

# Notice of Meeting

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# Executive

**Thursday, 9th June, 2022 at 5.00 pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,  
Market Street, Newbury**

**Note:** This meeting can be streamed live here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/executive/live>

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 30 May, 2022

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) on 01635 519052, e-mail: [sadie.owen1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sadie.owen1@westberks.gov.uk)

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)



## Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 9 June 2022 (continued)

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>To:</b> | Councillors Lynne Doherty (Chairman), Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Ross Mackinnon, Tom Marino, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston |
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# Agenda

|  | <b>Pages</b> |
|--|--------------|
| 1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b><br>To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).  | 5 - 6        |
| 2. <b>Minutes</b><br>To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 March 2022.   | 7 - 16       |
| 3. <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>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> . | 17 - 18      |
| 4. <b>Public Questions</b><br>Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.  | 19 - 20      |
| 5. <b>Petitions</b><br>Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.  | 21 - 22      |

## Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

|  | <b>Pages</b> |
|--|--------------|
| 6. <b>First Homes Policy Position (EX4177)</b><br>Purpose:<br><br>To brief members on a new affordable housing product 'First Homes' introduced into national policy through a Written Ministerial Statement in May 2021, and to consider West Berkshire's policy position on First Homes. | 23 - 52      |



**Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 9 June 2022 (continued)**

7. **Review of Town and Parish Engagement (EX4214)** 53 - 80  
Purpose:
- The report summarises work carried out to understand and address improvements in the engagement with town and parish councils. The report proposes a resulting 'Improvement Plan' (Appendix A).
- 
8. **Strategic Asset Plan (EX4168)** 81 - 132  
Purpose:
- The report seeks approval of the strategic document, Strategic Asset Plan 2019-2023 (revised 2022), this being a formal document conveying the council's approach to the management of its assets.
- 
9. **Residents' Survey 2021 - Key Findings (EX4200)** 133 - 224  
Purpose:
- The report presents the results of the West Berkshire Resident's Survey 2021.
- 
10. **Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22 (EX4019)** 225 - 246  
Purpose:
- The financial performance report details the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget. The report presents the provisional outturn position for financial year 2021/22.
- 
11. **2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter 4: Provisional Outturn (EX4018)** 247 - 268  
Purpose:
- The report presents the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. The report is Quarter Four, the provisional outturn position for the 2021-22 financial year. The reporting of this figure is the culmination of budget monitoring throughout the financial year and the figure will then become part of the Council's financial statements for the 2021-22 financial year.
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12. **London Road Industrial Estate Project Refresh (EX4219)** 269 - 292  
Purpose:
- To request approval for the revised strategic objectives and a revised delivery strategy for the London Road Industrial Estate that focus on developing the site for economic growth and utilising Council-owned assets for the benefit of the local community, and that take account of evolving economic drivers, market demand and the district's ambition to



be carbon neutral by 2030.

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13. **Members' Questions** 293 - 294  
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
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Sarah Clarke  
Service Director: Strategy and Governance

### **West Berkshire Council Strategy Priorities**

#### **Council Strategy Priorities:**

**PC1: Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes**

**PC2: Support everyone to reach their full potential**

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

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

**GP2: Maintain a green district**

**SIT1: Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships**

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Sadie Owen on telephone (01635) 519052.



Executive – 9 June 2022

## **Item 1 – Apologies for absence**

Verbal Item

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## DRAFT

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

### EXECUTIVE

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 2022

**Members of the Executive present:** Councillors Lynne Doherty (Chairman), Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Ross Mackinnon, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** Councillors Lee Dillon, Adrian Abbs, Jeff Brooks, Alan Macro

**Councillors present remotely:** Councillors Graham Bridgman, Hilary Cole, Carolyn Culver, Tony Vickers

**Officers:** Sarah Clarke (Service Director, Strategy & Governance), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Susan Halliwell (Executive Director – People), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Andy Sharp (Executive Director – People)

### PART I

#### 78. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2022 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

#### 79. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### 80. Public Questions

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

- A) A question standing in the name of Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the Sports Hub was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- B) A question standing in the name of Mr Nigel Foot on the subject of the Newbury football teams was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- C) A question standing in the name of Mr John Gotelee on the subject of the LRIE development site was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- D) A question standing in the name of Ms Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.
- E) A question standing in the name of Mr Stuart Gourley on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.

## EXECUTIVE - 24 MARCH 2022 - MINUTES

- F) A question standing in the name of Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the LRIE development site was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development.
- G) A question standing in the name of Mr John Gotelee on the subject of the effects of levelling up and housing targets was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.
- H) A question standing in the name of Ms Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- I) A question standing in the name of Ms Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.
- J) A question standing in the name of Ms Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- K) A question standing in the name of Ms Paula Saunderson on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.

### 81. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

### 82. **West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (for buses) (EX4164)**

Councillor Richard Somner introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 6), which sought approval of the West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme in accordance with the National Bus Strategy. He thanked officers for the hard work undertaken to improve transport opportunities for local residents and visitors.

It was acknowledged that the public transport industry had suffered during the pandemic and that getting footfall back would be challenging and key to success.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that whilst he and his colleagues supported the improvement plan, services needed to be regular as well as reliable. Thatcham Town Council's response was particularly welcomed and it was hoped that the connectivity between Thatcham and Newbury would benefit from the plan.

Councillor Somner agreed to identify the reference point from where the proposed improvement plan was actually improving from.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter agreed that it would be good to maintain the services in Thatcham. In seconding the proposal he noted that during the previous Christmas, free bus travel into Newbury had been offered which had been highly successful and a good model for improving the use and raising the profile of bus travel.

**RESOLVED that:** Executive

- Approve the prepared Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme as set out in Appendix C.
- Agree to 'making' the Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators by 01 April 2022.

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### Other options considered:

- Council could withdraw from their plans to make an Enhanced Partnership. This would, however, result in the ending of all Government funding towards our bus services and other transport and highways services (including existing funding streams). As explored in DOD4110, this is not a plausible option given the level of funding (capital and revenue) the Council receive from the Government. The development of an Enhanced Partnership for West Berkshire has also been widely supported by local operators.
- Council could amend the prepared Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, however, this will re-start the operator objection period as detailed in (5.18) and would delay any potential making of the Enhanced Partnership.
- Transport Authorities are given the choice of how they improve their bus services – via an Enhanced Partnership or via Franchising as currently occurs in London. As explored in DOD4110 legislation does not currently allow West Berkshire Council to follow the Franchising model, and in any case, the DfT recommend establishing an Enhanced Partnership first.
- Council could postpone ‘making’ the Enhanced Partnership to a later date (ie beyond 01 April 2022), however, local operators and partners are fully engaged with the process and a delay to establishing the formal partnership would only delay in being able to progress some of the proposed bus service improvements for residents and add to a potential delay in recovery from the pandemic.

### 83. **Contract Award for Pelham House - Supported Living Service for Adults with a Learning Disability (EX4169)**

Councillor Jo Stewart proposed and introduced the report (Agenda Item 7) which informed the Executive of the tender process and sought authority to award the contract.

Councillor Alan Macro expressed disappointment that the tender criteria for quality was 40% as opposed to the 50% criteria for price. It was noted that the contract award was proposed to the existing provider and assurances as to their quality were requested.

Councillor Stewart understood the premise for the query but reported that the current provider had supplied an excellent service, especially to residents, and that she was fully supportive of the tender outcome.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commented that he was pleased that the tender process had included a social value criteria, which allowed for the consideration of local economic, social and environmental issues to the process.

### **Recommendation** (Vote to be taken in Part II):

- That Executive resolves to award this contract to the successful bidder as per the agreed process for the procurement of a contract of this value.

### Other options considered:

- Do nothing: this would leave multiple vulnerable adults without the care and support they require and would also put them at risk of being homeless. This is a statutory provision.
- Contract extension: the current contract has already been extended so there is no provision to extend the contract further.

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- Re-tender a block contract: this would be a bigger financial risk to WBC as we would be liable for a set number of hours which might not always be used.
- In-house provision: this service would not fit with an existing in-house service provision. External providers should have greater resources to call on to provide flexibility should sickness/leave/demand require this.

### 84. Draft Leisure Strategy (EX3888)

Councillor Howard Woollaston proposed and introduced the Leisure Strategy (Agenda Item 8), thanking Get Berkshire Active and congratulating officers on an excellent piece of work.

It was noted that the report had been reviewed in parallel by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission which had submitted its findings two days prior. The recommendations had been included within the supplementary agenda pack, but none were deemed major enough to prevent the Strategy from progressing.

Councillor Somner commented that the proposed new 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) football pitch at Denefield School was a particular bonus to the area, especially to those in the eastern area of the district.

Councillor Adrian Abbs expressed concern at the 505 consultation response rate from a population of 160,000. He further commented that the Strategy required a lot more detail.

Councillor Woollaston responded that further additional work would be undertaken when creating a delivery plan in the forthcoming months.

In response to a comment that it was hoped that low usage and activity statistics for Theale, Pangbourne and Bradfield would be addressed, Councillor Woollaston agreed that there needed to be more leisure opportunities to the east of the district, but that given the size of the team this would be addressed incrementally and likely towards the middle/end of the decade.

It was acknowledged that whilst there was local objection to the Henwick Worthy site, there were plans for a masterplan to look at the overall use of the site and maximise its benefits. Further there were plans to enhance Thatcham Leisure Centre.

Councillor Dominic Boeck seconded the proposal and welcomed improvements to leisure facilities given how important health and sports activities were to young people.

**RESOLVED that:** Executive award this contract to the successful bidder as per the agreed process for the procurement of a contract of this value.

#### **Other options considered:**

- At the outset, consideration was given to a broader definition of leisure, beyond physical activity but it felt this was addressed by other strategies such as the Cultural Heritage Strategy.
- The production of a broader Physical Activity Strategy, including journey to work/school and school curriculum was also considered but it was felt that this perspective was more appropriately covered at a Berkshire West level through a systems analysis of physical activity, which is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed in early 2023.

**85. Re-development of Northcroft Lido (EX4159)**

Councillor Woollaston introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 9), which presented the results of the public consultation undertaken between July and September 2021 and which sought delegated authority to award the contract for the redevelopment of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre.

Councillor Woollaston noted that without significant investment, the Lido was currently at the end of its economic life. It was hoped that the newly developed Lido would be open for swimming in July 2023 offering a longer swimming season from Easter to September with estimated increased usage from 20,000 to 50,000 visitors a year.

In response to a query relating to inflationary implications, Councillor Woollaston commented that repayments over the 40 year period, including the repayment of capital would be just over £200,000 a year. It was hoped that the increased usage would cover the cost.

Councillor Dillon voiced his group's full support for the re-development scheme.

In seconding the proposals, Councillor Lynne Doherty expressed hope that the Lido would attract visitors from all over the country. It was noted that of the 715 responses to the consultation, 675 had been positive and supportive of the proposed investment. Councillor Doherty acknowledged disappointment that the Lido would not be open this summer but noted that there had been no investment in the pool since 1960, and that the proposed work was investing for long term future usage.

**RESOLVED that:** Executive

- Delegate authority to the Executive Director – People, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Culture and Leisure to award the call off contract for the redevelopment of the Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre (to include Access Agreement and Development Management Agreement) under the UK Leisure Framework to Alliance Leisure Services Ltd; and
- Delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services to enter into Call off contract (to include Access Agreement, Development Management Agreement, and associated agreements) with Alliance Leisure Services Ltd to finalise the terms of the agreement.

**Other options considered:**

- Continue lido operation as is – from the feedback provided in the technical surveys this would mean a continuation of patch and repair for a period until the lido became inoperable. No timescale can be given for this as it would be dependent upon ground conditions each year. This provides a high risk strategy as the current tank is at the end of its lifecycle.
- To undertake a different procurement strategy. It is likely that alternative procurement routes will require a longer time period and in light of current cost inflation this could significantly increase costs.
- An alternative development strategy could be undertaken that removes the lido completely and replaces this with new outdoor sports facilities or new indoor sports facilities. Potential outdoor facilities could include courts for tennis, netball, basketball and football. Indoor facilities could include provision for table tennis, martial

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arts/combat sports, weightlifting, or a range of disability sports. (e.g. Boccia, Power Chair Football, archery).

### 86. **Update on Future Working Arrangements for the Public Protection Partnership (EX4174)**

Councillor Hilary Cole introduced the report (Agenda Item 10) which asked the Executive to consider the resourcing, branding and governance arrangements for the new bilateral partnership between Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council following the successful conclusion of the negotiations with Wokingham Borough Council who were exiting the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). The report also informed members about the mechanism, funding and management of the services that Wokingham BC would be commissioning from the PPP.

Approval was also being sought from the Executive of the settlement sum payable by Wokingham BC due to their early termination of the Inter Authority Agreement as detailed within Part II report.

In proposing the report Councillor Ross Mackinnon also proposed an amendment to the recommendation before Executive, to 'APPROVE the proposed governance arrangements for the new bilateral service. NOTE that Full Council will also be asked to approve at the Annual Meeting'.

Cllr Doherty seconded the report and amendment.

Cllr Abbs commented that he felt Wokingham BC were making a mistake and requested assurance that their departure would not cost West Berkshire Council anything.

**Recommendation** (Vote to be taken in Part II):

- APPROVE the settlement sum of £416,681, payable by Wokingham Borough Council associated with the termination of the Inter Authority Agreement and to delegate authority to Service Lead – Legal & Democratic Services to enter into a settlement agreement with Wokingham Borough Council in this connection.
- DELEGATE authority to the Public Protection Manager to conclude negotiations on the future arrangement with Wokingham Borough Council for the provision of trading standards and other services and delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services to finalise and enter into an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA).
- DELEGATE authority to Executive Director – Place to conclude negotiations on the revised form of Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) with Bracknell Forest Council reflecting the Agreed Percentages of 60% West Berkshire and 40% Bracknell Forest and to delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services to finalise and enter into an amended IAA on similar terms to the existing IAA.
- APPROVE the revised branding for inclusion in the amended Inter Authority Agreement.
- APPROVE the proposed governance arrangements for the new bilateral service.
- NOTE that Full Council will also be asked to approve at the Annual meeting.

### 87. **Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter Three 2021/22 (EX4017)**

Councillor Mackinnon proposed and introduced the report (Agenda Item 11), which presented the forecast outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year as at Quarter Three. He highlighted a projected capital expenditure for the year of £42.3M, with a forecast underspend of £11.7M against a revised capital budget.



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In response to requests for further detail, Councillor Mackinnon agreed to seek specific details as to how much of the £54M capital programme budget would be actually allocated at the year end, and to seek further details in relation to the commuted spend and commentary in relation to an impact assessment on residents of not spending.

Cllr Macro noted that a proposed noise investigation of Thatcham bypass had been reprofiled for the second year in a row. It was requested that the funds not be reprofiled again and that the work be actioned.

Cllr Boeck seconded the report and assured members that the underspend in Education Services would not impact places being provided for children.

**RESOLVED that:** Executive note the report and approve the proposed reprofiling of £10.9 million of future expenditure from 2021/22 into financial year 2022/23.

**No other options were considered.**

### 88. **2021/22 Performance Report Quarter Three (EX4002)**

Councillor Woollaston proposed and introduced the report (Agenda Item 12), which sought to provide assurance that the core business and Council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy were being managed effectively. The report highlighted successes relating to the delivery of core business areas and priorities for improvement. The report also highlighted the small number of cases where performance had fallen below the expected level, the remedial action taken as a result of that action and the impact of that action.

Councillor Woollaston reminded members that the figures related to Q3 and consequently did not reflect the war in Ukraine and ensuing impact on energy costs.

Councillor Stewart commented that in relation to Adult Social Care, the charts were marked 'provisional' as they required Department of Health and Social Care validation. Further, the care home measure that was rated 'Good' in the report would be downgraded in Q4 to reflect the recent CQC inspection of Birchwood care home.

Councillor Dillon congratulated officers for getting so close to target in relation to processing benefit payments.

In response to concerns raised in relation to the rise in domestic abuse incidents from Q2 to Q3, Councillor Bridgman responded that a lot of work was being undertaken to support victims.

Further, Councillor Doherty added that an increase in referrals could sometimes be regarded as positive as it reflected that more people were reporting on the basis of higher profile and publicity.

Councillor Mackinnon clarified that in relation to the 2021/22 Performance Report Quarter Three chart, the 'Council Tax collected' rating, would remain Red until Q4 as it reflected the cumulative amount collected throughout the year. He expressed confidence that the target would be met in Q4.

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**RESOLVED that:** Executive note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023, maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the council's priorities for improvement, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

**No other options were considered.**

### 89. **Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group - Collaboration Agreement**

Councillor Woollaston introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 13), which sought delegated authority for the Chief Executive to enter into a Collaboration Agreement to forward the objectives of the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG). The DIG held responsibility for improving access to digital infrastructure across Berkshire, including the Superfast Berkshire project. The Collaboration Agreement was required in order to draw down funding recently awarded via a successful bid to the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS).

Councillor Woollaston further proposed an amendment to the recommendation to remove reference to the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Councillor Somner seconded the amendment.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter fully endorsed the paper, commenting that the scheme was a good thing for WBC to be participating in and offered huge opportunities in reducing bureaucracy and improving the digital environment.

Councillor Abbs referred to the small percentage of homes that still had very low broadband capacity. Councillor Woollaston responded that West Berkshire was currently at 99% superfast broadband coverage and that teams were constantly working to improve this.

It was clarified that the work on the agreement had already commenced.

Councillor Somner seconded the report and added that in a fast moving industry it was important to allow for swift movement wherever possible.

**RESOLVED that:** Executive delegate authority to the Chief Executive to enter into a Collaboration Agreement with the other five Berkshire Authorities to forward the objectives of the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group and further associated agreements as appropriate.

**Other options considered:** Executive could decide not to enter into the Collaboration Agreement. However, the signing of the Collaboration Agreement by all parties is the only way to unlock the £500,000 allocated by DCMS for the DCIA Pilot Project and enable the project to proceed. Without this in place, the grant funding will be lost and the project will not proceed. In addition, the lack of a Collaboration Agreement is likely to have an adverse impact on future funding bids.

### 90. **Members' Questions**

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

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- L) A question standing in the name of Councillor Carlyne Culver on the subject of the Household Support grant was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation.
- M) A question standing in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of the 2020 Housing Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation.
- N) A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of the government backed Council tax grant was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- O) A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the Council's care homes was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.
- P) A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of the Leisure Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.
- Q) A question standing in the name of Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of electively home educated children was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.

### 91. Exclusion of Press and Public

**RESOLVED** that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

### 92. Contract Award for Pelham House - Supported Living Service for Adults with a Learning Disability (EX4169)

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

*(Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 16), concerning the contract award for Pelham House.

**RESOLVED that:** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

#### **Other options considered:**

- Do nothing – this would leave multiple vulnerable adults without the care and support they require and would also put them at risk of being homeless. This is a statutory provision.
- Contract extension – the current contract has already been extended so there is no provision to extend the contract further.
- Re-tender a block contract – this would be a bigger financial risk to WBC as we would be liable for a set number of hours which might not always be used.
- In-house provision – this service would not fit with an existing in-house service provision. External providers should have greater resources to call on to provide flexibility should sickness/leave/demand require this.

### 93. Update on Future Working Arrangements for the Public Protection Partnership (EX4174)

*(Paragraph 3 – Information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person.)*

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The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 17), concerning the future working arrangements for the Public Protection Partnership.

**RESOLVED that:** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

**Other options considered:** as set out in the exempt report.

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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

Executive – 9 June 2022

## **Item 3 – Declarations of Interest**

Verbal Item

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## Item 4:

### **Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 9 June 2022.**

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

**A. Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:**

*"Can you confirm or deny that there is a twenty year break clause for the proposed Sport Pitch at Monks Lane , and if so is it at either parties discretion"*

**B. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

*"Referring to the councils Environmental Appraisal 7.24 Quote "WDBC has also commented that an "infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems and below ground attenuation storage will not be acceptable" and that significant space will needed for at ground level Sustainable Drainage Systems". What if any thought has been given to this?"*

**C. Question submitted by Nigel Foot to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation:**

*"When does WBC expect to have fulfilled its obligations to provide the documents needed to protect all 53 of its conservation areas, some of which have been outstanding for 50 years?"*

**D. Question submitted by Sam Coppinger to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:**

*"Demand for electricity regularly outstrips supply around Membury. In light of this continuing and increasing pressure on the local network, will the council recognise that infrastructure improvements are essential before any additional development is considered to ensure residents do not have to endure the increasing interruptions to their electrical supply?"*

**E. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:**

*"Can WBC please provide the estimated costs (upfront and ongoing) associated with the proposal for a New Sports Pitch at Manor Park?"*

**F. Question submitted by John Stewart to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:**

*"When will WBC provide a publicly available business case & total cost of ownership model for Monks Lane Sports Hub that shows all the actual and estimated upfront and ongoing costs, (including subsidies and free pitch allocations) and the total forecasted revenues and incomes?"*

**G. Question submitted by Lee McDougall to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:**

*"Why didn't WBC allow organised children's football to be played at the Faraday Road Football Pitch, in the Clay Hill Ward, (even temporarily) given the*

## Item 4:

### Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 9 June 2022.

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

*acknowledged playing pitch shortage highlighted in the Consultation for Manor Park Playing Pitch Proposal in Clay Hill Ward."*

**H. Question submitted by Andy Wallace to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, and Education:**

*"What actions have been taken to improve access to child and adolescent mental health services, and what results do you see, particularly in waiting times for referral and treatment?"*

**I. Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:**

*"Can you please confirm that there is an agreement that rugby and football matches will not be allowed at the same time at the Sports Pitch at Monks Lane?"*

**J. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

*"Is there any plot of council owned land on the LRIE of 2 to 4 acres in size that is currently available to create an attenuation pond and provide the drainage infrastructure so that the football pitch area can be developed?"*

**K. Question submitted by Sam Coppinger to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships:**

*"The cumulative effects of uncontrolled development at Membury have created a melting pot of hazardous activities in very close proximity (grain store, fuel depot, motorway service areas and their petrol stations, chemical industry, timber merchants and mechanical engineering and operational airfield) alongside the M4. Does the council have a major incident plan in place to deal with such an eventuality?"*



Executive – 9 June 2022

## **Item 5 – Petitions**

Verbal Item

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# First Homes Policy Position

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>        | Executive                    |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>                   | 9 June 2022                  |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>                    | Councillor Howard Woollaston |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b> | 1 February 2022              |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                       | Janet Weekes/Bryan Lyttle    |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>                    | EX4177                       |

## 1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To brief members on a new affordable housing product ‘First Homes’ introduced into national policy through a Written Ministerial Statement in May 2021, and to consider West Berkshire’s policy position on First Homes.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Executive is asked to:
- (a) Consider the proposed policy position on First Homes in West Berkshire, and
  - (b) Agree the proposed First Homes policy at Appendix B.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication            | Commentary   |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | The Council will be required to assess buyer eligibility of potential buyers of First Homes, in accordance with the policy position included at Section 5.17 of this report. There is no certainty over volume of applications that the Council will be required to assess and it is not possible at this stage to reliably estimate what such revenue costs might be. |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | There may be a requirement to increase resources to manage the assessment process whilst it is embedded as BAU.  |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | The model section 106 planning obligations will need to be incorporated into the current section 106 precedent and the   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | <p>responsibility and any administration fee for monitoring, needs to be considered and addressed in the section 106 agreement.</p>  |
| <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> | <p>The risks associated with the First Homes Policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the First Homes Policy is not implemented the Council will not be policy compliant and will not enable future planning applications submitted to reflect the policy position. The approval of this policy will mitigate this risk.</li> <li>• There is a risk that administering of the eligibility criteria will necessitate an increase in resources. A resource plan will be completed to mitigate this risk</li> <li>• There is also a recognised risk that First Homes will reduce the number of shared ownership and low cost rent/affordable homes for development. Changes to the tenure split will mitigate this risk but the impact of the risk to rural exception sites with these discounted homes is not yet known.</li> <li>• This policy would reduce the proportion of shared ownership and social rent delivered on open market sites (to 5% and 70% respectively) to make way for First Homes (25%). There is a risk that this could deter Registered Providers from providing social rent and shared ownership as part of open-market housing developments. Without a willing Registered Provider partner, the ability of developers to bring forward policy compliant development schemes could be restricted. This could risk both the delivery of open-market housing and First Homes, and could impact on CIL revenue.</li> <li>• Viability issues could occur from the lowering of the price cap which could impact on the delivery of First Homes and result in less affordable housing overall. To mitigate this the Council will determine whether to lower the price cap.</li> <li>• There is a risk that First Homes are rented at a market rent and this would mean the home would no longer be meeting the need for affordable housing. To mitigate this First Home tenants would be approved by the Council and the rent charged would be capped at the local housing allowance rate. This will make sure that the property remains affordable and is meeting local housing needs.</li> </ul> |

## First Homes Policy Position

|  |   |                |                 |   |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------|---|
| <b>Property:</b>   | Whilst it is not anticipated that First Homes will have any impact on Property, the Housing Service regularly liaises with Corporate Property where there are property related matters and will continue to do so in relation to this policy.   |                |                 |   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | The Written Ministerial Statement on Affordable Homes, 24 May 2021 sets out the national policy requirements.<br><br>The First Homes policy is intrinsically linked to the Local Plan, Affordable Housing policy and Housing Allocations policy. Therefore consideration will be applied to these policies. |                |                 |   |
|  | <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 need to deliver First Homes will benefit local buyers most in need of affordable housing. |
| <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 need to deliver First Homes will benefit local buyers most in need of affordable housing. |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   |   | X              |                 | The environmental impact is neutral.  |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |   | X              |                 | The health impact is neutral.   |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>   |   | X              |                 | The ICT impact is neutral.  |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>  |   | X              |                 | The digital services impact is neutral.   |

|                                     |  |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b> |  |   | X | The new national policy could impact on the timetable for delivering a new Local Plan before the elections in 2023.                             |
| <b>Core Business:</b>               |  |   | X | Additional work will need to be carried out involving policy, process and procedural aspects to address these changes introduced by Government. |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |  | X |   | A data impact assessment has been completed.  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | Internal consultation has taken place with housing, planning policy, planning development management, finance and legal officers. The Council will need to communicate its First Homes Policy to communities, developers, housebuilders and Registered Providers. The Council engaged with housing sector stakeholders (Registered Providers) in February in order to consult on the policy ahead of the Executive considering the policy for adoption. Minor queries were raised regarding how the policy would operate and amendments were made to the policy for clarification as a result. |   |   |   |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 In May 2021 the Government introduced a new type of affordable housing called ‘First Homes’. First Homes are a new affordable housing product that allow first-time buyers, with a maximum income of £80,000, to buy a property with a 30% discount off the market value, with a maximum price of £250,000 after the discount has been applied. Future resales of First Homes must also be discounted by 30%, to ensure the properties remain affordable in perpetuity.
- 4.2 National policy on First Homes allows local authorities to impose a lower price cap and introduce a higher discount of 40% or 50% if there is evidence of need to support this. Local authorities are also allowed to apply a lower income cap or specify their own local eligibility criteria.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 The Government consulted on a new type of affordable housing called ‘First Homes’ from February 2020 - May 2020. The Government then consulted on proposed changes to the planning system from August 2020 - October 2020. Following these consultations, the First Homes policy was introduced via a Written Ministerial Statement on affordable homes on 24 May 2021. Statutory planning guidance was updated at the same time.

## First Homes Policy Position

5.2 Transitional arrangements ended on 1 January 2022 and the policy will need to be operationalised by West Berkshire Council through a new West Berkshire policy (see Appendix B for the proposed policy), the new local plan, and decisions on new planning applications.

## Background

- 5.3 A First Home must be sold at a discounted price of 30% off the market value of the property. The market value must be set by an independent registered valuer, on the assumption that the home is sold as an open market dwelling without restrictions. The first time it is sold, the home must cost no more than £250,000, after the discount has been applied. This means that a home sold for £249,000 after the discount is applied would have a market value of £355,714. Future re-sales must also have a discount of 30%. If the home sold for a second time at a market value of £380,000, the sale price must be no more than £266,000. This makes sure that First Homes remain relatively affordable in future, even if property prices rise over time. Local authorities are allowed to set a lower price cap and introduce a higher discount of 40% or 50% if there is evidence of need to support this.
- 5.4 Buyers of First Homes must be first-time buyers with a mortgage or home purchase plan, and a combined annual income of no more than £80,000. This is a requirement set by the Government in national policy. Local authorities are allowed to set a lower income cap or set local eligibility criteria.
- 5.5 A First Home owner can let the property for up to 2 years provided they notify the local authority and secure any necessary permissions from their mortgage lender. The local authority can allow for rental periods of longer than 2 years and set criteria for this.
- 5.6 The delivery of First Homes as part of on-site affordable housing for new residential development sites is required by national policy. Government policy stipulates that 25% of on-site affordable housing should be First Homes and that this contribution cannot be made in lieu via an off-site commuted sum. Where schemes consist of 100% of: build-to-rent, specialist housing for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students), self- and custom-build, and affordable housing, these schemes are exempt from this requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.7 Sites with full or outline planning permission in place or determined (or with a right to appeal against non-determination) before 28 December 2021 are exempt from this requirement. Applications where significant pre-application engagement takes place before 28 March 2022 are also exempt. Applications made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to amend an existing planning permission are also exempt, unless the variation in question relates to the quantity or tenure mix of affordable housing for that development.
- 5.8 First Homes are secured through section 106 planning obligations. The Government has provided a model section 106 obligation for this purpose. Each property must have a restrictive covenant entered on the title registered at HM Land Registry which prevents the property from being sold without the discount unless the seller seeks permission from the local authority to have the covenant removed. The Government has provided a model covenant for this purpose. First Homes qualify for mandatory social housing

## First Homes Policy Position

relief from CIL. If the covenant is removed and the First Home is re-sold without the discount, the property becomes liable for CIL and this liability is backdated.

5.9 The Government is also keen to deliver First Homes through exception sites. Exception sites are small sites that are not allocated in the Local Plan that deliver affordable housing. There are now two types of exception sites 1. First Homes exception sites and 2. Rural exception sites.

5.10 National policy expects local authorities to support the development of First Homes exception sites unless the need for First Homes is already being met within the local authority's area. First Homes exception sites should be adjacent to existing settlements; proportionate in size to them; not be located within or compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance including Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONB); and comply with any local design policies and standards. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site, where essential to enable the delivery of First Homes without grant funding.

5.11 The Government's national policy (see appendix A) states that:

*As such, the Government have decided that in designated rural areas, which includes some of the more constrained and expensive regions of the country such as national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty, rural exception sites will remain as the sole exception site which can come forward. Elsewhere, First Homes exception sites and rural exception sites can both come forward.*

5.12 Therefore, it is important to note that only rural exception sites and not First Homes exception sites will be permitted within AONBs. While First Homes *exception sites* will not be permitted within AONBs, First Homes will come forward on *allocated sites* within AONBs. For example, sites allocated within AONBs through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

## Proposals

5.13 The national policy sets a price cap of £250,000 and a discount of 30%. The 30% discount will be absorbed by developers and house builders as part of their contribution towards affordable housing. It will not be paid for by the Council or by Homes England. The discount level will therefore need to be considered through viability assessments as supporting evidence for the Local Plan review. The Council will need to ensure that the discount level is viable and does not prevent the delivery of housing development, when all other policies in the Local Plan (including zero carbon) are taken into account.

5.14 The local authority has the discretion to set a lower price cap and to set higher discount of 40% or 50%. West Berkshire has high affordable housing need which would justify setting a lower price cap and a higher discount. However, this could impact on development viability and risk the delivery of both open-market housing and First Homes, and result in less affordable housing overall.

5.15 The national policy says that potential buyers of First Homes must be first-time buyers, must have a mortgage or home purchase plan and, must have a maximum combined income cap of £80,000. There is no local evidence to suggest that the income cap should be different for West Berkshire.



## First Homes Policy Position

- 5.16 The national policy allows local authorities to set local eligibility criteria. Setting a local connection criteria would ensure that local people in need of affordable housing would be given priority access to First Homes.
- 5.17 There are some circumstances where the local connection criteria would not apply. Members of the armed forces (and their families) are exempt from this criteria by the national policy. The national policy also stipulates that if a First Home has been marketed for three months and has not been sold, the local connection criteria would no longer apply. However, the income cap of £80,000 and the requirement to have a mortgage would still apply.
- 5.18 The national policy allows First Homes to be let for a maximum of 2 years, subject to notifying the local authority and securing permission from the mortgage lender. There is a risk that First Homes are rented at a market rent. In this situation, the home would no longer be meeting the need for affordable housing. Therefore, in West Berkshire, First Home tenants should be approved by the Council and the rent charged should be capped at the local housing allowance rate. This would make sure that the property remains affordable and is meeting local housing needs.
- 5.19 First Homes are secured through section 106 planning obligations. National policy requires that 25% of the affordable housing provided on-site via planning obligations must be First Homes. In West Berkshire, this would result in an affordable housing tenure mix of 70% social rent (previously 70%), 25% First Homes (previously 0% / new tenure), and 5% shared ownership (previously 30%). The Local Plan review will need to set out this mix in an affordable housing policy.
- 5.20 The impact of introducing First Homes into the affordable housing mix will be to reduce the provision of shared ownership dwellings potentially delivered through the planning process. In terms of dwelling numbers, without the introduction of First Homes, the Local Plan review would deliver between 795 and 898 shared ownership dwellings over the plan period 2022 – 2036. However, with First Homes taking up 25% of the affordable housing provision, the Local Plan review would deliver between 133 and 150 shared ownership dwellings over the same period. The impact of First Homes on shared ownership delivery is therefore between 662 and 748 fewer shared ownership dwellings.
- 5.21 The above analysis assumes that all new developments coming forward over the plan period will provide affordable housing in line with the Local Plan requirements (30% of the total number of dwellings on site, and the 70% social rent, 25% First Homes, 5% shared ownership tenure split). In practice, the Local Plan will allow some flexibility, in exceptional circumstances, for developments where the level of affordable housing or tenure mix needs to differ in order to bring the development forward. Therefore the above figures should be treated with caution, and as an estimate only.
- 5.22 In line with the new national policy on First Homes, West Berkshire's Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation will set out a draft policy to support the development of entry-level exception schemes to provide homes for first-time buyers. The Local Plan review policy will set out criteria for First Homes exception sites and will allow for a small proportion of market homes where essential to deliver the scheme.

**5.23** The proposed West Berkshire First Homes policy is set out at Appendix B. In summary, the **recommended policy position is:**

- New residential development will deliver First Homes as part of the affordable housing required on-site.
- Affordable housing on-site will consist of 70% social rent, 25% First Homes and 5% shared ownership.
- First Homes cannot be provided through off-site commuted sums in lieu of on-site provision.
- 100% build-to-rent schemes, specialist accommodation for the elderly or students, self- and custom-build homes, and affordable housing schemes are exempt from this requirement.
- The First Home will be sold at a discount of 30% off the market value (market value must be assessed by an independent, registered valuer) and, the first time it is sold, will have a maximum purchase price of £250,000, after the discount is applied.
- Future sales of the First Home will also be at a discount of 30% off the market value, to ensure the home remains affordable in perpetuity.
- Potential buyers of a First Home must:
  - Have a combined income of no more than £80,000;
  - Have a mortgage or home purchase plan;
  - Have a local connection to West Berkshire.
- West Berkshire Council will assess applications from potential buyers to check they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Members of the armed forces (and their spouses/partners and ex-spouses/partners), and veterans of the armed forces, are exempt from the local connection criteria. In exceptional cases, households may be fleeing violence or threats of violence, or be in need of protection as a witness in a serious criminal case. In such cases, the local authority may decide to exempt the household from the eligibility criteria.
- If the First Home has been actively marketed for at least 3 months and the property has not been sold at the end of this period, the local connection criteria will cease to apply but the income cap of £80,000 and the requirement for the buyer to be a first-time buyer with a mortgage or home purchase plan will continue to apply.
- If the First Home is let, it must be to a Council-approved tenant and the rent must not exceed the local housing allowance rate.
- The delivery of First Homes, the discount in perpetuity, and the eligibility criteria, will be secured through section 106 planning obligations and restrictive covenants entered onto HM Land Registry, using the model section 106 obligation and model covenant provided by the Government.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 Officers have considered amending the national income threshold and the price cap but there is no evidence to suggest that a different approach is justified in West Berkshire. Officers have considered only having the national eligibility criteria but this would not be sufficient in meeting local housing need and ensuring that local first time buyers are prioritised for this type of affordable housing.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 There is a need for West Berkshire to issue a policy on First Homes to enable the delivery of First Homes in a way that most benefits local people in need of affordable housing. This policy would then need to be incorporated into the Local Plan review affordable housing policy and exception sites policy to ensure that future applications for planning permission reflect the policy position.

## 8 Appendices

Appendix A – Written Ministerial Statement May 2021

Appendix B – First Homes Policy

Appendix C – First Homes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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### Corporate Board’s recommendation

Proceed to Operations Board.

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### Background Papers:

#### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

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

**Wards affected:** All

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## Document Control

|                       |              |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Document Ref:</b>  |              | <b>Date Created:</b>  | 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 |
| <b>Version:</b>       | 10           | <b>Date Modified:</b> | 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2022  |
| <b>Author:</b>        | Janet Weekes |                       |                              |
| <b>Owning Service</b> |              |                       |                              |

## Change History

| Version | Date       | Description  | Change ID |
|---------|------------|--|-----------|
| 1       | 17/01/2022 | Risks and formatting   | v0.1      |
| 2       | 17/01/2022 | Appendix – Written Ministerial Statement                       | v0.       |
| 3       | 17/01/2022 | Legal comments   | v0.3      |
| 4       | 18/01/2022 | Risks, references and appendices                               | v0.4      |
| 5       | 19/01/2022 | Financial risks, proof reading corrections                     | v0.5      |
| 6       | 24/01/2022 | Changes to reflect Service Director's comments                 | v0.6      |
| 7       | 26/01/2022 | Changes to reflect Executive Director's comments               | v0.7      |
| 8       | 26/01/2022 | Changes to reflect Portfolio Holder's comments                 | v0.8      |
| 9       | 2/02/2022  | Changes to reflect Housing Board's comments                    | v0.9      |
| 10      | 18/04/2022 | Approval to proceed granted by Corporate and Operations Boards | v.10      |

## Appendix A

### Written Ministerial Statement - Affordable Homes Volume 696: debated Monday 24 May 2021

The Minister for Housing (Christopher Pincher)

On 1 April 2021 the Government published responses to two consultations: delivering First Homes and the new model for shared ownership. This statement sets out the Government's plans for the delivery of First Homes and our new model for shared ownership through the planning system.

This statement issues substantial changes to planning policy which will come into effect on 28 June 2021.

The issues covered in this statement include:

The definition of a First Home

Eligibility criteria for First Homes

Setting developer contributions for First Homes

The remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions

Plans, development management and transitional arrangements

Level of discount

Exception sites

Delivering shared ownership homes

#### *Introduction*

The Government are committed to supporting people to own their home and make home ownership a reality for households and families. Since spring 2010 almost 709,000 households have been helped by Government schemes, including Help to Buy and Right to Buy, and we are taking steps to increase the supply of new housing. The Government are undertaking the most ambitious reforms to our planning system since the second world war, making it easier to build homes where they are most needed, and the stamp duty holiday, applying to the first £500,000 of property sales, has given a much needed boost to the economy. Ensuring access to home ownership remains a key priority and challenge for this Government. However, rising prices, high deposits and difficulty accessing mortgage finance still mean that far too many people are denied the opportunity to own a home of their own. Polling shows that 87% of people would prefer to own their home given a free choice. Therefore, the Government are determined to ensure that there is an adequate supply and variety of options to help hard-working people on to the housing ladder across England.

#### *First Homes*

The Government first consulted on First Homes, the new scheme to provide homes for first-time buyers at a discount of a minimum of 30%, in February 2020. This consultation made proposals around both the design of First Homes and changes to the planning system to support their delivery.

## First Homes Policy Position

We received nearly 800 responses to this first consultation. There was considerable support for our proposals for a minimum discount of 30% and strong support for proposals to develop a national standard model with discretion for local areas to set their own criteria. Many local authorities, housing developers and business organisations gave very helpful comments about how our proposed changes to planning policy could be introduced and we are very grateful for this. The Government published their consultation response on 6 August 2020, which is available online. On the same day, the Government published a consultation, "Changes to the current planning system", which included proposals on the detail of changes to planning policy to deliver First Homes. We received nearly 2,400 responses to this second consultation. The Government published their response to the First Homes part of that consultation on 1 April 2021, and a copy of that response will be placed in the Library of the House. It is also available online at: Government response to the First Homes proposals in "Changes to the current planning system" - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

After careful consideration of all the responses to both these consultations, the Government are today setting out their plans for the delivery of First Homes, defining the product and changes to planning policy as set out below.

### *First Homes criteria*

From 28 June 2021, a home meeting the criteria of a First Home will also be considered to meet the definition of "affordable housing" for planning purposes. The First Homes criteria mean: A First Home must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value; and, after the discount has been applied, the first sale of the home must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

Local authorities will be able to set a deeper minimum discount at either 40% or 50% and impose lower price caps, if they can demonstrate a need for this through evidence. However, the same level of discount as a percentage below market value must apply to the home each time it is sold in perpetuity, subject to certain specific exclusions, so that communities continue to benefit from the homes for years to come. The discount in perpetuity should be secured through a planning obligation. First Homes should, as a matter of course, comply with any other applicable planning policies and /or building regulations, for example those relating to space, accessibility, energy efficiency or carbon emissions. This includes avoiding the sale of homes as leasehold where this is not necessary.

In order to ensure that suitable mortgages are available for First Homes, local authorities should provide for a mortgage lender enforcing its security over a First Homes to be able to realise the full market value of the property, returning any surplus up to the value of the First Homes discount to the local authority.

### *First Homes eligibility criteria*

First Homes must be prioritised for first-time buyers—as defined in paragraph 6 of schedule 6ZA of the Finance Act 2003 for the purposes of stamp duty relief for first-time buyers—and not be sold to any household with a combined annual income in excess of £80,000 or £90,000 in Greater London. Local authorities will be able to apply additional criteria at a local level. For example, they may wish to set a lower income cap, prioritise key workers who also meet the first time buyer definition and/or specify a particular local connection requirement based on work or current residency.

Neighbourhood plans will also be able to apply these additional criteria at neighbourhood level. We do not intend to set out a national definition for key workers or local connections for the purposes of First Homes, but instead empower local authorities to take these decisions in the best interests of their areas and residents.

## First Homes Policy Position

In recognition of the unique nature of their circumstances, members of the armed forces, the divorced or separated spouse or civil partner of a member of the armed forces, the spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the armed forces—if their death was caused wholly or partly by their service—or veterans within five years of leaving the armed forces should be exempt from any local connection testing restrictions.

A person who can afford to purchase a First Home without a mortgage should not be eligible to purchase a First Home. As a deterrent against the use of First Homes for investment, all purchasers of First Homes must use a mortgage or home purchase plan, if required to comply with Islamic law, for at least 50% of the discounted purchase value.

If local authorities or neighbourhood planning groups choose to introduce their own eligibility restrictions, these will be time-limited to the first three months from the start date of marketing of the property. Upon expiry of the three-month period, any homes which have not been sold or reserved will revert to the national standard criteria set out above. This is to ensure that homes do not remain unsold if suitable buyers in the local area cannot be found.

To support developers and local authorities in using First Homes we are currently developing model section 106 obligations that can be used to secure First Homes at the planning stage. These will make it easier for developers to meet national requirements, for local authorities to consider imposing their own time-limited restrictions and will protect the interest of mortgage lenders by ensuring they can realise the full market value of the property in defined exceptional circumstances. These model obligations will also contain wording for a model title restriction, which will be recognised by HM Land Registry and will ensure the homes retain their discount in perpetuity.

We are clear that First Homes are intended to be used as a person's sole or primary residence and should not be used for investment or commercial gain. However, we also recognise that there are occasions when it may be necessary for owners of First Homes to let out their property for short periods of time, especially in response to unexpected life events. Therefore, a First Homes owner can only rent out their home for a maximum period of two years, as long as the relevant local authority is notified. Recognising that certain circumstances require a unique response, local authorities should be willing to grant permissions to rent out for longer periods under the following circumstances: deployment elsewhere, for members of the armed forces; primary caring responsibilities for relative/friend; short job posting elsewhere; redundancy; domestic abuse; and relationship breakdown. This will not affect restrictions on letting a property prescribed by a mortgage lender and permission from them would likely also be required.

### *Changes to planning policy*

In order to support the future development of First Homes, the Government are today also setting out changes to planning policy as set out above and below. These changes will come into effect from 28 June 2021.

### *Setting developer contributions for First Homes*

A minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. This is a national threshold which should be applied for England.

In accordance with paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework, affordable housing is expected to be delivered on-site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Where cash contributions for affordable housing are secured instead of on-site units, a minimum of 25% of these contributions should be used to secure First Homes. Where a mixture of cash

## First Homes Policy Position

contributions towards affordable housing and on-site units are secured, 25% of the overall value of affordable housing contributions should be applied to First Homes.

Local authorities should already have affordable housing policies set out in their development plan, which will include the amounts of affordable housing to be sought, and the tenure mix of this housing. Paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework currently states that where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. Under the approach set out in this written ministerial statement, therefore, it is necessary to define the criteria for policy compliance, under which a development is assumed to be viable.

Under the new system, a policy compliant planning application should seek to capture the same amount of value as would be captured under the local authority's up-to-date published policy. In addition to capturing the same amount of value towards affordable housing as the existing policy, where on-site affordable housing is required, a policy compliant application will have a minimum of 25% of affordable housing units on-site as First Homes.

### *The remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions*

The Government recognise the importance of social rent as part of the affordable housing tenure mix. A local authority should prioritise securing their policy requirements on social rent, once they have secured the 25% First Homes requirement. Where other affordable housing units can be secured, these tenure-types should be secured in the relative proportions set out in the development plan.

If an application aligns with a local authority's up-to-date policy on cash contributions in lieu of onsite provision, then it will be a policy compliant application in that regard.

Local planning authorities should use the most appropriate method available to them to set out how these requirements impact on their current affordable housing tenure mix policies.

### *Exemptions from requirements to deliver affordable home ownership products*

Paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that for major development involving the provision of housing, 10% of all homes on site should be affordable home ownership products, unless one of the exceptions applies. First Homes are an affordable home ownership product. Where specific developments are exempt from delivering affordable home ownership products under paragraph 64 of the framework, they shall also be exempt from the requirement to deliver First Homes.

### *Plans, development management and transitional arrangements*

Local plans and neighbourhood plans should take into account the new First Homes requirements from 28 June 2021. Local authorities may therefore need to review the tenure mix for the remainder of the affordable housing that they are seeking to secure. However, we also recognise that there will be a number of local plans and neighbourhood plans that have been prepared based on the existing National Planning Policy Framework and that have reached more advanced stages of the plan-making process. We do not intend that the evidence base for these should be re-opened, thus delaying the plan-making process. The following transitional arrangements will therefore apply.

Local plans and neighbourhood plans that have been submitted for examination<sup>[1]</sup> before 28 June 2021 are not required to reflect the First Homes policy requirements. Additionally, local plans and neighbourhood plans that have reached publication stage<sup>[2]</sup> by 28 June 2021 will also not be required to reflect the First Homes policy requirement as long as they are submitted for examination before 28 December 2021. However, reflecting our desire to introduce First Homes requirements at



## First Homes Policy Position

the earliest possible opportunity, planning inspectors should consider through the examination whether a requirement for an early update of the local plan might be appropriate.

Where local and neighbourhood plans are adopted under the aforementioned transitional arrangements, the First Homes requirements will also not need to be applied when considering planning applications in the plan area until such time as the requirements are introduced through a subsequent update.

Where local and neighbourhood plans do not benefit from the aforementioned transitional arrangements, the local planning authority should make clear how existing policies should be interpreted in the light of First Homes requirements using the most appropriate tool available to them.

We also recognise that many developers will have been preparing planning applications under different assumptions. Across all local authorities, the new requirement for 25% First Homes will not apply to sites with full or outline planning permissions already in place or determined or where a right to appeal against non-determination has arisen, before 28 December 2021, or 28 March 2022 if there has been significant pre-application engagement, although local authorities should allow developers to introduce First Homes to the tenure mix if they wish to do so. This transitional allowance will also apply to permissions and applications for entry-level exception sites.

The Government will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these transitional arrangements in the light of emerging economic circumstances.

### *Level of discount*

The minimum discount for First Homes should be 30% from market value, which will be set by an independent registered valuer. The valuation should assume the home is sold as an open market dwelling without restrictions. Where evidence justifies it—in the local or neighbourhood plan, an emerging policy or, where appropriate, a supplementary planning document—the minimum discount in an area can be increased to 40% or 50%.

Where discounts of more than 30% are applied to First Homes, the requirement for a minimum of 25% of the affordable housing units secured through developer contributions to be First Homes will remain in place. The approach to delivering the remaining 75% of affordable housing is set out above.

### *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*

The Government have introduced new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations which allow the developers of First Homes to obtain an exemption from the requirement to pay CIL, in line with other affordable housing products. These regulations came into force on 16 November 2020.

### *Exception sites*

A key priority of this Government is to enable as many people as possible to enjoy the benefits of home ownership, and First Homes is a crucial way in which this will be achieved. In order to maximise the number of First Homes made available to those keen to get on the housing ladder, the Government are also seeking to deliver First Homes via exception sites. Exception sites are small sites brought forward outside of development plans in order to deliver affordable housing, and currently consist of rural exception sites and entry-level exception sites.

While the Government support the mechanism of allowing land to come forward outside of the development plan to deliver much-needed homes via exception sites, the entry-level exception site policy has not delivered affordable housing to the extent originally envisaged. Following the

## First Homes Policy Position

consultation, the Government are replacing this policy with a “First Homes exception sites” policy, in order to encourage First Homes-led developments on land that is not currently allocated for housing. Local authorities should support the development of these First Homes exception sites, suitable for first-time buyers, unless the need for such homes is already being met within the local authority’s area. Local connection criteria may be set where these can be supported by evidence of necessity and will not compromise site viability. First Homes exception sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:

a) comprise First Homes, as defined in this written ministerial statement.

b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in the National Planning Policy Framework[3], and comply with any local design policies and standards.

A small proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of First Homes without grant funding. Also, a small proportion of other affordable homes may be allowed on the sites where there is significant identified local need.

While the Government want to ensure that home ownership is available to as many people as possible, we recognise that certain rural areas face particular challenges in terms of affordability, and that rural exception sites can be very effective in addressing the lack of affordable housing in these areas. As such, the Government have decided that in designated rural areas[4], which includes some of the more constrained and expensive regions of the country such as national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty, rural exception sites will remain as the sole exception site which can come forward. Elsewhere, First Homes exception sites and rural exception sites can both come forward.

### *Delivering shared ownership homes*

This Government believe shared ownership has a vital role to play in supporting people from all backgrounds to become homeowners. By purchasing a share of a property, aspiring homeowners can overcome the income and deposit barriers that can stand in their way. This is why the Government are making shared ownership work better by introducing a new model for shared ownership which will be delivered through grant funding and through the planning system.

On 28 August 2019, we ran a discussion paper to consult on several proposed changes to the shared ownership model. In the Government response to the consultation, published in September 2020, we confirmed the outline of the new model of shared ownership and committed to set an expectation for shared ownership homes secured through the planning system to be based on the new model.

The new model for shared ownership: technical consultation, which ran from 19 November to 17 December 2020, set out further details of the new model of shared ownership, including the proposal that we will expect all shared ownership homes delivered through obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to be based on the new model. We consulted on potential transitional arrangements.

We are today confirming that this expectation will come into effect from 28 June 2021. The principal changes to the shared ownership model are summarised as follows:

i) Minimum share to be purchased

The minimum share for initial shared ownership purchases will be lowered to 10% from the current 25%. The maximum share at initial purchase will remain unchanged at 75%.

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### ii) The purchase of further shares (“staircasing”)

New shared owners will be able to staircase in 1% increments for 15 years enabling shared owners to purchase up to 15% through this route. This option will be accompanied by reduced fees. It will still be possible to staircase in larger increments with the minimum additional share purchase reduced from 10% to 5%. Shared owners wishing to staircase in 5% increments or more will have to pay the range of fees as currently, such as a valuation fee, legal and mortgage costs as appropriate.

### iii) Shared ownership resales

The new shared ownership model will end the provider’s resale nomination period at the four week point if they wish to pursue a sale on the open market.

### iv) Responsibility for repairs and maintenance

The new shared ownership model introduces a new 10-year period during which the shared ownership leaseholder will receive support from their landlord with the cost of repairs and maintenance in new build homes. Only after 10 years will the shared owner take on full responsibility for any repairs and maintenance costs. This 10-year period is in addition to any repairs or maintenance covered by the new build warranty to cover any works required that the warranty does not cover.

### v) Shared ownership lease term

All new leases must be issued with a minimum lease length term of 990 years. These longer leases will provide long term security for shared owners and save them from paying for multiple lease extensions.

We believe these reforms will make the scheme more consumer friendly, easier to access and fairer, leading to a better experience for a future generation of shared owners.

The Government response to the new model for shared ownership: technical consultation, which we published in April 2021, sets out further details on these changes. You can also consult the Homes England Capital Funding Guide 1. Help to Buy: Shared Ownership - Capital Funding Guide - Guidance - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)), or the GLA Capital Funding Guide for homes in London, for further guidance on how to implement Shared Ownership.

Later this month, Homes England will publish a model lease which can be used as a basis for leases under the new model of shared ownership.

We recognise that many developers will have been preparing planning applications under different assumptions. The new requirement for the new shared ownership model will not apply to sites with full or outline planning permissions already in place or determined or where a right to appeal against non-determination has arisen, before 28 December 2021, or 28 March 2022 if there has been significant pre-application engagement, although local authorities should allow developers to introduce the new shared ownership model if they wish to do so.

The local and neighbourhood plan transitional arrangements set out above for First Homes also apply to the new requirement for the new shared ownership model.

[1] Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 for Neighbourhood Plans, and Regulation 22 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for Local Plans.

## **First Homes Policy Position**

[2] Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 for Neighbourhood Plans, and Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for Local Plans.

[3] i.e. the areas referred to in footnote 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework. First Homes exception sites should not be permitted in national parks (or within the Broads Authority), areas of outstanding natural beauty, land designated as green belt, or areas designated as rural under section 157 of the Housing Act 1985.

[4] As set out in annexe 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework

[HCWS50]

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# First Homes Policy

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## Part One: Purpose and Context

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to explain the framework by which the Council will deliver First Homes in West Berkshire.
- 1.2 The policy sets out the definition of First Homes, the nationally and locally agreed eligibility criteria for buying and letting First Homes in West Berkshire, the qualification process, how First Homes will be delivered, and the review and complaints procedure.
- 1.3 The Executive approved the First Homes Policy on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

### 2. Applicability

- 2.1 This policy applies to buyers and tenants, or potential buyers and tenants seeking to purchase or rent a First Home in West Berkshire.
- 2.2 This document is publicly available for reference and viewing.
- 2.3 The Council has consulted with relevant stakeholders, including social landlords known as Registered Providers; developers; Elected Members; and relevant Council Officers.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 This policy provides an over-arching framework for First Homes. The Council continues to manage and administer the Housing Register (HR) and the allocation of social and affordable accommodation through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system. Each Registered Provider (RP) will have their own Allocations and Lettings Policy for social and affordable accommodation which they will have regard to when deciding whether or not to make an offer of accommodation.

### 4. Review

- 4.1 The Council will review this First Homes Policy every five years or sooner if there is a legislative or policy requirement to do so. All material changes (changes that are not minor but constitute a significant change that could have an adverse impact on applicants) will be subject to consultation and Executive approval.

### 5. Housing in West Berkshire

- 5.1 West Berkshire is a very popular place to live with limited supply of social and affordable properties. However, there are many different types of homes in the district, including homes to buy on the open market or through affordable home ownership schemes; homes to rent from a private landlord or registered provider; and homes designed for particular groups, for example, sheltered housing.
- 5.2 The aims of this policy are to:
  - Ensure that affordable housing in the district is provided to those in the greatest need
  - Make the process of securing properties as transparent as possible
  - Make best use of affordable housing stock in the district
  - Encourage safer and sustainable communities

## 6. **Legal Context**

6.1 This is the Council's First Homes policy. In developing this policy the Council has followed and fully considered the following:

Legislation:

- Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 as amended by Localism Act 2011 (England)
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- The Planning Act 2008
- The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

National policy:

- Written Ministerial Statement 'Affordable Homes' volume 696 (24 May 2021)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (as amended, July 2021)

Statutory guidance:

- Planning Practice Guidance: First Homes (first published May 2021, updated December 2021, Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing)

6.2 In framing the policy, regard has also been given to the council's Reducing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025, Housing Strategy 2020 - 2036, the Tenancy Strategy and the Armed Forces Covenant 2011.

## **Part Two: Definition**

### 7. **Discounted sale price**

7.1 The definition of a First Home is set nationally through national policy (Written Ministerial Statement 'Affordable Housing' volume 696, May 2021).

7.2 A First Home is a home sold at a discounted price of no more than 70% of the market value of the property.

7.3 The market value must be determined by an independent registered valuer and must be based on the assumption that the home is sold as an open market dwelling without restrictions.

7.4 The first time a First Home is sold, the home must cost no more than £250,000, after the discount has been applied.

### 8. **Affordable in perpetuity**

8.1 To continue to qualify as a First Home, future re-sales of the home must also be at a discounted price of no more than 70% of the market value of the property.

8.2 This is to ensure that First Homes continue to be sold with a 30% discount off the market value and remain affordable in future, even if property prices rise over time.

## Part Three: Eligibility

### 9. National eligibility criteria

- 9.1 Eligibility for purchasing First Homes is set nationally through national policy (Written Ministerial Statement 'Affordable Housing' volume 696, May 2021).
- 9.2 National policy prioritises First Homes for first-time buyers, as defined in paragraph 6 of schedule 6ZA of the Finance Act 2003 for the purposes of stamp duty relief for first-time buyers.
- 9.3 First Homes must not be sold to any household with a combined annual income greater than £80,000 (or any threshold set by the Government in future).
- 9.4 All purchasers of First Homes must use a mortgage (or home purchase plan, if required to comply with Islamic law), for at least 50% of the discounted purchase value.

### 10. Local eligibility criteria

- 10.1 Part 6 of the Housing Act (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and national policy on First Homes enable local authorities to set their local qualifying criteria.
- 10.2 In West Berkshire, in addition to the national criteria, purchasers of First Homes must

- Have lived or worked within West Berkshire District Council's boundary for a period of 2 years before the property purchase;

Or

- Have a local connection to the area from one of the following criteria:
  - A child in permanent full time education within West Berkshire District Council's boundary
  - To take up meaningful employment within West Berkshire District Council's boundary
  - Immediate family who have lived within West Berkshire District Council's boundary for more than 5 years
  - Returning to care for a relative or dependant who has lived within the West Berkshire District Council's boundary for more than 5 years

- 10.3 If no one is eligible for the property from the criteria listed then other examples of local connection maybe considered at the discretion of the Housing Strategy and Reviews Manager.
- 10.4 Members of the armed forces, the divorced or separated spouse or civil partner of a member of the armed forces, the spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the armed forces – if their death was caused wholly or partly by their services, or veterans within five years of leaving the armed forces, are exempt from the above local eligibility criteria.



- 10.5 A potential buyer may be fleeing violence, or threats of violence. In such cases, the Council may decide to exempt the potential buyer from the local connection criteria, and treat them as qualifying, subject to meeting all of the other eligibility criteria.
- 10.6 In exceptional circumstances the local authority may be approached to assist a household who are a witness in a serious criminal case and who need to be moved to an alternative area for their own protection. In such cases, the housing authority will seek to cooperate with the relevant agencies and may decide to exempt the household from any or all of the eligibility criteria.
- 10.7 If, after three months of active marketing of the home, the home has not been sold to an eligible purchaser, the local eligibility criteria will cease to apply. The national eligibility criteria will continue to apply.

## 11. **Qualification process**

- 11.1 West Berkshire Council will assess applications from potential buyers to check they meet the eligibility criteria, including undertaking employment verification checks if relevant.
- 11.2 If the national and local eligibility criteria is met, consent addressed to HM Land Registry will be issued.
- 11.3 The fee for issuing this consent is £250.00.
- 11.4 If none of the criteria is met, the potential buyer should provide other evidence upon which they wish to rely in order that the Council can consider the application.

## 12. **Lettings**

- 12.1 A First Home can be let for a maximum of 2 years.
- 12.2 Homeowners wishing to let their First Home must apply to the local authority for permission to let the property
- 12.3 West Berkshire Council will assess applications from homeowners wishing to let their First Home to check that:
- potential tenants meet the criteria; and
  - the rent for the First Home is not more than the local housing allowance rate.
- 12.4 This will ensure that the property remains affordable and is meeting local housing needs.
- 12.5 If the criteria is met, West Berkshire Council will issue consent to let the property.
- 12.6 The fee for issuing this consent is £250.00.

## **Part Four: Delivery**

### 13. **Section 106 planning obligations**

- 13.1 In line with local planning policy, new residential development is required to provide affordable housing.
- 13.2 In line with national planning policy, at least 25% of this affordable housing must be First Homes.

- 13.3 The First Homes must be delivered on-site. Commuted sums or off-site provision will not be accepted in lieu of on-site provision.
- 13.4 Development schemes which consist of 100% build-to-rent; specialist accommodation for the elderly or students; self- and custom-build homes; or affordable housing are exempt from the requirement to deliver First Homes.
- 13.5 Section 106 planning obligations will be used to secure the delivery of First Homes using the model section 106 planning obligation provided by the Government, as set out in statutory planning guidance (published December 2021).
- 13.6 Restrictive covenants will be entered onto the HM Land Registry, using the model covenant provided by the Government, as set out below:

*No disposition of the registered estate (other than a charge) by the proprietor of the registered estate or by the proprietor of any registered charge, not being a charge registered before the entry of this restriction, is to be registered without a certificate signed by [Local Authority] of [address] or their conveyancer that the provisions of clause XX (the First Homes provision) of the Transfer dated [Date] referred to in the Charges Register have been complied with or that they do not apply to the disposition.*

- 13.7 A seller must apply to the Council for permission to remove this restrictive covenant. If approved by the Council, the property would cease to qualify as a First Home.
- 13.8 To help ensure the ongoing supply and availability of affordable housing in the district, the Council will not normally approve applications to remove this covenant.

#### 14. **Community Infrastructure Levy**

- 14.1 In accordance with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations, First Homes will qualify for mandatory social housing relief and will be exempt from the requirement to pay CIL (provided that the application for relief meets specific assessment criteria).
- 14.2 A rented First Home would still be eligible for mandatory social housing relief provided the letting of the property did not exceed the maximum 2 year period.
- 14.3 If an application is made to remove the restrictive covenant and the property is sold at more than 70% of the market value, the property will no longer qualify as a First Home and will no longer be eligible for mandatory social housing relief from CIL. The CIL liability will be backdated to commencement at the rate that was in place at the time of commencement (plus a surcharge for a disqualifying event).

#### 15. **Exception Sites**

- 15.1 In line with local planning policy, First Homes can also be provided on First Homes exception sites. The forthcoming Local Plan review will set out criteria for First Homes exception sites.

## **Part Five: Reviews and Complaints**

### **16. Right to Review**

- 16.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of a decision regarding:
- Whether a property qualifies under the definition of a First Home;
  - Whether s/he is eligible to purchase or rent a First Home of accommodation;
  - The suspension, cancellation, or removal of an application.
- 16.2 Applicants wishing to review a decision must advise the Council in writing within 21 days of the decision date giving their reasons for doing so.
- 16.3 As evidence is taken in written form it is very important that, when making the request for a review, the applicant, or someone acting on their behalf:
- Brings to the Council's attention any new information that they wish to have considered; and
  - Explains why they think the decision is wrong.
- 16.4 If no written representations are received the matter will be decided on the facts already known.
- 16.5 An officer senior to the officer who made the original decision, and who has not been involved in the original decision, will carry out the review and respond to the applicant.
- 16.6 The Council will determine the review within 56 days. If there is a delay with the review decision the applicant will be advised in writing of the reason for the delay and a revised timescale.
- 16.7 If the applicant disagrees with the review decision, they can seek judicial review or take their case to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### **17. Complaints**

- 17.1 Where an applicant considers that they have been treated unfairly or believes that there has been maladministration, they can make a formal complaint to the Council.
- 17.2 This is distinct from the procedure to request a review of a decision that has been made in accordance with this policy and the complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge the outcome of reviews.
- 17.3 The Council's complaints procedure is detailed on the Council's website and in the leaflet 'How to complain' which can be obtained from Council offices.

### **18. Monitoring**

- 18.1 The scheme will be closely monitored by the Housing Service to ensure that it is operating equitably and fairly.
- 18.2 The Housing Service will carry out regular checks to verify details to prevent fraud.
- 18.3 The policy will be reviewed after the first 12 months of introduction to consider if any revisions are necessary after initial operation. The policy will then be reviewed every 5 years thereafter. Should any significant amendments be required, consultation would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders including elected members prior to a decision being made.

## Document Control

|                       |                          |                         |                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Document Ref:</b>  |                          | <b>Date Created:</b>    | 18 January 2022 |
| <b>Version:</b>       | 0.8                      | <b>Date Modified:</b>   | 25/05/2022      |
| <b>Revision due</b>   |                          |                         |                 |
| <b>Author:</b>        | Harriet Fisher           | <b>Sign &amp; Date:</b> |                 |
| <b>Owning Service</b> | Development and Planning |                         |                 |

## Change History

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Description</b>                                  | <b>Change ID</b> |
|----------------|-------------|---|------------------|
| 0.1            | 18.01.2022  |   | HF               |
| 0.2            | 18.01.2022  | Formatting – paragraphs and comments for review     | JW               |
| 0.3            | 19/01/2022  | Proof reading corrections                           | HF               |
| 0.4            | 24/01/2022  | Changes to respond to service director's comments   | HF               |
| 0.5            | 26/01/2022  | Changes to respond to executive director's comments | HF               |
| 0.6            | 26/01/2022  | Changes to respond to portfolio holder's comments   | HF               |
| 0.7            | 28/02/2022  | Changes to respond to comments from the CIL team    | HF               |
| 0.8            | 25/05/2022  | Changes to local eligibility criteria               | HF               |

## Appendix C

### First Homes Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is a First Home?**

A First Home is an affordable home ownership product for first time buyers.

#### **How are First Homes built and funded?**

First Homes will be built by developers and housebuilders on-site as part of new residential developments. This requirement will be secured by the Council using section 106 planning obligations. First Homes can also be built on First Homes exception sites. The forthcoming Local Plan review will set out criteria for these sites.

#### **Can developers pay money to the Council instead of building First Homes?**

No. Commuted sums / off-site provision will not be accepted in lieu of developers meeting the requirement to build First Homes on-site as part of new residential development.

#### **Are any developments exempt from the requirement to build First Homes?**

Yes. Development schemes which consist of 100% build-to-rent; specialist accommodation; self- and custom-build homes; or affordable housing are exempt from the requirement to build First Homes.

#### **Will First Homes be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy?**

No. First Homes qualify for mandatory social housing relief and are exempt from the requirement to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy.

#### **How many First Homes will be built?**

National policy requires that at least 25% of the affordable housing built as part of new developments must be First Homes. As an illustrative example only, this means that on a new residential development of 200 homes, where 30% of the properties are affordable housing, 15 of the 60 affordable homes would be First Homes.

#### **How much does a First Home cost?**

A First Home must be sold at a discounted price of no more than 70% of the market value of the property. The first time it is sold, the home must cost no more than £250,000, after the discount has been applied.

#### **How is the market value of the property determined?**

The market value must be determined by an independent registered valuer and must be based on the assumption that the home is sold as an open market dwelling without restrictions. A discount of at least 30% is then applied to that market value to arrive at the sale price of the First Home.

### **Does the discount apply to future sales?**

Yes. Future sales must also have a discount of 30%. For example, if a First Home sold for a second time has a market value of £380,000, the sale price must be no more than £266,000. This makes sure that First Homes remain affordable in future.

### **Can a First Home be sold without the discount?**

Yes, if restrictions are removed with the Council's consent. When a First Home is built a restrictive covenant will be placed on the property and registered with the land registry. For a First Home to be re-sold without the discount, the seller would need to apply to the local authority for permission for the covenant to be removed. If permission is granted by the local authority to remove the restrictive covenant and the First Home is re-sold without the discount, it will no longer be a First Home.

### **What happens if a First Home is sold without the discount?**

If a First Home is sold without the discount it will no longer be a First Home or an affordable housing product. As a result, the property will no longer qualify for mandatory social housing relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy. In these circumstances, the Levy will become payable, backdated to commencement at the rate that was in place at the time of commencement (plus a surcharge for a disqualifying event).

### **Why hasn't a higher discount been set in West Berkshire?**

The discount of 30% is set by Government nationally. Local authorities can set a higher discount of 40% or 50%. However, a higher discount would not be viable and could risk the delivery of First Homes and other affordable housing.

### **How will First Homes be delivered in West Berkshire?**

First Homes will be built as part of new residential developments. Developers will be required to build First Homes on-site through Section 106 planning obligations (a legal agreement between the developer and West Berkshire Council). First Homes can also be delivered on First Homes exception sites. Policy setting out criteria for these sites will be set out in the West Berkshire Local Plan.

### **Who can buy a First Home in West Berkshire?**

Buyers of First Homes must be first time buyers with a mortgage or home purchase plan and a combined annual income of no more than £80,000. This criteria is set by Government in national policy. Local authorities can set local eligibility criteria. In West Berkshire, buyers of First Homes must have a local connection to the area.

### **What does having a local connection to the area mean?**

In West Berkshire, in addition to the national criteria, buyers of First Homes must have lived or worked within the District Council's boundary for a period of three years before purchasing the property or be returning to the area to care for a relative or dependent who lives within the District Council's boundary.

### **Why has West Berkshire set local connection eligibility criteria?**

West Berkshire has a high need for affordable housing, with an affordability ratio of 9.41. This means that property prices are 9 times the average income. Setting local connection criteria gives first time buyers with a connection to the area priority access to affordable housing.

**Does the local connection eligibility criteria apply to all potential buyers of First Homes?**

No. Members of the armed forces, the divorced or separated spouse or civil partner of a member of the armed forces, the spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the armed forces, if their death was caused by their service, and veterans within five years of leaving the armed forces, are exempt from the local connection criteria.

In cases where a potential buyer may be fleeing violence or threats of violence, or may be part of a witness protection programme, the Council may decide to exempt the buyer from the local connection criteria.

**Will the local connection eligibility criteria always apply?**

No. If after three months of active marketing, the First Home has not been sold, the local connection requirement will no longer apply, but the national criteria will still apply.

**How do potential buyers and tenants prove they are eligible to buy or rent a First Home?**

Potential buyers and tenants must apply to the local authority. West Berkshire Council will check that they meet the eligibility criteria and issue Permission to Exchange and Permission to Proceed. If applicable, employment verification checks will be undertaken by the Council at the point of application. If the national and local eligibility criteria are met, consent will be issued. The fee for issuing this consent is £250.00.

**Can a First Home be let/rented out?**

Yes, if the Council consents. A First Home should be a person's primary residence and not for investment of commercial gain. However, a First Home owner can let out the property for up to 2 years provided they notify the local authority and secure any necessary permissions from their mortgage lender.

**Who can rent a First Home in West Berkshire?**

In West Berkshire, potential tenants must apply to the Council for approval to rent a First Home. The rent charged must be capped at the local housing allowance rate. A market value rent cannot be charged. This is to ensure that the property remains affordable and meets local housing needs.

**Can potential buyers or tenants request a review of the Council's decision?**

Yes. Applicants wishing to buy or rent a First Home have the right to request a review of the Council's decision regarding whether the property qualifies as a First Home, whether they are eligible to purchase or rent a First Home, and the suspension, cancellation or removal of an application. Applicants wishing to review a decision must tell the Council in writing within 21 days of the decision date giving their reasons. The Council will determine the review within 56 days. If the applicant disagrees with the review decision they can seek judicial review or take their case to the Local Government Ombudsman.

**Can potential buyers or tenants make a complaint?**

## **First Homes Policy Position**

Yes. Where an applicant considers that they have been treated unfairly or believes there has been maladministration, they can make a formal complaint to the Council. The complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge the outcome of reviews. The Council's complaints procedure is on the Council's website and set out in the leaflet 'How to complain' which can be obtained from Council offices.

### **Will the First Homes policy be reviewed?**

Yes. The scheme will be monitored by the Council to ensure it is operating equitably and fairly. The policy will be reviewed every 5 years. Should any significant amendments be required, consultation would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders, including elected members, prior to a decision being made.



# Review of Town and Parish Engagement

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>                                       | Executive  |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>  | 9 June 2022  |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>   | Councillor Graham Bridgman                         |
| <b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b><br><i>(for Corporate Board)</i> | 15 February 2022                                   |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>                                | 22 February 2022                                   |
| <b>Report Author:</b>  | Sam Shepherd, Programme Manager, Local Communities |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>   | EX4214   |

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise work carried out to understand and address improvements in the engagement with town and parish councils. The report proposes a resulting 'Improvement Plan' (in Appendix A).

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Improvement Plan in Appendix A be agreed.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication            | Commentary  |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | It is anticipated that the Improvement Plan in Appendix A will be delivered by the Teams with actions across the Council, within existing resources. Should additional resources or capacity be required to enact the changes identified; funding would be applied for as transformation. Should the transformation in town and parish engagement reveal a long-term pressure on our business-as-usual, this pressure would be identified through the budget-setting process. |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | It is anticipated that the Improvement Plan in Appendix A will be delivered by the Teams with actions across the Council, within existing resources.  |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.  |

|  |  |                |                 |   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|---|
| <b>Risk Management:</b>  | The key risk arising from this report is the resource and capacity to deliver the Improvement Plan related to demands on both WBC and town and parish councils. This can be impacted by a number of factors (including the response to the Ukraine war, rise in the cost of living and local resources). |                |                 |   |
| <b>Property:</b>   | There are no direct property implications for the Council arising from this report or its proposals. Where individual town or parish work relates to devolution of assets, the property implications are considered on a case-by-case basis.   |                |                 |   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | There are no national policies which relate to this report or its proposals.   |                |                 |   |
|  | <b>Positive</b>  | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Negative</b> | <b>Commentary</b>   |
| <b>Equalities Impact:</b>  | X  |                |                 |   |
| <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 proposals outlined in this report will have a positive impact on inequalities, as it seeks to drive greater inclusion across communities.   |
| <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 proposals outlined in this report will have a positive impact on inequalities, as it seeks to drive greater inclusion across communities.   |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   |  | X              |                 | There are no direct environmental implications for the Council arising from this report or its proposals.   |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  | X  |                |                 | The proposals outlined in this report will help improve engagement with our communities, which in turn helps deliver the Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy which seeks to deliver on all aspects of improved health and wellbeing. |

|                                     |  |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>                  |  | X |   | There are no IT implications for the Council arising from this report or its proposals.   |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>     |  | X |   | There are no direct digital implications for the Council arising from this report or its proposals.   |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b> | X  |   |   | <p>The proposals in this report will help to improve the following Council strategy priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their potential</li> </ul> <p>The proposals outlined in this report directly deliver an action in the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023.</p> |
| <b>Core Business:</b>               | X  |   |   | The proposals outlined in this report will support stronger relationships between the Council and our town and parish councils. This will help the Council deliver services in partnership where appropriate.   |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |  |   | X | There are no data or data protection implications for the Council arising from this report or its proposals.  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | This report has been shaped by the views of town and parish councils. The Improvement Plan in Appendix A has been co-produced with our town and parish colleagues. It is estimated that around 75% of town and parish councils have fed in views to this work. |   |   |   |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 In recognition of the valuable contribution that town and parish councils make, West Berkshire Council committed to reviewing and improving engagement with local towns and parishes. This work supports delivery of the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023. It is underpinned by a commitment to working alongside our communities.
- 4.2 To begin a review of engagement with towns and parishes, we worked with representatives of parish and town councils to design a survey to understand the current situation. Through this survey and alongside workshop-style 'community conversations' conducted in the summer 2021, we asked what is working well and what we need to do differently to better support our local councils.

- 4.3 During November and December 2021, we worked with an internal Officer Group and then held four workshops with officers and town and parish colleagues to build on the feedback gathered throughout the summer. During the workshops, we co-designed improvement plans which focused on communications, engagement, working together and on specific services.
- 4.4 This report sets out the approach we have taken and then describes the issues which were identified. Appendix A presents co-designed improvement plans for agreement.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 Community life and social connections are all factors that make a vital contribution to people's health and wellbeing. These aspects of community build a sense of resilience and can help buffer against disease and reduce inequalities; this is often referred to as social capital<sup>1</sup>.
- 5.2 As part of West Berkshire Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy, we have committed to working in a way that builds social capital through a programme known as "Engaging and Enabling our Local Communities" (EELC). This approach builds on existing strengths to support community life, social connections and the development of locally-determined solutions to local challenges.
- 5.3 As partners, town and parish councils play an essential role in shaping community life in West Berkshire. We therefore want to make sure that we work alongside town and parish councils to co-design improvements for the future.
- 5.4 To initiate a review of our town and parish engagement, we carried out a survey and workshop-style 'community conversations' throughout the summer 2021. During this time we heard from a total of 56 representatives covering 45 different town and parish councils. This means that we reached 75% of town and parish councils through this engagement exercise; submitted by Chairs, Clerks or Parish Councillors.

### Town and parish views

- 5.5 Having engaged the views of 75% of town and parish councils through this exercise; there is a sense of a robust understanding of the views of colleagues, which are summarised below.

#### *Relationship with West Berkshire Council*

- 5.6 With regards to how town and parish councils feel about their relationship with West Berkshire Council, most (68%) reported that their relationship with the Council was excellent or good. A further 28% said they had a fair relationship. Only 5% said they felt their council had a poor relationship with West Berkshire Council and none reported a very poor relationship.
- 5.7 The positives cited about relationships between town and parish councils and West Berkshire were that it was a good relationship with visible leaders and responsive officers. Key words to describe the relationship were positive, collaborative and

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<sup>1</sup> What Makes Us Healthy (2012) <http://www.assetbasedconsulting.co.uk/uploads/publications/WMUH.pdf>

## Review of Town and Parish Engagement

constructive. Areas for improvement were that there were differing perspectives and a lack of understanding of the role of town and parish councils. Frustrating and inefficient were also terms used to describe the relationship.

### *Communication*

- 5.8 With regards to communication; the majority of town and parishes said they felt either very or extremely informed (60% in total), with a further 37% reporting they felt somewhat informed. Just over 2.6% felt they were not so informed but no respondents indicated they did not feel at all informed. Respondents identified a clear preference to receive information from West Berkshire Council via e-newsletters, and then via the Council's website. More tailored means of receiving information, via forums and network meetings were also popular. In terms of improvements in communications, topics town and parish respondents said they would find useful in future communications, the top three preferences were on a) changes in legislation b) funding opportunities c) projects in the district.
- 5.9 In the community conversations, there was a strong appreciation regarding the pandemic communications and visibility of the Leader and Chief Executive. Regular updates were really helpful and good summaries were very important. There was a request to use that model going forward and to work together on shared campaigns.

### *Customer service experience*

- 5.10 When we asked town and parish colleagues about their most recent contact with West Berkshire Council, respondents reported most frequent contact with the Council over planning (53%), followed by roads (45%), countryside (35%), grounds maintenance (32%) and waste collection/recycling (20%). In terms of how easy these departments were to contact, how satisfied town and parishes were with the timeliness of responses, how satisfied they were with a resolution and overall helpfulness, the majority of respondents reported positive experiences. However, there were significant numbers of respondents that reported lower levels of satisfaction with planning and roads when contacting the Council.

### *Areas for improvement*

- 5.11 70% of respondents said that there were things West Berkshire Council could do to improve things when communicating town and parish councils. Broadly there were two key themes; engagement and collaboration, and communications. Colleagues wanted increased and proactive engagement at an operational and a strategic level. They would like regular updates, feedback and collaboration on projects. Suggestions were given which included a directory of contacts, a sharing of resources and improved links through workshops and nominated officers. With regards to communications it was felt a summary of and more targeted, regular communications would be helpful.
- 5.12 With regards to the programme known as 'devolution', the majority (78%) of town and parish councils were somewhat informed or very informed are somewhat informed, with only 22% not so informed; however this still represents an opportunity for raising awareness for those in this latter group.
- 5.13 Only 3% of respondents said they were actively applying to the devolution programme with a further 38% possibly interested. Some (49%) of respondents wanted to know how to get further information and work has already started to ensure this guidance is

easily accessible for our towns and parishes. When asked about parish planning, 44% of town and parish respondents felt extremely or very informed about parish planning. There are however over 20% who feel not so informed. These figures suggest that there is a significant potential for sharing of information and best practice amongst town and parish colleagues locally which would be particularly helpful for the 42% of respondents who are considering creating or revising a parish plan and the 36% who would like a conversation about starting one.

### *Support for future priorities*

- 5.9 Parish priorities over the coming months and years were varied and will have a wide-reaching impact at a local level. They included community engagement, community safety, community support, environmental initiatives and parish projects.
- 5.10 Through the community conversations various support needs were shared. Skill building through access to training was discussed along with wider sharing of information and resources with town and parish councils. There is a desire to work as partners and tap into support and advice from West Berkshire Council such as HR, consultation advice and risk assessment templates. That access to shared resources would help a more consistent approach, save time provide support for clerks.
- 5.11 In further exploring support needs, a couple of specific service areas were discussed in more detail. Some parishes expressed frustration about consultation processes with planning and a need to improve collaboration at earlier stages. A request for feedback and wider engagement with the community. Concerns were raised about limited enforcement regarding planning breaches.
- 5.12 Speeding in communities was also a priority for parishes and there was discussion about the process being clear from the outset. Participants would like to work in partnership with West Berkshire Council for the benefit of their communities. To do that they would like a clear procedure/advice on speed management initiatives and training for volunteer SID operatives.
- 5.13 Some other key themes were raised at the community conversations regarding Highways, improvements to the Report a Problem portal, rights of way contact points and clarification regarding the ownership of community assets.
- 5.14 Throughout all three community conversations, there was a strong desire to improve the relationship between West Berkshire Council and local town and parish councils. This included practical ideas as well as improving how we work together. The following key themes emerged:
- Access to resources and information
  - Sharing of best practice
  - Project Support
  - Working in partnership – operationally and strategically

### Co-designing improvement plans

5.14 The views of town and parish councils gathered through the surveys and community conversations led to the following themes for improvement being identified:

- Communications
- Engagement
- Customer services
- Resources
- Planning and delivering services together
- Building relationships with specific services: Planning and Road Safety.

5.15 Feedback gathered against each of these themes formed the basis of a series of workshops. During which, town and parish colleagues came together in facilitated sessions with Council officers to co-design improvements against each theme.

5.16 During each workshop, participants considered the specific improvements needed, which actions were needed to deliver them by the Council, how town and parishes can take action and how success will be understood. The draft Improvement Plans were tested back with participants and officers within the Council to ensure they accurately reflect the priorities for improvement and are deliverable. The Improvement Plan is in Appendix A.

## 6 Delivery and next steps

6.1 The Improvement Plan has been developed with the teams and officers impacted, shared with the Executive Directors, considered by Customer First Programme Board and Corporate Board. Feedback given to date has been incorporated within the Delivery Plan and the findings of the work will be fed into wider consideration of the Council's approach to customer engagement.

6.2 Delivery of several actions are already underway and so the next steps are to continue the focus on actions identified as a priority. Responsibility for delivery is dispersed across the Council and will therefore need a coordinated effort. This will be coordinated via the Officer Working Group already formed and with individual actions assigned to the most relevant officer or team.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 In recognition of the valuable contribution that town and parish councils make, West Berkshire Council has committed to reviewing and improving engagement with local towns and parishes. This work is underpinned by a commitment to working alongside our communities.

7.2 Following significant engagement with Town and Parish Councils, this report has set out the key findings and themes which emerged. It has outlined the process to co-design an improvement plan and presents that Plan for agreement.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Town and Parish: Engagement Improvement Plan.

**Background Papers:**

[Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023](#) (approved at Executive, October 2020)

**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:**

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# Appendix A

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## Town and Parish Engagement - Improvement Plan

### First Theme: Communications, Engagement and Customer Services

| Theme                | Feedback/improvement   | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?  |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Communication</b> | a) A regular town and parish newsletter, which is co-produced providing a quarterly round up of news from WBC as well as towns and parishes; sharing best practice and encourage networking. This would be one newsletter for the whole of West Berkshire. | <p>This is different content than the WBC residents' newsletter and would include both WBC and town/parish news.</p> <p>Could include timetable of decisions, officer points of contact, Devolution case studies, WBC grant funding deadlines, etc.</p> <p>Towns/parishes should be contacted to ask for content.</p> | <p>Stories and news to be shared.</p> <p>Town and parishes to discuss with WBC Communications (Alice Bloor) regarding information they can share.</p> | 2  | <p>Newsletter with shared stories.</p> <p>Feedback shows that information being shared is useful and informative.</p> |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?  |
|-------|---|---|--|--|---|
|       | b) Information sharing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funding streams</li> <li>• changes in legislation</li> <li>• campaigns (in a format that can be shared widely)</li> </ul> | Share details of relevant campaigns and ensure local campaigns are shared through WBC channels.   | Share details of relevant campaigns  | 3  | Feedback indicating initial reader satisfaction levels (e.g. a social media 'like').<br><br>Popularity of articles, monitored through number of times an article is accessed (e.g. link click numbers). |
|       | c) Ensure a clear process for updating contact details of the town and parish councils and make sure this is communicated effectively.  | Executive cycle email address is the best contact for updating details of town and parish councils.<br><br>( <a href="mailto:executivecycle@westberks.gov.uk">executivecycle@westberks.gov.uk</a> ) | Share updated details when changes occur.<br><br>Provide social media links to assist with wider community engagement. | 3  | Accurate up to date details are publicly available.   |

| Theme             | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
|                   |   | <p>Ensure this is widely known.</p> <p>Capture town/parish council social media links to assist with collaboration and community engagement.</p> |  |  |  |
| <b>Engagement</b> | <p>a) Themed, two-way engagement forums to inform policy development (e.g. building on the District Parish Conference (DPC) to develop themed conversations, develop the West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum, Devolution, etc.)</p> | <p>Provide opportunities for a two-way discussion through DPC</p> <p>BCT Team (Jo Naylor) can help signpost to relevant officer.</p>             | <p>Link with Council officers for further advice on arranging themed forums.</p> | 1  | <p>When required, facilitate the delivery of a forum with for discussions on key topics.</p> |
|                   | <p>b) Consultation exercises to be targeted where specifically for town and parishes with clarity on whether a whole town/parish council view is required; along with time given to respond if it is.</p>                           | <p>Clear guidance should be provided to town/parish councils as to whether a full council view is</p>  | <p>To respond in a timely manner to WBC consultations.</p>                       | 3  | <p>Good engagement with consultation exercises.</p>  |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement                             | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-------|--|---|--|--|--|
|       |  | <p>required or whether it's appropriate to respond as an individual.</p> <p>Ensure clarity on the status of the consultation (e.g. the Council policy is a minimum of 6-weeks for a public consultation but for statutory consultations the time periods may vary.</p> <p>Communication should be clear when responses are required by.</p> |  |  |  |
|       | c) Closer links between WBC and the Clerks Forum | Ensure good BCT Team links with Clerks' Forum organisers.   | Clerks' Forum organisers (Tilehurst PC/Hampstead Norreys PC Clerks) to link with the | 2  | Appropriate attendance by WBC officers at relevant Clerks' Forum meetings. |

| Theme                           | Feedback/improvement   | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|                                 |  |  | Principal Policy Officer (Communities, in the BCT Team).         |  |  |
| <b>General customer service</b> | a) Responding to town and parish enquiries in a more timely manner, ensuring that feedback loops are closed to inform town/parish council colleagues when an issue has been closed | Work underway on the new Customer Charter – this includes our relationship with town and parish councils.<br><br>Share the required timeframes for a response.<br><br>Share the process to follow if there has not been any response within the set timeframe. |  | 3  | Greater satisfaction in response times and details provided. |
|                                 | b) A listing of officer contacts for towns and parish councils to help direct enquiries to the correct place in the first instance.  | Develop list of key officer contacts that town and parish  | Communicate which service areas are most frequently contacted to | 3  | Ensure officer details are easily accessible.                |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?                        |
|-------|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------|
|       |   | councils are most likely to need.   | help shape a list.  |  |                                 |
|       | c) Raise awareness of our respective roles (as a Unitary Authority and as town/parish councils) and understand the constraints of each organisation to assist more effective joint working. | To be clear in all communications and manage expectations of what is possible and achievable. | Work towards good communication links with relevant WBC officers. | 2  | Stronger working relationships. |

**Second Theme: Resources and delivering services together**

| Theme            | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?  |
|------------------|---|---|------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Resources</b> | a) Improved support from both West Berkshire Council and the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) for guidance on safeguarding and risk management. | Safeguarding support reshaped for all VCS. VCS support being commissioned that could help with risk management; ensure availability of this advice is communicated to | n/a                    | 2  | Increased levels of confidence on safeguarding and risk management. |



| Theme  | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
|  |   | town and parish councils.   |  |  |  |
|  | b) Development and communication of some standardised advice and guidance for town and parish councils on consultations and risk assessments.   | To provide a guide on consultation and engagement to enable parish and town councils in carrying out their own exercises.<br><br>To share links to the agreed Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on risk assessments. | Opportunity to share best practice through websites/ newsletter.                           | 2  | Increased levels of confidence in undertaking activities.      |
| <b>Planning and delivering services together</b> | a) Explore the simplification and/or tailoring of devolution for the relative size of the parish and the interests of the community (e.g. process for hedge cutting versus library devolution). | Look at a simplified approach to devolution with associated guidance.   | Town and parish councils to share best practice and their experiences of what worked well. | 1  | Opportunities for all sizes of parish to engage in devolution. |
|  | b) Consider the opportunities for assisting with access to funding to take on services through devolution.  | Explore the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for devolution   |  | 2  | Good access to funding to support devolution.                  |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?                                       |
|-------|---|---|---|--|--|
|       |   | <p>i.e. to facilitate the delivery of services.</p> <p>Explore the use of other community grants to support devolution.</p>             |   |  |  |
|       | c) Explore the use of CIL monies to support community priorities.   | Arrange a future DPC and/or workshop with town and parish councils to explore the use of CIL funding.                                   |   | 2  | Greater access to funds to support devolution. |
|       | d) Share case studies of successful devolution projects and explore where best to store/share this information. | Gather successful case studies (with points of contact) to showcase devolution. This could be best done via newsletter or on a website. | Share successful stories of devolution projects with WBC and each other | 2  | Clear access to information on devolution      |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?  |
|-------|---|---|------------------------|--|---|
|       |   | Consider how best to host information on devolution.  |                        |  |   |
|       | e) Ensure the 'offer' of support for parish planning and Neighbourhood Development Planning (NDP) is clear. | Better awareness of the officer points of contact within WBC to support parish planning and NDPs. |                        | 2  | Clear signposting on parish planning and NDP support available. |

### Third Theme: Working Together on Highways and Road Safety

| Theme              | Feedback/improvement   | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?             |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|----------------------|
| <b>Road safety</b> | a) A lower 'trigger' threshold sought for speeding cars. WBC set the threshold at 25% of vehicles going at 35mph or more - this is set according to the available officer resource – a lower threshold is possible, but not with the current level of resources currently available to the Road Safety Team. | Improve Parish and Town Councils' awareness of the Council's Speed Intervention Programme and the 'trigger points' for the various | Engage with the Council and/or the Police to determine the best management options. The best point of | 3  | Fewer speeding cars. |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success? |
|-------|----------------------|---|--|--|----------|
|       |                      | <p>interventions available.</p> <p>Council to report speed data back to communities in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1). Percentage of all vehicles above the speed limit</li> <li>2). Percentage of all vehicles above ACPO guidelines (10% +2mph)</li> </ol> <p>Share contact details of TVP contact for those wanting to engage with their Community Speedwatch initiative, which does not have trigger points, but does require more direct involvement from parish and town councils.</p> | <p>contact at TVP is Lee Turnham (Email: <a href="mailto:Lee.Turnham@thamesvalley.police.uk">Lee.Turnham@thamesvalley.police.uk</a>)</p> |  |          |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement   | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-------|--|---|--|--|--|
|       | b) Training, advice and guidance sought.   | <p>Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic meant WBC were unable to provide face-to-face SID training there has been full access given to the online SID portal. This is where both training and Council-owned equipment can be accessed.</p> <p>Links to be re-shared to all town and parish councils (see links to resources at the end of this document).</p> | <p>Register your interest to gain access to the SID portal by emailing <a href="mailto:Cheryl.evans@westberks.gov.uk">Cheryl.evans@westberks.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Each town and parish council should allocate a designated user.</p> <p>The approved designated user can then invite suitable volunteers to access training and to book the SID equipment.</p> | 3  | Successful use of SID equipment by Parish and Town Councils. |
|       | c) Advice and case studies sought which show the impact of speed management initiatives. | WBC officers to share case studies with town and parish councils to show the relative   |  | 2  | Improved understanding of the benefits of speed              |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-------|---|--|---|--|--|
|       |   | success of speed management initiatives.   |   |  | management initiatives   |
|       | d) Improvements to 'Report a Problem' to refine the system to ensure it functions more effectively (e.g. uploading photos of the issues), gives greater clarity on the status of reports and closes feedback loops. | Work currently underway improving the 'Report a Problem' portal – this will have much greater functionality in the future including uploading pictures, tracking issues with more specific details and seeing the final result after the contractor has completed the work. Officers to notify town and parish councils when the improved system is available. | Improved 'Report a Problem' portal will be available in the New Year. | 3  | Easier tracking of problems reported and better, clearer photographic evidence of the problem and the solution provided. |
|       | e) Road closures/diversions – Communications  | When there were road works, alternative routes provided were not always correct.   | Town/parish councils to advise of any errors in                       | 2  | Successful routing of diverted traffic during road closures.   |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs     | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success? |
|-------|----------------------|--|----------------------------|--|----------|
|       |                      | <p>Present practice included a map sent along with a list of road names. Greater local knowledge is often required and feedback from parishes will be helpful to amend the routes.</p> <p>Work will be done during 2022 to re-launch and improve of the existing website to notify of roadworks.</p> | notified route diversions. |  |          |

**Fourth Theme: Working Together on Planning**

| Theme           | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC  | Action needed by T&PCs | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-----------------|---|---|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Planning</b> | a) Ensuring planning decisions are clearly communicated back to the parishes, and where possible, to provide more detailed information to the town/parish council to explain the planning decision. | <p>To review the format of the officer report on planning applications and to ensure this report contains all necessary advice from the service areas and clearly shows the officer view, recommendation and other considerations.</p> <p>To ensure effective circulation of the planning officer reports and decisions to the relevant ward/town/parish councils.</p> <p>To produce a briefing sheet on what constitutes a 'material</p> |                        | 3  | Clearer transparency in the planning decision process. |



| Theme | Feedback/improvement  | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?   |
|-------|---|--|---|--|--|
|       |   | consideration' to help guide town/parish councils when commenting on planning applications.  |   |  |  |
|       | b) Showing the location of planning application sites more clearly, which will help enable better onward dissemination of this information. | Council officers to investigate the potential use of XMap which is being used by some other Local Authorities to map development sites. This was reported as a very helpful/accessible method for certain parish councils already using this system. There is a need to explore the costs involved and functionality compared to the current mapping software used by WBC. | A clearer electronic map of the development sites would enable greater sharing of information with local residents, local councillors and others. | 2  | Ability to easily appreciate the location of planning sites and keep residents and others better informed. |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement   | Action needed by WBC   | Action needed by T&PCs   | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success?  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|---|
|       | c) Better informed about planning applications being made in adjacent/neighbouring parish areas. | Planning Service to explore how this might be done in an automated way to ensure better awareness of planning applications in neighbouring parish areas. |  | 3  | Improved knowledge of where development is taking place, if just outside parish boundaries. |
|       | d) Greater enforcement action to be taken by WBC.  | All enforcement applications to be logged and investigated. Recruitment to a new Planning Enforcement Officer post is underway (Dec 2021).               | T/PCs to notify the Planning Service if they see unauthorised planning activity.                         | 3  | Enforcement action seen to be taking place to prevent unauthorised breaches.                |
|       | e) Training and ensuring towns/parishes are kept informed of changing/updated planning policy.   | Training to be organised for town/parish councils on current planning legislation. It was suggested this is could be done via Tim Parry at               | Training should be attended to keep updated with current legislation. This is particularly crucial those | 2  | Better understanding of planning policy and how this must be followed and applied.          |

| Theme | Feedback/improvement | Action needed by WBC                       | Action needed by T&PCs  | Priority level<br>1 = low,<br>2 = medium,<br>3 = high. | Success? |
|-------|----------------------|--|---|--|----------|
|       |                      | Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB). | councils with responsibility for overseeing Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). |  |          |

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## Strategic Asset Plan

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|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>                                       | Executive                 |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>  | 9 June 2022               |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>   | Councillor Ross Mackinnon |
| <b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b><br><i>(for Corporate Board)</i> | 15 March 2022             |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>                                | 8 April 2022              |
| <b>Report Author:</b>  | Richard Turner            |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>   | EX4168                    |

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### 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Asset management is about supporting the delivery of strategic goals and objectives through the use of property assets – it is part of resource and business planning. It is setting a vision of where you want to be, and mapping out the journey to that place – identifying where value can be added and where investment is needed to achieve objectives. The adoption of a written asset management framework ensures the processes and procedures are formally expressed.
- 1.2 Where strategic property asset management has been effectively put in place it has brought real and tangible benefits for the organisations concerned, in areas including, being corporate, finances, efficiency, delivering corporate objectives and partnerships.
- 1.2 This report's purpose is to seek approval of the strategic document, Strategic Asset Plan 2019-2023 (revised 2022), this being a formal document conveying the council's approach to the management of its assets.

### 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive approve the attached Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) into its suite of strategic documents.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication             | Commentary   |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>       | <p>The Strategic Asset Plan as a document, does not in itself create any financial implications.</p> <p>The actions contained within the Asset Management Action Plan as individual projects may have financial implications, dealt with outside of this report.</p>   |
| <b>Human Resource:</b>  | <p>The Asset Management Action Plan, is a live document with a continuous rolling programme of actions. All of these actions have a resource requirement for Property Services as a team.</p> <p>The level of required core activities and delivery of the action plan could have long term resource implications to enable success.</p>   |
| <b>Legal:</b>           | No immediate legal implications have been identified.  |
| <b>Risk Management:</b> | The document does not in itself create any obvious risks to the council, with topics contained within the document generally being within the public domain or not presenting any confidential or Part 2 data.   |
| <b>Property:</b>        | <p>The document is produced by and refreshed annually by the Property Services team. The action plan represents a significant series of projects or tasks managed by Property Services.</p> <p>Acting in accordance with the structure and requirements of the Strategic Asset Plan will ensure the council follows best practice in the management of its estate with operational and financial benefits.</p> |
| <b>Policy:</b>          | The Strategic Asset Plan is an overarching strategic document specific to the management of the council's estate and land assets, and complements other key strategies, such as the Housing Strategy, and Environment Strategy   |

|  | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary  |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---|
| <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?               | N        | Y       | N        |   |
| <b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | N        | Y       | N        |   |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   | Y        | N       | N        | By following the structure and actions within the SAP, working alongside the Environment Strategy, this ensures due consideration is given to the environment across teams, with positive impact. |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  | N        | Y       | N        |   |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>   | N        | Y       | N        |   |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>  | N        | Y       | N        |   |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>  | Y        | N       | N        | The purpose of the SAP and its Action Plan is to deliver outcomes across the estate which supports the key themes and priorities of the Council Strategy.   |
| <b>Core Business:</b>  | Y        | N       | N        | The activities and actions coming from the SAP supports the operational services in the delivery of the core business of the  |

|                                     |   |   |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
|                                     |   |   |   | council through an effective and efficient estate. |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 | N   | Y | N |  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | It is not anticipated that the SAP as a document is subject to a statutory public consultation. |   |   |  |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Strategic asset management can be defined as the activity of aligning property assets with the strategic aims and direction of the organisation and adding both financial and non-financial value to the organisation as a result.
- 4.2 A well developed Strategic Asset Plan, when subsequently implemented effectively can, bridge the gap between the corporate vision and the asset portfolio, identify and mitigate risks, aid decision making, prioritise capital, and support transition to low carbon.
- 4.3 The Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) runs in alignment with the Council Strategy, and the document attached to this report is a 2022 annual refresh of the document 2019 – 2023. In March of 2023 a refreshed SAP will be produced for the period 2024 – 2028.
- 4.4 The Strategic Asset Plan is formed from three distinct sections:
- (a) *Asset Management Policy:* High level guiding principles that set out the role of property assets in an organisation.
  - (b) *Asset Management Strategy:* Covers the contextual factors regarding the estate and key issues to be addressed, as well as the process to be adopted to achieve the policy objectives
  - (c) *Asset Management Action Plan:* The action plan is intended to provide clear actions that will be implemented over the short term as part of delivering the asset management strategy.
- 4.5 The Strategic Asset Plan has been produced in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines contained in:
- (a) Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Strategic public sector property asset management – 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, September 2021;
  - (b) The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA), Strategic Property Asset Management Framework – August 2018.
- 4.6 During the refresh of the SAP in 2021 feedback was received from Corporate Board. From this feedback, CIPFA was commissioned to review the 2021 SAP document and make recommendations for amendment and improvement. The CIPFA recommendations are reflected in this proposed 2022 refresh of the SAP document.



## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 Strategic asset management can be defined as the activity of aligning property assets with the strategic aims and direction of the organisation and adding both financial and non-financial value to the organisation as a result.
- 5.2 A well developed Strategic Asset Plan, when subsequently implemented effectively can:
- bridge the gap between the corporate vision and the asset portfolio;
  - act as a risk management tool by identifying key asset-related risks and strategies to mitigate those risks;
  - ensure rational decisions are made by requiring options to be appraised against predetermined criteria (aligned to corporate goals);
  - prioritise capital by targeting investment where it matters most;
  - create a context for operational asset management by highlighting strategies for particular assets from 'retain as is' through to 'dispose of in the short term';
  - support the transition to a low carbon economy;
  - break down barriers between the organisation and its customers and service users by providing the optimum number and location of physical access points.

- 5.3 The Strategic Asset Plan is formed from three distinct sections:

- Asset Management Policy

High level guiding principles that set out the role of property assets in an organisation. The asset management policies are consistent with corporate objectives and supporting strategies and plans.

The key activities and behaviours of the council's Asset Management Policy are:

- To plan and manage our property and land assets as a corporate resource to ensure they support our services to the people of West Berkshire;
- To ensure our estate benefits the operational services by providing properties which are fit for purpose for both the current service needs and planned future needs;
- The efficient and effective management and maintenance of our properties to optimise operational use, financial return or commercial opportunities (including through rationalisation or disposal of assets);
- To use land and buildings to enable the success of complementary council strategies. This includes the objectives of economic development, housing, and environmental strategies;
- To promote joint working with public sector and private sector partners and stakeholders where it will benefit service delivery or secure efficiencies.

(b) Asset Management Strategy

Covers the contextual factors regarding the estate and key issues to be addressed, as well as the process to be adopted to achieve the policy objectives.

Key sections for the Asset Management Strategy are:

- Governance;
- Corporate Landlord Approach;
- Challenging our assets;
- Measuring our Performance;
- Maintaining our Assets;
- Working with Partners;
- Engaging with our Communities;
- Supporting our Service Areas;
- Risks and challenges.

(c) Asset Management Action Plan

The action plan is intended to provide clear actions that will be implemented over the short term as part of delivering the asset management strategy.

The action plan is reviewed annually and runs for the same period of the Strategic Asset Plan. The refresh of the SAP for 2022 shows the updated action plan for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

The Asset Management Action Plan shows actions in the following categories:

- Strategic;
- Operational;
- Service Improvement.

**Background**

5.4 To manage the council's estate effectively, there is a need to adopt a strategic approach to asset management. The principles of this approach are expressed in a formal Strategic Asset Management document.

5.5 The Strategic Asset Plan has been produced in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines contained in:

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Strategic public sector property asset management – 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, September 2021;
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA), Strategic Property Asset Management Framework – August 2018.

## Strategic Asset Plan

- 5.6 The Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) runs in alignment with the Council Strategy, and the document attached to this report is a 2022 annual refresh of the document 2019 – 2023. In March of 2023 a refreshed SAP will be produced for the period 2024 – 2028.
- 5.7 During the refresh of the SAP in 2021 feedback was received from Corporate Board. From this feedback, CIPFA was commissioned to review the 2021 SAP document and make recommendations for amendment and improvement. The CIPFA recommendations are reflected in the proposed 2022 refresh of the SAP document.

## Proposals

- 5.8 The Strategic Asset Plan acts as a key document to direct and guide the organisation in the management of its estate.
- 5.9 This report and the Strategic Asset Plan 2019 – 2023 (attached as an appendix) has been refreshed for 2022 and is presented for approval.

## 6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The organisation could progress under the ‘do nothing’ option, without a formal Strategic Asset Plan (SAP). This is not recommended, as the SAP lays out the manner in which the organisation can adopt best practice in managing its estate.
- 6.2 Alternative option is for the SAP to act as an annex to the Capital Strategy, which has been adopted in the past. It is important that the SAP as a document stand in its own right and so appending to another strategy is not recommended.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Strategic Asset Plan is a document which conveys the framework and activities within which West Berkshire Council can ensure it follows best practice in the management of its estate.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the Executive approve the Strategic Asset Plan.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – stage 1
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection – Impact Assessment - stage 1
- 8.3 Appendix C – Strategic Asset Plan

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### Corporate Board’s recommendation

Approved to progress to Operations Board

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**Background Papers:**

Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) – attached to this report as an appendix.

**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: Richard Turner  
 Job Title: Property Services Manager  
 Tel No: 01635 503653  
 E-mail: [Richard.Turner@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.Turner@westberks.gov.uk)

**Document Control**

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

**Change History**

| Version | Date | Description | Change ID |
|---------|------|-------------|-----------|
| 1       |      |             |           |
| 2       |      |             |           |

## Appendix A

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

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>   | To approve the Strategic Asset Plan  |
| <b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>   | No specific relevant legislation   |
| <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><br><b>If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation</b> |
| <b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>   | Richard Turner   |
| <b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>   | Finance & Property/Resources   |
| <b>Name of assessor:</b>  | Richard Turner   |
| <b>Date of assessment:</b>  | 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2022  |
| <b>Version and release date (if applicable):</b>  | n/a  |

| Is this a .... ? |   | Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ? |   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Policy</b>    | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>New or proposed</b>                              | Yes <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Function</b>  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Is changing</b>                                  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Service</b>   | 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>   | To create a formal and structured approach to asset management.  |
| <b>Objectives:</b>   | To receive approval of the Strategic Asset Plan                  |
| <b>Outcomes:</b>   | To manage the council's assets in accordance with best practice. |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Benefits:</b> | That assets are aligned with service provision and used in the most effective and efficient manner. |
|------------------|---|

**(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                            | Nil impact                |                             |
| Disability                     | Nil impact                |                             |
| Gender Reassignment            | Nil impact                |                             |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Nil impact                |                             |
| Pregnancy and Maternity        | Nil impact                |                             |
| Race                           | Nil impact                |                             |
| Religion or Belief             | Nil impact                |                             |
| Sex                            | Nil impact                |                             |
| Sexual Orientation             | Nil impact                |                             |

**Further Comments:**

**(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"/> |
|--|---|

**Please provide an explanation for your answer:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <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"/> |
|---|---|

**Please provide an explanation for your answer:**

**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 EqIA 2.**

If an EqIA 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 EqIA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

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

**Name:** Richard Turner

**Date:** 13 April 2022

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



## Appendix B

### Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

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

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

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Directorate:             | Resources                   |
| Service:                 | Finance and Property        |
| Team:                    | Property Services           |
| Lead Officer:            | Richard Turner              |
| Title of Project/System: | Strategic Asset Plan        |
| Date of Assessment:      | 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 |

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

|   | Yes                      | No                                  |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</b></p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “ data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><b>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</b></p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><b>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</b></p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><b>Will any decisions be automated?</b></p> <p><i>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</i></p>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

|  | Yes                      | No                                  |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p> |                          |                                     |

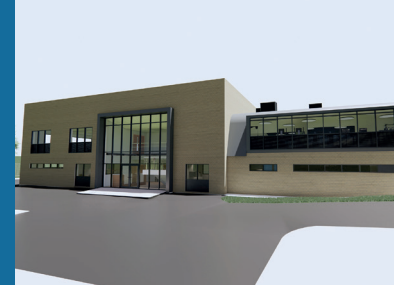
If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

**Strategic Asset Plan**

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# Strategic Asset Plan 2019 – 2023 (revised 2022)

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# Foreword

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West Berkshire Council has a significant property portfolio which either contributes directly with the delivery of its services (such as libraries, schools, and care homes) or indirectly (such as corporate offices, depots, and investment properties) and contributes to the vision, themes and priorities of the Council Strategy 2019 to 2023 (refreshed 2021).

It is vital that the Council assets are utilised to their optimum capability, both in delivering quality services and in economic terms. This is especially so given that properties are high value and high cost resources.

This Asset Management Strategy seeks to offer a coordinated approach to property and land asset management, to ensure West Berkshire Council continues to properly manage the property portfolio, enabling it to direct capital funding to the right places, whilst embracing new asset strategies and opportunities available to us.

To enable the property assets to work most effectively, West Berkshire Council is pursuing a number of opportunities, working with other public sector organisations. Through the 'One Public Estate' forum we are working with partners including other Berkshire unitary authorities, the Fire Brigade, Police and NHS Estates to develop common asset benefits. We are also seeking opportunities to develop affordable housing by working jointly with Sovereign Housing Association in a Joint Venture.

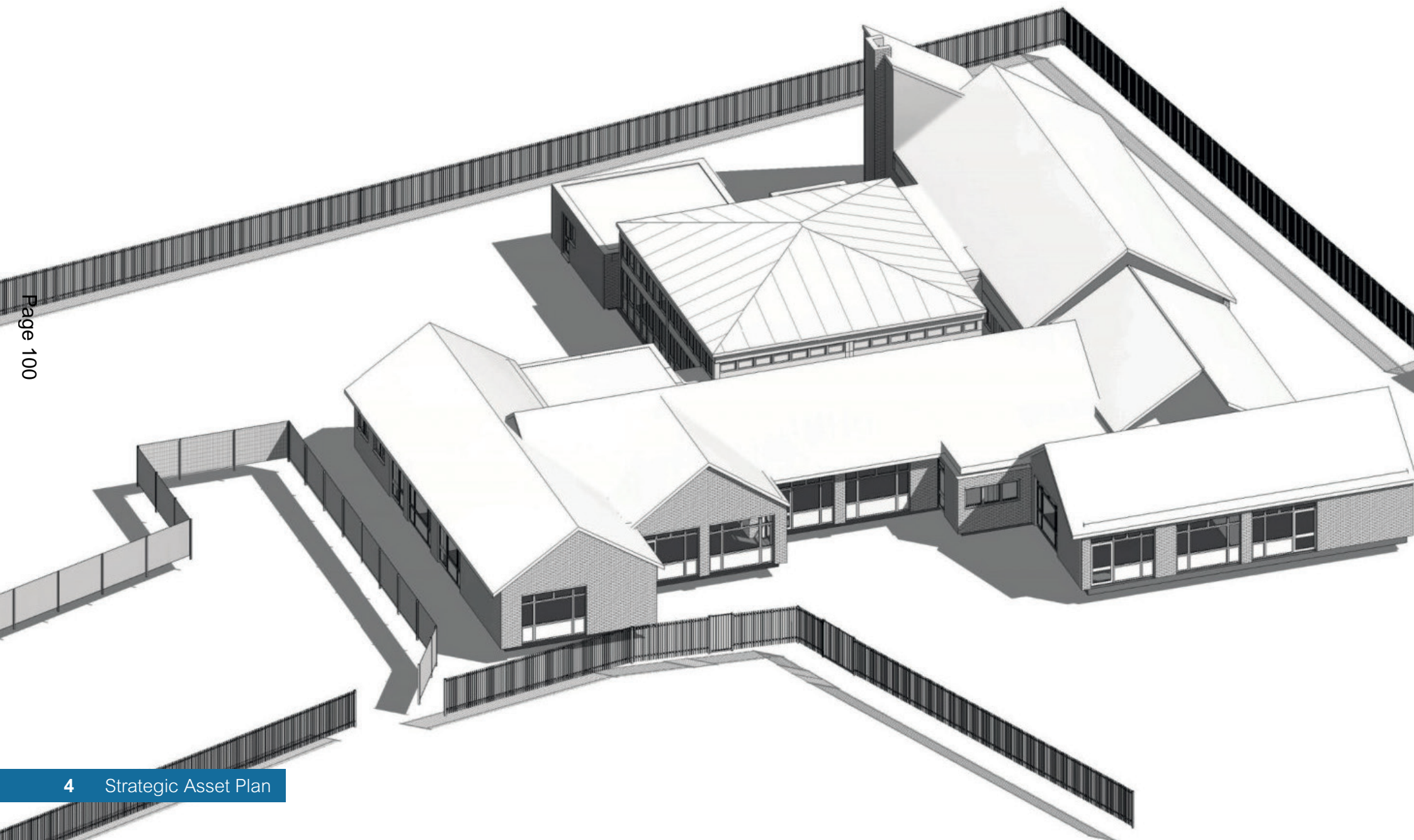
Additionally the council is pursuing the potential for wider asset opportunities which align with other council strategies including the Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030, and Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036.

This Asset Management Strategy and the asset plans and actions conducted through it will contribute to the Council's resilience, its working relationship with other partners, and its service delivery.



**Councillor Ross Mackinnon**  
*Executive Portfolio Holder for Finance &  
Economic Development.*







# Asset Management Policy

2019-2023 (revised 2022)

# Introduction

---

West Berkshire Council holds a large and diverse portfolio of land and building assets, which either contributes directly with the delivery of its services (such as libraries, schools, and care homes) or indirectly (such as corporate offices, depots, and investment properties) and contributes to the vision, themes and priorities of the Council Strategy 2019 to 2023.

The council owns 599 land and building assets covering a total of over 890 hectares of land, or equivalent to over 1,200 football pitches.

This Asset Management Strategy seeks to offer a coordinated approach to property and land asset management, to ensure West Berkshire Council continues to properly manage the property portfolio, enabling it to direct capital funding to the right places, whilst embracing new asset strategies and opportunities available to us.

A key element of achieving our goals and objectives includes efficient and effective use of our land and buildings. To support this the council's Strategic Asset Management process has three elements:

- An Asset Management Policy
- An Asset Management Strategy
- An Asset Management Action Plan

This is a suite of living documents divided into three parts, expressing different aspects of strategic asset management of the council's assets. Some elements will remain reasonably constant (such as the Asset Management Policy) and only require periodic review, whereas the working Action Plan will be adapted on a more regular basis to ensure we manage our assets and capital programmes within it.

Adopting this structure will ensure that we manage the council's assets in an efficient and effective manner, giving regard to operational requirements and the objectives of other key council strategies, such as the Council Strategy, Environment Strategy and Housing Strategy.

# Asset Management Policy

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This Asset Management Policy establishes the clear principles by which West Berkshire Council will manage its land and buildings. It supports the delivery of the Council's Strategy 2019-2023 with its core vision, overarching values, themes and priorities. The Asset Management Policy will be reviewed in alignment with the full review of the Council Strategy, but will be assessed annually to ensure still relevant.

| 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| To plan and manage our property and land assets as a corporate resource to ensure they support our services to the people of West Berkshire | To ensure our estate benefits the operational services by providing properties which are fit for purpose for both the current service needs and planned future needs | The efficient and effective management and maintenance of our properties to optimise operational use, financial return or commercial opportunities (including through rationalisation or disposal of assets) | To use land and buildings to enable the success of complementary council strategies. This includes the objectives of economic development, housing, and environmental strategies | To promote joint working with public sector and private sector partners and stakeholders where it will benefit service delivery or secure efficiencies. |

# Activities and Behaviours

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To support these key principles there are a number of activities, commitments and behaviours which in turn drive the Action Plan. These describe the council's commitment to the management of its assets to derive best outcome for the portfolio and are described below.

## 1 To plan and manage our property and land assets as a corporate resource to ensure they support our services to the people of West Berkshire

- Clear corporate decision making and governance on property matters
- Effective property budget management to prioritise allocation and investment
- Integration of property matters with other objectives and resources
- Balance between corporate priorities with service priorities
- Efficient management of a prioritised capital programme and delivery of capital projects
- Ensure property information is accurate and up to date
- To align asset management and planning with the West Berkshire Vision 2036.

## 2 To ensure our estate benefits the operational services by providing properties which are fit for purpose for both the current service needs and planned future needs

- Ensure properties are suitable and sufficient for service delivery
- Ensure the property is safe, secure and meets statutory health and safety compliance for its intended purpose
- To create a flexible workspace to respond to future service need
- Understand the services longer term needs in order to plan for the future and how the estate can contribute
- Work with community and other organisations to optimise use of council assets



### 3 The efficient and effective management and maintenance of our properties to optimise operational use, financial return or commercial opportunities (including through rationalisation or disposal of assets)

- Management and systems are in place to ensure our properties are properly maintained and managed
- To explore the potential for a Corporate Landlord Model to further improve management and efficiency of the estate
- We will carry out condition surveys across the estate to enable prioritised, planned capital maintenance investment
- Challenge the current use of our assets and identify opportunities for co-location, investment, rationalisation or disposal
- To optimise returns on commercial rents
- To challenge the cost of the estate through occupancy and utilisation efficiency
- Reduce energy and water consumption, as well as reducing CO2 to align with the Environment Strategy 2020-2030

### 4 To use land and buildings to enable the success of complementary council strategies. This includes the objectives of economic development, housing, and environmental strategies

- Work across the services to align the management of council buildings and land with the objectives of wider strategies
- To help promote the development of affordable housing in the district
- Reduce energy and water consumption, as well as reducing CO2 to align with the Environment Strategy 2020-2030
- To support town centre master planning and place planning

### 5 To promote joint working with public sector and private sector partners and stakeholders where it will benefit service delivery or secure efficiencies

- To work with other organisations to promote co-location and joint working
- As a partner in the Berkshire One Public Estate Group to continue to seek joint public sector opportunities
- To seek opportunity for external funding grants, and investment in our estate

# Priorities and Direction

The Strategic Asset Management Plan supports the delivery of the Council Strategy 2019 – 2023 (refreshed 2021) and its vision, theme and priorities.

Themes:

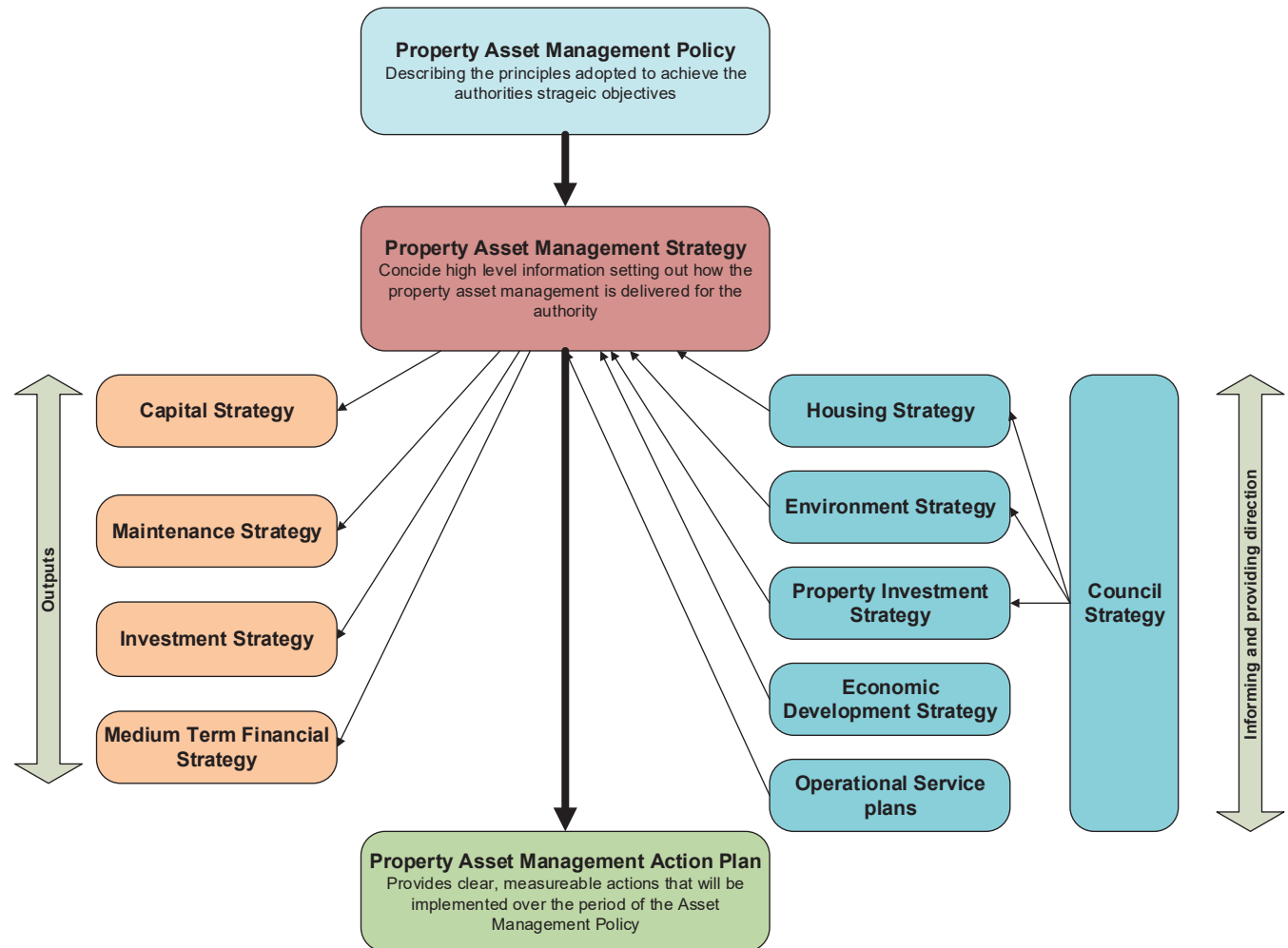
- Sustainable and Innovative Together
- Protected and Cared for
- Open for Business
- Great Place

Driven by these themes, the approach to asset management ensures the estate contributes to achieving these themes and the best use of our buildings and land. This includes investment through our capital programme, new building developments and regeneration whilst supporting our operational services with fit for purpose, safe and suitable buildings.

The Strategic Asset Management Plan is further informed through other council strategies including Economic Development, Environment, Housing and service plans.

This in turn helps to drive investment in our buildings and land in the council's investment, capital and maintenance strategies as well as influencing elements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

## Strategic Asset Management framework







Page



# Asset Management Strategy 2019-2023 (revised 2022)





# The Estate

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West Berkshire Council owns a substantial and diverse property and land estate, spread across urban and rural locations. Properties are held primarily for the delivery of frontline public services or generally to support the Council's Strategy both directly and indirectly.

The portfolio includes schools, family hubs, libraries, care homes, museum, leisure centres and waste recycling centres. Commercial property let to other organisations and farms let to tenant farmers, generate revenue income which directly contributes to the Council's service delivery.

The council currently operates from four key corporate offices, totalling 9,010 sq.m. (97,000 sq. ft.) The council is currently reviewing its structure for its office use with a view to rationalising.

A significant amount of the land assets are registered as common land, public open space or are let to other tiers of local government such as Town and Parish Councils.

The affordable housing stock in West Berkshire is primarily held by Housing Associations, mainly Sovereign Housing Association, but West Berkshire Council retains ownership of residential emergency accommodation and do it yourself shared ownership (DIYSO) properties as well as caretakers properties for its schools.

The following statistics illustrate the scale and nature of the Council's property portfolio, as at the financial year ending 31st March 2021:

Total number of properties/land assets **599**

Land totalling **892** hectares (excluding highways)

Buildings with a total floor area of **293,366 sq.m. (3,158,000 sq. ft.)**

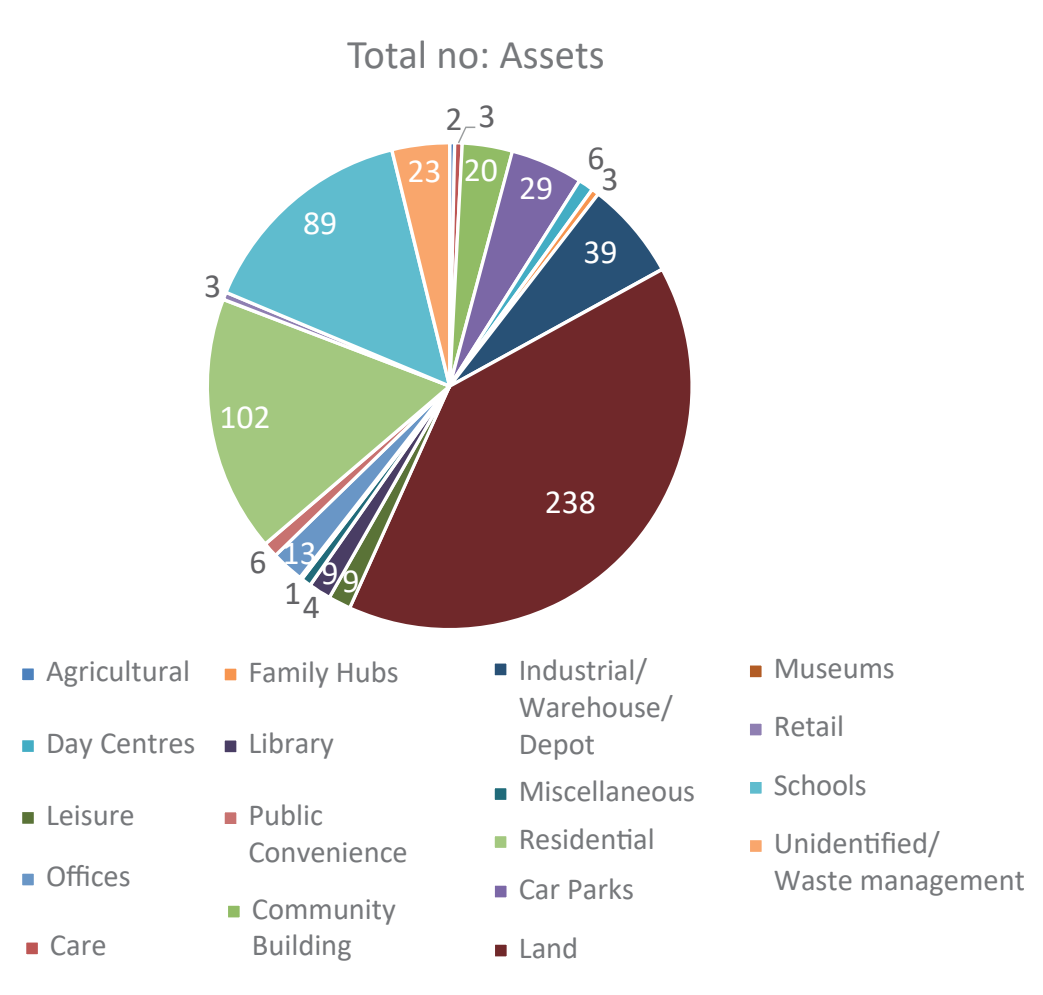
Total current asset value of **£410m**

Total annual rental income of **£3.8m**

Planned capital budgets 2022/23 to 2026/27 of **£220m**

| Asset type                    | Number of assets |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Agriculture                   | 2                |
| Care homes                    | 3                |
| Community buildings           | 20               |
| Car parks                     | 29               |
| Day Centres                   | 6                |
| Family hubs                   | 3                |
| Industrial/warehouse          | 39               |
| Land                          | 238*             |
| Leisure                       | 9                |
| Libraries                     | 9                |
| Miscellaneous                 | 4                |
| Museums                       | 1                |
| Offices                       | 13               |
| Public convenience            | 6                |
| Residential                   | 102              |
| Retail                        | 3                |
| Schools                       | 89               |
| Unidentified/Waste management | 23               |

\*Land refers to assets which are not directly associated with an operational service, such as common land, public open space and playing fields'



# Governance

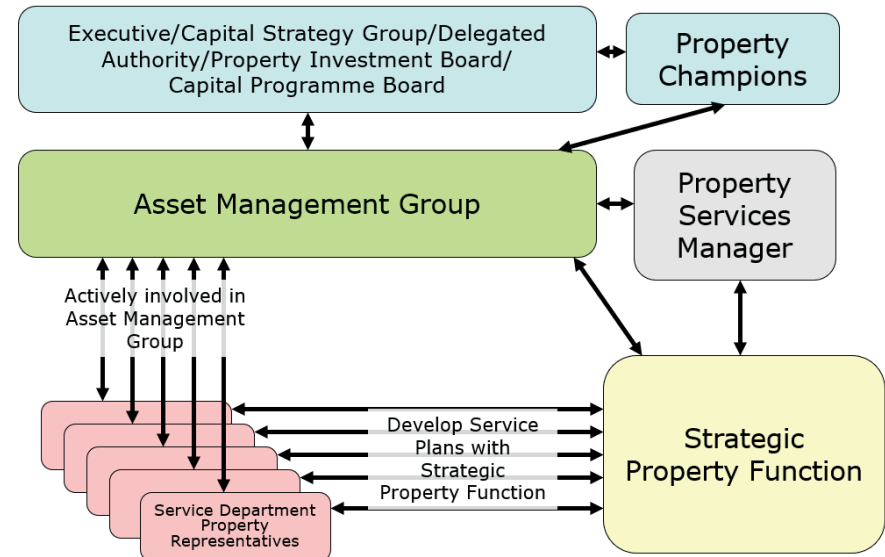
The council has robust governance to ensure decisions made regarding its estate are based on sound direction and transparency in accordance with the council's constitution.

The Asset Management Group (AMG) is the key forum on matters related to the management of the Council's assets and is formed from Officers from across the organisation and elected Executive Members. AMG considers and offers recommendations to the Council in its formal decision making.

Summary activities of AMG are:

- To conduct the asset challenge process;
- To establish surplus assets and recommend actions;
- To receive Service Plans and proposals from them;
- To monitor property related proposals coming from related strategies (eg - environment, housing)

AMG forms the hub for dealing with property matters as shown in the following diagram:



The Asset Management Group is a subordinate group to the Capital Strategy Group (CSG). CSG ensures the Council's capital strategy is being well managed and that the key objectives of the capital strategy are being met.

# Corporate Landlord Approach

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We need to ensure our land and buildings are managed to offer the best and most efficient use of the estate and decisions made support the priorities and objectives of the council.

The manner in which the council manages its estate has been created over a number of decades through historical changes and is currently one of a model where responsibility is devolved out to the services.

The council is progressing toward a Corporate Landlord Model, where responsibility for the management of the estate and its maintenance is transferred from service areas into the corporate centre. This allows the services to concentrate on the planning and delivery of services.

Adopting a Corporate Landlord Model is expected to offer benefits which include:

- The ability to prioritise maintenance across the estate;
- The ability to make evidenced based decisions as all property data is held centrally;
- The ability to deliver a robust asset challenge process;
- The ability to think and act strategically;
- The adoption of service level agreements where services become the clients;
- The ability for services to concentrate their efforts on core service delivery;
- To deliver improved outcomes for value for money, financial efficiencies, and income generation.

In seeking to adopt a Corporate Landlord Model the activities which will be included within this model are:

- Strategic Asset Management
- Estates Management
- Facilities Management
- Statutory Compliance (health & safety)
- Capital Projects
- Maintenance

The Corporate Landlord's responsibility extends further to the acquisition, development and disposal of land and buildings. The Corporate Landlord is responsible for asset planning, review, feasibility and options appraisal accounting for the needs of all service areas, but most importantly, making decisions based on overall corporate priorities.

# Challenging our Assets

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In achieving the outcomes expected of the Asset Management Strategy and the corporate objectives it helps deliver, there are a number of Council priorities that drive the best use of a given asset.

When deciding on the best approach for any asset, the following priorities exist:

- Retain for the operational use of a Service;
- Retain for Corporate Services;
- Re-assign/redevelop for purposes of revenue income;
- Allocate for redevelopment of affordable housing (including through available Joint Venture housing agreements);
- Transfer the asset (community transfer or devolution);
- Dispose of for capital receipt.

To ensure the estate is being managed most effectively, the process of reviewing the estate and its assets is a continuous one, by way of 'asset challenge'.

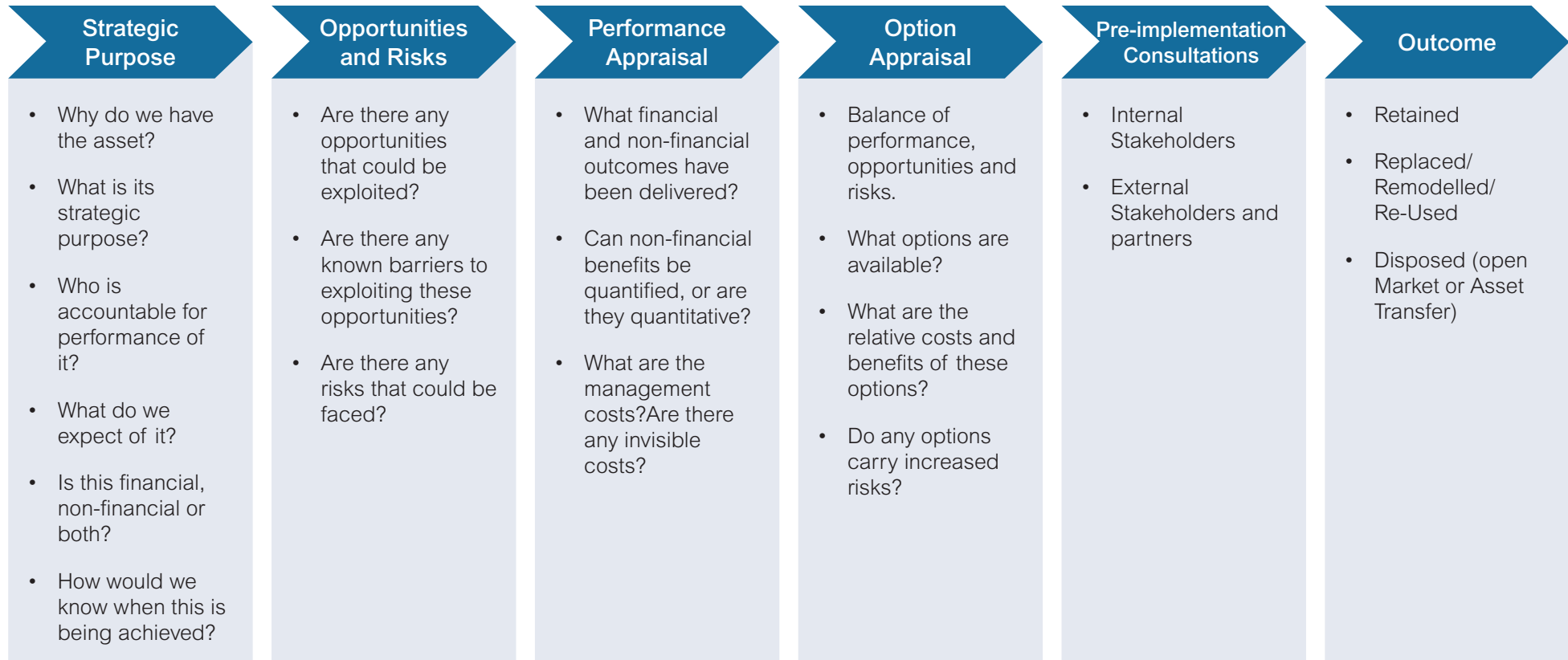
Reviewing the estate is driven by a number of factors:

1. The up to date provision of Operational Service Plans;
2. The outcomes from activities such as One Public Estate and Joint ventures;
3. The outcomes of asset transfers through the devolution process;
4. Changes in legislation relevant to assets.

In addition in conducting a challenge of the estate the following key performance criteria are a significant consideration:

- The cost performance of the building (revenue and capital) including benchmarking;
- Sufficiency of the space;
- Suitability of the space

To do this, each asset is assessed using a step-by-step challenge process, ensuring that every asset has been fundamentally tested against a common set of criteria. Our outline challenge process is set out below:



# Measuring our Performance

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To manage our assets effectively and efficiently we need to know how they are performing.

The performance of a building is measured against a set of criteria:

- Revenue costs (occupancy, building operations);
- Capital expenditure;
- Statutory Compliance and accessibility;
- Space utilisation;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Functional suitability;
- Customer satisfaction.

As well as the quantitative measures, the review will also give consideration to whether the asset is achieving the objectives of the Service, the customer, and operational demands.

In addition to internal performance monitoring, the council also appoints external providers for some services, particularly the management of its commercial property portfolio. These contracts are performance measured.

Within the quarterly performance monitoring of the council the following Key Performance Indicators exist related to the council's buildings and land:

- Percentage of capital projects completed on the council's Education Capital Maintenance Programme;
- Percentage of capital projects progressing to programme;
- Completion of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme projects;
- Meeting income targets for commercial properties;
- Review council assets through asset challenge;
- Implement the move to a Corporate Landlord Model.

With an intended progression to adopting a Corporate Landlord Model it is expected that the following performance measures will also be considered:

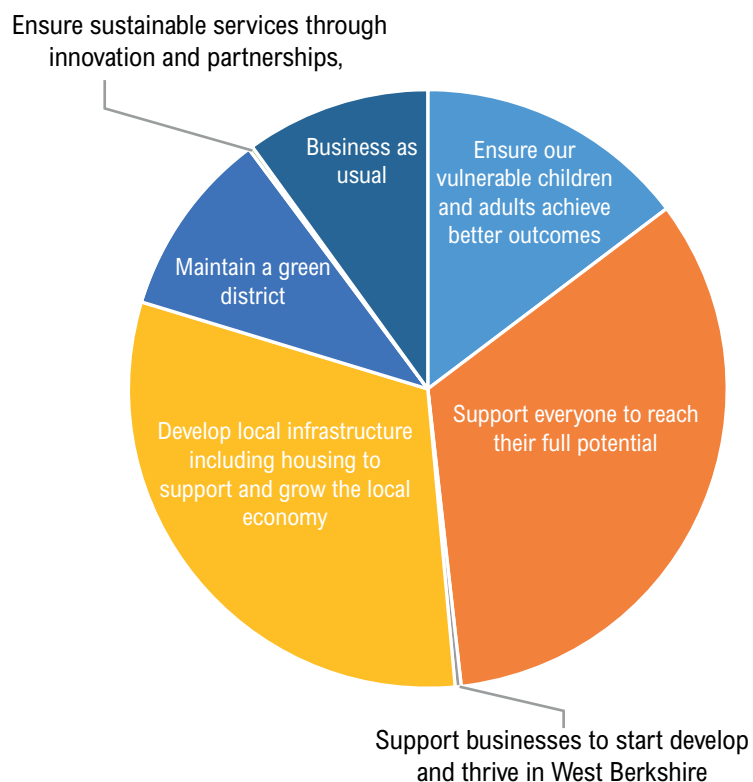
- Value of the Estate;
- Maintenance and Lifecycle costs;
- Occupancy and utilisation rates;
- Improvement in related financial targets;
- Revenue expenditure on property.

# The Capital Programme

West Berkshire Council has a significant capital programme with planned capital expenditure over the next five years of £220m, with £66m for financial year 2022/23 alone.

£98m of this total is allocated to the People Directorate, principally for Education Services for works at schools but also Communities and Wellbeing, Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care.

The capital programme contributes to achieving the priorities of the Council Strategy and it splits as follows across these priorities:



£101m of this total is allocated to the Place Directorate principally for highways related projects.

£21m of this total is allocated to the Resources Directorate for mainly ICT/technology based projects and Property Services.

A significant proportion of the capital projects within the capital programme are managed by key internal teams such as ICT, Highways and Property Services.

Over the period of this Asset Management Plan 2019 – 2023 a number of key capital investments and projects have successfully completed:

- Theale Primary School
- Highwood Copse Primary School
- Flood alleviation works
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Highways improvements and maintenance



# Maintaining our Assets

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It is important that we look after our assets and ensure they are safe and fit for purpose. Maintenance and statutory compliance for our buildings is a significant financial commitment for the council. It is important that both revenue and capital funding is prioritised to the areas of most need.

Prioritising maintenance in our buildings is conducted through a rolling programme of RICS compliant condition surveys which identify maintenance requirements over a ten year period. By strong planning of future revenue and capital planned maintenance works budgets can be spent efficiently and emergency or reactive maintenance reduced.

In the case of schools, the Education Service conducts needs based assessments of sufficiency, suitability and condition. The Education Service continues to be successful in achieving capital grant allocations to address capital maintenance in schools.

Additionally a number of successful bids has resulted in significant condition issues in some schools being addressed through the Priority Schools Building Programme.

Statutory compliance for our buildings is conducted through strong training and guidance coupled with ongoing scrutiny and audit of our sites, as well as quarterly reporting from all Responsible Persons which is scrutinised corporately. With an aspiration towards a Corporate Landlord Model it is expected that statutory compliance be further improved through centralised management and responsibility.

The key aims for building maintenance are:

- To ensure our buildings are safe and secure for the people who use them;
- To allocate and prioritise funding to works and projects to achieve maximum positive impact;
- To invest in planned maintenance to enable a reduction in reactive maintenance offering a balance;
- Achieving efficient and effective procurement of maintenance work

# Working with Partners

The Council has strong links with a number of organisations, both other Berkshire Unitary Authorities through shared services and external organisations, including community groups and charities, all helping to deliver high quality public services.

This partnership approach is being developed to ensure that the public assets owned by West Berkshire Council and wider assets held within Berkshire are being managed effectively.

An example of this within an estates context is working with Sovereign Housing Association in the formation of a Joint Venture for the purposes of bringing forward affordable housing developments in West Berkshire.

The council also works with organisations such as Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust for the management of open spaces.

One Public Estate (OPE) is an established national programme, providing technical support and funding to councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration with the Local Government Association and Government Property Agency.

Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire



OPE partnerships across the country have shown the value of working together across the public sector, taking a strategic approach to asset management. This is encompassed in three core objectives:

1. Creating economic growth (new homes and jobs)
2. Delivering more integrated, customer-focused services
3. Generating efficiencies, through capital receipts and reduced running costs.

West Berkshire Council is working with all of the Berkshire Unitary Authorities as well as Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the NHS.

The Berkshire OPE Group has succeeded in 2020/21 alone to obtain OPE funding of almost £8m. Most recently WBC has won £286,000 of capital funding through the Land Release Fund to help release one of its sites for affordable housing.



# Engaging with our Communities

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West Berkshire Council is working with Community Groups, Parish and Town Councils to help maintain or improve services, which can include best use of property and land assets.

The Council's discretionary powers are now supported by statutory backing, to enable the transfer of its building assets to community groups and town and parish councils.

West Berkshire Council gives consideration to transferring assets through two routes:

## 1. Community Asset Transfer Policy

Community Asset Transfer is the transfer of the Council's land and buildings to community and voluntary organisations, normally on a leasehold arrangement.

## 2. Devolution transfer

A devolution prospectus has been developed by WBC for the devolution of services and assets.

Devolution is about devolving, primarily to Town and Parish Councils, services and assets which the community feel would add value locally.

Devolution does not include statutory services, it is about those services which local communities feel should be delivered at the most appropriate level of government.

As part of the Devolution agenda, a Parish Portal has been developed. This Portal provides Parish and Town Councils with a range of information to support both service and asset transfers.

Since its introduction in 2017, the devolution process has successfully transferred nine services or assets to parish or town councils, and a further six applications are currently being progressed.

These transfers include playing fields, library buildings, and grounds maintenance.

# Supporting our Service Areas

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Public services are delivered through a range of distinct Services, some services which rely on the estate to enable them to deliver their service and others which rely only on the corporate offices.

This strategy will enable the operational services to deliver through maximising the use of assets, in an efficient and economic estate.

Operational Service Plans drive the creation of a Service Asset Management Plan specific to each Service which relies upon the estate to conduct its business.

Examples of key services which rely on the estate are:

**Adult Social Care:** To ensure that everything we do safeguards the vulnerable, promotes learning, independence, improves health and wellbeing and provides support where it is needed to the most vulnerable. This will be delivered by focussing on enabling people to manage their own lives safely, encouraging and supporting people to live at home, enriching peoples lives in a safe setting, ensuring a capable and energised workforce, and ensuring money is spent widely and effectively.

Service assets generally comprise care homes and resource centres.

**Communities and Wellbeing:** The vision for health and wellbeing is to enable communities to live healthy lives and to close the gap between communities that are doing well and those that need help. Overarching principles that drive the strategy includes, to live longer healthier lives, fewer people will die

prematurely, the gap in healthy life expectancy between the most vulnerable and least well off in our district and the rest will be reduced.

Services assets generally comprise leisure centres, playing pitches, libraries, and arts/culture venues such as museums.

**Development and Regulation:** The Service includes Housing as an operational team. Enacted through the Housing Strategy 2020-2036 which sets out West Berkshire Council's strategic housing priorities and details a range of actions that the Council intends to take in partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders to support residents to access good quality housing while preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

This is enacted through a delivery plan which has a number of linked themes including, affordable housing policy, housing allocations policy, empty homes strategy, and gypsy and traveller needs assessment.

Service assets generally comprise emergency accommodation, and a gypsy and traveller site.

**Environment:** The service is formed from traditional highways management, countryside maintenance and waste management and supports the ongoing upkeep of West Berkshires external spaces.

Service assets generally comprise highways depots, public open space, parks, and waste management sites.

# Risks and Challenges

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The delivery of the Asset Strategy supports the objectives of the council and its services. Council services face a number of risks and challenges, as well as challenges faced by the communities it serves.

Through the Strategic Asset Plan and its Action Plan these challenges can be tackled, helping deliver transformational outcomes in support of council priorities.

Challenges faced by the council include:

**Climate change:** The council announced a climate emergency in July of 2019 with an intention to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030 lays out the strategic objectives to deliver the vision for zero carbon.

This Strategic Asset Management Plan will contribute to the actions identified in the Environment Strategy to ensure the built environment is managed and maintained to contribute to successful zero carbon by 2030.

**Housing:** The need for housing, including affordable housing in the south of England, including West Berkshire is acute. Whether reacting to demographic change or growth, or preventing homelessness, housing is a critical topic and one in which West Berkshire Council has an important role to play.

The Housing Strategy 2020 – 2036 communicates how the council will achieve its housing priorities and this Strategic Asset Plan contributes through the potential for use of council owned assets to contribute to the objectives.

**Town centres:** The changing ways in which our communities use our town centres has been further impacted by covid 19. The council has

engaged a multi-disciplinary team to undertake a study into the future use of Newbury Town Centre. A public consultation was conducted during the summer of 2021 and the four thousand comments fed into the study.

**Changes to service delivery:** The council provides a wide variety of core services to the West Berkshire community, whether that be culture, leisure, waste services, adult social care or education.

Each of these services can be directly impacted by changes in delivery need due to increased or changing demand, possibly driven by changes in legislation.

This Strategic Asset Plan will ensure that the effectiveness and suitability of the estate reacts to the changing demands of the services.

**An aging estate:** With a significant estate, formed by a wide variety of different types and ages of buildings, including listed buildings, the condition of our buildings is an important aspect of managing the estate.

This Strategic Asset Plan seeks to ensure funding is prioritised to maintain in the highest need areas and that standards are maintained within our buildings.

**Corporate offices:** The changing working environment created by the Covid19 pandemic has presented opportunity for the council to re-assess working practices in its corporate staff offices.

Carried out through its project 'Timelord 2' this presents opportunity to reshape the council's office requirement.

# Our Forward Plan

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This document outlines the key strategic objectives for the Council's land and buildings for period 2019 – 2023 and has been refreshed for 2022. A new Strategic Asset Management Plan for the period 2024 – 2028 will be produced for release March 2023. The document is reviewed annually to ensure accuracy and currency is maintained.

Our Asset Management Action Plan further describes the specific activities to achieve these objectives, categorised under three key thematic headings of Strategic, Operational and Service Improvement actions. The Asset Management Strategy is refreshed annually, whilst the Asset Management Action Plan will be managed, monitored and updated continuously to report on progress and achievements. This means that the document will be continually changing to reflect achievement of actions and capturing new priorities and initiatives as they are identified.









# Asset Management Action Plan





# Asset Management Action Plan

Note: This Action Plan aligns with the final year of the Strategic Asset Plan 2019 - 2023. Full refresh of the Action Plan for 2024 - 2028 will be produced in 2023.

## Action references

- A: Action Plan**  
- Strategic
- B: Action Plan**  
- Operational
- C: Action Plan**  
- Service Improvement

## Asset Management Principles

1. To plan and manage our property and land assets as a corporate resource to ensure they support our services to the people of West Berkshire
2. To ensure our estate benefits the operational services by providing properties which are fit for purpose for both the current service needs and planned future needs
3. The efficient and effective management and maintenance of our properties to optimise operational use, financial return or commercial opportunities (including through rationalisation or disposal of assets)
4. To use land and buildings to enable the success of complementary council strategies. This includes the objectives of economic development, housing, and environmental strategies
5. To promote joint working with public sector and private sector partners and stakeholders where it will benefit service delivery or secure efficiencies

| Action ref | Action description                     | Asset Management Principles (1-5) | SMART objective   | 2022/23 key milestones   | Accountability            | Resource Implications                   |
|------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|---|
| A1         | Refresh the Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) | 1,2,3,4,5                         | By June 2022 have in place WBC Executive approval for the SAP. Approved SAP uploaded to WBC website.                | 1.Complete format document;<br>2.Present through the WBC corporate cycle;<br>3.Present to WBC Executive. | Asset Management Group    | Internal resource                       |
| A2         | Corporate Landlord Model feasibility   | 1,2,3,4,5                         | By September 2022 to have in place WBC Executive approval of the feasibility stage of becoming a corporate landlord | 1.Complete format document;<br>2.Present through the WBC corporate cycle;<br>3.Present to WBC Executive. | Corporate Programme Board | Internal resource and external resource |

|    |  |           |  |   |                        |   |
|----|--|-----------|--|---|------------------------|---|
| A3 | <b>One Public Estate</b>   | 4,5       | To engage in the activities of the Berkshire One Public Estate Group throughout the year   | To be a key part in strategic decisions related to land and building assets in Berkshire  | Corporate Board        | Internal resource and external resource |
| A4 | <b>Fixed assets valuation programme</b>  | 3         | By August 2022 have completed and submitted asset valuations.  | 1. Procured consultant valuer completed valuations;<br>2. Valuations checked and queries resolved;<br>3. Valuations submitted.  |                        | Internal resource and external resource |
| A5 | <b>Review performance criteria and reporting to Asset Management Group</b>   | 1,2,3,4,5 | By September 2022 to have agreed performance criteria and reporting format.  | 1. Agree reporting criteria with AMG;<br>2. Agree dashboard template format   | Asset Management Group | Internal resource                       |
| A6 | <b>Support Environment Delivery Plan to deliver audits of the Council's building portfolio and a programme to deliver carbon zero for 2030</b> | 4         | To contribute to the data capture of the council's building assets to enable the conclusion of the audit in line with the Environment Delivery Plan                                    | Data both from the council's assets database, site information and surveys  | Environment Group      | Internal resource                       |
| A7 | <b>Complete the 'Asset Challenge' of assets allocated for 2022/23.</b>   | 1,2,3,4,5 | By March 2023 complete the assets challenge of properties held within the estate of:<br>1. Adult Social Care;<br>2. Housing;<br>3. Libraries;<br>4. Car Parks                          | 1. Conclude the creation of Service Asset Plans;<br>2. Conduct assessment of existing use, proposed use, cost assessment;<br>3. Recommend proposals for individual assets.        | Asset Management Group | Internal resource and external resource |
| B1 | <b>Statutory Compliance rolling programme (Fire, Asbestos, Legionella)</b>   | 2         | To complete by March 2023 the annual allocation of fire risk assessments, asbestos management plans, and legionella risk assessment for both schools and non-school council buildings. | 1. Agree list of properties for 2022/23 (from five year rolling programme);<br>2. Appoint specialist surveyors/consultants;<br>3. Issue outcomes to sites and upload to database. | Corporate Board        | Internal resource and external resource |

|    |   |       |   |   |                           |   |
|----|---|-------|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| B2 | <b>Condition surveys</b>                      | 2     | To complete by March 2023 the annual allocation of RICS compliant condition surveys (as part of five year rolling programme across the estate). | 1. Agree list of properties/sites for 2022/23;<br>2. Appoint RICS surveyors;<br>3. Issues outcomes to sites and upload to database.   | Capital Strategy Group    | Internal resource and external resource |
| B3 | <b>Schools capital programme</b>              | 1,2,3 | By March 2023 to manage individual capital projects, both at schools and non-school sites to the individual project programmes.                 | Each project will progress to agreed RIBA stages within the financial year 2022/23.   | Capital Strategy Group    | Internal resource and external resource |
| B4 | <b>Schools capital maintenance programme</b>  | 1,2,3 | By March 2023 to have completed the construction of all capital maintenance projects allocated for 2022/23.                                     | Each project will progress to agreed RIBA stages within the financial year 2022/23.   | Capital Strategy Group    | Internal resource and external resource |
| B5 | <b>Commercial estate management</b>           | 1,3   | Throughout 2022/23 to maximise occupancy and income through timely lease renewals, rent reviews, service charges and management of debt.        | 1. To conclude full letting of 4 Sector;<br>2. Review leases falling in 22/23;<br>3. Work with agents and tenants to overcome any debt issues that arise;<br>4. Quarterly reporting to Property Investment Board. | Property Investment Board | Internal resource and external resource |
| B6 | <b>Facilities Management reporting system</b> | 2,3   | By March 2023 to present proposal for improved system of receiving Facilities tasks and monitoring progress (corporate offices).                | 1. Establish criteria/need;<br>2. Present solution including any IT system requirement;<br>3. Implement system.   | Corporate Board           | Internal resource and external resource |

|    |   |         |  |   |                        |   |
|----|---|---------|--|---|------------------------|---|
| B7 | <b>Asset strategy for corporate offices</b>                           | 1,2,3   | By September 2022 to present and have approval for the future of any surplus assets coming from the council's Timelord 2 project (rationalisation of working practices). | 1. Complete feasibility of recommended preferred option;<br>2. Present options to Executive;<br>3. Implement preferred option.                            | Executive              | Internal resource and external resource |
| B8 | <b>Internal Audit - Asset Management</b>                              | 2,3,4   | By March 2023 to have successfully complied with and completed the outstanding actions within the internal audit action plan.  | 1. Conclude individual actions;<br>2. Record and retain systems and guidance for long term use;<br>3. Report and close at AMG.                            | Asset Management Group | Internal resource                       |
| C1 | <b>Produce Service Asset Management Plans for identified services</b> | 1,2,3   | "By March 2023 to have in place Service Asset Management Plans for:<br>1. Adult Social Care;<br>2. Housing;<br>3. Libraries;<br>4. Car Parks."                           | 1. Reviews by the services of the operational plans for the provision of services;<br>3. Produce formal SAMP document<br>2. Agree operational objectives; | Asset Management Group | Internal resource                       |
| C2 | <b>Conclude the disposal of Phoenix and Chestnut Walk sites</b>       | 1,3,4,5 | To receive anticipated offer from housing Joint Venture, assess valuation and report options and proposal to WBC Executive for decision on disposal.                     | 1. Receive offer from JV;<br>2. Conduct s.123 assessment of land value;<br>3. Report to WBC Executive;<br>4. Complete disposal of sites/land.             | Executive              | Internal resource and external resource |
| C3 | <b>Land at Parsons Down School</b>                                    | 1,3,4,5 | By December 2022 complete proposals for the future plans for surplus land at Parsons Down School, Thatcham.  | 1. Feasibility of the options;<br>2. Agree preferred option.  | Asset Management Group | Internal resource and external resource |

|    |   |         |  |   |                        |   |
|----|---|---------|--|---|------------------------|---|
| C4 | <b>Adult Social Care - care home feasibility</b>  | 1,2,3,4 | Complete by March 2023 feasibility study for the provision of a new care home for West Berkshire and land acquisition options. | 1. Establish operational criteria/business case;<br>2. Appoint specialist consultants and carry out feasibility study;<br>3. Conduct site search. | Asset Management Group | Internal resource and external resource |
| C5 | <b>Four Houses Corner - site development</b>  | 1,2,3,4 | Complete, to revised agreed programme the construction stage of the Four Houses Corner site refurbishment.                     | 1. Approval of revised budget;<br>2. Complete design and procure contractor;<br>3. Complete construction  | Housing Board          | Internal resource and external resource |
| C6 | <b>Commence construction stage of Theale SEMH project</b>                                 | 1,2,3,4 | Commence construction by November 2022 of the new SEMH provision.  | 1. Complete detailed design;<br>2. Procure contractor;<br>3. Complete construction.   | Capital Strategy Group | Internal resource and external resource |
| C7 | <b>Complete construction stage of the I-College project, Badgers Hill.</b>                | 1,2,3,4 | Complete construction by March 2023 of the replacement building at Badgers Hill, Calcot.                                       | 1. Appoint contractor and complete construction stage.  | Capital Strategy Group | Internal resource and external resource |
| C8 | <b>Complete construction stage of Downlands Sports Centre, The Downs School, Compton.</b> | 1,2,3,4 | Complete construction by March 2023 of the rebuild of the sports hall building.  | 1. Complete detailed design;<br>2. Procure contractor;<br>3. Complete construction.   | Capital Strategy Group | Internal resource and external resource |

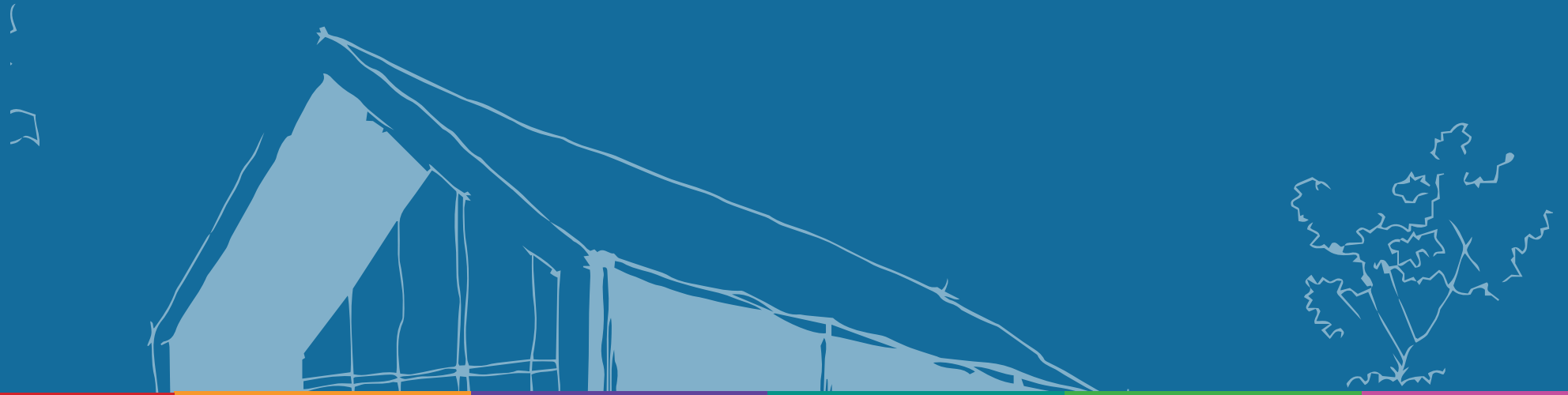
# Appendix to the Strategic Asset Plan

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## Residents' Survey 2021 – Key Findings

|                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Executive                |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 June 2022              |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>             | Councillor Lynne Doherty |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Catalin Bogos            |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | EX4200                   |

### 1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the West Berkshire Resident's Survey 2021.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the positive feedback provided by residents about satisfaction with the area and the Council; service improvement and prioritisation; communication and engagement; safety and feeling that they belong to the local area.
- 2.2 To note that the results of the survey will be used to inform the decisions about what will be prioritised in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 and to identify further communication and engagement activities with residents, especially from the groups with lower response rates to the survey. In addition, a number of actions are already being taken in response to the feedback received.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication            | Commentary  |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. However, the residents' feedback will inform the Council Strategy and the Medium Terms Financial Strategy. The approval of these strategies will highlight any financial implications. |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | none  |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | none  |

|  |  |                |                 |   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|---|
| <b>Risk Management:</b>  | none   |                |                 |   |
| <b>Property:</b>   | none   |                |                 |   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | The findings of the residents' survey will inform a new Council Strategy for the period 2023 – 2027. |                |                 |   |
|  | <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?               | Y  |                |                 | The survey was delivered based on a methodology to ensure the findings are representative for the District's population.  |
| <b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | Y  |                |                 | As the results of the survey will inform the priorities of the new Council Strategy, this will create the premises for positive impact on the lives of all residents in West Berkshire. |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   | Y  |                |                 | Positive environmental impact is expected as a result of the residents' views informing the new Council Strategy.   |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  | Y  |                |                 | Positive health impact is expected as a result of the residents' views informing the new Council Strategy.  |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>   |  | Y              |                 | There is no specific direct ICT impact as a result of this report.  |

|                                     |  |   |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>     | Y  |   |  | The views of the residents highlight insights that will be considered as part of the digitisation agenda.  |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b> | Y  |   |  | The residents' survey was delivered as part of the current Council Strategy commitment to enhance communication and engagement with our residents to develop a better understanding of their needs. The results will inform the re-write of the Council Strategy to address residents' needs during 2023 - 2027. |
| <b>Core Business:</b>               | Y  |   |  | The results of the survey reflect residents' feedback on Council's core business.  |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |  | Y |  | A Privacy Notice accompanied the residents' survey, detailing how data will be collected, processed and stored, and ensuring residents' anonymity in relation to the feedback they have provided.  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | A representative sample of West Berkshire's residents have been asked to complete a paper or online version of the questionnaire. This paper presents the findings of this consultation exercise conducted based on a methodology which is best practice in the public sector. |   |  |  |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This paper presents the results of the Residents' Survey 2021. This survey was delivered as a result of a number of planned actions to enhance the Council's approach to interacting with West Berkshire residents. These actions, including the survey, are detailed in the Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy. Budget was allocated from Covid recovery funding to be able to fund the delivery of the survey and follow up residents' engagement (focus groups and interviews).
- 4.2 West Berkshire Council commissioned M E L Research, a social research and behavioural insight company, to carry out a representative residents' survey. The contract was awarded following the Council's procurement process. As part of this, invitation to submit quotations through the Council's In-Tend procurement portal have been sent to all the organisations registered on the Local Government Association's (LGA) website as potential suppliers of residents' survey services.
- 4.3 The survey methodology followed the LGA's 'Are You Being Served' guidance, aiming to ensure consistency and comparability of similar surveys conducted by other local

authorities. In addition, the LGA conducts a telephone survey nationally covering the same questions. Whilst the methodology for the national survey is different, the results are included in this report for context.

4.4 As per the LGA methodology, all residents aged 16+ had the same chance of being invited to take part in the Residents' Survey. A total of 5,000 addresses have been randomly selected (proportionally from each ward, considering the total population living there) to receive the questionnaire. A total of 1,248 completed surveys have been received online and on paper. This is a good response rate, as it is exceeding the required threshold that allows the results to be statistically representative for the entire population in West Berkshire. However, more should and is done to capture the voices of younger generations (16 – 44 year olds), people in Thatcham North East Ward and residents from more deprived areas, as these are the groups of residents with lower response rates to the Residents' Survey. In addition, the Council is supplementing the usual survey based consultations with a number of actions to ensure that children and young people under-16 have the opportunity to provide their feedback and to better interact with the Council. Such activities include the development of a Youth Council, a Hackathon session (presenting a challenge and working with young people so they suggest the solution) and other online and face to face engagement sessions, including with primary school pupils.

4.5 The results of the survey are grouped on the key themes of the questionnaire:

- a) Attitudes towards the local area** – overall a high proportion of residents are satisfied with the local area (89%) and with the way the Council runs things (64%). For context, the results from the LGA national telephone survey are 78% and 56% respectively.

37% of residents agree that the Council provides value for money, whilst 25% would disagree. For context, it seems that nationally a lower percentage of residents are undecided (Neither agree or disagree). In addition, 33% of residents would speak positively about the Council compared to 16% that would speak negatively, and of the residents that contacted the Council in the previous six months, 56% reported a positive experience, compared to 15% that reported a negative one. Work is underway to better inform our residents about the services we deliver, our lower costs compared to similar councils and to adopt a customer charter developed with our residents.

- b) Service improvement and prioritisation** – the areas with the highest proportion of residents considering that require improvement are: *Environment* (in particular, the desire for better recycling/waste management/more materials collected and improved facilities/services), *Development and Planning* (concerns about the quality of the planning process and effects of overdevelopment), *Communities and Wellbeing* (desire for more/improved services, concerns about insufficient support), *Education* (need for additional funding, improved choice and SEN support) and *Adult Social Care* (need for better services, support, facilities and funding). Over 60% of residents stated that they would take actions to help achieve carbon neutrality.

The Council has made good progress to extend the advice, support and tools made available to residents to support more recycling, composting and reusing.

Plans are well under way to offer a separate food waste service. We are working to prepare a new development plan and are finalising a review of our Planning Service (through a Place Review) to better respond to residents' needs. The needs for Health and Wellbeing, Education, Social care and other services are being re-assessed so we can prioritise the services that West Berkshire residents need over the next four years.

- c) Sense of belonging, safety and community** – more than three quarters of residents reported that locally people get on well together and that friendships and associations in the neighbourhood meant a lot to them. More than half of the respondents agree that local people pull together to improve the local area. Under a third responded that they have volunteered in the previous 12 months and they intend to do so in the future.

The problems in their local areas are *rubbish or litter laying around* (44% of residents reported this) and *people using or dealing drugs* (32%). We have agreed with the contractor for street cleanliness to progressively re-focus on this activity after they had to divert staff to bins collection due to Covid sickness levels. The Council waste officers have increased the monitoring across the district. We are encouraging residents to report any concerns or provide any intelligence to Thames Valley Police via 101 telephone number or the website, so that the Police can use that information adapt their patrol plans. The Council work closely with the Thames Valley Police within the Building Communities Together partnership. In addition, the Building Communities Together team in particular works very closely with the Neighbourhood Police Teams within the District.

- d) Communication and Engagement** – Almost 60% of the residents agreed that the Council acts on their concerns and that they felt well informed about services and benefits provided by the Council. However, 45% responded that they were not aware of the e-bulletins from the Council. 48% of the residents have contacted the Council in the previous six months to request services, report a problem or request information.

20% agree that they can influence decisions that affect their local area, whilst 47% disagreed.

A high proportion of residents (75%) prefer to receive information about the Council by e-mail. Subgroups of population (older residents, diverse ethnic groups) prefer other methods (phone, face to face) of communication. We have planned a number of activities (including the Residents' Survey), as part of our Communications and Engagement Strategy, focusing on improving the ways in which we are communicating with residents and how we reach out to ensure that people and businesses that usually do not or can not take the opportunities to express their views, are proactively invited to inform the Council's decisions and to shape the ways in which we deliver Council services.

- e) Personal wellbeing** – The overall results show that West Berkshire residents reported a high level of life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile and happy. The anxiety score is within the low thresholds. However, approximately a quarter of the residents reported low and medium well-being score. These results are within the same thresholds as the national results reported for the period just before the start of the pandemic. The wellbeing of all our residents is what we are seeking to

achieve through a number of plans such as the Council's Recovery Strategy or the partnership Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- 4.6 The feedback from residents will be further analysed and further engagement activities are taking place to ensure a more detailed understanding of residents' views. Residents' views will be used to inform the new Council Strategy for 2023 – 2027.

## **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Appendix A provides the detailed responses to each question of the Residents' Survey 2021.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.2 The feedback received through the Residents' Survey will inform the production of the Council Strategy 2023-2027. This will ensure that residents' needs are assessed not only based on the statistical evidence available at national and local level, but also through the consideration of views expressed directly by residents in response to the survey.
- 5.3 Further communication and engagement activities (such as targeted interviews, focus groups and webinars) are taking place in order to reach residents from sub-groups with a lower response rate to the survey. In addition, any areas where a more in-depth understanding is needed about residents' messages will be further explored with residents. This will ensure a complete and clear understanding of the reasons why residents have reported some of the views expressed in the survey, so that the appropriate actions will be included in the Council Strategy and other more specific plans.

## **6 Other options considered**

- 6.1 n/a

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 The results from the Residents' Survey 2021 form an important part of the evidence base that will be used to identify the priorities for the new Council Strategy for 2023 – 2027.
- 7.2 Further engagement work (targeted interviews, focus groups, webinars etc.) will be organised to ensure the views of residents are covered extensively and a more in depth understanding of the feedback received wherever necessary.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A – Residents' Survey 2021 Final Report

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

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

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m.e.l  
research

**Residents' survey 2021**

**West Berkshire Council**

**Final report**

**February 2022**

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# Project details and acknowledgements

|                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Title</b>            | Residents' survey 2021        |
| <b>Client</b>           | West Berkshire Council        |
| <b>Project number</b>   | 21167                         |
| <b>Author</b>           | Pinder Mahal                  |
| <b>Research Manager</b> | Sophi Ducie                   |
| <b>Reviewed by</b>      | Sophi Ducie and Catalin Bogos |

This project has been delivered to ISO 9001:2015, 20252:2019 and 27001:2013 standards.



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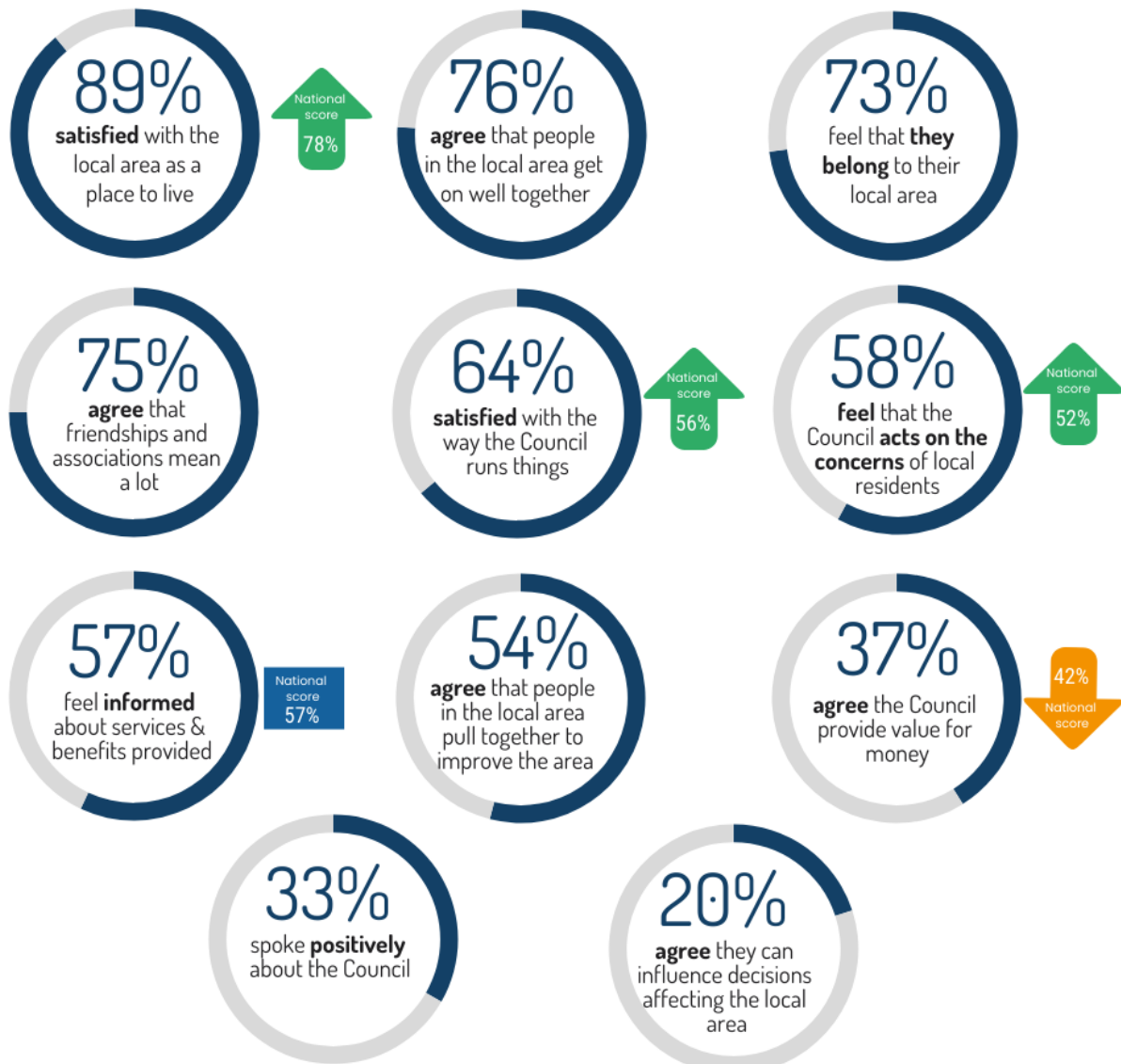
Tel: 0121 604 4664



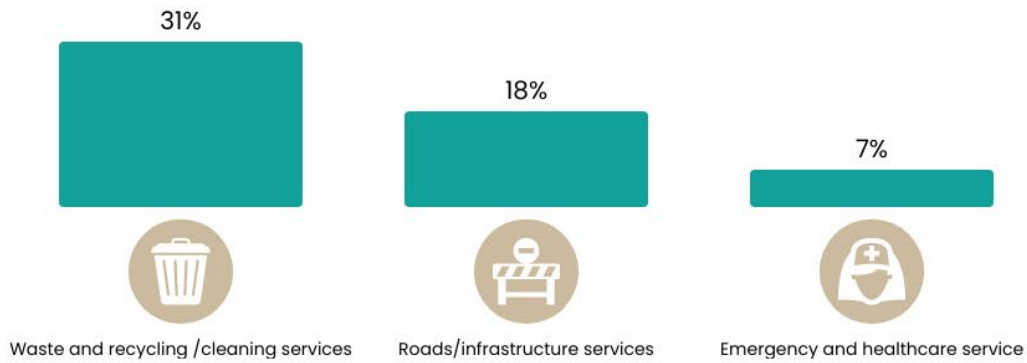
West Berkshire Council planned to enhance the way they engage with their residents and adopted a Communication and Engagement Strategy aiming to get people more involved in the decision-making process. A key component of the strategy is the delivery of a representative residents' survey. The aim of the survey was to get residents' views on quality of life factors and service satisfaction.

M·E·L Research were commissioned to carry out a residents' survey. During November and December 2019, 1,248 surveys were completed either via an online survey or postal survey. Results were weighted by age group, gender and Acorn<sup>1</sup>. This ensured that it more accurately matched the known profile of the West Berkshire.

## OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LOCAL AREA



## MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES



### WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?

- Recycling/waste management/more materials collected
- Better planning process
- Support for communities and wellbeing

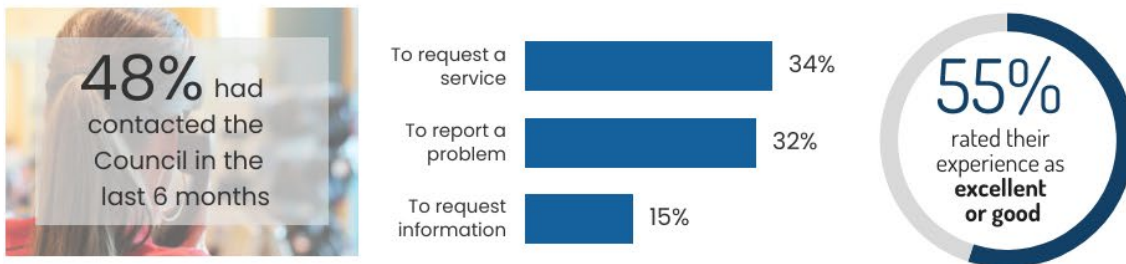
"More recycling kerbside such as cartons etc."

"State of some roads are terrible."

"Too many houses being built without adequate regard for existing infrastructure and local services."

"Mental health support very poor."

## CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL

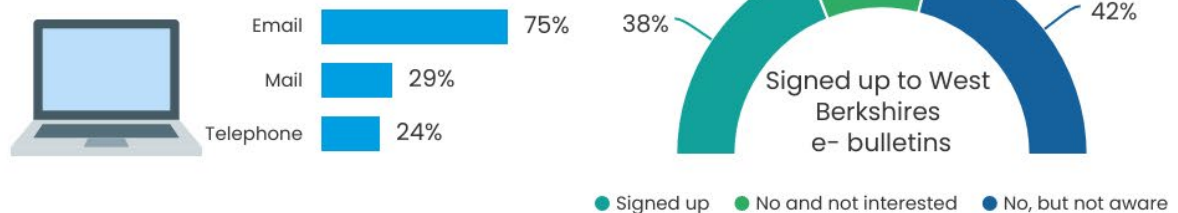


## VOLUNTEERING



## COMMUNICATION

Preferred contact with the Council:



# Background

## Research context

West Berkshire Council planned to enhance the way they engage with their residents and adopted the Communication and Engagement Strategy aiming to get people more involved in the decision-making process. The delivery of a representative residents' survey is one of the key objectives aiming to understand resident's views on the local area and Council services. The Council commissioned M·E·L Research to carry out a residents' survey to gather a baseline, with the objective of tracking indicators over time and to provide national comparisons wherever possible. The aim of the research was to get residents' views on quality of life factors and service satisfaction. The research covered a set of broad topics to gain an understanding of:

- Satisfaction with the local area and the Council
- Service Improvement and Prioritisation
- Communication and Engagement
- Sense of belonging, safety and community
- Personal wellbeing

## Methodology

Using our CACI Insite and Acorn Customer Segmentation software<sup>1</sup>, which includes Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF), we randomly selected 5,000 households across the borough stratified by ward.

Each selected household was sent a covering letter inviting the member of the household, aged 16 and over, with the next birthday to participate in the survey. It included instructions on how to access the online questionnaire and the need to enter a unique reference number (M·E·L ID) – provided on the covering letter. The letter highlighted the value of responding to the survey, that participation was voluntary and that responses would be confidential. It also provided an email address and freephone telephone number to contact for further information or to inform the project team that they would prefer to complete the survey in an alternative format (e.g. by telephone).

A reminder mailing was scheduled for two weeks after the initial mailing to those who had not responded to the initial questionnaire (unless they had indicated that they wished to be excluded). Below presents a summary of the approach:

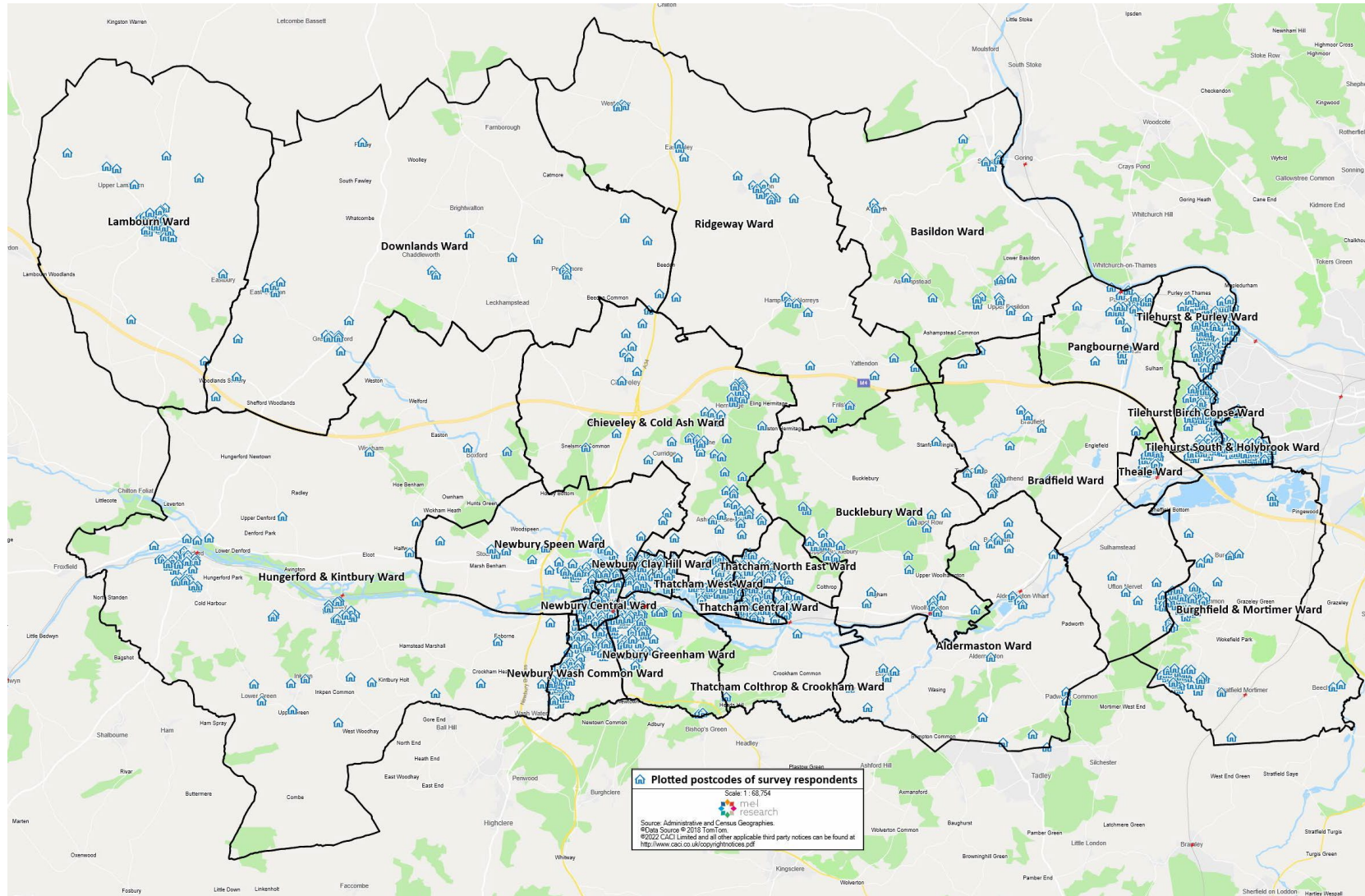
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<sup>1</sup> ACORN is a leading geo-demographic segmentation tool which classifies every postcode in the country into 6 Categories, 18 Groups and 62 types.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Target population</b>      | Residents of West Berkshire borough aged 16 or older      |
| <b>Survey length</b>          | Average of 15 minutes                                     |
| <b>Survey period</b>          | 10 <sup>th</sup> November – 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 |
| <b>Sampling method</b>        | Random selection, stratified by ward                      |
| <b>Data collection method</b> | Self-completion: Postal or online survey                  |
| <b>Total sample</b>           | 1,248 (postal n=944 & online n=304)                       |



Map 1: Plotted postcodes of survey sample



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# Statistical reliability

The survey findings are based on results of a survey of a sample of West Berkshire residents and results are therefore subject to sampling tolerances. With 1,248 residents having completed the survey, this returns a confidence interval of  $\pm 2.8\%$  for a 50% statistic at the 95% confidence level. This simply means that if 50% of residents indicated they agreed with a certain aspect, the true figure (had the whole population been surveyed) could in reality lie within the range of 47.2% to 52.8% and that these results would be seen 95 times out of 100 surveys. Table 1 below shows the confidence intervals for differing response results (sample tolerance).

**Table 1: Surveys completed overall**

| Size of sample | Approximate sampling tolerances* |            |            |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
|                | 50%                              | 30% or 70% | 10% or 90% |
| 1,248 surveys  | $\pm 2.8$                        | $\pm 2.5$  | $\pm 1.7$  |

\*Based on a 95% confidence level

The sample (n=1,248) was proportioned representatively across the 24 wards in the borough (please see (Table 2 below) although caution should be taken when interpreting the results due the small sizes.

**Table 2: Surveys completed by ward**

|                       | No. of surveys completed | % of surveys completed | % of Council population | Difference rounded |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Aldermaston           | 30                       | 2%                     | 2%                      | 0%                 |
| Basildon              | 23                       | 2%                     | 2%                      | 0%                 |
| Bradfield             | 29                       | 2%                     | 3%                      | 0%                 |
| Bucklebury            | 35                       | 3%                     | 2%                      | ↑ 1%               |
| Burghfield & Mortimer | 85                       | 7%                     | 7%                      | 0%                 |
| Chieveley & Cold Ash  | 80                       | 6%                     | 5%                      | ↑ 1%               |
| Downlands             | 30                       | 2%                     | 2%                      | 0%                 |
| Hungerford & Kintbury | 85                       | 7%                     | 7%                      | ↓ -1%              |
| Lambourn              | 43                       | 3%                     | 3%                      | ↑ 1%               |
| Newbury Central       | 56                       | 4%                     | 5%                      | ↓ -1%              |
| Newbury Clay Hill     | 54                       | 4%                     | 5%                      | 0%                 |
| Newbury Greenham      | 78                       | 6%                     | 8%                      | ↓ -1%              |
| Newbury Speen         | 62                       | 5%                     | 5%                      | 0%                 |
| Newbury Wash Common   | 83                       | 7%                     | 5%                      | ↑ 1%               |
| Pangbourne            | 30                       | 2%                     | 2%                      | 0%                 |
| Ridgeway              | 28                       | 2%                     | 3%                      | 0%                 |

|                              |              |    |    |   |     |
|------------------------------|--------------|----|----|---|-----|
| Thatcham Central             | 50           | 4% | 5% | ↓ | -1% |
| Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham | 24           | 2% | 2% |   | 0%  |
| Thatcham North East          | 42           | 3% | 5% | ↓ | -2% |
| Thatcham West                | 52           | 4% | 5% |   | 0%  |
| Theale                       | 22           | 2% | 2% |   | 0%  |
| Tilehurst & Purley           | 94           | 7% | 7% | ↑ | 1%  |
| Tilehurst Birch Copse        | 65           | 5% | 5% |   | 0%  |
| Tilehurst South & Holybrook  | 58           | 5% | 4% |   | 0%  |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>1,238</b> |    |    |   |     |

\*10 of the returned surveys omitted ward information.

## Analysis and reporting

### Weighting

As part of the analysis process the combined data was weighted by age group, gender and Acorn. Any significant differences between these groups has also been noted in the report. This ensures that it more accurately matches the known profile of the West Berkshire. The procedure involves adjusting the profile of the sample data to bring it into line with the population profile of West Berkshire district. For example, in the survey the final sample comprised of 45% men and 55% women. Census 2011 data tells us that the proportion should be 49% men and 51% women. To bring the sample in line with the population profile we applied weights to the gender profile. The same process was repeated for the remaining subgroup profiles.

**About Acorn:** Acorn is a classification system that segments the UK population by analysing demographic data, social factors, population and consumer behaviour. At the highest level, Acorn is broken down into five categories, outlined below:

- 1. **Affluent Achievers:** *These are some of the most financially successful people in the UK. They live in affluent, high status areas of the country. They are healthy, wealthy and confident consumers.*
- 2. **Rising Prosperity:** *These are generally younger, well educated, professionals moving up the career ladder, living in our major towns and cities. Singles or couples, some are yet to start a family, others will have younger children.*
- 3. **Comfortable Communities:** *This category contains much of middle-of-the-road Britain, whether in the suburbs, smaller towns or the countryside. They are stable families and empty nesters in suburban or semirural areas.*
- 4. **Financially Stretched:** *This category contains a mix of traditional areas of Britain, including social housing developments specifically for the elderly. It also includes student term-time areas.*
- 5. **Urban Adversity:** *This category contains the most deprived areas of towns and cities across the UK. Household incomes are low, nearly always below the national average.*

## Benchmarking

Several questions have been included from the Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Are you being Served?' survey for benchmarking purposes. Recently the LGA Council resident satisfaction benchmarking has been discontinued due to lack of use<sup>2</sup>. We have therefore had to rely on the LGAs national telephone polling result, which is a triannual telephone survey of 1,000 British adults across Great Britain. It should be noted that where comparisons are made to national polling LGA survey, these should be seen as indicative due to the difference in data collection methodology. The latest polling survey were carried out in October 2021 and there has been a dip in satisfaction nationally compared to other polling periods.

## Statistical tests

Differences in views of sub-groups of the population were compared using a statistical test (z test<sup>3</sup>) and statistically significant results (at the 95% level) are indicated in the text. Statistical significance means that a result is unlikely due to chance (i.e. It is a real difference in the population) and that if you were to replicate the study, you would be 95% certain the same results would be achieved again. As the sample for this research was representative by gender, age group, and acorn, analysis for other sub-groups will be indicative only.

## Presentation of data

Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on graphs and charts within this report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. The figures provided in the text should always be used. Where figures do not appear in a graph or chart, these are 3% or less. The 'base' or 'n=' figure referred to in each chart and table is the total number of residents responding to the question with a valid response.

### Icon key:



Gender



Acorn



Age group



BAME/None BAME



Those with children



Disability

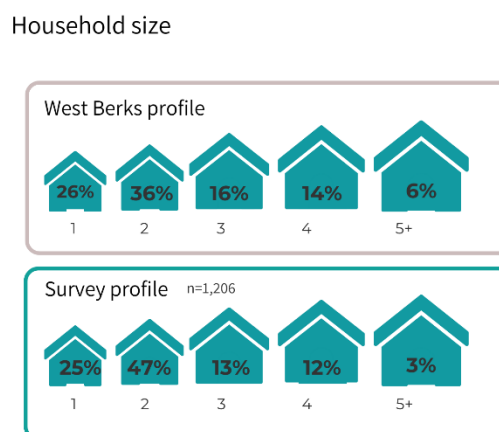
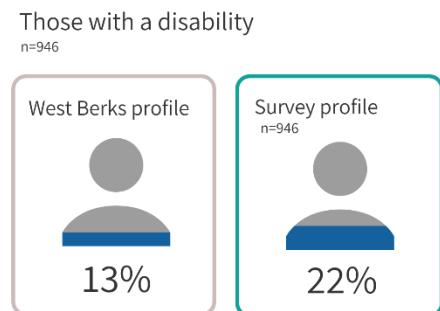
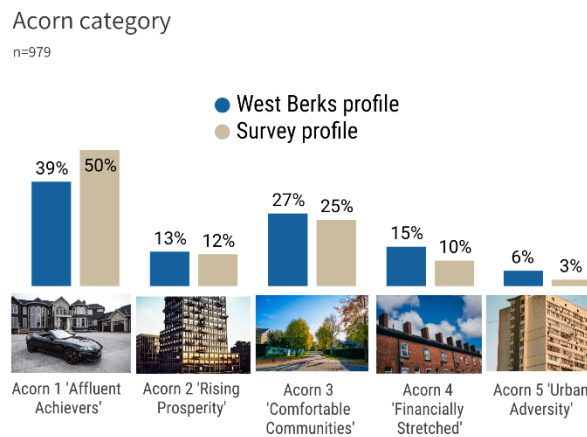
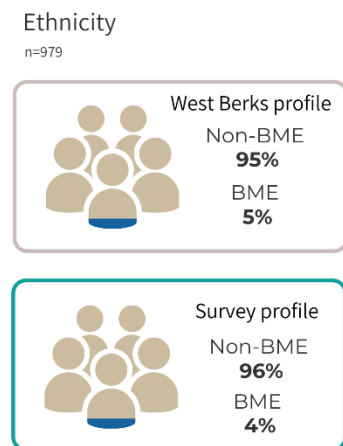
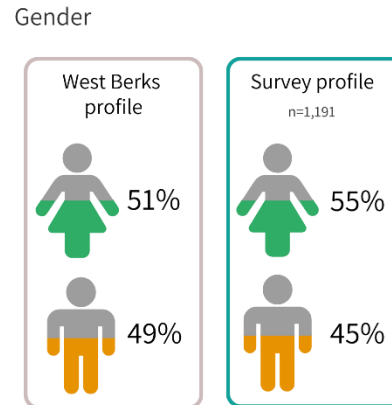
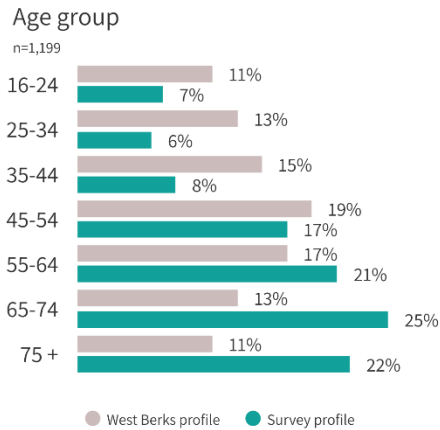
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-local-government>

<sup>3</sup> A statistical **test** to determine whether two population means are different when the variances are known and the sample size is large.

# Findings

## Who provided feedback

The unweighted survey profile of residents who completed the survey against the known profile population of West Berkshire.



# Section 1: Overall attitudes towards the local area

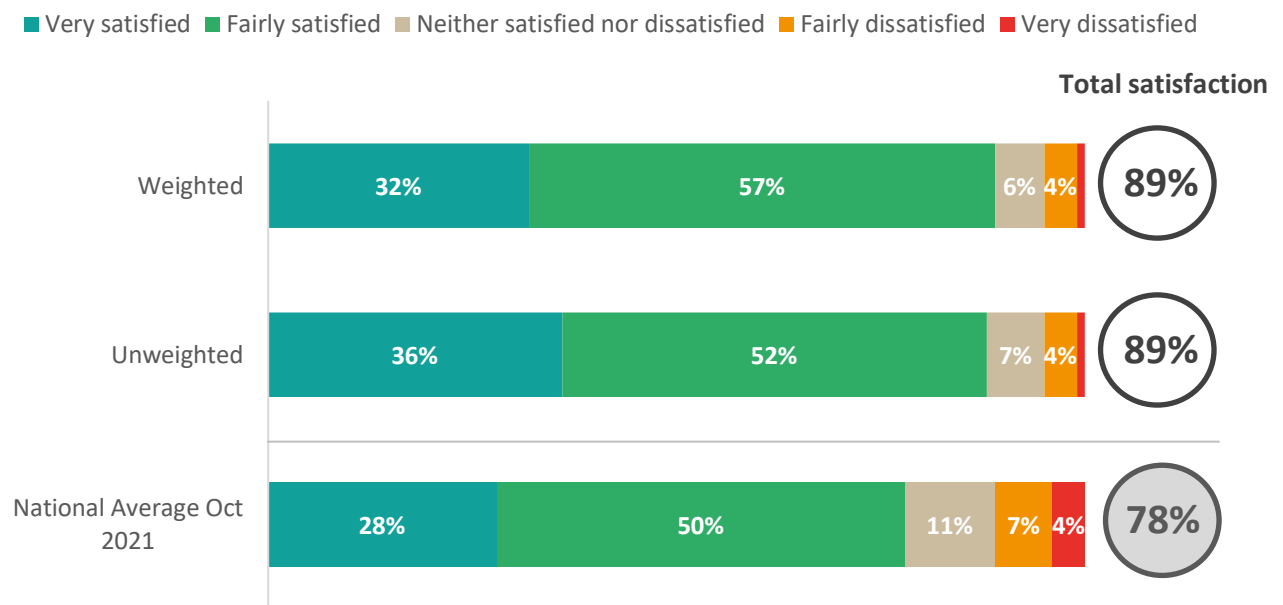
## Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live

First, residents were asked to think about how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their local area as a place to live.


- **89%** of residents were ‘very’ (32%) or ‘fairly’ (57%) satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Just 5% of residents were ‘very’ (1%) or ‘fairly’ (4%) dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live and 6% of residents had no feelings either way.
- West Berkshire scores 11% points above the national average score (78%).

**Figure 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?**



Unweighted base – 1,237



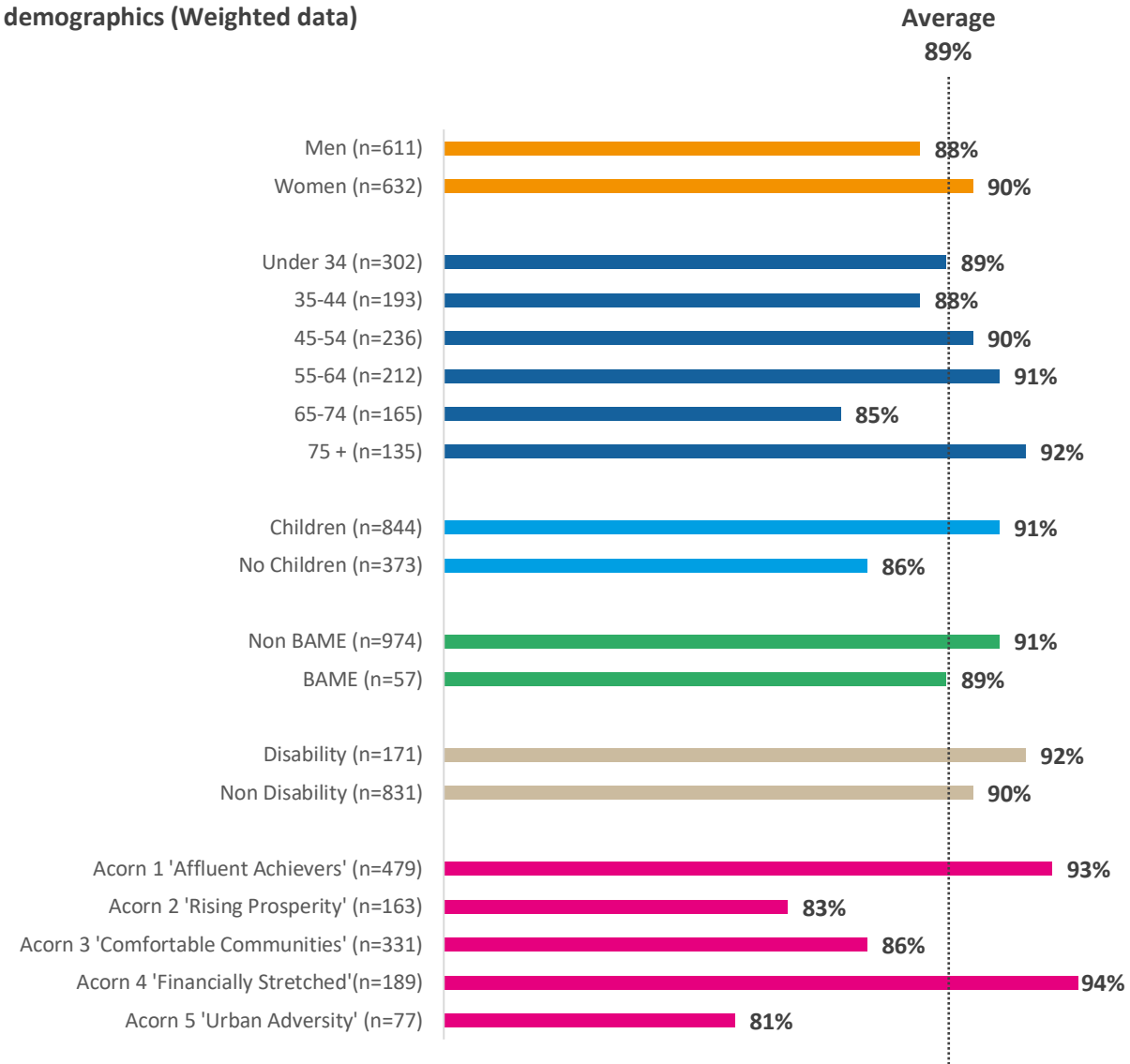
Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age, those with children and Acorn areas:



- Residents aged between 35-44 (8%) were more likely to be dissatisfied with the area as a place to live than the other age groups. For example, compared to just 2% of 45-54 year olds who were dissatisfied.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those with children (91%) were likely to be more satisfied with the area compared to those without children (86%).</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in homes classified as Acorn 4 'Financially Stretched' (94%) and Acorn 1 'Affluent Achievers' (93%) were more likely to be satisfied with their local area compared to those in homes classified as Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity' (81%).</li> </ul> |

**Figure 2: Satisfaction (very satisfied/fairly satisfied) with the local areas as a place to live by demographics (Weighted data)**



## Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things

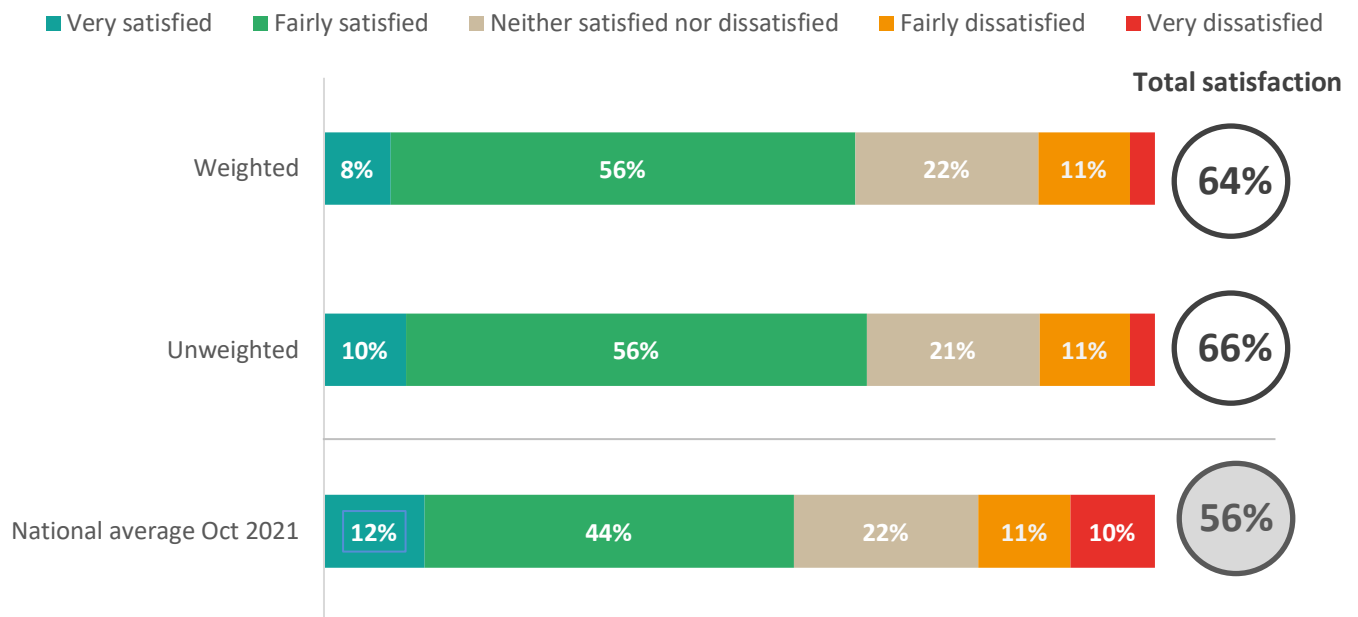
Residents were provided with the below statement (standard text recommended by the LGA) to read and were then asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the way West Berkshire Council runs things.

Your local area receives services from West Berkshire Council. West Berkshire Council is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

- **64%** of residents were either 'very' (8%) or 'fairly' (56%) satisfied with the way the Council runs things, while 22% of residents had no feeling either way.
- Positively, the total satisfaction for West Berkshire (64%) is 8% points above the national average score (56%)

**Figure 3: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way West Berkshire Council runs things?**




Unweighted base – 1,231



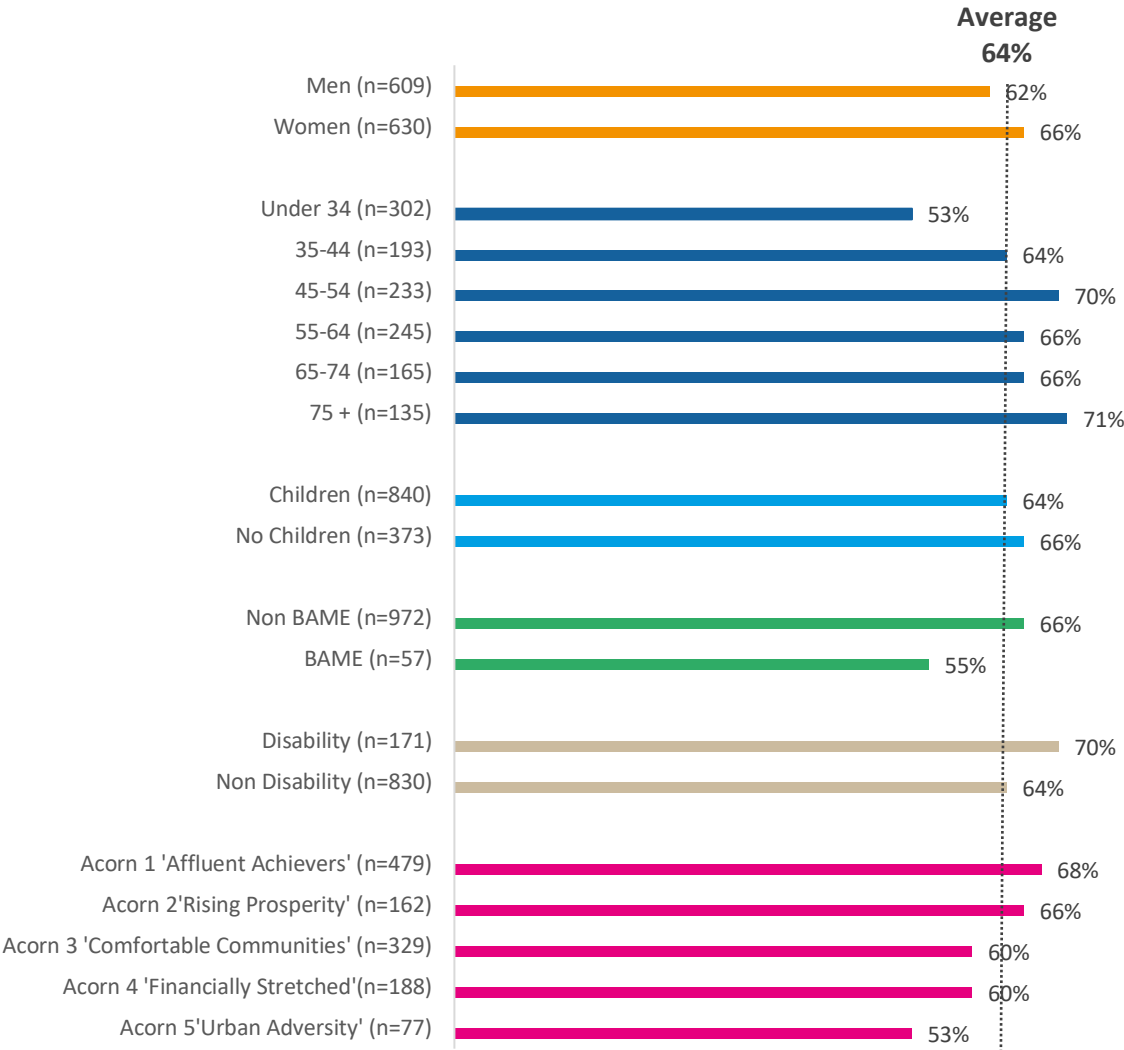
Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by gender, age, ethnicity and Acorn:



- Men (17%) generally were more dissatisfied than women (12%), with the way the Council ran things.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents aged 75+ were more likely to be satisfied with how the Council ran things (71%) compared to those aged under 35 years (53%).</li> </ul>                                   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents from Non BAME backgrounds (66%) were more satisfied than those from BAME backgrounds (55%) with the way Council ran things.</li> </ul>                                    |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in homes classified as Acorn 1 'Affluent Achievers' (68%) were more likely to be satisfied than the other Acorn groups with the way the Council ran things.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 4: Satisfaction (very satisfied/fairly satisfied) with the way the Council runs things by demographics (Weighted data)**





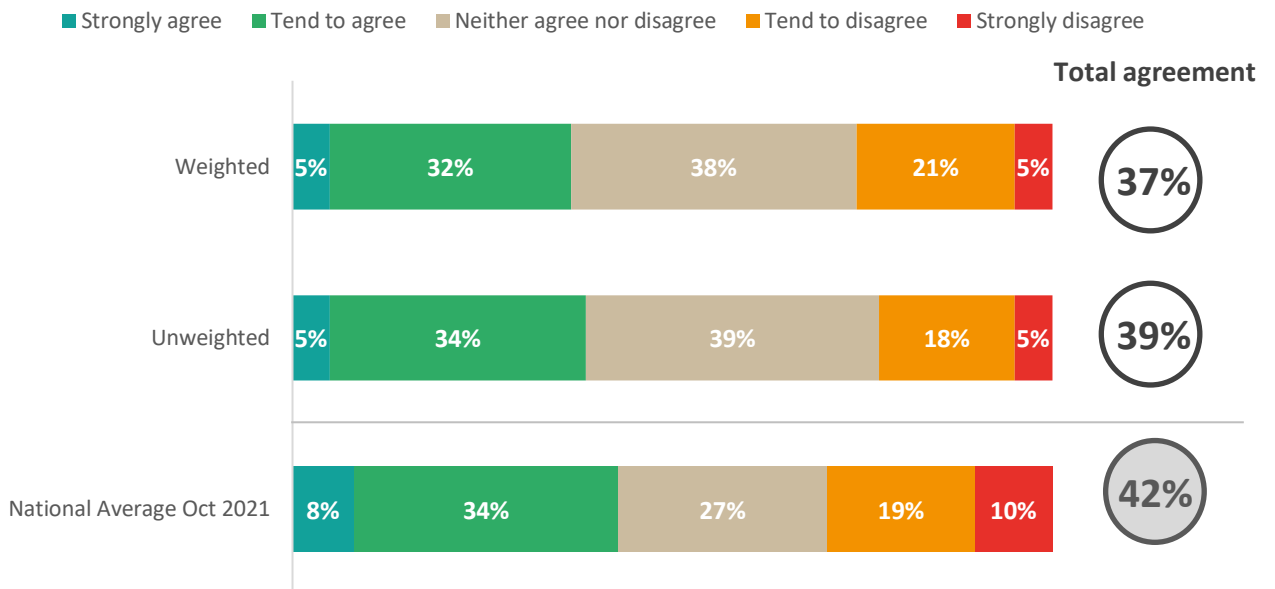
## Agreement the Council provides value for money

Residents were then asked to think about the range of services West Berkshire Council provides to the community as well as the services their household uses. They were then asked to what extent they agree or disagree that the Council provides value for money.

- **37%** of residents either ‘strongly’ (5%) or ‘tended to’ (32%) agree that the Council provides value for money. Over a third (38%) of residents had no feeling either way.
- Agreement with this aspect is lower than the national average score by 5% points. However, the disagreement score is less than the average score by 3% points.

**Figure 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that West Berkshire Council provides value for money?**

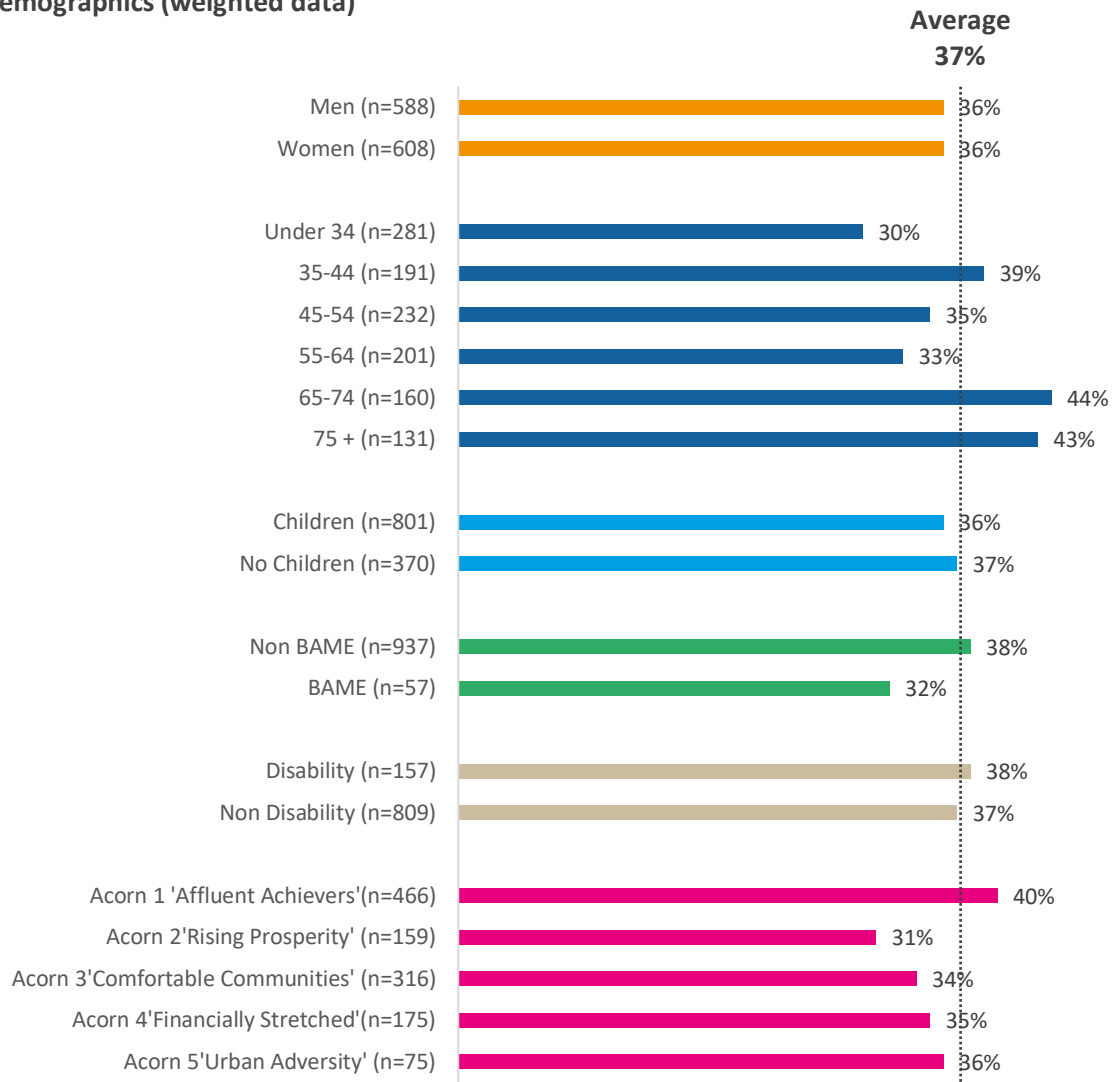
Unweighted base – 1,196



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, ethnicity and Acorn:

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | ▪ The younger age group (under 34) (30%) were significantly less likely to feel the Council provided value for money, this is compared to the older 65-74 age group with 44% satisfied with this aspect. |
|  | ▪ Those from BAME backgrounds disagreed (39%) with this aspect significantly more than those from Non BAME backgrounds (24%).  |
|  | ▪ Those living in homes classified as Acorn 2 ‘Rising Prosperity’ (32%) were more likely to be dissatisfied with this aspect than those from Acorn 1 ‘Affluent Achievers’ (19%)                          |

**Figure 6: Agreement (strongly agree/tend to agree) with the Council providing value for money by demographics (weighted data)**



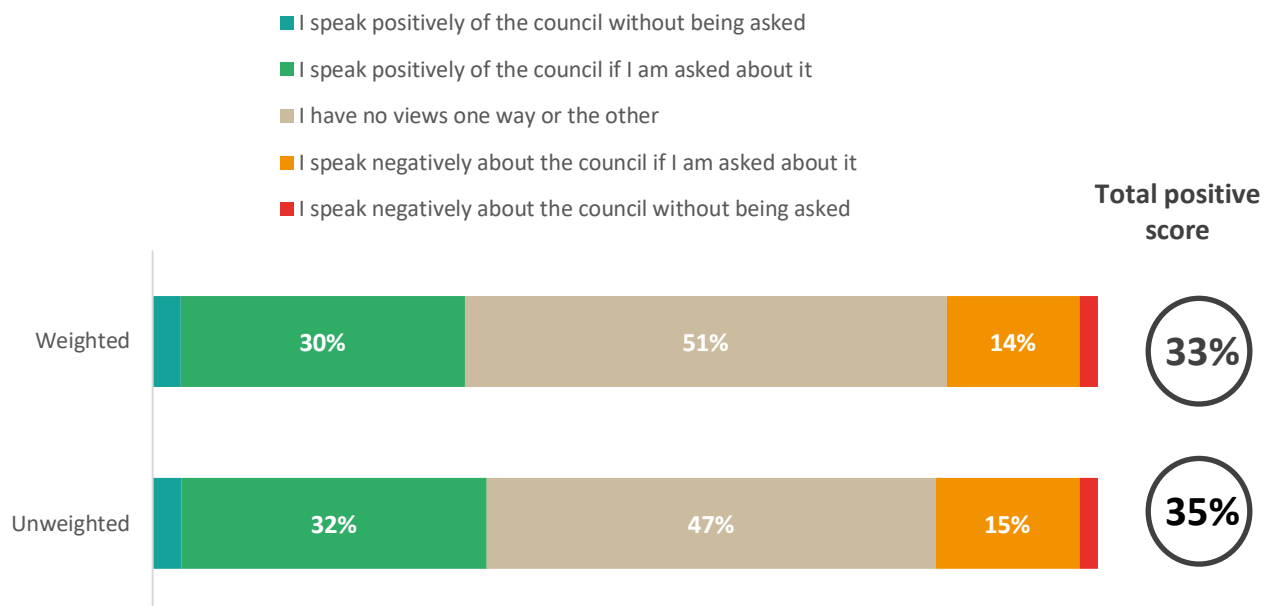
## Feelings towards West Berkshire Council

Residents were given a series of statements and were asked which one comes closest to how they feel about West Berkshire Council.




- One third (**33**)% of residents stated they would speak positively about the Council ( either with or without being asked).
- A total of (**16**)% of residents would speak negatively about the Council (either with or without being asked).
- The remaining (**51**)% had no feelings either way suggesting they perhaps had limited or no interaction with the Council.

**Figure 7: Feelings about the Council**

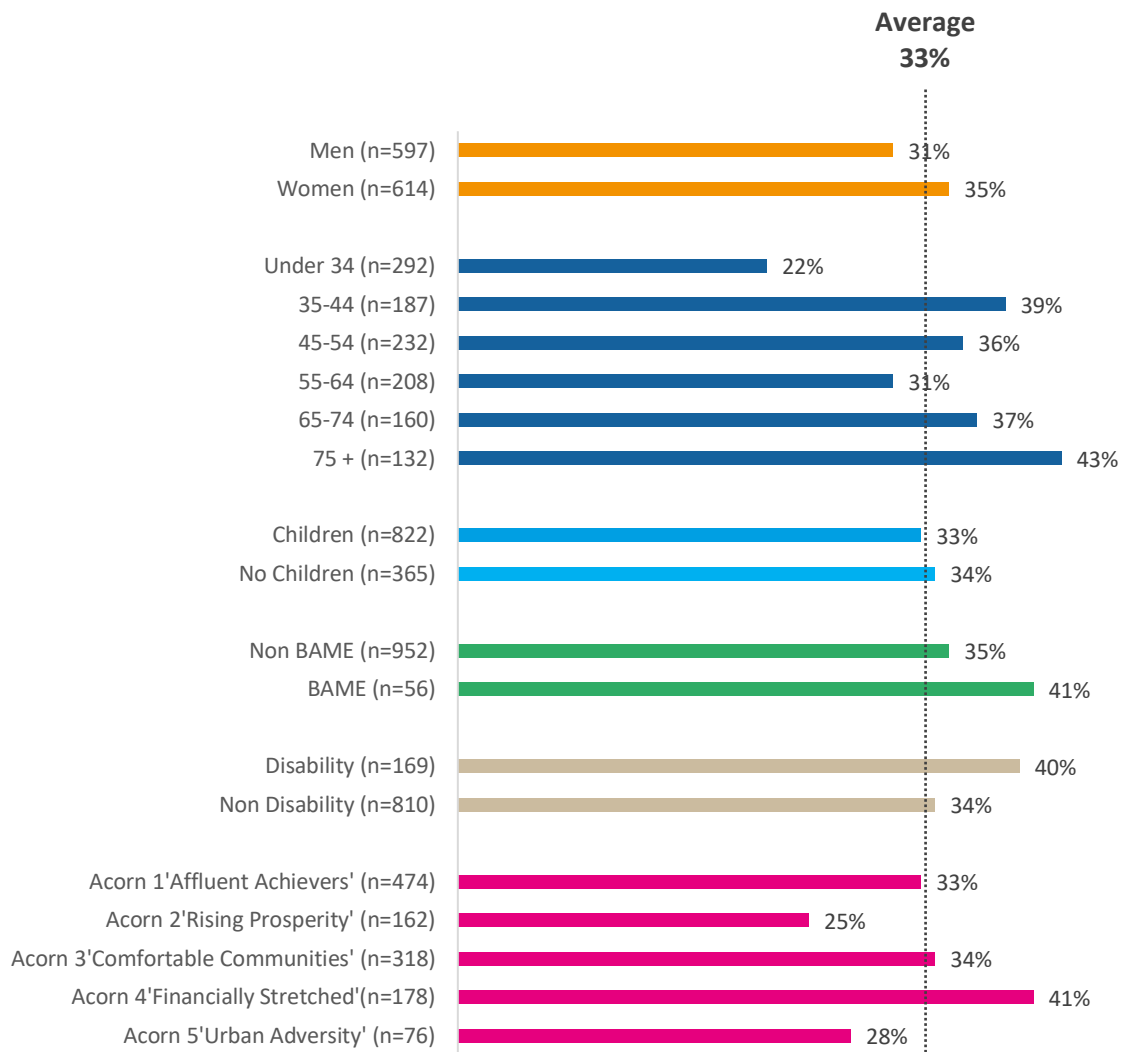
*Unweighted base - 1,205*



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by gender, age group and Acorn:

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slightly more men (19%) would speak negatively about the Council compared to women (13%) if asked.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those aged under 34 (22%) were significantly less likely to speak positively about the Council if asked, compared to all other age groups, especially those age 75 or older (43%).</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in homes classified as Acorn 4 'Financially Stretched' (41%), were more likely to speak positively of the Council if asked compared to those living in homes classified as Acorn 2 'Rising Prosperity' (25%).</li> </ul> |

**Figure 8: Agreement with speaking positively about the Council (Weighted data)**

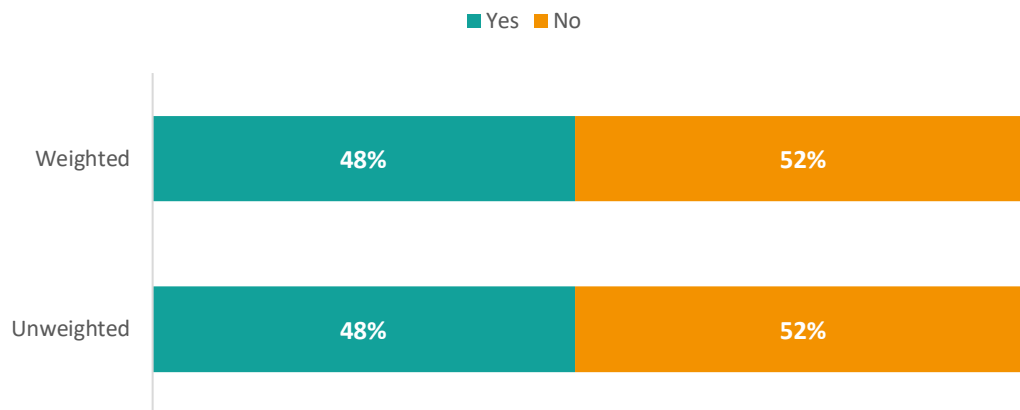


## Contacting the Council

Residents were asked if they had any need to contact West Berkshire Council in the last 6 months. Overall, just under half of residents 48% reported contacting the Council.

**Figure 9: Contact in the last 6 months (weighted data)**

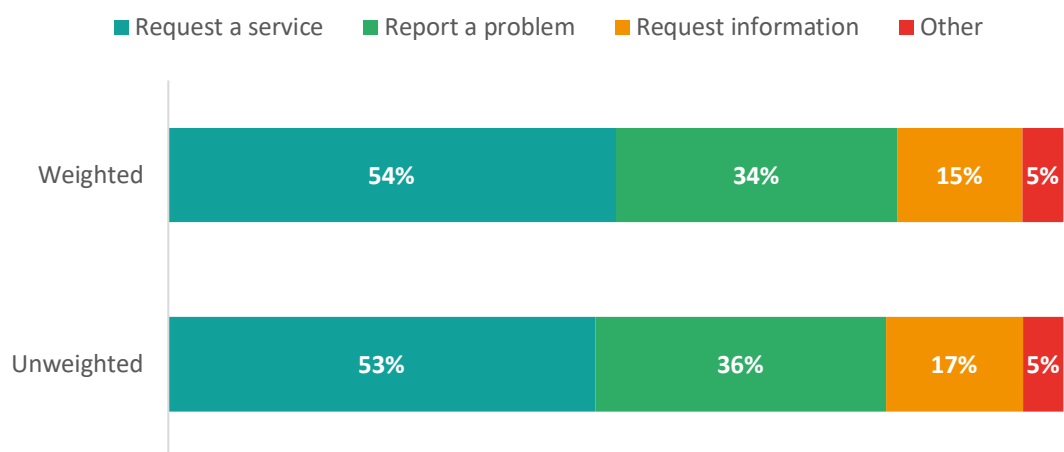
Unweighted base - 1,243



Of those that had contacted the Council over half (54%) requested a service, followed by a third (34%) reporting a problem.

**Figure 10: What was your reason for contacting West Berkshire Council?**

Unweighted base - 593



Residents had been given the opportunity to state any other reason why they had contacted the Council, a total of 103 provided a valid response to the question and themed and are shown in Table

3 below. The main themes related to ‘recycling/waste queries’, followed by just under a fifth (19%) contacting the Council regarding planning.

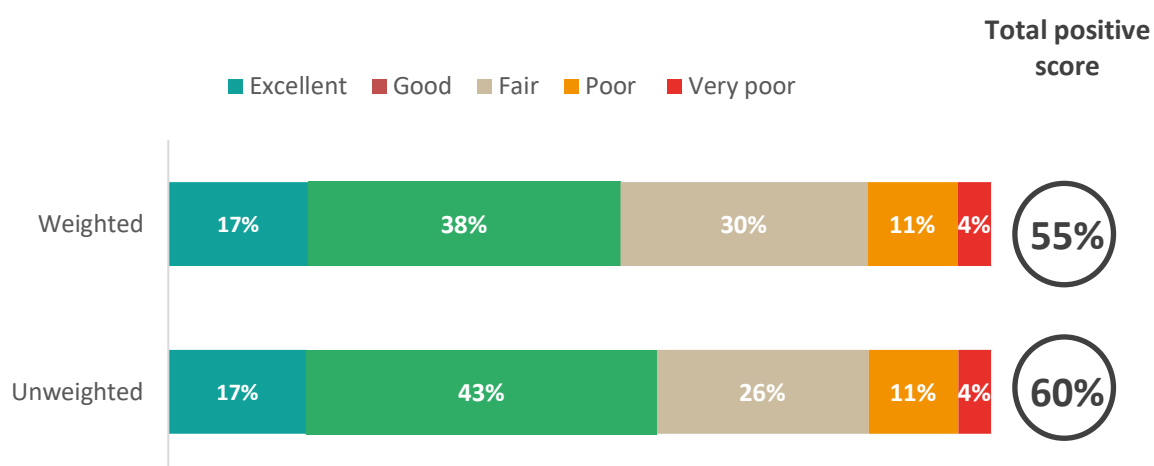
**Table 3: Other reasons for contacting the Council**

| Key themes   | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Recycling /waste queries e.g refuse collection       | 39             | 38%              |
| Planning   | 20             | 19%              |
| Enquiry about Council Tax                            | 12             | 12%              |
| Residential enquiries                                | 10             | 10%              |
| Outside areas e.g. footpaths                         | 9              | 9%               |
| Other queries e.g update with electoral registration | 5              | 5%               |
| Transport  | 4              | 4%               |
| Social services e.g mental health                    | 3              | 3%               |
| School allocations                                   | 2              | 2%               |
| Antisocial e.g noise/disturbance                     | 2              | 2%               |
| Covid issues   | 1              | 1%               |
| Other  | 1              | 1%               |
|  | 103            |                  |




Those who contacted the Council were asked to rate their experience. Just over five out of ten residents (56%) said the experience was positive (either excellent or good), while 14% said it was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Nearly a third (30%) said their experience was fair.

**Figure 11: Experience with contacting the Council**

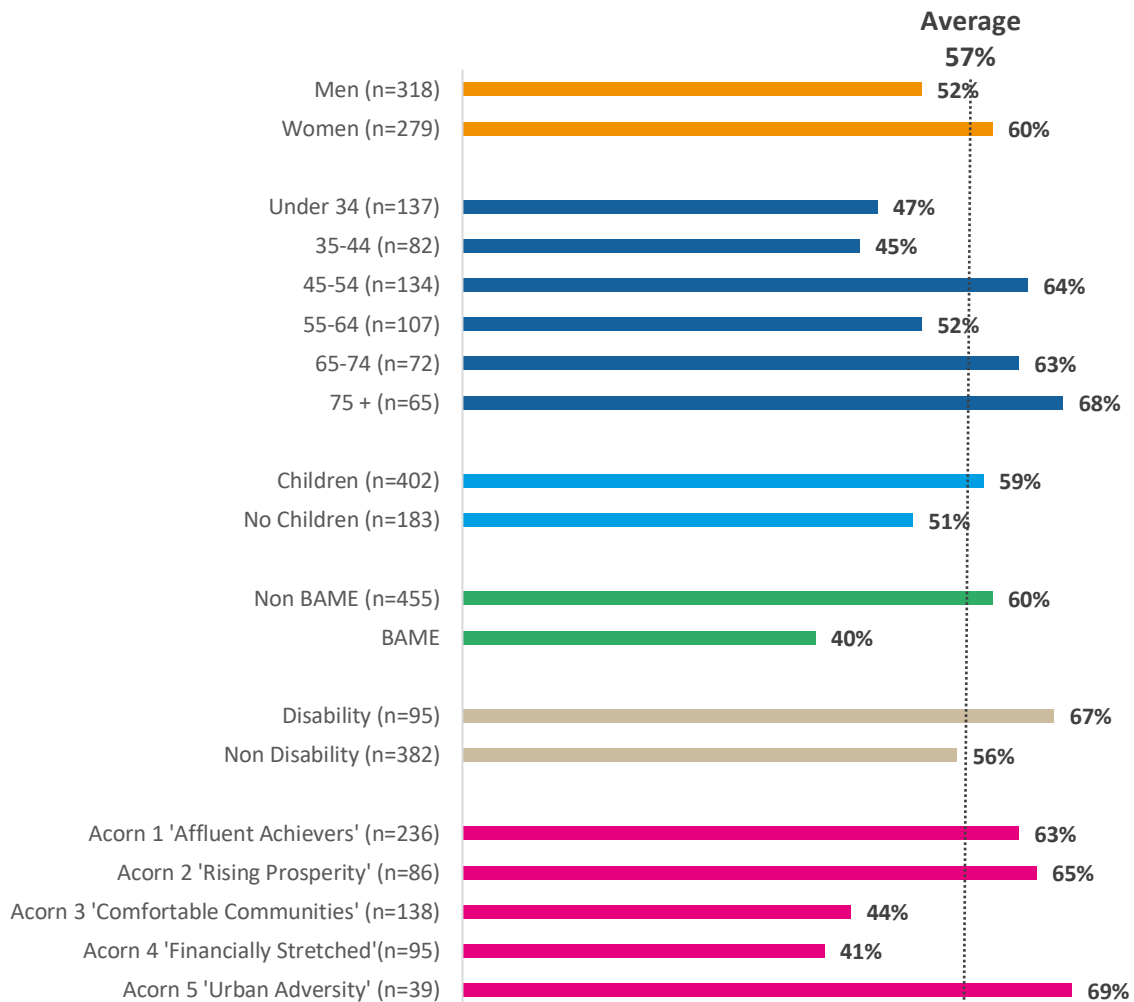
Unweighted base - 593



Sub group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, ethnicity and Acorn:

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents aged 75+ (68%) were most likely to give their last contact a positive rating. In comparison, residents aged 35-44 (45%) were least likely to give it a positive rating.</li> </ul>                            |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents from a non BAME background (60%) were more likely to give their last contact a positive rating compared to (40%) of those from a BAME background.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in homes classified as Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity' were more likely to give their recent contact a positive rating (69%) compared to those living in Acorn 4 'Financially stretched' (41%) homes.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 12: Positive rating (excellent/good) regarding the contact with Council (weighted data)**



All residents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments relating to any of the questions about satisfaction with their area and with West Berkshire Council. All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 492 residents provided a valid response (either positive or negative theme) to this question. NB: a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses.

Looking at the positive ratings first, the most popular themes related to ‘having a prompt service’ (74 mentions), followed by ‘happy with the way West Berkshire run things’ (45 mentions). It should also be noted that 76 comments related to negative themes ‘not satisfied could do more’, followed by ‘bad service/still waiting’ (70 mentions).

**Table 4: Additional comments from residents on contact with the Council**

| Key themes  | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| <b>POSITIVE</b>                                       |                |                  |
| Prompt service  | 74             | 15%              |
| Happy with the way West Berkshire Council runs things | 45             | 9%               |
| <b>NEGATIVE</b>                                       |                |                  |
| Not satisfied could do more                           | 76             | 15%              |
| Bad service/still waiting                             | 70             | 14%              |
| Roads/street maintenance                              | 58             | 12%              |

Some example comments are provided below:

**Prompt service:**

“Reported rubbish dumped on the road and it was collected.”

“Tree cutting and removal of dumped goods. Always received prompt response and service.”

**Not satisfied could do more:**

“Road and parking planning is very poor.”

“Fairly well maintained, however dustbins and dog bins could be emptied more regularly.”



## Service improvement and prioritisation

Residents were asked about their individual circumstances and which five services provided by West Berkshire Council they needed the most. A total of 1,080 residents answered this question. Table 5 presents the overall mentions for each service area.

- 31% mentioned **waste and recycling/cleaning services** as important to them, 18% said that **roads/highways/street infrastructure services** were important to them and 7% said that **emergency and healthcare services** were important to them.

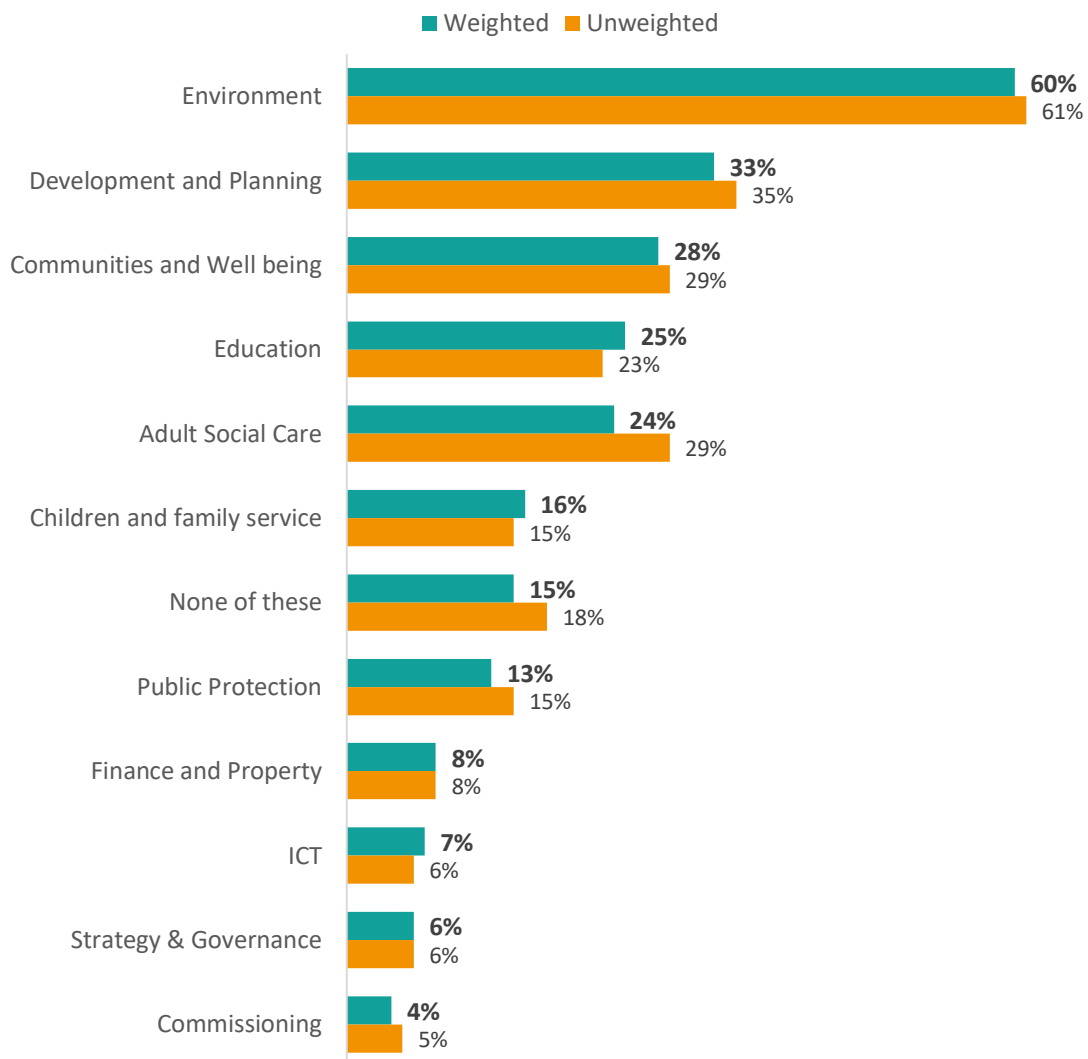
**Table 5: Which five services provided by West Berkshire Council do you needed the most?**

|                                       | Overall mentions (n=4,403) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Waste & recycling collection/cleaning | 31%                        |
| Roads/highways/streets                | 18%                        |
| Emergency services/Healthcare         | 7%                         |
| Environment/parks                     | 7%                         |
| Education                             | 6%                         |
| Community e.g. library/leisure centre | 6%                         |
| Other                                 | 5%                         |
| Development/planning/funding          | 5%                         |
| Transport e.g. bus services           | 4%                         |
| Policing/safety                       | 3%                         |
| Parking                               | 2%                         |
| Grounds maintenance/pathways          | 2%                         |
| Communication/information             | 1%                         |
| Libraries                             | 1%                         |
| Street lighting                       | 1%                         |
| Sports/recreation                     | 1%                         |
| Council Tax                           | 0%                         |
| Housing e.g. to be improved           | 0%                         |
| Health & Safety                       | 0%                         |

Residents were asked to select services that required improvement provided by West Berkshire Council. A total of 1,130 residents answered this question. Over half of (60%) stated environment service required improvement, followed by a third (33%) stating development and planning. The chart below presents the results of these findings:

**Figure 13: Which services require improvement?**

*Unweighted base - 1,130*



Of the services selected for improvement residents were asked for specific elements that needed improvement and why. Table 6 shows the three main improvements required of each service.

**Environment**

- The main improvement stated was **(35%)** better recycling/waste management/more materials collected, followed by better facilities/services (18%).

## Development and planning

- The main improvement stated (**26%**) would be better planning process.

## Communities and wellbeing

- The main improvement stated (**36%**) would be more services/improved followed by (25%) stating insufficient support.

**Table 6: Which services need improvement and why**

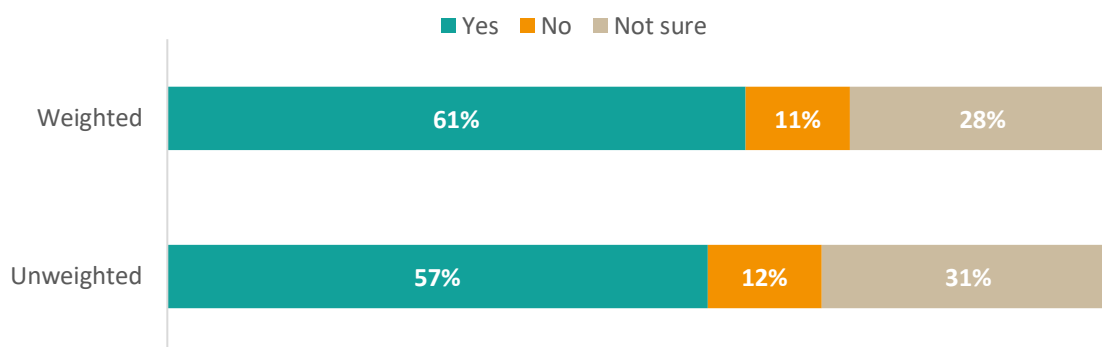
| Service                           | Improvement 1   | Improvement 2                            | Improvement 3  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Children Services</b>          | Support for SEN<br>43%  | More better facilities/services<br>18%   | Staffing<br>16%  |
| <b>Adult Social Care</b>          | More/better service/facilities required<br>40%                    | Adult Social Care Support<br>20%         | Funding<br>20%   |
| <b>Education</b>                  | Funding<br>23%  | Schools e.g. more improved choice<br>21% | SEN service/support<br>16%                             |
| <b>Communities and Well being</b> | More services/improved<br>36%                                     | Insufficient support<br>25%              | Other comment suggestions<br>10%                       |
| <b>Environment</b>                | Better recycling/waste management/more materials collected<br>35% | Roads/Highways/street<br>18%             | Parking<br>15%   |
| <b>Development and Planning</b>   | Planning Process<br>26%   | Other comments<br>16%                    | Development, e.g too much building<br>13%              |
| <b>Public Protection</b>          | Other comments suggestions<br>24%                                 | More Police<br>20%                       | Housing/building/planning control<br>15%               |
| <b>Commissioning</b>              | Other comments/suggestions<br>50%                                 | Care homes/agencies<br>31%               | Support<br>15%   |
| <b>Finance and Property</b>       | Other comments and suggestions<br>32%                             | Support/services/bene fits<br>20%        | Wasting of money/resources<br>18%                      |
| <b>Strategy and Governance</b>    | Communication/info<br>42%   | Other comments<br>29%                    | Strategy<br>13%  |
| <b>ICT</b>                        | Broadband, internet too slow<br>23%                               | Communication/access<br>20%              | ICT investment/pricing/resources to be improved<br>20% |

## Carbon neutrality

Residents were asked if they planned to take any actions to help achieve carbon neutrality<sup>4</sup>.

- Over half (**61%**) of residents stated they would take action to help achieve this goal. One in ten residents (11%) stated they would not take any action. The remaining 28% were not sure if they would take any action.

**Figure 14: Are you planning to take any actions to achieve this goal? Unweighted base - 1,198**



All residents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments relating to any of the questions about service improvement and prioritisation with West Berkshire Council. All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 446 residents provided a valid response to this question. NB: a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses. The main ones are listed below:

**Table 7: Comments on service improvement and prioritisation**

| Service prioritisation  | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Other comments e.g we already do as much as we can  | 136            | 30%              |
| Insulation/fuel changes e.g more efficient boiler   | 87             | 20%              |
| Electric car/hybrid   | 74             | 17%              |
| Financial restrictions e.g costs are a barrier, need funding to achieve carbon neutrality | 35             | 8%               |
| Unaware of how to contribute to carbon neutrality   | 25             | 6%               |
|   | 357            | 81%              |

<sup>4</sup> Carbon Neutrality is about reducing the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from various sources such as transport, building, processing, producing energy or farming and about removing carbon oxide from the atmosphere in order to achieve net zero emissions.

# Section 3: Communication and Engagement

This section focuses on how residents communicate with the Council.

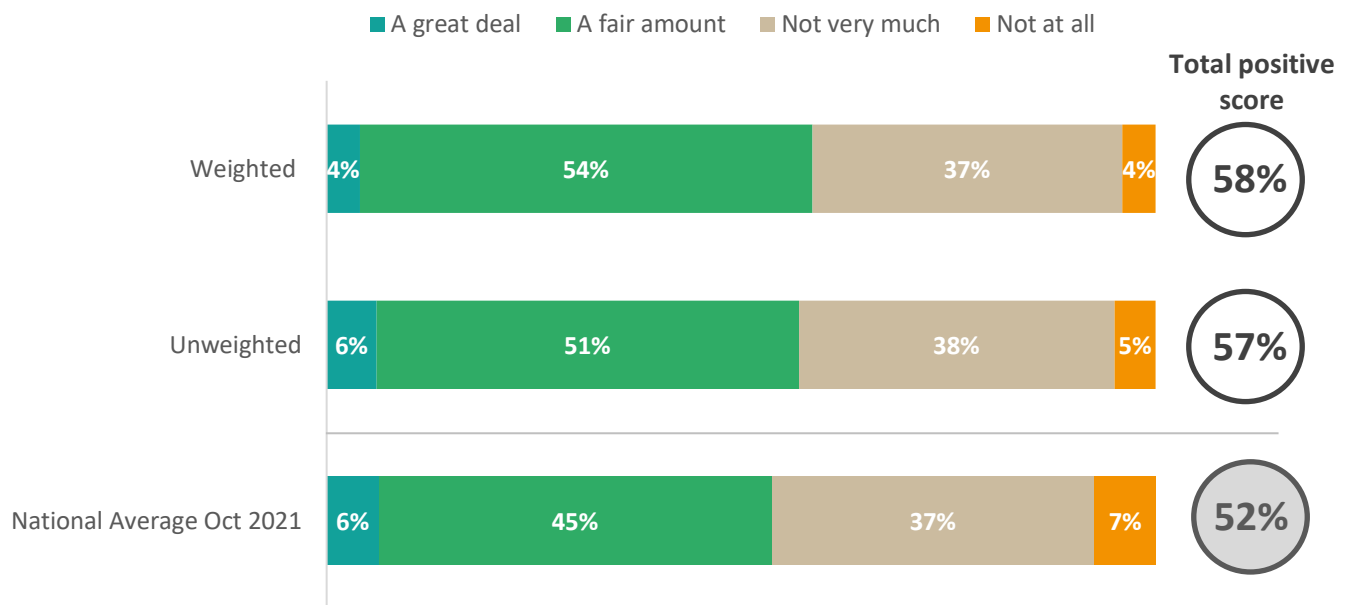
## Acts on the concerns of local residents

Residents were asked to what extent West Berkshire Council acted on the concerns of local residents.


- **58%** of residents felt the Council acts on the concerns of resident either ‘a great deal’ (4%) or ‘a fair amount’ (54%). Although the total positive score for the indicator is low, it is still above (6% points) the national average score of 52%.

**Figure 15: To what extent does West Berkshire Council act on the concerns of local residents**

*Unweighted base – 949*

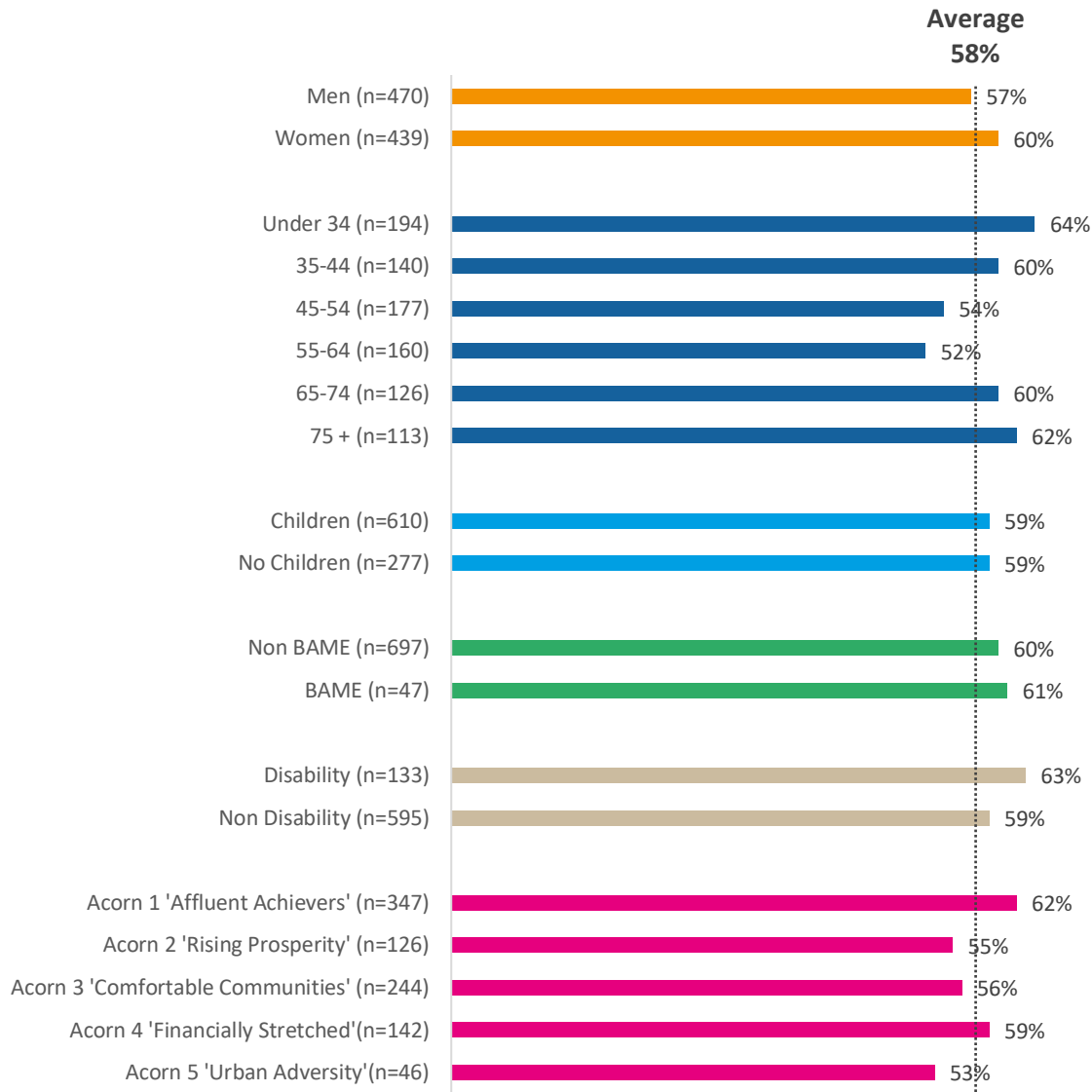


Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group:



- Residents aged under 34 (64%) were more likely to have felt that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents, compared to those aged 55 to 64 years (52%).

**Figure 16: Agreement with the Council acts on the concerns of local residents (Weighted data)**



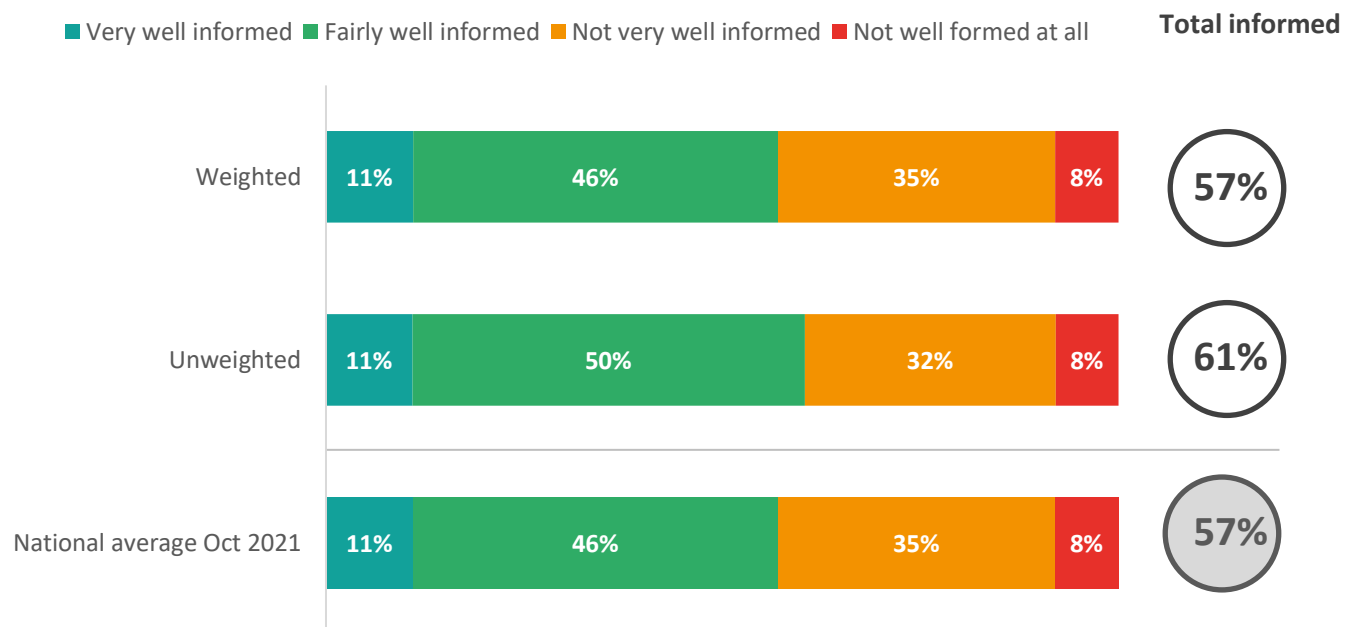
## Keeping residents informed about the services and benefits provided

Residents were asked how well-informed they think West Berkshire Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides.


- **57%** of residents either felt the Council keeps them ‘very’ (11%) or ‘fairly’ (46%) well informed about the services and benefits it provides.
- The score for this indicator is the same as the national average of 57%.

**Figure 17: Overall, how well informed do you think West Berkshire Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?**

Unweighted base- 1,114

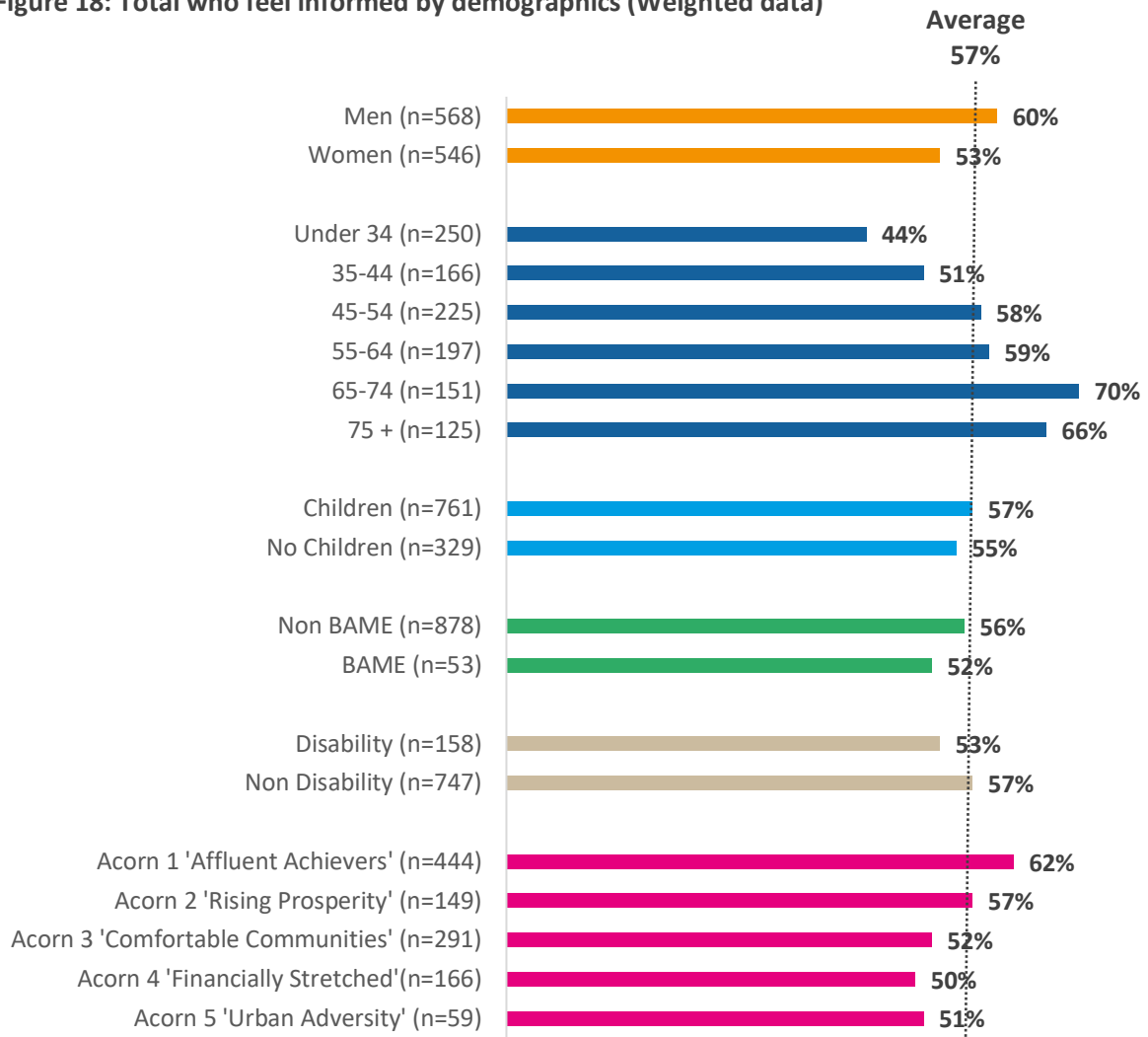


Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group:



- The younger age group (under 34) were significantly less likely to feel that the Council keeps them informed (44%) compared to those aged 65-74 with (70%) stating that the Council keeps them informed.

**Figure 18: Total who feel informed by demographics (Weighted data)**



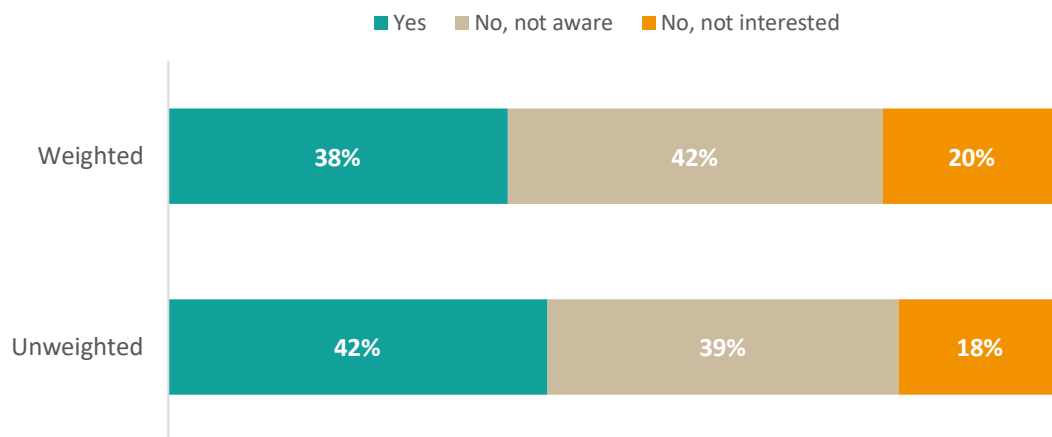


Residents were asked if they had received any of the West Berkshire Council e-bulletins, which provides updates on information, advice and support.

- Just over a third of **(38%)** of residents had signed up to e bulletins, whereas one fifth **(20%)** were not interested in signing up. The remaining **(42%)** were not aware of them.

**Figure 19: Have you signed up to receive any of West Berkshire Council’s e-bulletins?**

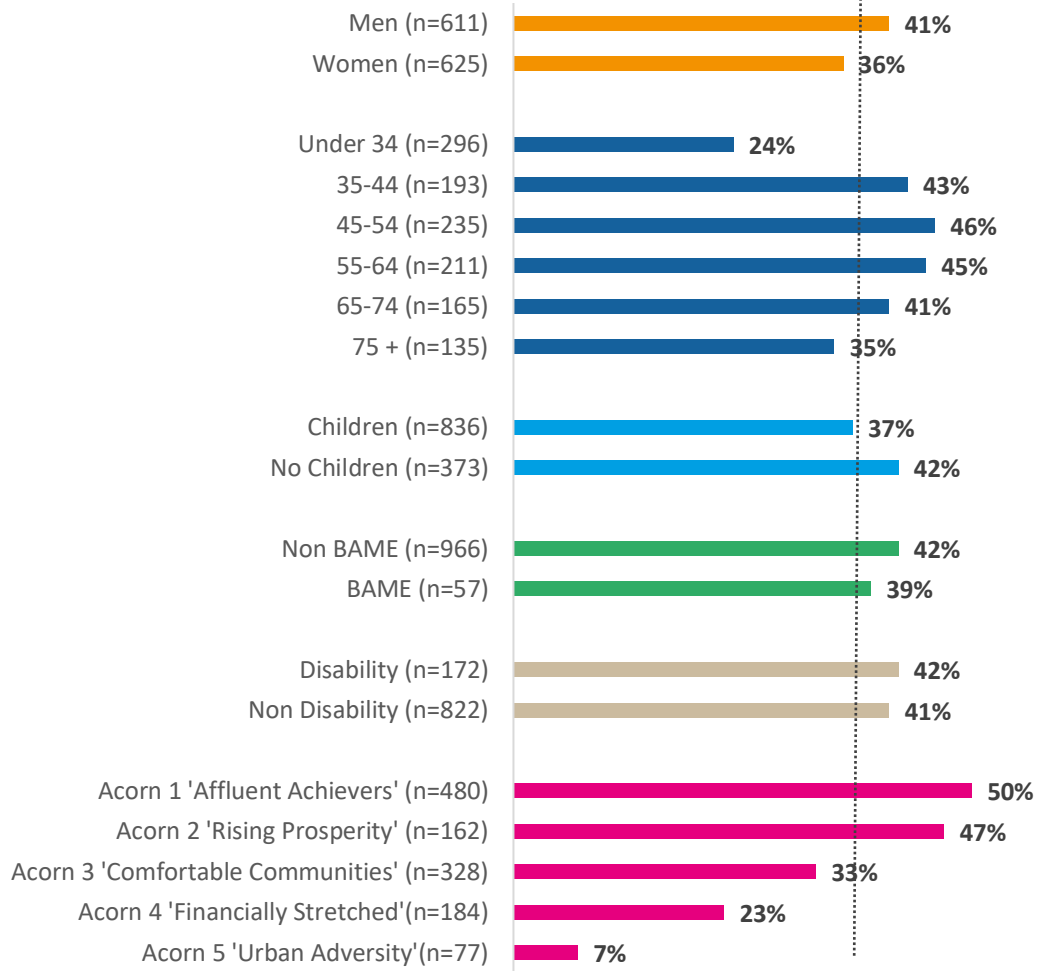
Unweighted base -1,229



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group and Acorn group:

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residents aged between 45-54 were more likely to have signed up to e bulletins (46%) compared to (24%) of those under 34. Nearly half of those aged under 34 (47%) were unaware that there were e-bulletins.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Those living in homes classified as Acorn 1 ‘Affluent Achievers’ were more likely (50%) to have signed up to e bulletins compared to those in Acorn 5 ‘Urban Adversity’ homes where only 7% signed up. This group was also more likely to say they were not aware (56%) of e-bulletins.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 20: Total who signed up to e-bulletins (Weighted data)** **Average 38%**

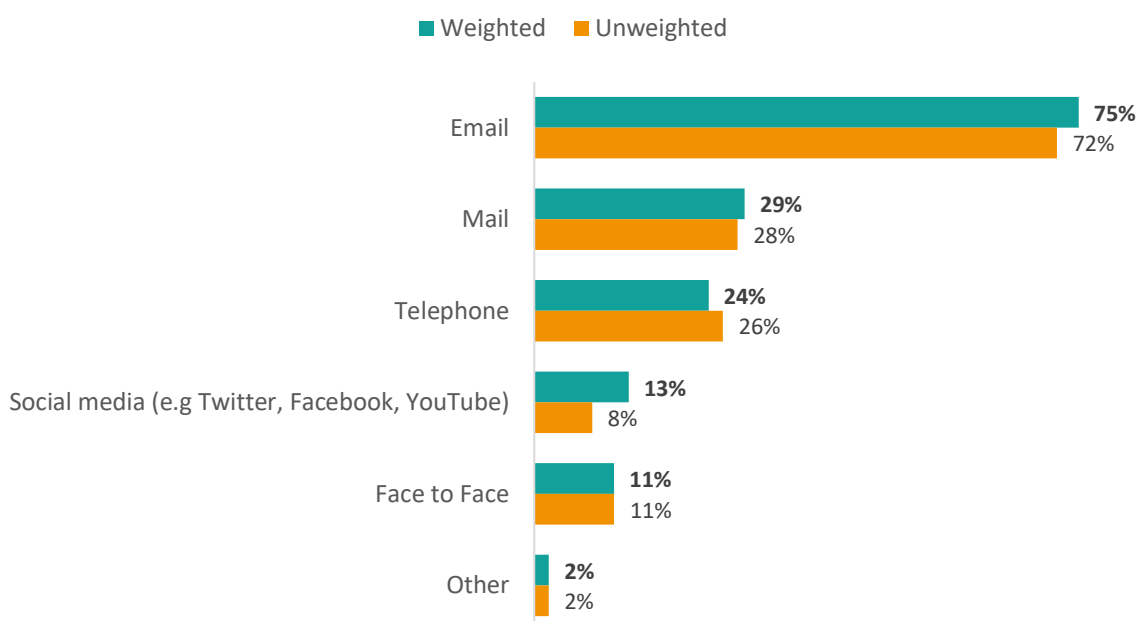


## Preferred methods of receiving information

All residents were then asked for their preferred method of receiving information about the Council. The most preferred methods were via email (75%) this was followed by just under a third (29%) stating via mail.


**Figure 21: Please tell us how you would prefer to receive information about the Council?**

Unweighted base -1,229



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group and gender, ethnicity and Acorn:

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older residents aged 75 and over were more likely to prefer information via telephone (43%).</li> <li>Those from the youngest age group (34 and under) preferred communication via mail (39%).</li> <li>Communication via email was popular with all age groups ranging from 71% (65-74) to 84% (45-54). However only half of those aged 75 and over (50%) preferred this method.</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men were more likely than women to prefer communication via email (78% vs. 72%).</li> <li>Women were more likely than men to prefer communication via social media provided by the Council (16% vs. 10%).</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nearly a third of residents from BAME backgrounds preferred communication (28%) provided face to face compared to just (9%) of those from Non BAME backgrounds.</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication via email was mostly favoured (81%) by those living in Acorn 1 'Affluent achievers' homes compared to less than half (45%) of Acorn 5 'Urban adversity' homes.</li> <li>Over half (54%) of those in Acorn 5 'Urban adversity' homes preferred communication by mail</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

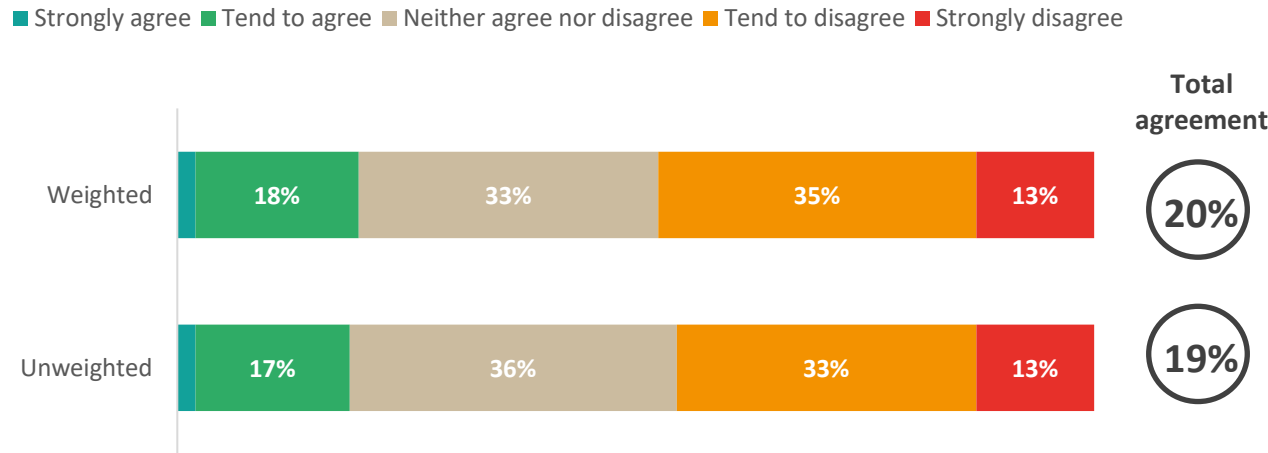
**Influencing decisions that affect the local area**

Residents were asked to what extent they agree they can influence decisions that affect their local area.




- 20% of residents either 'strongly' (2%) or 'tended to' (18%) agree that they could influence decisions that affect their local area. A third (33%) had no feelings either way and 47% disagreed with this.

**Figure 22: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?**

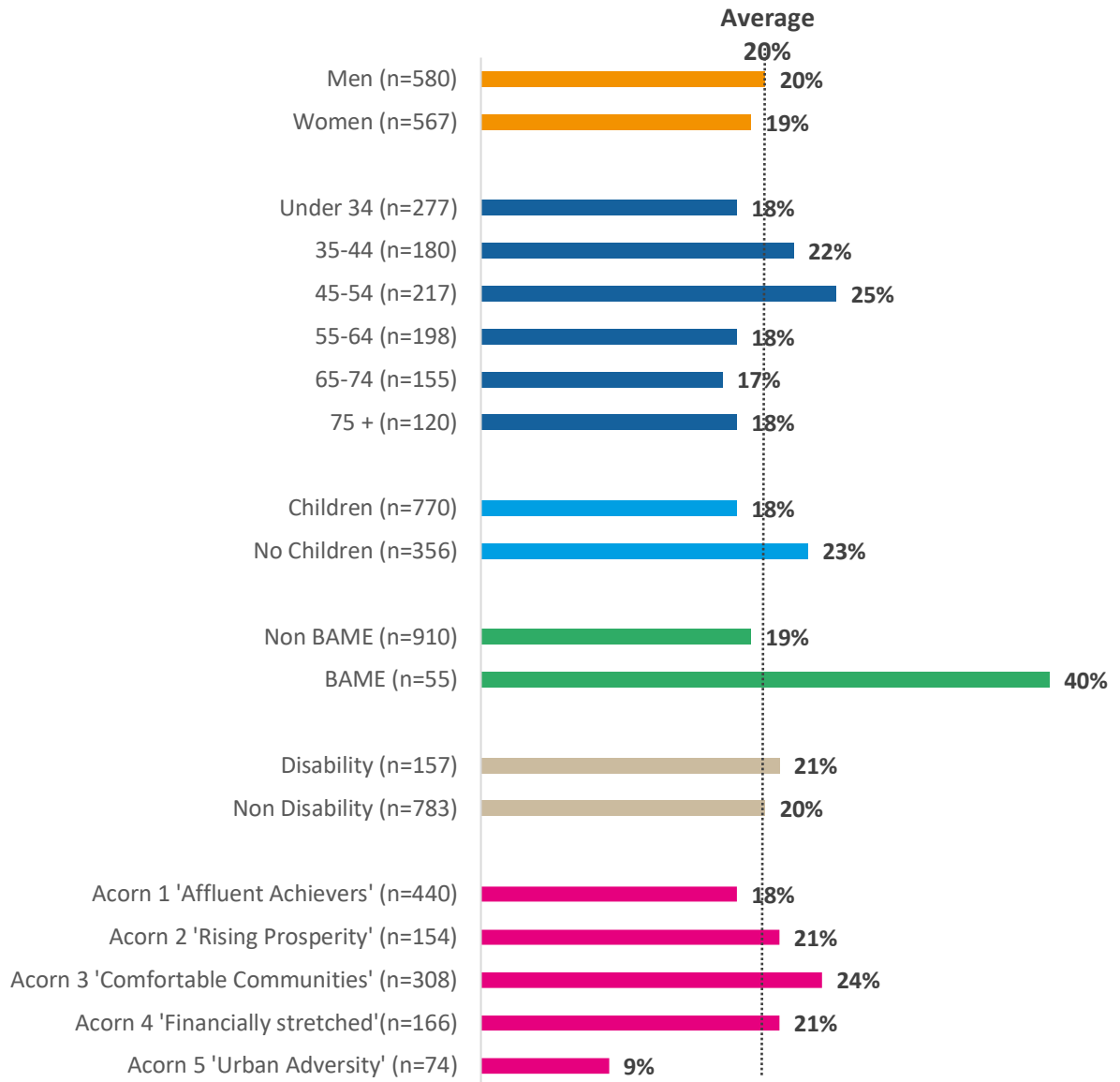
Unweighted base – 1,136



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, ethnicity, and Acorn:

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just over (55%) half of the younger (under 34) age group were significantly more likely to feel that they could not influence decisions, compared to those aged between 45-54 (39%).</li> </ul>                              |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those from BAME backgrounds (40%) were more likely to feel they could influence decisions affecting the local area, compared to only (19%) of those from Non BAME backgrounds.</li> </ul>                                    |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 9% of residents living in Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity' homes feel they can influence decisions affecting the local area compared to nearly a quarter of (24%) residents from Acorn 3 'Comfortable Communities'.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 23: Total agreement (strongly agree/tend to agree) that you can influence decisions that affect the local area by demographics (Weighted data)**



All residents were then given the opportunity to provide any additional comments relating to any of the questions about communication and engagement with West Berkshire Council. All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 205 residents provided a valid response to this question. NB: a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses. The main ones are listed below:

**Table 8: Additional comments on communication and engagement**

| Communication and Engagement                  | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Engage/communicate process e.g. email         | 26             | 13%              |
| Other, e.g value email bulletins              | 26             | 13%              |
| Council not listening e.g. resident views     | 25             | 12%              |
| Communication e.g limited                     | 22             | 11%              |
| Response too long/not received/unsatisfactory | 15             | 7%               |
|   | 114            | 56%              |

Some example comments are provided below:

**Engage/communicate process e.g email:**

“It's all email & phones not everyone has these.”

“Not receiving responses to complaints / queries.”

**Council not listening:**

“Young people’s voices are rarely heard when it comes to views on how to make life better for all.”

“Poor response to most problems that’s what we found when having anti-social issues “.”

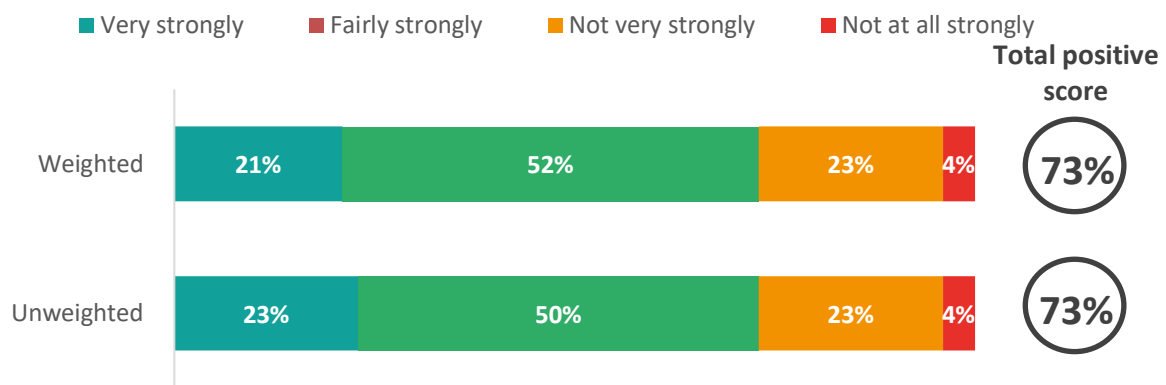
# Section 4: Sense of belonging, safety and the community

Residents were asked how strongly they felt they belonged to their area.




**73%** of residents either felt ‘very strongly’ (21%) or ‘fairly strongly’ (52%) that they belonged to their area. The remaining 27% felt ‘not at all strongly’ (4%) or ‘not very strongly’ (23%).

**Figure 24: How strongly do you feel you belong to the area?**

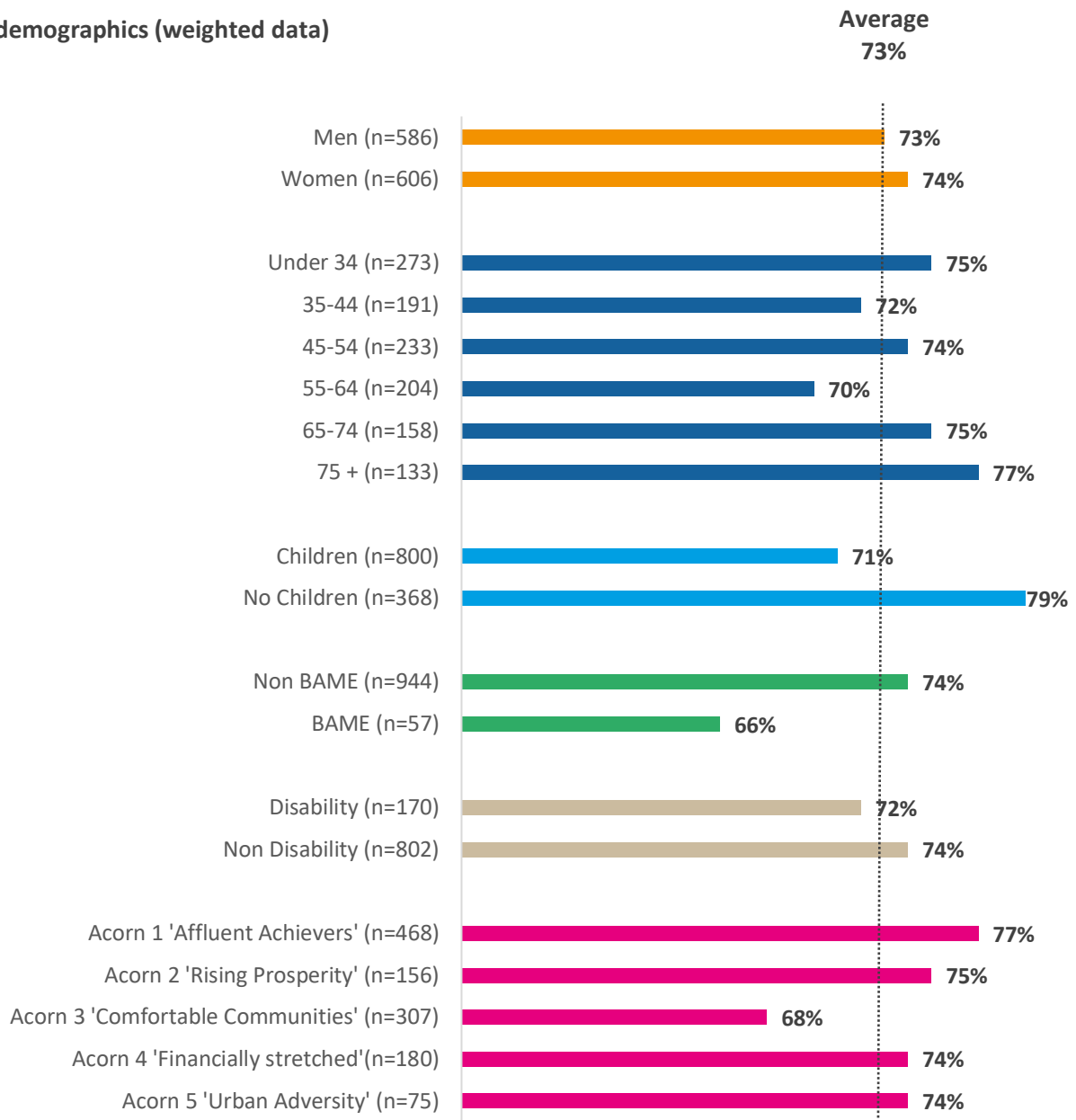
Unweighted base size – 1,191



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by those with children and Acorn group:

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those with no children (79%) were more likely to say they belonged to the area compared to (71%) of those with children.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those from non BAME backgrounds (74%) were more likely to say they belonged to the area, compared to (66%) of those from BAME backgrounds.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents living in areas classified as Acorn 1 ‘Affluent Achievers’ were more (77%) likely to feel that they belonged to an area compared to those living in Acorn 3 ‘Comfortable Communities’ (68%) areas.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 25: How strongly (very strongly/fairly strongly) to you feel you belong to the area by demographics (weighted data)**





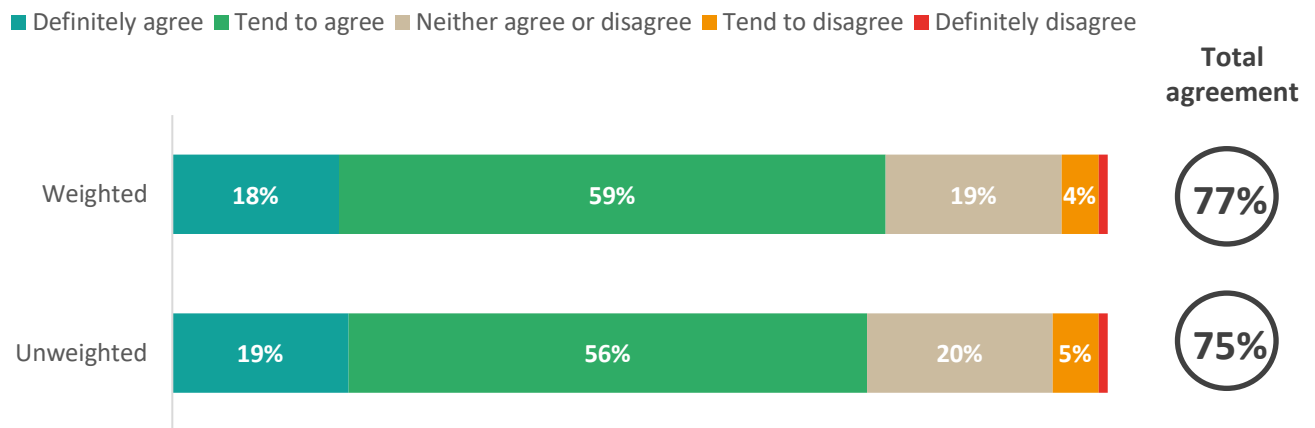
## Getting on well together

Residents were asked to what extent they agree that their local area is a place where people get on well together.

- 77% of residents either 'definitely' (18%) or 'tended' (59%) to agreed that people get on well together in their local area. Just under a fifth (19%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Figure 26: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people get on well together?**

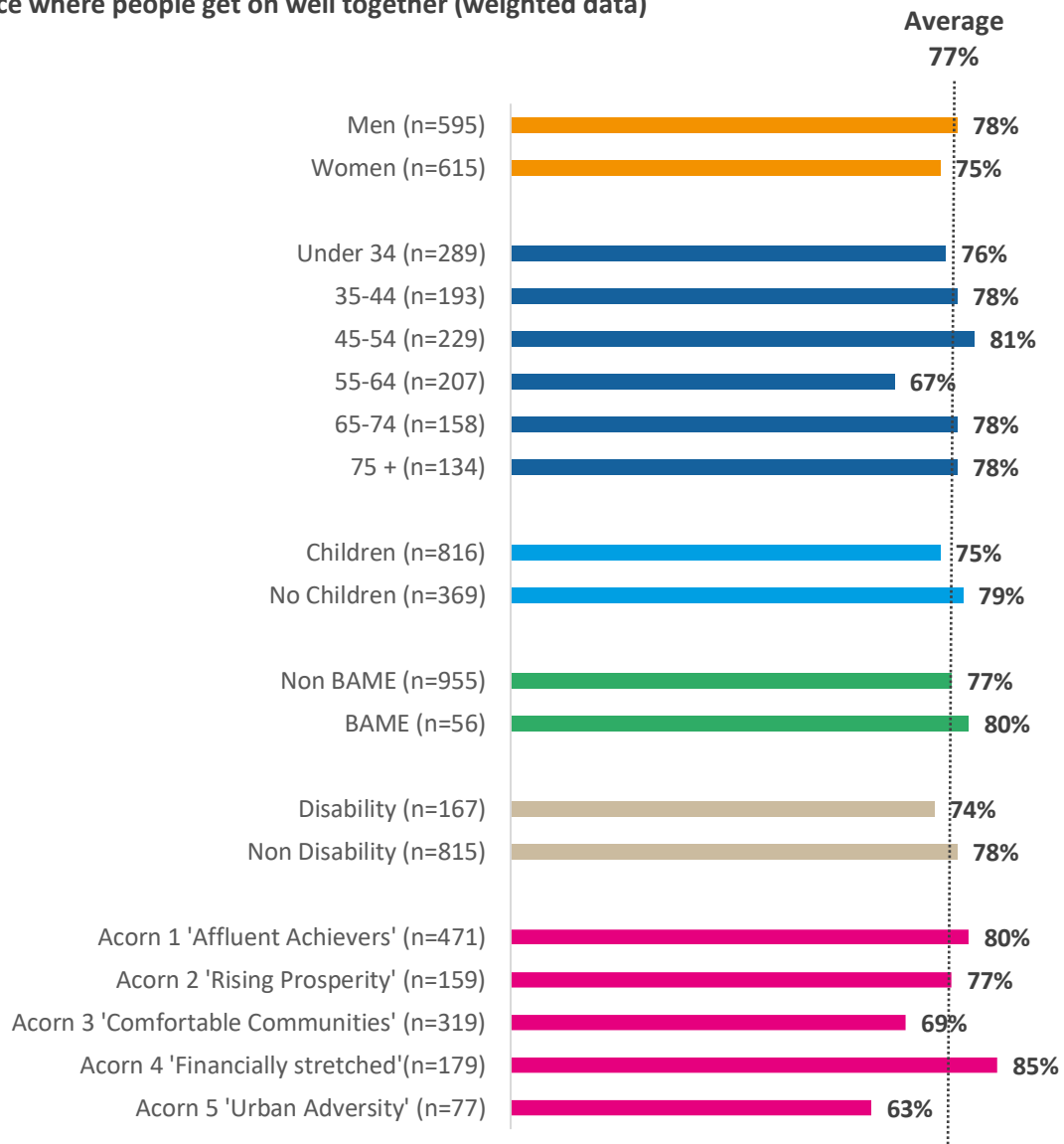
Unweighted base – 1,199



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age and Acorn:

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents aged between 45-54 were more likely to agree (81%) than 55-64 year olds (67%) that the local area is a place where people get on well together.</li> </ul>                             |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those living in homes classified as Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity were less likely (63%) than other Acorn categories to agree that the local area is a place where people get on together.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 27: How strongly to you agree that (definitely agree/tend to agree) in your local area is a place where people get on well together (weighted data)**



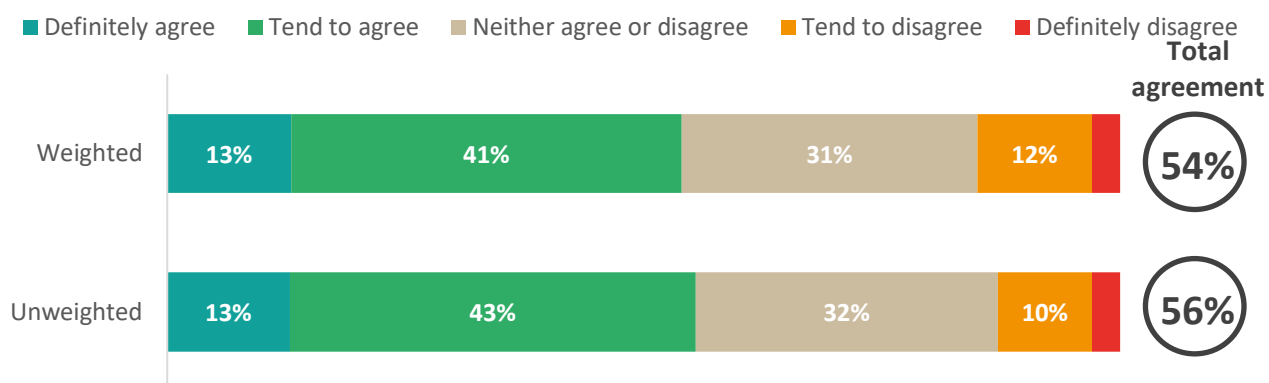
## Improvement to local area

Residents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area.

- **54%** of residents either 'definitely' (13%) or 'tended' (41%) to agree that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area.
- **15%** of residents either 'definitely' (3%) or 'tended' (12%) to disagree that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area. Just under a third (31%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Figure 28: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people pull together to improve the local area?**

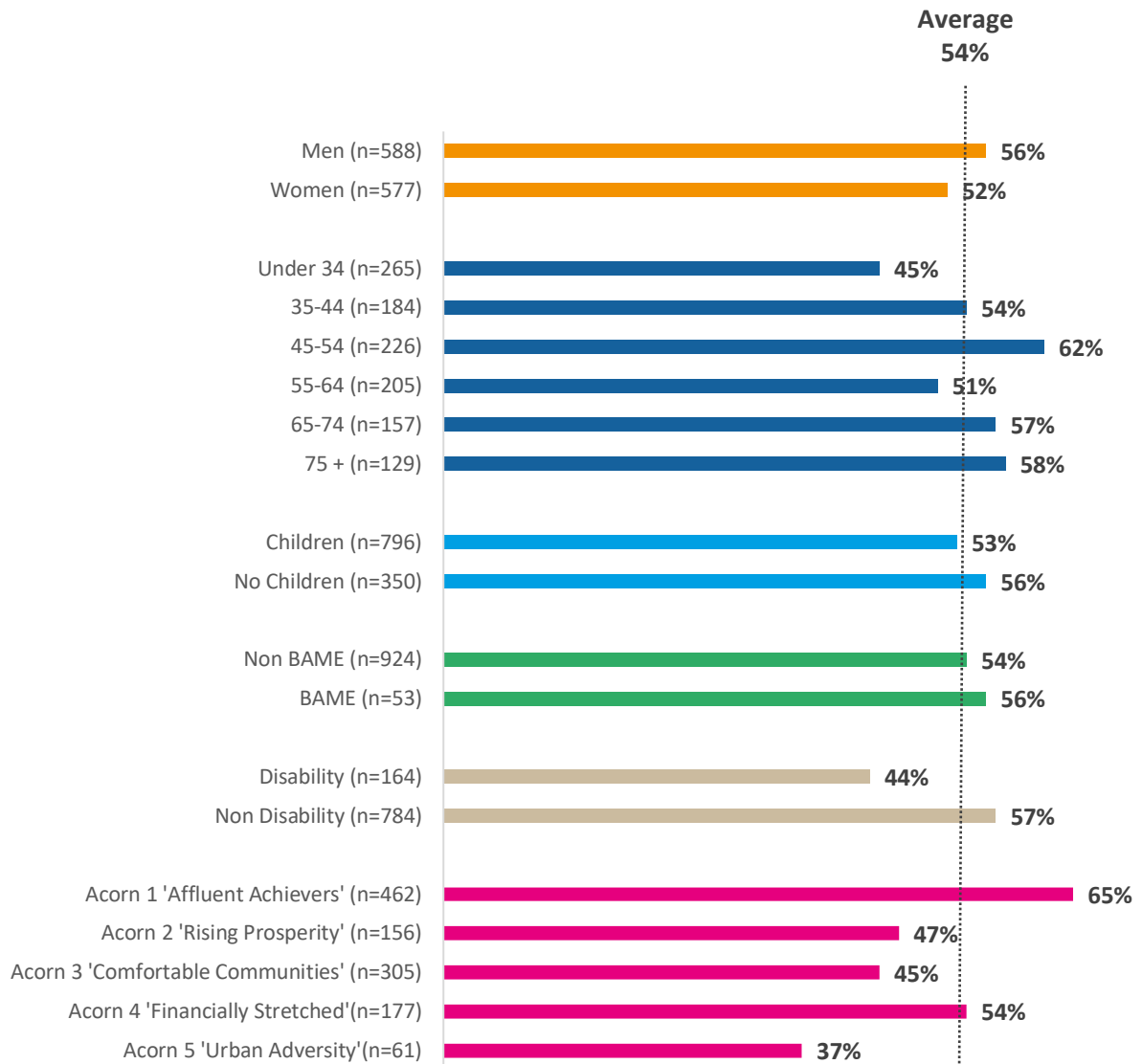
Unweighted base- 1,170



Sub group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, disability and Acorn:

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Those aged 34 and under (26%) were more likely to disagree that people in the area pulled together to improve the local area compared those aged (9%) 75 and over.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residents without a long-term health problem or disability (57%) were more likely to agree that people in their local area pulled together. This compares to (44%) with a long-term health problem or disability.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residents who lived in homes classified as Acorn category 1 'Affluent Achievers' (65%) were most likely to agree that their local area was a place where people pull together. This compares to 37% of those living in homes classified as Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity'.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 29: How strongly do you agree (definitely agree/tend to agree) that people in your local area pull together to improve the local area (weighted data)**



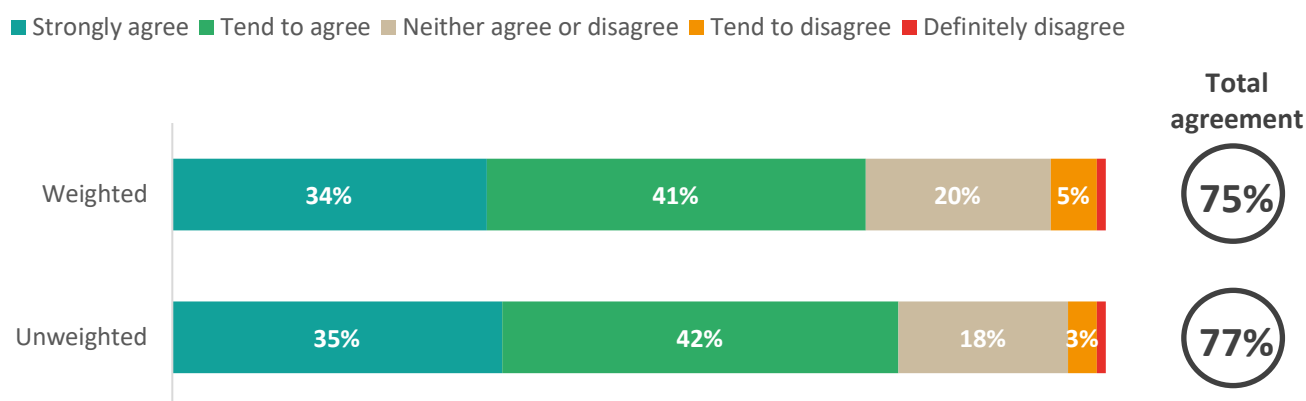
## Friendships and associations with people in neighbourhood

Residents were asked to what extent they agreed that the friendships and associations have with other people in the neighbourhood meant a lot to them

- 75% of residents either 'strongly' (34%) or 'tended to' (41%) agree that friendships and associations meant a lot to them. A fifth (20%) had no feelings either way and 6% disagreed with this.

**Figure 30: Do you agree or disagree that friendships and associations you have with other people in your neighbourhood mean a lot to you?**

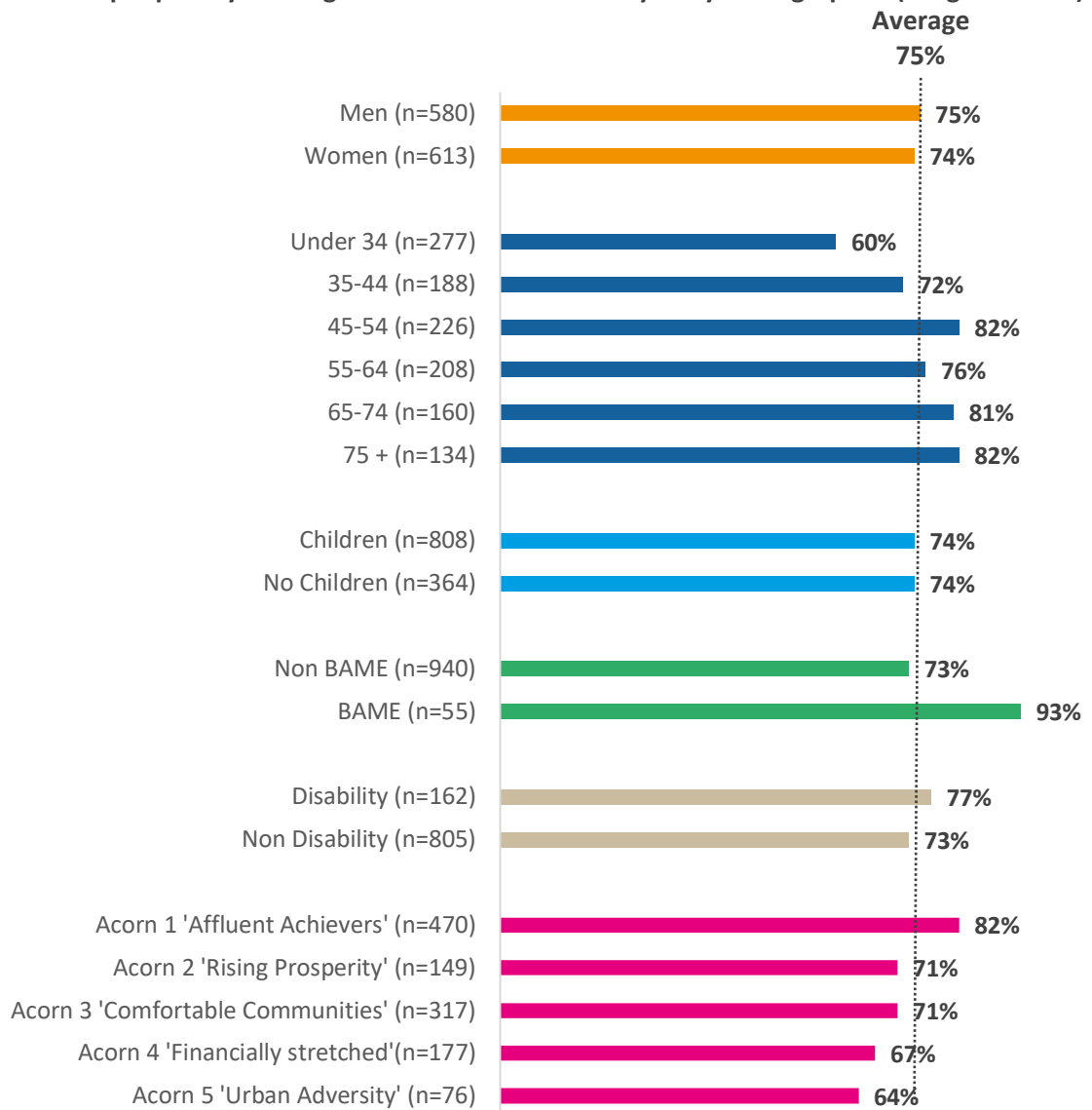
Unweighted base – 1,200



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, ethnicity and Acorn:

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The younger (under 35) age group was less likely (60%) to feel that friendships and associations meant a lot to them compared to those aged between 45-54 and 75 and over (both at 82%).</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those from BAME backgrounds (93%) agreed that friendships and associations they have with other people in the neighbourhood meant a lot to them compared to (73%) of those from Non BAME backgrounds.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents in Acorn 1 Areas (82%) 'Affluent Achievers' had significantly higher levels of agreement that friendships and associations they have with other people in the neighbourhood meant a lot to them compared to (64%) of those in Acorn 5 areas 'Urban Adversity'.</li> </ul> |

**Figure 31: Total agreement (strongly agree/tend to agree) that friendships and associations you have with other people in your neighbourhood mean a lot to you by demographics (weighted data)**



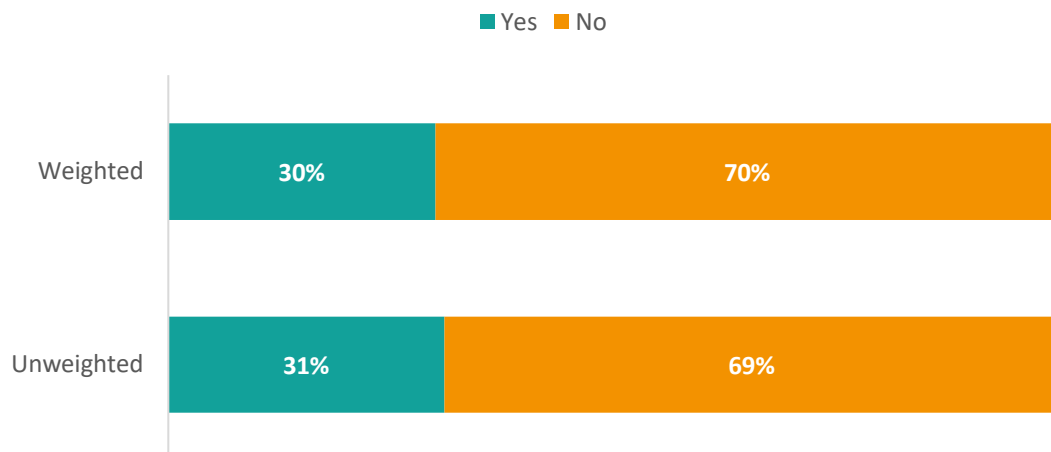
## Volunteering

We asked residents if they had given any time to help as a volunteer or helped any organisations, charity etc. in an unpaid capacity in the last 12 months.

- Under a third (**30%**) of residents had volunteered or provided unpaid time in the last 12 months.
- Of the residents who had given up their time (c.356), when asked what the reasons were the most common answer was that they wanted to do good for others and the community (77%), followed by just over a quarter (28%) stating they wanted to feel more of a connection with their local community.

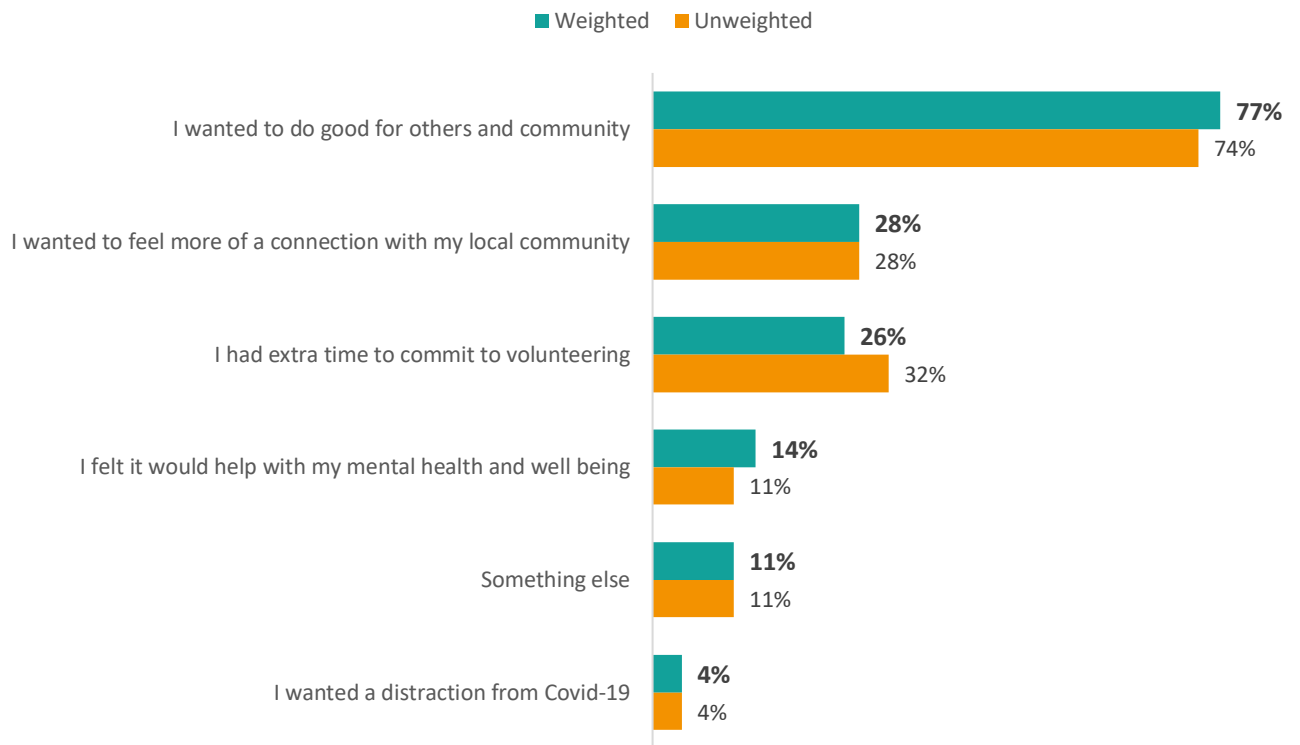
**Figure 32: Have you volunteered to help in your local community, either formally or informally, over the past year?**

*Unweighted base – 1,219*



**Figure 33: What were your reasons for choosing to volunteer in your local community over the past 12 months?**

Unweighted base - 360



The other reasons for choosing to volunteer in the local community are listed below. A total of 49 residents provided a valid response to this question. The main ones are listed below:

**Table 9: Other reasons for volunteering**

| Other reason for volunteering   | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Community, e.g donate to school | 14             | 29%              |
| Other comments                  | 10             | 20%              |
| Supporting others               | 8              | 16%              |
| Litter e.g unsightly            | 6              | 12%              |
| Volunteered previously          | 6              | 12%              |

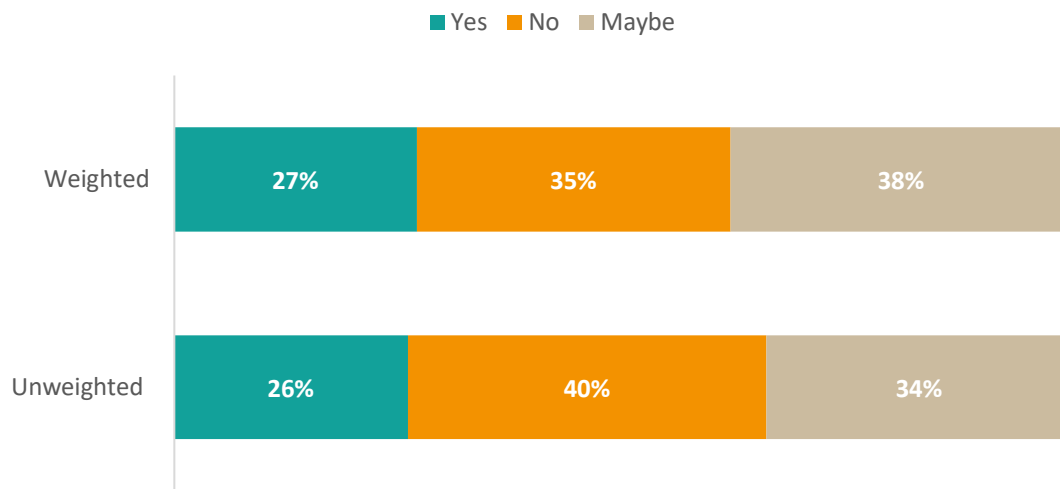
All residents were asked if they intended to volunteer in the local community during the next 12 months.

- **35%** of residents stated they did not intend to volunteer in the next 12 months, followed by 38% who said that they may volunteer and 27% said that they would volunteer.



**Figure 34: Do you intend to volunteer in your local community during the next 12 months?**

Unweighted size – 1,209



Sub-group analysis shows that there were significant variations by age group, ethnicity, and Acorn:




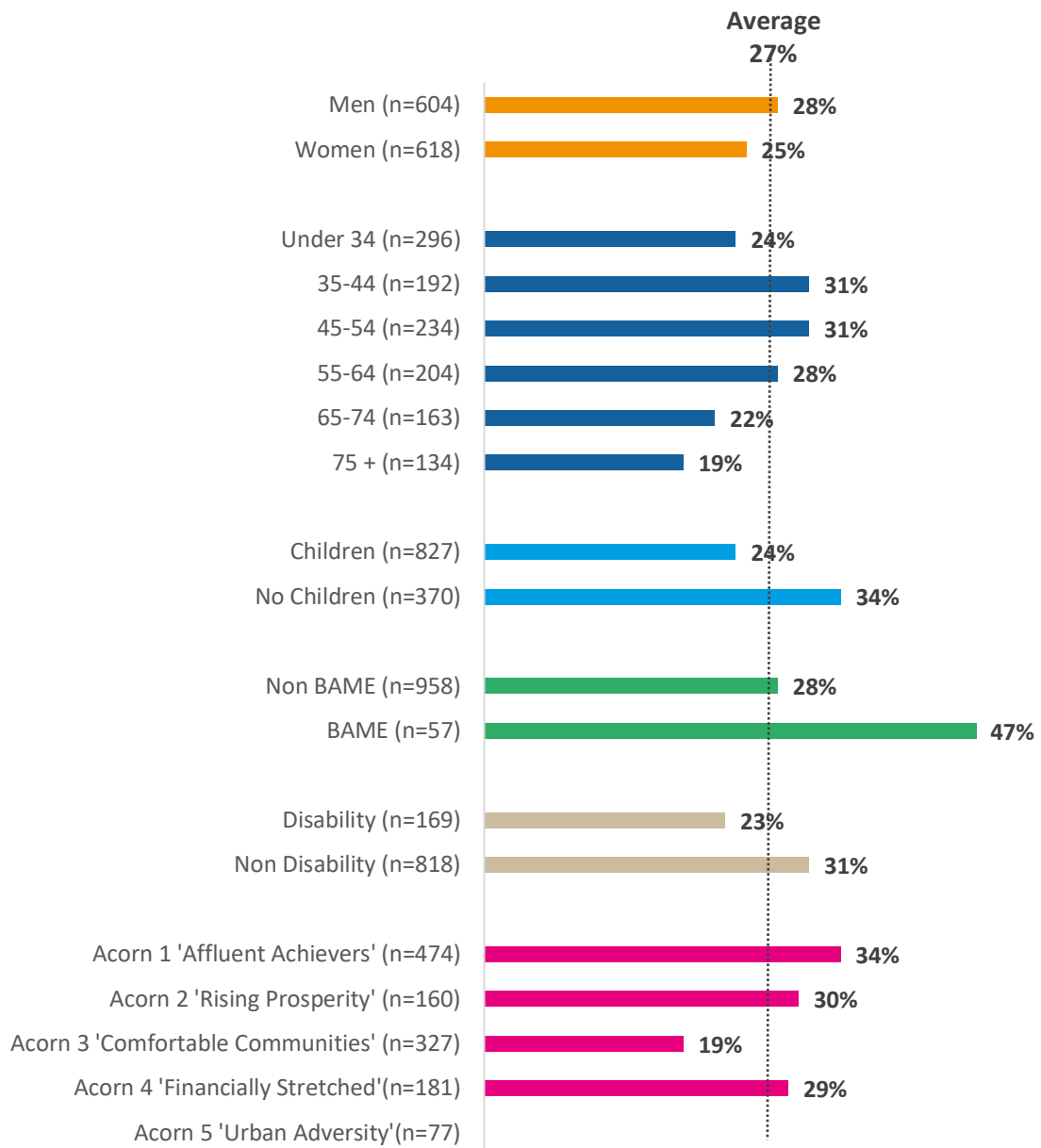
|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those aged 35-54 (31%) were more likely to volunteer in the next 12 months compared to those aged 75+ (18%).</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those from BAME backgrounds (47%) were more likely to volunteer in the next 12 months compared to those from Non BAME backgrounds (28%).</li> </ul>                            |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35% of residents living in Acorn 1 'Affluent Achievers' homes were likely to volunteer in the next 12 months compared to none from Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity' homes.</li> </ul> |

Figure 35 : Agreement to volunteering in community during the next 12 months (Weighted data)



Residents were given the opportunity to add any additional comments, a total of 250 of residents responded, the table below shows the key themes. The most popular themes related to be limited by age/disability/illness (73 mentions) followed by other comments such as just moved into the area (31 mentions). There was also (31 mentions) of those that already volunteer or help in other ways.

**Table 10: Additional comments on volunteering in the local community during the next 12 months?**

| Key themes  | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Limited by age/disability/illness                   | 73             | 29%              |
| Other comments e.g moving away, restricted by covid | 31             | 12%              |
| Already volunteering/helping in other ways          | 31             | 12%              |

Some example comments are provided below:

**Limited by age/disability/illness:**

“Too old to try to influence or to volunteer.”

“Our age and medical condition make volunteering impractical.”

**Already volunteering/helping in other ways:**

“We clean Wash Common park. Help with scouts. Assist during Covid. Volunteer in schools.”

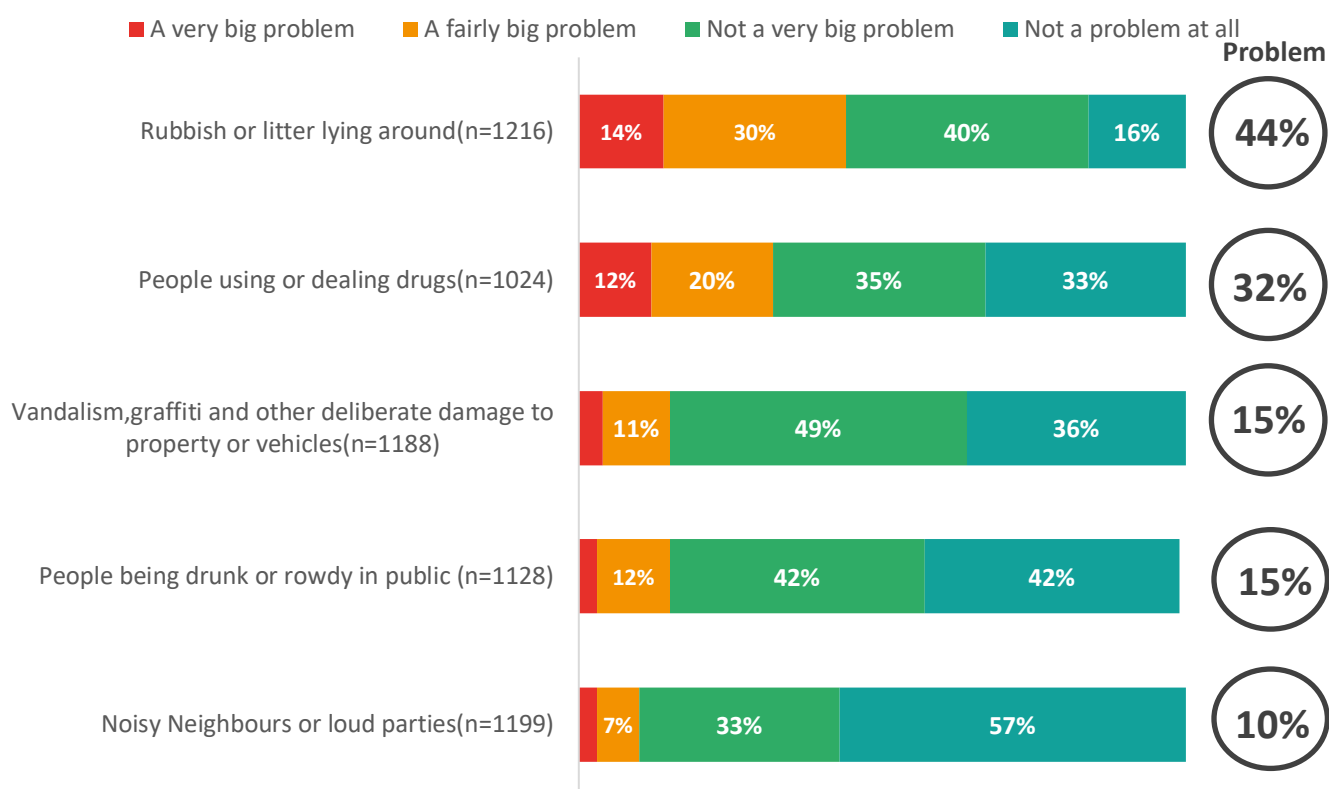
“Driver for downlands volunteer group”

## What problems are there in the local area

Residents were provided with a list of common problems in the local area and asked how much of a problem there were in their local area. Results show that:

- The main problem seemed to be rubbish or litter lying around, with 44% stating that it was either a 'very big problem' (14%) or a 'fairly big problem' (30%).
- Nearly a third of residents (32%) stated that people using or dealing drugs was either a 'very big problem' (12%) or a 'fairly big problem' (20%).

**Figure 36: How much of a problem do you think the following are (weighted data)**



Sub-group analysis, based on the top two aspects which were most applicable to West Berkshire, show the following: *Please note: only statistically significant differences have been included.*

### Rubbish or litter lying around

- Nearly half (49%) of all residents aged under 34 stated that rubbish or litter lying around was a very/fairly big problem compared to 38% of those aged 75 and over.
- Just under half (45%) of those from Non BAME residents thought rubbish/litter lying around was a big problem compared to (31%) of BAME residents.
- Those residents living homes classified as Acorn 4 'Financially Stretched' (56%) stated rubbish/litter lying around was a big problem compared to those from Acorn 1 (35%) 'Affluent Achievers' homes.

## People using or dealing drugs

- Those aged 55-64 years stated that people using or dealing drugs (39%) was a fairly/very big problem in the area compared to those aged under 34 (22%).
- Residents who lived in homes classified as Acorn category 4 'Financially Stretched' (40%) stated that people using or dealing drugs was a fairly/big problem in the area compared to those that live in Acorn 1 'Affluent Achievers' homes (23%).

Table 11 presents the proportion of residents stating aspects were either were a 'very big' or 'a fairly big' problem by ward, with the highest and lowest percentages colour coded. Although caution should be taken when interpreting the results due to the small sample sizes achieved by ward. Results should there be treated as indicative.

- Resident living in the Lambourn Ward were more likely to have said that 'rubbish or litter lying around' (83%), 'people using or dealing drugs' (79%) and 'vandalism, graffiti & other deliberate damage to property or vehicles' (36%) were a problem compared to the other wards.
- Resident living in the Theale Ward were more likely to have said that 'people being drunk or rowdy in public places' (29%) and 'noisy neighbours or loud parties' (36%) were a problem compared to other wards.

Table 11: Proportion of residents stating aspects were either were a 'very big' or 'a fairly big' problem by ward (highest and lowest percentages colour coded)

|  | Rubbish or litter lying around | People using or dealing drugs | Vandalism, graffiti & other deliberate damage to property or vehicles | People being drunk or rowdy in public places | Noisy neighbours or loud parties |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Aldermaston Ward (n=32)                  | 32%                            | 19%                           | 0%  | 0%   | 0%                               |
| Basildon Ward (n=21)                     | 44%                            | 0%                            | 0%  | 7%   | 7%                               |
| Bradfield Ward (n=26)                    | 29%                            | 11%                           | 9%  | 0%   | 6%                               |
| Bucklebury Ward (n=26)                   | 33%                            | 34%                           | 7%  | 2%   | 0%                               |
| Burghfield & Mortimer Ward (n=65)        | 48%                            | 19%                           | 18%   | 5%   | 6%                               |
| Chieveley & Cold Ash Ward (n=69)         | 28%                            | 14%                           | 11%   | 6%   | 8%                               |
| Downlands Ward (n=26)                    | 18%                            | 13%                           | 0%  | 0%   | 5%                               |
| Hungerford & Kintbury Ward (n=92)        | 45%                            | 30%                           | 11%   | 9%   | 17%                              |
| Lambourn Ward (n=38)                     | 83%                            | 79%                           | 36%   | 28%  | 15%                              |
| Newbury Central Ward (n=63)              | 40%                            | 34%                           | 21%   | 28%  | 16%                              |
| Newbury Clay Hill Ward (n=71)            | 38%                            | 36%                           | 8%  | 13%  | 18%                              |
| Newbury Greenham Ward (n=97)             | 38%                            | 46%                           | 24%   | 32%  | 12%                              |
| Newbury Speen Ward (n=57)                | 61%                            | 50%                           | 13%   | 19%  | 8%                               |
| Newbury Wash Common Ward (n=82)          | 37%                            | 33%                           | 11%   | 22%  | 1%                               |
| Pangbourne Ward (n=28)                   | 47%                            | 47%                           | 29%   | 10%  | 5%                               |
| Ridgeway Ward (n=23)                     | 26%                            | 11%                           | 12%   | 4%   | 11%                              |
| Thatcham Central Ward (n=57)             | 50%                            | 29%                           | 17%   | 16%  | 4%                               |
| Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham Ward (n=26) | 55%                            | 59%                           | 15%   | 12%  | 4%                               |
| Thatcham North East Ward (n=61)          | 41%                            | 26%                           | 4%  | 21%  | 9%                               |
| Thatcham West Ward (n=58)                | 44%                            | 28%                           | 17%   | 15%  | 7%                               |
| Theale Ward (n=38)                       | 76%                            | 23%                           | 14%   | 29%  | 36%                              |
| Tilehurst & Purley Ward (n=82)           | 34%                            | 31%                           | 8%  | 2%   | 10%                              |
| Tilehurst Birch Copse Ward (n=60)        | 44%                            | 29%                           | 34%   | 13%  | 4%                               |
| Tilehurst South & Holybrook Ward (n=51)  | 56%                            | 34%                           | 34%   | 19%  | 19%                              |

All residents were offered the opportunity to provide additional comments relating to any of the questions about sense of belonging, safety and community. All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 267 residents provided a valid response to this question. NB: a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses. The main ones are listed below:

**Table 12: Additional comments on belonging, safety and community**

| Sense of belonging, safety and community                  | No of mentions | % of respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Other comments/e.g live in a quiet place, happy with area | 71             | 27%              |
| Drugs/alcohol   | 66             | 25%              |
| Rubbish/litter  | 66             | 25%              |
| Noise issues  | 24             | 9%               |
| Traffic/parking   | 15             | 6%               |
| Antisocial behaviour                                      | 15             | 6%               |

Some example comments are provided below:

**Drugs/alcohol:**

“I don't go into Pangbourne at night anymore as I don't feel safe. Drug dealing, drunkenness and rowdy behaviour is rife!”

“More and more there is evidence of drug dealing and substance abuse. it has become visible on the streets and is influencing younger people.”

**Rubbish/litter:**

“Packaging, coffee cups, unwanted food and drink from local takeaways all discarded on footpaths and thrown in hedgerows are annoying.”

“Masks & litter apparent wherever you are out walking around the area. More dog waste bins needed & regular emptying of bins.”

## Section 5: Personal Well being

We used the ONS's four wellbeing questions (a validated question set) which measure life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile, happiness and anxiety. Individuals were asked to respond to the questions on a scale from 0 to 10 where '0' is 'Not at all' and 10 is 'completely'. Mean scores have been calculated for each measure, the below threshold should be used when interpreting the results.

**Table 13: Personal well-being thresholds**

| Life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness scores |           | Anxiety scores |          |
|--|-----------|----------------|----------|
| 0 to 4   | Low       | 0 to 1         | Very low |
| 5 to 6   | Medium    | 2 to 3         | Low      |
| 7 to 8   | High      | 4 to 5         | Medium   |
| 9 to 10  | Very High | 6 to 10        | High     |

Table 14 below shows the averages of West Berkshire residents.

- West Berkshire resident scores were just slightly lower than the national average (latest data available for the period just pre pandemic) for satisfaction with life nowadays, feeling worthwhile and happiness.
- The anxiety score was 0.56 higher than the national average score.

**Table 14: ONS wellbeing measure mean scores**

| ONS Measure                     | West Berkshire residents | National average* |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Satisfaction with life nowadays | 7.33                     | 7.66              |
| Feeling worthwhile              | 7.68                     | 7.86              |
| Happiness                       | 7.33                     | 7.48              |
| Anxiety                         | 3.61                     | 3.05              |

\*Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics, April 2019-March 2020 (latest data available)

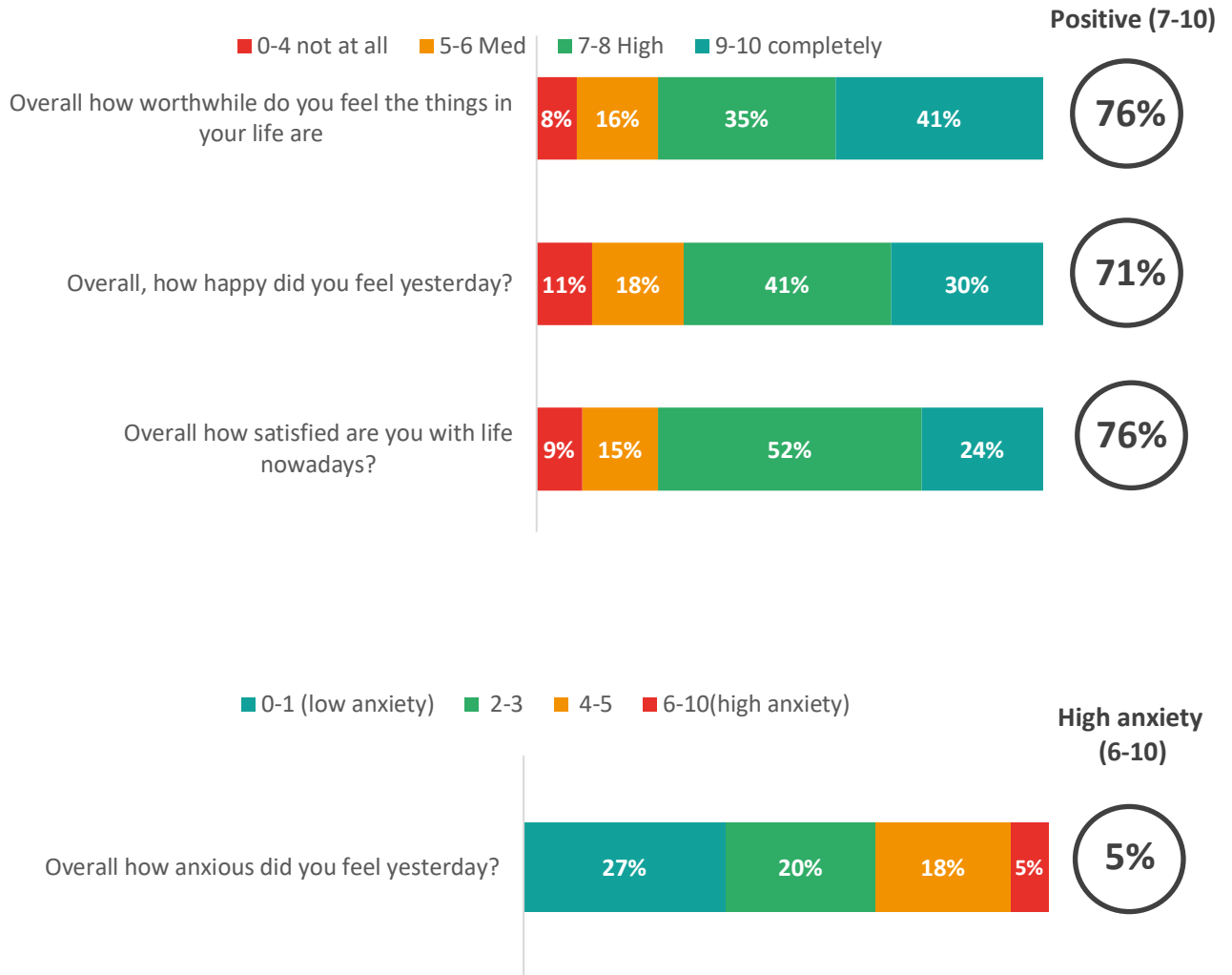
Figure 37 below presents the scaled scores for the ONS Measure.

- When scoring how worthwhile do you feel the things in your life are, positively over three quarters of residents (76%) scored 7-10.
- 71%** stated they felt happy yesterday, where as 29% scored this low.



- A total of **5%** stated that they had high anxiety yesterday.

**Figure 37: Feelings on aspects of life on a scale of 0 to 10 (weighted data):**



# Conclusions & recommendations

## Attitudes towards the local area

Findings from the survey show a number of successes, the results were positive for satisfaction with the local area as a place to live (89%), this score is above the national average (78%). Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things (64%) is also positive this is 8% points above the national average score (56%).

The proportion of residents agreeing the Council provides value for money was 37%. This indicator is lower than the national average score (42%).

A third of residents (33%) would speak positively about the Council (either with or without being asked) and over half had no feelings either way (51%) suggesting they perhaps perceived that they had limited or had no interaction with the Council.

Residents were given the opportunity to freely comment on the satisfaction of their area and with West Berkshire Council. Positive aspects included (15%) prompt service and (9%) happy with the way West Berkshire Council runs things. Whereas negative aspects that were mentioned (15%) were that they were not satisfied and could do more, while 14% stated a bad service or still waiting.

## Key sub-groups variations

Those from younger age groups (aged 34 under) scored the lowest satisfaction levels in many aspects. They were less likely to be satisfied with how the Council run things, to disagree that the Council provides value for money, that they could influence decisions that affect their local area and speak positively about the Council. This group also had low satisfaction with how informed they were with the Council about the services and benefits it provides. However, this group was less likely to have signed up to e-bulletins, but it is not known if there is a desire to be informed for this age group.

Those living in homes classified as Acorn 5 'Urban Adversity' were also less satisfied than all the other Acorn categories and were more likely to report problems in their local area, this may have contributed to their dissatisfaction.

## Service improvement and prioritisation

The main service choices needed by most residents were waste and recycling collection and cleaning services, followed by roads, highway streets and emergency services/healthcare. The majority of residents (60%) stated that environmental services required the most improvement and a third (33%)

stated development and planning required improvement. When asked the specific elements that needed to be improved, (35%) better recycling, waste management and more materials collected was commonly mentioned. For development and planning, (26%) stated a better planning process was required.

Over half of residents (61%) said that they would take action to help achieve carbon neutrality, with (20%) stating they could do this by fuel changes and a more efficient boiler and 17% would consider an electric car/hybrid.

## **Communication and Engagement**

Over half of residents (58%) agreed that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents. Residents were in line with the national average (57%) that felt well informed by the Council about the services and benefits it provides.

Over a third of residents (38%) had signed up for e-bulletins from West Berkshire Council, but 42% were not aware of them.

Residents would prefer to receive information about the Council by email (75%) and via mail (29%). Older residents were more likely to want to prefer information via telephone (43%). Those from BAME backgrounds would prefer receiving information by face to face.

The majority of residents disagreed (47%) that they could influence decisions that affect their local area, whereas (33%) a third had no feelings either way.

## **Communicating with the Council**

Nearly half of residents (48%) had contact with the Council in the past 6 months. The main reason for contact was to request a service (54%) followed by (34%) to report a problem. Main themes of contact were related to recycling/waste (38%) and planning (19%). The majority of residents had a positive experience (56%), whereas 14% had a negative experience.

## **Sense of belonging, safety and community**

Positively, a total of 77% agreed that their local area is a place where people get on well together, a similar proportion (75%) agreed that friendships and associations they have with other people in the neighbourhood meant a lot to them.

Over half of residents (54%) agreed that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area. Those from younger age groups, and from Acorn 5 areas were less likely to agree.

## Volunteering

Around a third (30%) of residents had provided unpaid help or support in the last 12 months, mainly for wanting to do good for others and the community. Barriers to providing unpaid help and support focused on limited by age, disability or illness – factors mainly outside the Councils control.

## Problems in the local area

The main problems in local areas seem to be rubbish lying around with (44%) of residents stating this, followed by (32%) stating people are using or dealing drugs. Those living in Acorn 4 areas were more likely to have agreed with both of the problems above.

### Recommendation 1

Although overall satisfaction in most areas were positive, residents from younger age groups were significantly less likely to feel this way. The reasons for this should be further explored through direct engagement with residents from this group. In addition, the Council could consider developing on the concept of ‘active citizens’ to increase residents’ awareness , with a focus on young adults - about local democracy and getting them to take a more active interest in their local community and local democracy, therefore bridging the gap between the Council and residents. Could further explore Acorn 5 ‘Urban Adversity’ perception about problems and satisfaction

### Recommendation 2

The preferred method of communication is by email; however it is important to make sure that alternative methods are readily available for those who are less willing to use digital platforms, e.g older residents – making sure other channels of communications are still available for those that need it.

### Recommendation 3

Further refining the ways in which the Council is communicating with residents should remain a key priority for the Council, utilising both digital and non-digital channels. The Council could focus on improving day to day communications with residents and explore how to better consider what residents say, whilst also explaining the rationale behind why a decision has been taken. Efforts should also be made on improving awareness on e- bulletins provided by the Council to increase the sign up.

### Recommendation 4

Working on how to improve environmental services, as this is the service that required most improvement from residents’ perspective and a service that is needed the most.

Suggestions include looking into better recycling facilities and increasing materials collected. Also, to tackle rubbish and litter lying around, this could be by promoting community litter picking (as this was also suggested by residents. Some more in-depth research work maybe needed to understand why residents feel this way and what the Council could realistically do to improve the services.

#### Recommendation 5

To publish the results of the survey and inform residents how these results will be used by the Council to prioritise service delivery, ensure further service improvements and acknowledge areas of strength and successes.

**Appendix A: Questionnaire**

**Appendix B: Data table (including don't know responses)**

# Appendix A: Questionnaire



## RESIDENTS SURVEY 2021



This survey is being carried out on behalf of West Berkshire Council by M·E·L Research who operate to the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society (<https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code-of-conduct>).

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and you won't be personally identifiable in any data or information passed on to **West Berkshire Council**. You can find out more information about our surveys and what we do with the information we collect in our Privacy Policy: <http://www.melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy> and from the Council's Privacy Notice: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/pnresident>.

This includes details of your right to change your mind and have any personal details and the responses you give to this survey deleted at any time. If you wish to check the validity of this survey you can email: [RCPTeam@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:RCPTeam@westberks.gov.uk)

The majority of the questions are tick boxes, although there are also opportunities to add comments throughout the survey. They are asked in no particular order, and you don't have to answer a question if you don't feel comfortable.

### SECTION 1. Satisfaction with the area and the Council

Throughout this survey we ask you to think about 'your local area'. When answering, please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home.

**Q1 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?**

*Please tick one box only.*

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't Know

Your local area receives services from West Berkshire Council. West Berkshire Council is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

**Q2 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way West Berkshire Council runs things? Please tick one box only.**

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't Know

In considering the next question, please think about the range of services West Berkshire Council provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services West Berkshire Council provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

**Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that West Berkshire Council provides value for money? Please tick one box only.**

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Q4 On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about West Berkshire Council? Please tick one box only.**

- I speak positively of the council without being asked
- I speak positively of the council if I am asked about it
- I have no views one way or the other
- I speak negatively about the council if I am asked about it
- I speak negatively about the council without being asked
- Don't Know



**Q5** Have you had any need to contact West Berkshire Council in the last 6 months? Please tick one box only.

- Yes (continue to **Q6**)
- No (Jump to **Q8**)

**Q6** What was your reason for contacting West Berkshire Council? Please tick all that apply.

- To report a problem
- To request a service
- To request information
- Other - please specify in the box below:

**Q7** Overall, how would you rate your contact(s) with West Berkshire Council?

Please tick one box only.

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

**Q8** Please add comments below relating to any of the questions in this section about satisfaction with your area and with West Berkshire Council.

## SECTION 2: Service Improvement and Prioritisation

**Q9** Thinking about your individual circumstances, which are the five services provided by West Berkshire Council that you need most?

Service 1

Service 2

Service 3

Service 4

Service 5

**Q10** Considering the services provided by West Berkshire Council, would you please select the ones which, in your opinion, require improvement? Please tick all that apply

- Children and Family Service** (Duty response service, Community Social Work teams, Children in Care, Care Leavers, Fostering and Adoption Service, Drug and Alcohol support, Youth Offending Team, Quality Assurance).
- Adult Social Care** (Care Homes, Community and Day Centres, Shared Lives, Maximising Independence, Information and Advice, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Assessments, Safeguarding, Reablement, Financial Assessment, Deputyship, Direct Payment Financial Support).
- Education** (School Improvement, Support for School Governors, Adult Learning; Special Education Needs, Inclusion and Disabled Children; Education Psychology, Behaviour Intervention and Emotional Health Academy; Early Years and Childcare, support for Vulnerable Learners and Families, and safeguarding; Education Contract Management/ICT). Ensuring sufficient school places and admissions.).
- Communities and Wellbeing** (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the health and wellbeing strategy, Sexual Health service, NHS Health checks, Reducing Obesity and Substance Misuse, Smoking Cessation, Health Visiting, School Nursing Services, Mental Health and tackling Domestic Abuse, Support for communities, Community safety, Liaison with Town and Parish Councils, Cultural services (West Berkshire Museum, Shaw House) and Libraries), Sports and leisure).
- Environment** (Network Management, Transport Services, Asset Management, Parking, Countryside and Waste Management).
- Development and Planning** (Development Management, Planning Policy, Economic Development, Housing).
- Public Protection** (Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards, Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU), Building Control, Registrars).
- Commissioning** (Care Placement, Commissioning, Care Quality & Contracts and Category Management).
- Finance and Property** (Revenues & Benefits, Property Services, Financial and Management Accounting).
- Strategy and Governance** (Customer Services, Democratic and Electoral services, Communications, Legal, Corporate Programme Office, Performance Management, Consultations, Risk Management, Internal Audit).
- ICT** (Education ICT, internal ICT / Application Delivery, Customer Support, Infrastructure and Operations and Telecommunications).
- None of these (Jump to **Q12**)

**Q11** Of the services you selected in Q10 for improvement can you tell us which specific elements need improvement and why?

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Children services          |  |
| Adult Social Care          |  |
| Education                  |  |
| Communities and Well being |  |
| Environment                |  |
| Development and Planning   |  |
| Public Protection          |  |
| Commissioning              |  |
| Finance and Property       |  |
| Strategy and Governance    |  |
| ICT                        |  |

**Q12** One of West Berkshire Council's priorities is to achieve carbon neutrality\* in the district by 2030. Are you planning to take any actions to help achieve this goal? *Please tick one box only.*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

\* Carbon Neutrality is about reducing the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from various sources such as transport, building, processing, producing energy or farming and about removing carbon oxide from the atmosphere in order to achieve net zero emissions.

**Q13** Please add any comments below relating to any of the questions in this section:

### SECTION 3. Communication and Engagement

**Q14** To what extent do you think West Berkshire Council acts on the concerns of local residents? *Please tick one box only.*

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know

**Q15** Overall, how well informed do you think West Berkshire Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides? *Please tick one box only.*

- Very well informed
- Fairly well informed
- Not very well informed
- Not well informed at all
- Don't know

**Q16** Have you signed up to receive any of West Berkshire Council's e-bulletins\*, which provide updates on information, advice and support straight to your inbox? *Please tick one box only.*

- Yes
- No, I'm not interested
- No, I'm not aware of them

\* You can sign up to West Berkshire Council's e-bulletins by visiting [info.westberks.gov.uk/newsletters](http://info.westberks.gov.uk/newsletters)

**Q17** What are your preferred methods of communication with West Berkshire Council? *Please tick all that apply.*

- Email
- Social media (e.g Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)
- Telephone
- Mail
- Face to Face
- Other - please specify in the box below:

**Q18** To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area? *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Q19** Please add any comments below relating to any of the questions in this section about communication and engagement:

#### **SECTION 4. Sense of belonging, safety and community**

**Q20** How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area? *Please tick one box only.*

- Very strongly
- Fairly strongly
- Not very strongly
- Not at all strongly
- Don't know

**Q21** To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people get on well together? *Please tick one box only.*

- Definitely agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Definitely disagree
- Don't know

**Q22** To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area? *Please tick one box only.*

- Definitely agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Definitely disagree
- Nothing needs improving
- Don't know

**Q23** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the friendships and associations you have with other people in your neighbourhood mean a lot to you?

Please tick one box only.

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Definitely disagree
- Don't know

**Q24** Have you volunteered to help in your local community, either formally or informally, over the past year? Please tick one box only.

- Yes (Continue to **Q25**)
- No (Jump to **Q26**)

**Q25** What were your reasons for choosing to volunteer in your local community over the past 12 months? Please tick all that apply.

- I wanted to do good for others and the community
- I had extra time to commit to volunteering
- I wanted to feel more of a connection with my local community
- I wanted a distraction from Covid-19
- I felt it would help with my mental health and well being
- Something else, please describe in the box below:

**Q26** Do you intend to volunteer in your local community during the next 12 months?

Please tick one box only.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Comments**

**Q27** Thinking about your local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are.... Please tick one on each row.

|   | A very big problem       | A fairly big problem     | Not a very big problem   | Not a problem at all     | Don't know/no opinion    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Noisy neighbours or loud parties  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rubbish or litter lying around  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People using or dealing drugs   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People being drunk or rowdy in public places                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q28** Please add any comments below relating to any of the questions in this section:

## SECTION 5. Personal well-being

**Q29** Next we would like you to answer four questions about your feelings on aspects of your life. There are no right or wrong answers. For each of these questions please give an answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". Please tick one on each row.

|  | 0                        | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        | 8                        | 9                        | 10                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Overall, how satisfied are you with life nowadays?               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overall how anxious did you feel yesterday?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overall, how worthwhile do you feel the things in your life are? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## West Berkshire Council's Community Panel

If you're a resident of West Berkshire, and would like to be invited to participate in any of our future consultation or engagement exercises, you can apply to join our Community Panel.

Any personal information you choose to provide will be kept confidential and used in accordance with the Councils privacy notice: [www.westberks.gov.uk/pnconsult](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/pnconsult)

**Q30 Would you like to join the West Berkshire Council's Community Panel?**

*Please tick one box only.*

- Yes (Go to **Q31**)  
 No (Go to **Q32**)  
 Already a member (Go to **Q32**)

**Q31 Please tell us your name and email address below. By doing so you consent for M-E-L Research to pass over your contact details to West Berkshire Council inline with our Data Protection policy.**

Name

Email address

## About You

Finally, we'd like to ask some questions about you. This is to ensure that we speak to a range of people from across the district and learn about if particular groups have different views. All the information you give will be kept completely confidential and will not be used to identify you.

**Q32 What is your sex? Please tick one box only.**

- Male  
 Female  
 Other, please describe in the box below  
 Prefer not to say

**Q33 Which of the following age groups do you fall into? Please tick one box only.**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 and over       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 |  |

**Q34 How many people, including yourself, live in your home? Please tick one box only.**

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |



**Q35** How many children aged from 0 to 17 live at home with you? Please tick one box only.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |  |

The following questions relate to you individually, and invite you to provide “special category” data in terms of data protection. As such, we need your explicit consent to collect and process your responses to these questions. They are not mandatory, and you are free to skip any or all of them if you wish. To read more about this, please consult our privacy notice: <http://www.melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy>

**Q36** I consent to the council collecting and processing special category data according to the purposes outlined in its privacy notice (please visit <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/pnresident> for details)

Please tick one box only.

- Yes (Go to **Q37**)  No (Go to end of survey)

**Q37** What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only.

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British  
 White Irish  
 White Other  
 Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma  
 Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups  
 Asian or Asian British  
 Black, Black British, Caribbean or African  
 Other ethnic group - please describe in the box below  
 Prefer not to say

**Q38** Do you have a disability, long term illness, or health condition?

Please tick one box only.

- Yes  No  Prefer not to say

That is all of the questions. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.  
Please return your completed survey to M·E·L Research in the FREEPOST envelope provided.

Please make sure you return your completed survey by Sunday the 28 November 2021.



## Appendix B: Data tables

|   |   |               |               |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|
|   |   | 1240          | 100.00%       |
| Q1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?                   | Very satisfied  | 446           | 35.97%        |
|   | Fairly satisfied  | 650           | 52.42%        |
|   | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied                          | 86            | 6.94%         |
|   | Fairly dissatisfied   | 44            | 3.55%         |
|   | Very dissatisfied   | 11            | 0.89%         |
|   | Don't Know  | 3             | 0.24%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>  | <b>88.60%</b> | <b>88.60%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>   | <b>4.45%</b>  | <b>4.45%</b>  |
|   |   |               |               |
|   |   | 1240          | 100.00%       |
| Q2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way West Berkshire Council runs things?           | Very satisfied  | 123           | 9.92%         |
|   | Fairly satisfied  | 687           | 55.40%        |
|   | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied                          | 254           | 20.48%        |
|   | Fairly dissatisfied   | 133           | 10.73%        |
|   | Very dissatisfied   | 34            | 2.74%         |
|   | Don't Know  | 9             | 0.73%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>  | <b>65.80%</b> | <b>65.80%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>   | <b>13.57%</b> | <b>13.57%</b> |
|   |   |               |               |
| Base  |   | 1237          | 100.00%       |
| Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that West Berkshire Council provides value for money?             | Strongly agree  | 54            | 4.37%         |
|   | Tend to agree   | 402           | 32.50%        |
|   | Neither agree nor disagree                                  | 465           | 37.59%        |
|   | Tend to disagree  | 218           | 17.62%        |
|   | Strongly disagree   | 57            | 4.61%         |
|   | Don't know  | 41            | 3.31%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>  | <b>38.13%</b> | <b>38.13%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>   | <b>22.99%</b> | <b>22.99%</b> |
|   |   |               |               |
|   |   | 1234          | 100.00%       |
| Q4. On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about West Berkshire Council? | I speak positively of the Council without being asked       | 41            | 3.32%         |
|   | I speak positively of the Council if I am asked about it    | 386           | 31.28%        |
|   | I have no views one way or the other                        | 572           | 46.35%        |
|   | I speak negatively about the Council if I am asked about it | 176           | 14.26%        |

|   |  |               |               |
|---|--|---------------|---------------|
|   | I speak negatively about the Council without being asked | 30            | 2.43%         |
|   | Don't Know   | 29            | 2.35%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>   | <b>35.44%</b> | <b>35.44%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>  | <b>17.10%</b> | <b>17.10%</b> |
|   |  |               |               |
|   |  | 1235          | 100.00%       |
| Q5. Have you had any need to contact West Berkshire Council in the last 6 months?   | Yes  | 595           | 48.18%        |
|   | No   | 640           | 51.82%        |
|   |  |               |               |
|   |  | 577           | 100.00%       |
| Q6. What was your reason for contacting West Berkshire Council?   | To report a problem                                      | 209           | 36.22%        |
|   | To request a service                                     | 304           | 52.69%        |
|   | To request information                                   | 100           | 17.33%        |
|   | Other - please specify in the box below:                 | 26            | 4.51%         |
|   |  |               |               |
|   |  | 593           | 100.00%       |
| Q7. Overall, how would you rate your contact(s) with West Berkshire Council?  | Excellent  | 98            | 16.53%        |
|   | Good   | 253           | 42.66%        |
|   | Fair   | 153           | 25.80%        |
|   | Poor   | 67            | 11.30%        |
|   | Very Poor  | 22            | 3.71%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>   | <b>59.19%</b> | <b>59.19%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>  | <b>15.01%</b> | <b>15.01%</b> |
|   |  |               |               |
| Base  |  | 1130          | 100.00%       |
| Q10. Considering the services provided by West Berkshire Council, would you please select the ones which, in your opinion, require improvement? | Children and Family Service                              | 173           | 15.31%        |
|   | Adult Social Care  | 326           | 28.85%        |
|   | Education  | 257           | 22.74%        |
|   | Communities and Wellbeing                                | 325           | 28.76%        |
|   | Environment  | 684           | 60.53%        |
|   | Development and Planning                                 | 391           | 34.60%        |
|   | Public Protection  | 164           | 14.51%        |
|   | Commissioning  | 53            | 4.69%         |
|   | Finance and Property                                     | 87            | 7.70%         |
|   | Strategy and Governance                                  | 67            | 5.93%         |
|   | ICT  | 71            | 6.28%         |
|   | None of these (Jump to Q12)                              | 199           | 17.61%        |

|   |   |               |               |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|
|   |   | 1198          | 100.00%       |
| Q12. One of West Berkshire Council's priorities is to achieve carbon neutrality* in the district by 2030. Are you planning to take any actions to help achieve this goal? | Yes   | 682           | 56.93%        |
|   | No  | 143           | 11.94%        |
|   | Not sure                                      | 373           | 31.14%        |
|   |   | 1235          | 100.00%       |
| Q14. To what extent do you think West Berkshire Council acts on the concerns of local residents?  | A great deal                                  | 52            | 4.21%         |
|   | A fair amount                                 | 486           | 39.35%        |
|   | Not very much                                 | 365           | 29.55%        |
|   | Not at all                                    | 46            | 3.72%         |
|   | Don't know                                    | 286           | 23.16%        |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>                                  | <b>56.69%</b> | <b>56.69%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>                               | <b>43.31%</b> | <b>43.31%</b> |
|   |   | 1239          | 100.00%       |
| Q15. Overall, how well informed do you think West Berkshire Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?  | Very well informed                            | 122           | 9.85%         |
|   | Fairly well informed                          | 563           | 45.44%        |
|   | Not very well informed                        | 359           | 28.98%        |
|   | Not well informed at all                      | 91            | 7.34%         |
|   | Don't know                                    | 104           | 8.39%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>                                  | <b>60.35%</b> | <b>60.35%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>                               | <b>39.65%</b> | <b>39.65%</b> |
|   |   | 1229          | 100.00%       |
| Q16. Have you signed up to receive any of West Berkshire Council's e-bulletins*, which provide updates on information, advice and support straight to your inbox?         | Yes   | 521           | 42.39%        |
|   | No, I'm not interested                        | 225           | 18.31%        |
|   | No, I'm not aware of them                     | 483           | 39.30%        |
|   |   |               | 1229          |
| Q17. What are your preferred methods of communication with West Berkshire Council?  | Email   | 879           | 71.52%        |
|   | Social media (e.g Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) | 104           | 8.46%         |
|   | Telephone                                     | 322           | 26.20%        |
|   | Mail  | 345           | 28.07%        |
|   | Face to Face                                  | 129           | 10.50%        |
|   | Other - please specify in the box below:      | 21            | 1.71%         |
|   |   |               | 1229          |

|  |                            |               |               |
|--|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Q18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?             |                            | 1240          | 100.00%       |
|  | Strongly agree             | 19            | 1.53%         |
|  | Tend to agree              | 196           | 15.81%        |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree | 404           | 32.58%        |
|  | Tend to disagree           | 375           | 30.24%        |
|  | Strongly disagree          | 142           | 11.45%        |
|  | Don't know                 | 104           | 8.39%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>               | <b>18.93%</b> | <b>18.93%</b> |
|  | <b>Bottom 2</b>            | <b>45.51%</b> | <b>45.51%</b> |
|  |                            |               |               |
| Q20. How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?   |                            | 1228          | 100.00%       |
|  | Very strongly              | 279           | 22.72%        |
|  | Fairly strongly            | 591           | 48.13%        |
|  | Not very strongly          | 273           | 22.23%        |
|  | Not at all strongly        | 48            | 3.91%         |
|  | Don't know                 | 37            | 3.01%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>               | <b>73.05%</b> | <b>73.05%</b> |
|  | <b>Bottom 2</b>            | <b>26.95%</b> | <b>26.95%</b> |
|  |                            |               |               |
| Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people get on well together?      |                            | 1231          | 100.00%       |
|  | Definitely agree           | 232           | 18.85%        |
|  | Tend to agree              | 672           | 54.59%        |
|  | Neither agree or disagree  | 234           | 19.01%        |
|  | Tend to disagree           | 54            | 4.39%         |
|  | Definitely disagree        | 7             | 0.57%         |
|  | Don't know                 | 32            | 2.60%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>               | <b>75.40%</b> | <b>75.40%</b> |
|  | <b>Bottom 2</b>            | <b>5.09%</b>  | <b>5.09%</b>  |
|  |                            |               |               |
| Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area? |                            | 1233          | 100.00%       |
|  | Definitely agree           | 152           | 12.33%        |
|  | Tend to agree              | 502           | 40.71%        |
|  | Neither agree or disagree  | 373           | 30.25%        |
|  | Tend to disagree           | 113           | 9.16%         |
|  | Definitely disagree        | 30            | 2.43%         |
|  | Nothing needs improving    | 1             | 0.08%         |
|  | Don't know                 | 62            | 5.03%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>               | <b>55.85%</b> | <b>55.85%</b> |
| <b>Bottom 2</b>  | <b>12.21%</b>              | <b>12.21%</b> |               |
|  |                            |               |               |
|  |                            |               |               |
|  |                            |               |               |

|  |   |               |               |
|--|---|---------------|---------------|
| Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the friendships and associations you have with other people in your neighbourhood mean a lot to you? |   | 1229          | 100.00%       |
|  | Strongly agree  | 424           | 34.50%        |
|  | Tend to agree   | 508           | 41.33%        |
|  | Neither agree or disagree                                     | 212           | 17.25%        |
|  | Tend to disagree  | 40            | 3.25%         |
|  | Definitely disagree   | 16            | 1.30%         |
|  | Don't know  | 29            | 2.36%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>  | <b>77.67%</b> | <b>77.67%</b> |
|  | <b>Bottom 2</b>   | <b>4.67%</b>  | <b>4.67%</b>  |
|  |   |               |               |
| Q24. Have you volunteered to help in your local community, either formally or informally, over the past year?  |   | 1219          | 100.00%       |
|  | Yes (Continue to Q25)   | 373           | 30.60%        |
|  | No (Jump to Q26)  | 846           | 69.40%        |
|  |   |               |               |
| Q25. What were your reasons for choosing to volunteer in your local community over the past 12 months?   |   | 360           | 100.00%       |
|  | I wanted to do good for others and the community              | 267           | 74.17%        |
|  | I had extra time to commit to volunteering                    | 115           | 31.94%        |
|  | I wanted to feel more of a connection with my local community | 100           | 27.78%        |
|  | I wanted a distraction from Covid-19                          | 15            | 4.17%         |
|  | I felt it would help with my mental health and well being     | 40            | 11.11%        |
|  | Something else, please describe in the box below:             | 38            | 10.56%        |
|  |   |               |               |
| Q26. Do you intend to volunteer in your local community during the next 12 months?   |   | 1209          | 100.00%       |
|  | Yes   | 312           | 25.81%        |
|  | No  | 481           | 39.78%        |
|  | Maybe   | 416           | 34.41%        |
|  |   |               |               |
| Q27a. Noisy neighbours or loud parties   |   | 1188          | 100.00%       |
|  | A very big problem  | 27            | 2.27%         |
|  | A fairly big problem  | 77            | 6.48%         |
|  | Not a very big problem  | 380           | 31.99%        |
|  | Not a problem at all  | 684           | 57.58%        |
|  | Don't know/no opinion   | 20            | 1.68%         |
|  | <b>Top 2</b>  | <b>8.90%</b>  | <b>8.90%</b>  |
|  | <b>Bottom 2</b>   | <b>91.10%</b> | <b>91.10%</b> |
|  |   |               |               |
|  |   |               |               |
|  |   |               |               |

|   |                        |               |               |
|---|------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Rubbish or litter lying around  |                        | 1205          | 100.00%       |
|   | A very big problem     | 155           | 12.86%        |
|   | A fairly big problem   | 332           | 27.55%        |
|   | Not a very big problem | 495           | 41.08%        |
|   | Not a problem at all   | 216           | 17.93%        |
|   | Don't know/no opinion  | 7             | 0.58%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>           | <b>40.65%</b> | <b>40.65%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>        | <b>59.35%</b> | <b>59.35%</b> |
|   |                        |               |               |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles |                        | 1195          | 100.00%       |
|   | A very big problem     | 45            | 3.77%         |
|   | A fairly big problem   | 137           | 11.46%        |
|   | Not a very big problem | 551           | 46.11%        |
|   | Not a problem at all   | 422           | 35.31%        |
|   | Don't know/no opinion  | 40            | 3.35%         |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>           | <b>15.76%</b> | <b>15.76%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>        | <b>84.24%</b> | <b>84.24%</b> |
|   |                        |               |               |
| People using or dealing drugs   |                        | 1208          | 100.00%       |
|   | A very big problem     | 112           | 9.27%         |
|   | A fairly big problem   | 216           | 17.88%        |
|   | Not a very big problem | 298           | 24.67%        |
|   | Not a problem at all   | 330           | 27.32%        |
|   | Don't know/no opinion  | 252           | 20.86%        |
|   | <b>Top 2</b>           | <b>34.31%</b> | <b>34.31%</b> |
|   | <b>Bottom 2</b>        | <b>65.69%</b> | <b>65.69%</b> |
|   |                        |               |               |
| Q29a. Overall, how satisfied are you with life nowadays?                |                        | 1201          | 100.00%       |
|   | 0                      | 5             | 0.42%         |
|   | 1                      | 5             | 0.42%         |
|   | 2                      | 14            | 1.17%         |
|   | 3                      | 28            | 2.33%         |
|   | 4                      | 47            | 3.91%         |
|   | 5                      | 97            | 8.08%         |
|   | 6                      | 109           | 9.08%         |
|   | 7                      | 249           | 20.73%        |
|   | 8                      | 336           | 27.98%        |
|   | 9                      | 176           | 14.65%        |
|   | 10                     | 135           | 11.24%        |
|   | <b>0 to 4 - Low</b>    | <b>99</b>     | <b>8.24%</b>  |
|   | <b>5 to 6 - Medium</b> | <b>206</b>    | <b>17.15%</b> |
|   | <b>7 to 8 - High</b>   | <b>585</b>    | <b>48.71%</b> |
| <b>9 to 10 - Very High</b>  | <b>311</b>             | <b>25.90%</b> |               |



|  |                          |               |               |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Q29b. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?                       |                          | 1197          | 100.00%       |
|  | 0                        | 10            | 0.84%         |
|  | 1                        | 6             | 0.50%         |
|  | 2                        | 19            | 1.59%         |
|  | 3                        | 39            | 3.26%         |
|  | 4                        | 39            | 3.26%         |
|  | 5                        | 106           | 8.86%         |
|  | 6                        | 116           | 9.69%         |
|  | 7                        | 193           | 16.12%        |
|  | 8                        | 303           | 25.31%        |
|  | 9                        | 207           | 17.29%        |
|  | 10                       | 159           | 13.28%        |
|  | <b>0 to 4 - Low</b>      | <b>113</b>    | <b>9.44%</b>  |
|  | <b>5 to 6 - Medium</b>   | <b>222</b>    | <b>18.55%</b> |
|  | <b>7 to 8 - High</b>     | <b>496</b>    | <b>41.44%</b> |
| <b>9 to 10 - Very High</b>   | <b>366</b>               | <b>30.58%</b> |               |
|  |                          |               |               |
| Q29c. Overall how anxious did you feel yesterday?                      |                          | 1191          | 100.00%       |
|  | 0                        | 240           | 20.15%        |
|  | 1                        | 142           | 11.92%        |
|  | 2                        | 165           | 13.85%        |
|  | 3                        | 105           | 8.82%         |
|  | 4                        | 57            | 4.79%         |
|  | 5                        | 121           | 10.16%        |
|  | 6                        | 111           | 9.32%         |
|  | 7                        | 85            | 7.14%         |
|  | 8                        | 94            | 7.89%         |
|  | 9                        | 46            | 3.86%         |
|  | 10                       | 25            | 2.10%         |
|  | <b>0 to 1 - Very low</b> | <b>382</b>    | <b>32.07%</b> |
|  | <b>5 to 6 - Medium</b>   | <b>232</b>    | <b>19.48%</b> |
|  | <b>7 to 8 - High</b>     | <b>179</b>    | <b>15.03%</b> |
| <b>9 to 10 - Very High</b>   | <b>71</b>                | <b>5.96%</b>  |               |
|  |                          |               |               |
| Q29d. Overall, how worthwhile do you feel the things in your life are? |                          | 1194          | 100.00%       |
|  | 0                        | 7             | 0.59%         |
|  | 1                        | 4             | 0.34%         |
|  | 2                        | 14            | 1.17%         |
|  | 3                        | 25            | 2.09%         |
|  | 4                        | 36            | 3.02%         |
|  | 5                        | 106           | 8.88%         |
|  | 6                        | 93            | 7.79%         |
|  | 7                        | 164           | 13.74%        |
|  | 8                        | 275           | 23.03%        |

|  |                            |            |               |
|--|----------------------------|------------|---------------|
|  | 9                          | 223        | 18.68%        |
|  | 10                         | 247        | 20.69%        |
|  | <b>0 to 4 - Low</b>        | <b>86</b>  | <b>7.20%</b>  |
|  | <b>5 to 6 - Medium</b>     | <b>199</b> | <b>16.67%</b> |
|  | <b>7 to 8 - High</b>       | <b>439</b> | <b>36.77%</b> |
|  | <b>9 to 10 - Very High</b> | <b>470</b> | <b>39.36%</b> |

|   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| <b>What is your sex?</b>                | 1191 |       |
| Male                                    | 531  | 44.6% |
| Female                                  | 654  | 54.9% |
| Other, please describe in the box below | 6    | 0.5%  |

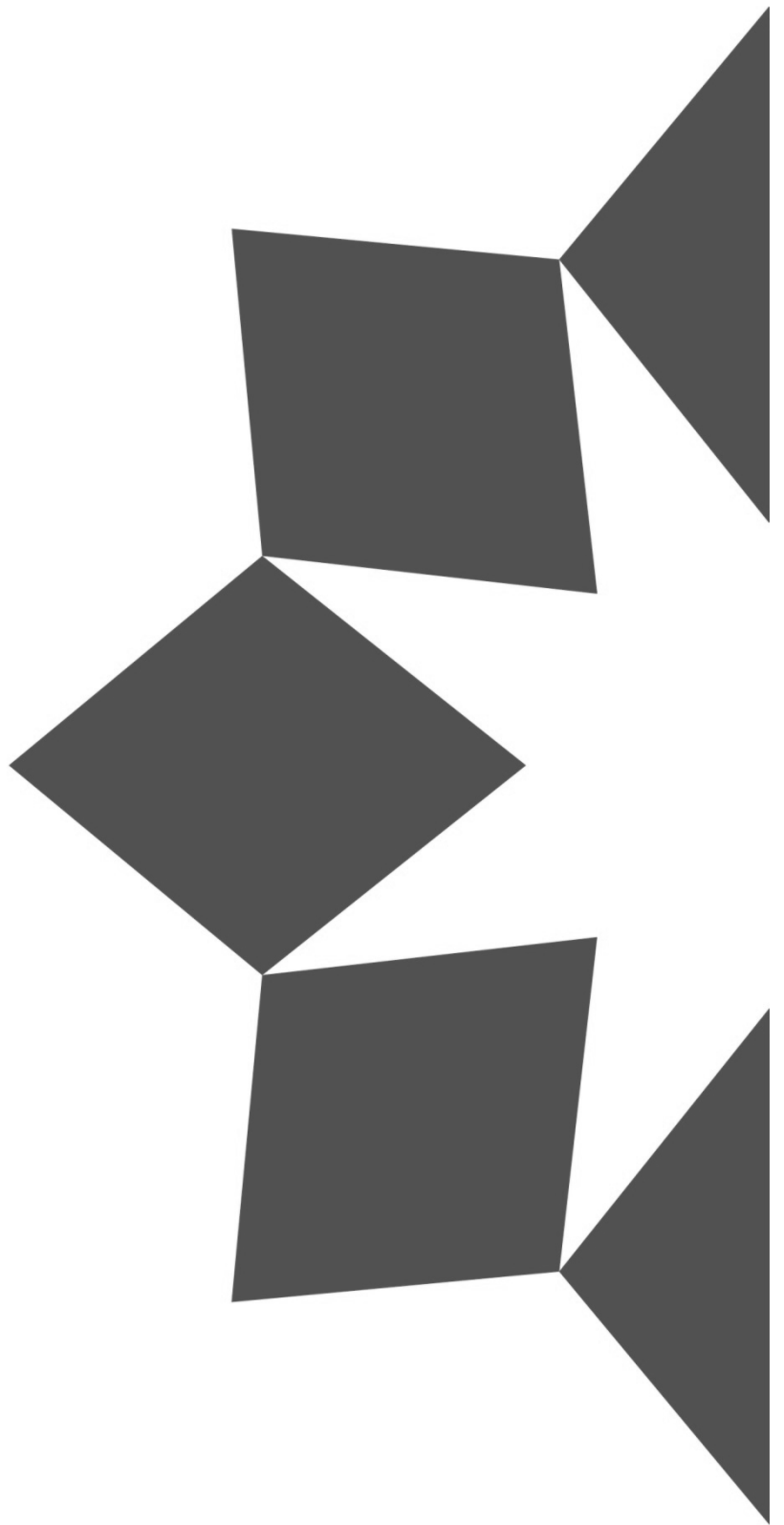
|  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| <b>Which of the following age groups do you fall into?</b> | 1199 |       |
| 16-17  | 1    | 0.1%  |
| 18-24  | 9    | 0.8%  |
| 25-34  | 71   | 5.9%  |
| 35-44  | 99   | 8.3%  |
| 45-54  | 203  | 16.9% |
| 55-64  | 246  | 20.5% |
| 65-74  | 303  | 25.3% |
| 75 and over  | 267  | 22.3% |

|  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| <b>How many people, including yourself, live in your home?</b> | 1206 |       |
| 1  | 298  | 24.7% |
| 2  | 563  | 46.7% |
| 3  | 155  | 12.9% |
| 4  | 148  | 12.3% |
| 5 or more  | 42   | 3.5%  |

|  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| <b>How many children aged 0 to 17 live at home with you?</b> | 1185 |       |
| 0  | 954  | 80.5% |
| 1  | 100  | 8.4%  |
| 2  | 101  | 8.5%  |
| 3  | 27   | 2.3%  |
| 4  | 2    | 0.2%  |
| 5 or more  | 1    | 0.1%  |

|   |     |       |
|---|-----|-------|
| <b>What is your ethnic group?</b>                         | 979 |       |
| White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British | 904 | 92.3% |
| White Irish   | 5   | 0.5%  |
| White Other   | 29  | 3.0%  |
| Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma                            | -   | -     |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups                           | 6   | 0.6%  |
| Asian or Asian British                                    | 26  | 2.7%  |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African                | 4   | 0.4%  |
| Other ethnic group - please describe in the box below     | 5   | 0.5%  |
|   |     |       |

|  |     |         |
|--|-----|---------|
| <b>Do you have a disability, long term illness, or health condition?</b> | 946 | 100.00% |
| Yes  | 210 | 22.20%  |
| No   | 736 | 77.80%  |



# Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>                                       | Executive                 |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>  | 9 June 2022               |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>   | Councillor Ross Mackinnon |
| <b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b><br><i>(for Corporate Board)</i> | 11 May 2022               |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed sent:</b>                                  | 19 May 2022               |
| <b>Report Author:</b>  | Shannon Coleman-Slaughter |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>   | EX4019                    |

## 1 Purpose of the Report

The financial performance report provided to Members reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget. This report presents the provisional outturn position for financial year 2021/22.

## 2 Recommendation

2.1 The following recommendation is made to members:

- (a) Approve the re-profiling of £9.4 million of expenditure from 2021/22 into financial year 2022/23 as recommended and agreed by Capital Strategy Group (CSG), as detailed at Appendix B.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

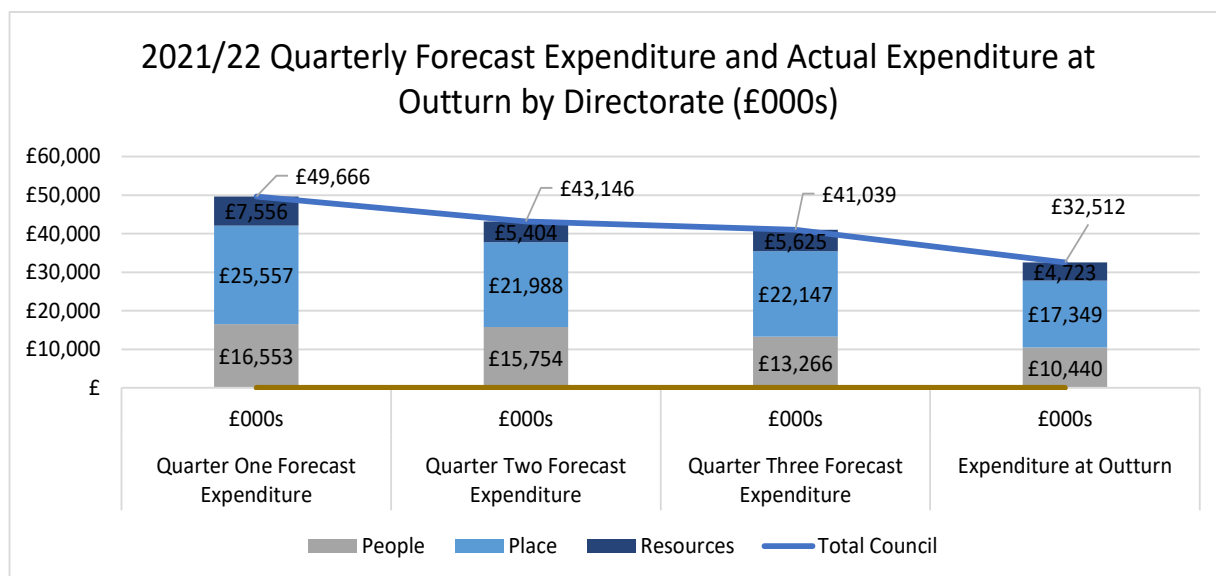
| Implication            | Commentary   |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | The outturn position against the approved capital programme is an incurred underspend of £10.5 million. £9.4 million of expenditure has been proposed by Capital Strategy Group to be re-profiled into financial year 2022/23 in support of the approved 2022/23 – 2026/27 Capital Strategy and complete delivery of ongoing projects. |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | Not applicable   |

|  |  |                |                 |                   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Legal:</b>  | Not applicable   |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Risk Management:</b>  | <p>A key ongoing risk is the potential impact of engaged suppliers to default on contractual obligations through financial difficulties. Budget Managers and CSG are closely monitoring these risks to highlight projects with potential suppliers of concern and where there is an ongoing risk of default and/or the potential to retender agreed contracts at potentially higher cost.</p> <p>The Council is also exposed to inflationary cost pressures across the capital programme as a whole. Furthermore, any rise in PWLB borrowing rates resulting from recent increases in Bank rate will result in increased interest cost on any new borrowing undertaken. Both of these external risks are largely outside the Council's ability to control, although the Council will take appropriate advice from our treasury consultants, Arlingclose, to determine the optimum time and structure for any new borrowing to be undertaken.</p> |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Property:</b>   | Not applicable   |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | Not applicable   |                |                 |                   |
|  | <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>   |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>   |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Core Business:</b>  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>  | Joseph Holmes, Executive Director for Resources, s151 Officer<br><br>Capital Strategy Group (CSG) |   |  |  |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The capital programme enables delivery of key Council schemes focused on supporting the approved Capital and Council Strategies. In financial year 2021/22 expenditure of £32.5 million has been incurred against the approved capital programme of £43.0 million, creating an underspent at the yearend of £10.5 million. The graphic below shows the forecast position on a quarterly basis during financial year 2021/22.

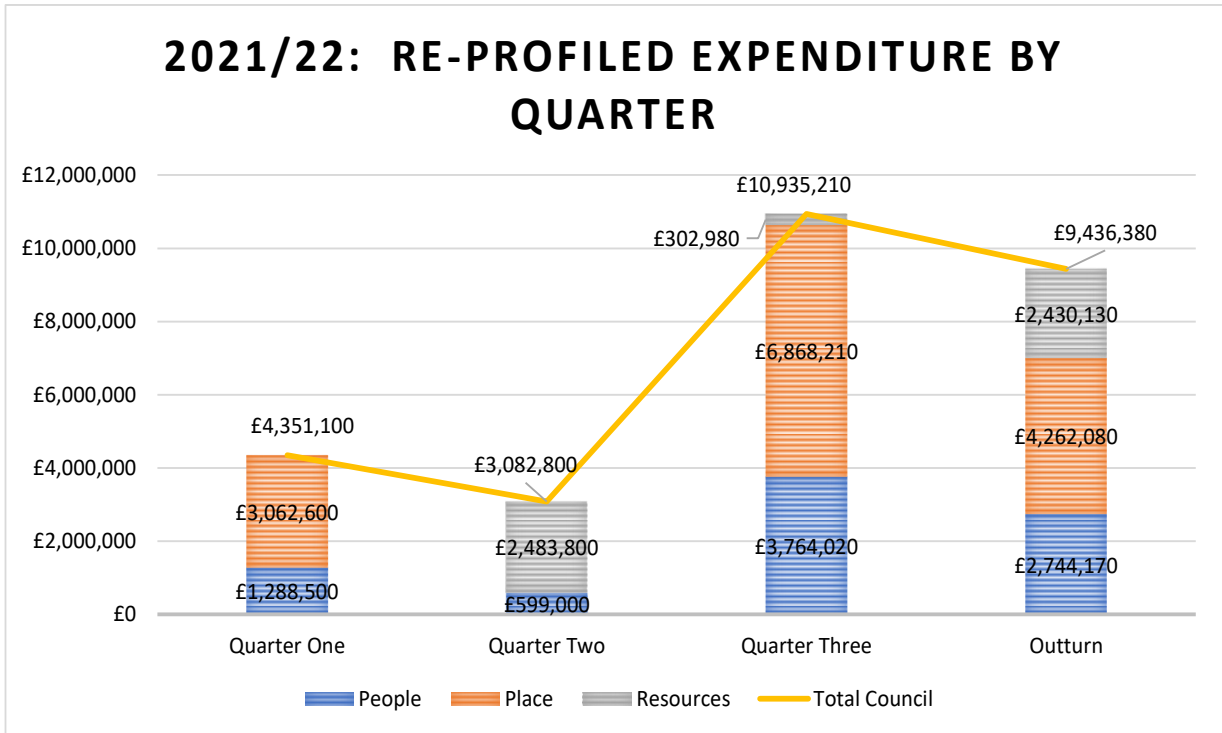


4.2 The main contributing factors to the underspend position at outturn are:

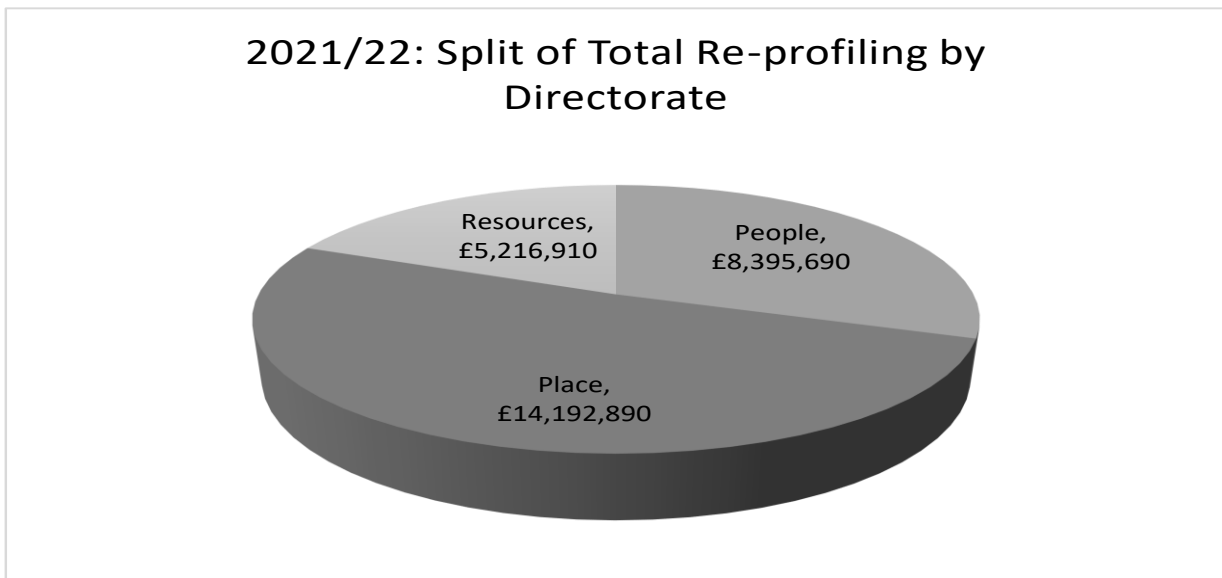
- (a) **People Directorate** – Delay to implementation of the Adult Social Care, Care Director Upgrade (£567k underspend). Education Services: snagging and valuation delays (£1.1 million). Communities & Wellbeing: (£439k) reflective of planning delays. See paragraph 5.7 for detail.
- (b) **Place** – Development & Planning: lower demand for Disabled Facility adaptive works (£648k); delay in finalising options to complete Four Houses Corner redevelopment (£518k). Environment: Park Homes Efficiency Project unlikely to proceed (£863k), Transport and Highways underspends mainly attributable to Covid delays and staff availability (£1.2 million). See paragraph 5.12.
- (c) **Resources** – Contractual delays in roll out of Superfast Broadband (£1.3 million). Finance & Property underspend of £379k, includes impact of Covid and supplier delivery delays; £180k underspend on property portfolio enhancement works. See paragraph 5.16.

4.3 As part of the outturn position it is proposed that £9.4 million of the £10.5 million underspend is re-profiled into financial year 2022/23, Appendix B provides a detailed breakdown of proposed re-profiling by project. £1.1 million of expenditure relates to projects that have been completed or ceased in year where no reprofiling into future years is required. Total re-profiling of expenditure from 2021/22 into 2021/23 (inclusive of sums proposed for re-profiling at outturn) is £27.8 million. The graphic below details the re-profiling undertaken on a quarterly basis during 2021/22.





4.4 The £27.8 million of re-profiled expenditure is split 51% for the Place Directorate, 30% for the People Directorate and 19% for the Resources Directorate. £20.3 million of the £27.8 million of re-profiling was undertaken at Quarter Three and outturn.



4.5 As at 31st March 2021, the Council’s total level of long term borrowing to fund capital spend stood at £197.4 million. The Capital Strategy and supporting Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22 made provision for £18.3 million to be borrowed in 2021/22 to fund capital investment in operational assets. No long term borrowing has been undertaken in respect of Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB) funding in 2021/22 to support delivery of the capital programme. Lower official interest rates have lowered the cost of short-term, temporary loans and investment returns from cash assets that can be used in lieu of longer term borrowing. The Council during the course of 2021/22 has pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying

levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and keep interest costs low. Principal repayments of £5.6 million have been made as at 31st March 2022 reducing the current total level of long term borrowing to £191.8 million.

- 4.6 In respect of the economic outlook, the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee has approved a series of stepped increase in Base Rate in 2022, which stands at 1% at the time of writing this report. In a rising interest environment, the Council will face risks of increased cost on any new external borrowing undertaken to support delivery of planned capital works, in addition to general cost inflationary pressures. The capital programme approved by Council Committee in March 2022 was set with the expectation to undertake £14.5 million of new long term borrowing alongside £8.1 million of short term borrowing during 2022/23.
- 4.7 In respect of developments to regulations and restrictions relating to Local Government capital financing, a 'capital finance risk management' clause has been included within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill included within the Queens' Speech laid before Parliament on 11 May. The clause provides the Secretary of State with new powers to intervene in individual councils in order to "reduce or mitigate financial risk", i.e. the Secretary of State may direct a local authority to set borrowing limits or require a council to "divest itself of a specified asset". Furthermore, in May 2022 the Treasury issued updated guidance on Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB) lending to say that the PWLB will not typically advance new loans if there is a "more than negligible risk" that a new loan will not be repaid without future government support. The capital financing position of the Council's approved capital programme for 2022/23 will be monitored by Treasury Management Group during 2022/23.

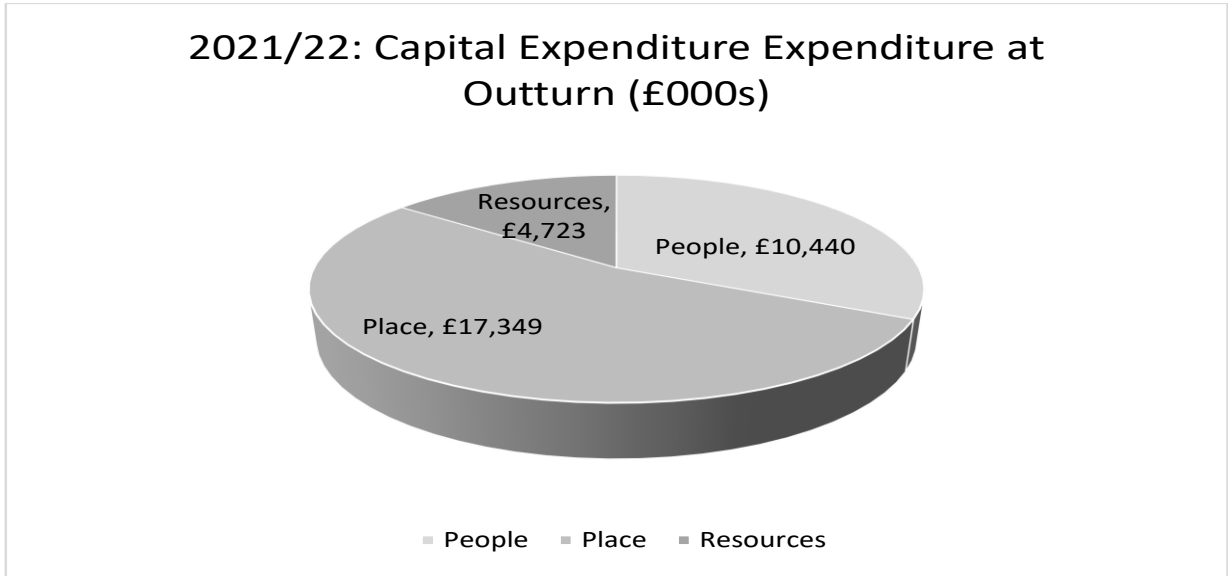
## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 A capital budget for 2021/22 of £47.8 million was set by Council in March 2021 with funding of £16.2 million from external grants, £8.4 million of section 106 contributions (s106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), with £23.2 million of expenditure planned to be funded from external borrowing. The repayment of principal sums and interest on loans used to fund capital expenditure are met from the revenue budget for capital financing and risk management. Forecast spend against this budget is reported in the Revenue Financial Performance Report.
- 5.2 During the financial year budget changes may occur, mainly as a result of budgets brought forward from prior financial years, additional grants, s106 and CIL allocations received in year and expenditure re-profiled in future financial years. Changes of less than £250k can be approved by the s151 Officer in conjunction with the portfolio holder, all other changes must be approved by CSG and reported to Executive as set out in the Council's Financial Regulations. As part of the budget monitoring process, the forecast year end position of the capital projects is reviewed and proposals for unutilised budgets to be re-profiled into subsequent financial years is reviewed by CSG. Appendix A provides a breakdown of budget changes as at the year end.

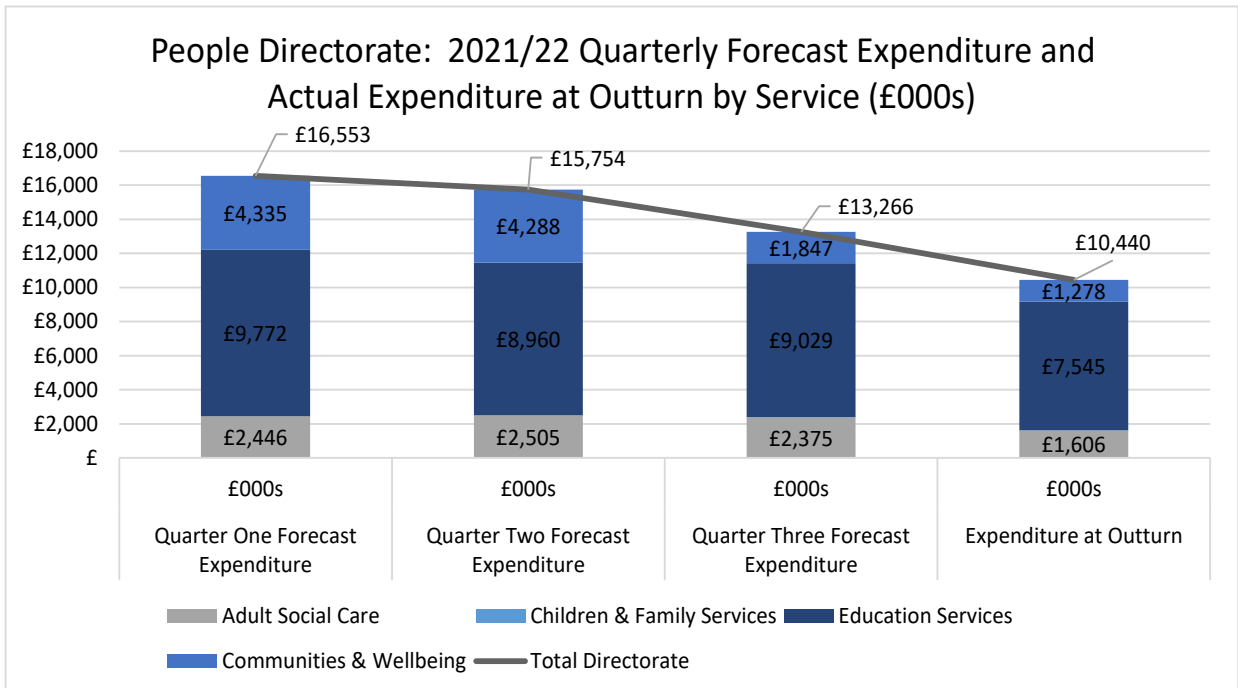
**Background**

5.3 Total expenditure incurred against the approved capital programme of £43.0 million for financial year 2021/22 amounts to £32.5 million. Capital spend across the programme at outturn was largely focused on projects across the Place and People directorates



**The People Directorate**

5.4 During financial year 2021/22 the directorate incurred total expenditure of £10.4 million against a budget of £13.3 million, creating an underspend of £2.7 million at outturn. The chart below details forecast expenditure and actual expenditure by service during the financial year.



5.5 During the course of the financial year the directorate successfully delivered the following key projects:

- (a) Willink School Refurbishment and expansion of classroom facilities: A further £1.1 million of spend was incurred in year; the project is essentially complete, with only final snagging costs likely to fall into 2022/23.
- (b) Speenhamland School: Works to the old Pelican Nursery building completed in October 2021. Works to the main school building are now due to complete April 2022, with £273k of budget requested to be re-profiled into 2022/23 to meet final costs.

5.6 The table below summaries actual expenditure for the People Directorate against budget as at the year end.

| People Directorate         | Quarter One Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Two Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Three Forecast Expenditure | Budget at Outturn | Expenditure at Outturn | Expenditure Variance to Budget at Outturn (Under) / Overspend |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
|                            | £000s                            | £000s                            | £000s                              | £000s             | £000s                  | £000s   |
| Adult Social Care          | £2,446                           | £2,505                           | £2,375                             | £2,375            | £1,606                 | (£769)  |
| Children & Family Services | £                                | £                                | £15                                | £20               | £10                    | (£10)   |
| Education Services         | £9,772                           | £8,960                           | £9,029                             | £8,860            | £7,545                 | (£1,315)  |
| Communities & Wellbeing    | £4,335                           | £4,288                           | £1,847                             | £1,878            | £1,278                 | (£599)  |
| Total Directorate          | £16,553                          | £15,754                          | £13,266                            | £13,133           | £10,440                | (£2,693)  |

5.7 In respect of the incurred underspend at the year end, the main contributing factors have been:

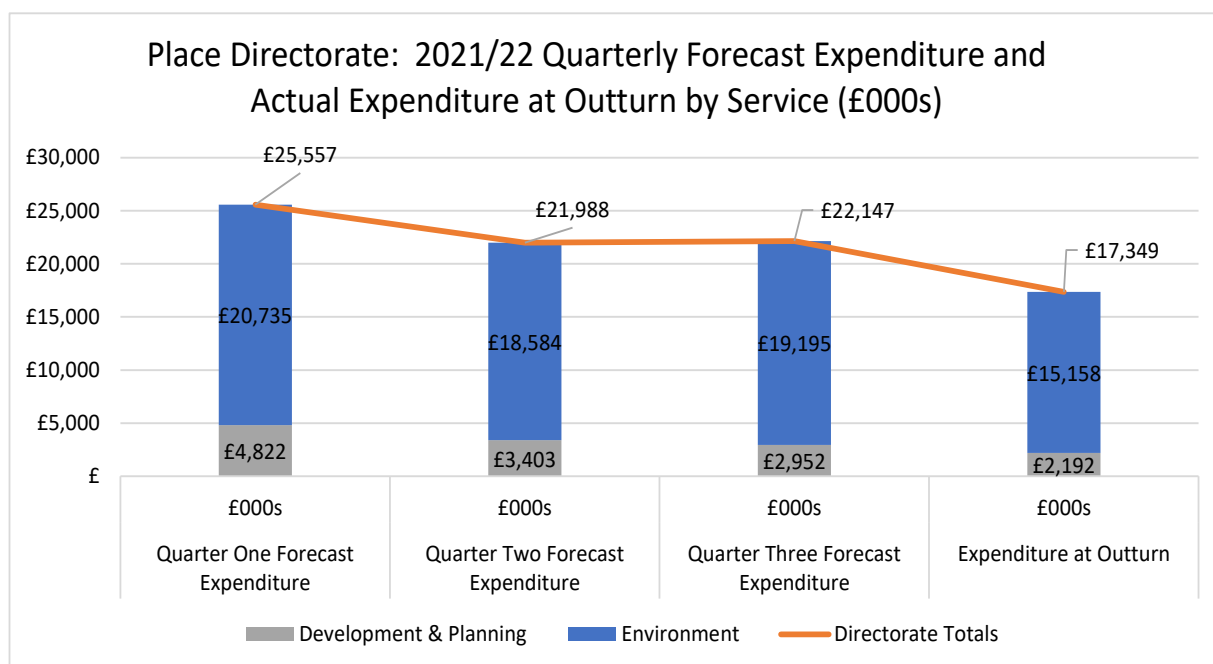
- (a) Adult Social Care: Upgrade of the Care Director system (£567k underspend), the system upgrade was originally intended to go live in late February 2022, the project has been delayed with expenditure now anticipated to be incurred in financial year 2022/23. The service have requested expenditure be re-profiled, accordingly.
- (b) Education Services: The Parsons Down School Accommodation Rationalisation project (£493k in-year underspend). The delay in spend was due to an outstanding valuation withheld as a consequence of snagging issues. The service have requested that £406k of anticipated expenditure be re-profiled into 2022/23 to cover final completion costs.
- (c) Education Services: Speenhamland 2FTE Project (303k in year underspend), Works to provide additional classroom space and resource at Speenhamland Primary were essentially completed in year, but final cost settlement was delayed as a result of outstanding valuation. The Service have requested that £273k of this be re-profiled into 2022/23 to meet the balance of costs expected.
- (d) Education Services: Highwood Copse Primary School Provision project (£266k in year underspend). Some post completion works remain outstanding, £112k is proposed for re-profiling into 2022/23 to fund these residual costs.

- (e) Communities & Wellbeing: Berkshire Records Office Expansion Project (£188k in year underspend). The incurred underspend is the result of a delay in obtaining planning permission for expansion works. The full underspend has been proposed for re-profiling into 2022/23.
- (f) Communities & Wellbeing: The Modular Exercise Studio at Hungerford Leisure Centre project (£151k in year underspend), has been subject to planning delays. The full underspend is proposed for re-profiling for works to complete in 2022/23.
- (g) Communities & Wellbeing: The Newbury Lido project has been delayed, as detailed in report taken to Executive in February, with a £100k in-year underspend proposed for re-profiling into 2022/23.

5.8 During the course of 2021/22 the directorate has re-profiled £5.7 million of expenditure into 2022/23 and future financial years. A further £2.7 million of re-profiling is proposed at outturn, resulting in total re-profiling of £8.4 million.

### The Place Directorate

5.9 During financial year 2021/22 the directorate incurred total expenditure of £17.3 million against a budget of £22.8 million creating an underspend of £5.4 million at outturn. The chart below details forecast expenditure and actual expenditure by service during the financial year.



5.10 During the course of the financial year the directorate successfully delivered the Sandford Access Improvements project involving widening of the A339 and development of access road for the Sandford development. Residual costs will be settled in 2022/23 with re-profiling of £37k requested.

5.11 The table below summaries actual expenditure for the Place Directorate against budget as at the year end.

## Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22

| Place Directorate      | Quarter One Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Two Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Three Forecast Expenditure | Budget at Outturn | Expenditure at Outturn | Expenditure Variance to Budget at Outturn (Under / Overspend) |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
|                        | £000s                            | £000s                            | £000s                              | £000s             | £000s                  | £000s   |
| Development & Planning | £4,822                           | £3,403                           | £2,952                             | £3,419            | £2,192                 | (£1,227)  |
| Environment            | £20,735                          | £18,584                          | £19,195                            | £19,364           | £15,158                | (£4,206)  |
| Directorate Totals     | £25,557                          | £21,988                          | £22,147                            | £22,783           | £17,349                | (£5,434)  |

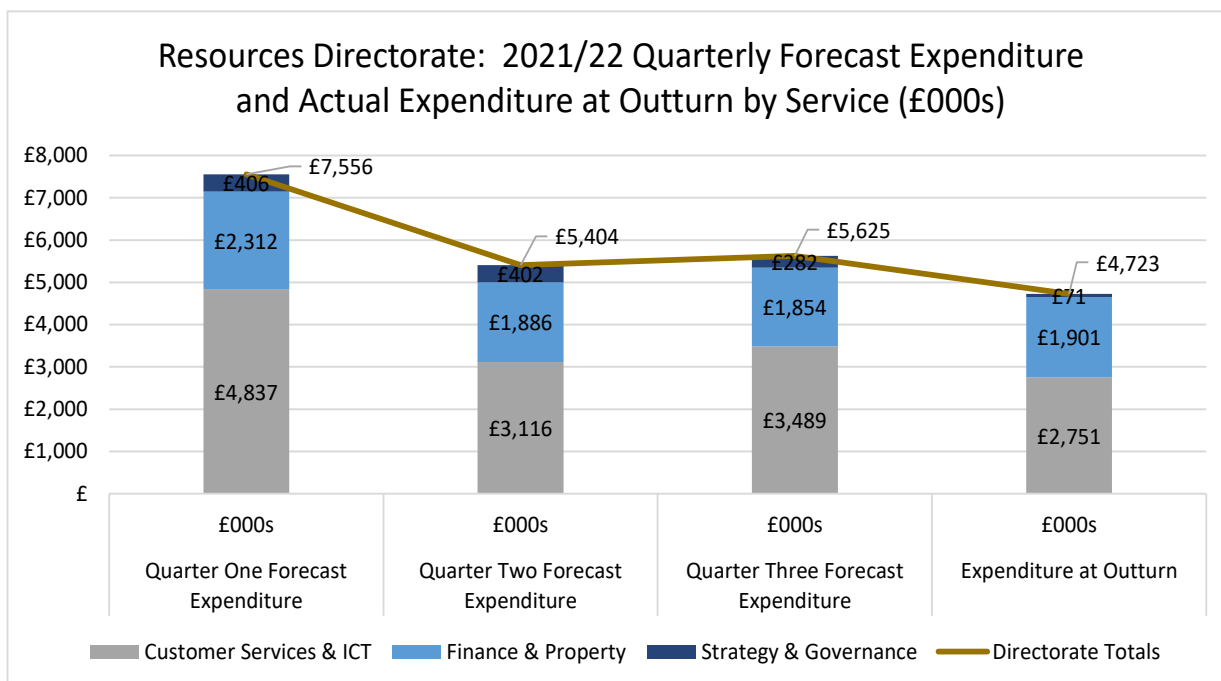
5.12 In respect of the incurred underspend at the year end, the main contributing factors have been:

- (a) Development and Planning: Slower than anticipated demand for Disabled Facilities works has generated an in-year underspend of £648k. However, this is proposed to be re-profiled into 2022/23, in anticipation of use during the course of the new financial year.
- (b) Development and Planning: Further delays have been experienced in delivery of the ongoing Four Houses Corner redevelopment as different delivery options were evaluated. Members have recently selected a preferred approach to conclude works and completion is now anticipated in 2022/23. The underspend of £518k is proposed for re-profiling for use in the new financial year.
- (c) Environment: The Newbury Rail Station capital budget was underspent in year by £1.3 million. This project is being led by Great Western Railway who identified a need for preliminary platform works to complete before the wider project can continue. This underspend is being requested to be re-profiled into 2022/23.
- (d) Environment: Park Homes Efficiency Project. Despite investigations on the possibility of joining with the South East Energy Hub's delivery mechanism the project was not judged achievable within the timescales set out by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and so the related project funding (£863k) has been returned to central government.
- (e) Environment: There was an aggregate underspend across the various capital transport scheme budgets of £581k. This was a result of various factors, including a backlog of work cause by Covid enforced delay and in year vacancies. It is hoped that works will progress during 2022/23, and the service is requesting that £562k of budget be re-profiled, accordingly.
- (f) Environment: There was an aggregate underspend across the Highways infrastructure and flood alleviation budgets of £297k, which included delays as a result of staff availability and third party factors. £198k of this is requested to be re-profiled into 2022/23.
- (g) Environment: Delivery difficulties including Covid and Brexit related delays have resulted in an underspend of £273k on planned works for Car Park enhancements and upgrade of the Transport Services fleet, which will be requested for re-profiling to allow for completion in the new financial year.

5.13 During the course of 2021/22 the directorate has re-profiled £9.9 million of expenditure into 2022/23 and future financial years. A further £4.3 million of re-profiling is proposed at outturn. Re-profiling for the directorate in 2021/22 totals £14.2 million.

### The Resources Directorate

5.14 During 2021/22 the directorate incurred total expenditure of £4.7 million against a budget of £7.1 million resulting in an underspend of £2.4 million at outturn. The chart below details forecast expenditure and actual expenditure by service during the financial year.



5.15 The table below summaries actual expenditure for the Resources Directorate against budget as at the year end.

| Resources Directorate     | Quarter One Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Two Forecast Expenditure | Quarter Three Forecast Expenditure | Budget at Outturn | Expenditure at Outturn | Expenditure Variance to Budget at Outturn (Under) / Overspend |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
|                           | £000s                            | £000s                            | £000s                              | £000s             | £000s                  | £000s   |
| Customer Services & ICT   | £4,837                           | £3,116                           | £3,489                             | £4,208            | £2,751                 | (£1,456)  |
| Finance & Property        | £2,312                           | £1,886                           | £1,854                             | £2,717            | £1,901                 | (£816)  |
| Strategy & Governance     | £406                             | £402                             | £282                               | £177              | £71                    | (£105)  |
| <b>Directorate Totals</b> | <b>£7,556</b>                    | <b>£5,404</b>                    | <b>£5,625</b>                      | <b>£7,101</b>     | <b>£4,723</b>          | <b>(£2,378)</b>   |

5.16 In respect of the incurred underspend at the year end, the main contributing factors have been:

- (a) Customer Services & ICT: The Superfast Broadband programme has underspent against in-year budget by £1.3m. Contract award to Virgin Media is currently in progress to deliver on the roll out of full fibre to schools during 2022/23 and the



Service are requesting budget be re-profiled to reflect the revised expectations of spend.

- (b) Finance & Property: Planned maintenance and condition budgets and the Timelord 2 budget have underspent by a net £261k and £118k, respectively due to a combination of Covid and supplier delivery delays. £382k of budget is requested to be re-profiled to 2022/23.
- (c) Finance & Property: Capital enhancement and development works on the Council's property portfolio was £180k underspent against budget for the year pending conclusion of lease negotiations. The service have requested budget be re-profiled in anticipation of spend required in the new financial year.

5.17 During the course of 2021/22 the directorate has re-profiled £2.8 million of expenditure into 2022/23 and future financial years. A further £2.4 million of expenditure has been identified at outturn for re-profiling. Total directorate re-profiling for 2021/22 is £5.2 million.

## Capital Financing

5.18 The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital and investment plans in light of overall organisation strategy and resources to ensure that decisions are made with sufficient regard to the long term financing implications and risks to the Council. To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the code sets out a number of indicators, the code does not include suggested indicative limits or ratios. Local Authorities are to set their own limits and ratios, subject to controls under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council's capital programme is a key driver of the treasury management activity.

5.19 A key indicator is the Council's Operational Boundary for debt which was set at £294 million for financial year 2021/22. As well as the level of borrowing needed to fund capital expenditure, the Operational Boundary also allows for debt embedded in the Waste PFI contract and any temporary borrowing which is required for cash flow purposes during the year (up to a maximum of £15 million at any one time).

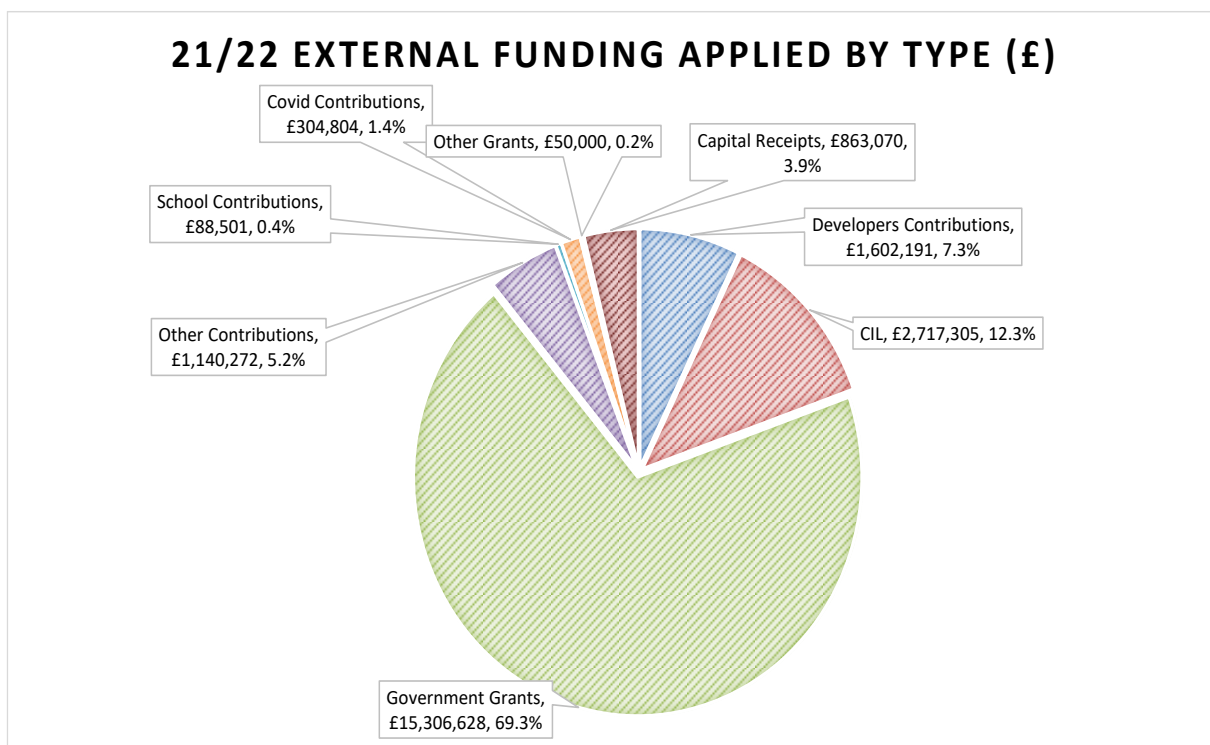
5.20 As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the Council's total level of long term borrowing to fund capital spend stood at £209.7 million. The Capital Strategy and supporting Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22 made provision for £18.3 million to be borrowed in 2021/22 to fund capital investment in operational assets. No long term borrowing has been undertaken in respect of Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB) funding in 2021/22 to support delivery of the capital programme. Lower official interest rates have lowered the cost of short-term, temporary loans and investment returns from cash assets that can be used in lieu of longer term borrowing. The Council during the course of 2021/22 has pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and keep interest costs low. Principal repayments of £5.6 million have been made as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 reducing the current total level of long term borrowing to £191.8 million.

5.21 The need and timing of further external borrowing will be contingent on the level of balances retained by the Council and pattern of capital expenditure incurred. The Council will predominately look to borrow long term in support of the capital programme

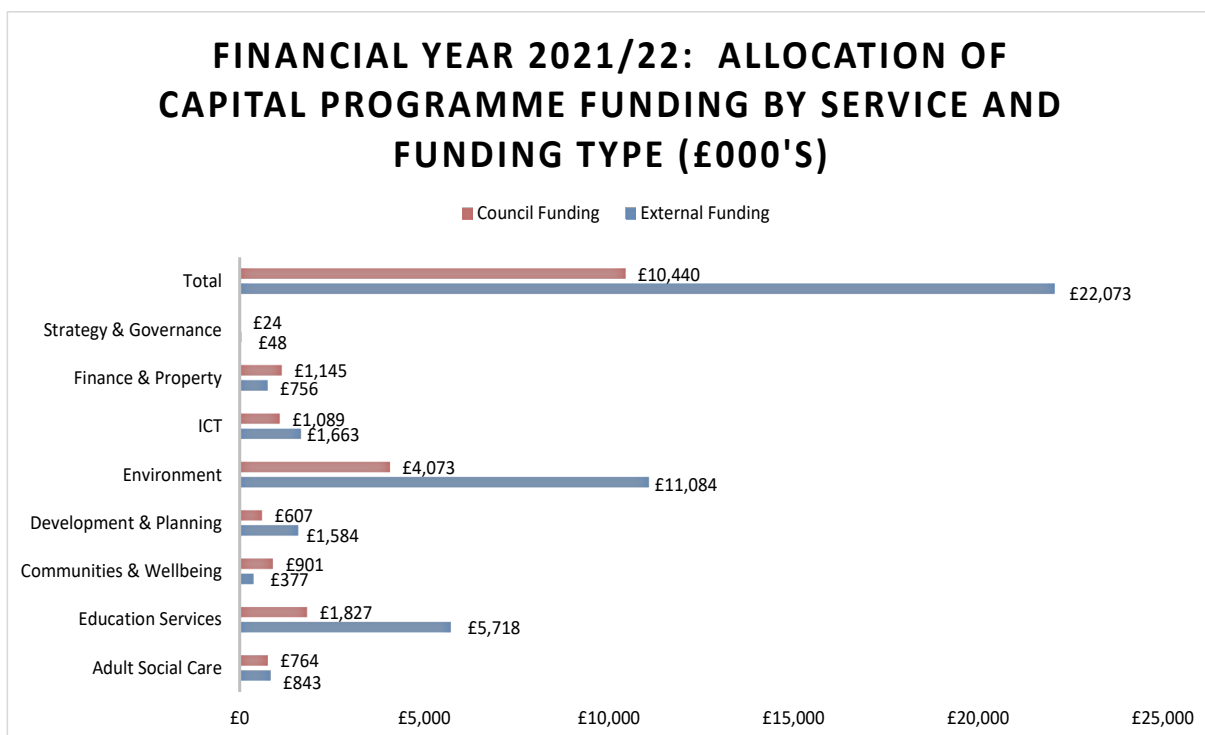


and will be exposed to interest rate risk in relation to rates prevailing in the market at the time at which such borrowing is to be undertaken.

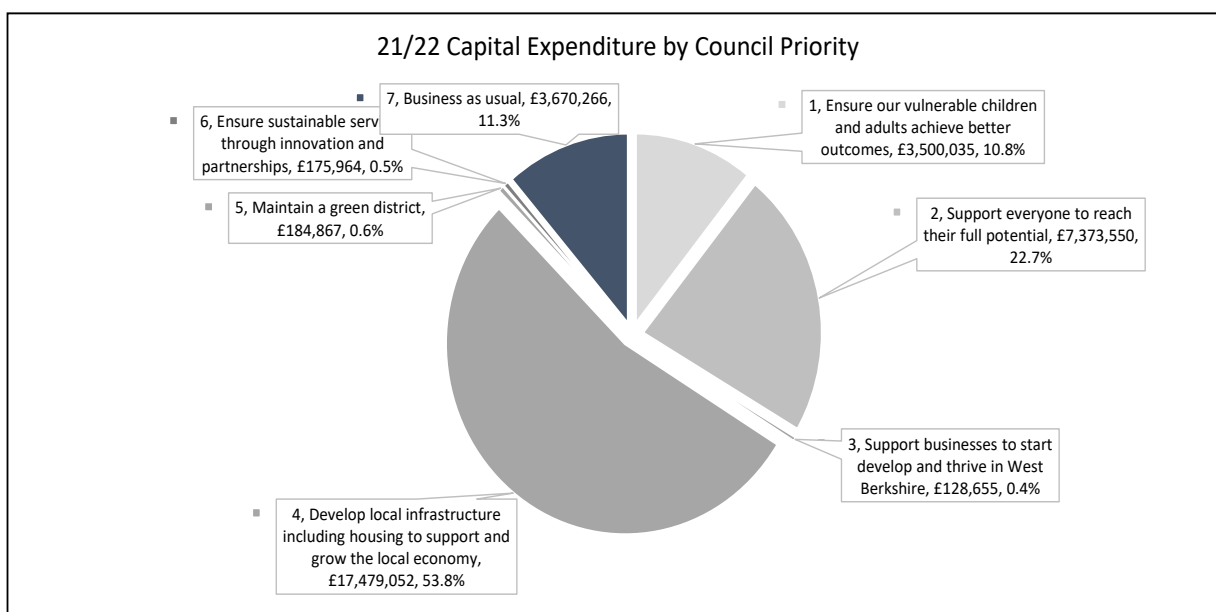
5.22 During 2021/22 £22.1 million of external funding and £10.4 million of council funding was applied to the capital programme, offsetting expenditure incurred. No new external borrowing was undertaken. The chart below details the funding by type that has been applied to the programme.



5.23 External funding is predominately applied in support of the Education Services and Environment programmes. The chart below details the split of council funding and external funding by service.



5.24 The capital programme is split across the Council’s approved Council Strategy. The graph below details the level of total expenditure (combined Council and external funded) spent by Council priority during 2021/22.



## Government oversight and access to PWLB borrowing

5.25 A ‘capital finance risk management’ clause included within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill included within the Queens’ Speech laid before Parliament on 11 May provides the Secretary of State with new powers to intervene in individual councils. The clause states that in order to “reduce or mitigate financial risk” the Secretary of State may direct a local authority to set borrowing limits or require a council to “divest itself of a specified asset”

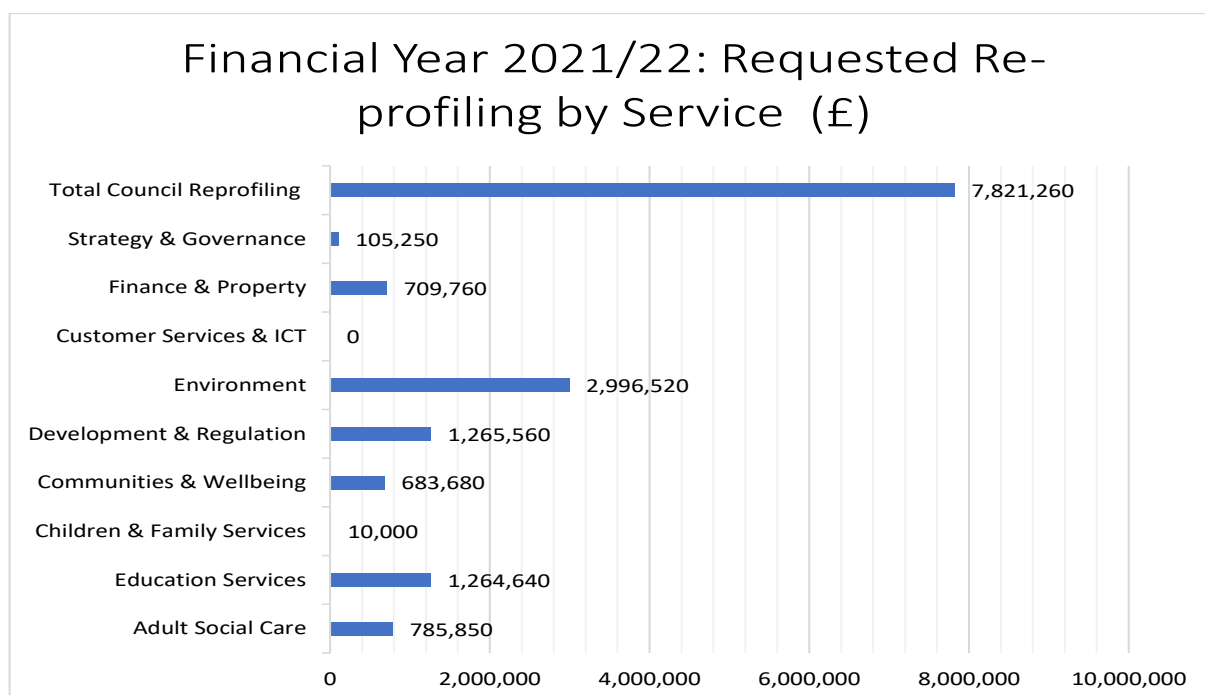
5.26 In May 2022 the Treasury issued updated guidance on PWLB lending to say that the PWLB will not typically advance new loans if there is a “more than negligible risk” that a new loan will not be repaid without future government support.

5.27 Whilst the impact of these recent changes on the wider local government sector are not yet known, Officers consider that the planned capital expenditure and borrowing plans of the Council are prudent and affordable and in compliance with guidance and the statutory framework.

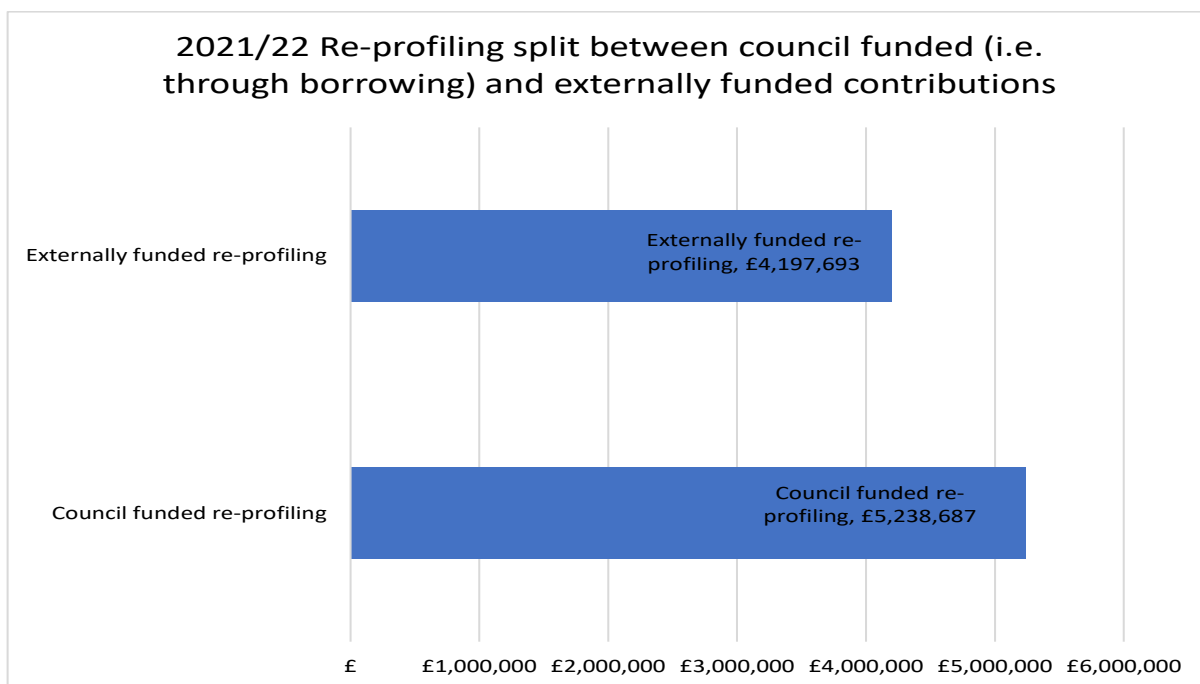
### Proposals

5.28 During the course of the financial year, where a service has identified expenditure which will not be incurred, the expenditure has been re-profiled into future financial years. At Quarter One £4.3 million of expenditure was re-profiled with the approval of CSG, together with a further £3.1 million at Quarter Two and £10.9 million at Quarter Three and included within the Capital Programme for financial years 2022/23 – 2026/27 approved by Council on 3 March 2022.

5.29 As part of the outturn process, a further £9.4 million of expenditure is proposed to be re-profiled into financial year 2022/23. The graph below details the cumulative level of re-profiling in financial year 2021/22 by service and the Council as a whole:



5.30 The majority of re-profiling is across the Environment, Development & Planning and Education Services budgets. The chart below provides a breakdown between internally council funded re-profiling and externally funded re-profiling.



5.31 Appendix B provides a detailed breakdown of the project expenditure proposed to be re-profiled into financial year 2021/22.

5.32 Included within the proposals shown at Appendix B is a request to adjust the 2022/23 original budget allocations to adjust for 2021/22 in-year overspends to accommodate projects which are effectively ahead of schedule. The aggregate value of adjustments proposed is £429k.

## 6 Other options considered

No other options were considered.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 In respect of the full programme, the total re-profiling of expenditure from 2021/22 and beyond, as approved post Quarters One to Three from 2021/22 amounts to £18.4 million. A further £9.4 million is requested to be re-profiled at Outturn. The total amount of re-profiling (£27.8 million) equates to 58% of the original 2021/22 capital programme of £47.8 million. Budget managers have confirmed there is capacity in 2022/23 to deliver slipped projects in addition to the approved capital programme for 2022/23. CSG will closely monitor spend against the re-profiled expenditure and approved programme in 2022/23.

## 8 Appendices

Appendix A – Budget Changes Financial Year 2021/22

Appendix B – Re-profiling Proposal

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No: X

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

**Officer details:**

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## Budget Changes: Financial Year 2021/22

| Service Area                             | Original Budget 2021/22<br>£000 | Budget Agreed by CSG to be Reprofiling from 2020/21<br>£000 | Agreed Reprofiling at Q1<br>£000 | Agreed Reprofiling at Q2<br>£000 | Agreed Reprofiling at Q3<br>£000 | Other Changes to 2021/22 Budget<br>£000 | Revised Budget for 2021/22<br>£000 | Explanation of Other Agreed Changes  | Approved by CSG                |
|--|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>PEOPLE DIRECTORATE</b>                |                                 |   |                                  |                                  |                                  |   |                                    |  |                                |
| Adult Social Care                        | £1,770                          | £676  | £0                               | (£83)                            | (£130)                           | £143                                    | £2,375                             | Care Home Garden Projects & Autism Grant   | 30.04.21/19.10.21/2<br>1.01.22 |
| Children & Family Services               | £20                             | £0  | £0                               | £0                               | £0                               | £0                                      | £20                                |  |                                |
| Communities & Wellbeing                  | £3,586                          | £749  | £0                               | (£516)                           | (£2,251)                         | £310                                    | £1,878                             | Members Bids and Parish Planning moved Service<br>Thatcham Library Refurbishment   | 30.04.21/19.10.21/2<br>1.01.22 |
| Education Services                       | £8,712                          | £2,318  | (£1,289)                         | £0                               | (£1,383)                         | £501                                    | £8,860                             | Grant Funding for Fibre installation at Hungerford Primary<br>Decarbonisation Grant  | 30.04.21/13.07.21/2<br>1.01.22 |
| <b>Total for Communities Directorate</b> | <b>£14,088</b>                  | <b>£3,743</b>   | <b>(£1,289)</b>                  | <b>(£599)</b>                    | <b>(£3,764)</b>                  | <b>£954</b>                             | <b>£13,133</b>                     |  |                                |
| <b>PLACE DIRECTORATE</b>                 |                                 |   |                                  |                                  |                                  |   |                                    |  |                                |
| Development & Regulation                 | £1,787                          | £2,427  | £0                               | £0                               | (£1,033)                         | £238                                    | £3,419                             | Additional DFG Funding Received  | 30.04.21/21.01.22              |
| Environment                              | £23,273                         | £612  | (£3,063)                         | £0                               | (£5,835)                         | £4,377                                  | £19,364                            | £2m additional DFT Grant<br>£2.1m Theale Train Station<br>£210k Faraday Road Open Spaces Project<br>£30k Additional Walking Routes | 30.04.21/13.07.21/2<br>1.01.22 |
| <b>Total for Environment Directorate</b> | <b>£25,060</b>                  | <b>£3,039</b>   | <b>(£3,063)</b>                  | <b>£0</b>                        | <b>(£6,868)</b>                  | <b>£4,615</b>                           | <b>£22,783</b>                     |  |                                |
| <b>RESOURCES DIRECTORATE</b>             |                                 |   |                                  |                                  |                                  |   |                                    |  |                                |
| ICT                                      | £4,067                          | £927  | £0                               | (£534)                           | (£303)                           | £50                                     | £4,208                             | £50k Transformation Funding for Office 365   | 30.04.21/19.10.21/2<br>1.01.22 |
| Finance & Property                       | £4,400                          | £266  | £0                               | (£1,950)                         | £0                               | £0                                      | £2,717                             |  | 30.04.21/19.10.21              |
| Strategy & Governance                    | £221                            | £224  | £0                               | £0                               | £0                               | (£269)                                  | £177                               | Members Bids and Parish Planning moved Service   |                                |
| <b>Total for Resource Directorate</b>    | <b>£8,688</b>                   | <b>£1,417</b>   | <b>£0</b>                        | <b>(£2,484)</b>                  | <b>(£303)</b>                    | <b>(£219)</b>                           | <b>£7,102</b>                      |  |                                |
| <b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>                   |                                 |   |                                  |                                  |                                  |   |                                    |  |                                |
| Chief Executive                          | £0                              | £0  | £0                               | £0                               | £0                               | £0                                      | £0                                 |  |                                |
| <b>Total for Chief Executive</b>         | <b>£0</b>                       | <b>£0</b>   | <b>£0</b>                        | <b>£0</b>                        | <b>£0</b>                        | <b>£0</b>                               | <b>£0</b>                          |  |                                |
| <b>Totals</b>                            | <b>£47,836</b>                  | <b>£8,199</b>   | <b>(£4,352)</b>                  | <b>(£3,083)</b>                  | <b>(£10,935)</b>                 | <b>£5,350</b>                           | <b>£43,018</b>                     |  |                                |

Financial Year 2021/22: Outturn Re-profiling Proposal

| Directorate   | Service                                       | Cost Centre | Project  | Expenditure Budget | Expenditure at Outturn | Underspend at Outturn | Re-profiling Request | Externally Funded Re-profiling | Council Funded Value | Approved 2022/23 Budget | 2022/23 Budget inc Re-profiling |
|---------------|---|-------------|--|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| People        | Adult Social Care                             | 86044       | Autism Capital Grant                                       | £12,540            | £                      | (£12,540)             | £12,540              | £12,540                        | £                    | £                       | £12,540                         |
| People        | Adult Social Care                             | 86046       | Care Director V6   | £718,850           | £151,893               | (£566,957)            | £566,960             |                                | £566,960             | £                       | £566,960                        |
| People        | Adult Social Care                             | 86008       | O/T Equipment  | £1,263,030         | £1,056,682             | (£206,348)            | £206,350             | £                              | £206,350             | £1,184,170              | £1,390,520                      |
| <b>People</b> | <b>Totals: Adult Social Care</b>              |             |  | <b>£1,994,420</b>  | <b>£1,208,575</b>      | <b>(£785,845)</b>     | <b>£785,850</b>      | <b>£12,540</b>                 | <b>£773,310</b>      |                         |                                 |
| People        | Children & Family Services                    | 86013       | Building Work: Fostering                                   | £20,000            | £10,000                | (£10,000)             | £10,000              | £                              | £10,000              | £20,000                 | £30,000                         |
| <b>People</b> | <b>Totals: Children &amp; Family Services</b> |             |  | <b>£20,000</b>     | <b>£10,000</b>         | <b>(£10,000)</b>      | <b>£10,000</b>       | <b>£</b>                       | <b>£10,000</b>       |                         |                                 |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82277       | Theale Primary Basic Need Project                          | £174,050           | £52,337                | (£121,713)            | £121,710             | £55,623                        | £66,087              | £                       | £121,710                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82285       | Highwood Copse   | £418,500           | £152,273               | (£266,227)            | £111,650             | £111,650                       | £                    | £223,330                | £334,980                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82308       | The Winchcombe Primary - Basic Need Bulge                  | £8,240             | £6,476                 | (£1,764)              | £1,760               | £                              | £1,760               | £                       | £1,760                          |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82315       | Hungerford Primary - UIFSM                                 | £25,060            | £3,287                 | (£21,773)             | £19,510              | £                              | £19,510              | £90,380                 | £109,890                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82316       | The Willink - Feasibility                                  | £1,155,730         | £1,146,108             | (£9,622)              | £9,620               | £                              | £9,620               | £67,790                 | £77,410                         |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82317       | Speenhamland - 2FE Project                                 | £617,830           | £314,558               | (£303,272)            | £272,590             | £                              | £272,590             | £157,020                | £429,610                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82319       | i-college Alternative Education - East of Area             | £127,030           | £22,850                | (£104,180)            | £104,180             | £104,180                       | £                    | £1,679,960              | £1,784,140                      |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82323       | Trinity School Basic Need                                  | £89,000            | £                      | (£89,000)             | £31,900              | £                              | £31,900              | £                       | £31,900                         |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82327       | Special Provision Fund Allocation - Intervention           | £2,530             | £                      | (£2,530)              | £2,530               | £2,530                         | £                    | £                       | £2,530                          |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82329       | Parsons Down Rationalisation                               | £1,402,480         | £909,530               | (£492,950)            | £405,600             | £                              | £405,600             | £180,080                | £585,680                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82335       | Garland School - Nurture Provision                         | £47,000            | £29,760                | (£17,240)             | £17,240              | £17,240                        | £                    | £308,760                | £326,000                        |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82336       | SEMH/ASD Resourced Provision - Secondary                   | £153,640           | £128,475               | (£25,165)             | £25,170              | £                              | £25,170              | £2,860,070              | £2,885,240                      |
| People        | Education Services                            | 82338       | Downlands Sport Centre - replacement and expansion         | £237,950           | £96,770                | (£141,180)            | £141,180             | £125,000                       | £16,180              | £2,970,240              | £3,111,420                      |
| <b>People</b> | <b>Totals: Education Services</b>             |             |  | <b>£4,459,040</b>  | <b>£2,862,422</b>      | <b>(£1,596,618)</b>   | <b>£1,264,640</b>    | <b>£416,223</b>                | <b>£848,417</b>      |                         |                                 |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85180       | Core Sites Essential Investment                            | £21,830            | £19,267                | (£2,563)              | £2,560               | £                              | £2,560               | £11,230                 | £13,790                         |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85188       | Leisure Centre Compliance & Modernisation                  | £84,830            | £12,649                | (£72,181)             | £72,180              | £                              | £72,180              | £396,200                | £468,380                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85193       | Northcroft Lido  | £8,320             | £6,880                 | (£1,440)              | £1,440               | £                              | £1,440               | £                       | £1,440                          |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 87133       | Cultural Services - Pmp                                    | £305,000           | £242,671               | (£62,329)             | £62,330              | £                              | £62,330              | £122,400                | £184,730                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85195       | Expansion of Berkshire Records Office. Reading             | £191,000           | £2,550                 | (£188,450)            | £188,450             | £155,120                       | £33,330              | £1,259,000              | £1,447,450                      |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85196       | Feasibility studies for options to deliver the Leisure Str | £155,000           | £130,657               | (£24,343)             | £24,340              | £                              | £24,340              | £245,000                | £269,340                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85197       | Feasibility Study - Newbury Lido                           | £100,000           | £                      | (£100,000)            | £100,000             | £                              | £100,000             | £                       | £100,000                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85198       | Hungerford LC - Modular exercise studio                    | £160,000           | £9,174                 | (£150,826)            | £150,830             | £                              | £150,830             | £140,000                | £290,830                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85199       | Playing Pitch Action Plan                                  | £200,000           | £142,852               | (£57,148)             | £57,150              | £                              | £57,150              | £4,606,000              | £4,663,150                      |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85122       | Libraries Book Stock                                       | £136,260           | £119,832               | (£16,428)             | £16,430              | £                              | £16,430              | £136,260                | £152,690                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85125       | Planned maintenance of library buildings                   | £73,730            | £72,988                | (£742)                | £740                 | £                              | £740                 | £141,160                | £141,900                        |
| People        | Communities & Wellbeing                       | 85143       | Museum Maint & Repair                                      | £15,000            | £7,768                 | (£7,232)              | £7,230               | £                              | £7,230               | £159,180                | £166,410                        |
| <b>People</b> | <b>Totals: Communities &amp; Wellbeing</b>    |             |  | <b>£1,450,970</b>  | <b>£767,287</b>        | <b>(£683,683)</b>     | <b>£683,680</b>      | <b>£155,120</b>                | <b>£528,560</b>      |                         |                                 |
| <b>People</b> | <b>Totals: People Directorate</b>             |             |  | <b>£7,924,430</b>  | <b>£4,848,284</b>      | <b>(£3,076,146)</b>   | <b>£2,744,170</b>    | <b>£583,883</b>                | <b>£2,160,287</b>    |                         |                                 |

Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22

| Directorate  | Service                                   | Cost Centre | Project  | Expenditure Budget | Expenditure at Outturn | Underspend at Outturn | Re-profiling Request | Externally Funded Re-profiling | Council Funded Value | Approved 2022/23 Budget | 2022/23 Budget inc Re-profiling |
|--------------|---|-------------|--|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Place        | Development & Regulation                  | 80001       | Home Repair Assist Grt                           | £61,560            | £2,980                 | (£58,580)             | £58,580              | £                              | £58,580              | £91,560                 | £150,140                        |
| Place        | Development & Regulation                  | 80003       | Disabled Facilities Gr                           | £2,319,270         | £1,671,697             | (£647,573)            | £647,570             | £                              | £647,570             | £1,687,290              | £2,334,860                      |
| Place        | Development & Regulation                  | 80010       | Four Houses Corner                               | £900,000           | £382,086               | (£517,914)            | £517,910             | £                              | £517,910             | £1,500,000              | £2,017,910                      |
| Place        | Development & Regulation                  | 85127       | PPP One System                                   | £89,320            | £47,821                | (£41,499)             | £41,500              | £                              | £41,500              | £                       | £41,500                         |
| <b>Place</b> | <b>Totals: Development &amp; Planning</b> |             |  | <b>£3,370,150</b>  | <b>£2,104,584</b>      | <b>(£1,265,566)</b>   | <b>£1,265,560</b>    | <b>£</b>                       | <b>£1,265,560</b>    |                         |                                 |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81627       | Newbury Town Centre Paving                       | £100,000           | £33,068                | (£66,932)             | £66,930              | £66,930                        | £                    | £                       | £66,930                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 88542       | Machine Patching                                 | £577,110           | £485,902               | (£91,208)             | £91,210              | £91,210                        | £                    | £                       | £91,210                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81631       | Newbury Rail Station Road Improvements           | £1,386,660         | £41,162                | (£1,345,498)          | £1,345,500           | £1,345,500                     | £                    | £4,210,000              | £5,555,500                      |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83110       | Solar PV Initiative                              | £60,000            | £46,283                | (£13,717)             | £13,720              | £                              | £13,720              | £154,190                | £167,910                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83130       | Natural Carbon Reduction Measures                | £20,000            | £                      | (£20,000)             | £20,000              | £                              | £20,000              | £1,205,000              | £1,225,000                      |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83132       | Renewable Energy Provision                       | £300,000           | £800                   | (£299,200)            | £299,200             | £                              | £299,200             | £2,650,000              | £2,949,200                      |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83062       | Waste Mgt Site Provisn                           | £14,580            | £                      | (£14,580)             | £14,580              | £                              | £14,580              | £                       | £14,580                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81051       | Village Speed Limits                             | £45,000            | £34,279                | (£10,721)             | £10,720              | £10,720                        | £                    | £30,000                 | £40,720                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81103       | Local Sfty Acc Reduct                            | £90,000            | £45,244                | (£44,756)             | £44,760              | £44,760                        | £                    | £75,000                 | £119,760                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81181       | Signing Improvements                             | £30,000            | £19,963                | (£10,037)             | £10,040              | £10,040                        | £                    | £30,000                 | £40,040                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81186       | Traffic Signal Upgrades                          | £200,000           | £163,709               | (£36,291)             | £36,290              | £36,290                        | £                    | £440,000                | £476,290                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81236       | Active Travel Infrastructure                     | £800,000           | £581,442               | (£218,558)            | £207,520             | £207,520                       | £                    | £775,000                | £982,520                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81514       | Public Transport Infrastructure                  | £50,000            | (£12,368)              | (£62,368)             | £28,660              | £28,660                        | £                    | £50,000                 | £78,660                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81603       | Aldermaston Footways                             | £42,500            | £37,461                | (£5,039)              | £5,040               | £5,040                         | £                    | £244,270                | £249,310                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81623       | Sandleford Access Improvements                   | £1,849,890         | £1,813,303             | (£36,587)             | £36,590              | £                              | £36,590              | £                       | £36,590                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81632       | On Street Electrical Charge Point                | £175,000           | £90,268                | (£84,732)             | £84,730              | £84,730                        | £                    | £289,670                | £374,400                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81649       | Local S106 Highway Improvements                  | £183,160           | £86,154                | (£97,006)             | £97,010              | £97,010                        | £                    | £100,000                | £197,010                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81658       | Car Park Maintenance                             | £35,000            | £9,156                 | (£25,844)             | £25,840              | £                              | £25,840              | £15,000                 | £40,840                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81662       | Hampstead Norreys Flood Alleviation Scheme       | £40,000            | £                      | (£40,000)             | £40,000              | £40,000                        | £                    | £                       | £40,000                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81670       | Pavement to St Mary's School                     | £12,500            | £12,120                | (£380)                | £380                 | £380                           | £                    | £22,500                 | £22,880                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81244       | Bridleway Imp Ped                                | £23,890            | £14,873                | (£9,017)              | £8,500               | £8,500                         | £                    | £13,890                 | £22,390                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81245       | Ridgeway   | £13,000            | £920                   | (£12,080)             | £12,080              | £12,080                        | £                    | £                       | £12,080                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81246       | Recreational Cycleways                           | £27,880            | £18,056                | (£9,824)              | £9,820               | £9,820                         | £                    | £                       | £                               |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83112       | Urban tree fund                                  | £40,000            | £5,977                 | (£34,023)             | £34,020              | £                              | £34,020              | £40,000                 | £74,020                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83114       | Habitat Creation                                 | £10,000            | £                      | (£10,000)             | £10,000              | £10,000                        | £                    | £18,750                 | £28,750                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83115       | Henwick Sports Pavillion                         | £65,000            | £8,737                 | (£56,263)             | £56,260              | £56,260                        | £                    | £                       | £56,260                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 83301       | Faraday Road Open Spaces Project                 | £210,000           | £121,828               | (£88,172)             | £41,570              | £41,570                        | £                    | £                       | £41,570                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 85116       | Playground Equipment                             | £140,000           | £47,158                | (£92,842)             | £92,640              | £                              | £92,640              | £51,880                 | £144,520                        |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81639       | Pay Machine Replacement                          | £90,000            | £59,468                | (£30,532)             | £26,030              | £                              | £26,030              | £                       | £26,030                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81648       | Replacement Enforcement Camera on Parkway Bridge | £38,000            | £6,954                 | (£31,046)             | £31,050              | £                              | £31,050              | £                       | £31,050                         |
| Place        | Environment                               | 81652       | Transport Services Fleet Upgrade                 | £200,000           | £4,167                 | (£195,833)            | £195,830             | £                              | £195,830             | £100,000                | £295,830                        |
| <b>Place</b> | <b>Totals: Environment</b>                |             |  | <b>£6,869,170</b>  | <b>£3,776,085</b>      | <b>(£3,093,085)</b>   | <b>£2,996,520</b>    | <b>£2,207,020</b>              | <b>£789,500</b>      |                         |                                 |
| <b>Place</b> | <b>Totals: Place Directorate</b>          |             |  | <b>£10,239,320</b> | <b>£5,880,670</b>      | <b>(£4,358,650)</b>   | <b>£4,262,080</b>    | <b>£2,207,020</b>              | <b>£2,055,060</b>    |                         |                                 |



Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22

| Directorate      | Service                                  | Cost Centre | Project                                       | Expenditure Budget | Expenditure at Outturn | Underspend at Outturn | Re-profiling Request | Externally Funded Re-profiling | Council Funded Valt | Approved 2022/23 Budget | 2022/23 Budget inc Re-profiling |
|------------------|--|-------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87291       | Remote Working Infrastructure Maintenance     | £50,000            | £                      | (£50,000)             | £50,000              | £                              | £50,000             | £20,000                 | £70,000                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87352       | Perimeter Firewall                            | £21,800            | £5,100                 | (£16,700)             | £16,700              | £                              | £16,700             | £                       | £16,700                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87281       | VMWare Hardware Refresh                       | £25,000            | £                      | (£25,000)             | £25,000              | £                              | £25,000             | £15,000                 | £40,000                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87282       | PSN Accreditation Maintenance                 | £40,000            | £25,159                | (£14,842)             | £5,000               | £                              | £5,000              | £40,000                 | £45,000                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87295       | Network Infrastructure (WiFi Provision)       | £45,000            | £                      | (£45,000)             | £45,000              | £                              | £45,000             | £10,000                 | £55,000                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87304       | Upgrade Backup Infrastructure                 | £35,000            | £                      | (£35,000)             | £35,000              | £                              | £35,000             | £15,000                 | £50,000                         |
|                  |  |             |   | £80,000            | £44,102                | (£35,898)             | £35,890              | £                              | £35,890             | £100,000                | £135,890                        |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87342       | Maintenance of DR Facility                    |                    |                        |                       |                      |                                |                     |                         |                                 |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87348       | ICT Helpdesk System                           | £65,000            | £51,943                | (£13,057)             | £13,060              | £                              | £13,060             | £35,000                 | £48,060                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87349       | Corporate Database Server Replacement         | £25,000            | £                      | (£25,000)             | £25,000              | £                              | £25,000             | £85,000                 | £110,000                        |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87355       | Cyber Security Enhancements                   | £20,000            | £2,625                 | (£17,375)             | £17,380              | £                              | £17,380             | £30,000                 | £47,380                         |
| Resources        | ICT                                      | 87400       | MHCLG Full Fibre to Schools Project           | £1,700,000         | £106,244               | (£1,593,756)          | £1,347,090           | £1,347,090                     |                     | £                       | £1,347,090                      |
| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Totals: ICT</b>                       |             |   | <b>£2,106,800</b>  | <b>£235,172</b>        | <b>(£1,871,628)</b>   | <b>£1,615,120</b>    | <b>£1,347,090</b>              | <b>£268,030</b>     |                         |                                 |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87103       | Bldg Mtce Total Prov                          | £438,000           | £232,774               | (£205,226)            | £205,230             | £                              | £205,230            | £388,000                | £593,230                        |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87119       | Cond/Asb/Meas Surveys                         | £61,760            | £2,550                 | (£59,210)             | £59,210              | £                              | £59,210             | £38,000                 | £97,210                         |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87127       | Unallocated Buildings                         | £25,600            | £20,254                | (£5,346)              | £790                 | £                              | £790                | £20,000                 | £20,790                         |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 89900       | Acquisitions & Development                    | £330,970           | £151,052               | (£179,919)            | £179,920             | £                              | £179,920            | £                       | £179,920                        |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87299       | Agresso Upgrade                               | £213,560           | £53,376                | (£160,184)            | £46,760              | £                              | £46,760             | £                       | £46,760                         |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87635       | Rationalism of council offices                | £200,000           | £82,349                | (£117,651)            | £117,650             | £                              | £117,650            | £100,000                | £217,650                        |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87633       | CIL Community Infrastructure Funding Bids     | £500,000           | £424,319               | (£75,681)             | £59,700              | £59,700                        | £                   | £500,000                | £559,700                        |
| Resources        | Finance & Property                       | 87634       | Enterprise Resource Planning System           | £50,000            | £9,500                 | (£40,500)             | £40,500              | £                              | £40,500             | £200,000                | £240,500                        |
| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Totals: Finance &amp; Property</b>    |             |   | <b>£1,819,890</b>  | <b>£976,173</b>        | <b>(£843,717)</b>     | <b>£709,760</b>      | <b>£59,700</b>                 | <b>£650,060</b>     |                         |                                 |
| Resources        | Strategy & Governance                    | 87603       | Adaptations for Disabilities                  | £10,000            | £3,891                 | (£6,109)              | £6,110               | £                              | £6,110              |                         |                                 |
| Resources        | Strategy & Governance                    | 87550       | HR/Payroll System                             | £31,510            | £12,674                | (£18,836)             | £18,840              | £                              | £18,840             | £                       | £18,840                         |
| Resources        | Strategy & Governance                    | 87601       | Digitalisation Infrastructure/ ICT Allocation | £124,140           | £43,843                | (£80,297)             | £80,300              | £                              | £80,300             |                         |                                 |
| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Totals: Strategy &amp; Governance</b> |             |   | <b>£165,650</b>    | <b>£60,408</b>         | <b>(£105,243)</b>     | <b>£105,250</b>      | <b>£</b>                       | <b>£105,250</b>     |                         |                                 |
| <b>Resources</b> | <b>Totals: Resources Directorate</b>     |             |   | <b>£4,092,340</b>  | <b>£1,271,753</b>      | <b>(£2,820,587)</b>   | <b>£2,430,130</b>    | <b>£1,406,790</b>              | <b>£1,023,340</b>   |                         |                                 |
| <b>Council</b>   | <b>Totals: Council</b>                   |             |   | <b>£22,256,090</b> | <b>£12,000,706</b>     | <b>(£10,255,384)</b>  | <b>£9,436,380</b>    | <b>£4,197,693</b>              | <b>£5,238,687</b>   |                         |                                 |

Capital Financial Performance Report Outturn 2021/22

| Re-profiling of Funding from 2022/23 into 2021/22 (i.e. budget reduction in 2022/23) |                          |             |  |                    |                        |                       |                      |                                |                      |                         |                                 |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|--|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Directorate  | Service                  | Cost Centre | Project  | Expenditure Budget | Expenditure at Outturn | Underspend at Outturn | Re-profiling Request | Externally Funded Re-profiling | Council Funded Value | Approved 2022/23 Budget | 2022/23 Budget inc Re-profiling |
| People   | Education Services       | 82286       | Park House - Impact of new housing                   | £940,270           | £1,065,957             | £125,687              | (£125,690)           | (£125,690)                     | £                    | £386,290                | £260,600                        |
| Place  | Environment              | 81455       | Travel Plans – eCargo & eBikes (Transport Planning)  | £57,760            | £77,639                | £19,879               | (£19,880)            | £                              | (£19,880)            | £51,800                 | £31,920                         |
| Place  | Environment              | 83103       | Council Carbon Management Plan                       | £25,000            | £26,892                | £1,892                | (£1,890)             | £                              | (£1,890)             | £122,070                | £120,180                        |
| People   | Communities & Wellbeing  | 85134       | Shawhouse Mansion Mtce                               | £110,000           | £123,735               | £13,735               | (£13,735)            | £                              | (£13,735)            | £98,090                 | £84,355                         |
| People   | Communities & Wellbeing  | 87610       | Members Bids   | £86,500            | £100,103               | £13,603               | (£13,600)            | £                              | (£13,600)            | £252,310                | £238,710                        |
| Place  | Development & Regulation | 84100       | New Oracle Server                                    | £31,130            | £37,322                | £6,192                | (£6,190)             | £                              | (£6,190)             | £8,870                  | £2,680                          |
| Place  | Development & Regulation | 86020       | Temp Accommodation Refurbishment                     | £17,500            | £23,383                | £5,883                | (£5,880)             | £                              | (£5,880)             | £37,500                 | £31,620                         |
| Resources  | ICT                      | 87110       | Corporate IT Replacement                             | £600,000           | £701,256               | £101,256              | (£101,260)           | £                              | (£101,260)           | £687,980                | £586,720                        |
|  |                          |             |  | £                  | £88,667                | £88,667               | (£52,770)            | £                              | (£52,770)            | £75,000                 | £22,230                         |
| Resources  | ICT                      | 87302       | Server Windows Licensing                             |                    |                        |                       |                      |                                |                      |                         |                                 |
| Resources  | ICT                      | 87344       | Telephony Infrastructure (Unified Communications Sof | £                  | £35,634                | £35,634               | (£35,630)            | £                              | (£35,630)            | £113,800                | £78,170                         |
| Resources  | Finance & Property       | 86039       | Chestnut Walk Project                                | £                  | £13,557                | £13,557               | (£12,000)            | £                              | (£12,000)            | £12,000                 | £                               |
| Resources  | Finance & Property       | 87129       | Compliance (LRA, FRA, Asbestos)                      | £29,170            | £30,992                | £1,822                | (£1,820)             | £                              | (£1,820)             | £34,000                 | £32,180                         |
| Resources  | Finance & Property       | 87755       | Corporate Furniture Replacement                      | £5,300             | £6,941                 | £1,641                | (£1,640)             | £                              | (£1,640)             | £5,300                  | £3,660                          |
|  |                          |             |  | £1,902,630         | £2,332,079             | £429,449              | (£391,985)           | (£125,690)                     | (£266,295)           |                         |                                 |

# 2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>        | Executive                 |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>                   | 9 June 2022               |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>                    | Councillor Ross Mackinnon |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b> | 26 May 2022               |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                       | Melanie Ellis             |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>                    | EX4018                    |

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is Quarter Four, the provisional outturn position for the 2021-22 financial year. The reporting of this figure is the culmination of budget monitoring throughout the financial year and the figure will then become part of the Council's financial statements for the 2021-22 financial year.
- 1.2 The report highlights where over and underspends have occurred during the year and reasons for these, as well as the overall position for the financial year, which is an underspend of £0.2m.

## 2 Recommendation

To note the provisional outturn of £0.2m underspend. The under spend is 0.17% of the Council's 2021-22 net revenue budget of £142m.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication            | Commentary   |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | £0.2m provisional underspend. This will be added to the Council's general reserves.<br>M.Ellis 11.5.22 |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | None   |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | None   |

|  |  |                |                 |                   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Risk Management:</b>  | Risks to next years' budget are included where relevant in the report.                 |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Property:</b>   | Impact on income due to a commercial property not being let during the financial year. |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | No   |                |                 |                   |
|  | <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?               |  | Y              |                 |                   |
| <b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? |  | Y              |                 |                   |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   |  | Y              |                 |                   |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |  | Y              |                 |                   |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>   |  | y              |                 |                   |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>  |  | y              |                 |                   |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>  |  | y              |                 | Business as usual |

|                                     |   |   |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Core Business:</b>               | Y   |   |  | The financial position and stewardship has enabled the Council to continue to provide services in line with the approved 2021-22 budget. |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |   | y |  |  |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | Budget holders, Heads of Service and Directors. |   |  |  |

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report is to inform members of the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is the provisional outturn for 2021-22 as at Quarter Four.
- 4.2 The 2021-22 net revenue budget of £142m was set on 2nd March 2021. Since then the Council has continued to play a significant and positive role in responding to the pandemic, from helping to coordinate the community response, supporting local businesses and working with schools. The overall outturn is interlinked to the impact of the pandemic and the use of Covid resources provided by central government and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Funding received from Government to date for Covid-19, and the Council's level of general fund reserves, meant that the Council was well placed to continue its efforts on response and recovery from Covid-19. The Covid-19 grant underspend from 2020-21 has been used to fund the ongoing pandemic response as well as funds from Government for 2021-22, including a quarter year of the income compensation scheme.
- 4.3 The provisional revenue outturn is a £0.2m underspend, which will be added to the Council's general reserves. The outturn is after taking account of any funds carried forwards to 2022-23, which comprise of moving unspent funding and grants into earmarked reserves to spend next year, including the Public Health grant and Covid grants, net of any drawdowns from earmarked reserves to support services in 2021-22.
- 4.4 The forecast position has remain relatively consistent at a Council wide position, but has fluctuated during the year in services as pressures/opportunities have emerged. The outturn position both protects the general fund reserve but also specific earmarked reserves which will not have a draw on them as forecast earlier in the year.

## 2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn

| Directorate Summary | Final Net Budget | Outturn        | (Under)/over spend |                   |                   |                    |                            |                |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|                     |                  |                | Quarter One        | Quarter Two       | Quarter Three     | Quarter Four       |                            |                |
|                     |                  |                | Year end forecast  | Year end forecast | Year end forecast | Variance to budget | Carried forward to 2022/23 | Final variance |
|                     | £000             | £000           | £000               | £000              | £000              | £000               | £000                       | £000           |
| People              | 81,203           | 81,466         | 59                 | 1,153             | 1,322             | 263                | 1,389                      | 1,652          |
| Place               | 29,829           | 28,887         | 231                | (654)             | (275)             | (943)              | 37                         | (905)          |
| Resources           | 15,011           | 14,026         | 405                | 364               | 219               | (984)              | 1,163                      | 179            |
| Chief Executive     | 561              | 579            | 0                  | 18                | 15                | 18                 | 0                          | 18             |
| Capital Financing   | 15,058           | 13,878         | (1,000)            | (1,222)           | (1,236)           | (1,179)            | 0                          | (1,179)        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>141,661</b>   | <b>138,836</b> | <b>(305)</b>       | <b>(341)</b>      | <b>44</b>         | <b>(2,825)</b>     | <b>2,589</b>               | <b>(236)</b>   |

4.5 The People Directorate overspend is £1.6m. At Quarter Three, the forecast was an overspend of £1.3m after a draw down from reserves of £0.5m. This is no longer required due to the overall Council underspend.

4.6 The Adult Social Care (ASC) overspend is £42k. The 2021-22 budget was built using £2.3m of one-off Covid emergency grant, of which £1.2m supported the general budget pressures in ASC such as increased client numbers, and £1m supported specific Covid pressures. The ongoing budget pressures have been addressed as part of the 2022-23 budget build process. The £43k overspend could have been fully mitigated if required at year-end by using some of the £0.9m identified as a risk against the General Fund during the budget build process.

- Long term services (LTS) are £40k underspent, after allocation of Covid funding. Although there are lower client numbers than modelled, 1697 compared to 1716, the cost of client care packages are higher due to the amount of care required, including an increase in double up care at home and earlier hospital discharge.
- There is lower than modelled occupancy within Council owned care homes, which has resulted in unmet savings. The budget was set at 95% occupancy across the three homes and is currently at 78%. As clients are discharged from hospital earlier, their needs are often too high for the provision available, and so are placed externally, resulting in higher costs.
- Short term services are £79k over spent after the allocation of Covid funding. The overspend is due to an increase in services being commissioned short term due to the uncertainty that Covid brings. ASC have proactively claimed for Continuing Health Care (CHC) and Covid funding to help mitigate this.
- The service continues to take action to suppress market demand by reinforcing the three conversations model, strategic review of in-house care home provision and use of technology enabled care. Market Management works with local providers to ensure supply and demand are better aligned and offer better value for money. Net weekly spend on long term services is carefully monitored, with requests for long term services scrutinised weekly at Good Practice Forum.

- 4.7 In Children & Family Services (CFS), the overspend is £1.2m. The risk reserve for residential placements of £0.4m could have been used to support this.
- Placements are £0.7m over spent, comprising a £1.2m overspend in residential care offset by underspends in areas including fostering and UASC. Whilst the children in care population has been stable, there is increasing complexity in the needs of children who have entered care and an increase in associated costs.
  - The Family Safeguarding Model had a saving target of £209k for income from partner agencies to support this model. The partner decision not to contribute has resulted in a pressure as this saving will not be met.
  - Additional Child Care Lawyer Fees have been incurred in relation to two investigations. The savings target of £150k against Child Care Lawyers has therefore not been achieved.
- 4.8 Education is reporting a £0.5m overspend, predominantly due to an exceptional residential placement which started in the autumn term, together with pressures on Home to School Transport. There is £80k set aside in reserves which could have been used to offset some of this.
- 4.9 The Place Directorate under spend is £0.9m arising largely due to additional income from dry recycling and diversion of waste from landfill to 'energy from waste' sites.
- 4.10 The Resources Directorate overspend is £0.2m arising from a vacant commercial property and a number of schools leaving the Council insurance in favour of cheaper Risk Protection Arrangements offered by the Department for Education. At Quarter Three, both were forecast to be met from reserves, but the overall underspend position has removed the need for this.
- 4.11 Capital Financing underspent by £1.2m from lower capital expenditure during the pandemic and savings through utilisation of short term borrowing and cash flow as opposed to longer term financing. Savings have also been achieved through the prepayment of pension contributions.
- 4.12 The 2021-22 savings and income generation programme of £3.6m is 76% Green.
- 4.13 Grant funding has helped the Council to cover additional costs and lost income and to enable us to continue to support a range of activities within our district.
- 4.14 Funding received from Government to date for Covid-19, and the Council's level of general fund reserves, meant that the Council was well placed to continue its efforts on response and recovery from Covid-19. The Covid-19 grant underspend from 2020-21 has been used to fund the ongoing pandemic response as well as funds from Government for 2021-22, including a quarter year of the income compensation scheme.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.1 The 2021-22 net revenue budget of £142m was set on 2nd March 2021. Since then the Council has continued to play a significant part in responding to the pandemic, from helping to coordinate the community response, supporting local businesses and working with schools. The overall outturn is interlinked to the impact of the pandemic and the use of Covid resources provided by central government and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

### 2021/22 Outturn

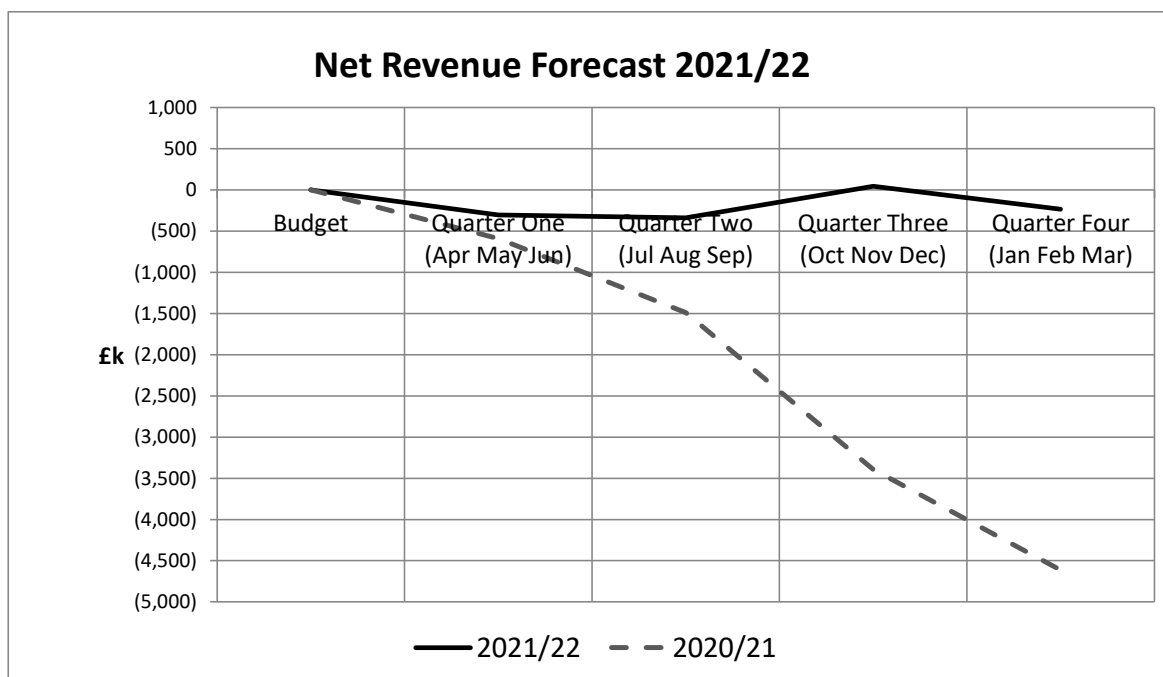
5.2 The provisional revenue outturn is £0.2m underspend, which is 0.17% of the Council's 2021-22 net revenue budget of £142m. This financial outturn report shows the underspend against budget, after taking account of any funds carried forwards to 2022-23. These comprise of moving unspent funding and grants into earmarked reserves to spend in 2022-23, including the Public Health grant and Covid grants, net of any drawdowns from earmarked reserves to support services in 2021-22.

| Directorate Summary | Final Net Budget | Outturn        | (Under)/over spend |                   |                   |                    |                            |                |      |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------|
|                     |                  |                | Quarter One        | Quarter Two       | Quarter Three     | Quarter Four       |                            |                |      |
|                     |                  |                | Year end forecast  | Year end forecast | Year end forecast | Variance to budget | Carried forward to 2022/23 | Final variance |      |
|                     | £000             | £000           | £000               | £000              | £000              | £000               | £000                       | £000           | £000 |
| People              | 81,203           | 81,466         | 59                 | 1,153             | 1,322             | 263                | 1,389                      | 1,652          |      |
| Place               | 29,829           | 28,887         | 231                | (654)             | (275)             | (943)              | 37                         | (905)          |      |
| Resources           | 15,011           | 14,026         | 405                | 364               | 219               | (984)              | 1,163                      | 179            |      |
| Chief Executive     | 561              | 579            | 0                  | 18                | 15                | 18                 | 0                          | 18             |      |
| Capital Financing   | 15,058           | 13,878         | (1,000)            | (1,222)           | (1,236)           | (1,179)            | 0                          | (1,179)        |      |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>141,661</b>   | <b>138,836</b> | <b>(305)</b>       | <b>(341)</b>      | <b>44</b>         | <b>(2,825)</b>     | <b>2,589</b>               | <b>(236)</b>   |      |

5.3 Forecasting was challenging this year due to the impact of recovering from Covid-19. The overall outturn position has remained close to forecast throughout the year, however there were some significant fluctuations within individual service areas.



## 2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn



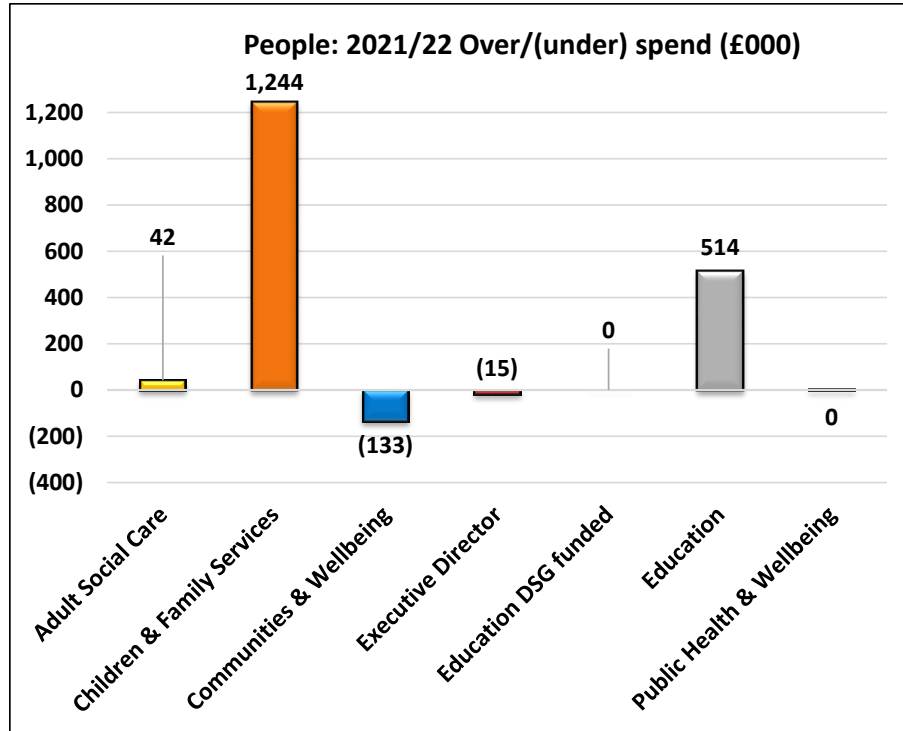
The forecasts by service are shown in the following chart:

|                             | Current Net Budget | Outturn        | (Under)/over spend |                   |                   |                    |                            |                | Change from Last Quarter |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
|                             |                    |                | Quarter One        | Quarter Two       | Quarter Three     | Quarter Four       |                            |                |                          |
|                             |                    |                | Year end forecast  | Year end forecast | Year end forecast | Variance to budget | Carried forward to 2022/23 | Final variance |                          |
|                             | £000               | £000           | £000               | £000              | £000              | £000               | £000                       | £000           | £000                     |
| Adult Social Care           | 51,259             | 51,260         | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 | 1                  | 41                         | 42             | 42                       |
| Children & Family Services  | 16,966             | 18,153         | 67                 | 444               | 711               | 1,188              | 57                         | 1,244          | 533                      |
| Communities & Wellbeing     | 2,509              | 1,979          | 0                  | (29)              | (42)              | (530)              | 397                        | (133)          | (91)                     |
| Executive Director          | 326                | 310            | (7)                | (9)               | (12)              | (15)               | 0                          | (15)           | (3)                      |
| Education DSG funded        | (441)              | (441)          | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 | 0                  | 0                          | 0              | 0                        |
| Education                   | 9,115              | 9,532          | 0                  | 747               | 665               | 417                | 97                         | 514            | (151)                    |
| Public Health & Wellbeing   | 1,470              | 673            | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 | (797)              | 797                        | 0              | 0                        |
| <b>People</b>               | <b>81,203</b>      | <b>81,466</b>  | <b>59</b>          | <b>1,153</b>      | <b>1,322</b>      | <b>263</b>         | <b>1,389</b>               | <b>1,652</b>   | <b>330</b>               |
| Executive Director          | 198                | 182            | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 | (16)               | 0                          | (16)           | (16)                     |
| Development & Regulation    | 5,907              | 5,753          | 87                 | (46)              | 58                | (154)              | 37                         | (117)          | (175)                    |
| Environment                 | 23,724             | 22,951         | 144                | (608)             | (333)             | (773)              | 0                          | (773)          | (440)                    |
| <b>Place</b>                | <b>29,829</b>      | <b>28,887</b>  | <b>231</b>         | <b>(654)</b>      | <b>(275)</b>      | <b>(943)</b>       | <b>37</b>                  | <b>(905)</b>   | <b>(631)</b>             |
| Commissioning & Procurement | 802                | 369            | (40)               | (190)             | (238)             | (434)              | 0                          | (434)          | (196)                    |
| ICT                         | 2,162              | 2,077          | 64                 | 88                | 107               | (85)               | 68                         | (17)           | (124)                    |
| Executive Director          | 301                | 300            | 1                  | 6                 | 9                 | (1)                | 0                          | (1)            | (10)                     |
| Finance & Property          | 1,188              | 744            | 343                | 357               | 349               | (444)              | 1,081                      | 637            | 288                      |
| Covid Grant within F&P      | 4,155              | 4,155          | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 | 0                  | 0                          | 0              | 0                        |
| Strategy & Governance       | 6,402              | 6,382          | 36                 | 103               | (8)               | (21)               | 14                         | (7)            | 1                        |
| <b>Resources</b>            | <b>15,011</b>      | <b>14,026</b>  | <b>405</b>         | <b>364</b>        | <b>219</b>        | <b>(984)</b>       | <b>1,163</b>               | <b>179</b>     | <b>(40)</b>              |
| Chief Executive             | 561                | 579            | 0                  | 18                | 15                | 18                 | 0                          | 18             | 4                        |
| Capital Financing           | 15,058             | 13,878         | (1,000)            | (1,222)           | (1,236)           | (1,179)            | 0                          | (1,179)        | 57                       |
| <b>Capital Financing</b>    | <b>15,058</b>      | <b>13,878</b>  | <b>(1,000)</b>     | <b>(1,222)</b>    | <b>(1,236)</b>    | <b>(1,179)</b>     | <b>0</b>                   | <b>(1,179)</b> | <b>57</b>                |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>141,661</b>     | <b>138,836</b> | <b>(305)</b>       | <b>(341)</b>      | <b>44</b>         | <b>(2,825)</b>     | <b>2,589</b>               | <b>(236)</b>   | <b>(280)</b>             |

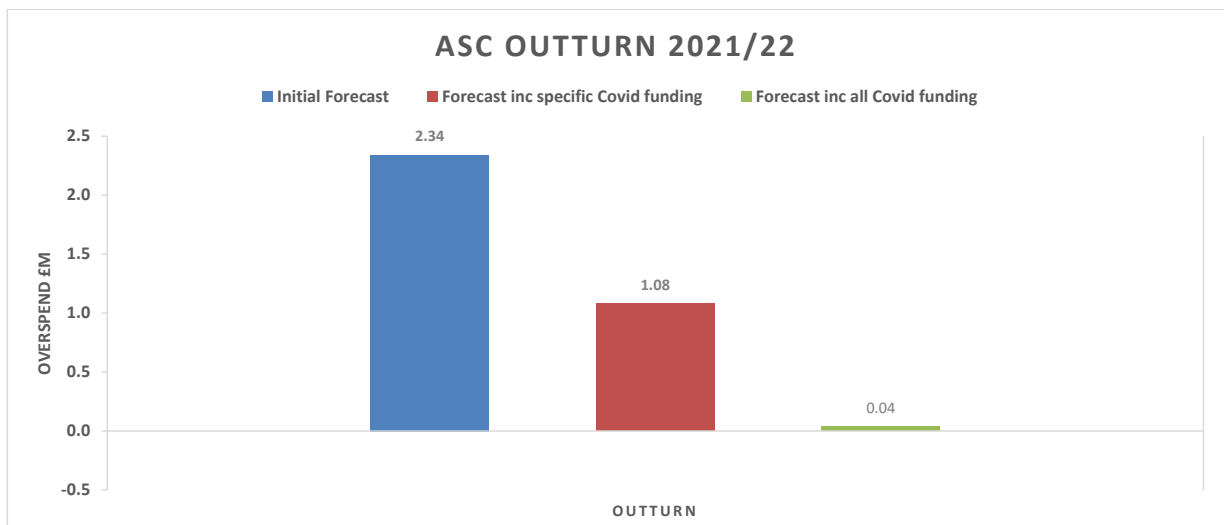
NB: Rounding differences may apply to the nearest £k.

**People Directorate**

5.4 The Directorate outturn is an overspend of £1.6m. At Quarter Three, the forecast was an overspend of £1.3m after a draw down from reserves of £0.5m. This is no longer required due to the overall Council underspend, but explains why the overspend has increased.



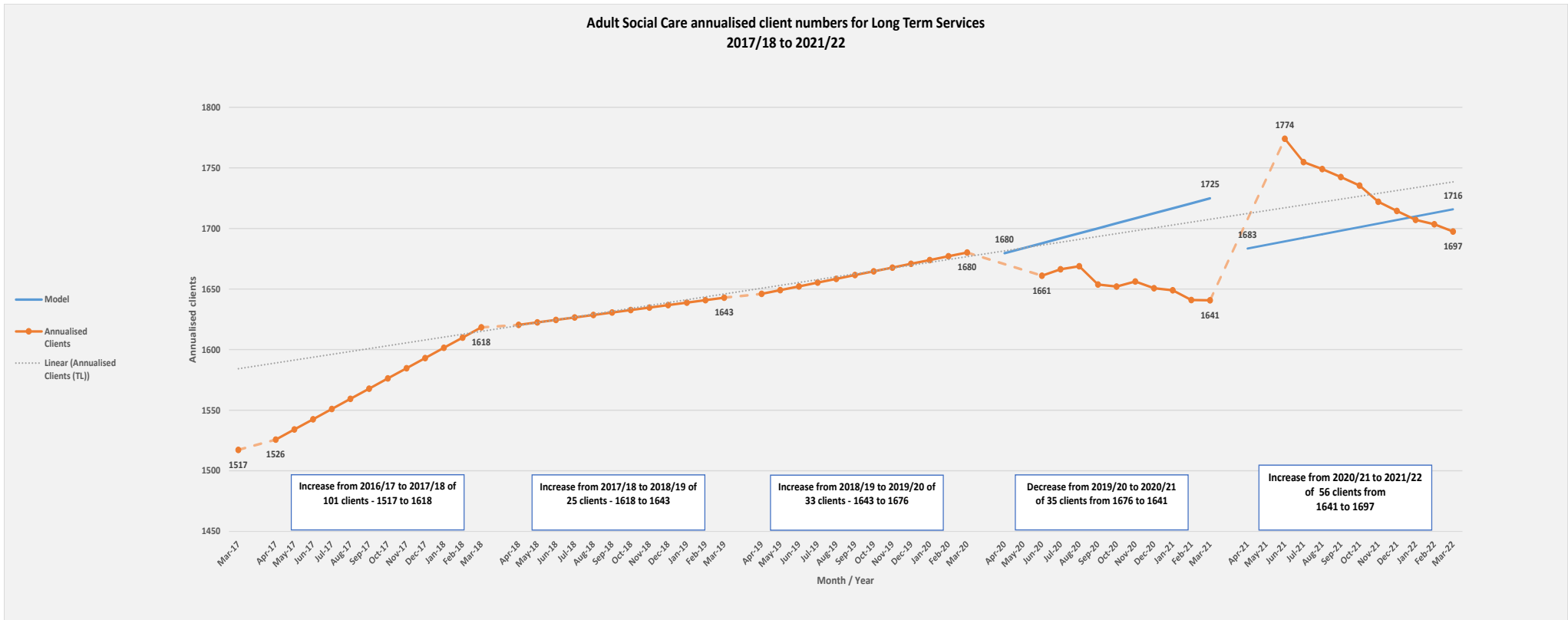
5.5 In ASC, the overspend is £42k. The 2021-22 budget was built using £2.3m of one-off Covid emergency grant, of which £1.2m supported general budget pressures such as increased client numbers and their costs, and £1.1m was used to support specific Covid pressures. The ongoing budget pressures have been addressed as part of the 2022-23 budget build process. The £43k overspend could have been fully mitigated if required at year-end by using some of the £0.9m identified as a risk against the General Fund during the budget build process.



- (a) Long term services (LTS) are £40k underspent, after allocation of Covid funding. Although there are lower client numbers than modelled, 1697 compared to 1716, the cost of client care packages are higher due to the amount of care required, including an increase in double up care at home and earlier hospital discharge.
- (b) There is lower than modelled occupancy within Council owned care homes, which has resulted in unmet savings. The budget was set at 95% occupancy across the three homes and is currently at 78%. As clients are discharged from hospital earlier, their needs are often too high for the provision available, and so are placed externally, resulting in higher costs.
- (c) Short term services are £79k over spent after the allocation of Covid funding. The overspend is due to an increase in services being commissioned short term due to the uncertainty that Covid brings. ASC have proactively claimed for Continuing Health Care (CHC) and Covid funding to help mitigate this.
- (d) The service continues to take action to suppress market demand such as reinforcing the three conversations model suppressing the need for long term services, strategic review of in-house care home provision, use of technology enabled care and maximising external funding streams. Market Management is working with local providers to ensure supply and demand are better aligned and offering better value for money. Net weekly spend on long term services is carefully monitored. All requests for long term services are scrutinised weekly at Good Practice Forum by senior management to ensure Care Act compliance and also make best uses of resources.
- (e) The ASC Model for long term services has been updated monthly throughout this financial year to inform the 2022-23 budget. The assumptions are reviewed and agreed by the ASC Financial Planning Steering group and reported at the ASC Financial Planning meeting on a monthly basis. The modelling produces a financial impact range between low cost, most likely and high cost. The model inflation was built at 2.7%, with a Risk Reserve to cover inflation up to 7% during 2022-23. This was partly funded from the release of invoice provisions made at the end of 2021 that are no longer required.

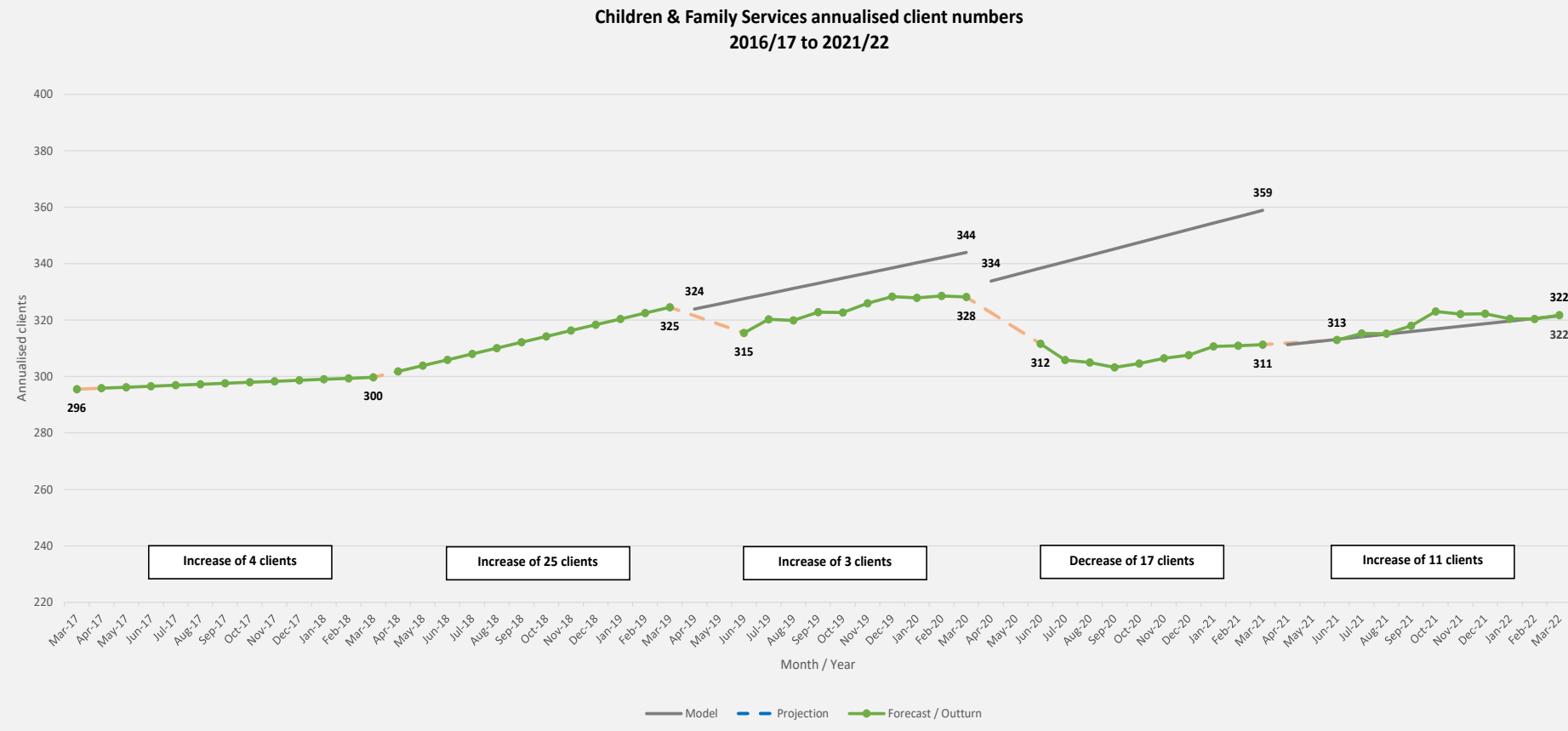
The graph below shows client numbers from March 2017.

2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn



- 5.6 In CFS, the outturn is a £1.2m overspend. The risk reserve for residential placements of £0.4m could have been used to support this and would have reduced the overspend to £0.8m.
- (a) There is a £0.7m overspend in placements, comprising an overspend of £1.2m in residential care offset by underspends in most other areas including fostering and UASC. Whilst the children in care population has generally been stable, we are seeing increasing complexity in the needs of children who have recently entered care.
  - (b) There is a particular cohort of young people with very high care needs, requiring specialist residential provision incurring costs considerably more than the typical price. Children with higher support needs require increased staffing ratios or solo occupancy of a home which will lead to a cost of more than double. This has contributed to the majority of the CFS projected overspend, and has meant the saving we were hoping to achieve from the placements budget is no longer possible.
  - (c) The Family Safeguarding Model had a saving target of £209k for income from partner agencies to support this model. The partner decision not to contribute has resulted in a pressure as this saving will not be met.
  - (d) Additional Child Care Lawyer Fees have been incurred supporting complex cases. The savings target of £150k against Child Care Lawyers has therefore not been achieved.
  - (e) The service has a £126k overspend in other areas, most notably staffing. This is due to current demands on staff from higher demand coupled with vacancies, maternity leave and sickness absence. Many of these are being covered by agency staff.
  - (f) The model for placements has been refined and is updated monthly. The graph below shows an increase in client numbers up to 2019-20, but 2020-21 saw a significant reduction. The client numbers for 2021-22 are the same as those budgeted, but the number of clients in higher cost provision has generated the in-year pressure.

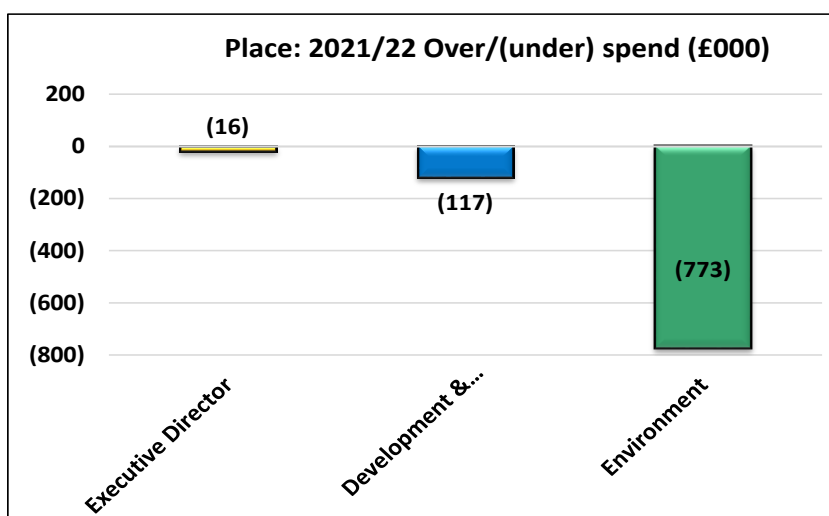
2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn



- 5.7 Education is reporting a £0.5m overspend. An exceptional residential placement which started in the autumn term costing £16k per week, forms most of the disability support for children’s overspend of £386k. There is a £260k overspend on Home to School Transport as a result of increased fuel costs, a shortage of drivers and an increase in the number of children being transported. There were £132k of savings across the service offsetting these pressures. The risk reserve for residential placements of £80k could have been used to support the overspend.
- 5.8 Communities & Wellbeing is reporting a £133k underspend with the majority of this coming from Building Communities Together, due to grant funding, and Leisure income from contract inflationary uplifts not being budgeted for. £400k of grant funding has been put into earmarked reserves to spend in 2022-23.
- 5.9 The Public Health grant is on line after transferring £797k of Public Health Grant funding to earmarked reserves. The underspend being transferred to reserves is mainly due to staff being deployed and supported by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). There remains £1.4m of COMF, which has been earmarked against projects in 2022-23.

**Place Directorate**

5.10 The Place Directorate outturn is an underspend of £0.9m against a budget of £30m.



5.11 In Development and Regulation, there is a £117k underspend.

- (a) There are favourable variances in both Economic Development £121k and the Housing Service £72k due to additional grant funding and staffing vacancies. Income has been over achieved in Temporary Accommodation £129k, Registrars £40k and Development Control £30k. There are adverse variances of £93k for delivery of the Local Plan and £170k on interim senior management costs.
- (b) The net expenditure reduced by £175k from Quarter Three forecast. This was mainly due to a delay in the Net Carbon Zero Project which will now take place in 2022-23 as part of the Local Plan, and staff vacancies and grant funding in Economic Development that had not been reported at Quarter Three. Grant

funding in support of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy was received in the final quarter and had not previously been forecast.

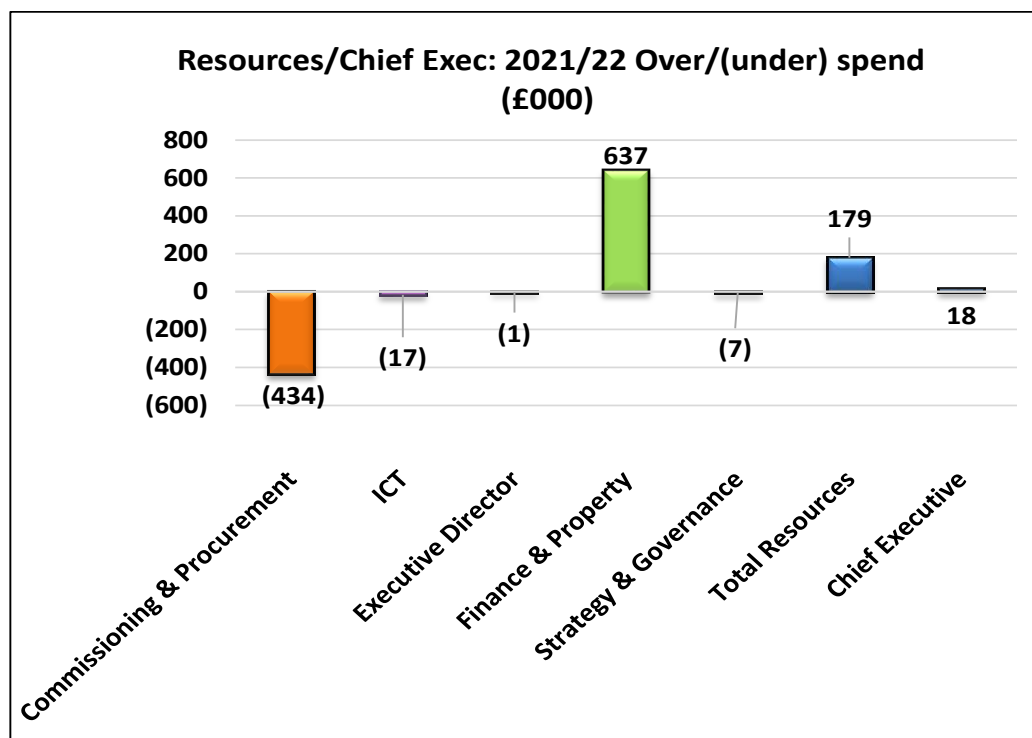
5.12 In Environment, there is a £773k underspend.

- (a) There is a net saving on the Waste Service of £679k due to additional income from dry recycling sales and diversion of waste from landfill to 'energy from waste' sites. There was additional income of £146k from the garden waste subscription. Public Transport budgets are £326k under spent from lower vehicle lease costs and receipt of Covid grant funding to support income and social distancing requirements. Car parks saw an underspend of £200k due to saving on repairs and maintenance and staff vacancies.
- (b) Pressures in the Environment service included £312k overspend on Ash Dieback remedial work required to ensure safety on the highway. It was previously agreed to treat this as a risk, however, ongoing investment will need to be made, unless funding becomes available to mitigate the costs. There are £167k pressures in Transport Services from Streetworks IT, testing costs and permit income. The majority of losses have been covered by Covid grants, but this pressure relates to residual amounts that aren't funded. There were Asset Management pressures of £220k from energy costs and highways emergency revenue spend which could not be funded from capital.
- (c) Net expenditure reduced by £440k from the Quarter Three forecast. This was largely due to the increased price received for recycled materials and a decrease in landfill site usage as waste has been sent to energy recovery plants. There were further underspends in car parks due to staffing vacancies and lower spend on maintenance.

### **Resources Directorate/Chief Executive**

5.13 The Directorate outturn is an overspend of £0.2m against a budget of £15m.





5.14 In Commissioning, there is £434k surplus income largely from the agency contract rebate, as a result of the increased agency usage for Covid cover during the year. The rebate was £183k higher than forecast at Quarter Three. Additional income has been reflected in the 2022-23 budget.

5.15 In ICT the underspend of £17k is from postage costs, staff vacancies and covid grant funding.

5.16 In Finance and Property, the £637k overspend has arisen as follows:

- (a) Commercial Property has a shortfall in net income for the year of £369k in light of ongoing vacancy at one of the Council's Commercial Property assets. At Quarter Three the pressure was forecast to be funded from reserves, but due to the overall underspend, this will not be required.
- (b) A number of schools have left the Council insurance in favour of cheaper Risk Protection Arrangements offered by the Department for Education. This has resulted in loss of income of £240k. At Quarter Three, this was to be supported by £100k release from reserves, but this will not be required.
- (c) Temporary staff costs covering vacancies in the Financial Reporting Team has led to an overspend of £73k due to recruitment difficulties.
- (d) A £158k saving was expected from rationalisation of office space, however, the timing of office moves and demand for temporary storage has left £86k unmet.
- (e) A surplus of £987k from the release of expired invoice provisions has been put into earmarked service risk reserves.

## Capital Financing

5.17 The Capital Financing outturn is an underspend of £1.2m. Capital financing costs are lower than expected due to less capital expenditure than expected during the pandemic and savings on capital financing through utilisation of short term borrowing and cash flow as opposed to longer term financing. Savings have also been achieved through the prepayment of pension contributions.

## Covid-19 impact on the 2021/22 budget

5.18 In 2020-21, the Council was awarded £9.6m of un-ringfenced emergency expenditure grant from Central Government and claimed £2.8m of emergency funding for lost income. Overall emergency grant funding totalled £12.4m and losses totalled £9.5m, so the balance of £2.9m was put to an earmarked Covid reserve to use during 2021/22.

5.19 In 2021-22, the Council has received a further £3.2m emergency grant and has claimed £1m in lost income. There is £1m grant remaining of which £0.9m has been committed as part of the 2022-23 budget build.

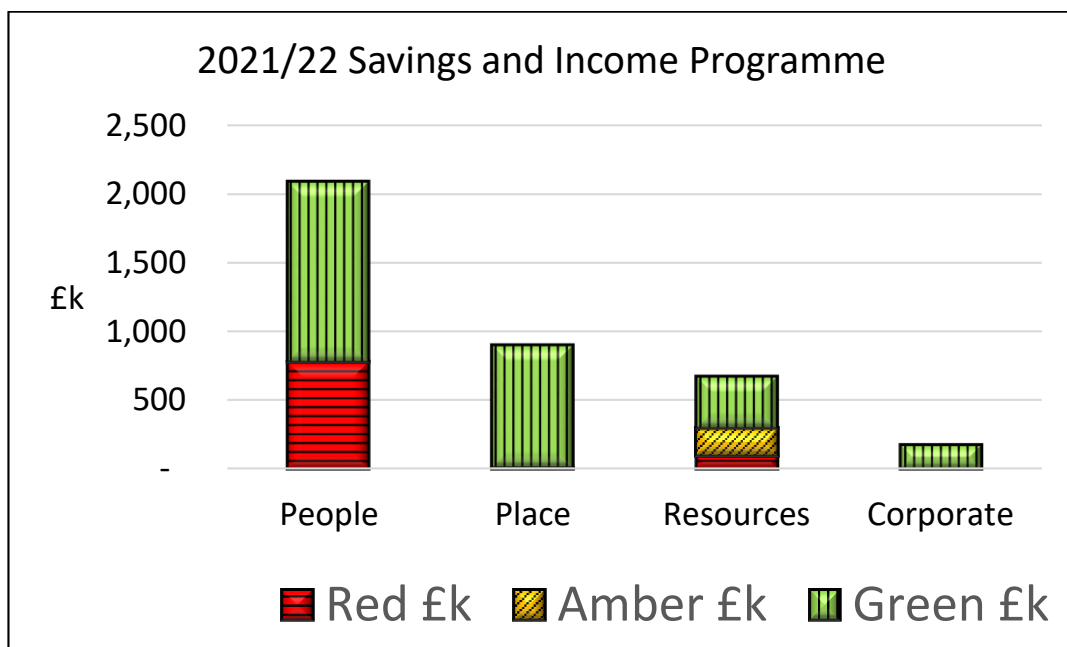
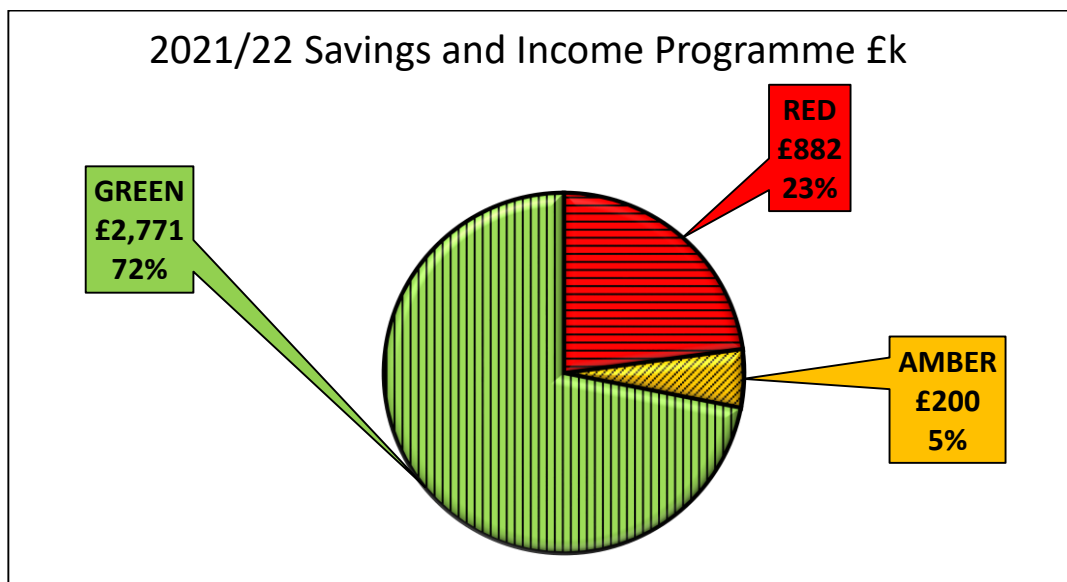
| Covid Funding 2021/22                  | General Grants 2021/22      |                            |                |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|  | Emergency Expenditure Grant | Income compensation Scheme | Total          |
|  | £000                        | £000                       | £000           |
| Grants brought forward                 | (2,947)                     |                            | (2,947)        |
| Track and Trace                        | (79)                        |                            | (79)           |
| Grants 2021/22                         | (3,257)                     | (971)                      | (4,228)        |
| <b>Total grants available</b>          | <b>(6,282)</b>              | <b>(971)</b>               | <b>(7,254)</b> |
| <b>To be awarded to services:</b>      |                             |                            |                |
| Adult Social Care                      | 2,144                       | 156                        | 2,300          |
| Children & Family Services             | 412                         | 0                          | 412            |
| Education                              | 171                         | 10                         | 181            |
| Communities & Wellbeing                | 471                         | 70                         | 541            |
| <b>People</b>                          | <b>3,198</b>                | <b>236</b>                 | <b>3,434</b>   |
| Development & Planning                 | (3)                         | 48                         | 45             |
| Public Protection                      | 121                         | 5                          | 127            |
| Environment                            | 642                         | 273                        | 915            |
| <b>Place</b>                           | <b>760</b>                  | <b>326</b>                 | <b>1,086</b>   |
| Finance & Property                     | 43                          | 76                         | 119            |
| Commissioning                          | 0                           | 0                          | 0              |
| ICT                                    | 286                         | 0                          | 286            |
| Strategy & Governance                  | 147                         | 5                          | 151            |
| <b>Resources</b>                       | <b>476</b>                  | <b>81</b>                  | <b>557</b>     |
| <b>CEX</b>                             | <b>0</b>                    |                            | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>Recovery</b>                        | <b>106</b>                  |                            | <b>106</b>     |
| <b>Total to be awarded to services</b> | <b>4,540</b>                | <b>643</b>                 | <b>5,183</b>   |
| Bus Routes                             | 395                         |                            | 395            |
| Car parking loss of income 21/22       |                             | 500                        | 500            |
| Awarded from reserve                   | 112                         |                            | 112            |
| <b>Total awarded</b>                   | <b>5,047</b>                | <b>1,143</b>               | <b>6,190</b>   |
| <b>Grant Remaining</b>                 | <b>(1,235)</b>              | <b>172</b>                 | <b>(1,064)</b> |
| <b>Commitments 2022/23</b>             |                             |                            | <b>866</b>     |
| <b>Collection fund support</b>         |                             |                            | <b>198</b>     |
| <b>Grant Remaining</b>                 |                             |                            | <b>0</b>       |

5.20 Further non-ringfenced grants were received during 2020-21 for New Burdens, Control Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and Test & Trace. At year end, £3.3m of this was put to the Covid reserve. There is now £1.6m of this remaining and will be used to support these areas during 2022-23.

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

**2021-22 Savings and income generation programme**

5.22 In order to meet the funding available, the 2021-22 revenue budget was built with a £3.6m savings and income generation programme. The programme is monitored using the RAG traffic light system. The status is shown in the following charts:



Red items are as follows:

| Saving item | Impact on 2022-23 |
|-------------|-------------------|
|             |                   |

2021-22 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn

|   |   |
|---|---|
| £50k for ASC Supported Accommodation unit for Learning as this is not due to open until 1.8.2022.   | Smaller impact on 2022-23; full year saving expected in future financial years. |
| £25k ASC Resource Allocation System, which will be implemented with Care Director V6 scheduled for 1.4.2022.  | Smaller impact on 2022-23; full year saving expected in future financial years. |
| <b>Saving item</b>  | <b>Impact on 2022-23</b>  |
| £9k from ASC Hillcroft rent reduction not met as rent reduction was lower than anticipated.   | Will be resolved through budget alignment within ASC for 2022-23.               |
| £150k from childcare legal fees, due to high costs from a complex case.   | One-off in year – not expected to have same case for 2022-23.                   |
| £250k CFS placement savings. Placements are reporting an overspend due to increased demand for most costly placements to meet complex needs (particularly mental health).       | Adjusted for in the 2022-23 budget with funding into the CFS model.             |
| £209k CFS Family Safeguarding Model income from third parties who have indicated that they will not be contributing. This forms part of the overspend in this area.             | Adjusted for in the 2022-23 budget with additional investment.                  |
| £33k in Education from premature retirement savings not met and agency cost in Disabled Children's team.  | Expected to be fully met in 2022-23.  |
| £50k in Education from CHC income generation. There have been no new cases that have attracted health funding.  | Uncertain for 2022-23 as will depend on cases.                                  |
| £10k in Environment from street naming and numbering. The policy document needs to be reviewed and amended before charging can commence, and extra resource is needed for this. | Will be delayed until resource is obtained.                                     |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>£86k in Finance &amp; Property from accommodation savings and £10k bank charges: Delay in vacating corporate buildings and need for temporary storage has diluted saving achievable in 2021/22.</p> | <p>Expected to be delivered during 2022-23 once the project is complete and review undertaken in early Autumn 2022. Costs already started to reduce in 2021-22.</p> |
|--|---|

## Proposals

5.23 To note the provisional outturn £0.2m underspend.

5.24 To note the ongoing impact that Covid will have on the 2021-22 budget as the Council sees increased demand for some services, but continues to be utilise external funding.

## 6 Other options considered

None.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 The 2021-22 financial year continued to present financial challenges for the Council in supporting our residents and business. Grant funding has helped the Council to cover additional costs and lost income and enabled us to support a range of activities within our district.

7.2 The outturn is interlinked to the impact of the pandemic and the use of Covid resources provided by central government. The Covid-19 grant funding received from Government to date, and the Council's level of general fund reserves mean that the Council has been well placed to focus its efforts on response and recovery from the Covid-19 during the financial year. The Covid-19 grant underspend from 2020-21 has been used in 2021-22 to fund the ongoing pandemic response.

7.3 The £3.6m savings and income generation programme was 76% achieved.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Quarter Four position

8.2 Appendix B – Budget changes

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### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

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

**Officer details:**

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Job Title: Chief Management Accountant  
Tel No: 01635 519142  
E-mail: Melanie.Ellis@westberks.gov.uk

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# Appendix A – Quarter Four position

Consolidated outturn report 2021/22

|                                  | Budget               |                     |                     | Gross Performance              |                         |                           |                           |                     |                      | Net Outturn        |                                   |                    |                         |                                 |                     |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
|                                  | Original Budget<br>£ | Budget Changes<br>£ | Revised Budget<br>£ | Expenditure                    |                         |                           | Income                    |                     |                      | Net Exp/Inc<br>£   | Items going straight to CIES<br>£ | Outturn<br>£       | Variance to budget<br>£ | Carried forward to 2022/23<br>£ | Final variance<br>£ |
|                                  |                      |                     |                     | Annual Expenditure Budget<br>£ | Actual Expenditure<br>£ | Expenditure Variance<br>£ | Annual Income Budget<br>£ | Actual Income<br>£  | Income Variance<br>£ |                    |                                   |                    |                         |                                 |                     |
| Adult Social Care                | 51,172,220           | 86,830              | 51,259,050          | 69,876,490                     | 77,450,667              | 7,574,177                 | -18,617,440               | -26,106,182         | -7,488,742           | 51,344,485         | -85,000                           | 51,259,485         | 435                     | 41,000                          | 41,435              |
| Children & Family Services       | 16,718,350           | 247,170             | 16,965,520          | 19,075,550                     | 20,261,797              | 1,186,247                 | -2,110,030                | -2,108,722          | 1,308                | 18,153,075         |                                   | 18,153,075         | 1,187,555               | 57,000                          | 1,244,555           |
| Executive Director - People      | 320,270              | 5,500               | 325,770             | 325,770                        | 783,117                 | 457,347                   | 0                         | -472,783            | -472,783             | 310,334            |                                   | 310,334            | -15,436                 | 0                               | -15,436             |
| Education (DSG Funded)           | -444,000             | 2,880               | -441,120            | 115,333,260                    | 116,839,904             | 1,506,644                 | -115,774,380              | -117,281,024        | -1,506,644           | -441,120           |                                   | -441,120           | 0                       | 0                               | 0                   |
| Education                        | 9,026,100            | 88,570              | 9,114,670           | 12,935,640                     | 13,568,695              | 633,055                   | -3,820,970                | -4,037,012          | -216,042             | 9,531,683          |                                   | 9,531,683          | 417,013                 | 97,000                          | 514,013             |
| Public Health & Wellbeing        | -80,000              | 1,549,550           | 1,469,550           | 6,048,220                      | 8,573,387               | 2,525,167                 | -4,578,670                | -7,900,624          | -3,321,954           | 672,763            |                                   | 672,763            | -796,787                | 797,000                         | 213                 |
| Communities & Wellbeing          | 2,352,530            | 156,940             | 2,509,470           | 3,929,900                      | 3,785,257               | -144,643                  | -1,420,430                | -1,806,204          | -385,774             | 1,979,053          |                                   | 1,979,053          | -530,417                | 397,000                         | -133,417            |
| <b>People</b>                    | <b>79,065,470</b>    | <b>2,137,440</b>    | <b>81,202,910</b>   | <b>227,524,830</b>             | <b>241,262,825</b>      | <b>13,737,995</b>         | <b>-146,321,920</b>       | <b>-159,712,552</b> | <b>-13,390,632</b>   | <b>81,550,273</b>  | <b>-85,000</b>                    | <b>81,465,273</b>  | <b>262,363</b>          | <b>1,389,000</b>                | <b>1,651,363</b>    |
| Development & Regulation         | 5,560,180            | 346,900             | 5,907,080           | 13,442,140                     | 15,899,910              | 2,457,770                 | -7,535,060                | -10,186,733         | -2,651,673           | 5,713,176          | 40,000                            | 5,753,176          | -153,904                | 37,000                          | -116,904            |
| Executive Director – Place       | 197,790              | 0                   | 197,790             | 197,790                        | 182,172                 | -15,618                   | 0                         | 0                   | 0                    | 182,172            |                                   | 182,172            | -15,618                 | 0                               | -15,618             |
| Environment                      | 24,337,330           | -612,990            | 23,724,340          | 34,310,310                     | 34,259,993              | -50,317                   | -10,585,970               | -11,308,682         | -722,712             | 22,951,311         |                                   | 22,951,311         | -773,029                | 0                               | -773,029            |
| <b>Place</b>                     | <b>30,095,300</b>    | <b>-266,090</b>     | <b>29,829,210</b>   | <b>47,950,240</b>              | <b>50,342,075</b>       | <b>2,391,835</b>          | <b>-18,121,030</b>        | <b>-21,495,416</b>  | <b>-3,374,386</b>    | <b>28,846,660</b>  | <b>40,000</b>                     | <b>28,886,660</b>  | <b>-942,550</b>         | <b>37,000</b>                   | <b>-905,550</b>     |
| ICT                              | 2,162,970            | -1,290              | 2,161,680           | 3,016,090                      | 3,047,377               | 31,287                    | -854,410                  | -970,321            | -115,911             | 2,077,057          |                                   | 2,077,057          | -84,623                 | 68,000                          | -16,623             |
| Executive Director - Resources   | 203,910              | 97,570              | 301,480             | 301,480                        | 307,689                 | 6,209                     | 0                         | -7,344              | -7,344               | 300,345            |                                   | 300,345            | -1,135                  | 0                               | -1,135              |
| Commissioning & Procurement      | 802,460              | 0                   | 802,460             | 10,283,490                     | 11,281,345              | 997,855                   | -9,481,030                | -10,912,812         | -1,431,782           | 368,532            |                                   | 368,532            | -433,928                | 0                               | -433,928            |
| Finance & Property               | 5,077,040            | 265,700             | 5,342,740           | 48,710,850                     | 49,837,606              | 1,126,756                 | -43,368,110               | -46,987,589         | -3,619,479           | 2,850,017          | 2,049,000                         | 4,899,017          | -443,723                | 1,081,000                       | 637,277             |
| Strategy & Governance            | 6,437,480            | -35,320             | 6,402,160           | 7,467,730                      | 7,798,010               | 330,280                   | -1,065,570                | -1,416,364          | -350,794             | 6,381,646          |                                   | 6,381,646          | -20,514                 | 14,000                          | -6,514              |
| <b>Resources</b>                 | <b>14,683,860</b>    | <b>326,660</b>      | <b>15,010,520</b>   | <b>69,779,640</b>              | <b>72,272,026</b>       | <b>2,492,386</b>          | <b>-54,769,120</b>        | <b>-60,294,430</b>  | <b>-5,525,310</b>    | <b>11,977,597</b>  | <b>2,049,000</b>                  | <b>14,026,597</b>  | <b>-983,923</b>         | <b>1,163,000</b>                | <b>179,077</b>      |
| <b>Chief Executive</b>           | <b>552,850</b>       | <b>7,890</b>        | <b>560,740</b>      | <b>560,740</b>                 | <b>594,056</b>          | <b>33,316</b>             | <b>0</b>                  | <b>-14,880</b>      | <b>-14,880</b>       | <b>579,176</b>     | <b>0</b>                          | <b>579,176</b>     | <b>18,436</b>           | <b>0</b>                        | <b>18,436</b>       |
| Capital Financing and Management | 12,430,960           | 2,626,790           | 15,057,750          | 15,177,750                     | 7,744,199               | -7,433,551                | -120,000                  | -1,151,743          | -1,031,743           | 6,592,456          | 7,286,000                         | 13,878,456         | -1,179,294              | 0                               | -1,179,294          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>136,828,440</b>   | <b>4,832,690</b>    | <b>141,661,130</b>  | <b>360,993,200</b>             | <b>372,215,181</b>      | <b>11,221,981</b>         | <b>-219,332,070</b>       | <b>-242,669,019</b> | <b>-23,336,949</b>   | <b>129,546,161</b> | <b>9,290,000</b>                  | <b>138,836,161</b> | <b>-2,824,969</b>       | <b>2,589,000</b>                | <b>-235,969</b>     |

## Appendix B – Budget Changes

| Service                      | Original Net Budget<br>£000 | Approved Budget B/F from 2020/21<br>£000 | Budget changes not requiring approval<br>£000 | FAGG approved release from reserves<br>£000 | Approved by S151 & Portfolio Holder<br>£000 | Approved by Executive<br>£000 | Budget C/F to 2022/23<br>£000 | Final Net Budget<br>£000 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adult Social Care            | 51,172                      |  |   | 87  |   |                               |                               | 51,259                   |
| Children and Family Services | 16,718                      |  | 23  | 159   |   |                               | 65                            | 16,966                   |
| Communities & Wellbeing      | 2,353                       |  |   | 176   |   |                               | (19)                          | 2,509                    |
| Executive Director           | 320                         |  |   | 6   |   |                               |                               | 326                      |
| Education DSG funded         | (444)                       |  |   | 3   |   |                               |                               | (441)                    |
| Education                    | 9,026                       |  |   | 109   |   |                               | (20)                          | 9,115                    |
| Public Health & Wellbeing    | (80)                        |  |   |   |   |                               | 1,550                         | 1,470                    |
| <b>People</b>                | <b>79,065</b>               | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>23</b>                                     | <b>540</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>1,576</b>                  | <b>81,203</b>            |
| Executive Director           | 198                         |  |   |   |   |                               |                               | 198                      |
| Development & Planning       | 5,560                       |  | 238   | 331   |   |                               | (222)                         | 5,907                    |
| Environment                  | 24,337                      |  |   | 139   |   | (766)                         | 14                            | 23,724                   |
| <b>Place</b>                 | <b>30,095</b>               | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>238</b>                                    | <b>469</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>(766)</b>                  | <b>(208)</b>                  | <b>29,829</b>            |
| Commissioning                | 802                         |  |   |   |   |                               |                               | 802                      |
| Customer Services & ICT      | 2,163                       |  |   | 27  |   | (28)                          |                               | 2,162                    |
| Executive Director           | 204                         |  |   | 98  |   |                               |                               | 301                      |
| Finance & Property           | 922                         |  | 60  | 166   |   | (1,892)                       | 1,932                         | 1,188                    |
| Covid Grant within F&P       | 4,155                       |  |   |   |   |                               |                               | 4,155                    |
| Strategy & Governance        | 6,437                       |  | 20  | 121   |   |                               | (176)                         | 6,402                    |
| <b>Resources</b>             | <b>14,684</b>               | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>80</b>                                     | <b>411</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>(1,920)</b>                | <b>1,756</b>                  | <b>15,011</b>            |
| Chief Executive              | 553                         |  | 8   |   |   |                               |                               | 561                      |
| <b>Capital Financing</b>     | <b>12,431</b>               |  | <b>(60)</b>                                   |   |   | <b>2,686</b>                  |                               | <b>15,058</b>            |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>290</b>                                    | <b>1,420</b>                                | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>3,123</b>                  | <b>141,661</b>           |
| <b>Quarter One</b>           | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>0</b>                                      | <b>353</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>3,123</b>                  | <b>140,305</b>           |
| <b>Quarter Two</b>           | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>0</b>                                      | <b>434</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>0</b>                      | <b>140,739</b>           |
| <b>Quarter Three</b>         | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>234</b>                                    | <b>12</b>                                   | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>0</b>                      | <b>140,985</b>           |
| <b>Quarter Four</b>          | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>56</b>                                     | <b>621</b>                                  | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>0</b>                      | <b>141,661</b>           |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>136,828</b>              | <b>0</b>                                 | <b>290</b>                                    | <b>1,420</b>                                | <b>0</b>                                    | <b>0</b>                      | <b>3,123</b>                  | <b>141,661</b>           |



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## London Road Industrial Estate Project Refresh

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|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b>                                       | Executive                 |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>  | 9 June 2022               |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>   | Councillor Ross Mackinnon |
| <b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b><br><i>(for Corporate Board)</i> | 10 May 2022               |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>                                | 26 May 2022               |
| <b>Report Author:</b>  | Katharine Makant          |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>   | EX4219                    |

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### 1 Purpose of the Report

To approve revised strategic objectives and a revised delivery strategy for the London Road Industrial Estate that focus on developing the site for economic growth and utilising Council-owned assets for the benefit of the local community, and that take account of evolving economic drivers, market demand and the district's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 The Executive resolves to: -

(a) approve revised strategic objectives for the project as follows:

By 2030, the London Road Industrial Estate programme will have achieved:

1. The sustainable economic regeneration of London Road Industrial Estate to create an appealing destination for businesses.
  2. Inward investment, green economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities for local people;
  3. A positive contribution to the district's carbon neutrality aspirations;
- (b) approve a revised delivery strategy as set out in paragraph 6.9 and 6.10 of the report;
- (c) delegate authority to Executive Director, Place in consultation with Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder to negotiate and restructure leases or buy back leases, and approve such agreement as necessary to secure the LRIE delivery strategy,

AND that the Service Lead for Legal & Electoral Services shall have the delegated authority to enter to such agreements.

- (d) delegate authority to Executive Director, Place in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Economic Development to select a new name for LRIE which reflects the district's carbon neutrality ambitions, following a competition involving local schools.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication                   | Commentary   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Financial:</b></p>      | <p>Of the £145,000 revenue budget for 21/22 approved by Executive in December 2020, a total of £81,000 was spent on consultancy support to take forward the LRIE project last financial year. £64,000 was carried forward to 22/23.</p> <p>The proposals set out in this report are expected to be met within existing budgets over the next two years, as follows:</p> <p><b>Capital</b></p> <p>£850,500 for 22/23 and £17,000 for 23/24 for planning and consultancy to help deliver LRIE projects, including some staffing costs. This report proposes to refocus part of this budget to buy back leases that may become available in the current financial year.</p> <p><b>Revenue</b></p> <p>£100k pa for 22/23 and 23/24 approved by Executive in December 2020 to take the project forward, plus £64,000 carried forward for 22/23. This does not include staffing costs.</p> <p>In addition, the Council will seek funding from other sources including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEFRA and Regional Flood &amp; Coastal Committee</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Leaseholders</li> <li>• Developer partners</li> </ul> <p>The site currently has a book value worth £9.2m (as at 31.3.21) with an annual income from the site of £0.4m pa.</p> |
| <p><b>Human Resource:</b></p> | <p>The proposals set out in this report are expected to be met within existing resources over the next two years, by using revenue funding released by capitalising a proportion of existing staffing costs. This includes programme management</p>  |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | <p>within the Economy Team alongside the delivery of the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The capital and revenue budgets set out above include provision for specialist multi-disciplinary services to be bought in to assist with delivery as required.</p>  |
| <p><b>Legal:</b></p>           | <p>Long term leases and depending on how the land is assembled to fulfil the strategic and delivery objectives as set out in the report, the Council will have regard to its obligations under Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 which relates to best price achievable in the open market.</p> <p>In relation to the delivery mechanism for achieving the objectives the Council will have regard to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for the delivery of the objectives.</p> <p>To conduct consultation with Planning under an agreed scope and specific performance agreement to ensure that there is no conflict between the Council as a landowner/ developer and the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>The playing field is registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). If the Council decides to dispose of the asset – or part of the asset - as a financial transaction, the asset must be offered to the registered ACV holder at commercial value. The registered holder has six months in which to make a commercial offer. The Council is not obliged to accept the offer and thereafter may proceed with its plans.</p> |
| <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> | <p>The report sets out in paragraph 7.14 summaries high level risks attached to this project and actions to mitigate. These include legal, financial and environmental risks.</p> <p>The programme risk register sets these out in more detail and is monitored regularly by the LRIE Project Board.</p>   |
| <p><b>Property:</b></p>        | <p>There are significant property implications in that the Council's aspirations for LRIE include the reconfiguration and disposal of leases on land which it currently controls and potential buy back and disposal of existing leases as well as discussions and negotiations with existing leaseholders on lease extensions, rent levels and place-making.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed delivery strategy confirms that the Council will seek to retain the freehold of the LRIE as a long term asset for employment use.</p>  |

|  |  |                |                 |                   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|  |  |                |                 |                   |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | <p>The project supports the delivery of the Council Strategy priorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire;</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support the local economy;</li> <li>• Maintain a Green District;</li> <li>• Ensure Sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Aligns with the Economic Development Strategy, the Environment Strategy and the Strategic Asset Plan.</p> |                |                 |                   |
|  | <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>        | X |  |  | LRIE is in an area of flood risk and mitigation will be required, not least as part of the planning process as development proposals are brought forward. The intention is for the overall environmental impact of the LRIE proposals to be positive, including on carbon net zero, nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain – details will be set out in an LRIE Place-making Strategy and Supplementary Planning Document.   |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>               | X |  |  | The intention is for the overall health impact of the LRIE proposals to be positive - details will be set out in an LRIE Place-making Strategy and Supplementary Planning Document.   |
| <b>ICT Impact:</b>                  | X |  |  | The requirement for whole site digital infrastructure will be assessed as part of the place-making work.  |
| <b>Digital Services Impact:</b>     |   |  |  | N/A   |
| <b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b> | X |  |  | Supports the delivery of the Council Strategy priorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire by providing incentives and opportunities to enable businesses to grow;</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure to support the local economy, including to deliver regeneration and flood prevention and alleviation schemes;</li> <li>• Maintain a Green District by encouraging carbon neutrality;</li> <li>• Ensure Sustainable services through innovation and partnerships to generate income for supporting vital services</li> </ul> |
| <b>Core Business:</b>               |   |  |  | N/A   |

|                                     |   |  |  |                  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |   |  |  | None identified. |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key employers and/or leaseholders on LRIE (via informal discussions with the Economy Team)</li> <li>• Potential development partners (via Soft Market Testing by consultant team)</li> <li>• Commercial property agents (on market demand for industrial and office space)</li> <li>• LRIE Project Board and Economic Development Board</li> <li>• LRIE Officer Task &amp; Finish Group</li> <li>• Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership</li> </ul> |  |  |                  |

## 4 Executive Summary

4.1 This report proposes revised strategic objectives and a revised delivery strategy to move forward the regeneration of London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) following a project refresh which took place between November 2021 and April 2022. The LRIE Project Board oversaw the refresh in the light of evolving economic drivers, market demand and the district's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

4.2 The change in approach is summarised below:

- A focus on attracting investment in employment space and jobs that aligns with carbon net zero ambitions;
- A commitment to working in partnership with leaseholders and potential partners to grow current LRIE businesses in a sustainable way and encourage new businesses;
- A sustainable design-led approach to place-making to create an appealing destination for businesses that includes seeking external funding for public realm improvements;
- A move away from the residential-led approach set out in the 2020 Development Brief.

4.3 Approval of the recommendations set out in paragraph 2 above will provide the clarity needed to move forward on LRIE at pace, to grasp opportunities presented by the current market and economic drivers and to bring forward investment in sustainable economic growth that will support a number of the Council's strategic priorities.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.1 The economic regeneration of the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) has been a Council priority since publication of the original Newbury Vision 2003 and became a

defined priority in the 2012 Council. The Newbury Vision as originally published set out four areas of important regeneration; Parkway as a retail quarter, the Wharf as a cultural quarter, Market Street development as an urban village and the LRIE as an employment quarter. Since then, Parkway and Market Street have been redeveloped and the Newbury Bus Station relocated to the Wharf, improvements have been carried out to Newbury Rail Station and the Council has brought forward the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.

- 5.2 Meanwhile, the first LRIE project milestone was achieved in 2015, when a development partner was procured to bring the regeneration forward, and the second in 2017, with the construction of a new road junction on the A339 to unlock the site for both residential and employment development. The developer partner arrangement with St Modwen had to be abandoned in 2018 after a legal challenge relating to the procurement process.
- 5.3 The project was restarted in 2019 when work began on a new Development Brief for the estate assisted by consultants Avison Young, which was adopted by Executive in November 2020 following public consultation. The approach set out in the Brief was residential-led in order to enable the long term economic aspirations for the site to be realised. In December 2020, Executive agreed to adopt a phased approach to development and set aside funding in the Council's budget to progress the scheme. This included commissioning a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help better align development proposals with Planning Policy and to set out estate wide design criteria and infrastructure requirements.
- 5.4 During 2021, an Environmental Appraisal Report was commissioned to explore the environmental challenges around the site in more detail. In addition, as public green space became increasingly important due to Covid restrictions, the former football pitch at Faraday Road which had been closed since 2018, was opened to the public for sports and recreation pending redevelopment.
- 5.5 In the meantime, the local, national and global economies have faced fundamental change as they transition to meet Carbon Net Zero targets and post-Brexit trading conditions, deal with the impact of the Covid pandemic and – most recently – feel the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- 5.6 The Council has responded to these challenges by carrying out a refresh of the LRIE project between November 2021 and April 2022. This included a review of the assumptions on which the 2020 Development Brief was based, taking into account the most up to date economic drivers and market analysis. The review also took into account the results of further work by consultants Avison Young, including the Environmental Appraisal Report and Soft Market Testing., The various elements of the review are summarised below.

### **Environmental Appraisal Report**

- 5.7 The Environmental Appraisal Report was commissioned in 2021 to move the LRIE Development Brief forward and to inform soft market testing with potential development partners. The Council as landowner wanted to identify any significant environmental obstacles to redevelopment that might affect viability of the project. The decision to

commission the report was informed by environmental concerns raised during the public consultation on the draft Development Brief during September 2020.

- 5.8 The report concludes that no ‘in principle’ issues have been identified that would prevent development of the LRIE site. It states that the significant issues of flood risk and drainage can be satisfactorily addressed at detailed design stage during the planning process. Further details including the summary report are available on the Council’s website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>.

## **Transitioning to a Carbon Net Zero Economy**

- 5.9 In April 2021, the UK Government committed to achieving a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035, a key milestone in the global ‘Race to Zero’ campaign, which supports national transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Over 60 of the UK’s FTSE 100 companies have signed-up to The Race, signalling a strong shift in the UK economy as carbon reduction goals are reflected in procurement requirements and supply chains are cleansed to help achieve Net Zero targets.
- 5.10 However, most of the LRIE buildings have a poor or no energy rating, low eaves height in industrial units and are too old to meet the needs of businesses currently looking for space. There is a risk that these buildings will become ‘stranded assets’ without refurbishment or redevelopment.
- 5.11 The 2020 Environment Strategy articulates the Council’s own target of achieving carbon neutrality for its operations and activities by 2030, alongside working with others towards the same ambition for the District of West Berkshire. The strategic objectives of the strategy include a focus on responsible economic growth and working with our communities and partners.
- 5.12 The LRIE has the potential to provide a showcase for Carbon Net Zero through place-making initiatives such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and biodiversity net gain as well as investment in buildings and infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions associated with energy, fuel and material use.

## **Demand for commercial space**

- 5.13 The 2020 Development Brief’s approach was based on the assumption that the market demand for office and industrial space was not strong enough and that the redevelopment of sites for housing was necessary to enable the regeneration of LRIE.
- 5.14 However, recent analysis has found that demand for commercial space has risen significantly since 2020, driven by the post Brexit trading environment, the impact of the Covid pandemic, the UK’s commitment to reduce carbon emissions in order to achieve Net Zero by 2050 and, more recently, by challenges in the supply of construction materials and the rise in energy costs.
- 5.15 The mainstreaming of sustainability in business models has focussed the demand on new industrial and office space that is energy efficient and finished to a high standard. Within the past few months, local commercial property agents have corroborated the continuing strong demand for industrial space and linked the demand for high quality



office space to post Covid recovery and competition to attract ‘talent’ amid continued recruitment shortages.

- 5.16 This demand for commercial space presents an opportunity for LRIE that did not exist in 2020, and has the potential to remove the dependency on housing to achieve economic regeneration.

### **LRIE profile**

- 5.17 Maps showing the outline of the Council’s freehold on LRIE and the extent of land within its immediate control are attached as Appendices to this report. Around 36 businesses are currently located on LRIE providing 300+ jobs, with the largest employers being Elis UK, Newbury Electronics and Calor UK.
- 5.18 [Elis UK](#) (Plot 13M/N) employs 160 people on LRIE and provides high quality cleaning services and supplies to Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Healthcare and Hospitality sectors, with a 24/7 operation. Their clients include the NHS, whom they advise on the Race to Net Zero and they are committed to reducing their own carbon emissions.
- 5.19 [Newbury Electronics](#) (Plot 13V) is a local company that designs and manufactures circuit boards for the IT market with clients worldwide, and employs 35 people on LRIE. The company employs another 60 people in 3 production units on the neighbouring Riverpark Industrial Estate and a further 15 people working on electronic design projects at the Votec Centre, Hambridge Lane.
- 5.20 [Calor UK](#) (Plot 13 R) supplies Liquid Petroleum Gas and Futuria Liquid Gases to off-grid customers. Calor are developing a portfolio of sustainable fuels as part of its goal to transition to 100% of sustainably sourced fuels by 2040.
- 5.21 The smallest employers are 24+ businesses in car sales and vehicle repair providing about 90 jobs and located on sites totalling 11 acres (40% of the whole). From 2030 dealerships selling new vehicles will have to switch to selling electric vehicles only. There is potential for LRIE to become a central hub for EV charging and there may be external funding available to support this, given that there is a national deficit of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure to support the transition.
- 5.22 Council officers have held confidential discussions with some leaseholders on LRIE who have expressed interest in exploring ways to grow their businesses. At least one leaseholder has indicated that there may be an opportunity for lease buy-back. The current profile of businesses on LRIE presents exciting opportunities for working with leaseholders moving forward to generate investment and support their plans for green growth.

### **Soft Market Testing and Valuations**

- 5.23 Informed by the Environmental Appraisal Report, Avison Young carried out Soft Market Testing with potential development partners in early 2022. No advert was placed, but interest was sought from a broad range of developers including mixed-use developers, housebuilders and employment regeneration specialists to inform deliverability. Views were invited on the former depot site for commercial use and the playing field for housing, as outlined in the 2020 Development Brief, and on different procurement and

planning approaches. Interviews took place in January with 11 developers - a further five developers were contacted but declined to participate.

5.24 The key findings of the Soft Market Testing are summarised below:

- Confirmation of no market interest in taking on the LRIE site as a whole;
- Investment in place-making needed to improve overall site appeal;
- Potentially more developer interest if more plots made available;
- Weak interest in developing playing field site for housing (none for market sale housing without more land);
- High demand for industrial space;
- No market for speculative office development;
- All developers would expect to lead on planning applications for individual plots;
- A complex procurement process would deter smaller developers and larger ones were reluctant without certainty of more plots coming forward.

5.25 At the same time, Avison Young carried out informal (i.e. not Red Book) valuations based on the 2020 Development Brief to determine potential capital receipts and help inform return on investment for the two available sites – the former depot (industrial space) and the playing field (market housing).

5.26 Confirmation has been received from the Planning Service that there is no housing allocation on LRIE in the draft Local Plan Review and that an intensification of employment use on the site would be welcome to meet identified demand for industrial and office space.

5.27 Taken together, the valuations and the Soft Market Testing results provide further evidence that under current market conditions, housing development on the playing field is no longer integral to the long term regeneration of LRIE. However, the playing field site is still required for redevelopment as it is one of only two land parcels currently available within the Council's control (see below).

## Summary

5.28 The various elements of the LRIE project review summarised above have revealed opportunities for LRIE that are market led and we must move at pace to meet demand. This has led to a refresh of the LRIE strategic objectives and delivery strategy, reflecting a new approach that includes:

- A focus on attracting investment in employment space and jobs that aligns with Carbon Net Zero ambitions;
- A commitment to working in partnership with leaseholders to grow current LRIE businesses in a sustainable way and encourage new businesses;
- A sustainable design-led approach to place-making to create an appealing destination for businesses that includes seeking external funding for public realm improvements;
- A move away from the residential-led approach set out in the 2020 Development Brief.

## 6 Proposals

### Revised Strategic Objectives

- 6.1 Executive in December 2020 approved an overarching Vision for LRIE to provide a focus for progressing the development of the site over the years to come. This Vision allows for a range of uses on the site as a whole, including - to date - residential development by leaseholders (subject to planning and to negotiations with the Council as freeholder). LRIE Project Board and Economic Development Board have considered the Vision and decided the references to 'mixed use' and 'live' should remain in order to provide longer term flexibility. However – as set out below – the revised delivery strategy is focussed on the immediate need to for employment use.
- 6.2 Therefore, no changes are proposed to the overarching Vision for LRIE approved by Executive in December 2020, which is set out below.

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

- 6.3 Executive in December 2020 also approved key objectives for the development of the site including that it should be economic development led, that connectivity with the town centre is important, that business square footage and jobs should be increased and that the value of the Council's financial position should be protected.
- 6.4 In the response to the changing economic climate and for the reasons set out in the Supporting Information section, this report proposes to replace the December 2020 key objectives with revised strategic objectives that include reference to the Council's target of carbon neutrality by 2030 and remove the requirement for mixed use to include housing. This will assist in simplifying the public messaging around the Council's objectives for LRIE.
- 6.5 The strategic objectives have been revised to include targets, deliverables and outcomes that form the basis for the programme management framework being developed alongside this report.
- 6.6 This report seeks approval of proposed revised strategic objectives as set out below:

**By 2030, the London Road Industrial Estate programme will have achieved:**

- 1. The sustainable economic regeneration of London Road Industrial Estate to create an appealing destination for businesses.**
- 2. Inward investment, green economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities for local people;**
- 3. A positive contribution to the district's carbon neutrality aspirations.**

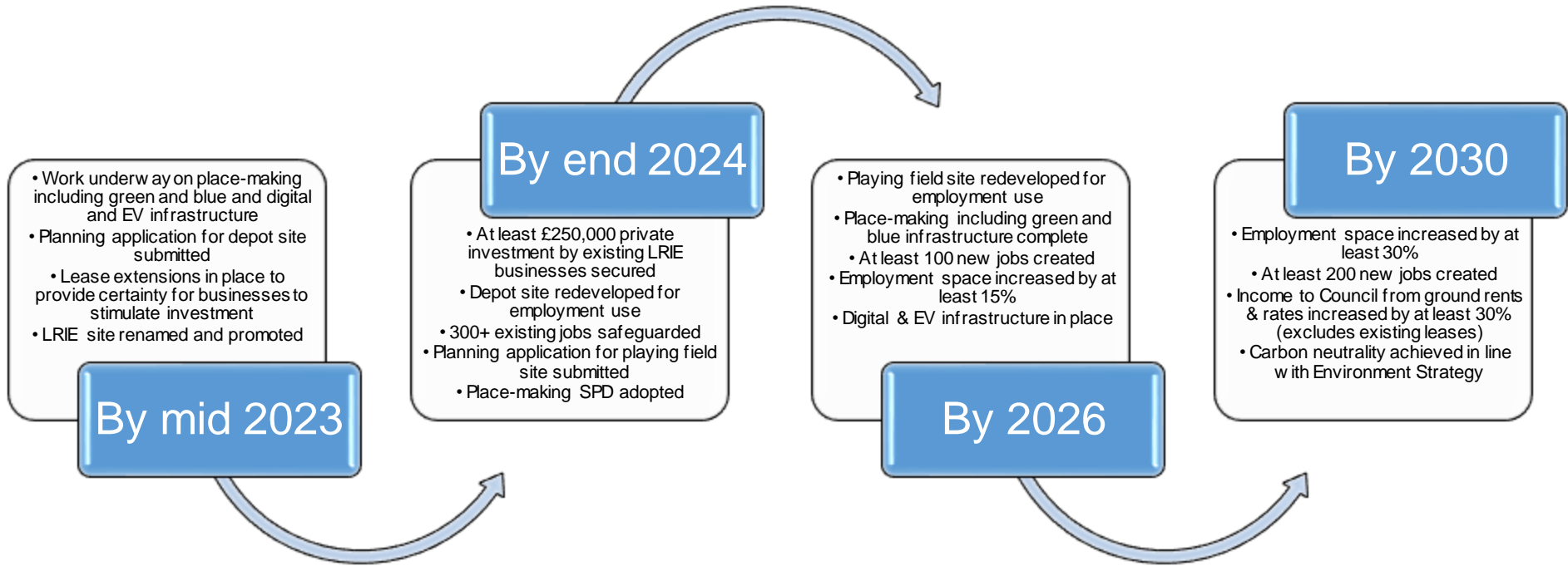
## Revised Delivery Strategy

- 6.7 The Development Brief approved by Executive in November 2020 set out a residential-led approach to the regeneration of LRIE and offered two options for delivery. In December 2020, Executive decided to deliver development via the phased approach option in view of wider market conditions, previous experience of the site and the Council's desire to mitigate risk of non-delivery.
- 6.8 The Development Brief is available to view on the Council's website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>.
- 6.9 The Development Brief was a substantial body of work produced by consultants well-respected in the field and remains a key source of information and evidence to underpin the LRIE programme. A number of the 'next steps' set out in the December 2020 report to Executive have been completed or are underway, including market testing and leaseholder discussions. Additional work streams have also been completed, including the Environmental Appraisal Report and re-opening the playing field to the public for sport and recreational use pending redevelopment.
- 6.10 This report seeks approval to retain the phased approach but to refocus the strategy for delivering the Council's overarching Vision for LRIE away from a residential-led approach to one in which, by 2030, the Council will:
- Work with existing and potential leaseholders and develop partners on LRIE to:
    - Bring forward business investment to safeguard 300+ jobs and create at least 200 new jobs
    - Agree lease terms to unlock at least 30% of new employment space and place-making improvements
    - Align values with carbon net zero agenda
  - Seek to retain the freehold of the LRIE site as a long term asset for employment use and:
    - Buy back leases if and when they become available for redevelopment
    - Avoid use of CPO wherever possible
    - Increase income from the former depot and playing field sites through ground rents and business rates by at least 30% (excludes current leases)
  - Seek interest from existing leaseholders, developers and/or other partner(s) to:
    - Promote LRIE for enterprise and innovation as part of a wider Investment Strategy for West Berkshire by mid 2023
    - Develop the depot site for employment use by end 2024
    - Develop the playing field site (subject to alternative provision) for employment use by 2026

- In partnership with leaseholders and key stakeholders, develop an LRIE Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and evidence base, with the aims of:
  - Creating an appealing destination for businesses through place-making
  - Delivering site wide mitigation for flooding and drainage and improved blue and green infrastructure (including nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain) by 2026
  - Investing in digital infrastructure and EV charging points by 2026
  - Achieving carbon neutrality in line with the Environment Strategy, through measures that include an Energy Strategy
  - Creating high quality design guidance for buildings and spaces

6.11 The Delivery Strategy is summarised along with projected timescales on the next page. Due to the number of variables in the LRIE programme – such as outcomes from leaseholder negotiations and external funding bids – it is likely that there will be some variation in the timescales. These will be reviewed regularly as part of the programme monitoring.

### Delivering the Regeneration of London Road Industrial Estate, Newbury



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## 7 Issues to Consider

### Financial and Property Issues

- 7.1 In respect of income, the Council receives annual ground rent of £0.4m per annum representing a yield of over 5% against Council freehold assets worth a book value of £9.2m (as at 31.3.21). The LRIE represents one of few income generating sites left in the Council's portfolio. Given reductions in Government funding for local authorities in recent years, the Council is required to consider its wider financial position as part of this redevelopment, both from long term income regeneration and share of business rates retention generated by LRIE.
- 7.2 In order to be clear about the Council's intentions in discussion with prospective developers, the strategic objectives set out above include an increase in income from the former depot and playing field sites through ground rents and business rates by at least 30%. This excludes current leases, which are subject to rent review. The proposed revised delivery strategy confirms the Council's position in seeking to retain the freehold of the LRIE site as a long term asset for employment use
- 7.3 The report seeks delegated authority to negotiate, restructure or buy back leases which may become available during the current financial year
- 7.4 This would necessitate the use of part of the LRIE capital budget to fund the new property arrangements (see below). Proposals falling outside the financial year and/or outside the existing capital budget approved for LRIE would be brought back to Executive for decision.
- 7.5 In terms of cost, this report proposes no additional expenditure at this time – the Council's costs are expected to be met within existing budgets over the next two years, as follows:

### Capital Budget

- 7.6 Among the alternative delivery options considered by the LRIE project refresh was that of the Council itself submitting an outline planning application for the whole site, rather than seeking to develop a Supplementary Planning Document to support its longer term aspirations for the site. A capital bid to support the submission of an outline planning application was submitted to provide sufficient flexibility for a different approach, should this become the preferred way forward.
- 7.7 As part of the budget setting process, £850,500 was set aside in the capital programme for 22/23 and £17,000 for 23/24 for planning and consultancy to help deliver LRIE projects, including some staffing costs.
- 7.8 Submission of an outline planning application has now been discounted. The proposed revised delivery strategy seeks to refocus part of the LRIE capital budget to fund new arrangements including buy-back of leases which may become available during the current financial year.
- 7.9 The remainder of the budget will be used to support the production and delivery of the aspirations set out in the site-wide Place-making Supplementary Planning Document.

## Revenue Budget

7.10 £100k pa for 22/23 and 23/24 approved by Executive in December 2020 to progress the scheme, plus £64,000 carry forward approved for 22/23.

7.11 In addition, the Council will seek to lever in additional funding for infrastructure and place-making improvements from sources including:

- DEFRA and Regional Flood & Coastal Committee
- Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and other stakeholders
- Leaseholders and occupiers
- Developer partners
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Digital and EV infrastructure enablers
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund

7.12 Expenditure will be closely monitored as part of the programme management framework and in accordance with the Council's budget monitoring process.

## Resource Issues

7.13 The proposals set out in this report are expected to be met within existing resources over the next two years, by using revenue funding released by capitalising a proportion of existing staffing costs. This includes programme management within the Economy Team alongside the delivery of the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.

7.14 The capital and revenue budgets set out above include provision for specialist multi-disciplinary services to be bought in to assist with delivery as required. This includes legal and commercial property services, independent planning advice and design and engineering services. 'Intelligent client' support will be sourced from other services across the Council including Legal, Property, Commissioning, Environment Delivery, and Asset Management (Highways & Flood Risk).

## Risk Management

7.15 The LRIE scheme has been subject to a legal challenge in the past. The phased approach set out in this report seeks to mitigate such risks wherever possible, to enable effective development of the land within the Council's control within the shortest possible timeframe. All development requiring planning permission will be subject to the statutory planning process.

7.16 The proposals provide a regeneration framework that enhances one of the Council's major assets at minimal financial risk to the Council. Independent support to negotiate lease term extensions and include sharing of regeneration costs will help manage upfront capital costs and result in an annual uplift in rental income for the council.

7.17 The playing field is registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). If the Council decides to dispose of the asset – or part of the asset - as a financial transaction, the asset must be offered to the registered ACV holder at commercial value. The registered holder has six months in which to make a commercial offer. The Council is not obliged



to accept the offer and thereafter may proceed with its plans. This timescale has been built into the programme management framework.

- 7.18 In the past, the Council's reputation has suffered from a perceived lack of transparency and progress on LRIE. The development and implementation of a comprehensive communications plan will ensure that milestones are celebrated and progress is shared quickly and effectively with stakeholders.
- 7.19 The delivery strategy emphasises the importance of site-wide environmental enhancements and place-making, including flood mitigation and achievement of carbon neutrality. External technical support will carry out investigations, the results of which will inform a flood mitigation plan. A site-wide Energy Strategy will be developed in partnership with leaseholders.
- 7.20 This is a complex programme with multiple interdependencies and variables. Effective programme management will make the most of in-house resource and procuring external technical support will ensure appropriate capacity is in place to deliver on the programme objectives.

### Communications

- 7.21 The proposals set out in this report are intended to provide clarity on the Council's intentions for taking the site forward for employment use to support businesses to grow and create jobs for local people in line with its carbon neutrality ambitions.
- 7.22 In April 2021, LRIE Project Board agreed that a programme of further engagement activities should be developed once a clear vision which articulated the Council's ambitions for the site had been developed. In addition, the Project Board approved the setting up of a new micro-website for the project and to go out to public consultation on a range of potential new names for the estate that would focus on future uses.
- 7.23 A communications plan is now being developed to improve engagement with the programme by local residents, stakeholders and the wider public, linked to the programme milestones.
- 7.24 Following the successful launch earlier this year of the new Business West Berkshire website <https://www.businesswestberks.co.uk/>, there is no longer a need for a new micro-website. Instead, a dedicated LRIE page will be set up with compelling visuals and blog content, where people can see for themselves how the project is progressing.
- 7.25 A proposal for a competition among local schools to find a new name for LRIE which reflects the district's carbon neutrality ambitions is being developed for consideration by the Project Board. Suggestions would be shortlisted by a panel including members, business representatives and commercial property agents. The report seeks to delegate authority to the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development to make the final decision on a new name for LRIE.

### Governance

- 7.26 The refreshed project has been assessed as a tier 1 project using the Council's project sizing toolkit. This requires regular reporting to the officer led LRIE Project Board and the member led Economic Development Board as the Governance Group, which

considers any matters escalated by the Project Board. Key decisions are taken by the Executive where required, in line with the Council's constitutional requirements.

7.27 The LRIE Project Board meets regularly, is chaired by the Executive Director Place as Project Sponsor and includes the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development as member lead, as well as officers from relevant Council services. Economic Development Board also meets regularly and includes the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and two other Portfolio Holders.

7.28 Responsibility for managing the LRIE programme and associated projects or work streams lies within the Economy Team, which also manages the town centre regeneration programme including the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan. A programme management framework is being developed in parallel with this report and will be considered in due course by Economic Development Board as the Governance Group. . Further oversight is provided through the Corporate Programme Board which oversees all Council project activity.

## **8 Other options considered**

### **Close down the LRIE Programme**

8.1 One option is to take no further action and close down the LRIE regeneration programme, on the basis that the Council would continue to receive income of £0.4m pa from leaseholders.

8.2 However, as previously explained, this would be missing a significant opportunity to support and grow local businesses in line with the Council Strategy and to demonstrate the Council's commitment to sustainable development and to achieving carbon net zero. Moreover, there is a risk that without refurbishment or redevelopment, the buildings on LRIE will become 'stranded assets' and the income will eventually dwindle.

### **Formal Developer route**

8.3 The option of seeking a site-wide developer partner was previously ruled out by Executive in December 2020. Executive decided to deliver development via the phased approach option in view of wider market conditions, previous experience of the site and the Council's desire to mitigate risk of non-delivery.

8.4 A development partner or partners remains an option for plots within the Council's direct control – if this route is chosen, the Council will have regard to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for the delivery of the objectives.

### **Exclude the Playing Field Site**

8.5 Another option is to exclude the playing field site from the LRIE proposals and let it remain in recreational use.

8.6 However, this would limit the potential to achieve the LRIE objectives of economic regeneration, investment in green growth, more and better quality jobs and making a positive contribution to carbon neutrality. Furthermore, exclusion of the playing field

would remove one of only two land parcels currently available within the Council's control to progress the aspirations for the site.

- 8.7 Retaining the playing field site and the adjoining car park within the LRIE red line provides the Council and potential development partners with the flexibility to expand and/or relocate existing businesses, attract more businesses to the area and to provide place-making elements including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and biodiversity net gain.

### Submission of outline planning application

- 8.8 As stated above, an alternative delivery option considered was for the Council to submit an outline planning application for the whole site. However, the cost of work to support this would be very high and its effectiveness in delivering Council aspirations questionable given that planning permission has a limited lifespan. In addition, Soft Market Testing established that developers prefer to lead on planning applications.
- 8.9 Therefore, the preferred approach is to develop an evidence base that would include an LRIE Place-making Strategy and Energy Strategy and to procure independent planning consultants to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The scope of the SPD would include site-wide design guidance, flood mitigation, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), biodiversity net gain, nutrient neutrality, BREEAM standards, skills and employment plans and targets linked to more jobs and employment space.

## 9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This report presents a refresh of the LRIE project which took place between November 2021 and April 2022 to take account of evolving economic drivers, market demand and the district's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. This included a review of the assumptions on which the 2020 Development Brief was based. The refresh also took account of the results of further work by consultants Avison Young, including an Environmental Appraisal Report and Soft Market Testing, and recent announcements by the UK Government.
- 9.2 The issues to be considered in any review of the London Road Industrial Estate are many and varied, reflecting the long history and complexity of the project. There is a need to be clear about the Council's aspirations for the LRIE site, for the benefit of leaseholders, occupiers, employees, local residents and stakeholders as well as the wider public.
- 9.3 The recommendations set out in paragraph 2 above, provide the clarity needed to move the LRIE programme forward at pace, to grasp opportunities presented by the current market and economic drivers and to bring forward investment in sustainable economic growth that will support a number of the Council's strategic priorities.

## 10 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A – Aerial map showing site outline
- 10.2 Appendix B – Map showing land in Council control

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**Background Papers:**

Report EX3960 and Minutes of Executive held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Development Brief by Avison Young dated November 2020.

Report EX3978 and Minutes of Executive held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

All available via the Council's website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

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

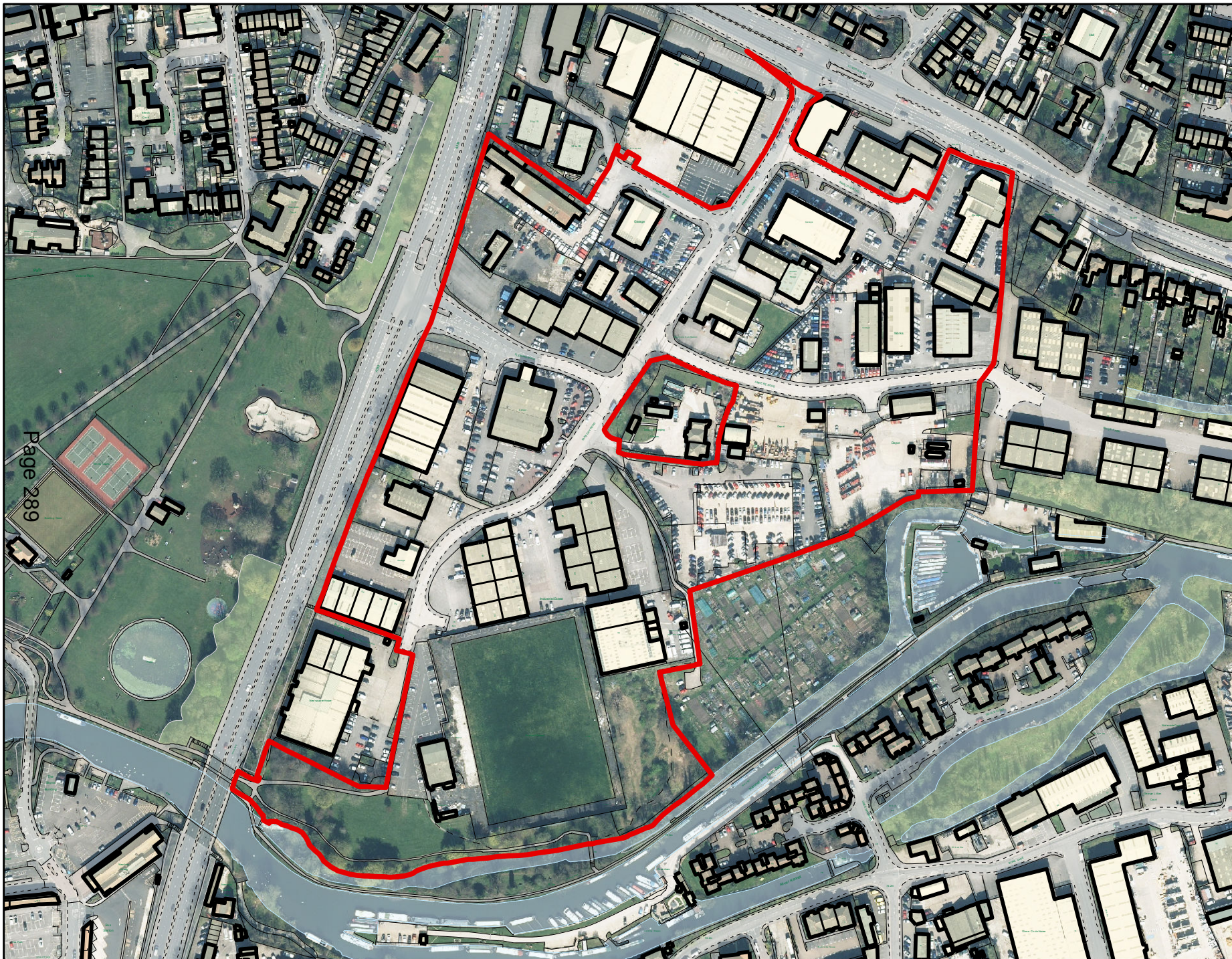
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# London Road Industrial Estate




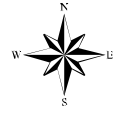
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**Legend**  
Site Outline

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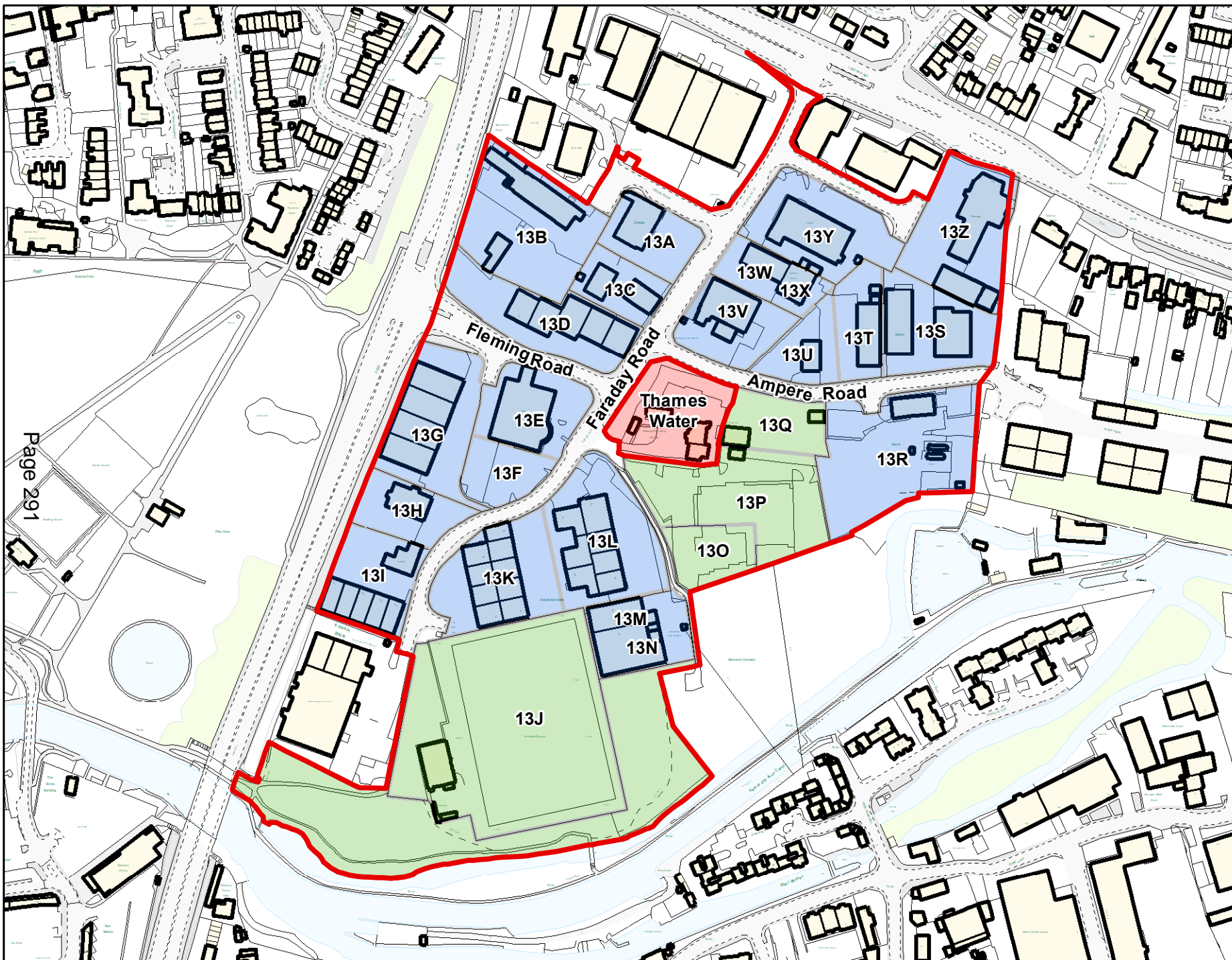
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# London Road Industrial Estate



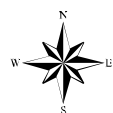
## Legend

-  Site Outline
-  Council Controlled
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## Item 13:

### **Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 9 June 2022.**

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

**A. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation:**

*"How does the administration intend to support on-shore wind farms in West Berkshire?"*

**B. Question submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon to the Portfolio Holder for Leader of the Council:**

*"The 'Give My View' advert running on Facebook gives no indication that it is part of West Berkshire Council's process to fulfil the new 30-year visions that are required for substantial developments. Why have you not asked for clearer communications?"*

**C. Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:**

*"Noting that the Local Development Scheme on the public-facing Council website still has the next draft (Regulation 19) new Local Plan down for publication in December 2020, and that we Councillors know the date for publishing it has slipped 18 months already (to this July), how confident are you that the risks to the revised Local Plan timetable - for Adoption in late 2023 - will be met?"*

**D. Question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education:**

*"Having accepted that education is key to reducing the littering problem in our streets and countryside, does the Council know what is being taught in our schools regarding this issue."*

**E. Question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:**

*"How much has been spent on upkeep and improvement at the NoTrees care home over the last four financial years?"*

**F. Question submitted by Councillor Billy Drummond to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:**

*"Can the Executive Member for Highways remind me and others of the size of potholes before they are repaired by West Berkshire Council?"*

**G. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation:**

*"Given that improving insulation is one of the cheapest and fastest ways to reduce people's energy bills, will the Administration join the Lib Dems in urging a much greater focus from the Government on improving insulation in homes by lobbying our local MPs?"*

**H. Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:**

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*"What lessons have been learned from the failure of one quarter of the cold-lay tarmac footway resurfacing works carried out by the Council's sub-contractor in recent weeks across the District?"*

**I. Question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:**

*"The Local Government Ombudsman has upheld a complaint from a resident that the Council:*

- *Did not properly deal with a safeguarding matter involving her late mother;*
- *Did not provide an advocate or social worker to help her mother make decisions about her care and medication in the last weeks of her life;*
- *Did not inform the family what was happening; and*
- *Did not have an advocate contact the family until six days after her mother's death.*

*What actions are the Council taking to avoid these problems in the future?"*

**J. Question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:**

*"Access to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) is subject to a limit of £10 per week below which this Council does not pay it. Considering this amounts to over £500 a year, how can withholding this entitlement from working families be justified"*

**K. Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation:**

*"What progress is being made with the Newbury town centre Conservation Area Appraisals, which were supposed to be the first ones to be worked on by consultants appointed just before the pandemic struck?"*

**L. Question submitted by Councillor Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Leader of the Council:**

*"The pandemic and now the massively increased cost of living have resulted in many working families becoming eligible for benefits who have never had to claim before. How well publicised is CTR on the Council's website and elsewhere?"*