

Notice of Meeting



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Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 26th January, 2021 at 6.30 pm
Virtual meeting

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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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 26
January 2021 (continued)**

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 18 January 2021

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver / James Townsend on (01635) 519486 / 503605

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



**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 26
January 2021 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Jeff Brooks, James Cole, Lee Dillon (Vice-Chairman), Gareth Hurley, Alan Law (Chairman), Thomas Marino, Steve Masters, Gordon Oliver, Garth Simpson and Tony Vickers
- Substitutes:** Councillors Adrian Abbs, Peter Argyle, Jeremy Cottam, Carlyne Culver, Owen Jeffery, David Marsh, Claire Rowles and Andrew Williamson
- Other Officers & Members invited:** Councillor Hilary Cole, Councillor Lynne Doherty, Councillor Ross Mackinnon, Councillor Jo Stewart, Bill Bagnell, Nick Caprara, Nick Carter, Sarah Clarke, Susan Halliwell, Joseph Holmes, Gary Lugg, Gabrielle Mancini

Agenda

Part I	Page No.
1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6 October 2020.	7 - 14
3. Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	15 - 16
4. 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 .	
5. Petitions To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.	
6. Items Called-in following the Executive on 17 December 2020 To consider any items called-in by the requisite number of Members following the previous Executive meeting.	17 - 50
7. Receive Responses of the Council, Executive or Other Committees to Reports of the Commission	



Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 (continued)

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission referred the Task Group Report on the London Road Industrial Estate (EX3976) to the Executive. The Executive's response was provided to the Executive meeting on 15 October 2020. The Executive resolved that the action plan produced in response to the recommendations raised by the Task Group be noted. Copies of the report and minutes of this meeting can be obtained from Strategy and Governance or via the [Council's website](#).

8. **Draft Housing Strategy** 51 - 130
Purpose: To consider the Draft Housing Strategy, which is due to go to Executive for approval on 25 March 2021.

Standing Items

9. **Revenue Financial Performance Report - Quarter 2 of 2020/21** 131 - 148
Purpose: To inform the Commission of the latest revenue financial performance of the Council.
10. **Capital Financial Performance Report - Quarter 2 of 2020/21** 149 - 160
Purpose: To inform the Commission of the latest capital financial performance of the Council.
11. **West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 3 February 2021 to 31 May 2021** 161 - 162
Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council from 3 February 2021 to 31 May 2021 and decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.
12. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme** 163 - 164
Purpose: To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission for the remainder of 2020/21 and for 2021/22.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director Strategy and Commissioning

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



DRAFT

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2020

Councillors Present: Jeff Brooks, James Cole, Lee Dillon (Vice-Chairman), Lynne Doherty, Gareth Hurley, Alan Law (Chairman), Thomas Marino, Steve Masters, Garth Simpson and Tony Vickers

Also Present: Paul Anstey (Head of Public Protection and Culture), Catalin Bogos (Performance Research Consultation Manager), Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance)), Kevin Griffin (Head of Customer Services & ICT) and Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Gordon Oliver (Corporate Policy Support), Phil Rumens (Digital Services Manager) and James Townsend (Policy Officer- Executive Support)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Pete Campbell

PART I

17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Tom Marino declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 by virtue of the fact that he was a member of Tilehurst Parish Council, but reported that, as his interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

19. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

20. Actions from previous Minutes

There were 6 actions followed up from previous Commission meetings:

- (18) Catalin Bogos noted that this would be brought to the OSMC meeting in January 2021
- (20) Completed
- (21) Completed
- (22) Completed
- (23) Councillor Lee Dillon noted that this was in progress
- (24) Councillor Garth Simpson noted that this was in progress

21. ICT / Digital Transformation Task Group Report

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the work undertaken by the task group created to review the Council's Digital Strategy and the Corporate Digitisation Programme.

Councillor Marino noted that it was recommended to:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 6 OCTOBER 2020 - MINUTES

- note the changes made to the Digital Strategy in response to comments made by the Task Group prior to the Strategy being approved;
- approve the proposal for the Task Group to continue to meet on an on-going basis to monitor delivery of the Digital Strategy.

He noted that there were a number of findings in the report, notably:

- References to procuring commercial off-the-shelf software was a key principle;
- Highlighting the need for sufficient funding and resources to be made available in order to deliver the projects identified in the Programme;
- Additional detail on performance indicators, baselines and targets to be used to measure delivery of the strategy and achievement of desired outcomes.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that the success of the strategy was a question of resources. He noted that the strategy was front-loaded in first 18 months so was crucial to get off to a good start.

Kevin Griffin noted that the front-loaded plan was more a reflection of the detailed plans for projects that were ready to go and that after six months the next projects would appear. He noted that outside consultants were also being utilised to supplement the resources available.

Councillor Alan Law stated that he was pleased to see the continued scrutiny of the strategy by the task group. He noted he was disappointed not to see a 5 and 10 year vision of what IT will look like structurally, particularly on cloud and server based functions. He also noted he would have liked to have seen some detail on shared services.

Councillor Brooks noted that the terms of reference centred on looking at the detail of the plan, and that shared services was more of a broad topic with the Council overall. He stated that the group took the approach of looking at how it could be improved rather than starting again.

Councillor Dillon asked about the governance of the task group and how frequently it would meet.

Councillor James Cole noted that the strategy was not too dissimilar from 2017 and he had hoped the phraseology on project management would be a bit stronger. He wanted to see more of a challenge to IT structures in the strategy.

Councillor Brooks noted that there was a lot of challenging and probing in the meetings and if certain elements weren't in the report, it was because they were satisfied they were handled. He suggested that it was difficult to predict the future 10 years ahead.

Councillor Cole noted that he did ask to be included in the task group as he had some strong views on the matter, but he looked forward to seeing how the strategy panned out.

Resolved that the report and recommendations were noted.

22. Shared Services Report

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The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the Council's shared services and to provoke discussions on whether any other Council services should be shared with other authorities. Gordon Oliver noted that the report provided an overview of the shared service agreements that West Berkshire Council currently has with other local authorities. It set out the original rationale and business cases on which the shared services were based and provided an update on how they were currently performing where information was available.

Gordon Oliver noted that the report also provided information on studies that the Council had undertaken, or was currently undertaking, to consider the potential for other services to be shared, focusing on HR, ICT, Legal Services and Planning. Furthermore, he noted that the report considered what shared service agreements other local authorities had put in place, drawing on evidence and case studies produced by the Local Government Association. He stated that further work had been undertaken in relation to a few case studies to look at how these had evolved and if they were still delivering the expected benefits. The report concludes that West Berkshire Council was already party to a large number of existing shared services, and that with a few exceptions, the majority of these arrangements were continuing to perform well. However, there were a number where the original business cases were no longer being achieved, or where improved governance was required to better control expenditure.

He stated that current shared services had been identified in consultation with the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, and other senior managers. A summary of current shared services was provided in Appendix A. This included information on: the services affected; the partner authorities; the start and end date for current agreements; the business case for the shared services; and the most recent annual expenditure. He noted that these shared service agreements had been put in place for a variety of reasons, such as: delivering cost savings; delivering improved customer service; and improving service capabilities, flexibility and resilience.

He noted that the report highlighted some of the key benefits that can be derived from shared service agreements, which were often as much about improving service resilience, flexibility and quality of service, as financial savings. However, it also identified some of the challenges and risks associated with setting up new agreements or maintaining established shared services. Issues with ICT systems were amongst the most commonly cited barriers to setting up new shared services, including the availability and usage of common systems. He also stated that even where there may be a sound business case on paper, the decision to enter into a shared service agreement may also be affected by political considerations. This was particularly notable in respect to Planning. Lastly, he noted that it may be beneficial to have a strategy and a systematic consideration of assessing and deciding on sharing opportunities, potentially as a component of the Corporate Programme due to the transformational nature of such initiatives. Ideally, this should be done independently to avoid internal bias. However, it should be noted that the process of conducting a review of the potential for sharing services was very resource-intensive and could be disruptive to the services involved.

Councillor Dillon noted that he thought it was a great report that summarised all the Council's shared services and asked if this could be sent to all Councillors.

Action: shared services report to be sent to all Councillors.

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Councillor Law agreed with Councillor Dillon's comments. He noted there was a feeling of negativity when shared services were recommended in certain services and perhaps it was a question of culture.

Councillor Vickers stated he thought was a very good summary of the shared services within the Council and that there was perhaps a case for a scrutiny task group. He pointed to the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) and the fact it only included parts of shared services which could lead to service management issues. He pointed to paragraph 5.24 and 'mistakes in establishing the partnership' and highlighted the need for proportionality on governance boards. He noted he was in favour of shared services.

Councillor Cole noted that the shared services for the PPP worked well. He noted the report did not mention specialist expertise in trading standards in the PPP and it failed to mention Brexit. He stated that the report could be updated in many areas in relation to the PPP, which had acted upon recommendations of a previous report. He acknowledged that Building Control had not been as successful and indicated that shared services should be reviewed where they were not working.

Councillor Hurley asked if there was a quantification of the benefits of the shared services compared to West Berkshire running the services themselves.

Joseph Holmes noted that this was difficult to work out for older shared services, but there were value for money statistics that could be looked into to provide a comparison. On the culture against shared services, he noted that it was important to make sure there were the right partners, which at times could prove to be a hindrance in creating a shared service. He also stated that the local government re-organisation agenda would be a hindrance to the shared services sector in the short-term.

Paul Anstey noted that benchmarking for regulatory services was difficult. He felt that a strength of the PPP was the ability to have 'grown-up conversations' about changes rather than sticking to contractual obligations. He also noted that the PPP had agreed methodologies with how to deal with cost recovery and that the PPP had enabled the Council to have expertise that many local authorities did not.

Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that the driving force for shared services must be benefits for the residents of West Berkshire, whether that be improving the service or reducing costs. She highlighted Adopt Thames Valley as an example of delivering genuine benefits.

Councillor Dillon, on the issue of culture around shared services, noted that he would like to see more explanation from IT around the barriers to shared services.

Resolved that the recommendations were noted

23. **2020/21 Performance Report - Quarter One**

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 8) concerning the 2020/21 Performance Q1 and to provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures were being managed effectively. Catalin Bogos also noted that the report sought to: highlight successes and where performance had fallen below the expected level; and present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.

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Catalin Bogos noted that the measures shown in the report, monitoring performance from April to June 2020, had been greatly affected by the restrictions introduced by the government to manage Covid-19, starting with the national lockdown on 23 March 2020. However, prompt response at local level ensured that the strong performance of the Council's services had been maintained. He noted that the majority of performance measures reflecting the core business areas were on track to achieve the targets for the year. As an exception, the following area had been impacted by the Council's conscious measures put in place to support local businesses:

- Non domestic rates collected as percentage of non-domestic rates due

He noted that the Council's strong performance position was further confirmed when performance was compared with other local authorities. The majority of the Council's measures ranked in the first and second quartiles. It was also clear that this already positive relative position will continue to improve in many areas, as performance improves in activities such as the speed with which decisions were made on Housing Benefit Claims and determinations made on planning applications.

He asked for OSMC to note the report, including the following recommendations approved by the Executive:

- To note progress and achievements.
- To review the appropriateness of any remedial actions taken to improve performance, in particular for:
- Non domestic rates collected as percentage of non-domestic rates due

Councillor Brooks pointed to page 69 and 'ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults'. He noted that the Council's RAG rating of 66.7% was a long way off the national level of 84%.

Catalin Bogos noted that the small number of adult social care services, detailed on page 89, was the reason behind the low percentage, but that the services had worked with external consultants to try and improve and that the Care Quality Commission were not conducting their inspection yet. Therefore, the percentage would remain the same until the inspection had been carried out.

Councillor Doherty noted that Councillor Graham Bridgman was keeping a very close eye on these figures.

Councillor Hurley pointed to 'non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due' on page 68. He asked why the percentage was so low.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that this was down to the decision to allow residents to defer payments to later in the year.

Councillor Law pointed to page 66, supporting local employers and the target of retaining the top 10. He noted that this was not the target, but the target was to meet with these employers on a regular basis.

Councillor Dillon pointed to domestic abuse numbers climbing back up. He asked if there was any news on the impact of the Building Communities Together partnership.

Councillor Doherty noted that work was on-going and additional work was being put in place to develop the partnership.

Resolved that the recommendations were approved

24. 2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Report Quarter One

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning the in-year financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets and to note the Quarter One forecast of £590k under spend, which was 0.5% of the Council's 2020/21 net revenue budget of £130m. He stated that there were a number of uncertainties around Covid-19, which would become clearer in Q2.

Councillor Simpson pointed to page 108 and noted that 232 changes not requiring corporate approval in legal and strategic support. He asked why.

Joseph Holmes noted that he would need to look further into the detail and report back to Councillor Simpson.

Action: Joseph Holmes to provide further information to Councillor Simpson on the figures in appendix 2.

Councillor Hurley noted that there was a general underspend across all the Directorates. He asked if that was a saving or poor forecasting.

Joseph Holmes noted that it did tend to fluctuate yearly and Covid-19 had led to a dramatic change, particularly in adult social care where there were low numbers in care. He also noted that extra funding from central Government had offset some costs.

Councillor Mackinnon stated that the People Directorate had the biggest under-spend due to adult social care.

Joseph Holmes stated that whilst an under-spend would not be expected given Covid-19, funding from central Government had helped dramatically.

Councillor Law noted that usually adult social care has seen an over-spend in previous years.

Resolved that the report and recommendations were noted

25. 2020/21 Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter One

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the financial performance report provided to Members on a quarterly basis. The report outlined the under or over-spends against the Council's approved capital budget. The report presented the Quarter One financial position.

Joseph Holmes asked Members to note:

- The forecast financial position as at Quarter One.
- £124k of additional external funding from the Phase One of the Emergency Active Travel Fund had been received by the Council. Under delegated authority, the S151 Officer and Portfolio Holder agreed allocation of the funding to the Transport and Countryside programme in 2020/21.

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- A further application was to be submitted (August 2020) for Phase Two Emergency Active Travel funding, with an indicative sum of £495k.

Councillor Simpson pointed to paragraph 5.1 of the report. He noted that he was concerned about a future risk on costs due to contractor's failures.

Joseph Holmes noted that the main concern was around Highwood Copse, but he had not seen anything further that suggested he would not be able to deliver the capital programme.

Councillor Tony Vickers highlighted the transport underspend in 4.3, and asked which S106 agreement this related to.

Action: Joseph Holmes to investigate and confirm the scheme and S106 agreement.

Councillor Hurley pointed to paragraph 5.7 and asked whether inflation costs had been considered in project costs estimations, especially given the likelihood of delays.

Joseph Holmes noted that each project when it started had contingency plans within it, including inflation costs.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

26. **West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 6 October 2020 to 31 January 2021**

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 11) for the period covering 6 October to 31 January 2021.

Councillor Dillon noted that the OSMC work programme was missing from the agenda and indicated that this should be a standing item.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 18:30 and closed at 19:54)

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Actions arising from last OSMC Meeting

The OSMC is requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/ Update
18	14/01/2020	Corporate Programme and New Ways of Working - Progress with the NWoW reviews would be discussed with Heads of Service at appropriate stages in the process.	Catalin Bogos	Report on NWoW is on the agenda for the OSMC special meeting on 09 February 2021.
25	06/10/2020	ICT Digital Transformation Task Group Report - Confirm with the Chairman how often the task group will meet and how they will report back to OSMC	Cllr Tom Marino	
26	06/10/2020	Shared Services Report - Send copy of report to all members	Gordon Oliver	Complete - sent 07 October 2020
27	06/10/2020	2020/21 Performance Report Q1- Send Cllr Hurley details of the top 10 employers in West Berkshire	Gordon Oliver	Complete - sent 26 October 2020. Details of individual employers are not available, so information on the top 10 industries was provided as a proxy.
28	06/10/2020	2020/21 Performance Report Q1- Review target relating to major employers. Suggest changing target to meet with each top 10 employer at least annually / 6 monthly	Catalin Bogos	An alternative measure is being considered by the Development and Planning service. The new measure is expected to be reported in the Q3 performance report.
29	06/10/2020	2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Report Q1 - Provide Cllr Simpson with details of changes not requiring financial approval shown in Appendix B	Joseph Holmes	Complete - sent 26 October 2020 Funding moved from reserves to the Legal and Strategic Support services to fund New Ways of Working posts and funding from EU Exit grant received in the previous financial year.
30	06/10/2020	2020/21 Capital Financial Performance Report Q1 - Provide Cllr Tony Vickers with details of which S106 contribution was responsible for the £3.1 million underspend identified in paragraph 4.2(b)	Joseph Holmes	Complete - sent 26 October 2020 This is in respect of the North Newbury development and the s106 total of £1.5m

Last updated: 14 January 2021

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Agenda Item 6.

Title of Report:	Item Called-in following an Executive Decision
	London Road Development Options
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 January 2021
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3978

Purpose of Report: To detail the objectives of development on the London Road Industrial Estate and request funding to help achieve these objectives through successful development of the site.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission reviews the decision.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Alan Law – Tel (01491) 873614
E-mail Address:	alan.law@westberks.gov.uk

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon – Tel (0118) 9833567
E-mail Address:	ross.mackinnon1@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Gordon Oliver
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Supporting Information

1. Executive Decision

- 1.1 The London Road Development Options report was presented for consideration by the Executive on 17 December 2021. The report recommended that the Executive resolve to approve as follows:
- (a) a phased approach option to the development of the site within an overall vision for the development as a whole;
 - (b) the objectives of the development as per paragraph 5.14;
 - (c) commissioning a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help better align development proposals with Planning Policy, to set out estate wide design criteria and infrastructure requirements and for the cost of this work to be found out of annual funding requested in this report;
 - (d) a one-off budget of £45,000 to provide funding for feasibility services in the 2020- 21 financial year including, as appropriate, negotiations with estate stakeholders with commercial interests;
 - (e) the renaming of the London Road Industrial Estate working in consultation with the public.
- 1.2 The report also asked Executive to resolve to recommend, for inclusion on the budget papers, a revenue budget of £100,000 per annum over the next three years to provide for consultancy support during the project development where the Council does not have internal resources to provide the specific project resources.
- 1.3 Executive resolved to approve the above recommendations.

2. Call-In of the Decision

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution five Elected Members (Councillors Lee Dillon, Alan Macro, Jeff Brooks, Tony Vickers and Erik Pattendon) called in the Executive Decision (EX3978) on the basis of:
- (1) Significant concern regarding the Council's project management expertise and capacity to undertake this development;
 - (2) A lack of confidence in the management structure of the development which fails to place a "*Chinese wall*" between the Council as landowner and its planning authority;
 - (3) The question of whether a phased approach is the most appropriate rather than waiting for a full environmental assessment of the whole site to be undertaken;
 - (4) A lack of clarity of the market for both office space and flats as the longer-term ramifications of the pandemic are not yet understood.

- 2.2 The Members of the Council who submitted the call-in request proposed that the following alternative course of action should be followed:
- That a decision on the options should be paused until an environmental assessment of the entire site has been carried out, the fall-out of the pandemic is more fully understood, and the appropriate project management structure and expertise is in place.

- 2.3 This decision is not considered to be contrary to the policy framework, neither is it considered to be contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

3. Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

- 3.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny and Management Commission is to review the Executive's decision.
- 3.2 The Commission will produce a report with its findings to the next meeting of the Executive (i.e. the meeting following the call-in request) unless there are exceptional circumstances why this cannot be achieved. In these circumstances the Chairman of the Commission and the Leader of the Council will agree a revised timetable.
- 3.3 The report will either confirm that it concurs with the original decision or propose amendments to it in any way it thinks fit and shall give reasons for its final decision. If the Commission upholds the Executive decision, that decision shall take immediate effect.
- 3.4 It should be noted that any matter which has been the subject of a call-in request may not be the subject of a further call-in request

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission review the Executive's decision (EX3978) of 17 December 2020 concerning London Road Development Options, in accordance with the call-in request dated 21 December 2020.
- 4.2 Having reviewed the Executive decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission should either:
- (a) Confirm that it concurs with the Executive decision (in which case it will be implemented with immediate effect); or
 - (b) Propose amendments and refer the matter back to the Executive for further consideration

Appendix A: London Road Development Options Report.

Appendix B: Draft Minutes from the Executive Meeting on 17 December 2020

Appendix C: Written Responses from the Executive Portfolio Holders for Finance and Economic Development, and Planning and Housing

London Road Development options

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	17 th December 2020
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	8 th December 2020
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources)
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3978

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report details the objectives of development on the London Road Industrial Estate and requests funding to help achieve these objectives through successful development of the site. The project remains a priority as part of the Council Strategy, and this report seeks to provide a way forward to enable development on the site, in a phased approach, following consideration of the Development Brief, and the consultation on this, as well as the Council's objectives for the site as a whole.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive resolves to approve as follows:
- a. a phased approach option to the development of the site within an overall vision for the development as a whole.
 - b. the objectives of the development as per paragraph 5.14.
 - c. commissioning a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help better align development proposals with Planning Policy, to set out estate wide design criteria and infrastructure requirements and for the cost of this work to be found out of annual funding requested in this report.
 - d. a one-off budget of £45,000 to provide funding for feasibility services in the 2020-21 financial year including, as appropriate, negotiations with estate stakeholders with commercial interests.
 - e. the renaming of the London Road Industrial Estate working in consultation with the public.
- 2.2 That the Executive recommends, for inclusion on the budget papers, a revenue budget of £100,000 per annum over the next three years to provide for consultancy support

during the project development where the Council does not have internal resources to provide the specific project resources.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>Revenue budget requests are included within the recommendations; there is current no on-going revenue budget associated with this project other than staffing costs.</p> <p>The request of £100,000 per annum over the next three years is to progress the scheme through to a planning application. Some of these costs may be able to be capitalised as part of any future development, but as the project is at an early stage, these works will begin as revenue.</p> <p>The site currently has a value worth £7.7m (as at 31.3.20) with an annual income from the site of £0.4m p.a. (2020-21 budget). Any future development will need to consider this as part of the development and the Council’s wider financial position.</p> <p>Any capital budget requests will be considered in the capital strategy, and will come back to the Executive (and Council if applicable) once the development route is clearer.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>None directly</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>None directly – this scheme has been subject to a legal challenge in the past, and this paper sets out mitigate risks, where possible, to enable effective development of the site.</p> <p>Depending on how the land is assembled for the objectives including regeneration as set out in the report, the Council will have regard to its obligations under Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 which relates to best price achievable in the open market.</p> <p>In relation to the delivery mechanism for achieving the objectives the Council will have regard to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 if procuring a joint venture vehicle for the delivery of the objectives.</p>

Risk Management:	<p>There are substantial risks with developing any site of this size. In light of previous work on this site, risks have been mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting an overarching budget for external support from a multi-disciplinary team • Moving to a phased approach, making each development a smaller scale piece of work • That a phased approach will allow for a greater level of flexibility on each of the development options • That a phased approach will maximise financial control and the potential for a completed plot to subsidise a follow on plot • That a phased approach allows potentially individual development agreements per plot based on known market conditions at the time, fully surveyed and known site constraints of each plot and reflecting opportunities for built-in risk & reward at a higher or lower level of commitment per development agreement. This approach generally has greater control than one over-arching development agreement across the whole estate. 			
Property:	<p>There are significant property implications. This site is key site left within the Council's property portfolio of assets that are not for direct service provision. The Property Services team will be involved in the project group and the council will also use external advisors where appropriate to support the development of the site.</p>			
Policy:	<p>Supports the delivery of the Council Strategy priority to develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support the local economy</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

London Road Development options

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		The overall development should have a positive environmental impact through redevelopment and better active transport routes. As schemes are developed, this will be more clearly identified.
Health Impact:		X		As schemes are developed, this will be more clearly identified.
ICT Impact:				None identified
Digital Services Impact:				None identified
Council Strategy Priorities:				Supports the delivery of the Council Strategy priority to develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support the local economy, as well as the Economic Development Strategy.
Core Business:				No implication other than resource to support the development.
Data Impact:				None identified
Consultation and Engagement:	Property Services and Legal Services			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The development of the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) has been discussed and progressed over a long period of time. The site is an important element of the Council's overall asset base and presents a number of opportunities to benefit the local area, as well as enhance the overall economic activity of the vicinity and the wider district.
- 4.2 The site at present has a wide range of businesses on the site, but the land use density is low and there are some vacant and underused sites included in the area. The Council's Development Brief for the area, approved at the November Executive, sets out that the LRIE is viable for development and presents two options for development; a comprehensive approach or a phased approach.
- 4.3 This report sets out a range of recommendations to enable the progression of the LRIE development on a phased approach. There are others that have been considered, but have been rejected as articulated later in the report. This report does also recommend a substantial sum to be set aside for this scheme; this is mainly to provide the Council with further planning and advisory services to help enable development and to mitigate some development risk where the Council does not have the skills and expertise in-house.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

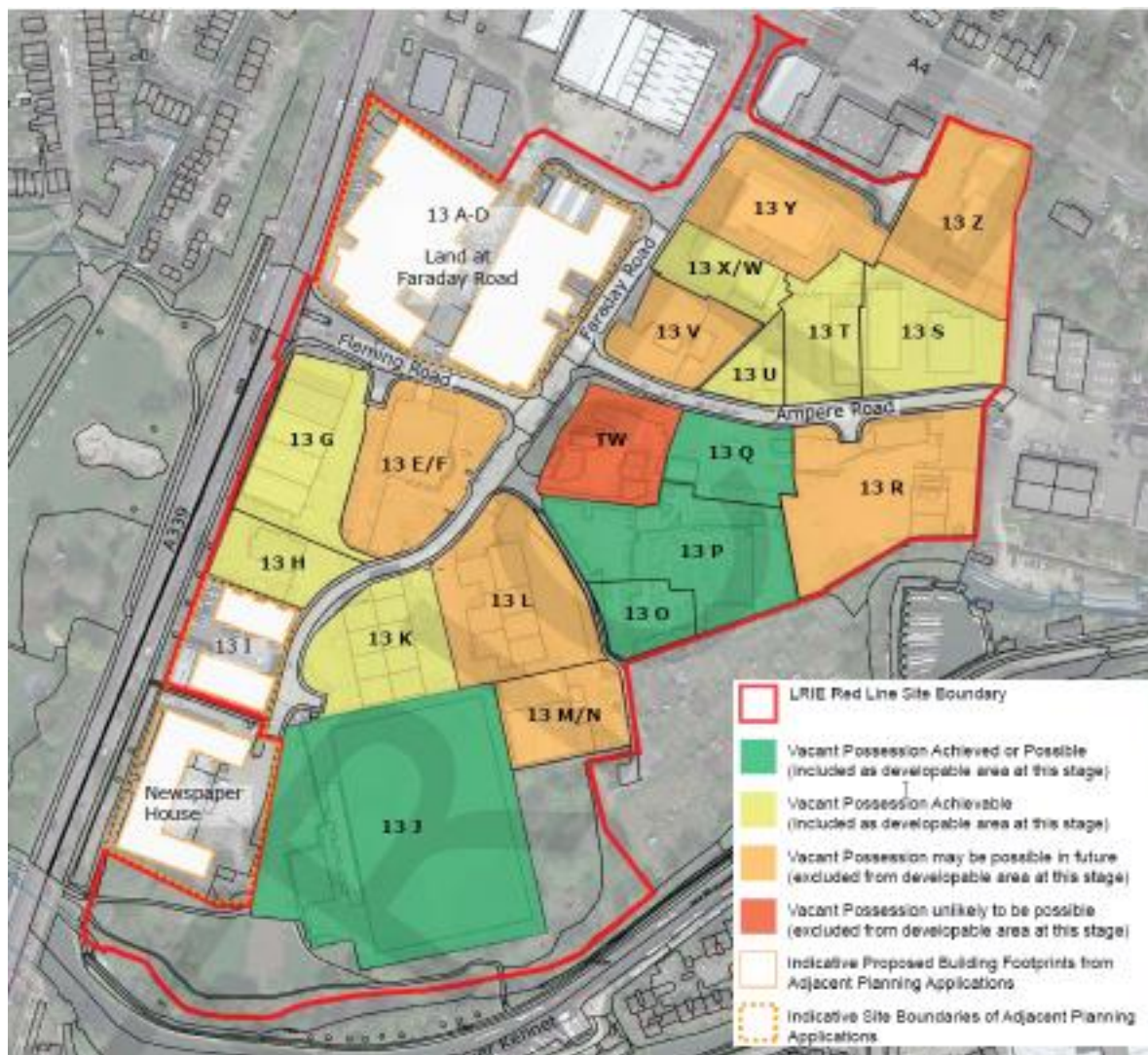
- 5.1 The Council has had a long standing ambition to see the redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE). The Development Brief, approved in November 2020 by the Executive, provides an opportunity to see development on the LRIE site.
- 5.2 To support the development of the site, the Executive are requested to approve an overarching vision for the development of LRIE that will provide an overarching focus over the coming months and years to progress the site.

The delivery of a mixed-use site that delivers economic growth, an improved local environment within which to work, travel and live, and provides effective links to the town centre

Background

- 5.3 The 11 hectare site within the Council's freehold ownership referred to as the London Road Industrial Estate consists of a variety of units with leasehold ownerships varying from 25 years to 90 years. The exception is Thames Water who hold their plot freehold. West Berkshire Council (WBC) is the See plan below – Thames Water site in red marked 'TW'.
- 5.4 The Council has had a long standing ambition to develop the site and this also included in the Council Strategy 2019-23 within the priority "develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support the local economy". There was also a recent task-force, a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, review and report that was responded to by the Executive in September 2020. Learning from this report has been included within the proposals incorporated in this paper.

Map 1.1: London Road & lease situation



5.5 The Council wishes to see economic regeneration and growth as part of this development. As highlighted in the vision, the Council is committed in the Council Strategy, and through its Economic Development Strategy, to enhance the economic activity across the district and to secure jobs within the local area.

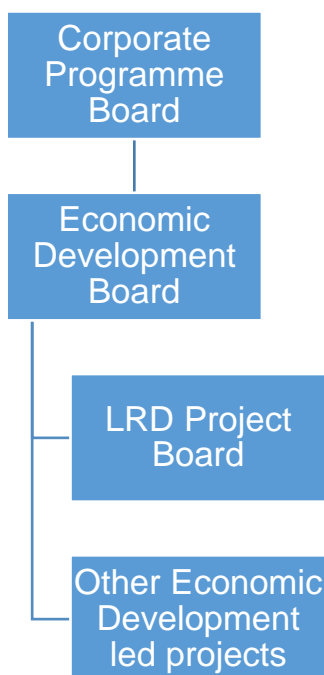
5.6 The Council receives annual ground of £0.4m per annum representing a yield of over 5% against Council freehold assets worth a total of £7.7M (as at 31.3.20). Given the reductions to Council funding in recent years, where councils receive nothing from the revenue support grant from the Government, the Council does need to consider its wider financial position as part of this redevelopment, both from an income point of view and from business activity, the development of jobs, and share of business rates retention generated on the estate.

London Road Development options

- 5.7 The Council recently (September to October 2020) consulted on a development brief prepared by Avison Young (AY) on future options for the development of the site. At its meeting in November 2020 the Executive approved the final Development Brief. The Development Brief highlighted two main options for development; a comprehensive approach to the whole site vs a plot by plot or 'phased' approach. On review of the Development Brief, the wider market conditions, and previous experience of the site, it is proposed to deliver development on the site on a phased approach basis. This is also driven by the Council risk appetite on development on this site; it is important to see progress to support the local economy and to enhance the Council's reputation for delivering development on this site. In light of Covid-19 and the business uncertainty from the pandemic, a phased approach is more appropriate to mitigate risk of non-delivery and of further market changes requiring a changed approach.
- 5.8 The Development Brief, and comments to the consultation on it, highlight the need for an overarching plan for the site. In order to achieve this, and recognising the resource constraints on the Council, as well as wide range of skills required, it is proposed to request funding for a multi-disciplinary team to support the internal project team to provide advice on a variety of areas, including:
- Site master-planning including a Supplementary Planning Document
 - Site and financial appraisals for the individual plots
 - Community engagement and support
 - Market advice and testing
 - External legal support on possible partnering agreements
 - Planning consultancy
 - Environmental advice
 - Procurement development options
- 5.9 Estimates for this work are expected to total £100,000 per annum over a three year period; a long enough time to commence planning action on the LRIE based on an overall masterplan for the estate and provide a framework for all phases of development.

Governance

- 5.10 The project has been assessed as a tier 1 project using the Council's project sizing toolkit. This involves regular project reporting to various internal boards, see below



5.11 The LRD (London Road Development) Project Board meets regularly and includes the Portfolio holder with responsibility for economic development as well as another Executive member and leader of the Liberal Democrat Opposition, and also includes officers from across Council departments.

5.12 The LRD Board then feeds into the Economic Development Board with project highlight and exception reports where required. Overall progress on the project is monitored through the Corporate Programme Board that oversees all Council project activity. This provides a substantial amount of member oversight through the process of considering and implementing development options. Reports will also come through to the Executive where required in line with the Council’s constitutional requirements.

5.13 There is also a dedicated lead project officer for this scheme as well as a project sponsor (Executive Director – Resources) and member lead (Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economic Development).

Proposals – Objectives of the development

5.14 Reflecting upon the Development Brief and members’ aspiration for the site, the following key objectives for the development of the site have been provided below.

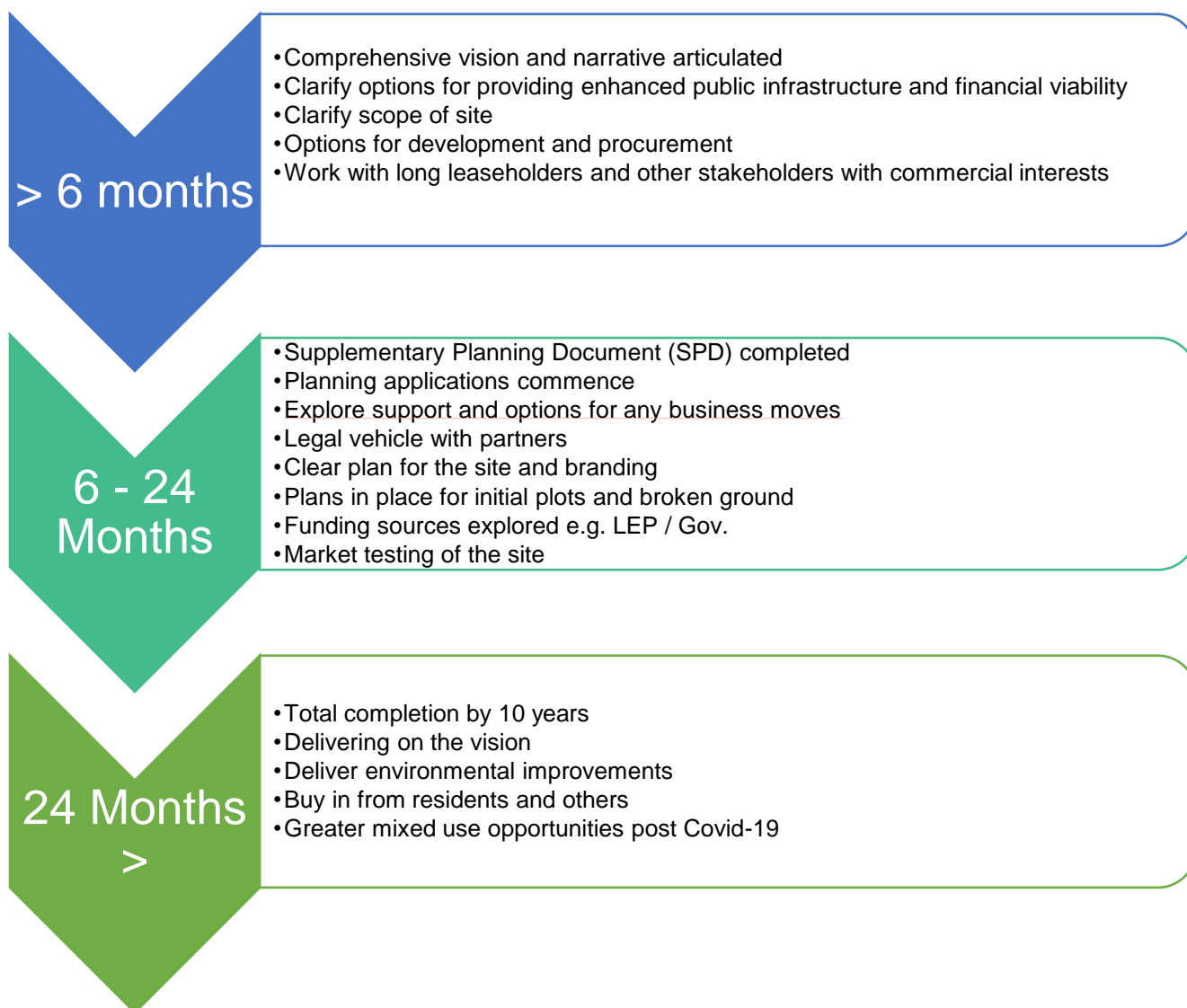
- To deliver a mixed-use development; recognising that this is economic development led, where high quality regeneration is of equal importance to financial returns and that a mixed use should include housing. This will ensure a more vibrant development and enhance the economic opportunities of the site
 - Enhanced infrastructure on the site that successfully connects with Newbury Town Centre and other entrances to the site
 - Acts as a gateway from the A339

London Road Development options

- To enhance the economic activity that takes place on the site; this can be measured through a variety of means as the Council cannot, nor would want to, dictate the exact nature of business on the site. These measures will include:
 - maximise the amount of business square footage on employment land within development proposals.
 - Increase in the number of jobs generated on the site
- To protect the value of the Council's financial position, which may mean by investing Council funds into the site, including:
 - Continue to receive income from the site via rental income and business rates (and any potential replacement to this property tax) as a preferred approach.
 - To retain some long term asset interest / or receive an appropriate capital receipt for some or all of the site to achieve other highlighted objectives where they outweigh a long term income stream.
 - Improving general infrastructure to ensure sustainable growth on the estate.

Proposals – Next Steps

5.15 There are a range of aspirations for the site, and the recent consultation on the development brief highlighted a broad spectrum of wishes for the site. To help achieve a development of the site that meets the vision and objectives included in this paper, there are a variety of steps that are proposed to be taken forward over a range of time periods. These may flex in their timescales due to outside factors, and the nature of a complex development site, but are highlighted to provide a broad overarching view of the future phases.



6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The Council can continue with a ‘do nothing’ option of leaving the site as it is and managing leasehold arrangements as they come towards expiry. This has been discounted as it does not support the Council Strategy objectives and the infrastructure on the site will continue to deteriorate.
- 6.2 Redevelopment could be delivered by a ‘comprehensive approach’ as set out in this report. The comprehensive approach requires the Council to acquire all interests on the estate to create one large redevelopment site. This would require an enormous upfront financial outlay, either via borrowings or in partnership, and where the potential enhanced financial rewards are marginal compared to a phased redevelopment. Similarly the comprehensive approach is not only more challenging to deliver but where the risks to the Council are greatly increased. For these reasons the comprehensive approach to redevelopment has been discounted.

London Road Development options

- 6.3 The Council has the option to put the site on the market and seek a sale and capital receipt. This has been discounted at present as it would be unlikely to achieve the Council Strategy objectives, and the current market would is very uncertain for potential investors in the site.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 For the Executive to consider the report and the recommendations included in order to progress the development of a key site that is part of the delivery of the Council Strategy.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 None

Background Papers:

September 2020 Executive report

November 2020 Executive report

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

Document Control

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

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

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DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2020

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

Also Present: John Ashworth (Executive Director - Place), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Paul Coe (Service Director, Adult Social Care), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources) and Shiraz Sheikh (Legal Services Manager), Councillor Adrian Abbs (Shadow Portfolio Holder: Environment, Climate Change and Public Protection), Councillor Jeff Brooks (Shadow Portfolio Holder: Finance and HR), Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Carlyne Culver (Leader of the Minority Group: Environment, Countryside, Planning and Local Economy), Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Rick Jones, Councillor Steve Masters (Climate Change, Transport, Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing), Councillor Erik Pattenden (Shadow Portfolio Holder: Education, Young People and Culture), Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Martha Vickers and Councillor Tony Vickers (Shadow Portfolio Holder: Highways and Transport)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Tess Ethelston and Andy Sharp

Councillor(s) Absent:

PART I

55. Minutes

Councillor Lynne Doherty opened the meeting. She highlighted that this would be the last Executive meeting that John Ashworth, the Executive Director for Place, would attend before his retirement at the end of the calendar year. Councillor Doherty took the opportunity to formally thank John for his years of service to West Berkshire Council. His calm and considered approach was highly valued and he would be much missed.

Councillor Jeff Brooks gave his support to those comments and added best wishes for John for the future.

Councillor Doherty also took the opportunity to wish attendees a Merry Christmas and a safe festive season.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

56. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

57. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- (a) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of the cleanliness of streams would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.

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- (b) The question submitted by Mr Graham Storey on the subject of the conversion of some of West Berkshire's unsold 'affordable houses for sale' to 'homes for social rent' was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (c) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee on the subject of surface water run off at the A339 junction was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (d) The question submitted by Mr William Wood on the subject of the broadcasting of public meetings was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (e) The question submitted by Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of making the current football ground available for the next three years for men's, youth and ladies organised football was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (f) The question submitted by Mr Paul Morgan on the subject of a breakdown of all anticipated costs associated with the replacement football ground was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (g) The question submitted by Mrs Karen Swaffield on the subject of removal of comments from the YouTube video of the Council meeting on 3 December was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (h) The question submitted by Mr Lee McDougall on the subject of what legal advice the Council acted on to change the football pitch at Faraday Road to a recreational open space was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (i) The question submitted by Mr Lee McDougall on the subject of what the legal advice was to change the football pitch at Faraday Road to a recreational open space was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (j) The question submitted by Mr Darren King on the subject of whether the Council meeting on 3 December 2020 would encourage members of the public from diverse backgrounds to get involved in local politics was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (k) The question submitted by Mr Jason Braidwood on the subject of the forecasted public use of the proposed recreational space at Faraday Road was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (l) The question submitted by Mr Jason Braidwood on the subject of the source of the supporting data to reach the public use forecasts for the Faraday Road recreational space was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (m) The question submitted by Mr John Stewart on the subject of a contingency plan for the replacement football ground in Newbury would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

58. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

59. London Road Development Options (EX3978)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the objectives of development on the London Road Industrial Estate and requested funding to help achieve the objectives through successful development of the site. The project remained a priority as part of the Council Strategy and the report sought to provide a way forward to enable development on the site, in a phased approach, following consideration of the Development Brief, and the consultation on this, as well as the Council's objectives for the site as a whole.

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Councillor Ross Mackinnon in introducing the report stated that whilst there would be a holistic overall vision for the regenerated estate the Council was proposing a phased approach to development of the site on a plot by client basis rather than a comprehensive approach which would mean that the use of compulsory purchase orders would be far less likely and there would be a lower risk to the Council.

Paragraph 5.14 stated that the development of the site was economic development led, where high quality regenerations was of equal importance to financial returns and that a mixed use should include housing. Two budgetary recommendations had also been included – an in-year one-off budget of £45k to provide funding for feasibility studies and negotiations with the stakeholders and then over the next three years a revenue budget of £100k to provide for consultancy support during the project development where the Council did not have the internal resources available. Councillor Mackinnon pointed out that the Council had not ruled out the option of a Local Development Order either.

Councillor Howard Woollaston seconded the report and stated that the London Road Industrial Estate was the prime regeneration site for Newbury. The report quite rightly proposed a phased developed over the next ten years to allow the Council to pick the most appropriate joint venture partners to be selected for the different elements of this 25 acre site. The main driver was going to be economic development on this site which was already designated for employment purposes. This was likely to be facilitated by residential development which would include significant affordable housing on the southern end of the site. The revenue derived from this would act as a catalyst for the infrastructure works which would allow for commercial development on the larger northern end of the site to enable employment opportunities for local residents. The Council would work in partnership with existing occupiers of the site to relocate them over the medium term.

Councillor Jeff Brooks expressed his concerns about the project management element. It was noted that the Task Group had looked at the previous development proposal for the site and project management was found to be wanting. He noted in paragraph 5.13 that there would be a dedicated lead Project Officer but in his opinion this would just be a glorified Quantity Surveyor who would check what was being spent and what was slipping. That would not actually manage the project. The Executive Director (Resources) was the project sponsor which would not be a dedicated role and also a Member lead which could also not be a dedicated role. He therefore had severe concerns about the robustness of the Council's project management capability and he asked for some reassurance and confidence that the Lead Officer would be capable of undertaking the role. Councillor Mackinnon responded that he had full confidence in the Lead Officer who would be responsible for the day to day management of the project.

Councillor Tony Vickers stated that the Liberal Democrats were very concerned about the lack of clarity over the relationship between the planning side of taking this project forward and the landowner's responsibility. He noted that the production of a supplementary planning document would take place in the next 6 to 24 months and he asked if further clarity could be provided about the necessary division of responsibility as it was about time that there was some clear planning policy around this. Councillor Ross Mackinnon confirmed that his portfolio would oversee the project from a landowner's point of view. The report stated that the Council would be preparing the supplementary planning document over the coming months but Councillor Vickers was asking for things that had not yet happened. Councillor Hilary Cole referred to the Local Plan review and in particular paragraph 7.6 of SP20 which stated that the London Road Industrial Estate was an edge of centre designated employment area which had scope for comprehensive regeneration within the plan period to maximise the potential of the site and office development might be appropriate in that context. There was additional supporting text in

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DC31 Designated Employment Areas (paragraph 12.7) which stated that in addition the London Road Industrial Estate had scope for comprehensive regeneration within the plan period to maximise the potential of the site. Some mixed use development might be appropriate in the context, such that no net loss of employment floorspace resulted from that development. As a Member on the Planning Advisory Group, Councillor Vickers should be fully aware that the Council had to operate as a local planning authority and as a landowner and those divisions were quite clear and definite. The Local Plan review was out for consultation and once the responses to the consultation had been analysed the consultation document would be taken to the Planning Advisory Group to formulate those policies. Councillor Vickers stated that the Project Manager was line managed by the Economic Development Officer who reported to the Head of Planning and Development which in itself seemed to imply that there was a problem. Councillor Ross Mackinnon reiterated that the line management arrangements were what they were but he had full confidence that the Officers would be able to handle those duties responsibly.

Councillor Erik Pattenden noted that Councillor Mackinnon spent a great deal of time answering questions in relation to the fate of the football provision in London Road and he wondered if it was felt that the report could have potentially done more to pacify those concerns and address the needs of the people asking these questions on a regular basis. Councillor Mackinnon responded that he was always happy to answer questions from members of the public. An announcement would be made very shortly in relation to the reprovision of a football facility and therefore the development of the industrial estate and the provision of football in the district would then follow separate paths.

Councillor Adrian Abbs raised concerns about the impact of Covid and the uncertainty as to what the future would hold. Councillor Mackinnon had said that the Council were already committed to spending a further £345k on this project but Councillor Abbs felt that the Council should be thinking of taking a pause to re-evaluate the situation. If the London Road Industrial Estate was a valuable asset to the Council now then it would continue to be a valuable asset. When the Council started on this project it would disrupt the businesses that were currently on the site and the football provision had already been disrupted. He queried where the community value of this development would be. Councillor Mackinnon did not accept that this was a headlong charge as he had just mentioned that there would be a three year budget during which time decisions would need to be made in relation to the precise mix of office accommodation and housing.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Executive resolved to approve the following:

- (a) a phased approach option to the development of the site within an overall vision for the development as a whole.
- (b) the objectives of the development as per paragraph 5.14.
- (c) commissioning a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help better align development proposals with Planning Policy, to set out estate wide design criteria and infrastructure requirements and for the cost of this work to be found out of annual funding requested in this report.
- (d) a one-off budget of £45,000 to provide funding for feasibility services in the 2020-21 financial year including, as appropriate, negotiations with estate stakeholders with commercial interests.
- (e) the renaming of the London Road Industrial Estate working in consultation with the public.

2. That the Executive recommended, for inclusion on the budget papers, a revenue budget of £100,000 per annum over the next three years to provide for consultancy

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support during the project development where the Council did not have internal resources to provide the specific project resources.

Other options considered:

- (1) The Council could continue with a 'do nothing' option of leaving the site as it was and managing leasehold arrangements as they came towards expiry. This had been discounted as it did not support the Council Strategy objectives and the infrastructure on the site would continue to deteriorate.
- (2) Redevelopment could be delivered by a 'comprehensive approach' as set out in the report. The comprehensive approach required the Council to acquire all interests on the estate to create one large redevelopment site. This would require an enormous upfront financial outlay, either via borrowings or in partnership, and where the potential enhanced financial rewards were marginal compared to a phased redevelopment. Similarly the comprehensive approach was not only more challenging to deliver but where the risks to the Council were greatly increased. For these reasons the comprehensive approach to redevelopment had been discounted.
- (3) The Council had the option to put the site on the market and seek a sale and capital receipt. This had been discounted at present as it would be unlikely to achieve the Council Strategy objectives, and the current market was very uncertain for potential investors in the site.

60. Approval to adopt a revised Housing Allocations Policy (EX3902)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the adoption and implementation of the Housing Allocations Policy.

Councillor Hilary Cole presented the report. She explained that the revised Policy provided the framework that would be used to make decisions on the allocation of social and affordable homes in West Berkshire.

Allocations would be based on a more easily understood banding system than the previous points based system.

The Policy outlined both the nationally set eligibility rules for the Common Housing Register and the rules that could be set at a local level. For example, the Common Housing Register would be closed to non-West Berkshire residents.

The Policy explained the bidding process for available homes and the process for assessing applications against housing need. Reasons were provided to explain why an application would be deferred or refused. Applicants were able to request a review of such a decision.

Councillor Cole was pleased to report that additional priority would be given to key workers and to members of the Armed Forces.

She thanked officers for their thorough work in reviewing the Policy and proposed its adoption. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter.

Councillor Carolyne Culver understood from data provided in November 2020 that there were 861 people who qualified for social housing at that time. She queried how many people would qualify for each category of the new banding system.

Councillor Cole explained that there were currently 816 people on the Common Housing Register who would qualify under the new Policy. She was however unable to confirm numbers on a band by band basis. She agreed to provide this in writing.

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Councillor Culver then queried how the banding threshold figures of £44k and £60k were arrived at. Councillor Cole believed that these figures had been identified following research undertaken by officers. She would ask officers to confirm on this point.

Councillor Tony Vickers added his thanks to officers for their work. The revised Policy contained many positive improvements. Difficulties with the housing market continued with insufficient social housing to meet demand, but he noted that officers were doing all they could in that respect.

Councillor Tony Vickers queried when the new software would be installed to enable the revised Policy to be fully implemented. Councillor Cole gave her expectation that this would be early in the new year. The new software was in the process of being fully tested prior to installation.

Councillor Steve Masters added his awareness of all the hard work undertaken by officers on the Policy, in particular the provision for rough sleepers. He asked for his thanks to be passed on. Councillor Cole agreed to do so.

Councillor Masters then turned to the reference made in the Policy to approaching the private sector on the need to increase the social housing stock. He queried whether the Council would consider providing its own housing stock in some form, rather than a reliance on the private sector. Councillor Masters felt that the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) was a potential site on which to do so.

In response, Councillor Cole stated that the Council had no standard housing stock. However, the Council continued to look at ways to improve social housing provision. Social and affordable housing would be considered on Council land as sites came forward. This could therefore be a consideration on the LRIE if housing was to be developed on the site.

Councillor Masters then asked if a commitment would be made to undertake an analysis of the cost benefits of social and affordable housing delivery in-house, in comparison to the private sector.

Councillor Cole pointed out that the Council and Sovereign Housing Association had established the Joint Venture which had provided two small affordable housing schemes which would hopefully be expanded. The possibility of forming a housing company was another consideration. The Council would continue to explore all appropriate avenues.

RESOLVED that the revised Housing Allocations Policy, as set out at Appendix A, be adopted and fully implemented when the Housing Department's ICT allocations system was deployed.

Other options considered:

The option not to review and develop a revised Housing Allocations Policy was dismissed due to changes in legislation and associated statutory guidance and the requirement to ensure that our policies reflect these.

61. Response to the Local Electricity Bill Motions (EX3966)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) which addressed two motions submitted to Council seeking support of the Local Electricity Bill. The first motion was submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs at the 3 March 2020 Full Council meeting and the second was from Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter submitted at the 10 September 2020 Full Council meeting. The report sought to address these motions and to make recommendations as to whether they should be implemented.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter confirmed that the Environment Advisory Group had been very supportive of the motions as were at least two of Berkshire's three MP's. The

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report had gone into a little bit more detail and had highlighted some ways in which the drafting of the Bill could be improved. For example by encouraging and showing greater direction towards explicit green energy rather than just local energy and the recommendation broadly was to recommend to all our three MP's that this Council was supportive of this sensible change in law and it looked forward to it progressing through Parliament in the early part of the following year. The support was contingent on the resolution of the issues identified in the APSE Energy report which had been attached as Appendix B to the report.

Councillor Richard Somner confirmed that he was happy to support the proposal and there was clearly cross party support on this as it has been raised by two different parties.

Councillor Tony Vickers stated that some small companies were trying to get into this field by what could be achieved by the Bill. They would be suppliers of renewable energy and he felt that the Council was making it conditional on there being explicit mention of renewable energy. It would be a shame if the Bill fell just because of that as he felt that the majority of the companies that would be formed would be promoting renewable energy. Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter agreed that it was a good point but the purpose of the Bill was to empower organisations and definitely smaller companies to supply renewable generated electricity for local users at a competitive price.

Councillor Adrian Abbs expressed his disappointment that it had taken so long to get a response to these motions particularly when there had been cross party agreement.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Council supported the Local Electricity Bill that this support was contingent on the resolution of the issues identified in the APSE Energy report attached as Appendix B;
- (2) The issues identified within the existing draft of the Bill would be brought to the attention of the local MP's so that they could potentially be addressed as the Bill progressed through Parliament.

Other options considered:

The Motions could be rejected but this would be at significant odds with the Council's Climate Energy Declaration, the associated target of achieving carbon neutrality for both the Council and the district by 2030, the Council's 'maintain a green district' priority for improvement and the recently adopted Environment Strategy which specifically targeted the increased adoption of energy from renewable sources.

62. Safer Schools Motion (EX3964)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning the response to the Motion proposing a range of safety and environmental improvements outside schools which was presented to Council by Councillor Erik Pattenden in March 2020.

Councillor Richard Somner confirmed that this report had taken some time and considerable resource to complete due to the complexity of the issues raised. This was the reason for commissioning an independent report from WSP. This report had been discussed at the Transport Advisory Group in October.

Councillor Somner felt that the report was both factual and honest. It identified the work already undertaken by the Council and work that it continued to do. It also gave direction on areas to be focused on further into the future. It was important to ensure that Education colleagues were fully aware of the resources and support that was available to them.

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Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter seconded the report. He stated that the issues raised within it overlapped with many other issues in particular traffic congestion around schools which was certainly a big issue in his ward and general road safety. The issues in the report were complex and he looked forward to the results from this and any follow on work that would take place.

Councillor Erik Pattenden said that the point of the Motion had been to bring all of the issues under the umbrella of safer schools. If the Council was already doing some of those things in other disparate areas the focus of a safer school did not exist and he asked if that focus could be provided to the initiatives that were already underway. Councillor Somner did not agree with the word 'disparate' as there was a programme of works through the department that included liaison with other departments. Highways and Transport would continue to work with the Education Team. The issue was that some of the work that was undertaken was not necessarily solely for the benefit of schools. If the focus was on one area then it was possible that need in other areas would be overlooked and that would be remiss as road safety applied to everyone across the district. Schools would be an important part of that but it was only a part of it. Traction could be gained by making sure that work could be done across the district which was surely the better approach particularly in the current climate. For example the motion suggested that car sharing was an option for schools but mixing families together to get them to school would not be best practice at present. It was essential that the Council was able to adapt but part of that came from being able to provide that resource or methodology across the wider area.

Councillor Adrian Abbs gave an example of how being disparate was an issue within the Council when two departments were not communicating with each other. Efforts needed to be made to ensure this was avoided.

Councillor Tony Vickers noted that at one time there had been a dedicated School Travel Plan Officer post who had worked with schools and he wished that that could be reintroduced. He agreed that the last nine months had been difficult for schools and therefore they had not been able to give this the priority it needed but he hoped that going forward it might become possible. The Government advice was to promote active travel and starting with schools was the best place to start as it would build habits of a lifetime into travel from home to work i.e. walking or cycling. Each individual school was in a different environment and he felt that having a dedicated Officer to pull all this together with support from Highways Officers would be beneficial.

Councillor Somner agreed with the officer comment made in the report in relation to this point. Discussion needed to take place between Public Health and Education Officers to take work forward, and he would ensure this took place.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The measures proposed in Councillor Pattenden's Motion might be appropriate in certain circumstances in some locations but should not be implemented as a single initiative;
- (2) The Council would continue to implement road safety and environmental improvements outside schools on the basis of identified local needs as part of the annual capital programme;
- (3) The Council would continue to invest in highway infrastructure that promoted and enabled active travel, especially to schools, as part of the annual capital programme;
- (4) The Council would continue to work with schools to deliver road safety initiatives to equip children with the skills and knowledge required to travel to school safely,

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especially on foot or by bicycle or scooter. The Council should also evaluate the extent to which schools were aware of and engaged with these services;

- (5) The Council would continue to promote active travel to school, which by reducing reliance on car-based transport would lead to an improvement in local air quality and improve the health, fitness and mental wellbeing of children;
- (6) The Council would continue to monitor air quality across the district and to engage with schools to promote initiatives to reduce vehicle idling.

Other options considered:

Each of the specific suggestions made in Councillor Pattenden's Motion were considered by the consultants and discussed with Council Officers, with comments as to the feasibility of each being made in the report in Appendix A.

63. Newbury Town Centre Pedestrianisation (EX3979)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the response to the Motion regarding the pedestrianisation of roads in Newbury Town Centre, which had been presented to Council by Councillor David Marsh in September 2020.

Councillor Richard Somner stated that as a proposal the report had been discussed in detail at the Transport Advisory Group meeting in October. The position of the authority, Officers and the Portfolio Holder had been consistent in that this had originally been a temporary under exceptional circumstances and whilst it had been popular with some it was equally disliked by others. As could be seen via social media and in press releases it had not found wholesale support in one direction or the other. Councillor Somner reminded Members of the engagement with key stakeholders originally and throughout the temporary measure and this would continue to be the case as the study of the town centre took place. Full consultation would also need to take place for any permanent measure to be enacted should that be the outcome. There was still some concern about removing traffic from one of the town centre routes as it would merely increase traffic on the others. New studies would need to be undertaken to provide up to date figures to include in any debate if that was what came out of the town centre work that was ongoing.

Councillor Carlyne Culver said that she welcomed the fact that full pedestrianisation in the long term option had been included in the paper as she felt that it was really important from the point of view of helping to meet the objectives of the climate emergency in the Environment Strategy by reducing pollution. It would also assist with social distancing at the moment and would enable people to shop safely. She felt that it would be a great asset if full pedestrianisation could be introduced in the future as it would make the town centre an even nicer place to be.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The measures proposed in Councillor Marsh's Motion would not be implemented, at least in the short term;
- (2) The consultants tasked with undertaking the Newbury Town Centre Study be asked to include the principle of permanent pedestrianisation in their work in order to facilitate consensus or, at least, a way forward on the issue;
- (3) Prior to any informal consultation with stakeholders, the consultants would work with the Highways Network Management team to ensure that any specific proposals made public were in accordance with the relevant road traffic legislation;
- (4) An assessment to be made of the extent to which the capacity that the town centre roads added to the network was actually needed. This would require modelling work by external transport consultants and therefore had time and cost implications;

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- (5) Should the above work determine that changes to the pedestrianised hours were desirable and could be implemented on a practical and legal basis a permanent traffic regulation order could be drafted and taken forward to statutory consultation.

Other options considered:

- (1) Implementing a 24-hour traffic free zone on a temporary basis with immediate effect, as proposed by the Motion, was not considered by officers to be reasonable within the legislation. Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 stated that the authority must be "satisfied that traffic on the road should be restricted or prohibited... because of a likelihood of danger to the public".
- (2) Implementing a 24-hour traffic free zone on a permanent or experimental basis with immediate effect was not possible due to the amount of preparatory work that was required, including the consideration of the issues listed in 5.13 of the report, and the requirement to consult stakeholders.
- (3) Completely ruling out any changes to the traffic-free hours would not be appropriate given the views expressed by Members at Transport Advisory Group and the forthcoming wider study of Newbury town centre, of which vehicular access was a key component.

64. 2020/21 Performance Report Quarter Two (EX3884)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 11) which provided assurance that the core business and Council priorities for improvement measures were being managed effectively.

The report also sought to highlight successes, in particular maintained strong levels of performance for core business areas, supported by the actions taken by the Council, partner organisations and community groups to aid the recovery from Covid-19. In the few cases where performance had fallen below the expected level, details were provided including any further actions.

Councillor Jo Stewart in introducing the report explained that this had been another challenging quarter which included a lead up to a period of lockdown. She then highlighted the following points from the report:

- There had been a continued rise in the number of benefit claimants, in particular young people. Councillor Stewart was therefore very pleased to report that the Council was participating fully in the Kickstart scheme that sought to help get young people into the workplace in both local businesses and within the Council. To date 13 posts had been created within the Council and it was hoped that more would follow.
- The Council had been very busy in distributing grant funding to support local businesses.
- Exception reports had been produced for the collection of Council Tax (reported as 'amber') and the collection of Business Rates (reported as 'red'). These both came as a result of the action taken by the Council to ease the financial burden on residents and businesses by pausing the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates. It was hoped that some of the deficit could be covered by Central Government and further information was awaited on that.
- The report recommended the inclusion of new measures as part of striving to continually improve. These were listed in Appendix D. Two related to befriending schemes within the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio and three in relation to key activities within the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio.

Councillor Stewart concluded her presentation by advising Members that links were provided within the report to its data sources.

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Councillor Lynne Doherty took the opportunity to give thanks on behalf of the Executive to the Council's officers for their continuing hard work, particularly during such a challenging year. The hard work of officers had kept services running as close to normal as possible, as was evidenced in this report.

Councillor Graham Bridgman pointed out that a large number of the key performance indicators had been thrown into disarray by Covid-19. This was making it difficult in some cases to be clear on the progress being made. By way of an example, he referred to Adult Social Care. The Care Quality Commission had largely suspended operating meaning areas of improvement in Adult Social Care could not be retested at the present time.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The strong progress and achievements made, despite challenges and constraints as a result of Covid-19, be noted;
- (2) The impact of the Council's conscious decision to provide additional support to residents and local businesses and any further actions planned had been reviewed, in particular for:
 - Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due
 - Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non-domestic rates due
- (3) The inclusion of new measures emerging as a result of Strategic Goals being delivered (as recommended by the OSMC) be approved. The list of measures and further details were provided at Appendix D.

Other options considered:

None considered.

65. 2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two (EX3908)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 12) concerning the in-year financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets as at Quarter Two of 2020/21.

The Quarter Two forecast was an underspend of £1.5m which was 1.1% of the Council's 2020/21 net revenue budget of £131m. The two main services contributing to the underspend were Adult Social Care and Children & Family Services.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon apologised that the table on page 255 of the agenda under paragraph 5.2 had errors in the second column with the figures not being updated from Quarter One and he would ensure that it was corrected and circulated the following morning. However, the over and under spend figures for all directorates and the total were correct. The forecast under spend position at Quarter One had been £600k so it was noted that the forecast under spend had increased by around £900k. This was almost all from the People Directorate and in particular Adult Social Care. Deaths had been higher than the previous year although it was expected that there would be an increase in demand on the service in the second half of the year from clients in step down placements requiring longer term services. Children & Family Services had continued to see a fall in clients requiring placements and a fall in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children which was not surprising given the reduction in route transport. Education were forecasting a £200k under spend arising from savings from Home to School Transport, external funding being received and successful trading income.

The total under spend forecast will inform the budget setting process along with decisions on Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept for 2021/22. It was also noted that the under spend in the current year would not automatically transfer to the following year but

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the impact on next year's budget would be considered. Covid funding from Government and the impact of the recently announced Local Government Settlement would also be considered.

Councillor Graham Bridgman referred to the under spend in Adult Social Care and the fact that the CCG had picked up the bill for hospital discharges for a period of about six months. However, that period of time was coming to an end and there were a number of individuals who were in step down beds having come out of hospital. This was literally a holding area for a decision to be made about their long term care with the possibility of them coming on to the authority's books for long term service provision. Therefore the Adult Social Care model showed quite a steep rise in demand in the long term service provision. Consequently, there were other factors in the Adult Social Care number which would work their way through going forward.

Councillor Jeff Brooks noted that there had been a lot of movement in the forecast over the past 13 weeks. He understood that there was a considerable amount of volatility but he hoped that Officers would work on getting the forecasts to be tighter in their movement quarter on quarter. He also stated that there would be a risk reserve for Adult Social Care and if that was not required what sum would that potentially release into the under spend position.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon responded that Councillor Brooks was right about the numbers it was a big jump from quarter to quarter. In respect of the modelling Officers were continually trying to improve that and he felt that it was in a good place. This had been an unusual year and there had been diverging movement from the budget. Councillor Mackinnon also confirmed that he was part of the Budget Board discussions where the ASC model was closely monitored. In respect of the risk reserve Councillor Mackinnon stated that he was not in a position to discuss that at present and the decision would be made closer to the budget setting process. Councillor Brooks asked what the risk reserve figure was as he thought it was around £900k. Councillor Mackinnon confirmed that the figure was £850k. .

RESOLVED that the Quarter Two forecast of a £1.5m under spend be noted.

Other options considered:

None considered.

66. 2020/21 Capital Financial Performance Quarter Two (EX3909)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 13) which provided the Quarter Two financial position against the Council's approved capital budget.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon reported that at the end of Quarter Two, expenditure of £44.5 million had been forecast against the revised budget of £56.9 million. An overall forecast underspend of £12.4 million of which £7.3 million was proposed to be re-profiled into 2021/22 and later financial years. It was noted that further re-profiling was likely to follow.

The underspend had increased from the £6 million reported at Quarter One.

The fact that there had been delays to the Capital Programme was not surprising during the pandemic. There had been delays to planned maintenance, transport projects and the refurbishment of Four Houses Corner. ICT projects had also been paused until the review of the Council's office accommodation needs had been concluded. The final stages of the Superfast Broadband project had also suffered a delay, but it was close to completion.

RESOLVED that the Quarter Two forecast financial position be noted together with the proposed re-profiling of expenditure from 2020/21 into 2021/22.

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Other options considered:

None considered.

67. Treasury Management Mid Term Report - Financial Year 2020/21 (EX3989)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 14) concerning the treasury management semi-annual and annual reports. This report provided an overview of the treasury management activity for financial year 2020/21 as at 30 September 2020.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon highlighted the Council's borrowing and investment activity over the first six months of 2020/21. The Council had a Capital Financing Requirement of £239m. As at 30 September 2020 the Council held £221.8m of loans – an increase of £2.4m compared to 31 March 2020. PWLB funding margins had lurched quite substantially and there remained a strong argument for diversifying funding sources. During the first two quarters of the financial year the Council became the first authority to successfully launch a community bond which was designed to fund green initiatives in support of the Council Strategy. The target of £1m had been achieved. In relation to investments the Council continued to hold cash balances with banks, building societies and Government including local authorities.

Councillor Jeff Brooks asked if Councillor Mackinnon could confirm that movements would be largely neutral for the Council. Councillor Mackinnon replied that the drop in PWLB rates would not have dropped in this period. So going forward, the PWLB rate dropping back down when it did, it will be back at the original requirements before the artificial bump, so roughly revenue neutral. Councillor Brooks asked if Councillor Mackinnon could come back with what the forward look might be in year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Other options considered:

None considered.

68. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- (a) The question submitted by Councillor Carlyne Culver on the subject of encouraging greater diversity among candidates in future elections was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance.
- (b) The question submitted by Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of whether the Universal Basic Income figure of £660 billion was a gross or net figure would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (c) The question submitted by Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of providing examples of when the Green group had 'run to the press' would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (d) The question submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of how the Council would ensure that opposition members were kept informed on LRIE following the removal of an opposition member from the Board would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (e) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of support given to schools and nurseries to protect teaching and support staff from coronavirus was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.

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- (f) The question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of Continuing Healthcare Funding would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.
- (g) The question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of where the level of Continuing Healthcare Funding placed the Berkshire West CCG in the national rankings would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.
- (h) The question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of the process of enabling the Local Plan to take account of its Master Plan for the LRIE was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (i) The question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers on the subject of the request to make the Rail to Refuge scheme permanent was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.
- (j) The question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of increasing the number of candidates applying for senior officer roles was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance.
- (k) The question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of plans to move from the Market Street office within the next 10 years was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 7.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Below is the response to the stated grounds for the call-in of the decision of the Executive on the next steps for the LRIE regeneration project from Cllr Ross Mackinnon, representing the LRIE Project Board.

- **Significant concern regarding the Council's project management expertise and capacity to undertake this development**

West Berkshire Council has the required project management expertise to undertake this project through its dedicated project management methodology and its Corporate Programme Office (CPO), which was established in part in response to OSMC recommendations. The CPO compiles and monitors the Corporate Programme of projects being undertaken by the council and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission has sight of this when they request it. Programme and project management also form part of the council's management and leadership development programme to ensure that these skills are in place across the organisation.

A dedicated project manager has been in place for this specific project for some time and appropriate project management methodology has been carried out and reported to both the CPO and the LRIE Project Board at regular intervals. Given the increased profile of the forthcoming stages in the development, it is now the council's intention to make budgetary provision for additional project management and administration resource to accelerate progress on the project. This will be reflected in the 2021/22 Budget. Additional budget has also been requested as part of this paper to provide an ongoing level of support to the project.

Furthermore, the council as landowner intends to enlist planning specialists with appropriate experience in preparing planning applications for similar types of site to prepare an eventual outline application for LRIE. This will ensure that the application is prepared appropriately and that the development has the best possible chance of success.

- **A lack of confidence in the management structure of the development which fails to place a "Chinese wall" between the Council as landowner and its planning authority**

The London Road Industrial Estate Project Board is chaired by the Executive Director for Resources and is attended by the Executive Member with responsibility for Finance, Property and Economic Development. Formal decisions relating to the site will be taken by the Executive. Any planning applications that follow will be decided by the Western Area Planning Committee. Both decision making bodies operate independently and decisions are made transparently and in public.

It is not unusual for local authority regeneration and major development teams to sit within a Development and Planning Service. Legal advice has confirmed that this is acceptable.

Furthermore, the Executive has full confidence in both the professional integrity of the council's Development and Planning Service which performs an effective quasi-judicial function and in the case officer to progress the council's application on its merits, as would be the case with any other application. The case officer will make a recommendation to the Planning Committee which, in accordance with the Constitution, has responsibility for determining any major planning application submitted by the council as landowner. It is also worth noting that the answer to the first of the concerns outlined has relevance to this point as external planning consultants will be appointed to advise the council as a Landowner and to independently prepare any planning applications.

- **The question of whether a phased approach is the most appropriate rather than waiting for a full environmental assessment of the whole site to be undertaken**

A development brief for this site was sought and was approved by the Executive in November 2020. The work was undertaken by an external consultant, Avison Young, who, following an assessment which included high level environmental analysis, suggested two possible options for the site, one of which was a multi-phased development. On the basis of this assessment, our conclusion is that a multi-phased development is most appropriate given the complexities regarding land ownership and tenancies on the site. Following such an approach will allow sufficient time to negotiate with existing tenants, to minimise disruption on the site and surrounding area and to manage the potential cost of the development.

As part of the consultancy work mentioned above and the preparation of the outline planning application, the requisite technical work for the next stage of the process, including an in depth assessment of the environmental implications of the proposed development, will be undertaken for the entire site. This is in line with the due diligence process any landowner would undertake when proposing a redevelopment of this scale.

- **A lack of clarity of the market for both office space and flats as the longer-term ramifications of the pandemic are not yet understood**

Through the preparation of the planning application, the onus will be on the council as landowner to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with policies in the Local Plan and is of the appropriate type and scale in the context of Newbury and the wider district, not just in the immediate future but in the 10-20 year timeframe over which the development will be delivered.

It is clear that the pandemic will have a significant impact on the district's economy and that it is not yet possible to calculate exactly what this will be. What is also clear from evidence provided by local property industry professionals and from the evidence compiled for the Local Plan Review, however, is that the office stock available in Newbury Town Centre is dated and is not fit for purpose for businesses looking to move to new office accommodation. Given the council's commitment to promoting West Berkshire as a great place to do business, it is vital that this issue is addressed.

It is also the case that independent economic analysis from the Institute for Fiscal Studies recognises the relative resilience of the local economy in West Berkshire and that some degree of confidence in the district's emergence from the pandemic in a strong position can be had. Ensuring that the district has the best possible infrastructure and facilities will improve still further its chances of successful economic recovery and the LRIE development represents a strong investment and vote of confidence in the economic future of West Berkshire, its residents and businesses. The benefit of completing this development on a phased approach is that it allows the council greater time to be more flexible in response to any future changes to the market for various uses as these arise over the coming years.

It remains the intention of this administration to proceed with an ambitious development on this site, which will offer an attractive new gateway into the town and will make much better use of an important strategic town centre site which has been in need of investment for some time.

Response to the LRIE call-in from Cllr Hilary Cole, Executive Member with responsibility for Planning

- **Significant concern regarding the Council’s project management expertise and capacity to undertake this development;**

This is a matter for the LRIE Project Board.

- **A lack of confidence in the management structure of the development which fails to place a “Chinese wall” between the Council as landowner and its planning authority;**

Planning is a statutory service that performs a quasi-judicial function. Legislation and government guidance set out the process the matters that should be considered when assessing and determining applications. In addition to national guidance we have our own local plan policies that are currently being reviewed.

All planning applications follow the same process and are assessed in the same way. All information received will be published on the Planning pages of the Council’s web site as usual. Although we don’t have a planning application for this site I would expect an application of this scale, and with so much local public interest, to be decided in public by the Western Area Planning Committee.

As the Executive Member with responsibility for Planning I have full confidence in the professional integrity of the council’s Planning Officers. The Planning officers are duty bound to assess applications based on the evidence before them and I have no doubt that is what will happen in this case as it does for all other applications.

- **The question of whether a phased approach is the most appropriate rather than waiting for a full environmental assessment of the whole site to be undertaken;**

This is a matter for the Project Board but the Council’s Planning Service is available to provide formal pre-application advice as it would do for all applications of this type.

- **A lack of clarity of the market for both office space and flats as the longer-term ramifications of the pandemic are not yet understood.**

This is a matter for the Project Board although current evidence that supports the emerging Local Plan Review clearly supports the need for protecting important employment sites and more homes in sustainable locations.

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Draft Housing Strategy

Committee considering report: Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Date of Committee: 26th January 2021

Portfolio Member: Councillor Hilary Cole

Date Portfolio Member agreed report: 4th January 2021

Report Author: Janet Weekes

Forward Plan Ref: EX3833

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the draft Housing Strategy and delivery plan.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That OSMC notes the draft Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 and the delivery plan, as set out at Appendix A, and makes any comments as appropriate before the strategy and delivery plan go to Executive for adoption on 25 March 2021.

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</p>

	<p>authority to set out its future strategic plan in a Housing Strategy, and for 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>

Draft Housing Strategy

<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 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.
- 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.

Draft Housing Strategy

- 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

Corporate Board's recommendation

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: All wards

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Document Control

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

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
		Draft Housing Strategy changes made following closure of consultation on 01/11/2020	

Housing matters:

West Berkshire's Housing Strategy 2020 - 2036

Draft for Consultation



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1 Foreword - why housing matters



Hilary Cole
Executive Portfolio Holder,
Planning and Housing

Housing is a key cause 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 also highlighted the challenges faced by many residents in maintaining and accessing safe, secure and affordable housing for themselves and their families in order to live in stable communities and a place to call home while also exposing informal shared housing arrangements.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic priority for West Berkshire Council, and 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 that meets 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 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 key determinants of our health, with poor housing impacting on 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)

1,616

older people and vulnerable adults accessing long term support (Mar 2018).



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 2018 there were

232

long term empty homes in West Berkshire

In 2018/19 the Council assisted

115 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 2018) was

65,000



Since 2001 census, an average of

376 new homes

have been built each year.



149 Looked after children and more than

680 children in need supported (Mar 2018), both below England averages (as a rate per 10,000 children).



On average

2,200

households threatened with homelessness contact the Council each year.



It is estimated that the residential sector produced

18%

of the total national carbon dioxide emissions in 2018



Between 2012 and 2017 the level of private renting in West Berkshire reduced by

8%

while nationally it increased by 8%



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

– a reduction from the 20 people sleeping rough in November 2017





4 The national context

The Government's 2017 White Paper – 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'¹ – set out the Government's intention to boost housing supply and create a more efficient housing market over time, but also that the challenge of increasing housing supply could not be met by Government in isolation. The White Paper also acknowledged that in the shorter-term people's housing needs and aspirations needed to be addressed, including supporting people to buy or rent their own home, preventing homelessness, improving options for older people, and protecting the most vulnerable.

The White Paper also set out the support to enhance the capacity of both local authorities and the industry to build the new homes that each local area needed, with the proviso that partners were 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 be a significant factor 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, with a number of common drivers including loss of employment, relationship breakdown, and domestic abuse. In many cases residents threatened with homelessness may not be used to the welfare benefits system, and although vulnerable households are over-represented, the negative perception of homeless households is often unwarranted.

Nationally housing affordability remains a key driver for homelessness, with loss of private rented accommodation consistently one of the top reasons for homelessness across the country, often as a result of rent arrears or an inability to afford a proposed rent increase. And 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, and 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 following the transfer of council housing to them through Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs). 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 that sets out the Council's proposed position on affordable housing for new developments that 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, and while most commonly used to improve private rented accommodation, they can also be utilised to improve owner-occupied and Registered Provider homes.

Empty homes are a wasted resource and councils have a range of powers to intervene and return properties back into use, while planning 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 regimes provide the framework that enables Council's to administer grants for aids and adaptations to help 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, and 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. However, of particular importance is the projected increase in older people across West Berkshire, with the cohort of people aged over 85 projected to double in size, while those residents aged over 75 will almost increase by half (46.9%) over the same period.

Table 1 – Projected demographic change across West Berkshire 2020-2036⁶

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%



Housing supply and demand

The Council’s Local Plan⁷ details local planning policies that support development across West Berkshire until 2026, and 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 also details 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, currently planning policy requires that affordable housing 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 also sets out the need for affordable homes of different sizes, and tenure as set out 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 strengthen 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 help understand the demand for Self Build and Custom house building Local planning authorities should plan to meet this need. To meet this need West Berkshire Council maintains a register of individuals and associations of individuals who have expressed an interest in self- and custom-build homes and 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 housing stock that is rented as social housing 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 now own and manage 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, and 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 29%.

Housing and the economy

Employment opportunities are critical to delivering a balanced housing market, and across West Berkshire the number of jobs is higher than the south east average and 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 and West Berkshire Council's Economic Development Strategy 2019-2036 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.

Across the South East affordability is a critical issue in all segments of the housing market, with people struggling to secure affordable and sustainable housing, whether seeking home ownership or seeking to rent. In many areas the cost of home ownership relative to earnings is high, and in West Berkshire the £346,500 average cost of a home¹⁷ 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, which in West Berkshire is often driven by professionals seeking accommodation near their place of work, and this presents affordability challenges for local residents. People private renting pay the highest housing costs compared with home-owners with mortgages and social housing tenants²⁰.

The private rental value in West Berkshire show an 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 and/or 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 therefore 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 with private renters in the 25-34 age group forming 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, and there were also 481 households affected by the under-occupation charge – 416 households subject to a 14% deduction, and 65 subject to a 25% deduction.

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

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, and 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 will provide additional preference to key workers to support their applications for social housing. This in addition to our collaborative work with our Registered Providers to enable a range of affordable housing will contribute towards addressing the affordability challenges that keyworkers face.

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, and during 2018/19 1,765 households presented to West Berkshire Council as being threatened with homelessness, of which, just under 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 which impacted on 23% of households threatened with homelessness. The next most common reason for being threatened with homelessness 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 interestingly 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’²⁹. 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)³⁰ 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)³¹ interventions.

Nationally rough sleeping has risen year on year since 2010 until a reduction in 2018, while across West Berkshire the number of people sleeping rough has fluctuated over the same period, falling from a peak of 23 in 2014 to 18 in 2018. A further reduction to 10 rough sleepers in November 2019 as illustrated in table 5 demonstrates the success of the strong partnership working. Whilst across West Berkshire, comparatively the number of rough sleepers in 2019 remained low as illustrated in table 6.

Table 5 - Rough sleeping in England and West Berkshire since 2010³²

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

²⁸ Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=48320&p=0>

²⁹ xxx

³⁰ MHCLG, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-initiative-to-reduce-rough-sleeping>

³¹ MHCLG, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-rehousing-pathway-2019-to-2020-funding>

³² 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 2019³³

Local authority	Number of rough sleepers ³⁴	Number of rough sleepers per 1,000 households ³⁵
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 individual’s needs, and 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 Councils Market Position Statement 2020-23 Adult Social Care sets out how the Council will meet the needs for specialist accommodation. West Berkshire Council is also delivering a specialist Housing First scheme with partners to provide housing for rough sleepers with complex needs who would ordinarily be refused housing due to those needs, and for whom 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 setting out qualifying criteria and other details. West Berkshire Council’s Housing Allocation Policy prioritises applicants based on individual circumstances with the aim of ensuring that applicants with the greatest need have the highest priority.

The scheme is delivered through a choice-based lettings scheme, whereby applicants are able to choose the social housing properties that they wish to place bids on, and then 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, councils are able to secure private sector tenancies as an alternative to an allocation of social housing to end homelessness obligations. To achieve this councils will very often offer a range of incentives to improve partnership working with private landlords to increase supply of appropriate tenancies.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ 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

The data is calendar years not financial

West Berkshire has a low number of empty homes, with 232 long-term empty homes 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%.

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, and 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.

Park homes provide an important housing solution for many residents, who are often older residents in their retirement. Park homes are in effect temporary, moveable structures and owners lease pitches on often large sites, paying a site fee and being 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 and 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 end homelessness obligations.”

Environmental considerations

West Berkshire Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, and 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 through both the initial carbon footprint associated with delivering new-build housing, refurbishing existing housing and through energy use in homes. Energy use in homes alone accounts for 14% of UK emissions.

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 oil and the 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 and 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, and;
- Providing for or 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 therefore that the increased costs associated with embracing environmental considerations³⁶ may impact on future viability of housing development and in particular the delivery of affordable homes.

There are also 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 and potential reduce costs when factoring in the additional revenue potential arising from earlier completions³⁷.

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 also 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, and 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 utilise the Council's joint venture delivery vehicle to contribute to the delivery of new homes

We will deliver a Council-owned housing company to procure private rented accommodation let at rents that are affordable for residents

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, and our policies and decision making are robust and efficient 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 and all affordability segments within the housing market.

Given the real affordability challenges in the local housing market, young people and key workers experience particular challenges in securing affordable housing in West Berkshire both through renting 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

For vulnerable residents this includes the provision of a suitable range of supported housing within the District that is affordable having regard to welfare benefit.

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 is not balanced and there is insufficient supply of smaller homes and in particular single-person shared accommodation to meet the demand. This is in part due to the housing typology 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 also 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 determinant 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 and this then limits future employment prospects and risks them living in poor housing in adult life.

Nationally the worst housing conditions can be found within the private rented sector. This is not the case for all private sector rented homes, indeed the majority of private rented properties are in excellent condition, however due to the size of the sector the small minority of homes that are in poor condition represents a large portfolio.

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 both the image of the sector and providing 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 and they provide training and development for landlords as well as enforcing proportionate 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

The Council's private sector housing regulatory service is currently provided as part of the Public Protection Partnership which 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.

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 to ensure that we are maximising our ability to improve private sector housing conditions

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, and this has the potential to disadvantage service users in both the western and eastern areas of the District. Similarly, as the need for services has increased the Council has commissioned services largely within the Newbury area, 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:

a) 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).

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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, and 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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Housing Strategy

Consultation Summary Report

Why we consulted?

The Housing Strategy 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.

The delivery of the new Housing Strategy is a key corporate priority and in accordance with the Council's Consultation Policy a public consultation exercise is required to ensure that residents and other stakeholders are able to contribute to the formation of the strategy. The draft strategy proposes two key priorities for intervention and sets out areas for action. These actions will be detailed further in a delivery plan that will be finalised once the strategy is adopted.

The previous Housing Strategy covered the period 2010-2015 and the proposed strategy is intended to provide the strategic housing framework for the period up to 2036. This will ensure that the strategy links with the Council's corporate vision, but will also provide the ability to secure longer-term interventions in the housing market that are less likely to be achieved within a shorter period. The strategy aims to link with relevant corporate strategies and provides the framework for the delivery of specific housing plans and policies, such as, the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

The draft strategy has been developed working with internal partners and stakeholders and has also been subject to consultation with the Housing Board and local residents.

Approach

We developed and implemented a comprehensive communication plan to ensure that we consulted extensively and in a range of different ways. We published the proposals and questionnaire regarding the changes on our consultation website pages. The questionnaire was available for a six week period with feedback requested by midnight on 1st November 2020.

Respondents were directed to the draft strategy to read before answering the questionnaire. A total of 477 stakeholders submitted feedback but of these only 271 responses were viable for data analysis. Many were abandoned after the first initial question was answered and there was a high rate of unanswered questions throughout the responses.

We set up a dedicated email address to deal with any questions relating to the consultation process including queries about the ability to access the questionnaire. We also printed copies of the proposed document and questionnaire following enquiries and made them available on request.

An invitation to provide feedback on the draft housing strategy was sent by email to the following groups:

- All applicants on the housing register

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- Tenants in temporary accommodation provided by the Council
- Voluntary sector
- Registered Providers
- Internal departments and partner organisations

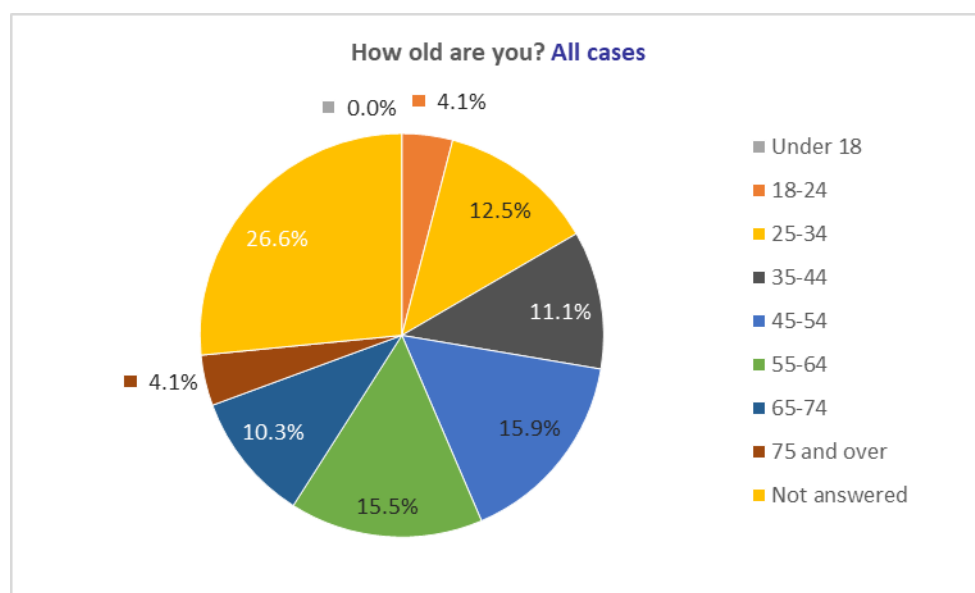
Finally, we issued a press release and further publicised our consultations through our Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as the council's website. Please see Appendix 1 for the communications plan.

Consultation Response

Number of responses and main category of respondents

In total 271 responses were received that had answered the questions or provided comments for data analysis. 85% of responses were from West Berkshire residents. 7% did not choose a category and the remaining 3 categories had responses of 4% and under. We have included key stakeholder feedback at the end of this report.

The percentage of responses per age range are shown in the graph below. There was a poor response rate from the younger age ranges and the 75 and over. The largest portion of the responses were from the 45 to 64 age range.



Only 17% of the responses were from key workers. The remaining were from non key workers or did not give a response to the question. Of those that said that they were a key worker, the largest percentage were care workers and the smallest response was from health care workers.

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Summary of Main Points

Respondents agreed that the draft strategy captures the relevant local housing issues.

- 76.4% agreed or strongly agreed with proposed priority 1
- 75.2% agreed or strongly agreed with proposed priority 2
- 42.8% agreed or strongly agreed with the delivery plan to address priorities 1 and 2.
- 31% agreed or strongly agreed that the proposed delivery plan will result in positive housing outcomes for them across West Berkshire
- 52.4% thought that the draft strategy was clear and easy to understand.

There was some overarching messages throughout the feedback that have been addressed later on in this report but have been extrapolated below:

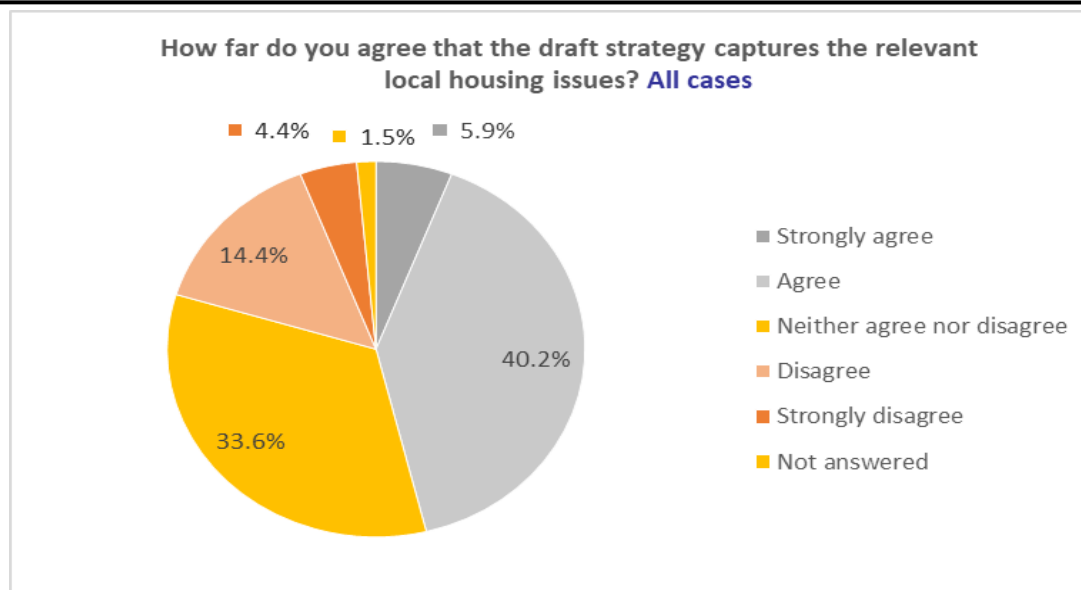
- Residents are worried about the impact on the local infrastructure and the environment due to the development of the houses
- Respondents thought that too much emphasis was put onto expensive private rentals and not enough on social affordable housing.
- The definition of affordable housing needs to be explained
- Not enough emphasis is on development of quality, energy efficient houses as a pose to quantity
- There is not enough being done to address the physical and mental issues of why residents become homeless in the first place and provide support to help them re-build their lives.

All of the individual comments from respondents were reviewed and the responses have been broken down by survey question below:

Summary of Responses by Question

1. How far do you agree that the draft strategy captures the relevant local housing issues?

The data in the table below shows that 46.1% of respondents who expressed a view agreed or strongly agreed with the changes and only 18.8% were against the change. 33.6% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. There were a further 1.5% of respondents who did not answer this question.



A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

- **Comment:** There needs to be more emphasis on the environmental impacts and how to build energy efficient homes whilst improving the local infrastructure and developing it further to cope with all the new properties.
- **Response:** The infrastructure to support the additional homes will be aligned with the Local Plan. As part of the feedback the Climate Emergency focus will be revisited in terms of emphasis within the plan.
- **Comment:** There is a disproportionate emphasis on homelessness and rough sleeping. There are not enough actions identified to tackle those that make themselves intentionally homeless.
- **Response:** There are 2 key priorities and the resources are balanced according to the needs of each priority. Actions to tackle those that make themselves intentionally homeless are addressed in the new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
- **Comment:** The strategy does not cover building new stock of a higher standard, retrofitting of existing houses and the lack of opportunity for owner-builders to buy plots of land or develop their own homes.
- **Response:** This point will be made clearer in the updated draft strategy and will incorporate the opportunity for owner-builders to buy plots of land to develop their own homes through initiatives such as 'Self-Build.'
- **Comment:** Respondents wanted to know what was the plan to redevelop brown field sites over green field sites to preserve recreational areas and countryside?
- **Response:** This is addressed in our Core Strategy Development Plan documentation which will sit alongside the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.
- **Comment;** The strategy is based on the need to provide 10,500 homes over the next 20 years. There is no breakdown of the figures to justify the claim and it

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doesn't take into account the number of properties that will become available over time due to tenants passing or moving to care homes.

- **Response:** The need to provide 10,500 homes has been taken from the Local Delivery Plan which looks at housing need across the district in greater detail. The Housing strategy will support the Local Delivery Plan adoption to ensure it is in line with the interests of the district. Relets will not form part of the 10,500 homes as they are not new additional homes.
- **Comment:** The strategy seems to sway towards increasing the rented sector or supporting private property developers who are only interested in profits, rather than trying to help people secure their own homes. An approach to support not for profit organisations to build and offer real affordable rented properties or properties for sale would be better suited to solve the current housing issues.
- **Response:** In order to fully address housing need for the district we have to look at all tenures therefore we need to include details about the private rented sector and not just social housing and other affordable housing products. We also work in partnership with our Registered Providers and Homes England to ensure that we deliver the Affordable Housing Programme which provides housing that is not for profit and increasing the supply of affordable rented properties or properties for sale.
- **Comment:** There is no mention on how to tackle the increasing housing need as a result of COVID-19 and what the economic impact of this might be.
- **Response:** We have noted the importance of including the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing need and will include this within the final strategy.

Comments in support of the strategy:

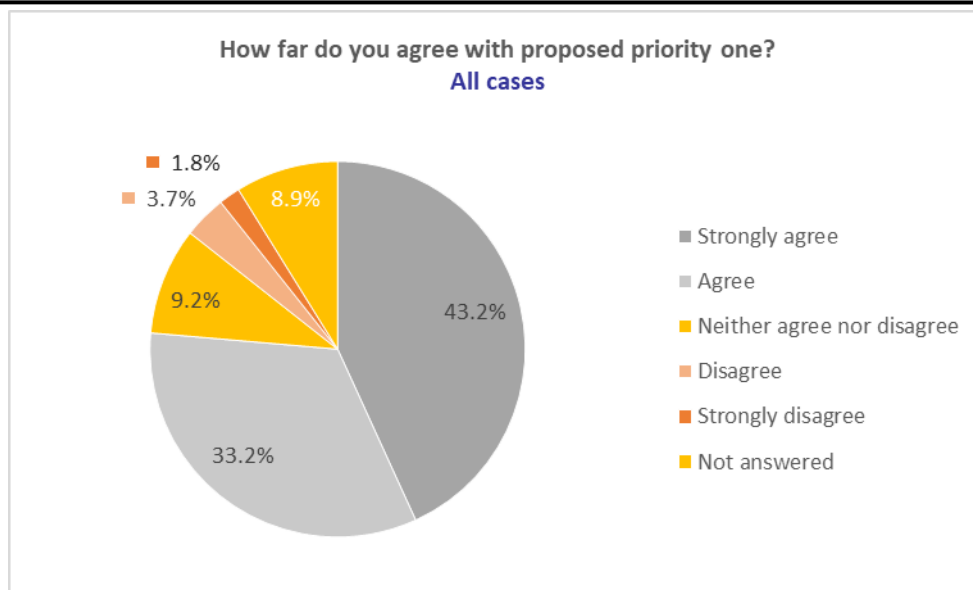
- 'It does identify the issues, especially the lack of homes for social rent and affordability',
- 'Seems comprehensive, shows understanding of the issues, depicts a council with a social conscience'.

2. How far do you agree with proposed priority one? – Enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs.

The table below shows that there was very strong support for priority one with over 76.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing with it. 5.5% did not agree or disagree or disagreed with the proposal plus 8.9% who neither agreed nor disagreed and 9.2% who did not answer the question

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A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

- **Comment:** The use of HMOs as mentioned in the strategy is one that some people will not engage with, I fear that those with dual diagnosis issues will find themselves unable to access mental health accommodation and will not cope in a shared environment. They also see a far higher turnover of tenants than other rental options.
- **Response:** This will be linked to our new Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy that also incorporates complex needs and support relating to accommodation for single people. In addition, the Market Position Statement for Adult Social Care also captures how we will help our residents to access specialist accommodation such as those linked to mental health.
- **Comment:** Excellent target but how will it be met and measured?
- **Response:** The draft strategy details a number of interventions to deliver the proposed priorities. These are further detailed within the delivery plan which will be finalised once the strategy is adopted. The plan will detail how each intervention will be delivered.
- **Comment:** Agreed, but what is the definition of appropriate housing and how is this worked out?
- **Response:** We have included a glossary of terms with the final strategy which will clarify definitions and the data source can be found as a footnote at the end of the page.
- **Comment:** How are the environmental considerations taken into account when developing the properties?
- **Response:** The environmental considerations are addressed in our Core Strategy Development Plan documentation and will also link to the Environment Strategy which will sit alongside the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.

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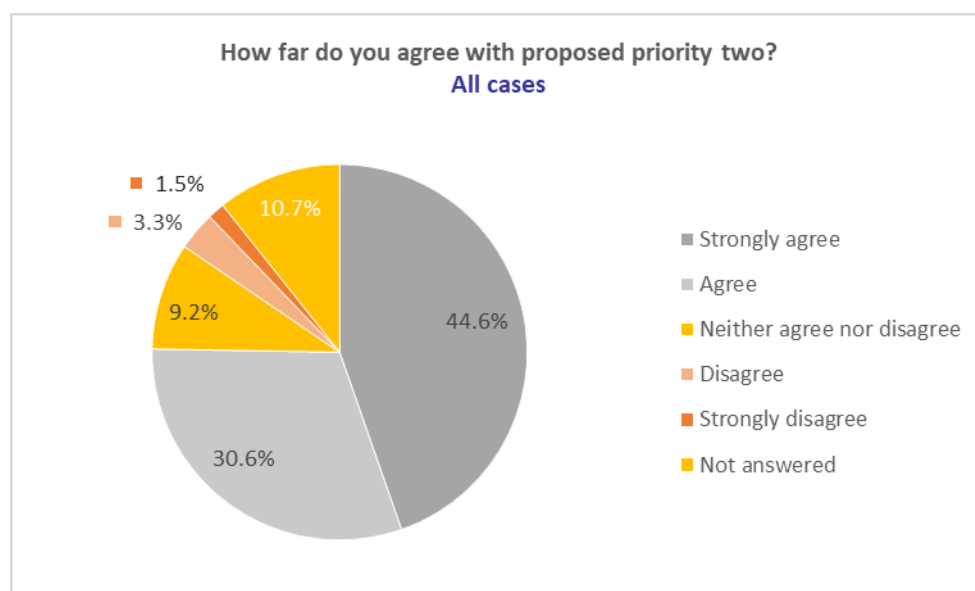
- **Comment:** The design guidance of West Berkshire Council is out of date
- **Response:** This will be updated as part of the final housing strategy

Comments in support of the Strategy:

- '100% no one should live in cold, damp or cramped homes or ill equipped homes'.
- 'An adequate house is essential for every person'.

3. How far do you agree with proposed priority two? Reduce Homelessness

Respondents were asked how far they agreed with proposed priority two to reduce homelessness. 75.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this and less than 4.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 9.2% did not agree or disagree. The remaining percentage did not answer this question which equated to 10.7%



A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

Comment: The excellent execution of previous strategies has reduced homelessness to 10 in West Berks. I think that this as a second priority out of two is rather imbalanced. The signal is that for a population of 10 West Berks dedicates 50% of its strategic housing intent. I would have expected key workers to be taken out of priority 1 into a separate priority.

Response: There are 2 key priorities and the resources are balanced according to the needs of each. It is important that keyworkers can also access a home that meets their needs and this is included in the priority that this falls in.

Comment: In this area there is a lack of suitable temporary accommodation for people that present as homeless and they are often placed many miles from their support network and the schools that their children attend. We understand that it takes time to investigate whether someone is intentionally homeless and for the

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decision to be relayed to the claimant. There should also be a hostel facility for couples.

Response: There has been significant changes made regarding temporary accommodation. The council has purchased an additional twenty units of temporary accommodation in the district and no longer makes placements out of the district. Placements are made in the district as close to support networks as possible. Our hostel facilities adequately meets the needs of the district and our temporary accommodation meets the interim needs under S188 of the HRA (Homelessness Reduction Act) 2017 for other households that are not single.

Comment: Building more homes is not going to solve homelessness. Simply building what you deem to be 'affordable' homes is not going to provide the homeless with employment or an ability to afford a home. Even what are deemed affordable homes are simply not affordable to the homeless or those on low incomes?

Response: We have adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 which addresses affordability for those on low incomes or homelessness.

Comments: The priority should be to eradicate homelessness rather than just reduce it. It was eradicated during lock down so can be achieved

Response: At any one point a different cohort of residents will be homeless due to changes in circumstances. There are also a small minority who do not want to be housed and want to remain street homeless but have worked in partnership with our strategic partners and voluntary sector partners to continue to reduce homelessness. Homelessness was not eradicated during lock down in the UK as many individuals were placed in hotel provision to stop the spread of Covid-19 but some still remained street homeless as they refused the housing offer. West Berkshire similar to other Local Authorities have an ambition to eradicate homelessness in line with central government's targets and are working hard to sustain the reduction of homelessness in the district.

Comment: Some of the homeless population have been given accommodation many times but have neglected and abused the place. Why should they then be offered yet another?

Response: As per our Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy this sets out reasons for homelessness which will provide a useful insight into why accommodation is refused and the cycle of homelessness and what support we put in place to work with the homeless population to help them.

Comment: We need to look at why people are homeless in the first place and the Health and Social reasons. Many suffer from addiction yet agency funding to help them has been cut. This then feeds into the issue that many of those that are homeless don't want to use a hostel due to the drug taking which needs to be addressed first.

Response: We have adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 which addresses the health and social reasons of why residents become homeless and provide appropriate agency support.

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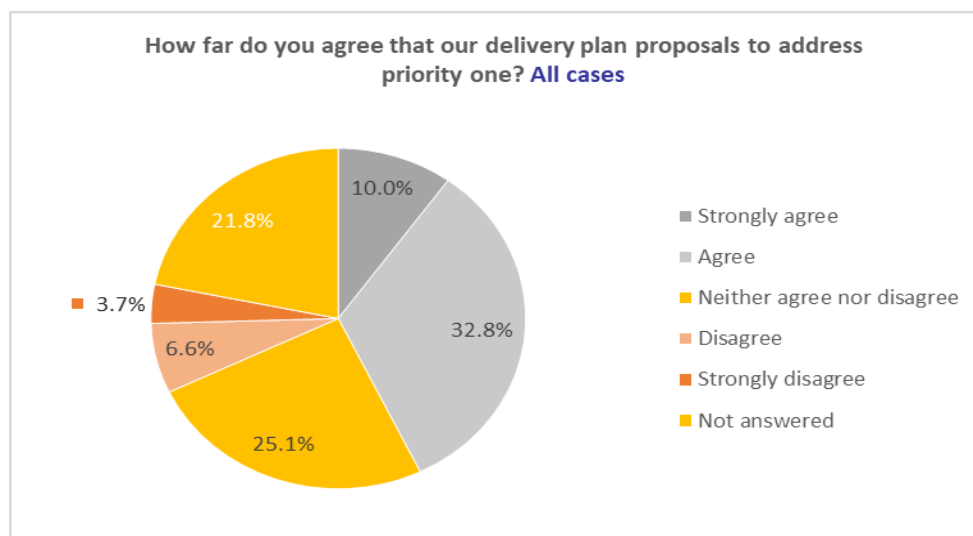
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Comments in support of the Strategy:

- 'Access to well maintained and step up housing should be a priority'
- 'homelessness can be the cause of many situations and many situations can be the cause of homelessness. It could happen to anyone at any time. Housing First has proven successful all over the world and every one should be given the chance to have a home in which to feel safe and secure.'
- The health and social issues around homelessness need resolving and the support to deal with those issues is not just about providing roofs over heads. I am pleased to see that in the West Berkshire area the council has been more pro-active than in many other areas

4. How far do you agree that our delivery plan proposals address priority one?

Respondents were asked how far they agreed that the delivery plan proposals addressed priority one – the table below shows, enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs. 42.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the plan does. Less than 10.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 25.1% did not agree or disagree and 59 respondents did not answer this question which equalled 21.8% of respondents.



A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

Comment: "Page 21. 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" It is vital that parents of children with disabilities/people with disabilities/occupational therapists/specialist architects for people with disabilities are consulted as part of this "needs assessment". A needs assessment is only helpful if it consults and works closely with relevant stakeholders."

Response: A communications plan will be created in order to ensure that relevant stakeholder feedback is captured during consultation for the needs assessment.

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Comment: “I have one specific concern, which is that the definition of keyworker excludes care staff. This is a crucial workforce, generally poorly paid and it is essential that their housing needs are met.”

Response: This has been addressed and the key worker definition has been updated in the strategy to reflect care staff within this category.

Comment: “There's a need to go further with social housing as so-called 'affordable' housing is only relative and is still very expensive, excluding a lot of people. We may be well off in West Berks, but we need people from all walks of life to be able to live here, for the benefit of the economy and society”

Response: Affordable housing is just that and West Berkshire made a commitment to help residents with affordability issues to access affordable housing by ensuring that we work with Registered Providers to enable social rent which is cheaper than Affordable Rent which is 80% of the market rent.

Comments: The private rental accommodation is not being made accessible enough, many landlords are asking for guarantors which not everyone can provide. HMOs cost the same as a social tenancy but are far smaller and provide none of the security.

Response: Accessibility to private rental accommodation and HMO's are being addressed as part of the delivery plan on the Housing Strategy.

Comments: There is no mention about keeping the type of properties required under review and encouraging developers to provide homes that fit the necessary profile, rather than creating expensive properties that maximise their profits. It also doesn't cover whether planning consents should be time limited to ensure developers are not sitting on land to increase their profits.

Response: This is addressed in our Core Strategy Development Plan documentation which will sit alongside the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan. The Local Plan will also feed into this to ensure that development fits in with the needs of the District.

Comments: There does not seem to be concrete proposals for where the housing will be developed along with the relevant improvement of services in the area. For instance Newbury has recently reached its limit for water provision and Thames Water are effectively rationing supply through the reduction of pressure in the system. More housing development will result in extra demand on the current infrastructure, has this been taken into account?

Response: The location of additional homes will be outlined in the Local Plan which will also include local infrastructure improvements. As part of the feedback from this consultation the Climate Emergency focus will be revisited in terms of emphasis within the Housing Strategy.

Comments: There is a lot of investment currently from outside the area which is profit driven. We need to enable West Berkshire residents to be prioritised in the strategy over outside investors.

Response: This view underpins Priority 1 in the council's Housing Strategy and will be addressed within the delivery plan of this strategy.

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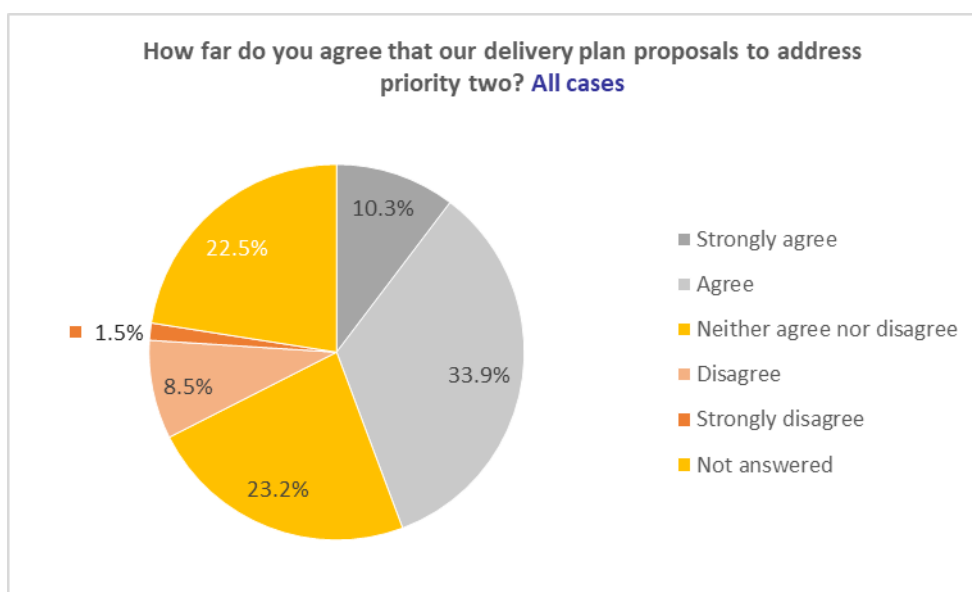
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Comments: Many people, at the lower end of the 'spectrum', wouldn't be able to afford to buy a home. They will always need to rent which is too high in the private sector for many. Social rent would resolve many of the housing issues as many can never aspire to buy.

Response: The Strategic Housing Market Assessment details that in order to meet housing need, new housing developments should provide an affordable housing mix comprising 70% social rent and 30% Shared Ownership houses. As a result there is a larger percentage of social rented accommodation being made available to residents to support those at the lower end of the 'spectrum' who are unable to afford to buy a property.

5. How far do you agree that our delivery plan proposal addresses priority two?

Respondents were asked how far they agreed that the delivery plan proposals addressed priority two – reduce homelessness. The table below shows that 44.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the plan does. 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 23.2% did not agree or disagree and 22.5% did not answer this question.



A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

Comment: “Always a good idea to try to give homeless people a home, as it also prevents their turning to crime or becoming victims of crime. However, there will be some who don't want to be housed and some who have homes but choose not to live there. So, 'relevant' has lots of variables.”

Response: We have adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 which will address the needs of the homeless cohort and link to the Housing Strategy.

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Comment: “More opportunity for single homeless vulnerable people will make a huge difference to not only their lives but the whole community. Private rented opportunities for those clients is extremely difficult to secure due to vulnerabilities past history and stigma attached to being single and homeless. It would be really effective if there was a specific estate agent set up to help those secure PSL like they have done in Surrey. It works really well and that is a very affluent area but they still are able to help”.

Response: We have adopted a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 which will provide more opportunities for single homeless vulnerable residents and outline how West Berkshire Council will seek to improve their current situations and opportunities.

Comment: Much more detail is needed on the package of measures intended to incentivise private landlords to accommodate people at risk of homelessness. What measures have worked in other local authority areas? Will this approach be sufficient, in a rapidly changing housing market, to offset the threat of homelessness? Given the likely reduction in demand for commercial premises post-Covid, would it not make more sense to invest in appropriately-specified low cost structures on vacant sites - an example that comes to mind would be insulated shipping containers, suitably spaced on a redundant commercial site on (say) Bone Lane in Newbury, not too far from essential services.

Response: We are currently working with our private landlords in the district regarding accommodation needs and the package of measures range from a tenant finder service, support and dedicated staff to financial incentives which is similar to what other local authorities provide. Alternative housing solutions will come out of the work carried out as part of the delivery of the housing strategy.

Comments: Hostels are temporary accommodations and not suitable for all single individuals experiencing homelessness. These individuals can spend a vast amount of time in a hostel before finding more suitable accommodation. Can more be done to ensure they spend less time in a hostel before finding more suitable accommodation i.e. supported housing?

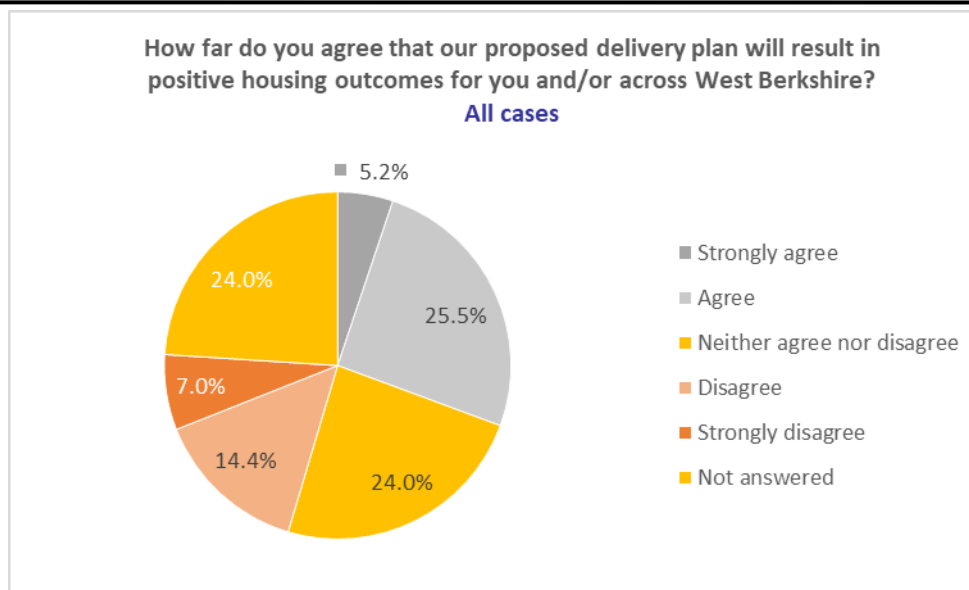
Response: West Berkshire has adopted a Move-on Strategy which is part of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 and includes the use of hostels and temporary accommodation as part of this.

6. How far do you agree that our proposed delivery plan will result in positive housing outcomes for you and/or across West Berkshire?

Respondents were asked if they thought that the proposed delivery plan will result in positive housing outcomes. The table below shows that 30.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the plan will, 21.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 24% did not agree or disagree and 24% of respondents did not answer this question.

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A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

Comment: “As part of the ageing population I am not sure there is enough in the plan to ensure suitable properties will actually get provided without exorbitant sale, leasehold or maintenance fees for the residents/owners that many of these developments charge”

Response: Our Affordable Housing Provision mix is 70% social rent and 30% shared ownership. There is a larger percentage of social rented accommodation being made available to meet the affordability aspect of our residents and we will be working with our Registered Providers on affordability in relation to shared ownership and service charges that align with your concerns about leasehold fees. In addition, Homes England will also be involved as part of continuous engagement regarding the development of these schemes.

Comment: “Needs a holistic consultation on infrastructure to support these 10500 extra homes, and also the further education growth expected in the age group of 15-19 year olds. 8.8% growth. Also the growth of the social care sector where the age range growth is expected to be 80.5% for over 75's. Climate Emergency needs more focus - carbon neutral builds, and green affordable housing in terms of build and also bills utilities for occupiers”

Response: The infrastructure to support the additional homes will be aligned with the Local Plan. As part of the feedback the Climate Emergency focus will be revisited in terms of emphasis within the plan.

Comments: There should be more emphasis on brownfield development and re-development, to protect greenfield sites in the areas of natural beauty.

Response: The Core Strategy Development Plan and Local Plan will address these concerns.

Comments: It is not firm enough on plans, targets and timelines. There are too many hard targets that these plans should have to hit and deadlines to deliver.

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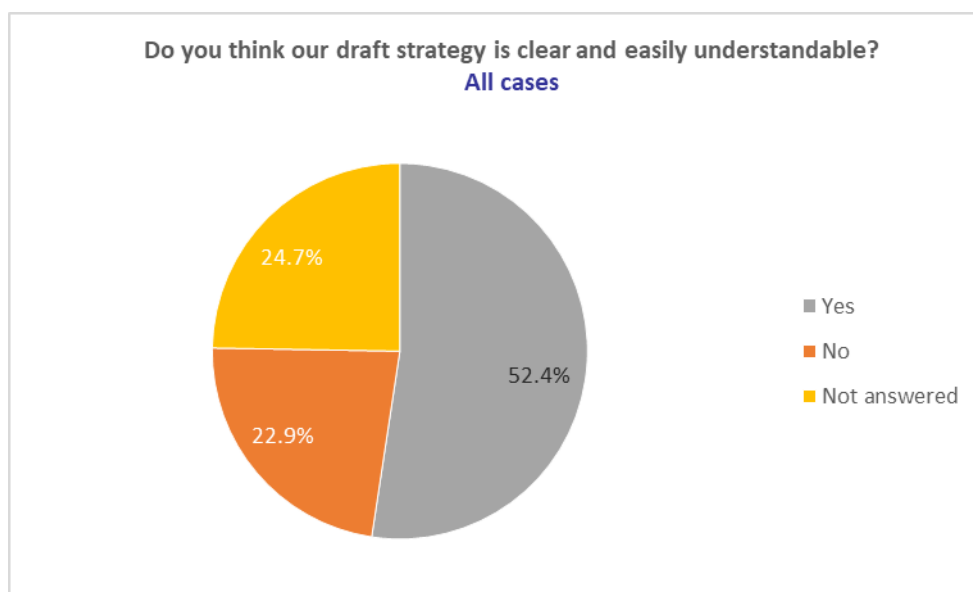
Response: This has been noted and we have reviewed the delivery plan and made amendments in light of this feedback.

Comment in support of the Strategy:

- This is an excellent well thought out strategy. Covid has given us a new way of looking at opportunities and working within the new norm. Let's bite the bullet and be innovative and get actively involved in delivering new affordable homes and lets really drive long term change with creative (but equally well thought out solutions).

7. Do you think our draft strategy is clear and easily understandable?

The table below 52.4% of respondents thought that the strategy was clear and easy to understand. Only 22.9% thought it wasn't whilst 24.7% did not answer the question.



A number of comments were raised and these are identified below:

Comments: It would have been useful to have a summary document to summarise the main points

Response: This will form part of the changes made to the final draft housing strategy

A sample of comments in support of the Strategy:

- Well thought out, in addition it flows well and sets out clear objectives
- I read the document and remained engaged - for a government document it avoided acronyms and outlined everything clearly
- It is very detailed and everything is explained.

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8. Do you have any additional comments?

A number of comments were raised and these are identified below :

Comment: What is the Council's joint venture delivery vehicle, and how does it function?

Response: The Joint Venture delivery vehicle was set up by the Council with Sovereign Housing Association to develop and grow opportunities in the market place such as increasing the supply of housing. There is a joint Board that governs and makes decisions about growth opportunities that is submitted to the JV to progress and complete.

Comment: "Children and adults with disabilities level of independence and quality of life is closely interconnected with the home environment and is highly dependent on space. There is not much detail within the strategy pertaining to meeting people with disabilities' highly specialist needs via planning and development at the early phase. Huge cost savings could be gained by working with partners to consult and adapt houses to meet specialist needs at the time of planning/building, rather than adapting afterwards using DFG funding. Space within the home is a key factor and most modern build has small rooms and is high density. Housing strategy often does not take into account the families of children with disabilities. Most specialist new build for people with disabilities has one carer and is an adult ie. 1 or 2 bedroom homes."

Response: We administer the Disabled Facilities Grant which addresses the housing needs of residents with disabilities and potential adaptations. Reference to this has been included within the updated Strategy.

Comment: "House builders are mainly interested in families (which are an important part of our community). But there are many family homes occupied by retired people. It would be useful to have a focus group aimed at starting a discussion with people who are per-retirement with no children or in early retirement to find out what accommodation they think they will require over the next 10 years and encouraging builders/developers to take these needs into account. This should free up family homes."

Response: This will be taken into consideration and we would also like to refer you to the Market Position Statement ASC which also addresses assistance that will be provided to older people.

Comment: The term affordable housing and social housing are not interchangeable and should be treated separately in the document/policy and where one is not applied it should be explicit. In the infographic on page 4 it mentions 2,300 households were in need of social housing, but does not mention how many received social housing 1.2 Depending how this measure is understood there is either no requirement to deliver new homes or the requirement to deliver one home per year until 2035 when the remainder can be delivered. 1.12 The return on investment of this objective should be scrutinised, as it appears to be a 'nice to have' and not a hard requirement, that will delivery material benefits. 1.13 The performance measure is very easy to achieve and will provide no benefits. I would suggest more thought should be put into what is actually required and a better

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objective is set. 1.14 The strategy seems to be moving off track. Why would the council want the private sector to fill the gaps in the housing needs of its residents?

Response: The delivery plan makes it clear how measures will be addressed and any scrutiny will be dealt with through the relevant Governance Board and for housing the main governance board is the Housing Board. In addition, the strategy will be subject to the Overview and Scrutiny. 1.14 The supply of homes is not just social housing it also includes private housing as well. So to this end we must consider all tenures in terms of supply and demand.

A sample of comments in support of the Strategy:

- Good effort. For many, the outcomes in the delivery plan are all that matter, and many of the relevant people will never read a strategy. Important to have it though, and good messages to the development sector.
- I found the report interesting to read and informative. There was very little repetition and I was interested in the facts about how WB shapes up compared to other authorities. I like the Landlord Accreditation Scheme. If this were supplemented with providing local councils with more influence over developers, then real change could be made. The Localism Act 2011 is key, if you're going to get local but in to the proposals.

Member and other stakeholder responses

Sovereign Housing Association:

Sovereign would like to see:

- More information on the demographic data and how it ties in with what is known about local income and affordability.
- The location and mix of tenure of new homes delivered through S.106
- The appetite for shared ownership homes over the next 5 years and the impact of Covid-19 on the current mortgage market.
- Plans for the local private housing market for younger people and how to address their needs.
- More information on the council-owned housing company
- Is there a possibility to extend the strategy to promoting lifetime homes or incentivising low carbon homes?
- More details on how West Berkshire will meet all of the needs of the aging population not just housing.
- More reference could be given to seeking opportunities to create more shared ownership opportunities for older people
- Consideration of homelessness and links to a 'tenancy ready' project
- Reflection of the homeless strategy actions in the strategy
- Consideration of working social landlords with proven track records to achieve outcomes that might be cost effective and provide added value in the services.
- Reference to a holistic approaches that addresses not just the physical housing need but also the support and prevention.
- The document refers to an assessment of needs for gypsy, traveller and travelling show person accommodation. But there are no specific proposals for meeting those needs.

Housing Strategy

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- More details of the plans to tackle the Environment challenge.

Response: This will form part of the changes made to the final draft housing strategy

Homes England: Affordable Homes Programme (AHP)

Homes England will be making grants available from April 2021 to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing for rent or sale. The funding is for the supply of new build affordable housing, homes for rent, social rent and affordable rent. This funding also supports the development of supported Housing, rural housing, traveller pitches and Empty homes. West Berkshire can apply for a grant to fund all of the aforementioned.

Response: This will form part of the changes made to the final draft housing strategy

The Newbury society

The Newbury Society would welcome more figures in the Strategy about the existing housing situation and trends. In particular, the numbers and percentages for social housing and privately-rented housing locally, as compared to the national averages; and the recent trends in both these figures.

Looking at the data it is difficult to understand why the council's priorities, as expressed in this document, are to produce more houses for purchase, rather than social housing. Surely this should be the priority?

How can steps towards Priority 1 be realised without promoting social housing?

Where the strategy is not prioritising housing for purchase, it looks to private rental. Market rents are not in any way affordable for people such as shop workers, factory operatives, cafe and catering staff. To prioritise the private rental sector above social housing, as appears to be the case in this strategy (e.g. pp. 20-21), is to fail to respond to the needs of local people.

In addition, many local villages are looking for genuinely-affordable houses for local people, who are often priced out of the area by house prices; so in practice this means social housing, rather than homes for sale to more commuters.

We hope there is some room within the national policy framework for a local expansion of social housing, and that the council will be aware of routes by which this can be pursued. To use taxpayers money to subsidise houses for purchase is a policy open to question when genuinely-affordable homes are in such demand. The recently-published planning White Paper proposes to reduce the amount of "affordable" housing obtainable through the planning process, which would be a retrograde step. We would like West Berkshire Council to call for central government to grant more freedom to local councils to provide genuinely-affordable housing where they feel it is needed (and this would include freedoms to raise and spend the money necessary to do so). This would allow local authorities to build good-quality houses and flats that people on minimum wage can afford, and still be

Housing Strategy

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able to feed and clothe a family. Nationally, we would like to see an emphasis on Registered Social Landlords being the providers of more genuinely-affordable housing, with suitable finance from government via the Public Works Loan Board or equivalent, and perhaps CIL money being divided between infrastructure and RSLs. David Peacock Newbury Society October 2020

Response: A number of these comments has already been addressed through our Affordable Housing Programme, where we specify that 70% Social Housing and 30% Shared Ownership is delivered. This aligns with our commitment to help residents on a low income because we are requesting social rent which is cheaper than Affordable Rent which is 80% of Market Rent. We have to consider all tenures therefore there needs to be an emphasis on both affordable housing and private rented sector housing.

Liberal Democrat Group response

Our Priorities

1. The Liberal Democrat Group give a very high priority to the provision of sufficient affordable housing. "Affordable" in our view means that any household with one or more members in work should be able to afford to live in a decent home. It includes costs of heating and powering all reasonable domestic appliances, as well as costs of finding, buying (or renting) and maintaining a home in good condition, sustaining the health of all occupants and of the local economy, i.e. all "housing costs" incurred by the occupier.
2. We also believe that helping to meet a family's laudable aspiration to own their own home is a secondary priority for a Housing Authority. It is more important to help every household achieve security of tenure, whatever that tenure might be. For many families, renting is more sensible than owning.
3. Also the needs of the tenant should always take priority over those of the landlord if there has to be a choice, especially where there are children or vulnerable adults involved. We want to see an early end to 'no fault eviction' and the introduction of intermediate tenure: it is unacceptable that families with children cannot plan ahead for settled schooling because they don't know if they might have to move out of the area after losing their home at the whim of a landlord.
4. We are opposed to many of this Government's – and its predecessor's - policies on housing, some of which are mentioned in the draft Strategy and acknowledged there as causing 'challenges'. Our comments below reflect that but should not be taken as a criticism of this Council or, in particular, of its Housing Service.
5. We note the very significant improvements achieved by the Service over recent years, especially in its own operations such as the prevention of homelessness. We applaud those responsible and we also concur with most of their plans to continue improving. Our comments are therefore intended to be constructive and supportive of the Council's ambitions.

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6. We support the Council's priorities in Section 7 but we remain unconvinced that Housing will receive the resources needed to achieve the Delivery Plan described in Section 8.

The National Context

7. We fully agree that the planning system is the "key mechanism" for achieving sufficient affordable new homes. We have supported the Administration in opposing the Government's proposed radical reforms set out in "Planning for the Future" and we believe these proposals have far more potential to undermine the delivery of sufficient and (by our definition) "affordable" new homes than they have for solving the current crisis of affordability in the housing market.
8. However the total number of new homes built in our District over the period of this Strategy can never be more than 10% of the total existing housing stock, so we focus in these comments on measures relating to the homes we already have or which are being built now. Our comments on future tenure mix, design and other aspects of new homes will be reserved for the Local Plan Review, although the Strategy does include details of these.
9. We note that almost half of the Actions in the Strategy have the words "staffing capacity" mentioned under "Risks". Therefore there is a high risk overall that budget pressures imposed on this Council by the awaited government funding settlement will mean that the Strategy cannot be achieved. We will have to wait and see what other pressures are made on the Council's budget from other service areas before we commit to supporting the Actions. Our comments that follow assume that Actions can and will be fully funded.

Strategy Delivery Plan

10. We are unsure what "proactively engage with developers" means, both as regards delivery of new homes and in providing advice on the "removing unnecessary burdens" mentioned. Whilst success in this going forward will be measurable, we note the average number of new homes per year since 2001 (376) compares badly with the target of 525 and even worse with the likely increase to nearer 600 per year. We need to know more about the action[s] by Housing & Planning Services proposed to boost this number.
11. Similarly, "a Council-owned housing company" sounds like a good idea but it is unclear how it will manage to deliver more private and affordable rented accommodation for residents, or whether the homes acquired are in the current stock or newly built future stock. We need to see details of a business case.
12. Past experience of attempts to prioritise homes for "key workers" is not good, largely because it stigmatises those who apply. It is only because the housing market is flawed that this is needed. In a properly functioning housing market, anyone who really needs a home and is in full-time paid work – let alone professionally qualified - should not have to be processed through our Allocations Policy. Also a breadwinner who is a "key worker" now may not be in a few years while the economy is going through rapid change: then what happens?

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13. We would like to see the stock condition survey include data on the kind of landlord owning the poorer quality homes. We suspect that the smaller buy-to-let ‘amateur’ landlord, whose numbers have grown in recent years, will prove to account for a large share of these.
14. We support measures to accredit landlords because we believe many lack the skills needed to fulfil the landlord service and own these properties purely as investments, to the detriment of their occupants and the quality of our housing stock and the built environment. As Housing Authority, we should ensure that the “professional landlord” role and status is enhanced. Whilst the PPP may be the best way of achieving this, it seems to have little member oversight and insufficient resources.
15. All the above comments on the Delivery Plan relate to a very wide-ranging Priority 1. On Priority 2 (preventing homelessness), we believe there is unlikely to ever be support for this from the traditional private sector development industry because they will see the provision of accommodation for homeless people to be a serious drag on the profitability of any nearby market properties, unless it is just a short-term measure using properties they intend to demolish. However we agree that the private sector, in the form of local businesses other than developers, might help provide support services. We broadly support the measures in the recently agreed Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
16. Returning to the point we made in our first paragraph, there is no mention of heating costs in the Strategy, despite the featured statistic on page 7 that housing accounts for 18% of the District’s carbon emissions and the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency. Whilst it may be Environment Board that is responsible for achieving carbon reduction targets overall, we regard this as a serious omission in the Housing Strategy. “Affordable” housing must be affordable to heat, particularly for those on low incomes or vulnerable for other reasons. The Housing Service needs to give a high priority to tackling fuel poverty, which is very often associated with poor quality housing.
17. We cannot assume from what we read in this draft Strategy that the Service is sufficiently involved in carbon reduction efforts. We trust that the housing stock survey will identify which properties exhibit poor insulation but we need to see what measures are going to be taken to improve it. This is probably most urgent with private rented accommodation, which we suspect has the worst performance.
18. Specific measures should include lobbying for Government support to the Local Energy Bill, proposed at Full Council recently, which would give local councils and our communities the “power to power” themselves by being able to purchase energy outside of the national market and greater control over the rate at which homes are converted to both renewably sourced electricity and from carbon fuel for heating and cooking. Renewable is also becoming cheaper than carbon sourced energy and we need to be more ambitious in our drive to cut carbon emissions. We cannot ignore the housing sector and we ought to be proactive in this.

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19. Finally we found it a hard document to navigate and we are sure that it would be extremely hard for a lay person to understand and follow. We have just been sent the response of Paula Saunderson with comments on this aspect among others, regarding the layout and format of the document. We agree wholeheartedly with her comments.

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Housing Strategy Communications Plan

Draft v0.2 August 2020

Executive Member	Cllr Hilary Cole
Sponsor	Gary Lugg
Project Manager	Neil Coles
Communications Officer	Mandip Bilkhu
Internal stakeholders	Housing Board
	Heads of Service
	WBC Staff
External Stakeholders	Homelessness Strategy Group
	Registered Providers (RPs)
	Voluntary and third sector agencies
	Supported housing providers
	Thames Valley Police
	Previous, current, and potential service users
	West Berkshire residents

	WHAT What will be communicated	WHO Audience	WHY Purpose of Communication	HOW Method of Communication	WHEN Timing of Communication	Responsibility	Progress RAG rating
1.	Live consultation on the website	Internal	<p>To inform them there is a consultation taking place.</p> <p>To take part in having their say.</p> <p>To share consultation amongst their networks</p> <p>To encourage more replies to the survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council website • Intranet • Posters in council owned buildings • Update email from Nick/Lynne • During the Let's Chat session with staff, allow 5-10mins for the service area to discuss the consultation • Reporter 	When consultation goes live and then continually throughout the consultation period (6 weeks)	Comms Graphics Leaders	

	WHAT What will be communicated	WHO Audience	WHY Purpose of Communication	HOW Method of Communication	WHEN Timing of Communication	Responsibility	Progress RAG rating
2.	<p>Live consultation on the website.</p> <p>What does the consultation mean?</p> <p>Why should people responds to this consultation?</p> <p>How do they respond?</p> <p>Key messages on various elements of the strategy in the media statement.</p>	General public	<p>To inform them there is a consultation taking place and to take part in having their say.</p> <p>Seek views and ensure involved in strategy development, feedback incorporated into strategy</p> <p>Share the consultation amongst their own networks.</p> <p>Approved media statement and spokesperson to use in press release and other forms of communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email to consultation distribution list • Council website • Social media (images/videos) • Press release • Media interviews • NWN weekly briefing (Tuesdays) • Residents newsletter • Posters in council owned buildings • Town and Parish Councils • Schools • Partner/stakeholders • Citizen Advice Bureau • Health and Wellbeing Board • Homelessness Group • Bordering Local Authorities • Webinars 	When consultation goes live and then continually throughout the consultation period (6 weeks)	Comms Graphics Leaders	

	WHAT What will be communicated	WHO Audience	WHY Purpose of Communication	HOW Method of Communication	WHEN Timing of Communication	Responsibility	Progress RAG rating
3.	Consultation has gone live on the website as a key target audience it's important they have their say on this consultation	<p>Key workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Fire Service • NHS / GPs • Private care providers • Internal 	<p>To inform them there is a consultation taking place and to take part in having their say.</p> <p>Seek views and ensure involved in strategy development, feedback incorporated into strategy</p> <p>Share the consultation amongst their own networks.</p> <p>Awareness that consultation is available in other formats to ensure full access i.e. hard copies of the consultation survey can be requested by phone.</p>	<p>Public listed communications channels.</p> <p>Network / service leads to inform key contacts in this group by email, virtual meeting or telephone call.</p> <p>Make use of this audience's communication channels e.g. their intranet, add to their website, put on their social media channels and we tag them in our messages, staff newsletters, posters that can be used in the staff areas etc.</p>	When consultation goes live and then continually throughout the consultation period (6 weeks)	Comms Graphics Leaders	

	WHAT What will be communicated	WHO Audience	WHY Purpose of Communication	HOW Method of Communication	WHEN Timing of Communication	Responsibility	Progress RAG rating
4.	Consultation has gone live on the website as a key target audience it's important they have their say on this consultation	Elderly / Vulnerable	<p>To inform them there is a consultation taking place and to take part in having their say.</p> <p>Seek views and ensure involved in strategy development, feedback incorporated into strategy</p> <p>Share the consultation amongst their own networks.</p> <p>We can offer hard copies of the consultation survey if needed due to no access to a computer</p> <p>Have assets specific to this audience rather than generic?</p>	<p>Public listed communications channels.</p> <p>Make contact with the following list of organisations to share the consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advice Bureau • Community groups/centres such as art or exercise groups • Carers • Homeless shelters • Volunteer and charity groups • Places of worship • Town and Parish Councils • NHS/GP surgeries <p>Add this to their intranet, add to their website, put on their social media channels and we tag them in our messages, newsletters, posters, leaflets, etc.</p>	When consultation goes live and then continually throughout the consultation period (6 weeks)	Comms Graphics Leaders	

	WHAT What will be communicated	WHO Audience	WHY Purpose of Communication	HOW Method of Communication	WHEN Timing of Communication	Responsibility	Progress RAG rating
5.	Consultation has gone live on the website as a key target audience it's important they have their say on this consultation	Young people	<p>To inform them there is a consultation taking place and to take part in having their say.</p> <p>Seek views and ensure involved in strategy development, feedback incorporated into strategy</p> <p>Share the consultation amongst their own networks.</p>	<p>In addition to the public listed communications channels, we can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Carers Team • Secondary School/Colleges • Job Centre • Voluntary and Community Services • Social media (organic or paid adverts) • Webinars or Facebook live for some focus groups <p>Add this to their intranet, add to their website, put on their social media channels and we tag them in our messages, newsletters, posters, leaflets, etc.</p>	When consultation goes live and then continually throughout the consultation period (6 weeks)	Comms Graphics Leaders	

Location:	PR folder
Version:	0.2
Last Updated:	14 Aug 2020
By:	Neil Coles

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2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

Committee considering report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Committee:	26 January 2021
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Date Head of Service agreed report: <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	10.11.20
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	26.11.20
Report Author:	Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3908

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on the in-year financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.

2 Recommendation

- 1.1 To note the Quarter Two forecast of £1.5m under spend.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

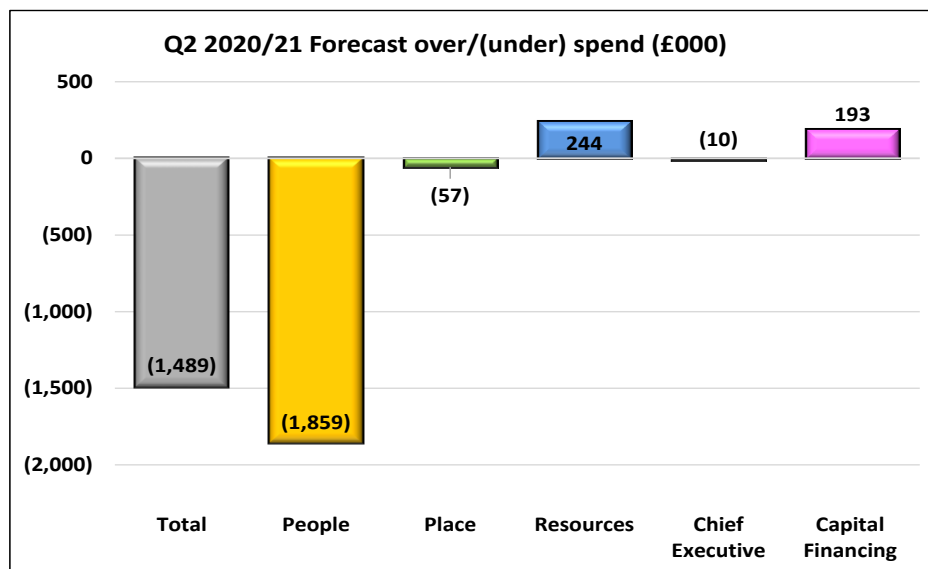
Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The Quarter Two forecast is an under spend of £1.5m. Any under spend at year end will be added to the Council's reserves. Any under spend arising from the Covid grant funding will be set off against the Collection Fund deficit.
Human Resource:	None
Legal:	None
Risk Management:	Risks to next years' budget are included where relevant in the report. Where identified these will form part of the budget build process for 2021/22.
Property:	Impact on income due to an unlet commercial property.

Policy:	No			
	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?		Y		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		Y		
Environmental Impact:		Y		
Health Impact:		Y		
ICT Impact:		y		
Digital Services Impact:		y		
Council Strategy Priorities:		y		Business as usual
Core Business:		y		
Data Impact:		y		

Consultation and Engagement:	Budget holders, Heads of Service and Directors.
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4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Quarter Two forecast is an under spend of £1.5m, which is 1.1% of the Council's 2020/21 net revenue budget of £131m. The two main services contributing to this are Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children & Family Services (CFS).



4.2 The People Directorate is forecasting an under spend of £1.86m, with the principle under spends arising from ASC £1m, CFS £639k and Education £197k.

In ASC, long term services (LTS) are forecast to be £1.4m under spent. ASC has seen a high number of deaths in the first six months of 2019/20. We recorded the deaths of 295 people who were in receipt of services commissioned by ASC. This compares with 199 deaths in the same period during 2018/19. This is an additional 96 deaths in the first half of the year. Deaths have been seen both in care homes and in community settings. The increased number of deaths will have been largely driven, but not solely, due to Covid-19 and may have been a combination of both direct and indirect impacts. Covid-19 will also have had further impacts, such as on the circumstances, behaviours and choices of service users and their families.

There are 78 clients in step down placements and the forecast assumes that half of them will require a LTS. The service has taken action to suppress demand including use of technology enabled care, reinforcing the 3 conversations model, maximising external funding streams and ensuring supply and demand are better aligned. Short term services (STS) are largely in line with budget. There is an income pressure of £387k in the four council care homes due to falling occupancy. A number of assumptions have been made regarding the impact of Covid-19 on budgets and these are detailed in the report.

- In CFS, the forecast under spend of £639k is largely in placements, where since the end of the financial year 2019/20, there has been a decrease in the number of clients. Decreases have mainly been in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and In-house fostering. The Quarter Two forecast allows for an increase to client numbers during the financial year, as there is evidence among neighbouring authorities of a noticeable increase in children entering care as a result of Covid-19 pressures on households and UASC presentation in the UK has not declined overall. Client numbers have been increasing over the last three years, but 2020/21 has seen a significant reduction to date. This is being taken into account for 2021/22.

4.3 The Place Directorate is forecasting an under spend of £57k. The main variances are:

- In Public Protection & Culture, a forecast over spend of £61k arising from income pressures in Shaw House, building control and libraries.
- In Transport & Countryside, a forecast under spend of £104k mainly from increased energy from waste and garden waste subscriptions are anticipated to exceed target.

4.4 The Resources Directorate has a £244k forecast over spend. The main areas are under achievement of income in Finance and Property from commercial property, and in Strategy and Governance from land charges, graphics and digital transformation.

4.5 The Capital Financing Quarter Two forecast position is a £193k over spend. £100k relates to a corporate commercialisation target and £93k to under recovery of write back targets. Neither are achievable and will be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 budget build.

4.6 The 2020/21 savings and income generation programme of £3.2m, is 88% Green, 8% Amber and 4% Red.

Covid-19 impact on the 2020/21 budget

4.7 There continues to be significant impact on the 2020/21 budget due to Covid-19. To date, the Council has been awarded four tranches of un-ringfenced emergency expenditure grant from Central Government to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 totalling £9.56m. There will be emergency grant for lost income, with an estimated total of £2.08m. In addition, there have been a number of specific grants received.

4.8 The latest assessment is that the funding provided by Government and the income scheme below are sufficient for the 2020/21 Financial Year based on current estimates. Clearly, these can fluctuate, and will in light of further impacts from the Covid-19 outbreak. The Council also has general reserves to support further impacts and these are above the minimum level set by the s151 officer.

4.9 The COVID emergency grants will fund service Covid related expenditure, lost income and unmet savings. These are being estimated, recorded and reported to GOLD. The latest forecast through to March 2021 is that these pressures amount to £9.94m for 2020/21 which the emergency expenditure and income grant will offset. The assumptions in budget monitoring is that there will be enough grant to cover all expenditure losses but that income may not be fully compensated. The longer term position will require further analysis and announcements from Central Government on the funding position for Local Government, before the impact on 2021/22 and beyond is known.

2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

4.10 The Council has now submitted seven forecasts to Central Government on the Covid-19 financial impact and claimed against the income guarantee scheme for April to July.

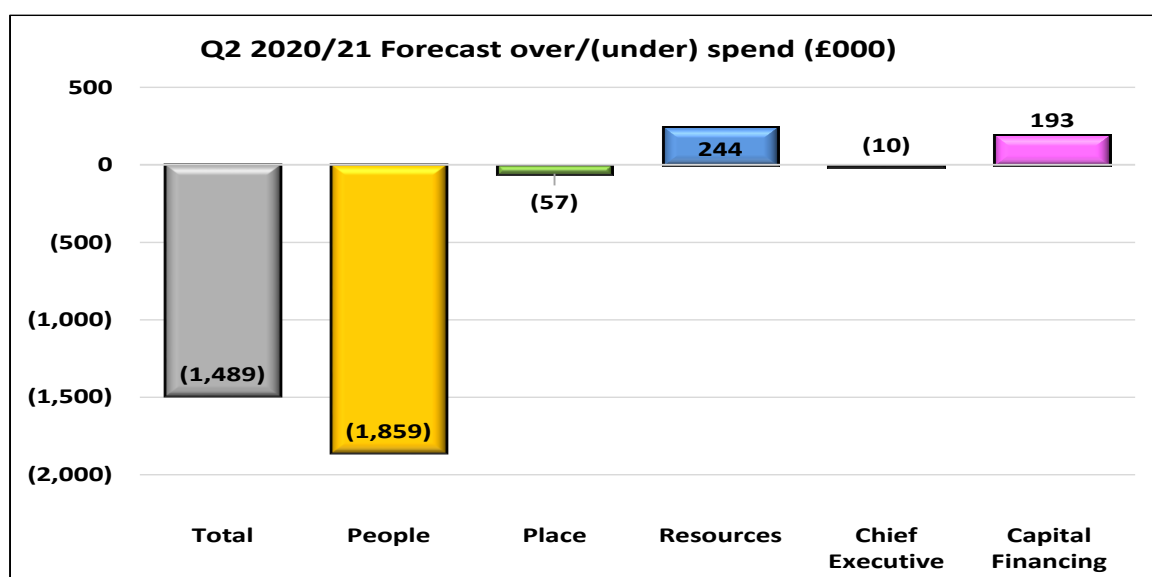
Conclusion

4.11 The Council is forecasting an under spend of £1.5m, which is a positive reflection on the management of adult and children social care. The £3.2m savings and income generation programme is forecasting 88% achieved at Quarter Two. The Covid-19 grant funding received from Government to date, and the Council's level of general fund reserves mean that the Council is well placed to focus its efforts on response and recovery from the Covid-19 into next financial year. Any Covid-19 grant under spend will be used to offset Collection Fund deficit.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The Quarter Two overall forecast is an under spend of £1.5m. This is 1.1% of the Council's 2020/21 net revenue budget of £131m.



5.2 The Directorate forecasts are shown in the chart below, showing the forecast under spend increasing by £0.9m since last quarter.

Directorate Summary	Current Net Budget	Net Forecast	Forecast (under)/over spend				Change to Service Forecast from Last Quarter	Current Quarter % over / (under) spend
			Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four		
			Service Forecast	Service Forecast	Service Forecast	Service Over/ (under)		
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
People	76,317	74,459	(810)	(1,859)	0	0	(1,049)	(2.4)%
Place	31,143	31,086	(101)	(57)	0	0	44	(0.2)%
Resources	11,679	11,923	230	244	0	0	14	2.1%
Chief Executive	759	749	(10)	(10)	0	0	0	(1.3)%
Capital Financing	11,197	11,390	100	193	0	0	93	1.7%
Total	131,095	129,607	(590)	(1,489)	0	0	(898)	(1.1)%

5.3 The Service forecasts are shown in the following chart:

	Current Net Budget	Net Forecast	Forecast over/ (under) spend				Change to Service Forecast from Last Quarter
			Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four	
			Service Forecast	Service Forecast	Service Forecast	Over/ (under) spend	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adult Social Care	50,508	49,482	(588)	(1,026)	0	0	(438)
Children & Family Services	17,167	16,528	(247)	(639)	0	0	(392)
Executive Director	336	341	3	4	0	0	1
Education DSG funded	(444)	(444)	0	0	0	0	0
Education	8,830	8,633	22	(197)	0	0	(219)
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)	(80)	0	0	0	0	0
People	76,317	74,459	(810)	(1,859)	0	0	(1,049)
Executive Director	197	197	0	0	0	0	0
Development & Planning	3,180	3,166	(76)	(14)	0	0	62
Public Protection & Culture	3,895	3,956	75	61	0	0	(14)
Transport & Countryside	23,871	23,767	(99)	(104)	0	0	(5)
Place	31,143	31,086	(101)	(57)	0	0	44
Executive Director	195	215	0	20	0	0	20
Commissioning	799	761	(58)	(38)	0	0	20
Customer Services & ICT	2,983	3,043	59	60	0	0	1
Finance & Property	2,674	2,812	123	138	0	0	15
Human Resources	1,714	1,691	(10)	(23)	0	0	(13)
Legal and Strategic Support	3,314	3,401	115	87	0	0	(28)
Resources	11,679	11,923	230	244	0	0	14
Chief Executive	759	749	(10)	(10)	0	0	0
Capital Financing	11,197	11,390	100	193	0	0	93
Capital Financing	11,197	11,390	100	193	0	0	93
Total	131,095	129,607	(590)	(1,489)	0	0	(898)

NB: Rounding differences may apply to the nearest £k.

People Directorate

5.4 The Directorate is forecasting an under spend of £1.86m, against a budget of £76m. This is an increase of £1m from last quarter. At Quarter One, there was no funding agreement in place beyond September for hospital discharge patients, so increased costs were forecast from October. Funding extensions have since been announced. Client numbers have also remained lower than budget.

- In ASC, the forecast under spend of £1m, has increased by £0.4m since last quarter.

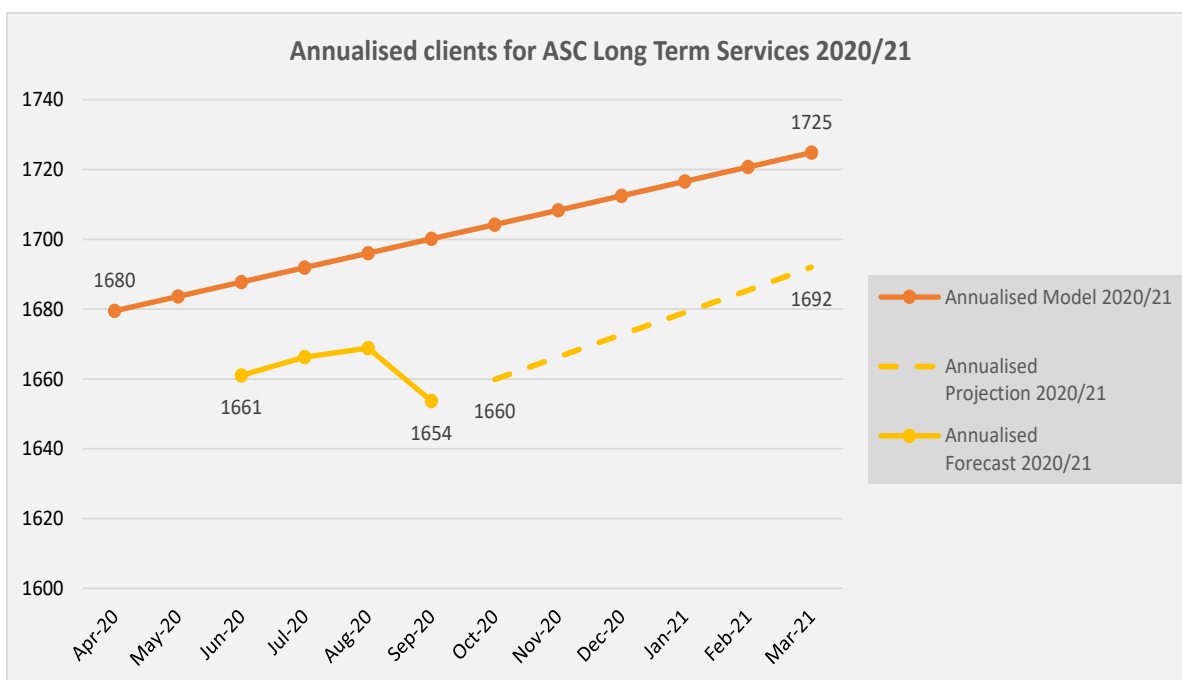
Long term services (LTS) are forecast to be £1.4m under spent. ASC has seen a high number of deaths in the first six months of 2020/21. The deaths of 295 people were recorded who were in receipt of services commissioned by ASC. This compares with 199 deaths in the same period during 2019/20. This is an additional 96 deaths in the first half of the year. Deaths have been seen in both care homes

2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

and in community settings. Of the 96 additional deaths, 58 were in receipt of a Long-term Service and 38 were in receipts of a Short-term Service.

The increased number of deaths will have been largely driven, but not solely, due to Covid-19 and may have been a combination of both direct and indirect impacts. Covid-19 will also have had further impacts, such as on the circumstances, behaviours and choices of service users and their families.

There are 78 clients in step down placements and the forecast assumes that half of them will require a LTS. The service has taken action to suppress demand including use of technology enabled care wherever possible, reinforcing the 3 conversations model, maximising external funding streams and ensuring supply and demand are better aligned.



Assumptions have been made regarding the impact of Covid-19 on budgets. It is assumed that the second wave of Covid will not have the same impact as the first wave, as a result of the additional measures put in place such as testing, infection control and heightened awareness. It is assumed that services that were previously unavailable will be operational for the second half of the financial year. WBC care homes are anticipating being back to their modelled occupancy rates by December, reducing the number of beds purchased on the open market.

Short term services (STS) are largely in line with budget. Within this area there is a forecast under spend in Maximising Independence budgets, due to costs being covered by Health Covid-19 funding for the first six months of 2020/21. However, an increase to costs in this area has been assumed for the remainder of the year. Other STS are over spending, after accounting for health and grant funding. This is due to the number of people in step down placements who are forecast to require additional costs for short term services before they are moved onto a long term service. Two college placements have been extended due to Covid-19, leading to increased short term costs.

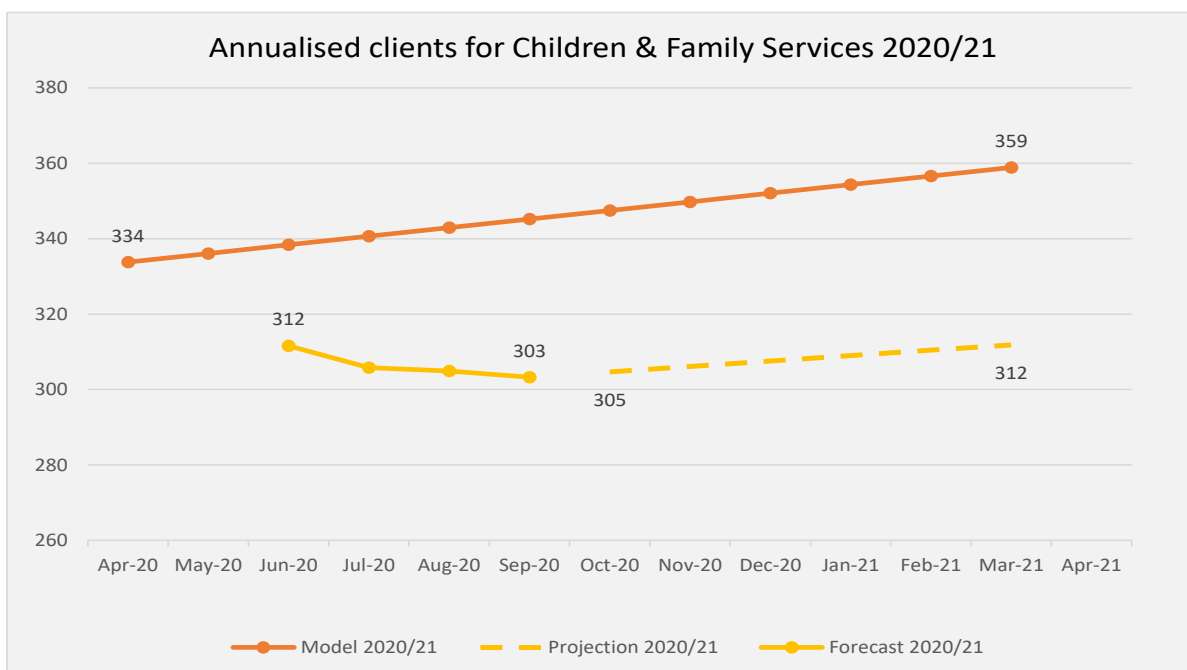
2020/21 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

In Provider Services, there is an income pressure of £387k in the four council care homes due to falling occupancy. Options are being explored to address both these concerns.

- In CFS, the forecast under spend of £639k is largely in placements, where since the end of the financial year 2019/20, there has been a decrease in the number of clients. Decreases have mainly been in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and In-house fostering. West Berkshire typically experience UASC presentations via freight transport, which is noticeably less during the Covid-19 period. With regards to other services, there has been a conscious effort by the service to provide effective support and earlier help to prevent entry to care.

Client numbers have also decreased in adoption placements and residence orders, but have increased in residential, care leavers, kinship, independent fostering agencies and special guardianship.

2020/21 has seen a significant overall reduction to date and this is being taken into account for 2021/22. In Quarter Two, the number of clients has continued to decrease but the ongoing forecast allows for an increase to client numbers during the remainder of the financial year, as there is evidence among neighbouring authorities of a noticeable increase in children entering care as a result of Covid-19 pressures on households and UASC presentation in the UK has not declined overall.



- Education is forecasting an under spend of £197k, compared to a £22k over spend forecast last quarter. Home to School Transport has a forecast under spend of £98k, partly due to previously suspended services and partly due to routes being retendered and renegotiated. External funding of £50k has been received towards the Mental Health School team project and LAC Mental Health project and trading income is over achieving by £40k. Other small under spends make up the balance.
- Education DSG is reported on line for the Council as any over or under spends are ring-fenced within the grant. However, in 2020/21 funding is £2m lower than

expenditure requirements and there is a £200k over spend forecast leading to a £2.2m in-year shortfall. This is in addition to the £1.7m brought forward deficit, taking the total forecast DSG deficit at year end to £3.9m. The pressures are mostly in High Needs but also in Early Years.

The Department for Education recognises the position that many authorities are in, and are expecting to work with authorities during 2020 to 2022 to agree a plan of action to recover the deficits.

- The Public Health grant budget is on line, however the longer term implications of Covid-19 are not yet known. Any pressures in this area are dependent on increases to the grant and what additional commitments are placed on Public Health.

Place Directorate

5.5 The Place Directorate is forecasting an under spend of £57k against a budget of £31m. The under spend has reduced by £44k since last quarter.

- In Development and Planning, the forecast under spend of £14k, has reduced from £76k last quarter. There are under spends from vacant posts and additional income from temporary accommodation rental. Development Control is still forecasting an under achievement of income, and since last quarter CIL income is also forecast to be lower than expected.
- In Public Protection & Culture, there is a forecast over spend of £61k, a minor change from last quarter. There are income pressures in Shaw House, building control and libraries and all these areas are being reviewed for 2021/22 implications.
- In Transport & Countryside, there is a forecast under spend of £104k, a slight overall increase from last quarter. Forecast savings in the waste service have increased from £100k to £250k this quarter due to increased use of energy from waste and higher than forecast garden waste subscriptions, as more data is now available on these areas. There is a £66k saving in traffic management from reduced costs and increased income. There is a shortfall of £100k in parking income mainly due to the closure of Market Street car park. Covid-19 related loss of income is expected to be grant funded. The grounds maintenance budget is over spent by £44k due to work to address Ash Die Back disease. A savings target of £68k from the implementation of solar panels on Council buildings will not be achieved this year due to delays.

Resources Directorate

5.6 The Directorate has a £244k forecast over spend against a budget of £12m. This is a similar position to last quarter. The main variances are:

- In Finance and Property, there is an overall over spend of £138k largely due to an income shortfall from a vacant commercial property,
- Strategy and Governance is forecasting an over spend of £87k from unachievable income in legal, graphics and digital transformation,
- Other services are forecasting minor over and under spends.

Chief Executive

5.7 An under spend of £10k is being forecast in the contingency budget, unchanged from last quarter.

Capital Financing

5.8 The Capital Financing Quarter Two forecast position is a £193k over spend against a £111m budget. This is an increase of £93k from last quarter. The overspend consists of

- a £100k corporate commercialisation target that is not achievable and will be removed as part of the 2021/22 budget build,
- a £93k under recovery of write back targets, partly attributable to Covid economic conditions and partly related to new payment arrangements. This target will be reviewed as part of budget build.

Covid-19 impact on the 2020/21 budget

5.9 There continues to be a significant impact on the 2020/21 budget due to Covid-19. To date, the Council has been awarded four tranches of un-ringfenced emergency expenditure grant from Central Government to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 totalling £9.56m. There will be emergency grant for lost income, with an estimated total of £2.08m. In addition, there have been a number of specific grants received. All grants are summarised in the table below. In excess of the below the Council has also distributed £37.8m of business rates relief bringing the total of Government funding for Covid-19 to the Council of £91.2m.

Covid grant funding	Q1	Q2	Q3 est	Q4 est	2020/21
	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Non-ringfenced emergency expenditure grant	7.56	1.04	0.96	-	9.56
Income compensation scheme for lost sales, fees & charges	-	1.27	0.48	0.34	2.08
Business grants and discretionary grants distributed April -August	29.31	0.17	-	-	29.48
Council Tax Hardship Fund	0.55	-	-	-	0.55
Business grants and discretionary grants distributed November onwards	-	-	5.37	-	5.37
Bus services support grant	0.11	-	-	-	0.11
Reopening High streets safely fund	0.14	-	-	-	0.14
Home to school transport	-	0.13	-	-	0.13
Emergency active travel fund	-	0.12	0.50	-	0.62
Infection control fund	0.70	0.70	1.41	-	2.81
Support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals fund	-	-	0.06	-	0.06
Test and trace service support grant	0.54	-	-	-	0.54
Test and trace support payment scheme	-	-	0.11	-	0.11
Contain outbreak mgt fund	-	-	1.27	-	1.27
Emergency assistance grant for food and essential supplies	-	0.10	-	-	0.10
Winter grant scheme	-	-	0.28	-	0.28
Additional support for rough sleepers	-	-	0.18	-	0.18
Wellbeing for Education return grant	-	0.03	-	-	0.03
Surge funding compliance and enforcement	-	-	0.06	-	0.06
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING	38.91	3.56	10.68	0.34	53.49

5.9 The COVID emergency grants will fund service Covid related expenditure, lost income and unmet savings. These are being estimated, recorded and reported to GOLD. The latest forecast through to March 2021 is that these pressures amount to £9.94m for 2020/21 which the emergency expenditure and income grant will offset.

Emergency grant funding	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21	2020/21 Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Covid emergency expenditure grant	7.56	1.04	0.96	-	9.56
Covid emergency income grant	-	1.27	0.48	0.34	2.08
TOTAL EMERGENCY GRANT	7.56	2.30	1.45	0.34	11.65
Expenditure	1.59	1.57	1.52	1.10	5.78
Income losses	1.72	1.19	0.81	0.44	4.16
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED	3.32	2.76	2.32	1.54	9.94
NET SURPLUS					1.71

5.10 Surplus funds that are non-ringfenced will be held against collection fund deficits and future covid costs in 2021/22.

5.11 Funds will be transferred to services on a quarterly basis. The assumptions in budget monitoring is that there will be enough grant to cover all expenditure losses and most income losses. The longer term position will require further analysis and announcements from Central Government on the funding position for Local Government, before the impact on 2021/22 and beyond is known.

5.12 All other grants are being spent in line with their specific conditions.

5.13 The funding received from Government to date, and the Council's level of general fund reserves mean that the Council is well placed to focus its efforts on response and recovery from the Covid-19 in the current financial year.

5.14 The table below sets out some of the key items raised during Covid-19 and the response provided through the Council.

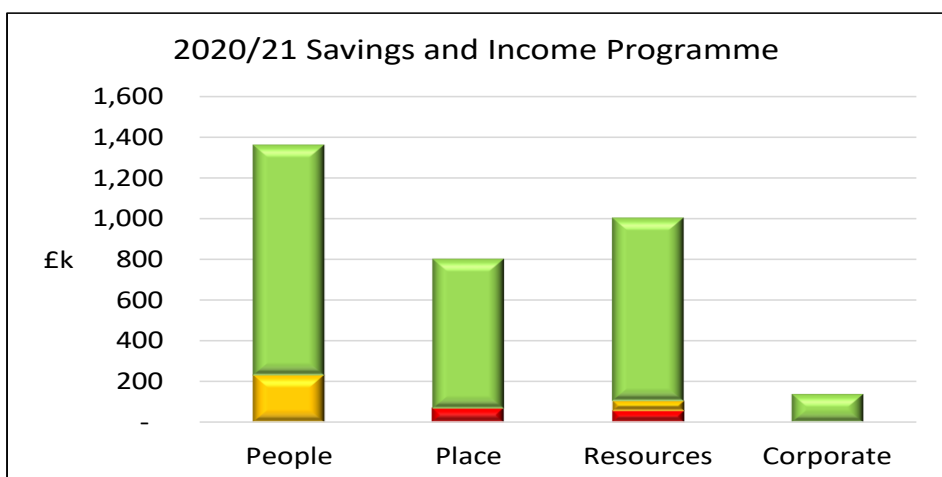
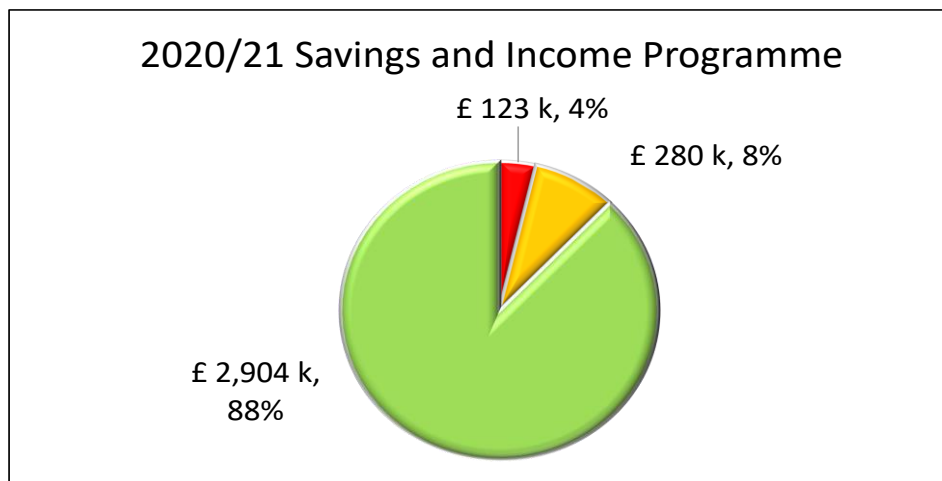
Item	Response
Additional expenditure pressures – especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Social Care - Leisure services - Community Hub - Housing 	Government have provided non ring-fenced funding of £9.6m to support the Council in its response to Covid-19. This figure has been received in four separate tranches and the Council monitors this on a weekly basis. The latest assessment is that the funding provided by Government and the income scheme below are sufficient for the 2020-21 Financial Year based on current estimates. Clearly, these can fluctuate, and will in light of further impacts from the Covid-19 outbreak. The Council also has general reserves to support further impacts and these are above the minimum level set by the s151 officer.

Item	Response
<p>Income pressures, the most significant being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parking income - Adult Social Care - Other Sales, fees and charges 	<p>Government have provided an income share scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council funds the first 5% of losses - The Council shares 25% and Government 75% of all further losses.
Cashflow risks	Government provided up front funding of, for example, business grants and paused the payment required for business rates
Specific grants provided by Government for key areas of activity, as shown above	These funds are being applied to support service specific pressures and/or to provide services through the grant.
Losses on Council Tax and Business Rates	<p>The Council Tax collection rate has held up well to date; collection is marginally down, but the Council did offer the ability to amend the two months of non Council Tax payment to early in the financial year.</p> <p>The Council made a quick early decision in March to suppress business rates recovery and the initial direct debit to support businesses. The Government have also provided a significant amount of business rates reliefs.</p> <p>The Government have announced that the collection fund deficit can be spread across a three year period rather than one year. This option will be considered as part of the budget setting process for the March Council.</p>
Impact on 2021-22 budget setting	<p>The long term flow of changed costs and lost income is difficult to estimate in detail. However, the budget for the year ahead is being prepared with adjustments for Covid-19.</p> <p>The Government has also paused the roll out of the fair funding review and further retention of business rates which reduces by just over £1m the savings requirement for 2021-22 on the assumption that all changes are paused, including the rest of business rates baselines.</p>

5.15 The longer term position will require further analysis and announcements from Central Government on the funding position for Local Government, before the impact on 2021/22 and beyond is known. The Government have announced a pause to the fair funding review for 2021/22 and so the Council is planning for a similar financial settlement for 2021/22 as it received in 2020/21.

2020/21 Savings and income generation programme

5.16 In order to meet the funding available, the 2020/21 revenue budget was built with a £3.2m savings and income generation programme. The programme is monitored using the RAG traffic light system. The status of the programme is shown in the following charts:



5.17 Unachieved red savings are as follows:

- £68k in Planning & Public Protection from phase 2 solar panels on Council buildings. This work has been delayed but is expected to be achieved in 2021/22.
- £55k in Strategy & Governance: £45k from income generation in legal will not be achieved due to Covid-19 and £10k from training income.

5.18 Amber savings are as follows:

- £80k in ASC. This represents 13% of a range of savings that are otherwise met. Work is ongoing to achieve the remainder of the savings but has been slowed due to Covid-19.
- £100k in CFS. This saving was expected to be achieved as a result of increased income. In May 2019 the Home Office announced an increase in the daily sum that can be claimed per asylum seeker child in local authority care. We calculated that

£100k could be released from the existing UASC budget because of this additional income. This has not been possible due to the decrease in UASC cases.

- £50k in Education as Covid-19 has led to delays in health funding assessments for disabled children.
- £40k in Finance & Property. Implementation of the VAT reclaim on mileage project has become a lower priority as mileage claims are greatly reduced.
- £10k in HR relating to an efficiency target yet to be achieved.

Proposals

5.19 To note the Quarter Two forecast.

6 Other options considered

6.1 None.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Council is forecasting an under spend of £1.5m, which is a positive reflection on the management of adult and children social care. The £3.2m savings and income generation programme is forecasting 88% achieved at Quarter Two. The Covid-19 grant funding received from Government to date, and the Council's level of general fund reserves mean that the Council is well placed to focus its efforts on response and recovery from the Covid-19 into next financial year. Any Covid-19 grant under spend will be used to offset Collection Fund deficit.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Forecast position

8.2 Appendix B – Budget changes

Corporate Board's recommendation

*(add text)

Background Papers:

*(add text)

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: *(add text)

Officer details:

Name: *(add text)
 Job Title: *(add text)
 Tel No: *(add text)
 E-mail: *(add text)

Document Control

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

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Appendix A – Forecast position

	Budget				Forecasted Performance						
	Original Budget 2020/21 £	Changes in year 2020/21 £	Funding Released from Reserves 2020/21 £	Revised Budget 2020/21 £	Expenditure			Income			Net
					Annual Expenditure Budget for 2020/21 £	Annual Expenditure Forecast for 2020/21 £	Expenditure Variance for 2020/21 £	Annual Income Budget for 2020/21 £	Annual Income Forecast for 2020/21 £	Income Variance for 2020/21 £	Net Variance £
Adult Social Care	50,220,510	0	287,920	50,508,430	73,203,400	70,775,510	-2,427,890	-22,694,970	-21,293,480	1,401,490	-1,026,400
Childrens and Family Services	17,102,250	-11,660	76,260	17,166,850	19,139,320	18,241,520	-897,800	-1,972,470	-1,714,020	258,450	-639,350
Executive Director - People	249,440	0	87,000	336,440	336,440	340,580	4,140	0	0	0	4,140
Education (DSG Funded)	-444,000	0	0	-444,000	108,034,100	108,105,840	71,740	-108,478,100	-108,549,840	-71,740	0
Education	8,829,540	0	0	8,829,540	12,221,200	11,776,090	-445,110	-3,391,660	-3,143,540	248,120	-196,990
Public Health & Wellbeing	-80,000	0	0	-80,000	5,951,590	6,451,930	500,340	-6,031,590	-6,531,930	-500,340	0
People	75,877,740	-11,660	451,180	76,317,260	218,886,050	215,691,470	-3,194,580	-142,568,790	-141,232,810	1,335,980	-1,858,600
Corporate Director - Economy & Environment	197,080	0	0	197,080	197,080	197,080	0	0	0	0	0
Development and Planning	3,070,650	32,820	76,270	3,179,740	6,535,760	6,367,360	-168,400	-3,356,020	-3,201,550	154,470	-13,930
Public Protection and Culture	3,903,550	-8,400	0	3,895,150	9,261,680	9,238,820	-22,860	-5,366,530	-5,282,300	84,230	61,370
Transport and Countryside	23,795,330	-51,840	127,700	23,871,190	34,805,930	34,751,660	-54,270	-10,934,740	-10,985,310	-50,570	-104,840
Place	30,966,610	-27,420	203,970	31,143,160	50,800,450	50,554,920	-245,530	-19,657,290	-19,469,160	188,130	-57,400
Executive Director - Resources	120,870	73,980	0	194,850	194,850	214,850	20,000	0	0	0	20,000
Commissioning	814,420	-18,900	3,820	799,340	10,300,370	10,311,570	11,200	-9,501,030	-9,549,930	-48,900	-37,700
Customer Services and ICT	2,970,540	0	12,380	2,982,920	3,837,330	3,824,740	-12,590	-854,410	-782,080	72,330	59,740
Finance and Property	2,823,670	-150,020	0	2,673,650	47,421,350	56,808,110	9,386,760	-44,747,700	-53,995,980	-9,248,280	138,480
Human Resources	1,723,870	-10,200	0	1,713,670	2,113,600	2,103,160	-10,440	-399,930	-412,990	-13,060	-23,500
Legal and Strategic Support	3,004,900	101,240	207,960	3,314,100	3,999,740	4,004,480	4,740	-685,640	-603,110	82,530	87,270
Resources	11,458,270	-3,900	224,160	11,678,530	67,867,240	77,266,910	9,399,670	-56,188,710	-65,344,090	-9,155,380	244,290
Chief Executive	833,510	-74,020	0	759,490	769,490	756,990	-12,500	-10,000	-7,500	2,500	-10,000
Chief Executive	833,510	-74,020	0	759,490	769,490	756,990	-12,500	-10,000	-7,500	2,500	-10,000
Capital Financing & Management	11,196,770	0	0	11,196,770	11,974,340	11,673,340	-301,000	-777,570	-283,570	494,000	193,000
Movement Through Reserves	-117,000	117,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Risk Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing and Risk Management	11,079,770	117,000	0	11,196,770	11,974,340	11,673,340	-301,000	-777,570	-283,570	494,000	193,000
Total	130,215,900	0	879,310	131,095,210	350,297,570	355,943,630	5,646,060	-219,202,360	-226,337,130	-7,134,770	-1,488,710

Appendix B – Budget Changes

Service	Original Net Budget £000	Budget changes not requiring approval £000	Approved Budget B/F from 2019/20 £000	Other budget release from reserves £000	Approved by S151 & Portfolio Holder £000	Requiring Executive Approval £000	Approved Budget C/F to 2021/22 £000	Current Net Budget £000
Adult Social Care	50,221		288					50,508
Children and Family Services	17,102	(12)	76					17,167
Executive Director	249		87					336
Education DSG funded	(444)							(444)
Education	8,830							8,830
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)							(80)
Communities	75,878	(12)	451	0	0	0	0	76,317
Executive Director	197							197
Development & Planning	3,071	33	76					3,180
Public Protection & Culture	3,904	(9)						3,895
Transport & Countryside	23,795	5	71					23,871
Place	30,967	29	147	0	0	0	0	31,143
Executive Director	121	74						195
Commissioning	814	(19)	4					799
Customer Services & ICT	2,971		12					2,983
Finance & Property	2,824	(150)						2,674
Human Resources	1,724	(10)						1,714
Legal and Strategic Support	3,005	93	85	131				3,314
Resources	11,459	(12)	101	131	0	0	0	11,679
Chief Executive	834	(74)						759
Capital Financing & Management	11,197							11,197
Movement through Reserves	(117)	117						0
Capital Financing	11,080	117	0	0	0	0	0	11,197
Total	130,216	48	699	131	0	0	0	131,095

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Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21

Committee considering report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Committee:	17 th December 2020
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	26 th November 2020
Report Author:	Andy Walker
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3909

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 Two financial position.

2 Recommendations

No recommendations have been made within this report. Members are to note:

- (a) The forecast financial position as at Quarter Two.
- (b) The proposed re-profiling of expenditure from 2020/21 into 2021/22.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>At the end of Quarter Two expenditure of £44.5 million has been forecast against a revised budget of £56.9million, an overall forecast underspend of £12.4 million.</p> <p>£7.3 million of expenditure is proposed by Capital Strategy Group (CSG) to be re-profiled from 2020/21 into 2021/22 and later financial years and Appendix B provides more detail of the projects impacted. The remaining forecast underspend will be kept under close review by CSG to determine whether any further re-profiling is required before year end.</p>

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:	<p>Joseph Holmes, Executive Director for Resources, s151 Officer</p> <p>Shannon Coleman-Slaughter – Chief Financial Accountant</p> <p>Capital Strategy Group (CSG)</p>			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 At the end of Quarter Two expenditure of £44.5 million has been forecast against a revised budget of £56.9 million, an overall forecast underspend of £12.4 million of which £7.3m has been proposed to be re-profiled into 2021/22 and later financial years.

Directorate Summary	Quarter Two			Change from Forecast in Q1	Proposed Re-profiling	Forecast spend as a % of budget
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend			
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
People	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	(£795)	£2,508	80.9%
Place	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	(£3,423)	£4,120	78.5%
Resources	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	(£2,152)	£694	71.2%
Chief Executive	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Totals	£56,890	£44,544	(£12,346)	(£6,370)	£7,322	

4.2 The main contributing factors to the forecast position are:

- (a) Education Services is forecasting a £3.2 million underspend driven primarily by a delay in the Eastern Area PRU project (£1,493k) through delays in agreeing new lease terms with the Parish Council, and a forecast underspend against the planned maintenance budget (£455k) and project feasibility (£483k). The planned maintenance budget has been impacted by the COVID pandemic with delays in feasibility studies and commencement of works and the current construction industry market environment.
- (b) Transport and Countryside are forecasting a £5.6 million underspend primarily relating to the Robinhood Roundabout and A4 development (£1.5 million). The project is funded from section 106 funding which has yet to be received creating a delay in commencing the project. Newbury Station Car Park project now not proceeding as originally planned (£1,784k). A number of projects across the transport programme have forecast underspends due to delays in commencing projects through the national COVID lockdown.

4.3 There has been a total of £7.3 million of the forecast underspend proposed to be re-profiled into 2021/22 or later financial years summarised in the table below and Appendix B provides more detail on the projects impacted. The remaining forecast underspend will be kept under close review by CSG to determine whether any further re-profiling is required before year end.

Directorate Summary	Number of projects	Re-profiling amount £000
People	7	2,508
Place	12	4,120
Resources	13	694
Totals	32	7,322

- 4.4 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 Two.

Background

- 5.3 Total forecast capital expenditure for financial year 2020/21 as at Quarter Two is £44.5 million against a revised capital programme of £56.9 million, generating a forecast underspend position of £12.4 million.

5.4 The main contributing factors to the forecast position are:

Directorate Summary	Quarter Two					
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Change from Forecast in Q1	Proposed Re-profiling	Forecast spend as a % of budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
People	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	(£795)	£2,508	80.9%
Place	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	(£3,423)	£4,120	78.5%
Resources	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	(£2,152)	£694	71.2%
Chief Executive	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Totals	£56,890	£44,544	(£12,346)	(£6,370)	£7,322	

- (a) Education Services is forecasting a £3.2 million underspend driven primarily by a delay in the Eastern Area PRU project (£1,493k) through delays in agreeing new lease terms with the Parish Council, and a forecast underspend against the planned maintenance budget (£455k) and project feasibility (£483k). The planned maintenance budget has been impacted by the COVID pandemic with delays in feasibility studies and commencement of works and the current construction industry market environment.
- (b) Transport and Countryside are forecasting a £5.6 million underspend primarily relating to the Robinhood Roundabout and A4 development (£1.5 million). The project is funded from section 106 funding which has yet to be received creating a delay in commencing the project. Newbury Station Car Park project now not proceeding as originally planned (£1,784k). A number of projects across the transport programme have forecast underspends due to delays in commencing projects through the national COVID lockdown.

5.5 There has been a total of £7.3 million of the forecast underspend proposed to be re-profiled into 2021/22 or later financial years summarised in the table below and Appendix B provides more detail on the projects impacted. The remaining forecast underspend will be kept under close review by CSG to determine whether any further re-profiling is required before year end.

Directorate Summary	Number of projects	Re-profiling amount £000
People	7	2,508
Place	12	4,120
Resources	13	694
Totals	32	7,322

5.6 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.

The People Directorate

People	Quarter Two			Change from Forecast in Q1	Proposed Re-profiling
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Social Care	£2,190	£1,895	(£295)	£27	
Children & Family Services	£20	£20	£0	£0	
Education Services	£15,926	£12,766	(£3,160)	(£822)	£2,508
Totals	£18,136	£14,681	(£3,455)	(£795)	£2,508

5.7 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £14.7 million against a £18.1 million budget. The forecast underspend position of £3.4 million is mainly attributable to Education Services. The Education Services forecast position is being driven by key underspends against:

- (a) Delays in the Eastern Area PRU (£1,493k) development as lease negotiations with the Parish Council remain ongoing.
- (b) The planned maintenance budget (£455k) has been impacted by the COVID pandemic with delays in feasibility studies (£483k) and commencement of works along with the current construction industry market environment.

The Place Directorate

Place	Quarter Two			Change from Forecast in Q1	Proposed Re-profiling
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Development & Planning	£4,478	£3,403	(£1,075)	(£1,419)	
Public Protection & Culture	£2,458	£2,472	£14	£146	
Environment	£24,226	£18,584	(£5,642)	(£2,150)	£4,120
Totals	£31,162	£24,459	(£6,703)	(£3,423)	£4,120

5.8 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £24.5 million against a budget of £31.2 million. The forecast underspend position of £6.7 million is through:

- (a) Transport and Countryside: A delay in the Robinhood Roundabout and A4 development through delayed receipt of section 106 funding (£1.5 million).
- (b) Transport and Countryside: A number of projects across the transport programme have forecast underspends due to delays in commencing projects through the national COVID lockdown.

- (c) Development and Planning are forecasting a £294k overspend relating to purchases of temporary accommodation along with delays in delivering Four Houses Corner redevelopment £1,062k and Disabled Facilities programme £306k.

The Resources Directorate

Resources	Quarter Two				Proposed Re-profiling
	Budget at Q2	Forecast Spend in Year	Forecast (under)/Over Spend	Change from Forecast in Q1	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Customer Services & ICT	£4,877	£3,116	(£1,761)	(£1,721)	£694
Finance & Property	£2,312	£1,886	(£426)	(£427)	
Strategy & Governance	£403	£402	(£1)	(£4)	
Totals	£7,592	£5,404	(£2,188)	(£2,152)	£694

- 5.9 The directorate is forecasting capital expenditure of £5.4 million against a budget of £7.6 million. The main driver of the forecast directorate underspend relates to Customer Services & ICT projects (£1,761k) and relates to forecast underspends against a range of projects requiring to be re-visited due to office accommodation review which is underway along with a forecast underspend in delivering Superfast Broadband Infrastructure (£896k). The forecast underspend in Finance & Property mainly relates to COVID restrictions in delivering the corporate buildings capital maintenance programme.

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 Two expenditure of £44.5 million has been forecast against the revised budget of £56.9 million, resulting in a forecast underspend of £12.4 million of the approved Capital Programme of which £7.3m has been proposed to be re-profiled to 2021/22 or later financial years.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Budget Changes as at Quarter Two

Appendix B – Re-profiling as at Quarter Two

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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Document Control

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

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

2020/21 Budget Changes as at Quarter Two

Service Area	Original Budget 2020/21 £000	Budget Agreed by CSG to be Re-profiled from 2019/20 £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	£577	£2,190	Revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) ref Modernising ASC - £84k/ Notrees Heating - £170k. Care director V6 - £323k	30.04.20
Children & Family Services	£20	£0	£0	£20		
Education Services	£14,375	£1,551	(£0)	£15,926		
Total for People Directorate	£15,783	£1,777	£577	£18,136		
PLACE DIRECTORATE						
Development and Planning	£1,703	£2,664	£111	£4,478	Housing ICT System - £111k	27.02.20
Public Protection & Culture	£1,160	£1,094	£204	£2,458	PPP One System - £204k	27.02.20
Environment	£19,499	£1,556	£3,171	£24,226	New DFT Challenge Funding (£3.048)/ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Delivery Plan (£124k)	16.07.20
Total for Place Directorate	£22,362	£5,313	£3,487	£31,162		
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE						
Customer Services and ICT	£2,041	£2,836	£0	£4,877		
Finance & Property	£2,108	£135	£69	£2,312	RCCO for Income Manager - £70k	30.04.20
Strategic & Governance	£237	£166	£0	£403		
Total for Resources Directorate	£4,386	£3,136	£69	£7,592		

2020/21 Reprofiting at Quarter Two

Scheme Name	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Q2 Expenditure Forecast £'000	Q2 Variance between Forecast & Budget (Underspend)/Overspend £'000	Reprofile Amount £'000
Highwood Copse	£3,533	£3,410	(£123)	£123
The Willink - Feasibility	£2,183	£1,700	(£483)	£483
Speenhamland - 2FE Project	£685	£470	(£215)	£215
East Area PRU	£1,513	£20	(£1,493)	£1,000
Parsons Down Rationalisation	£249	£110	(£139)	£139
Calcot Schools Remodelling	£109	£16	(£93)	£93
Education - Pmp	£2,649	£2,194	(£455)	£455
COMES Total	£10,921	£7,920	(£3,001)	£2,508
A4 Faraday Rd Improvements	£320	£0	(£320)	£320
Village Speed Limits	£30	£15	(£15)	£15
Local Sfty Acc Reduct	£75	£60	(£15)	£15
Robin Hood Roundabout & A4	£1,500	£5	(£1,495)	£1,495
Kings Road Link, Newbury	£1,000	£250	(£750)	£750
Aldermaston Footways	£287	£50	(£237)	£237
Sandleford Access Improvements	£1,000	£700	(£300)	£300
On Street Electrical Charge Point	£173	£50	(£123)	£123
Aldermaston Lift Bridge Replacement	£600	£0	(£600)	£600
Local S106 Highway Improvements	£100	£50	(£50)	£50
Cycle Parking at Schools	£75	£10	(£65)	£65
Solar PV Initiative	£670	£520	(£150)	£150
ENVTC Total	£5,830	£1,710	(£4,120.00)	£4,120

Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter Two 2020/21

Scheme Name	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Q2 Expenditure Forecast £'000	Q2 Variance between Forecast & Budget (Underspend)/Overspend £'000	Reprofile Amount £'000
Telephony Infrastructure (SIP and MPLS)	£50	£0	(£50)	£50
Contact Centre Systems Enhancements	£90	£0	(£90)	£90
Cyber Security Enhancements	£20	£0	(£20)	£20
Remote Working Infrastructure Maintenance	£45	£25	(£20)	£20
Network Infrastructure (Core Switches)	£70	£0	(£70)	£70
Network Infrastructure (WiFi Provision)	£15	£0	(£15)	£15
Telephony Infrastructure (VoIP Corporate Offices)	£45	£0	(£45)	£45
Telephony Infrastructure (VoIP Outlying Offices)	£20	£0	(£20)	£20
Telephony Infrastructure (Unified Communications Core Infrastructure)	£60	£0	(£60)	£60
Telephony Infrastructure (Unified Communications Software)	£114	£0	(£114)	£114
Refresh Multifunctional Devices Fleet	£125	£0	(£125)	£125
Upgrade Internet Bandwidth	£15	£0	(£15)	£15
ICT Helpdesk System	£50	£0	(£50)	£50
RESCSI Total	£719	£25	(£694)	£694
Grand Total	£17,470	£9,655	(£7,815)	£7,322

**West Berkshire Council Forward Plan
3 February 2021 - 31 May 2021**

Key:	C = Council
	DOD = Delegated Officer Decision
	EX = Executive
	GE = Governance and Ethics Committee
	HWB = Health and Wellbeing Board
	ID = Individual Decision
	PC = Personnel Committee
	PP = Joint Public Protection Committee

Reference	Item	Purpose	Decision Body	Month/Year	Executive	ID	Date Report Published	Council	Governance and Ethics Committee	OSMC	Other	Officer and Contact No	Directorate	Lead Member	Consultee(s)	Part II	Call In
EX3888	Leisure Strategy	To adopt the Council's Leisure Strategy post the consultation exercise.	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Paul Anstey	Place	Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture		No	Yes
EX3976	Strategy and Governance Service Review – Proposed Redundancies <i>(Paragraph 1 – information relating to an individual)</i> <i>(Paragraph 2 – information identifying an individual)</i> <i>(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)</i>	To agree the redundancy costs arising from the Strategy and Governance Service Review	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Sarah Clarke	Resources	Internal Governance		Yes	Yes
EX3952	Risk Management Strategy	To set out the overarching framework for managing risk at the Council, the Council's risk appetite and latest Corporate Risk Register.	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21		01/02/21 GE			Joseph Holmes	Resources	Internal Governance		No	Yes
EX3961	Care Homes Catering <i>(Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial/business affairs of a particular person)</i>	To award the contract for West Berkshire Council Care Homes and Resource Centre catering	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Zoe Campbell	Resources	Adult Social Care		Yes	No
EX4004	Response to the Community Infrastructure Levy Motion	To provide a response to the motion presented to the 03 December 2020 Council meeting.	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Bryan Lyttle	Place	Planning and Housing		No	No
EX4005	Response to the Postponement of Demolition of the Faraday Road Football Ground Facilities Motion	To provide a response to the motion presented to the 03 December 2020 Council meeting.	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Bill Bagnell	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
EX4006	Devolution of Hermitage Green	To approve the devolution of Hermitage green to the Parish on a long lease 99 years.	EX	01 February 2021	11/02/21 EX		03/02/21					Paul Hendry	Place	Transport and Countryside		No	Yes
ID3924	West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 16 March 2021- 30 June 2021	To agree the Forward Plan for the next four months.	ID	01 February 2021		11/02/21	03/02/21					Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
ID4007	Newbury Wharf Bus Station Parking Order	To approve the order for parking at Newbury Wharf Bus Station	ID	01 February 2021		01/02/21	tbc					Emma Jameson	Place	Transport and Countryside		No	No
C3991	Member Development Programme for 2021/22	To propose a Member Development Programme for 2021/22 for the Member Development Group to consider and Council to approve.	C	01 March 2021			20/02/21	02/03/21 C			MDG in January 21	Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
C3933	Health Scrutiny arrangements across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB)	To consider the proposal to form a new mandatory committee with health scrutiny powers to consider matters affecting patient flow across the whole Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) geography.	C	01 March 2021			22/02/21	02/03/21 C		26/01/21		Gordon Oliver	People	Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture		No	No
C3972	Response to the Fireworks Motion	To present a response to the Motion presented to the 10 September Council meeting.	C	01 March 2021			22/02/21	02/03/21 C			08/02/21 - Lic	Sean Murphy	Place	Planning and Housing		No	No
C3980	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2021/22	This report sets out the proposed Investment and Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22, as required by the Local Government Act 2003.	C	01 March 2021	11/02/21 EX		22/02/21	02/03/21 C				Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
C3981	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24	To agree the medium term financial planning and strategy for the organisation.	C	01 March 2021	11/02/21 EX		22/02/21	02/03/21 C				Joseph Holmes	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No

**West Berkshire Council Forward Plan
3 February 2021 - 31 May 2021**

Key:	C = Council
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	PC = Personnel Committee
	PP = Joint Public Protection Committee

C3982	Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24	To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2021/22 -2023/24 and supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability	C	01 March 2021	11/02/21 EX		22/02/21	02/03/21 C			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
C3983	Revenue Budget 2021/22	To consider and recommend to Council the 2021-22 Revenue Budget.	C	01 March 2021	11/02/21 EX		22/02/21	02/03/21 C			Joseph Holmes/Melanie Ellis	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
C3984	Statutory Pay Policy 2021	To seek Council's approval of the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication from 1st April 2021.	C	01 March 2021			22/02/21	02/03/21 C		09/02/21 PC	Rebecca Bird	Resources	Internal Governance		No	No
C3988	Land Appropriation for Parsons Down Rationalisation Project	To explain the requirement for the land appropriation to support the rationalisation project at Parsons Down Infant and Junior Schools	C	01 March 2021			22/02/21	02/03/21 C			Neil Obbard	People	Children, Young People and Education			No
C4008	West Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee		C	01 March 2021			22/02/21	02/03/21 C		26/01/21	Gordon Oliver	People	Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture		No	No
EX3833	Adoption of the Housing Strategy	To adopt a new Housing Strategy	EX	01 March 2021	25/03/21 EX		17/03/21				Neil Coles	Place	Planning and Housing		No	Yes
EX3885	Key Accountable Performance 2020/21: Quarter Three	To report Q3 outturns for the Key Accountable Measures which monitor	EX	01 March 2021	25/03/21 EX		17/03/21			20/04/21	Catalin Bogos	Resources	Internal Governance		No	Yes
EX3911	Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2020/21	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	EX	01 March 2021	25/03/21 EX		17/03/21				Melanie Ellis	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
EX3912	Capital Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2020/21	To present the Q3 capital financial performance for Members to note.	EX	01 March 2021	25/03/21 EX		17/03/21				Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Resources	Finance and Economic Development		No	No
ID3925	West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 15 April 2021- 31 July 2021	To agree the Forward Plan for the next four months.	ID	01 March 2021		11/03/21	03/03/21				Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
EX3985	Review of Library Services	To review the provision of library services.	EX	01 April 2021	29/04/21 EX		21/04/21				Paul James	Place	Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture		No	Yes
GE3894	Internal Audit – Interim Report 2020-21	To update the Committee on the outcome of internal audit work.	GE	01 April 2021			09/04/21			19/04/21 GE	Julie Gilhespy	Resources	Internal Governance		No	No
GE3895	Internal Audit Plan 2021/22	To outline the proposed internal audit work programme for the next three years.	GE	01 April 2021			09/04/21			19/04/21 GE	Julie Gilhespy	Resources	Internal Governance		No	No
C3959	West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2036	Formal approval of Council to go out to Regulation 19 Consultation	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Bryan Lytle	Place	Planning and Housing		No	No
C3992	Monitoring Officer's Annual Report to the Governance and Ethics Committee –2020/2021	To provide an update on local and national issues relating to ethical standards and to bring to the attention of the Committee any complaints or other problems within West Berkshire.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Sarah Clarke	Resources	Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee		No	No
C3993	Appointments to Outside Bodies	To consider and agree West Berkshire Council's nominations to the following Outside Bodies: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel and the Local Government Association General Assembly.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
C3994	Election of the Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22	To elect the Chairman for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
C3995	Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22	To appoint the Vice Chairman for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
C3996	Appointment of the Executive by the Leader for the 2021/22 Municipal Year	The Leader to announce the composition of the Executive for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No
C3997	Appointment of and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2021/22 Municipal Year	To consider the appointment and allocation of seats on Committees for the next Municipal Year in accordance with the duty under Section 15 of the Local Government Housing Act 1989. To agree the Council's Policy Framework for 2021/22 To agree the terms of reference of the Council's Committees.	C	01 May 2021			30/04/21	11/05/21 C			Moira Fraser	Resources	Leader, District Strategy and Communications		No	No

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The following items will be considered in addition to Standing Items (Financial Performance (Quarterly), Key Accountable Performance (Quarterly), New Ways of Working Reviews (ad hoc) and Corporate Programme (annually/ on request))

Last Updated:
07 Jan 2021

Item	OSMC Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Profolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?	
09 February 2021 (Report Deadline 01 February 2021)						
10	Commercialisation Part 2: Commercial Board Update	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report to the Commission the Board's activities and achievements, what revenue had been achieved and how this was tracked.	Andy Sharp	Finance	OSMC decision
11	New Ways of Working	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To provide an update on and overview of the council's New Ways of Working programme	Melanie Best	Internal Governance	OSMC decision
12	Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee*	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To seek OSMC's endorsement of proposals to delegate health scrutiny powers in relation to the BOB Intergrated Care System to a new Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Gordon Oliver	Internal Governance	Pre decision
13	West Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee*	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To seek OSMC's endorsement of proposals to delegate health scrutiny powers in relation to local NHS services to a new Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.	Gordon Oliver	Internal Governance	OSMC decision
20 April 2021 (Report Deadline 12 April)						
14	Performance or financial topic tbc.	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	tbc	tbc	Finance	OSMC decision
15	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To consider the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Matt Pearce	Public Health and Community Wellbeing	Pre decision
16	Community Safety	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	Meeting as Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive presentations on and consider: performance of the Building Communities Together Partnership in 2020/21, and their priorities for 2021/22	Susan Powell	This report applies to all portfolios	OSMC decision
17	Covid-19: Lessons Learned (Defer to October?)	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic and changes put in place as a consequence.	Matt Pearce	Public Health and Community Wellbeing	OSMC decision

06 July 2021 (Report Deadline 28 June)						
18	Recovery Strategy	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review progress in implementing the Recovery Strategy	Joseph Holmes	This report applies to all portfolios	OSMC decision
19	Inequalities in West Berkshire	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To present a research report to the Commission outlining inequalities in West Berkshire, actions to address these and benchmarking data against comparable local authorities.	tbc	This report applies to all portfolios	OSMC decision
12 October 2021 (Report Deadline 04 October)						
20	Environment Strategy Operational Review	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review progress in implementing the Environmental Strategy	Jenny Graham	Environment	OSMC decision
21	Economic Development Strategy	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review progress in implementing the Economic Development Strategy	Gary Lugg / Gabrielle Mancini	Economic Development and Planning	Post decision

Key:

- 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 partnership
- Crime and Disorder Committee