

# Notice of Meeting

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## Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

**Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 6.30 pm**  
in Council Chamber Council Offices  
Market Street Newbury

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Friday, 26 August 2022

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver / Vicky Phoenix on (01635) 519486  
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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 6  
September 2022 (continued)**

- To:** Councillors Alan Law (Chairman), Adrian Abbs (Vice-Chairman), Jeff Brooks, James Cole, Tony Linden, Steve Masters, Biyi Oloko, Claire Rowles, Tony Vickers
- Substitutes:** Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Jeremy Cottam, Carlyne Culver, Lee Dillon, Gareth Hurley, Owen Jeffery, David Marsh and Andrew Williamson
- Other Officers & Members invited:** Councillor Dominic Boeck (Executive Portfolio: Children, Young People and Education), Councillor Lynne Doherty (Executive Portfolio: Leader and District Strategy and Communications), Councillor Ross Mackinnon (Executive Portfolio Holder: Finance and Economic Development), Councillor Richard Somner (Executive Portfolio: Planning, Transport & Countryside), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Susan Halliwell (Executive Director – Place), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director – People), Eric Owens (Service Director – Development and Regulation), Jon Winstanley (Service Director – Environment), Pete Campbell (Head of Children and Family Services), Katharine Makant (Economy Manager), Richard Aylard (Thames Water) and Nikki Hines (Thames Water)

## Agenda

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3. <b>Actions from previous Minutes</b> To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	21 - 24
4. <b>Declarations of Interest</b> 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' <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> .	25 - 26
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**Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 6 September 2022 (continued)**

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| 12. | <b>Task and Finish Group Updates</b><br>Purpose: To receive updates from the Chairmen of Task and Finish Groups appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.  | 101 - 102 |
| 13. | <b>Health Scrutiny Committee Update</b><br>Purpose: To receive an update from the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee.   | 103 - 104 |
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15. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme** 121 - 122  
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programme of the Commission.

Sarah Clarke  
Service Director Strategy and Commissioning

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

# Agenda Item 1.

OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 1 – Apologies**

Verbal Item

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## 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, 24 MAY 2022**

**Councillors Present:** Alan Law (Chairman), Adrian Abbs (Vice-Chairman), Jeff Brooks, James Cole, Tony Linden, Steve Masters and Claire Rowles

**Also Present:** Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Service Director (Strategy and Governance)), Paula Goodwin (Service Lead HR) and Carolyn Richardson (Civil Contingencies Manager), Councillor Thomas Marino (Executive Portfolio: Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships), Councillor Howard Woollaston (Executive Portfolio: Housing, Leisure and Culture), Zahid Aziz (Thames Valley Police), Gordon Oliver (Democratic Services) and Tom Dunn

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillors Tony Vickers, Lee Dillon and Owen Jeffery

**Councillor(s) Absent:** Councillor Biyi Oloko

#### **PART I**

##### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22 March 2022 and 10 May 2022 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

##### **4. Actions from previous Minutes**

Members noted the updates on the actions from the previous Minutes.

##### **5. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### **6. Petitions**

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

##### **7. Effective Employee Appraisal and Management Development Update**

Paula Goodwin presented a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning Effective Employee Appraisal and Management Development Update.

The Chairman noted that the report was slightly different from what was expected, which was a review of the appraisal system.

It was noted that a peer review of the HR Service had been undertaken through the Local Government Association. Although initial feedback had been very positive, further work was required to meet customer care standards.

It was highlighted that there was a very clear Workforce Strategy, which was updated in 2021. Good progress had been made in relation to delivering the strategy. For example,

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a training needs analysis had just been completed and had been used to develop a new corporate training programme.

Leadership and management development and aspiring managers programmes would be developed in 2022. Improvements would also be made to the coaching and mentoring framework, informed by a pilot programme introduced last year. This would have external as well as internal support.

It was noted that there was a lot of recruitment activity planned for coming months.

HR was providing additional data for Personnel Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

A key action from the Workforce Strategy was to review the competency framework and performance management standards. An external consultant was helping to develop a behaviour framework, which would be subject to internal consultation prior to implementation. This would be used for appraisals and other performance management standards would be reviewed around the behaviour framework. Digital processes would be utilised to provide access to performance management data.

It was confirmed that the appraisal process hadn't changed, but would be reviewed within the next 12 months. In the meantime, managers had been encouraged to ensure that staff had 1-2-1s and appraisals. New templates and associated guidance had been produced and feedback had been positive.

The target was for 90% of staff to have received an appraisal and performance had improved from 74.9% in Quarter 1 to 87.2% in Quarter 4. Further training would be rolled out to managers.

It was noted that feedback from the Staff Survey was positive.

Councillor James Cole stated that an update on appraisals to Personnel Committee in February 2022 data had highlighted considerable differences between services. He had expected that data to form the basis of the report to OSMC and asked if the differences had changed.

It was confirmed that the Quarter 4 data would be presented to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee. Also, appraisal data was circulated monthly to Operations Board. Officers were not aware that this information was required for the OSMC report.

Councillor Steve Masters asked if there was any particular service that was falling short in terms of appraisals and what support was being provided to managers. He also asked about when management training would be provided and if it was possible for aspiring managers to take part.

It was confirmed that the People Directorate had completed 83.6% of appraisals, Place 90.9% and Resources 92.5%. Managers could ask HR if they needed support. The 1-2-1 form and associated guidance had been improved, and feedback had been sought. Also, training / coaching would be provided to help managers have better conversations as part of appraisals. In addition, a training needs analysis had highlighted the need for training about how to improve conversations with staff.

Paula Goodwin indicated that once the behaviour framework was agreed, training programmes for leadership, management development and aspiring managers would be designed. Managers were encouraged to put forward names of employees who were seen to be aspiring managers, and employees could also put themselves forward. It was stressed that all staff should have a personal development plan (PDP) and should have regular discussions with managers about their aspirations. This was important in terms of retaining staff. In addition to training, employees were offered other opportunities, such as secondment. HR was also looking at graduate schemes and internships. It was noted



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that the Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan was ambitious and actions would need to be prioritised.

Councillor Jeff Brooks commended the progress made in improving completion of appraisals, but hoped that 95% or higher could be achieved. He noted that many work-streams were pre-existing, but were being reviewed. He suggested that there should be a flow-chart to show the links between appraisals, PDPs, training and peer-to-peer learning. He acknowledged that behaviours were important, but stressed that any framework should augment rather than replace measures of performance and competency.

Paula Goodwin confirmed that the behaviour framework would replace the competency framework. However, appraisals would still feature smart objectives and a PDP. Employees would still be expected to deliver, but there was also an emphasis on delivering in the best way possible (e.g. by demonstrating excellent customer care). It was confirmed that there would still be specific competencies for specific roles.

Councillor Brooks stressed the importance of career paths and showing staff how they could progress by developing particular competencies. He suggested that this should be made visual and transparent.

Councillor Tony Linden noted that the behaviour of some Members had not been appropriate in public meetings and stressed that it was important to address this. In relation to manager networks, he had seen some instances of silo working and hoped that this had been addressed. In relation to appraisals, he noted that these may have been affected by Covid.

Paula Goodwin confirmed that 87.2% of staff had received an appraisal within the last 15 months. She acknowledged that rates may have fallen due to Covid, since staff had other priorities, and in some cases, objectives would have changed due to Covid, and the need to support refugees. She indicated that work was ongoing to develop better manager networks across the organisation, and work would also be undertaken to look at improving internal communications and engagement to support manager networks. Within the Resources Directorate, there were 'unconferences' for managers. There were also lots of opportunities to get involved in projects and focus groups. Another action related to establishing networks for women who aspired to be managers. The challenge was to create these networks in a hybrid format now that people were working from home as well as in the office.

Councillor Claire Rowles highlighted the current values mentioned in the report, and expressed surprise that there was no reference to the Nolan Principles.

Paula Goodwin indicated that these would be reflected in the behaviour framework together with other principles such as inclusivity. Where they related to specific parts of the organisations, there would be no change.

Councillor Rowles noted that the Constitution made little reference to officers being governed by the Nolan Principles, so it was important to reference them in the behaviour framework.

Councillor Adrian Abbs asked if virtual appraisals had been a catalyst for improving the completion rate or if it was a potential barrier.

Paula Goodwin felt that rates had improved because managers were being encouraged to have conversations, and also because of the new forms, guidance and support offered. She felt that the return to the office had helped, but remote working should not be an excuse for not having appraisals.

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The Chairman suggested that the improvements reflected the change in senior management.

Nigel Lynn agreed that there had been more emphasis on appraisals amongst the corporate leadership team. He confirmed that it was part of his responsibility to ensure that members of staff were appropriately trained, appraised and had PDPs. He acknowledged that the current system was cumbersome, and would be simplified. Also, some managers had completed appraisals but had not uploaded the data. Focus groups had been set up in response to the Employee Attitude Survey which had highlighted a desire for more 1-2-1s and appraisals. He stressed that these should be part of an ongoing process.

Councillor Cole noted the report had acknowledged that corporate values were not promoted through current induction processes and asked what had been happening as part of inductions.

Paula Goodwin explained that staff were not currently measured against those values. Also, the values were not linked to the competencies used in the appraisal process. This would be addressed in the new behaviour framework. She indicated that there would be a graphical depiction of the connections between organisations values, objectives, and competencies.

Councillor Brooks stressed that in a face-to-face appraisal, it was easier to note aspects such as body language and discomfort that could open up wider conversations.

The Chairman noted that the original brief had been to review the current employee appraisal system. Members' concerns had stemmed not from the numbers being appraised, but from the numbers achieving the highest grades. He requested a short paper to capture the strengths and weaknesses of the current appraisal system. He also noted that the report had indicated that the behavioural framework came first, but suggested that the analysis should come first to identify the issues. He concluded by noting that managers should not wait until an appraisal to talk to staff about inappropriate behaviour – instead appraisals should focus on outcomes and management by objectives.

Paula Goodwin confirmed that a review of the appraisal process had not yet been completed. The change from a competency framework to a behaviour framework was an action in the Workforce Strategy and a review of the appraisal process and other performance management processes would be undertaken on the back of this to embed the change. Staff would be engaged as part of that review process and it would consider the effects of hybrid working.

The Chairman noted that OSMC had made the request for a review several months ago and asked whether this could be completed for the next meeting.

Sarah Clarke indicated it would not be possible to bring a report to the September meeting, but she undertook to provide an update to OSMC prior to implementing any changes.

The Chairman highlighted that the report had committed to a review by June. He also indicated that officers should have indicated earlier that the timescales for conducting the review were not possible.

Sarah Clarke apologised and highlighted that this was part of a journey, with a lot of work being undertaken to deliver positive change.

**Action: Sarah Clarke to confirm when it would be possible to bring a further report on the appraisal system.**

## 8. **Crime and Disorder Committee - Community Safety Update**

Sitting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, the Commission received a presentation (Agenda Item 6) concerning the Building Communities Together Partnership (BTCP).

Nigel Lynn explained that the BTCP was the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for West Berkshire. He highlighted the relevant legislation and the statutory partners.

The BTCP's Terms of Reference had been reviewed in Spring 2021 to focus on core CSP duties, and to anticipate the new serious violence duties. The partnership also fulfilled the roles of the Prevent Partnership Board and the Youth Offending Team Steering Group.

In addition to its statutory partners, the BTCP also had a number of non-statutory partners.

The BTCP was accountable to:

- Communities of West Berkshire
- The Home Secretary
- The Home Office
- The Ministry of Justice
- Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Adults

The partnerships' objectives were confirmed as:

1. To reduce and prevent crime
2. To ensure that statutory responsibilities were fulfilled
3. To identify and respond to changes in the nature, incidence and severity of crime in West Berkshire
4. To safeguard the vulnerable
5. To help people and communities to help each other and to engage with community safety related initiatives

The process and timescales for the annual assessment were described. The results would be used to inform the setting of partnership priorities and the Partnership Plan.

Superintendent Zahid Aziz summarised the work of the Thames Valley Police (TVP).

It was noted that there had been a slight increase in domestic abuse compared with the previous year. However, there had been a local reduction in domestic abuse during lockdown, when other areas had seen an increase. Rates had since returned to previous levels. Tackling domestic abuse was a key focus for TVP and BCTP, in terms of response, prevention and support for victims. Those at high risk of domestic abuse had received increased support and a priority for the coming year was to provide additional support for those at medium risk. It was emphasised that West Berkshire had the lowest levels of domestic abuse within Berkshire.

The Commission was informed of two trials relating to enhanced support for domestic abuse victims. One focused on continuity of care for victims and reduction in the time between the offence and the taking of statements. The other allocated a dedicated domestic abuse support officer throughout the course of any incident. Both had delivered positive outcomes, but the former was considered the most viable.

Another key focus for TVP was to ensure a robust response to county drug lines. Previously, there had been several operating in the area, Officers had engaged with drug

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users and street dealers to get intelligence of new activity and police operations had succeeded in quickly closing down new county drug lines.

It was explained that the BCTP had statutory duties around tackling violence against women and girls. There had been a week of action in March 2022, with 12 public engagement events, with presentations given to around 400 people. Also, officers involved in policing the night-time economy were given enhanced skills to help them spot predatory behaviour. However, it was noted that this was not a serious issue in West Berkshire. Investigative and crime management processes had been enhanced to prioritise precursor offences, and prolific offenders were being identified and managed. Front line staff had been given training around the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders to prevent suspects from approaching homes / individuals for up to 28 days. There had also been engagement of local advocacy groups to understand victims' needs and what gaps still needed to be addressed. In addition, it was highlighted that there was a Government website where the public could identify locations where they felt unsafe / vulnerable and the BCTP took action to address issues where appropriate.

It was noted that knife crime was a priority, but West Berkshire had the second lowest levels of offences in TVP. Efforts had been focused on youth knife carrying.

In terms of violence offences, there had been a recent increase, but this was to be expected after the Covid lockdown restrictions had ended. However, it was stressed that West Berkshire had the lowest number of offences in TVP. The Home Office had announced £7 million over three years to fund the Violence Reduction Unit. Over £2 million of this was for specific operations to tackle hot-spots or areas where a trend was developing.

The work of the Neighbourhood Teams was highlighted. They sought to understand what communities needed and responded to trends, including those related to rural crime. It was noted that a problem solving and prevention analyst had been appointed to help with this process.

It was explained that the Public Spaces Protection Order in Newbury town centre had been successful in addressing anti-social behaviour, and a similar order was proposed for Thatcham town centre. Other activity to address anti-social behaviour included:

- 15 house closures
- 6 criminal behaviour orders issued
- 3 community protection warnings / notices issued for persistent anti-social behaviour

Nigel Lynn concluded the presentation by highlighting partnership working across the themes of domestic abuse reduction, county drug lines, community conversations and enforcement.

Councillor Steve Masters asked about the assessment of the two domestic abuse support trials. Superintendent Aziz confirmed that the assessment was being done internally by the Performance Team. He stressed the importance of tailoring the approach to local needs.

Councillor Masters asked about guidelines followed when dealing with vulnerable young people involved in county lines and if they were used as human sources of information. Superintendent Aziz confirmed that the police would not use a young / vulnerable person as a source of intelligence. Subject to their history, the starting point was to view the young person as a victim, and a wrap-around service was provided to support them. However, persistent offenders were prosecuted.

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Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that West Berkshire had a low number of domestic abuse incidents relative to other areas, but asked how it compared per head of population. Superintendent Aziz did not have the data to hand, but thought that the population was similar to the other local police areas.

**Action: Superintendent Aziz to provide domestic abuse crime data per head of population.**

Councillor Abbs also asked about monitoring carried out in areas that had been reported by the public as unsafe. Superintendent Aziz indicated that reported sites were reviewed to see what action could be taken. Around 130 locations had been identified - mostly parks and underpasses. Often there was little that could be done to make people feel safer, but mobile CCTV cameras were being considered.

Councillor Tony Linden welcomed the report, but expressed concern at the increase in domestic abuse incidents. He noted that the Secretary of State for Education had recently issued a report on Children's Services and asked the speakers for observations on this. Superintendent Aziz had not read the report personally, but noted that when children were taken into protection, it was often difficult to find suitable accommodation for them and they often had to go into a series of temporary foster homes. He agreed with the report's finding that it would be better for other family members to be supported to look after the child. He highlighted that the Safeguarding Partnership worked well and good support was given to young people.

Councillor Linden asked about the police use of the Theale Community Fire Station. Superintendent Aziz noted that they had previously been based in Pangbourne. He had not received any complaints and noted that the police could access a variety of towns and villages more quickly.

Councillor Claire Rowles acknowledged the work of Detective Inspector Emily Evans and Susan Powell in relation to tackling violence against women and girls. She also praised Jon Winstanley and the Highways Team who had reviewed several underpasses and cut back vegetation in key locations. She asked if Project Vigilant operated in West Berkshire. Superintendent Aziz explained that this has started in Oxford where there had been a significant increase in sexual offences. This pilot was then rolled out to other areas where there was an identified need. He explained that this was not a significant issue in West Berkshire, but officers had been trained to spot signs of vulnerability or suspicious behaviour so they could take appropriate action.

Councillor Rowles noted that she had received a number of enquiries about CCTV in underpasses and asked about its effectiveness and possible timescales for implementation. Superintendent Aziz had seen this used in Slough and Reading and felt that it would have benefits for West Berkshire. He undertook to discuss this through the BCTP.

**Action: Superintendent Zahid Aziz to discuss the use of mobile CCTV with the BCTP.**

Councillor Rowles noted that there had been a recent conviction of a Newbury police officer for misconduct and asked if there was an awareness campaign to help potential victims spot predatory behaviour. Superintendent Aziz confirmed that the officer's behaviour had come to the attention of an inspector who flagged it with the Police Standards Department. The officer was immediately suspended and had not been on patrol for 2 ½ years. He had gained information as an attending officer and via the police computer system. When taken to court, he was found guilty of misconduct in public office and data protection offences. He was sentenced to 2½ years in prison. He had not previously exhibited any signs of predatory behaviour. However, supervisors were now

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more closely monitoring risk areas to ensure that a similar incident did not happen in future. Following the Sarah Everard incident, TVP had sought to distance itself from the Metropolitan Police and demonstrate the positive things being done in Thames Valley. A recent newspaper article had highlighted that if residents had concerns, they could ask the officer to radio the control room to confirm their identity. He stressed that it was rare to have a plain-clothes officer working alone and this was being communicated to the public. He stressed that this had been an isolated incident and communications were mostly via the IAG.

Councillor Graham Bridgman indicated that the BCTP was within his Executive Portfolio and the Domestic Abuse Board and Lived Experience Sub-Group sat beneath this, which allowed the voice of victims to be heard. He noted that a rise in reported crime may be as a result of improved reporting or detection rather than an increase in the crime rate. Superintendent Aziz felt that there was improved public confidence and highlighted that an increasing proportion of those reporting crimes were men. He also felt that the support offered and positive outcomes encouraged people to report incidents.

The Chairman asked how the TVP staff levels had changed in recent months. Superintendent Aziz confirmed that there were challenges. While the number of officers had been stable and was increasing by 600 over a three year period, the new training programme allocated protected learning time for new officers, which took them away from front-line duties. This had led to challenges in maintaining capacity for crime prevention and safeguarding, which meant that more functions would need to be shared across partners.

### 9. Customer Journey - Out of Hours

Carolyn Richardson presented a report (Agenda Item 8) concerning customer journey for the Council's out of hours emergency service.

It was explained that the report provided an overview of the services and included officers' recommendations – the Task Group had requested additional before making their own recommendations to OSMC.

Officers had welcomed the opportunity to reflect on the current arrangements and the reasons why things were done in certain ways. The report set out the history of the service and the process through which the customer engaged with the service.

It was explained that calls were handled by a contractor rather than the in-house call centre. Calls to the service had dropped slightly during the pandemic, but there were typically around 800 calls per year to the service. Very little negative feedback had been received and any issues were easily dealt with in conjunction with the contractor. Officers also highlighted refinements to processes on an ongoing basis.

It was stressed that the service provided an emergency response for a limited number of services and it did not replicate normal daytime Council services. The service dealt with situations that could cause serious issues if they were not addressed quickly, and allowed for escalation in the event of a major incident.

The service was led by an out of hours manual, to which all services contributed. It was noted that issues had arisen in the past when services did not provide updates, but generally it worked well.

Officers had already identified a number of potential improvements, and the Task Group had started to identify a further set of recommendations, which would be developed further in due course.

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Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that the report's appendix referred to 593 calls per year rather than 800 calls.

Councillor Tony Linden noted that the Council had been in existence since 1974, but had changed name when it took on additional functions upon the demise of Berkshire County Council. In relation to page 80 of the report, he noted that Thames Valley Fire Control did an excellent job in terms of call handling. He noted that there had been a lot of false fire alarms triggered on commercial properties, so responses had been scaled back. Overall, he considered that the Out of Hours Service did an excellent job.

Councillor Jeff Brooks welcomed the inclusion of the schematic on page 68 which showed what the service did and did not cover. He noted that the report indicated that the out of hours service was 'adequate'. He had previously called the service when customers had been trapped in the Kennet Centre car park, but there had been nobody available from the Car Parks Team. He asked if processes had been improved following that event. He also asked if secret shopper exercises were carried out by external users to test the service.

Carolyn Richardson indicated felt that the service did a good job. She stated that the service was not there to make decisions, but to follow the manual. If the manual was wrong then this was due to the services not providing the necessary information. She confirmed that analysis was undertaken each year to look at the number of calls made for each service, and if there were large numbers for a particular location / service then they sought to understand the reasons for this and take mitigating action. In terms of mystery shopper exercises, she stressed that this needed careful planning to ensure that services were not called out unnecessarily.

Councillor Brooks asked about frequency of testing, and noted that there would be a degree of risk if there were errors in the manual. It was confirmed that testing did take place, but in a controlled way to avoid triggering unnecessarily alerts and responses.

Councillor Brooks stressed the need for a feedback loop from real customers to check they got the response they needed in a timely manner.

Nigel Lynn indicated that there had been a recent check of the communications processes around a critical event. Officers had been briefed that a test was planned, but they were not advised of the time or date.

The Chairman indicated that he had previously made a complaint following a bad experience, but on two subsequent occasions, he had had a good experience. All three had been related to Highways and he felt that this should have its own category in the choices given when customers contacted the out of hours call centre. Carolyn Richardson explained that the options were to ensure that calls were directed to the correct place. The Chairman suggested that given its importance, Highways might need to have a duty officer available.

Councillor Brooks asked if calls were recorded for training purposes. Carolyn Richardson confirmed that they were.

Councillor Claire Rowles asked how customers with disabilities were accommodated. Carolyn Richardson noted that customers currently made contact via telephone, but other options were being investigated.

The Chairman invited Councillor James Cole to summarise the initial observations of the Task Group. In relation to the out of hours service, Councillor Cole made the following observations:

- The report had been comprehensive, but the Task Group had asked for additional information.

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- They had asked whether the service could be run in house, but this was not possible with the existing budget.
- The current provider was not locally based, so did not have knowledge of the area – unfortunately, neither Sovereign Housing nor the Fire Service submitted a bid when the out of hours service was last tendered.
- The number of Emergency Duty Officers had reduced over time.
- Mutual aid was difficult due to lack of access to West Berkshire Council's systems - this should be addressed.
- Some services did not provide out of hours services – for example there was nobody from the Communications Team on call when the former Newbury Football Club building caught fire.
- The Task Group felt that a single number for in and out of hours services would make it easier for people to get in touch.
- Other communications channels should be explored (e.g. WhatsApp).
- The Task Group was keen to do some secret shopper exercises.
- It was felt that the contract should be managed by the Council's call centre manager.
- The out of hours service should be more widely promoted so people knew where to go / what to do.

Councillor Cole indicated that the Chief Executive would be attending a future meeting and the Task Group would be looking at the views of residents and Members.

It was noted that the Task Group had held a session focused on the Council's call centre and website. Observations included:

- The need for a single telephone number for all enquiries.
- Proposed improvements to the online reporting system were welcomed, particularly the ability to upload photos.
- The MyAccount facility appeared promising.

Councillor Cole indicated that the Task Group wanted to talk to more people. Several Members indicated that they wished to contribute. He explained that the timescale for concluding the review would need to be extended, with the report anticipated to come to the November OSMC meeting.

Councillor Tom Marino also indicated that he would like to contribute to the review.

### 10. **Appointment of Task Groups**

The Chairman stated that OSMC had agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at fees and charges and invited comments on the draft Terms of Reference provided in the agenda.

Councillor Jeff Brooks noted that the focus was on increasing fees and levying additional charges. He felt this was inappropriate during when there was a cost of living crisis, and suggested that this could be picked up by the media. He suggested that the Council should consider reducing its fees and charges where they were found to be higher than other local authorities. He indicated that he was not prepared to vote for the terms of reference in its current form.

Councillor Tony Linden indicated that he was open to reducing fees and charges if appropriate. He acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the points raised by Councillor Brooks, but noted that the Council's financial situation may be difficult depending on the settlement from Government.



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 24 MAY 2022 - MINUTES

Councillor Abbs suggested that the Terms of Reference should refer to the value of the services provided.

The Chairman agreed that the point of the review should not just be about bringing in more money, but accepted that the wording of the terms of reference could be interpreted in this way. He proposed that the first paragraph should end after ‘...West Berkshire Council services’.

Councillor Abbs indicated that Part 2 should make reference to the value of the new services to be delivered through the new Leisure Strategy.

Councillor Brooks noted that page 124 referred to considering opportunities for new and increased fees and charges and asked that the wording be softened throughout the terms of reference.

It was suggested that OSMC should delegate to the Principal Policy Officer to amend the wording in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, with the revised wording to be circulated to OSMC Members for comment.

Councillor Claire Rowles noted that the terms of reference referred to increasing fees and charges and identifying additional funding streams throughout. The Chairman suggested that there was nothing wrong with identifying additional revenue streams if they were valid.

It was noted that the terms of reference already made reference to affordability and value for money.

Sarah Clarke highlighted that the original report on fees and charges had suggested a review of:

- new proposals for planning income;
- fee income arising from the Leisure Strategy; and
- other opportunities for commercial charging in the Place Directorate.

She indicated that OSMC could broaden the scope of the review in light of the current economic climate.

Councillor Brooks indicated that the current Terms of Reference included aspects that were not in the original report. He did not think that the objective of this review should be to find more revenue in order to help next year’s budget.

The Chairman stated that OSMC was being proactive in informing the setting of fees and charges for the next financial year and the recommendations may be for increases or decreases, but he hoped they would all be regarded as offering good value for money.

**RESOLVED: that OSMC should delegate to the Principal Policy Officer to amend the wording in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, with the revised wording to be circulated to OSMC Members for comment.**

Councillor Linden highlighted the need to consider the timescales for the review and proposed that Joseph Holmes be added to the list of witnesses. The Chairman agreed to liaise with Councillor Linden when making the amendments to the Terms of Reference.

### 11. Task and Finish Groups Updates

It was noted that this item had been covered as part of Agenda Item 8.

### 12. Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Councillor Claire Rowles presented the update on the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 11).

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 24 MAY 2022 - MINUTES

The Committee had held a special meeting on 23 May 2022 to receive an update on the development proposals for the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The meeting also considered Councillor Macro's motion to Council on 17 March 2022 regarding the hospital redevelopment. Officers' recommendations had been rejected, so the matter would be referred back to Council. In addition, the Committee considered an update on the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Strategy refresh. The meeting had been attended by Alison Foster (Programme Director for Building Berkshire Together), Andrew Statham (Director of Strategy), Sally Moore (Head of Communications and Engagement) and Tom Broadfoot (Communications and Engagement Officer). It was noted that there had been some press coverage about a potential new site for the hospital, which picked up on a comment made by one Member at the meeting. It was stressed that this was not the Council's position. It was noted that the next meeting would be on 14 June 2022.

### 13. **West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 1 April to 31 July 2022**

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12) for the period covering 1 April to 31 July 2022.

Councillor Jeff Brooks indicated that the Liberal Democrat Support Executive had struggled to find the published Forward Plan and sought assurance that it would be kept up to date and published.

Sarah Clarke confirmed that the Forward Plan had not stopped being published and that the Council was legally obliged to produce it. However, it was noted that the format had recently changed. OSMC was advised that a link to the Forward Plan would be included in the weekly email to all Members. She also undertook to email the link to Councillor Brooks.

**Action: Sarah Clarke to email the Forward Plan link to Councillor Brooks and to ask that a link be added to the weekly email to all Members.**

The Chairman indicated that he had had discussions with the Leader about increasing the timescales for the Forward Plan to allow OSMC to be more proactive.

Councillor Tony Linden, suggested that the Forward Plan should include major projects. However, the Chairman suggested that this was covered in the Performance Reports.

Councillor James Cole highlighted the item on the Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Plan. He noted that the Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Board no longer existed, so it was not clear how the Delivery Plan would be monitored. He suggested that OSMC should look at this in 2023.

**Action: Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Plan to be added to the OSMC Forward Plan.**

### 14. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme**

It was noted that the Task Group reports would both report to the November meeting. As a result, the items on the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Build Back Better had been slipped to March 2023.

In relation to the Thames Water item programmed for September 2022, Councillor Adrian Abbs indicated that he wanted to know the technologies that would be deployed by Thames Water to solve the issue of discharges into watercourses. It was highlighted that all Members had been invited to identify issues of concern, which would be forwarded to Thames Water in advance of the meeting.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.56 pm)*

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 24 MAY 2022 - MINUTES**

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

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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
52	12/10/2021	<b>Review of the Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic</b> To look at the Scrutiny programme to schedule some task groups, to look at the response from the perspective of residents, service users and then businesses	Cllr Alan Law & Cllr Lee Dillon	<b>Complete (24/05/2022)</b> - This has been included on the OSMC work programme for later in the 2022/23 municipal year.
55	25/01/2022	<b>Operational Review of the Communications and Engagement Strategy</b> Discuss the possibility of British Sign Language interpretation for public meetings with the Executive Portfolio Holder	Shiraz Sheikh / Stephen Chard	<b>In Progress</b> - An officer working group has been set up to look at this issue in more detail. The Association of Sign Language Interpreters has provided advice on what would be required to provide real-time interpretation. Inquiries have been made as to what other local authorities are doing, and investigations undertaken as to likely costs. Local advocacy groups will be consulted to better understand user needs.  While the BSL Act 2022 recognises BSL as an official language, it does not impose additional obligations to provide BSL interpretation above that required by existing legislation, e.g. the Equalities Act 2010. However, it does require Central Government to produce 'guidance' on the promotion and facilitation of BSL and for Government departments to report back on their use of BSL by 30 April 2023. We will await publication of the guidance before making any further decisions about the use of BSL for public meetings.
58	22/03/2022	<b>Securing Effective Management of the Kennet and Avon Canal</b> Initiate discussions regarding resurrecting the Kennet & Avon Canal Partnership	Paul Hendry	<b>Complete (08/06/2022)</b> - An approach has been made with the Chairman of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust to reconvene the partnership. In anticipation, Councillor Richard Somner has been appointed to the Partnership and Councillor Howard Woollaston has been appointed as deputy.
60	22/03/2022	<b>Securing Effective Management of the Kennet and Avon Canal</b> Invite Newbury Business Improvement District to be part of the Kennet & Avon Canal Partnership.	Paul Hendry	<b>Complete (08/06/2022)</b> - Subject to the partnership being reconvened.
62	24/05/2022	<b>Effective Employee Appraisal and Management Development Update</b> Confirm when it would be possible to bring a further report on the appraisal system.	Sarah Clarke	<b>Complete (26/08/2022)</b> - The review of the appraisal process is due to start shortly and is expected to be complete in spring 2023. This has been added to the work programme and will be added to the for the first OSMC meeting in 2023/24 (date TBC).

**Actions arising from last OSMC Meeting**

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

<b>Ref No:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Item/Action</b>	<b>Member/Officer</b>	<b>Comments/Update</b>
63	24/05/2022	<b>Crime and Disorder Committee - Community Safety Update</b> Provide domestic abuse crime data for West Berkshire on a per head of population basis	Supt Zahid Aziz	<b>Complete (26/08/2022)</b> - Thames Valley Police does not currently produce the stats in this format. However, as a rough guide, figures have been calculated based on 2021 Census (21 March 2021) population data for each local authority area. These are shown overleaf.
64	24/05/2022	<b>Crime and Disorder Committee - Community Safety Update</b> Discuss the use of mobile CCTV with the Building Communities Together Partnership	Supt Zahid Aziz	<b>Complete (26/08/2022)</b> - Supt Aziz has discussed mobile CCTV with colleagues in Reading and Slough. In both locations, use of mobile CCTV has been discontinued due to issues around data protection and public rights to privacy, which meant that significant amounts of administration were required prior to deployment of the cameras. In light of this experience and the limited number of sites with issues, the decision has been taken not to [ursue mobile CCTV locally. However, automatic number plate recognition cameras will continue to be deployed, which can be used to track vehicles.
65	24/05/2022	<b>West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 1 April to 31 July 2022</b> Councillor Brooks to be sent the link to the Forward Plan, and the link to be added to the weekly email to all Members.	Sarah Clarke	<b>Complete (27/05/2022)</b> - This is now incorporated into the weekly email to Members.
66	24/05/2022	<b>West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 1 April to 31 July 2022</b> Cultural Heritage Strategy to be added to the OSMC Forward Plan	Gordon Oliver	<b>Complete (26/08/2022)</b> - This has been added to the OSMC work programme and will be considered at the first meeting in the new municipal year. It will be added to the forward plan once the meeting dates have been agreed for 2023/24.

**Last updated: 26 August 2022**

## Domestic Abuse Crime Statistics per Head of Population for Berkshire LPAs

Local Police Area	Population	2020/21		2021/22	
		DA Offences	DA Offences per 10k popn.	DA Offences	DA Offences per 10k popn.
Bracknell & Wokingham	302100	2166	71.7	2364	78.3
Reading	174200	2421	139.0	2623	150.6
Slough	158500	2752	173.6	3007	189.7
West Berkshire	161400	1383	85.7	1465	90.8
Windsor and Maidenhead	153500	1347	87.8	1431	93.2

Population data based on 2021 Census data for 21 March 2021

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 4 – Declarations of interest**

Verbal Item

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# Agenda Item 5.

OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 5 – Petitions**

Verbal Item

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 6 – Thames Water Activities**

Presentation to follow

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# A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Dominic Boeck
<b>Report Author:</b>	Pete Campbell
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	OSMC

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and update on the functioning of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 1.2 As part of this report there is also reference to models and approaches used in other parts of the country to promote ‘Corporate Parenting’. Opportunities for West Berkshire are presented in this report.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

This report is primarily for information only. However, there is opportunity to consider changes to our current approach in order to raise both the profile and ambitions we have for Corporate Parenting and enable greater co-production with children in care and care leavers.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	None (at this stage)
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None (at this stage)
<b>Legal:</b>	There is a legal duty of Corporate Parenting, which West Berkshire meets. This paper considers increasing the current ambitions.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None

A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel

<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	None			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>				
<b>Health Impact:</b>				
<b>ICT Impact:</b>				
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>				
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>				
<b>Core Business:</b>				



<b>Data Impact:</b>				
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>				

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers. In this context local authorities are often referred to as being the ‘corporate parent’ of these children and young people, and the critical question that local authorities should ask in adopting such an approach is: ‘would this be good enough for my child?’.
- 4.2 A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own. This will be evidenced by a culture where council officers do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the council is the best ‘parent’ it can be to the child or young person.
- 4.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced corporate parenting principles (Appendix C) which local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers. The corporate parenting principles are about embedding a positive culture in the local authority towards looked-after children and care leavers and their success will depend on the extent to which directors, councillors, heads of service and front line managers champion and promote understanding of them.
- 4.4 In West Berkshire at the start of each new Council, all elected members are introduced to Corporate Parenting. There is also a training and development session provided to councillors. The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) meets four times per year and is chaired by the portfolio holder for children, young people and education. There is deliberate representation from members of all political parties in West Berkshire.
- 4.5 The corporate parenting panel has been relatively unchanged in recent years. It is fair to state that the focus has been on scrutiny where children’s services and partner agencies such as Health and the Virtual School services report on key measures. Periodically, young people in care (the ‘in care council’) attend and provide input, and more recently care leavers have been supported to attend as panel members.
- 4.6 West Berkshire is ambitious to more visibly promote the corporate parenting principles, and in particular the participation and engagement of young people. Whilst it is felt that the frequency of CPP is sufficient to provide oversight of scrutiny, challenge and support, it would struggle to provide a platform for greater promotion of corporate parenting and participation as well.
- 4.7 There are many good examples across the country where participation is enabled and shapes service delivery. Furthermore, there is currently consultation at a national level on recent recommendations from the national review of children’s social care and also

with Ofsted on developing the inspection framework for care leavers. These provide a timely opportunity for West Berkshire to develop and embrace some new approaches.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 Local authorities provide around 700 services to their local communities (source: Dept of Education), but have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers. Whilst many services are universally delivered to all (refuse collection, trading standards and environmental health), some services are differentiated for certain groups, such as children in care and care leavers. It is generally agreed that the corporate parenting role is most relevant in the service areas of education, social care, housing, libraries, leisure and recreation, strategic policies (such as health and well-being plans) and local tax collection.
- 5.2 West Berkshire Children's Services are rated as GOOD by Ofsted (March 2022) and this includes the services to children in care and care leavers. Education services, including the virtual school for children in care, were recognised in this GOOD rating.
- 5.3 Even though West Berkshire is a small unitary authority with fewer than 150 school aged children in care, there is a healthy 'In Care Council' called R:Vue. This group meets regularly to discuss issues important to children in care, plan events, engage children who have recently entered care and challenge the council to be good corporate parents. The group regularly invite senior officers and also the lead member to meet them. There is also a specialist 'community club' providing a similar role to R:Vue for care leavers.

### The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP)

- 5.4 The CPP is a carefully selected group of members, officers and partner agency representatives who meet 4 times per year and provide scrutiny, challenge and support to the services delivering corporate parenting. The terms of reference in Appendix A provides comprehensive detail of the purposes and expectations of the panel.
- 5.5 The panel has good and regular representation from attendees and focuses on core reports and activity as well as projects and service developments. The panel was not disrupted by Covid although the online arrangements made it harder for the in care council to attend and participate (as they are used to being part of a group together). In June 2022 the CPP moved to hybrid option. The membership is presented in Appendix B.
- 5.6 The Ofsted inspection in March 2022 commented "*As a committed corporate parent, the local authority has a well-developed understanding of its role and responsibilities for children in its care and steps are being taken to extend this further. An example of recent progress is the ring-fencing of 5% of social housing accommodation for care leavers. Leaders have recognised that the corporate parenting board has been overly focused on the scrutiny of performance reports and needs to do more to promote and increase the active engagement of children in care and care leavers on the board. Work has begun to progress this*".

## A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel

- 5.7 Children's services and the virtual school for children in care have hosted a very popular 'Award & Achievements' evening annually for all young people in care and their carers. Many officers, members and volunteers attend to celebrate achievement of every child. Sadly, the pandemic prevented the hosting of this event in 2020 and 2021 but plans are in place for a celebration event in 2022.
- 5.8 As mentioned in the Ofsted report, there are tangible examples of care leavers being supported with social housing, and we have also been pleased to support a number of care leavers into apprenticeships (including roles in the West Berkshire Council) and work experience locally.
- 5.9 There are good examples of children in care engaging in helping shape the services that matter to them, and this is primarily through the in care council and the care leavers community group. Senior leaders and the portfolio holder receive invitations to attend the in care council. The Independent Reviewing Service receives a continuous stream of feedback from young people about the service and will frequently champion their needs. The Independent Reviewing Service attend the CPP.
- 5.10 The existing expertise of the in care council and care leavers community group are helping to shape the early stages of wider participation projects and activities for young people in West Berkshire. An example is the implementation of a Youth Council.

## Proposals

- 5.11 The proposals below are all within the gift of the Council and could be implemented relatively easily.
- 5.12 In the **implication and impact assessment** section of corporate papers (section 3 above) there is the question "*Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?*". Whilst being care experienced is not (yet) a protected characteristic, care experienced young people are very much 'service users'. Indeed, it might be that they justify much greater focus and deliberate consideration on potential impact to them of any council proposals. The corporate template could be adjusted accordingly.
- 5.13 The terms of reference for CPP are in appendix A. The CPP mostly achieves its objectives and there is a genuine sense of collaboration and shared ambition for young people. The activities which are not achieved are at 6.4 and 6.5 of the reporting mechanisms. We currently do not publish a quarterly newsletter that keeps all Corporate Parent's updated on key issues, trends and support needs for our children. Nor does the panel submit an Annual Report to Full Council on its work for the year. Going forward an Annual Report would be able to capture a wide range of achievements and impact of corporate parenting delivery and therefore raise the profile of this important area. A 6 monthly report to compliment the annual report would also be purposeful, and could be themed on particular areas such as Education or Health or Foster Care.
- 5.14 At the start of each new Council, all councillors are introduced to the principles of Corporate Parenting. There is also a training and development session provided to councillors. Whilst these arrangements have had good support, there is opportunity to achieve greater awareness and ownership of corporate parenting to all members. The newsletters and annual report mentioned above would go some way to achieve this.

Parallel to this is the requirement that corporate parenting must be promoted as a 'whole council' duty, requiring more than just children and families to consider and deliver on this duty. The social housing offer and access to local leisure services are examples of good corporate parenting. Some local authorities host an annual 'Corporate Parenting Conference'. This would significantly increase the profile of corporate parenting, with opportunity to agree collective goals, hear achievements and generate greater ambitions. This could be in the spring each year to compliment the 'Awards & Achievements' evening which is typically held in the Autumn.

- 5.15 There is a Pledge to children in care and Care Leavers charter (Appendix E) made by the council as corporate parents. However, these are not well known across the council or by children in care. These could have deliberate promotion at a council meeting and there could be a corporate parenting section of the West Berkshire Council website which captures this information and makes it accessible. The commitment to children in care and care leavers will also be more widely promoted to officers across all services of the Council. The annual celebration event and other activities can be given a higher profile across the council.
- 5.16 There is a desire to greatly increase the visibility, opportunity and engagement of young people in care on the matters important to them. The current style of CPP does not lend itself to this, so consideration has been given to introduce engagement events during the year to meet with young people in care and enable participation. These events will be less formal than a board meeting and food can be arranged. Particular themes can be identified on matters important to them – such as emotional wellbeing, being healthy, opportunities to learn, staying safe etc. The Council and partner agencies can hear young people's views on these subjects, make suggestions for service delivery and hear about services that exist to support them.
- 5.17 A desktop exploration of approaches to Corporate Parenting across the country is included in Appendix D. Some of the options are well established in certain areas, indeed, some are only achievable when the service is a certain size. However, West Berkshire have the same ambitions and will be able to reflect these in an updated Strategy and Delivery plan.

### Future proposals

- 5.18 The national review of children's social care (by Josh MacAllister) has particular recommendations for children in care and care leavers. The government has committed to respond to the recommendations by the end of the year. MacAllister describes how good corporate parenting can be demonstrated by care leavers being exempt from council tax and a policy of no housing evictions for care leavers. Furthermore he argues that being care experienced should be a protected characteristic akin to the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.19 From '**corporate parenting**' to '**community parenting**'. The MacAllister review also highlighted that '*Whilst local authorities play a crucial role in delivering services to care leavers as their corporate parent, they are not the only organisations that should play a role. The Scottish Government changed the law in 2015 to name 24 bodies and organisations as corporate parents, alongside local authorities. These organisations, like the police, schools, and primary care, now have a legal duty to promote the*

*wellbeing of care experienced people in Scotland. This has led to tangible and meaningful changes which could be replicated in England.*

- 5.20 *Local authorities cannot promote the wellbeing of children in care and care leavers when they do not possess all the levers to affect change. Making a similar change to the law in England would more accurately reflect the role that schools, colleges, universities, health agencies and other parts of the public realm play in the lives of children in care and those with a care experience. The organisations in scope should align with, or go further than, similar changes made to the law in Scotland. Implementing this will require training for new corporate parents, and the government should consider changing the language from ‘corporate parenting’ to ‘community parenting’.*
- 5.21 There is a real possibility that this ‘wider’ responsibility for corporate parenting will become law in England. Meanwhile, West Berkshire Council can already progress some of these ambitions with key partners as we seek to change the culture.
- 5.22 In the autumn, we have arranged for a visit from National Advisor for care leavers Mark Riddell MBE. Mark will visit the Council for 2 days, meeting with key leaders and ‘testing’ our corporate parenting. We expect there to be a number of recommendations where we can embrace current best practice

## 6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The current model of CPP works effectively and no concerns were raised by Ofsted. Indeed the support and ambition for young people in care and care leavers in West Berkshire is viewed as strong. Therefore there is the option to ‘do nothing’ and keep things as they are.
- 6.2 However, we have high ambitions for corporate parenting in West Berkshire and would wish to raise the profile and achieve outstanding outcomes for our children. Increasing the visibility and participation of the children will require introducing a new style of meeting. Increasing the understanding and commitment of corporate parenting to a wider audience requires us to consider regular newsletters and web presence.

## 7 Conclusion

As stated, the corporate parenting offer in West Berkshire is strong and there remain ambitions to improve and build on current strengths. There is a degree of expertise across the council and examples of good opportunities afforded children and young people to be involved and participate in services. That said, there remains the potential to further expand on the awareness and knowledge of the corporate parenting agenda within all areas of the council.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference
- 8.2 Appendix B – Membership
- 8.3 Appendix C – The Corporate Parenting Principles

8.4 Appendix D – Corporate Parenting Review

8.5 Appendix E – The Pledge and Leaving Care Charter

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**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:**

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## WEST BERKSHIRE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### 1. AIM

- 1.1 The aim of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to ensure that the Council and its partners are carrying out their responsibilities towards the children and young people in the care including care leavers.
- 1.2 To uphold the statutory responsibilities as defined by law and our moral responsibilities as defined in their West Berkshire Pledge to Looked After Children.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The key objectives of the Corporate Parenting Panel are to:

- Ensure West Berkshire has a Looked After Children's strategy which links its priorities to The Pledge made to our Children in Care and aligns with the Council's overall primary Aims.
- Scrutinise key performance indicators to help inform the Council's effectiveness as a corporate parent and when necessary give effective challenge to ensure positive outcomes for our children.
- Improve the life chances of children and young people in care in line with their peers.
- Ensure the voice and views of our children and young people in care are heard either through attendance at Corporate Parenting Panel or in Children in Care Council meetings by the Panel Chair or other Panel Members.
- Ensure children have the opportunity to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel to present key topics in order to seek the support of members.
- Review the Council's Pledge to children and young people in care and leaving care on an annual basis to ensure its focus is retained on the needs of our children.
- Ensure the effective communication between Panel Members, the wider group of corporate parents, the Children in Care Council, our Looked After Children population alongside their parents/carers.
- Consider arrangements for Panel Member information and training.
- Make recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee as and when appropriate regarding matters to do with children and young people in Care.

### 3. SCRUTINY MECHANISMS

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel will make use of the following scrutiny mechanisms to assist with maintaining and improving the standards of services for children and young people who are in the care of West Berkshire Council.

Including the examination of the following key statutory performance measures:

- LAC health assessments
- LAC dental checks
- LAC access to CAMHS
- LAC reviews held on time
- LAC educational attainment
- Numbers of SGOs and adoptions
- Adoption timescales
- LAC placement stability
- LAC placements out of area/>20 miles
- LAC in non-family based settings
- Complete of Pathway Plans
- Completed SDQs
- Average SDQ score
- Analyse and understand data relating to our looked after children and compare these findings to National Averages to ensure we are as a minimum comparable but aspire to be better
- Use of anonymised case studies to highlight key national or local policy and practice issues
- Approve on an annual basis the Statement of Purpose for Castle Gate.
- Service User attendance at Panel.

### 4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel take a broad approach to monitoring the Council's performance. This will help to build knowledge and understanding of the wide range of issues involved. The panel is in place to satisfy themselves that the Service:

- Provides Looked After Children and their parents with opportunities to express their views and feed these into service developments and improvements.
- Has taken steps to secure a range of care placements which deliver care and support and develop children and young people's cultural, religious and linguistic heritage.
- Provides feedback from statutory inspections and that they are acknowledged and acted upon.
- Ensures looked after children's health needs are addressed.



## A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel

- Makes sure looked after children are supported to achieve their full potential educationally.
- Ensures looked after children have access a range of cultural and leisure activities.
- Ensures looked after children are prepared for leaving care and are supported thereafter.
- Uses the National Care Standards as a basis for scrutiny of services through Panel Members involvement in a sample of reviews and working groups.

Monitoring should also pick up on any areas of concern identified through discussions at Panel with children and young people, carers and staff as part of the research work of the Panel.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The Panel shall comprise of 9 Members, which should include the following:

- Lead Member for Children and Family Services
- Shadow Lead Member for Children and Family Services
- Foster Carer representative
- Health representative
- Educational partner
- 3 additional Members
- 2 substitutes

Members of the Panel will be required to attend appropriate training and be subject to a check by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Arrangements will be made by the Panel for the direct and indirect involvement of looked after children and young people.

### Officer Attendance at Panel

Attendance will be by appropriate senior Council Officers and statutory partners and will include the:-

- Director of Children & Family Services
- Head of Children & Family Services
- Children & Family Services Manager for Looked After Children
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Other officers and partners as necessary.

## 6. REPORTING MECHANISMS

6.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet, as a minimum, every three months.

## **A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel**

- 6.2** The Corporate Parenting Panel, along with the Life Chances Team, will hold an annual event to celebrate our children and young people in care successes.
- 6.3** The Panel will have no direct decision-making powers but will make recommendations to the service and the Executive where appropriate.
- 6.4** The Chair will publish a quarterly newsletter to keep all Corporate Parent's updated on key issues, trends and support needs for our children.
- 6.5** The Panel will submit an Annual Report to Full Council on it's work for the year.

## CPP Membership

	2021/22 Membership	2022/23 Proposed
Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education	Dominic Boeck	Dominic Boeck
Shadow Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services	Erik Pattenden	Erik Pattenden
Conservative Group (two Members)	Graham Pask, Lynne Doherty	Graham Pask, Lynne Doherty
Liberal Democrat Group (one Member)	Martha Vickers	Martha Vickers
Green Party Group (one Member)	David Marsh	David Marsh
Conservative Group Substitutes (two Members)	Graham Pask, Jo Stewart	Dennis Benneyworth, Jo Stewart
WBC Executive Director, People (DCS)	Andy Sharp	Andy Sharp
WBC Head of Service, Children & Family Services	Pete Campbell	Pete Campbell
WBC Head of Service, Education	Ian Pearson	Ian Pearson
WBC Service Manager, Early Years, Vulnerable Learners & Families	Avril Allenby	Avril Allenby
WBC Service Manager, Looked After Children	Karl Davis	Karl Davis
WBC Service Manager, Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Service	Nicky Robertson	Nicky Robertson
WBC Virtual School Headteacher	Robin Douglas	Robin Douglas
Chair, Foster Carer Association	Ian Graham	Ian Graham
NHS Berkshire West CCG	Jane bell	Jane Bell
Chair, WB Primary Head Teacher Association	Andy Higgs	Andy Higgs
Principal Social Worker	-	Sonia Harris

## The Corporate Parenting Principles

### The principles

- 2.1 In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:
- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
  - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
  - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
  - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
  - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
  - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
  - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Taken from the Department of Education "*Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers statutory guidance for local authorities*". February 2018

### Corporate Parenting Review

Although there are clearly lots of good things happening with corporate parenting in West Berkshire, as evidenced by the recent Ofsted review, it seems to have a relatively low profile with elected members and the public.

The NCB has developed a [toolkit for evaluating local corporate parenting arrangements](#). Although this dates back to 2013, it still provides a useful framework. A quick evaluation from an external perspective has highlighted a number of possible areas for further work / investigation:

- West Berkshire Council does not appear to have a Corporate Parenting Strategy and associated Delivery Plan that sets out the objectives for looked after children and how these will be achieved;
- Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel are held in private and there is little information on the website about the Panel and its governance arrangements – for example, links with relevant bodies such as Full Council, Health and Wellbeing Board and Scrutiny Committees are not always clear;
- Members do not appear to have many opportunities to engage with Corporate Parenting issues outside of the Corporate Parenting Panel or discussions with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services;
- There appears to be little in the way of ongoing training for members on Corporate Parenting issues;
- There is little information about how the Council engages with children in care and care leavers to ensure that: their voices are heard; they are contributing to the development of services; and their achievements are celebrated.

#### Corporate Parenting Strategy

Many local authorities have Corporate Parenting Strategies / Delivery Plans, which set out a long-term vision and priorities for improvement over the short to medium term (generally three years). For example, [Leeds](#) has six priorities in their strategy, with a champion identified for each priority.

As part of their Corporate Parenting Strategies, many local authorities make a promise or pledge to looked-after children, using straightforward and direct language – this helps to make the commitment more personal and meaningful. For example, [Hackney](#) has done this using a comic book format.

#### Corporate Parenting Panel / Board

Most local authorities have a Corporate Parenting Board that meets in public. Some have themed meetings with relevant officers and partner agencies invited to attend based on the agenda for each meeting.

Some have also a Steering Group, which sits below the Board and is responsible for driving the Delivery Plan, with Task Groups set up to progress particular priorities / actions.

### Governance / Links with Other Bodies

Many local authorities provide annual reports on the work of their Corporate Parenting Boards to other bodies such as Full Council and Health and Wellbeing Board (e.g. [Lambeth](#)). This provides a great opportunity to celebrate achievements, highlight emerging issues and show how these are being addressed. It is also a good way to engage with elected members and partners and let them have oversight of what is happening and how they can contribute.

In addition to a Corporate Parenting Board, many councils also have a dedicated Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. Although West Berkshire Council does not currently have a dedicated committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission has Children's Services as part of its remit. OSMC should have a role in monitoring the services provided to looked-after children and in providing challenge to decision-makers and providers by holding them to account. They can be also be used to undertake in-depth reviews of particular issues or to gather evidence from other local authorities on best practice and the Corporate Parenting Panel may wish to refer matters to them. Again, this allows for a wider range of members to engage with corporate parenting activities.

### Member Training

Most local authorities undertake induction and regular refresher training with elected members, running sessions on different aspects of corporate parenting each year. Some have published a corporate parenting handbook for elected members (e.g. [Leeds](#)).

Leeds also undertakes a two-day training course called Total Respect, which is delivered by young people who have direct experience of the care system. It is designed to give foster carers, practitioners, officers and members a better understanding of what it is like for a young person to be in care.

### Engagement of Young People in Care / Care Leavers

The recent Ofsted inspection of West Berkshire's children's services suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board has been overly focused on the scrutiny of performance reports and needed to do more to promote and increase the active engagement of children in care and care leavers on the board.

Every local authority is expected to have a Children in Care Council and a Care Leavers Council to advise officers and members about their experiences and how services can be improved. Some also have a separate Youth Council. A few local authorities, such as Cheshire West and Chester, have a dedicated website for their [Children in Care Council](#), which helps to give it greater prominence and ownership by its users.

Some councils invite their Children in Care Council to participate in their Corporate Parenting Board, while others receive reports mediated by their participation service. It is essential that a local mechanism is established that works for both parties, otherwise there is a risk that they will operate in parallel rather than collaboratively.

The NCB has created a [guide to good practice in the structure and running of a children in care council](#), which includes lots of advice and practical examples of how to make these more effective. Examples include:

- Ensuring the CICC has a clearly defined role

## A Review of Corporate Parenting Panel

- Making all children in care aware of its existence
- Encouraging all children in setting agendas and work plans
- Having good support and facilitation of meetings
- Having virtual meetings
- Involvement of children in care in service reviews
- Rewarding participation

A number of local authorities use the [Mind of My Own app](#) to help young people express their views to their care team. They can use it to prepare for meetings, request a change in their care, or to ask for a problem to be sorted out. It works by prompting them to enter their views, structuring what they say into a statement, and then delivering the statement to their care team or another trusted adult.

Lambeth holds an annual Corporate Parenting Conference, which aims to:

- Better understand the roles and responsibilities as corporate parents
- Explore how members, staff and partner organisations as corporate parents can work together to improve the lives of looked after children and care experienced young people
- Provide an opportunity to listen to young people and understand their journey and what they expect of their corporate parents
- Consult and use the feedback obtained to influence their corporate parenting priorities for the coming year

Kent has previously organised a [Corporate Parenting Takeover Day](#) where looked after children / care leavers have the opportunity to shadow directors and members to learn how the Council is run and how decisions are made. It is also another opportunity for elected members to engage with looked after children and care leavers.

Celebrating success is another great way to engage with children in care and care leavers. Swindon Borough Council organises [annual awards events](#) to celebrate the achievements of children and young people in their care, with awards to recognise achievement in education, sports, arts, and community spirit.

The above is not intended to provide a definitive list of best practice, but may help to identify some areas where improvements could be made, or areas where further research could be undertaken. It may be that West Berkshire is already implementing many of the above activities, but that this has not been picked up from the initial desktop research.

## The Pledge

# THE PLEDGE 2021

Now you are in care of West Berkshire, the Council are your Corporate Parent and we pledge:

- Where possible we will try to keep you and your brothers and/or sisters living together. If this is not possible your social worker will explain why.
- We will make sure you get to see people in your family who are important to you. If this is not possible your social worker will explain why.
- We want to know if you are unhappy about anything and your social worker will give you opportunities to express this when you meet with them.
- We promise to find you the best available home where you will be safe and supported. If we can we will try and give you a choice of where you might live and we will try to find a place to live that is near your family and friends.
- If time allows, you will have a proper introduction to your new home, and we will show you a picture of the people you might live with before you move into the home. If this isn't possible, your social worker will explain the reasons why.
- We pledge that your bedroom will be your personal space and you will have a say with how it's decorated.
- We promise to provide a social worker who will get to know you well and who will keep in contact with you and listen to what you say. We can't promise that this worker will not change but if there is a change you will be given the reasons why.
- You may not have a say in who your social worker is but if you don't get on with them, we will look at the reasons for this and possible options for change. We will give you information on how to contact your social worker by phone or email and who to call in an emergency.





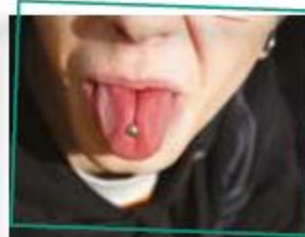
- We will talk to you about how often your social worker will see you and will have the opportunity to speak alone with your social worker when they visit you.
- Social workers will be on time for meetings and, if not, explain why.
- We will ask you what your dreams are and will help you pursue them.
- Your carer will talk to you about your interests and hobbies and will support you in accessing them. If this isn't possible, you will be told the reasons why.
- Those caring for you will recognise your birthday, other important events and religious festivals in a way that is special to you.
- Those looking after you will give you pocket money and help you save for your future.
- You will have free access to West Berkshire leisure centres for some activities and your social worker will provide you with information about these facilities and local activities.
- Your views will be important and contribute to your review meetings. You will be invited to be part of our Children in Care Council called R:Vue.
- If you are unhappy and feel no one is listening you can talk to your social worker, social workers manager or Debbie Mitchell, Senior Youth Worker
- We will draw up an education plan to encourage you to have high ambitions and help you get the best results you can.
- Your social worker will arrange to see you outside of school hours unless something important makes this necessary.
- We will help you if you fall behind with your studies, providing extra support to you if you need it.
- We will encourage and support you to go to university.
- We will work with you to explore all possible options for work when you leave education. This could include apprenticeships.

Your Corporate Parents want to see you thrive and do well. If there are other ways we can do this please let us know you can ring or text **Debbie Mitchell** Senior Youth Worker on **07554 114577**

## Charter for Care Leavers

### 1. Respecting your Identity

This means helping you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will also respect you as an individual and a valued member of the community, so you can speak positively about your identity to others. We'll also support you in relationships and help you come to terms with any loss or trauma.



### 2. Believe in you

We will value your gifts and talents and encourage you to use them to achieve any goals you have. We will also help you overcome barriers and develop a vision for your future, even if you have lost sight yourself of where you want to be.



### 3. Listen to you

It is important we take time to listen to you and understand your point of view. This means we will then be able to place your needs and feelings at the heart of and decisions we make about you. If you don't agree with us, then we will discuss this with you and give you the opportunity to appeal elsewhere about any decisions we proposed.



### 4. Provide you with all the information you need

This includes information on what you are entitled to legally, all information about your time in care, and information about the service you can expect from us. Details will be accurate and up to date and in the format you want. We'll also tell you where to get information once you are no longer in regular touch with us. We'll also help you manage your feelings regarding anything you find out, and make a note of anything you disagree with.



Young people who have lived in care are likely to need support as they move into adulthood and start becoming more independent.

Your upbringing could have been in foster care, in a children's home run by:-

- Local authority
- Charity
- In another arrangement

Whatever the circumstances, the local council that has had responsibility to oversee your upbringing and will often want to continue to offer support.

### The Charter

The Charter is based around what you as young people leaving care would want local councils and government organisations to do, when making any further decisions about your future.

This way, you can be confident the authority is acting in your best interests and has your wellbeing at heart.

This charter will consist of 7 principles and promises that West Berkshire Council will keep supporting you as care leavers.

West Berkshire Council wants to make a commitment to support you in your individual futures.

### 5. Continue to support you

As well as providing information, we will offer you emotional support and can provide ongoing advice. You won't need to struggle to get support, and we'll make sure that is the case with any other organisations you deal with. We'll respect your right to change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to support you even when we are no longer directly caring for you. And we'll help you learn from any mistakes you make, understand your needs and help you find where your needs can be met.



### 6. Help find you a home

We will help you to develop skills you need to live independently, work alongside you as you discover how to live independently, and help find accommodation that is right for you. Then we'll do all we can to make sure you can manage and are happy and safe in your new home. If you want to start over at any time, that's fine. Our aim is to see you settled in your new independent life.



### 7. Be a lifelong companion

This means we can help break down barriers you may meet when dealing with housing, benefits, colleges or universities, employers, or health services. We want to help you become a confident individual and be the driver of your life, not the passenger. We will remain your supporter in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.



# Economic Development Strategy Review

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	6 September 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
<b>Report Author:</b>	Katharine Makant
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	OSMC

## 1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) Refresh 2021 for review and comment by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC).

## 2 Recommendation(s)

For OSMC to note the information in the report and to comment on the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021, published in August 2022.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	The Economy Team processed significant amounts of Covid Recovery grant funding during 2021/22, as well as project-related expenditure. The 21/22 Revenue Budget included provision for staffing and a small operating budget, as well as project-related budgets. Temporary resource to support the administration of Covid Recovery grants was funded via the Welcome Back Fund and Recovery.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	The Economy Team is responsible for delivering the EDS including through business engagement, partnership working, project management and monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Legal:</b>	None

<b>Risk Management:</b>	None			
<b>Property:</b>	The Council is the freehold owner of the London Road Industrial Estate, which is the subject of a regeneration programme for employment use.			
<b>Policy:</b>	The report seeks comment on the Annual Progress Report of the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace and is intended to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace and is intended to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	X			The EDS Refresh seeks to support delivery of the Environment Strategy's green infrastructure targets and promote active travel modes.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	X			The EDS Refresh seeks to reshape our town centres to contribute to sustainable, inclusive growth
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		x		

<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>	x			The EDS Refresh seeks to improve digital infrastructure in the district in collaboration with partners in the pan- Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG).
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	X			The EDS Refresh contributes to the following strategic priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Supporting businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Developing local infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy</li> </ul>
<b>Core Business:</b>		x		.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		x		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>The original Economic Development Strategy was the subject of a public consultation in July 2019 for six weeks.</p> <p>The Annual Progress Report was considered in draft by Economic Development Board on 26 June 2022 and by Corporate Board on 16 August 2022.</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The original Economic Development Strategy 2020-2023 was built around four themes of People, Places, Infrastructure and Business Environment, recognising the district’s strengths in blending the economic strengths of the Thames Valley ‘turbo economy’ with the environmental assets more often found in the South West. The Strategy was reviewed in 2021 to ensure that its priorities were aligned with altered needs of the local economy post Covid-19.
- 4.2 One year on from the ratification of the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, we have reflected on the progress that has been made, particularly around the provision of financial support to local businesses to aid Covid Recovery and in the development of place-making strategies to ‘future-proof’ our town centres and the London Road Industrial Estate. We have also reflected on those areas where we have had to reprioritise, particularly where we have less ability to influence the local economy. The results of this review are set out in the Annual Progress Report, published on the Council’s website in August 2022 and attached to this report as Appendix B.

- 4.3 We will continue to work to deliver the overall priorities for West Berkshire set out in the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, recognising that the economy is facing a number of challenges over the next few years and that we must be ready to meet these as they arise.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 This report presents the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 for review and comment by OSMC.
- 5.2 The West Berkshire Health and Well-being Board published its 2036 Vision for the district in 2020, outlining one of the key themes as ‘welcoming business and enterprise’. The Council’s own Strategy for 2020-2023 cites the theme of ‘open for business’ as an underpinning principle for its work over the next four years. Both ambitions are reflected in the Economic Development Strategy Refresh, which also aligns with those of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP).

### Background

- 5.3 West Berkshire’s local economy has long been strong and resilient with a high number of businesses representing a diverse range of industries, a well-qualified workforce and an excellent natural environment. Our local Economic Development Strategy which was first published in draft in March 2019, and was eventually adopted in early 2020, reflected on this position of strength and sought to ensure that more local people were able to take advantage of the opportunities our district has to offer.
- 5.4 The original Strategy was built around four themes: People, Places, Infrastructure and Business Environment, recognising the district’s strengths in blending the economic strengths of the Thames Valley ‘turbo economy’ with the environmental assets more often found in the South West. The Strategy was reviewed in 2021 to ensure that its priorities were aligned with altered needs of the local economy post Covid-19 and with the economic priority within the Council’s Recovery and Renewal Strategy. At the same time, we published a high level Delivery Plan setting out planned actions in the short, medium and long term.
- 5.5 At the time of publication of the EDS Refresh, we were between periods of national lockdown for Covid-19 and it was not known that they would continue for almost another year. We have had to be agile in responding to new Government initiatives to ensure they met local economic needs, for example Kickstart, the Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) and Welcome Back Fund (WBF). In addition, we have responded along with colleagues to national crises including the Afghan and Ukraine refugee initiatives. This has been alongside continuing to deliver on pre-Covid commitments including the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan and London Road Industrial Estate
- 5.6 The Economy Team is responsible for delivering the EDS including through business engagement, partnership working, project management and monitoring and evaluation. The team processed significant amounts of Covid Recovery grant funding during 2021/22, as well as expenditure on regeneration projects. Temporary resource to



support the administration of Covid Recovery grants was funded via the Welcome Back Fund and Recovery.

5.7 Governance is provided by the Economic Development Board (EDB), which is a governance group chaired by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance. The Board membership includes the Leader of Council, the Executive Members for Education and Planning & Transport and the Executive Directors for Place and Resources. The Board leads on the development, implementation and monitoring of the Economic Development Strategy. EDB has one sub-group reporting to it - the London Road Industrial Estate Project Board, chaired by the Executive Director, Place.

### Progress

5.8 The Annual Progress Report outlines activities during the review period against the four themes as follows:

- **People** - good jobs and greater earning power for all in West Berkshire
- **Places** - creating prosperous communities across West Berkshire
- **Infrastructure** - future-proofing West Berkshire's infrastructure
- **Business Environment** - making West Berkshire the best place to start and grow a business

5.9 Each theme is broken down into sub-headings reflecting groups of actions set out in the EDS Refresh and high level Delivery Plan. Case studies are included where relevant to provide more detailed examples of activity.

5.10 The publication of the Annual Progress Report is an example of the service's desire to engage more with businesses and residents, and to showcase the district to attract talent and investment to benefit the local economy. Other examples include the [Businesswestberks](#) website, the monthly Business Newsletter, and building relationships with partners including Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

5.11 In the year to come, the focus of delivery is expected to be as follows:

- 'future-proof' our town centres through place-making initiatives;
- continue to ensure economic development is considered in the planning process;
- improve employment and training outcomes through large developments;
- work with the DWP and colleagues on supported employment;
- facilitate inward investment in the district through engaging and supporting business; and
- progress the London Road Industrial Estate regeneration project.

5.12 We will continue to explore partnerships and external funding opportunities for our town centre initiatives and to engage further with West Berkshire businesses, including our rural businesses, to understand and address the challenges they are facing. We will also seek to deepen our knowledge and build our evidence base on the state of the local economy in order to inform service improvement across the council.

5.13 The Report includes a useful summary of business support provided by the council in the period of review (noting that the Covid-related grant figures relate to the period for which the schemes were live (Nov 2020 to March 2022):

## Economic Development Business Support

**20** businesses have received a share of over **£85,000** in **Welcome Back Business Grants** to drive footfall after lockdown



**44** businesses have benefited from our **£700,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant Challenge Fund** to aid recovery, green growth and innovation



**450** businesses have benefited from a total of

**£6,420,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant** to help with the impacts of the pandemic

**15** Interventions and events facilitated to support high streets

**22** Independent businesses have featured in our 'Shop Green, Shop Local' online magazine to promote sustainable Christmas Shopping



**4** Webinars and events held



**29** Employments created (Kickstart)



**29**

**258** Number of businesses supported with advice and guidance



**2,294 to 3,293** Newsletter subscribers (May 21 – 22)

Subscribe



**2,294 to 3,293**

## 6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The Annual Progress Report was published in August 2022. The review represents a 'snapshot' in time of progress, adding to the information set out in the quarterly reporting of Key Performance Indicators for the service.
- 6.2 Monitoring and evaluation is a key part of the implementation of any strategy and comments from OSMC members are welcomed.

## 7 Conclusion

OSMC is invited to note the information set out above and to comment on the Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021, published in August 2022 (attached).

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 Annual Progress Report

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### Background Papers:

Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021 available to view at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/economic-development-strategy>

### 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:** ALL

**Officer details:**

Name: Katharine Makant  
Job Title: Economy Manager  
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**Document Control**

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<b>Author:</b>	Katharine Makant		
<b>Owning Service</b>	Development and Regulation		

**Change History**

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

## Appendix A

### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	N/A
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	N/A
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	N/A
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	Development and Regulation
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Katharine Makant
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	8 August 2022

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

<b>(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?</b>	
<b>Aims:</b>	Seek OSMC comments on the Annual Progress Report for Annual Progress Report on the Economic Development Strategy Refresh 2021
<b>Objectives:</b>	As above

<b>Outcomes:</b>	OSMC feedback
<b>Benefits:</b>	Improved monitoring and evaluation

**(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?**  
*(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)*

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
All groups	More inclusion and equality	The EDS Refresh seeks to empower everyone to enter the workplace.
<b>Further Comments:</b>		

**(3) Result**

<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:**

<b>EqIA Stage 2 required</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Owner of EqIA Stage Two:</b>	
<b>Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:</b>	

Name: Katharine Makant

Date: 8 August 2022



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# Review of the Economic Development Strategy Refresh

Annual progress report  
(June 2021 – June 2022)



# Economic Development Business Support

**20** businesses have received a

share of over **£85,000** in **Welcome Back Business Grants** to drive footfall after lockdown



**44** businesses have benefited from our

**£700,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant Challenge Fund** to aid recovery, green growth and innovation



**450** businesses have benefited from a total of

**£6,420,000** in **Additional Restrictions Grant** to help with the impacts of the pandemic



**Interventions and events facilitated to support high streets**

**15**

**22** Independent businesses have featured in our 'Shop Green, Shop Local' online magazine to promote sustainable Christmas Shopping



**4** Webinars and events held



**Employments created (Kickstart)**



**29**

**Number of businesses supported with advice and guidance**



**258**

**Newsletter subscribers (May 21 – 22)**

**Subscribe**



**2,294 to 3,293**



Unemployment  
**3.1%**



**71.4%**  
qualified at  
NVQ 3 and  
above

**87.8%**



of the 16-64 population  
is economically active

Average pay  
per annum

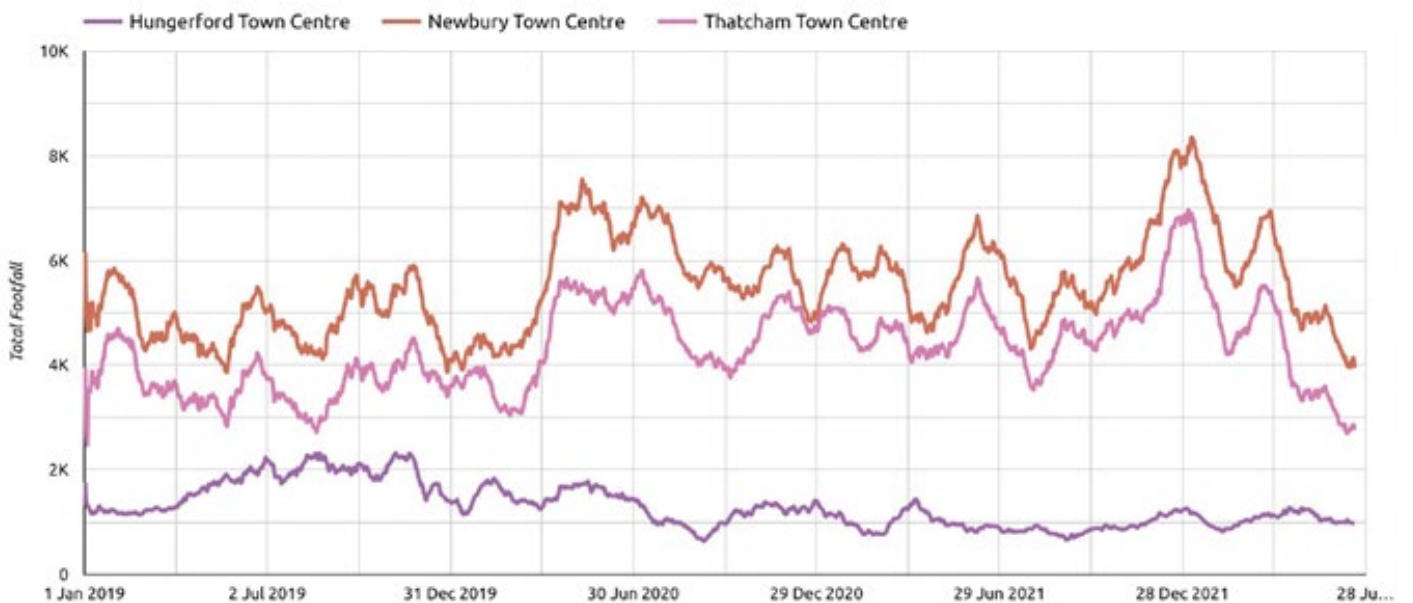
**£34,850**



House prices  
vs income ratio

**10.94**

### Town centre footfall



# Introduction

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West Berkshire has a diverse and resilient economy, with over 9000 businesses, a well-qualified workforce, excellent connectivity, and is part of the strongest regional economy in the UK outside of London: the Thames Valley. Although, like the rest of the world, our economy was affected by the pandemic, it was in a position to mount a strong recovery and continue to grow.

Our [Economic Development Strategy refresh](#) was written to build on this position of strength by ensuring that our priorities were aligned with the altered needs of the economy as a result of Covid-19. The refresh was ratified in August 2021 and it reviewed and updated the priorities and actions of the original [Economic Development Strategy](#), which was first written in March 2019.

A year on we are now reviewing the progress that has been made towards the vision of the refresh: that West Berkshire's economy emerges from the Covid-19 environment stronger than it was before.

This progress report is structured along the 4 themes of the strategy: People, Place, Infrastructure and Business Environment. It will look at the progress made against each priority and explore areas where our work has been delayed or priorities have pivoted.

Our Economic Development Strategy Delivery Plan sets out the actions and timescales for how we intend to achieve the aims of the strategy, and the two documents should be viewed in conjunction.

Pivoting in response to major Government announcements or shifting local priorities is a key requirement of the Economy Team. When the strategy refresh was written, in March 2021, we were between periods of national lockdowns and it was not known that they would continue for almost another year. As a result we had to invest a significant amount of time providing emergency support for the local economy, specifically the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme (ARG) from its inception in November 2020 to March 2022, has required 60-70% of the time of the Economic Development Officer. This has resulted in some actions being reprioritised, particularly in areas where we have less direct ability to influence the local economy.

This was compounded by another major pressure on our capacity; the refresh of the London Road Industrial Estate regeneration project which, as explored in a case study below, has required significant time and resources.

As the team has expanded and the demands of the aforementioned projects have reduced we have been able to expand our scope, however there remains a lot more work to be done.

# People

## Empower everyone to enter the workplace

We funded a two-week course offering skills to local people on how to start their own business or go self-employed, delivered by the [Rebel Business School](#). Promotion was targeted through community groups particularly at women who are not part of the workforce, resulting in 17 pre-start-ups attending in total.

We have created and are soon to ratify, in collaboration with Adult Social Care, a partnership agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions that facilitates a closer working relationship between the Council and DWP. The first action to arise has been working with DWP to offer advice to Ukrainian refugees who are seeking employment.

## Put in place employment support for the newly unemployed

There was a major uptick in unemployment claims in West Berkshire by mid-2020 as a result of the pandemic. In order to respond directly and create job opportunities for young people we made extensive use of the Government's Kickstart scheme, which is described in the case study below.

We also facilitated a sector-based worked academy (SBWA) at Newbury JobCentrePlus in March 2021 which provided a cohort of 10 young people with practical workplace admin skills.

We work with partners to improve careers advice, such as [Berkshire Opportunities](#) to whom we provided £5,000 in 2021/22 to enable them to continue to support people into employment.

## Encourage the uptake of apprenticeships

Our strategy includes a commitment to create a 'community apprenticeship levy' to gift the Council's excess apprenticeship levy funds. This work pivoted in response to the Government's Levy Transfer Scheme announced in September 2021, which nationalised the transfer system. Human Resources led on committing the Council's excess levy through this scheme, and local businesses are now regularly signposted to it.

An initiative to embed Employment and Skills Plans (ESPs) in conditions of major planning applications and procurements has begun, with the aim of creating local apprenticeships and training opportunities. The first output was a planning condition requiring a commercial development in Colthrop to provide an ESP.

## Support Newbury College's University Centre

The Skills and Enterprise Partnership, chaired by Newbury College, allows us to maintain close contact with the College, however we continue to look for an opportunity to support the University Centre directly, particularly in the area of digital technology. Next year we will be aiming to explore the opportunity to arrange placements for their students within the Council.



## Work with partners to improve careers advice and put employment and skills at the heart of everything we do

The work experience opportunities at West Berkshire Council project was managed and delivered by the HR team in summer of 2021 and we will be considering how we can support this by making placements available in future years.



### Case study: Kickstart scheme

**KICKSTART  
SCHEME**

We became a Kickstart Gateway organisation in late 2020, and we used the scheme to make a total of 55 temporary job opportunities available for young people in West Berkshire. In total we were able to recruit 29 people to these roles; 13 within the Council and 16 within local businesses that we directly supported. We published case studies about the experiences of two Kickstarters, which can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3QpP2Cw> and here: <https://bit.ly/39yaPXZ>



We also offered a coaching and advice service to support local businesses to apply for Kickstart funding to create jobs. Support was given to approximately 50 businesses, most of whom applied to the scheme with many reporting back on their success.

In total we have distributed over £190,000 in wages and start-up grants through Kickstart

## Reshape our town centres

We have successfully developed a revised strategic objective and delivery strategy for the London Road Industrial Estate that focuses on developing the site for economic growth, described in the case study below.

Following announcement of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we have been asked to develop the investment plan to draw down West Berkshire's £1 million allocation. The investment plan was submitted on the 1st of August, and it includes a mix of impactful projects across the district which have the support of local stakeholders.

We delivered two grant schemes over 2021/22 to enhance the economic recovery of our towns: the Welcome Back Fund and Welcome Back Business Grants, both of which were supported by major promotional campaigns.

Welcome Back Fund: £173,000 from the European Regional Development Fund was spent on events, publicity and beautification to support Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham high streets. This followed a survey of all town and parish Councils to invite interest and proposals.

Welcome Back Business Grants: we developed a unique local scheme to fund businesses to host events or make improvements which drove customer footfall. In total we distributed £85,000 of recovery funding to 21 businesses who applied.

[Shop Local Shop Green](#): in collaboration with our Environment Team we rolled out two campaigns aimed at promoting local sustainable businesses, involving 28 in total. They were selected through an application process to feature in digital magazines that were sent to local residents.

In June 2022 we commenced procurement for consultants to deliver place-making strategies for Thatcham and Hungerford town centres which will be delivered by March 2023



## Support rural businesses to diversify and support the Lambourn Horseracing industry

Rural business forum – engagement and planning has begun for a conference event in autumn 2022 that will bring together major stakeholders in the rural economy, with the aim of supporting existing and new rural businesses to become more resilient, grow and diversify.

Supporting comments have been provided on a number of planning applications for rural business diversification and we will continue to offer our support for this where appropriate.

## Use the local plan to deliver sustainable development in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford and Pangbourne

The Local Plan Review is due to be submitted to the planning inspectorate in March 2023. We have put forward comments on policies in the plan which will facilitate economic development priorities in our town centres, [London Road Industrial Estate](#) and the rural economy.

The Newbury Town Centre Masterplan was ratified by Executive on 10 February 2022 and we are now developing an accompanying delivery and stakeholder engagement plan.

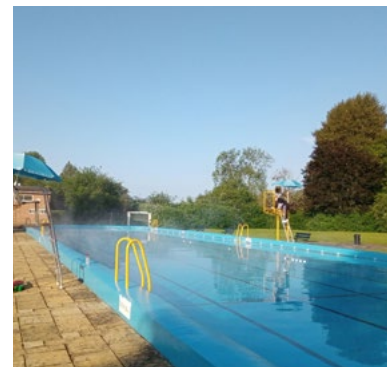
An outline redesign for turning Newbury Wharf into a flexible public space, as proposed by the Masterplan, is due to be delivered by consultants by August 2022. We have already used this project as the basis of a funding proposal for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund



## Enhance our leisure offering

The proposed development of the Newbury Lido was approved at Executive in March 2022 and has been allocated £5 million in capital funding for structural work, improved access, a new pool and play equipment. We have prepared and submitted two Levelling Up Fund bids for the Lido work, the first unsuccessfully in March 2021 followed by a revised version for round 2 on 1st August 2022.

The Sports and Leisure team have developed a proposal for expansion of Goosecroft sports ground in Purley on Thames, which we are putting this forward to be considered for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan. If approved it would deliver 3 junior football pitches, and one cricket pitch.



## Case study: London Road Industrial Estate

The regeneration of the London Road Industrial Estate has been a long-standing objective of the Council since 2003. One of the key aims of our team over the last year has been to progress the project forward, after it was restarted in 2019 following a legal challenge.

A review of the project was undertaken which took into account the post-pandemic economy, market demand and the district's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. On the basis of this work a report was developed which outlines a fresh approach for the site focusing on safeguarding existing employment and creating 200 additional jobs, attracting investment into Newbury and achieving carbon neutrality – superseding a previous development brief that had been agreed in November 2020. The [report and new way forward](#) was agreed at Executive on 9th June 2022.

We will now be working towards this new delivery strategy, which includes work underway on place-making, lease extensions in place, re-naming of the site and a planning application for the former depot site by mid-2023.

[View the London Road Industrial Estate micro-site here.](#)



## Support delivery of Environment Strategy green infrastructure targets

The Low Carbon Workspaces grant has been promoted through our newsletter, with 18 West Berkshire based businesses successfully applying for funding, totalling £57,000 in grants to implement building energy efficiency measures.

As part of the Additional Restrictions Grant we developed a unique local scheme called the ARG Challenge Fund, offering large grants to stimulate environmentally friendly growth and carbon reduction measures. Businesses received funding for projects such as solar panels, e-commerce websites, an air-source heat pump, development of a travel carbon-tracker app, and an e-cargo bike. A number of these projects have now been completed and we are in the process of developing video case studies of the successful proposals.



We have built close links with the Environment Delivery Team and collaborated on projects such as the ARG Challenge Fund, and Shop Local Shop Green. We will be continuing to support delivery of the Environment Strategy – which is well underway.

## Digital infrastructure focusing on full fibre and 5g coverage

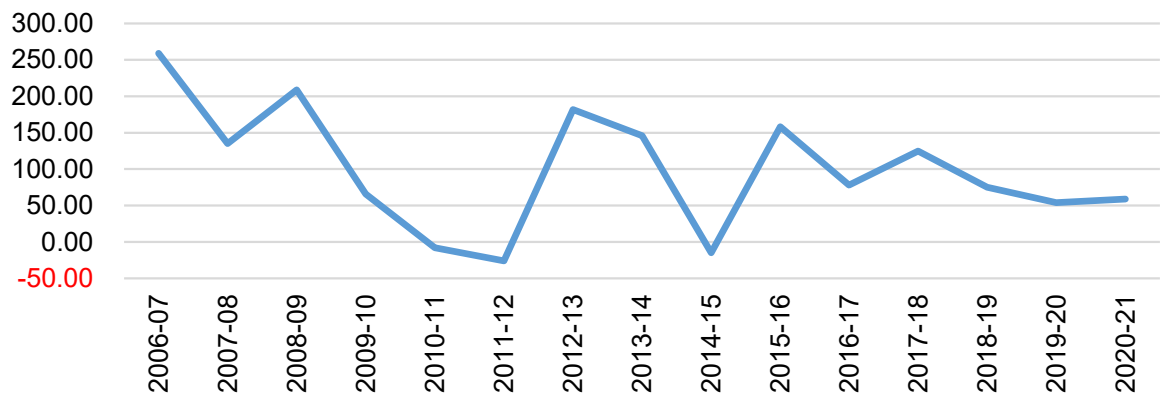
Our Chief Executive chairs the Thames Valley LEP Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG), and we have set up a secondary group of Council officers in order to support local delivery of the larger DIG's targets. The mini-DIG aims to develop a programme of local initiatives in line with the wider targets which can viewed here: [www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/digital-infrastructure-group](http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/digital-infrastructure-group)



## Ensure affordable housing delivery

The [Housing Strategy 2020-2026](#) describes how the Council will facilitate affordable housing delivery; primarily through the planning process, and we provided a consultation response to this strategy. There was a net delivery of 59 affordable homes in 2020-2021 and the Local Plan Review will set out the Council's position on affordable homes in new developments for the future.

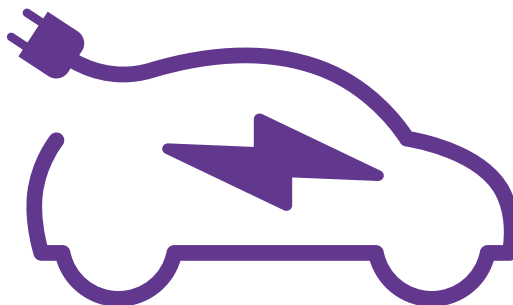
Net affordable housing completions  
2006 - 2021



## Enhance intelligent and sustainable transport infrastructure

The Local Transport Plan is in progress and being delivered by consultants WSP. The main body of work is currently being drafted, and we will be contributing comments from an economic development perspective when the plan goes out to consultation in autumn 2022.

In planning consultation responses we promote the inclusion of sustainable transport infrastructure, including EV charging points and cycle provision on commercial premises



# Business environment

## Create an environment to help start-ups and small businesses grow

The recruitment of a Business Engagement Officer has allowed us to extend our direct business engagement significantly and enhance the guidance and signposting that we offer to local businesses and start-ups.

The Business engagement officer post shares some of the goals and priorities of the discontinued Newbury West Berkshire Economic Development Company (EDC). The EDC was created in 2020 and discontinued in early 2021 as a result of a lack of funding and outcomes not meeting expectations.

The [Business West Berkshire website](#) was launched April 2022. It provides a brochure for inward investment and one-stop-shop for advice for local businesses. So far the website has attracted 401 unique visitors and 3k views, including visitors from the USA, China and Europe.

Thirty four start-up businesses were referred to the Berkshire Business Growth Hub from March 2021 - 2022, for bespoke growth and financial guidance.

Our strategy included an action to develop the business case for incubator space. Great Western Rail submitted an application for 3 business growth units at Newbury Railway Station, which was approved in 2021. We will continue to explore opportunities to develop incubator space with prospective partners and funding providers.



## Remain business friendly as a council

In November 2021 the [Social Value Policy](#), which we developed in collaboration with the Commissioning team, was formally adopted by Executive. This policy allows officers to give weighted consideration to social value impacts when procuring contracts, including measures to promote spend with local SMEs.

We are planning to co-host a supplier engagement event with Commissioning to get suppliers' feedback on how the newly adopted Social Value Policy is affecting them.

We host quarterly webinars to engage with the business community around a variety of topics, including local grant schemes, Kickstart and the Rebel Business School, which have drawn attendance from 8 to 30 businesses at a time. We also maintain an active presence at other engagement opportunities such as local events hosted by the Federation of Small Businesses and Newbury BID.

We gave support to hospitality businesses to apply for outdoor tables and chairs licences when social restrictions were in place, resulting in several successful applications.

## Support businesses that have been affected by Covid-19 to reopen and trade resiliently

Coronavirus business grant support, specifically the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) has been a key area of work for the team and led to the informal secondment of the Economic Development Officer into the Business Rates team for most of 2021. See the case study below.

## Foster relationships and create stronger engagement with local businesses

A business engagement plan has been developed which outlines all activities aimed at creating a closer relationship with businesses in the district. This includes our regular newsletter, and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to undertake local business surveys. We are also developing plans to increase our engagement with institutions such as AWE, Vodafone and rural estates.

We are working collaboratively with local organisations such as the [Thames Valley LEP](#) to broaden our offering outside of West Berkshire on initiatives such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG).

West Berkshire Growth Board – the creation of a strategic local partnership to facilitate growth is an ongoing objective, however it has been postponed to due to uncertainty around the future of the LEP.

## Promote the West Berkshire brand and provide a soft-landing to new companies

We are developing an account-management approach to attracting inward investment into the district that will be led by a new Business Investment Officer funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, if our investment plan submitted 1st August is successfully approved.

We continue to use the Berkshire Film Office (BFO) to promote West Berkshire as a location for filming, and to act as a liaison between productions and the Council. Since we joined in 2019 the BFO have facilitated 22 productions in West Berkshire. With the development of Shinfield studios we expect to see more opportunities for local filming to help build the West Berkshire brand and improve commercial outcomes for local businesses in the film industry.



### Case study: Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)

Following the November 2020 national lockdown the Government released discretionary business grant funding, called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to all local authorities. We were tasked with managing the policy and distribution of this fund to offer the best support possible to local businesses.

We developed a policy and application process and reviewed the bulk of applications with support from the Business Rates team. Over the 16 month lifespan of the scheme over **450** local businesses were supported with a share of **£6,420,000** that was paid out in total. Feedback from businesses was positive, many expressed that our system of automatic repeat payments gave them confidence, and that a broad range of industries were supported. However we did also hear from some applicants that the decision process was unreasonably long, as there was very high demand and significant pressure on resources.

Below is some feedback we received from a well-known local business that supplies the hospitality sector:

*'Many thanks for your email last night, we wanted to reply but were way too emotional. We actually had a good night sleep for the first time in months as a result of your email, cannot thank you enough for your efforts. The grant below really will be the difference between make or break for us.'*

## Conclusion

We will continue to take forward the Economic Development Strategy by progressing our existing actions and initiating those that we are committed to deliver.

Some of the key outcomes that we aim to achieve this year, as expressed by our key performance indicators, are to: progress the

London Road Industrial Estate regeneration project; future-proof our town centres through place-making initiatives; continue to prioritise economic development in the planning process; improve employment and training outcomes through large developments; and facilitate inward investment in the district through engaging and supporting business.



# Report Title: West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	6 September 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Richard Somner
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jon Winstanley
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	OSMC

## 1 Purpose of the Report

To:

- Provide Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) with an overview of the West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2022-2027;
- Outline the Council’s duties and responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act;
- Update OSMC on activities undertaken in the last 12 months and on planned flood alleviation and drainage works programmed for the 2022/23 financial year;

## 2 Recommendation(s)

That the content of this report be noted.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications for the council. Duties, responsibilities and capital works proposed are funded as part of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
<b>Human Resource:</b>	There are no direct human recourse implications at present, however, the enactment of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) may require additional resources. The council employs engineering consultants to assist with the design of flood defence schemes and to meet peaks in

	workload from our duties under the Flood and Water Management Act.			
<b>Legal:</b>	Legal assistance is required with land purchases for flood defence schemes.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	As Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) the Council has a duty to manage the risk of flooding from ordinary watercourses, surface water and groundwater. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) is essential to set the framework for managing these risks. Reputational harm would be caused by a failure to implement the actions contained in the LFRMS and our duties under the FWMA.			
<b>Property:</b>	It is sometimes necessary to purchase private land to construct major flood defence schemes and to serve notice on private landowners to ensure riparian responsibilities are adhered to.			
<b>Policy:</b>	The LFRMS supports HM Government Policy Statement 'Flood and coastal erosion risk management', the National Planning Policy Framework and the EU Floods Directive.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		There are no Equalities impacts associated with the LFRMS.



<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		There are no Equalities impacts from this report.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			Whenever possible, all flood defence schemes, sustainable drainage systems and land drain works undertaken or approved by the council aim to achieve biodiversity, water quality and amenity benefits.  Adaptation and protecting the District against the impacts of climate change is an integral part of the Council's Environment Strategy.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	x			Flooding can have a significant impact on Health and Wellbeing of those residents that have been affected. Reducing the risk of flooding will therefore lead to healthier communities.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		x		No impact.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		x		No impact.
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	x			The LFRMS and Council's flood risk activities are in line with the Council Strategy Priorities of 'maintaining a green district' and 'developing local infrastructure to support and grow the local economy.'
<b>Core Business:</b>	x			The LFRMS supports the council's Environment Strategy.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		x		No impact.

<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>The draft LFRMS was published on the council’s web-site from 23 August 2021 with comments invited by 3 October 2021. In total 101 responses were received from a mixture of residents, Local Ward Members, Parish Councils and Local Flood Forums. A wide range of feedback and comments were received.</p> <p>The feedback from the consultation was on the whole constructive and supportive. The general consensus was that the document is welcomed and the objectives are appropriate to reducing flood risk within the district.</p> <p>Details of the responses along with an officer comment was reported to the Council’s Executive in February 2022.</p>
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## 4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 places a number of duties on West Berkshire Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority including:

- To prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas (a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – LFRMS);
- Carrying out works to manage local flood risks in their areas;
- Maintaining a register of flood risk assets;
- Investigating significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations;
- Powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to regulate ordinary watercourses (including issuing consents for works on ordinary watercourses).
- To undertake a statutory consultee role providing technical advice on surface water drainage (or Sustainable Drainage – SuDS) to local planning authorities on major developments;
- To co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities;
- To play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event.

4.2 The LFRMS forms the framework to which the Lead Local Flood Authority carries out the above duties. The latest version of the strategy 2022 – 27 was approved at Executive in February 2022 and can be found [here](#). The Strategy encourages effective flood risk management by enabling people, communities, businesses and the public sector to work together to ensure a clear understanding of the risks of flooding so that investment in flood risk management can be prioritised more effectively.

4.3 An update on other duties the Council has as Lead Local Flood Authority is covered in the supporting information.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.2 The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 was enacted as a direct result of an independent review (The Pitt Review) following the widespread flooding in 2007. The review put forward a number of recommendations, including the need for a "wider brief for the Environment Agency" and for local councils to be given powers and responsibilities to "protect communities through robust building and planning controls".

5.3 The FWMA 2010 establishes a role of Lead Local Flood Authority for upper tier or Unitary Authorities with a responsibility for reducing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. The LLFA essentially has responsibility to investigate, mitigate and plan for flooding that does not come from statutory main rivers or reservoirs.

5.4 Within West Berkshire Council the LLFA duties predominantly sit within the Drainage and Flood Risk Team within the Environment Department. However duties that relate to emergency planning and recovery are led by the Council's Joint Emergency Planning Unit.

### Overview and Scrutiny

5.5 The Flood and Water Management Act has made an amendment to the Local Government Act, under Section 21F, introducing powers for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review and scrutinise the activities of the flood risk management authorities. In addition, under the Flood Risk Management Overview and Scrutiny (England) Regulations 2011, the lead local flood authorities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is empowered to request reports or the attendance at meetings of any flood risk management authority, to enable the scrutiny of the delivery of their flood risk management functions.

### Update on Flood Risk Management Activities

5.6 The following table gives a breakdown of activities undertaken in the last 12 months and planned works in the 2022/23 financial year.

Duty	Activity
To prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas (a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – LFRMS).	West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022 – 27 can be seen <a href="#">here</a> .

<p>Carrying out works to manage local flood risks in their areas.</p>	<p>The Council has a programme of major flood risk management projects and a minor works programme. The major works are predominantly funded through bids from the Environment Agency's Grant in Aid funding route, through which the Council has been particularly successful over the years. In the last 10 years the Council has successfully bid for and delivered schemes to the value of £9.75m. In addition, funding for flood alleviation has been raised through local businesses, Thames Water, Parish/Town Councils and in some instances from residents via flood forums and flood groups.</p> <p>The minor works programme is funded through the Council's Capital Programme. Both programmes for the 2022/23 financial year can be seen in Appendix B.</p> <p>In addition to these planned works the Drainage and Flood Risk Team responds to requests for service and reports of local flooding throughout the District. 758 such requests were responded to in the 2021/22 financial year.</p>
<p>Maintaining a register of flood risk assets.</p>	<p>The Council maintains a register of flood risk assets within its Highways, Structures and Drainage Asset Management System.</p> <p>The asset register is being constantly updated when new works take place and when we undertake maintenance work on historic drainage assets.</p>
<p>Investigating significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations.</p>	<p>Under Section 19 of the FAWMA, the Council has a duty to investigate flood incidents.</p> <p>Appendix 3 of the <a href="#">Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</a> details the policy and threshold levels for investigations.</p> <p>There have been no flood incidents in the last 12 months that have reached the threshold for a section 19 investigation.</p>
<p>Powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to regulate ordinary watercourses (including issuing consents for works on ordinary watercourses).</p>	<p>The two main activities under this section of the act are serving notice on landowners (riparian owners) to clear blockages in ditches and ordinary watercourses and to approve any requested changes to ordinary</p>

	<p>watercourses (ordinary watercourse consents (OWC's).</p> <p>Formally serving notice under the act is rare and most works are undertaken by riparian owners through negotiation. No formal notices have been served in the last 12 months.</p> <p>14 OWC's have been issued in the last 12 months.</p>
<p>To undertake a statutory consultee role providing technical advice on surface water drainage to local planning authorities on major developments.</p>	<p>A total of 418 planning consultations have been responded to by the Drainage and Flood Risk Team in the 2021/22 financial year.</p>
<p>To co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities.</p>	<p>Council Officers hold regular meetings with the Environment Agency to discuss major flood risk management projects within the District.</p> <p>Council Officers also attend and support the following flood forums which generally meet quarterly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pang Valley;</li> <li>• Lambourn Valley;</li> <li>• Thatcham.</li> </ul> <p>The Pang and Lambourn Valley flood forums are also attended by the EA and Thames Water. Council Officers also recently attended the inaugural Newbury Flood Forum meeting and will offer support going forward.</p>
<p>To play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event.</p>	<p>There have been no major flood events in the last 12 months.</p>

## 6 Other options considered

Not applicable.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 Flooding can have severe detrimental impacts on people's lives, from short duration nuisance flooding of highways, open space and river corridors to flooding of people's

homes and businesses leading to damage, loss of personal possessions, displacement during remedial works and environmental impacts from pollution. The effects can also lead to physical and mental health issues and increased strain on people's lives.

- 7.2 Becoming more resilient to climate change is a key objective of the Council's Environment Strategy. Our flood risk management activities are central to our ability to adapt to climate change and the Drainage and Flood Risk Management Team has been proactive in introducing biodiversity and carbon reduction measures in exercising its duties under the FAWMA.
- 7.3 The Council is committed through its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and other powers and duties as Lead Local Flood Authority to working with partners to understand local flooding, communicate risks and manage unacceptable risks now and in the future.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One.
- 8.2 Appendix B - Major and minor drainage and flood risk works programmes 2022/23.

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### Background Papers:

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022-27

### 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:** All Wards

**Officer details:**

Name: Jon Winstanley  
Job Title: Service Director Environment  
Tel No: 01635 519087  
E-mail: jon.winstanley@westberks.gov.uk

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**Document Control**

<b>DocumentRef:</b>		<b>Date Created:</b>	Aug 22
<b>Version:</b>	1.0	<b>Date Modified:</b>	-
<b>Author:</b>	Jon Winstanley		
<b>Owning Service</b>	Environment		

**Change History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Change ID</b>
1	05/08/22	Draft Issued to Sue Halliwell for comment	
2	24/08/22	CB comments included	

## Appendix A

### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

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

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

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

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

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



<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	Approval of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022-2027
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	<b>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> <b>If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation</b>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	<b>Andrew Reynolds</b>
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	<b>Transport and Countryside</b>
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	
<b>Version and release date (if applicable):</b>	

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

<b>(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?</b>	
<b>Aims:</b>	The LFRMS sets out the aims and priorities to reduce flood risk over the 5 year period ending in 2027.
<b>Objectives:</b>	Develop plans and identify measure to reduce existing flood risk. Improve the understanding of flood risk in West Berkshire and increase public awareness.

<b>Outcomes:</b>	Raising public awareness of flooding and reducing flood risk.
<b>Benefits:</b>	The primary beneficiaries are the residents and businesses in West Berkshire effected by flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourse.

**(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?**  
*(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)*

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
<b>Further Comments:</b>		

**(3) Result**

<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b>	
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b>	

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

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

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

Name: Stuart Clark

Date: 6 December 2021

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

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## Appendix B

### Drainage and Flood Risk Major Projects 2022/23

Project	2022/23 Activities	Overall programme
<p>Dunstan Park and South East Thatcham Flood attenuation.</p> <p>Budget - £5m</p> <p>Provision of attenuation basins, bunds, swales and natural features to slow the flow of surface water throughout Thatcham.</p>	<p>Works complete.</p> <p>Contract maintenance period to be signed off.</p> <p>Remedial work required to Siege Cross playing fields.</p>	<p>Complete snagging by March 2023</p>
<p>North &amp; East Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p> <p>Budget - £4m</p> <p>Provision of 3 separate flood attenuation basins around the north and east of Thatcham.</p>	<p>Achieve planning permission for the projects (approved in May 2022).</p> <p>Approval of procurement strategy.</p> <p>Planning and procurement of main earthworks contract.</p> <p>Complete access and site clearance work prior to Jan 23.</p>	<p>Commence main earthworks project in March 2023.</p>
<p>Memorial Fields Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p> <p>Budget - £1.4m</p> <p>Provision of a flood attenuation basin on Thatcham Memorial Fields.</p>	<p>Scheme detail design.</p> <p>Public consultation.</p> <p>Submit planning application late autumn 2022.</p> <p>Commence procurement process.</p>	<p>Construct summer 2023.</p>
<p>North brook ditch investigation and catchment study.</p>	<p>Investigation complete.</p> <p>Detailed flood alleviation options to be considered.</p> <p>Potential bid to EA for further funding to be considered.</p>	<p>Ongoing project.</p>
<p>Hamstead Norreys FAS</p> <p>Flood alleviation ditch to provide alleviation from flooding from the River Pang.</p>	<p>Detailed design.</p> <p>Compilation of business case for funding bid to the EA.</p>	<p>Ongoing project.</p>

## Drainage and Flood Risk Minor Works Programme 2022/23

Location	Work/Activity	Progress
<b>Projects</b>		
Fairfields Close Hungerford	3 maybe 4 Soakaways or Attenuation Tank/s	Planning
Membury - Dixons Building	New outfall for Highway Drainage	Planning
A339 from Swan RB to Greenham Industrial Estate	Clean Ditches	Planning
Dean Copse Road Burghfield between Hadleys and Reading Road	Clean Ditches	In Progress
Sheffield Bottom Deans Copse Road & Hose Hill & Hanger Road	Clean Ditches	In Progress
A4 from Hill Place to A340 RB	Clean Ditches	Works Ordered
Burghfield Road from Kennet River to Theale Road - Ditches along 3.2 km road length	Clean Ditches and repair broken outfalls	In Progress
A4 West of Newbury intersection Milkhouse	Carrier Drain repair/Cleanse; poss additional s/aways & ditching	Planning
Paices Hill - Adjacent to Travellers Site	Lost Outfall	Planning
Paices Hill - 150m north of Sascron Car Sales	Lost Outfall	Feasibility
Blandys Hill Kintbury	Trap and redirect flow crossing road.	Completed
Hill Green Lane Peasemore - Across from The Fox PH	Repair drainage and install new soakaway with overflow French drain	Completed
Speen Lane - Barbary End	Reinstate lost outfall	Planning
Deadmans Lane - Greenham	Lost outfall - Install new connection to TW system	Completed
Hamstead Marshall : Park Road culvert downstream ditch	Engage with landowner to get ditch working again - either clean out or re-route.May need to re-visit survey	Planning
A4 Hoe Benham to Halfway (and particularly Milkhouse Rd crossroads)	Jetting survey. Potentially requires new chambers - soakaways or otherwise on north side to intercept water from Gravel Hill)	Planning
Bucklebury : Tylers Lane / Marlston Rd junction	Replace collapsed culvert across Tylers Lane junction (jetting completed 6/7/2020)	Depends on location of Stats
Beech Hill : Beech Hill Road opposite Yew Tree Cottage	Jetting: Pipes rooted as found from Sapphire jetting survey. May need pipe & chamber rebuild	On hold

Membury : Ramsbury Rd at Cuckoo Cottage	H'way drainage system cleaned 2020. No outlet available from ditch so very limited capacity and overall problem not solved. Requires new ditch through Cuckoo Cottage woodland to allow water to discharge to lower ground	Requires agreement with property owner for new ditch; email exchange undertaken but no agreement reached
Speen : Bagnor village at Watermill Theatre junc.	Connect extg broken pipe under c'way to ditch on north side	Planning
Thatcham: Church Gate o/side Stitch in Time	New c'way gully & connection req'd. Email from Peter House 12/3/2019 & Thatcham Town Council	Planning
B4494 Donnington : nr Care Home	Re-establish outfall from highway system into private land	Planning
Hampstead Norreys : Water St / 5 Points junction - locate missing gullies; put more in if necessary. Riparian owner action to clear holding pond. New drainage to connect to it	Need to liaise with landowner in first instance	In Progress
Thatcham - Turnpike Road	Phone call from Ian Goodwin : south side ditch between A4 and Hospital needs re-digging to allow gully connectins to work	Planning
10 York Road, Newbury	Renew existing gully pot and 1.5 metres of pipe (ELM 152825)	Planning
The Moors jcn of Fromont Drive, Thatcham	Re-profile c'way or add one gully (ELM 160350)	Planning
<b>Programmes</b>		
Trash Screen Program	Developed	Works Ordered
Grip Program	Programme being developed	Planning
Ditch Program	Programme being developed	Planning
Soakaway Program	Programme being developed	Planning
MHs CPs and Carrier Lines Program	Programme being developed	Planning
<b>Projects forwarded to others</b>		
Hermitage Outfall at intersection with Red Shute Hill	Lost Outfall	Planning

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 10 – 2022/23 Revenue Financial Performance Report Quarter One**

Report to follow

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 11 – Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter One 2022/23**

Report to follow

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 12 –Task & Finish Group Updates**

Verbal Item

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OSMC – 06 September 2022

## **Item 13 – Health Scrutiny Committee Update**

Verbal Item

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## WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN 1 JULY 2022 - 31 OCTOBER 2022

### The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

1. This document gives 28 clear days notice of key decisions which the Executive and Individual Executive Members or Officer expect to take.
2. The document is updated as required and is available to the public on the Council's website.
3. The Executive is made up of the Executive Leader, Deputy Leader and seven Executive Members with the following portfolios:

Executive Leader of the Council District Strategy and Communications	Councillor Lynne Doherty
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing	Councillor Graham Bridgman
Housing, Leisure and Culture	Councillor Howard Woollaston
Finance and Economic Development	Councillor Ross Mackinnon
Planning, Transport & Countryside	Councillor Richard Somner
Children, Young People and Education	Councillor Dominic Boeck
Environment & Transformation	Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
Adult Social Care	Councillor Joanne Stewart
Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships	Councillor Tom Marino

4. Key decisions are those executive decisions which are likely to result in spending or savings which are "significant" in relation to the budget for the service or function in question, or in terms of the effect on communities living or working in two or more wards or electoral divisions. All contracts above £500,000 require a key decision in accordance with the Constitution.
5. The Regulations and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in this document in accordance with General Exception and Special Urgency provisions.
6. The Forward Plan will also contain details of intended review activity by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and its Sub-Committee(s) or another body e.g. Task Group associated with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

7. Copies of the Council's Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council may be accessed on the Council's website.
8. For copies of reports or other documents, and for detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Executive, individual Member or officer please contact the named Lead Officer for the item concerned.
9. For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please email [executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk](mailto:executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk) or by writing to the address below.

Publication Date: 1 July 2022

Shiraz Sheikh  
Service Lead  
Legal & Democratic Services  
West Berkshire Council, Council Offices  
Market Street  
Newbury  
RG14 5LD

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
7 Jul 2022	Summary of Covid-19 Recovery work	To provide a summary of the recovery work completed by the Council in delivering the Recovery Strategy	Yes	Executive			Sadie Owen	Open
7 Jul 2022	Adult Social Care Strategy	To sign off the ASC Strategy, updated following public consultation.	Yes	Executive			Paul Coe	Open
7 Jul 2022	Continued impact of Covid and energy cost inflation on the provision of leisure centres in West Berkshire.	To update on the continued impact of Covid in the light of the cessation of UK support from the National Leisure Recovery Fund and the subsequent risk to business continuity for the current leisure management contract. To	Yes	Executive			Jim Sweeting	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		outline the risks involved with the extension of the current leisure management contract to June 30, 2023, to allow for the full procurement exercise to be completed on a new management contract.						
7 Jul 2022	Downlands Sports Centre at the Downs School	Contract Award Report - Delegated Authority Request	Yes	Executive	Stakeholder Meetings, Email, Telephone		Vickie Collins	Open
7 Jul 2022	Key Accountable Performance 2021/22 Quarter 4	To report Q4 outturns for the Key Accountable Measures which monitor performance against the 2021/22	No	Executive	Members of the Executive		Catalin Bogos	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		<p>Council Performance Framework. To provide assurance that the objectives set out in the Council Strategy and other areas of significant activity are being managed effectively. To present, by exception, those measures that are predicted to be 'amber' or 'red' and provide information on any remedial action taken and the impact of that action. To recommend changes to measures/targets as requested</p>						

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		by services.						
7 Jul 2022	Theale Social Emotional Mental Health Needs/Autism Spectrum Disorders Secondary Provision	Contract award report. Delegated Authority Request. Contract needs to be awarded by 01.09.22.	Yes	Executive	Stakeholder meetings, email, telephone		Vickie Collins	Open
21 Jul 2022	Newbury Sports Hub Funding	Request for further funding	Yes	Executive			Jim Sweeting	Open
16 Aug 2022	Appointment to an Outside Body (Integrated Care Partnership)	To appoint a Member to the Integrated Care Partnership.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Leader of Council, District Strategy and Communications			Gordon Oliver	Open
22 Sep 2022	Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Plan	This follows on from the Cultural Heritage Strategy Plan.	Yes	Executive			Felicity Harrison	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
22 Sep 2022	Provision of Grounds Maintenance Contract	To provide advance notice that the Transport & Countryside Team will be going out to tender for our Grounds Maintenance Contract which expires on 7th Jan 2023 - the contract will be let for an initial 5 years with an option to extend for a further 5.	No	Executive	Stakeholder engagement, meetings, telephone with Transport & Countryside team, Legal, Finance		Paul Hendry	Open
22 Sep 2022	Treasury Management Annual report	The report summarises the results of the Council's management of cash-flow, borrowing and investments in the financial year 2021/22.	Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open
22 Sep 2022	Key	To provide assurance that	No	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Accountable Performance 2022/23: Quarter One	the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy 2019-2023 are being managed effectively. To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, to present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.						
22 Sep 2022	Helping West Berkshire Taxi Trade Go Greener	To consider options available to the Council to assist the local taxi trade to 'go greener' and	Yes	Executive	EAG and LC at meetings, the Taxi Trade at a Liasion meeting		Moira Fraser	Open



Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		provide incentives to entice them to switch to ultra-low emission vehicles and to respond to the motion tabled at the 18 January 2022 Council meeting which sought to introduce a fee based incentive scheme to help all forms of vehicles licensed by West Berkshire for public transport to go green.						
22 Sep 2022	Agency and Temporary Staff Contract	To provide advanced notice that West Berkshire Council is looking to re-procure a managed service provider	Yes	Executive			Chris Harris	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		to source and fulfil all of its agency and temporary staff requirements. The contract is intended to commence on 4 March 2023 and to have a maximum term of 4 years.						
22 Sep 2022	Adult Social Care - preparation for CQC inspection	To update on the preparations West Berkshire Council is making for the planned Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections of local authority Adult Social Care (ASC) functions and to identify areas for investment	Yes	Executive			Paul Coe	Open
22 Sep 2022	Notrees Care	New recommendatio	Yes	Executive			Paul Coe	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Home	ns following the public consultation on the proposed closure of Notrees Care Home.						
3 Nov 2022	Response to Sprinklers Motion	To consider the response to the Sprinklers Motion submitted to Council in July 2021.	Yes	Executive			Bryan Lyttle	Open
3 Nov 2022	Children & Young Peoples Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)	To award the contract for the supply/provision of the CYPIT Service following a tender process.	Yes	Executive			Millie Smith	Open
3 Nov 2022	Review of Libraries Service	To evaluate the impact of the transformation of the library service which took place in 2017-18 and put forward any additional options for	Yes	Executive	Community Needs Assessment Stakeholder Surveys – volunteers, staff, service managers, hard to reach groups Public Survey		Felicity Harrison	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		improving the service for residents.			including library users and non-users Parish and Town Council engagement sessions			
3 Nov 2022	Medium Term Financial Planning Update	To provide Executive with an overview of the financial planning position for 2023-24 and beyond.	No	Executive			Joseph Holmes	Open
3 Nov 2022	CCTV Policy	To set out the obligations on the Council with respect to the use of CCTV. To seek approval for fuller consultation of the CCTV policy with a view to formal Executive approval to	Yes	Executive			Leigh Hogan	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		follow.						
3 Nov 2022	Leisure Strategy Delivery Plan	To present the plan for implementing the Leisure Strategy.	Yes	Executive			Jim Sweeting	Open
3 Nov 2022	Transfer of the Freehold of the Corn Exchange Building to the Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust	To provide an update on the current status of negotiations with the Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust regarding the transfer of the freehold of the Corn Exchange and to propose how the Council concludes this matter.	Yes	Executive			Nicola Peacock	Open
3 Nov 2022	West Berkshire Co-Production Framework	The purpose of this report is to propose a Co-Production Framework for West Berkshire.	Yes	Executive	Citizens of West Berkshire, Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations, Town and Parish Councils, all		Samantha Shepherd	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
					Councillors.			
15 Dec 2022	Corporate Landlord Model Feasibility	To discuss and make recommendation regarding the potential change to the way West Berkshire Council manages and maintains its estate through a Corporate Landlord Model.	Yes	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
12 Jan 2023	Key Accountable Performance 2022/23: Quarter Two	To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy 2019-2023 are being managed effectively. To	No	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, to present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.						
9 Feb 2023	North and East Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme	To gain approval to award the contract for the flood alleviation works following a full tender process.	Yes	Executive			Andrew Reynolds	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
23 Mar 2023	Leisure Management Contract	West Berkshire Council is procuring an Operator	No	Executive			Jim Sweeting	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		Partner to manage, operate and maintain a number of existing leisure and community facilities together with a proposed new facility to replace one of the existing facilities. The Contract is intended to commence on 1 July 2023 and to have a maximum term of 15 years.						



## 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:  
23 August 2022

Item	OSMC Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?	
<b>29 November 2022 (Report Deadline 18 November)</b>						
8	Equalities and Diversity Strategy	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review the draft Equalities and Diversity Strategy	Sarah Clarke / Pamela Voss	Applies to all portfolios	Pre-decision
9	Covid and Recovery	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To agree Terms of Reference for a Task and Finish Group to look at the lessons learned in response to and recovery from Covid, from the perspectives of residents, service users and businesses.	Sarah Clarke	Leader of the Council	OSMC decision
10	Customer Journey: Task Group Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report the findings of the scrutiny review into the Customer Journey	Gordon Oliver	Planning, Transport & Countryside	OSMC decision
11	Fees & Charges: Task Group Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report the findings of the scrutiny review into Fees and Charges	Gordon Oliver	Finance and Economic Development	OSMC decision
<b>7 March 2023 (Report Deadline 24 February)</b>						
12	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To consider the effectiveness of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Eric Owens / Katharine Makant	Finance and Economic Development	OSMC decision
13	Build Back Better	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consider the anticipated impacts in West Berkshire of the Government's plan for Health and Social Care and the supporting White Paper.	Andy Sharp / Paul Coe	Adult Social Care	Pre-decision
14	Libraries Review	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consider the effectiveness of improvements implemented following the review of the Libraries Service.	Steve Welch / Felicity Harrison	Housing, Leisure and Culture	Post-decision
<b>To Be Programmed</b>						
15	Appraisal System Review	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To receive an update on the revised appraisal system for Council officers	Sarah Clarke / Paula Goodwin	Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships	Pre-decision
16	Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Plan	<i>Policy Effectiveness</i>	To review progress in implementing the Cultural Heritage Strategy Delivery Plan	Steve Welch / Felicity Harrison	Housing, Leisure and Culture	Post-decision

Standing Items						
	Quarterly Capital Financial Performance Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Finance and Economic Development	Pre-decision
	Quarterly Revenue Financial Performance Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Finance and Economic Development	Pre-decision
	Annual Key Accountable Performance Measures	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy 2019-23 are being managed effectively. To highlight successes and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on remedial action taken, and the impact of that action	Joseph Holmes / Catalin Bogos	Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships	Pre-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