

Notice of Meeting



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Executive

Thursday 6th July, 2023 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/executivelive>

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 28 June 2023

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

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



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023 (continued)

To:	Councillors Lee Dillon (Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Jeff Brooks, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Iain Cottingham, Denise Gaines, Janine Lewis, Alan Macro and Tony Vickers
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Agenda

Part I

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	5 - 6
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 June 2023.	7 - 12
3. Declarations of Interest To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct .	13 - 14
4. Public Questions 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.	15 - 18
5. Petitions Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.	19 - 20

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

	Pages
6. Petition response - Charging (EX4328) Purpose: the Council received a petition for debate at Full Council on the 1 December 2022. The petition set out "We, the undersigned, call upon WBC to adopt the following policy without delay: WBC will ensure that it charges the correct amounts of money due to it for any and all services for which it levies charges and will reimburse any resident or service user who has been charged in error or has been charged where no charge should have been levied." The petition was tabled for a debate as it had over 1,500 signatories. Following verification by officers the total verified signatories was below	21 - 26

Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023 (continued)

this threshold so has become an 'ordinary petition'. The response to the petition therefore needs to return to a subsequent Executive.

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7. **Save the ReadiBus Petition (EX4340)** 27 - 32
Purpose: to report on the receipt of a 1208 signature petition entitled 'Save the ReadiBus', which calls on the Administration to 'review their decision on funding the ReadiBus service; making sure that this important community service remains available for those who need it, when they need it, for the long term'.
- The Council provides funding for community bus services operating in the district, which is distributed based on operating costs, allowing enhanced basic payments for different vehicle types operated, the types of customers served, with the predominant factor being passenger journeys from the previous year. The Council has approved funding for this to continue in 2023/24, as part of the budget set on the 2 March 2023.
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8. **Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report 2022 (EX4405)** 33 - 86
Purpose: to provide an assessment of childcare sufficiency in West Berkshire.
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9. **Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive (EX4407)** 87 - 100
Purpose: to provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from the Executive during the next quarter. This report provides the Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding any of the contracts identified. It follows the work by a Constitution task group over last two years and resulting recommendations.

Items referred to the Executive following Call-In

- | | Pages |
|--|--------------|
| 10. Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332) | 101 - 108 |
| Purpose: Scrutiny Commission has reviewed the request to call-in the Executive decision taken of 23 March 2023 in respect of 'Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)' as set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 6.9 sections 13-17). | |
| The call-in was reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission on 20 June 2023. This report presents the findings of Scrutiny Commission for the | |



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023 (continued)

Executive to consider.

11. **Members' Questions** 109 - 110
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
12. **Exclusion of Press and Public**
RECOMMENDATION: that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. [Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution refers.](#)

Part II

13. **Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive (EX4407)** 111 - 124
(Paragraph 6 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)
- Purpose: to provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from the Executive during the next quarter. This report provides the Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding any of the contracts identified. It follows the work by a Constitution task group over last two years and resulting recommendations.

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**



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023 (continued)

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

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Executive – 6 July 2023

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, 8 JUNE 2023

Councillors Present: Lee Dillon (Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Iain Cottingham, Denise Gaines, Janine Lewis and Alan Macro

Also Present: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Dominic Boeck, David Marsh, Jo Stewart, and Richard Somner

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillors Jeff Brooks and Tony Vickers, and Councillor Howard Woollaston

Officers Present: Sarah Clarke (Service Director- Strategy & Governance), Paul Coe (Interim Executive Director- People), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) and Nicola Thomas (Service Lead – Legal & Democratic)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Jeff Brooks and Tony Vickers, and Councillor Howard Woollaston.

2. Minutes

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that Councillor Lynne Doherty's name had been misspelled in section 95 of the minutes.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that section 96 of the minutes incorrectly implied that Shadow Executive Members had a right to vote at the meeting.

Councillor Dominic Boeck referred to section 104 of the minutes and clarified that he had stated that 98% of children were admitted to schools of their parents' choice, rather than the 90% recorded.

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

4. Public Questions

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

5. Petitions

A petition was handed in by Mr James Matos, containing sixty-two signatures and relating to a request to move the bike rack and phone booth outside McDonalds at Northbrook Street due to anti-social behaviour concerns. The petition was referred to officers within the Place Directorate.

EXECUTIVE - 8 JUNE 2023 - MINUTES

6. Capital Financing Performance Report Outturn 2022/23 (EX4381)

Councillor Iain Cottingham introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 6), which noted the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget. The report presented the provisional outturn position for financial year 2022/23.

Councillor Cottingham highlighted key projects of expenditure over the previous year, which had included investment in Newbury Rail Station development, highway improvement projects, investment in local schools and investment in schemes to help maintain a green district.

Councillor Cottingham thanked the financial reporting team for their hard work in preparing and publishing the Council's financial statements to meet the Government's revised and earlier deadline of 31 May 2023.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commented that he was glad that Councillor Cottingham had mentioned the hard work of officers Joseph Holmes, Melanie Ellis, and Shannon Coleman-Slaughter and hoped that he would enjoy working with them.

Councillor Mackinnon referred to the financial implications section of the report commenting that an expenditure of £35.9m against a budget of £60.1m, would not leave an under spend of £20.6m. Joseph Holmes clarified that the expenditure figure had been transposed in error and should have read £39.5m, as referred to throughout the remainder of the report.

Referring to section 5.7 of the report, and noting Councillor Tony Vickers' previous criticism of the ten year capital programme, Councillor Mackinnon queried whether the current administration would continue to follow the long term capital budgeting process. Councillor Cottingham confirmed that the Executive would.

Councillor David Marsh queried whether there would be sufficient existing funds to complete the projects scheduled within the capital budget, given the recent impact of inflation. Councillor Cottingham confirmed that there would.

Councillor Marsh queried whether the Executive would aim to keep more strictly to its budget each year rather than creating such a large underspend. Councillor Cottingham responded that there would need to be a robust business case and a tangible benefit to the residents of West Berkshire to justify expenditure on capital projects.

Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that he had been unnerved by the response as the implication was that planned expenditure which had been reprofiled would no longer be spent. Councillor Cottingham clarified that he could not guarantee that all of the reprofiled money would be spent due to inflation and interest rate pressures, however there would need to be an appropriate business case for the expenditure to occur.

Councillor Mackinnon commented that one of the benefits of a ten year budgeting process was the flexibility to reprofile and allow a long term view.

Councillor Adrian Abbs seconded the report.

Resolved that: Executive

- Note the provisional outturn on the 2022/23 capital programme.
- In respect of reprofiling of planned capital expenditure, members approve:
 - (a) £17.1 million of planned expenditure to be reprofiled into financial year 2023/24 (project details in Appendix B).
 - (b) £736k of funding proposed to be brought forward from approved expenditure for financial year 2023/24 into financial year 2022/23 (project details in Appendix C).

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7. **2022/23 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Four: Provisional Outturn (EX4380)**

Councillor Iain Cottingham introduced the report (Agenda Item 7), which detailed the revenue performance of the Council during 2022/23, noting a provisional management accounting outturn of £4.71m overspend. Councillor Cottingham reported that following use of the reserves that had been set aside to support this, the overspend totalled £0.77m, which would reduce the Council's general fund reserve to £7.2m, which was just above the minimum level set.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commented that the outturn represented an improvement to the Quarter Three figures.

Councillor Mackinnon noted that at the Council budget meeting in March 2023, Councillor Adrian Abbs had promised an emergency budget if elected, and queried when this would occur. Councillor Lee Dillon responded that the Executive would utilise the financial levers available to it and that if an emergency budget was required then one would be scheduled.

Councillor Jo Stewart queried whether there were any initiatives being adopted in Adult Social Care to address agency costs, and offered to work with Councillor Alan Macro to assist him. Councillor Macro responded that initiatives were underway to recruit more social workers and welcomed the offer of assistance.

Councillor David Marsh noted the lack of reserves and queried how they would be increased. Councillor Dillon commented that the report under discussion related to the previous quarter, however the existing MTFS had scheduled £1m to reserves for the forthcoming three years to help reduced the funding gap.

Councillor Dominic Boeck queried whether the recruitment and retention policy that had been introduced to Children and Family Services the preceding year was starting to work. Councillor Heather Codling confirmed that a member of staff was in post to oversee the recruitment and that there had been interest from external candidates.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Note the provisional management accounting outturn of £4.71m overspend. After using the reserves that were set aside to support this, the overspend totals £0.77m. This will reduce the Council's general fund reserve to £7.2m, which is just above the minimum level set, with further planned and unplanned removal of earmarked reserves to support the 2022/23 outturn position.

8. **2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Four/Year end (EX4292)**

In the absence of Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Lee Dillon introduced the report (Agenda Item 8), and thanked officers for delivering the past administration's Strategy, but noting that the current Executive would be developing a new Council Strategy that would be bought to Council in the autumn.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon expressed thanks to the Executive Directors and officers of the council for producing a solid performance over the previous four years, particularly during the uncertain time during the Covid pandemic. Councillor Mackinnon expressed hope that the new administration would set similar challenging targets.

Councillor Richard Somner noted a number of red ratings against the Planning Service, however requested that Members recognise the importance of the Service Improvement Plan, and the hard work that had been undertaken by officers to build a better Planning Service. Councillor Dillon agreed that Planning played a crucial function within the district and that all were committed to ensuring that it provided the best service it could which

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included supporting the Service Improvement Plan, albeit whilst looking at best practice across the country and potentially adopting further improvements.

Councillor David Marsh commented that he was disappointed in the missed targets for maintaining a green district and requested improvement. Councillor Adrian Abbs responded that he had already discussed with officers initiatives to deliver an improved performance.

Councillor Jo Stewart referred to Birchwood Nursing Home and thanked all of the teams involved in the work and action plans that had been undertaken to improve the home.

Councillor Dominic Boeck queried the new Executive's plans to improve the number of schools within the district with a good or better rating. Councillor Dillon clarified that the paper referred to past actions and the performance of the past administration.

RESOLVED that: Executive

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

9. **Delivery of the Local Authority Housing Fund (EX4336)**

Councillor Denise Gaines introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 9), which sought an increase to the number of housing units provided through the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme from seventeen to twenty-seven. The units would be provided to house displaced persons. It was noted that at least 40% of the capital funding of the project would be funded by Central Government which would consequently limit the Council's financial exposure.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commented that it was an excellent scheme, noting that it had originated under the previous administration and so was fully supported.

Councillor David Marsh agreed with Councillor Mackinnon and queried whether long standing empty properties could be considered as possible stock for future schemes. Councillor Gaines agreed and commented that she was supportive of the proposal and would investigate, where possible.

Councillor Martin Colston seconded the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Delegate to the Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with Housing and Property Services, delegated authority to negotiate, agree to purchase and enter into purchase documentation for each individual property identified for the Local Authority Housing Fund above £300,000 within the overall funding envelope of £9.25m (rising from the previous £6m allocated).
- Approve the increase of housing units to be provided through the scheme from 17 properties to 27 units
- Allocate a further £3.25m in total of funding from the Capital Strategy to deliver the additional 10 housing units of which £1.3m if Government funded.
- Note the refurbishment of the WestPoint House property to support this scheme
- Approve the setting of rents at the Local Housing Allowance level for scheme 1 (subject to confirmation from the Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services) and Social rent for Scheme 2; otherwise rents will be set at Social Rent across both schemes.

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- Delegate to the Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with Housing and Property Services, delegated authority to enter into individual licences or the appropriate.

10. Hackney Carriage Tariffs - 2023 (Post Consultation) (EX4298)

Councillor Lee Dillon introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 10), which proposed modifications to the table of taxi fares, following consultation with the trade.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commented that he found the report difficult to interpret and requested that future iterations of the report clarify the percentage increases proposed.

Councillor Richard Somner requested clarification in relation to section 2.2 of the report as to which option was being adopted. Councillor Dillon clarified that option 6.1(b) 'Approve the revised table of fares at Appendix D as drafted, without modification' was the option that was proposed for approval.

Councillor Adrian Abbs seconded the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Consider the objections and comments received during the statutory consultation as set out in Appendix A;
- Approve the revised table of fares at Appendix D as drafted, without modification; and
- Confirm the date of 19 June 2023 for the table of fares to come into effect.

11. Members' Questions

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

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Item 3 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 6 July 2023.

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

A. Question submitted by Gareth Beard to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"What top three environmental improvements is the Liberal Democrat Administration going to deliver on top of the existing environment strategy. When will the improvement materialise and what benefit will it have on the West Berkshire Environment?"

B. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"The Bond Riverside website May 23 states Ardent are putting final touches to their SUDs plans. How can you design SUDs without a surface water management plan?"

C. Question submitted by Brandon Mosconi to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"It's no secret that we are in need of more housing. However, new housing must be sustainable, dense, and close to amenities to reduce already dire traffic, increase active travel, and affordability of homes. Therefore, will the council commit to looking at brownfield areas close to town centers, such as the LRIE, for dense housing rather than extending suburbs out into our green spaces and forcing those living there to use cars?"

D. Question submitted by John Bibbings to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"What additional infrastructure has been planned for the new houses at the end of Speen Allotments."

E. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"The West Berkshire Council Website, with respect to "Bond Riverside" updates, stated in May 2023 that: "Following a review of the programme Hemingway Designs have been given an extended 3 months to produce the final placemaking report. This will allow for a better integration with other ongoing council strategies such as Parking".

Please can you confirm:

a) That the Hemingway Designs brief has been amended to reflect that the Football Ground at Faraday Road will remain as a football ground with the associated stadia?

b) The cost (if any) associated to the Council of this 3-month extension.

c) That the final placemaking report will be delivered in August 2023?"

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Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 6 July 2023.

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.

F. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Deputy Leader, Governance and Transformation:

"On the day of submission of this question, the WBC Forward Plan did not include the Executive Item relating to a New Sports Pitch at Manor Park Newbury which had a Public Consultation, the results of which have never been FULLY Published yet the Consultation has been archived, therefore when can we expect the results of the further work due in Spring 2023 to come onto the Forward Plan for an Executive Decision please?"

G. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"When using a drainage strategy to develop the LRIE that incorporates third-party land downstream being used to store urban runoff, and that land is subject to man-made property flooding in a one-hundred-year storm event. Please can the Council give a cost estimate of implementing its current policy EX4219 London Road Industrial Estate Project Refresh "3 Implications and Impact Assessment, Financial: The site currently has a book value £9.2 m (as at 32.3.2021) with an annual income from the site of £0.4m pa" together with its current policy EX3978 London Road Development options "Recommendations 2.1 a. a phased approach option to development of the site with an overall vision for the development as a whole"?"

H. Question submitted by Gareth Beard to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"What improvements to rural electric vehicle charging (ie rapid charge points) does the council envisage over the next four years?"

I. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"In what way (if any) are the plans for the regeneration of the LRIE different from the previous administration?"

J. Question submitted by John Bibbings to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"What new car parking arrangements are being made for the loss of parking in Station Road."

K. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"The proposal to use the Manor Park ANGS – Accessible Nature-based Green Space (with no buildings) – was to provide a football pitch lost elsewhere, which no longer applies as Saturday & Sunday League Football is returning to Faraday Road (Paul Hendry announcement of 21st June 2023), therefore please can we keep this space to enhance BIODIVERSITY, as part of the Local

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Nature Recovery Network for this part of North Newbury, thus helping to mitigate the loss of a next door Greenfield at the Coley Farm Housing Development?"

L. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Does the executive realise that pedestrianisation and car parking charges has been bad for the small businesses in the town centre. Are you serious about causing further damage to the local economy by extending pedestrianisation?"

M. Question submitted by John Bibbings to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Could a loading only parking spot be created, in Station Road as burning is not allowed and heavy loads can be involved with waste and gardening equipment? Many of the gardeners are 80 years old +"

N. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"A recent Update Announcement on the Bond Riverside Regeneration Project, which was not replicated on the WBC Main LRIE web page, states: 'Ardent have begun putting together the final drawings and locations for the SUDS environmental improvements, ready for work to begin later this summer'. As the Clayhill Flood & Drainage Warden and currently the lead on these aspects until a handover can be achieved, I have not been kept informed on these developments, therefore how do they fit into the WBC SFRA (2022) Requirements for the whole of the lands within the red lines of the Regeneration Site to have a full Flood Risk Assessment and a whole site (old LRIE) Surface Water Drainage Strategy? Nb. SFRA Level 2 – Appendix B Pages 105-109 refer"

O. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"The council has said it will be using a herbicide on the Faraday rd pitch can the council name this herbicide and confirm it contains none of the following chemicals which if used incorrectly are dangerous to the aquatic environment Glyphosphate, Imazapr and Triclopyr?"

P. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"The recent much welcomed Announcements of the Return of Football at Faraday Road and a video on the preparation of the Sports Pitch (Paul Hendry announcement 21st June 2023) fails to mention how the Rest of the Requirements within the 'Return of Football at Faraday Road Project Implementation Plan' will be undertaken by very early in September 2023 so please can the Portfolio Holder outline who will manage the Plan and how the

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Changing Rooms, Showers/Toilets, Fencing, Connections to Sewage & Surface Water Drainage might be achieved in the Timescales, together with how the Land outside the pitch area, which is part of the bigger Public Open Space, will be maintained and enhanced for Nature Recovery given that it includes an SSSI Buffer Zone?"

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Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Petition response – Charging

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	6 July 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	22 June 2023
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources)
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4328

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council received a petition for debate at Full Council on the 1st December. The petition set out “We, the undersigned, call upon WBC to adopt the following policy without delay: WBC will ensure that it charges the correct amounts of money due to it for any and all services for which it levies charges and will reimburse any resident or service user who has been charged in error or has been charged where no charge should have been levied.”
- 1.2 The petition was tabled for a debate as it had over 1,500 signatories. Following verification by officers the total verified signatories was below this threshold so has become an ‘ordinary petition’. The response to the petition therefore needs to come back to a subsequent Executive.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive:
- 2.2 notes the petition and resolves to continue to ensure that the Council complies with the intent of its policy framework in income collection
- 2.3 aims for the Council to provide the best possible customer experience, and recently published its Customer Charter, which details the service levels it aspires to provide. It also explains what recourse is available to individuals or businesses who feel these have not been met. This would include those individuals or businesses who believe that they have been charged incorrectly or have been charged where no charge should have been levied. It is not the Council’s intention, nor will it be policy, to issue and collect charges that are incorrect or are not chargeable if appropriate procedures and form completion have been properly undertaken.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	None identified			
Human Resource:	None identified			
Legal:	None identified			
Risk Management:	None identified			
Property:	None identified			
Policy:	None identified			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
<p>A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>		X		
<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		

Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	None			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Council received a petition on the 1st December, and in line with the Council constitution needs to respond to this in a timely manner.
- 4.2 The petition concerns the Council’s collection of monies and charges across the Council and ensuring that the charge is correct. The Council issues charges of £30.7m for specific services across its remit that enables the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations and a variety of services to the public; this includes a very wide range of charges, fees and levies. The larger elements of collection are in respect of Council Tax, Business Rates, Car Parking income, Adult Social Care fees and charges, Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 agreements, commercial property income, planning fees and income from services traded to schools.
- 4.3 Ensuring that the Council collects all fees and charges owed to it is crucial as part of the overall budgetary framework. Without the income from the very many fees and charges provided to the Council, the much valued services provided would lack funding and the respective ongoing delivery of services and capital schemes would cease.
- 4.4 The Council aims for the best possible customer experience and recently published its Customer Charter, which details the service levels it aspires to provide. It also explains what recourse is available to individuals or businesses who feel these have not been met. This would include those individuals or businesses who believe that they have been charged incorrectly or have been charged where no charge should have been levied. It is not the Council’s intention, nor will it be policy, to issue and collect charges that are incorrect or are not chargeable if appropriate procedures and form completion have been properly undertaken.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The Council received a petition at the Full Council meeting on the 1st December 2022. The petition was worded as follows:

We, the undersigned, call upon WBC to adopt the following policy without delay:

WBC will ensure that it charges the correct amounts of money due to it for any and all services for which it levies charges and will reimburse any resident or service user who has been charged in error or has been charged where no charge should have been levied.'

- 5.2 After verification by officers, there were 1,418 signatories to the petition. According to Part 13 the Council's Constitution (excerpt below for reference), this petition response has been determined to go to the Executive for consideration:

“Process when an Ordinary Petition is received

The Petitions Officer will arrange for each ordinary petition to be reported to the next convenient meeting of the Executive, Council, Committee, Commission or Sub-Committee of Council which has the power to take a decision on the matter”

Supporting information

- 5.3 The Council collects income of over £240 million pounds¹ from charges, fees and levies annually. This comprises a wide range of various fees and charges, Council Tax and Business Rates; not all of it for West Berkshire itself. The two largest sources of income are Council Tax and Business Rates. Income targets are reported upon in the quarterly performance reports that go to the Executive with overall rates against these two areas in the high 90%.
- 5.4 The collection of this income is essential as it is used to fund vital services and projects. It is incumbent on all local authorities to collect all monies owed to it for services provided so that it can set a balanced budget as dictated by statute.
- 5.5 If residents or service users believe that they have been charged incorrectly or that have been charged where no charge should have been levied, there are a range of processes available. These options include informal resolution with the Council, the formal complaints process (this is detailed on the Council's website), taking the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (or respective Ombudsman for that specific service area if available) or even the option of a Judicial Review of the decision if previous stages of the process have not resolved the complaint.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 This report sets out the Council's response to a petition presented to it. A response must be issued to petitions, so no other options have been considered.

¹ £30.7m in specific charges, £90m in business rates and £110m Council Tax, £6.6m in Community Infrastructure Levy and £2.9m in s106

7 Conclusion

7.1 For members of Executive to note the report and resolve to support the intent of the petition in line with the Customer Charter, the corporate complaints process and its statutory obligations with respect to sound budgetary management.

8 Appendices

None

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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Save the ReadiBus Petition

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	6 July 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Denise Gaines
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	22 June 2023
Report Author:	Jon Winstanley
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4340

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on the receipt of a 1208 signature petition entitled ‘Save the ReadiBus’, which calls on the Administration to ‘review their decision on funding the ReadiBus service; making sure that this important community service remains available for those who need it, when they need it, for the long term’.
- 1.2 The Council provides funding for community bus services operating in the district, which is distributed based on operating costs, allowing enhanced basic payments for different vehicle types operated, the types of customers served, with the predominant factor being passenger journeys from the previous year. The Council has approved funding for this to continue in 2023/24, as part of the budget set on the 2nd March 2023.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is proposed that Executive note the request detailed within the petition, and approve the removal of the confidentiality clause from the service level agreement (SLA) with community transport operators.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None as a result of this recommendation.
Human Resource:	None as a result of this recommendation.
Legal:	The confidentiality clause which will be removed from the SLA is a standard clause. This can be removed from the SLA

	without adversely impacting the overall operation of the agreement.			
Risk Management:	None as a result of this recommendation.			
Property:	None as a result of this recommendation.			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		A full equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the previous decision to reduce community transport grant funding.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		There will be no impact as a result of the recommendation of this report.
Environmental Impact:		X		None as a result of this recommendation.
Health Impact:		X		None as a result of this recommendation.
ICT Impact:		X		None as a result of this recommendation.
Digital Services Impact:		X		None as a result of this recommendation.

Council Strategy Priorities:		X		N/A
Core Business:		X		N/A
Data Impact:		X		N/A
Consultation and Engagement:	WBC Transport Team. WBC Legal Services.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 A petition was presented to the Council's Executive by Cllr Lee Dillon at its meeting on 12 January 2023 entitled 'Save the Readibus'. The petition is signed by 1208 signatories and calls upon *'the administration of West Berkshire Council to review their decision on funding the Readibus service; making sure that this important community service remains available for those who need it, for the long term.'*
- 4.2 Readibus is one of 14 community transport operators active in West Berkshire. The current level of grant funding for community transport operators is approximately £55,000. This is divided amongst the various community transport groups using a formula based approach linked to the number of passenger journeys in the previous financial year.
- 4.3 In recent years community transport operators have been asked to sign a service level agreement if they are in receipt of grant funding in excess of £5,000. This is to ensure the Council grant funding is used appropriately.
- 4.4 Readibus felt that a particular clause in the service level agreement (clause 21.2) imposed a restriction on freedom of speech and refused to sign the SLA. The clause was a standard confidentiality clause that the Council included in SLA's, but Readibus objected to this and ultimately determined not to sign the agreement. This decision meant that there was a cap of £5,000 on the funding that could be allocated to Readibus.
- 4.5 The SLA has been reviewed, and it is proposed that the confidentiality clause be removed from the SLA for grants being awarded during 2023/24. This should remove the perceived barrier to Readibus signing the agreement, which would enable Readibus to receive funding in accordance with the Council's formula based approach.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 A petition was presented to the Council's Executive by Cllr Lee Dillon on 12 January 2023 entitled 'Save the Readibus'. The petition requested *'the administration of West*

Berkshire Council to review their decision on funding the Readibus service; making sure that this important community service remains available for those who need it, for the long term' The petition had received the support of 1208 signatories.

Background

- 5.2 In the 2019/20 financial year West Berkshire Council reduced its revenue grant funding for Community Transport operators from £90,790 in the previous year to £55,280, a reduction of 39%. This was approved at full Council in March 2019. The annual grant funding to community transport operators has remained constant since 2019/20. It should be noted that additional capital funding was made available for community transport operators at this time, and this is discussed further below.
- 5.3 In parallel with this reduction in funding a revision was made in how the community transport grants were calculated. The new model took into account operating costs, enhanced basic payments for different vehicle types operated, and payments to reflect the types of customers served. The remainder of the funding is distributed on the basis of passenger journeys from the previous year.
- 5.4 Readibus is one of 14 community transport operators active in West Berkshire. In 2018/19 Readibus received a grant of £45,761 which reduced to £14,580 in 2019/20. In recent years community transport operators have been asked to sign a service level agreement if they are in receipt of grant funding in excess of £5,000. This is to ensure the Council grant funding is used appropriately. Readibus felt that a particular clause in the service level agreement (clause 21.2) imposed a restriction on freedom of speech, and they therefore refused to sign the SLA.
- 5.5 The clause was a standard confidentiality clause that the Council included in SLA's. However Readibus objected to this and made a commercial decision at the time not to sign the agreement, which meant that they could not benefit from the total funding that may otherwise have been available..
- 5.6 Several attempts were made to agree a revised form of wording of clause 21.2 that Readibus would find acceptable, but no agreement was reached. Readibus' grant contribution has therefore been capped at £5,000 since 2020.
- 5.7 Over 70,000 single passenger journeys were completed by community transport operators in West Berkshire in 2018/19. In the two years following the grant reduction in 2019/20, the Council has been contacted by around 30 Readibus customers concerned about transport provision and the community transport team has in the main been able to find alternative provision with other community transport operators.
- 5.8 Since the reduction in revenue funding for community transport in 2019/20, West Berkshire Council has also been made available an annual capital grant of £50,000 for community transport operators to supplement the reduction in funding. This money has been instrumental in supporting initiatives such as:
- Allowing groups to replacing older vehicles, reducing ongoing maintenance costs and providing a more attractive offer to users.
 - Upgrading existing vehicles.

- Allowing for investment in additional new vehicles to expand service provision.

5.9 The operators have been able to use our funding for these investments to obtain additional funding from Greenham Trust.

5.10 Last year, the funding was used to support Downlands Volunteer Group's desire for a wheelchair-accessible electric minibus. Downlands have never before been able to offer trips for wheelchair-bound passengers, and the vehicle will also improve accessibility for those with other mobility difficulties. They will be the first community transport group in Berkshire with a zero-emission minibus, and one of only a small handful of groups to have achieved this across the UK.

5.11 Previous year's funding has been used to assist Volunteer Centre West Berkshire (VCWB) to purchase a vehicle to expand their offering to passengers in the Newbury and Thatcham areas. They launched a 'book-a-bus' dial-a-ride service but usage was relatively low, and the resources are now being used more generally to provide additional essential trips, including shopping.

Proposals

5.12 It is proposed that the Council continues to work with the sector to enhance provision through use of capital grant and joint bids for infrastructure for demand responsive services.

5.13 It is proposed that the service level agreement (SLA) with community transport operators be amended to remove the confidentiality clause. This should remove the basis of the objection which Readibus stated prevented them from signing the service level agreement.

6 Other options considered

6.1 Not to change the service level agreement. This is not recommended for the reasons detailed in the report.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The level of revenue funding, supplemented by capital grants, is appropriate to the level of service needed and provided by the Community Transport sector.

7.2 The amendment of the standard SLA to delete the confidentiality clause, should remove the objection that Readibus had to the terms of the agreement. This will enable Readibus to receive future grant funding in accordance with the Council's formula based approach.

8 Appendices

None

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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Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report 2022

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	6 July 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	May 2023
Report Author:	Avril Allenby/Ann Miemczyk
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4405

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an assessment of childcare sufficiency in West Berkshire. :
- 1.2 We must demonstrate that there is sufficient early education and childcare available for working parents and those parents training to enter work.
- 1.3 We must demonstrate that there is sufficient early education and childcare for every child to access their entitlement to free early education and care.
- 1.4 The duties of the Childcare Act require local authorities to shape and support the development of early education and childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a market management function, supporting the needs of parents, children and young people and stakeholders.
- 1.5 Local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 We recommend that the Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 goes via the Executive Committee to inform elected members on how we are meeting our duty to secure sufficient childcare.
- 2.2 We would also like the Operations Board and Executive Committee to recommend the report is actively promoted on the Council's websites to make it accessible to parents/carers and other interested parties.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	N/A			
Human Resource:	N/A			
Legal:	N/A			
Risk Management:	N/A			
Property:	Work with colleagues in property to keep informed of local developments that may impact childcare sufficiency and work with them to design and deliver new early years accommodation when required.			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		

Environmental Impact:		X		N/A
Health Impact:		X		N/A
ICT Impact:		X		N/A
Digital Services Impact:		X		N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:			X	<p>Relates to the Council Strategy 2019-2023 and its Priorities for Improvement:</p> <p>Priority 2: Support everyone to reach their full potential.</p> <p>One of the commitments in this priority is to support everyone in their learning journey to achieve their best. The EY Sufficiency Assessment indicates that there is sufficient early education in the area to help deliver this commitment.</p>
Core Business:			X	As above but the report and information contained in it is an annual update for the Authority.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Director of Education, Portfolio Holder – Heather Codling			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The report is being brought as the Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities by law to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).
- 4.2 The impact of childminder resignations and recruitment and retention issues in the wider early years education offer have contributed to an increase in enquiries to the Family Information Service’s brokerage service which helps parents/carers find early education provision for their children. An increased number of early years providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the sector. Some of the reasons given for

this are the ability of staff to find higher paid work in other sectors, the rates of entitlement funding and increased employment costs in early years provision.

- 4.3 These issues have been reflected in either short or longer-term reductions in the number of places being offered by providers within West Berkshire. Childminders leaving the sector is also impacting both day care and wraparound (before and after school) provision for families.
- 4.4 The table showing population and the ratio of places by ward is an indicator that there are sufficient places in West Berkshire. Areas whose sufficiency levels are being closely monitored include: Lambourn and Thatcham where sufficiency is tight with either few or no surplus places. Bradfield and Bucklebury are geographically close and also have a ratio of less than 1. However, we have not had enquiries about provision in these areas. However most of these areas were also reporting vacancies when the report was produced so any sufficiency concerns are somewhat mitigated by this.
- 4.5 The population of Early Years children has been declining and estimates for West Berkshire indicate a decline over the next 10 years at least. These estimate figures also help to confirm that our sufficiency duty will be met.
- 4.6 Over the year we saw the number of childminders reduce by 11 and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provision reduce by 4 settings. Quality of provision remains high with 85% of childminders and 87% of day nurseries and pre-schools and independent provision being rated by Ofsted as outstanding or good.
- 4.7 **Childcare Reforms** were announced in the 2023 Budget and are set to increase availability, reduce costs and increase the number of parents accessing childcare so that they can return to work. These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system as follows:

Autumn 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder grants become available • Invest £204m into 3/4yo and 2yo funding rate • Staff:child 2yo ratio change
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15hrs for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds introduced • Invest £288m into 3/4 yo and 2yo funding rates
Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National wraparound support begins • 15hrs for eligible working parents of children 9 months plus introduced
Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30hrs for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary school age introduced
Sept 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools able to offer 8am-6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership

4.8 These announcements will of course impact on our West Berkshire provision. Providers will need to revise their offer to accommodate 30 hours for the working parents of 2 year olds and then the lowering of the offer to 9 months up. Similarly the capacity of the Early Years Team is being reviewed in light of these changes. We are waiting for further detail from the Department for Education (DfE) to help inform any decisions.

4.9 In conclusion, the report proposes that in spring 2022 West Berkshire was meeting its childcare sufficiency duty as there was adequate provision across most of the area. The data used to produce this report is a snapshot in time and indicates that currently we are meeting our sufficiency duty. Demand is being met and there is currently good quality provision in West Berkshire and this gives parents/carers both flexibility and choice. The analysis also shows that there are wards where the number of places are at risk of not meeting local population demand. However, as has also been shown in the report, parents do travel for their childcare and this is an area that needs to be monitored as parental working patterns and styles have changed since the pandemic.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 Introduction

This childcare sufficiency assessment provides an overview of the childcare provision in West Berkshire.

5.2 Background to Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report

(a) What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?

- This childcare sufficiency assessment provides an overview of the childcare provision in West Berkshire.
- The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities by law to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

We must ensure that:

- There is sufficient childcare available for working parents and those parents training to enter work.
- There is sufficient childcare for every child to access their entitlement to free early education and care.
- The duties of the Childcare Act require local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a market management function, supporting the needs of parents, children and young people and stakeholders.
- Local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

(b) Relevant Legislation

- The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities in England to ensure a sufficiency of childcare for working parents, access to education and training, and for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. Childcare sufficiency covers registered childcare for children aged 0-14, 0 – 18 for a child with EHCP or additional needs.
- The Childcare Act (2016) requires local authorities to ensure early years provision is available free of charge to eligible children. The universal entitlement provides funded childcare up to a maximum of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks (570 hours per year) for eligible 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds.
- The Childcare Act (2016) became law in March 2016 and introduced the extended 30 hour entitlement of funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds to eligible families, from September 2017.
- More information regarding Childcare provision legislation can be found here [Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

5.3 Impact of coronavirus

(a) Provider Sustainability

- In our 2021 Sufficiency Report we evaluated the impact of Coronavirus on Early Years Provision and its ongoing impact.
- Support was offered to providers through an Early Years Sustainability Grant and the provision of financial training.
- The Team continues to assess and monitor the market to support sufficient childcare in West Berkshire. Comments regarding the continuing impact of the pandemic will be included in this report.

(b) Economy, wellbeing and employment

- The rise of home working was a clear result of the pandemic and statistics show that just under a third of workers are able to continue to do this. Although this is positive, prolonged periods of working from home have also taken their toll on wellbeing, with over half of employees expressing concerns of feeling isolated or detached from the workplace. Furthermore, the relative success of home working alongside the cost and emissions savings made as a result of office buildings not being used led many employers to consider their estate needs which in turn will have a knock on impact on our town centres and ultimately where families access their childcare..
- The impact on childcare is also being monitored as home working and different workstyles have altered families demand for childcare, in terms of hours and location. Recruitment and retention in the local childcare market is also being monitored. There has been another reduction in Childminders (see 4.1 below) and we are hearing from some Childminders that they are moving into alternative types of work.
- A survey of West Berkshire providers by the Early Years Team in summer 2022 showed evidence that some Early Years providers were finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff. In certain cases this has led to temporary or permanent changes in the number of childcare places they are able to offer and at the same time ensure the maintenance of ratios of workers to children.

5.4 Demand for Early Education and Childcare in West Berkshire

(a) Overall Population

- As mid-year population data for 2021 is not yet available for publication, we have retained the previous year's information.
- The mid-year population estimate for 2020 showed West Berkshire's population as 158,450. The largest urban areas in the district are Newbury, Thatcham and the East Suburban Area where in total 63% of the population lives. The remaining 37% live in the more rural areas of West Berkshire but include smaller towns such as Hungerford and Theale.

2020 Mid-Year population data West Berkshire	
Town/area	Estimated Population, All Ages
Newbury	44,044
Thatcham	25,399
Eastern suburban area (Calcot, Purley, Tilehurst)	31,477
Rural area	57,530
West Berkshire	158,450

Source: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/research>

(b) Population of Early Years Children

Age	Number of Children
0	1515
1	1514
2	1631
3	1684
4*	1762

Source: ONS-Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

* most four-year old will have started in a school reception place

(c) Population of School Age Children

Age	Number of Children
5	1880
6	1977
7	1983
8	2037
9	2105
10	2167
11	2280
12	2262
13	2273
14	2465

Source: ONS-Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- Population of West Berkshire early years and school age children has been declining since 2020. For 2 year olds this has reduced by just over 10% and for 3 year olds this has reduced by almost 11.5 %.

(d) Economy, Employment and Wellbeing

- Employment rates in West Berkshire are generally high, 85.2% of 16 to 64 year olds are economically active (people that are not retired, a student, a carer or unemployed). This is higher than the South East and Great Britain averages. Increasing employment and supporting people into work are key elements of the UK Government’s public health and welfare reform agendas.
- West Berkshire enjoys low levels of unemployment compared with other areas of the South East and England. An indicator used to measure unemployment levels is based

on the number of residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) which now forms part of the Universal Credit scheme. Unemployment is at 2.6% in West Berkshire.

- In 2020, for every resident aged 16-64, there were on average 1.1 jobs in West Berkshire. This is higher than the South East and Great Britain. The density figure represents the ratio of jobs to working population. For example, a job density of 1.0 means there is one job for every resident aged 16-64.

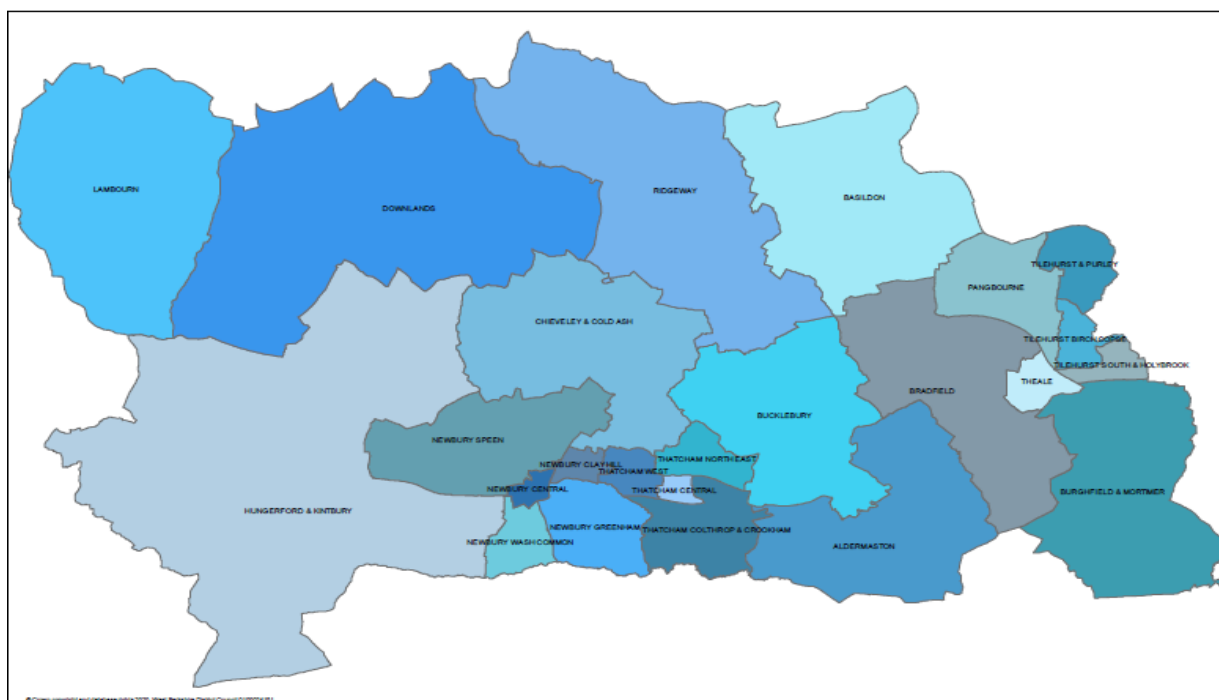
(e) Ethnicity

Table showing Ethnicity of the West Berkshire Population as per 2021 Census

Ethnicity	West Berkshire Population 2021 Census	%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	138,253	85.6
White: Other White	8,379	5.2
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	3,087	1.9
White: Irish	1,404	0.9
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1,274	0.8
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	1,095	0.7
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1,054	0.7
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	1,046	0.6
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1,028	0.6
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	907	0.6
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	801	0.5
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	658	0.4
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	627	0.4
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	501	0.3
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	398	0.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	308	0.2
Other ethnic group: Arab	279	0.2
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	190	0.1
White: Roma	158	0
Total Population	161,447	100

(f) Wards

Map showing names and locations of West Berkshire Wards



(g) Deprivation and Family Hubs

- Overall, West Berkshire ranks as the 39th least deprived district in England (out of 326): placing the district in the 89th percentile in terms of deprivation across England.
- There are however pockets of deprivation across the district, and the table below shows the 10 most deprived areas in West Berkshire.

Table Showing most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Area in West Berkshire

Order	WARD	LSOA
1	Greenham	The Nightingales, Equine Way
2	Thatcham N	Park Avenue, The Henrys
3	Calcot	Royal Avenue
4	Calcot	Underwood Road
5	Victoria	London Road, Faraday Road, Hambridge Road
6	Aldermaston	Aldermaston Village, Soke
7	Clay Hill	Walton Way, Curling Way
8	Downlands	Brightwalton, Chaddleworth, Catmore, West Ilsley, Farnborough, Fawley
9	Lambourn	Newbury Road, Mill Lane, Bockhampton Road, Lambourn
10	Hungerford	Priory Road, Hungerford Common

- West Berkshire has 3 Family Hubs which replaced the Children Centres in 2016. The West Family Hub is located in Victoria Ward, Newbury and there is a satellite Hub in Hungerford. The Central Family Hub is in Thatcham North Ward and the East Family Hub, Calcot,
- The Hubs are located in areas with recognised raised levels of deprivation to be able to target families from these areas. They work directly with children 0 to 5 years old

and signpost services for families with 5 to 19 year olds. (0 to 24 for children with special educational needs and disabilities).

- Families with children under 5 can access the following:
- 1-1 support from a Family Support Worker, families can self-refer or be referred by a professional
- A variety of groups running in the Hubs and local community, enabling children and their parents/carers to take part in range of play-based activities to support early learning, development, and building friendships
- Family learning courses such as Boost, Parenting in the Early Years, Healthy Eating and Lifestyles
- Antenatal, postnatal, breastfeeding support and baby massage
- Support with finding suitable provision and applying for free childcare for 2-year-olds and 30 hours free childcare
- Friendly, qualified staff who will provide a listening ear to support your child's learning & development and parent/carer wellbeing
- Signposting for information about employment, training, and childcare

5.5 Supply of Early Years and Childcare in West Berkshire

(a) Types of Provision

- In spring 2022 West Berkshire had a total of 209 Early Years providers. This comprised 126 registered childminders, 57 of whom were registered to offer the free entitlement funding to families. There were 22 Day Nurseries, 32 Pre-Schools, 8 Private School Nurseries, 19 Maintained Schools with nursery classes and 2 Maintained Nursery Schools. The overall number of places being offered was 4879.

Table Showing Types of provision and places in West Berkshire

Type of Provision	Number of Providers		Number of Places	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Childminders	137	126	777	683
Day Nurseries	23	22	1729	1856
Pre-Schools	34	32	1017	1013
Private Schools	10	8	324	272
Maintained Nursery Schools	2	2	280	300
School with Nurseries	18	19	696	755
Total	224	209	4823	4879

- West Berkshire continues to offer a good mix of childcare provision to all families including working parents. The overall number of places, which includes both funded and unfunded, remains similar to last year. The maintained sector shows an overall increase in places on offer.

- Comments made earlier about the continued impact of Coronavirus on the supply of childcare is somewhat shown in the provider and place numbers in the sector. The numbers of childminders and places has reduced and there were some setting closures due in part by the pandemic and pre-schools being unable to fundraise to support their early education offer.
- The number of Ofsted registered Childminders reduced by 11 (8%). Day Nurseries by 1 (4.3%) and Pre-schools by 2 (5.8%) in 2021-22.
- Ofsted also reported that nationally the ongoing decline in the number of childcare providers has continued. Most of this overall decrease in provider numbers is due again to a fall in the number of childminders.

Table Showing Spring Term 2022 relevant child population, funded children and available places.

Ward	Number of 2-3 year olds	Number of 3-4 year olds	Number of funded 2 year olds	Number of funded 3-4 year olds	Total Vacancies per Ward	Total Places per Ward	Ratio of Places
Aldermaston	51	40	1	36	86	475	5.22
Basildon	29	34		33	0	105	1.67
Bradfield	45	47	14	93	13	52	0.57
Bucklebury	31	29	2	23	11	63	1.05
Burghfield & Mortimer	95	102	13	118	29	254	1.29
Chieveley & Cold Ash	50	70	7	106	39	295	2.46
Downlands	36	24	4	55	26	143	2.38
Hungerford & Kintbury	106	110	14	126	47	235	1.09
Lambourn	31	47	10	42		52	0.67
Newbury Central	85	77	9	92	3	230	1.42
Newbury Clay Hill	84	99	14	129	9	101	0.55
Newbury Greenham	158	150	23	209	45	512	1.66
Newbury Speen	82	79	19	124	78	236	1.47
Newbury Wash Common	83	100	6	121	23	147	0.80
Pangbourne	33	45	0	29	25	114	1.46
Ridgeway	32	34	5	32	6	54	0.82
Thatcham Central	81	95	23	141	92	217	1.23
Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham	27	32	5	29	0	39	0.66
Thatcham North East	96	85	20	107	12	137	0.76
Thatcham West	98	84	15	101	36	168	0.92
Theale	31	26	4	43	12	326	5.72
Tilehurst & Purley	98	111	7	115	45	268	1.28
Tilehurst Birch Copse	78	82	3	85	39	180	1.13
Tilehurst South & Holybrook	91	82	8	91	13	100	0.58
Out of District			25	292			N.A.
Total	1631	1684	251	2372	689	4503	1.36

(b) Sufficiency

- The table indicates that there are sufficient funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in West Berkshire. There is a surplus of places compared to population. The table above shows that there are Wards where there are insufficient places compared to demand and local population and supply could be increased to future proof childcare provision.
- Parent mobility should also be taken into account when looking at the table. Parents have traditionally chosen childcare near or on their way to their place of work rather

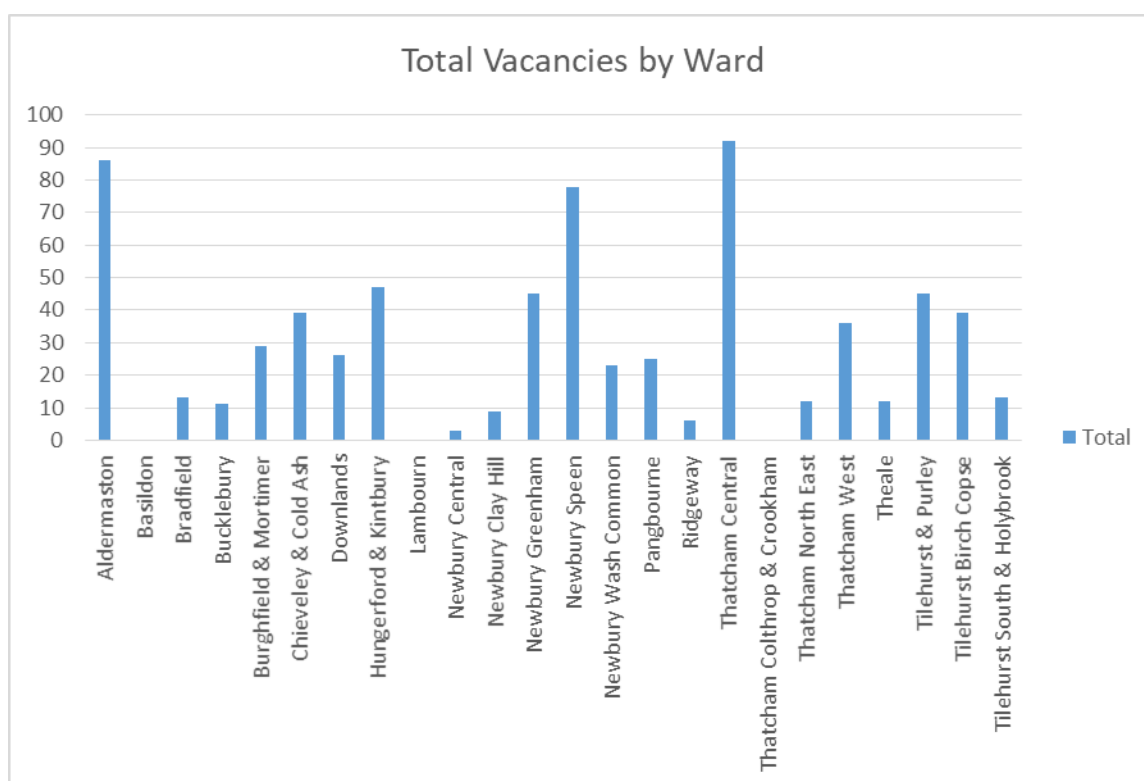
than near to their home. However, with the continued increase in home working following the pandemic and how many hours parents are accessing, we are aware that this changing aspect of demand would benefit from further analysis.

- Areas whose sufficiency levels are being closely monitored include: Lambourn and Thatcham where sufficiency is tight with either few or no surplus places.
- Recruitment and retention of early years staff has had an impact on sufficiency. Many providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the sector. Some of the reasons given for this is the ability of staff to find higher paid work in other employment sectors. Providers have also commented on the low levels of the free entitlement funding and increasing employment costs e.g. Minimum Wage increases.
- This has been shown in either short or longer-term reductions in places within West Berkshire. As mentioned previously, childminders are also leaving the sector which is impacting both day care and wraparound provision for families.

(c) Vacancies

- Vacancy rates provide a snapshot and often change rapidly especially from spring term into summer term. In spring 2022 the overall vacancy rate was 15%. This figure is down 5% on the previous year. Vacancies are greater in autumn term and become fewer during the spring and summer as more children become eligible for the free entitlement funding.

Table showing childcare vacancies at spring 2022

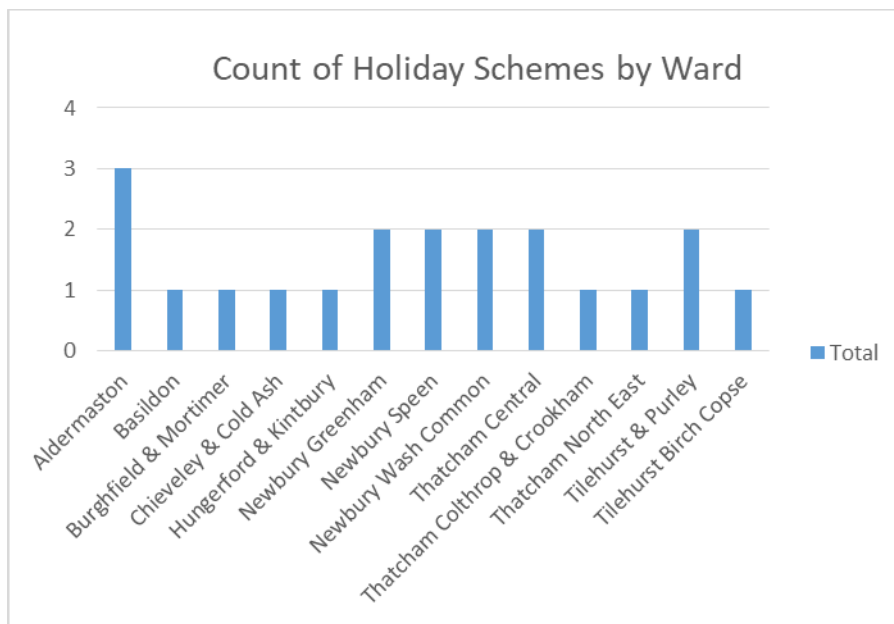


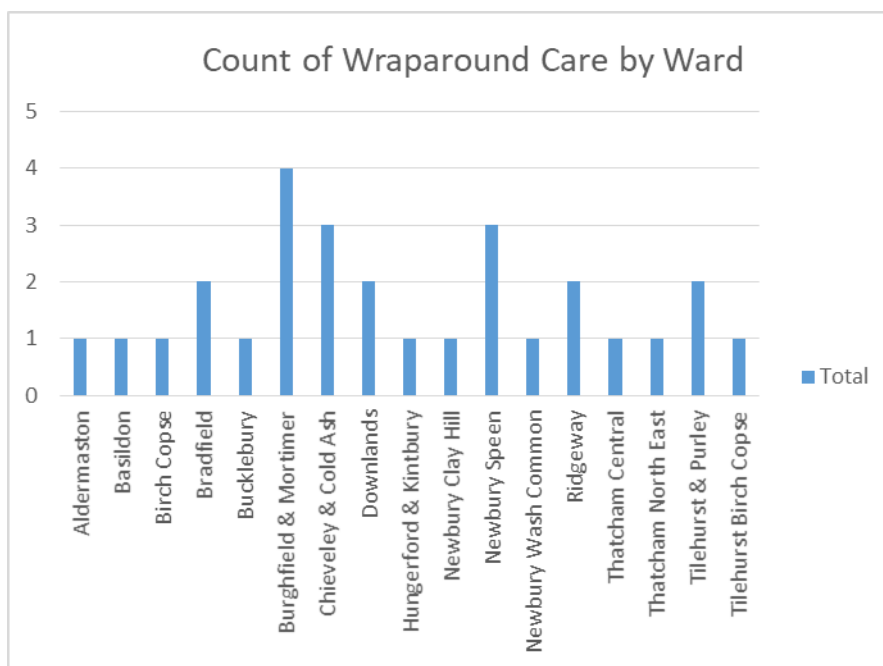
Looking at early education places, current take up and vacancies; West Berkshire has sufficient childcare places to meet demand.

(d) Breakfast and Afterschool Clubs and Holiday Clubs

- West Berkshire has a number of out of school clubs that operate across the Authority. Spaces in these clubs vary on a termly basis.
- These clubs provide breakfast and afterschool care, some are based on the school premises, privately run or run by the school, and some are at other locations, sometimes a nursery or a standalone club, who will deliver and collect children from schools.
- Childminders also provide childcare for school age children, this gives parents choice, and flexible childcare.
- Holiday clubs are also available in some schools and also privately run to provide all year round childcare for working parents.
- Parents of children from Reception age up to the end of Year 9 have the right to ask their child’s school to establish wraparound and/ or holiday childcare and childcare providers have the right to request to use school facilities for these purposes. We are not aware of any new provision being created through this process currently. [Wraparound and holiday childcare. Parent and childcare provider 'rights to request'](#)

Current listings by ward are in the tables below.





(e) Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

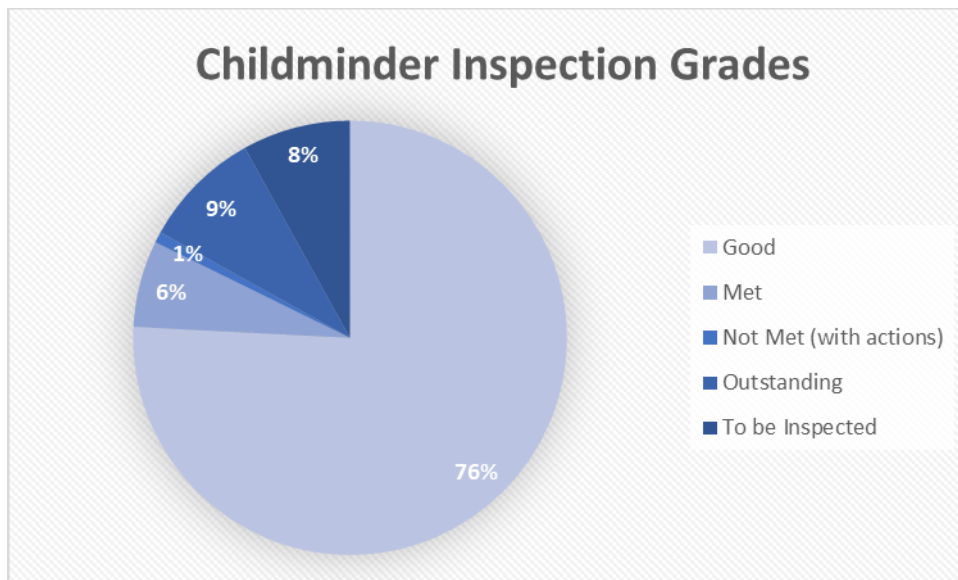
- West Berkshire has continued to successfully deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. These are free holiday club places available for children and young people eligible for free school meals. The aim of the HAF programme is to support children to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition, as well as being more engaged with school and other local services.
- Children are able to access sessions throughout the holidays, at no cost. The sessions include a variety of fun and enriching physical activities, including sports, music, arts and other exciting opportunities to learn and develop skills, alongside a nutritious meal each day. Nutritional resources are also made available to children attending the sessions. The holiday club places are available for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week, and six weeks per year.
- In West Berkshire HAF has been delivered through local schools, voluntary and community organisations and childcare providers.
- In addition to this programme, families who are eligible for Universal Credit may be able to claim back up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs, dependent on the club attended.

(f) Quality of Provision

- Early Years providers are routinely inspected by Ofsted. Ofsted inspections restarted in August 2021 after being halted during the pandemic.
- The data below reflects this in the number of providers that are categorised as ‘To be Inspected’. These include new provision waiting for their first inspection after registration with Ofsted.
- ‘Met’ and Not Met (with actions) relate to pre-registration inspections for new childminders where no children were present on inspection day.

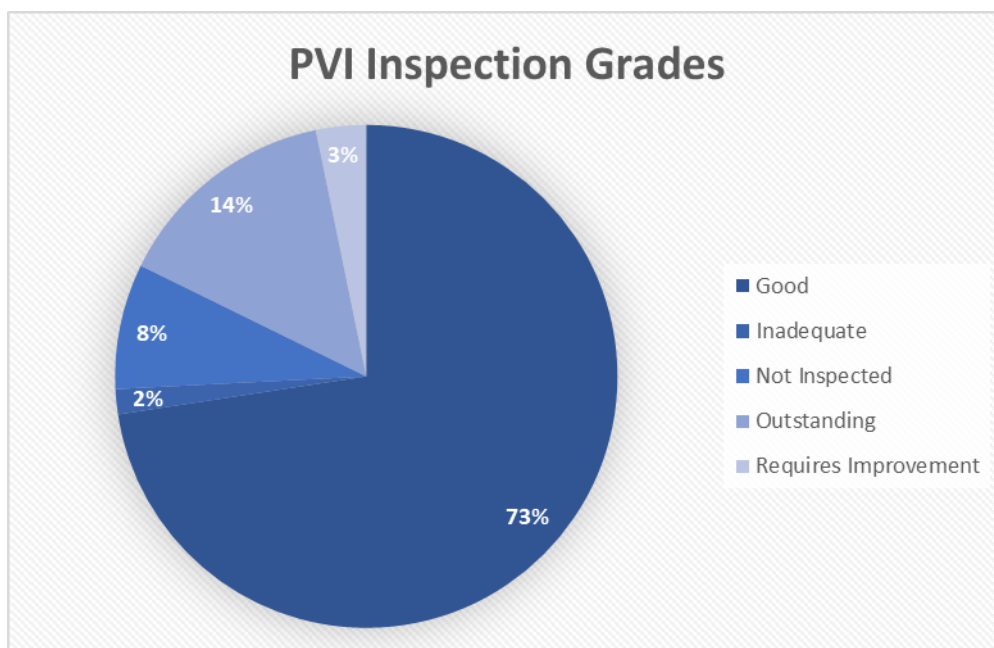
(g) Childminders

- 85% of the Childminders are rated good or outstanding. 10% have yet to receive an Ofsted rating, 6% were inspected when no children were present (Met) and 1 Childminder had their first inspection without children and required to carry out improvements (Not met with actions)



(h) Pre-schools, Day Nurseries and Private Nursery Schools

- 87% of providers in these categories were rated good or outstanding.



(i) Free Entitlement /Funded Early Education

Funded two year olds

- A 2-year-old can get free childcare if they live in England and get one of the following benefits:
 - Income Support
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
 - child tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
 - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
 - the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- 2-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:
 - are looked after by a local authority
 - have a statement of [special education needs \(SEN\)](#) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
 - get [Disability Living Allowance](#)
 - have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

For a non-EEA citizen who cannot claim benefits

- A 2-year-old may get free childcare if parents are getting [support under the Immigration and Asylum Act](#) and have either:
 - [claimed asylum](#) in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
 - been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')
- A 2-year-old may also get free childcare if the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and they have any of the following:
 - leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on [family or private life grounds](#)
 - support from their local council because they have 'a child in need', for example they have a disability or a child protection plan
 - the right to live in the UK because they are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a ['Zambrano Carer'](#))
- 2 year olds from families meeting these criteria are currently eligible for 15 hours a week of funded early education and childcare for 38 weeks of the year (or 570 hours across the year). The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) produces a list of potentially eligible children. These lists are used to contact families and invite them to access the funded hours and also shared with Family Hubs and used to encourage families to apply for the funding.
- Good early years provision will have a life-long positive impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore places must be taken up with a provider that is rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

- The table below shows that the level of take-up of the 2 year old funding has fluctuated over time but has risen almost 30% in the last year. Increasing this percentage has been a target for the service. We believe the increased take-up since in spring 2021 was partly as a result of parental confidence returning after the pandemic and the desire for families to give their children the ability to socialise again.

Term	Funded 2 Year Olds	Number of potentially eligible 2 Year Olds	% 2YO take up
Spring Term 2022	249	270	92.0%
Autumn Term 2021	256	319	80.3%
Summer Term 2021	225	352	63.9%
Spring Term 2021	202	335	60.3%
Autumn Term 2020	237	346	68.5%
Summer Term 2020	213	330	64.5%

Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

- All children are entitled to 15 hours per week of Free Entitlement funding starting the term following their 3rd Birthday. Parents can choose any nursery, preschool setting or childminder offering funding. The offer can be taken for 15 hours per week over 38 weeks or stretched over a full year if the provider offers this.

Extended Hours for 3 and 4 Year olds.

- From September 2017 working parents of 3 and 4 year olds have been able to access 30 hours per week of Free Entitlement if they meet the nationally specific criteria. The extended hours have to be taken with providers that are rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ with Ofsted.
- From the table below we can see that demand for places is not at pre-pandemic levels but this has to be viewed in conjunction with the reduction in population.

Table Showing 3 and 4 year old take up of Free Entitlement funding in West Berkshire

Term	3 and 4 Year Olds	
	Universal Entitlement	Extended Entitlement
Spring Term 2022	2290	1128
Autumn Term 2021	1799	834
Summer Term 2021	2756	1327
Spring Term 2021	2592	1106
Autumn Term 2020	1830	808
Summer Term 2020	2843	1308

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

- The [Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\)](#) is additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide for eligible 3 and 4 year-olds.
- Children must be receiving funded Early Education from the provider to attract EYPP funding. They do not have to take up the full 570 hours of early education they are entitled to in order to get EYPP.
- EYPP funding was introduced in 2015 and West Berkshire has seen an increase year on year of eligible families claiming EYPP.
- 3 and 4 year olds in funded early education will attract EYPP funding if their parents/carers meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Income Support
 - Income based Jobseeker’s Allowance
 - Income related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and an annual income of no more than £16,190).
 - Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
 - Or if children are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales, or they have left care in England or Wales through an adoption or a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order.

Table showing Number of West Berkshire children claiming EYPP funding

Year	Children Eligible for EYPP
Spring Term 2020	206
Spring Term 2019	190
Autumn Term 2019	103
Autumn Term 2018	95
Autumn Term 2017	83

The Disability Access Fund (DAF)

- DAF is available to providers to support children with disabilities or SEN. The DAF helps access to early year places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or purchasing specialist equipment.
- Children aged 3 – 4 years old will be eligible for DAF if they meet the following criteria:
 - The child is in receipt of child disability living allowance (DLA) and;
 - The child attends an early years provider for the funded entitlement.
- Providers taking eligible 3 & 4 year olds will be entitled to a one-off payment of £615 per year. DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement.
- West Berkshire Council had 25 eligible DAF applications for the financial year 2021/22 compared to 21 the previous year 2020/21.

(j) Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- A national childcare survey found that 46% of parents with children with a SEND used formal childcare and 40% of parents with a child with an illness or disability agreed that their childcare provider catered for their child’s needs. Nationally it is recognised that parents of children with SEND can face more challenges in finding good quality, affordable childcare to meet their needs.
- The introduction of the national Disability Access Funding (DAF) for 3 and 4 year olds taking free early education also provides additional financial support to providers and will also be monitored to assess its impact in improving access to childcare for children with SEND.

Table showing the number of West Berkshire children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) by age and year.

Year	Aged 0-4	Aged 5-10	Aged 11-15	Aged 16-25
2021 (20/01/2022)	35	355	469	339
2020 (21/01/2021)	26	345	415	288
2019 (16/01/2020)	29	330	401	274
2018 (17/01/2019)	24	285	389	273
2017 (18/01/2018)	25	274	379	260

- Each local authority publishes a Local Offer. This makes available in one place information about all of the provision available in the area, this includes education, health and social care for children and young people in West Berkshire who have SEN or a disability regardless of whether they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The Local Offer provides advice and support to all: young people, families and professionals supporting families.
- [Local Offer | West Berkshire Directory](#)
-

(k) Other Help with Childcare Costs

Tax Free Childcare

Tax Free Childcare (TFC) is a government initiative designed to help working families afford childcare. The scheme was launched in 2017 and offers eligible families 20% support towards childcare costs. Operated through an online account, parent pay money towards qualifying childcare costs and the government will automatically make “top up” payments of 20p for every 80p that families pay in. Tax free childcare replaces the use of childcare vouchers and makes it easier for more families to access financial support. This can be claimed in addition to 30 hour funding and is available for families aged 0-12 and up to 17 if the child is disabled.

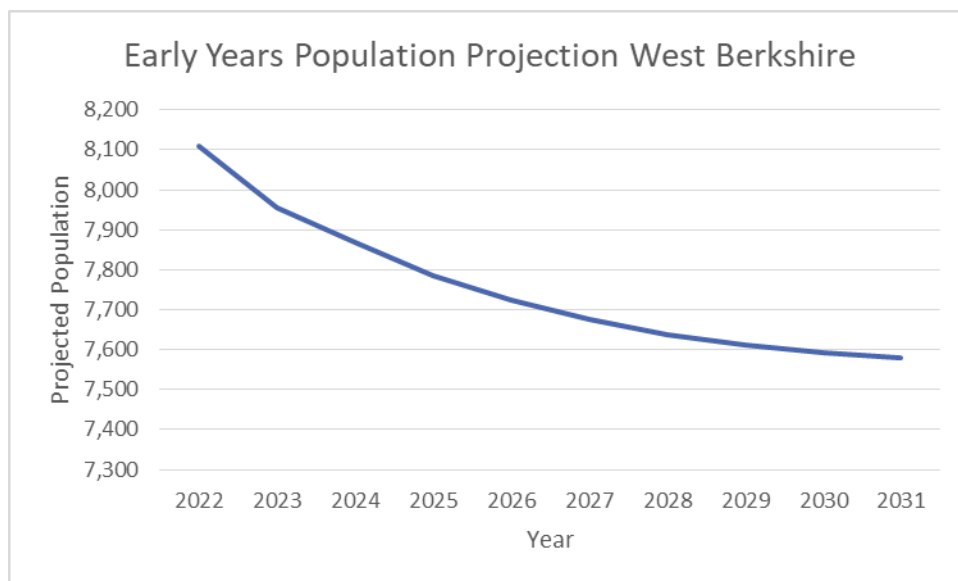
Details can be found here: [Tax Free Childcare](#)

(l) Planning Developments and Early Years Provision

- As outline planning was approved for Sandford Park, the opening of a nursery class in Highwood Copse School to the south of Newbury is still expected.
- There are further developments that are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which supports West Berkshire's Local Plan up to 2037 and others that are not on the IDP. Examples of wards where developments that are part of the IDP have started or have planning approval include Greenham, Speen, Theale and Tilehurst. Early Years places are currently sufficient in these wards.
- In the Thatcham and North East Ward there is an IDP site with around 1500 houses proposed although no application has been submitted. This scheme has reduced the number of dwellings by 1000.
- The building of some developments not in the IDP have already started or have planning approved but current provision has capacity of places to accommodate the additional Early Years children. Wards include, Birch Copse, Cold Ash and Theale.
- Other maintained schools are considering nursery provision but discussions are at an early stage currently.

5.6 Key Findings

- The Family Information Service offers a brokerage service designed to support parents, carers, and professionals working with families to source childcare when they are unable to find suitable childcare to meet their requirements.
- The number of brokerage cases rose during the year but most have resulted in finding suitable childcare for the family, carer or professional.
- The impact of childminder resignations and recruitment and retention issues in the wider early years education offer have also contributed to the increase in enquiries to the Family Information Service.
- An increased number of early years providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the sector. Some of the reasons given for this is the ability of staff to find higher paid work in other sectors, the rates of entitlement funding and increased employment costs for early years provision.
- This has been reflected in either short or longer-term reductions in the number of places being offered by providers within West Berkshire. As mentioned previously, childminders are also leaving the sector which is impacting both day care and wraparound provision for families.
- However, the table in 4.1 showing population and a ratio of places by ward is an indicator that there is a sufficiency of places in West Berkshire. Areas whose sufficiency levels are being closely monitored include: Lambourn and Thatcham where sufficiency is tight with either few or no surplus places. Bradfield and Bucklebury are geographically close and also have a ratio of less than 1. We have not had enquiries about provision in these areas.
- All areas of Thatcham are also showing some pressure for places. However most of these areas were also reporting vacancies at the time of this report so any sufficiency concerns are somewhat mitigated by these.
- As noted earlier the population of Early Years children has been declining and estimates for West Berkshire indicate a decline over the next 10 years at least. This again helps to confirm that our sufficiency duty will be met.



Source: nomisweb.co.uk

- Over the year we saw the number of childminders reduce by 11 and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provision reduce by 4 settings.
- Out of School and Holiday schemes are still under-reported. Many schools who do not need an additional Ofsted registration to run, for example, breakfast and after school clubs are not always registering their offer on the Family Information Service Directory.

5.7 Conclusion

- The data used to produce this report is a snapshot in time and indicates that currently we are meeting our sufficiency duty. Demand is being met and there is currently good quality provision in West Berkshire and this gives parents/carers both flexibility and choice.
- The analysis also shows that there are wards where the number of places are at risk of not meeting local population demand. However, as has also been shown in the report, parents do travel for their childcare and this is an area that needs to be monitored as parental working patterns and styles have changed since the pandemic.
- Quality of provision remains high with 85% of childminders and 87% of day nurseries and pre-schools and independent provision being rated by Ofsted as outstanding or good.
- The increase in the take-up of 2 year old funded places for disadvantaged families is positive for the service. Initiatives are continuing to encourage the continuation of this high number.

5.8 Next Steps

(a) Childcare Reforms

- These were announced in the 2023 Budget and are set to increase availability, reduce costs and increase the number of parents accessing childcare so that they can return to work.

- The following measures were announced:
- **Entitlements:** Eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year, from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school. Hourly rates for providers will also increase.
- **Wraparound:** The government will invest £289m over two academic years, from Sept 2024, to enable schools and local areas to set up wraparound childcare provision
- **Market reforms:** including more choice for childminders and changes to EYFS requirements, to improve flexibility for providers and support the workforce.
- **Childminder Grants:** to attract people to childminding with £1200 for those who register with a childminder agency and £600 for those who register with Ofsted.
- **Changing staff: child ratios:** from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds in England to align with Scotland and provide greater flexibility for providers
- **Universal Credit reforms:** will pay childcare support up-front when parents move into work or increase their hours and increase the monthly re-imbusement caps

These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system as follows:

Autumn 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder grants become available • Invest £204m into 3/4yo and 2yo funding rate • Staff:child 2yo ratio change
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15hrs for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds introduced • Invest £288m into 3/4 yo and 2yo funding rates
Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National wraparound support begins • 15hrs for eligible working parents of children 9 months plus introduced
Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30hrs for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary school age introduced
Sept 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools able to offer 8am-6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership

- These announcements will of course impact on our West Berkshire provision. Providers will need to revise their offer to accommodate 30 hours for the working parents of 2 year olds and then the lowering of the offer to 9 months up.

(b) Sufficiency Reporting Support

- The Department for Education (DfE) recently awarded a contract to Hempsalls to support Local Authorities with their sufficiency duties ensuring there are enough available childcare places and to meet the demand for school-aged children. This contract supports the delivery of the current early years entitlements.

- The support is being offered now to support change, sufficiency and sustainability and to respond to the continuing effects of the pandemic and the annual sufficiency reporting duty for LAs.
- The contract includes proactive (preventative and improvement) advice and support to LAs identified as in need of some support to facilitate the maintenance of, or improvement in, their local childcare sufficiency picture, including wraparound provision for school-aged children. LAs can also self-refer.

(c) Vulnerable Groups and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Our next report will have more focus more on reporting on vulnerable groups and SEND in particular. The team plans to develop the information about early years provision in these areas and provide more data on demand and sufficiency in West Berkshire.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 As producing the assessment is a statutory obligation for the authority, the only other option of ‘doing nothing’ is not an option. The report is also helpful to the Early Years Team in informing on-going planning and looking at the development of childcare in our area and in supporting our providers.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This detailed report covers all of the main requirements of a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment with clear indications of the situation in West Berkshire in spring 2022. It shows that West Berkshire has a sufficiency of childcare with data backing up the assessment and our experience as an Early Years Team. It indicates that we are fulfilling our duty to secure sufficient childcare.
- 7.2 With the above in mind we recommend that the Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 goes via the Executive Committee to inform elected members on how we are meeting our duty to secure sufficient childcare.
- 7.3 We would also like the Operations Board and Executive Committee to recommend the report for publication on the Council’s websites to make it accessible to parents/carers and other interested parties.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Copy of West Berkshire Council Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 V1

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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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.

<p>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</p>	<p>There is no decision,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recommend that the Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 goes via the Executive Committee to inform elected members on how we are meeting our duty to secure sufficient childcare • We would also like the Operations Board and Executive Committee to recommend the report for publication on the Council's websites to make it accessible to parents/carers and other interested parties.
<p>Summary of relevant legislation:</p>	<p>The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities by law to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).</p>
<p>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation</p>
<p>Name of Budget Holder:</p>	<p>Avril Allenby</p>
<p>Name of Service/Directorate:</p>	<p>Education, People</p>
<p>Name of assessor:</p>	<p>Avril Allenby</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>01.02.2022</p>
<p>Version and release date (if applicable):</p>	

<p>Is this a ?</p>		<p>Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?</p>	
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>New or proposed</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	Local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents/carers.
Objectives:	The report is being brought as the Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities by law to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).
Outcomes:	The report proposes that in spring 2022 West Berkshire was meeting its childcare sufficiency duty as there was adequate provision across most of the area.
Benefits:	There is a sufficiency of early education and childcare in West Berkshire for all families and carers.

(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	Positively through provision of sufficient childcare.	Sufficient childcare allows working parents/carers or those studying to access childcare.
Disability	Positively through provision of sufficient childcare and availability of childcare for children with disabilities.	Available provision in West Berkshire.
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		

Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Further Comments:		

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The report is for information about the sufficiency of provision of Childcare and Early Education in West Berkshire.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The report is for information about the sufficiency of provision of Childcare and Early Education in West Berkshire.	

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

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

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

Name: Avril Allenby

Date: 01.02.2022

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

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West Berkshire Council Early Years Service

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022

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1. Background to Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report

1. What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?

This childcare sufficiency assessment provides an overview of the childcare provision in West Berkshire.

The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities by law to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

We must ensure that:

- There is sufficient childcare available for working parents and those parents training to enter work.
- There is sufficient childcare for every child to access their entitlement to free early education and care.

The duties of the Childcare Act require local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a market management function, supporting the needs of parents, children and young people and stakeholders.

Local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

2. Relevant Legislation

The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities in England to ensure a sufficiency of childcare for working parents, access to education and training, and for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. Childcare sufficiency covers registered childcare for children aged 0-14, 0 – 18 for a child with EHCP or additional needs.

The Childcare Act (2016) requires local authorities to ensure early years provision is available free of charge to eligible children. The universal entitlement provides funded childcare up to a maximum of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks (570 hours per year) for eligible 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds.

The Childcare Act (2016) became law in March 2016 and introduced the extended 30 hour entitlement of funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds to eligible families, from September 2017.

More information regarding Childcare provision legislation can be found here [Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

2. Impact of coronavirus

1. Provider Sustainability

In our 2021 Sufficiency Report we evaluated the impact of Coronavirus on Early Years Provision and its ongoing impact.

Support was offered to providers through an Early Years Sustainability Grant and the provision of financial training.

The Team continues to assess and monitor the market to support sufficient childcare in West Berkshire. Comments regarding the continuing impact of the pandemic will be included in this report.

2. Economy, wellbeing and employment

The rise of home working was a clear result of the pandemic and statistics show that just under a third of workers are able to continue to do this. Although this is positive, prolonged periods of working from home have also taken their toll on wellbeing, with over half of employees expressing concerns of feeling isolated or detached from the workplace. Furthermore, the relative success of home working alongside the cost and emissions savings made as a result of office buildings not being used led many employers to consider their estate needs which in turn will have a knock on impact on our town centres and ultimately where families access their childcare..

The impact on childcare is also being monitored as home working and different workstyles have altered families demand for childcare, in terms of hours and location. Recruitment and retention in the local childcare market is also being monitored. There has been another reduction in Childminders (see 4.1 below) and we are hearing from some Childminders that they are moving into alternative types of work.

A survey of West Berkshire providers by the Early Years Team in summer 2022 showed evidence that some Early Years providers were finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff. In certain cases this has led to temporary or permanent changes in the number of childcare places they are able to offer and at the same time ensure the maintenance of ratios of workers to children.

3. Demand for Early Education and Childcare in West Berkshire

1. Overall Population

As mid-year population data for 2021 is not yet available for publication, we have retained the previous year's information.

The mid-year population estimate for 2020 showed West Berkshire's population as 158,450. The largest urban areas in the district are Newbury, Thatcham and the East Suburban Area where in total 63% of the population lives. The remaining 37% live in the more rural areas of West Berkshire but include smaller towns such as Hungerford and Theale.

2020 Mid-Year population data West Berkshire	
Town/area	Estimated Population, All Ages
Newbury	44,044
Thatcham	25,399
Eastern suburban area (Calcot, Purley, Tilehurst)	31,477
Rural area	57,530
West Berkshire	158,450

Source: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/research>

2. Population of Early Years Children

Age	Number of Children
0	1515
1	1514
2	1631
3	1684
4*	1762

Source: ONS-Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

* most four-year old will have started in a school reception place

3. Population of School Age Children

Age	Number of Children
5	1880
6	1977
7	1983
8	2037
9	2105
10	2167
11	2280
12	2262
13	2273
14	2465

Source: ONS-Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Population of West Berkshire early years and school age children has been declining since 2020. For 2 year olds this has reduced by just over 10% and for 3 year olds this has reduced by almost 11.5 %.

4. Economy, Employment and Wellbeing

Employment rates in West Berkshire are generally high, 85.2% of 16 to 64 year olds are economically active (people that are not retired, a student, a carer or unemployed). This is higher than the South East and Great Britain averages. Increasing employment and supporting people into work are key elements of the UK Government's public health and welfare reform agendas.

West Berkshire enjoys low levels of unemployment compared with other areas of the South East and England. An indicator used to measure unemployment levels is based on the number of residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) which now forms part of the Universal Credit scheme. Unemployment is at 2.6% in West Berkshire.

In 2020, for every resident aged 16-64, there were on average 1.1 jobs in West Berkshire. This is higher than the South East and Great Britain. The density figure represents the ratio of jobs to working population. For example, a job density of 1.0 means there is one job for every resident aged 16-64.

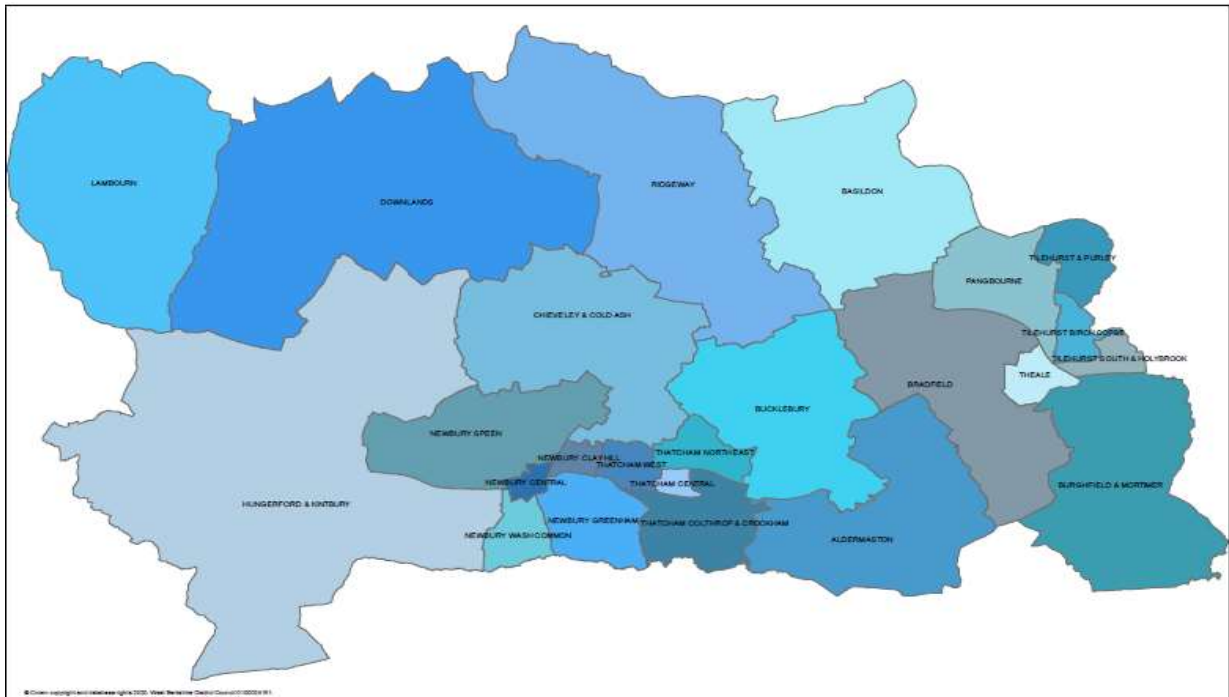
5. Ethnicity

Table showing Ethnicity of the West Berkshire Population as per 2021 Census

Ethnicity	West Berkshire Population 2021 Census	%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	138,253	85.6
White: Other White	8,379	5.2
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	3,087	1.9
White: Irish	1,404	0.9
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1,274	0.8
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	1,095	0.7
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1,054	0.7
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	1,046	0.6
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1,028	0.6
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	907	0.6
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	801	0.5
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	658	0.4
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	627	0.4
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	501	0.3
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	398	0.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	308	0.2
Other ethnic group: Arab	279	0.2
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	190	0.1
White: Roma	158	0
Total Population	161,447	100

6. Wards

Map showing names and locations of West Berkshire Wards



7. Deprivation and Family Hubs

Overall, West Berkshire ranks as the 39th least deprived district in England (out of 326): placing the district in the 89th percentile in terms of deprivation across England. There are however pockets of deprivation across the district, and the table below shows the 10 most deprived areas in West Berkshire.

Table Showing most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Area in West Berkshire

Order	WARD	LSOA
1	Greenham	The Nightingales, Equine Way
2	Thatcham N	Park Avenue, The Henrys
3	Calcot	Royal Avenue
4	Calcot	Underwood Road
5	Victoria	London Road, Faraday Road, Hambridge Road
6	Aldermaston	Aldermaston Village, Soke
7	Clay Hill	Walton Way, Curling Way
8	Downlands	Brightwalton, Chaddleworth, Catmore, West Ilsley, Farnborough, Fawley
9	Lambourn	Newbury Road, Mill Lane, Bockhampton Road, Lambourn
10	Hungerford	Priory Road, Hungerford Common

West Berkshire has 3 Family Hubs which replaced the Children Centres in 2016. The West Family Hub is located in Victoria Ward, Newbury and there is a satellite Hub in Hungerford. The Central Family Hub is in Thatcham North Ward and the East Family Hub, Calcot,

The Hubs are located in areas with recognised raised levels of deprivation to be able to target families from these areas. They work directly with children 0 to 5 years old and signpost services for families with 5 to 19 year olds. (0 to 24 for children with special educational needs and disabilities).

Families with children under 5 can access the following:

- 1-1 support from a Family Support Worker, families can self-refer or be referred by a professional
- A variety of groups running in the Hubs and local community, enabling children and their parents/carers to take part in range of play-based activities to support early learning, development, and building friendships
- Family learning courses such as Boost, Parenting in the Early Years, Healthy Eating and Lifestyles
- Antenatal, postnatal, breastfeeding support and baby massage
- Support with finding suitable provision and applying for free childcare for 2-year-olds and 30 hours free childcare
- Friendly, qualified staff who will provide a listening ear to support your child's learning & development and parent/carer wellbeing
- Signposting for information about employment, training, and childcare

4. Supply of Early Years and Childcare in West Berkshire

1. Types of Provision

In spring 2022 West Berkshire had a total of 209 Early Years providers. This comprised 126 registered childminders, 57 of whom were registered to offer the free entitlement funding to families. There were 22 Day Nurseries, 32 Pre-Schools, 8 Private School Nurseries, 19 Maintained Schools with nursery classes and 2 Maintained Nursery Schools. The overall number of places being offered was 4879.

Table Showing Types of provision and places in West Berkshire

Type of Provision	Number of Providers		Number of Places	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Childminders	137	126	777	683
Day Nurseries	23	22	1729	1856
Pre-Schools	34	32	1017	1013
Private Schools	10	8	324	272
Maintained Nursery Schools	2	2	280	300
School with Nurseries	18	19	696	755
Total	224	209	4823	4879

West Berkshire continues to offer a good mix of childcare provision to all families including working parents. The overall number of places, which includes both funded and unfunded, remains similar to last year. The maintained sector shows an overall increase in places on offer.

Comments made earlier about the continued impact of Coronavirus on the supply of childcare is somewhat shown in the provider and place numbers in the sector. The numbers of childminders and places has reduced and there were some setting closures due in part by the pandemic and pre-schools being unable to fundraise to support their early education offer.

The number of Ofsted registered Childminders reduced by 11 (8%). Day Nurseries by 1 (4.3%) and Pre-schools by 2 (5.8%) in 2021-22.

Ofsted also reported that nationally the ongoing decline in the number of childcare providers has continued. Most of this overall decrease in provider numbers is due again to a fall in the number of childminders.

Table Showing Spring Term 2022 relevant child population, funded children and available places.

Ward	Number of 2-3 year olds	Number of 3-4 year olds	Number of funded 2 year olds	Number of funded 3-4 year olds	Total Vacancies per Ward	Total Places per Ward	Ratio of Places
Aldermaston	51	40	1	36	86	475	5.22
Basildon	29	34		33	0	105	1.67
Bradfield	45	47	14	93	13	52	0.57
Bucklebury	31	29	2	23	11	63	1.05
Burghfield & Mortimer	95	102	13	118	29	254	1.29
Chieveley & Cold Ash	50	70	7	106	39	295	2.46
Downlands	36	24	4	55	26	143	2.38
Hungerford & Kintbury	106	110	14	126	47	235	1.09
Lambourn	31	47	10	42		52	0.67
Newbury Central	85	77	9	92	3	230	1.42
Newbury Clay Hill	84	99	14	129	9	101	0.55
Newbury Greenham	158	150	23	209	45	512	1.66
Newbury Speen	82	79	19	124	78	236	1.47
Newbury Wash Common	83	100	6	121	23	147	0.80
Pangbourne	33	45	0	29	25	114	1.46
Ridgeway	32	34	5	32	6	54	0.82
Thatcham Central	81	95	23	141	92	217	1.23
Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham	27	32	5	29	0	39	0.66
Thatcham North East	96	85	20	107	12	137	0.76
Thatcham West	98	84	15	101	36	168	0.92
Theale	31	26	4	43	12	326	5.72
Tilehurst & Purley	98	111	7	115	45	268	1.28
Tilehurst Birch Copse	78	82	3	85	39	180	1.13
Tilehurst South & Holybrook	91	82	8	91	13	100	0.58
Out of District			25	292			N.A.
Total	1631	1684	251	2372	689	4503	1.36

2. Sufficiency

The table indicates that there are sufficient funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in West Berkshire. There is a surplus of places compared to population. The table above shows that there are Wards where there are insufficient places compared to demand and local population and supply could be increased to future proof childcare provision.

Parent mobility should also be taken into account when looking at the table. Parents have traditionally chosen childcare near or on their way to their place of work rather than near to their home. However, with the continued increase in home working following the pandemic and how many hours parents are accessing, we are aware that this changing aspect of demand would benefit from further analysis.

Areas whose sufficiency levels are being closely monitored include: Lambourn and Thatcham where sufficiency is tight with either few or no surplus places.

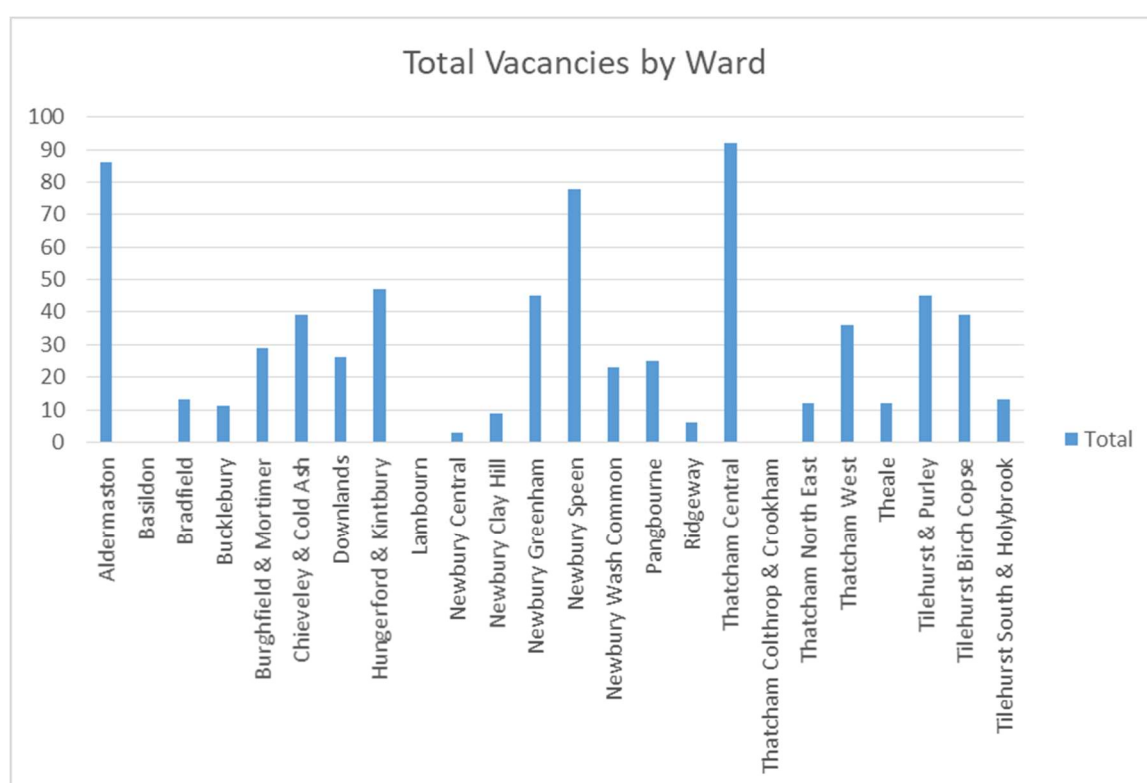
Recruitment and retention of early years staff has had an impact on sufficiency. Many providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the sector. Some of the reasons given for this is the ability of staff to find higher paid work in other employment sectors. Providers have also commented on the low levels of the free entitlement funding and increasing employment costs e.g. Minimum Wage increases.

This has been shown in either short or longer-term reductions in places within West Berkshire. As mentioned previously, childminders are also leaving the sector which is impacting both day care and wraparound provision for families.

3. Vacancies

Vacancy rates provide a snapshot and often change rapidly especially from spring term into summer term. In spring 2022 the overall vacancy rate was 15%. This figure is down 5% on the previous year. Vacancies are greater in autumn term and become fewer during the spring and summer as more children become eligible for the free entitlement funding.

Table showing childcare vacancies at spring 2022



Looking at early education places, current take up and vacancies; West Berkshire has sufficient childcare places to meet demand.

4. Breakfast and Afterschool Clubs and Holiday Clubs

West Berkshire has a number of out of school clubs that operate across the Authority. Spaces in these clubs vary on a termly basis.

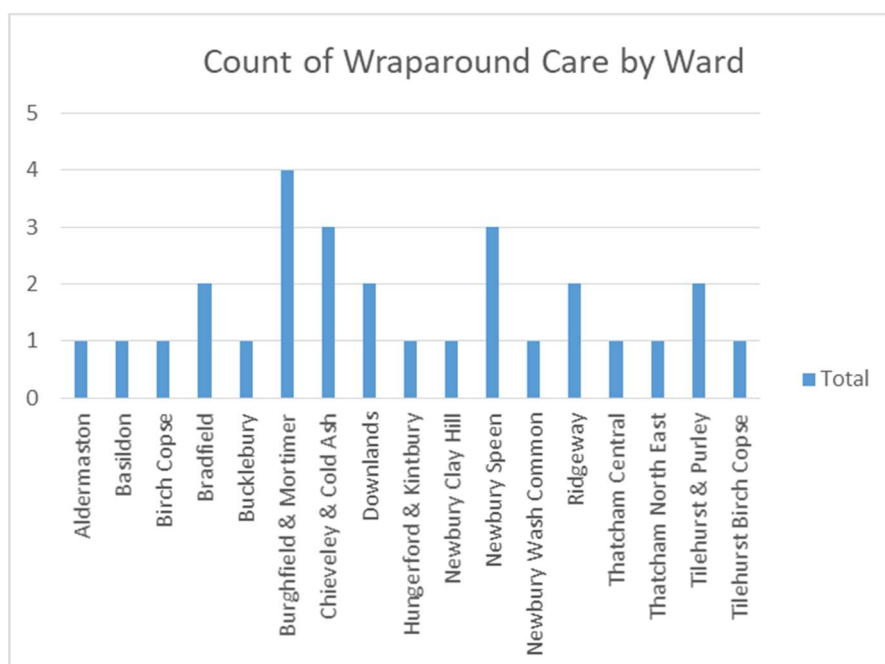
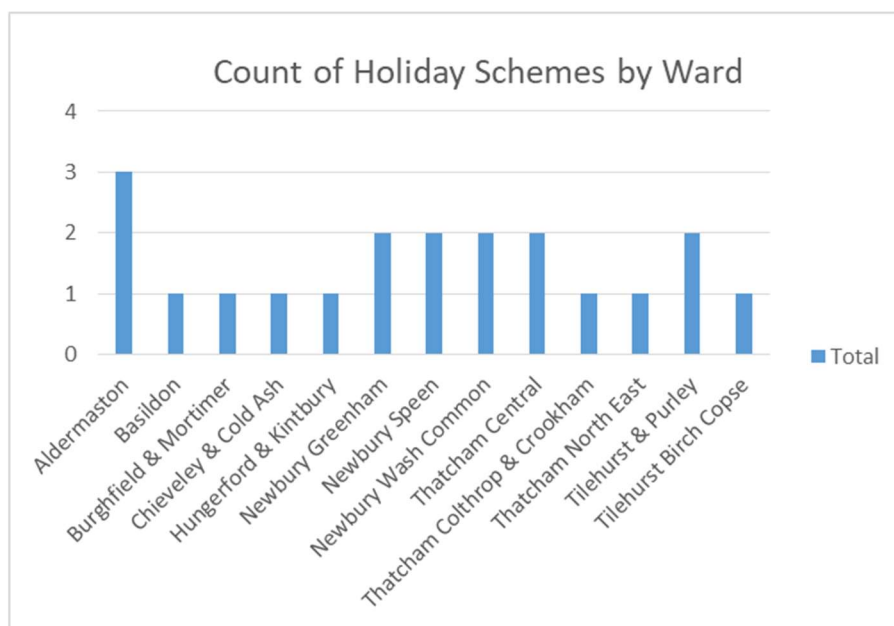
These clubs provide breakfast and afterschool care, some are based on the school premises, privately run or run by the school, and some are at other locations, sometimes a nursery or a standalone club, who will deliver and collect children from schools.

Childminders also provide childcare for school age children, this gives parents choice, and flexible childcare.

Holiday clubs are also available in some schools and also privately run to provide all year round childcare for working parents.

Parents of children from Reception age up to the end of Year 9 have the right to ask their child’s school to establish wraparound and/ or holiday childcare and childcare providers have the right to request to use school facilities for these purposes. We are not aware of any new provision being created through this process currently. [Wraparound and holiday childcare. Parent and childcare provider 'rights to request'](#)

Current listings by ward are in the tables below.



Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

West Berkshire has continued to successfully deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. These are free holiday club places available for children and young people eligible for free school meals. The aim of the HAF programme is to support children to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition, as well as being more engaged with school and other local services.

Children are able to access sessions throughout the holidays, at no cost. The sessions include a variety of fun and enriching physical activities, including sports, music, arts and other exciting opportunities to learn and develop skills, alongside a nutritious meal each day. Nutritional resources are also made available to children attending the sessions. The holiday club places are available for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week, and six weeks per year.

In West Berkshire HAF has been delivered through local schools, voluntary and community organisations and childcare providers.

In addition to this programme, families who are eligible for Universal Credit may be able to claim back up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs, dependent on the club attended.

5. Quality of Provision

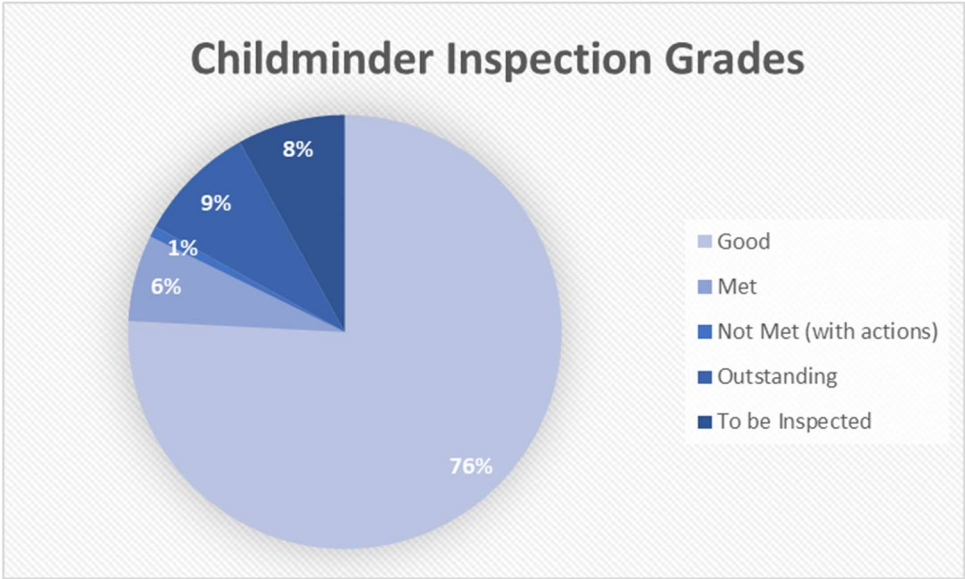
Early Years providers are routinely inspected by Ofsted. Ofsted inspections restarted in August 2021 after being halted during the pandemic.

The data below reflects this in the number of providers that are categorised as 'To be Inspected'. These include new provision waiting for their first inspection after registration with Ofsted.

'Met' and Not Met (with actions) relate to pre-registration inspections for new childminders where no children were present on inspection day.

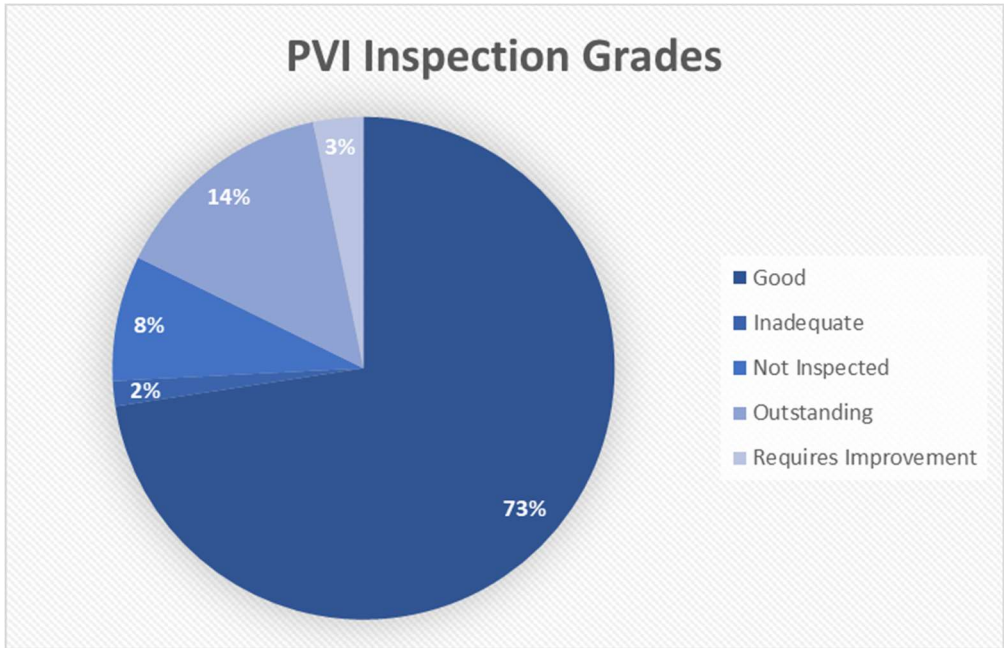
Childminders

85% of the Childminders are rated good or outstanding. 10% have yet to receive an Ofsted rating, 6% were inspected when no children were present (Met) and 1 Childminder had their first inspection without children and required to carry out improvements (Not met with actions)



Pre-schools, Day Nurseries and Private Nursery Schools

87% of providers in these categories were rated good or outstanding.



6. Free Entitlement /Funded Early Education

Funded two year olds

A 2-year-old can get free childcare if they live in England and get one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- child tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

2-year-olds can also get free childcare if they:

- are looked after by a local authority
- have a statement of [special education needs \(SEN\)](#) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- get [Disability Living Allowance](#)
- have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

For a non-EEA citizen who cannot claim benefits

A 2-year-old may get free childcare if parents are getting [support under the Immigration and Asylum Act](#) and have either:

- [claimed asylum](#) in the UK and are waiting for a decision (known as 'part 6')
- been refused asylum in the UK (known as 'section 4')

A 2-year-old may also get free childcare if the household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, and they have any of the following:

- leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on [family or private life grounds](#)
- support from their local council because they have 'a child in need', for example they have a disability or a child protection plan
- the right to live in the UK because they are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a ['Zambrano Carer'](#))

2 year olds from families meeting these criteria are currently eligible for 15 hours a week of funded early education and childcare for 38 weeks of the year (or 570 hours across the year). The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) produces a list of potentially eligible children. These lists are used to contact families and invite them to access the funded hours and also shared with Family Hubs and used to encourage families to apply for the funding.

Good early years provision will have a life-long positive impact on children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore places must be taken up with a provider that is rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

The table below shows that the level of take-up of the 2 year old funding has fluctuated over time but has risen almost 30% in the last year. Increasing this percentage has been a target for the service. We believe the increased take-up since in spring 2021 was partly as a result of parental confidence returning after the pandemic and the desire for families to give their children the ability to socialise again.

Term	Funded 2 Year Olds	Number of potentially eligible 2 Year Olds	% 2YO take up
Spring Term 2022	249	270	92.0%
Autumn Term 2021	256	319	80.3%
Summer Term 2021	225	352	63.9%
Spring Term 2021	202	335	60.3%
Autumn Term 2020	237	346	68.5%
Summer Term 2020	213	330	64.5%

Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

All children are entitled to 15 hours per week of Free Entitlement funding starting the term following their 3rd Birthday. Parents can choose any nursery, preschool setting or childminder offering funding. The offer can be taken for 15 hours per week over 38 weeks or stretched over a full year if the provider offers this.

Extended Hours for 3 and 4 Year olds.

From September 2017 working parents of 3 and 4 year olds have been able to access 30 hours per week of Free Entitlement if they meet the nationally specific criteria. The extended hours have to be taken with providers that are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' with Ofsted.

From the table below we can see that demand for places is not at pre-pandemic levels but this has to be viewed in conjunction with the reduction in population.

Table Showing 3 and 4 year old take up of Free Entitlement funding in West Berkshire

Term	3 and 4 Year Olds	
	Universal Entitlement	Extended Entitlement
Spring Term 2022	2290	1128
Autumn Term 2021	1799	834
Summer Term 2021	2756	1327
Spring Term 2021	2592	1106
Autumn Term 2020	1830	808
Summer Term 2020	2843	1308

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The [Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\)](#) is additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide for eligible 3 and 4 year-olds.

Children must be receiving funded Early Education from the provider to attract EYPP funding. They do not have to take up the full 570 hours of early education they are entitled to in order to get EYPP.

EYPP funding was introduced in 2015 and West Berkshire has seen an increase year on year of eligible families claiming EYPP.

3 and 4 year olds in funded early education will attract EYPP funding if their parents/carers meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and an annual income of no more than £16,190).
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Or if children are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales, or they have left care in England or Wales through an adoption or a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order.

Table showing Number of West Berkshire children claiming EYPP funding

Year	Children Eligible for EYPP
Spring Term 2020	206
Spring Term 2019	190
Autumn Term 2019	103
Autumn Term 2018	95
Autumn Term 2017	83

The Disability Access Fund (DAF)

DAF is available to providers to support children with disabilities or SEN. The DAF helps access to early year places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or purchasing specialist equipment.

Children aged 3 – 4 years old will be eligible for DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- The child is in receipt of child disability living allowance (DLA) and;
- The child attends an early years provider for the funded entitlement.

Providers taking eligible 3 & 4 year olds will be entitled to a one-off payment of £615 per year. DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement.

West Berkshire Council had 25 eligible DAF applications for the financial year 2021/22 compared to 21 the previous year 2020/21

7. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A national childcare survey found that 46% of parents with children with a SEND used formal childcare and 40% of parents with a child with an illness or disability agreed that their childcare provider catered for their child’s needs. Nationally it is recognised that parents of children with SEND can face more challenges in finding good quality, affordable childcare to meet their needs.

The introduction of the national Disability Access Funding (DAF) for 3 and 4 year olds taking free early education also provides additional financial support to providers and will also be monitored to assess its impact in improving access to childcare for children with SEND.

Table showing the number of West Berkshire children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) by age and year.

Year	Aged 0-4	Aged 5-10	Aged 11-15	Aged 16-25
2021 (20/01/2022)	35	355	469	339
2020 (21/01/2021)	26	345	415	288
2019 (16/01/2020)	29	330	401	274
2018 (17/01/2019)	24	285	389	273
2017 (18/01/2018)	25	274	379	260

Each local authority publishes a Local Offer. This makes available in one place information about all of the provision available in the area, this includes education, health and social care for children and young people in West Berkshire who have SEN or a disability regardless of whether they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Local Offer provides advice and support to all: young people, families and professionals supporting families.

[Local Offer | West Berkshire Directory](#)

8. Other Help with Childcare Costs

Tax Free Childcare

Tax Free Childcare (TFC) is a government initiative designed to help working families afford childcare. The scheme was launched in 2017 and offers eligible families 20% support towards childcare costs. Operated through an online account, parent pay money towards qualifying childcare costs and the government will

automatically make “top up” payments of 20p for every 80p that families pay in. Tax free childcare replaces the use of childcare vouchers and makes it easier for more families to access financial support. This can be claimed in addition to 30 hour funding and is available for families aged 0-12 and up to 17 if the child is disabled. Details can be found here: [Tax Free Childcare](#)

9. Planning Developments and Early Years Provision

As outline planning was approved for Sandford Park, the opening of a nursery class in Highwood Copse School to the south of Newbury is still expected.

There are further developments that are in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which supports West Berkshire’s Local Plan up to 2037 and others that are not on the IDP. Examples of wards where developments that are part of the IDP have started or have planning approval include Greenham, Speen, Theale and Tilehurst. Early Years places are currently sufficient in these wards.

In the Thatcham and North East Ward there is an IDP site with around 1500 houses proposed although no application has been submitted. This scheme has reduced the number of dwellings by 1000.

The building of some developments not in the IDP have already started or have planning approved but current provision has capacity of places to accommodate the additional Early Years children. Wards include, Birch Copse, Cold Ash and Theale.

Other maintained schools are considering nursery provision but discussions are at an early stage currently.

5. Key Findings

The Family Information Service offers a brokerage service designed to support parents, carers, and professionals working with families to source childcare when they are unable to find suitable childcare to meet their requirements.

The number of brokerage cases rose during the year but most have resulted in finding suitable childcare for the family, carer or professional.

The impact of childminder resignations and recruitment and retention issues in the wider early years education offer have also contributed to the increase in enquiries to the Family Information Service.

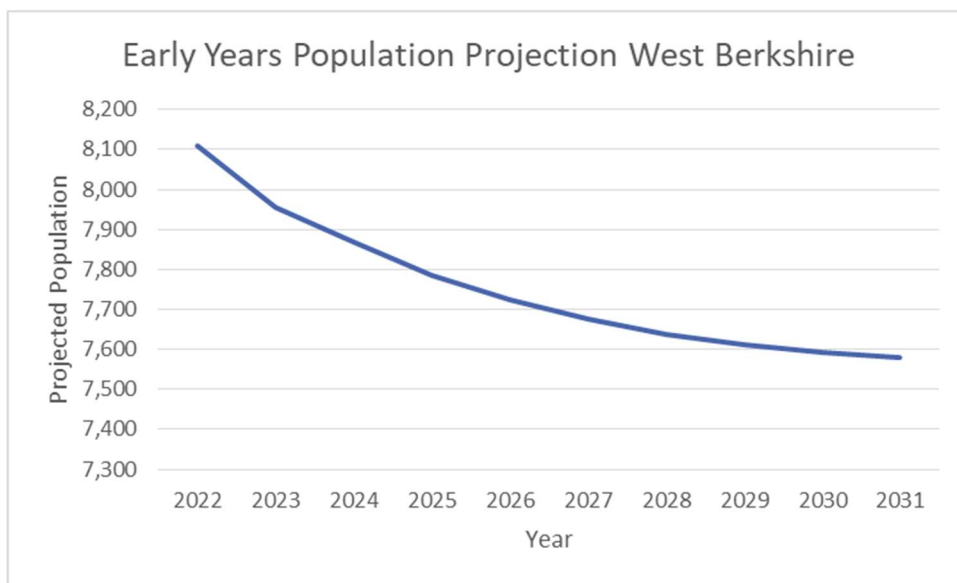
An increased number of early years providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the sector. Some of the reasons given for this is the ability of staff to find higher paid work in other sectors, the rates of entitlement funding and increased employment costs for early years provision.

This has been reflected in either short or longer-term reductions in the number of places being offered by providers within West Berkshire. As mentioned previously, childminders are also leaving the sector which is impacting both day care and wraparound provision for families.

However, the table in 4.1 showing population and a ratio of places by ward is an indicator that there is a sufficiency of places in West Berkshire. Areas whose sufficiency levels are being closely monitored include: Lambourn and Thatcham where sufficiency is tight with either few or no surplus places. Bradfield and Bucklebury are geographically close and also have a ratio of less than 1. We have not had enquiries about provision in these areas.

All areas of Thatcham are also showing some pressure for places. However most of these areas were also reporting vacancies at the time of this report so any sufficiency concerns are somewhat mitigated by these.

As noted earlier the population of Early Years children has been declining and estimates for West Berkshire indicate a decline over the next 10 years at least. This again helps to confirm that our sufficiency duty will be met.



Source: nomisweb.co.uk

Over the year we saw the number of childminders reduce by 11 and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provision reduce by 4 settings.

Out of School and Holiday schemes are still under-reported. Many schools who do not need an additional Ofsted registration to run, for example, breakfast and after school clubs are not always registering their offer on the Family Information Service Directory.

6. Conclusion

The data used to produce this report is a snapshot in time and indicates that currently we are meeting our sufficiency duty. Demand is being met and there is currently good quality provision in West Berkshire and this gives parents/carers both flexibility and choice.

The analysis also shows that there are wards where the number of places are at risk of not meeting local population demand. However, as has also been shown in the report, parents do travel for their childcare and this is an area that needs to be monitored as parental working patterns and styles have changed since the pandemic.

Quality of provision remains high with 85% of childminders and 87% of day nurseries and pre-schools and independent provision being rated by Ofsted as outstanding or good.

The increase in the take-up of 2 year old funded places for disadvantaged families is positive for the service. Initiatives are continuing to encourage the continuation of this high number.

7. Next Steps

1. Childcare Reforms

These were announced in the 2023 Budget and are set to increase availability, reduce costs and increase the number of parents accessing childcare so that they can return to work.

The following measures were announced:

Entitlements: Eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year, from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school. Hourly rates for providers will also increase.

Wraparound: The government will invest £289m over two academic years, from Sept 2024, to enable schools and local areas to set up wraparound childcare provision

Market reforms: including more choice for childminders and changes to EYFS requirements, to improve flexibility for providers and support the workforce.

Childminder Grants: to attract people to childminding with £1200 for those who register with a childminder agency and £600 for those who register with Ofsted.

Changing staff: child ratios: from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds in England to align with Scotland and provide greater flexibility for providers

Universal Credit reforms: will pay childcare support up-front when parents move into work or increase their hours and increase the monthly re-imburement caps

These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system as follows:

Autumn 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder grants become available • Invest £204m into 3/4yo and 2yo funding rate • Staff:child 2yo ratio change
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15hrs for eligible working parents of 2-year-olds introduced • Invest £288m into 3/4 yo and 2yo funding rates
Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National wraparound support begins • 15hrs for eligible working parents of children 9 months plus introduced
Sept 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30hrs for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary school age introduced
Sept 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools able to offer 8am-6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership

These announcements will of course impact on our West Berkshire provision. Providers will need to revise their offer to accommodate 30 hours for the working parents of 2 year olds and then the lowering of the offer to 9 months up.

2. Sufficiency Reporting Support

The Department for Education (DfE) recently awarded a contract to Hempsalls to support Local Authorities with their sufficiency duties ensuring there are enough available childcare places and to meet the demand for school-aged children. This contract supports the delivery of the current early years entitlements.

The support is being offered now to support change, sufficiency and sustainability and to respond to the continuing effects of the pandemic and the annual sufficiency reporting duty for LAs.

The contract includes proactive (preventative and improvement) advice and support to LAs identified as in need of some support to facilitate the maintenance of, or improvement in, their local childcare sufficiency picture, including wraparound provision for school-aged children. LAs can also self-refer.

3. Vulnerable Groups and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Our next report will have more focus more on reporting on vulnerable groups and SEND in particular. The team plans to develop the information about early years provision in these areas and provide more data on demand and sufficiency in West Berkshire.

Sources

GP Population Data 2021/22

Family Information Service (FIS) data spring 2022

2011 & 2021 Census Data

Ofsted data

West Berkshire Council Population Data

www.nomisweb.co.uk population and employment data

Further reading

[Statements of SEN and EHC Plan in England 2021](#)

[Childcare and early years survey of parents: 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	6 July 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	Jeff Brooks – 12 June 2023
Report Author:	Kate Pearson / Vicki Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4407

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from the Executive during the next quarter. This report provides the Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding any of the contracts identified. It follows the work by a Constitution task group over last two years and resulting recommendations.
- 1.2 To gain approval from the Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director, Head of Service or Executive Director) to proceed with the contract awards provided in this report, on the condition that a Procurement Strategy and a Contract Award report is granted approval by Procurement Board. Updated terms of reference for Procurement Board are attached.
- 1.3 A consolidated report is considered the most effective way of complying with the Council's Contract Rules, whilst providing the Executive with visibility of forthcoming high value contracts requiring approval. This in turn will help minimise any delays that may impact the tender timetable for contract award and service mobilisation.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director, Head of Service or Executive Director) to proceed with the award of the contracts in table [4.11] in consultation with the portfolio holder following the completion of the appropriate tender process and Procurement Board approval of a Contract Award report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Contracts will be procured in line with the Council’s Contract Rules. All contracts with a value in excess of £100k require approval of a Procurement Strategy before tendering is commenced and the award is subject to the approval of a Contract Award report by Procurement Board prior to the formal award of the contract.</p> <p>All contracts over £500k in value are considered key decisions and will be placed on the forward plan at point of Procurement Strategy.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>The social care contracts detailed below all have a TUPE element to them and this will be considered as part of the procurement and any subsequent award process.</p>
Legal:	<p>Contracts will be procured in line with the Council’s Contract Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.</p> <p>All contracts with a value in excess of £2.5m will have a procurement strategy and contract award report which has been approved by Procurement Board, Corporate Board and Operations Board. The Service Lead and / or Service Director shall have delegated authority to award the contract subject to such approval and in consultation with the portfolio holder, s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer.</p>
Risk Management:	<p>As part of each tender process – supplier due diligence is carried out to include: review and verification of financial health, confirmation of insurances held, credit report, references and reassurance around the ability to evidence and deliver public sector contracts.</p>
Property:	N/A.
Policy:	N/A.

Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:		X		
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual				Business as usual.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	N/A.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 To gain approval from Executive on forthcoming contract awards due to take place during the next quarter of the financial year.
- 4.2 The Contract Rules state that supply, service and works contracts with a value in excess of £100k must have approval of a Procurement Strategy from Procurement Board prior to conducting a procurement process.
- 4.3 Following the completion and outcome of a tender process, the approval of a Contract Award report must also be granted by Procurement Board before awarding a contract. For contracts with a value in excess of £2.5m the Contract Rules require the approval of a Contract Award report from Procurement Board, Corporate Board, Operations Board and the Executive before the contract can be awarded.
- 4.4 This governance process requires bidders to adhere to an extended tender validity period which in turn can impact on prices as bidders cost in the risk of price increases between submitting bids and contract award. In order to minimise the risk of unsuccessful or more expensive tender processes due to this and the potential for challenge from bidders, it is imperative that delays in contract award are minimised and that the Council adhere to the timetable for contract award as published in the Invitation to Tender documents. The notification of the award decision and outcome of the tender should be communicated to bidders as soon as possible following the conclusion of the tender evaluation.
- 4.5 A consolidated award report is considered the most efficient way of meeting the Council's Contract Rules, whilst providing the Executive with visibility of forthcoming contract awards requiring approval. This in turn will help minimise any delays that may impact the tender timetable for contract award and contract mobilisation.
- 4.6 There are ten contracts with a value of £2.5m+ which are planned to be awarded during the next quarter. These are contracts that have had Procurement Strategies approved by Procurement Board and will follow the Council's Contract Rules for tendering and award approval.
- 4.7 The tenders relating to these contracts will be advertised on the Council's e-tendering portal, relevant external journal publications (e.g. Contracts Finder & Find a Tender Service) or will be procured using compliant framework agreements in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (or relevant procurement legislation in force at the time).
- 4.8 Following the completion of the tender process, the service areas are then required to submit a Contract Award report back to the Procurement Board, Corporate Board and Operations Board for approval prior to awarding the contract. The Service Lead/Service Director will consult with portfolio holders, the s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer prior to contract award to ensure necessary consultation has been completed.
- 4.9 There are a number of projects listed on the Council's Capital programme where it is not known at this stage if the delivery of these projects will require tendering for supply contracts. Whilst every effort has been made to include all contracts which are likely to

Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive

arise, it is possible that other, urgent requirements may emerge. Such cases will need to be reported separately to the board as individual contract award reports for approval.

4.10 The contract award summary table (4.11) provides an overview of the contracts which are being tendered following approval of a Procurement Strategy by the Procurement Board. These contracts are expected to have a contract value of over £2.5m based on the previous contract term values. The detail of each forthcoming contract award is provided in Part II of this report.

4.11 Forthcoming Contract Award Summary Table

Contract Title	Service Area	Budget (inc. tolerance)	Contract planned start date	Procurement Process	Evaluation weightings	Proposed Contract Term (years)	Estimated contract term award value	Tender Status
Berkshire Community Equipment Service	Adult Social Care / Children & Family Services	£175m gross / £75m expected spend due to recycling model.	01.04.2024	Direct award via Buckinghamshire Framework (call-off single supplier framework)	55% quality 45% price	5 + 2 (extension)	As budget	Partners in-principle agreement
West Berkshire Adult Advocacy Services including: Lot 1: Healthwatch, NHS Complaints, Learning Disability Partnership Board, Lot 2: Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (including Relevant Persons Paid Representative), Independent Mental Health Advocate, Safeguarding Advocacy & Care Act Advocacy	Adult Social Care	Ceiling budget lot 1: £141,333 Ceiling budget lot 2: £186,021	01.10.2023	Open tender	60% quality 10% social value 30% price	5 + 3	Lot 1: £133,803 per annum Lot 2: £166,451 per annum	Procurement complete
Extra Care Housing – Lot 1 – Audrey Needham House and Redwood House	Adult Social Care	£838k per year	01.10.2023	Open tender	50% quality 10% social value 40% price	7 years (5+2)	£4.8m (5yrs) £7.1m (7yrs)	Pending contract award
Extra Care Housing – Lot 2 – Alice Bye Court	Adult Social Care	£451k per year	01.10.2023	Open tender	50% quality 10% social value 40% price	7 years (5+2)	£2.7m (5yrs) £4.0m (7yrs)	Out to tender

Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive

Baily Thomas House Respite Service for adults with learning disabilities	Adult Social Care	£435k per year	01.10.2023	Open tender	50% quality 10% social value 40% price	5 years (3+2)	£1.5m (3 yrs) £2.6m (5 yrs)	Pending contract award
Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Electric Vehicle Charge Points (West Berkshire car parks and community locations)	Environment	£1,174,025 Capital funding Potential additional funding up to £382k external grant yet to be confirmed. The Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Electric Vehicle Charge Points is being funded by capital funding and therefore budgets given below are inclusive of tolerance. Future phases of this contract will be decided on costs to fit within the budget and therefore no overspend is anticipated.	01.10.2023	ESPO 636_21– Vehicle Charging Infrastructure	40% cost 50% quality 10% social value	4 years	Not yet known	Going out to tender via ESPO framework in July 2023
Supply and Installation of Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels across West Berkshire	Environment	Estimated £690,000 for one year contract. Potential spend over 4 years depending on budget availability is anticipated to be £2,400,000.	01.10.2023	Open tender	50% cost 40% quality 10% social value	1 year contract to be followed by a further procurement process for a further 3 years	£690,000 for one year contract.	Going out to tender in August 2023
Kennet Valley Expansion Project	Property Services / Education	£2,600,000	01.09.2023	Open tender	60% cost 40% quality (inc. social value)	One-off design and build (40 weeks)	£2,000,000	Procurement strategy stage
Northcroft Dryside Development	Leisure	£4,500,000	01.09.2023	Direct Award off UK Leisure Framework	To be agreed in line with framework guidance.	18 months	£4,500,000	In planning stages.
Council Insurances	Finance	£3,900,000	01.11.2023	Open Tender	Price, quality and social elements are tailored to each element.	3 years + 2 year optional extension	£3,900,000	Currently out to tender. Closing date for submissions is 16.06.23

5 Supporting Information

5.1 Introduction

The contracts presented in this report all have an estimated value in excess of £2.5m for the whole life of the contract term, including any optional extensions. The budget information and previous contract values are currently provided by the service areas leading the procurement strategy.

5.2 Background

Procurement Board has the overall responsibility for monitoring contractual spend within the Council. The Procurement Board scrutinise both the strategy and award reports to ensure the procurement is compliant with the Council's constitution, relevant legislation, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and that the award of the contract demonstrates value for money. All contracts with a value in excess of £100,000 require an individual Procurement Strategy to be submitted to Procurement Board for scrutiny and approval prior to the service area conducting a tender process. Following the completion of the procurement process, a contract award report detailing the outcome of the tender is submitted to Procurement Board, Corporate Board and Operations Board for approval prior to awarding the contract.

5.3 The Contract Rules state that for supply contracts with a value of in excess of £2.5m, a Contract Award report must be approved by Procurement Board, Corporate Board, Operations Board and Executive, before the contract can be awarded.

5.4 Further detail regarding the contracts set out in 4.11 is included below (and as a Part II report for the Executive meeting):

5.5 List of Contracts

Included as a Part II report.

6 Other options considered

6.1 The approval of a consolidated contract award report is considered the most efficient way of meeting the governance requirements of the Constitution, therefore no alternative proposals are being made.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report provides details of contracts which have been registered with the Commissioning Service that are scheduled for award during the next quarter. Whilst every effort has been made to capture and include all of the contracts which are likely to arise, there may be other projects which Commissioning & Procurement have not yet been involved in or the service area have not yet submitted a strategy to the Procurement Board for approval. Should the Commissioning and Procurement team become aware of contracts with a value of over £2.5m that need approval during the next quarter, then these will be submitted separately to Corporate Board, Operations Board and Executive as individual Contract Award reports for approval.

8 Resolution

8.1 The Executive resolves to:

Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive

(1) delegate authority to the relevant Service Lead/Service Director in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer to proceed with the award of forthcoming contracts that have been identified in this report for award approval during the next quarter of the financial year;

(2) delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal and Democratic in consultation with the relevant Executive Director to finalise the terms of any agreement as set out in the tender documents and make any necessary drafting or other amendments (such amendments not to be substantia or material) to the terms of the agreement necessary to produce a final agreement for execution and to enter into that agreement; and where relevant

9 Appendices

9.1 The detailed list of contracts is provided as a Part II report.

9.2 Updated Terms of Reference for Procurement Board are attached.

9.3 List of pipeline awards over £100k (due between July and October 2023).

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 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

Officer details:

Name: Vicki Murphy
Job Title: Corporate Category Manager
Tel No: 01635 519364
E-mail: vicki.murphy@westberks.gov.uk

Procurement Board – Terms of Reference

Purpose

To ensure that the Council's procurement activity is well governed and delivers best value for money across the Council's activities.

Scope:

- To provide a report on all contracted third party spend of the Council, both revenue and capital expenditure (value exceeding £50k). This includes spend of grant monies or funded work.
- Procurement activity where the Council is the lead on behalf of other organisations
- The reports that should come to procurement board are highlighted in appendix A and the three areas are:
 - Procurement Strategies i.e. how do services intend to procure with full options appraisal;
 - Procurement extensions – where a procurement has previously taken place for a contract which includes the option to extend and the service wishes to exercise their option to extend the contract;
 - Procurement exceptions – where a service wish to use a different procurement route to the standard approach in the constitution or proposes to modify an existing contract (including the extension of that contract where there is no provision to extend);
 - Category plans – one off activity;
 - Contract Awards
 - Policy Papers/Procurement Updates and Significant Developments e.g. new legislation or contract uplifts.

Objectives:

- To ensure compliance with the Council's constitution in respect of part 8 ([Contract Rules](#)).
- To agree exceptions to the above Part 8 of the constitution in line with delegation levels.
- To ensure the Council is maximising Best Value through its procurement activity.
- To ensure that the forward plan (at least 12 months) is well managed with up-coming procurement activity.

Last updated: 6 June 2023

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- Where there are financial implications, that the service has ensured that there is either the required budget, or that additional budget (revenue, capital or funding via grants) has been secured.
- To agree procurement strategies (i.e. how service areas intend to procure) for contracts per the contracts rules of procedure and highlighted in appendix A.
- To provide quarterly summaries to corporate board on contracts awarded.
- To provide a quarterly summary to Executive on contract awards which will exceed £2.5m and seek approval to delegate authority to award in appropriate circumstances.
- To ensure appropriate information sharing with Portfolio Holders around contractual and procurement activity (relevant PH will be asked to comment in advance on board papers within their respective remits – thus avoiding requirement to attend this board in person).
- To agree contract award reports in accordance with the previously agreed procurement strategy.

Frequency

- Meet on a monthly basis (dates to be scheduled annually in advance).
- Any papers to appear on an exception basis outside of usual meetings to be:
 - Agreed by the Chair
 - Must be due to a genuine exception (e.g. critical / urgent / statutory services)
 - Incomplete papers will not be considered by the Board

Attendees (with named substitute)

- Executive Director/S151 Officer (resources) – Chair
- Head of Commissioning and Procurement
- Legal Services Representative
- Financial services representative
- Service Managers and procurement officers to attend for their specific agenda items
- Directorate representatives
- Corporate Category Manager (standing items on contract awards and upcoming renewals)
- Commissioning and Procurement Administrator (scheduling and administration)

To be quorate, the meeting must include the following officers as a minimum (or their representative)

- Executive Director (Resources)
- Head of Commissioning and Procurement
- Legal Services representative

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- Financial services representative

If non-quorate the meeting may take place, but subsequent agreement from the above members must be sought to ratify any decisions made.

Procurement Board oversight

Procurement Strategies - Standard procurement activity

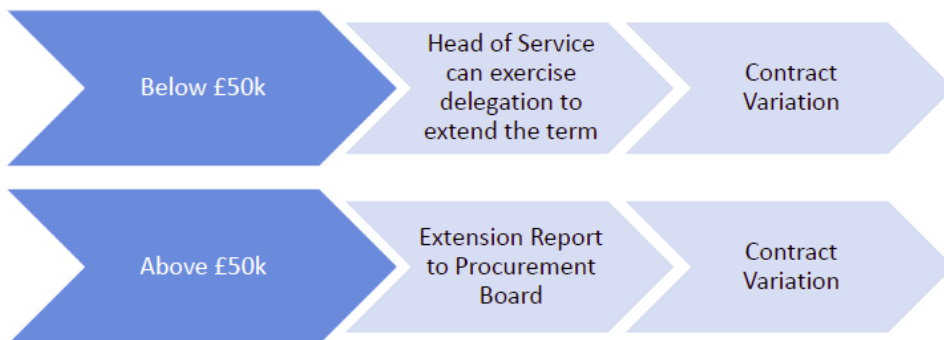
The below flowchart sets out when reports will need to come to the procurement board. Simply, any procurement over £100k will need a strategy setting out the approach for the procurement to come to the procurement board. Over £100k an award report will need to come back to Procurement Board to gain approval for any Contract Award.

Any contract valued over £500k – will need to be added to the forward plan at point of procurement.

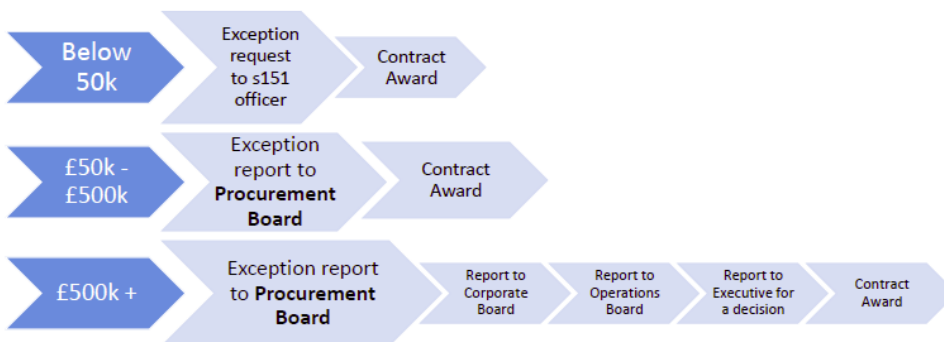
Any contract valued over £2.5m will require approval to award via Procurement Board, Corporate Board, Operations Board and Executive – prior to the Intention to Award being given.

Full consultation with stakeholders at all stages should be undertaken to include Service Lead / Director, Finance, Legal & Democratic Services – with relevant Portfolio Holder sighted on papers prior to full circulation.

Procurement Extension (only where provision exists within the contract)



Procurement exception (where extensions are sought and there is no provision to extend OR where a direct award is recommended with clear reasoning set out)



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Pipeline projects due to award Jul - Nov 2023

Service area	Category	Contract Title	Expected Budget	Procurement Process	Award Due
Housing LAHF	Construction & Facilities	Refurbishment of acquired properties	£340,000	Open tender	Jul-23
HR	Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship provider services for Resources	£500,000	Open tender	Jul-23
Adult Social Care	Construction	Willows Edge Remodelling	£463,000	Open Tender	Aug-23
ICT	ICT Services	DIG Digital Roadmap Project Support	£500,000	Open Tender	Aug-23
Transport Services	Passenger Services	Various home to school and transport routes*	TOTAL BUDGET (80 routes) - £9,400,000	Using DPS - one project per route	Aug-23
Property Services	Construction & Facilities	Architect Services at Falkland Primary School	£300,000	Open tender	Aug-23
ICT	ICT Hardware	Turnhams Green Equipment Refresh	Not yet known	Not yet agreed	Sep-23
ICT	ICT Hardware	Corporate Laptop Refresh	£200,000	Framework	Sep-23
Property Services	Construction & Facilities	West Point House Refurbishment	£900,000	Open tender	Sep-23
Revs & Bens	ICT / Postage and Courier	Council Tax / Benefits Mailing Services	£210,000	Open Tender	Oct-23
Road Safety	ICT Systems	Road Safety Platform	£160,000	Open Tender	Oct-23
Communities	ICT Systems	Digital Community Signposting solution	£105,000	Open Tender	Oct-23
Education	Social Care	Supported Employment 16-25 yr olds	£280,000	Open Tender	Nov-23
Property Services	Construction & Facilities	Changing Places	£180,000	Open tender	Nov-23
Property Services	Construction & Facilities	Security Services	£170,000	Open Tender	Nov-23
Transport Services	Financial Services / Cash Collection	Cash collection (parking)	Over £100,000	Framework (ESPO)	Nov-23
Transport Services	Security / CCTV	CCTV Wharf and Rugby Club	£100,000	Likely Open Tender if combined	Nov-23

* A full list of routes to be tendered can be supplied separately on request.

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Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	6 July 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Janine Lewis
Report Author:	Gordon Oliver, Principal Policy Officer (Scrutiny and Democratic Services)
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4332

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Scrutiny Commission has reviewed the request to call-in the Executive decision taken of 23 March 2023 in respect of 'Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)' as set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 6.9 sections 13-17).
- 1.2 The call-in was reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission on 20 June 2023. This report presents the findings of Scrutiny Commission for the Executive to consider.

2 Recommendation

That the Executive reconsiders its original decision of 23 March 2023 in respect of 'Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)', with particular consideration given to the following aspects:

- costs incurred;
- the Council should conduct a new value for money review taking into account:
 - business plan based on increased costs;
 - penalty fees associated with not proceeding with the original scheme as planned;
 - any implications for the new Leisure Contract; and

- the need to revisit the Playing Pitch Strategy should the Sports Hub not be progressed.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>If the Executive is minded to pursue the original Sports Hub option, a revised cost estimate will have to be obtained from the contractor, which will take account of inflation that has occurred during the delay incurred.</p> <p>Pursuing an alternative option to the current Sports Hub proposal at Newbury Rugby Club would have significant financial implications. There would be additional costs associated with aspects such as: scheme design; business case development; consultation; land acquisition / leases; planning permission; legal agreements; and construction.</p> <p>Approval would be needed for any change in the budget.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>Developing an alternative option to the existing Sports Hub proposal at Newbury Rugby Club may require the procurement of additional consultancy support, and / or the extension of existing contracts.</p>
Legal:	<p>Pursuing an alternative option to the existing Sports Hub proposal at Newbury Rugby Club may require a fresh set of legal agreements.</p>
Risk Management:	<p>The delay to the existing scheme has had inevitable financial implications due to cost inflation.</p> <p>There may be a risk to the Council's reputation associated with not progressing with the original Sports Hub proposal, since discussions with the Rugby Club and construction contracts had proceeded to an advanced stage.</p>
Property:	<p>The original Sports Hub development was subject to a land deal and lease with Newbury Rugby Club. These agreements were not signed due to the risks associated with the judicial review claim and the subsequent call-in.</p> <p>An alternative option would involve construction of a facility on an alternative site, which has not yet been identified.</p>

	Depending on the location and ownership of the site, this may require new land deals and / or leases.			
Policy:	Regardless of which option is progressed, the project will be delivered in accordance the National Planning Policy Framework. Specifically it will address the need to increase the provision of artificial grass pitches as detailed in the Playing Pitch Strategy.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			Future demand and supply analysis shows a significant deficit for all pitch typologies across West Berkshire. The provision of an additional artificial grass pitch would assist in meeting latent demand and facilitate growth for participation for adults and children in football and rugby.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			Any new facilities will be fully accessible. New facilities will also be incorporated into the new leisure management contract and the new operator will be required to demonstrate that the future programme will benefit all sections of the West Berkshire community. Officers will work in partnership with the Football Association to explore development partnerships for football.

Environmental Impact:				For the existing proposal, this has been addressed through the planning conditions. Multiple measures are in place including the expansion of hedgerows, creation of a wildflower meadow, tree planting (via the Queen's canopy already undertaken) and a bee bank. The Pavilion would achieve an excellent BREEAM rating for energy management. It is expected that similar measures and standards would be applied to any alternative proposal.
Health Impact:				The new 3G pitch will increase opportunities for children to be active and can provide a variety of football programmes, for adults such as "walking football," enabling less active and older people to continue to participate in sport
ICT Impact:		X		None
Digital Services Impact:		X		None
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			A new Sports Hub will support the Council Strategy priority to 'Improve the health and wellbeing of our residents' and the associated action to 'Support participation in sports and leisure activities'.
Core Business:	X			A new Sports Hub will enhance sports infrastructure in West Berkshire. Operational management of any new facility will be included in the new leisure management contract.
Data Impact:		X		None.
Consultation and Engagement:	Extensive consultation and engagement was carried out to inform the current Sports Hub proposal. This was reported to Executive in April 2021. A fresh round of consultation and engagement would be required if the Executive decides to develop an alternative proposal.			

4 Supporting Information

Background

- 4.1 In accordance with the Constitution, six Members called-in the Executive decision taken on 23 March 2023 in respect of 'Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)'. The request to call in the decision is attached **Appendix A**
- 4.2 Call-ins are generally heard at a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission to be arranged as soon as is reasonably practicable. Unfortunately, there was not time to arrange a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission to consider the call-in and a subsequent meeting of the Executive to consider any alternative course of action proposed by the Scrutiny Commission before the election on 4 May 2023, so it was agreed with the Leader and Commission Chairman that the call-in should be considered at the next scheduled meeting on 20 June 2023.
- 4.3 Scrutiny Commission reviewed the Executive decision on 20 June 2023. In accordance with Part 17; the options available to Scrutiny Commission were to either:
 - (a) Confirm the original decision; or
 - (b) Propose amendments to it in any way it thinks fit and shall give reasons for its final decision
- 4.4 Scrutiny Commission proposes amendments in accordance with the recommendation outlined at paragraph 2.

5 Proposals

- 5.1 Members of the Scrutiny Commission propose amendments to the Executive decision of 23 March as set out in paragraph 2.
- 5.2 Under the Constitution, it is for the Executive to decide how it wishes to proceed (provided the decision is within the Budget and Policy Framework) having regard to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission.
- 5.3 It should be noted that any matter which has been the subject of a Call-In request may not be the subject of a further Call-In request.

6 Other options considered

The Scrutiny Commission could have confirmed the original Executive decision, in which case it would have been implemented immediately.

7 Conclusion

In accordance with the Constitution, the Executive has been asked by the Scrutiny Commission to review its original decision taken on 23 March 2023 in respect of 'Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)'. It is for the Executive to decide how it wishes to

proceed (provided the decision is within the Budget and Policy Framework), having had regard to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission. The outcome of the decision should be reported back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – Call-In of the Executive Decision EX4332

Background Papers:

Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement, Executive (23 March 2023)

Item Called-in following an Executive Decision: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement, Scrutiny Commission (20 June 2023)

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: Newbury Wash Common

Officer details:

Name: Gordon Oliver
Job Title: Principal Policy Officer (Scrutiny and Democratic Services)
Tel No: 01635 519486
E-mail: Gordon.Oliver1@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

31st March 2023

To: Sarah Clarke
Service Director Strategy & Governance
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

Liberal Democrat Group
c/o Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

Dear Sarah

Request for Call-in of Executive Item: Newbury Sports Hub – revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement: (EX 4332)

I and the Councillors named below wish to call in the recent decision EX4332.

Section 5.3.4 of the Council's Constitution states: *'The notice shall give reasons for the request ('call-in request'), together with a proposal for an alternative course of action and state whether or not those Members believe that the decision is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.'*

It is our belief that the decision should be reviewed based on the following reasons:

- That given the threat of further legal action against the Council in regards to this site, more inflationary costs could be incurred by the Council;
- That the Executive should set an absolute limit on the cost of the site;
- That a new business plan should be conducted based on the increased costs, and
- That the Council should conduct a new value for money review.

Based on the need for further detailed examination of the points above, we believe an alternative course of action would be to update the business plan and value for money review and set an upper limit of work value.

We do believe that this decision is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Lee Dillon



Councillor Jeff Brooks



Councillor Adrian Abbs



Councillor Alan Macro



Councillor Erik Pattenden



Councillor Tony Vickers

Item 11:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 6 July 2023.

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 Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"On 24 November, you, Cllr Vickers, stated "The Liberal Democrats are broadly content with the district-wide policies in the Local Plan that we'll be asked to vote on next Thursday. We certainly won't be voting against the motion to publish it for the Regulation 19 consultation." Why then, one week later, did your group vote against publishing the Local Plan for the Regulation 19 consultation?"

B. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Since GWR introduced charges in both their car parks at Aldermaston Station, rail travellers have been parking in every available space in Station Road, Aldermaston Wharf, causing considerable inconvenience to nearby residents. For example, one young family with small children are consistently unable to park within a reasonable distance from their home, which severely affects their wellbeing and the quality of their lives. Residents, Beenham and Aldermaston Parish Councils and I have persistently asked Highways to address this problem, without success. What commitment will the Portfolio Holder make to consider the problem of parking at Aldermaston Wharf?"

C. Question submitted by Councillor Carlyne Culver to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"Is West Berkshire Council ready to fulfil its impending obligation from the Environment Act to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?"

D. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Further to her comments at the last Executive meeting about the problem of long-term empty properties, will the portfolio holder undertake that the council will: 1 Take rigorous action under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure that owners of buildings left empty, and which pose an environmental hazard to neighbours as well as "adversely affecting the amenity of the area", are held responsible for restoring them to an acceptable level? 2 Where the owner refuses to do this, and where a property has been left empty for at least two years, take out an EDMO (empty dwelling management order) under the Housing Act 2004 on the property? 3 Where both these approaches are unsuccessful, serve a CPO (compulsory purchase order) so that suitable properties can be brought back into use as much-needed homes?"

E. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"The Liberal manifesto promised to fix all potholes "first time", and dangerous potholes within 72 hours of notification. What specific changes to the Council's

Item 11:

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highway maintenance processes will you make to keep this promise, and how much will they cost?"

F. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"The Liberal Democrat manifesto promised to remove the Garden Waste charge. How much income did this charge generate in 2022-23?"

G. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"At the Budget Council meeting on 2 March, where the Liberals failed to suggest any amendments to the Conservative administration's budget, Cllr Abbs promised that if the Liberals won control of the Council at the election, they would present an emergency budget detailing what their amendments would have been. Will there in fact be an emergency budget, or is this the first broken promise of the new Liberal administration?"

H. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"The Council has announced that it will not commercially develop the former pitch at Faraday Road and instead use it for football matches, despite a superb alternative facility being shortly available at the Sports Hub. Leaving aside the constitutional propriety of that decision, approximately how many jobs would have been created on the Faraday Road site if it were commercially developed by 2026 as planned by the previous administration?"

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