received, the additional burden funding is used for two purposes; firstly to recruit administrative support within the Building Communities Together Team with responsibility for providing support to the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board and secondly commissioning additional services where gaps in support and safe accommodation have been identified through the required needs assessment.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The Council will be receiving £250,101 from the 1st April 2021 in the form of a non-ringfenced grant for additional burdens associated with the functions of the new duty. This funding covers 2 combined aspects; support costs i.e. commissioning services and administrative burdens. It is yet to be determined how long this funding will be available for and if the amount is subject to change but it is expected that it will be paid on an annual basis. This duty is resource intensive but funding may also cease in the future which could lead to financial implications leading to decisions being required at a later date.</p> <p>Financial Manager: Lisa Potts</p> <p>Date agreed report: 08/02/2021</p>
Human Resource:	None.
Legal:	<p>Amongst other new responsibilities, the Council will be under a legal obligation based on the new duty to assess the need for support and prepare strategies to provide support for victims and their children [who need to reside] in safe accommodation. If we do not implement the new duty from 1st April 2021 then there will be legal implications as the Council would be in breach of its statutory obligations. All work to prepare for the new duty has been undertaken and legal advice was sought which highlighted the need to bring the duty to Executive.</p> <p>Legal officer: Holly Whitwham</p> <p>Date agreed report: 8 February 2021</p>
Risk Management:	<p>The only risk identified is victims of domestic abuse and children of domestic abuse are required to be a statutory member of the new Domestic Abuse Board.</p> <p>In order to meet the membership requirement it is recognised that it may not be appropriate for victims of DA and children of DA victims to sit on the Board.</p> <p>To manage this risk the Board will ensure the voice of victims/survivors and their children are provided by a specialist practitioner on their behalf where appropriate to do so.</p>

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

	It is known that some practitioners are themselves survivors of domestic abuse and can therefore provide insight for the Board when required.			
Property:	No property related issues identified at this stage, however as the duty focusses on accommodation based support for domestic abuse victims we may be required to expand our accommodation support if gaps are identified e.g. dispersed accommodation and work jointly with housing and property services to address this if and when it arises.			
Policy:	The new Duty relates to the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020, currently going through parliament. The Bill is passing through the House of Lords and is expected to receive Royal Assent by April 2021.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		Please refer to Appendix A, EqIA assessment.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			The new duty will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs. A broad definition of 'accommodation-based services has been proposed to meet the support needs of diverse groups of victims and children. For example; we will be required to provide "Specialist safe accommodation which provide dedicated specialist support to victims with protected characteristics and/or complex needs, such as specialist refuges for BAME, LGBT, and disabled victims and their children."

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT Impact:		x		
Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities:		x		<p>Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>The proposal will support this priority because it will ensure all victims of domestic abuse have access to the right support within safe accommodation when they need it so they are not at further risk or harm</p>
Core Business:		x		
Data Impact:		x		
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Internal: Howard Woollaston (Portfolio Holder, Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture), Hilary Cole (Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing), Gary Lugg (Head of Development and Planning), Matt Pearce (Service Director, Communities and Wellbeing), Janet Weekes (Housing Service Manger), Susan Powell (BCT Manager), Zoe Campbell (Public Health Category Manager), Lisa Potts (Finance Manager) Holly Whitwham (Solicitor - Corporate & Communities).</p> <p>External: all 19 housing register providers, members of BCT Partnership, members of DA Strategy Group, members of Housing Board, members of Homelessness Strategy Group, members of Health and Wellbeing Board, Standing Together Charity and Safe Lives Charity.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Domestic Abuse Bill currently making its way through parliament places a new statutory duty on the Council to assess the need for support and prepare strategies to provide support for victims and their children [who need to reside] in safe accommodation. The new duty must be implemented from 1st April 2021.

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

- 4.2 The Council is required to establish and appoint a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which will be responsible for performing certain specified functions of the new duty.
- 4.3 To support local authorities with this new duty, the Council will be receiving £250,101 additional funding for any new burdens associated to implementing the duty from 1st April 2021. This will be paid in the form of a non-ringfenced grant and covers 2 combined aspects; support costs i.e. commissioning services and administrative burdens. It is yet to be determined how long this funding will be available for and if the amount is subject to change but it is expected that it will be paid on an annual basis. This duty is resource intensive but funding may also cease in the future and there may be a financial impact leading to decisions being required
- 4.4 The following proposals are being made for agreement by the Board:
- The role of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group is revised to enable it fulfil the role of the 'West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board' which will be responsible for performing the new requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill. It will also serve a function to provide strategic oversight for all domestic abuse related activity.
 - Once received, the additional burden funding is used for two purposes; firstly to recruit administrative support within the Building Communities Together Team with responsibility for providing support to the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board and secondly commissioning additional services where gaps in support and safe accommodation have been identified through the required needs assessment.
- 4.5 The recommendations detailed within this report are approved as they are based on extensive and detailed planning that has been undertaken to inform it. There have also been a number of conversations with internal stakeholders to consider the best approach the Council should take to implement the new Duty. It is felt that the recommendations meet all legal requirements whilst taking into consideration professional's time and capacity by making the slightest of changes to current processes which is needed to fulfil our Duty.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The report seeks to inform the Board of a new statutory duty which must be fulfilled from April 2021. It includes a new duty for the Council to assess the need for support and prepare strategies to provide support for victims and their children [who need to reside] in safe accommodation.
- 5.2 Certain functions of the new duty have to be considered as part of the preparation work leading up to the commencement from 1st April 2021. This is detailed within the report and requires Executive approval.

Background

- 5.3 The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill is currently making its way through parliament and if it receives Royal Assent, as expected, it places a new duty on all Tier 1 local

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

authorities. The new duty will require the Council to make appropriate arrangements to fulfil its new functions.

- 5.4 The Council will be required to report on the progress of meeting this duty and submit an annual reports as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year. This should be within 3 months following the end of the financial year.
- 5.5 To assist the Council in preparing for the new Duty all Tier 1 local authorities received a £50k Capacity Building Fund from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that there were adequate resources to plan, prepare for implementation and properly engage with key agencies. The capacity building fund is not associated with the functions of the new duty. An earlier report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board where it was decided how the funding would be used.
- 5.6 A summary report will be shared with the MHCLG on how this funding has contributed to our preparation for the duty.

Safe Accommodation

5.7 The Council must adhere to all aspects listed below defined as safe accommodation when fulfilling this duty. All support must be provided to victims of domestic abuse, or their children, who reside in safe accommodation and should meet the MHCLG Quality Standards.

- Refuge accommodation;
- Specialist safe accommodation (i.e. dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs);
- Dispersed accommodation (i.e. safe self-contained accommodation and self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation);
- Sanctuary Schemes;
- Move-on and / or second stage accommodation;
- Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation.

Support

5.8 Domestic abuse support includes the expert help provided to victims and their children by the specialist staff in domestic abuse support services. The Council must ensure support is provided within safe accommodation which includes the following:

- Overall management of services within relevant accommodation;
- Support with the day-to-day running of the service;
- Advocacy support;
- Domestic abuse prevention advice;
- Specialist support for victims (i.e. designed specifically for victims with relevant protected as well as unique and / or complex needs);
- Children's support;
- Housing-related support;
- Advice service (i.e. financial and legal support);
- Counselling and therapy.

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards

- 5.9 The Act will place a duty on the Council to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions. This duty is separate to local authority housing duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 5.10 The new Board must fulfil certain specific functions in order to meet this new duty, which fall outside the remit of both the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group and Homelessness Strategy Group in their current format. The functions include:
- a) Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area;
 - b) Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the needs assessment;
 - c) Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
 - d) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy;
 - e) Monitor any impact of the new duty on the provision of community based support (through effect of the strategy);
 - f) Report back annually to central government.
- 5.11 The statutory membership requirements of this Board will need to consist of representatives of West Berkshire Council, Victims of domestic abuse (DA), Children of DA victims, DA Charities and other Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, Health Care services, Policing or criminal justice.
- 5.12 In order to meet the membership requirement it is recognised that it may not be appropriate for victims of DA and children of DA victims to sit on the Board. The Board will need to decide how it enables the voices of victims to be heard. A senior practitioner can represent the interest of victims of DA and children of DA victim on their behalf.
- 5.13 The Council are also expected to work collaboratively with, at a minimum, neighbouring local authorities by for example, sharing local data and service information.
- 5.14 The new Board will support the Council in meeting this duty. This will be through providing expert advice, data and information for the needs assessment, feeding into the development of domestic abuse strategies and reporting requirements, as well as supporting a joined-up approach amongst wider domestic abuse areas.

Needs Assessment

- 5.15 The needs assessment required to be conducted is designed to support the Council in identifying the needs of victims within the area, which will allow the Board to then develop robust strategies which addresses these needs.
- 5.16 The MHCLG will provide a recommended standardised needs assessment form to create consistency across the country. This will set out in detail what data and information should be collected. The needs assessment form will be available ahead of the duty coming into force in April 2021.

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

- 5.17 A needs assessments will need to be conducted prior to developing any strategies in order to meet the requirements set out in the duty. The needs assessment itself will not have to be published but the resulting strategy will be.
- 5.18 A full local needs assessments should be conducted at a minimum every 3 years, with a refresh being undertaken on an annual basis to ensure any change in demand or support requirements are adequately captured.
- 5.19 To ensure the Council is adequately prepared to begin conducting a local needs assessment from April 2021 it is proposed that there a commissioning process is instigated. External charities have been contacted to explore if they may be able to assist us in this piece of work to ascertain the potential success of any commissioning process. This will be a short term contract but specialists in both the domestic abuse and safe accommodation sector will be invited to submit quotes to conduct our needs assessment.

Strategies

- 5.20 The Council must prepare and publish a local strategy informed by our robust needs assessment by August 2021. Strategies must be reviewed every three years.
- 5.21 Strategies will clearly set out our overall and holistic approach to deliver a rounded offer of support to victims in safe accommodation. It will also set our needs identified and how this will be addressed.
- 5.22 In order to give effect to our strategy, the Council should ensure support is commissioned (directly and / or through de-commissioning) in safe accommodation to meet the needs of victims and their children in line with our local strategy as soon as reasonably practicable. No commissioned services under the duty include locality restrictions; this ensures victims are not turned away from accessing support on this basis due to where they originally resided
- 5.23 Unless there is good reason not to, commissioning should at a minimum reflect the period covered under the local strategy (3 years).

Additional Burden Funding

- 5.24 Funding for new burdens associated with the duty will be allocated separately upon commencement from 1st April 2021. An allocations consultation was undertaken and closed on 13 November 2020, which sought views on the proposed methodology for allocation under the new duty; the MHCLG consultation response was published on 12 February 2021.
- 5.25 The government announced £125 million of funding in 2021-22 to enable local authorities to meet these new duties. To ensure consistency of local government funding, MHCLG have applied a Relative Needs Formula to determine local allocations. The relative needs formula takes in to account the size of the local population, relative deprivation and area cost adjustment.
- 5.26 West Berkshire has been allocated £250,101 in the form of a non-ringfenced grant, this will be made available from 1st April 2021. The funding covers 2 combined aspects, this includes; support costs i.e. commissioning services and administrative burdens.

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

Local domestic abuse and safe accommodation support

- 5.27 In West Berkshire the current accommodation based support for Domestic Abuse victims is provided by A2dominion, the commissioned domestic abuse service.
- 5.28 Refuge is predominately provided to clients who are out of area (non-West Berkshire residents). A reciprocal arrangement occurs with areas outside of our local authority for West Berkshire residents. Our domestic abuse service does turn away clients from out of area for Refuge if they cannot meet their needs or if they pose a risk. If a West Berkshire resident isn't accepted into a chosen Refuge then A2Dominion will support them to find another, or support them to stay in their own home safely if that's what they wanted. Background checks are undertaken on all clients referred into our West Berkshire Refuge.
- 5.29 In respect of the numbers of clients A2dominion have supported who have successfully secured a place into Refuge annual figures are as follows: 12 (2015/16), 12 (2016/17), 8 (2017/18), 6 (2018/19) and 6 (2019/20).
- 5.30 In West Berkshire, there are 4 units (6 bedrooms) available for Refuge which includes a combination of family rooms and rooms for single women.
- 5.31 Refuge is only temporary accommodation and usually clients have to be moved out within 6 months. A common struggle A2dominion face is securing accommodation for clients when their time in Refuge is up.
- 5.32 Move-on and second stage accommodation will be offered for clients leaving Refuge and the Domestic Abuse Service will work with the Council's Housing team should they need to secure accommodation if difficulties arise.
- 5.33 The Council's Housing department provide accommodation to West Berkshire residents. Data shows that the numbers of those at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse were 33 out of 616 clients in 2018/19, 30 out of 454 clients in 2019/20 and 18 out of 209 clients up to Q2 2020/21. This is a total of 81 clients over 3 years.
- 5.34 There is also the Sanctuary Scheme through which the Council's Housing Options Team give advice and assistance on making homes safer environments for victims. If a tenant is living in a housing association property then this is supported by their allocated housing officer who will be able to make the relevant referral. A home visit will then usually be made by the Housing Officer and with any necessary works undertaken by the maintenance teams. If someone does not live in a housing association property then the Council's Housing Team can assist with making a referral for any works to be completed.
- 5.35 Gaps initially identified are specialist safe accommodation for those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs and dispersed accommodation.

Proposals

- 5.36 It is proposed that the most appropriate option for the Council in establishing a local Partnership Board would be to revise the purpose of the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy Group to enable it to become the 'West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board'.

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

- 5.37 The new West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board could meet quarterly with representation similar to the current Domestic Abuse Strategy Group but with membership revised to include officers with seniority to ensure that the Board can adequately fulfil all functions including for example commission/de-commissioning decisions of new and/or existing Domestic Abuse Services.
- 5.38 The West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board could meet for 2 ½ hours and with an agenda in two parts to ensure the duties of the current Domestic Abuse Strategy Group continue to be fulfilled whilst in addition delivering the functions set out in the new Duty.
- 5.39 In order to meet the membership requirements of having victims of domestic abuse and children of DA victims sit on the Board whilst considering the risk implication, the voice of victims/survivors and their children could be provided by a specialist practitioner on their behalf where appropriate to do so. This could also be managed by directly having a survivor on the Board where appropriate (for example some service provider staff are also survivors of Domestic Abuse).
- 5.40 *Please refer to Appendix B and C for the draft Terms of Reference and Procedure Note for the West Berkshire Board.*
- 5.41 It is also proposed that once received, the additional burden funding is used for two purposes; firstly to recruit administrative support within the Building Communities Together Team who will be responsible for providing support to the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board. Secondly the Council will commission additional services where gaps in safe accommodation have been identified to ensure what is defined as 'safe accommodation' within the new duty is being met.
- 5.42 The financial implication has been considered and it has been noted that the £250,101 non-ringfenced grant (to support fulfilling new burdens associated with the duty) is likely to cease at some point in the future. Therefore, there could be a potential financial implication for the Council and this should be considered when commissioning any services.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Another option for consideration to enable the Council to meet the new Board requirement would be for the Homelessness Strategy Group to be revised (as suggested for the DA Strategy Group) to fulfil the role of the Domestic Abuse Board by continuing to meet quarterly but splitting into a two part meeting to take on the additional responsibilities and functions of the new Board.
- 6.2 This has not been recommended because although the group already has a focus on accommodation and homelessness, this new duty is passing through the Domestic Abuse Bill and the responsibility for domestic abuse currently sits with the Building Communities Together (BCT) Partnership. Therefore, it was felt that whilst this would be a viable option, the focus of domestic abuse should remain under the BCT Partnership.
- 6.3 There are no further options for consideration in regards to the additional burdens funding. Administration support was identified as a possible way to spend the money by the MHCLG due to how resource intensive the Board will be. We will also be required to

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

commission services where appropriate to do so if our Needs Assessment identifies any gaps.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 All preparation work has almost concluded to ensure the Council is ready to begin implementing the new Duty from 1st April 2021. It is felt that the all other possible options have been considered and enough conversations have been held with various professionals to ensure the most appropriate option has been recommended that will meet all legal requirements whilst considering colleagues capacity, time and resources

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Draft Terms of Reference for West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board
- 8.3 Appendix C – Draft Procedure Note for West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board

Background Papers:

[Future delivery of support to victims and their children in accommodation-based domestic abuse services: consultation response](#)

[Draft guidance on the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse, including children, in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#)

[Domestic abuse safe accommodation funding allocation: consultation response](#)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: None.

Officer details:

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Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Created:	
Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To decide how we fulfil the new requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill through establishing and implementing a local partnership Board and considering how we use the additional burden funding.
Summary of relevant legislation:	Legislation is currently making its way through parliament – Domestic Abuse Bill 2020
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation
Name of Budget Holder:	Susan Powell
Name of Service/Directorate:	Communities and Wellbeing
Name of assessor:	Jade Wilder
Date of assessment:	25/01/2021
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To meet the support needs of diverse groups of victims and their children in different accommodation settings.
Objectives:	Meet the needs of all victims including those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs by providing appropriate accommodation based support.
Outcomes:	All victims of domestic abuse and their children are offered accommodation-based support based on their needs.
Benefits:	All victims are given a fair and equal opportunity to find somewhere safe to live be it temporarily or permanently allowing them to live free from domestic abuse.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
<i>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)</i>		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Positively	Draft guidance on the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse, including children, in domestic abuse safe accommodation services
Disability	Positively	
Gender Reassignment	Positively	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positively	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positively	
Race	Positively	
Religion or Belief	Positively	
Sex	Positively	
Sexual Orientation	Positively	
Further Comments:		
As part of the new Duty within the Domestic Abuse Bill, it will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs. A broad definition of ‘accommodation-based services has been proposed to meet the support needs of diverse groups of victims and children. For example; we will be required to provide “Specialist safe accommodation which provide dedicated specialist support to victims		

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

with protected characteristics and/or complex needs, such as specialist refuges for BAME, LGBT, and disabled victims and their children.”

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The duty is focused on supporting all victims of domestic abuse and children of domestic abuse including those with protected characteristics and/or complex needs ensuring everyone’s needs are met.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
There will not be an adverse impact, only a positive one to ensure all domestic abuse victims are offered accommodation-based support fairly and equally by meeting their needs.	

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqIA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqIA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:	

Name: Jade Wilder

Date: 25/01/2021

Draft Terms of Reference for West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board

1. Introduction

The West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board will fulfil its responsibilities by holding quarterly meetings for 2 ½ hours and will manage both operational and strategic requirements that will inform the agenda for the meetings.

The members for this Board will be accountable to the West Berkshire Building Communities Together Partnership which is a statutory partnership reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board and will consist of representatives from services and agencies across West Berkshire which provide support to victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

2. Purpose

The Board will be responsible for delivering the following objectives:

- Operational and strategic functions under the shared vision within the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy, “For individuals, families and children in West Berkshire to live freely from Domestic Abuse”.
- Legal requirements within the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 (subject to receiving Royal Assent) i.e. provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within accommodation based domestic abuse services.

The Board will deem where appropriate to do so attendance from victims/survivors, however Domestic Abuse specialist practitioners can provide this voice on behalf of the victim/survivor where appropriate.

Strategies will be published on West Berkshire Council website.

3. Governance and Accountability

The Board shall be accountable to the West Berkshire Building Communities Together (BCT) Partnership which is a statutory partnership reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Chair reports on behalf of the Board to the BCT Partnership.

The Board will support West Berkshire Council under their legal obligations as part of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 (subject to receiving Royal Assent) and report back to central Government that they have met these obligations when required in line with statutory guidance and the standardised reporting form.

4. Membership

The Board will be chaired by Executive Director - People. In the absence of the Chair, the nominated vice-chair will be *to be determined by Board*.

Membership of the Board will include the following services:

- West Berkshire Council
- Housing Registered Providers
- Thames Valley Police
- Criminal Justice and Probation Services
- Domestic Abuse Services
- Healthcare Providers
- Voluntary Sector
- Substance Misuse Providers
- Victims and/or children of Domestic Abuse (or specialist practitioner on their behalf)

A detailed account of Board membership can be found in Appendix A.

5. Administration

Administrative support will be provided by the Building Communities Together Team who will retain responsibility for organising the quarterly meetings, distributing agendas/papers, writing minutes and circulating any relevant information to the Board.

The Domestic Abuse Coordinator will retain responsibility for overseeing the administrative support to the Board. The Domestic Abuse Coordinator will also be responsible for writing any strategies in collaboration with the Board and in line with the duties of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020.

6. Approval

The following Terms of reference has officially been signed off by members of the Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Chair.

Name:

Signed:

Dated:

7. Review

The Board Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. Next review should take place in March 2022.

Draft Procedure Note for West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board

1. Introduction

This procedural note accompanies the Terms of Reference for the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Board. The Board will be split into two-parts to cover the operational and strategic requirements.

2. Process

The first part of the Board meeting will focus on operational duties and issues which in turn will inform the agenda of the second part of the meeting that will focus on strategic duties and issues.

The Board will meet quarterly for a 2 ½ hours, with an interval part way through to allow sufficient time to transition into the second part of the meeting and representation to change over where appropriate to do so.

Quarterly reports will be provided to the governing body, the West Berkshire Building Communities Together Partnership.

3. Functions

Part 1

The first part of the meeting will be to focus on operational delivery locally ensuring all aspects of the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy and its corresponding action plan is being delivered effectively.

The following functions are required to be carried out:

- a) Conduct local Needs Assessments to assess the need and demand for accommodation-based support for all victims, including those who require cross-border support (in full every 3 years with an annual review);
- b) Regularly review performance data to monitor any trends or anomalies locally to help identify and delegate areas for improvement, opportunities to increase service provision, develop training and further protect victims;
- c) Actively seek to include the voice of victims/survivors and their children (or specialist practitioner on their behalf) in ongoing work through sufficient time being allocated at the end of part 1 of the meeting.

Part 2

The second part of the meeting will be to focus on strategic delivery locally by owning and making decisions and addressing any issues identified through part 1 of the meeting and in response to any national requirements.

The following functions are required to be carried out:

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

- a) Develop and publish strategies for the provision of support to cover the locality and diverse groups of victims;
- b) Make any appropriate commissioning / de-commissioning decisions of new and/or existing Domestic Abuse Services;
- c) Meet the support needs of all victims;
- d) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy;
- e) Monitor any impact of the new duty on the provision of community based support (through effect of the strategy);
- f) Report back to central government (MHCLG).

4. Decision Making, Escalation and Quorum

The Board will be responsible for making decisions in relation to all operational and strategic duties. All views should be considered during this process but ultimately any final decisions which have to be taken will be made by the Chair.

Members of the Board can raise a concern regarding a final decision made by the Chair if it is firmly believed the decision is wrong, this will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

If any issues arise then the Chair should escalate this to the West Berkshire Building Communities Together Partnership.

To be quorate, attendance must include at a minimum: the Chair, West Berkshire Council, victims and their children (or specialist practitioner on their behalf), domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations, health care providers and the police or other criminal justice agencies.

Where commissioning/de-commissioning decisions are to be made during part 2 of the meeting, any representatives from Domestic Abuse charities and services will be asked to leave the meeting to avoid any conflict of interest.

5. Membership

Full membership of the Board will include the following services:

- Targeted Intervention Service, West Berkshire Council
- Housing, West Berkshire Council
- Public Health and Wellbeing Service, West Berkshire Council
- Building Communities Together Partnership, West Berkshire Council
- Sovereign Housing Association
- Thames Valley Police
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Service, A2Dominion
- Youth Offending Team, West Berkshire Council
- Berkshire West CCG
- Royal Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Adult Social Care, West Berkshire Council

New Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Duty

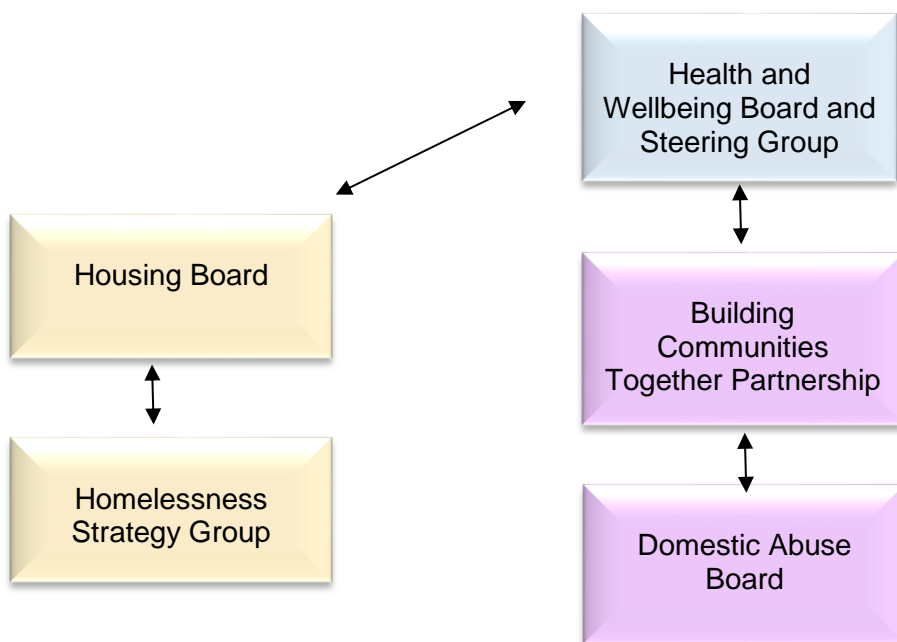
- Children and Families Services, West Berkshire Council
- Voluntary Sector
- Swanswell (Cranstoun), Drug and Alcohol Misuse Service
- Two Saints
- Other local housing register providers
- Victims (and/or children) of Domestic Abuse

Not all members of the Board will be invited to attend both parts of the meeting and representation is subject to change where appropriate.

New members will also be invited as and when appropriate by agreement of the Board.

Where members are unable to attend a meeting, they are responsible for informing the Board ahead of the meeting and, as far as possible, should ensure a representative is present on behalf of the organisation / body.

6. Structure



Housing Strategy and delivery plan

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Hilary Cole
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	15 January 2021
Report Author:	Janet Weekes
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3833

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To seek approval for the Housing Strategy and delivery plan 2020 - 2036.

2 Recommendation

The Executive to approve the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 and the delivery plan, as set out at Appendix A.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The financial implications relate to costs associated with the delivery plan, and pressure bids have been submitted in preparation for approval to adopt the housing strategy.
Human Resource:	There are no HR implications.
Legal:	<p>Whilst section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 conferred the power on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities to have a housing strategy, this was repealed by section 29 of the Deregulation Act 2015. This means there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy.</p> <p>However, the Council’s constitution includes a Policy Framework and the Housing Strategy is one of the key strategies that will be delivered as part of this. It is also considered best practice for a local housing authority to set out its future strategic plan in a Housing Strategy, and for</p>

Housing Strategy and delivery plan

	<p>that strategy to have been developed through evidence and consultation.</p> <p>The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.</p>			
Risk Management:	<p>The risk management for the housing strategy is set out in the delivery plan along with the mitigation to manage the risk. These risks broadly cover resources, planning issues and external factors such as, lack of interest that may arise once the actions are undertaken.</p>			
Property:	<p>Whilst it is not anticipated that the housing strategy will have any immediate impact on Property, the Housing Service regularly liaises with Corporate Property where there are property related matters and will continue to do so in relation to this strategy and the delivery plan.</p>			
Policy:	<p>This housing strategy is a high level outward facing document therefore policies such as, the Local Plan, Affordable Housing Planning Policy, Housing Allocations Policy, Grants and Loans Policy and the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy will all feed into the Housing Strategy and any reviews will be completed in consideration of the Housing Strategy.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>The Housing Strategy will have a positive impact because it will enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs</p>

Housing Strategy and delivery plan

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	X			<p>The draft housing strategy will benefit the lives of people with a protected characteristic as it is a strategy to enable and increase housing in the district.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>		X		<p>The draft housing strategy has a number of measures identified on page 18 along with the approach taken through the Environmental Strategy 2020 – 2030 that will support the environment.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>	X			<p>The draft housing strategy supports people who have housing issues which significantly impact upon their health.</p>
<p>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</p>		X		<p>The draft housing strategy will not have any ICT or Digital Services impact.</p>

<p>Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>The housing strategy will support the following Council Priorities:</p> <p>Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through appropriate interventions and policies. • Help people to help themselves and others. • Support everyone to reach their full potential. • Improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through appropriate interventions and policies. <p>Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Integrated Infrastructure Plan to deliver regeneration, housing, flood prevention and alleviation schemes, and travel and transport infrastructure. <p>Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data to better understand our services and to improve the way we interact and deliver services.
<p>Data Impact:</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>The housing strategy will not have any impact on the rights of data subjects or how their data is used by the Council.</p>
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>Full details of this consultation can be found in the consultation report at Appendix B</p>			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 is a key corporate strategy that sets out how the Council intends to influence and intervene within the local housing market for the benefit of residents. It has been developed in light of legislative, national and local changes that has emerged nationally and locally. It is a strategy that is outward facing with a focus

on enabling every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs and to reduce homelessness.

- 4.2 The Housing Strategy will enable the Council to set out the strategic housing framework for the period up to 2036 and will link with the Council's corporate vision, and provide the ability to secure longer term interventions in the housing market.
- 4.3 The Housing Strategy 2020 - 2036 has therefore been updated to reflect these changes.
- 4.4 The Council carried out consultation for the draft Housing Strategy between 18 September 2020 until 01 November 2020 and this provided for a period in excess of 6 weeks and complies with the requirements of the Council's Consultation Policy.
- 4.5 We developed and implemented a comprehensive communication plan to ensure that we consulted extensively and in a range of different ways using social media, attending meetings, the website, questionnaire and a press release.
- 4.6 A total of 477 stakeholder's submitted feedback but of these only 271 responses were viable for data analysis due to not being fully completed.
- 4.7 We received feedback relating to environmental issues, infrastructure, and affordability, the requirement for a range of accommodation, Covid-19 and a glossary of terms to name a few.
- 4.8 Feedback from partners demonstrated support for the draft Housing Strategy and delivery plan and changes have been made to the Housing Strategy to take account of all the feedback received.
- 4.9 The full consultation report is attached as Appendix B
- 4.10 The final proposed Housing Strategy following consultation is attached as Appendix A.
- 4.11 If the recommendation to adopt and approve the proposed Housing Strategy is not agreed this will delay the progression of the Housing Strategy and its key priorities.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 This report seeks approval to adopt the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 and the delivery plan.
- 5.2 The Housing Strategy has two key priorities:

Priority 1 – Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs
Priority 2 – Reduce homelessness
- 5.3 The Delivery Plan sets out how the Council will work with partners to deliver the actions from the Housing Strategy.

Background

- 5.4 The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties and the delivery of the 'Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy'.
- 5.5 It is considered best practice for a local housing authority to set out its future strategic plan in a Housing Strategy, and for that strategy to have been developed through evidence and consultation.
- 5.6 The draft Housing Strategy will enable the Council to set out the strategic housing framework for the period up to 2036 and will link with the Council's corporate vision, and provide the ability to secure longer term interventions in the housing market and enable access to housing.
- 5.7 The draft Housing Strategy was developed in conjunction with other corporate strategies and policies, with engagement from our internal and external partners, key stakeholders and residents and by reviewing new legislation, national policy changes and updated guidance from central government.
- 5.8 The draft Housing Strategy details how a thriving housing market can positively influence and support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities:
- Priority 1 - Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs
- Priority 2 - Reduce homelessness
- 5.9 The draft Housing Strategy will also complete our commitment to answer and respond to the question, 'What does housing mean to us in West Berkshire Council?' following our Peer Review.

Proposals

- 5.10 To adopt and implement the draft Housing Strategy and delivery plan.
- 5.11 Publishing a Housing Strategy is therefore key to ensuring that the Council is clear about the strategic plan to meet housing need, support other plans such as the Local Plan, lead and influence the housing market, support the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities; and enable every resident to have access to a home and reduce homelessness.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The option not to review and develop a new draft Housing Strategy was dismissed due to changes nationally and locally and due to changes in legislation.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The draft Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 is a high level document that has been developed in accordance with the Council's consultation policy and constitution to ensure a range of views and the results have been taken into account as part of the evidence base.

Housing Strategy and delivery plan

7.2 The Housing Strategy provides the framework and direction for enabling and delivering new homes, ensuring access to good quality homes in the private rented sector, influencing the housing market, enabling residents to remain in their homes and reducing homelessness.

7.3 The Housing Strategy links to a number of corporate priorities that align with the Council's vision such as;

- Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes,
- Develop local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships and
- Support everyone to reach their full potential.

7.4 This report seeks approval to adopt the draft Housing Strategy and delivery plan.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Draft Housing Strategy and delivery plan

8.2 Appendix B – Consultation report

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

Name: Janet Weekes
Job Title: Housing Service Manager
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Document Control

Document Ref:	1	Date Created:	29/12/2020
Version:	0.1	Date Modified:	16/03/2021
Author:	Janet Weekes		
Owning Service	Housing		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
0.1	05.01.2021	Draft Housing Strategy changes made following closure of consultation on 01/11/2020 – Housing Board	
0.2	26.01.2021	Change of Committee considering report – Overview & Scrutiny	
0.3	23.02.2021	Change of Committee considering report – Corporate Board	
0.4	04.03.2021	Change of Committee considering report – Operations Board	
0.5	25.03.2021	Change of Committee considering report – Executive	

Housing matters:

West Berkshire's Housing Strategy 2020 - 2036



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1 Foreword - why housing matters



Hilary Cole
Executive Portfolio Holder,
Planning and Housing

Housing is a key Indicator of health with good quality housing having a positive impact on our health and well-being. This has become more apparent during 2020 when we have spent more time at home managing the impact of Covid-19 and the changes that we have adjusted to.

The pandemic has highlighted the challenges faced by many residents in maintaining and accessing safe, secure and affordable housing. This will influence how the Council supports residents in creating stable communities and settled homes. The pandemic has exposed issues such as informal shared housing arrangements.

Housing is a key strategic priority for West Berkshire Council. This strategy is intended to be a high-level document, that sets out how we will work with our partners and stakeholders to support a balanced housing market across West Berkshire to meet residents' needs. The strategy encompasses the period to 2036, which as well as aligning with the Council's other corporate strategies, reflects the time it takes to influence and effect change within any housing market.

This strategy aims to provide strategic direction for the Council and our partners and will enable the delivery of the two challenging priorities these being;

- Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs
- Reduce homelessness

While we want to lead and influence in the housing market, we recognise that the Council cannot successfully deliver this strategy alone and that our partners and stakeholders also have key roles to play. The delivery plan set out at the end of the housing strategy details the key actions that will help us to achieve our strategic priorities. This will be undertaken in collaboration with our established strong partnerships in the district.

I would like to thank the many residents, partners and stakeholders who have taken the time to engage with us during the preparation of this strategy and whose thoughts and comments have helped to shape our vision for housing across West Berkshire.

2 Introduction

Housing is more than having a roof over our head or having somewhere to sleep – having a place to truly consider to be ‘home’ plays an essential role in all our lives. Our homes are acknowledged as being a key indicator of our health, with poor housing often contributing to poor health. The presence of a balanced housing market across West Berkshire is therefore critical to ensuring that residents’ health and well-being is safeguarded and that their housing needs and aspirations are met in respect of the availability, location, size, and affordability of homes across all tenures.

This Housing Strategy sets out West Berkshire Council’s strategic housing priorities and details a range of actions that the Council intends to take in partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders to support residents to access good quality housing while preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The strategy sets out the context both nationally and locally which, alongside the Council’s strategic vision, frame our priorities and the actions and interventions detailed within the delivery plan.



“The presence of a balanced housing market across West Berkshire is critical to ensuring that residents’ health and well-being is safeguarded.”



3 Our District



West Berkshire has an estimated population of

158,500
(2019)

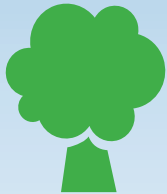
1,659
older people and vulnerable adults accessing long term support (Jan 2021).



Healthy life expectancy at birth at 70.1 years for females and 66.4 for males are

higher

than the England average (2014-16). Similarly, life expectancy at birth, at 84.5 for females and 81.1 for males is higher than the national average.



West Berkshire covers an area of **272 square miles** which is over half of the geographical area of the county of Berkshire. Nearly three quarters of West Berkshire is classified as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



In October 2019 there were

232

long term empty homes in West Berkshire

In 2019 the Council assisted

117
residents



secure a total of £1.1m Disabled Facilities Grant funding for aids and adaptations to live safely in their homes

The total number of households in West Berkshire is

65,000



Since 2001 census, an average of **376 new homes** have been built each year.



151 Children in Care (Feb 2021)

840 Children in Need Feb 2021 (including Children in Care and those subject to a Child Protection Plan)



In 2020

1,533

homeless approaches were made



Average house price was

£340,000

(June 2020)



Between 2015 and 2019 the average monthly cost of privately renting has increased by

10%



In West Berkshire the median house price is

9.6

times the median income level (2019)



13.4%

of housing is owned and managed by housing associations and registered providers – lower than the national average of

17.1%



In November 2020 there were

9

people sleeping rough in West Berkshire



"Supporting people to buy or rent their own homes; preventing homelessness, improving options for older people and protecting the most vulnerable."



4 The national context

The Government's 2017 White Paper – 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'¹ – sets out the Government's intention to boost housing supply and create a more efficient housing market. It also recognises that increasing housing supply could not be met by the Government in isolation. The White Paper acknowledged that in the shorter-term the nation's housing needs and aspirations needed to be addressed. This includes supporting people to buy or rent their own homes; preventing homelessness, improving options for older people and protecting the most vulnerable.

The White Paper sets out the support required to enhance the capacity of local authorities and the house building industry to build the new homes that each local area needs, with the proviso that partners are required to turn the proposals into reality.

While building more homes is clearly a key contributor to balancing the housing market, there are a range of other factors that influence the effectiveness of the market both nationally and locally.

The impact of Covid-19 and a potential post Covid-19 recession will have a significant impact on the housing market. It will affect supply and demand and over time the longer term implications will emerge.

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

Homelessness has the potential to touch any household. There are a number of common drivers including loss of employment, relationship breakdown and domestic abuse, although vulnerable households are over represented. In many cases residents threatened with homelessness may not be used to the welfare benefits system. The negative perception of homeless households is often unwarranted.

Nationally, housing affordability remains a key driver for homelessness. Loss of private rented accommodation is consistently one of the top reasons for homelessness across the country. This is often due to rent arrears or a proposed rent increase. Affordability also limits the ability for many households to access home ownership.

Since April 2018, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has resulted in local authorities having additional powers and duties (in accordance with the relevant legislation) to assist residents who are threatened with homelessness, with the primary emphasis placed on the prevention of homelessness.

Homelessness legislation provides a safety net for those households who are impacted by homelessness. In many cases, councils are obliged to provide temporary accommodation and other assistance until homelessness is relieved. Where the homeless household does not secure accommodation themselves, councils may secure accommodation either in the private rented sector or through 'affordable housing' let through a Registered Provider² to end homelessness.

Rough sleeping is often the most visible form of homelessness and regularly impacts on the most vulnerable residents who often have complex needs. Preventing rough sleeping is a key Government priority and in 2018 its Rough Sleeping Strategy was published³. The strategy set out the vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending rough sleeping by 2027.

As part of this bold vision the Government have provided funding opportunities for local authorities to reduce rough sleeping through the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

² Registered Providers are registered and regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Registered providers include local authority landlords and private registered providers (such as not-for-profit housing associations and for-profit organisations)

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

Enabling the delivery of affordable housing

Social housing, originally provided by local authorities, is now more often delivered by Registered Providers. Registered Providers provide both affordable rented and home ownership products designed to assist households who are struggling to access market housing.

The key mechanism for the delivery of affordable homes is through the planning process, where developments of certain sizes are conditional on the delivery of affordable housing as set out in local planning policies.

The definition of affordable housing is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁴ and this was updated in 2018 to include a range of alternative products to supplement social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership including starter homes and build to rent.

The Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan. This will set out the Council's proposed position on affordable housing for new developments. This will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate when the plan is formally submitted in 2022.

Supporting private sector housing

Across the country private housing represents the largest tenure, with 83% of homes privately owned in England and 17% owned by councils, Registered Providers and other public bodies⁵.

Councils currently have a wide range of enforcement interventions to maintain and improve private sector housing standards. These powers are applicable across all tenures. Whilst most commonly used to improve private rented accommodation, they can also be utilised to improve owner-occupied and Registered Provider owned homes.

Empty homes represent a wasted resource and councils have a range of powers to intervene and return properties back into use. Legislation can be used to tackle dilapidated empty homes that impact on the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. However, some empty homes are needed to ensure that the housing market operates as efficiently as possible.

For those living with a disability, housing can have a greater impact on health and wellbeing, for example, where access to facilities is difficult or even impossible. The statutory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Home Repair Assistance Grants provide the framework that enables councils to administer grants for aids and adaptations. This helps residents remain independent in their own home for longer.



⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

⁵ Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

5 The local context

This Housing Strategy aims to address the challenges and opportunities that present themselves across West Berkshire. Consequently considering the local context is essential to ensure that our strategic approach is fit for purpose and meets the needs of our residents.

Demographics

West Berkshire has a relatively young population at present, however this is expected to change significantly in future years with the population becoming older and household size reducing. This will impact on the future requirements for the type and size of housing.

The demographic change during the life of this strategy will drive an increased focus on housing for older people, residents who need support to live independently, and for those with specialist care needs, as well as smaller homes to accommodate smaller household size.

As illustrated in Table 1, the population of West Berkshire is projected to contract by 0.9% over the next 16 years to 2036. Of particular importance is the projected increase in older people across West Berkshire. It is projected that the cohort of people aged over 85 will double, while those residents aged over 75 will increase almost by 46.9% over the same period.

Table 1 – Projected demographic change across West Berkshire 2019-2036⁶

3. Age range	Population		% Change
	2019	2036	
0-4	8,800	7,655	-13%
5-9	10,300	7,964	-22.6%
10-14	10,400	8,925	-14.1%
15-19	9,400	8,749	-6.9%
20-24	7,000	6,955	-0.6%
25-29	7,900	8,266	4.6%
30-34	8,700	7,711	-11.3%
35-39	9,600	8,339	-13.1%
40-44	10,300	9,181	-10.8%
45-49	11,900	9,739	-18.1%
50-54	12,500	10,148	-18.8%
55-59	11,400	10,309	-9.5%
60-64	9,700	10,375	7%
65-69	8,500	10,860	27.8%
70-74	8,500	10,129	19%
75-79	5,800	8,226	41.8%
80-84	4,000	6,130	53.2%
85+	3,800	7,410	95%
Total	158,500	157,070	-0.9%

*This projected decline in population does not equal a decline in demand for homes.



Housing supply and demand

The Council's Local Plan⁷ details local planning policies that support development across West Berkshire until 2026. The Council is currently in the process of reviewing the Local Plan for the period to 2036⁸.

The current Local Plan details a requirement to deliver 10,500 homes during the 20-year Local Plan period⁹ – a net requirement of 525 new homes each year. It is expected that a similar housing supply requirement will be included in the emerging Local Plan in due course.

The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)¹⁰ details the key drivers for the local housing market, including housing need. The SHMA indicates that in order to meet housing need, new housing developments should provide an affordable housing mix comprising of 70% social rented homes and 30% shared ownership homes¹¹.

Across West Berkshire, current planning policy requires affordable housing to be delivered on all sites in excess of five homes. With up to 40% of homes required to be provided as affordable housing on large green field sites¹².

The SHMA sets out the need for affordable homes of different sizes and tenures as shown in Table 2, with an emphasis on the delivery of smaller affordable homes. This aligns with demographic change, however, to ensure that smaller homes are fit for the future they should be designed with double bedrooms wherever possible.

Given the projected demographic change, and the increase in population of those aged over 75, it is likely that the need for smaller homes will increase during the period of this strategy. This is also likely to increase the demand for a range of specialist housing solutions to meet the needs of the ageing population.

Self Build and Custom house building

Self build and custom housebuilding is a key element of the Government's agenda to increase supply of new housing. Legislation has been introduced to support this initiative including:

- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (March 2015)
- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016 (Commenced 1st April 2016)
- Housing and Planning Act 2016

To meet this need West Berkshire Council maintains a register of individuals who have expressed an interest in self and custom-build homes. The Local Plan Review contains a specific policy promoting this provision. Furthermore, the Council will work with partners to establish how serviced plots may be effectively provided to meet the demand.

Delivering affordable housing

West Berkshire Council does not own social housing stock following the transfer of all Council-owned housing stock in 1989¹⁴ to Sovereign Housing Association¹⁵.

Table 2 - Housing tenure bedroom need in West Berkshire 2020¹³

Housing Tenure	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Market	5 – 10%	25 – 30%	40 – 45%	20-25%
Affordable	20- 25%	35 – 40%	30-35%	5 – 10%

⁷ <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplan>

⁸ <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplanreview2036>

⁹ Core Strategy Planning Policy CS1

¹⁰ <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40949&p=0>

¹¹ Core Strategy Planning Policy CS6

¹² <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36374&p=0>

¹³ Table 140, SHMA 2016

¹⁴ The stock was transferred by Newbury District Council

¹⁵ Formerly known as West Berkshire Housing Association

This was one of the first large-scale voluntary transfers (LSVTs) and Sovereign owns and manages over 6,500 affordable homes across West Berkshire.

The Council actively works with a number of Registered Providers who operate within West Berkshire to deliver a range of affordable homes to meet the needs of our residents. There are over 9,000 affordable homes managed by registered providers in the District¹⁶.

The Council enables access to affordable homes managed by our Registered Providers through planning policies and the housing register. The number of applicants on the housing register has seen an increase from 2,029 to 3,624 in the year from March 2019 to March 2020, a rise of over 79%.

Housing and the economy

Employment opportunities are critical to delivering a balanced housing market. Across West Berkshire the number of jobs per working age person is higher than the average. Similarly there is a greater proportion of adults who are economically active. However, there is a risk that where employment opportunities do not match the skills of local residents, the inward employment migration that results can place pressures on the local housing market. In addition, the potential post-Covid-19 recession will also have an impact on unemployment, potentially removing housing

opportunities for local people and increasing the reliance on social housing.

Housing affordability is inextricably linked to economic activity. West Berkshire Council's Economic Development Strategy 2019-2023 sets out how the Council intends to work with its partners to address economic challenges. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Economic Development Strategy and the 2021 post-Covid refreshed Economic Development Strategy.

Across the South East affordability is a critical issue in all segments of the housing market. Residents are struggling to secure affordable and sustainable housing, whether for home ownership or seeking to rent. In many areas the cost of home ownership relative to earnings is high. In West Berkshire the average cost of a home¹⁷ is £340,000, which is almost ten times that of average earnings¹⁸.

For those seeking to rent their home, average private rents have increased by just over 20% to meet demand¹⁹. In West Berkshire this is often driven by professionals seeking accommodation near their place of work. This presents affordability challenges for local residents. People in privately rented accommodation pay the highest housing costs compared with homeowners with mortgages and social housing tenants²⁰.

Private rental values in West Berkshire show a significant increase in monthly rental from 2013 to 2019 (as illustrated in table 3.)

Table 3 - Private rental values in West Berkshire since 2013²¹

Monthly rental values (£s)	Year					
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Mean	870	941	1,014	1,007	1,041	1,050
Lower quartile	650	725	750	750	779	795
Median	795	850	880	895	925	925
Upper quartile	950	1,000	1,150	1,150	1,200	1,200

¹⁶ Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

¹⁷ Median house prices for administrative geographies: HPSSA dataset 9, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianhousepriceforationalandsubnationalgeographiesquarterlyrollingyearhpssadataset09>

¹⁸ ONS, House price to residence-based earnings ratio, Table 5b, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoresidencebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

¹⁹ Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019>

²⁰ MHCLG, English Housing Survey- Housing Costs and Affordability, 2018-19, 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898397/2018-

²¹ Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019>

For residents who are on low incomes, including those who are in receipt of welfare benefits, the continued low level of Local Housing Allowance (LHA)²² reduces the availability of affordable accommodation. This is due to the resulting low value of Housing Benefit or (the housing costs element of) Universal Credit relative to market rent levels.

It is expected that the affordability challenges facing many private renters will remain moving forward, unless there is a significant injection in the capacity within the private rental market.

Households affected by the under occupation charge often face affordability issues and the delivery plan sets out how the council can help to address this.

The private rented sector is characterised by a younger age profile than other forms of market housing. Private renters in the 25-34 age group form the largest group by age nationally²³. At the same time the age of private renters is increasing²⁴ and can be attributed to the affordability challenges facing private renters in moving into home ownership.

Recent reforms relating to welfare benefits also have the potential to impact on housing affordability²⁵. At the end of March 2019 there were 156 West

Berkshire households affected by the welfare benefit cap. There were 481 households affected by the under-occupation charge – 416 households subject to a 14% deduction, and 65 subject to a 25% deduction.

The challenges relating to affordability are often felt hardest by key workers who may struggle to secure suitable accommodation local to their workplace. It is estimated that there are around 9.8m key workers across the country making up just over 30% of the workforce in the South East²⁶. Women are twice as likely to be key workers as men. Younger and older people who are key workers are more likely to be in low-paid employment²⁷.

There are a range of definitions for key workers and West Berkshire Council defines a key worker using the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership definition as set out in Appendix 2.

The Council's Allocations Policy provides additional preference to key workers to support their applications for social housing. We are also working collaboratively with our Registered Providers. The aim is to increase the range of affordable housing that is available for keyworkers.

Table 4 - Private rental and LHA values in West Berkshire - 2018/19²²

Monthly rental values (£s)	Property size				
	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Mean rental value	592	742	925	1,160	1,844
LHA rate (Newbury)	319.22	568.14	718.90	865.80	1,213.68
LHA rate (Reading)	351.61	682.98	865.80	989.91	1,365.52

²² Valuation Office Agency: private rental market statistics, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2019>

²³ ONS, UK private rented sector: 2018, 2019, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/ukprivaterentedsector/2018>

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ The Impact of Welfare Reform Bill measures on affordability for low income private renting families, Shelter, 2011, https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/334726/Impact_of_Welfare_Reform_Bill_measures_on_affordability_for_low_income_private_renting_families.pdf

²⁶ A £10 minimum wage would benefit millions of key workers, TUC, May 2020, <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/ps10-minimum-wage-would-benefit-millions-key-workers>

²⁷ *ibid*

Homelessness

In December 2019 the Council adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy²⁸ based on a housing needs assessment underpinning and informing the interventions that the Council will take (with its partners) to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

Homelessness is increasing across the country. During 2018/19 1,765 households presented to West Berkshire Council as being threatened with homelessness. Less than one-third were assisted by the Council under our homelessness duties to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Across West Berkshire in 2018/19, the most common reason for being threatened with homelessness was the loss of a private rented sector tenancy. This accounted for 23% of households. The next most common reason was due to family or friends no longer being willing to accommodate.

During 2018/19 the lead applicant in homelessness applications (i.e. the head of the household) was most commonly aged 25-34 (29% of applications) and 10% of presentations were made by applicants over the age of 55.

In 2019 the Council adopted its own plan for preventing and reducing rough sleeping – ‘Reducing Rough Sleeping in West Berkshire: A plan to ensure that no-one has the need to sleep rough’. This plan sets out the actions that the Council will take to prevent and reduce rough sleeping working in partnership with a range of partners operating in the homelessness sector.

During 2018/19 the Council received £211k in Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)²⁹ funding and this increased to £261k for 2019/20 and £475k for 2020/21. This funding has been used to deliver a range of interventions agreed with and monitored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Further funding of £102k was awarded to the Council in 2019 for delivery of Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP)³⁰ interventions.

Nationally rough sleeping has risen year on year since 2010, until a reduction in 2018. In West Berkshire, during the same period, the number of people sleeping rough has fallen from a peak of 23 in 2014. This number dropped to 9 rough sleepers in November 2020.

Table 5 shows the most recently published data comparing numbers in West Berkshire to national and regional figures. The drop in numbers in West Berkshire can be attributed to the success of strong partnership working locally. Table 6 sets out West Berkshire's performance in comparison with the rest of the county of Berkshire.

Table 5 - Rough sleeping in England and West Berkshire since 2010³¹

Area	Year									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
England	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,677	4,266
South East	310	430	442	532	609	827	956	1,119	934	900
West Berkshire	5	6	11	8	23	15	14	20	18	10

²⁹ MHCLG, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-initiative-to-reduce-rough-sleeping>

³⁰ MHCLG, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-rehousing-pathway-2019-to-2020-funding>

³¹ Rough sleeping snapshot in England 2019, Table 1, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>

Table 6 - Rough sleeping across Berkshire 2019³²

Local authority	Number of rough sleepers ³³	Number of rough sleepers per 1,000 households ³⁴
Bracknell Forest	22	0.44
Reading	28	0.40
Slough	25	0.45
West Berkshire	10	0.15
Windsor and Maidenhead	40	0.63
Wokingham	10	0.15

Specialist accommodation

There is a range of specialist accommodation that is required to meet an individual’s needs. This includes extra care housing for those requiring a specialist health care setting, sheltered housing, young person’s supported accommodation, hostel accommodation for single homeless persons, housing schemes for people with a learning disability, families of children with disabilities or for individuals with mental health needs.

The Housing Strategy in conjunction with West Berkshire Council’s Market Position Statement 2020-23 Adult Social Care, sets out how the Council will meet the needs for specialist accommodation.

West Berkshire Council is delivering a specialist Housing First scheme with partners. This is to provide housing for rough sleepers with complex needs who would ordinarily be refused housing. The provision of a tenancy enables support to be better provided to tackle specific complex needs.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities are often disadvantaged in accessing affordable housing solutions as suitable sites can be challenging to deliver. West Berkshire Council currently manages one Gypsy/Traveller site within the district and there is also a site accommodating Travelling Showpersons. The Council’s specialist ‘Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment’ (2019) provides a detailed assessment of need for these groups.

Housing solutions

Councils use two main approaches to support residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness into sustainable accommodation – allocations of social housing and private rented sector tenancies.

Councils are required to adopt a Housing Allocation Policy that sets out how social housing will be allocated to residents and the qualifying criteria. West Berkshire Council’s Policy prioritises applicants based on individual circumstances, with the aim of ensuring that applicants with the greatest need have the highest priority.

Homes are let through a choice-based lettings scheme. Applicants are able to choose the social housing properties on which they wish to place bids. The applicant with the highest priority is offered the tenancy. This is in contrast to schemes where the Council allocates accommodation directly to the applicant with the greatest priority.

To further assist households who are threatened with homelessness, the Council is able to secure private sector tenancies as an alternative to social housing to fulfil its homelessness obligations. In order to achieve this the Council offers a range of incentives to improve partnership working with private landlords to increase supply of appropriate tenancies.

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Calculated using data from Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>, and Rough sleeping snapshot in England 2019, Table 1, op cit

As well as providing mechanisms to support residents to access social and private rented sector homes, the council also enables residents to remain in their homes with the help of aids and adaptations and granting Disabled Facilities Grants. Table 7 illustrates the number of DFG's awarded from 2015-2019.

Table 7 - Number of DFG's awarded from 2015-2019

	Number of DFGs awarded
2015	145
2016	77
2017	103
2018	116
2019	117

Data based on calendar years, January to December

West Berkshire has a low number of empty homes, with 232 long-term empty homes (those that have been empty for over six months) as of October 2019. This is the lowest proportion (3.4%) in Berkshire, with the next lowest proportion of empty homes being 5.5%, and the highest proportion being 12.0%.

Properties that have been empty for over two years are subject to the Empty Homes Premium, which enables the Council to apply a penalty under Council Tax legislation. In West Berkshire, this can result in the owner of a long-term empty home paying up to four times the annual Council Tax rate.

Park homes provide an important housing solution for residents, many of whom are often retired. Park homes are in effect temporary, moveable structures and owners lease pitches on large sites. They pay a site fee and are responsible for ensuring that their home is kept in good repair.

Privately-owned park home sites are required to be licensed by the local authority. Following historical poor practices within the park home industry, that in some cases resulted in residents being significantly disadvantaged, the Government strengthened the regulation of park home sites through the Mobile Homes Act 2013.



“To further assist households who are threatened with homelessness, councils are able to secure private sector tenancies as an alternative to an allocation of social housing to fulfill its homelessness obligations.”

Environmental considerations

West Berkshire Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. The Council's Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030 sets out approaches to tackle the current climate crisis and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Environment Strategy.

Housing is a key contributor to national carbon emissions. This is through the development of new-build homes and refurbishing existing properties. Everyday energy use in homes accounts for 14% of the UK's emissions alone.

Whilst there are challenges of energy efficiency across the housing stock, there are specific challenges relating to park homes and Gypsy / Traveller sites. These homes often have poor energy efficiency due to thin and uninsulated building fabric and the solutions to create efficient homes tend to be more expensive.

Approximately 12% of West Berkshire is at risk of flooding, whether that be from groundwater, surface water or river water. While the planning process provides appropriate mitigation for new housing development and the provision of new flood alleviation measures for certain areas (Thatcham), flooding remains a concern for existing housing stock in areas identified as remaining at risk.

There remain a number of areas of challenge associated with reducing the negative environmental impact of housing, including:

- Reducing the reliance on steel and concrete based building materials;
- Increasing the use of engineered timber construction methods in the context of fire safety regulation;
- Reducing the reliance on the oil and gas network for heating and cooking appliances;
- Increasing the use of low-carbon sources of heating such as heat pumps and heat networks;
- Accelerating the uptake of renewable energy, energy efficiency and insulation measures;
- Improving indoor air quality and ventilation associated with thermal insulation;
- Improving water efficiency;
- Improving flood protection for homes at risk of flooding;
- Improving the levels of green spaces associated with housing, including trees on streets, vegetation on roofs, and sustainable drainage systems;
- Providing for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and electric vehicle owners.

Many of the above measures are currently restricted through finance gaps, i.e. there is a cost associated with change. There is a risk that the increased costs associated with embracing environmental considerations may impact on future viability of housing development, in particular the delivery of affordable homes³⁵.

There are opportunities to explore the potential savings associated with innovation. For example, the speed of construction utilising modular timber-framed construction methods has the potential to offset the additional costs often associated with this approach, when factoring in the additional revenue potential arising from earlier completions³⁶.

6 Our vision

West Berkshire Council's corporate vision- 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work, and learn' – is supported by the West Berkshire Vision 2036 that details priorities for the Council across five key areas and commits to creating:

- A West Berkshire where everyone has what they need to fulfil their potential
- A West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone
- A West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy
- A West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good
- A West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering



These commitments aim to maintain West Berkshire's status as a great place to live, work and learn whilst rising to the challenges we anticipate facing in the future.

Building on our Strengths – the Council's Corporate Strategy 2019-23 – sets out six priorities that align with the Council's vision:

- Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes
- Support everyone to reach their full potential
- Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire
- Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy
- Maintain a green district
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

7 Our priorities

This Housing Strategy aims to build on our previous successes and provide strategic direction for both the Council and our partners to continue to support a thriving housing market across West Berkshire through the following twin priorities:

Priority 1 Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs

Priority 2 Reduce homelessness

The Housing Strategy priorities will be delivered through the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan as well as a range of strategies and plans that link to the Housing Strategy as set out below:



8 Delivering our priorities

This part of the strategy sets out what we are going to achieve and why. It identifies areas for action and intervention and will frame our strategic priorities. Further detail and information is set out in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.

Priority 1 Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs

There is a shortfall in the provision of housing of all tenures across West Berkshire. The current Local Plan details that 520 homes are required to be built year on year to meet local housing demand. The emerging Local Plan is likely to reach a similar conclusion, although the overall annual requirement has yet to be determined it is likely to be in the range of 525 – 600 dwellings per annum.

We will engage with landowners and developers to deliver the level of new homes as required through the Local Plan

We will lead on innovative new delivery vehicles to provide new housing solutions in the area

In order to deliver new homes through development opportunities, we will utilise the Council's joint venture vehicle to contribute to the delivery of new homes

We will deliver a Council owned housing company to provide much needed affordable rented accommodation in the district

A thriving housing market is reliant on a buoyant economy across West Berkshire to lever in appropriate housing investment across all tenures and sub-markets. A strong local economy supports demand for housing and promotes West Berkshire as a place to live.



The provision of employment opportunities also improves income levels and helps to mitigate the negative impact of welfare benefit reforms.

For West Berkshire to be a place where businesses choose to invest in housing, we need to ensure that our systems and processes are fit for purpose and interactions with businesses are effective and efficient. We need to ensure our policies and decision making are robust to improve deliverability of development proposals.

We will proactively engage with developers and Registered Providers to provide advice in respect of development opportunities with the aim of removing unnecessary burdens and to be more responsive to business needs

The Council and its housing partners utilise a range of resources when assisting residents with housing-related interventions. This can range from delivering aids and adaptations to enable a vulnerable resident to remain in their own home, through to securing temporary accommodation to relieve homelessness.

These transactions have the potential to contribute positively to the local economy providing local businesses are utilised wherever practicable.

We will promote the use of local businesses in delivering value for money housing-related services wherever practicable

A vibrant and well-balanced housing market relies on West Berkshire providing the housing solutions that our residents want and can afford across all tenures of the housing market.

Young people and key workers experience significant challenges in accessing affordable rental or home ownership products.

We will ensure that key workers are afforded priority within our Housing Allocations Policy to assist with securing low-cost housing

We will undertake research to identify the level of demand for affordable rent and discounted home ownership products from young people and key workers which will influence an ongoing review of our delivery plan

For vulnerable residents this includes the provision of a suitable range of affordable supported housing within the District.

We will review the delivery of supported housing solutions across the District

West Berkshire has an ageing population and the number of residents requiring alternative housing solutions to enable them to live longer healthy lives will increase year on year. While the use of aids and adaptations will provide sustainable solutions for some residents to remain in their own homes, there will be a growing demand for innovative housing suited to the lifestyle of older residents.

We will review the delivery of Extra Care and Older Persons' housing schemes to meet the needs of an ageing population

The private rented sector across West Berkshire has an insufficient supply of smaller homes, in particular single-person shared accommodation to meet the demand. This is in part due to the housing make up within the district but also due to competing demands from professional renters who are often able to pay a premium to secure accommodation.

We will engage with private sector landlords to increase the supply within the private rented sector, and in particular within the HMO (houses in multiple occupation and shared houses) sector

Demand within the social housing sector is high, driven by the affordability challenges facing many residents due to the disparity between housing costs (i.e. mortgage and rental payments) and their salaries.

The position is compounded by the low level of social housing stock that is present within West Berkshire that further increases demand for affordable accommodation.

We will engage with developers and Registered Providers to maximise delivery of affordable homes to meet the needs of residents within mixed tenure and inclusive neighbourhoods



Housing is a key indicator of health and poor housing directly impacts on poor health and well-being. This is obvious when considering health and safety hazards that may be present within the home (e.g. trip hazards resulting in physical injury) but is less obvious when considering psychological hazards (e.g. poor security resulting in a fear of crime and resultant stress and anxiety).

Poor housing can also have a negative impact on future life chances. For example, children who grow up in overcrowded homes are less likely to attain high levels of educational achievement. This can limit future employment prospects and increases the risk of them living in poor housing in their adult life.

Nationally the poorest housing conditions can be found in the private rented sector. Due to the size of the sector a small minority of homes in poor condition can equal a significant number of homes.

We will deliver a private sector stock condition survey to better understand the housing conditions within the private sector housing stock in West Berkshire

The majority of private landlords seek to comply with the diverse array of regulatory requirements that govern their business, however, often they are simply unable to keep pace with regulatory change. This often restricts landlords from meeting their legal obligations despite their best intentions.

We will deliver a private sector landlord forum as a vehicle for providing regulatory updates and sharing best practice as a means of improving standards within private rented accommodation

Self-regulation of the private landlord sector is a valuable method of improving the image of the sector. This provides residents with a valuable indicator as to whether a private landlord is likely to act professionally. There are a number of private landlord accreditation schemes that operate across the country. These provide training and development for landlords as well as enforcing codes of practice to ensure that landlords act professionally in their business.

We will introduce a private landlord accreditation scheme across West Berkshire to promote the business of being a professional landlord

We will review enforcement of poor housing conditions within the private rented sector in accordance with the Public Protection Partnership's Private Sector Housing Policy. This will ensure that we are maximising our ability to improve private sector housing conditions

The Council's private sector housing regulatory service is currently provided as part of the Public Protection Partnership. This delivers Environmental Health and Trading Standards services across West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham. As such there are competing demands for resources to focus on private sector housing conditions and consequently capacity to improve the private rented sector is limited.

West Berkshire has an ageing population and the need to support independence is expected to grow year on year as residents become less able to lead healthy lives within their homes. There is currently limited information available to inform the future delivery of housing for older people and the needs of disabled residents across West Berkshire.

We will undertake a needs assessment to determine estimated future need for housing that meets the needs of older residents, disabled residents, and other residents whose needs are not suitably met by general needs housing

As well as homes needing to be affordable in terms of mortgage and rental payments, they need to be efficient and affordable to live in when it comes to heating and energy costs. This is particularly important for those on low incomes or who are vulnerable for other reasons. Fuel poverty can be tackled through a range of solutions that can help to make homes more energy efficient and bring down monthly costs for residents. These solutions also play an important part in the meeting of carbon reduction targets set out in our Environment Strategy.

We will promote measures available to residents that will help reduce their heating and energy costs.

We will take opportunities to bid for funding to deliver improvements in energy efficiency particularly focusing on low income households and vulnerable residents.

Priority 2 Reduce homelessness

The prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping remains a clear focus for the Council as the most effective intervention to secure housing solutions for residents who are threatened with homelessness. The interventions required to maximise performance in this area are discussed in detail in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

We will deliver the actions set out in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The loss of private rented accommodation is the main driver for homelessness within West Berkshire and alongside the high demand for private rented accommodation local residents face significant challenges in securing affordable private rented accommodation.

We will introduce a package of measures to incentivise private landlords to accommodate residents who are threatened with homelessness to reduce the need for the Council to secure temporary accommodation under its homelessness obligations

Newbury is a key hub for many housing services that support our most vulnerable residents. However, the delivery of these services can result in other vulnerable people migrating from other local authority areas and in its extreme form can increase the incidence of rough sleeping.

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and within West Berkshire is largely found in and around Newbury town centre and consequently can have a negative impact on the perceptions of both local residents and visitors to the town which may influence future shopping behaviours.

We will continue our work with our partners to reduce rough sleeping through a range of interventions focussed on supporting individuals to access accommodation pathways appropriate to individual needs

We will continue to deliver Rough Sleeping Initiative projects as agreed with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to reduce the number of people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough

The provision of services for single homeless people are currently focussed in Newbury. This has the potential to disadvantage service users in both the western and eastern areas of the district. As the need for services has increased the Council has commissioned services including hostel provision.

We will review the provision of support services for the single homeless, including the provision of smaller units of hostel-type accommodation distributed throughout West Berkshire to better meet local need.

“The Housing Strategy Delivery Plan will provide the full detail of how the Council intends to deliver on the priorities set out in this strategy”



Appendix 1 – Key achievements from the previous Housing Strategy

We have reflected on our achievements through the previous Housing Strategy period and these are set out below grouped by theme:

Homelessness prevention

- Prevented 1,835 households from becoming homeless through early intervention between April 2010 and March 2015 with an average of 2,200 each year since
- Housing Options service awarded NPSS Silver Award for operational good practice
- Introduced a Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) partnership to challenge systemic barriers impacting on residents with complex needs, including rough sleeping, offending, mental health and substance misuse

Rough sleeping

- Working with partners the number of rough sleepers has reduced from a peak of 23 in 2014 to 10 in November 2019
- Introduced the Rough Sleeper Task and Targeting Group in 2014 to tackle rough sleeping through multi-agency working
- Successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding resulting in an allocation of £211k in 2018/19, and a further £261k for 2019/20 to tackle rough sleeping
- Successfully bid for Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding of £102k for 2019/20 to improve the housing pathways for people sleeping rough

Delivery of affordable homes

- Delivered 336 affordable homes between April 2010 and March 2015 with an average of 127 each year since

Provision of Housing Assistance

- Approved on average over 100 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) each year to assist disabled residents to live independently in their homes
- Processed 1,798 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to support residents receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to remain in their homes at a point of crisis
- Introduced the West Berkshire Collective Energy Switching Scheme in 2016, saving over 660 households a total of £148,916 since the scheme started.

Providing support to vulnerable residents

- Introduced the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach in 2017 to break down barriers preventing vulnerable adults from accessing key Council services

Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs

- Allocated 8 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at New Stocks Farm, Aldermaston
- Allocated 24 plots for Travelling Showpersons at Long Copse Farm, Enborne
- Approved 2 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Woolhampton
- Delivered the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2019
- Completed preparatory work to enable the refurbishment and redesign of the Council's Gypsy/ Traveller site

Partnership working

- The Homelessness Strategy Group formed to represent the diverse range of strategic partners working within West Berkshire to prevent homelessness and/or support homeless households
- Introduced a Housing First partnership providing sustainable accommodation with targeted support for entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs.

Appendix 2 – Key worker definition

The Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership definition of the job roles that are considered to be key workers comprises:

- Clinical staff employed by the NHS (excluding doctors and dentists)
- Teachers, including further education teachers and Early Years/nursery teachers
- Police officers and community support officers
- Frontline police staff (civilians) may also be eligible in some areas
- Prison officers and some Prison Service staff in prisons
- Probation officers (senior or not) and, for intermediate rent only, trainee probation officers
- Local authority (LA) or local education authority (LEA) or NHS social workers
- LA therapists (including occupational therapists and speech and language therapists)
- LA social care assessment staff
- LA educational psychologists
- LA/LEA/NHS nursery nurses
- LA planners
- LA clinical staff
- Uniformed staff, below principal level, in fire and rescue services
- Armed forces personnel and some civilian Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel (i.e. clinical staff, MoD police officers and uniformed staff in the Fire and Defence Service), also including some discharged personnel
- Highway Agency traffic officer staff
- LA environmental health officers/practitioners.
- All care staff working in care homes, supported living and Extra Care Housing settings.
- All care staff providing domiciliary care (care at home)

Appendix 3 – Glossary Explanation of terms

Glossary

AONB- Area of Outstanding National Beauty

DFG- Disabled Facilities Grant

LSVT- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer

RP- Registered Provider

RRP- Rapid Rehousing Pathway

SHMA- Strategic Housing Market Assessment

RSI- Rough Sleeper Initiative

RRP- Rapid Rehousing Pathway

LSVTs- Large Scale Voluntary Transfers

NPPF- National Planning Policy Framework

LHA- Local Housing Allowance

MHCLG- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Affordable housing- housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household’s eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

- **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Climate Emergency - West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and thus committed to the creation of a strategic plan to work towards carbon neutrality in the district by 2030.

Corporate Vision - West Berkshire Council's corporate vision is 'Working together to make West Berkshire an even greater place in which to live, work, and learn'.

Disabled Facilities Grant - The statutory Disabled Facilities Grant regime provides the framework that enables the Council to administer grants for aids and adaptations to help residents remain independent in their own home for longer.

Discretionary Housing Payments - A Discretionary Housing Payment is a discretionary and short-term payment made in the United Kingdom that helps people in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with their housing costs.

Hostel Accommodation - Hostels are generally non-self-contained and cater for an identifiable group of people, such as people who would otherwise be homeless. They are defined as a building with domestic accommodation.

Housing Market - The Housing Market refers to the supply and demand for houses/properties, usually in a particular country or region in this instance West Berkshire.

Large Scale Voluntary Transfers - A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer involves the council transferring ownership of its homes with the agreement of its tenants to a new or existing Registered Provider (RP).

Local Housing Allowance - Local Housing Allowance was introduced on 7th April 2008 to provide Housing Benefit entitlement for tenants renting private-sector accommodation in England, Scotland and Wales.

Local Plan - A plan that sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land in a local area, authority or district and guides most day-to-day planning choices and decisions.

Long Term Empty homes - These long-term empty homes have been empty for over six months. Properties that have been empty for over two years are subject to the Empty Homes Premium which enables the Council to apply a penalty under Council Tax legislation. In West Berkshire this can result in the owner of a long-term empty home paying up to four times the Council Tax for an occupied property in the same band.

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) - Making Every Adult Matter is a coalition of national charities working together to support local areas across the country to develop effective, coordinated services that directly improve the lives of people facing multiple disadvantages.

Public Protection Partnership - Delivers environmental health and trading standards services across West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham.

Rapid Rehousing Pathways - The Rapid Rehousing Pathway was launched as part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. The pathway brings together 4 policy elements (Somewhere Safe to Stay, Supported Lettings, Navigators and Local Lettings Agencies) that will help rough sleepers, and those at risk of rough sleeping, access the support and settled housing they need to leave the streets for good.

Registered Provider - The term registered provider is defined in Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as a provider of social housing.

Rough Sleeper Initiative- The Rough Sleepers Initiative is designed to accommodate homeless people with emergency hostels.

Shared Accommodation - Shared accommodation is when renters share specific spaces in the property. Typically, each renter has their own bedroom and shares other rooms like the living area, kitchen and sometimes the bathroom.

Sheltered Housing- Sheltered housing is a term covering a wide range of rented housing for older and/or disabled or other vulnerable people.

Social Housing- Social housing is the term given to accommodation which is provided at affordable rates, on a secure basis to people on low incomes or with particular needs. Social housing properties are usually owned councils, or by non-profit organisations such as housing associations also known as Registered Providers.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment - A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is an assessment of future housing requirements in an area.

Under occupation charge- If someone is assessed as having more bedrooms in their accommodation than is necessary, they will be under-occupying that property. This means they will get a reduction on their Housing Benefit. Under-occupying is also known as 'Bedroom Tax'.

Welfare Benefit Cap - The benefit cap is a British Coalition government policy that limits the amount in state benefits that an individual household can claim per year.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
Priority 1 Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs								
1.1	Engage with landowners and developers to deliver the level of new homes as required through the Local Plan	Annual delivery of new housing to exceed published Local Housing Need (currently 507 dwellings per annum)	Planning consents and the delivery of new homes matches the Local Plan requirement	Reduction in scale of planning application received for housing development	Current land supply provides for 7.8 years of housing delivery	April 2021	March 2036	Housing Service Manager/Planning Policy Service Manager
1.2	Utilise the Council's joint venture delivery vehicle to contribute to the delivery of new homes	Increase the number of additional homes delivered by 2036	Annual delivery of new homes	Insufficient viable development opportunities	Mixed tenures considered to cross-subsidise delivery	April 2021	March 2036	Housing Board
				Delays in obtaining planning consent	Development forward plan reviewed by Housing Board			

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
1.3	Deliver a Council-owned housing company to procure private rented accommodation let at rents that are affordable for residents	Housing company established	Incorporation agreed by Housing Board	Business case not agreed	Review feasibility and project brief	In progress	December 2022	Housing Board
1.4	Proactively engage with developers and Registered Providers to provide advice in respect of development opportunities with the aim of removing unnecessary burdens and to be more responsive to business needs	Reduction in time taken to reach planning decisions for major developments	Time taken to make decisions in respect of major development applications	Resources	Review resources and submit a pressure bid if required	April 2021	March 2022	Development Control/Planning Policy Service Managers

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
1.5	Work with registered providers to establish and implement schemes to assist with under occupation.	Increase in under-occupied homes released	Number of under occupiers identified and provided with support and assistance	Under-occupiers do not want to move	Investigate reasons for not moving and implement support package to assist with moving	June 2021	March 2022	Housing Board
1.6	Promote the use of local businesses in delivering value for money housing-related services wherever practicable	Procurement exercises for housing-related services promoted to local businesses	Percentage of procurement exercises promoted to local businesses	May need a procurement exercise to ensure housing related service are delivered	Market research and support from Procurement Team	April 2021	January 2022	Housing Service Manager

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
1.7	Ensure that key workers are afforded priority within our Allocations Policy to assist with securing low-cost housing	Allocations Policy sets out priority for key workers	Number of housing allocations made to key workers	The emerging housing Allocations policy is not adopted.	Revise policy to ensure adoption.	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager
1.8	Undertake research to identify the level of demand for affordable rent and discounted home ownership products from young people and key workers	Key worker review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	July 2021	March 2022	Housing Board
1.9	Review the delivery of supported housing solutions across the District	Supported housing review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	March 2021	September 2021	Housing Board
1.10	Review the delivery of Extra Care housing schemes to meet	Extra Care housing review completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	June 2021	January 2022	Housing Board

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
	the needs of an ageing population							
1.11	Engage with private sector landlords to increase the supply within the private rented sector, and in particular within the HMO (houses in multiple occupation and shared houses) sector	Increased number of high-quality HMOs within the private rented sector	Number of licensed HMOs	Resources	Increase staffing through utilising enforcement income	April 2021	March 2024	Public Protection Partnership
1.12	Engage with developers and Registered Providers to maximise delivery of affordable homes to meet the needs of residents within mixed tenure and	Increase in number of affordable homes completed by 10% each year	Number of affordable homes completed	Site viability	Facilitate use of external funding, e.g. through Homes England	April 2021	Annually	Housing Service Manager

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
	inclusive neighbourhoods							
1.13	Deliver a private sector stock condition survey to better understand the housing conditions within the private sector housing stock in West Berkshire	Private sector stock condition survey completed by specialist contractor	Survey reported to Housing Board	Budgetary pressure	Subject pressure bid	June 2021	December 2021	Housing Board
1.14	Deliver a private sector landlord forum as a vehicle for providing regulatory updates and sharing best practice as a means of improving standards within private rented accommodation	Quarterly private landlord forum established	Landlord forum dates	Lack of interest from private landlords	Devise forum in conjunction with a national landlord association to increase relevance and market the forum to a larger audience	April 2021	April 2022	Public Protection Partnership

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
1.15	Introduce a private landlord accreditation scheme across West Berkshire to promote the business of being a professional landlord	Private landlord accreditation scheme launched	Number of accredited private landlords	Lack of interest from private landlords	Devise forum in conjunction with a national landlord association to increase relevance and market the forum to a larger audience	June 2021	September 2021	Public Protection Partnership
1.16	Review enforcement of poor housing conditions within the private rented sector in accordance with the Public Protection Partnership's Private Sector Housing Policy to ensure that we are maximising our ability to improve private	Increase private rented sector dwellings improved each year	Number of private rented sector dwellings improved	Resources	Review use of civil penalty income to increase resources	April 2021	March 2024	Public Protection Partnership

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
	sector housing conditions							
1.17	Undertake a needs assessment to determine estimated future need for housing that meets the needs of older residents, disabled residents, and other residents whose needs are not suitably met by general needs housing	Housing needs assessment completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	June 2021	January 2022	Housing Board
1.18	Implement a review mechanism regarding eligibility for a DFG application.	The number of DFG applications subject to review, will be approved and evidenced by eligibility will increase.	Review of DFG applications will form part of performance report	Accessibility of service and ability to provide information as part of the review due to circumstances out of our control i.e. Pandemic	Developing recovery plans to address risks posed from circumstance out of our control.	February 2021	December 2021	Housing Service Manager

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by
			Risks	Mitigation			

Priority 2 Reduce homelessness								
2.1	Deliver the actions set out in the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Actions detailed in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivered	Project update reports considered by the Housing Board	As detailed in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan		In progress	March 2025	Housing Service Manager
2.2	Introduce a package of measures to incentivise private landlords to accommodate residents who are threatened with homelessness to reduce the need for the Council to secure temporary accommodation under its	Private landlord incentives implemented	Number of households threatened with homelessness prevented from becoming homeless through use of landlord incentive	Poor take up of incentives by landlords	Use private landlord forum to promote incentive scheme	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
	homelessness obligations							
2.3	Continue our work with our partners to reduce rough sleeping through a range of interventions focussed on supporting individuals to access accommodation pathways appropriate to individual needs	Eliminate rough sleeping by 2027	Number of rough sleepers as identified at the annual November count	External factors influence rough sleeping	Ensure the service is flexible to meet changing demands	In progress	November 2027	Housing Service Manager
2.4	Continue to deliver Rough Sleeping Initiative projects as agreed with the Ministry of Housing and	Rough Sleeping Initiative projects delivered as agreed with MHCLG	Annual reporting to MHCLG	Change in needs of rough sleeping cohort	Projects under continuous review with MHCLG with the ability to flex projects to meet emerging need	In progress	March 2021	Housing Service Manager

Action	Outcome	Performance measures	Risk management		Start	Completion	Owned by	
			Risks	Mitigation				
	Local Government to reduce the number of people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough							
2.5	Review the provision of support services for the single homeless, including the provision of smaller units of hostel-type accommodation distributed throughout West Berkshire to better meet local need.	Review of support services completed	Review reported to Housing Board	Resources	Use of external consultants to deliver review	July 2021	March 2022	Housing Board



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Summary of changes made to the draft housing strategy following consultation closing on 01/11/2020

Focus Area on Draft Strategy	Issue identified by consultation	Recommended amendment to the strategy	Action taken
	Formatting of numbers and links to be finalised	To be completed once all changes to the body of the report have been made	
	Foreword required and picture - Lead Portfolio Member for Housing – Cllr Hilary Cole	JW to complete and send over draft	Foreword and picture added to the draft
	Update the layout to make it flow and read better	Move paragraphs to create better flow	Layout altered
Pages 8 – The national context	National Context 2017 White Paper – boost housing market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met housing needs • Support people to buy or rent their own homes • Prevent Homelessness • LA'S and industries to build new homes 	Reviewed and still relevant	Reviewed and still relevant – no changes required
Page 8 – The national context	To include Covid 19/pandemic in here	Include Covid-19 content	Added to the Foreword, pages 8 and 12.
Page 9 Context and data source	Check content and data sources and include DFG information.	Completed	Data sources checked and DFG information included
Page 10 – Local context	Demographics – check up to date and fit to one page	Confirmed numbers, amended and Design team to fit to one page	Data reviewed and updated where necessary. Graphics reduced to 1 page.
Page 11 – consultation feedback on self-build	Include information on self-build and custom house building in this section.	Seek info from Planning Policy	Updated Self-build section
Page 11 continued	Tenure is missing and needs to tie up with SHMA. Just shows projected demographics amend	Checked housing tenure data from ONS (Nomis) and then updated with title – table 2 and projected demographics also checked	Updated
Page 12	Add in reference to the pandemic and impact on the economy in this area and double check data sources and Table 3 data and include title.	Update the economy section to include impact following Covid-19 pandemic and data checked	Added to the Foreword, pages 8 and 12.
Page 13	Will need to change Table 4 as the LHA rates have increased	Will need to retrieve this from Valuation Office website and change reference in strategy to include date produced	LHA rates were checked and remained the same to keep consistent

	Edit under occupation so that it aligns with action in the delivery plan	and data source in January 2021 as published LHA rates 19/20 not yet available Under-occupation now amended	data set throughout document Amended
Page 15 – specialist accommodation	Add in reference to families of children with disabilities and two saints as per consultation feedback. Also link to the 'Market Position Statement for ASC housing and care due to other specialist provision within that statement.	Amended to say families of children. Link to the 'Market Position Statement for ASC housing and care also updated.	Amended
Page 16 - DFGs	The number of DFGs awarded is missing as it demonstrates other housing solutions and that we do award DFGs	Table 7 included with DFGs awarded from 2015 – 2019, but only available in calendar years not financial years.	Amended
Page 18 – Environmental considerations	Add in environmental considerations as per feedback	This has been incorporated from the Environment Strategy with Jenny Graham from Environment Delivery.	Amended as suggested by Jenny
Infographics	Add rough sleeper numbers into the infographics	Add in and will need a footnote of date	Amended and updated
	Add in Oct 2020 Empty homes number from council tax	Source from Council Tax	Still required
Page 24 – Key worker definition	Amend to include care worker definition as per feedback	Amend the Key worker definition to reflect updated definition	Updated and amended
Page 12	The percentage rise in applicants on the register should have been 79% not 29%	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended
Page 13 – first paragraph	Add capital letters to Housing Benefits	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended
Page 21 – under priority one	Include new wording - We will lead on innovative new delivery vehicles to provide new housing solutions in the area.	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended
Page 21- last paragraph	Include new wording - which will influence an ongoing review of our delivery plan	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended
Page 21 – under priority one	Include new wording - In order to deliver new homes through development opportunities, we will	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended
Page 21 – under priority one	Include new wording - The Council-owned housing company will increase much needed rented accommodation in the district.	Recommendation from Scrutiny	Updated and amended

Page 13-15 links updated	Added in correct links that were broken or missing	Identified during proof reading	Updated and amended
Throughout document	Remove all references to Draft	Identified during proof reading	Updated and amended
Infographics – updated	Some of the infographics were out of date. These have been updated where new data is available.	Recommendation from Operations Board	Updated and amended
Throughout document	Wording and punctuation updated to improve readability	Recommendation from Operations Board	Updated and amended

Focus Area on Draft Delivery Plan	Issues identified on the draft Delivery Plan	Recommended amendment to the Delivery Plan	Actions taken
Page 37	There is no mention of Disabled Facilities Grant's on the delivery plan	Review the mechanism for eligibility has been added to the delivery plan	Amended
	Although we have the number of new affordable homes built in the infographics can we source information on Affordable Housing Lettings data, i.e. social rented lets and AR Lets and then shared ownership	Will need to see if we can pull this from CORE return data. Still trying to source the data	Data obtained for affordable housing and will be added into the strategy
	Do we need to update the AH Completions figures from the MHCLG Live tables?	Review data and data source to see if 2020 has been published and update	Reviewed and data was not available
	Revisit the targets in the delivery plan where there are XXX as per feedback	Revise the wording if unable to source the targets.	Wording revised and numbers added where applicable
	Revisit what we have said about under-occupation and tenancy strategy as per feedback. These are linked and would be an action in the delivery plan	Reviewed and updated and also updated delivery plan action	Updated
	A glossary of terms would be helpful	Include a glossary of terms as per feedback	Updated and added

	Do we need Help To Buy information?	Review and see if there is an action in the delivery plan about this.	Action not required
	Cllr Hilary Cole suggested removing the housing register figure from the infographics as it will cause confusion. If we do this then we need to make sure that this information is clearly set out as part of housing need data within the housing strategy	Remove Infographic on housing register stats, and include the housing register stats within the housing strategy text – done and included on page 12 of the housing strategy	Removed infographic
	My comments from reading the feedback about links to other strategies – a hierarchy of how the strategy fits into other strategies should help the reader to understand why it does not go into significant details as it is a high level strategy and other plans and projects will fall out of it. This is the outward facing diagram on page 20	Hierarchy of the Housing Strategy included on page 20 as also fits into explaining our priorities	Hierarchy included

Motion - Scrutiny of Community Infrastructure Levy Payments

Committee considering report:	Executive on 25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Hilary Cole
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	16 February 2021
Report Author:	Bryan Lyttle
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4004

1 To Provide a response to the motion 18 (b) for the Executive

- 1.1 At the 3rd December 2020 Council the following motion 18 (b) was submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks:

We call upon the Council to urgently engage external expertise to undertake an independent review of the management of CIL payments from local developers. This is in light of two cases – that Members are aware of – where the sums paid by the applicants have been contested as they maintain they have been penalised by many thousands of pounds for incorrect paperwork submissions. These were able to be corrected rapidly when pointed out to the Applicant, but the Council pressed on in charging the applicant based on the original assessment.

Therefore:

The Council resolves to engage with an independent scrutineer – potentially from an adjacent Local Authority – to undertake an external review of its method of handling CIL payments from developers – including the processing of them, the interface with developers on the amounts due and the paperwork being submitted accurately.

- 1.2 The Chairman informed the Council that, in accordance with Procedural Rule 4.9.8 the motion if seconded, would be referred to the Executive for consideration.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive resolves to reject the Motion contained in 1.1 above. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations clearly set out the procedures that can be taken to dispute a CIL charge by the Charging Authority. The complaints relating to the two cases referred to in the motion were not upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman. Furthermore the cases date back to 2015 and 2017, since then changes have been made to both the Regulations and the Council's CIL processes. In addition, the CIL team have been audited twice and found to be Satisfactory.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	There will be cost involved in commissioning an external audit estimated to be in the region of £7,000 to £20,000.			
Human Resource:	None			
Legal:	The way CIL operates is governed by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The CIL is a levy required by new development to pay for the infrastructure to support it. It is therefore Core Business.			
Risk Management:	Further details to be incorporated under paragraph 5 below - Supporting Information.			
Property:	None			
Policy:	<p>National Policy</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Regulations (2010) (As amended) - if the CIL Charging Authority (CA) has not been notified in advance, then the CIL regulations are clear that once work commences the CA have no lawful basis (under the CIL legislation) to retrospectively grant exemption, and any CIL arising becomes payable in full.</p> <p>Local Policy</p> <p>WBDC CIL Charging Schedule (Adopted 2014)</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:				None
Health Impact:				None
ICT Impact:				None
Digital Services Impact:				None
Council Strategy Priorities:				None
Core Business:				None
Data Impact:				None
Consultation and Engagement:	Sarah Ball – CIL team Sarah Clarke, Sharon Armour & Shiraz Sheikh – Legal Julie Gillhespey - Audit			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a statutory charge payable in respect of certain types of planning applications (once approved) to assist in the delivery of infrastructure needed to support the local community following the removal of the ability to use a formulaic approach to Section 106 contributions.

- 4.2 Local Planning Authorities can choose to introduce a CIL requirement or not, however if they do not introduce CIL then much needed local infrastructure required to support new development would not be funded by the developer. West Berkshire Council was one of the first in the country to choose to introduce the levy in 2015, so that infrastructure projects in West Berkshire would continue to be funded.
- 4.3 Regulations specify the various forms and notifications required in the administration of the CIL. Whilst the Council must acknowledge notifications received, the onus is placed on the person who has accepted liability to ensure they comply with the CIL Regulations. Failure to do so may incur surcharges and penalties, or removal of entitlements to relief e.g. an instalment scheme is in place for where the sum payable exceeds £15,000, but a breach of Regulations can lead to forfeiture and the full sum becoming due immediately.
- 4.4 Since the introduction of CIL by West Berkshire Council in 2015, there have been over 2,374 CIL liable developments in West Berkshire and the Council has only been informed by the Local Government Ombudsman of just four complaints against it relating to CIL. In all cases the LGO found in favour of the Council.
- 4.5 The Council's CIL processes have also been internally audited twice, once in 2018/19 and again in July 2020.
- 4.6 The CIL legislation is constantly changing and as a result the processes and procedures and service improvements recommended by internal audit have been implemented. Therefore, the officer recommendation is that another audit is not necessary and the motion should be rejected.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 At the 3rd December 2020 Council the following motion 18 (b) was submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks:

We call upon the Council to urgently engage external expertise to undertake an independent review of the management of CIL payments from local developers. This is in light of two cases – that Members are aware of – where the sums paid by the applicants have been contested as they maintain they have been penalised by many thousands of pounds for incorrect paperwork submissions. These were able to be corrected rapidly when pointed out to the Applicant, but the Council pressed on in charging the applicant based on the original assessment.

Therefore:

The Council resolves to engage with an independent scrutineer – potentially from an adjacent Local Authority – to undertake an external review of its method of handling CIL payments from developers – including the processing of them, the interface with developers on the amounts due and the paperwork being submitted accurately.

Background

- 5.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a statutory charge payable in respect of certain types of planning applications to assist in the delivery of infrastructure needed to support the local community following the removal of the ability to use a formulaic approach to Section 106 contributions. This should be paid once approved and prior to implementation, if not paid prior to implementation there are a range a sanctions that legislation imposes for example the withdrawal of from the charge.
- 5.3 Regulations specify the various forms and notifications required in the administration of the CIL. Whilst the Council must acknowledge notifications received, the onus is placed on the person who has accepted liability to ensure they comply with the CIL Regulations. Failure to do so may incur surcharges and penalties, or removal of entitlements to relief e.g. an instalment scheme is in place where the sum payable exceeds £15,000, but a breach of Regulations can lead to forfeiture and the full sum becoming due immediately.
- 5.4 Since the 1st April 2015 there have been over 2,374 CIL liable developments in West Berkshire with less than 50 appeals and 25 complaints. Where an independent party has investigated and found against the Council has occurred in only 8 out of these 2,374 CIL liable developments or simply 0.3%.
- 5.5 In May 2018 an information item on CIL was taken to Operations Board, this report in section 7 highlighted the fact that if the regulations where not followed a “disqualifying event” may occur resulting in the withdrawal of any exemption granted prior to the commencement and a fine being levied in addition to the original liability.

CIL cases to Ombudsman

- 5.6 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has only asked the Council to respond to four CIL cases in which complaints had been made against the Council and how it operated CIL.
- 5.7 In a case the LGO responded to in September 2017 in the final decision the Ombudsman states:
- Mrs X accepts that her agent made a mistake and did not apply for a CIL exemption. However, she believes her application was invalid without it. She said the Council should have told her this information was missing and should not have decided her application without it.
- 5.8 In the analysis of the case the LGO states

We will not investigate the complaint as there is insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.

There is no requirement nationally or locally for an applicant to provide an exemption claim form with a planning application to make it valid. So it seems that Mrs X’s application – made on her behalf by her agent – was valid. There was no reason, therefore, why the Council should not have decide it. Both the PAAIR form and the Council’s later letter advised Mrs X’s agent that an exemption claim should be made and decided before development started. It is unfortunate that Mrs X’s agent did not apply for a CIL exemption. But it did not happen because of anything the Council failed to do.

5.9 In another case the charge made against the Council to the LGO was;

“Mr P complains about a Community Infrastructure Levy charge he had to pay to the Council. He says the Council failed to explain or assist him.”

5.10 In its final decision the Ombudsman states;

“There is a possible fault by the Council regarding its email of 14th March to Mr X. This was sent to an incorrect email address. It is unclear whether this was an error on the part of Mr X or the Council. However, it did not result in an injustice to Mr P because the Council subsequently told him that a CIL charge was payable several times in 2018 along with comments in the planning officer’s report in 2017 noting that a charge was payable.”

5.11 In addition to the Councils’ CIL processes being scrutinised by the Local Government Ombudsman the team has been audited twice.

5.12 The first audit was for the period 2018/19 and the final report was issued in February 2020. In the opinion of the auditors the controls and procedures reviewed were found to be satisfactory. However, 11 weaknesses were identified; 6 moderate and 5 minor and an action plan to remediate these was recommended and implemented.

5.13 At the end of July 2020, the Executive Director Place requested that a further Internal Audit carried out a more focused review regarding exemptions and reminders being issued. As a result of concerns being raised by Members regarding consistency in these issues.

5.14 The conclusion of the second audit was

- The Council’s website publishes comprehensive and clear guidance covering the CIL process and there are links to all forms required to be completed by an applicant/their agent.
- The CIL Team also offers guidance to each applicant at each of the key stages of the CIL process, by stating what the next stage is, and what forms may be relevant for the applicant at that stage.
- From our sample checks of 40 applications where an exemption had been approved we did not find any cases where there were inconsistencies in how the application had been processed regarding the issuing of reminders where an exemption may apply. As stated earlier, the CIL team do not have a process whereby they chase/remind applicants where there is the possibility an exemption may apply given that it is the applicant’s/agent’s responsibility to ensure forms are completed correctly and in a timely manner.
- All through the process the website and email correspondence clearly state that it is the applicant’s/liable party’s responsibility to ensure that the forms are completed correctly and submitted on time in accordance with the regulations.

5.17 From the detailed internal audit in 2020, changes to the web site that have been made as the legislation has been revised, that provides clear and comprehensive information to assist both agents and applicants through each stage of the CIL process, do not seek out to “trap” people into paying large amounts of money for CIL. Further the random sample of cases did not find any cases of inconsistencies in approach by the CIL team.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Option A - The motion requests that the Council invites another Charging Authority in to check its processes so such issues do not arise in the future.
- 6.2 All the Berkshire authorities charge CIL and follow the same processes as West Berkshire Council, in line with the latest regulations. The only differences between the authorities is the amount charged and the type of development that incurs the charge. If an external audit team was to be appointed it could cost between £7,000 and £20,000 based on a 15 day process.
- 6.3 Option B – The Council is a member of the Planning Advisory Service CIL and Section 106 advisory group which also includes representatives from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. PAS do offer an advisory service which could be retained to check Council processes, however there would still be a fee associated with undertaking this review.
- 6.4 Option C – Reject the motion.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 With less than 0.3% of CIL decisions going against the Council when investigated by the Valuations Office, Planning Inspectorate or Local Government Ombudsman and two internal audit reviews that have found the service satisfactory the need for another review so soon after the last is not necessary. The officer recommendation is therefore Option C.

Appendices - None

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Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	4 March 2021
Report Author:	Bill Bagnell
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4005

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Council’s response to the motion submitted in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon at the Council meeting on 3rd December 2020, namely:

We propose the Council postpones their application for demolition of the Faraday Road Football Ground facilities at least until the equivalent, or better, alternative site is confirmed and approved by the football community.

Furthermore, we propose that the Council now engage with the local football community and interested parties (e.g. Newbury Community Football Group and Newbury Town Council) to explore options that make the Faraday Road Football Ground available for Men’s, Ladies and youth clubs in Newbury to book for football training and matches in the meantime.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive resolves to reject the motion. The planning application is being considered by Planning amongst other things for the demolition of an unsafe club house and to introduce measures to allow the old grass pitch to be brought into general public use. Whilst this is underway it is not proposed that the site would be used for football training and matches.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	There are ongoing costs associated with the maintenance and security arrangements for the existing structure. These would rise in the event that the proposal as laid out in the motion was accepted.			
Human Resource:	N/A			
Legal:	It is noted the football ground is an Asset of Community Value (ACV). The proposal to demolish the old clubhouse and open the old grass pitch to public use does not breach the ACV provisions.			
Risk Management:	The building in question is a derelict property and thus unsafe making it not suitable for use by the public. In order to mitigate risk of injury it would be prudent to demolish the building as soon as possible.			
Property:	The proposal relates to the demolition of a derelict and unsafe building on a site wholly owned and occupied by the Council.			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		The redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate is a key priority for the council and any delay in the demolition of the building and entering into a new single sports use occupancy of the old football pitch could have an impact on the project.
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Shiraz Sheikh – Legal Services Manager Paul Anstey- Head of Public Protection and Culture Gary Lugg - Head of Development and Planning Joseph Holmes - Executive Directory (Resources)			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 On 3rd December 2020, Councillor Lee Dillon brought a motion to Council calling for the demolition of the former Newbury Football Club Clubhouse to be delayed until such time as plans for alternative provision for community football could be made and further engagement had been undertaken with the football community in Newbury.

Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

- 4.2 The old football ground forms part of the council-owned London Road Industrial Estate, the development of which is seen as a key medium term aspiration for West Berkshire Council. The lease on the football ground ended in June 2018 at which point the Council gained vacant possession. In the following July a condition survey was carried out which demonstrated the old clubhouse could not be reoccupied without carrying out significant immediate remedial works and where the building represents a safety risk and on-going security maintenance cost.
- 4.3 Over the last three years the Council has worked with Sport England and relevant sport governing bodies to deliver a district wide Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Further to this the Council has made a clear commitment to develop a new sustainable location for club football within the Newbury area. The Council has viable options to deliver the appropriately graded sports ground in line with the objectives and action plan set out in the PPS.
- 4.4 As the last tenant of the old football ground, Newbury Football Club has successfully carried on playing at another venue supported by the Council and there is agreement that these arrangements can remain in place until delivery of the new facility. This was agreed as part of the PPS. None of these proposals have any impact on any other football teams as they play at different locations. The Council has routinely requested that any football team in need of support to find a playing pitch should come forward and, to date, none have. Regardless of future LRIE redevelopment plans, it is not appropriate to reopen the old football ground to any temporary user while very poor condition structures remain in situ. Similarly removal of these structures does not prevent further dialogue with interested parties.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 West Berkshire Council has submitted planning application 20/02402/REG3 to demolish built structures associated with the old football ground on the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) and make changes to the immediate environment allowing the grass pitch to be available for general public recreational use until the land is required for redevelopment, subject to consent. The determination period of that application has been extended in order to allow for bat emergence surveys to be carried out in May, June & July on the basis that a pre-roost assessment shows the former football clubhouse may contain hibernating bats.
- 5.2 The demolition application has been submitted since, whatever happens to the old football ground in respect of the LRIE redevelopment, the existing structures including the boundary fence are in extremely poor condition, cannot be effectively maintained in their current state, are not necessary to the re-opening of the old grass pitch and in the case of the old clubhouse a potential public health risk, an on-going security cost and in the context of a building wholly beyond sensible economic repair if emergency remedial works were contemplated. Furthermore retention of these structures is not relevant to any further dialogue that might take place between the Council and interested parties should further dialogue be appropriate or helpful. .
- 5.3 Notwithstanding the need for the Council to reasonably engage with any section of the community, Sport England in conjunction with the Football Association are the

appropriate organisation for the Council to liaise with and satisfy when considering how best to deliver sustainable football within the Newbury area. All discussions are focussed on the delivery of the objectives set out in the PPS, this is acknowledging the fact that complex usage plans (schedules which show what team plays where, which leagues and cup competitions and for how long each week) will need to be developed to ensure the football community are supported with investment in the most sustainable facilities.

Background

- 5.4 After a two year extension, the lease on the old football ground ended June 2018. The Council had no obligation to find another tenant and where, using best endeavours, achieving vacant possession of the football ground was a contractual requirement of the development agreement between the Council and St.Modwen. At the time the Council achieved vacant possession the St.Modwen development agreement was still in place.
- 5.5 In July 2018 a condition survey was carried out on the football clubhouse and which identified over £200,000 of immediate remedial works required before the building could be re-occupied by another user. The condition survey highlighted further works to be carried out within two years totalling just over £300,000. Including consultant fees but not any contingency sums, the survey set out total repair costs at £568,000 but in the context of a building wholly beyond economic repair. The football ground facilities generally would require regeneration, the funding for which could only be secured by granting a 25 years plus lease to a new operator and where this would be contrary to the Council's long held and well publicised aspirations to redevelop the LRIE, including the football ground.
- 5.6 Since becoming vacant the old clubhouse has been made secure by metal sheeting from a company on 24hr call out security. Despite best reasonable endeavours, the building is very difficult to keep secure and represents a potential safety risk as well as an on-going security maintenance cost. There have been multiple break-ins requiring replacement and enhancement of metal sheeting. The risk could only be further mitigated by opening up again the building for use but where this could not happen without substantial monies being spent on the building and where the Council has no meaningful use for it.
- 5.7 In 2018 the Council, working closely with Sport England and other sports governing bodies, commissioned a district wide Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which was completed at the end of 2019 and made public February 2020. The PPS demonstrated the district had, overall, the required natural grass football pitch capacity but some pitches were only able to be booked month to month or season to season. There was a known deficit of artificial grass pitches in the Newbury catchment.
- 5.8 As a result of the PPS's findings, the Head of Public Protection and Culture sought to identify a site for provision of a new community sports ground which would satisfy the specific objectives, namely to provide a Step 6 facility (an FA sports ground grading system which identifies the need for a small number of spectator seating/stands, toilets and changing facilities, with floodlights etc.) As part of that it was also stated in the PPS that it would be equal or better to the Faraday road facility if it was built with an artificial grass surface and had the ability to be further upgraded to Step 5 (more spectator

facilities). In January 2021 the Council announced its intention to negotiate a 40 year lease with Newbury Rugby Club to adapt a section of their site to provide a Step 6 Sports Ground. The public engagement exercise followed, including online survey, virtual meetings with interested parties, and provision was made in the Budget 2021/22 for the operation of the new site. Negotiations are ongoing, but should they fail to deliver against the PPS objectives at this late stage the Council has a viable alternative plan which is in the public domain. The same rigorous process will be followed for any other site considered and will only be pursued if it meets the PPS objectives.

5.9 During the same time period the Council Strategy 2019-23 reconfirmed the London Road Industrial Estate as a key site for redevelopment and in late 2019, the Council as landowner appointed Avison Young to prepare a development brief for the site. The final draft of the development brief was referred to Executive in 17 December 2020 for consideration and which confirmed the redevelopment of the LRIE on a mixed use basis, including the football ground, remained a commercially viable proposition, subject to consent.

5.10 The Avison Young development brief described the delivery options for redevelopment based between a full land assembly exercise and a phased approach. Whilst the decision on the delivery option is pending it would be entirely detrimental to the Council's redevelopment plans to enter into any formal operating occupancy with another football group. Notwithstanding any planning consent, there remains no logic in retaining the old unsafe clubhouse and associated structures.

5.11 It is proposed that the recommendations laid out in the motion are rejected on the following basis:

- alternative provision, as defined by the PPS, for the former club football facilities provided on the LRIE has now been identified within the Newbury area,
- All appropriate engagement has been undertaken with the signatories of the PPS to ensure the objectives can be met,
- there is no logic in retaining dilapidated and potentially dangerous structures,
- any further dialogue on the use of the old grass pitch, should that occur, is not dependant on retention of structures to be demolished.
- the Council remains committed to the regeneration and redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate and therefore it is not prepared to take any action that might jeopardize those plans including renewed single sport reoccupation and management of the former LRIE football ground.
- the Council has proposals that will allow the old grass pitch to be used for general public enjoyment until the area is required for redevelopment and where those proposals maintain the Council's control of the asset thus ensuring freedom of action as and when the land is needed for development, subject to the Council obtaining the necessary planning consent.

6 Other options considered

6.1 No other options were considered.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The London Road Industrial Estate regeneration is a Council priority which was clearly stated in the Council Strategy 2019-23. The Council has engaged with a range of stakeholders including football over a number of years and has shown public commitment to secure alternative provision for local football which meets the objectives of the PPS. There is now a negotiation process underway that, if successful, will deliver those objectives and a viable alternative has been prepared.
- 7.2 The existing clubhouse and outbuildings are in a state of disrepair and are not suitable for reoccupation regardless of the way in which the remainder of the site is used. It would be prudent to demolish the building as soon as possible to mitigate any risk of injury or harm.
- 7.3 The desire to make progress on the project and to deliver improvements which will contribute to the economic success of the district must also be considered. It is therefore proposed that the recommendations laid out in the motion are rejected.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Officer details:

Name: Bill Bagnell
Job Title: Manager – Special Projects

Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

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E-mail: bill.bagnell@westberks.gov.uk

Document Control

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;**
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.*
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To reject proposals laid out within a Council Motion relating to the demolition of a derelict council-owned asset
Summary of relevant legislation:	N/A
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation
Name of Budget Holder:	Gabrielle Mancini
Name of Service/Directorate:	Development and Planning
Name of assessor:	Gabrielle Mancini
Date of assessment:	11/2/2021
Version and release date (if applicable):	

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To facilitate the redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate
Objectives:	To contribute to the economic success of West Berkshire and the creation of an improved gateway into Newbury

Outcomes:	The next stage of the redevelopment will be possible
Benefits:	The future economic success of West Berkshire

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	N/A	
Disability	N/A	
Gender Reassignment	N/A	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	
Race	N/A	
Religion or Belief	N/A	
Sex	N/A	
Sexual Orientation	N/A	

Further Comments:

N/A

(3) Result

Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? Yes No

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users? Yes No

Please provide an explanation for your answer:

Alternative provision including improved facilities has already been agreed

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a EqlA 2.

If an EqlA 2 is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the EqlA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name:

Date:

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Development and Planning
Team:	Economic Development
Lead Officer:	Gabrielle Mancini
Title of Project/System:	Response to Opposition Motion relating to demolition of the Clubhouse at the former Newbury Football Club
Date of Assessment:	11/2/2021

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Response to the Council Motion relating to the demolition of the former Newbury Football Ground Clubhouse

	Yes	No
Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is "scored" or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any "profiling" of data subjects?		
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised		

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter Three 2020/21

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Date Portfolio Member agreed sent:	25 February 2021
Report Author:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3912

1 Purpose of the Report

The financial performance report provided to Members on a quarterly basis reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget. This report presents the Quarter Three financial position.

2 Recommendation

No recommendations have been made within this report. Members are to note the forecast financial position as at Quarter Three.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	At the end of Quarter Three, expenditure of £42.9 million has been forecast against a revised budget of £48.3 million, an overall forecast underspend of £5.4 million.
Human Resource:	Not applicable
Legal:	Not applicable
Risk Management:	Any further significant delays in project delivery impact on the provisional budget for 2021/22 and subsequent years.

Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	Not applicable			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		

Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Joseph Holmes, Executive Director for Resources, s151 Officer Capital Strategy Group (CSG)			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 At the end of Quarter Three, expenditure of £42.9 million has been forecast against a revised budget of £48.3 million, an overall forecast underspend of £5.4 million.

Directorate Summary	Quarter Two			Quarter Three		
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Budget at Q3	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
People	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	£15,778	£14,023	(£1,755)
Place	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	£25,396	£23,237	(£2,159)
Resources	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	£7,093	£5,625	(£1,468)
Chief Executive	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Totals	£56,890	£44,544	(£12,346)	£48,267	£42,885	(£5,382)

4.2 The main contributing factors to the forecast position are:

- (a) Education Services is forecasting a £1.4 million underspend driven primarily by a delay in the i-College (formally Eastern Area PRU) project (£493k) through delays in agreeing new lease terms with the Parish Council, and delays to the Speenhamland project through redesign and re procuring a contractor (£427k). The planned maintenance budgets have been impacted by the COVID pandemic with delays in feasibility studies and commencement of works.
- (b) Development and Planning are forecasting a £1.7 million underspend consisting of delays in delivering the Four Houses Corner redevelopment (£1.6 million), and underspends against the demand led Disabled Facilities Grant (£368k), offset by an overspend against the purchases of temporary accommodation budget (£282k).
- (c) Public Protection & Culture are forecast an underspend of £768k, attributable to delays in undertaking maintenance across key sites including Shaw House, Museum and Libraries (£448k), delays in commencing projects relating to leisure centre modernisations (£285k) and underspends against the renewal of library books budget (£35k).

4.3 A future risk identified relating to the COVID pandemic is the potential for engaged suppliers to default on contractual obligations through financial difficulties. Budget managers and CSG are closely monitoring these risks to highlight projects with potential suppliers of concern and where there is a risk of default and/or the potential to retender agreed contracts at potentially higher cost.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 A capital budget for 2020/21 of £42.5 million was set by Council in March 2020 with funding of £21.4 million from external grants, £6.2 million of section 106 contributions (s106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), with £14.8 million of expenditure planned to be funded from external borrowing. The repayment of principal sums and interest on loans used to fund capital expenditure are met from the revenue budget for capital financing and risk management. Forecast spend against this budget is reported in the Revenue Financial Performance Report.
- 5.2 During the financial year budget changes may occur, mainly as a result of budgets brought forward from prior financial years, additional grants, s106 and CIL allocations received in year and expenditure re-profiled in future financial years. Changes of less than £250k can be approved by the s151 Officer in conjunction with the portfolio holder, all other changes must be approved by Capital Strategy Group (CSG) and reported to Executive as set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. As part of the budget monitoring process, the forecast year end position of the capital projects is reviewed and proposals for unutilised budgets to be re-profiled into subsequent financial years is reviewed by Capital Strategy Group (CSG). Appendix A provides a breakdown of budget changes as at Quarter Three.

Background

- 5.3 Total forecast capital expenditure for financial year 2020/21 as at Quarter Three is £42.9 million against a revised capital programme of £48.3 million, generating a forecast underspend position of £5.4 million.

Directorate Summary	Quarter Two			Quarter Three		
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Budget at Q3	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
People	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	£15,778	£14,023	(£1,755)
Place	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	£25,396	£23,237	(£2,159)
Resources	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	£7,093	£5,625	(£1,468)
Chief Executive	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Totals	£56,890	£44,544	(£12,346)	£48,267	£42,885	(£5,382)

- 5.4 £7.3 million of expenditure was agreed by Capital Strategy Group and reprofiled into future financial years at Quarter Two. Projects across the directorates, most notably in Education Services have been impacted by the COVID pandemic resulting in reprofiling. Impacts have been through delays to the commencement of works due to access issues and via an ongoing risk relating of the potential for engaged suppliers to default on contractual obligations through financial difficulties. Budget managers and CSG are closely monitoring these risks to highlight projects with potential suppliers of concern and where there is a risk of default and/or the potential to retender agreed contracts at potentially higher cost.

The People Directorate

People	Quarter Two			Quarter Three		
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Budget at Q3	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Social Care	£2,190	£1,895	(£295)	£2,273	£1,915	(£358)
Children & Family Services	£20	£20	£0	£20	£0	(£20)
Education Services	£15,926	£12,766	(£3,160)	£13,485	£12,108	(£1,377)
Totals	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	£15,778	£14,023	(£1,755)

5.5 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £14 million against a £15.8 million budget. Delays in the commencement and completion of planned maintenance works at residential care homes (£212k) as a result of the Covid pandemic and reprofiling of milestone payments relating to the Care Director upgrade project (£146k) have generated the forecast underspend in Adult Social Care. The forecast underspend position across the directorate is mainly attributable to Education Services. The Education Services forecast position is being driven by key underspends against:

- (a) Delays in the i-College (formally Eastern Area PRU) development (£493k) as lease negotiations with the Parish Council remain ongoing.
- (b) Delays in the Speenhamland development (£427k) as a result of changes in the project scope and having to reprocur a design team and contractor.
- (c) Delays in feasibility studies and commencement of works across a number of projects due to the current construction industry market environment.

The Place Directorate

Place	Quarter Two			Quarter Three		
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Budget at Q3	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Development & Planning	£4,478	£3,403	(£1,075)	£4,640	£2,952	(£1,688)
Public Protection & Culture	£2,458	£2,472	£14	£1,858	£1,090	(£768)
Environment	£24,226	£18,584	(£5,642)	£18,898	£19,195	£297
Totals	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	£25,396	£23,237	(£2,159)

5.6 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £23.2 million against a budget of £25.4 million. The forecast underspend position is the result of:

- (a) Development and Planning are forecasting a £1.7 million underspend consisting of delays in delivering the Four Houses Corner redevelopment (£1.6 million), and underspends against the demand led Disabled Facilities Grant (£368k), offset by an overspend against the purchases of temporary accommodation budget (£282k).
- (b) Public Protection & Culture are forecast an underspend of £768k, attributable to delays in undertaking maintenance across key sites including Shaw House, Museum and Libraries (£448k), delays in commencing projects relating to leisure

centre modernisations (£285k) and underspends against the renewal of library books budget (£35k).

- (c) Environment is forecasting a £297k overspend. The net overspend position is mainly attributable to overspends against flood alleviation works and drainage works across the district (£352k), highways structure improvements including carriage patching (£479k), cycle way improvements (£260k) and an overspend against the Newbury Rail Station Improvement project (£480k). Current overspends are offset through underspends against delays in the solar panel project phase 2 (£600k), bridge maintenance (£375k), footways improvements (£220k) and upgrade of the transport fleet (£100k).

The Resources Directorate

Resources	Quarter Two			Quarter Three		
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Budget at Q3	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Customer Services & ICT	£4,877	£3,116	(£1,761)	£4,183	£3,489	(£694)
Finance & Property	£2,312	£1,886	(£426)	£2,507	£1,854	(£653)
Human Resources	£32	£32	(£0)	£32	£8	(£25)
Strategy & Governance	£371	£371	(£1)	£371	£275	(£97)
Totals	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	£7,093	£5,625	(£1,468)

5.7 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £5.6 million against a budget of £7 million. The forecast underspend position is the result of:

- (a) Customer Services & ICT are forecasting a £694k underspend which is driven by underspends against a range of projects requiring to be re-visited due to the office accommodation review which is underway along with a forecast underspend in delivering Superfast Broadband Infrastructure (£588k).
- (b) The forecast underspend in Finance & Property of £653k mainly relates to COVID restrictions in delivering the corporate buildings capital maintenance programme.
- (c) The forecast underspend in Strategy & Governance is attributable to members' bids.

Proposals

No proposals are made within this report. Report is to note only.

6 Other options considered

No other options were considered.

7 Conclusion

7.1 At Quarter Three expenditure of £42.9 million has been forecast against the revised budget of £48.3 million, resulting in a forecast underspend of £5.4 million.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Budget Changes as at Quarter Three

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No: X

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

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Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

2020/21 Budget Changes as at Quarter Three

Service Area	Original Budget 2020/21 £000	Budget Agreed by CSG to be Re-profiled from 2019/20 £000	Agreed Re-profiling at Q2 £000	Agreed Re-profiling at Q3 £000	Other Changes to 2020/21 Budget £000	Revised Budget for 2020/21 £000	Explanation of Other Agreed Changes	Approved by CSG
PEOPLE DIRECTORATE								
Adult Social Care	£1,388	£226	£0		£660	£2,273	Revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) ref Modernising ASC - £84k/ Notrees Heating - £170k. Care director V6 - £323k, £83k additional DFG grant received 21.12.20	30.04.20
Children & Family Services	£20	£0	£0		£0	£20		
Education Services	£14,375	£1,551	(£2,508)		£67	£13,485	Increase in grant and school funding £67k	
Total for Communities Directorate	£15,783	£1,777	(£2,508)	-	£726	£15,778		
PLACE DIRECTORATE								
Development and Planning	£1,703	£2,664	£0		£273	£4,640	Housing ICT System - £111k, £162k additional DFG received 21.12.20	27.02.20
Public Protection & Culture	£1,160	£1,094	£0		£204	£2,458	PPP One System - £204k	27.02.20
Environment	£19,499	£1,556	(£4,120)		£1,363	£18,298	New DFT Challenge Funding (£3.048)/ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Delivery Plan (£124k). Removal of projects (£1.8m)	16.07.20
Total for Environment Directorate	£22,362	£5,313	(£4,120)		£1,840	£25,396		
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE								
Customer Services and ICT	£2,041	£2,836	(£694)		(£0)	£4,183		
Finance & Property	£2,108	£135	£0		£264	£2,507	RCCO for Income Manager - £70k, £195k 4, The Sector works	30.04.20 / 15.10.20
Human Resources	£0	£32	£0		£0	£32		
Strategic Support & Legal	£237	£134	£0		£0	£371		
Chief Exec	£0	£0	£0		£0	£0		
Total for Resource Directorate	£4,386	£3,136	(£694)		£265	£7,093		
Totals	£42,531	£10,226	-£7,322	£0	£2,831	£48,267		

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Three

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 March 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jo Stewart
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	4 March 2021
Report Author:	Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3885

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures ([Council Strategy 2019-2023](#)) are being managed effectively.
- 1.2 To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.

2 Recommendations

To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the Council's priorities for improvement and remedial actions taken where performance is below target, which is mostly due to Covid-19.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Human Resource:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Legal:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Risk Management:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Property:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.
Policy:	To be highlighted and managed by individual services.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT or Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:	x x			Supports all priorities and core business of the Council Strategy 2019-2023.
Data Impact:		x		
Consultation and Engagement:	The information provided for this report, has been signed off by the relevant Head of Service / Service Director and Portfolio Holder.			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This paper provides updates for each component of the Council Strategy Delivery Plan:

- The influencer (external context) measures,
- Targeted measures for each core business area,
- Targeted measures for each priority for improvement and
- Corporate health (internal context) measures.

4.2 The **contextual measures** indicate that the District is not as badly impacted by Covid-19 as other parts of the country. The infection and death rates are in the lowest (best) quartile of local authorities in England. The key economic indicators (economic activity,

employment rate, business rated properties) are strongly resilient. Although, town centres seem more vulnerable to changing working patterns. Proactive solutions have been adopted to mitigate the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the employment opportunities of young people (e.g. by securing work placements for young people through the implementation of the Kick Start scheme).

- 4.3 Work with our communities to support local residents continued. The increase in benefits claimant count is mainly as a result of changes to the eligibility criteria so that more people can access support. Social Care measures have also been impacted, showing a reduction in safeguarding enquiries in adult social care. An enhanced preventive approach ensures lower rates of children in care and child protection plans (compared to other councils) and these remained relatively stable this year. Council's services are carefully monitoring the contextual measures and adapting service delivery to ensure vulnerable residents are identified and supported.
- 4.4 The Council's resources have been focused to respond to the Covid-19 challenges and to ensure **core business** service delivery. This area maintained strong performance during Q3. Furthermore, exceptional results have been achieved for promptly deciding on benefit claims, timely responding to major and minor planning applications or timely assessments of children at risk. New benchmarking data released this quarter placed the District in the top quartile nationally. The notable exception is the collection of Council Tax and Non domestic rates which are impacted by the Council's conscious decision for payment holidays, made in support of local residents and businesses during Covid-19.
- 4.5 Improvement activity through the Council Strategy **priorities for improvement** continued to be progressed. The majority of measures remained on track and delivery of outcomes continued this quarter (e.g. offered accommodation to all rough sleepers, produced the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan and adopted the Communication and Engagement Strategy). There are some measures not reporting due to data availability impacted by Covid (e.g. educational attainment, average traffic time). A few measures, mostly relating to the approval of other specific strategies and frameworks, are being re-profiled by a few months, as the services responsible for their delivery are at the forefront of the response to Covid-19. The ones to highlight to the Executive include:
- affordable homes completions is 22 units below target (125), however there are currently over 900 affordable housing units with planning permission yet to be built,
 - rural afforestation and urban tree planting feasibility studies are behind schedule and will be reconsidered as part of the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan.
- 4.6 The Council's **corporate health indicators** highlight sound resources management, a budget underspend, reducing sickness absence and stable workforce.
- 4.7 In conclusion, the contextual measures evidence the socio-economic resilience of the District. The Council contributed to this by focusing resources to support the Covid-19 response and recovery activity, and to maintain strong core business delivery. Most of the priorities for improvement are progressed too, but a few actions in this area are re-profiled to ensure sufficient capacity for Covid-19 response and continuity of service delivery.

5 Supporting Information

Influencer measures

Refer to Appendix A for more detail

- 5.1 Non-targeted measures of volume are monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across council services.
- 5.2 The major contextual factors during Q3 remained the challenges due to the ongoing work to mitigate the **impact of Covid-19**. Against a background of a strong economy and more favourable social characteristics, the Council worked with local communities to protect lives and livelihoods ([West Berkshire Community Hub](#)). Data on the cumulative rates of infections and deaths place the District in the best (lowest) quartile nationally, evidencing a resilient West Berkshire.
- 5.3 Overall, **the local economy maintained** the strong pre-Covid-19 levels. Key indicators such as the economic activity rate (chart 1), unemployment rate (chart 2), business rated properties (chart 7), and planning applications and their approval rates (chart 13) remained stable.
- 5.4 Areas impacted more by the pandemic are being tackled through local measures which include the implementation of national solutions. Enhancements to Universal Credit, as part of the UK government's response to Covid-19, mean that an increasing number of people (charts 5 & 6) became eligible for unemployment-related benefit support, although still employed. As part of the Kick Start work placement scheme, over 70 young people have been placed, primarily in the business sector but also within the Council.
- 5.5 Town centres are likely to be more vulnerable to changing working patterns than elsewhere. As would be expected for another lockdown, footfall and the number of parking tickets sold were substantially below normal levels (charts 9 & 10).
- 5.6 The **local social indicators** are following the national trends. In some areas, such as crime (chart 15) and domestic abuse incidents (charts 16 & 17), they show a reduction in volume. The number of households prevented from becoming homeless (chart 34) and rough sleepers (chart 36) is lower than usual, due to the Council's part in the national drive to get '[Everyone in](#)' during the pandemic.
- 5.7 Arrangements have been put in place to ensure that vulnerable children, young people and adults continue to be identified and to receive support. Such arrangements include enhanced screening, closer joint working between different services, face to face visits for all child protection and high level child in need referrals. As reassurance, the number of safeguarding (Section 47) enquiries, have remained in line with previous year's level.
- 5.8 In adult social care, the number of cases receiving long term services (chart 31), and the number of new adult safeguarding enquiries (chart 30) have increased during Q3, after being lower than normal due to Covid-19 in the previous two quarters. There are still a number of clients in interim Short Term solutions that are likely to become long term, so this number may increase by year end.

5.9 The number of flytips reported is 13% higher than Q3 2019/20 (chart 46). An awareness campaign and an increase in enforcement activity appear to have had an effect in stalling the steep rise seen in Q2 experienced by many other councils in the region.

Core Business Activities

Refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports

Please note:

R (red): year-end target will not be met

A (amber): behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

G (green): year-end target will be met.

DNA: Data not available

DNP: Data not provided

Refer to Appendix C for technical conventions

Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q3 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
Protecting our children	Ofsted rating of at least Good for our Children and Family Service	G	Good	Good	Latest available inspection result. OFSTED Inspections are currently on hold due to Covid-19.
	% of Children in Care where the child has been visited in the past 6 weeks (or 12 weeks if this is the agreed visiting schedule)	A	83.4%	≥95%	YTD: 131 / 157 Classing a visit as 'statutory' if it is carried out face to face. If we include visits in all formats, we are at 96%.
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	G	95.7%	≥93%	YTD: 66 / 69 No inspections have taken place since March 2020 due to COVID 19.
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	G	Complete in Q1	≥95%	
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	G	Complete in Q1	≥95%	

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Three

Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q3 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults	% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better	R	66.7%	100%	YTD: 4 / 6 January 2021 update: Birchwood not inspected yet as CQC are not completing inspections. Walnut Close has been closed from 25 Jan 2021. See exception report for details.
	% of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team	A	95.8%	≥98%	YTD: 1,435 / 1,498 Vacant post from October 2020 to January 2021. New officer to commence in role from January 2021.
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	DNA	Annual - Reports in Q4	Top 25% nationally	
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	G	51.8% (P)	≥49.5% (≥2018/19 outturn)	Q3: 8,253 / 15,736 YTD: 28,356 / 54,764 Data is provisional and subject to change once validated by DEFRA after Q4
	Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators)	G	Good	Good	
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	G	Av. 18.26	≤20 days	
Collecting Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	R	81.3%	≥98.8%	For comparison, Q3 2019/20 = 84.1 Result of conscious decision. Over 2000 accounts requested payment holidays.

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Three

Category	Measure	RAG	2020/21		Notes
			Q3 (YTD) Outturn	Target	
	Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due	R	74.4%	≥99%	For comparison, Q3 2019/20 = 85.1% Result of conscious decision. Many businesses were closed between March and July and some have remained so.
Planning and housing	% of planning appeals won	A	61.3%	≥65% (England average)	YTD: 25 /40 There is no particular change in circumstances within the Service. Appeals submitted and appeals decisions, are outside the control of the Service. Low numbers result in greater percentage swings. Should balance out over the year.
	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	98.3%	≥90% (England average)	Q3: 20 / 21 YTD: 58 / 59
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	G	88.9%	≥86% (England average)	Q3: 67 / 77 YTD: 208 / 234
Supporting local employers	Number of top 10 business sector employers in 2018/19 retained in the district	G	10	≥10	

Please note:

R (red): year-end target will not be met

A (amber): behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

G (green): year-end target will be met.

DNA: Data not available

DNP: Data not provided

Refer to Appendix C for technical conventions

5.10 Performance for the majority of core business activities reported has been on target.

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Three

5.11 Where Covid-19 restrictions have hindered statutory, face-to-face visits, teams have offered the service in a different way e.g. closer partnership and interdisciplinary team working, video meetings or telephone calls, to ensure the safety of clients and staff.

5.12 As in previous quarters, the amount of Council Tax collected has been affected by residents accessing payment holidays during Covid-19. As of 20 January 2021, statutory debt recovery has restarted and court dates have been provided for legal action to take place where appropriate. Collection is at 89.13%.

5.13 The amount of non-domestic rates or “Business Tax” collected is still well below the norm, as many businesses closed during the first lockdown and have remained so. As of 20 January 2021, collection is at 80.71%, however where industries such as hospitality and events do not meet the criteria of other relief, extended flexibility can be given.

National Benchmarking for Core Business Measures (April 2018- March 2020)

5.14 Benchmarking data for 2019/20 has been published for some areas. In the majority of services, we compare favourably with our peers and continue to maintain our position. More data is due to be released in time for Q4.

Category	Measure	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2019/20 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	2020/21	
					RAG	Q3 RAG Outturn
Supporting education	% of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted	2nd Qtile Rank 38/152 (August) (YE: 95.7%)	1st Qtile Rank 22/152 (YE: 95.7%)	≥93%	-	95.7%
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions)	2nd Qtile Rank 51/152 (YE: 98.4%)	Awaiting national data	≥95%	G	Q1: 98%
	% of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions)	1st Qtile Rank 27/152 (YE: 97.9%)	1st Qtile Rank 22/152 (YE: 95.7%)	≥95%	G	Q1: 98%
Maintaining our roads	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	1st Qtile Rank 17/146 (YE: 2%)	1st Qtile Rank 22/152 (YE: 95.7%)	Top 25% nationally	Annual	Annual - reports at Q4

2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Three

Category	Measure	2018/19 National Qtile/Rank	2019/20 National Qtile/Rank	2020/21 Target	2020/21	
					RAG	Q3 RAG Outturn
Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	1st Qtile Rank 31/148 (YE: 50.7%)	Awaiting national data	≥49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn)	G	51.8% (E)
Providing benefits	Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	2nd Qtile Rank 54/122 (YE: 19.54)	Awaiting national data	≤20 days	G	18.26
Collecting Council Tax and Business rates	Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due	1st Qtile Rank 6/123 (YE: 98.5%)	Awaiting national data	≥98.8%	R	81.3%
	Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due	3rd Qtile Rank 82/151 (YE: 98.4%)	Awaiting national data	≥99%	R	74.4%
Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults	% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better	England overall = 84%	Awaiting national data	100%	R	66.7%
Planning and housing	% of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 108/122 (YE: 78.1%)	Awaiting national data	≥90% (England average)	G	98.3%
	% of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time	4th Qtile Rank 102/123 (YE: 77.5%)	Awaiting national data	≥86% (England average)	G	88.9%

Council Strategy Priorities for Improvement:

Refer to Appendix B for Exception Reports

Table 1. Number of measures by priority of improvement and performance status

Priority for Improvement	RAG Status			
	Red	Amber	Green	Other
Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes	2	0	4	2
Support everyone to reach their full potential	1	0	4	6
Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire	2	0	2	0
Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy	3	0	6	6
Maintain a green district	2	0	5	0
Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships	1	0	2	1
	11	0	23	15

Note:

Red: year-end target will not be met

Amber: behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

Green: year-end target will be met.

Other: includes Annual (reported once a year), data not available, data not provided and targets to be confirmed

Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

5.15 Overall good results have continued to be achieved for this priority for improvement. Sound intervention, combined with preventative support, maintained the repeat referrals to Children's services within the expected thresholds and a high percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training. Adult safeguarding enquiries achieved the outcomes expected by the service users. Particularly high performance to note in the area of preventing homelessness and rough sleepers being offered accommodation.

5.16 Covid-19 delayed the Strategic Goal of publishing a strategic framework to improve employment opportunities of vulnerable people, due to Adult Social Care service having to prioritise the response to the pandemic (target December 2020 is re-profiled to March 2021). The restrictions also impacted the number of disadvantaged people aged 16-25 who have enrolled in apprenticeship training. Work continues with Council services and schools to instigate work experience days, which may lead to apprenticeships.

Support everyone to reach their full potential

5.17 Attainment outturns for the academic year 2019/20 are not available due to Covid-19. Support is provided to pupils and schools to minimise the impact of school closures.

5.18 The development and adoption of a community resilience index (Strategic Goal) has been delayed from March 2021 to December 2021, as the officer responsible was

abstracted from normal duties to work in the Community Support Hub as part of West Berkshire Council's Covid-19 response. An additional officer was appointed and will commence during Q4. Covid-19 restrictions affected the number of volunteer hours for cultural services, however it is envisaged that once lockdown has eased, the volunteers will return.

- 5.19 Measures resulting from the approved Community Wellbeing Model (Strategic Goal) regarding active Befrienders and those who have been supported by the Befriender scheme have already exceeded the annual target. The scheme, which aims to prevent and reduce social isolation and loneliness in West Berkshire, provides social and emotional support to residents aged 50 and over from a volunteer befriender or buddy. Due to Covid-19 the scheme is currently running as a telephone befriending service and face to face befriending and buddying will be introduced when it is safe to do so and in line with government guidance.
- 5.20 The Communications and Engagement Strategy (Strategic Goal) has been developed and was approved by the Executive Committee on 15 October 2020. The delivery plan was approved by the Customer First Programme Board on 15 December 2020.

Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire

- 5.21 Activities are on track to deliver the [Newbury Town Centre Masterplan](#) study by the end of 2021. West Berkshire Council has appointed a multi-disciplinary team to undertake this major new study into the future uses of Newbury Town Centre. The work started with a public consultation due to close in January 2021. The number of responses has been very encouraging.
- 5.22 The Newbury West Berkshire Economic Development Company which was responsible for delivering the Inward Investment Brochure has been dissolved. This piece of work will now be absorbed by the Economic Development team and expected to be completed by December 2021 instead of the initial target of December 2020.
- 5.23 The Economic Recovery Board has amended the target date for the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy refresh, from December 2020 to February 2021, in order to align with the Local Enterprise Partnership's Recovery and Renewal plan.

Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy

- 5.24 The Regulation 18 consultation to inform the submission of a New Local Plan for examination (Strategic Goal) is on track and in line with the Local Development Scheme agreed in April 2020. The infrastructure delivery plan (Strategic Goal), which is aligned with the schedule for the submission of the Local Plan for examination, is also underway.
- 5.25 Data is not available regarding a traffic model for an average journey time in the District, due to staff being diverted to focus on the response and recovery relating to Covid-19. Due to similar reasons, following the consultation on the West Berkshire Housing Strategy (Strategic Goal) during Q3, this strategy cannot be approved as originally planned in February 2021 but will be delayed by one month.

- 5.26 Targets have been exceeded for residential units granted planning permission (582), the number of additional residential units completed (609) and the number of affordable homes granted planning permission (216). The number of affordable homes completed during 2019/20 is below target by 22 homes, however there are currently over 900 affordable housing units with planning permission that are yet to be built.
- 5.27 The project to make Superfast Broadband available in West Berkshire has been completed. As part of the Government's 'Getting Building fund' the [Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\) has successfully bid for funding and secured £7.5m](#), £1.7m of which will be used by West Berkshire Council to implement Full Fibre and improve broadband connectivity for schools, fire services and GPs in rural areas.
- 5.28 The consultation on the West Berkshire Cultural Heritage Strategy (Strategic Goal) took place between 7 September and 18 October 2020 and was approved by the Executive meeting on 14 January 2021.

Maintain a green district

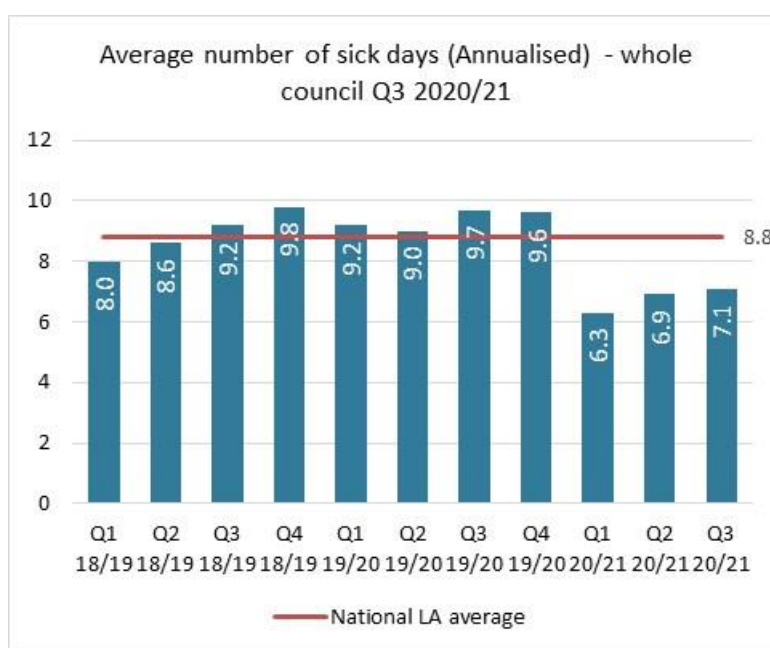
- 5.29 The Strategic Goal of studying the feasibility, the cost and journey time benefits of installing infrastructure in Thatcham is on track. Air quality sensors have been deployed on a trial basis and capital funds have been requested for variable message signs to influence drivers' route choices.
- 5.30 The first draft of the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan (Strategic Goal) has been approved by the Environment Advisory Group. Appropriate performance measures will be forthcoming as part of the planning process for 2021/22.
- 5.31 The adoption of the Local Transport Plan (Strategic Goal) is on track, subject to a successful funding bid.
- 5.32 The Department for Transport has awarded additional funding for a phase 2 of Emergency Active Travel schemes. Various schemes are being designed to encourage cycling and walking and will be going out for consultation at the end of February 2021.
- 5.33 Work towards generating energy from council renewable sources is progressing with an initial six council buildings having solar panels installed. Subject to funding and planning permission [a solar farm could be built near Grazeley](#) that could generate enough electricity a year to power approximately 4,400 homes.
- 5.34 The Strategic Goals of studying the feasibility of and carrying out cost benefit analysis for large scale afforestation and natural regeneration in the rural area and urban tree planting, are behind schedule. Recruitment to the team occurred during quarter 3, with one vacant position being filled and two others commencing during quarter 4. The Economic Delivery Plan is being developed and priorities that arise from this process will inform measures and targets which will be considered for inclusion through service planning for 2021/22.

Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

- 5.35 The Strategic Goal to develop a strategic positioning statement on commercialisation and the implementation of a confidential Employee Assistance Programme have already been completed in previous quarters.
- 5.36 Work is progressing to develop and adopt a corporate approach to capture and respond to customer feedback, in particular progress has been made around better coordination of consultation exercises. A repository of consultation findings is to be implemented starting in Q1 next year under the governance of the Customer First Programme Board.
- 5.37 The development of a community engagement framework has been incorporated into a broader programme of Engaging and Enabling Communities due to staff responsible for delivery of this framework being diverted to respond to Covid-19 during quarter 1 and the need to source additional staff during subsequent quarters. The delivery of this work is re-profiled to March 2022.

Corporate Health

- 5.38 The Q3 financial position shows a forecast under spend of £3.4m. Further details are available from the quarterly financial monitoring reports.
- 5.39 Absence levels are much lower than usual, but slightly higher than Q2. Quarters 3 and 4 are usually higher due to the increase in coughs, colds and stomach bugs, however as many staff are working from home due to Covid-19, this has potentially kept the usual winter bugs at bay.
- 5.40 Covid-19 self-isolation days lost are not included in the sickness figures. These are days where staff are not working due to self-isolation and cannot be recorded as sickness as this would trigger sick pay entitlements, which is not permissible under the Green Book and National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services guidance during Covid-19.



Proposals

To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the Council's priorities for improvement and remedial actions taken where performance is below target, which is mostly due to Covid-19.

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Quarter three results show that strong performance levels have been maintained and key services delivered to residents as part of the activities in the Core Business category.
- 7.2 The District is not as badly impacted by Covid-19 as other parts of the country. The economy is inherently more resilient. An immediate impact on Town Centres is evident due to changes in working patterns. Research conducted at national level, suggests that the inequality gap is likely to have widened.
- 7.3 Services have continued with mitigation actions where Covid-19 impacted the normal service delivery, e.g. ensured telephone and video contacts in cases where face to face statutory visits were not possible and more partnership and interdisciplinary working, to ensure that, in particular, vulnerable service users are identified and supported.
- 7.4 The Council has continued to prioritise the need to respond quickly to Covid-19. However, improvement work and key outcomes continued to be delivered, e.g. offered accommodation to all rough sleepers, developed a Communications and Engagement Strategy, produced an Environment Strategy Delivery Plan etc. and only a few measures, mainly relating to approval of strategies and frameworks, have been delayed by a few months.
- 7.5 Action plans are in place to address performance measures rated Amber and Red and the Executive is asked to note these actions and the overall performance reported.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Influencer Measures
- 8.2 Appendix B – Exception Reports
- 8.3 Appendix C – Technical Conventions

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

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Document Control

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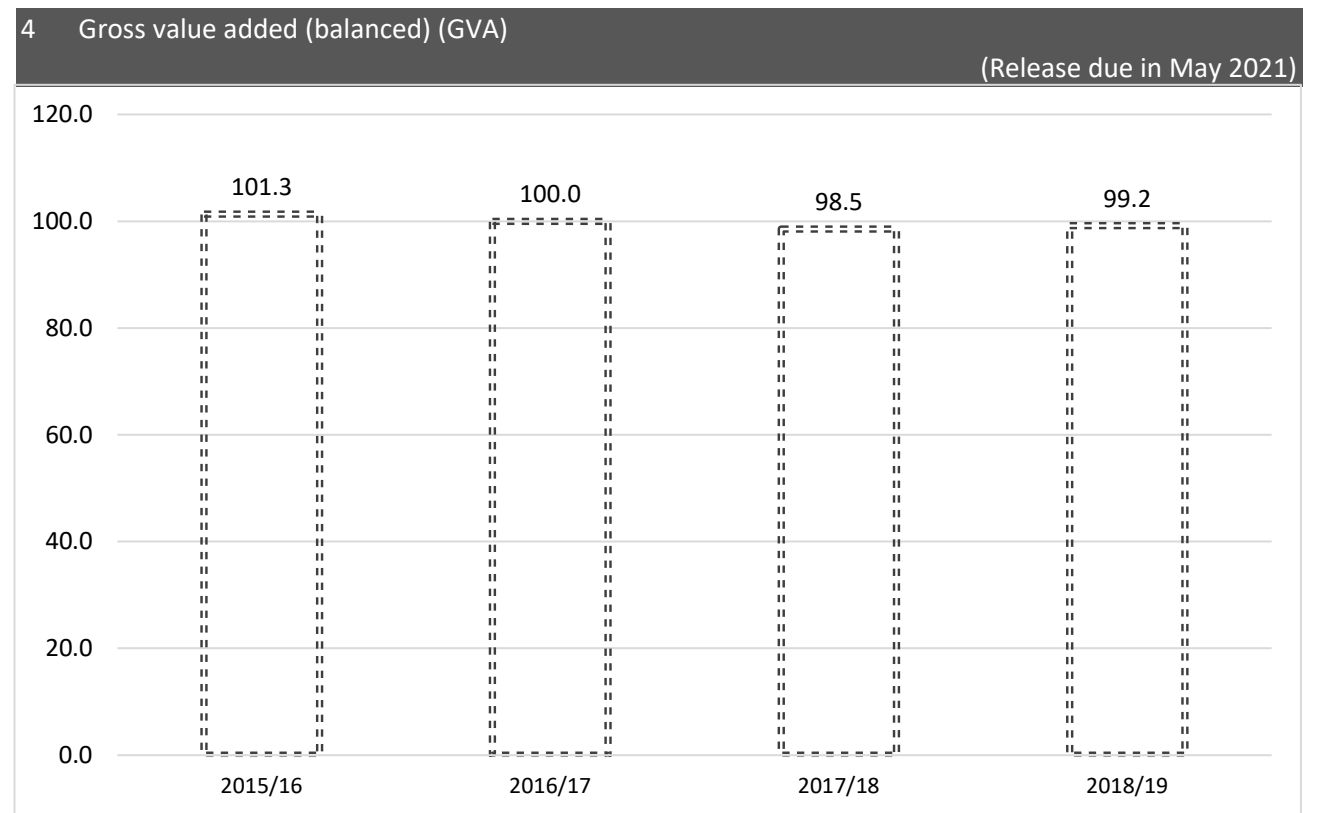
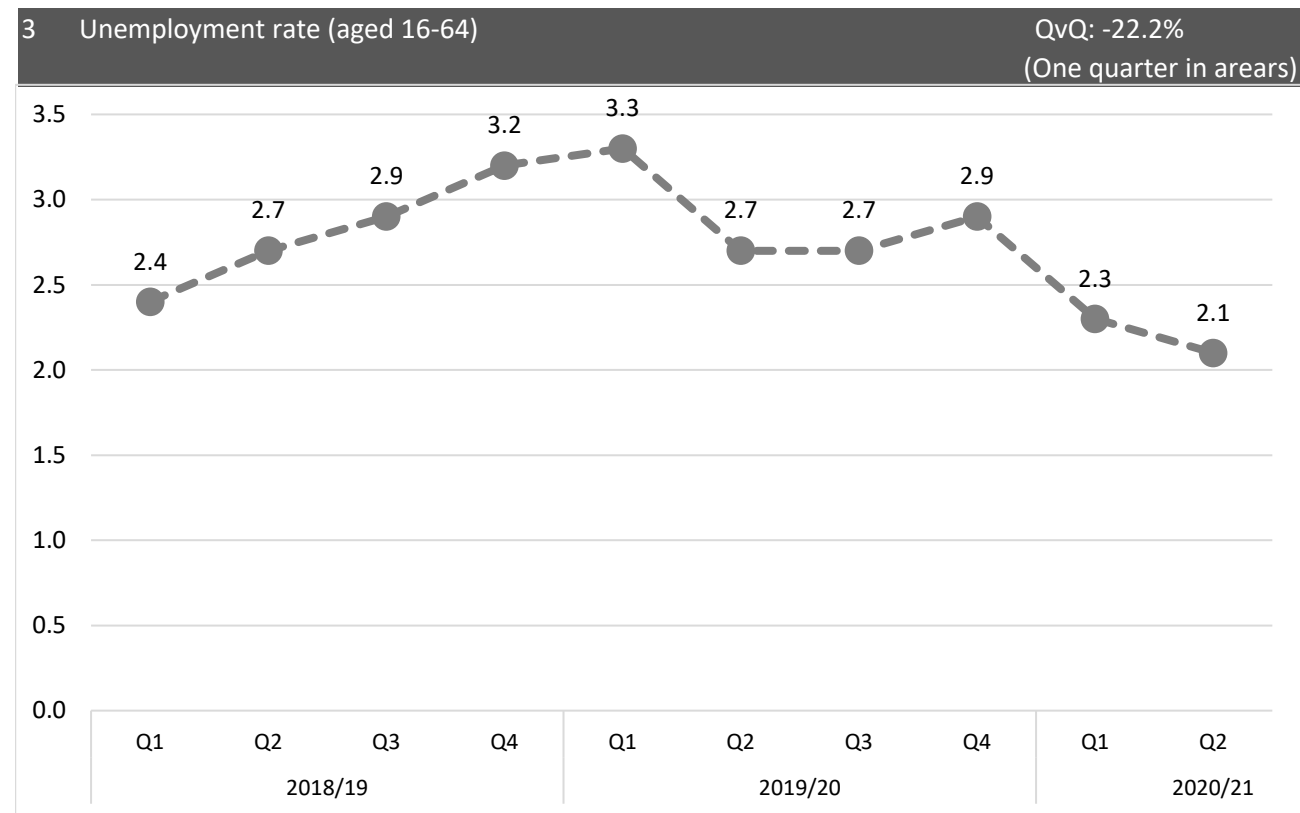
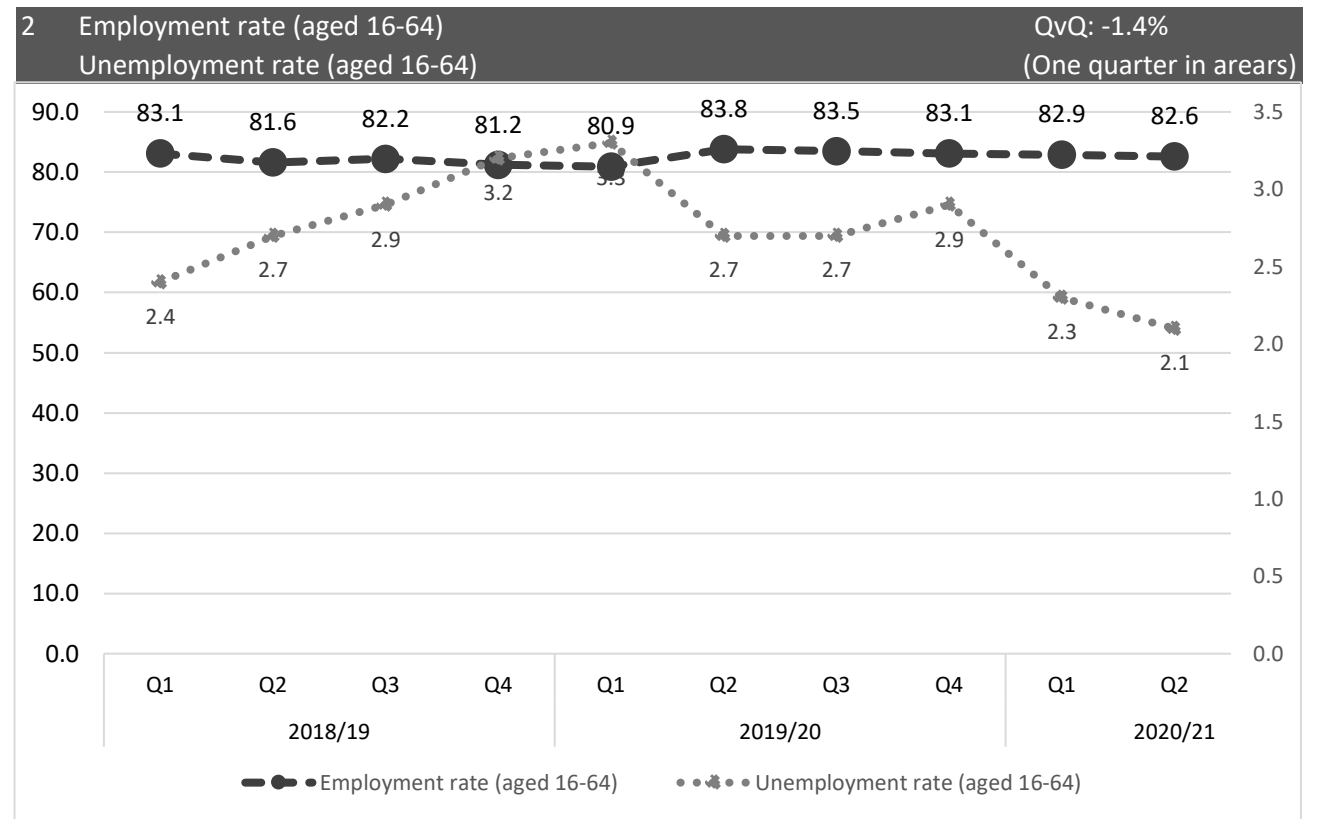
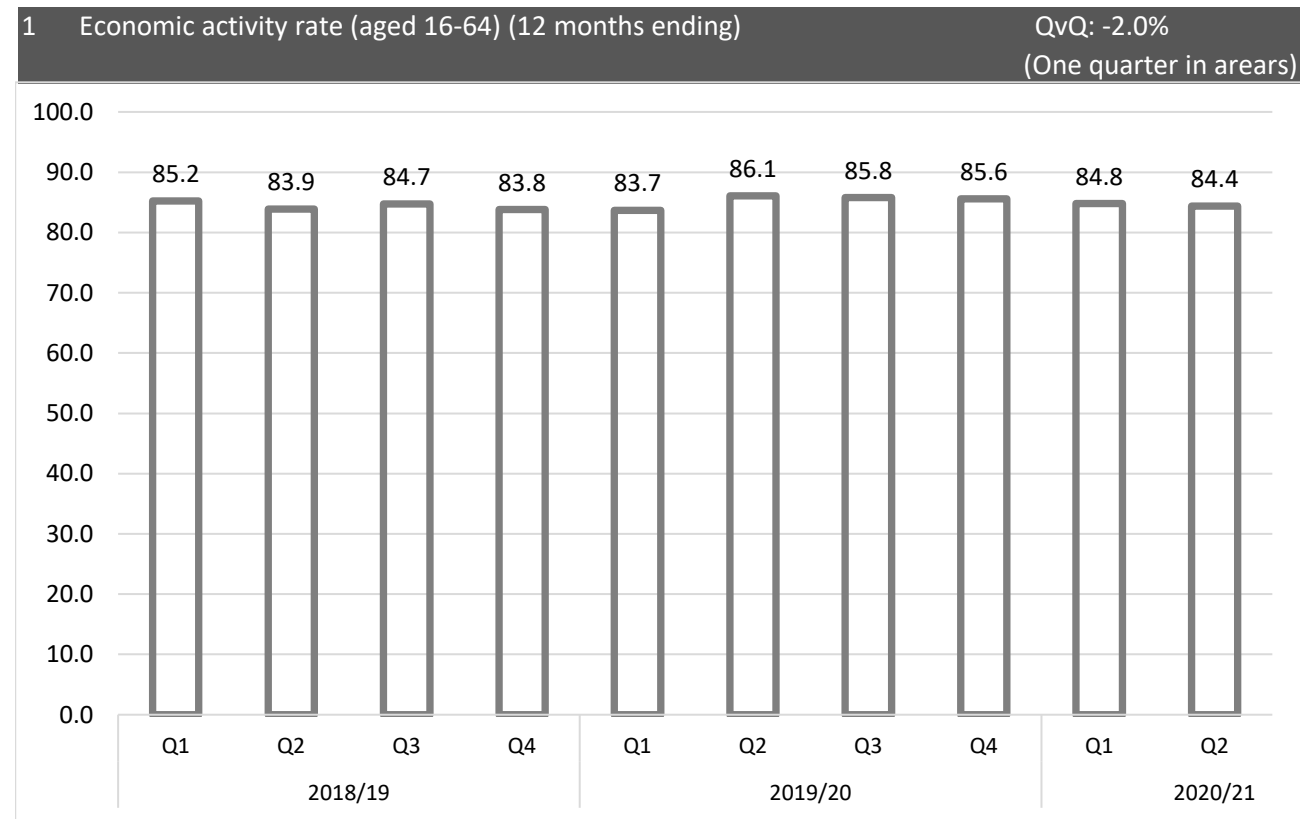
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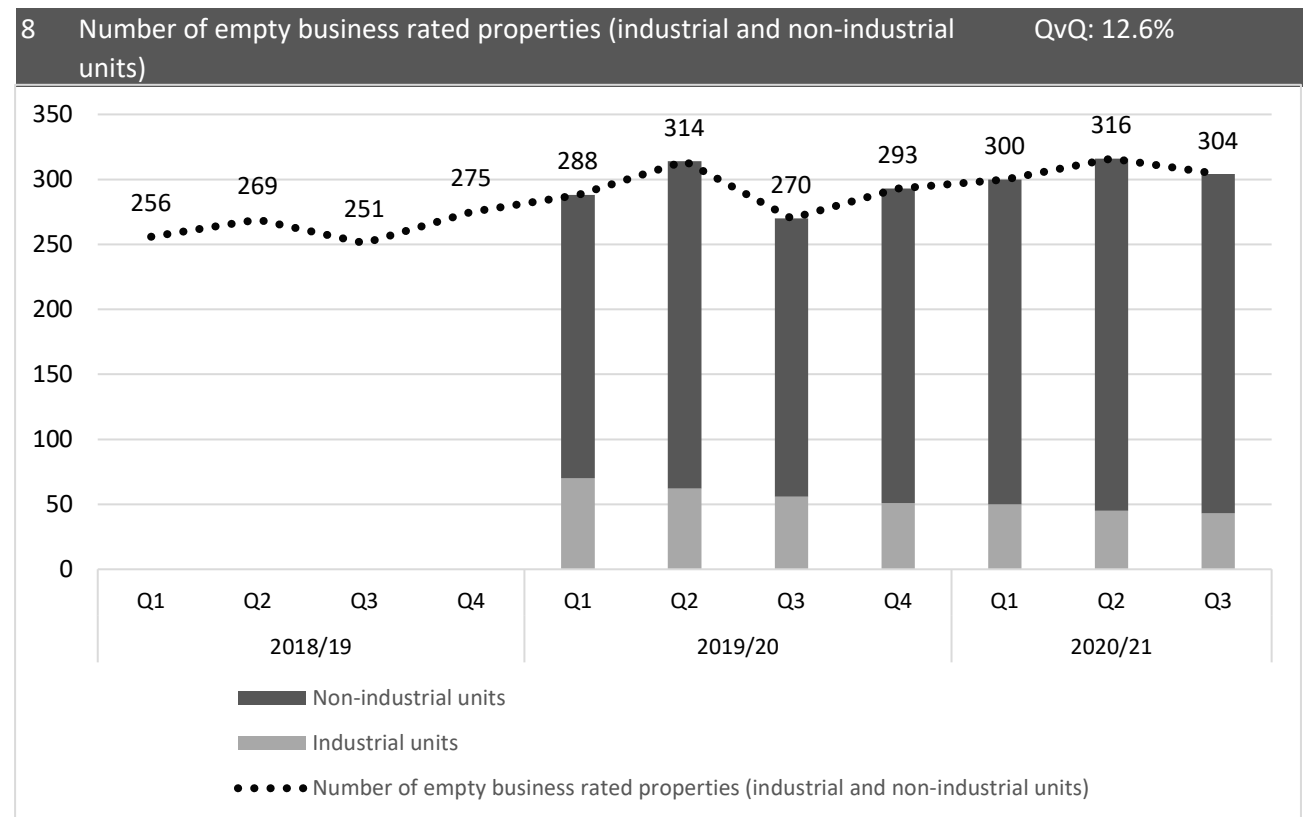
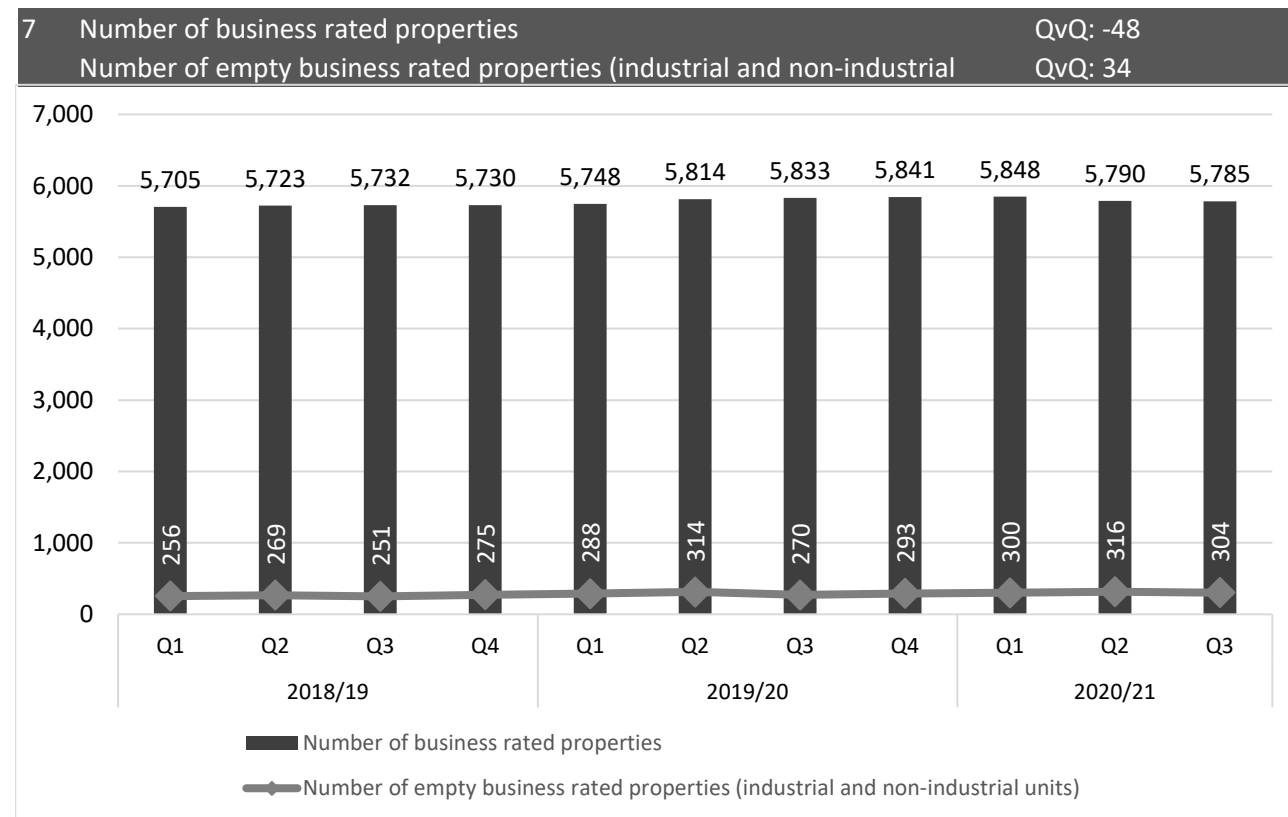
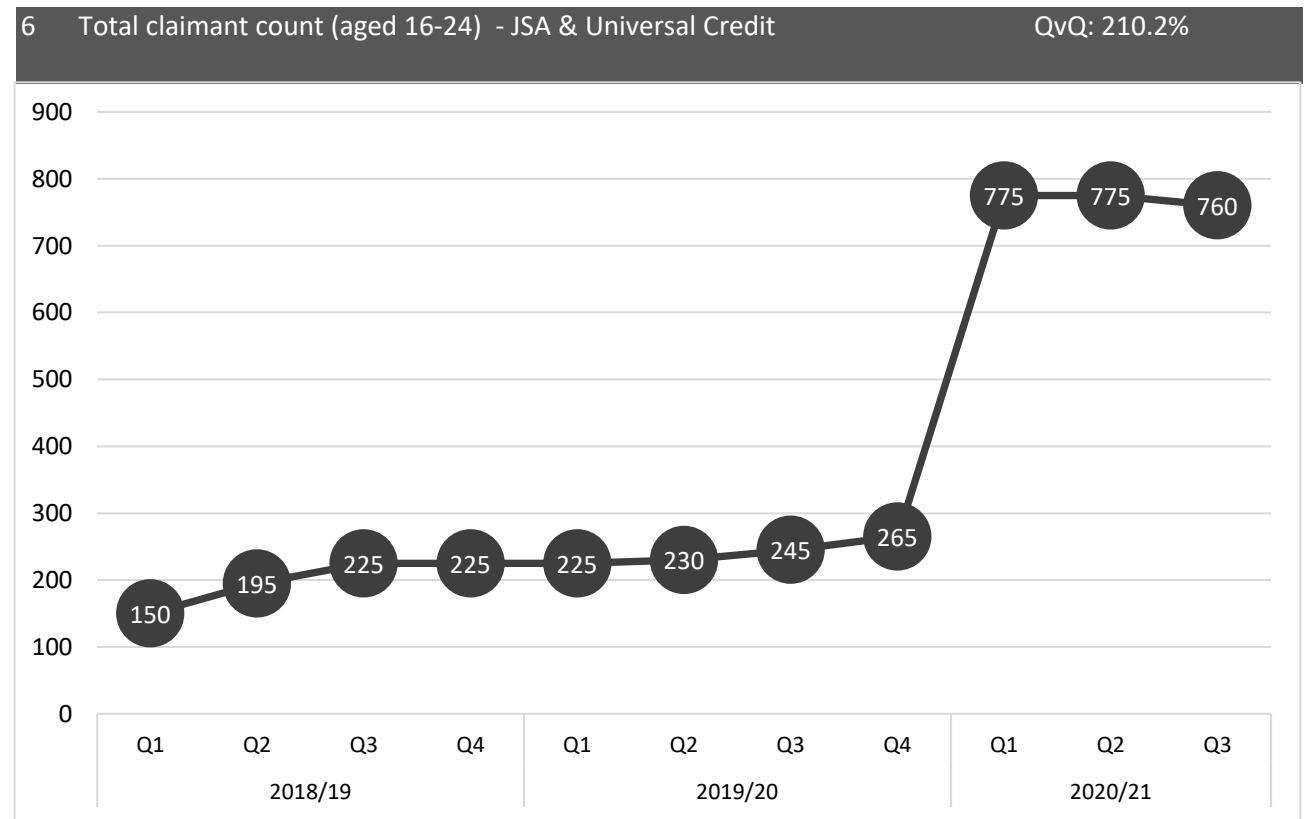
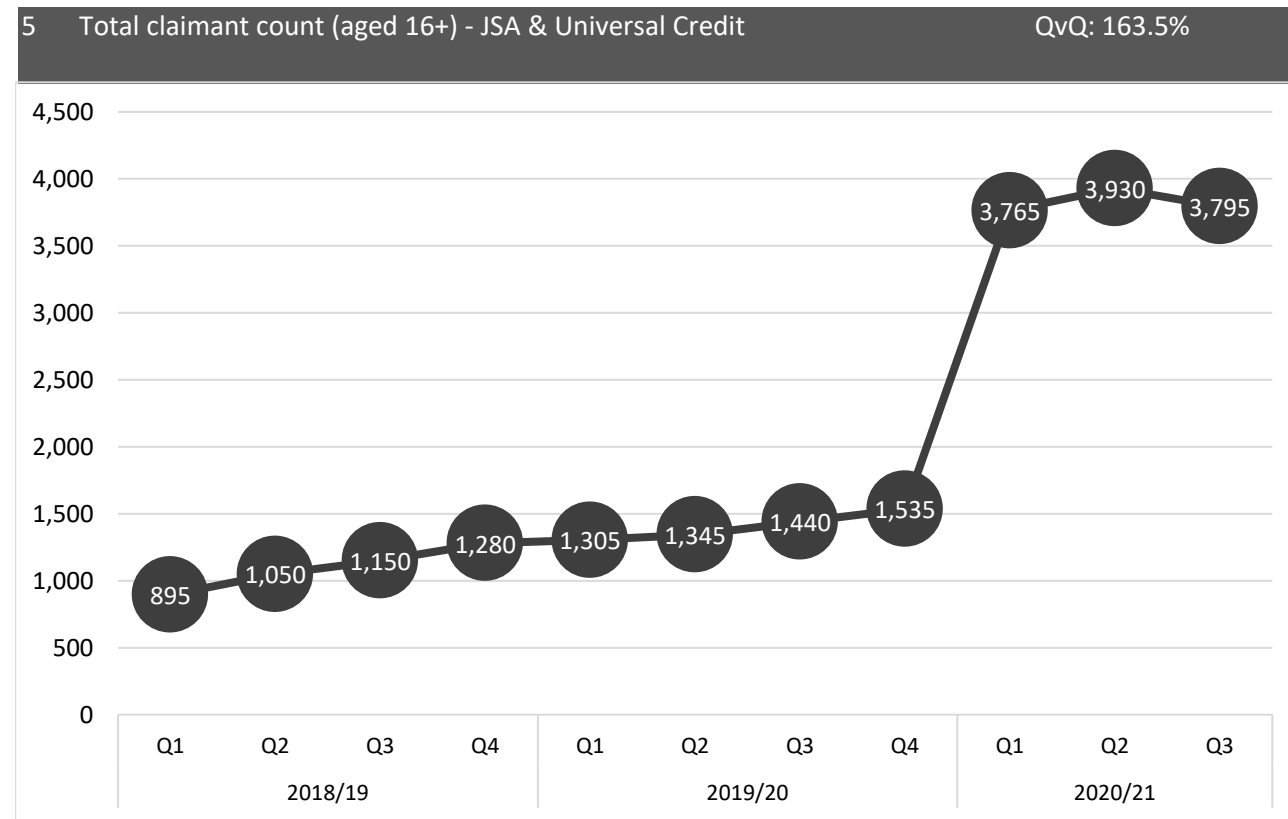
Appendix A: Influencer Measures Dashboard 2020/21 (current qtr v same qtr last year)

Economy (Grey) | Social Care (blue) | Environment (Green)



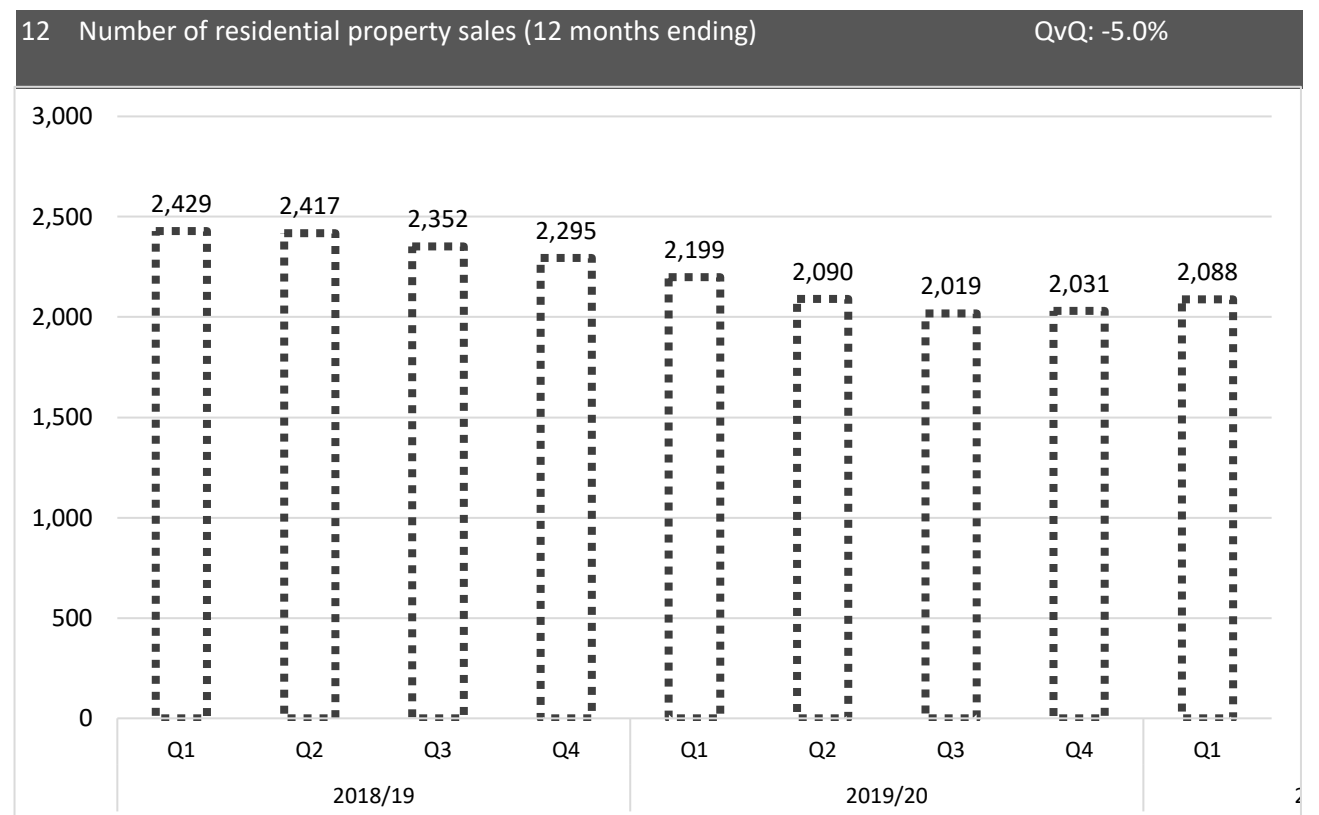
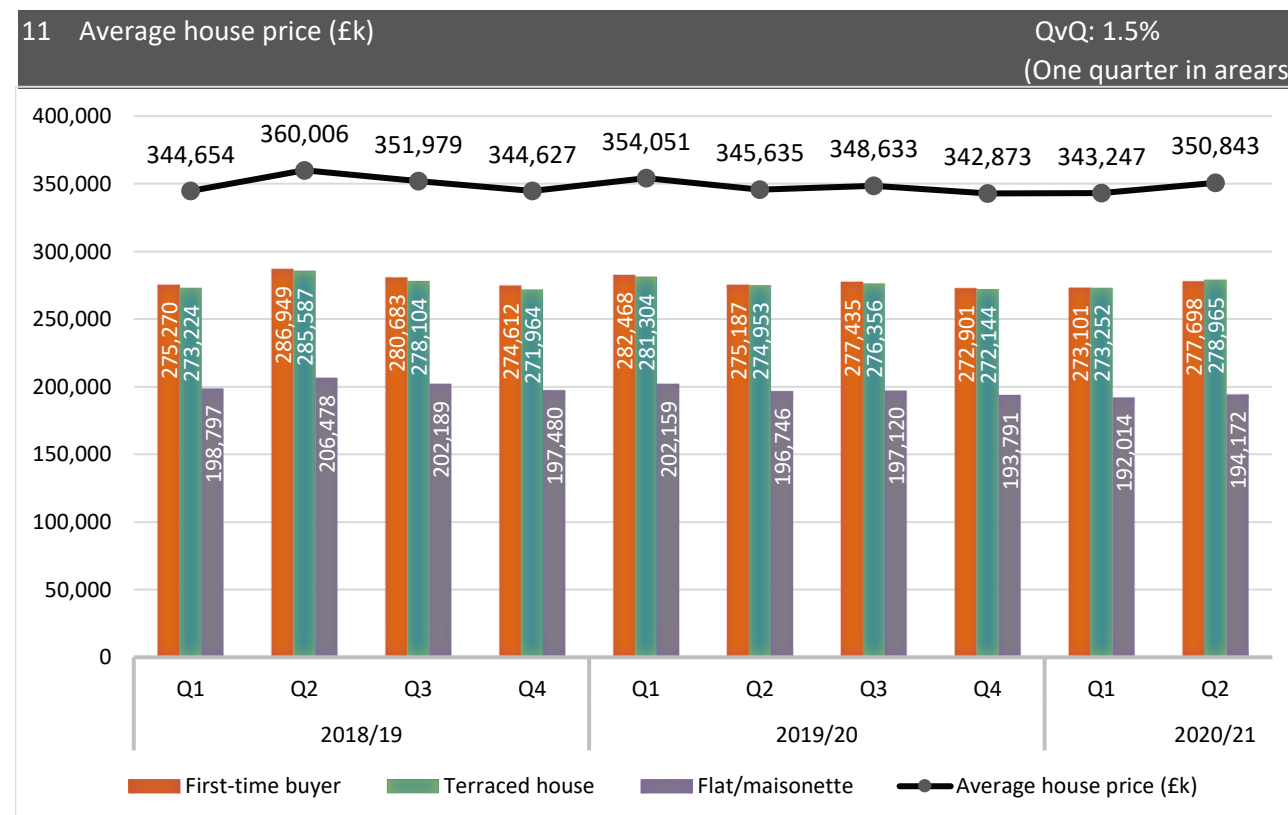
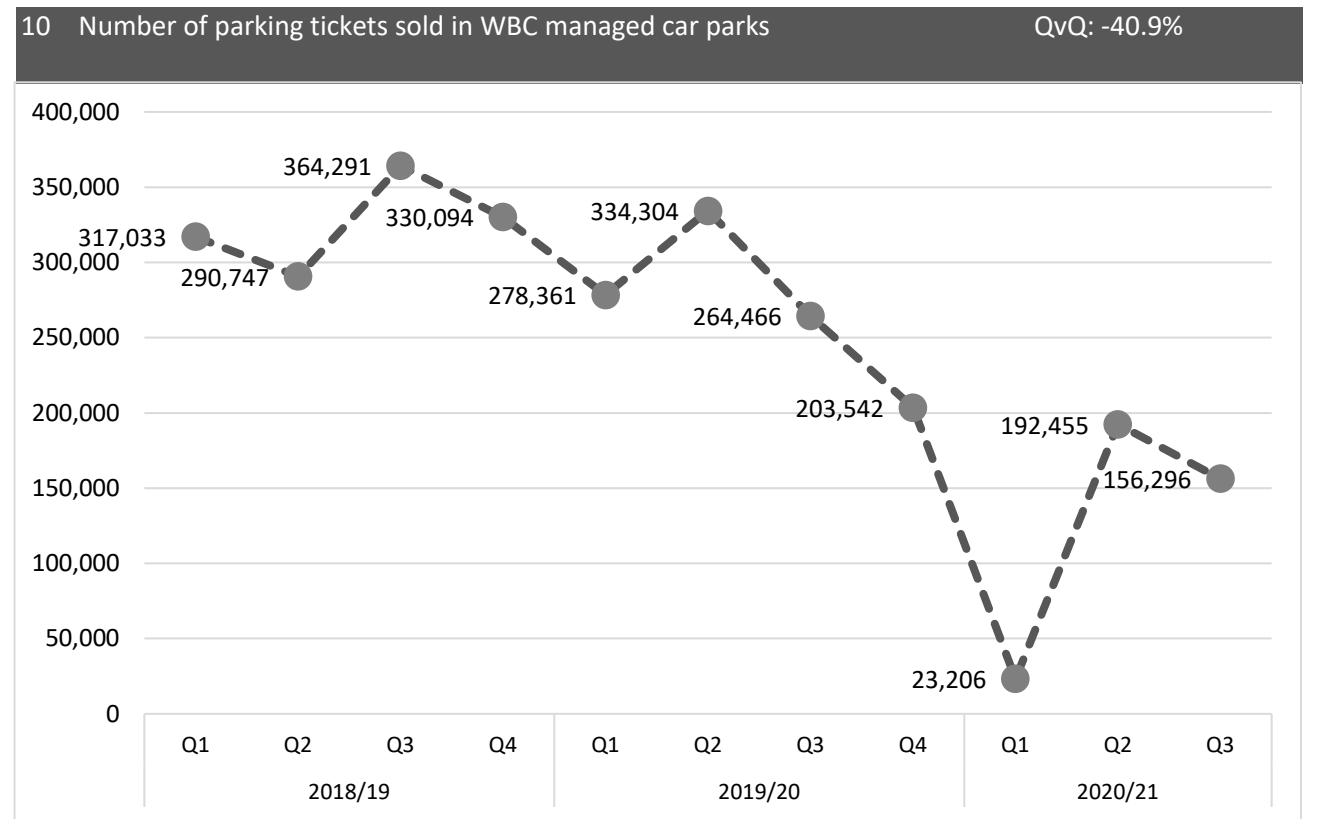
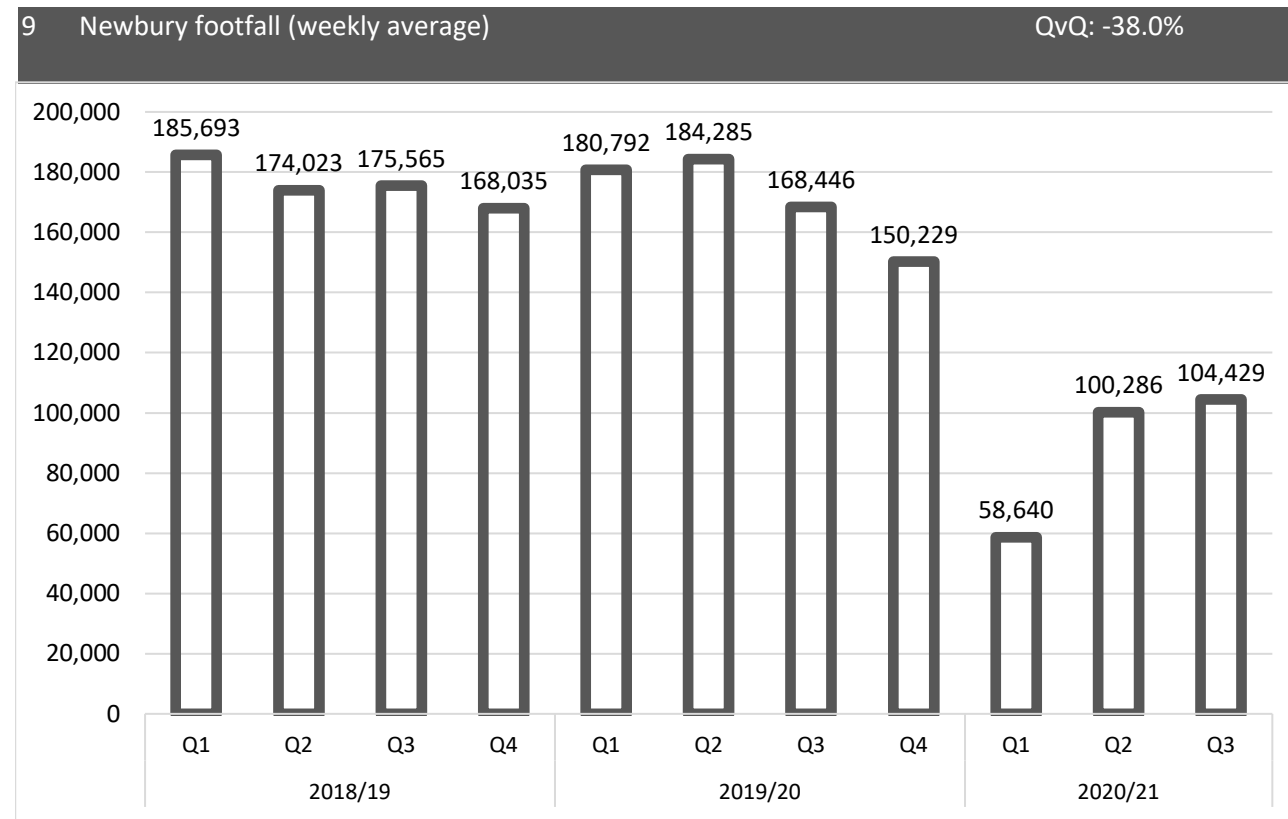
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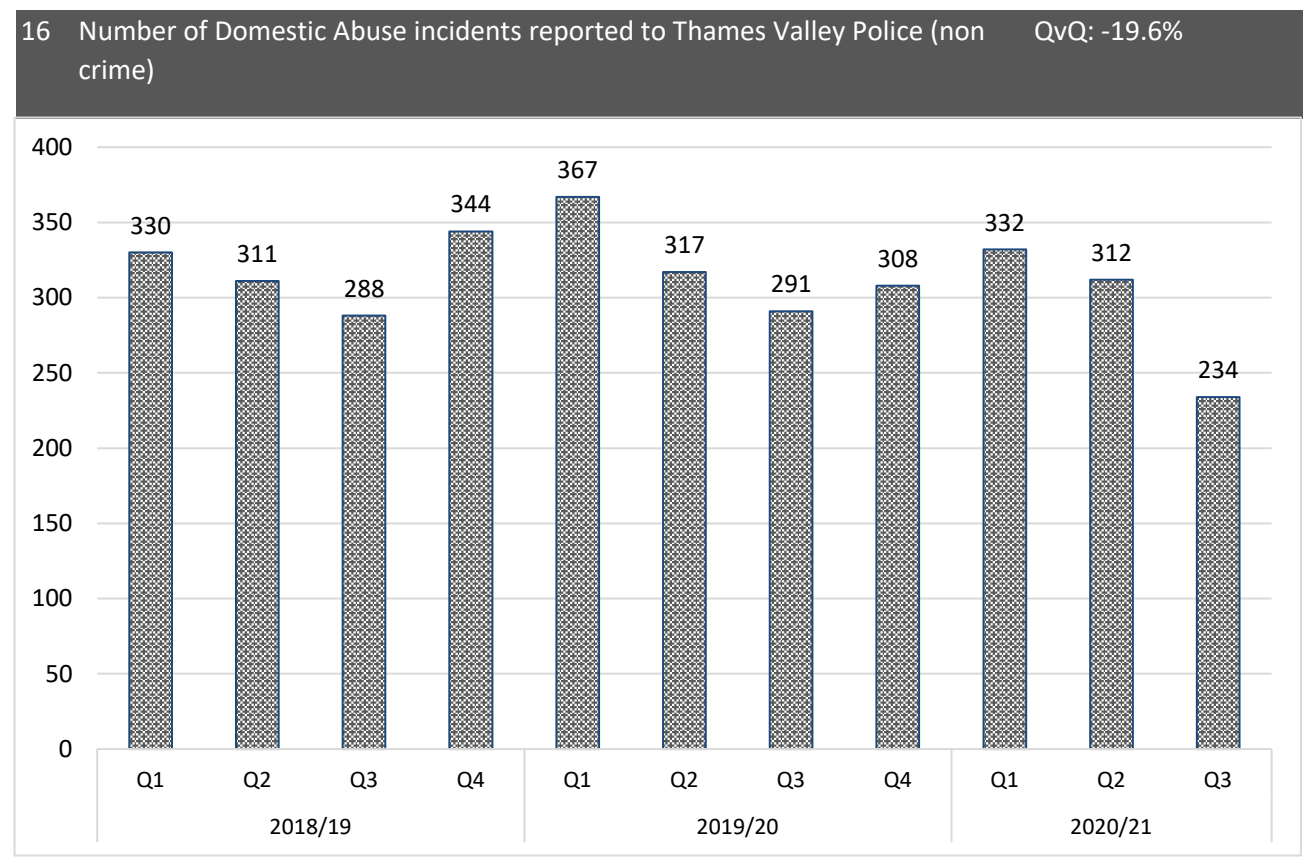
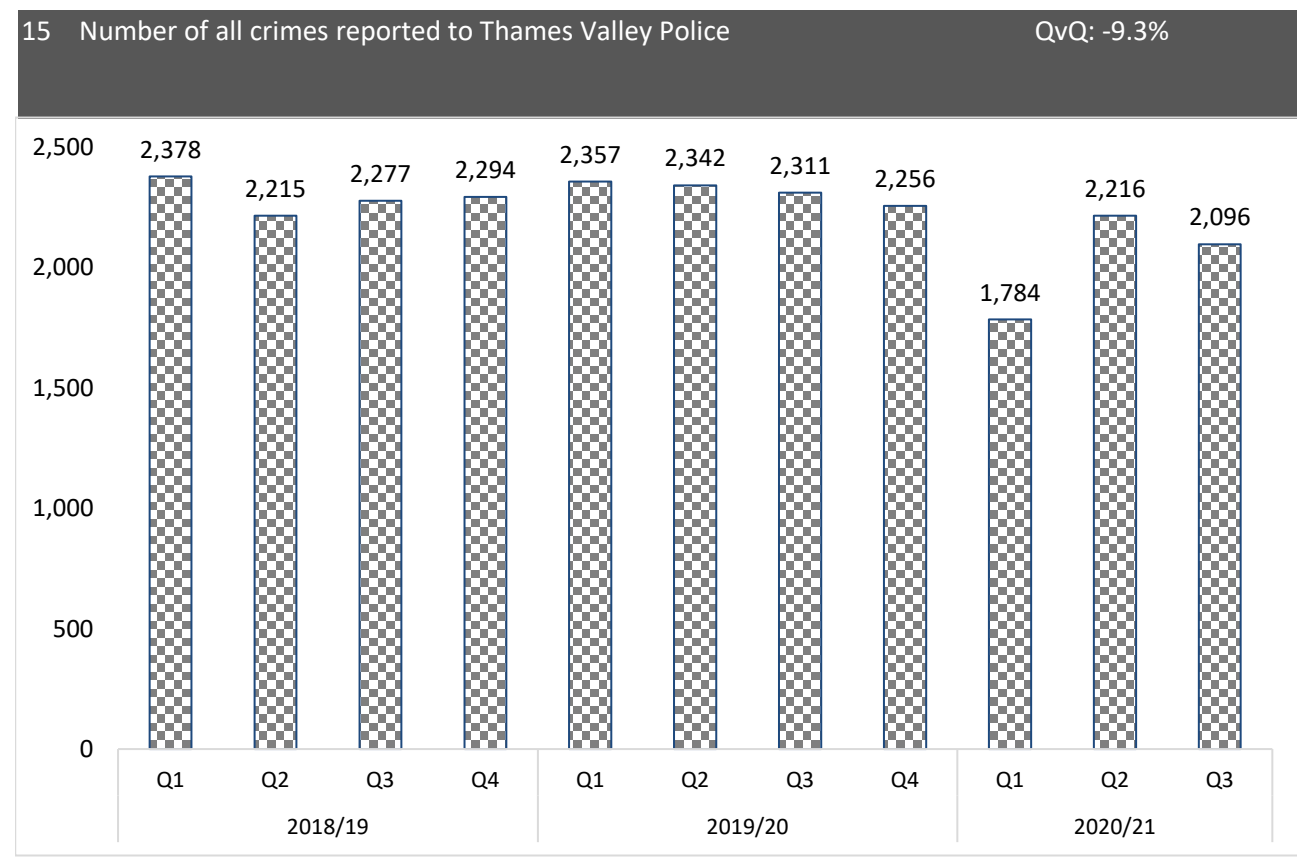
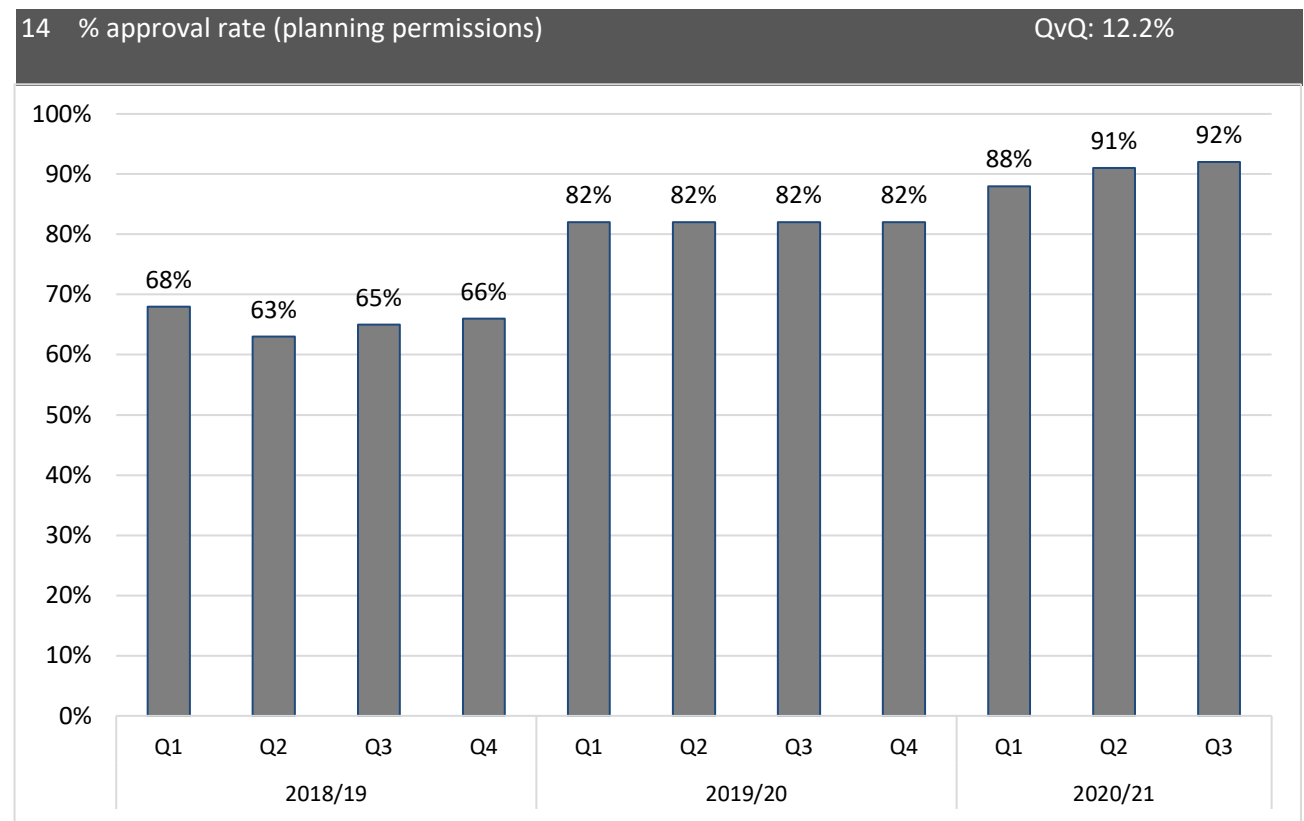
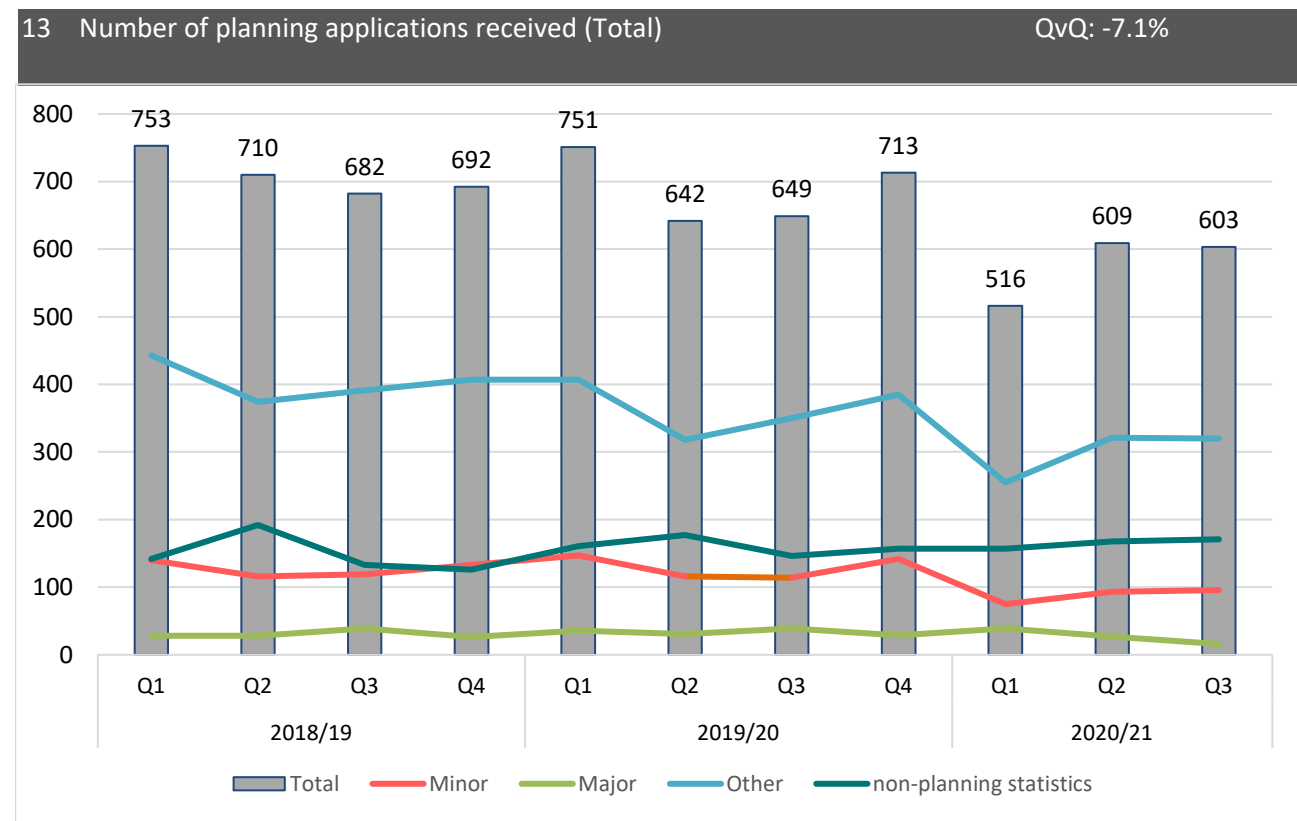
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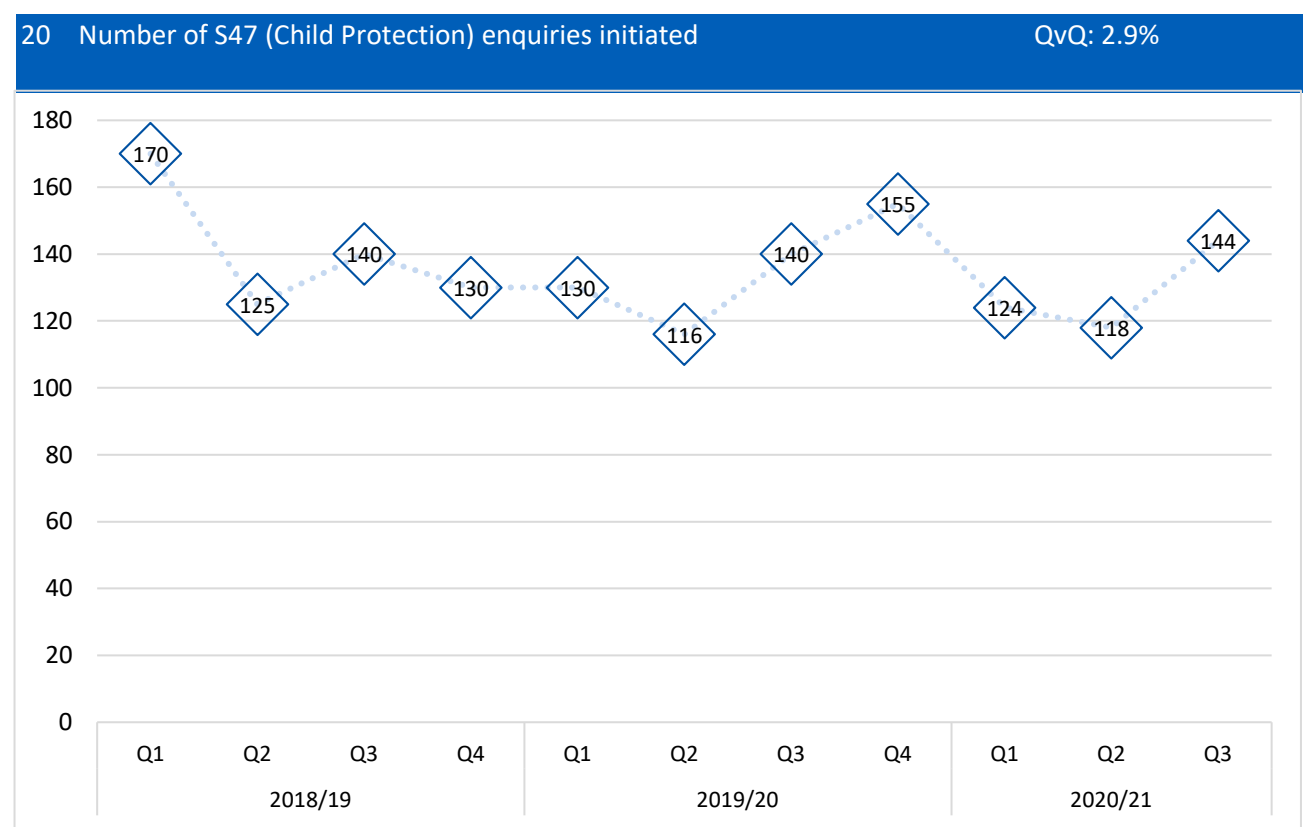
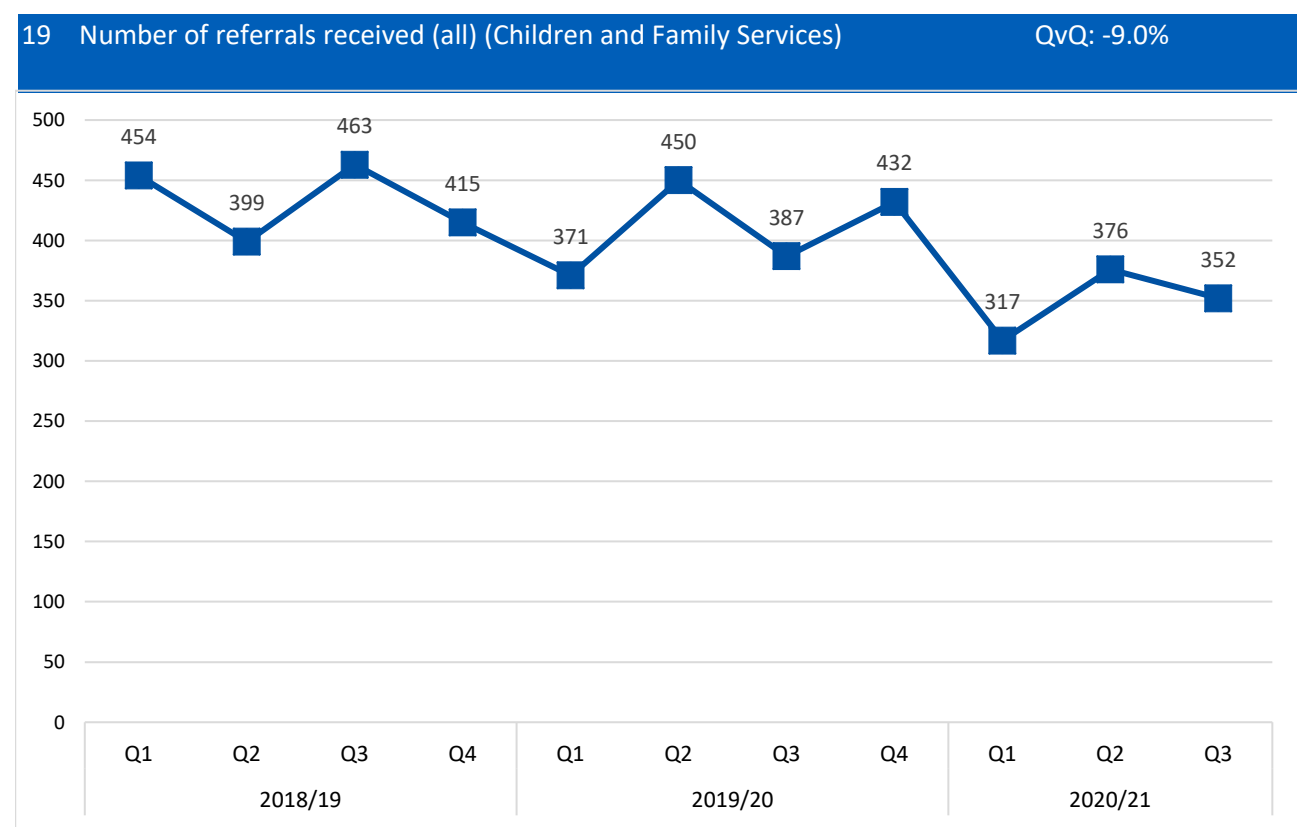
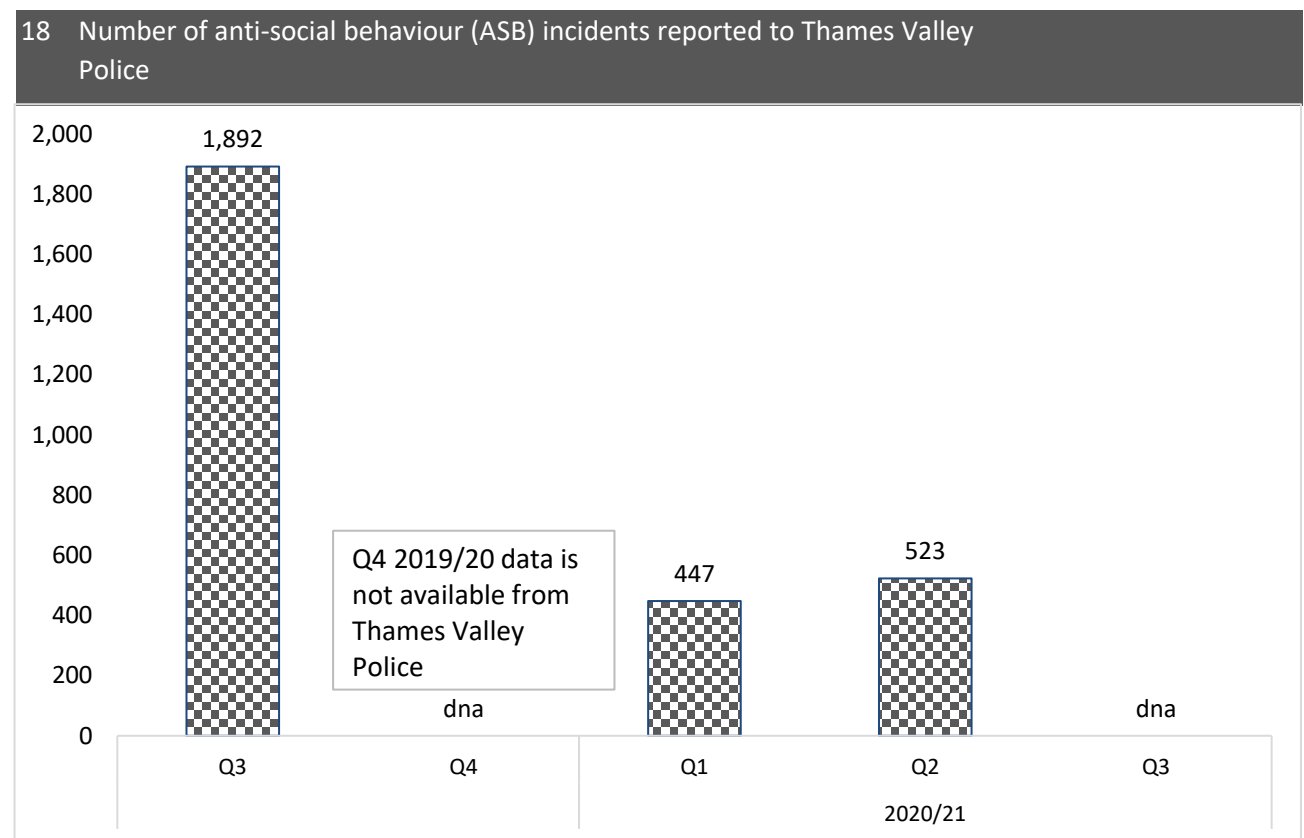
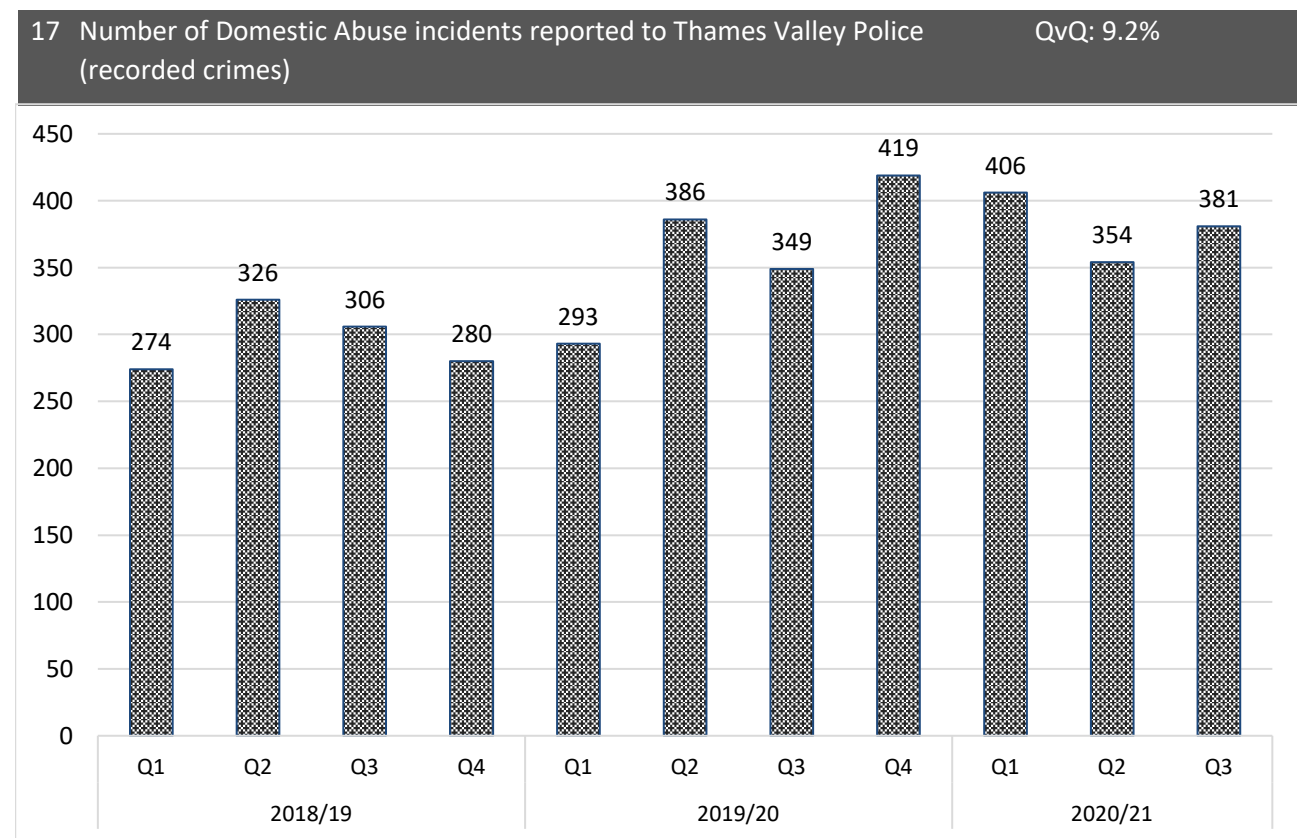
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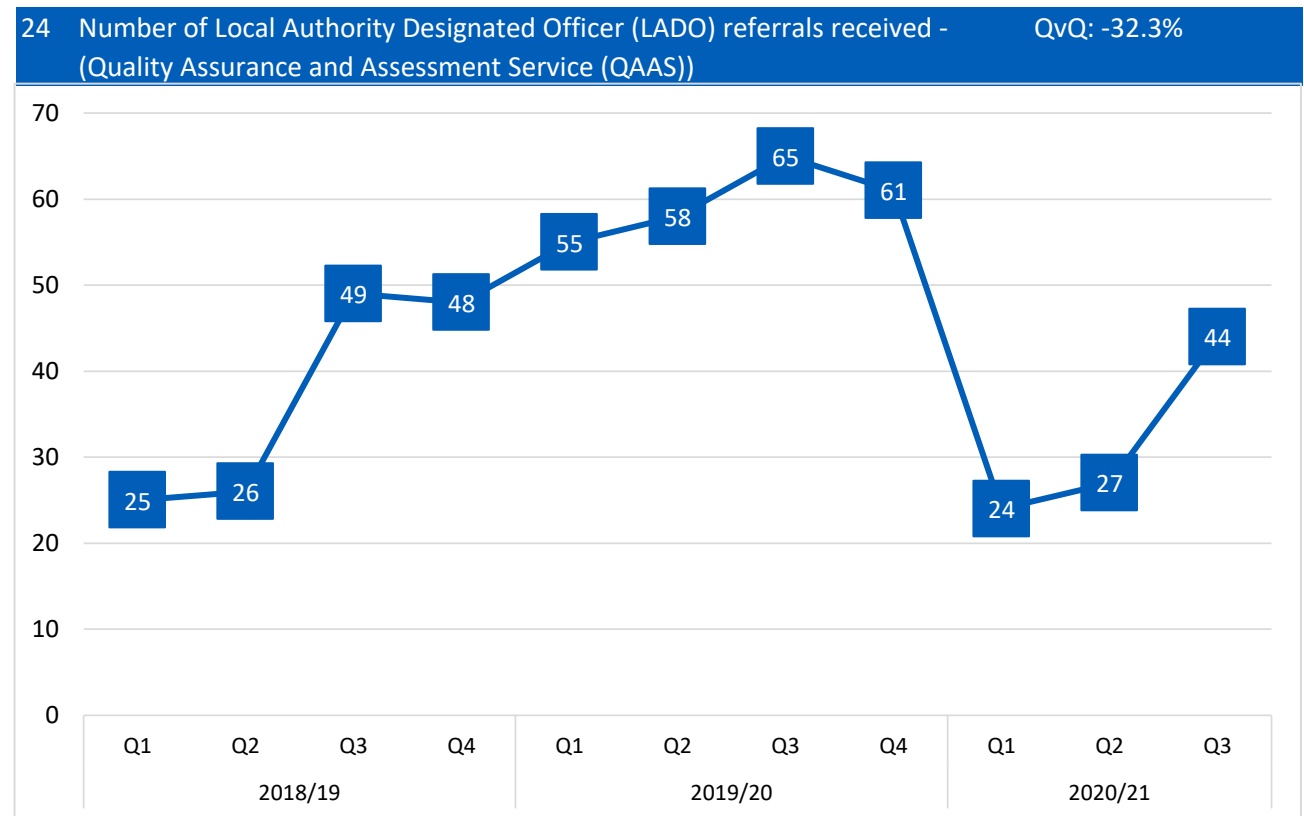
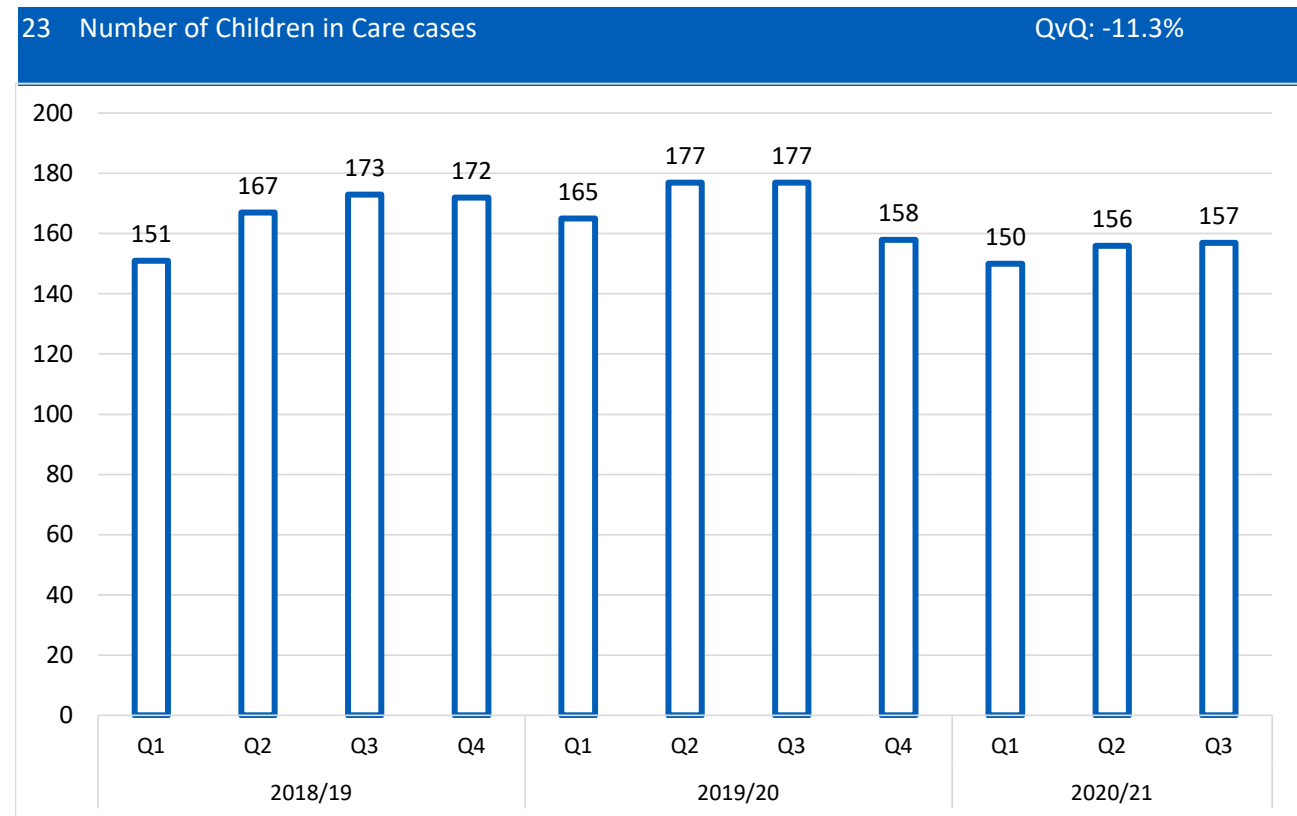
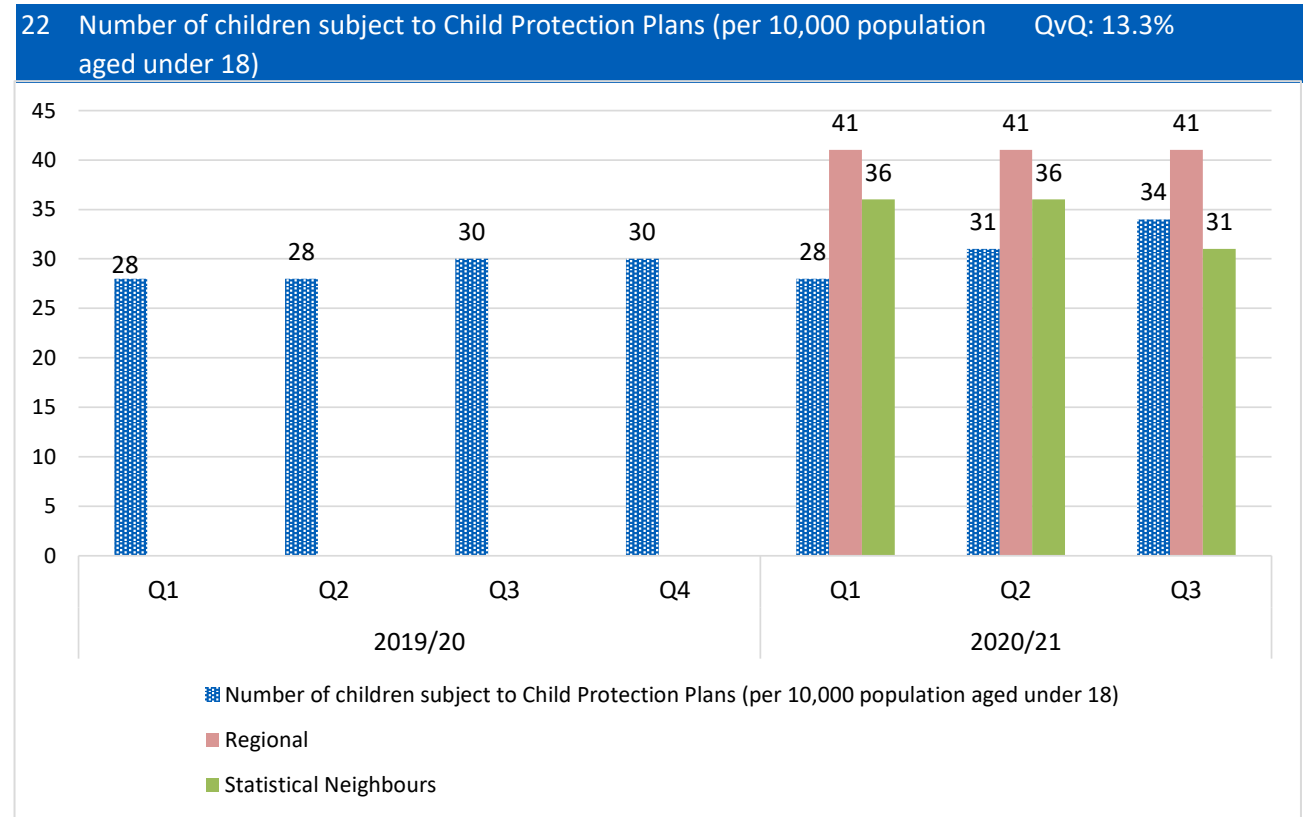
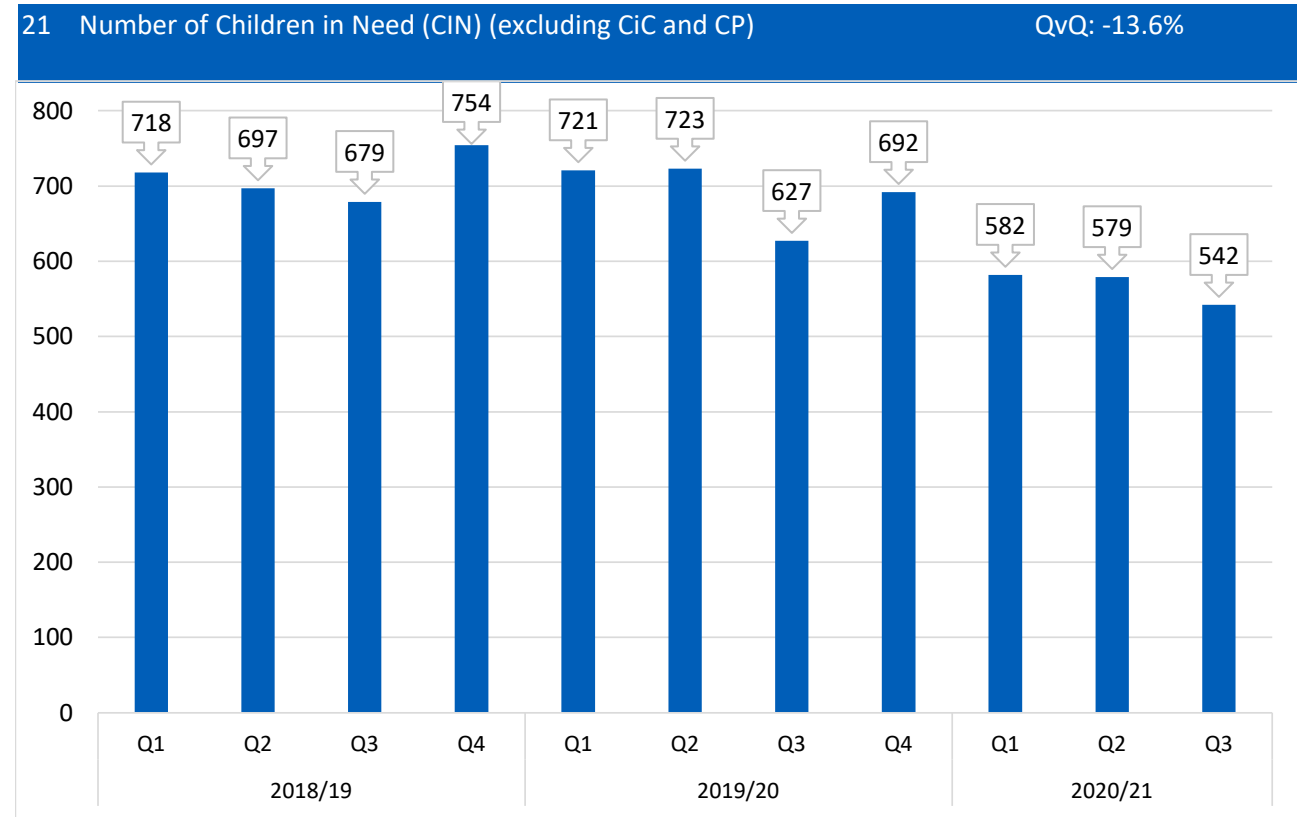
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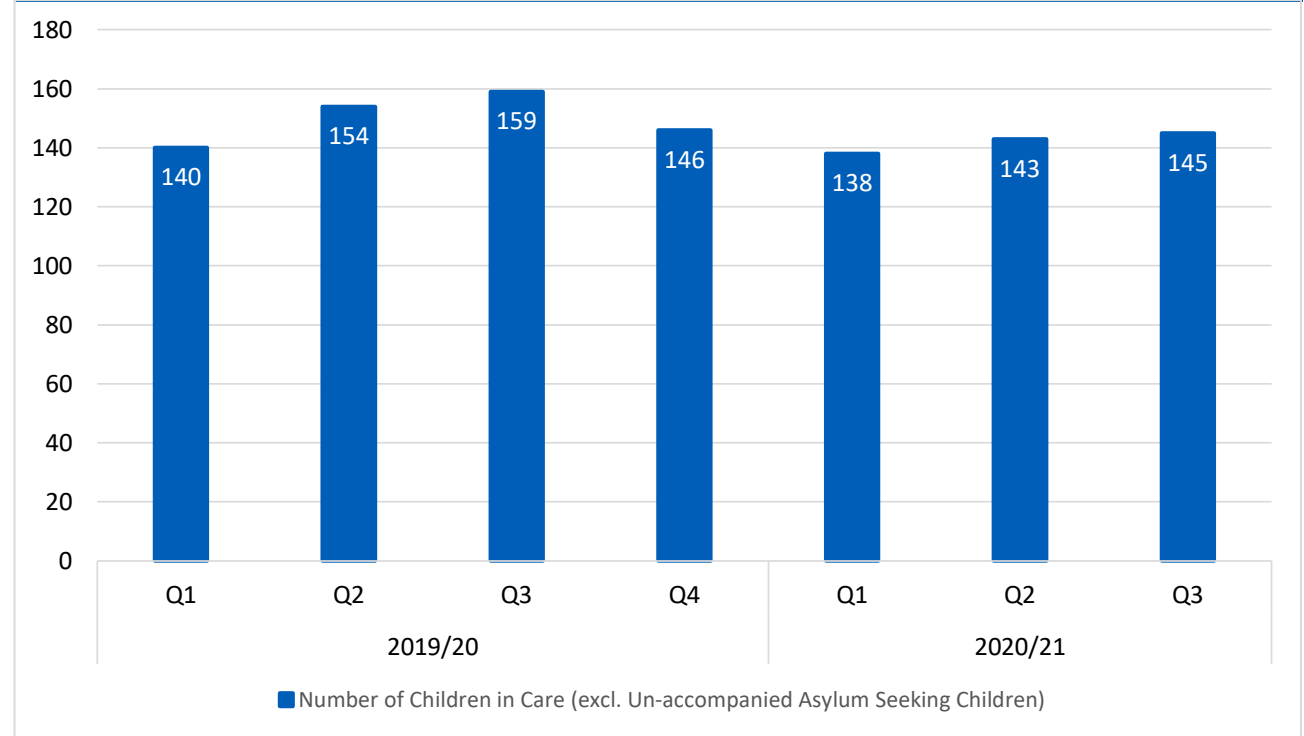
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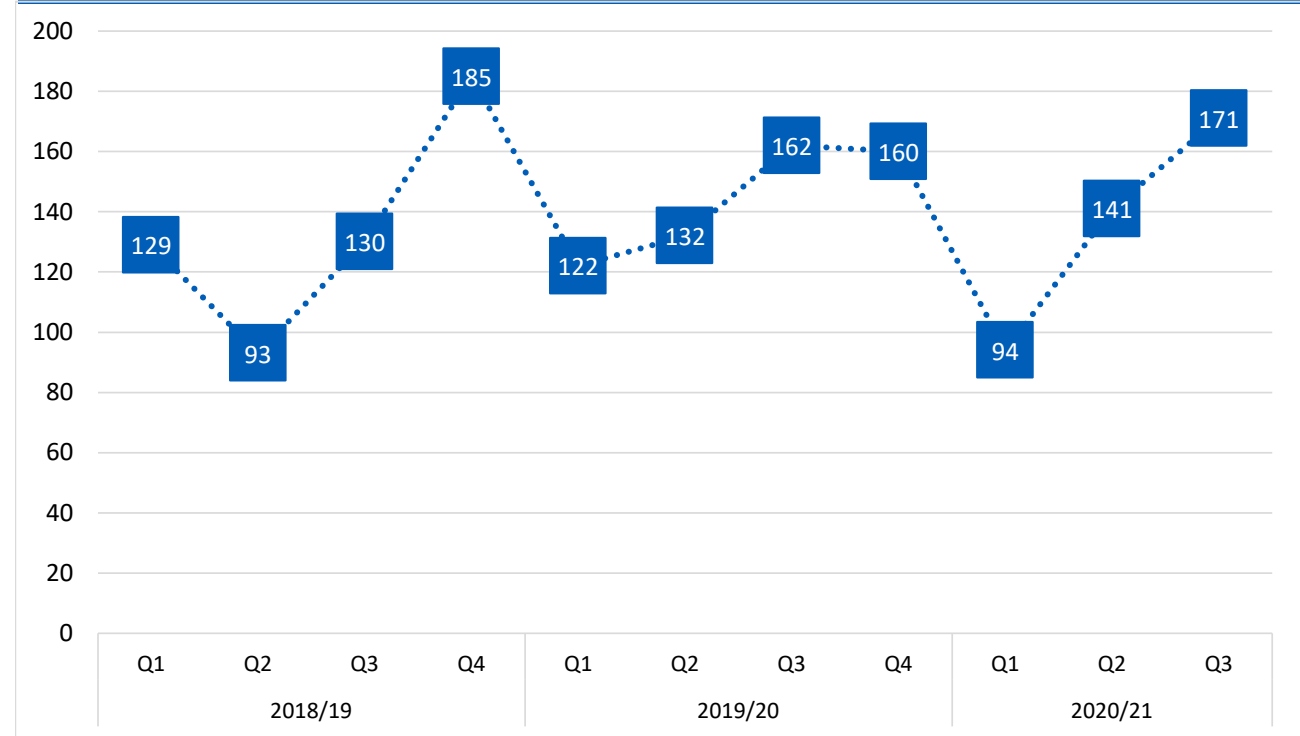
25 Level of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System (per 100,000 under 10 to 17 year olds) (12 month rolling) QvQ: -

**No data currently available as the PNC computers are not currently accessible at the Ministry of Justice

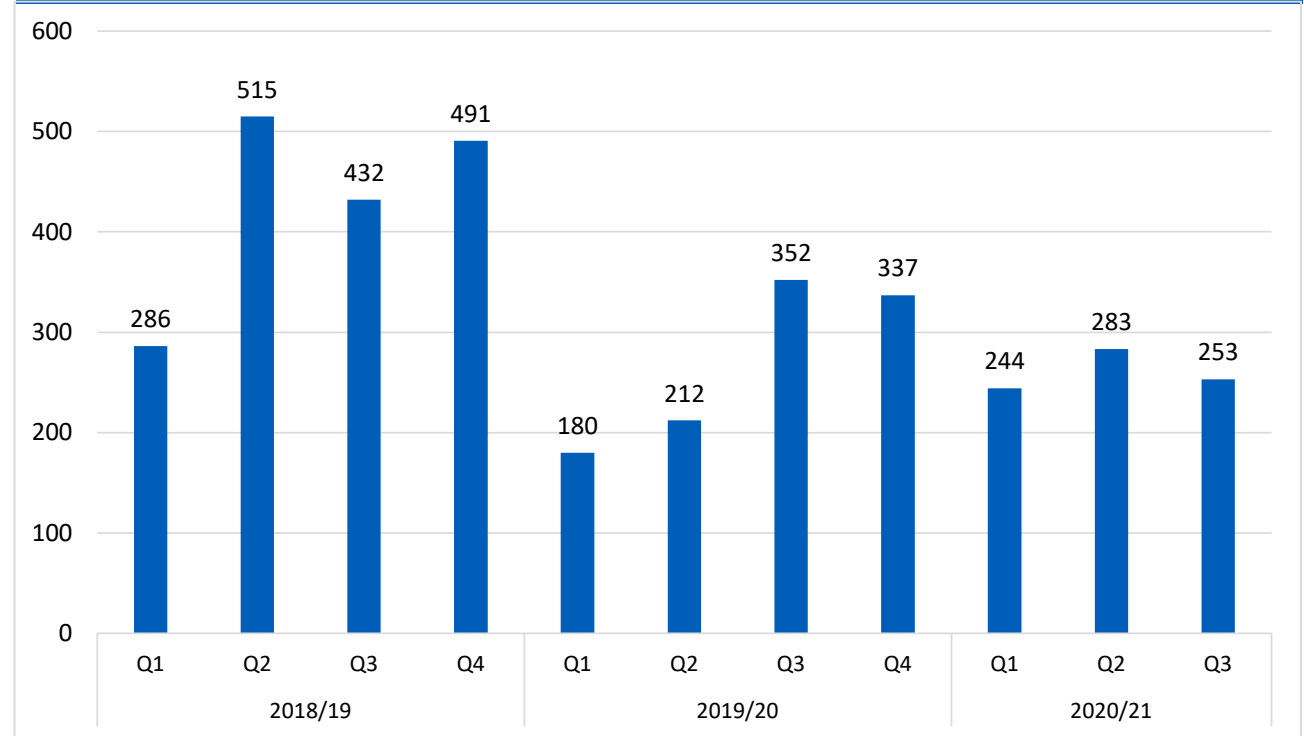
26 Number of Children in Care (excl. Un-accompanied Asylum Seeking Children) QvQ: -8.8%



27 Number of referrals to the Emotional Health Triage (EHT) QvQ: 5.6%

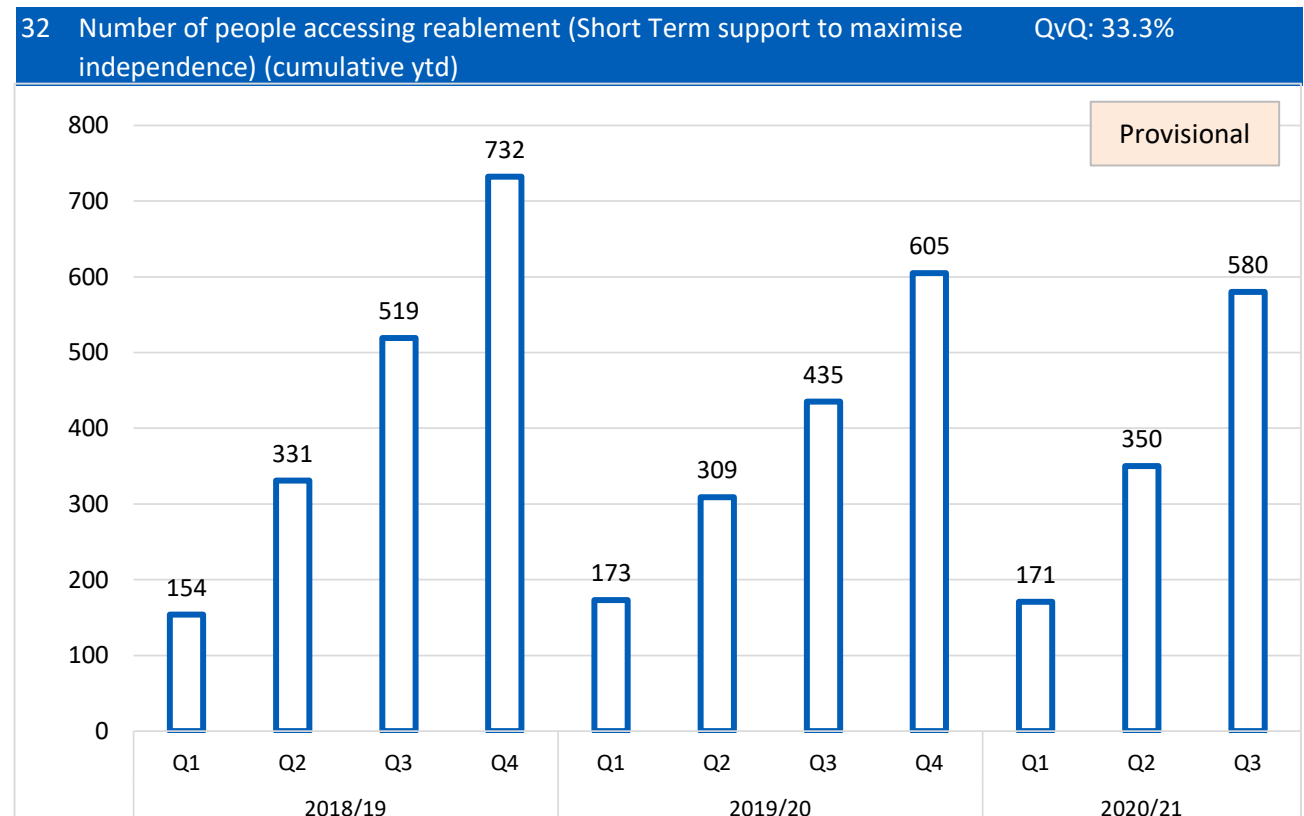
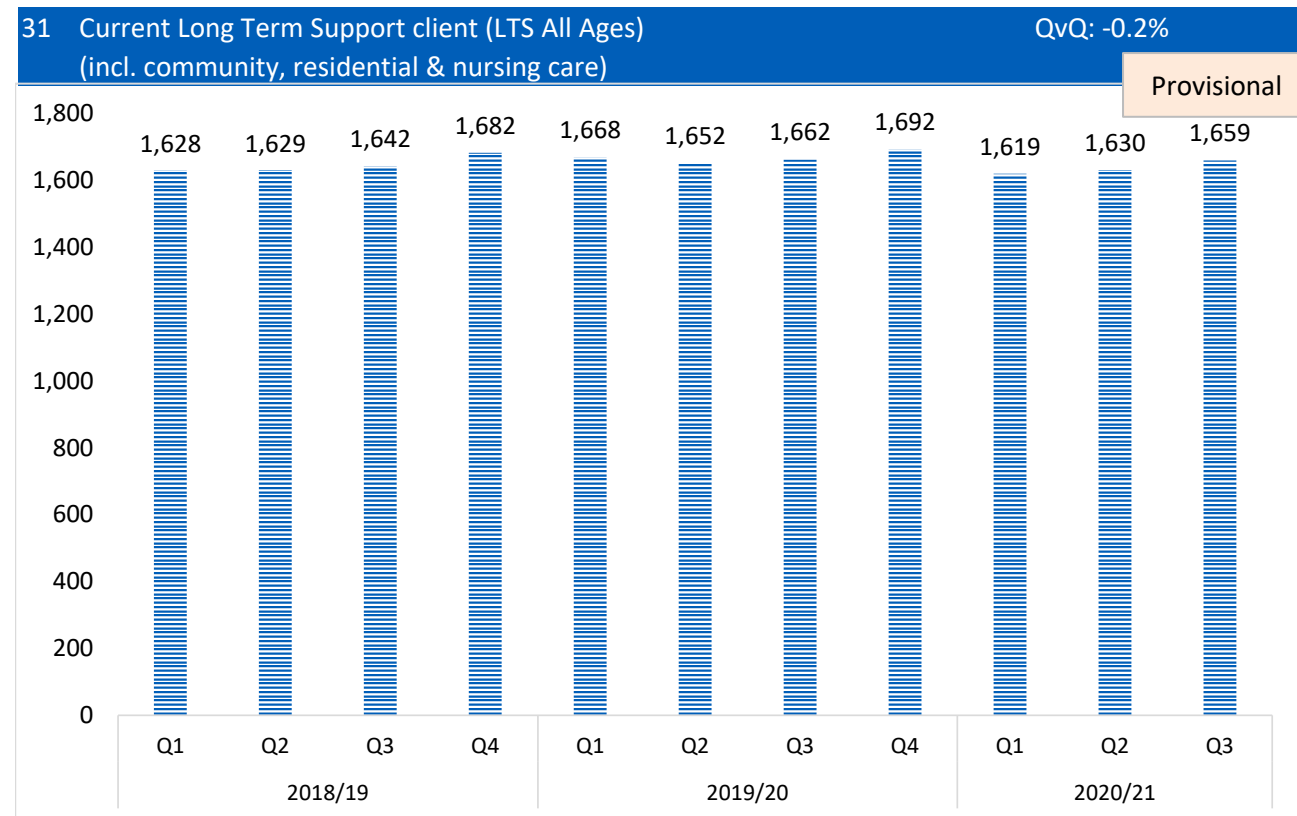
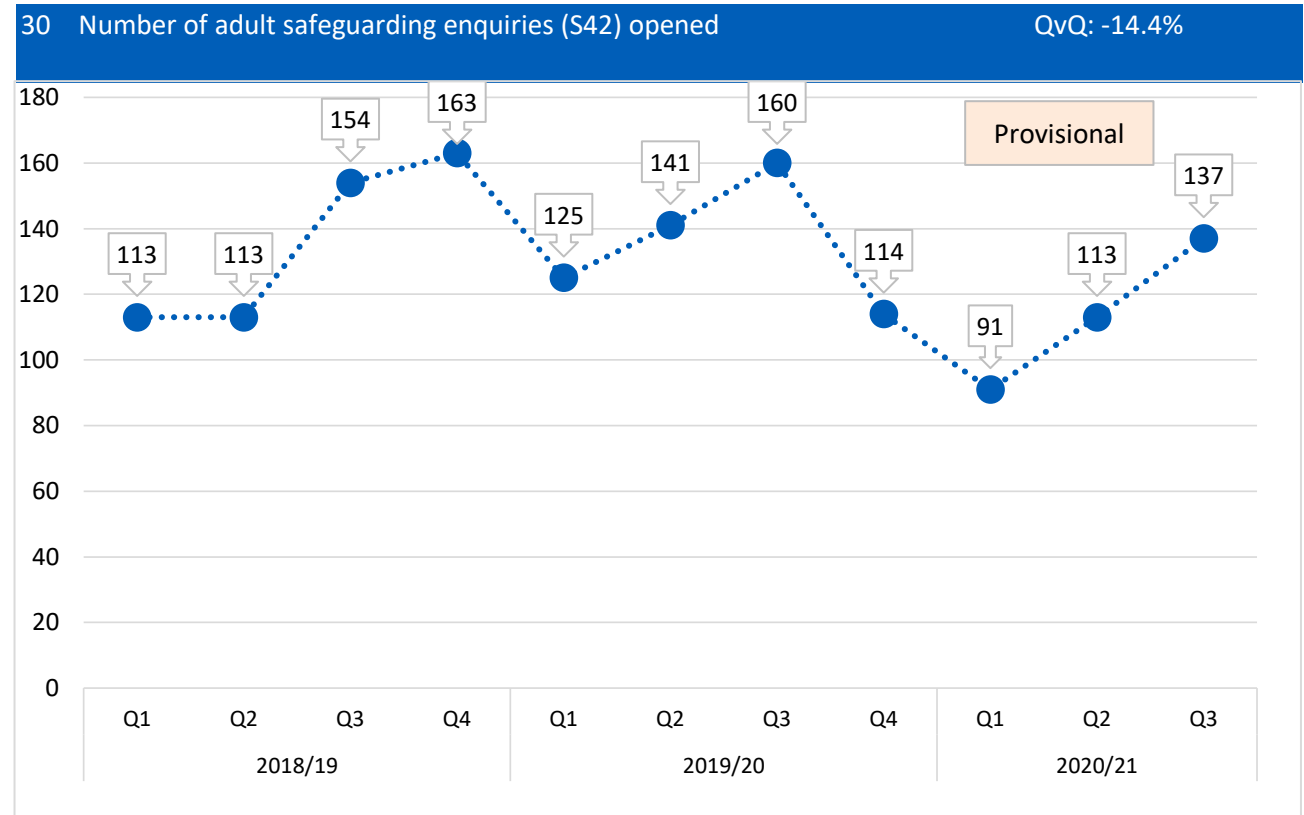
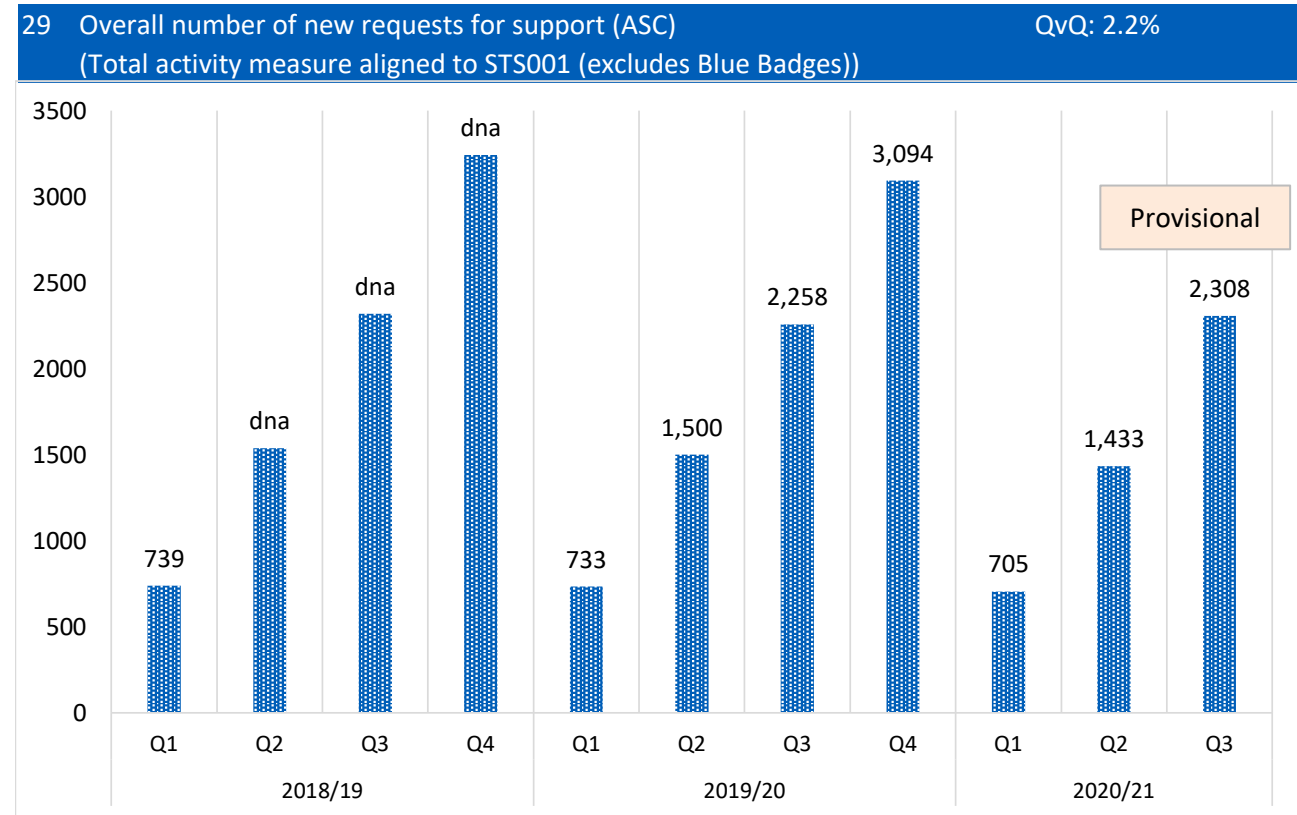


28 Number of active involvements receiving intervention from the Emotional health Academy (EHA)(Total CYP) QvQ: -28.1%



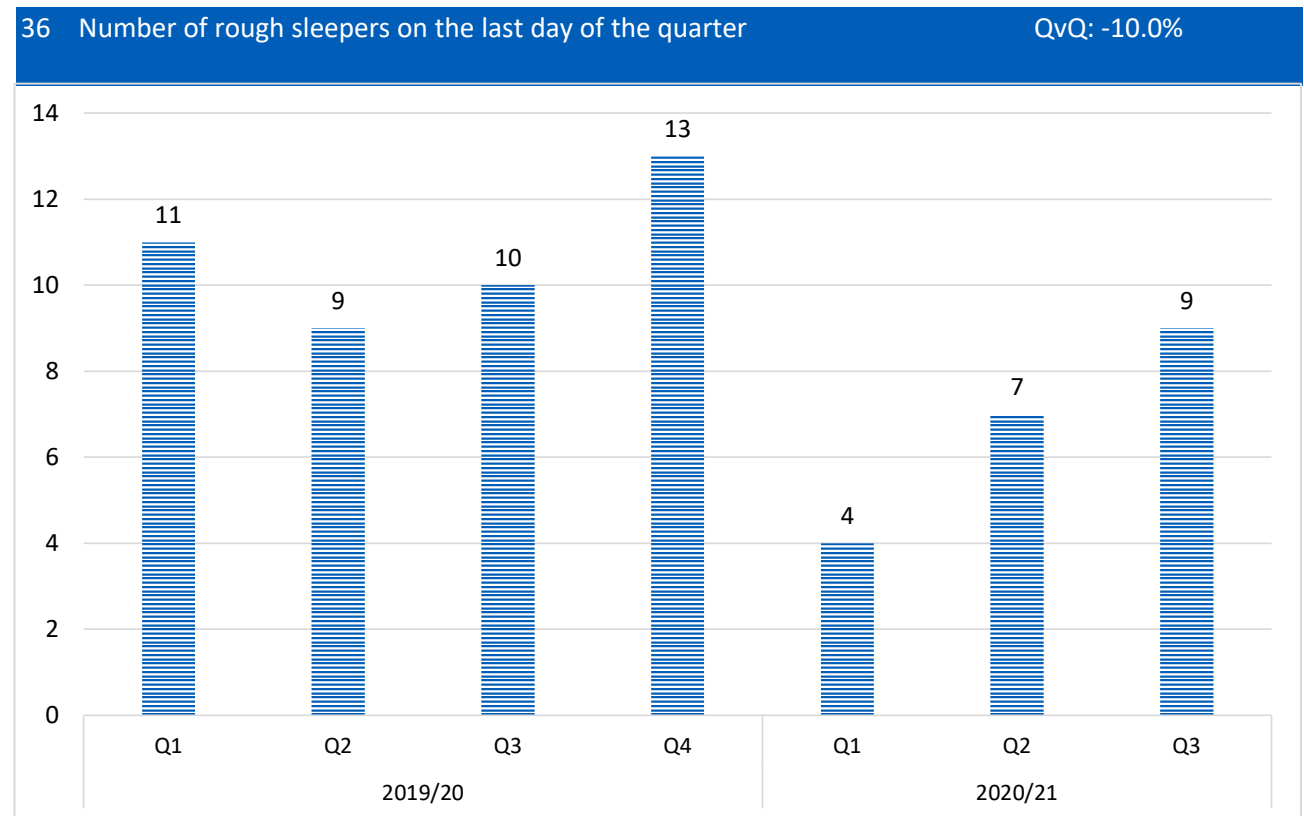
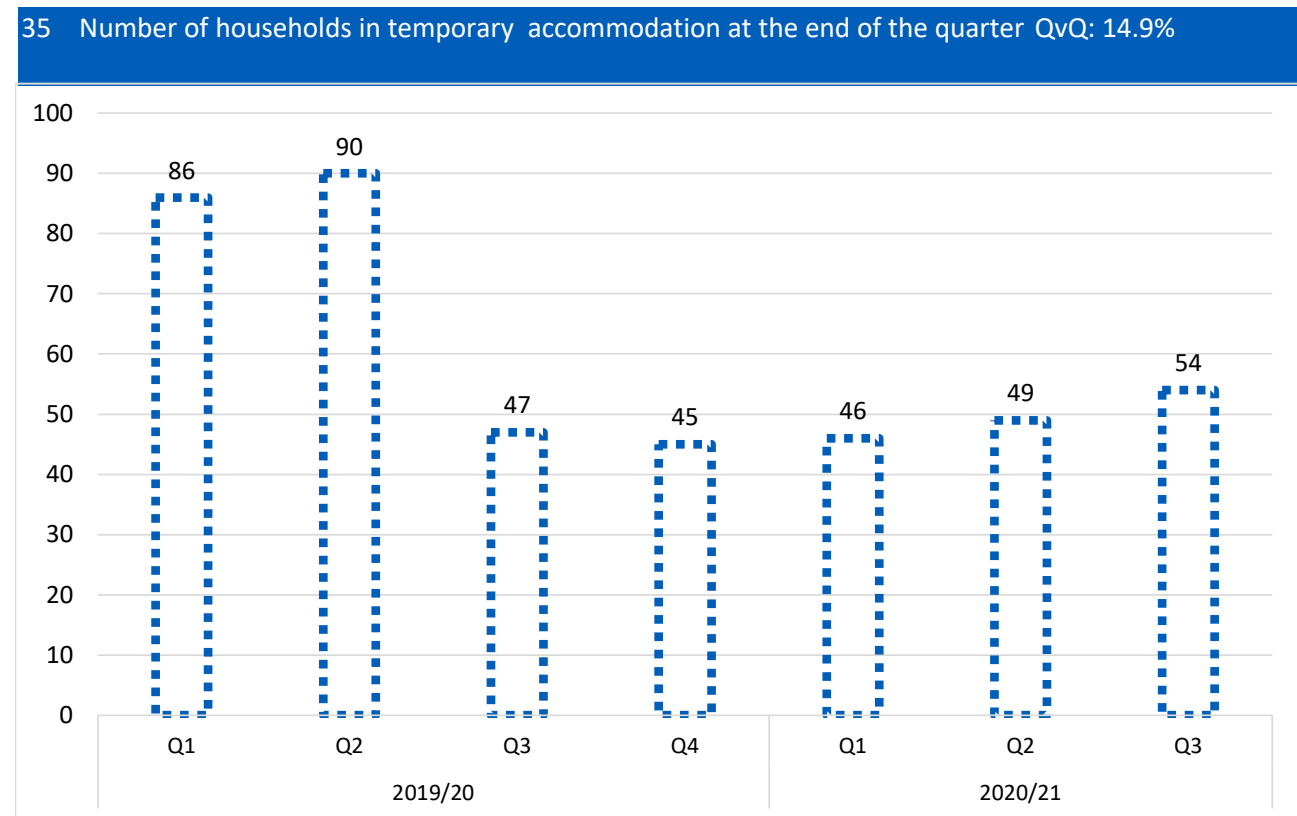
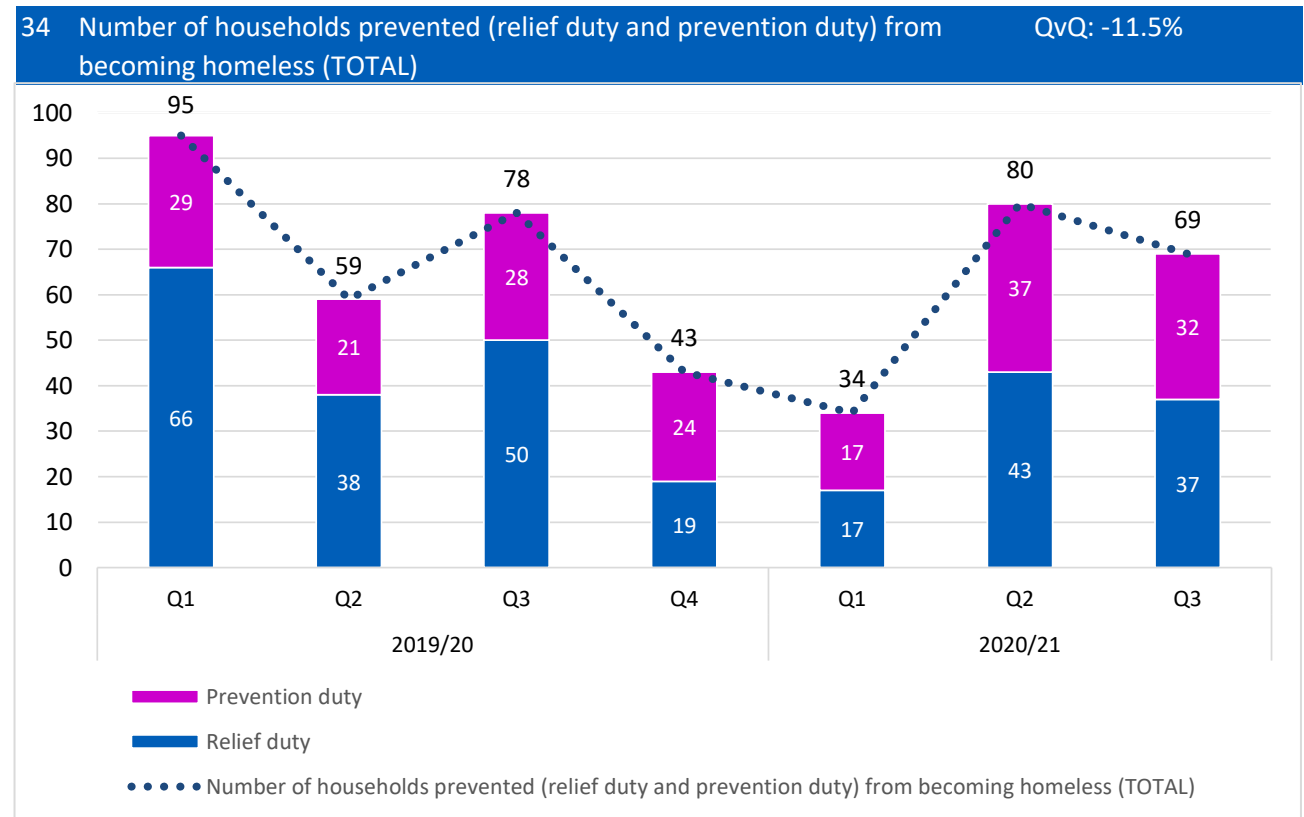
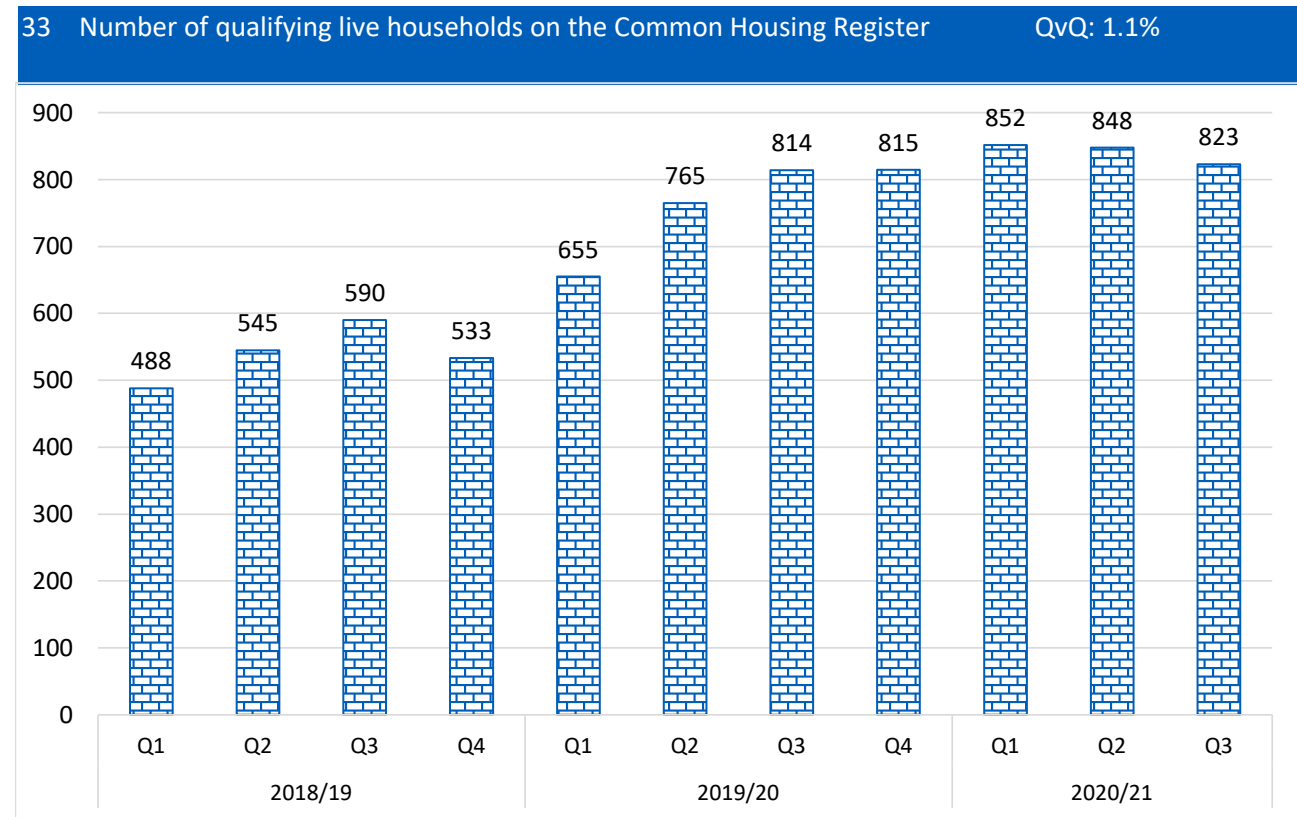
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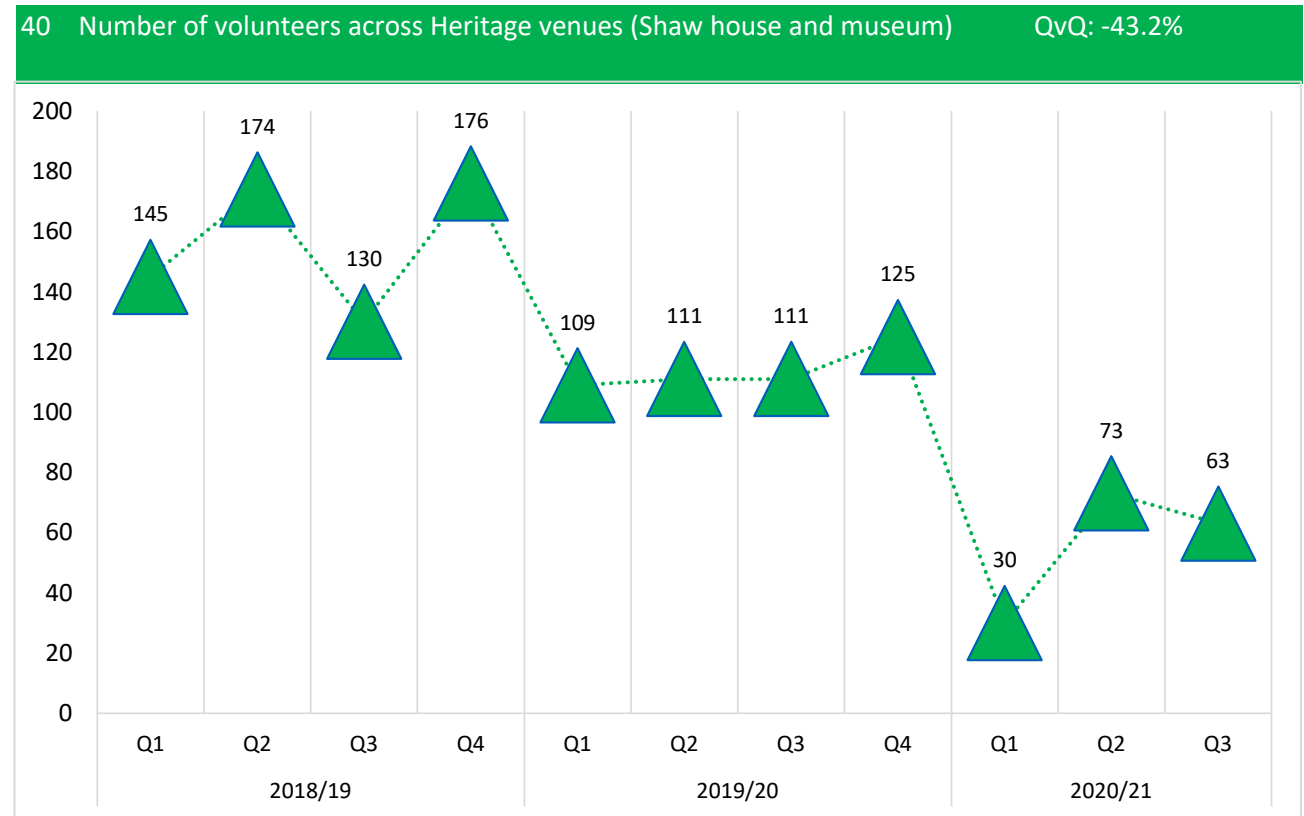
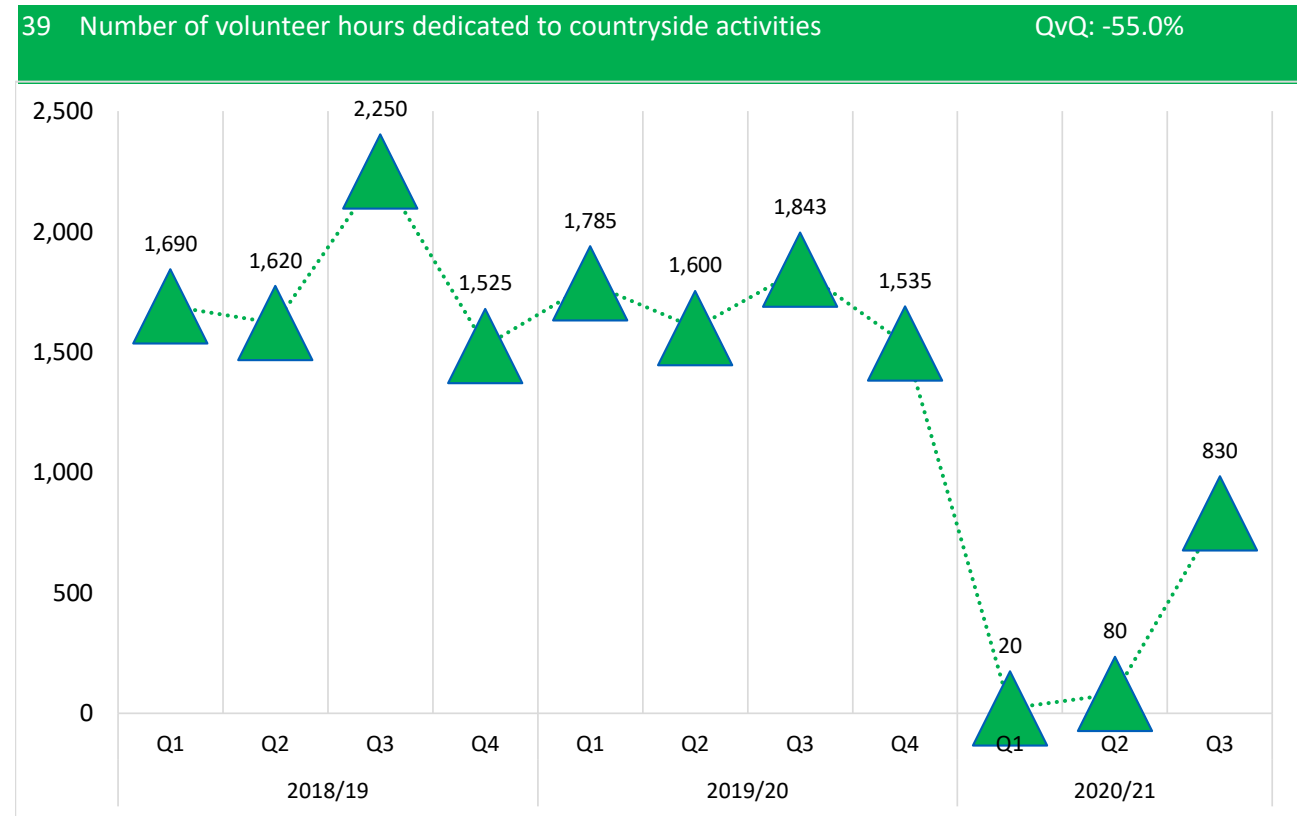
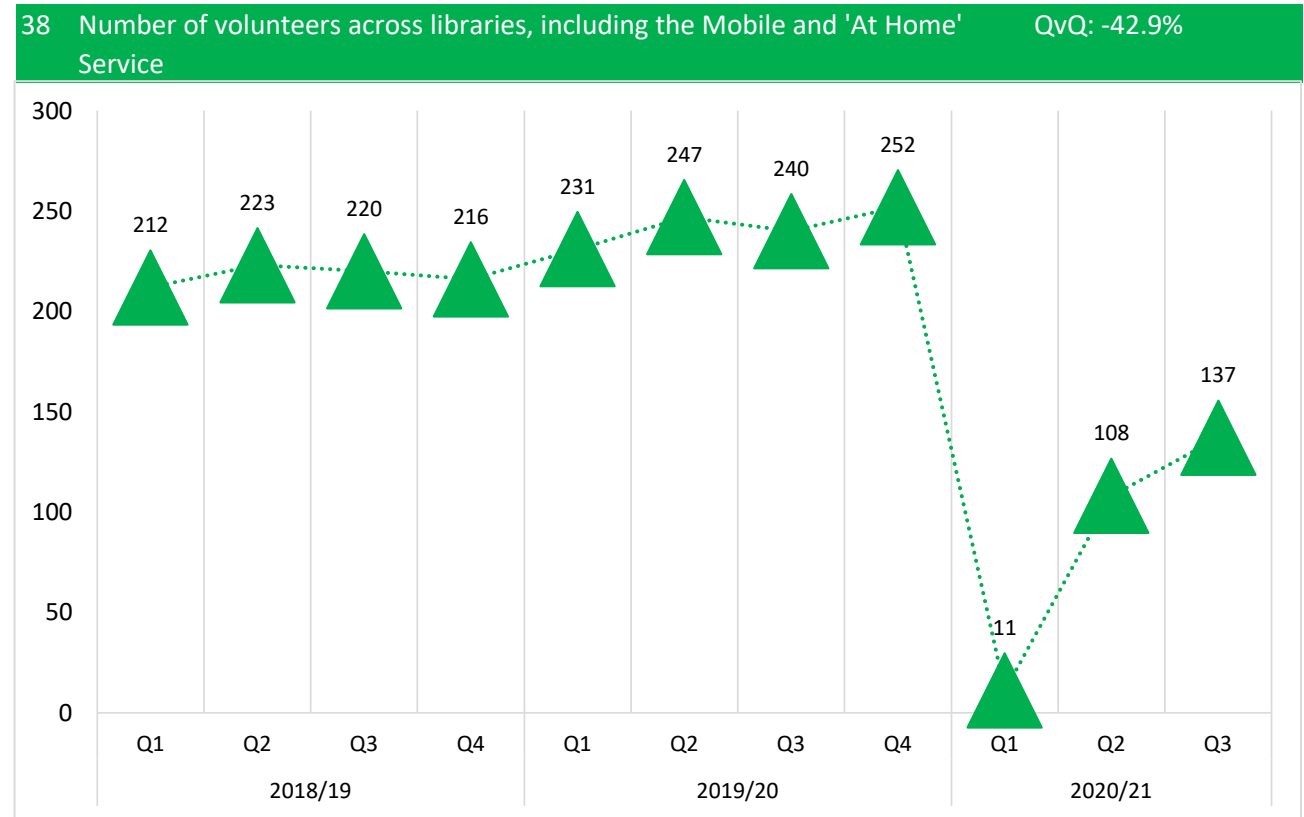
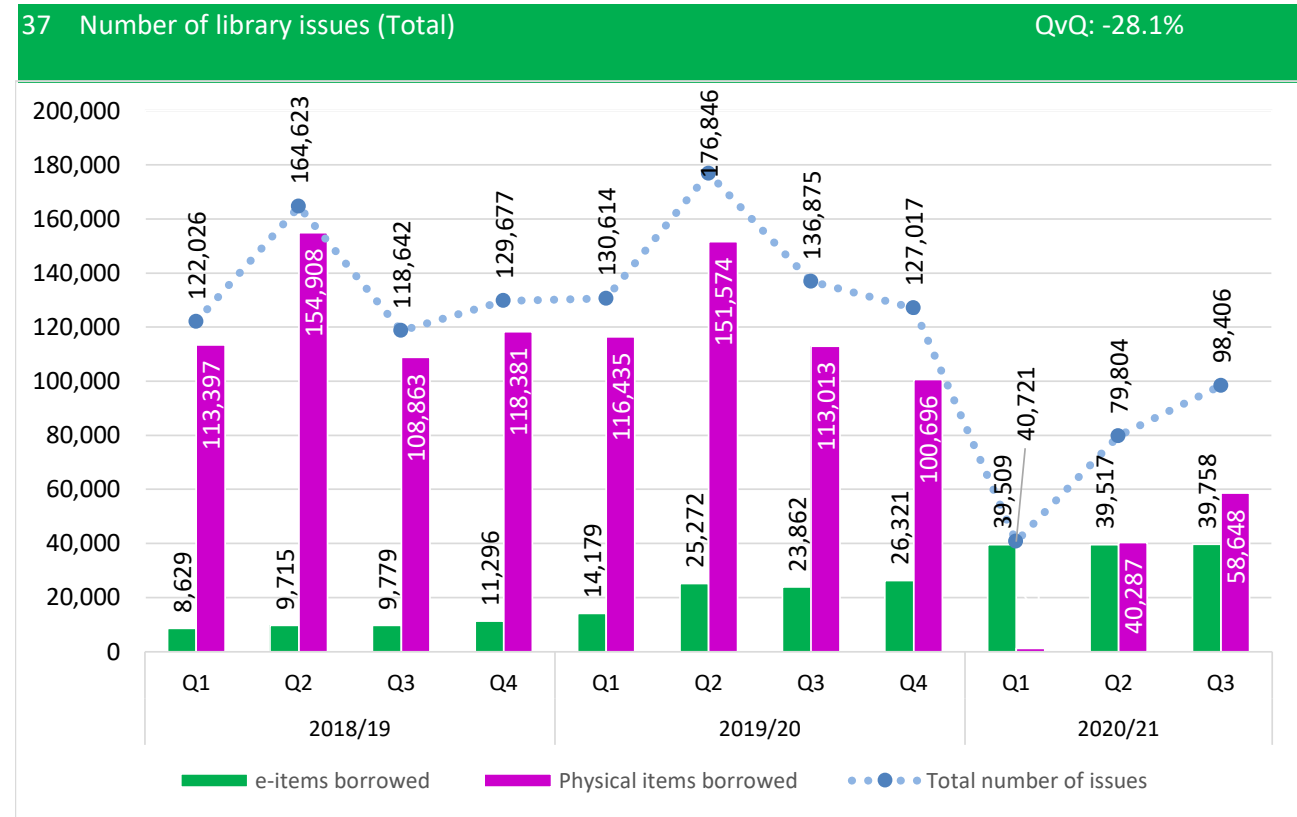
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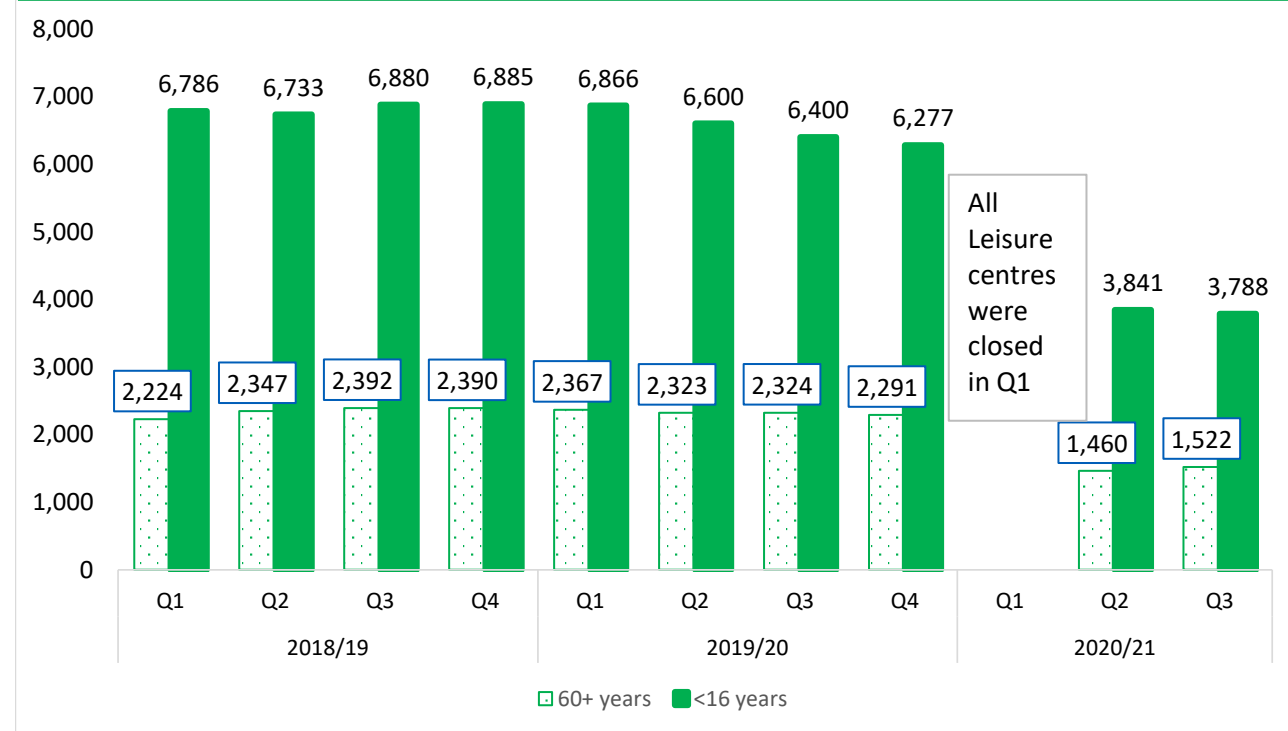


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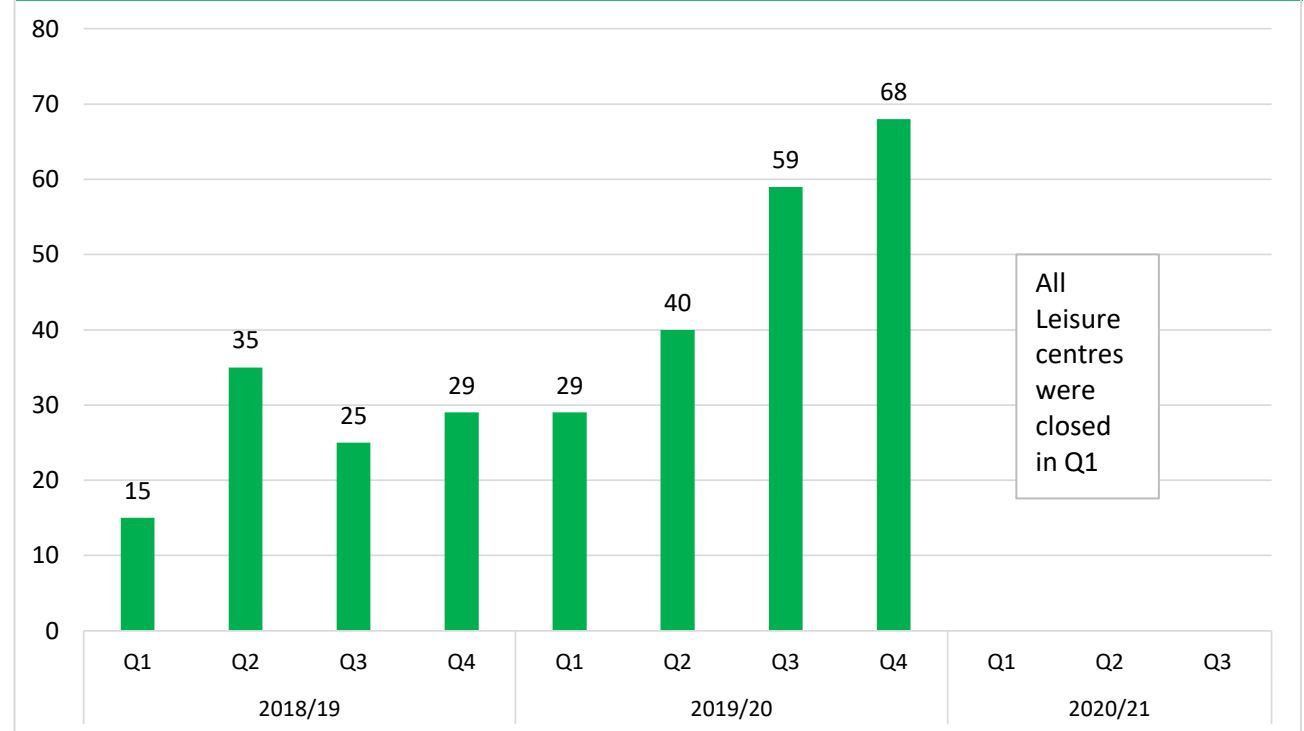
Economy (Grey) | Social Care (blue) | Environment (Green)

41 Number of individuals aged 60 years and over who have used a sports or leisure centre in previous 12 months QvQ: -34.5%

Number of individuals aged under 16 years who have used a sports or leisure centre in previous 12 months QvQ: -40.8%

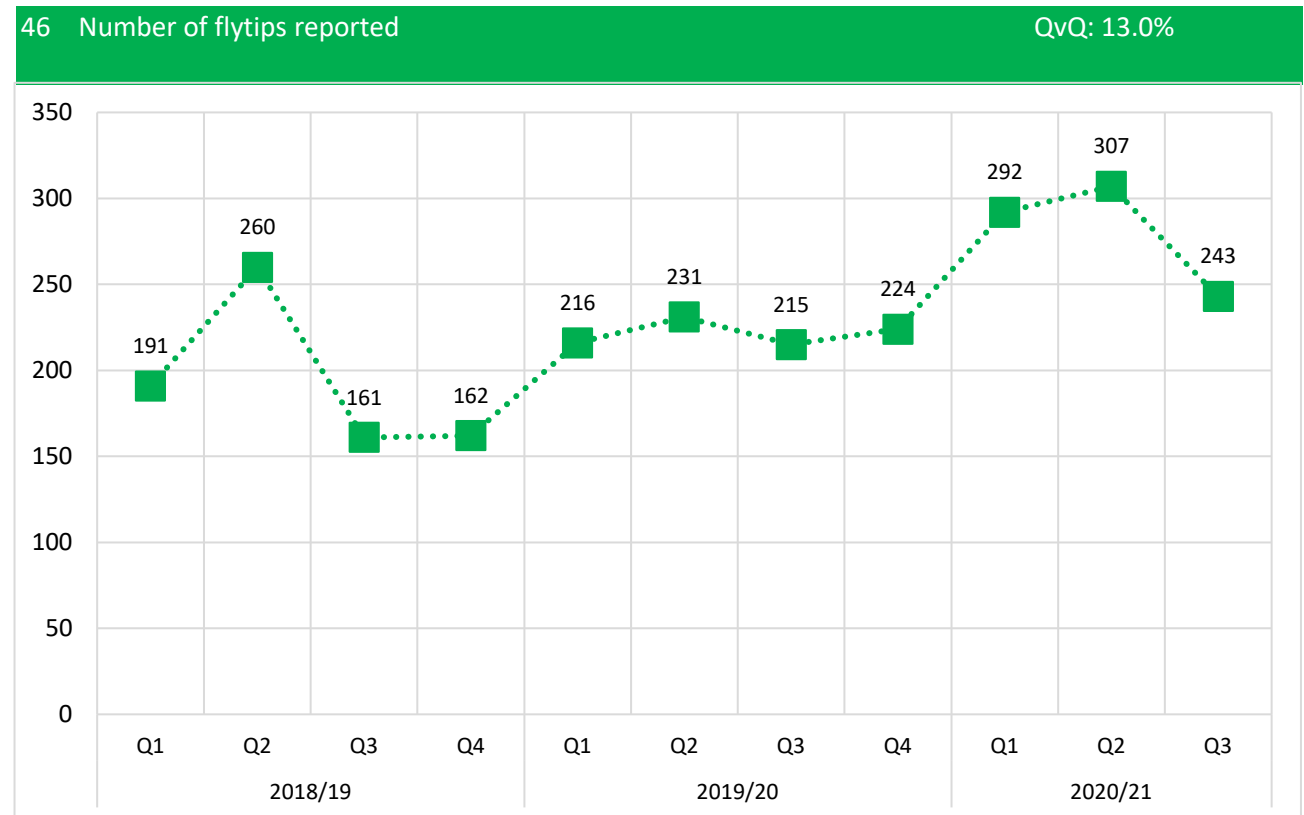
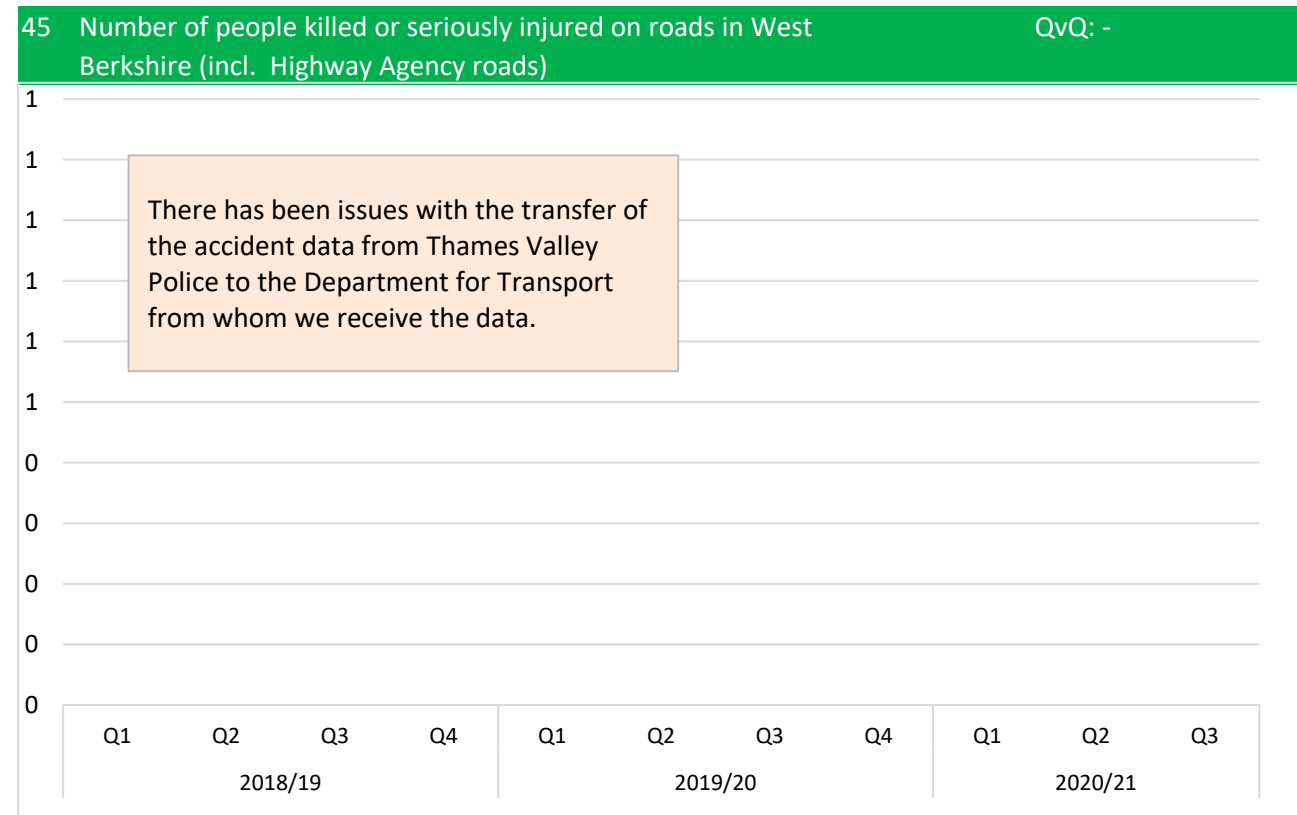
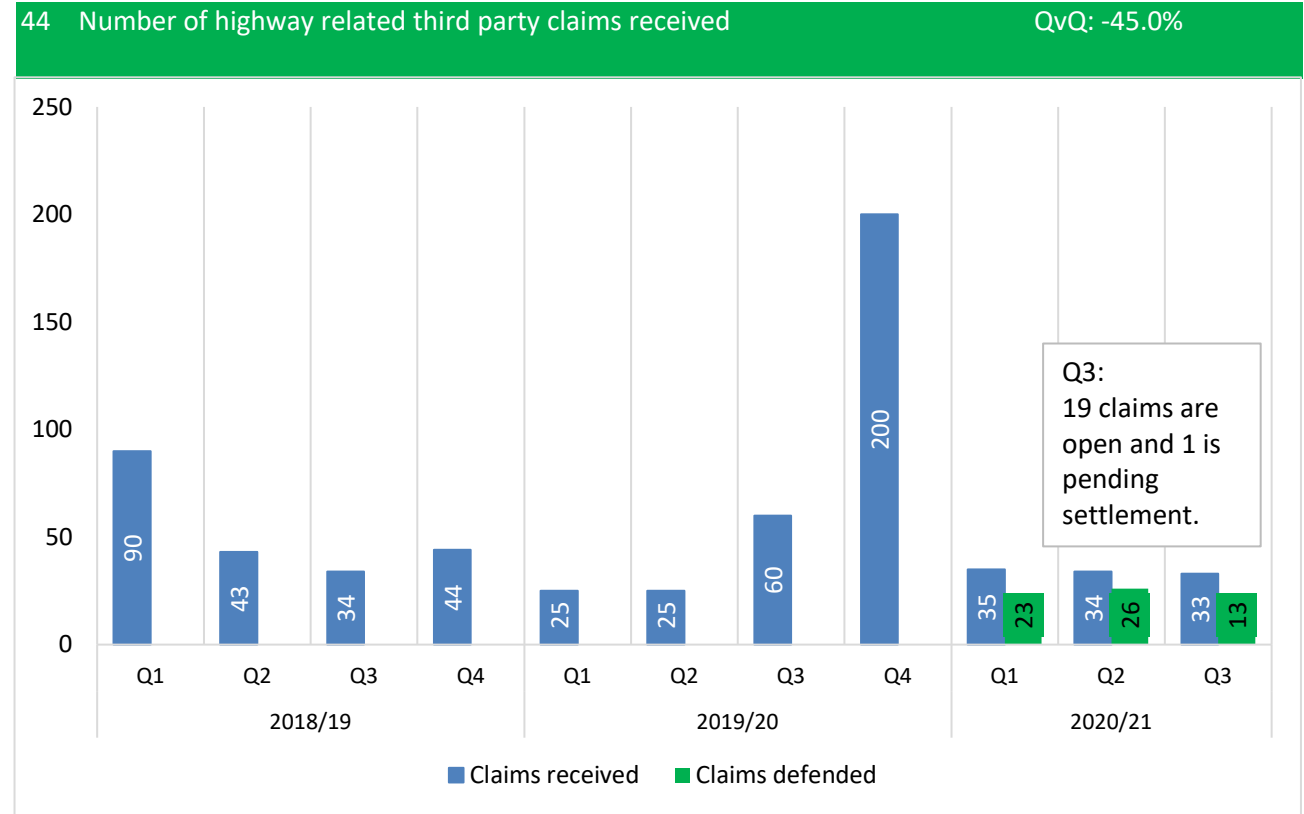
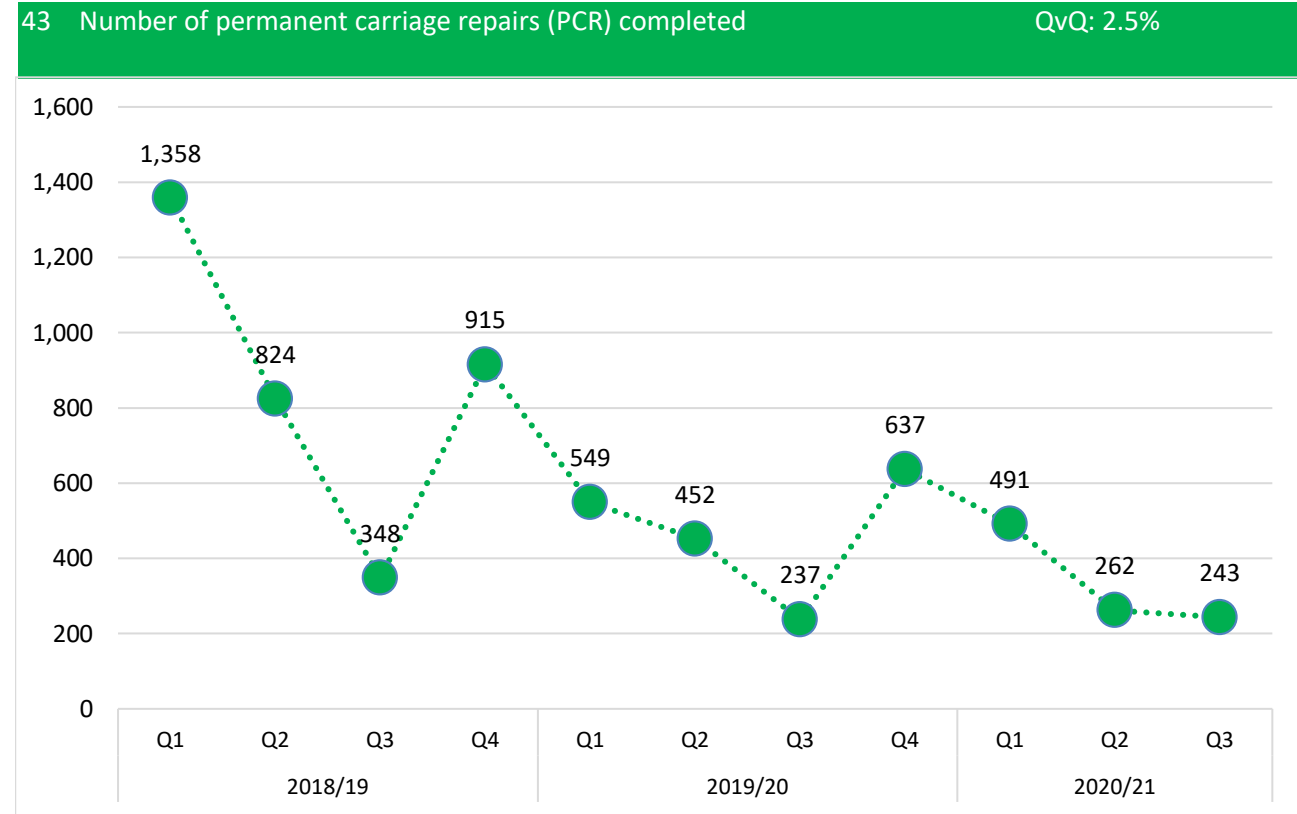


42 Number of Children in Care (and those care leavers aged 18 to 25 who left care due to age) who access a leisure centre QvQ: -100.0%



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Andy Sharp / Pete Campbell			Children and Family Service				Q3 2020/21	AMBER
Indicator Ref: CBacfs14			% of Children in Care where the child has been visited in the past 6 weeks (or 12 weeks if this is the agreed visiting schedule)				Type: Snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	■	■	◆	◆	◆		≥95%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-	-	-			
YTD outturn	94.8% (164/173)	91.8% (145/158)	42.0% (63/150)	84.6% (132/156)	83.4% (131/157)			
<p>REASON FOR AMBER:</p> <p>We are only classing a visit as ‘statutory’ if it is carried out face to face. Whilst the vast majority of visits are now being carried out ‘face to face’, there are some that are being conducted via video/telephone. This is therefore the reason that our performance is below the target set for the year. We have chosen not to exercise the ‘easements’ that have been afforded by the Coronavirus Act 2020, preferring to value ‘stat visits’ to those virtually. Where we include visits in all formats we are at 96%.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p>Visits are increasingly being carried out face to face and, provided that this can continue, performance against this indicator will improve.</p> <p>IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: Not applicable</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None Required.</p>								

Andy Sharp / Paul Coe			Adult Social Care				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: CBgasc2			% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) that are rated good or better by CQC in the area of "safe"				Type: Snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	■	■	■	■	■		100%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-					
YTD outturn	5/6 83.3%	4/6 66.7%	4/6 66.7%	4/6 66.7%	4/6 66.7%			
REASON FOR RED:								
<p>Birchwood Nursing Home was re-inspected in July 2019 and achieved an overall rating of Requires Improvement (RI); published in September 2019. There were improvements within the 5 domains and 2 achieved a rating of Good, but this did not change the overall rating. The next Inspection is expected in November 2020.</p> <p>*Update Jan 2021 – Birchwood Inspection has not taken place yet due to Covid and CQC not completing inspections yet.</p> <p>Walnut Close was inspected in September 2019 with a published report in December 2019. The Home achieved a rating of RI overall and in all domains with the exception of Caring. One issue for Walnut, causing breaches in regulation leading to an RI rating, related to the fabric of the building and internal maintenance which was deemed to be poor.</p> <p>*Update Jan 2021 – Walnut Close is being closed w/c 25th January 2021</p> <p>When Walnut Close closes we will have 5 CQC Inspected services with 4 at Good or above</p>								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:								
<p>An external consultant was commissioned to review environment and practice in Birchwood and work directly with the home on specific areas of activity to improve the rating for 2020. This work began towards the end of 2019 and is ongoing during 2020. Further action plans have been developed and implemented.</p> <p>Similarities in practice apply across all our homes and it is reasonable to assume all will benefit from actions drawn from this work.</p> <p>Positively; Willows Edge was recently inspected (Feb 2020) and the overall outcome achieved was good in all 5 areas. It is clear that some of the recent</p>								

work is having a positive impact.

Focus in Q1 has been on adapting to and supporting the Coronavirus Pandemic.

During the Covid pandemic, the CQC has been undertaking virtual assurance checks because site visits are not considered appropriate. These checks have taken place for all four homes during the last two months and no concerns have been raised.

***Update Jan 2021** – Willows Edge has had a full CQC Infection Control Inspection in January 2021, and feedback from the inspector was very positive.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Both Birchwood and Walnut Close had a high number of COVID infections. 2 impacts - closed to new admissions and high number of deaths means occupancy decreased during Q1

***Update Jan 2021** – Moving Walnut Close residents into Birchwood will improve the financial position for Birchwood.

All homes currently closed to visitors and awaiting vaccinations for as many staff and residents as possible so that we can look at restarting safe admissions into the three remaining homes in February 2021.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: None, as this is already incorporated in the ASC Service Plan and monitored through the Council Delivery Plan.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

Andy Sharp / Paul Coe			Adult Social Care				Q3 2020/21	AMBER
Indicator Ref: CBcasc14			% of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team				Type: %snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	★	★	★	★	◆		≥98%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-						
YTD outturn	100% (2,003/2,008)	97.9% (2,181/2,228)	100% (441/441)	100% (1,080/1,081)	95.8% (1,435/1,498)			
REASON FOR AMBER: Reviewing Officer vacancy from October 2020 – January 2021								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: New reviewing officer recruited, started role 11/01/2021 so improvement expected.								
IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None								
STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None								

Joseph Holmes / Andy Walker			Finance & Property				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: CBgfp13			Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due				Type: Snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	★	★	★	◆	■		≥ 98.8%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-	-	-			
YTD outturn	98.55% (111,577,534 / 113,220,427)	98.5% (116,717,237 / 118,541,476)	27.9% (34,483,678 / 123,527,421)	54.71% (6700,626 / 123,748,322)	81.32% (100,591,752 / 123,700,342)			

REASON FOR RED:

Figures for comparison Q3 2019/20 (99,715,801 / 118,600,712) = 84.08%

The effects of Covid-19 have reduced the amount of Council Tax being paid. Over 2,000 accounts requested payment holidays and therefore many customers did not start paying until June or July. As we are playing 'catch up' with these accounts over time collection should improve.

The Council also decided not to issue any 'arrears' letters or to use any enforcement action between April and August.

We are also not fully aware of people's income in terms of the furlough scheme and possible changes in income. I.e., we have seen a slight increase in benefit caseload but not to a degree that was perhaps expected.

Throughout this period payment by Direct Debit has remained stable at around 70%.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

Over the Autumn 2500 'soft' reminder letters have been issued. This had little effect on the level of payments.

Statutory debt recovery will restart this month and as court dates have been provided legal action can also take place.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Loss of income / cash flow

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: As of 20 January 2021 collection is 89.13% (110,237,047 / 123,671,760). Would appear to be more resilient than Business Rates.

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: Monitor level of payment to ensure all reasonable action being taken in a timely manner.

Joseph Holmes / Andy Walker			Finance & Property				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: CBgfp14			Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due				Type: Snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	■	★	■	■	■		≥ 98.9%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn								
YTD outturn	98.43% (89,938,381/ 88,326,834)	98.9% (88,068,975/ 89,028,134)	27.27% (15,038,824/ 55,154,964)	50.75% (27,154,565/ 53,506,113)	74.38% (39,604,357 /53,247,198)			

REASON FOR RED:

Q3 comparison 2019/2020 = 85.05% (76,075,269/89,449,221)

Covid-19 has had a massive effect on collection. Many businesses were closed between March and July and some have remained so. Further national restrictions for have meant businesses have been mandated to close for additional periods of time. At the time of writing this report many hundreds of businesses have been asked to close.

Direct Debits payments were not collected in April and May and were therefore rescheduled to start in June or July. Additional relief has subsequently been awarded to those eligible retail businesses but other assistance for non-retail businesses is limited

The Council had decided not to issue any 'arrears' letters or to use any enforcement action between April and August. Some 'soft' reminders were issued September and October before further 'national restrictions' were announced.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

Debt recovery action is due to start again this month despite the ongoing national restrictions. Court dates have been booked in March to start legal action.

This is very much dependent upon the Covid-19 situation, should further restrictions apply elements of recovery may have to be reviewed.

Businesses hardest hit appear to be those in the hospitality and events industry where no relief can be awarded and therefore extended flexibility can be given in such circumstances

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Reduced income and cash flow. As of 20th January collection is at 80.71% (42,863,550/53,107,064)

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

Susan Halliwell / Gary Lugg			Development and Planning				Q3 2020/21	AMBER
Indicator Ref: CBhdp32			% of planning appeals won				Type: %+	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	★	◆	★	◆		65% (England Average)	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-	5/9 55.6%	12.5/17 73.5%	7/14 50%			
YTD outturn	-	51/63 81%	5/9 55.6%	17.5/26 67.3%	24.5/40 61.3%			

REASON FOR AMBER:

There is no particular change in circumstances within the Service that has caused this outcome for Q3. Which appeals are submitted, when those appeals are made, and also when those appeals are determined, are outside the control of the Service. These decisions within Q3 all relate to appeals lodged between July 2019 and July 2020. Throughout the year, the number of appeals is relatively low overall and therefore greater percentage swings are likely over the short Quarterly reporting periods as opposed to the full Year End outcome. It is expected that appeal decisions can balance out over the Year.

In order to provide some context and accountability for the appeal decisions in Q3:

- Of the 7 appeals won (appeals dismissed): 5 of these were following a delegated decision of refusal; 1 was following refusal at DPC in line with officers' recommendation (following a WAPC resolution to approve) and 1 was following a WAPC resolution to refuse in line with officers' recommendation.
- Of the 7 appeals lost (appeals allowed): 4 of these were following a delegated decision of refusal and 3 were following refusal at EAPC against officers recommendations.

The appeal decisions have been clearly justified in all cases by the relative Inspectors having looked at the specific merits of the particular cases. Decisions are monitored and there is no repetitive or predominant aspect to the decisions at this time.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

Monitoring of the Inspectorate's appeal decisions and the comments made in them about the original decisions made (which lead to the need to appeal) are monitored after the receipt of each decision. A Quarterly report is prepared within the Service to summarise the appeal decisions and provide feedback on some of the key findings. This report is presented at the Portfolio Holder Briefings. There is currently no identifiable adverse pattern in respect of appeal decisions. If such a pattern was to emerge, any necessary remedial management action would be identified and implemented.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

Andy Sharp / Paul Coe			Adult Social Care				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: PC1asc21			Agree and publish a strategic framework to improve the employment opportunities of vulnerable people				Type: text	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG					■		December 2020	-
Qrtly outturn	-	-						
YTD outturn	-	-			Not yet published			
<p>REASON FOR RED:</p> <p>There was a delay in progressing this piece of work during Q1 due to competing priorities and the challenge of engaging with other partners during a time of change and uncertainty.</p> <p>However work has progressed and the strategy has now been developed; it has been reviewed by Skills and Enterprise partnership and will go for consideration at Strategy Board on 9th February.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p>An alternative data of March 2021 to publish the strategy is required.</p> <p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None</p> <p>IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None</p> <p>SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: New target date of end of March 2021.</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None</p>								

Joseph Holmes / Sarah Clarke			Strategy and Governance				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: PC1hr2			Number of Corporate and School and those who have been facilitated via levy transfer, who are disadvantaged and aged 16-25 enrolled onto training which is funded through the apprenticeship levy				Type: Nos+	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG		Baseline	★	★	■		3	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-	-	-			
YTD outturn	-	1	0	0	0			
REASON FOR RED:								
<p>During the pandemic it is extremely challenging to support a new apprentice who has additional needs when working remotely. Businesses have been closed due to Government restrictions, schools have been closed and staff have been redirected to respond to the pandemic.</p>								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:								
<p>We continue to support apprenticeships where possible and have taken on a number of new providers for new areas this year. We have also signed up to the Kickstart scheme for 13 internal placements and we are hopeful some of this will convert to apprenticeship posts in Q2 of 21/22.</p> <p>We continue to train staff to be job mentors (2 cohorts of training running in Q4) so we are in a good place for when we can open our doors again.</p> <p>HR are working closely with SEND coordinators in secondary and special schools to run pilots work experience programmes for SEND pupils which hopefully will lead to apprenticeships in the future. We have also agreed to part fund 8 Job Coaches in schools to support disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Where possible we are supporting requests for meetings to with pupils interested in working for the council.</p> <p>In addition we have found a Fixed term Contract role for a previous disadvantaged apprentice and part funded a complaints apprenticeship role which we hope to have a disadvantaged young person in post as well. We also tried to recruit to a substance misuse role but were unable to find a candidate who met the disadvantaged criteria in full hence have not included these posts in the figures as they are not confirmed.</p>								
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Unused funds – we are looking to ask FAGG to carry these forward to 21/22 financial year								
IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None								
SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: None								
STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None								

Nick Carter			Building Communities Together				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: PC2bct2			Develop and adopt a community resilience index (based on proxy indicators) (Strategic Goal)				Type: Text	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG			◆	◆	■		March 2021	Project
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-	-	-			
YTD outturn	-	-	Behind schedule	On hold	Delayed			
REASON FOR RED:								
This was a new measure for 2020/21.								
In quarter 1 until early June 2020, the officer responsible for the community resilience index work was abstracted from normal duties to work in The Community Support Hub as part of West Berkshire Council's COVID19 response, from then on the post has been vacant.								
In quarter 2 the 'Engaging and Enabling our Communities' project, being led by Matt Pearce and which went to the Exec on 15 October 2020, was initiated. A project manager was to be appointed. The community resilience index work will form part of this project.								
In quarter 3 a post holder has been appointed but due to a delay in them being released from their previous employer they will not be joining WBC until 22 February 2021. This work will be progressed within this project manager role - 'Program Manager Engaging & Enabling Communities' but it is unlikely that the work will be completed by year-end given that the new employee will only be in post for just over month before year-end								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:								
Updates will be provided as this project progresses and reported on as part of the BCT Team KPI and MoV quarterly return.								
It is suggested that this target is moved to 3 rd quarter 2021/22.								

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

Other KPIs are dependent on the development of the community resilience index:-

Pilot the Community Resilience Index to identify areas of low resilience and most in need

% of communities supported, who have been identified through the Community Resilience Index

% of communities identified and supported through the Community Resilience Index who have improved their Index score

These are not due to be reported on until 2021/22 but they cannot be progressed until the 'Development of the Community Resilience Index' KPI has been completed.

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:

The service request a new target date of December 2021 be put forward for approval.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

Susan Halliwell / Gary Lugg			Development and Planning				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: OFB1dp44			Deliver the Inward Investment Brochure				Type: Project	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	-	-	★	■		Dec 2020	n/a
YTD outturn	-	-	New measure added at Q2	On track	Behind schedule			

REASON FOR RED:

Newbury West Berkshire Economic Development Company, which was to be responsible for this work, has been dissolved. The work had not been started while the company was active.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

The work will now be absorbed into the internal Economic Development Team following a restructure in 2021/22. The brochure will be included in the Recovery Strategy as a key action for encouraging local growth post-Covid and will be prioritised in the ED Strategy Refresh delivery plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:

The deadline for this work should be amended to December 2021 to reflect the need to recruit officers to complete the work and begin from scratch.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

None

Susan Halliwell / Gary Lugg			Development and Planning				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: OFB1dp43			Deliver the Economic Development Strategy refresh to reflect Covid-19 impact				Type: Project	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	-	-	★	■		Dec 2020	n/a
YTD outturn	-	-	New measure added at Q2	On track	Behind schedule			
<p>REASON FOR RED:</p> <p>Economic Development Board took the decision to push this work back to the end of February due to the prolonged Covid response period, and the need to ensure it is aligned with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Recovery Plan, which has not yet been published.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p>Not applicable as the delay is outside of the council's control.</p> <p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</p> <p>None</p> <p>IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:</p> <p>Some actions in the Strategy will be delayed due to the need to prioritise initiatives which contribute to the mitigation of the immediate impact of Covid on the local economy.</p> <p>SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:</p> <p>The deadline for this work should be amended to early March 2021 to reflect the need to wait for the LEP's Recovery Plan to be published, and to allow time for it to be embedded into the council's local plan.</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:</p> <p>None</p>								

Susan Halliwell / Gary Lugg			Development and Planning				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: GP1dp21			Develop and adopt a new West Berkshire Housing Strategy				Type: Project	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	■	★	★	■			
YTD outturn	-	Behind schedule (Target: Jul 2020)	On track	On track	Behind schedule		Feb 2021	n/a
<p>REASON FOR RED:</p> <p>Due to a reduction in staffing and the continued impact of Covid 19, the housing strategy had to be slipped one Executive Cycle to March 2021.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p>Recruitment process was undertaken immediately along with updating members, senior managers and key stakeholders. Relevant documents i.e. the forward plan and corporate project plan were amended to reflect the change.</p> <p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</p> <p>None</p> <p>IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:</p> <p>None</p> <p>SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:</p> <p>No permanent change is required to the service plan.</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:</p> <p>Already noted in remedial management above.</p>								

Susan Halliwell / Gary Lugg			Development and Planning				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: GP1dp25			Number of affordable homes completed				Type: Snapshot	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		
YTD outturn	75	103 (Target: 125)	Reports Q3 - 2021/22	Reports Q3 - 2021/22	Reports Q3 - 2021/22	Reports Q3 - 2021/22	125	Higher is better
REASON FOR RED:								
Developers did not build out their permitted sites as expected.								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:								
The council already has an affordable housing policy which seeks units on smaller sites than suggested in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). There are currently over 900 affordable housing units with planning permission that have not been built. (This includes 170 at the Racecourse).								
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:								
None as affordable housing does not pay the Community Infrastructure Levy								
IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:								
None								
SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:								
None								
STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:								
None								

Susan Halliwell / Jon Winstanley			Environment Department				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: GP2env30 & GP2env31			<p>Complete a feasibility and cost benefit analysis for large scale afforestation and natural regeneration in the rural area</p> <p>Complete a feasibility and cost benefit analysis for urban tree planting to help improve urban air quality and achieve 20% cover for urban areas in the district</p>				Type: Project	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	-	★	★	★	■		March 2021	Project
YTD outturn	-	On track	On track	On track	Behind schedule			
<p>REASON FOR RED:</p> <p>Main reason for this not being achieved is lack of capacity within the team. Recruitment to the Environment Delivery Team occurred during Q3 resulting in the filling of a vacant position in Q3 and two new team members starting in Q4. Whilst these two KPIs relate to important actions in the delivery plan, the team has had to focus on other priorities and does not have the capacity currently to engage in these feasibility studies.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p>The Environment Delivery Plan is being developed in more detail ready for consultation. This work will help to prioritise the range of measures included in the plan. This will in turn inform new KPIs and assist in setting appropriate timescales. These projects are required and a bid for additional funding for the team has been put forward to increase capacity. This area of work is specifically mentioned in the funding bid.</p> <p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</p> <p>There are no financial implications as a result of not being able to achieve these KPIs within the target timescales.</p> <p>IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:</p> <p>Due to the nature of these projects, they need to be started in the early part of the Environment Delivery Plan. Further delays in progressing this work will have an impact on the carbon reduction results they could deliver and an impact on our overall target of carbon neutrality by 2030.</p> <p>SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:</p> <p>These two projects will need to progress as described and only the timescales need to change.</p> <p>It is recommended that the process of updating the Service Plan will consider which projects and actions from the Environment Delivery Plan are</p>								

appropriate to have as KPIs.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

Consideration of team capacity alongside Environment Delivery Plan. Decision on funding bid seeking additional resource.

Nick Carter			Building Communities Together				Q3 2020/21	RED
Indicator Ref: SITbct8			Develop a Community Engagement Framework with our statutory partners and community and voluntary organisations				Type: Text	
Executive	2018/19 Year End	2019/20 Year End	2020/21				Target	Polarity
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG			◆	◆	■		March 2021	Project
Qrtly outturn	-	-	-	-	-			
YTD outturn	-	-	Behind schedule	Behind schedule	Behind schedule			
REASON FOR RED:								
<p>This was a new measure for 2020/21.</p> <p>In quarter 1 and until early June the officer was abstracted from normal duties to work in The Community Support Hub as part of West Berkshire Council's COVID19 response.</p> <p>In quarter 2 the work was delayed due to the officer going on maternity leave; an officer is expected to be in post early November. The work is now to be subsumed into the 'Engaging and Enabling our Communities' project which is being led by Matt Pearce and which went to Exec on 15 October 2020. A project manager is to be appointed.</p> <p>In quarter 3 a post holder has been appointed but due to a delay in them being released from their previous employer they will not be joining WBC until 22 February 2021. This work will be progressed within this project manager role - 'Program Manager Engaging & Enabling Communities'. Given that the post holder will only have a month in the role before year-end this KPI will not be completed. Any progression is also reliant on what work is able to be undertaken given the current COVID19 restrictions.</p>								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:								
<p>Updates will be provided as the project progresses and reported on as part of the BCT Team KPI and MoV quarterly return.</p> <p>It is suggested that this target is moved to year end 2021/22.</p>								
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: None								

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

The outcome of this KPI will have an impact on other work that the Council is currently undertaking on Community Engagement.

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED:

The service request a new target date of March 2022 be put forward for approval.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

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Technical Conventions

This report sets out the Council's progress against its Priorities for Improvement set out in the [Council Strategy](#). Performance is presented by priority and augmented with Influencer measures to further describe the operating environment and / or challenges.

Activities are monitored within the council priorities and RAG rated by projected year end performance, e.g. a prediction of whether the target or activity will be achieved by the end of the financial year (or, for projects, by the target date):

Red (R)	Indicates that we have either not achieved (or do not expect to achieve) the activity or target by year end, or the specified target date.
Amber (A)	Means we are behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure or activity by year end, or the specified target date.
Green (G)	Means we have either achieved or exceeded (or expect to achieve or exceed) what we set out to do.
Annual	Indicates that the measure that can only be reported against at a particular point in time e.g. at quarter 4.
Baseline	Means that the measure is not targeted and the results are provided as a baseline for future monitoring.
Data not available (dna)	Indicates that the quarterly data is not yet available and will be updated at a later date, usually the following quarter.
Data not provided (dnp)	Means that data has not been provided and will be updated at a later date, usually the following quarter
(E)	Indicates a result is an estimate and will be updated during the year, as and when data becomes available.
(P)	Means a result is provisional and subject to further validation e.g. from an external body, and will be updated during the year, as and when data becomes available.

Where a measure is reported as 'amber' or 'red', an exception report is provided. This identifies the reasons for this assessment and shows what remedial action has been put in place to either bring the measure back on target or to mitigate the consequence of it not being achieved; and whether any Strategic action is required.

Benchmarking

Where possible our progress is compared to all English single tier and county councils, where available, by quartile and rank. Due to the timescales involved in central government publication these are usually available 6-12 months in arrears.

Influencer Measures

Non-targeted measures are reported to either illustrate the demand on a service or provide context for the demand, e.g. economic activity.

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Item 12:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 March 2021.

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

(a) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside/Finance and Economic Development:**

“Do you share Newbury BID’s vision for the town centre as “a safe and welcoming space for visitors, residents and workers to eat, drink and relax in, enjoying an ambient, atmospheric setting without the noise and safety risks that vehicle access brings”?”

(j) **Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:**

“What will be the carbon footprint impact of cancelled bus services proposed in West Berkshire?”

(l) **Question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:**

“What is the council doing to support Alice Bye Court Extra Care Sheltered Housing to improve its CQC rating for safety and leadership?”

(m) **Question submitted by Councillor Andy Moore to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

“I am aware that the Newbury Business Improvement District (BID) has written to this Council (letter dated 1 Mar 21) seeking assistance on matters such as traffic-free timings and licences for outdoor hospitality as the COVID-19 restrictions are eased this spring. Furthermore, the BID’s request and approach has been broadly supported by Newbury Town Council’s Planning & Highways Committee. What actions will the Council take to respond to these requests and ensure that Newbury Town Centre is given the best chance to recover from the effects of the pandemic?”

(n) **Question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

“How many children in West Berkshire schools will no longer be eligible for Pupil Premium after the Government’s change to the date on which eligibility is calculated now being before the end of furlough scheme, and with the effect that families where the major bread winner is made unemployed and are forced to go onto benefits will not be taken into account?”

(p) **Question submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:**

“How many hospital referrals to West Berkshire located care homes are refused because the appropriate medical care can't be provided?”

Item 12:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 March 2021.

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

(q) **Question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

"In the light of continuing concerns in society regarding the attitude and behaviour of some men towards women does this Council recognise the need to begin the process of attitudinal change through initiatives in our schools?"

(s) **Question submitted by Councillor Phil Barnett to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"How much has West Berkshire Council received in both Section 106 and CIL receipts since 2016 regarding all new approved developments in the Greenham Ward?"

(u) **Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

"Why does the Council still use 'as the crow flies' distances for determining entitlement to free school travel when there is free off-the-shelf software that can calculate journey distance by bus, car, bike or on foot?"

(b) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"How many members of the Executive have visited the site of the proposed sports ground at the rugby club in Monks Lane?"

(k) **Question submitted by Councillors Adrian Abbs/Royce Longton to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:**

"What consideration has been given in the Environment Delivery Plan to investigating the carbon footprint implications of home to school journeys?"

(o) **Question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

"When were secondary school catchment areas last reviewed and what plans does the Council, as LEA, have to review them again?"

(r) **Question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

"What evidence is there that access to the means of travel to school (perhaps through income level and employment status) is linked to educational, health or income inequalities?"

(t) **Question submitted by Councillor Phil Barnett to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:**

"The government are now offering local authorities a chance to tap into a £30m "Changing places toilet fund" - will West Berkshire Council be making a bid?"

Item 12:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 March 2021.

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

(v) **Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance:**

"Why doesn't this Council publish draft minutes of its public meetings in a timely manner, like most local councils do, so the public can see how their elected representatives debated the important matters which they were elected to decide?"

(c) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"What are the estimated running costs of the proposed sports ground in its first three years of operation, and will these costs be met by council tax payers?"

(d) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"If the new sports ground goes ahead, what assurances can you give residents of Monks Lane, Heather Gardens, Sutherlands and other residential roads in the area that their lives will not be made intolerable by the increase in traffic and, particularly, parking?"

(e) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"What impact would the proposed floodlighting in Monks Lane have on nearby properties, ancient woodland and wildlife, and what advice has the council taken on the potential ecological impact on, for example, bats' flight paths?"

(f) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"How is the location of the proposed sports ground, which will inevitably increase car use, consistent with the council's active travel strategy?"

(g) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"Have the proposals for Monks Lane factored in the prospect of future success, and therefore competing at a higher level, for football, rugby or indeed both?"

(h) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"What safeguards have been put in place should circumstances change and, for whatever reason, the rugby club decides it no longer wishes to rent its land in Monks Lane to the council?"

(i) **Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:**

"Has the council considered how it can increase the acreage devoted to community sport in Newbury, rather than concentrate it on one site?"

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