

Notice of Meeting



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Scrutiny Commission

Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday, 9 July 2024

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Agenda - Scrutiny Commission to be held on Wednesday, 17 July 2024 (continued)

- To:** Councillors Carlyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeremy Cottam, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Erik Pattenden, Justin Pemberton and Christopher Read
- Substitutes:** Councillors Laura Coyle, Billy Drummond, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston

Agenda

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Agenda - Scrutiny Commission to be held on Wednesday, 17 July 2024 *(continued)*

8. **Revenue Report Outturn 2023/24** 127 - 152
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9. **Capital Financing Performance Report Outturn 2023/24** 153 - 168
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Purpose: To receive an update from the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee.
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Purpose: To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission.



Agenda - Scrutiny Commission to be held on Wednesday, 17 July 2024 *(continued)*

Sarah Clarke

Service Director Strategy and Commissioning

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Gordon Oliver on telephone (01635) 519486.



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Agenda Item 1.

Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 1 – Apologies

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

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

SCRUTINY COMMISSION**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2024**

Councillors Present: Carlyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Erik Pattenden, Justin Pemberton, Christopher Read, Jeremy Cottam (Substitute) (In place of Geoff Mayes), Richard Somner (Substitute) (In place of Paul Dick), Howard Woollaston (Substitute) (In place of Ross Mackinnon), and Stuart Gourley

Also Present: Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Jon Winstanley (Service Director (Environment)), Kofi Adu-Gyamfi (Service Lead - Climate Change) and Jenny Graham (Environment Delivery Manager),

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Paul Dick, Councillor Ross Mackinnon and Councillor Geoff Mayes

PART I**53. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 28 November 2023, 18 January 2024 and 6 February 2024 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman then read out a statement which covered the following points:

- The role of the Scrutiny Commission was to hold the Executive and other decision makers to account, and it had a unique legitimacy to examine issues.
- It was not appropriate for a Member of the Executive to put pressure on the Chairman to reverse a decision that had already been made about the Commission's work programme.
- Executive portfolio holders should respect the independence of the scrutiny function and should not seek to direct the work of the committee.
- While the Chairman was happy to consider requests regarding scrutiny of an issue, she would not be bullied. Any such attempt raised suspicions and suggested that the decision to scrutinise an issue was correct.
- Members were reminded that they should come to scrutiny meetings with independent minds.

54. Actions from previous Minutes

Members noted the updates on actions from the previous meetings.

Comments were made in relation to the following terms:

- **Action 119** - it was considered that the terms equity and equality had not been properly defined, so this action was not considered to be closed.
- **Action 122** – Members asked if it would be possible to see the Bus Survey results.

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Actions:

- **Gordon Oliver to seek further clarification of the definitions of equity and equality from officers.**
- **Gordon Oliver to ask for the Bus Survey results to be provided to Scrutiny Commission Members.**

The Chairman read out an update on flooding/sewage issues. It was agreed that this would be appended to the minutes. The following matters were discussed in relation to the update:

- It was explained that Gold Command meetings were only used for emergency incidents. However, Strategic and Tactical Groups had been set up for the recent floods. It was acknowledged that it would be useful to review the effectiveness of these groups.
- The importance of maintaining sluice gates was highlighted, since these could exacerbate flooding if they could not be opened. The Environment Agency lacked powers to require landowners to maintain them.
- It was suggested that people living in mills were often unaware of their responsibility to manage river levels and that this should be considered as part of future discussions with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
- Ownership of one of the bunds in Linear Park had changed hands and it was suggested that changes in ownership needed to be tracked so authorities knew who to contact if there was an issue.
- Jon Winstanley committed to provide an update on the uptake of flood grants to the October meeting.
- The threshold of 50 affected properties for local authorities to be eligible for flood grants was seen as a high bar for small local authorities like West Berkshire. DLUHC had been unwilling to make concessions.
- It was noted that sonic equipment could detect leaks in pipes/sewers. It was suggested that Thames Water be asked if they were using this equipment.
- In addition to sewer lining and manhole sealing, the need for major infrastructure was highlighted (e.g., London Road Pumping Station).
- Although Thames Water had visited Hampstead Norreys on 12 April, they had not found evidence of pollution, despite ongoing sewage leaks from a manhole cover into the river.
- The latest edition of the Newbury Weekly News had featured a story about a child falling into sewage and subsequently becoming unwell.
- It was suggested that the Council's 'report a problem page' could be used to log issues reported by residents. Officers confirmed that they always encouraged residents to report issues to Thames Water directly. Any issues reported through the website were referred onto the relevant organisation.
- Apologies were given for officers not responding to Newbury Town Councillor Steve Masters' request for West Berkshire Council to issue an abatement notice against Thames Water under Section 79e and section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990. This was being investigated.

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- Thames Water was nervous about water levels remaining high into next winter. If water levels remained high over the summer, then there would be no respite from the issues, and Thames Water would be unable to implement any remedial measures.
- It was confirmed that Richard Aylard had left Thames Water, but it was not known if he would be replaced. Tess Fayers was suggested as an alternative contact.

Actions:

- **Scrutiny Commission to review the Section 19 report at the October meeting.**
- **Officers to prepare a report similar to that produced following scrutiny of the 2014 flooding response in order to provide reassurance that the Council was joined-up when it came to:**
 - a) **its flood and water management related strategies;**
 - b) **the various council teams that responded to such emergencies; and**
 - c) **communication between authorities.**
- **For officers to consider how we might work more effectively with Thames Water and the Environment Agency on information/education campaigns.**
- **For officers to provide an update about take-up of flood grants at the October meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.**
- **Pumping of groundwater and cellar water and the need for a long-term solution to be discussed at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission.**
- **For Scrutiny Commission to consider how lessons learned were being captured and how these could be used to inform Environment Agency decisions about future flood alleviation schemes.**
- **Chairman of Scrutiny Commission to write to the Flood Forums and Sewage Groups to thank them for giving their time to gather data and evidence, advise and support residents, and challenge the authorities about what action they were taking.**
- **Seek clarity at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission that the WBC Section 19 report and any other relevant documentation and evidence gathered this winter/spring will be used to inform revisions to the GISMP documents.**
- **At October Scrutiny, ask Thames Water how they log calls, ask why people were told they were the only ones affected, check that the automatic reply email system has been rectified, and ask why people have been told there was no evidence when there clearly was.**
- **Scrutiny Commission to establish who was responsible for clean-up.**
- **Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with Councillor Gourley's motion that was passed at March Council.**
- **Officers to provide a response to Steve Masters' request for West Berkshire Council to issue an abatement order to Thames Water.**
- **Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether action would be taken following the results of the Northbrook tests.**
- **Councillor Stuart Gourley to share contact details for Tess Fayers at Thames Water.**

55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

56. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

57. Environment Strategy Operational Review

Councillor Stuart Gourley (Executive Portfolio Holder: Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity), Jenny Graham (Environment Delivery Manager) and Kofi Adu-Gyamfi (Service Lead – Climate Change) presented the Environment Strategy Operational Review (Agenda Item 6).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- It was noted that the Environment Advisory Group (EAG) Open Forum was improving transparency of decision making and the group was hearing from innovators and technology companies. This was helping to inspire local residents and businesses.
- Members asked about the reprioritisation process for the next version of the Delivery Plan. It was explained that significant changes were proposed to the way it would be laid out to make it easier to navigate, with actions organised around the following themes:
 - Energy efficiency and renewables
 - The natural environment
 - Sustainable travel
 - Waste and recycling

Cross-cutting themes would be:

- Focus on net zero
- Health and wellbeing benefits
- Communications
- Partnership working
- Education and community engagement

Business as usual activities were being stripped out.

Officers would seek to ensure that actions were of a similar scale.

- Members suggested that the Council's recently appointed Ecologists could work with town/parish councils who were looking to respond to the ecological emergency. Officers suggested that the Ecologists could attend a future Town and Parish Climate Forum and highlight areas that town/parish councils might wish to consider. It was confirmed that contact details had recently been updated for all town/parish, so this should help to improve attendance.

Action: Jenny Graham to arrange a Town and Parish Climate Forum focused on biodiversity.

- It was noted that there were over 60 town/parish councils, who may lack knowledge, skills and experience, and who had land/buildings/assets that needed improvement.
- It was suggested that a similar forum could be established for local environmental groups/stakeholders. Officers indicated that this was a key driver for the EAG Open Forum sessions. There were plans to tweak the Open Forum to provide more

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opportunities for collective brainstorming around key issues to inform policies and guide progress towards net zero and beyond.

- Members asked about participation at EAG. It was confirmed that there was a full programme of talks. Although online attendance was good, attendance in person was limited. Attendees were there to hear what was going on and ask questions and learn about new initiatives. A recent presentation on plastic-free living had highlighted synergies between the work of the Council and Veolia and a waste company that was trying out new technology.
- Officers were asked about flood defence schemes planned for the Rivers Lambourn and Kennet. It was confirmed that the Section 19 investigation and the Environment Agency's Section 18 report would inform decisions around business cases and funding bids for schemes to mitigate flood risk. £6.3 million had been secured on the basis of previous Section 19 reports for Thatcham flood alleviation measures and studies in Newbury around the Northcroft ditch and surface water in Clay Hill, as well as property level protection.
- There was discussion around the Big Community Energy Switching scheme. While previous rounds had offered significant savings for residents, the latest round in 2023 had not, due to unpredictability in the energy market. The scheme had been suspended for 2024, but it would be kept under review.
- Members noted the ambitious plans to achieve carbon neutral status by 2030 and asked how this would be achieved, and whether carbon offsetting could be avoided. It was explained that the Council aimed to tap into local natural resources (e.g., solar and water). Investigations had been carried out around decarbonisation of local assets. It was thought that the Council could achieve carbon neutral status without offsetting, but more work was needed to understand the pathway and develop a pipeline of projects.
- Officers were asked for further detail about the Green-Blue Infrastructure Framework. It was confirmed that work had started on scoping the framework, which had benefited from input from a large number of teams. Work had been paused due to resourcing and a vacancy in the team, but this would restart once the resource was in place.
- Members proposed communications with riparian landowners to encourage them not to mow their grass up to the river in order to maintain habitat for wildlife. It was confirmed that a communications campaign was planned for 'No mow May'. Also, it was suggested that the Town and Parish Climate Forum would be a good mechanism for disseminating messages and encouraging people to take action within their communities. Furthermore, it was planned to provide a toolkit of practical things that residents could do.
- There was discussion about what was being done in relation to the circular economy. The soil conditioner giveaway was highlighted, but it was acknowledged that there were still significant opportunities around reducing food waste. Education was key to changing behaviour. Also, it was suggested that large businesses could have a significant influence. Local organisations could share information on work they were doing in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain, achievement of the highest BREEAM ratings on new buildings, and local purchasing. Within the Council, a sustainability tool was being developed to guide projects, and staff were encouraged to use Thatcham Refillables. In addition, the Council was doing lots of work on educating residents around waste avoidance with a particular focus on children, including outreach work at local schools and the Eco Schools programme. Work was ongoing

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with the Community Reuse Project in Newbury to repair and refurbish items for resale, and the concept of a reuse shop was being explored.

- It was noted that the Living Rainforest had raised concerns about the absence of sustainability, biodiversity and climate change in the school curriculum. However, Members welcomed the school outreach work. Reaching young people and maintaining their interest was seen as important.
- Members asked about benchmarking of performance, networking opportunities and the support available from the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA was seen as a key focus for knowledge sharing. There was a lot of space for innovation and there were lots of different forums for networking and sharing of best practice. This included a Berkshire group, which also helped to identify opportunities for joint working (e.g., Solar Together). Officers had also met with colleagues from other local authorities to share ideas (e.g., Sustainability Assessment Tool created by Cheltenham Borough Council). The Association for Public Service Excellence was also cited as being useful for sharing best practice.
- Officers were asked if they were confident that the Council would meet its target to be carbon neutral by 2030. Officers confirmed that they were confident that this would be achieved.
- Members asked if the report was shared with residents. It was confirmed that all three annual progress reports were on the Council's website. A refreshed strategy and delivery plan, and a further progress report would be presented to the Executive in the autumn. These would be promoted through the EAG Open Forum.

Resolved to note the report.

58. **Task and Finish Group Updates**

The Chairman read out the following update on the work of the Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Agenda Item 7), which had been provided by Councillor Paul Dick.

“Since the last update in November, the Task Group has met four times, with each meeting having a particular focus.

December's meeting looked at various Public Health and Community Support aspects. There were presentations on: communications, outbreak management, the vaccination programme, Covid testing, and the role of the Public Protection Partnership.

The focus of January's meeting was on Public Health and Emergency Community Support, with presentations on the Community Support Hub, mental health and isolation, and supporting individuals with their recovery.

In February, the Task Group looked at how the Council had supported local businesses and the recovery of the local economy. The Task Group Members were keen to get the perspective of service users, so they surveyed local businesses and invited the Chair of Newbury Business Improvement District to attend and share his experiences.

The most recent meeting considered the support provided to the education sector in West Berkshire. There was a presentation from the Schools Emergency Planning Team. Again, the Task Group Members sought the perspectives of service users. They conducted a survey of local headteachers and invited two headteachers from local primary and secondary schools to give evidence.

The next session will focus on Support for the Care Sector, and a meeting is being arranged for May.

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There remain some further lines of enquiry that the Task Group hopes to tie up at a further meeting. A survey has just gone out to town / parish councils and community groups, and additional information is being sought in relation to domestic abuse.

Throughout the process, the Task Group has sought to understand what elements of the Council's response had worked well and what changes could be put in place now, so we are better prepared for the next event. A series of draft recommendations are starting to emerge and the Task Group is aiming to report back to the Scrutiny Commission in September."

It was suggested that the Task Group be made aware of a local charity offering free legal aid for victims of domestic abuse.

Resolved to note the report.

59. **Sports Hub Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference**

Members considered the draft Sports Hub Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference (Agenda Item 8) as drafted by the Scrutiny Commission Chairman.

Key points from the debate were as follows:

- Additional witnesses were proposed, including Mr Alan Pearce, the Football Federation, the Football Association, Newbury Town Council, and Paul Martindill.
- It was proposed to consider whether consistent advice (including external advice) had been given to officers and subsequently to Members.
- It was felt that the review could be concluded in four meetings, but concern was expressed that it may take longer if the Task Group considered all aspects in detail.
- Some Members felt that the review might become political and they suggested that it should not rake over previous decisions. The new administration had simply decided on a different course of action.
- A suggestion was made to narrow the scope to consider: whether the project had been well-managed; whether reliable and consistent advice had been provided; and what lessons could be learned from the project.
- If the scope was narrowed, it was suggested that the list of witnesses could be reduced. It was felt unlikely that Sport England would attend and that there would be existing documentation that could be referred to instead. Also, it was suggested that the political witnesses would not be able to add much to the proceedings.
- A reduced scope was felt to be a good compromise in terms of available resources and outcomes.
- Others felt that Sport England were fundamental to the conversations that had taken place, so it would be necessary to have them as a witness and to review the evolution of the project from as far back as possible.
- Learning lessons to inform future work was considered important.
- It was suggested that the Task Group should focus on scrutinising the Executive's decisions rather than fact-finding.
- The administration should have nothing to fear from the decision making process being reviewed – any lessons could be applied to future decisions.

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- In terms of the outputs of the review, it was suggested that, rather than producing a long report, the Task Group should come up with concise points in a tabular form about what had gone well/badly and lessons that could be applied to a future project.
- Members felt that it would be difficult to review the project without reference to the revised Playing Pitch Strategy document. Unfortunately, this would not be ready for some time.
- The consistency of advice was considered to be one of the most important aspects to consider.
- If the Council had used PRINCE2 for the project, then the documentation could be readily reviewed (e.g., initial idea, business case, gateway reviews and lessons learned report). If everything was in order, then subsequent interviews may be unnecessary.
- The Chief Executive expressed concerns about staff capacity. The interviews would take time to organise. The organisation was under pressure from Adult Social Care and Children's Services, which had much higher levels of spend and risk than this project and it was suggested that staff should spend their time on things that could make a difference financially and in terms of the services the Council provided.
- Members suggested that this work could inform a future review of the Playing Pitch Strategy as well as learning lessons about project management to inform future projects.
- It was confirmed that the Sports Hub would have been funded from borrowing and so no funds had been reallocated.
- It was recognised that external witnesses were not obliged to attend, but attendance via Zoom would be offered. Alternatively, they could be send a list of questions.
- Although this was a project of the previous administration, it was felt that there was still value in looking at it.

Councillor Erik Pattenden proposed to amend the Terms of Reference to focus solely on points three, four and seven and that the list of witnesses be reviewed in order to reduce the amount of effort required to organise and run the task and finish group. This was seconded by Councillor Jeremy Cottam. At the vote, the motion was not carried.

The Chairman proposed to agree the terms of reference as written. The motion was seconded by Councillor Dominic Boeck. At the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to agree the terms of reference.

It was noted that the Legal Team had advised that the terms of reference should be amended to state that the Task Group would 'consider' rather than 'determine' each aspect.

The start date for the reviews was likely to be September.

Nominations were invited for membership of the Task Group. Members who had been involved in decisions about the Sports Hub would not be eligible.

60. Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Members considered the Health Scrutiny Committee Update provided by Councillor Martha Vickers (Agenda Item 9).

It was noted that the Healthcare in New Developments Task Group was due to conclude by the end of April. This had proved to be an interesting topic. The Chairman thanked

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Vicky Phoenix and Elisabeth Gowens for their contributions. The Task Group had interviewed GPs and NHS Integrated Care Board representatives. It was a complicated topic and a great deal of work had been done by officers to consider health implications of major planning applications. This was a key concern for residents. The Task Group report would go to Health Scrutiny Committee in due course.

Resolved that the report be noted.

61. **West Berkshire Council Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024**

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 May to 31 August 2024 (Agenda Item 10).

Reports previously highlighted for potential scrutiny included:

- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Active Travel Plan

In addition, it was suggested that the Community Infrastructure Levy – Customer Journey Independent Review (CIL) be scrutinised.

Actions:

- **Confirm why the CIL report was not due until May 2025.**
- **Confirm Planning Advisory Group's role in reviewing the CIL report.**
- **Seek further details about the scope of the Market Failure Policy.**
- **Seek further details about the scope of the Protected Characteristics report.**
- **Raise concerns about missing/outdated information on the Forward Plan.**

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

62. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme**

The Commission considered its work programme (Agenda Item 11).

The Work Programme had been updated following discussions at recent meetings as well as subsequent discussions and the following aspects were discussed.

A private briefing on Adult Social Care High Cost Clients was proposed for May, in addition to an external training session on Adult Social Care Scrutiny.

Action: Gordon Oliver to liaise with Paul Coe on the ASC briefing.

It had previously been proposed that the Health Scrutiny Committee should take responsibility for scrutiny of Adult Social Care Services from May 2024. However, senior officers had since suggested a wider review of the Council's Scrutiny function, which would be undertaken by the Constitution Task Force

Members agreed that the May meeting should be pushed back to 26 June, to allow the first SEND/High Needs Block report to come forward in a timelier manner, and to allow the end of year financial and performance reports to come to Scrutiny before going to Executive.

Action: Gordon Oliver to rearrange the meeting and advise officers.

The Acting Leader of the Council had suggested that the Scrutiny Commission review IT Project Management. Members agreed that this was important but felt that IT should be dropped from the title of the review. It was noted that the recent car park issues had highlighted the importance of choosing the right delivery partners.

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Members agreed to have a special meeting in October 2024 to consider the Section 19 report and Thames Water/Environment Agency activities.

Action: Gordon Oliver to invite Thames Water and Environment Agency.

Members agreed that the Commission should consider the Community Infrastructure Levy - Customer Journey Independent Review.

The Chairman highlighted a request from a resident to review the spend on Faraday Road Football Ground. This alleged that a fencing contract had been given to Volker Highways at a cost of £150,000, despite the Council having received a quote from another contractor for £54,000. It was noted that the Scrutiny Commission was already reviewing the Sports Hub. It was suggested that this matter could either be picked up as part of the wider review of Project Management, or it could be handled by a public question to a meeting of the Executive. It was agreed that the Project Management Review could include Care Director, iTrent and the Faraday Road Football Ground.

Resolved that the changes to the work programme be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.31 pm and closed at 9.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Supplemental Item for Scrutiny Commission

Thursday, 25 April 2024 at 6.30 pm
in Committee Room Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Part I

Page No.

3. **Actions from previous Minutes**

3 - 8

To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.



Sarah Clarke

Service Director (Strategy & Governance)

For further information about this/these item(s), or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver on (01635) 519486
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C O U N C I L

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Update from Councillor Carlyne Culver, Chairman of Scrutiny Commission, at meeting on 25 April 2024

This update fulfils a requirement in the action log. Hopefully it will assist Scrutiny Commission in preparing for our October meeting when Thames Water and the Environment Agency are invited to meet with us again.

Bear with me. This is a lengthy list. But these challenges are pertinent and persistent. And the public will be interested to hear this update as well as members.

I aim to provide information and propose actions and would value members' feedback on those proposed actions.

Flooding

Regarding the flooding which began in early January, a Section 19 report has been commissioned by WBC and is being undertaken by consultants WSP. Members will recall that such a report was produced following the flooding in 2014 and provided useful information about what happened, when and where.

Scrutiny will be able to examine that report later this year.

[Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 19 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/section/19> states the following:

(1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate—

(a) which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and

(b) whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

(2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must—

(a) publish the results of its investigation, and

(b) notify any relevant risk management authorities.]

I've been told the section 19 report will not contain maps that indicate which homes were flooded 'internal', 'internal cellar' and 'external', so it will not be the same as the 2014 report. I have been told this is because of GDPR and the need to avoid identifying in public which houses were affected. I have been reassured that there will be figures on how many homes and businesses were affected.

PROPOSED ACTION: Scrutiny Commission to examine section 19 report at October meeting.

Following the flooding in 2014, a 'severe weather review' was conducted by Oversight and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC), as this Commission was then known, via a series of public meetings in September 2014, totalling more than 20

hours. A document was presented by officers, separate to the section 19 report. The section 19 report focuses on hydrological issues and will not include sewage, emergency planning and external agencies' responses, and supporting functions within WBC and how they performed, and lessons learned.

[The terms of reference of the 'severe weather review' document were as follows:

- (1) Understand what happened and why*
- (2) Determine whether the plans in place prior to the flooding were effective*
- (3) Identify the lessons that should be learnt*
- (4) Assess the future severe weather risks to the district and the extent to which they might be managed*
- (5) Report to the Executive and others with recommendations as appropriate.*

Following the meetings, recommendations were made.]

There is concern from some members and flood wardens whether TW, EA and WBC are communicating effectively during periods of flooding/sewage leaks. People are confused about who to report to, and they are often told it's another organisation's responsibility. The use of Gold Command meetings was suggested to me by Cllr Woollaston.

PROPOSED ACTION: I would like to know how we kept track of the implementation of these recommendations, and to request from officers please that they consider producing a similar report that includes pertinent issues outlined above not covered by the section 19 report. Our scrutiny of 2024 needs to be at least as robust as, if not more robust, than 2014. I would particularly like reassurance that the council is joined-up when it comes to a.) its flood and water management related strategies and b.) the various council teams that respond to such an emergency and c.) communication between authorities.

Residents also have responsibilities – putting the correct things down the toilet and riparian ownership. What more can we do to inform the public? Thames Water have done campaigns around not putting fat down the sink for example.

PROPOSED ACTION: Please can officers consider how we might work more effectively with Thames Water and the Environment Agency on information/education campaigns?

WBC has offered grants in response to the flooding:

- Business Recovery Grant, Community Recovery Grant, and Council Tax Discount – all now closed to applications.
- Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme. The grant is available to improve the flood resilience of a property. It is not compensation for flood damage. Applications close on 30th April.

All information about grants is at www.westberks.gov.uk/flood-grants

PROPOSED ACTION: Ask for up update about take-up at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission.

Groundwater in the Pang Valley and Lambourn Valley remain high. There are still groundwater springs coming up in the road in Upper Lambourn. Thames Water do not want cellar water pumped into the streets because if manhole covers are not sealed it inundates the sewer system. WBC does not want cellar water in the highways drains. I emphasise that I have seen no evidence of plans to enforce this, and indeed do not know whether there are any powers to enforce this. The alternatives are for residents to tanker water away privately, or for homes to flood. This problem is not going to go away in the future. It is likely to be exacerbated by the higher precipitation caused by climate change. If cellar water is inundating sewers that is a problem, but if the alternative is homes flooding that is also a problem. So, all agencies need to give serious consideration to this matter.

Project Groundwater supports communities to be more resilient to groundwater flooding. Six-year programme working with communities in nine high-risk flood areas of the Chiltern Hills and Berkshire Downs. Led by Buckinghamshire Council in partnership with five other local authorities and Flood Community Groups. Funded by Defra as part of the £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes which is managed by the Environment Agency.

The West Berkshire Groundwater Scheme (WBGWS) is a network of pumps and connecting pipelines designed to abstract groundwater from the chalk aquifer in the Upper Pang and Lamborn valleys in times of drought, to augment river flow in tributaries of the River Thames. This has the potential to increase the water available for abstraction downstream for public water supply to London. The Pang Valley Flood Forum has explored whether there is a potential for using the WBGWS to reduce groundwater levels to reduce the risk of groundwater flooding to properties. The EA have noted that it is not legally licensed for this purpose, running costs would be prohibitive and downstream flood risk in the lower Pang villages needs further analysis. Project Groundwater have committed to cover the cost of Jacobs consultants undertaking further analysis and peer review of the two MSc reports that have been done on the idea.

PROPOSED ACTION: Pumping of groundwater and cellar water and the need for a long-term solution to be discussed at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission.

I understand that the Eastbury Flood Alleviation Scheme worked well this winter.

PROPOSED ACTION: At October Scrutiny Commission we would like to know how lessons learned from this will be captured and inform Environment Agency decisions about future flood alleviation schemes.

Flood Forums and Sewage Action Group

Pang Valley Flood Forum and Lambourn Valley Flood Forum met during April. Pang Valley Flood Forum organised a flood resilience exhibition in Hampstead Norreys village hall on 20 January which was very well attended by the public.

Newbury Flood and Drainage Action Group is meeting monthly.

The Sewage Action Group for the Lambourn Upper Valley has been formed recently and held its first full meeting on 5 April.

PROPOSED ACTION: I would like to convey our thanks to all involved in these bodies for giving their time voluntarily to gather data and evidence, advise and support residents, and challenge the authorities about what action they are taking. Chairman of Scrutiny to write to these bodies.

Sewage

Residents in Lambourn, Eastbury, East Ilsley and Hampstead Norreys, and I expect other villages too, have experienced sewage in the streets and on pavements, in gardens, and backing up into toilets/sinks/showers. There has been widespread media coverage of the sewage in the Pang and Lambourn Valleys including the BBC, Daily Mail, Daily Express, and the Mirror. Been on front of NWN three times in the past five weeks. The UK correspondent of Le Monde visited and is due to publish a story imminently.

Thames Water has done some pipe-lining and manhole sealing work in the district, to prevent the inundation of the sewers with groundwater, as they explained when they came to Scrutiny Commission last autumn. Members will recall that Thames Water told us about their Groundwater Impacted System Management Plans. During the current period they have said they cannot access pipes until the groundwater has subsided. They have also said that if there is a wet summer, and the groundwater does not drop very significantly, we could be stuck with this situation for a long while.

PROPOSED ACTION: Seek clarity at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission that the WBC section 19 report and any other relevant documentation and evidence gathered this winter/spring will be used to inform revisions to the GISMP documents.

Many residents have reported incidents to Thames Water. In East Ilsley several residents were told by Thames Water that they were the only resident affected, and therefore action in the village was not a priority. This was clearly not true.

Many residents who have contacted Thames Water about sewage leaks have received email responses from Thames Water to say their problem has been resolved, when it has not. This adds insult to injury. I understand that they have apologised for this, and it will be fixed by June.

I have seen an email from Thames Water to a resident saying they visited on 12 April and they couldn't find any effluent on the road and found fish swimming in the river so were not concerned about watercourse pollution, despite there being sewage spewing directly into the River Pang on that date (and indeed every day previously going back to January, and every day since up to the present day).

PROPOSED ACTION: At October Scrutiny, ask Thames Water how they log calls, and why people are told they are the only ones affected, check that the automatic reply email system has been rectified, and ask why people are being told there is no evidence when there clearly is.

I have requested that the streets be cleaned. I was told by officers that this is the responsibility of Thames Water, and that the council's Environmental Health team would visit to assess the situation and pass evidence to Thames Water. I was then told there was no evidence of waste materials. I then took photos and videos to prove that there was evidence and sent them to officers. EH are going to visit the sites again.

PROPOSED ACTION: EH are sending someone out to have a look again. I await their response. Scrutiny would like clarity about who is responsible for clean-up.

A motion proposed by Councillor Stuart Gourley was passed at the March Council meeting. One of the resolutions was 'to ask the CEO, and the acting Leader of West Berkshire Council to write to the Thames Water CEO and demand for an action plan to be put in place across West Berkshire to resolve issues urgently across the area, and to set up a regular meeting with the Executive Director - Place, and relevant Service Directors, and Senior Thames Water Leadership to monitor, and track action in line with the urgency of each situation.

Other resolutions were to contact MPs urging an increase funding for the Environment Agency and review of OFWAT.

PROPOSED ACTION: We would like Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with the implementation of this motion's resolutions, particularly the demand for an 'action plan' and 'regular meeting'. How will this align with Scrutiny Commission's role, bearing in mind that Thames Water and the Environment Agency will be invited to attend Scrutiny Commission again this October?

Today I have received an email from Town Councillor Steve Masters regarding his request that WBC issue an abatement notice against Thames Water under Section 79e and section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990.

[Section 79e states that this is applicable where there is '(e) any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance'. In this case the discharge of sewage onto the streets and into the rivers in the Pang Valley, Lambourn Valley and Newport Road area, resulting in the deposit of faecal material, toilet paper, wet wipes and sanitary products. Section 80 states 'where a local authority is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, in the area of the authority, the local authority shall serve a notice ("an abatement notice") imposing all or any of the following requirements— (a) requiring the abatement of the nuisance or prohibiting or restricting its occurrence or recurrence; (b) requiring the execution of such works, and the taking of such other steps, as may be necessary for any of those purposes, and the notice shall specify the time or times within which the requirements of the notice are to be complied with'.]

In his correspondence Councillor Masters makes the case that local authorities have an obligation to do this notwithstanding any powers that any other regulators may have. There is also legal precedent, namely Regina v Carrick District Council ex parte Shelley dated 3 April 1996.

PROPOSED ACTION: The CEO has this evening acknowledged receipt of Cllr Masters' email.

Northbrook Stream pollution

At last October's Scrutiny Commission meeting with Thames Water and the Environment Agency, Clayhill Flood Warden Paula Saunderson raised the issue of industrial pollution in the Northbrook Stream and met Thames Water operatives several times in gardens next to the stream. Subsequently Thames Water undertook testing. Councillor Gourley has this week made the results available.

PROPOSED ACTION: Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether any action will be taken following the results.

Next

Are members in agreement with my action points?

Please can Gordon transfer actions points to 'actions arising from previous meetings'?

Make sure the relevant authorities have the October meeting in their diaries and are given as much notice as possible about the issues we would like to speak with them about.

Head of Sustainability, Richard Aylard, who attended Scrutiny Commission last autumn, has now left Thames Water and we do not know whether he will be replaced. Karen Nelson is still there. We need to make sure the relevant people attend.

Addendum

Councillor Woollaston reports that he managed to persuade the EA to cut weed in Eastbury and it was transformational. Flood disappeared and sewage leak stopped. They are now going to cut it every three months. Excess growth was caused by excess nutrients from human waste.

PROPOSED ACTION: At October meeting ask EA how we can ensure weed cutting is done more systematically in future on all our watercourses.

DRAFT

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

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 9 MAY 2024**

Councillors Present: Carlyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Justin Pemberton, Christopher Read, Laura Coyle (Substitute) (In place of Erik Pattenden) and Billy Drummond (Substitute) (In place of Jeremy Cottam)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeremy Cottam and Councillor Erik Pattenden

PART I

1. Election of the Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Carlyne Culver be elected Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

2. Appointment of the Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Dominic Boeck be elected Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

(The meeting commenced at 8.30pm and closed at 8.35pm)

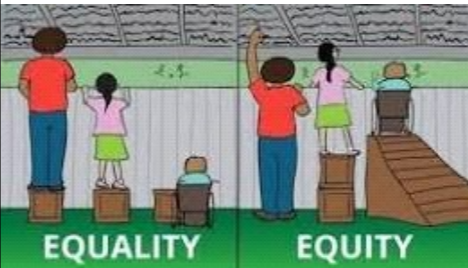
CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
89	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Consult with town / parish councils to understand what they wanted from the service	Felicity Harrison	In Progress - The libraries report did not go to Executive on 21 September 2023 as originally planned. Instead, the vision for libraries, based on the recommendations of the Libraries Review, was presented to Strategy Board on 9 November 2023. The review has been deferred until the new Libraries Manager is in post.
90	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Ensure that 'priorities', 'review recommendations' and 'opportunities for future investment are aligned and that targets are set	Felicity Harrison	
91	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Libraries report to be updated before submitting it to the Executive	Felicity Harrison	
112	11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency Set up a meeting with Councillor Stuart Gourley and council officers to discuss the London Road pumping station	Thames Water	In progress - Held initial meeting prior to Christmas, TW committed to come back before end of March to present firmer plans for London Road Pumping Station and Lower Way Sewage Treatment Works. They have now done this, albeit no firm plan was provided, but they have talked through the initial plan, and the various governance and business case processes it needs to go through to secure and ringfence funding for the upgrades required, subject to approval.
116	11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency Meet with the EA and West Berkshire Council to discuss the Northbrook in Newbury	Thames Water	In progress - Thames Water have supported with testing of the Northbrook. WBC have started an initial business case, and had initial conversations with the Environment Agency on potential funding opportunities for flood alleviation.
119	28/11/2023	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework	Alex O'Connor	<p>Complete - The following definition has been provided: <i>"Equality means everyone is given the same resources or opportunities; Equity recognises that everyone is different and allocates the resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome."</i></p> 
121	28/11/2023	Thames Water Update Circulate an update on Thames Water actions following the meeting.	Cllr Carolyne Culver	Complete - Verbal update provided at meeting on 25 April 2024.
		Scrutiny Commission Work Programme		Outstanding - The bus survey closed on 10 September 2023. Analysis of the results can be found in the 2023 Bus Service Improvement Plan:

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
122	28/11/2023	Check if the Bus Survey results are available and when the Transport Advisory Group would be looking at the Bus Strategy.	Gordon Oliver	https://westberks.gov.uk/media/57563/Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-2023/pdf/West_Berkshire_Council_Final_BSIP_2023_v.3.1.pdf?m=1718096310930 TAG was due to look at the Bus Strategy in July 2024, but the meeting has been postponed due to the election.
123	06/02/2024	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2024/25 Correct the typo in Appendix C of the report (% to £)	Joseph Holmes	In Progress - To be amended for 2024/25.
127	06/02/2024	Revenue Budget 2024/25 Provide a briefing on adult social care cases	Paul Coe	In progress - this has been delayed because of the elections. This will be reprogrammed to fit around Member training.
128	06/02/2024	Revenue Budget 2024/25 Programme reviews of SEND services and the Adult Social Care Strategy.	Gordon Oliver	In progress - SEND Reviews are proposed for 2024/25. Scrutiny structures are currently being reviewed, but it is likely that responsibility for scrutiny of Adult Social Care will move to another committee.
129	06/02/2024	2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Q3 Liaise with Catalin Bogos regarding comparator data for staff vacancy rates	Joseph Holmes	In progress - To be considered using information from the Local Government Association
130	06/02/2024	2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Q3 Programme a report on the Transformation Programme in discussion with the Chairman and Gabrielle Mancini	Gordon Oliver	In progress - Scope of the report needs to be further defined before it can be programmed.
131	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Scrutiny Commission to review the Section 19 report at the October meeting.	Jon Winstanley	In Progress - Awaiting draft report from WSP.
132	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Officers to prepare a report similar to that produced following scrutiny of the 2014 flooding response in order to provide reassurance that the Council was joined-up when it came to: a) its flood and water management related strategies; b) the various council teams that responded to such emergencies; and c) communication between authorities.	Carolyn Richardson	Awaiting response - this action was originally allocated to Jon Winstanley, but it has now been confirmed that Carolyn Richardson would be the officer to lead this piece of work.
133	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes For officers to consider how we might work more effectively with Thames Water and the Environment Agency on information/education campaigns.	Jon Winstanley	Complete - To be progressed through the Flood Forums

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
134	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes For officers to provide an update about take-up of flood grants at the October meeting of the Scrutiny Commission	Jon Winstanley	In progress - will be reported to the October meeting
135	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Pumping of groundwater and cellar water and the need for a long-term solution to be discussed at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission.	Thames Water	Will be discussed at the October meeting
136	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes For Scrutiny Commission to consider how lessons learned were being captured and how these could be used to inform Environment Agency decisions about future flood alleviation schemes.	Environment Agency	Will be discussed at the October meeting
137	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Chairman of Scrutiny Commission to write to the Flood Forums and Sewage Groups to thank them for giving their time to gather data and evidence, advise and support residents, and challenge the authorities about what action they were taking.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	Complete - This was actioned shortly after the meeting.
138	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Seek clarity at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission that the WBC Section 19 report and any other relevant documentation and evidence gathered this winter/spring will be used to inform revisions to the GISMP documents.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	Will be discussed at the October meeting
139	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes At October Scrutiny, ask Thames Water how they log calls, ask why people were told they were the only ones affected, check that the automatic reply email system has been rectified, and ask why people have been told there was no evidence when there clearly was.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	Will be discussed at the October meeting
140	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Establish who was responsible for clean-up	Jon Winstanley	Complete - Thames Water responsible for clean-up of sewer flooding. Relevant landowners are responsible for clean-up for other types of flooding.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
141	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Actions from Previous Minutes</p> <p>Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with Councillor Gourley's motion that was passed at March Council.</p>	Cllr Stuart Gourley	<p>In progress - Letters to DEFRA ministers all sent - no response received. Letter to TW CEO sent - reponse received and meeting arranged to discuss the longer term, and the strategic plans TW have to improve the situation.</p> <p>We are keeping the pressure on for proper long-term solutions from Thames Water and partnering where required on key infrastructure project develeopment.</p> <p>TW and WBC are still in contact with current ongoing issues where they remain and ensuring TW manging the real time impact of this.</p>
142	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Actions from Previous Minutes</p> <p>Officers to provide a response to Steve Masters' request for West Berkshire Council to issue an abatement order to Thames Water</p>	Clare Lawrence	<p>Complete - A response has been provided to Steve Masters.</p>
143	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Actions from Previous Minutes</p> <p>Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether action would be taken following the results of the Northbrook tests.</p>	Cllr Stuart Gourley	<p>In progress - Following a walkover of the Northbrook with the EA and Flood Forum members it was discussed about whether further testing was needed to determine pollutants. EA recommendation was not, as they belive in their expereince that its consistent with watercourses where surface water is drained to.</p> <p>There is small scale work planned on some areas of the Northbrook catchment to promote more sustainable drainage solutions.</p> <p>Further options are being investigated.</p>
144	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Actions from Previous Minutes</p> <p>Councillor Stuart Gourley to share contact details for Tess Fayers at Thames Water.</p>	Cllr Stuart Gourley	<p>Complete</p>
145	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Environment Strategy Operational Review</p> <p>Arrange a Town and Parish Climate Forum focused on biodiversity.</p>	Jenny Graham	<p>In progress - A presentation and discussion on biodiversity has been added to the Forward Plan for the Town and Parish Council Climate Forum on 6th November 2024. Prior to this updates will be provided on a regular basis to the group as usual in relation to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and how they can engage.</p>
146	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024</p> <p>Confirm why the CIL report was not due until May 2025.</p>	Clare Lawrence	<p>Awaiting response</p>
147	25/04/2024	<p align="center">Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024</p> <p>Confirm Planning Advisory Group's role in reviewing the CIL report.</p>	Clare Lawrence	<p>Awaiting response</p>

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref No:	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Comments/Update
148	25/04/2024	Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024 Provide further details about the scope of the Market Failure Policy.	Karen Felgate	Complete - The 'Market Failure Policy' sets out the roles and responsibilities of West Berkshire Council in the event of care market failure in an Adult Social Care service. The policy has since been renamed as the 'Care Market Failure Plan'.
149	25/04/2024	Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024 Provide further details about the scope of the Care Experienced as a Protected Characteristics report.	Rebecca Wilshire	Complete - A report requesting that Care Experienced be seen as a Protected Characteristic was taken to Executive following a Motion made at Full Council and was subsequently approved. Therefore, West Berkshire joins a number of local authorities that consider Care Experienced as a Protected Characteristic, affording them the same protections and rights as other groups who are considered to have a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010.
150	25/04/2024	Forward Plan 1 May to 31 August 2024 Address concerns about missing/outdated information on the Forward Plan	Sadie Owen	In progress - highlighted errors 17 June.
151	25/04/2024	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Rearrange the May meeting for June and advise officers.	Gordon Oliver	Complete - Meeting slipped to 17 July because of the elections.
152	25/04/2024	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Invite Thames Water and Environment Agency to the October meeting	Gordon Oliver	In progress - awaiting confirmation from Thames Water.

Last updated: 9 July 2024

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Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 4 – Declarations of interest

Verbal Item

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Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Waste Strategy

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	17 July 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Report Author:	Daniel Warne, Waste Manager
Forward Plan Ref:	

1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide information to assist the Scrutiny Commission in reviewing the development of the Council’s new Waste Strategy (enclosed at Appendix C).

[Please note that the draft Waste Strategy has not yet been through the Council’s internal governance process. The final strategy will be considered by the Council’s Executive later this summer]

2 Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Scrutiny Commission notes the steps currently being taken to develop a new waste strategy and to provide any relevant comments, as required.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	This report does not propose decisions with significant financial implications. The strategy does however contain potential service delivery options which could have significant financial implications as well as other proposals that will only be possible to implement with investment/efficiencies. If relevant projects progress as a result of the acceptance of the Waste Strategy, the Council’s Project Management Methodology (PMM) process will be used to seek the required additional funding through the budget-setting process.
Human Resource:	There are no direct HR implications as a result of the Waste Strategy development. The delivery of the Council’s waste collections and management has been outsourced under a

	<p>25-year PFI contract.</p> <p>Individual projects may identify HR implications, all of which will be dealt with through the PMM process and any appropriate bids for additional staff resource.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>There are no direct Legal implications as a result of this report. It is however worth noting that Legal input may be required if some of the proposals within the Waste Strategy are approved for implementation. This is because the Council may have to confirm compliance with emergency government requirements or undertake contract variation negotiations with the incumbent contractor. Individual projects may identify HR implications, all of which will be dealt with through the PMM process and any appropriate bids for additional staff resource.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>The main risks identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some initial public resistance if the option(s) selected for implementation involve significant changes which may be deemed to inconvenience householders. This risk is manageable through continued stakeholder engagement, effective communications and mitigation activity as required. • Funding availability could be a challenge for the implementation of significant changes. Separate business case justification will be completed if specific changes and projects are required. • Implementation of selected options within the emerging strategy will require suitable resource availability of Council and contractor staff.
<p>Property:</p>	<p>There are no direct property implications because of this report.</p>
<p>Policy:</p>	<p>The proposal relates to the Council's policy to be Net Zero by 2030.</p> <p>It also links to emerging national Waste and Resource Strategy measures including 'Simpler Recycling', extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging, and the deposit return scheme (DRS). It also links to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) which will see energy from waste facilities included within ETS from 2028.</p>

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		This report does not propose decisions with significant equality implications. This will be dealt with on a project-by-project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact on equalities. The upcoming public consultation on the Waste Strategy is expected to tease out any perceived inequalities that consultees may be aware of.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		This report does not propose decisions with significant impact on people with protected characteristics. This will need to be dealt with on a project-by-project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact on equalities. The upcoming public consultation on the Waste Strategy is expected to tease out any potential impacts on people with protected characteristics that consultees may be aware of.
Environmental Impact:	X			The Waste Strategy will have a significantly positive impact on the environment as it sets out how we can improve our recycling rate, reduce waste generation by householders, and can help reduce associated carbon emissions.

Waste Strategy

Health Impact:		X		This proposal is expected to have a neutral impact on health. This will be monitored on a project-by-project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact.
ICT Impact:		X		This will need to be dealt with on a project-by-project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact.
Digital Services Impact:		X		This will need to be dealt with on a project-by-project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact.
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			Implementation of the Waste Strategy will have a positive impact in supporting the Council priority of Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency by helping to achieve the Council's Net Zero ambitions. This will be supporting this priority by increasing recycling rates, encouraging waste minimisation and reducing carbon emissions.
Core Business:		X		Not applicable.
Data Impact:		X		At this stage it is not envisaged that there will be any significant data impact associated with the implementation of the Waste Strategy.

Consultation and Engagement:	<p>A number of activities have been carried out focused on consultation and engagement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Environment Advisory Group (EAG) Open Forum updates- Three workshops with members (held on 6 March 2023, 13 March 2023 and 3 July 2023) to gather feedback and foster dialogue.- A public workshop held with residents (on 23 May 2023) to gain valuable community perspectives.- Planned public consultation in autumn of 2024.
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The development of a new Waste Strategy is necessary as the previous one ended in 2022. This strategy will cover all aspects of waste management services, including household waste collection and management, litter clearance, street cleaning, and the management of abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping. Our goal is to balance continuity of services with enhancements and innovations through to 2032.
- 4.2 The new strategy aims to improve the Council’s waste management performance by increasing recycling rates, reducing waste generation, and minimising carbon emissions. This involves making household waste collection more efficient and promoting public recycling initiatives. Ultimately, the Council will strive to create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible community.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 This report is intended to assist the Scrutiny Commission in reviewing the development of the Waste Strategy. It includes the latest draft (Appendix C) and an overview of the development process to date.
- 5.2 The need for a new waste strategy is driven by the expiry of the previous strategy at the end of 2022 and upcoming changes in UK legislation, as outlined in the UK Government’s Resource and Waste Strategy and the Environment Act 2021. These changes will significantly impact some of our waste management services, introducing new requirements for recycling, waste reduction, and handling specific waste types. Our strategy must comply with these evolving regulatory frameworks while also seeking opportunities for service improvement and innovation.
- 5.3 The development of a new waste strategy offers numerous business benefits to the Council and its stakeholders, including:
 - Providing clear strategic framework for waste management practices and policies until 2032;

Waste Strategy

- Increasing recycling rates and reducing waste production, leading to cost savings and potential revenue from recycled materials;
- Increasing opportunities for effective communications with residents to achieve greater resource efficiency, and to reduce littering and fly-tipping offences;
- Enhancing environmental credentials, improving public perception, and supporting broader sustainability targets; and
- Reducing carbon emissions from waste management activities, contributing to the Council's Net Zero goals.

5.4 The new waste strategy will focus on services provided under the Integrated Waste Management Contract (IWMC) such as:

- Household waste collections and treatment;
- Litter clearance and street cleaning; and
- Management of abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping removal.

5.5 Out of scope:

The following items are outside the scope of the emerging waste strategy:

- Provision of commercial waste collections;
- Waste processing by third parties outside the current contract;
- Waste management activities not controlled by the Council;
- Infrastructure projects not included in current contract specifications; and
- Service delivery post-2032.

5.6 To ensure alignment with community needs and expectations, we have actively engaged with members and the public. Key activities include:

- Three workshops with members (held on 6 March 2023, 13 March 2023, and 3 July 2023) to gather feedback about member priorities and foster dialogue;
- A public workshop (held on 23 May 2023) to better understand community perspectives; and
- Presentation at the Environment Advisory Group (EAG) meeting (on 27 November 2023).

Upcoming Public Consultation

5.7 To ensure that we capture a comprehensive range of insights and feedback regarding the project and its anticipated outcomes, we will run a public consultation exercise after initial consideration of the emerging draft waste strategy by Council's Executive.

Waste Strategy

Our goal is to engage as many stakeholders as possible and to carefully consider all feedback in the finalisation of our strategy.

- 5.8 During the public consultation we will utilise digital and print platforms to facilitate easy access for community members wishing to provide their input.
- 5.9 All feedback provided will be meticulously reviewed and analysed by our project team. We are committed to a transparent process and will categorise and summarise the feedback to identify common themes, concerns, and suggestions.
- 5.10 Based on this comprehensive review, we will adjust and refine our strategy where possible, taking on board constructive suggestions and addressing relevant concerns. The final strategy will not only reflect a detailed understanding of community feedback but also demonstrate our commitment to incorporating the public input into our decision-making process.
- 5.11 Timely finalisation of the waste strategy after the public consultation exercise will be dependent on availability of key personnel within the project team.

Proposals

- 5.12 We are proposing to submit a draft waste strategy for public consultation by autumn 2024 in line with the timeline set out under section 5.14. This draft will include options for increasing recycling rates, reducing waste production, and minimising carbon emissions.
- 5.13 A finalised waste strategy document, incorporating public feedback, to be officially adopted by the end of 2024/25. This document will serve as the guiding framework for waste management services up to 2032.

Strategy Development Timeline

5.14 The timeline for developing the strategy has been outlined below:

- Procurement of Consultants: (September 2022)
- Workshops with Members and Residents: (March – July 2023)
- Production of the First Draft: (July 2023 – June 2024)
- Corporate, Operations and Executive: (July – September 2024)
- Public Consultation: (September – November 2024)
- Final Draft and Strategy Finalisation: (December 2024)
- Approval by the Executive: February 2025 (estimated)
- Completion and Review: The final strategy will be formally presented to stakeholders and published. A review mechanism will be established to monitor the implementation of the strategy and its effectiveness, setting the stage for continuous improvement and adaptation.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 No other options were considered because developing a new waste strategy is essential to meet legislative requirements and ensure continued service improvement. Without a new strategy, the Council could lack direction in waste management practices, potentially leading to non-compliance with upcoming regulations and missed opportunities for service enhancement and environmental benefits.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The development of a new waste strategy is crucial for ensuring that our waste management services remain effective, efficient, and compliant with upcoming legislative requirements. This strategy not only addresses the immediate need for continuity following the expiration of the previous strategy in 2022 but also sets the foundation for sustainable and innovative practices through 2032.
- 7.2 Through comprehensive engagement with members, the public, and external advisors, we have crafted a strategy that is both responsive to community needs and aligned with broader environmental goals. The forthcoming public consultation phase will help to further refine this strategy, ensuring that it benefits from a wide range of perspectives and insights.
- 7.3 Our commitment to increasing recycling rates, reducing waste production, and minimising carbon emissions will contribute to operational efficiencies, environmental sustainability, and improved public perception. The strategy's successful implementation will depend on the dedicated efforts of our team, supported by specialist consultants, and the active participation of the community.
- 7.4 As we move towards finalising and adopting the waste strategy, we are confident that it will provide a clear, actionable framework for waste management services up to 2032, fostering a more sustainable and environmentally responsible community.
- 7.5 In summary, this waste strategy represents a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach to waste management that prioritises environmental stewardship, community engagement, and continuous improvement within the confines of our current Integrated Waste Management Contract with Veolia. We look forward to the contributions of all stakeholders in shaping and implementing a strategy that will serve our community well into the future.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment – Not Used
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment – Not Used
- 8.3 Appendix C – Draft Waste Strategy – Attached as a separate document.

Background Papers:

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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

Name: Daniel Warne
Job Title: Waste Manager
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E-mail: daniel.warne@westberks.gov.uk

Document Control

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	
Summary of relevant legislation:	
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Name of Budget Holder:	Daniel Warne
Name of Service/Directorate:	Climate Change
Name of assessor:	Daniel Warne
Date of assessment:	21 June 2024
Version and release date (if applicable):	Not applicable

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

Objectives:	
Outcomes:	
Benefits:	

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

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

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 type="checkbox"/>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

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

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

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

Name:

Date:

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

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

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

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

Directorate:	Place
Service:	Climate Change
Team:	Waste Management
Lead Officer:	Daniel Warne, Waste Manager
Title of Project/System:	Waste Strategy
Date of Assessment:	21 June 2024

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

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

Waste Strategy

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

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

Draft Waste Strategy

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Draft Waste and Resources Strategy

West Berkshire Council 2024-2032

09 2024



Report For

West Berkshire Council

Research Team

Jessica Fairbrother, Madelyn Robertson & Manon Bataille

Technical Leads

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Prepared By

Jessica Fairbrother & Madelyn Robertson

Quality Review

Peter Jones

Approved By



Peter Jones

(Project Director)

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the residents of West Berkshire that attended the resident's engagement workshop and to Council officers and members for their insight and feedback which supported the development of this strategy.

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Forward/ Executive Summary

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1.0

Introduction

1.1 Strategy Development

This document sets out the strategic direction for West Berkshire Council to take in managing its recycling, waste and street cleansing services up until 2032.

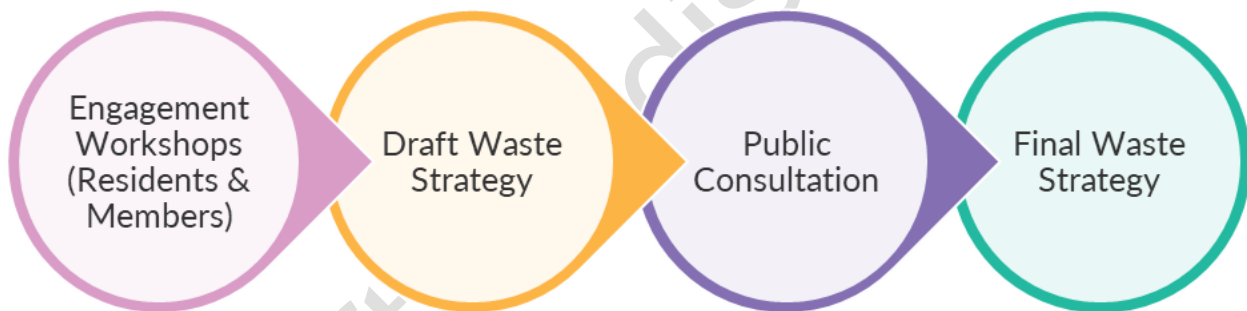
In developing this strategy, we have focussed on developing priorities and actions that recognise the different types of collections residents of West Berkshire receive, alongside understanding the impact of change within the different communities within West Berkshire.

The process of developing this strategy has been informed by:

- several engagement workshops with residents and elected members of the Council; and
- how cost, performance, and carbon modelling of different options to collecting waste and recycling can contribute towards meeting the Council's targets of increased recycling. Modelling results can be found in Appendix xx.

As part of the strategy development process, the Council will be consulting with the public on the key proposals, which will be developed further over the coming months. The consultation will take place in 2024 and run for four to six weeks. Feedback received from residents will be used to shape the final strategy (see Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1. Development of the Waste and Resources Strategy



This strategy intends to complement other existing Council strategies including the Environment Strategy and the associated Environment Strategy Delivery Plan managed by the Councils Environment Delivery team. It is also aligned with the Council Strategy 2023 – 27. The Council Strategy sets out five priority areas and the main ones which will be supported by this strategy include:

Priority Area 1: Services we are proud of; and

Priority Area 3: Tackling the climate and ecological emergency.

When adopted, the new Waste Strategy will replace the Council's previous Waste Strategy 2002 – 2022¹. Selected service changes since the previous strategy was published have been set out under Annex A.

¹<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/environmentstrategy>

² <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/environmentdp>

³ <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/Council-Strategy-2023-2027>

Current Performance

In 2021/22 (the most recent year for which published data is available) West Berkshire had a recycling rate of 49%, placing it joint 85th out of the 338 English waste collection authorities. This places West Berkshire above the national average of England of 44%. West Berkshire's current and historic recycling rate compared to England's average can be found in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2. West Berkshire's Current and Historic Recycling Rate Compared to England's Average

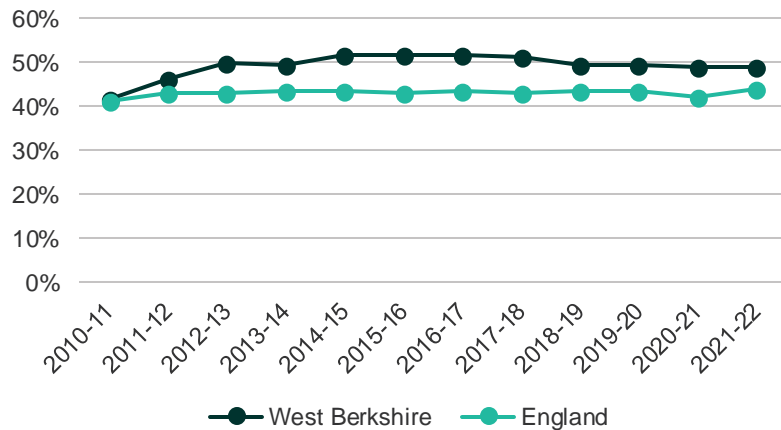


Figure 1-3. Compositional Analysis of the General Waste Bin



However, compositional analysis of kerbside collected bins in August 2023 found that over 42% of waste that people put in the residual waste bin could have been recycled – food waste alone made up 22%. Figure 1-3 shows a full analysis of the types of waste found in the average general waste bin in West Berkshire.

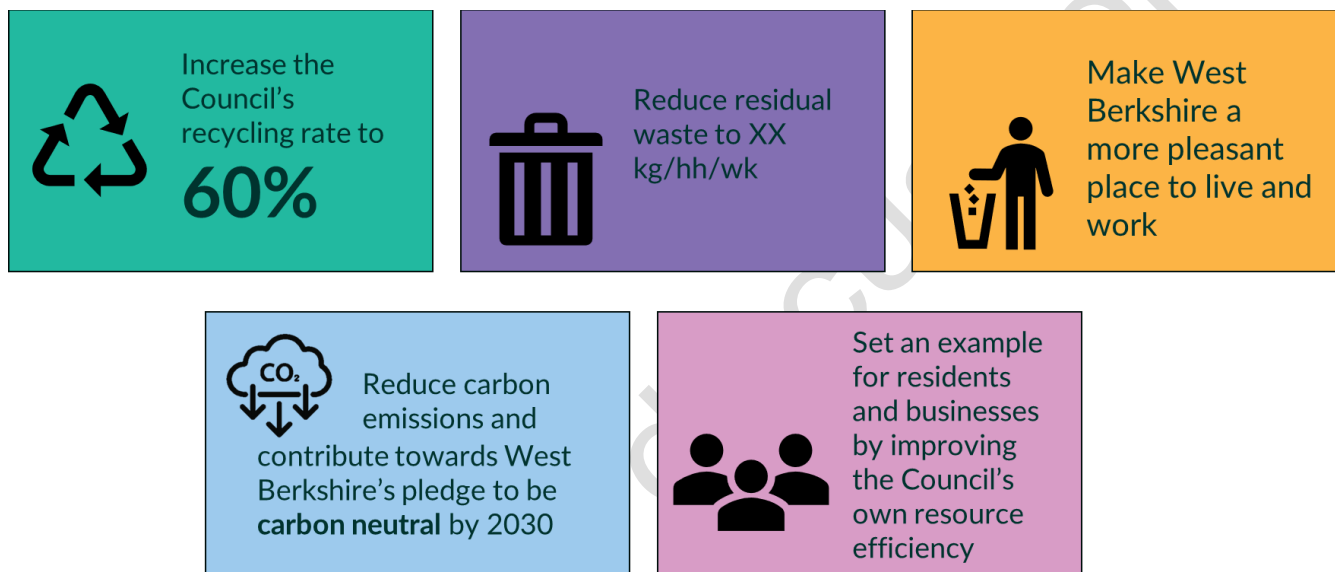
Furthermore, a survey undertaken in August 2023 of 280 properties found that only 59% were making use of the separate weekly food waste recycling service, indicating that there is considerable potential for residents to recycle more.

Following the latest annual Local Environmental Quality survey undertaken over three tranches between April 2023 and March 2024 the level of litter and detritus within the district is of a good level, this is the highest possible score.

¹ https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/36818/Waste-Strategy-2002-2022/pdf/Waste_Strategy_2002-2022.pdf?m=1563274615137

1.2 Vision for the Strategy

The aims of this strategy are outlined below.



The strategy defines how the Council can achieve these goals and sets out the steps the Council will take to continue to improve the services it offers, while responding to changing national policies and incentives and feedback from residents. The goals and initiatives outlined in this strategy will also contribute towards the Council's Environment Strategy which aims for West Berkshire Council to become Net Zero by 2030.²

Throughout the lifetime of the strategy, we will engage with our communities in line with our Customer Charter³, improving waste and recycling services while seeking to improve the local environment through effective communications, education, and enforcement. The performance of these services will contribute towards nation-wide recycling and waste reduction targets.

² West Berkshire Council. *Environment Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/environmentstrategy>

³ West Berkshire Council. *Customer Charter*. Available at: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/54156/Customer-Service-Charter-January-2023/pdf/WBC_Customer_service_charter_January_2023.pdf?m=1675348889277

2.0

Local Context

2.1 The Recycling, Waste and Street Cleansing Services

The Recycling and Waste Collection Services

The Council endeavours to provide all West Berkshire residents with equivalent services and access to recycling services, so each resident can recycle the same material whether they have a street-level (kerbside collection) or collections from a shared bin store. However, there are slight differences to the services provided to a very small minority of properties, such as residents living in flats above shops and in hard-to-reach areas. This difference is largely due to practical issues associated with the storage of waste between collections and transporting waste to a suitable collection point. More information about recycling and waste collection services in West Berkshire can be found. www.westberks.gov.uk/rubbishandrecycling

In addition to the kerbside recycling and waste collection services, the Council also currently operates nine Mini-Recycling Centres (MRCs) and two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The MRCs are located across the district and offer collection points for a variety of materials, including some not currently collected at kerbside, such as:



More information about the mini-recycling centres and where they are located can be found [at www.westberks.gov.uk/minirecyclingcentres](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/minirecyclingcentres).

The two HWRCs are at Newtown Road, Newbury, in the west of the district and Padworth Lane, Lower Padworth near Aldermaston Wharf in the east. At these centres residents can recycle and dispose of larger bulky items or excess waste that they cannot fit in their bin and items not collected at street level (kerbside) or communal bin stores, such as:

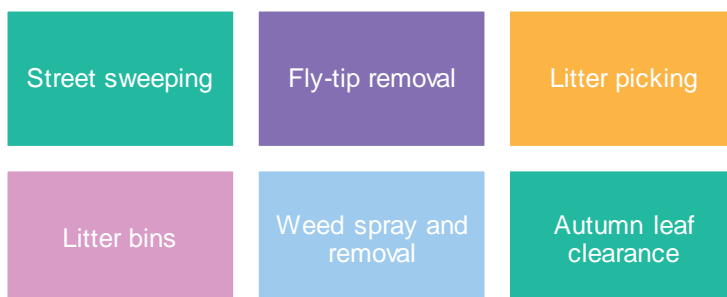


Both HWRCs have recently began collecting coffee pods and vapes for recycling. More information about what can be taken to Newtown Road HWRC can be found www.westberks.gov.uk/newtownroad, and information on the Padworth HWRC can be found www.westberks.gov.uk/padworthhwrc.

The Council also offers to collect large bulky waste items (such as sofas, tables, chairs, mattresses, and beds) from residents' homes. The service costs £60 for the collection of up to five items. More information on the Council's bulky waste collection service can be found www.westberks.gov.uk/Bulky.

The Street Cleansing Service

The Council provides a comprehensive street cleansing service, along 1303km of public highway and 827km of public footways and cycle paths by sweeping, litter picking and providing litter bins, all contributing to efforts to make West Berkshire a pleasant place to work and live. The current street cleansing services includes:



All the of these services are provided by Veolia as part of our 25-year PFI contract which started in 2008. Our street cleansing service is operated to ensure compliance with the acceptable levels of litter and detritus as set out in the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (COPLAR). Further information regarding service provision can be found at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/keepwestberkstidy>

To compliment the street cleaning services the Council also provide litter picking equipment and collection to community groups across the district, this plays an important role in not only complimenting our extensive street cleansing service it also plays an integral role at engaging with community groups and promoting the anti-littering message.

The population is becoming older

The population has increased by 4.9% between 2011 and 2021

9,000 new homes will be built by 2039

Ninth least densely populated local authority in the South East

2.2 West Berkshire's Demographics

West Berkshire has a relatively young population at present; however, this is expected to change significantly in future years with the average age of the population expected to increase.³ Furthermore, West Berkshire has also seen its population increase by 4.9% in the last decade, from around 153,800 in 2011 to 161,400 in 2021.⁴ It is therefore essential that this strategy should include ways to identify and communicate with West Berkshire's changing population, including new residents moving into the area, in a way that is simple and easy to understand.

The increase in West Berkshire's population is also driving the need for more housing. The 2022-2039 Local Plan includes proposals for 9,000 new homes in West Berkshire by the end of 2039.⁵ As part of thinking about how we develop our

³ Office for National Statistics. Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000037/>

⁴ Office for National Statistics. Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000037/>

⁵ West Berkshire Council (2022). The Local Plan Review. Available at: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/local-plan-review>

waste and recycling services, the Council will need to design schemes that work for all our residents, whilst understanding the challenges they face and what is appropriate for each housing type.

Finally, as of 2021, West Berkshire is the ninth least densely populated local authority in the Southeast of England, with approximately two people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.⁶ West Berkshire is therefore required to consider the relatively large distance between households in rural areas and between residential areas in any future service changes.

Draft for discussion

⁶ Office for National Statistics. Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000037/>

3.0

National Context

Alongside considering our local context, as part of the development of this strategy the Council also has to consider the wider national drivers of change. The UK Government has announced a number of major policy changes which will affect how waste and recycling is managed in England, and how services are funded across the UK. These are planned to take effect during the lifetime of this strategy and, if implemented, will significantly influence how waste and recycling is managed in West Berkshire. The 3 major policies are:



It should be noted that the policies discussed below are still in development by the UK Government and not yet finalised, so there may be further amendments to their content or timing made during the lifetime of this strategy.

3.1 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Expected implementation date: Originally scheduled for April 2025 (currently delayed)

Impact: West Berkshire Council will receive funding/payment for operating an 'efficient and effective' household waste service. It is not yet clear how the government will assess local authority performance or the efficiency and effectiveness of household waste services, but it is likely to take into account local circumstances such as geography and deprivation. It is also not clear on the amount of funding that will be received, and how it will affect the overall waste and recycling budgets of each individual Council.

Under the proposals, packaging producers will be responsible for the full net cost of managing the packaging they handle or place on the market. This includes the cost of collecting, transporting, sorting and disposal of packaging waste, whether from households or businesses. It also includes administration and overhead costs. The scheme will cover packaging waste collected in the recycling and general waste streams, as well as material that is placed in street litter bins.

3.2 Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

Expected implementation date: From October 2027

Impact: West Berkshire is likely to see fewer DRS eligible materials, such as plastic bottles and metal drink cans, placed in household recycling and general waste containers. Experience from other countries indicates that a DRS may also have a positive impact on street litter.

Under a DRS, people who buy drinks in certain kinds of containers will have to pay a small deposit, which they can reclaim by taking the container to a dedicated return site (situated in shops and a variety of other locations). In England, the scheme will target plastic and metal drinks containers between 50 ml and 3 litres. The DRS is likely to lead to a significant improvement in the proportion of the target containers that are captured for recycling, while also reducing street litter. It is currently expected that the scheme will involve consumers returning materials to a collection point (such as a supermarket) to claim their deposit, although digital solutions are also being explored that would allow residents to reclaim their deposit by placing items in their household recycling.

3.3 Simpler Recycling

Expected implementation date: 31 March 2026

Impact: West Berkshire will be required to:

- Collect plastic pots, tubs and trays and cartons, foil and aluminium trays.
- Collect plastic film (from 2027).
- Provide a separate food waste service to flats above shops where practicable.).

The Government wishes to achieve greater consistency in the materials that are collected for recycling by different English local authorities, and in the way their local services are designed. The requirements below have been consulted upon, but the results of the consultation have not yet been published and the proposed dates are now subject to delay.

The key requirements on local authorities are:

- **To collect a core set of recyclable materials for recycling (proposed for April 2026):** The core set of recyclable materials is expected to include glass, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, steel and aluminium cans and tins, and is also likely to include foil, aerosols and cartons. Plastic film is expected to be phased in as a core material during 2027.

West Berkshire Council already meets most of these requirements, but may be required to collect and recycle:

- plastic pots, tubs and trays and cartons at the kerbside, perhaps from April 2026.
- plastic film, perhaps from April 2027.
- **To offer an opt-in garden waste collection service (proposed for April 2026):** Local authorities will be required to provide a garden waste collection service where it is requested but, as is currently the case, they can continue to choose to charge for this service. Householders will be able to make their own decision about whether they wish to use this optional service or make other arrangements. The Council already provides an opt in chargeable service, however it has started to phase out the charge.

- **To separately collect food waste weekly (proposed for April 2026):** The Council has already introduced separate food waste collections across the district from October 2022 (see Case Study 1), as such, the Council is already meeting this requirement. The Council will continue work to provide this service to the properties that do not currently receive it, such as flats above shops, where practicable.

Case Study 1 - Separate Food Waste Collection service.

The objective of introducing a separate food waste collection service was to comply with emerging government resource management policies, improve recycling performance, and enhance service efficiency. The new service replaced the previous fortnightly commingled garden and food waste collection with a weekly separate food waste collection for all properties.

The implementation of the separate food waste collection service began in October 2022. This initiative was in direct response to government policies requiring local authorities to provide free separate weekly food waste collections. To facilitate this transition, eight new collection vehicles and 120,000 containers were procured and delivered with our waste contractor, Veolia, and engaged in negotiations with them to ensure seamless delivery of the service.

To foster community engagement, a competition was launched in local primary schools to name the collection vehicles. This initiative not only generated excitement but also provided an opportunity to visit the winning schools with the new vehicles, thereby promoting the service in a positive light. An extensive social media communication plan was implemented to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the transition period.



Minor public scepticism regarding the new service, particularly concerns about odours and vermin, was addressed through a comprehensive FAQ and targeted social media communications. Emphasis was placed on the benefits of weekly collections, the use of lockable lids, and the availability of liners to mitigate these concerns. Initial studies indicated that only 46% of residents were using the service, resulting in a weekly collection of 78 tonnes. However, following a summer communication campaign, which included affixing 'no food waste' stickers on every black general waste bin, participation rates increased to 59%, with weekly tonnage rising to 88 tonnes.

In addition to addressing some public concerns about odours, another campaign is due to be launched to highlight the benefits of using the service. A waste compositional study of the black bin conducted in August 2023 shows that 20% of its contents are food waste that could be recycled as part of our weekly collection. There will also be a trial using bin housing for communal bin stores to improve capture rates and reduce contamination, further enhancing the service's effectiveness.

The introduction of the separate food waste collection service has proven to be a significant step towards increasing the amount of waste recycled within the district. So far 4,500 tonnes of food waste have successfully been diverted from landfill during 2022/23 into our own composting facility, where it is mixed with garden waste collected from residents and turned into soil conditioner used by local landowners and landscapers. Despite some initial public scepticism, extensive community engagement and effective communication strategies have successfully increased participation rates and the weekly tonnage of collected food waste. The ongoing efforts to address concerns and improve service efficiency underscore the importance of proactive communication and community involvement in achieving sustainable waste management goals. Following the introduction of the separate food waste collection service, the Council's recycling rate has increased from 49% in 2021/22 to 53% in 2023/24.

- **To collect different dry recycling streams separately where practicable:** The Council meets this requirement as it collects its recyclable materials in three separate streams (materials are separated by residents into different recycling containers and then collected and processed separately)
- **Collect residual waste at a minimum frequency of once every two weeks (proposed for April 2026):** The Council already collects residual waste at a minimum frequency of at least once every two weeks, so is already meeting this requirement. However this is still going through a private consultation process and is subject to change.

3.1 Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse

3.2 Fly tipping

4.0

Future Services

The Council is dedicated to continuing to develop and improve its services to suit the area's evolving needs, meet the incoming national requirements, increase our recycling rate and become a Net Zero Council by 2030. This may mean changing how recycling and waste services are delivered in West Berkshire.

To consider the possible future options, the Council – with the support of Eunomia Research & Consulting, our external technical advisors - has undertaken modelling of a range of different future options for the design of recycling and waste collections from households, within the framework set by national policy and the Council's contractual commitments. This has helped the Council to understand the impact that any service change could have on recycling, carbon, and financial performance. We are not proposing any changes to how the street cleansing and litter collection service operate as part of this strategy. Although it will identify key themes and interventions.

These options were developed in conjunction with residents and elected members of the Council at several workshops during the first half of 2023. This helped the Council to understand residents' points of view, opinions and concerns regarding the current waste collection services and any future potential changes.

Options explored included:

- The kerbside collection of plastic pots, tubs, and trays (PTT), plastic film, cartons and aluminium foil to comply with requirements set out under Simpler Recycling (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**).
- The free collection of garden waste.
- Reducing the collection frequency of general waste, whether to three weekly or four weekly collections.
- Reducing the capacity of black bins used for the collection of residual waste; and
- The use of different types of collection vehicles.

The modelling took account of key data, including household numbers, the quantities of each type of waste we collect, vehicle requirements, staffing requirements, costs incurred by the Council to collect and manage waste/recycling, and the types of receptacles/containers that residents will need. To understand the possible impact of the future options, West Berkshire was benchmarked against other, socio-demographically similar, authorities who already deliver such services.

As shown in Table 4-1, the modelling indicates that the best performing options were those where the frequency of general waste collections were reduced. Reducing the collection of general waste to every three weeks could increase West Berkshire's recycling rate to approximately 56%, while reducing it to four-weekly could increase the recycling rate to 60%. It is important to note that modelling results provide an indication of potential outcomes based on reasonable assumptions, and actual results following implementation of changes may vary.

With support from Eunomia Research & Consulting, the Council also undertook a RAG (Red – Amber - Green) rating exercise which scored each option against quantitative and qualitative criteria including cost, impact on recycling rate and carbon emissions, ease of implementation, public and political acceptability, risk, flexibility, social value and adherence to legislation and policy. As shown in Table 4-1, the option that scored the highest estimated recycling rate was option 5, in which residual waste collections would be reduced to four weekly.

The Council recognises that any reduction in residual waste collection frequency could be challenging for selected households and could depend on finalisation of government guidance. However, some of the UK councils with the highest recycling rates have already introduced less frequent collections while still providing services that meet householders' needs and expectations. If any change to collection frequency were to be made, the Council would take steps to avoid undue impact on households that produce unavoidably large amounts of general waste.

Table 4-1. Modelled Options and Estimated Impact on Recycling Rate

	Rubbish	Dry Recycling	Collection Vehicles	Garden Waste	Estimated Recycling Rate	RAG Score
Baseline	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Current vehicles	Charged	51%	-
Option 1*	Fortnightly	Plus PTT, film and foil	Current vehicles	Charged	52%	-
Option 2 & 3	Fortnightly	Plus PTT, film and foil	Alternative vehicles	Charged	52%	TBC
Option 4	Three-weekly	Plus PTT, film and foil	Current vehicles	Charged	56%	TBC
Option 5	Four-weekly	Plus PTT, film and foil	Current vehicles	Charged	60%	TBC
Option 6	Fortnightly	Plus PTT, film and foil	Current vehicles	Free	53%	TBC

*Option 1 is an enhanced baseline which takes into account the impact of DRS and includes separate weekly food waste collections.

The Council's Preferred Option

Section to be complete once the Council has decided on the preferred options or the option they have decided to take forward. (with pros and cons the preferred option(s))

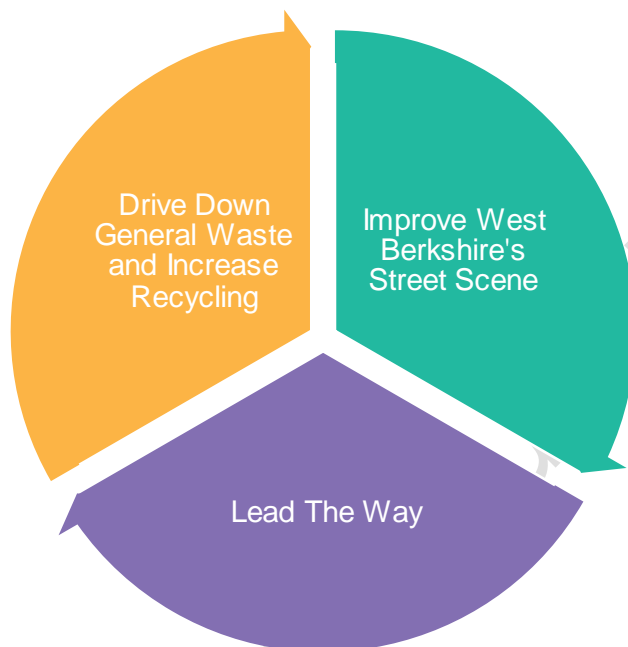
Next steps: The Council will consult with residents before implementing any changes to the recycling and waste services. The Council will also endeavour to support any changes to the general waste collections with easy to access and understand guidance and information about the new service.

5.0

Key Themes and Interventions

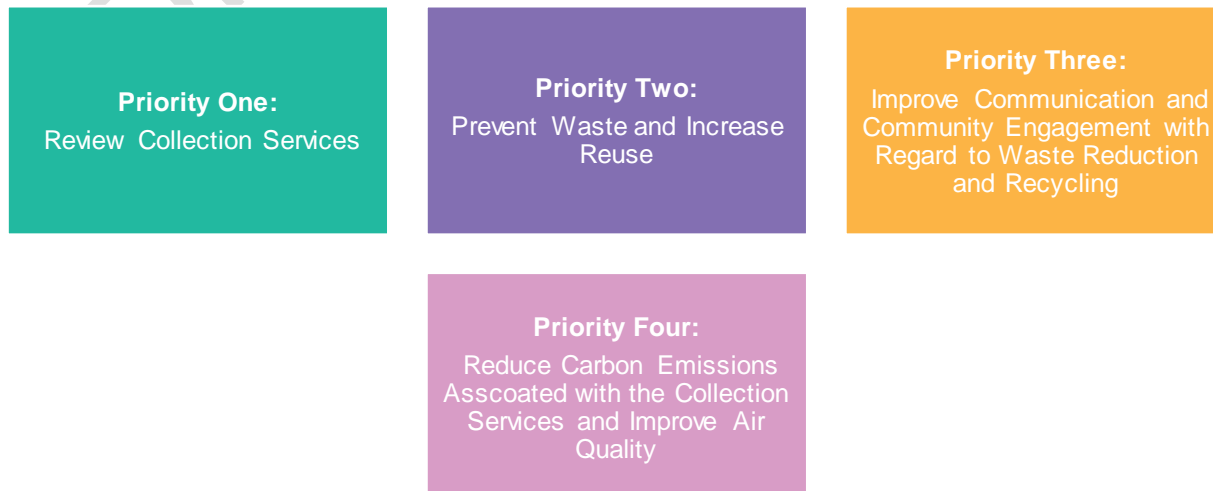
This section looks at the key principles and priorities that will help moving West Berkshire Council towards achieving its targets and vision for this strategy. There are three key principles to this strategy, which are outlined in Figure 5-1, each of which contains several priorities which are explored in the relevant sections below.

Figure 5-1. The Three Key Principles of West Berkshire's Waste and Resources Strategy



5.1 Drive Down General Waste & Increase Recycling

The first key principle is that the Council should 'drive down general waste and increase recycling'. Five priority areas have been identified which will help the Council to achieve this:



How the Council plans to achieve these priorities is explored in the following sections.

Priority One: Reviewing Collection Services

The Council is dedicated to continuing to develop and improve its recycling and waste collection services, increasing the amount of waste it collects for recycling to 60% and beyond, both to suit its residents and meet incoming national requirements (Section 3.0). This may mean changing how recycling and waste is collected in West Berkshire. To consider the possible future options, the Council with the support of Eunomia Research & Consulting has undertaken mathematical modelling of a range of different options for how it might collect waste from households in the district in future, to understand their likely recycling, carbon and financial performance. The Council with the support of Eunomia Research & Consulting has also undertaken engagement with residents to understand residents' points of view, opinions and concerns regarding the current waste collection services and any future potential changes.

1. Consider changes to the frequency of waste collections (TBC).

As discussed in Section 4.0, research and modelling has shown that reducing the collection frequency of general waste from every fortnight to every three weeks could increase the recycling rate to 56%, and reducing the collection frequency to every four weeks could increase the recycling rate to 60%. Such changes in the collection service would normally have to go to public consultation before implementation if the Council's leadership wish to implement such a change. It would not affect households that share bins (e.g. those living in flats). Changes will be supported by communication and campaign material to encourage residents to minimise the amount of waste they produce and to recycle everything they can. In addition, the Council will assess how they can address any valid concerns raised by residents. This may include the provision of a separate nappy collection for households with children in nappies, and to continue assessments for a larger general waste bin for large families or households that produce unavoidably large quantities of general waste.

2. Review receptacles provided to residents to present their waste for collection (from TBC).

The majority of residents in West Berkshire have their household recycling collected from two 55L recycling boxes and one 90L reusable green sack. Residents are asked to separate their recycling and place glass in one box, paper and cardboard in the second box and plastic bottles and metal packaging in the reusable green sack, large card can also be presented for collection so long as it is folded flat no higher or wider than a normal wheely bin. During engagement workshops concerns were raised that problems can arise in the event residents leave their recycling boxes and reusable sacks outside for collection for extended periods of time, or on windy days: 1) recycling can be blown out of the boxes; and 2) the reusable sacks can blow away because they are quite lightweight and their design means that they are quite easily caught by the wind.

To prevent litter being caused in this way, the following options could be considered:

- Option 1: Provide residents with nets for the current recycling boxes. These are elastic nets which often attach to one side of the box and stretch over the handles to contain the recycling within the box.
- Option 2: Provide residents with lids for the current recycling boxes. These are lids which fit on top of the recycling box and prevent recycling from escaping.

- Option 3: Replace the reusable sacks with boxes or weighted reusable sacks. As the reusable sacks are fairly lightweight and prone blowing away, the Council could instead provide residents with a third recycling box (with a lid to contain the recycling) or weighted sack.

Option 4: Replace the reusable sacks with a wheeled bin. This would ensure that we provide residents with enough capacity to present the wider range of materials for recycling in line with Simpler Recycling proposals, rather than providing either another reusable bag or box.

- Option 5: Supply residents with troliboc containers. The Troliboc system comprises three boxes that stack on top of each other on a trolley. The system therefore has a small footprint (similar to a wheeled bin), and usually ensures that waste is kept contained on windy days and is easier for residents to present for collection because it can be wheeled out to the street on collection day. There are flaps in the middle and lower boxes so residents can post material into them without needing to unstack the boxes.

- Option 6: No change.

For each of the options mentioned above, we will consider the following:

- the impact that it could have on the amount of recycling we collect.
- the impact that it could have on reducing litter and improving the street scene.
- whether there are any operational and logistical challenges.
- the impact that it could have on residents (for example, whether we expect it to be easy for difficult for residents to us).
- the impact on the quality and value of wet paper and card.
- the cost of implementing and maintaining each option; and
- feedback and examples of other local authorities that have implemented similar containers.

3. Consider the implications Simpler Recycling has on the current collection method for collecting recycling (from TBC).

At present, West Berkshire Council operates a multistream service for the collection of household recycling. To support this service, the Council provides its residents with two recycling boxes (one for paper and card, the other for glass bottles and containers), and a reusable sack (for the collection of plastic bottles and metal packaging).

This collection method aligns with the requirements of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 which require local authorities that collect paper, metal, plastic, or glass to do so separately from one another where it is necessary and practicable to do so. It is also consistent with similar requirements written into the Environment Act 2021, although in response to the consultation on 'Consistency in household and business recycling in England', the government has proposed potential changes (called 'Simpler Recycling') that would provide a blanket exemption from the separate collection requirements in the Environment Act, thereby permitting all local authorities to provide co-mingled collection of recyclable materials if they wish.

A co-mingled service allows residents to deposit all recyclable materials into a single container – typically a wheeled bin – which is then collected in one compartment of a recycling vehicle. The mixed materials are subsequently sent to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting by material type. Authorities that adopt co-mingled collections typically choose them because they consider the system simpler for residents, who

can place all recyclables in a single container; and because they anticipate that the logistical efficiencies of using a single vehicle to empty wheeled bins will outweigh the additional sorting costs that arise from needing all materials to be processed by an MRF. However, this reduces the quality and value of the material collected and increases contamination, while also reducing the demand for the material by reprocessors who turn the recyclable waste into new products.

While West Berkshire Council faces no legal impediment to changing its collection system to mix more, or all, of its dry recycling in a single stream, it is currently under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Veolia, which was awarded in 2008 and is set to conclude in 2032. This covers the collection, sorting, recycling, and treatment of waste. Any alteration that the Council wish to make to its waste collection system within the lifespan of the contract would require a contract variation to be negotiated with Veolia and would be likely to result in an increase in contract costs.

Switching from a multistream service to a co-mingled service could have significant performance and financial implications for West Berkshire Council. As such we will consider the following:

- **Recycling Performance and the Quality of Material Collected:** While it is sometimes claimed that the simplicity of co-mingled collections leads to increased recycling, the best available evidence indicates that, once contamination is excluded from the amount of recycling collected, the differences between the performance of different systems is marginal. Introducing co-mingled collections would therefore not be expected to significantly affect the Council's recycling performance. However, it could result in more of some materials, such as glass and HDPE plastic, being sent to lower grade reprocessing.
 - **Collection Costs:** Co-mingled collections are expected to be more efficient and therefore have lower associated collection costs. However, they also require different collection vehicles and systems, necessitating a significant investment in new bins and vehicles, as well as communication with residents.
 - **The Material Recovery Facility (MRF):** Co-mingled collections require the mixed recyclables to be sorted at an MRF. This could lead to additional costs as the current MRF is designed only to separate plastic and cans and would require substantial modification in order to ensure it is able to manage a fully co-mingled material stream.
 - **Contractual Changes:** West Berkshire Council currently has a contract with Veolia, and changing the collection method would require a contract variation potentially leading to higher costs.
4. **Continue to work towards phasing out the Garden Waste charge with the ambition to make it free for all households (from TBC).**

We remain committed to our goal of phasing out the Garden Waste charge. Significant efforts have already been made to reduce the fee, and we are continuously working to make it more affordable for those in need. While we strive to phase out this charge, we recognise the importance of being financially responsible, as the revenue generated from the Garden Waste charge is crucial in funding vital council services. Balancing these priorities ensures we can support our community effectively while working towards our ambitious goal.

We will also consider:

5. **Installing CCTV at mini-recycling centres (from TBC).** The installation of CCTV will allow the Council to identify and monitor anyone misusing the services. This might include people not placing the correct materials in the correct container or fly-tipping. CCTV is already in use at our

HWRCs to deter and detect abuse by rogue traders using the services instead of paying for a commercial waste collection.

6. **Expanding the different types of recyclable materials collected at kerbside, as required by emerging government policies (from TBC).** This will likely include kerbside collection of plastic pots, tubs and trays and plastic film. The collection of plastic pots, tubs and trays is expected to be introduced by the end of 2024, with plastic film and other specified materials such as cartons and foil by March 2026, but may be delayed until after the eventual implementation of EPR (see Section 3.0). Any changes to the types of materials collected will be supported by effective communication with residents. It should be noted that the collection of additional materials may be subject to negotiation with the Council's collection contractor.
7. **Providing an equivalent level of core service across all property types, including the roll out of a food waste recycling service to flats above shops where practicable (from TBC).** The expansion of the service is necessitated by new legal requirements but will represent an improvement in services for the very small amount of residents that do not currently have food waste collections.
8. **Increasing the number of MRCs to collect a range of materials that are not collected kerbside at the MRCs and HWRCs (from TBC).** The Council will explore the addition of several mini-recycling centres across the area to expand the current service, and whether additional materials can be collected at the MRCs and/or the HWRCs.
9. **Supporting the collection of additional materials (such as small electricals) at kerbside (from TBC).** The Council will explore the feasibility of collecting additional materials from kerbside, not currently required by 'Simpler Recycling' (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**), such as small electrical appliances and batteries.
10. **We will continue to provide guidance for developers and managing agents on communal bin properties (from TBC).** The Council currently offers guidance to developers or managing agents upon request. Improving the accessibility to this guidance will assist developers and managing agents. By publishing this information and seeking to incorporate it into planning and highway processes will set minimum standards for the provision of facilities to allow proper waste management in new housing and commercial developments and advise on how these requirements can be met. To ensure developers are using the most effective and efficient technology.

Priority Two: Prevent Waste and Increase Reuse

The best way to deal with waste is not to generate it in the first place. The benefits of waste reduction and reuse include reduced energy consumption and resource use, and therefore reduced carbon emissions and pollution. Waste prevention is usually achieved through lifestyle changes, which can be facilitated through incentives that encourage behaviour change. It can also be enabled through reuse, so that items go on to have a second life rather than being thrown away. This can be made easier by products being designed for re-use, and by making it attractive, easy and affordable to buy and own second-hand items (communication and behaviour change). There are steps the Council can take to encourage waste prevention and reuse locally.

1. **We will continue to work with local charitable organisations and explore how we can increase the amount of bulky items like furniture we can divert for reuse. (from TBC).**

We currently work with The Community Furniture Project which is a local charity that re-sell donated items of furniture and other household goods. The Council will continue to communicate and advertise their collection point at our Newtown Road HWRC and their other services that allows residents to have their unwanted bulky items, such as furniture and electrical items collected, enabling them to dispose of

their preloved furniture in an accessible and appropriate way. Promoting this service is key to increasing uptake.

- 2. We will explore options to expand our reuse provision with an ambition to provide a donation point and or reuse shop at our Padworth Lane HWRC. (from TBC).**

We plan to enhance our reuse services by exploring options to establish a donation point and/or a reuse shop at our Padworth Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC). This initiative aims to promote sustainability and community engagement by providing residents in the east of the district with a convenient way to donate and repurpose items, reducing waste and fostering a culture of reuse.

- 3. We will continue to promote reusable nappies through the Real Nappy Scheme (from TBC).**

The Real Nappy Scheme provides reusable nappies for babies in place of the commonly used disposable ones and up to £30 cash back for residents who spend over £60 on real nappies. Switching from disposable items to reusable alternatives has significant impacts on waste reduction and it is therefore important that the Council supports the work of organisations like this that facilitate the switch. The cash back scheme has currently been suspended, however the Council plans to reopen the cash back scheme in April 2025.

- 4. We will continue to encourage home composting (from TBC).**

To follow and promote the waste hierarchy, we will continue to encourage residents to compost their garden waste at home or as a community through community composting schemes. The Council will continue to support home and community composting through the provision of discounted compost bins. We will explore the possibility of providing free online webinars and workshops to teach residents how to compost efficiently and effectively; attending local events to promote composting; and by answering questions from residents and providing information on composting through social media and leaflets.

- 5. We will consider more opportunities to introduce reuse schemes for specific waste types. (from TBC).**

The Council will consider ways it can support in increasing awareness of reuse schemes for specific waste types across West Berkshire. Such as the paint reuse scheme already introduced at our Household Waste Recycling Centres. The Council could also work with campaigns such as Refill which is an initiative covering sellers of food and hot drinks that allow people to bring their own containers, or who make use of minimal packaging.

Case study 2 – Paint Re-use

In October 2022, the Council joined the Community RePaint scheme, a UK-wide paint reuse network.

The goal of this initiative was to collect leftover paint and redistribute it to benefit individuals, families, communities, and charities. An estimated 50 million litres of the 320 million litres of paint sold in the UK each year go to waste.

This partnership allows residents to drop off paint at either of our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in the usual way. Householders visiting the HWRCs also can take away paint free of charge. When paint is dropped off, staff at the HWRCs assess its condition to determine if it can be reused. Paint deemed reusable is placed into the Community RePaint area at both HWRCs, where it can be collected free of charge by householders for DIY jobs or local community projects.



The scheme was promoted to the community through various channels such as social media, e-newsletters and from site staff informing visitors about the scheme and its benefits.

Since launching, over 3,000 litres of paint have been redistributed to more than 300 residents. This paint would have otherwise been recycled or sent to landfill.

The Paint Re-use initiative has successfully diverted significant amounts of paint from waste streams, demonstrating the value of reuse over recycling. Partnering with the Community RePaint scheme and actively promoting the program, has made a positive environmental impact while supporting local residents and community projects. This case study underscores the importance of innovative waste management strategies in fostering sustainability and community well-being.

6. We will consider how the Council can support repair initiatives such as repair cafes and the library of things in the community and through the HWRCs (from TBC).

By supporting services and platforms that are encouraging repair and reuse, the Council will continue to support the idea that unwanted items can be seen as a resource and not as waste, particularly for those in the community for whom buying new may not always be an option. The Council will consider ways to support the reuse and repair of things through the HWRCs and the bulky waste service. This may include increasing the materials that can be taken to the HWRCs for reuse or opening a reuse shop at the HWRCs to divert good quality reusable items for reuse and ensure these items are rehomed locally.

Priority Three: Improve Communication and Community Engagement with Regard to Waste Reduction and Recycling

Communication is an effective way of fostering behaviour change, which is fundamental in contributing to reducing waste and encouraging recycling. Behaviour change is about getting people and communities to change their habits and behaviours for the long term. Behaviour change can be encouraged by making services more user-friendly, changing communication methods to achieve better engagement, education and awareness raising activities and supporting voluntary activities.

- 1. We will continue to deliver waste education programmes at schools across the district and aim to increase the number of education programmes delivered across the district (from TBC).**

The Council is currently actively engaged in work with local schools to encourage children to foster good recycling knowledge and habits at an early age, and to encourage young people to be engaged in the importance of recycling and reducing waste. This approach has been proving effective in changing household recycling habits, as school children often spread their newly acquired knowledge to their parents. We will continue to deliver our primary school programmes while also investigating how this can be improved and expanded, linking into the Eco-Schools programme managed by the Councils Environment Delivery Team.

- 2. We will engage with the Town and Parish Councils across the district to see how we can work better together promoting and facilitating awareness of waste reduction and recycling (from TBC).**

By fostering stronger partnerships and open communication focusing on educating residents, sharing best practices, and organising local initiatives we can significantly enhance our collective environmental impact. Community litter picking being a great example of where we could increase engagement and awareness.

- 3. We will continue to develop a detailed communication plan which will outline key topics that would be beneficial to communicate with residents (from TBC).**

Ongoing communications are key to maintaining recycling performance and positive behaviour changes. This is especially true in areas with more transient populations, where new residents moving to the area may not fully be aware of or understand the services.

At the workshop with residents, participants suggested that communication around what can and cannot be recycled in West Berkshire, the impact of littering, how to present certain items for collection (e.g., textiles), and the difference between 'biodegradable' and 'compostable' would be beneficial. The Council will explore the best ways to communicate these with residents. Suggestions from the residents' workshop included stickers on bins, email reminders and targeted communications to households that do not recycle.

- 4. We will consider enrolling and working with community champions to encourage and promote recycling in their local area (from TBC).**

The Council will consider introducing a community champion scheme. Community champions would be volunteers that are enthusiastic about waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. They would work with the Council and support in activities such as:

- The promotion of reuse and recycling events in the community.
 - The distribution of posters and leaflets within their local community.
 - Setting up or promoting events and facilities such as swap shops and the repair café.
5. **We will conduct a review of the Council's website to make it easier for residents to use and ensure the information provided is accessible and easy to understand (from TBC).**

The Council's website is a key tool that residents can use to understand the recycling service. In the workshop, residents suggested that the Council's website should be reviewed to ensure it is user-friendly and that information can be easily found and that the waste and recycling webpages continue to be updated to ensure information remains current and easy to understand.

6. **We will formalise and enhance the enforcement of the existing 'No Side Waste' and 'Closed Lid' policies (from TBC).**

Formalising and increasing the enforcement of these the 'No Side Waste' and 'Closed Lid' policies will mean that any additional non-recyclable waste that doesn't fit into the designated container will not be collected on collection day. These policies will restrict the amount of residual waste that is able to be placed out.

Since over half of the waste in residual waste bins is material that could have been recycled, adopting these policies will incentivise households both to reduce the amount of waste they produce and separate as much out as possible for recycling, helping to achieve increased recycling, residual waste reduction and carbon emissions reduction targets.

Priority Four: Reduce Carbon Emissions Associated with the Collection Services and Improve Air Quality

Like most UK local authorities, the Council has set goals to reduce carbon emissions and aspires to achieve Net Zero by 2030. [Link to Environment Strategy]. The Council is adopting a range of actions to reduce its carbon footprint, looking both at the way it delivers its services and across its wider supply chain.

1. **We will ensure that the recycling and waste collection fleet is compatible with Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and explore using it in place of diesel (from TBC).**

The UK is increasingly moving away from fossil fuels as the energy source for vehicles. However, the progress in decarbonising HGVs is proving slower than for smaller vehicles like cars, due to the high demands their operation places upon them. The current food waste collection vehicles can be fuelled using HVO and the replacement fleet for the other collections will be compatible with HVO. This technology almost completely eradicates fossil fuel-based exhaust emissions from the vehicle. This reduces overall CO₂ and can also improve air quality. The Council will ensure that the whole recycling and waste collection fleet is compatible with HVO, while also exploring the feasibility of using HVO to fuel the new fleet, mixed with diesel or by replacing it completely as soon as possible.

2. **We will continue to investigate the feasibility of using electric and or hydrogen powered vehicles (from TBC).**

Building on our commitment to sustainability and innovation, we will continue to explore the viability of integrating electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles into our fleet. This investigation will encompass thorough testing and evaluation of these vehicles under various conditions to assess their performance, reliability, and cost-effectiveness in partnership with our Waste collection contractor. With an objective of potentially adopting one of these options for a significant proportion of the fleet from 2032. This initiative reflects our dedication to reducing our carbon footprint and leading the way in the transition towards cleaner, more sustainable transportation alternatives.

3. We will explore targeting the increased collection and recycling of carbon-intensive materials, such as electrical appliances and textiles (from TBC).

Materials such as electrical appliances and textiles are extremely carbon intensive to produce. Electrical appliances contain a large number of valuable materials such as precious metals, and many textiles have high potential for reuse. However, their typical recycling rates are low compared with other recyclable materials. The Council has systems in place to target the collection of these materials through HWRCs and MRCs, with textiles also collected from the kerbside, and will continue to promote the use of these services. The Council will also explore new ways to increase the collection and recycling of these materials. Increasing the collection of electrical appliances and textiles and encouraging their refurbishment/repair and resale will help reduce carbon emissions.

4. We will aspire for the waste service as a whole to be Net Zero by 2030 and carbon negative by 2040.

To achieve our aspiration for the waste service to be Net Zero by 2030 and carbon negative by 2040, we are exploring low carbon vehicle alternatives, contingent on technological advancements and affordability. Our contractors, Veolia, are also committed to reducing their carbon footprint, having already completed several impactful projects. These include installing LED lighting, installing a borehole at our Padworth facility, conducting efficiency reviews such as the collection day changes in 2021, and partnering with the Council to install solar panels. These initiatives are significantly contributing towards our environmental goals. Actions set out in Priority one, two and three will also positively contribute to this aspiration.

Figure 5-2. Timeline to Drive Down General Waste and Increase Recycling

5.2 Improve West Berkshire's Street Scene

The second key principle of this waste and resources strategy is to 'improve West Berkshire's Street scene'. There are four priority areas which have been identified that will help the Council to achieve this:



How the Council plans to achieve these priorities is explored in the following sections.

Priority Five: Improve the Current Recycling, Waste and Street Cleansing Services to Ensure They Help Reduce Litter and Fly-Tipping

The Council can manage how the recycling, waste and street cleansing services are run to ensure they are reducing the amount of litter in West Berkshire. Litter may be generated by accident by households that do not have the correct recycling container, or when on street public litter bins are misused. Litter is also generated on purpose, by residents, visitors and people travelling through the district who have little care for the environment or understanding of the impact their actions have.

1. We will review the location and capacity of litter bins (from TBC).

We will review the number and size of the on-street litter bins currently in place across West Berkshire and will assess whether they are in the most affective locations. This will include liaising with other internal departments who are responsible for litter bin provision in other areas of the district to ensure placement and provision of litter bins are as effective and efficient as possible.

We will also promote taking litter home, to increase the chance of the waste being recycled as well affirming responsibility on the producer of the litter to dispose of it properly.

2. We will consider increasing the number of recycling bins for on-the-go recycling (from TBC).

'On-the-go' recycling is a method of collecting waste material for recycling away from residential areas. There is a significant potential to target tourists, visitors and/or commuters in West Berkshire's town centres and high streets and improve recycling performance, provided that the bins are used correctly. Our current on-the-go recycling bins are heavily contaminated, so we will work to promote the correct use of them along with any possible expansion of the service.

3. We will engage with local parish and town councils to see how they can add value to our current litter bin service (from TBC).

In our ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness and reach of our current litter bin service, we plan to actively engage with local parish and town councils. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, we aim to understand how these local bodies can contribute value to our service, potentially through innovative solutions or increased community involvement. This collaboration may also explore the feasibility of devolving responsibility for certain aspects of the litter bin service to these councils, enabling more localised management and decision-making. Such a partnership could lead to more tailored approaches to litter management, reflecting the unique needs and preferences of different communities, thereby improving overall service efficiency and environmental cleanliness.

Priority Six: Improve Communication and Enforcement Against Littering and Fly-Tipping

We acknowledge the need for increased efforts in both communication and enforcement to enhance the street scene by addressing littering and fly-tipping within our district. While our area fares better than many others nationally, any occurrence is one too many, and we are committed to implementing measures to tackle these issues effectively.

1. Strengthening Our Commitment to Combat Littering and Fly-tipping (from TBC).

To decisively address the persistent issues of littering and fly-tipping, the Council will adopt the enforcement strategies listed below. This will involve not only the continuation but an escalation in the issuance of fines and the prosecution of those found guilty of littering and fly-tipping offences. By reinforcing our enforcement measures, we aim to deter these environmentally harmful practices, safeguarding the cleanliness and health of our community spaces. This initiative reflects our dedicated effort to foster a cleaner, more sustainable environment for all residents, ensuring that our community remains a beautiful and safe place to live and visit.

- **Increased Monitoring:** Deploy more surveillance cameras in known hotspots for littering and fly-tipping. These cameras can utilise motion sensors and night vision technology to ensure effective monitoring around the clock.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate the community about the environmental and social impacts of littering and fly-tipping. These campaigns can include social media outreach, informational posters in public areas, and community workshops.

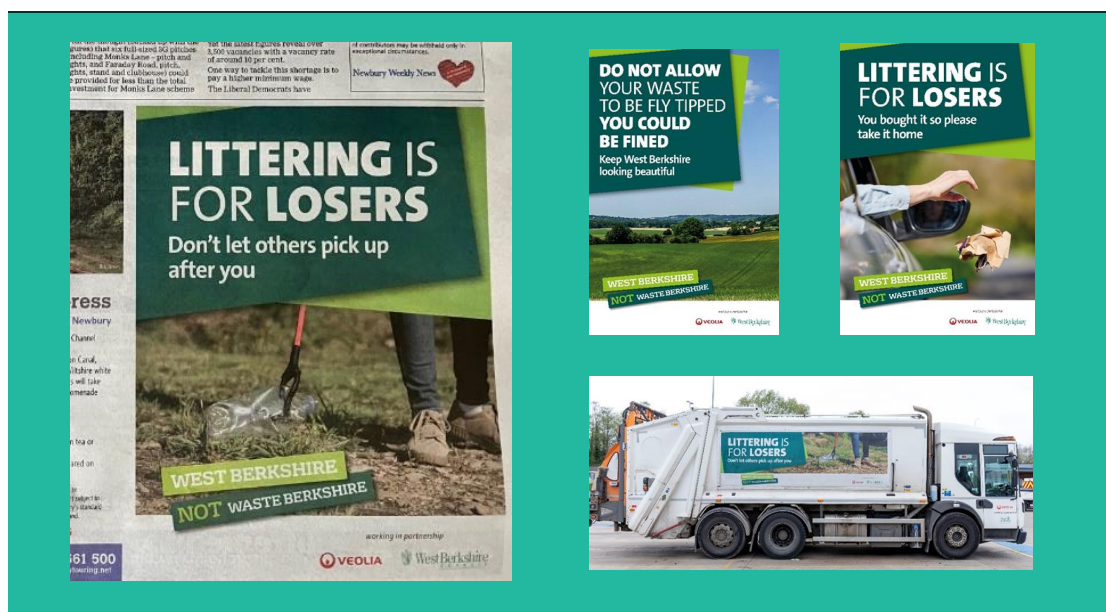
Case Study 3 - Anti Littering and Fly tipping Campaign.

The goal of this campaign was to raise awareness about the importance of proper waste disposal and to reduce instances of littering and fly-tipping in West Berkshire.

To combat littering and fly-tipping, our anti-littering campaign launched in March 2023 and ran through to the end of summer 2023. The campaign targeted pedestrians in high footfall areas, secondary school children, and motorists. Advertisements were utilised in local newspapers and their websites, alongside targeted social media ads, to reach residents across the district.

Posters were strategically placed in key locations including bus stops near schools and in Newbury town centre, ensuring high visibility for pedestrians. Large posters were also placed along the A4 main road through Newbury and Thatcham to catch the attention of drivers and at a local superstore. Additionally, posters were provided to all parish and town councils that opted to participate, enhancing the campaign's reach and community involvement.

To capture attention and drive the message home, the Council developed two impactful slogans: "Littering is for Losers" and "Do not allow your waste to be fly tipped. You could be fined.". These slogans were prominently featured across various media in the locations mentioned above. Eye-catching graphics and bold colours were used to ensure high visibility and engagement. Media provided by the SCRAP¹ campaign was also used on social media, further amplifying the message. This creative strategy effectively communicated the consequences of littering and fly-tipping while encouraging responsible waste disposal practices among the community.



The anti-littering and fly-tipping Campaign successfully raised awareness and promoted responsible waste disposal practices in West Berkshire. By using a multi-channel approach and engaging various segments of the community, the importance of keeping the environment clean was effectively communicated. The campaign's creative strategies and widespread reach, bolstered by the use of SCRAP campaign media on social media, significantly contributed to reducing instances of littering and fly-tipping, fostering a cleaner and more sustainable community.

¹ <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/lets-scrap-fly-tipping.aspx>

- Review of reporting methods: Ensure that we allow residents to easily report instances of littering and fly-tipping, including the ability to upload photos and pinpoint the location via GPS. This would streamline the reporting process and facilitate quicker response times.
- Partnerships with Local Businesses and Organisations: Collaborate with local businesses, schools, and environmental organisations to sponsor clean-up events and promote anti-littering messages. Partnerships can also include the adoption of certain areas for regular clean-up and maintenance.
- Enhanced Penalties and Fines: Penalties and fines associated with littering and fly-tipping offences have recently been increased, in line with national guidance, to create a stronger deterrent. This will be publicised to ensure that the community is aware of the serious consequences of such actions.
- Educational Programs in Schools: Implement educational programs in schools to teach children about the importance of proper waste disposal and the environmental impact of littering and fly-tipping. Encouraging responsible behaviour from a young age can have long-lasting effects.
- Regular Feedback and Reporting to the Community: Provide regular updates to the community about the results of enforcement activities, including the number of fines issued, cases prosecuted, and areas cleaned. This transparency can increase community support and involvement in the initiative.

2. We will look to improve the information available on the Councils interactive map and online reporting function (from TBC).

To enhance our community's ability to efficiently address issues related to litter bins, we are committed to improving the information accessible through the Council's interactive map and online reporting functions. Recognising the confusion among residents regarding the jurisdiction and responsibility for various public bins—because not all bins within our area fall under the Council's purview, with some being managed by parish councils or situated on private land—we aim to bring clarity and convenience to the reporting process. This enhancement will streamline the reporting and resolution process and ensuring that bins are emptied in a timely manner.

3. We will continue to support community-led litter picking initiatives (from TBC).

The Council is grateful to the local community groups that help to keep West Berkshire litter free. Due to the support from residents and community litter picking groups, the Council will consider ways in which it can continue to help facilitate community-led litter picking initiatives such as the Great British Spring Clean. This may include the Council working with organisations to provide residents with the necessary litter picking equipment such as litter pickers, gloves, and bags. The Council will also continue to:

- offer community groups health and safety support and guidance; and
- will increase utilising the Council's social media platforms and the Green Hub [insert link to green hub] to help raise awareness of upcoming events.

4. We will consider the use of innovative technology to help improve the current street scene (from TBC).

The Council will conduct a review of how innovative technology such as smart bins, can be used to help improve the current street scene and improve the aesthetic appeal of a development or high street.

- **Smart bins:** Integrate smart sensors into on street recycling or litter bins that allow the street cleansing contractor to monitor how full the container is and alerts them when the bin needs emptying.
5. **We will consider implementing a 'No Bins on Streets' policy for commercial properties (from TBC).**

Bins stored on pavements or streets can obstruct residents from using walkways and can lead to street clutter, attract fly-tipping and in some cases cause a fire risk.

The Council will conduct a review and consider the pros and cons of preventing businesses and organisations from storing their commercial waste containers on the pavements and streets. Businesses and organisation may therefore be required to ensure any recycling and waste containers are stored away from pavements or streets and on their own property.

To support this the Council will ensure there is adequate funding and resources in place.

Priority Seven: Reduce Carbon Emissions Associated with the Street Cleansing Services and Improve Air Quality

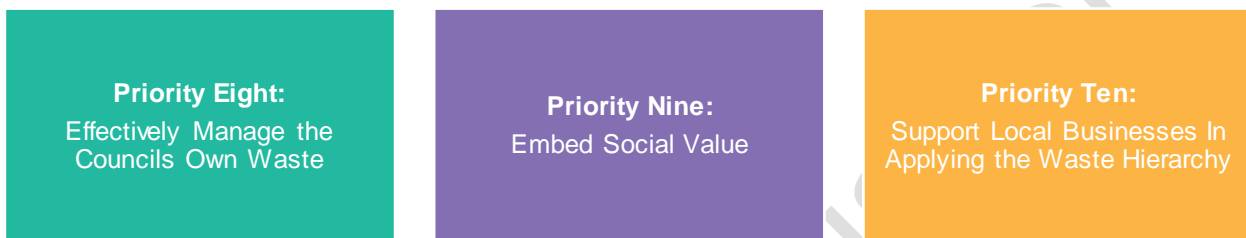
As previously discussed in priority five, the Council will also consider ways in which the street cleansing service can contribute towards reducing the Council's carbon emissions.

1. **We will consider exploring the costs and benefits of an alternative fuel street cleansing fleet (from TBC).** As mentioned earlier, the UK is moving away from fossil fuels for vehicles, but decarbonising HGVs is slower due to their high demands. Current food waste collection vehicles use HVO, eliminating fossil fuel emissions and reducing CO₂, improving air quality. The Council will ensure the street cleansing fleet is HVO-compatible and explore using HVO mixed with diesel or as a complete replacement. Figure 5-3. Timeline to Improve West Berkshire's Street Scene

5.3 Leading The Way

West Berkshire wants to lead by example, going above and beyond the minimum it is legally required to do with regards to waste management. It will do this through its support for waste prevention schemes and initiatives, through work with local environmental and community groups on issues such as reuse, and through entering arrangements to collect additional streams of recycling. However, there are also actions that the Council can take within its own internal systems and its wider policies to enable it to lead the way.

There are three priority areas which have been identified which will help the Council to achieve this:



How the Council plans to achieve these priorities is explored in the following sections.

Priority Eight: Effectively Manage the Council's Own Waste

To demonstrate the progress that the Council aims to achieve within its own internal systems and policies the Council will need to collect data and track the success of the implementation of the measures outlined below as well as identify areas for improvement.

1. We will apply the waste hierarchy for Council buildings and at Council events (from TBC).

The waste hierarchy is an accepted "rule of thumb" that guides waste management. It says that prevention and reuse are preferable to recycling, which in turn is preferable to incineration or disposal in landfill. To demonstrate its commitment to improving waste management, the Council will consider implementing measures such as:

- Banning or reducing the use of single use items; and
- Requiring the separate collection of food and dry recycling.

Seemingly small measures such as these can be effective in driving behaviour change and raising awareness around common environmental issues. The reduction/banning of single use items can reduce resource consumption and encourage a reuse culture, thereby reducing associated carbon emissions. The separate collection of recycling and food waste will contribute to national recycling targets and promote the shift towards a circular economy.

- 2. We will apply a criterion for the procurement of goods which embed the waste hierarchy and contribute towards a circular economy (from TBC).**

Embedding the waste hierarchy into procurement policy is one aspect of adopting a responsible or sustainable procurement approach. The Council will focus on maximising the embedded value in products by seeking to extend the lifetime of products through reuse. The Council will seek opportunities to procure items that are reused, or that have high potential for repair or reuse. By implementing the waste hierarchy into procurement policy, the Council can help to increase demand for different types of products, thereby helping to change market demand, supporting innovation and investment into new business models.

- 3. We will set up and report on corporate recycling targets (from TBC).**

Setting and reporting recycling targets is important to ensure continuous improvement and is the most effective way to assess the impacts of any new measures.

Priority Nine: Embed Social Value

The Council aims to produce local social value through its waste and recycling services. Social value is considered as the wider benefit gained by a local community from the delivery of public contracts. This can be the community, disadvantaged individuals, minorities, businesses, voluntary, community or social enterprises, as well as the environment.

Social value can be demonstrated through employment and jobs created, community support, contribution to the economy and investment and donations for good causes. Contributing to social value can add immediate and long-term impacts and can be most effective when the Council works in partnership with trusted suppliers and customers to help deliver these goals.

Link to Social Value Policy <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/social-value-policy>

- 1. We will continue to work with local residents, businesses, voluntary groups and charities (from TBC).**

As discussed in the relevant sections above, the Council will continue to work with local residents, businesses, voluntary groups and charities to encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling, and support in improving the street scene in West Berkshire through litter reduction schemes. The Council greatly appreciates the work currently done by residents, businesses, voluntary groups and charities to support waste reduction, reuse, recycling and litter reduction across the borough and will continue to find ways to support the work already being done.

- 2. We will embed social value within the delivery of the recycling, waste and street cleansing services contract let from 2032.**

As per the Council's Social Value Policy the Council will ensure that Social Value is included as a criterion in all procurement processes involving household waste and recycling services, the Council will secure better outcomes and opportunities for the local community. Social Value in procurement is often split into three areas:

- **Social:** This could include volunteering within the community or hosting community events.

- **Economic:** This could include hosting work placements, creating apprenticeships or jobs, employing local people, being a Living Wage employer or using local suppliers.
- **Environmental:** This could include reducing energy consumption, waste generation or carbon emissions or supporting improvement to local public spaces and parks.

Priority Ten: Support Local Businesses In Applying the Waste Hierarchy

The Council will take steps to support local businesses to be more responsible in managing their waste.

1. **We will continue to identify and advise businesses that lack a collection contract or are not applying the waste hierarchy (from TBC).**

The Council will work with businesses to ensure they have waste collection contracts in place with [registered waste carriers](#) in line with their legal obligations. The Council will ensure that commercial waste is dealt with correctly and does not result in fly-tipping, or other forms of illegal disposal that cause environmental damage.

Businesses are also required to apply the waste hierarchy, and show that they have prioritised waste prevention, reuse and recycling over disposal. The Council will explore whether its approach to enforcement and communication can do more to ensure businesses are dealing with their commercial waste in an environmentally responsible way. To support this, the Council will ensure there is adequate funding and resources in place.

This will be dependent on resource and budget availability within the Councils Waste team.

2. **We will consider offering business support and look to embed the principles of this waste and resources strategy within local businesses and the commercial waste service (from TBC).**

The Council will ensure that, where it offers support and advice to businesses, it promotes the practices described in this waste and resources strategy are being take on board and implemented. To support this, the Council will ensure there is adequate funding and resources in place.

Figure 5-4. Timeline to the Council Leading the Way

Draft for discussion

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Implementation	Service changes
Mar 2008	Integrated Waste Management Contract signed.
Jun 2008	Kerbside Collection Service introduced card, plastic bottles & green waste.
Oct 2008	HWRC Newtown Road Newbury opened, replacing Pinchington Lane site.
Oct 2011	Integrated Waste Management Facility, Padworth opened. Including Padworth HWRC (recycling only).
Oct 2011	Kerbside Collection Service introduced food waste & fortnightly refuse.
Sep 2012	Chargeable additional green waste collection service introduced. (1 st bin was free, any additional was charged).
Aug 2014	Kerbside Collection Service introduced aerosols.
Dec 2016	Kerbside Collection Service introduced larger cardboard.
Jul 2018	Residual waste accepted at Padworth HWRC.
Sept 2018	Introduction of charge for garden waste collections.
Apr 2019	Increased opening hours Padworth HWRC to align with Newtown Road.
June 2020	Glass banks removed from all Mini Recycling Centres (MRCs).
March 2021	Plastic pots/tubs/trays collection from recycling banks in HWRCs and selected MRCs.
Feb 2022	Reroute of collection rounds in District, changing collection days for most. Improving efficiency.
Aug 2022	Two new MRC sites installed in Theale & East Garston.
Oct 2022	New weekly separate food waste collection service commenced.
Dec 2022	New MRC installed in Tilehurst.

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2023/24 Performance Report Quarter Four

Committee considering report:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Committee:	17 July 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	20 June 2024
Report Author:	Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos
Forward Plan Ref:	Ex. 4352

1 Purpose of the Report

To provide assurance that the priority areas in the [Council Strategy 2023-2027](#) are being managed effectively, and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action. To ensure effective oversight to Councillors, staff and residents regarding progress made towards the achievement of the outcomes detailed in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027, maintaining a strong outcome for the majority of the measures, and remedial actions taken, where appropriate, where performance is below target.
- 2.2 In line with the performance management policy, to approve remedial actions, including requests to update/reprofile measures and targets agreed by the Council, to help assess performance, pending the Council’s approval of the annual refresh of the Delivery Plan.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

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

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			Supports all priorities areas of the Council Strategy 2023-27.
Core Business:	x			
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	The information provided for this report, has been signed off by the relevant Heads of Service/Service Directors, Executive Directors and Portfolio Holders.			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This paper provides updates for each component of the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027](#):

- Non-targeted influencer measures for context.
- Targeted measures for each priority area.

- Corporate health measures for internal context.
- 4.2 This report highlights the key updates on performance for the quarter rather than duplicating analysis and progress already reported as part of previous quarterly reports. However, full details for all the results to date (including for previous quarters are available for each performance measure from the Citizen's Portal online (<https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance>)).
- 4.3 The **Influencer measures** indicated that the district's economy continued to be robust overall (increased economic activity and stable employment rates, decreasing unemployment rate). However, the number of planning applications received continues the downwards trend. The demand on our social services has decreased but remains higher than pre-Covid levels. Pressure increased on long term adult social care case, first time entrants into the Youth Justice System and housing. Library lending, both physical and electronic items, continued to build on the success of our Summer Reading Challenges.
- 4.4 The delivery of the outcomes grouped under each **Council Strategy Priority Area** continued to progress well. Overall, two priority areas achieved and exceeded targets and were rated as Green: (ii) *A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All* and (v) *Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice*. The remaining three areas were more than 5% below target and were rated as Red: (i) *Services We Are Proud of*, (iii) *Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency* and (iv) *The Prosperous and resilient West Berkshire*.
- 4.5 Areas of achievement to highlight include:
- Peer Review successfully completed highlighting the strengths of the Council and eleven key recommendations for further improvement.
 - Non-domestic rates collection target achieved.
 - Pilot for re-introducing neighbourhood notification letters – completed on time.
 - Number of school holiday sessions (including lunch) - over target
 - Schemes to help residents get cheaper solar panels and/or greener energy were implemented.
 - Funding for community recovery and rural businesses were implemented.
 - Reduced the number of posts filled by agency staff
 - Strong performance for our children social services, both prevention and statutory intervention
 - Improved cycle route completed (Stockcross village - B4000/A4/A34 roundabout)
 - Achieved targets relating to flood prevention schemes, the potholes repairs and quality of our road network.
 - Introduced a demand responsive service – formally launched the Downlands demand response service on 15/01/2024.
 - Returned Faraday Road Football Ground to a bookable grass pitch.

4.6 Of the measures rated Amber or Red, a number of areas to note include:

- Total revenue spend variation compared to net budget set was estimated at £3.5m showing that the additional financial control measures have prevented further increases from the previous quarters.
- Number of verified rough sleepers – increase in line with national trends.
- Education attainment – some results for the Academic Year 2022/23 were below target, but in several areas maintained a similar level as for the previous year, are better than the national average, and mirrored the national trend.
- Newbury Wharf first phase delayed.
- Bond Riverside Regeneration 2023/24 phase ceased.

4.7 The council's **corporate health indicators** highlight focus on resource management and a controlled financial approach to manage service demand. The Quarter Four provisional outturn was an overspend of £3.1m, representing 1.9% of the net revenue budget. The outturn is after use £2.5m of flexible use of capital receipts for transformational activity.

4.8 Staff turnover data for quarters three and four was not available due to staff redeployment to implement a new HR system.

4.9 Sickness absence data for Q4 was not available at the time of publication of this report.

5 Supporting Information

Influencer measures

5.1 Detailed information on the measures in this report can be found online in the Performance Portal via this link: (<https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance>).

5.2 Non-targeted measures of influence (Appendix C) were monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across council services.

5.3 Overall, the local **economy remained strong**. Empty business rated industrial properties remained at a consistent level and the number of empty non-industrial units stabilised, however overall the trend is starting to rise slightly. The sale of parking tickets in WBC managed car parks was 6% higher than the same period last year. The average house price for continued to increase. The number of planning applications has consistently reduced over the last four quarters, however the planning permissions approval rate held at around 90%. Overall, the number of crimes, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour incidents reported to Thames Valley Police have been reducing.

5.4 Within the local **social care indicators**, following significant increases in children's social care referral and enquiry numbers, children in need, children subject to a child protection plan and children in care over the past two years, the volume of referrals has decreased, but remains at a much higher level that it was pre COVID.

- 5.5 The level of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System has been increasing since the beginning of the year, Thames Valley Youth Offending Teams are analysing the data to try to understand the causes.
- 5.6 The number of Adult Social Care clients requiring Long Term support, rose again this quarter. The service continues to monitor the position.
- 5.7 Within the **Environment** indicators, following the huge success of our Summer Reading Challenges library lending continued at an elevated level with a steady increase in both physical and electronic issues. Notably, e-library issues had increased by 27% on 2022/23 figures (online magazines by 71%, newspapers by 21%, audio books by 20% and eBooks by 12%). This was most likely due to a combination of staff engagement with schools, increased messaging about the online services on social media, e.g. message of the month, posters, newsletters, and word of mouth.
- 5.8 Due to the continued high level of rainfall during the spring, the number of highway related third party claims remained high, but the number of claims settled (paid) was very low (1).

5.9 **Priority Area Measures Performance**

Detailed information on the measures in this report can be found online in the Performance Portal via this link <https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance>

Note the meaning of the following in the Performance Portal:

- Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on a 5% tolerance (variance) from target.
- Planned – refers to tasks/milestones in progress
- Completed with a green star – refers to measures/tasks which are completed and on or ahead of schedule
- Completed with a red triangle – refers to measures/tasks which are completed later than scheduled
- ? - means no actual value for the current period has been recorded
- n/r - means an actual value for the current period is not expected e.g. annual measure
- >> - means that data is not due to be reported

5.10 **Council Strategy Priority Areas** - Results at the end of this quarter showed that two of the five priority areas were RAG rated as Green (on schedule or delivered), and three as Red (ceased/delayed or more than 5% below target)



15/05/2024

Chart 1. Overall RAG Rating of Priorities (inner circle) and associated Goals (outer circle)

5.11 **Priority Area 1: Services we are proud of**

5.12 Overall, this priority area was rated as Red, as out of the four goals two were rated as red, one as green and one as amber. The overall rating was impacted by five measures missing their targets (revenue overspend compared to net budget, consider social, ethical and environmental impact when amending the Investment and Borrowing Strategy, two of 15 Executive Committee’s decisions considered in private due to being too commercially sensitive, five less young people compared to the target of 40 involved in work experience opportunities).

5.13 Achievements to note in the quarter were the successful completion of the Corporate Peer Review, with the report with suggested actions was due to be [released on 16 May 2024](#) and that the number of people subscribing to our [e-newsletters](#) continued to increase, meaning even more people received news and information about council services. Also, our budget for 2024/25 was approved by all Councillors. £174m will be spent on delivering services across the district and £50m on infrastructure and improvement projects.

5.14 Challenging areas of work were in the amount of Council Tax collected, where there was an expected slight decrease this year (0.3%), due to the pressure on household finances. By comparison, government relief schemes for retail and hospitality sectors meant we were able to achieve the challenging target (98%) for non-domestic rates collection.

5.15 **Priority Area 2: A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all**

5.16 Overall, this priority area was rated as green. The three goals were rated as one each of Green, Amber, Red.

5.17 Achievements to note in the quarter were:

- The delivery of 5 housing units for displaced people at West Point was on schedule.
- The number of school holiday sessions (including lunch) being provided is much higher than target (63 v 52 YTD).
- 16 fostering household carers have been recruited since April 2023; however 14 households have ceased fostering as they have applied for Special Guardianship Orders, Child Arrangement Orders or Staying Put arrangements. The service continues to be proactive in its recruitment of foster carers, and there are a further eight families in the assessment and training process and we anticipate that they will be presented to the fostering panel in the coming months.

5.18 Challenging areas of work were around the number of rough sleepers, which increased in line with national trends. Verified rough sleeper numbers include cases who are transient rough sleepers and those who sleep in vehicles on regular basis, as opposed to more traditional entrenched rough sleepers. Although the number of people affected has increased, 100% were offered accommodation when first identified.

5.19 The education attainment results for the end of primary school stage (Key Stage 2) were below targets (including for the disadvantaged cohort), impacting primarily by the results in Writing. For the end of secondary school (Key Stage 4) West Berkshire's results remained in the top quartile nationally, even if below an ambitious target, impacted by a decline of results nationally.

5.20 **Summary of requests to amend measures/targets (Appendix B):**

- Refresh and adopt the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (31/12/23) – change target date to 30/09/2024.
- Develop a strategy to bring back empty homes into use (31/03/24) – change target date to 31/03/2025.
- Adopt a plan to close the attainment gap focussing on early years and deprivation (31/03/2024) – change target date to 31/03/2025.
- Review the structure of WBC education provision to maintained schools (31/10/23) – change target date to 31/03/2025.

5.21 **Priority Area 3: Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency**

5.22 Overall, this priority area was rated as Red. Two out of the three goals were rated as Red, and one as Green. The ones rated Red are impacted by eight measures missing their targets (charging points in the Council's car parks and on streets without off-street parking, electric car club vehicles, delays regarding the adoption of local transport plan, trialling extended pedestrianisation in Newbury, finalise the green waste plans, standard for energy rating of council's properties and amount of renewable energy generated).

5.23 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- Two schemes to help residents to install solar panels and/or switch to greener energy providers at a lower cost were successfully implemented.
- A Sustainability Assessment Tool for project development and decision making was successfully piloted.
- Our popular soil giveaway returned for a fourth time. Working with Veolia, we provided residents with free soil conditioner, made using food and garden waste collected from households across the district.
- State of the art thermal sensors installed across West Berkshire highway network. Real-time data gained during the winter season will help inform winter gritting routes in the future.

5.24 Challenging areas of work were around the number of EV charging points installed on streets without off-road parking. Less than anticipated put in place, due to the availability of Ubitricity and their contractor, and some issues with selected sites, the installation of the next batch of charge points (approx. 25) has slipped slightly with an anticipated installation starting in June 2024.

5.25 **Summary of requests to amend measures/targets (Appendix B):**

- No. of additional kWp installed for generating renewable energy - change target to 350 kWp by 31/03/2025.
- Commence trial of extended pedestrianisation hours Newbury Town Centre (31/03/24) – change target date once plans have been reconsidered
- Adopt a Local Transport Plan (31/03/24) – change target date to 31/03/2025.
- Confirm plan to phase out the charge on garden waste collection (secure the financial resource) (31/03/24) – change date to 30/06/2024.

5.26 **Priority Area 4: A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire**

5.27 Overall, this priority area was rated as Red. Out of the four goals, two were rated as Green, one Amber and one Red. The overall red rating was impacted by four measures (completion of the first phase of works on Newbury Wharf, meetings with rural clusters' businesses, internships for young people with education, health and care plans, progress the Bond Riverside Regeneration).

5.28 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- After intervention by the Secretary of State, the Local Plan Examination in public is now continuing to progress, with Hearings expected to take place through Spring/Summer 2024, exact dates yet to be confirmed.
- Our [open digital planning service](#) was launched which provides advice to make it easier to understand some of the regulations around planning for anyone who thinks they might need planning permission.
- A [Community Recovery Grant](#) was launched to help eligible households whose houses were flooded by Storm Henk.
- The [Rural England Prosperity Fund grant](#) scheme for rural businesses by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs was implemented for West Berkshire. The funding could help with farm diversification e.g. glamping sites, and pet and equine businesses e.g. kennels and livery.

5.29 Challenging areas of work were around the completion of the first phase of the Newbury Wharf transformation and the delivery of the Bond Riverside Regeneration Programme which have been delayed.

5.30 **Summary of requests to amend measures/targets (Appendix B):**

- Complete the first phase of works on Newbury Wharf (31/03/24) – Change target date to 31/12/2024.

5.31 **Priority Area 5: Thriving communities with a strong local voice**

5.32 Overall, this priority area was rated as Green. Out of the four goals, two reported Green and two reported Red. The outcomes rated red were impacted by 10 measures (two less Community forums than target, issues with data about visits to sports and leisure centres, and some delays about adopting a plan to tackle social isolation, refresh the Playing pitch strategy and parking strategy, refurbishments of Hungerford and Northcroft leisure centres).

5.33 Achievements to note in the quarter were that:

- The [Let's Get Active Fund](#) was launched, and made £40,000 available to improve access to physical activities in West Berkshire
- A [new fitness and social area](#) opened at the Cotswold recreation ground in Tilehurst. Following a young people survey, West Berkshire and Tilehurst Parish Councils worked together to repurpose a tarmacked area to install a multi-use games area (MUGA), including a space for children's cycling.
- [The Northcroft Lido in Newbury](#) re-opened its doors to the public for the spring/summer season. For full accessibility, a hoist has been installed in the pool area and the facility is complete with an accessible changing room.

5.34 Challenging areas of work were around the production of strategies and plans e.g. a plan to tackle social isolation in rural areas, and the Parking Strategy, which were delayed due to operational resource issues and have been rescheduled. Ambitious

projects to refurbish leisure facilities in Hungerford and Northcroft centres were delayed and have also been rescheduled.

5.35 **Summary of requests to amend measures/targets (Appendix B):**

- Refresh the Playing Pitch Strategy (31/12/2023) - change target date to 30/06/2025.
- Refurbish Hungerford Leisure Centre (31/03/24) – change target date 30/12/2024.
- Refurbish Northcroft Leisure Centre (31/12/24) – change target date 30/06/2025.
- Set up a new fund with Greenham Common Trust for mental health support initiatives (31/03/24) – change target date 30/06/2024.

Corporate Health

5.36 The quarter four provisional outturn is an overspend of £3.1m, representing 1.9% of the net revenue budget. The outturn is after use £2.5m of flexible use of capital receipts for transformational activity.

5.37 Data was not available in time for the submission of this report for sickness absence or turnover.

Proposals

5.38 To note the progress made in delivering the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027](#), maintaining a strong outcome for the majority of the measures, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

5.39 To note request to be made for the Executive to approve remedial actions, including requests to update/reprofile measures and targets agreed by the Council, to help assess performance, pending the Council's approval of the annual refresh of the Delivery Plan, in line with the performance management policy (see details in Appendix B: Department/service requests to amend measures/targets).

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Quarter four results show that good progress had been made towards the delivery of the majority of measures under all five Council Strategy priorities. Strong performance levels have been achieved as some of the initiatives listed in the Delivery Plan completed and key services delivered to our district.

7.2 Action plans are in place to address performance for a small number of measures rated “Amber” and “Red”. The Executive will be asked to note these actions, approve the requests to amend measures/targets (as set out in Appendix B), and note the overall performance reported.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: Performance in pictures.
- 8.2 Appendix B: Department/service requests to amend measures/targets.
- 8.3 Appendix C: Influencer measures dashboard.
- 8.4 Appendix D: Purpose and background.

Background Papers:

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 wards

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Document Control

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			

2023/24
January-
March



Soil conditioner
giveaway success
in March



Lido opened
in March

Let's Get Active Fund
- grants available



Open Digital
Planning Service
launched

2024/25
budget approved



Thermal sensors
installed across
highway network



Multi Use Games Area
(MUGA) opened
in Tilehurst



Support available
for those affected
by flooding

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Q4 2023/24: requests to amend measures/targets for Council Strategy Delivery Plan (CSDP) measures.

No.	Dept./ Service	Measure name	Current target	Proposed Target	Details
PRIORITY AREA: 2. A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All					
1.	Education	Refresh and adopt the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (31/12/23)	31/12/23	30/09/2024	The refresh of the SEND Strategy has been delayed in order to ensure that it fully reflects the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. The DBV funding bid was submitted in December 2023 and approved in February 2024. Officers are now in the process of developing the detail of projects in the DBV Programme with stakeholders. This is an important transformational programme which needs to align with the SEND Strategy. Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/12/2023 to 30/09/2024.
2.	Development and Regulation	Develop a strategy to bring back empty home into use (31/03/24)	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	Action delayed due to operational resourcing issues during 2023/24 scheduled for 24/25. Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/03/2024 to 31/03/2025
3.	Education	Adopt a plan to close the attainment gap focussing on early years and deprivation (31/03/2024)	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	This plan is ongoing with the benefits of a refresh currently being considered. Recommendation: change target date from 31/03/2024 to 31/03/2025
4.	Education	Review the structure of WBC education provision to maintained schools (31/10/23)	31/10/23	31/03/2025	The process of re-structuring the Education department has been started and will continue under the direction of the new Service Director for Education. Recommendation: change target date from 31/10/2023 to 31/03/2025
PRIORITY AREA: 3. Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency					
5.	Environment	No. of additional kWp installed for generating renewable energy	300	350 by 31/03/2025	Due to delays in going out to procurement caused by additional survey work being necessary, the target will not be met at Q4. If procurement is successful, delivery is currently anticipated in Q4 of 2024/25.

Appendix B


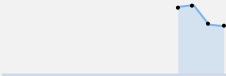





No.	Dept./ Service	Measure name	Current target	Proposed Target	Details
					Recommendation: change target to 350 kWp by 31/03/2025
6.	Development and Regulation	Commence trial of extended pedestrianisation hours Newbury Town Centre (31/03/24)	31/03/24	tbc	<p>The Department for Transport have responded to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) and have raised concerns about the objection from the Police and have advised consultation should be undertaken ahead of the ETRO. Officers are looking at options to address these concerns.</p> <p>Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/03/24 once plans have been reconsidered</p>
7.	Environment	Adopt a Local Transport Plan (31/03/24)	31/03/24	31/03/2025	<p>We are progressing as far as we can in our preparation and consultation of our LTP4. However, central government have not yet issued their guidance to local authorities.</p> <p>Recommendation: change target date from 31/03/20247 to 31/03/2025.</p>
8.	Environment	Confirm plan to phase out the charge on garden waste collection (secure the financial resource) (31/03/24)	31/03/24	30/06/2024	<p>Paper to be submitted during by the end of June 2024 for consideration. There will be an opportunity to consider this in tandem with other papers on potential service adjustments e.g. adoption of hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel for waste service fleet (this has significant environmental benefits but will need investment from the Council), and potential waste collection options that could result in net savings and drive a significant increase in recycling and waste avoidance.</p> <p>Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/03/24 to 30/06/2024</p>
PRIORITY AREA: 4. A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire					
9.	Development and Regulation	Complete the first phase of works on Newbury Wharf (31/03/24)	31/03/24	31/12/2024	<p>This has been delayed due to issues being raised by the contractor which are being addressed.</p> <p>Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/03/24 to 31/12/2024.</p>

Appendix B




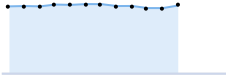
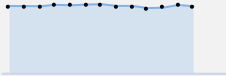




No.	Dept./ Service	Measure name	Current target	Proposed Target	Details
PRIORITY AREA: 5. Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice					
10.	Communities and Wellbeing	Refresh the Playing Pitch Strategy (31/12/2023)	31/12/2023	30/06/2025	<p>A strategic decision has been taken to carry out a full refresh of the Playing Pitch Strategy rather than a Stage E review. This requires a new specification and procurement process. The target date for this measure will therefore need to change to end of Q1 2025/26.</p> <p>Recommendation: Change target date from 31/03/2024 to 30/06/2025</p>
11.	Communities and Wellbeing	Refurbish Hungerford Leisure Centre (31/03/24)	31/03/2024	Provisionally 30/12/2024	<p>The information required to fully explain the status of this project is commercially sensitive. Project options were under review, and it has now been agreed for the project to continue, as defined. Currently awaiting new programme to be confirmed. Target date will need adjustment - provisionally to end of Q3 2024/25.</p> <p>Recommendation: Change the target date provisionally from 31/03/2024 to 30/12/2024</p>
12.	Communities and Wellbeing	Refurbish Northcroft Leisure Centre (31/12/24)	31/12/24	30/06/2025	<p>The information required to fully explain the status of this project is commercially sensitive. The programme remains under review. A provisional target date for full completion is end of Q1 2025/26.</p> <p>Recommendation: Change the target date from 31/12/2024 to 30/06/2025</p>
13.	Communities and Wellbeing	Set up a new fund with Greenham Common Trust for mental health support initiatives (31/03/24)	31/03/2024	30/06/2024	<p>Project was on hold at Q3 2023/24, due to internal governance prioritisation. Funding has since been approved and the recommended new target date is 30/06/2024 (was 31/03/2024).</p> <p>Recommendation: to change the target date from 31/03/2024 to 30/06/2024.</p>


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Influencer MoV - Economy


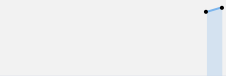



Measure Ref	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
CW-MoV-001	No. of all crimes reported to Thames Valley Police		2,199	9,310	Q2 2023/24 data was not yet available from Thames Valley Police, therefore we've subtracted Q1 (2599) and Q3 (2313) from the year end total (9310) and then distributed the remainder equally (2199 each) over Q2 and Q4.	
CW-MoV-002	No. of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to Thames Valley Police for WB LPA		263	1,285		
CW-MoV-003	No. of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to Thames Valley Police (recorded crimes)				Q4 2023/24 data is not yet available from Thames Valley Police.	
CW-MoV-004	No. of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to Thames Valley Police (non crime)				Q4 2023/24 data is not yet available from Thames Valley Police.	
DR-MoV-006	No. of valid planning applications received (Total)		450	1,973		
DR-MoV-006(i)	No. of valid minor planning applications received		71	300		
DR-MoV-006(ii)	No. of valid major planning applications received		14	79		







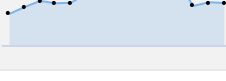

Measure Ref ↑	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
DR-MoV-006(iii)	No. of valid other planning applications received		189	869		
DR-MoV-006(iv)	No. of valid non-ps planning applications received		176	725		
DR-MoV-007	% approval rate (planning permissions)		90.4%	90.3%		
DR-MoV-013	Average weekly footfall in Newbury Town Centre					
DR-MoV-014	Average weekly footfall in Hungerford Town Centre					
DR-MoV-015	Average weekly footfall in Thatcham Town Centre					
ENV-MoV-014	No. of parking tickets sold in WBC managed parking spaces		275,850	1,101,734		
FP-MoV-005	No. of business rated properties		5,967	5,967		
FP-MoV-006	No. of empty business rated properties (industrial and non-industrial units)		249	249		
FP-MoV-007	No. of empty business rated properties (industrial units)		31	31		

Measure Ref ↑	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
FP-MoV-008	No. of empty business rated properties (non-industrial units)		218	218		
SG-MoV-Context	Average house price (£k)				Data from June 2022 onward amended. December 2023 is the latest available data.	
SG-MoV-Context	Average price of a house bought by first-time buyers				Data from June 2022 onward amended. December 2023 is the latest available data.	
SG-MoV-Context	Economic activity rate (aged 16-64) (12 months ending)				Oct 2022-Sep 2023 is the latest data available.	
SG-MoV-Context	Employment rate (aged 16-64)				Oct 2022-Sep 2023 is the latest data available.	
SG-MoV-Context	Total claimant count (aged 16+) - JSA & Universal Credit				Quarter 3 2023/24 is the latest data available.	
SG-MoV-Context	Total claimant count (aged 16-24) - JSA & Universal Credit				Quarter 3 2023/24 is the latest data available.	
SG-MoV-Context	Unemployment rate (model based estimate)				Quarter 2 2023/24 is the latest data available.	
SG-MoV-Context	Unemployment rate England (model based estimate)				Quarter 2 2023/24 is the latest data available.	


Measure Ref ↑	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
SG-MoV-Context	Unemployment rate South East (model based estimate)				Quarter 2 2023/24 is the latest data available.	

Influencer MoV - Social Care







Measure Ref	Measure Name ↑	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
ASC-MoV-010	Current Long Term Support client (LTS All Ages) (incl. community, residential & nursing care)		1,885	1,885		
DR-MoV-024	No. of Household Support Fund applications approved		348	673		
ASC-MoV-001	Overall no. of new requests for support (ASC) (excludes Blue Badges)				Q4 2023/24 data will be available once our statutory year end returns have been completed. It is expected that this will be by the end of May.	
ASC-MoV-009	No. of people accessing reablement (Short Term support to maximise independence) (cumulative ytd)					
ASC-MoV-046	No. of adult safeguarding enquiries (S42) opened		164	667		

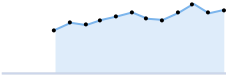


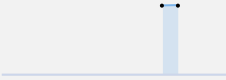


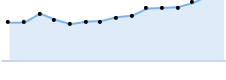
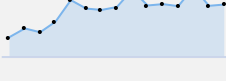

Measure Ref	Measure Name ↑	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
CFS-MoV-001	No. of children subject to Child Protection Plans (per 10,000 population aged under 18)		53	280		
CFS-MoV-003	No. of Children in Care cases		187	777	Compared to national figures, which show numbers as increasing/stable, locally we are seeing a better than average level.	
CFS-MoV-004	No. of Children in Care (excl. Un-accompanied Asylum Seeking Children)		162	676	Compared to national figures, which show numbers as increasing/stable, locally we are seeing a better than average level.	
CFS-MoV-005	No. of Children in Need (CIN) (excluding CiC and CP)		761	3,451	Compared to national figures, which show numbers as increasing/stable, locally we are seeing a better than average level.	
CFS-MoV-007	Level of first time entrants into the YJS (per 100,000 under 10 to 17 year olds) (12 month rolling)		152	684	Thames Valley Youth Offending Teams have agreed to undertake analysis of the data to try to understand the recent increase in numbers	
CFS-MoV-009	No. of referrals received (as a subset of Contacts) (Children and Family Services)		510	2,291		
CFS-MoV-010	No. of S47 (Child Protection) enquiries initiated		159	696		
CFS-MoV-012	No. of (LADO) referrals received - (Quality Assurance and Assessment Service (QAAS))		142	483	It is difficult to ascribe a specific reason, or reasons, for the increase in LADO numbers. The figures are following a year-on-year trend of increasing contacts to the LADO, particularly post Covid. In terms of comparison, both Wokingham and Reading have also experienced significant increases this year in contacts to their LADO service.	

Measure Ref	Measure Name ↑	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
DR-MoV-016	No. of households prevented (relief duty and prevention duty) from becoming homeless (Total)		97	348	There is an increase in this figure due to an increased number of households presenting to the service in 2023/24 to the previous year. The variance can also be attributed to more households successfully securing alternative accommodation.	
DR-MoV-016(i)	No. of households prevented (relief duty) from becoming homeless		75	227		
DR-MoV-016(ii)	No. of households prevented (prevention duty) from becoming homeless		22	121		
DR-MoV-020	No. of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter		111	111	The number of households in TA increased due to an increased number of presentations during the year. 111 additional households presented to the Council as being homeless during 2023/24. The increase relates to the increased need to accommodate households in Bed & Breakfast Accommodation. Published data nationally (to end Q3) shows an increase in use of B&B accommodation of 33%, while TA (non nightly let accommodation) has increased by 12% for the same period.	
DR-MoV-021	No. of active (qualifying) households on the Housing Register		1,075	1,075		
ES-MoV-014	No. of active involvements receiving intervention from the (EHA)(Total CYP)		251	999		
ES-MoV-018	No. of referrals to the Emotional Health Triage (EHT)		204	619	An increase in the number of referrals received in Q4 2023/24 is in line with trends seen in previous years. The higher numbers of referrals could be attributed to improved accessibility via the new online referral form which was introduced in late November 2023.	

Measure Ref	Measure Name ↑	Period Actual Sparkline	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
ENV-MoV-003	No. of people killed or seriously injured on roads in West Berks, incl. National Highways roads		2	10	Q4 2023/24 data provided by Thames Valley Police, was only available for the number of people killed on West Berkshire roads. Data on those seriously injured was not available at the time of publication.	

Influencer MoV - Environment

Measure Ref	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline ↑	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
ENV-MoV-024	No. of highway related third party claims settled (paid)		1	2		
CW-MoV-054	No. of CiC (and care leavers 18-25 who left care due to age) who access a leisure centre		6	6	Previous data has been removed as it was recording the number of registrations instead of the number of active users. Contractors will supply the correct data from Q2 2023/24 onwards shortly.	
CW-MoV-023(i)	No. of volunteers at Shaw House		35	35		
CW-MoV-053/KPI-045(n)(n)	No. of individuals who have attended the Activity for Health programme in previous quarter		43	135		
CW-MoV-024(ii)	No. of volunteers at the West Berkshire Museum		46	46		
ENV-MoV-023	No. of highway related third party claims received		173	541		

Measure Ref	Measure Name	Period Actual Sparkline ↑	Period Actual	YTD Actual	Comments	Open Details
CW-MoV-025(iii)	No. of volunteers in Libraries (including the Mobile and 'At Home' Service)		218	218		
ENV-MoV-039	No. of flytips reported		255	928	Qrt 4 data is an estimate.	
CW-MoV-022	No. of volunteers across Culture and Library Services (Total)		299	299		
ENV-MoV-019	No. of permanent pothole repairs completed (single defects)					
CW-MoV-051	No. of individuals aged 60+ using a sports or leisure centre in previous quarter		1,762	1,762		
CW-MoV-052	No. of individuals aged under 16 years who have used a sports or leisure centre in previous quarter		3,442	3,442		
CW-MoV-019(i)	No. of e-items borrowed from libraries		72,906	258,033		
CW-MoV-020(ii)	No. of physical items borrowed from libraries		109,608	468,673		
CW-MoV-018	No. of library issues (Total)		182,514	726,706		

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2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 July 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	12 June 2024
Report Author:	Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is Quarter Four, the provisional outturn for the 2023-24 financial year. The report is highlighting the financial position at each quarter of the financial year and impact on the Council's General Fund position. This allows the Executive and Scrutiny Commission to consider the implications and the actions that have been taken to mitigate and manage the position.
- 1.2 The outturn is the culmination of budget monitoring and management accounting throughout the financial year. The financial reporting outturn will change after the financial statements are finalised, including further review of accruals and provisions. This will then become part of the Council's financial statements for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.3 The report highlights where over and underspends against budget have occurred during the year and reasons for these, as well as the overall position for the financial year.
- 1.4 The Council has been forecasting a significant overspend across many services, especially in the People Directorate. This is due to increasing demand on services, continued inflationary cost pressures and additional staffing costs through the use of agency workers.
- 1.5 To mitigate the financial pressures, the Council implemented measures from July 2023 to provide greater oversight and scrutiny of financial decisions and financial commitments, as well as additional approval mechanisms for staffing and agency arrangements across the Council.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the provisional management accounting outturn of £3.1m overspend, a reduction of £0.15m from Quarter Three.
-

2.2 To note the continuation of Financial Review Panel (FRP) meeting weekly to ensure the spending limits are being adhered to and to monitor the measures around recruitment, staffing and agency.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

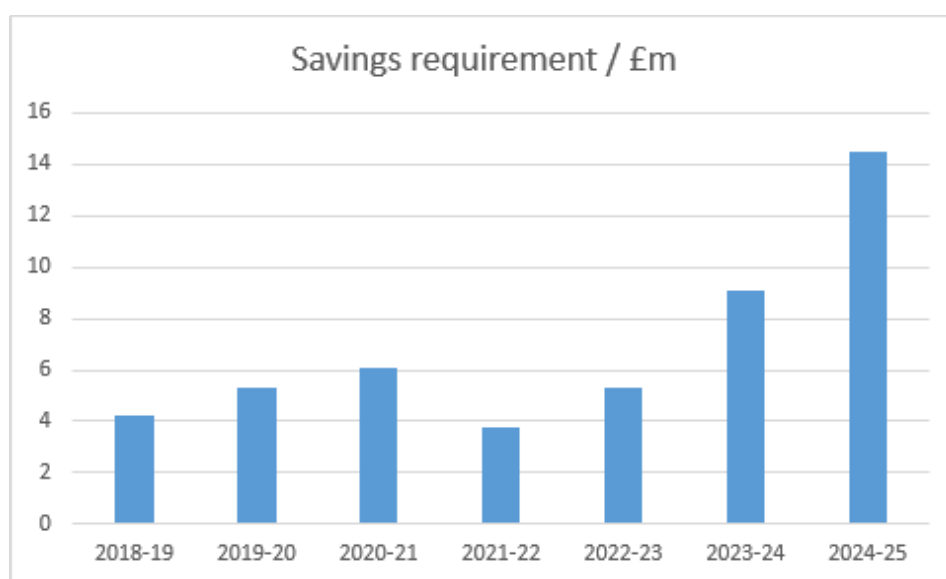
Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The provisional outturn of a £3.1m overspend has significant financial implications. The General Fund is at £7.2m, with a minimum recommended level of £7m. The £3.1m overspend leaves a General Fund of £4m. This is a very low level of general fund balance and actions in place will be closely monitored to ensure that the in-year financial position improves.</p> <p>The minimum level of general fund balance recommended by the s151 officer is £7m and this outturn puts the Council significantly below this; for future budget setting has meant an increase in future year's budget savings to replenish the level of reserves in the future. The 2024-25 budget assumptions include a forecast contribution to reserves of £1.9m.</p>
Human Resource:	None as part of Quarter Four. The FRP (Financial Review Panel) implications have been reviewed by Service Lead (HR) as a member of the panel.
Legal:	None as part of Quarter Four. The FRP (Financial Review Panel) implications have been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer.
Risk Management:	Measures have been included in the report to provide greater levels of scrutiny on much lower levels of expenditure and recruitment costs.
Property:	Review of assets has been undertaken with a view to possible sales that could be utilised for reduced capital financing costs and / or funding for a range of transformational activity across the Council to reduce costs.
Policy:	None directly

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		y		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		y		The proposal aims to continue to protect those characteristics
Environmental Impact:		y		Unlikely to have any long-term environmental impact.
Health Impact:		y		
ICT Impact:		y		N/A
Digital Services Impact:		y		N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:			y	The proposal could reduce spend on some areas of council priority.
Core Business:		y		
Data Impact:				No impact
Consultation and Engagement:	Service Directors, Executive Directors.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The provisional outturn shows a substantial financial pressure for the Council during 2023-24. Primarily driven through cost pressures in the People directorate, with growing demand for social care services, additional staffing costs through the use of agency staff and inflationary pressures, the People directorate alone has an overspend of £8.9m. There are other financial pressures in the Place directorate Development and Regulation Service, in planning services, unachieved income and delayed additional planning income charges via Government changes leading to an overspend of £0.4m, although this has been offset in-year by grant funding.
- 4.2 The outturn position of a £3.1m overspend has reduced the overall General Fund to just over £4m. In the context of the significant financial pressures that the Council has faced during the year, this is a positive position to end the year in compared to Quarter One. That the General Fund is below the minimum level of reserve of £7m is acknowledged and £1.9m of additional funding for reserves has been included in the 2024-25 budget. This will mean that the General Fund balance will be forecast to be over £6m by the end of 2024-25 and a much closer figure to the minimum level.
- 4.3 The Council responded quickly to the growing financial pressure that emerged early in 2023-24. The establishment of the Financial Review Panel (FRP) and relentless focus on cost reduction, review of accounting policies, commencing the disposal of assets and reducing agency expenditure has all had a significant impact. The agency expenditure alone has reduced by £2.4m year on year (2023-24 vs 2022-23) and is forecast to further reduce during 2024-25. The new approaches to recruitment have seen a greater number of posts being filled with permanent members of staff and the number of agency workers reduce. Through the Council's main agency providers, Comensura, the number of workers has reduced from 229 (April 2023) to 169 (April 2024) with a significant reduction in the number of 'off-contract' workers as well.
- 4.4 The financial pressure does not go away for the Council, nor the sector, in 2024-25. This financial year sees the Council with the highest savings requirement in its history, and with a large, and ever growing number of Councils who have requested Exceptional Financial Support from central government, with over £2bn of exceptional support granted by government that needs to be repaid.
- 4.5 The background to the financial position of the Council is that the Council has historically had low levels of reserves, at approximately half of the average of similar Councils. The Council has a track record of strong financial control and stewardship, and though (the Covid-19 pandemic excepted) reserves have remained comparatively low, the Council has achieved financial balance as well as delivered significant financial savings programmes. The savings and investment programme over recent years is highlighted below; on top of this, the 2024-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) highlights a savings requirement of £14.5m in 2024-25 and a further £15m over the following three years. This is heavily weighted to 2024-25 given uncertainties over future fair funding reviews – this totals £40m over a seven year period per the below. The figure for 2024-25 is £14.5m due to increased demand pressures that are referenced in this report:

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



4.6 The Council has also commenced its Transformation programme. This programme seeks to identify longer term financial savings, but will of course highlight any shorter term opportunities to help support the Council's in year financial position. This has now established a range of cost avoidance and costs savings that will support the Council's financial position from 2024-25 onwards.

4.7 The provisional outturn is an overspend of £3.1m as summarised below:

2023/24 Directorate Summary	Net Budget £000	Net Income/ Expenditure £000	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four					Change from Last Quarter £000
			Year end forecast variance £000	Year end forecast variance £000	Year end forecast variance £000	Variance before use of reserves £000	Reserve movements £000	Pre-agreed Transformation £000	New Transformation £000	Final variance £000	
People	98,169	113,464	5,840	6,297	8,354	15,296	(5,077)	0	(1,314)	8,905	551
Place	34,084	32,614	597	(47)	(1,035)	(1,470)	0	0	(344)	(1,814)	(779)
Resources	12,275	13,329	24	26	221	1,054	(244)	(435)	(411)	(37)	(258)
Chief Executive	550	568	(5)	(10)	5	18	0	0	(2)	16	12
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	14,443	6,521	(157)	(3,002)	(4,308)	(7,922)	3,936	0	0	(3,986)	322
Total	159,520	166,496	6,298	3,264	3,237	6,976	(1,384)	(435)	(2,071)	3,085	(153)

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The 2023-24 net revenue budget of £159m was set in March 2023, using £157m revenue funding and £1.8m of reserves. During the 2023-24 budget build, inflationary pressures were identified in demand led services, but not all pressures were built into the budget, with some being held as a risk against the general reserve.

5.2 The Council brought in a strategy for managing the in-year financial pressures at Quarter One, where the overspend was forecast to be £6.3m. This was after some initial mitigations against pressures being seen. Since the Quarter One (Q1) forecast was made, actions have been undertaken as highlighted in the Q1 report to the Executive in September. Progress against the strategy for managing the overspend are set out below:

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Action	Progress	Financial benefit
1) Implementation of a Financial Review Panel (FRP)	a) Review of all expenditure for overspending services over £2,000.	Included within Q4 outturn
	b) Review of all agency expenditure and incorporating all staff within the Council's Comensura ¹ contract.	Reduced agency staff expenditure in Comensura from £11.9m in 2022-23 to £9.5m in 2023-24.
	c) Review all recruitment activity, pausing some activity.	Included within outturn where posts were held vacant or delays to recruitment.
	d) Enhanced recruitment activity	338 posts moved from agency to permanent staff – full year saving of £0.56m.
2) Review of accrual policy	Review has been complete and already included in the outturn for Q4.	Already taken into account in the outturn.
3) Review of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy	The Council has been provided with a report from Link (the Council's Treasury Management advisors) that highlight a range of options for review. This required a change of policy to MRP at Full Council (and was included in the February budget papers with a request for a revision to in year treatment).	In year benefit of £4m with a 2024-25 benefit
4) Review of opportunities for asset sales	The November Executive meeting approved the sale of capital assets owned by the Council. These can be used to fund Transformational activity per the below and will also reduce MRP, but will reduce investment income in future years.	The sale of the first commercial property has yielded over £6m to be applied for transformational activity for 2023-24, 2024-25 and beyond as well as to reduce capital financing costs.

¹ Overarching provider of agency staff for WBC

5) Review the flexible use of capital receipts	Review of activities that fit within the Government guidance for the flexible use of capital receipts total £2.1m. These are short term benefits but benefit the in-year position.	£2.1m
6) S151 officer to discuss position with the Government (DLUHC)	Conversations have taken place and further action (for example a capitalisation request) to occur if required	n/a – no further action taken as the General Fund is at over £4m and so a s114 report would not be required.

5.3 The strategy will continue during 2024-25, with additional focus on delivering in year savings targets for directorates and the establishment of a Star Chamber to review any department that is forecasting an overspend and review the accompanying action plan to achieve a break-even position.

5.4 The Government continues to consider the financial position of Councils facing significant financial pressures and in past year has provided capitalisation directives to a growing number of Councils, see the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exceptional-financial-support-for-local-authorities-capitalisation-directions>.

In these cases, the Government have provided specific sums of funding to Councils through a capitalisation directive whereby the Council repays the Government (with additional financial costs) and the Council will be required to have a formal external assurance review on their financial position. This will then be published by the DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up and Communities) and subject to progress and updates on improvement to the Council's financial position.

Quarter Four 2023-24

5.5 The Quarter Four provisional outturn is an overspend of £3.1m, representing 1.9% of the net revenue budget. The outturn is after use £2.5m of flexible use of capital receipts for transformational activity.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

	Net Budget	Net Income/ Expenditure	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four					Change from last quarter
			Year end forecast variance	Year end forecast variance	Year end forecast variance	Variance before use of reserves	Reserve movements	Pre-agreed Transformation	New Transformation	Final variance	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adult Social Care	63,055	65,730	791	575	2,038	2,676	0	0	(440)	2,236	197
Children & Family Services	21,249	25,954	3,721	3,719	3,688	4,705	0	0	(799)	3,906	218
Executive Director	448	520	7	(3)	4	72	0	0	(50)	22	18
Education DSG funded	(444)	4,245	0	0	0	4,689	(4,689)	0	0	0	0
Education	10,708	13,589	1,321	2,020	2,697	2,881	0	0	(25)	2,856	158
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)	307	0	0	0	387	(387)	0	0	0	0
Communities & Wellbeing	3,234	3,119	0	(14)	(75)	(115)	0	0	0	(115)	(40)
People	98,169	113,464	5,840	6,297	8,354	15,296	(5,077)	0	(1,314)	8,905	551
Executive Director	207	180	(21)	(25)	(29)	(27)	0	0	0	(27)	1
Development & Regulation	5,671	4,766	618	612	(352)	(905)	0	0	(89)	(994)	(642)
Environment	28,206	27,668	0	(634)	(654)	(537)	0	0	(255)	(792)	(139)
Place	34,084	32,614	597	(47)	(1,035)	(1,470)	0	0	(344)	(1,814)	(779)
ICT	2,437	2,116	(0)	(36)	(56)	(321)	0	(22)	0	(343)	(287)
Executive Director	323	352	(82)	(50)	(134)	29	0	0	0	29	163
Commissioning & Procurement	448	592	(75)	(113)	(113)	143	0	(146)	(67)	(70)	43
Finance & Property	1,562	2,442	201	245	446	879	(244)	0	(344)	292	(154)
Strategy & Governance	7,505	7,700	(20)	(20)	79	195	0	(139)	0	56	(23)
Transformation	0	128	0	0	0	128	0	(128)	0	(0)	(0)
Resources	12,275	13,329	24	26	221	1,054	(244)	(435)	(411)	(37)	(258)
Chief Executive	550	568	(5)	(10)	5	18	0	0	(2)	16	12
Capital Financing	14,851	6,835	(157)	(3,002)	(4,178)	(8,016)	3,936	0	0	(4,080)	98
Risk Management	-407	(313)	0	0	0	94	0	0	0	94	224
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	14,443	6,521	(157)	(3,002)	(4,178)	(7,922)	3,936	0	0	(3,986)	322
Total	159,520	166,496	6,298	3,264	3,367	6,976	(1,384)	(435)	(2,071)	3,085	(153)

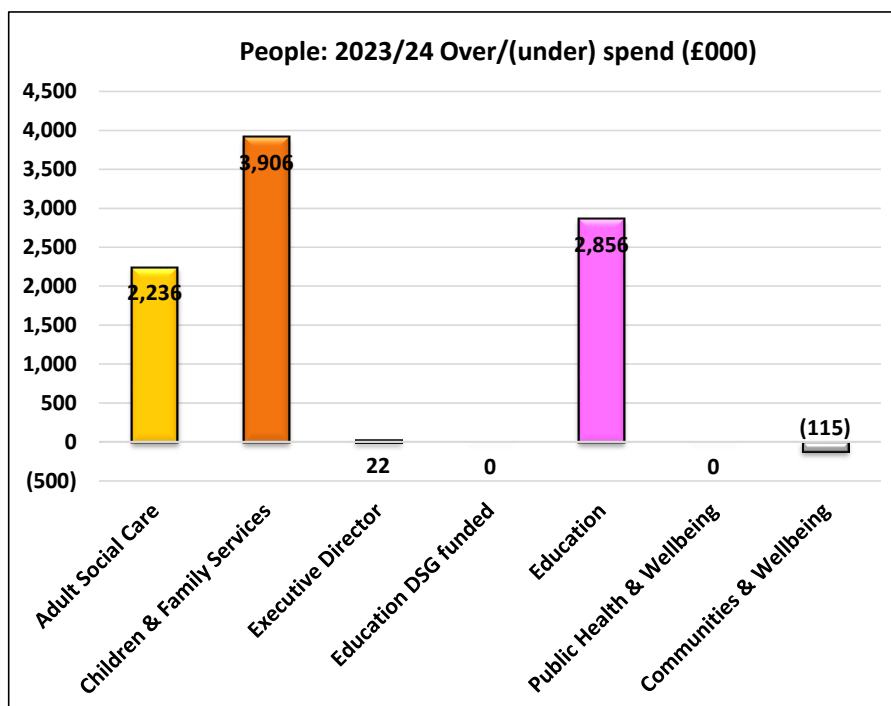
NB: Rounding differences may apply to the nearest £k.

Impact on Reserves

5.6 The general fund will be reduced to just over £4m as a result of the provisional outturn. This is significantly below the recommended level for future budget setting as outlined in the report.

People Directorate

5.7 The People Directorate outturn is an over spend of £8.9m against a budget of £98m, representing 9% of budget. The overspend has increased by £0.5m from last quarter.



5.8 In ASC, the overspend is £2.2m, which is 3.5% of the net budget of £63m. This is after £0.4m use of transformation funding. The modelled investment request for Adult Social Care packages for 2023-24 was reduced by £1m and held as a risk. This has led to a higher level of overspend. The budget included savings of £2.3m of which £1.25m were not achieved. Additional pressure also arose from the pay award of £0.5m.

5.9 The overspend of £2.2m is after ASC found several in-year mitigations amounting to £1.6m to help offset the pressures.

5.10 The overspend has increased by £0.2m since last quarter largely due to increased overspend in our own care homes due to use of agency and lower than budgeted occupancy. Commissioning spend on client packages also increased but year-end provisions were lower than forecast offsetting most of these increases.

5.11 ASC long term services (LTS) are £2.6m over spent.

- There is an increase in the cost of care packages, due to inflation, complexities and challenges in the external workforce market. This equates to an average increase of 13% per client package since 2022-23.
- There has been lower than modelled occupancy in our own three care homes due to refurbishment and admissions restrictions resulting in clients being placed in externally commissioned beds costing more.

5.12 Short term services are £0.3m under spent due to the additional funding for Hospital Discharge and changes to the in-house reablement model.

5.13 Other overspends is ASC total £0.04m.

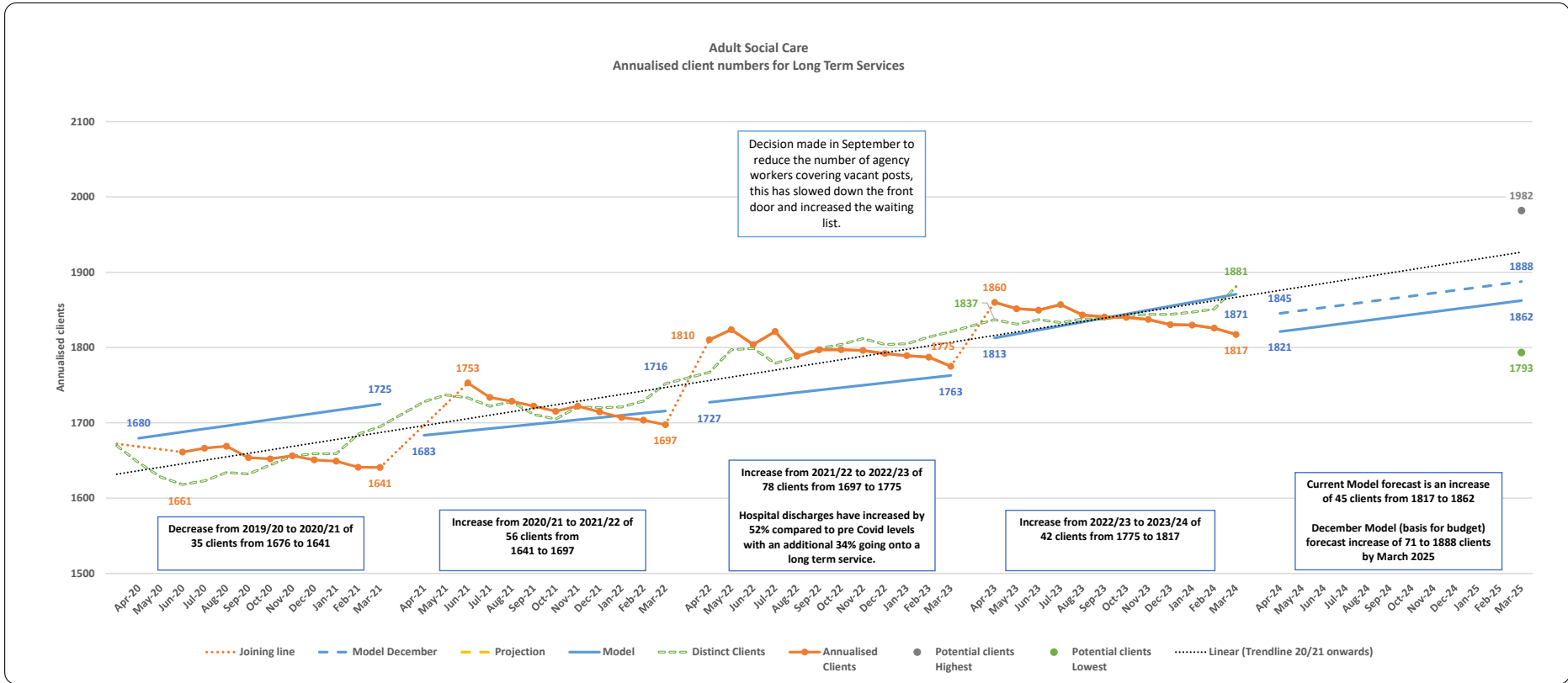
2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

- There is a £1.4m overspend in two of our own care homes due to a shortfall of income due to refurbishments and agency staffing requirements from recruitment difficulties, absence cover and additional care requirements.
- Underspends have arisen in Shared Lives £0.2m due to lack of carer availability/additional income and in Reablement £0.6m due to vacancies. Other underspends are in Maximising Independence, Resource Centres and staffing.

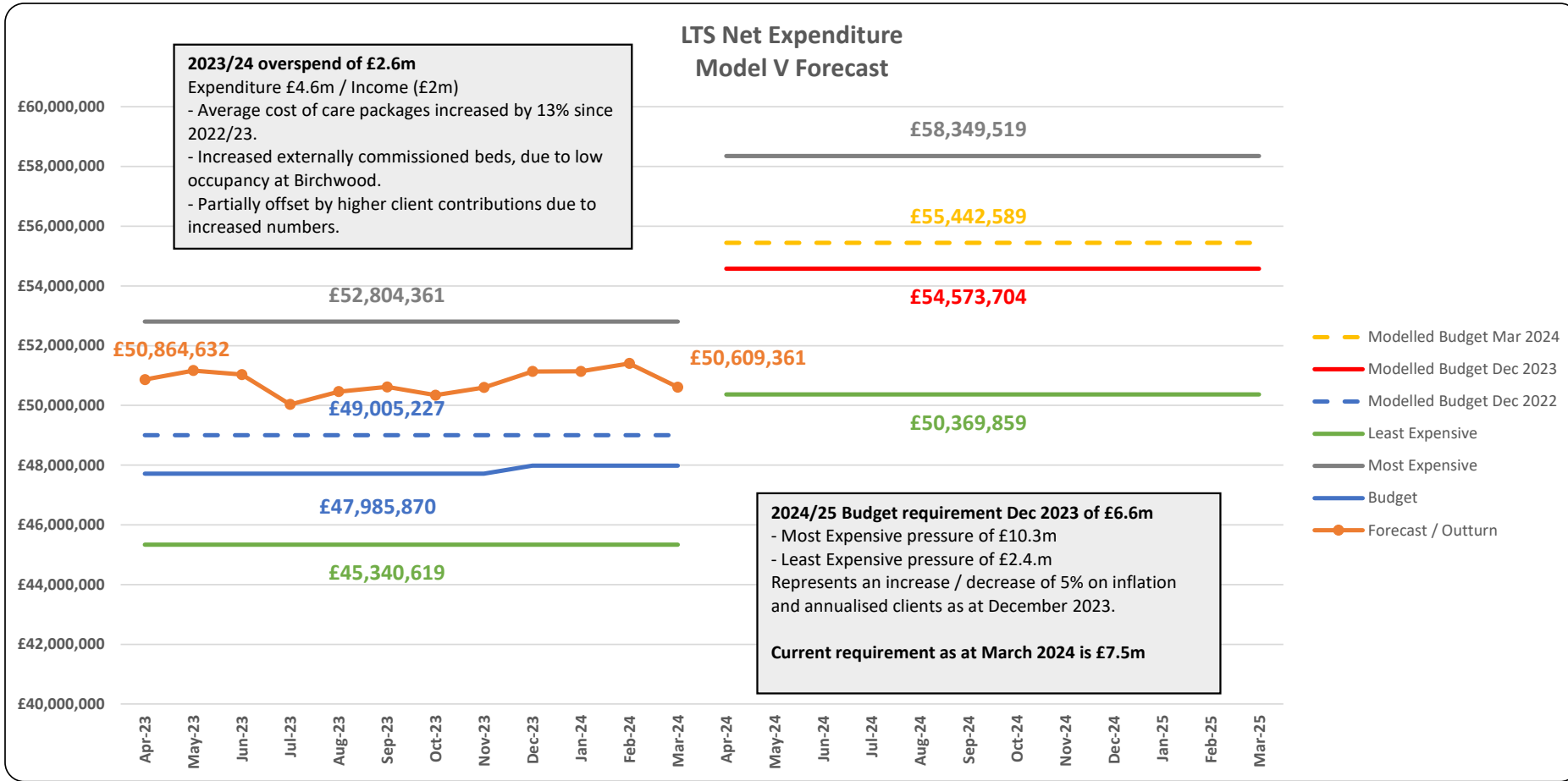
5.14 The 2023-24 savings target of £2.3m is £1.3m red and £1m green. The red is due to health funding, increased care packages and use of other care homes.

5.15 ASC are seeing an aging population as well as increased costs. The ASC Model for long term services is updated monthly, with assumptions reviewed and agreed by the ASC Financial Planning Steering group and reported at the ASC Financial Planning meeting.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

5.16 In CFS, the outturn is a £3.9m overspend, which is 18% of the net budget of £21m. This is a £0.2m increase since last quarter. The outturn is after the use of transformation funding of £0.8m.

- There is a £2.6m over spend in placements. The children in care population has stabilised in the last 12 months, however there is increased complexity, mental health and emotional wellbeing needs, and provision for teenagers. There is a small cohort of young people with very high care needs requiring specialist residential provision and a national shortage of suitable residential placements.
- The Family Safeguarding teams are overspending by £1.2m due to agency costs. This has been required to cover vacancies and maternity leave and increased demand. Childcare lawyers has a £1m overspend due to an increase in the number of cases in court.

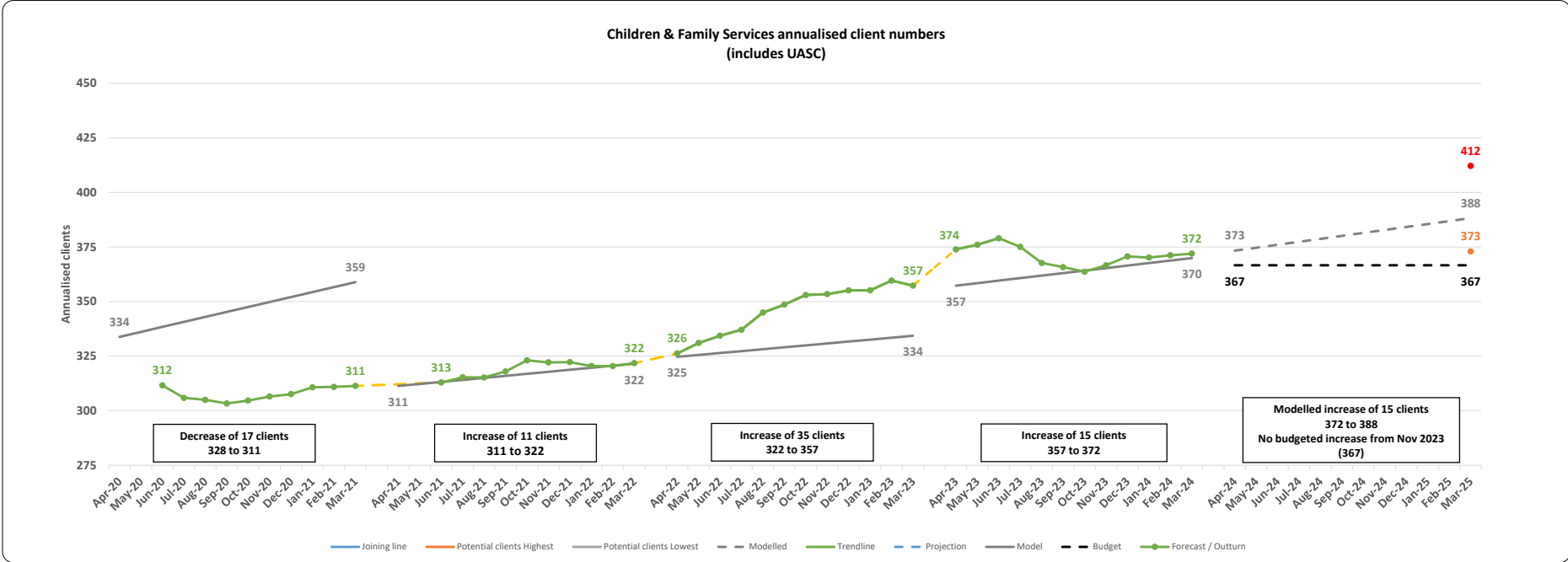
5.17 The 2023-24 savings target of £0.5m is £256k red and £271k green. The red is due to a target for not filling posts immediately upon becoming vacant not being met due to the level of demand for statutory intervention and for placement cost reductions which were planned at a point when a rise in the care population was not as great as now being seen.

5.18 Demand at the front door remains high, however through effective early support and diversion, the numbers of child protection plans have reduced and the children in care population is showing signs of stability.

5.19 There has been successful recruitment of permanent social workers which has reduced the number of locum workers. There is ongoing work to continue the focus on recruitment and retention of a permanent workforce.

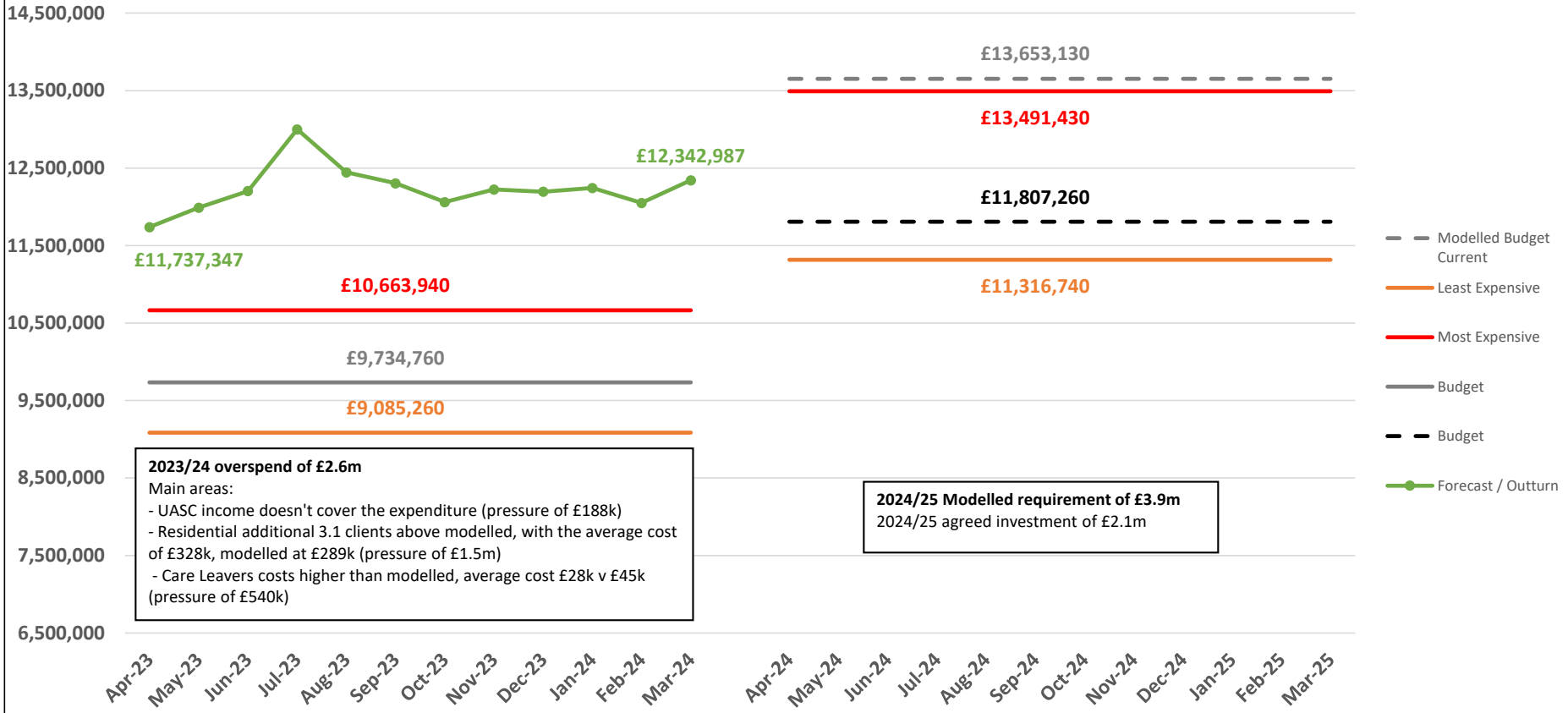
5.20 The model for placements has been refined and is updated monthly. Client numbers and net expenditure are shown in the graphs below.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Children & Family Services Net Expenditure
(includes UASC)



2023/24 overspend of £2.6m
 Main areas:
 - UASC income doesn't cover the expenditure (pressure of £188k)
 - Residential additional 3.1 clients above modelled, with the average cost of £328k, modelled at £289k (pressure of £1.5m)
 - Care Leavers costs higher than modelled, average cost £28k v £45k (pressure of £540k)

2024/25 Modelled requirement of £3.9m
 2024/25 agreed investment of £2.1m

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

5.21 Education outturn is a £2.8m overspend, which is 27% of the £10.7m budget. This has been forecast since Quarter Two.

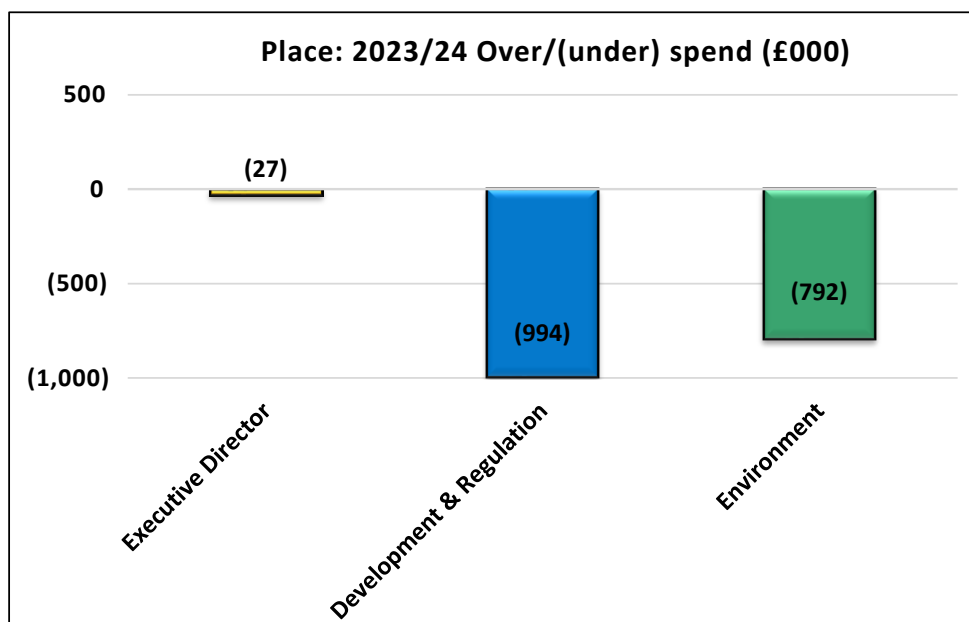
- £1.4m of the overspend is in Home to School Transport (HTST), representing 48% of the overspend. This is due to higher costs from retendering of contracts and a 5% increase in eligible pupils. The service is engaged in looking for ways to reduce HTST costs.
- £1.4m overspend was from disability support packages residential due to complex residential support and higher costs, together with increased requests for families in their own homes.

5.22 Public Health had an in-year underspend of £270k which will transfer to the Public Health Reserve. The underspend was mainly due to agenda for change payments not being required for NHS related contracts.

5.23 Communities and Wellbeing is reporting a £115k underspend. There are pressures in library income due to Parishes not contributing, but there are savings in leisure and the museum offsetting this.

Place Directorate

5.24 The Place Directorate provisional outturn is an underspend of £1.8m, representing 5.3% against a budget of £34m. This is after outturn adjustments including the utilisation of £0.3m transformation funding and £1.3m unspent migration funding which will be moved to an earmarked reserve.



5.25 The outturn prior to these adjustments was an underspend of £135k, of which there was an overspend of £429k in Development and Regulation and an underspend of £537k in Environment.

5.26 In Development and Regulation, the £429k overspend before use of reserves represents 7.6% of the £5.6m budget. This is a reduction of £0.6m since Quarter Three.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

The decrease has been from improved planning income and allocation of grant and transformation funding in the final quarter.

- There is a £0.7m pressure on Planning Application fee income, of which £0.4m is from a national fee uplift which was anticipated to start at the beginning of this financial year, but introduced from December 2023.
- There is a £0.3m pressure on Bio-Diversity Net Gain income, where income was expected to be generated through activity linked to developments delivering a 10% uplift in Bio-Diversity Net Gain. It is clear from the introduction in the legislation in February 2024, that there is no opportunity to generate income from the scheme.
- There are £1.3m pressures in Housing from temporary accommodation repairs and emergency accommodation for homeless families. However there is a £0.9m underspend on the main housing staffing cost centre from vacancies and supplies and services plus underspends on rough sleeper accommodation and external housing management.
- There are areas of underspend from staffing vacancies and reduced spend on consultants.

5.27 The 2023-24 savings target of £1.5m is £1.1m red and £0.4m green. The red is due to the income targets outlined above not being achievable.

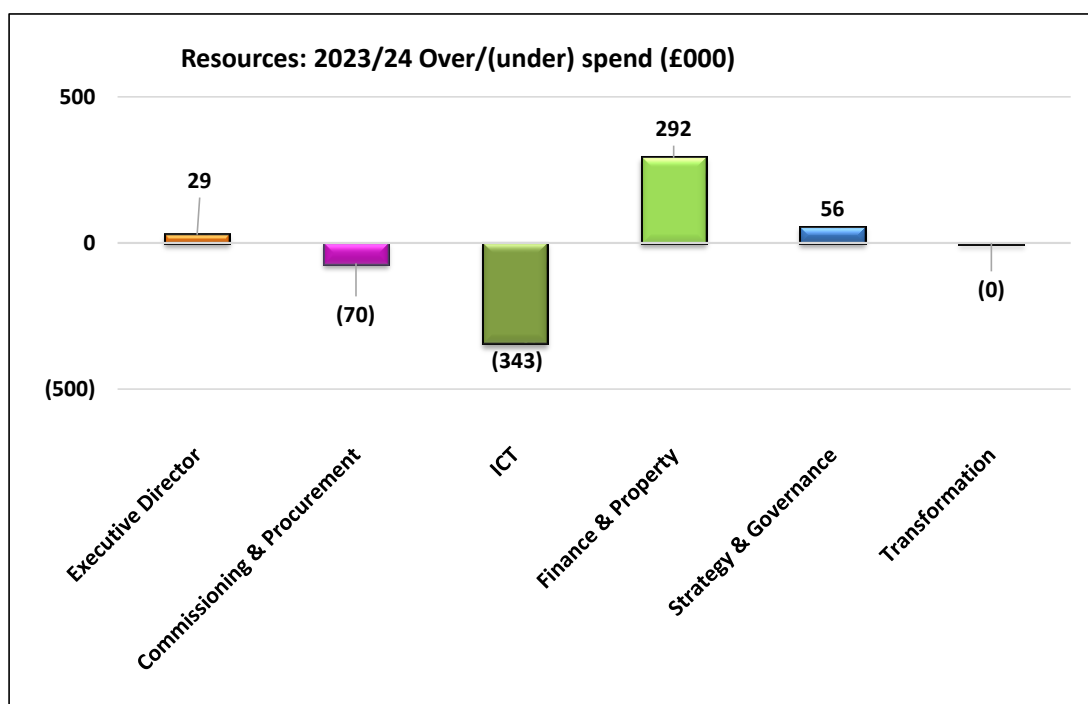
5.28 In Environment, the underspend is £792k after mitigations and use of reserves. There are pressures in highways emergencies and car parks but there are underspends in contractors and garden waste subscriptions, public transport and streetworks are over achieving income.

5.29 The 2023-24 savings target of £1.2m is £76k red and £1.1m green. The red is from biodiversity and carbon credits as legislation has not been forthcoming and from pre-application income.

Resources Directorate/Chief Executive

5.30 The Resources Directorate outturn is an underspend of £37k. This is after use of reserves of £0.2m and transformation of £0.8m. The Chief Executive Service is an overspend of £16k. The combined underspend of £20k represents 0.2% of the net budget of £12.8m.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



5.31 In Commissioning & Procurement, the £70k surplus is largely due to additional income from the agency contract rebate, although this has reduced slightly from previous estimates as a result of the reduced agency usage. Transformation funding has supported staff working on the Procurement Strategy and can supporting time spent reducing agency reliance. The £350k savings are green.

5.32 In ICT the outturn is a £343k under spend largely due to licence capitalisation and staffing savings. The £110k savings target is £35k red and £75k green.

5.33 In Finance and Property, the £292k overspend has arisen from unachieved savings from the accommodation review project, delayed property disposals and recruitment difficulties necessitating the use of agency. The £1.1m savings target is £145k red and £1m green.

5.34 Strategy and Governance is £56k overspent, but after funding the apprentice scheme project this drops to a £9k underspend. The £420k savings programme is £151k red and £269k green. The red is from grant funding that is not available and lack of staffing to undertake digital transformation.

5.35 The Transformation Service is forecast online after use of transformation funding.

Capital Financing and Risk Management

5.36 Capital Financing has an underspend of £4m relating to the review of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for capital expenditure. The outcome of this review has identified a net reduction in the annual charge of £4m for 2023-24.

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

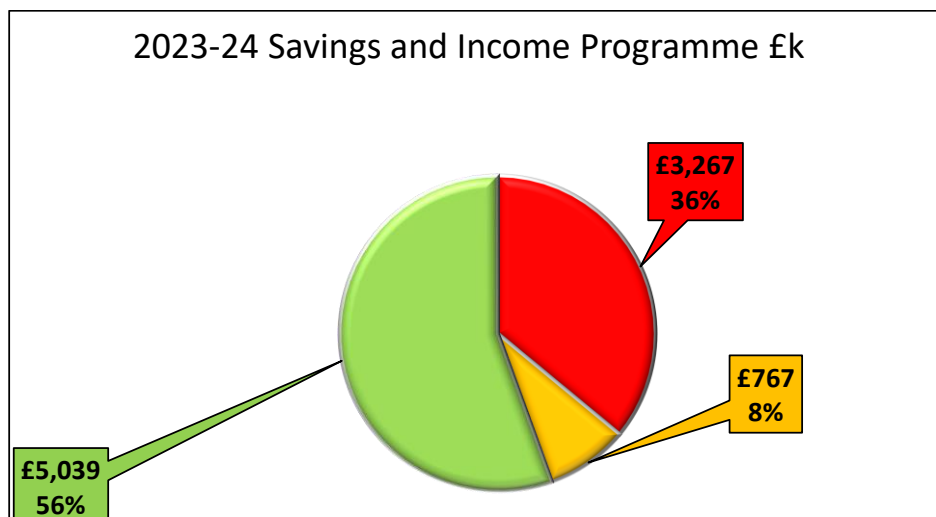
Agency Spend

5.37 Agency spend to Quarter Four was £9.5m compared to £11.9m in 2022-23. The Financial Review Panel which started at the end of July 2023, have been making progress to reduce agency spending as shown in the chart below:

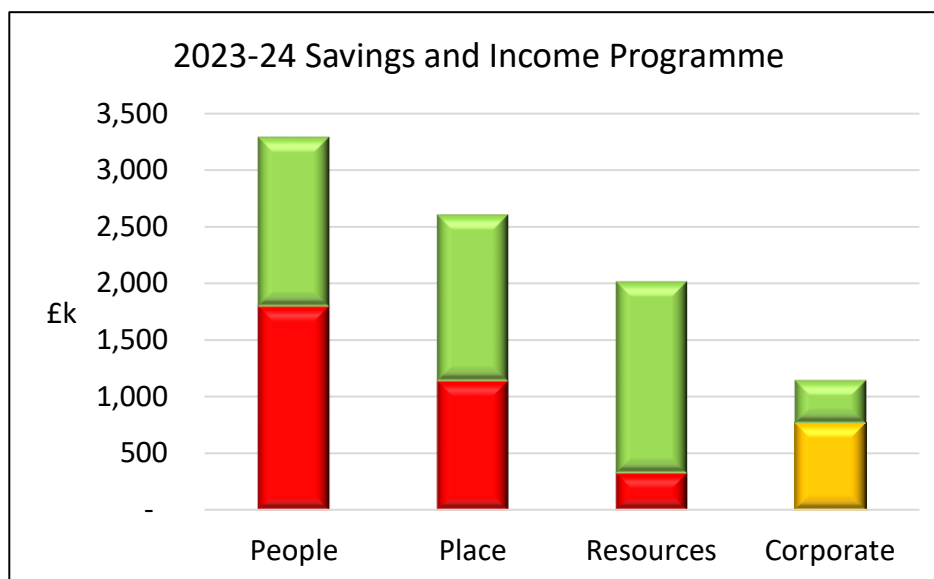
Service Summary	Q1 Agency spend	Q2 Agency spend	Q3 Agency spend	Q4 Agency spend	Trend	Total Agency spend 2023/24	Total Agency spend 2022/23	Change year on year	Q1 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend	Q2 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend	Q3 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend	Q4 Agency spend as a % of Employee spend
Chief Executive	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0%
Adult Social Care	1,101,964	913,384	713,248	993,284		3,721,880	4,417,239	- 695,359	22%	20%	14%	20%
Children & Family Services	805,261	907,343	739,538	603,265		3,055,407	3,119,151	- 63,744	33%	33%	25%	23%
Communities & Wellbeing	2,608	2,379	-	-		4,987	-	4,987	0%	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director - People	-	-	14,442	-		14,442	975	13,467	0%	0%	12%	0%
Education	230,573	276,477	239,964	190,742		937,756	776,644	161,112	13%	16%	13%	11%
Public Health & Wellbeing	-	-	-	-		-	64,445	- 64,445	0%	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director – Place	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0%
Development & Regulation	269,596	250,966	215,937	213,868		950,367	2,354,237	- 1,403,870	11%	10%	8%	8%
Environment	34,529	34,159	38,974	49,194		156,856	212,608	- 55,752	3%	2%	2%	3%
Commissioning & Procurement	917	917	-	916		916	13,339	- 12,423	0%	0%	0%	0%
Executive Director - Resources	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0%
Finance & Property	103,186	87,054	75,316	129,995		395,551	469,234	- 73,683	9%	8%	6%	11%
ICT	17,132	7,624	-	27,066		51,822	149,668	- 97,846	3%	1%	0%	6%
Strategy & Governance	27,957	40,147	62,391	60,782		191,277	303,302	- 112,025	2%	2%	3%	4%
Total	2,593,723	2,518,616	2,099,810	2,269,112		9,481,261	11,880,842	- 2,399,581	15%	14%	11%	12%

2023-24 Savings and income generation programme

5.38 In order to meet the funding available, the 2023-24 revenue budget was built with a £9m savings and income generation programme. The programme is monitored using the RAG traffic light system. The status is shown in the following charts:



2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn



5.39 The amber item relates to targets in relation to vacant posts. Whilst some of this may have been achieved in some services, the overall position is that employee budgets were overspent due to the agency costs.

5.40 Red items are as follows:

Service	Saving item	Impact on 2024-25	Re-moved	Red	Amber	Green
ASC	£81k fees and charges increase	Consultation has taken place in line with setting the fees for 2024-25.			40	41
ASC	£99k review of care packages	£351k of this saving was achieved, however capacity was redirected to urgent reviews during 2023-24. To help achieve savings next year, the officers in the reablement service will offer additional support with double handed care packages when they have capacity.			50	49
ASC	£706k health funding S117 and CHC	£394k of this saving was achieved. This has been escalated with the ICB and the challenge will continue into 2024-25.			706	
ASC	£26k RAS software	This was dependent on an upgrade going live. The saving has been removed for 2024-25.	26			
ASC	£150k market management	An increase in the cost of care packages, due to inflation rates, complexities and the challenges in the external workforce market have meant we have been unable to achieve this saving. This target has been removed from 2024-25.	150			

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Service	Saving item	Impact on 2024-25	Re- moved	Red	Amber	Green
ASC	£189k Requires Improvement (RI) status in care homes	£61k of this saving was realised. In some cases RI homes have been more expensive than those rated good. For 2024-25, the three commissioning options will include an RI home for consideration.			189	
CFS	£184k recruitment lag on new posts	With the unprecedented level of demand for statutory intervention it is unsafe to not fill social work posts given the caseloads already exceeding safe levels. This saving was for one year only so no impact on 2024-25.	184			
CFS	£66k actions to reduce cost of care	The anticipated reduction in placement costs were planned at a point when the children in care population was not rising to the extent that it has and when the residential market was not under the strain that it is currently. This saving was removed for 2024-25.	66			
CFS	£13k placement cost reduction	£75k of this saving was achieved and the saving should be made in full next year.				13
ES	£58k fees and charges	£51k of this relates to home to school transport (HTST) which is overspent so the saving was not achieved. £7k of this relates to family hubs, where have been unable to meet the target. HTST will struggle to meet this in 2024-25 whilst the service is under pressure. Family hubs had a further fee increase for 2024-25 so will need to be monitored.			58	
C&W	£225k from income generation and transformation	£151k has been achieved in year but not on a permanent basis which is why this remains red. There are discussions underway to achieve this in 2024-25.			225	
D&R	£63k premium service for pre application advice and determination of householder applications.	A trial of the Premium Service took place in October 2022. This service is currently not being offered, therefore the income target will not be realised.		63		

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Service	Saving item	Impact on 2024-25	Re- moved	Red	Amber	Green
D&R	£265k place shaping and delivery.	Income was originally expected to be generated through activity linked to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Conservation Area Appraisals. The requirement for developments to deliver a 10% uplift in BNG became law in February 2024, however, it is now clear there is no opportunity to generate income other than through cost recovery through pre-apps and PPAs or by the sale of BNG credits. This target has been removed for 2024-25. The sale of credits is represented by a £50k income target in the Environmental Delivery team.	265			
D&R	£390k uplift in planning fees	Planning fees are set nationally by DLUHC. The saving proposal was based on new fees starting from April, however they only came into effect from December 2023. Although there is the benefit of higher rates for the final 4 months of the financial year, there was an outturn pressure on the income target of £675k, therefore none of the saving target has been achieved. Next year will see the benefit of a full year of fees.			195	195
D&R	£25k financial contribution from registered providers for use of Council's choice based letting system	There was a £55k income target for choice based lettings of which £30k was achieved. There has not been the anticipated uptake in demand for providers to advertise through the letting system, linked with issues in the current demands in the rental market. This pressure will continue into 2024-25 unless there is a significant increase in demand.		25		
D&R	£220k review of systems processes and resources. £100k planning white paper/ levelling up and regeneration bill service efficiencies	This saving is linked with the implementation of the Planning Service Staffing Restructure which is in the process of being implemented. Although there is an in year pressure on achieving this, once the new structure is implemented then the saving will be achieved for future years. In year there are posts being held vacant in Minerals & Waste/Planning Policy which are helping offset/mitigate this pressure.				320
Env	£26k pre app charges	The difficulty in recruiting to key posts has impacted on this target. Some pre-app income has been achieved but not at the levels estimated in budget build. This pressure will continue in 2024-25 unless demand increases.		26		

2023-24 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn

Service	Saving item	Impact on 2024-25	Re- moved	Red	Amber	Green
Env	£50k for biodiversity and carbon credits	This saving has not been achieved as expected Environment Act secondary legislation was only released in the final quarter of 2023-24. The Environment Delivery Service are reviewing implications and long-term achievability of this saving. In year this pressure has been mitigated by underspends across the department.			50	
F&P	£65k from savings on surplus accommodation	£31k of the target was achieved. The saving is achievable in the long term as the property is being disposed of.				65
F&P	£43k from accommodation review	£37k was achieved, but one of the properties is still fully occupied. The accommodation review is being led by the Transformation service and it is anticipated that once complete, the saving can be fully achieved.				43
F&P	£37k rental income	Saving based on higher income following rent reviews. However some rents were not uplifted following the outcome of the review, and others are still waiting to take place. This should be completed in 2024-25.				37
ICT	£35k print and postage savings	Although there have been reductions in printing across the Council, the cost of paper has almost doubled over the past few years. As part of the capital programme, new printers are due to be purchased, which will provide more efficient printing and additional management information to target a reduction in printing.				35
S&G	£50k digital transformation	Saving not achieved due to overspend in cost centre. Posts have not been deleted and service state that at current levels of demand they are unable to reduce their current staffing. There will be continued pressures until the staffing saving can be achieved or offset through other budget reductions.		50		
S&G	£101k grant funding of elections staff	There is no ongoing grant funding for the restructure of the Elections Team, an investment bid to remove this is part of the 2024-25 budget proposals.	101			
		Total 2024-25 impact of 2023-24 red items	792	164	1513	798

6 Proposals

- 6.1 To note the £3.1m overspend.
- 6.2 To note the continuation of Financial Review Panel (FRP) to meet weekly to ensure the spending limits are being adhered to and to monitor the measures around recruitment, staffing and agency. The FRP has been reviewed and expenditure over £10k for overspend directorates (from 2023-24) now goes to the FRP to reflect the new financial year.

7 Other options considered

None

8 Conclusion

The Council is facing an unprecedented level of financial pressures due a range of factors. The Council has taken a proactive position to review overspends from across departments. This has resulted in a stabilising of the overspend forecast from Quarter Two. It is important to note that the underlying overspend, especially from the People directorate services has been very significant. Over £12m has been added into the 2024-25 budget to adjust for this large overspend, and managing this position will be critical to the financial resilience of the Council in 2024-25.

9 Appendices

Appendix A – Budget Changes

Background Papers:

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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only
-

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

Name: Melanie Ellis
Job Title: Service Director, Finance, Property & Procurement

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
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Appendix A – Budget Changes

Appendix A

Service	Original Net Budget £000	Budget B/F from 22-23 released from reserves £000	Grants/ funding released from reserves £000	FAGG approved release from reserves £000	Budget changes not requiring approval £000	Approved by S151 & Portfolio Holder £000	Approved by Executive £000	Budget C/F to 2024-25 £000	Final Net Budget £000
Adult Social Care	62,899		130		26				63,055
Children and Family Services	21,223				26				21,249
Executive Director	370		76		2				448
Education DSG funded	(444)								(444)
Education	10,688	20							10,708
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)								(80)
Communities & Wellbeing	3,257				(23)				3,234
People	97,912	20	206	0	31	0	0	0	98,169
Executive Director	213				(6)				207
Development & Regulation	5,344	294		33					5,671
Environment	27,942			293	(30)				28,206
Place	33,499	294	0	327	(36)	0	0	0	34,084
ICT	2,437								2,437
Executive Director	317				6				323
Commissioning & Procurement	448								448
Finance & Property	1,468				94				1,562
Strategy & Governance	7,289	192		16	8				7,505
Resources	11,959	192	0	16	107	0	0	0	12,275
Chief Executive	541		11		(2)				550
Capital Financing & Risk	14,851	(314)			(94)				14,443
Total	158,762	192	217	343	7	0	0	0	159,520
Quarter One	158,762	192							158,954
Quarter Two	158,954			16	7				158,977
Quarter Three	158,954		217		426				159,620
Quarter Four	158,954			327	(426)				159,521
Total	158,762	192	217	343	7	0	0	0	159,520

Capital Financing Performance Report Outturn Financial Year 2023/24

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	25 July 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member sent/agreed report:	13 June 2024
Report Author:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter
Forward Plan Ref:	

1 Purpose of the Report

The capital financing performance report provided to Members reports on the under or overspends against the Council's approved capital budget and proposed reprofiling of planned expenditure into subsequent financial years. This report presents the provisional outturn position for financial year 2023/24 against the approved capital programme and financing implications for financial year 2024/25.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- (a) The provisional outturn underspend against the 2023/24 capital programme of £47.7 million.
- (b) The impact of required capital financing on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and liability benchmark which identifies the Council as a long-term borrower of funding. (Appendix C).
- (c) £13.6 million of planned expenditure to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25 (project details in Appendix B).
- (d) £1.7 million of funding proposed to be brought forward from approved expenditure from financial year 2024/25 into financial year 2023/24 (project details in Appendix B).

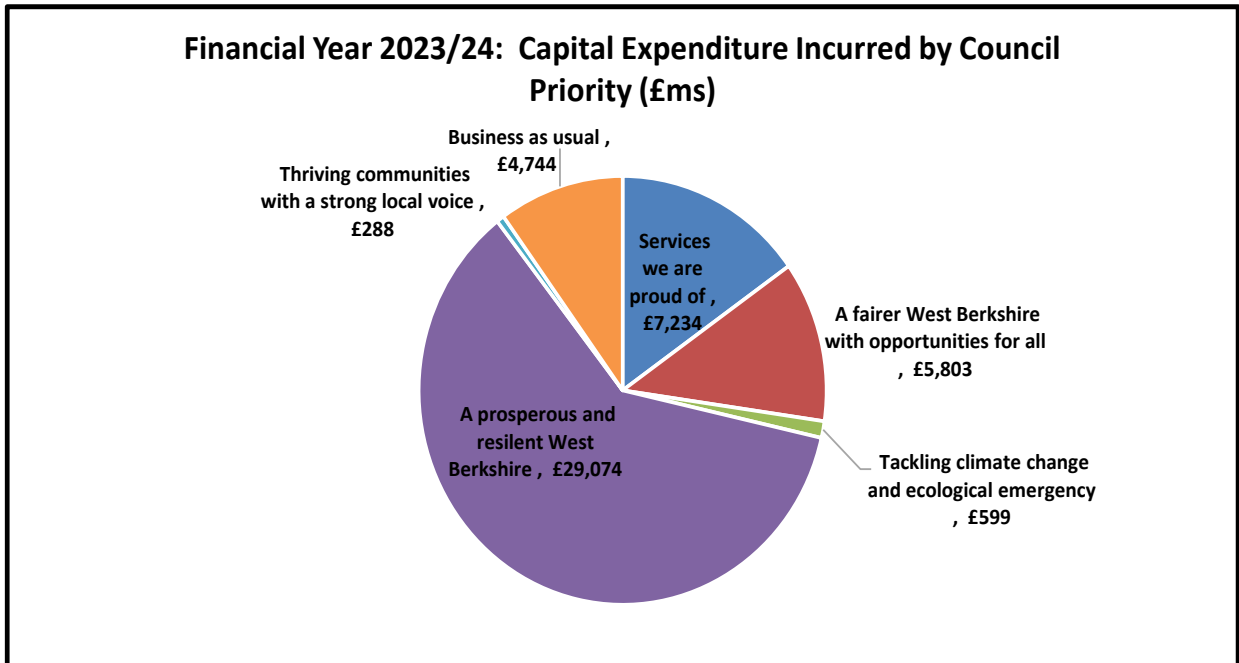
3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	The outturn position is expenditure of £47.7 million has been incurred against a revised budget of £70.9 million, an overall forecast underspend of £23.2 million. £13.6 million of future expenditure is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. £1.7 million of funding is proposed to be brought forward from financial year 2024/25 into financial year 2023/24.			
Human Resource:	Not applicable			
Legal:	Not applicable			
Risk Management:	The Council is also exposed to inflationary cost pressures across the capital programme as a whole. Furthermore, any changes in PWLB borrowing rates will impact on any new borrowing undertaken and the Council's weighted average cost of borrowing. Both of these external risks are largely outside the Council's ability to control, although the Council will take appropriate advice from our external treasury consultants, to determine the optimum time and structure for any new borrowing to be undertaken.			
Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	Not applicable			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Joseph Holmes, Executive Director for Resources, s151 Officer			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The capital programme enables delivery of key Council schemes focused on supporting the approved Capital and Council Strategies. As at the close of financial year 2023/24 £47.7 million of expenditure across capital schemes had been incurred.



- 4.2 As part of the outturn position £13.6 million of future planned expenditure is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2023/24, a detailed breakdown of which is included in Appendix B. This is comprised of £7 million of Council funded expenditure (i.e. to be financed through external borrowing) and £6.6 million of externally funded expenditure. A further £1.7 million of funding is proposed to be brought forward from financial year 2024/25 to fund project expenditure incurred in 2023/24 where projects are ahead of schedule, details are provided in Appendix B.
- 4.3 In respect of financing the capital programme, as at 31st March 2024, the Council's total level of long-term borrowing to fund capital spend stood at £207 million.
- 4.4 Capital financing costs are incurred a year in arrears; hence the cost of financing 2022/23 capital expenditure will fall into financial year 2024/25. The Council's liability benchmark (included in appendix C) identifies the Council as a long-term borrower. Hence there is a borrowing need within 2024/25 and the approved Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25 includes provision for financing of capital expenditure incurred in financial year 2023/24.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 Capital expenditure and its supporting financing have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. Expenditure is therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework.
- 5.2 The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital and investment plans in light of overall organisation strategy and resources to ensure that decisions are made with sufficient regard to the long-term financing implications and risks to the Council. To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the code sets out a number of indicators, although the Code does not include suggested indicative limits or ratios. Local Authorities are to set their own limits and ratios, subject to controls under

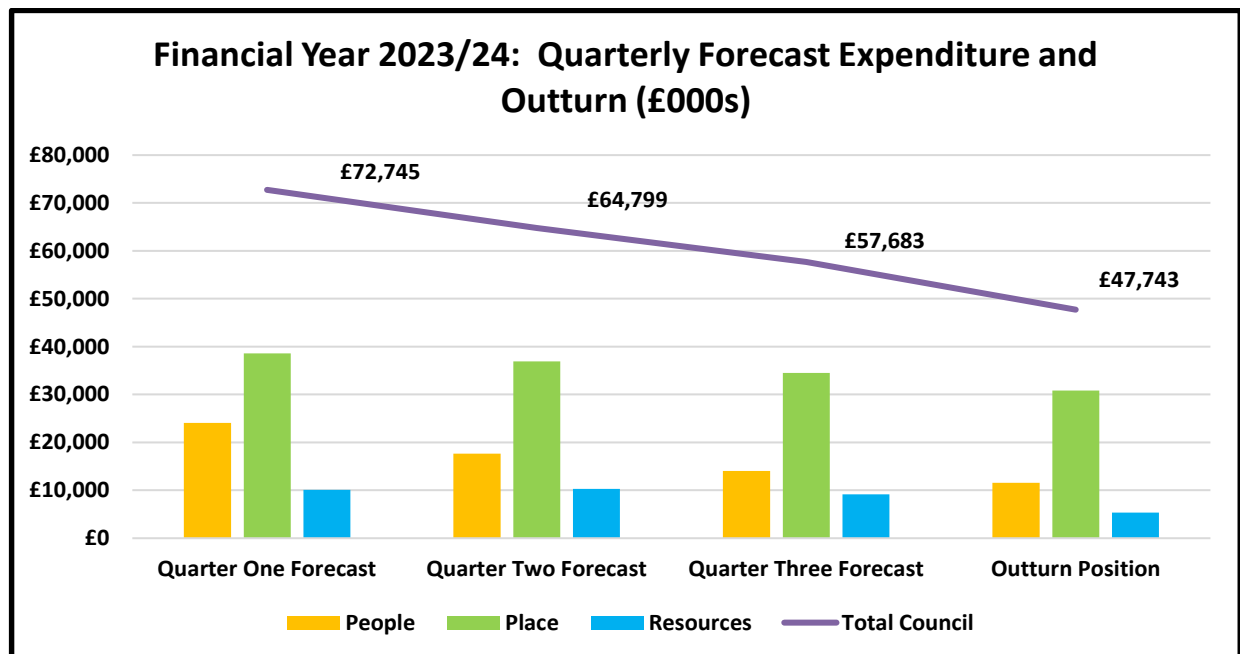
section 4 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council's capital programme is a key driver of the treasury management activity.

Background

5.3 At outturn total expenditure of £47.7 million was incurred against the approved capital programme of £71.0 million generating a £23.2 million underspend. From a directorate perspective the outturn position is as follows:

Directorates	Budget at Outturn	Expenditure at Outturn	(Underspend) / Overspend at Outturn
	£000s	£000s	£000s
People	£21,310	£11,590	£-9,721
Place	£39,078	£30,840	£-8,238
Resources	£10,584	£5,313	£-5,271
Total Council	£70,972	£47,743	£-23,229

5.4 During financial year 2023/24 the Council's revenue budget was under significant financial pressure with the General Fund anticipated to be well below the s151 recommended level of £7 million at outturn. In response to the financial pressures, projects were slowed, vacant posts were held vacant, and recruitment was slowed to generate in year savings. The impact of these steps protected the Council's General Fund position but slowed delivery of the overall capital programme as key project management posts were held vacant and projects reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. During the financial year £24.7 million of planned expenditure was reprofiled into 2024/25. At outturn it is proposed that a further £13.6 million of planned expenditure is reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. The graph below details the forecasting of planned capital expenditure over the course of the 2023/24 financial year.

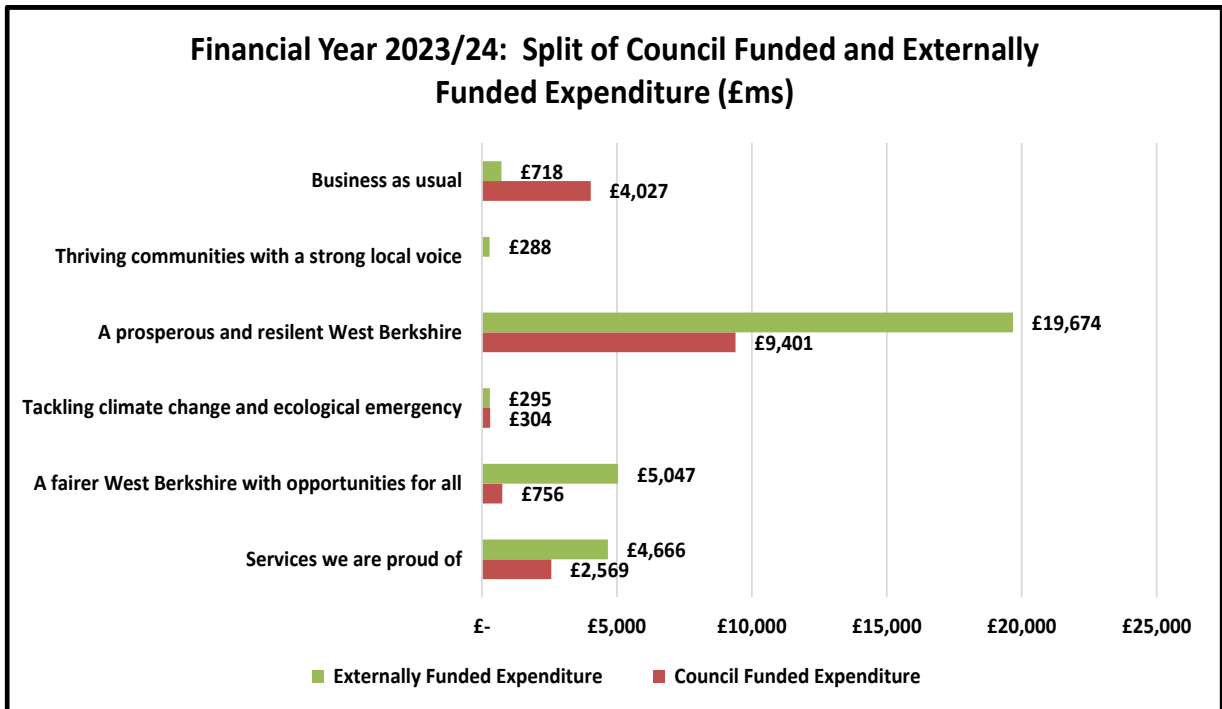


5.5 The capital programme is aligned to the approved Council Strategy (2023-2027, adopted in October 2023) and its key themes.

Strategy Theme	Budgetd Expenditure	Expenditure Incurred
	£000s	£000s
Services we are proud of	£9,481	£ 7,234
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	£10,572	£ 5,803
Tackling climate change and ecological emergency	£2,533	£ 599
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	£40,856	£ 29,074
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	£500	£ 288
Total Expenditure	£63,942	£42,999
Business as usual	£7,030	£ 4,744
Total Expenditure including business as usual	£70,972	£47,743

- 5.6 The Council has invested heavily in ensuring that West Berkshire remains an area that is prosperous, resilient and supportive of the most vulnerable. Key projects undertaken in year include: Delivery of an upgraded Lido facility at the Northcroft Leisure Centre. The Lido opened in Summer 2023 after an extensive redevelopment. The project was delivered within the £2.9 million budget, at a total cost of £2.8 million. Further investment has been made into the leisure provision with a major project covering the redevelopment of Northcroft Leisure Centre, and enhancements to facilities across the district. The redevelopment of Northcroft is ongoing and planned expenditure of £911k has been reprofiled into 2024/25. Eighteen properties have been purchased during the financial year as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund project. The joint funded budget of £9.2 million (£3.8 million external grant funding and £5.4 million Council funding), has been utilised to purchase properties within the district in conjunction with redeveloping a former Council office (West Point House), into accommodation to address the rising demand for temporary accommodation across the district. £7 million of expenditure has been incurred against the project to date with a further £2.2 million of planned expenditure reprofiled into 2024/25. Major projects investing in school capacity and enhancement of existing building stock across the school estate have been undertaken in year, key projects including SEMH/ASD provision for both primary and secondary age pupils (£3.8 million of expenditure), and improvement works in respect of ensuring the i-college provision is fit for purpose (£530K). £20.7 million of expenditure has been invested into the infrastructure across the district including £9.5 million on highway infrastructure and signage, £1.3 million on improvements to Newbury rail station and £3.2 million on the North Thatcham Flood Alleviation scheme.
- 5.7 Alongside delivery of the key themes, investment is required to maintain and enhance business as usual activities, primarily in respect of planned enhancement of business systems. £4.7 million of expenditure was incurred in the financial year against an outturn budget of £6.8 million. Key projects undertaken in year were: replacement of aging ICT infrastructure (£700K), installation of full fibre broadband to schools (£1.4 million) and implementation of a new HR and payroll system (£587k).
- 5.8 Expenditure incurred is split between Council funded expenditure (i.e. funded through application of capital receipts of debt financed through borrowing), or externally funded expenditure, (i.e. through application of external grants, contributions, section 106 or Community Infrastructure levy receipts). In respect of financial year 2023/24, £17.0 million of Council funding and £30.7 million of external funding has been applied to the

capital programme (i.e. financed expenditure incurred). Funding has been applied as follows:



5.9 Appendix A provides a summary of expenditure incurred on a directorate and service basis.

Proposals

5.10 At outturn £13.6 million of expenditure budget is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. In respect of the delivery of the Council Strategy and its key themes, planned reprofiling is detailed below:

Strategy Theme	Budgetd Expenditure	Expenditure Incurred	Reprofiled Planned Expenditure	Council Funded Reprofiling	Externally Funded Reprofiling
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Services we are proud of	£9,481	£ 7,234	£ 227	£ 227	£ -
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	£10,572	£ 5,803	£ 3,441	£ 1,308	£ 2,133
Tackling climate change and ecological emergency	£2,533	£ 599	£ 1,782	£ 1,535	£ 247
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	£40,856	£ 29,074	£ 6,792	£ 3,107	£ 3,685
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	£500	£ 288	£ 212	£ -	£ 212
Total Expenditure	£63,942	£42,999	£12,454	£ 6,177	£ 6,277
Business as usual	£7,030	£ 4,744	£ 1,204	£ 850	£ 354
Total Expenditure including business as usual	£70,972	£47,743	£13,658	£ 7,027	£ 6,631

5.11 Appendix B provides details of all schemes with planned future expenditure which is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. As part of the outturn process projects which are ahead of schedule and have incurred expenditure in excess of the annual budget are identified. As part of the outturn process approved allocated project specific funding from 2024/25 is brought forward to fund the 2023/24 in year overspend. £1.7 million of funding is proposed to be brought forward from 2024/25 into 2023/24. The funding is split between £124k of Council funding and £1.6 million of external

funding. Details of project specific funding to be brought forward is included in appendix B.

6 Other options considered.

Not applicable.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 All capital expenditure must be financed, The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital and investment plans in light of overall organisation strategy and resources to ensure that decisions are made with sufficient regard to the long-term financing implications and risks to the Council. A key indicator is the Council's Authorised Limit for external for debt, which was approved at Council on 29th February 2024, at £386.8 million for financial year. As well as the level of borrowing needed to fund capital expenditure, the Limit also allows for debt embedded in the Waste PFI contract up to a maximum of £13.2 million at any one time). As at 31st March 2024, the Council's total level of long-term borrowing to fund capital spend stood at £207 million (split £206.6 million from the PWLB and £0.4 million community bond).
- 7.2 The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The 2023/24 capital programme was expected to increase the Council's CFR by £20.4 million to £300.3 million by 31.3.2024. At outturn the revised CFR is £292.9 million with a forecast to increase to £314 million during 2024/25.
- 7.3 Capital financing costs are incurred a year in arrears; hence the cost of financing 2023/24 capital expenditure will fall into financial year 2024/25. Based on the outturn position, the Council's Balance Sheet forecast indicates that long term borrowing will be required in financial year 2024/25. It should be noted that the Balance Sheet resources assumption are based on draft accounts, until such time the accounts are finalised, and an audit opinion provided by the Council's external auditors, the figures remain draft and hence are subject to adjustment. Appendix C provides detail on the Council's CFR and liability benchmark.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A –Summary of Financial Year 2023/24 Outturn position by Directorate.
- 8.2 Appendix B – Proposed Reprofile of Planned Expenditure at Outturn Financial Year 2023/24.
- 8.3 Appendix C – Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and Liability Benchmark.

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:Yes: X 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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Wards affected: All Wards**Officer details:**

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Appendix A

Summary of Financial Year 2023/24 Outturn position by Directorate

The People Directorate

Service	Approved Programme & Reprofiled from 22/23	Reprofilng into 24/25 undertaken in year	Other Budget Changes	Outturn Budget	Quarter One Forecast	Quarter Two Forecast	Quarter Three Forecast	Outturn Expenditure
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adult Social Care	£ 5,118	-£ 1,273	£ 224	£ 4,068	£ 4,285	£ 2,631	£ 2,184	£ 1,489
Children & Family Services	£ 30	£ -	£ -	£ 30	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Education Services	£ 14,225	-£ 5,091	£ 408	£ 9,542	£ 12,081	£ 8,733	£ 7,628	£ 6,480
Communities & Wellbeing	£ 11,911	-£ 5,411	£ 1,170	£ 7,670	£ 7,714	£ 6,268	£ 4,197	£ 3,620

The outturn position for **Adult Social Care** is an underspend of £2.58 million. As part of the slowing of the capital programme in year and in response to reviews of the Council's in-house care provision, the following projects were not undertaken in 2023/24:

- (a) Refurbishments at the Willows Edge and Notrees care homes.
- (b) Willows Edge, Notrees and Birchwood care home garden redesign projects.
- (c) Feasibility study for a new care home in the district.

The implementation of care Director v6 was terminated during the financial year due to functional issues with the system offering resulting in capital costs incurred being recharged back to the Council's revenue account, generating a capital underspend of £181k.

The outturn position for **Education Services** is an underspend of £3.06 million. Delivery of the Education programme was significantly impacted through the holding of project management posts vacant within Property Services (as part of the slowing of expenditure to protect the Council's General Fund). Key underspends include: £944k relating to SEMH/ASD resourced provision for primary stage. £402k on planned enhancements across the school estate, and £530k relating to i-college alternative education provision project. £2.12 million of the underspend relates to planned expenditure proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25.

The outturn position for the **Communities and Wellbeing** service is an underspend of £4.05 million. The primary driver of the underspend is the cessation of the sports hub project (£1.8 million). A second key underspend is the Northcroft Dry side Redevelopment project (£912k), which has been identified by the service as requiring reprofiling into 2024/25. Various underspends have been identified against a number of maintenance budgets across the museum and leisure estate.

The Place Directorate

Service	Approved Programme & Reprofilng from 22/23	Reprofilng into 24/25 undertaken in year	Other Budget Changes	Outturn Budget	Quarter One Forecast	Quarter Two Forecast	Quarter Three Forecast	Outturn Expenditure
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Development & Regulation	£ 13,893	-£ 5,236	£ 4,347	£ 13,004	£ 10,091	£ 12,901	£ 12,886	£ 9,947
Environment	£ 31,760	-£ 7,067	£ 1,381	£ 26,074	£ 28,474	£ 29,089	£ 21,605	£ 20,893

The outturn position for Development and Regulation is an underspend of £3.05 million. The main contributing project is the Local Authority Housing Fund where works are still being undertaken to convert West Point House into accommodation units. The £2.19 million underspend has been proposed for reprofiling into 2024/25 in order for completion of the project. Underspends of £491k and £304k have been identified against the Newbury Town masterplan project and Bond Riverside respectively. Bond Riverside has been proposed for reprofiling into 2024/25.

The outturn position for Environment is an underspend of £5.18 million. Over 50 projects were commenced during the financial year. At outturn the projects with the most significant underspends were: Newbury Rail station Improvements (£2.34 million), this project is jointly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funded, delays in delivery have been due to third party supplier issues. The Solar Photovoltaic Initiative (617k), delays in delivery have been due to issues identified with the earmarked sites and internal resourcing. The renewable energy provision project, which relates to the development of a solar farm with the Council's estate (£606.8K), the project is in the planning and development stage with construction anticipated in later financial years. The underspend has been proposed to be reprofiled into 2024/25 to support delivery of the project. Theale rail station improvements (£400k), the project has been delayed by rail partners, the project has been rescheduled to commence in 2024/25 and the unutilised budget of £400k reprofiled into 2024/25 to support project delivery.

The Resources Directorate

Service	Approved Programme & Reprofilng from 22/23	Reprofilng into 24/25 undertaken in year	Other Budget Changes	Outturn Budget	Quarter One Forecast	Quarter Two Forecast	Quarter Three Forecast	Outturn Expenditure
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Finance & Property	£ 2,574	-£ 85	-£ 1,281	£ 1,208	£ 2,021	£ 1,898	£ 1,550	£ 1,028
Strategy, Governnace & ICT	£ 8,294	-£ 544	-£ 3,886	£ 3,865	£ 8,079	£ 8,359	£ 7,633	£ 4,212

The Finance & Property Service generated an outturn underspend of £870k. The key drivers of the underspend related to CIL funded community bids (£211k), and the Future of West Street & West Point House project (£216k). Unutilised CIL funded budget has been identified for reprofiling into 2024/25.

The newly combined Strategy, Governance and ICT service ended the financial year with a £4.47 million underspend. Key underspends were: Superfast Broadband project (£2.757

million). This project comprises of two elements, firstly project management (budget £1.18 million) and infrastructure (budget £1.58 million). The infrastructure budget was completed two years ago with the budget reprofiled in error and hence no expenditure has been incurred in year. The project management costs relate to general project management costs within ICT and have been allocated to the appropriate projects. Both budgets are not proposed for reprofiling in 2024/25. Other key underspends relate the implementation of the new HR/Payroll system (£162k) and digitisation projects (£183k), reprofiling of future planned expenditure into 2024/25 has been requested for both projects.

Appendix B

Proposed Reprofile of Planned Expenditure at Outturn

Service	Requested Council Funded Reprofile to 2024/25	Requested Externally Funded Reprofile to 2024/25	Council Funding to be Brought Forward from 2024/25	External Funding to be Brought Forward from 2024/25	Net Council Reprofile Impact 2024/25	Net External Reprofile impact 2024/25
Adult Social Care	£ 418,009	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 418,009	£ -
Education Services	£ 195,128	£ 1,926,868	£ 8,699	£ 130,619	£ 186,429	£ 1,796,249
Communities & Wellbeing Service	£ 1,317,909	£ 207,352	£ 17,262	£ -	£ 1,300,647	£ 207,352
Development & Regulation	£ 2,207,657	£ 375,000	£ 70,377	£ -	£ 2,137,280	£ 375,000
Environment	£ 2,038,038	£ 3,555,978	£ 28,374	£ 1,479,582	£ 2,009,664	£ 2,076,396
Resources	£ 849,843	£ 566,288	£ -	£ -	£ 849,843	£ 566,288
Total Reprofile of Expenditure	£ 7,026,584	£ 6,631,486	£ 124,711	£ 1,610,201	£ 6,901,872	£ 5,021,285

Appendix C

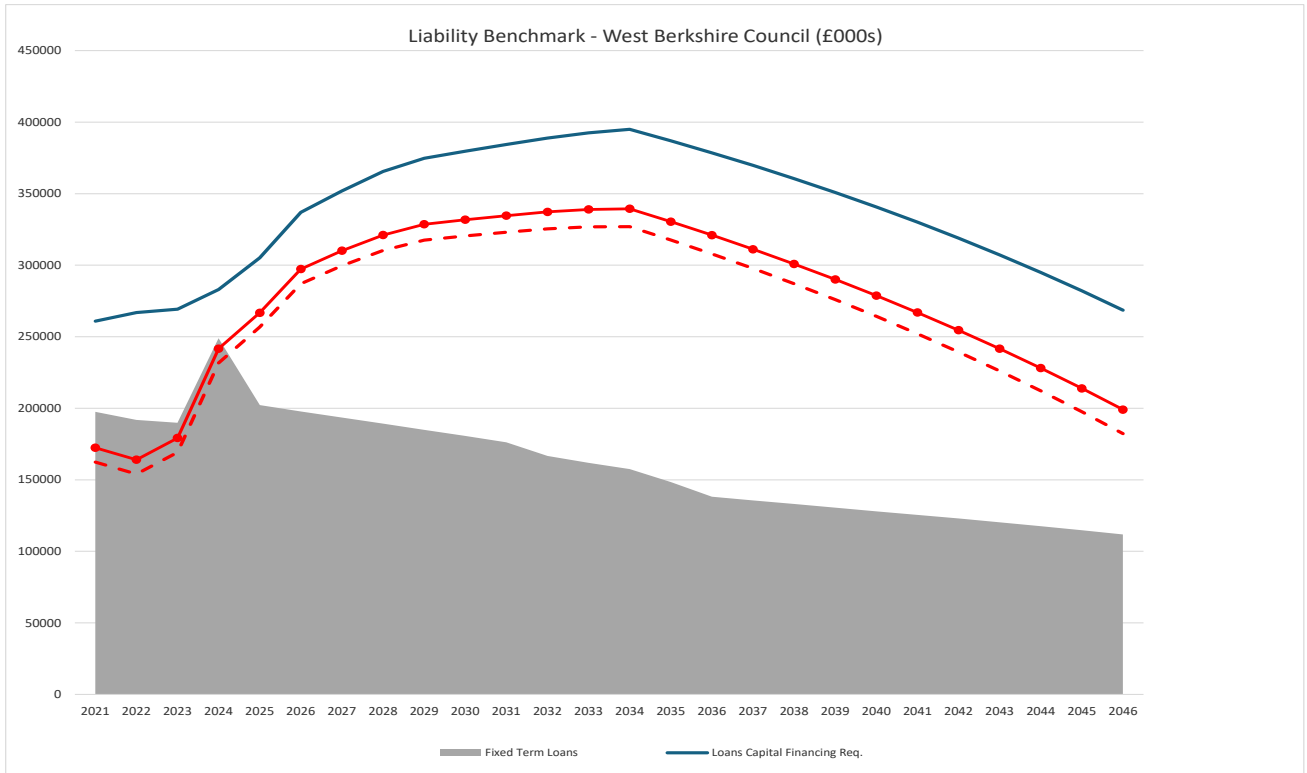
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and Liability Benchmark

The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2023/24 unfinanced capital expenditure, and prior years' net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

Capital Financing Requirement	31/03/2024	31/03/2025	31/03/2026
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m	£m
Capital Financing requirement	£292.9	£314.0	£344.9
Less: Other Debt Liabilities	£9.8	£8.9	£7.9
Loans Capital Financing requirement	£283.1	£305.1	£337.0
Less: External Borrowing	£249.0	£202.2	£172.7
Internal Borrowing	£34.1	£102.9	£164.2
Usable Reserves	£42.7	£39.7	£41.2
Working Capital	£8.7	£8.7	£8.7
Net Investments/(New Borrowing)	£17.3	£54.5	£114.4

To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as the table above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10 million at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow. Councils are now required as part of in year reporting to publish the liability benchmark.

Liability Benchmark	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast
	£000	£000	£000
Loans Capital Financing requirement	£283,063	£305,140	£336,956
Less: Balance sheet resources	-£51,363	-£48,363	-£49,863
Net loans requirement	£231,700	£256,776	£287,092
Plus: Liquidity allowance	£10,000	£10,000	£10,250
Liability benchmark	£241,700	£266,776	£297,342



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Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	17 July 2024
Scrutiny Commission Chairman:	Councillor Carolyne Culver
Report Author:	Gordon Oliver
Forward Plan Ref:	C4556

1 Purpose of the Report

The Annual Scrutiny report for 2023/24 provides a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission, and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendation(s)

For the Scrutiny Commission to agree the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023/24 for presentation to Council.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no financial implications associated with this report
Human Resource:	There are no HR implications associated with this report.
Legal:	<p>The report shows how the Council has discharged its legal obligations with regards to scrutiny, including those relating to health scrutiny and scrutiny of crime and disorder functions.</p> <p>Although there is no legal requirement to prepare an annual report, it is considered to be good practice to present the report to Council and publish it on the website in order to raise the profile of scrutiny locally.</p>
Risk Management:	None

Property:	None			
Policy:	The report demonstrates that scrutiny has been undertaken in accordance with national guidance.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:	X			The report demonstrates that the Council has undertaken scrutiny of matters that affect the health and wellbeing of local residents and has made recommendations for how services can be improved.
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		

Council Strategy Priorities:	X			The report demonstrates that the Council has had regard to the Council Strategy and the priorities of the Executive when developing its work programme.
Core Business:	X			The report demonstrates that the Council has had regard to the Council Strategy and the priorities of the Executive when developing its work programme. This includes areas where under-performance has been identified.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Sarah Clarke, Service Director Strategy and Governance Vicky Phoenix, Principal Policy Officer (Health Scrutiny)			

4 Supporting Information

Background

4.1 The Annual Scrutiny report 2023/24 provides a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission, and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The report provides:

- an overview of scrutiny's role;
- details of how scrutiny is carried out in West Berkshire, and jointly with neighbouring local authorities;
- an insight into how the scrutiny work programme was developed; and
- a summary of scrutiny activity for each meeting.

4.3 Items of particular interest are described in further detail.

4.4 The report concludes with a summary of decisions that were called-in prior to implementation and the resolution in each case.

Proposals

4.5 For the Scrutiny Commission to agree the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023/24 for presentation to Council.

5 Other options considered

The Scrutiny Commission could choose not to agree the Annual Scrutiny Report, or request changes to be made prior to the report being referred to Council.

6 Conclusion

The Annual Report provides a summary of scrutiny activity over the previous municipal year. A copy of the report will also be made available on the Council's website.

7 Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Commission Annual Report 2023/24

Background Papers:

[Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Local authority health scrutiny - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: N/A

Officer details:

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Document Control

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Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Appendix A

Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24

(July 2024)



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

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Foreword

This year 2023/24 has been a busy year for the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee and their task and finish groups. West Berkshire Council and our residents have faced serious challenges this year, which have influenced our agendas, including the council finances, the cost-of-living crisis, and flooding and sewage discharges into our rivers and onto our streets.

Some highlights of the year were as follows.

- *Scrutiny of the work of Thames Water and the Environment Agency at a special meeting in October 2023, where members of flood forums, Action for the River Kennet and River Action asked questions alongside members.*
- *Scrutiny of the Council's budget for 2024/25, fostering, the Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan, and the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.*
- *Task and finish groups focusing on 'healthcare on new developments' (reported its findings in June 2024), and 'Covid and recovery' (due to report September 2024).*

Scrutiny Commission is designated as the council's Crime and Disorder Committee, so the Police were invited to give evidence and answer questions from members. We also dealt with call-ins from Members, including active travel experimental road closures, Newbury town centre pedestrianisation, the development management agreement for Monks Lane Sports Hub and the Property Investment Strategy review.

I would like to thank everyone who has played a part in the scrutiny process over the past 12 months including Members of the Scrutiny Commission, Health Scrutiny Committee, and their various task and finish groups. My thanks also to the officers who have made such an important contribution to the scrutiny process including Gordon Oliver and Vicky Pheonix. I would also like to thank external guests who have attended meetings to give evidence and have their organisations' roles in service provision scrutinised.

Councillor Carolyne Culver
Chairman, Scrutiny Commission

1. Key Information About Overview and Scrutiny

1.1 Scrutiny's Role

1.1.1 The role of scrutiny is to improve the lives of local residents through improved public services and ensure that public funds are spent effectively.

1.1.2 Scrutiny committees have the power to look at any issue which affects the area or the area's inhabitants. This gives them a unique legitimacy to examine cross-cutting issues in a way that no other individual or organisation can.

1.1.3 Key roles for scrutiny committees include:

- Holding the Executive and other decision makers to account;
- Policy development and review;
- External scrutiny;
- Performance management.

1.1.4 The principles of good scrutiny are:

- To provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- To amplify the voice and concerns of the public;
- To be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
- To drive improvement in public services.

1.2 Operation of Overview and Scrutiny in West Berkshire

1.2.1 West Berkshire Council currently has two scrutiny committees – the Scrutiny Commission and the Health Scrutiny Committee.

1.2.2 The Scrutiny Commission is responsible for reviewing the decisions, policies and services of West Berkshire Council and, in some cases, those of other organisations and partners. In particular, the Commission acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, undertaking scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership.

1.2.3 It comprises of nine Members, reflecting the political composition of the local authority. In 2023/24 the Commission was chaired by Councillor Carlyne Culver and the other Members were Councillors Antony Amirtharaj, Dominic Boeck, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Geoff Mayes, Erik Pattenden, Justin Pemberton, and Christopher Read.

1.2.4 The Scrutiny Commission had five scheduled meetings in 2023/24, with additional meetings arranged as necessary to consider urgent items and requests to call-in decisions made by the Executive that had not yet been implemented.

1.2.5 Topics were either considered at a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission or delegated to a time-limited task and finish group, with findings reported back to the Scrutiny Commission.

- 1.2.6 The Health Scrutiny Committee focuses on matters related to the provision of health and public health services within West Berkshire and fulfils the statutory health scrutiny functions.
- 1.2.7 In 2023/24, it comprised of five Members, reflecting the political composition of the local authority. It was chaired by Councillor Martha Vickers. Other Members who sat on the Committee in the last year were: Councillors Nick Carter, Nigel Foot, Stuart Gourley, Owen Jeffrey, Jane Langford and Justin Pemberton. The Health Scrutiny Committee had four scheduled meetings in 2023/24.
- 1.2.8 West Berkshire Council also has two Members on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (BOB JHOSC). For 2023/24, these were Councillors Martha Vickers and Nigel Foot. The other Members of the BOB JHOSC are drawn from Buckinghamshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council, with numbers reflecting the population of each local authority, as well as the political composition for each Council. The BOB JHOSC reviews activities relating to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). Members attended two meetings in 2023/24.

1.3 Community Involvement

- 1.3.1 The Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee engage with a wide selection of groups, organisations and individuals when undertaking their reviews.
- 1.3.2 Healthwatch West Berkshire is invited to give an update at all Health Scrutiny Committee meetings to provide feedback from service users. Other key stakeholders are invited to Health Scrutiny Committees in relation to specific agenda items.
- 1.3.3 Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and residents are welcome to come along and listen to the presentations and debates. Task and Finish Group meetings tend to take place in private, but their reports are made public.
- 1.3.4 Members of the public are able to suggest topics for scrutiny reviews by [completing our online form](#). Members of the public are also invited to comment and inform Members' questions on Health Scrutiny Committee key agenda items to ensure that the voice of the local population is heard.

2. Scrutiny Work Programme

2.1 Complementing the Work of the Executive

- 2.1.1 The Scrutiny Commission seeks to complement the work of the Executive. A meeting was held with Members of the Executive and senior officers in September 2023 to review their priorities for the coming year and identify any areas where there were concerns about performance. This helped to highlight areas where scrutiny could add value.

2.2 Pre-Decision Scrutiny

2.1.2 Pre-decision scrutiny (or policy development) can be highly beneficial. It reduces the need for call-in by helping back-bench councillors to develop an understanding of relevant issues. It also allows Members to be assured that public engagement has been properly carried out and alternative courses of action considered. The Scrutiny Commission regularly reviews the Executive's Forward Plan to identify where it could get involved in pre-decision scrutiny.

2.3 Post-Decision Scrutiny

2.1.3 Call-in is an important mechanism that allows back-bench councillors to hold the Executive to account. It allows for decisions made (but not yet implemented) by the Executive, an individual Executive Member, or an officer with delegated authority, to be put on hold so they can be scrutinised.

2.4 Scrutiny of Partners and Third Parties

2.1.4 The Council has statutory duties to undertake scrutiny of services delivered by particular external partners, especially around areas such as crime and disorder, education, and health. These parties are legally required to attend scrutiny meetings, provide the information as requested, and answer questions. In the case of health partners, they must respond to any recommendations made by the Health Scrutiny Committee.

2.1.5 Health partners are also required to consult the Health Scrutiny Committee on any substantial variations to services that affect our residents. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed with local NHS stakeholders to help inform this process.

2.1.6 The Local Government Act (2000) also gives scrutiny committees the power to investigate and report on any matter which affects a local authority's area or its inhabitants. This type of scrutiny brings its own challenges, as most other organisations are under no obligation to participate in scrutiny reviews.

2.5 Prioritisation

2.1.7 Once potential review topics have been identified, it is important to prioritise them into a realistic work programme. The PAPER tool has been developed to help rank competing proposals. This considers the following aspects:

- Public interest
- Area affected
- Performance Issues / Local Priority
- Effectiveness
- Available Resources

3. Summary of Activity for 2023/24

3.1 Scrutiny Commission

3.1.1 The Scrutiny Commission met eight times in 2023/24. Details of the topics considered are set out below.

Date	Topics
20/06/2023	Call-In of Individual Executive Member Decision (ID4317) of 16 March 2023 related to Active Travel Experimental Road Closures and Prohibition of Motor Vehicles on Deadman's Lane
	Call-In of Executive Decision (EX4332) of 23 March 2023 regarding revised costs and permission to sign the development management agreement for Newbury Sports Hub
	Capital Financial Performance Report: Q4 2022/23
	Revenue Financial Performance Report: Q4 2022/23
	Quarterly Performance Report: Q4 2022/23
17/07/2023	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report Decision Review
14/09/2023	Community Safety Update
	Revenue Financial Performance Report – Q1 2023/24
	Capital Financial Performance Report – Q1 2023/24
11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency
28/11/2023	Call-in of the Executive Decision (EX4402) on 2 November 2023 regarding the Property Investment Strategy Review
	Fostering in West Berkshire
	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework
	2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Q2
18/01/2024	Call-In of Executive Decision (EX4416) of 14 December 2023 concerning the Newbury Town Centre Pedestrianisation Trial
06/02/2024	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2024/25
	Medium Term Financial Strategy
	Capital Strategy, Financial Years 2024/25 to 2033/34
	Revenue Budget 2024/25
	2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Q3
25/04/2024	Environment Strategy Operational Review

3.1.2 The Scrutiny Commission also set up a Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group to review the Council's response to the Covid pandemic and subsequent recovery. This is approaching the end of its review and is aiming to report its findings in September 2024.

3.2 Health Scrutiny Committee

3.2.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee met four times in 2023/24. Details of the topics considered are set out in the table below.

Date	Topics
13/06/2023	Dementia diagnosis rates and pathways in West Berkshire
	Diabetes pathways including prevention, diagnosis and healthcare
	Integrated Care Board activities and commissioning plans
12/09/2023	All Age Continuing Health Care Transformation Programme
	Access to primary care across West Berkshire
	Integrated Care Board activities and commissioning plans
12/12/2023	Mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people in West Berkshire
	Services supporting women and families with perinatal mental health care
	Update on the progress of the All Age Continuing Health Care Transformation Programme
	Integrated Care Board activities and commissioning plans
12/03/2024	Pharmacy Services and current provision
	Approach and systems of support for Early Years in West Berkshire
	To receive the annual report from the Inquest Review Panel
	Integrated Care Board activities and commissioning plans

3.2.2 The Health Scrutiny Committee also undertook a deep dive into the provision of healthcare facilities in new developments through a task and finish group.

3.2.3 The Health Scrutiny Committee maintains a number of watching briefs such as the Royal Berkshire Hospital Redevelopment, Hampshire Hospitals new hospital programme and Continuing Health Care. Members engage with the relevant key partners through informal briefings and other mechanisms, including a visit to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The Committee also responds to notifications of proposed changes to NHS services.

3.3 Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.3.1 The BOB JHOSC met twice in 2023/24 to consider the following topics.

Date	Topics
15/06/2023	ICB Integrated Care Strategy
	ICB Five Year Joint Forward Plan
24/01/2024	Draft ICB Primary Care Strategy
	ICB Communications and Engagement Strategy

4. Scrutiny Highlights for 2023/24

4.1 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Report Decision Review

4.1.1 Following investigations, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) found there to have been maladministration and injustice in relation to how a homelessness application had been managed by West Berkshire Council in December 2020.

4.1.2 The Council was required to consider the Ombudsman's report at a decision making body made up of elected members, and it was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Scrutiny Commission.

4.1.3 Members sought assurances that lessons had been learned from the incident and that suitable mitigations had been put in place to minimise the risk of a similar incident occurring in future.

4.1.4 Questions were asked about the following aspects of the Housing Service:

- Adequacy of processes and documentation
- Officer training
- Quality assurance and serious case reviews
- Levels of resourcing within the service
- Temporary accommodation and use of hotels
- Communications with neighbouring local authorities
- Links with Adult Social Care and Children's Services

4.1.5 Recommendations arising from the review were that the Housing Service should:

- take an assumption of responsibility and ownership of any case/issue until written confirmation had been received from the other party that they had taken ownership; and
- include contributions from clients or charities representing people who had experienced homelessness within its training programmes.

4.1.6 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Monday, 17th July, 2023, 6.30 pm](#)

4.2 Review of Thames Water and Environment Agency Activities

4.2.1 The Scrutiny Commission undertook a review of the activities of Thames Water and the Environment Agency. This review considered how Thames Water's investment in its water supply and foul water networks was supporting planned development in West Berkshire, and how effectively it was working to reduce and manage local pollution incidents. It also sought to understand how the Environment Agency was holding Thames Water to account.

4.2.2 The following groups provided written evidence in advance or spoke to the meeting:

- Action for River Kennet
- East Garston Flood and Pollution Forum
- Lambourn Valley Flood Forum

- Newbury Flood Forum
- Pang Valley Flood Forum
- River Action
- Thatcham Flood Forum

4.2.3 Key outcomes arising from the review included:

- Discussions with planners to consider how best to facilitate water efficient homes.
- Meetings between Councillor Stuart Gourley and Thames Water to discuss the London Road Pumping Station.
- Meetings between Thames Water and West Berkshire Council regarding pollution in the Northbrook in Newbury.
- Commitment from Thames Water to investigate whether additional sewer lining works were needed at Frilsham.
- Commitment from Thames Water to find a solution for faulty data loggers at Hampstead Norreys.

4.2.4 The Scrutiny Commission continues to keep these matters under review. Thames Water has been invited to attend a further meeting in October 2024 to provide an update on its activities. This will also consider the Section 19 report prepared in the wake of recent flooding events.

Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Wednesday, 11th October, 2023, 6.30 pm.](#)

4.3 Budget Scrutiny

4.3.1 A special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission was arranged to allow for scrutiny of the budget before it went to Executive and onwards to Council for approval. Although the Scrutiny Commission had previously received quarterly capital and revenue financial updates, it had not undertaken pre-budget scrutiny before. Given the current pressures on Council budgets and the depleted reserves, it was important for Members to understand the process that had been followed in developing the budget and to challenge the underlying assumptions and allocations to ensure they were robust.

4.3.2 The Scrutiny Committee reviewed the following:

- Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2024/25 (including the Property Investment Strategy)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Capital Strategy, Financial Years 2024/25 to 2033/34
- Revenue Budget 2024/25

4.3.3 Actions arising from the review, included:

- Identification of where Members could find historic financial information for other local authorities, particularly those that had issued S114 Notices.
- Highlighted inconsistencies in quoted figures for the West Berkshire Tax Base.

- Commitment for officers to provide anonymised information on high-cost social care clients.
 - Scrutiny Commission to programme reviews of key areas of spend, including SEND services/High Needs Block, and the Adult Social Care Strategy.
 - Data requested on how staff vacancy rates at West Berkshire Council compared with those at other local authorities.
 - The Scrutiny Commission to receive an update on the Council's Transformation Programme.
- 4.3.4 Scrutiny of the budget was welcomed by both officers and Members of the Executive and this will become a permanent part of the scrutiny work programme.
- 4.3.5 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Tuesday, 6th February, 2024, 6.30 pm](#)

4.4 Continuing Healthcare

- 4.4.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee has kept in view concerns about NHS Continuing Healthcare, with updates provided to two meetings in 2023/24, and ongoing communications with the ICB.
- 4.4.2 NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) is a package of care for adults aged 18 or over which is arranged and funded solely by the NHS. In order to receive NHS CHC funding, individuals have to be assessed according to a legally prescribed decision making process to determine whether the individual has a 'primary health need'.
- 4.4.3 Concerns were raised by residents that approvals for patients in Berkshire West (which includes West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham) were consistently amongst the lowest in England, so the Health Scrutiny Committee asked the ICB to explain the process and what was being done to investigate these concerns.
- 4.4.4 The Local Government Association had been commissioned to deliver a series of peer reviews of CHC services. The reviews provided an opportunity for systems to reflect on what was working well and what needed to be developed further locally. The local review also provided an opportunity for clinical and care leaders and practitioners from across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) to reflect on how CHC is delivered at 'place' level and across the new 'integrated care system' (ICS), and how this delivery might be strengthened in the future.
- 4.4.5 The peer team had outlined a number of concerns about how CHC reviews were undertaken in Berkshire West, but found areas of excellent practice in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, which, if made universal across BOB and supported by consistent processes and assurance, could provide a foundation for excellence in delivery of CHC.
- 4.4.6 Additional information sought by the Health Scrutiny Committee included:
- Details of the project plan for how CHC services would be transformed in Berkshire West

- Statistics on the number of patients assessed as being eligible for CHC payments
- Information on how reviews and appeals compared to the rest of BOB and England
- Information about the eligibility process and dates of changes to the National Framework
- A briefing from the ICB to support Members' understanding of All Age Continuing Care.

4.4.7 The CHC Transformation Programme is ongoing, so this matter will continue to be kept under review.

4.4.8 Further details of these meeting can be viewed on the Council's website:

[West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Health Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12th September, 2023, 1.30 pm](#)

[West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Health Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12th December, 2023, 1.30 pm](#)

4.5 Healthcare in New Developments Task and Finish Group

4.5.1 A Task and Finish Group was set up to review healthcare in new developments. This brought together officers from Planning and Public Health, as well as developers and the BOB ICB.

4.5.2 A key concern regarding proposed new developments is ensuring adequate healthcare services are provided. There is a need to ensure that healthcare commissioners are adequately consulted on the requirements for the primary care services to serve new developments when local populations increase, and that developers engage with health commissioners and planners.

4.5.3 There is also opportunity to ensure that new developments are designed to promote health and wellbeing, and therefore prevent future demand on primary care services. There is therefore a need to review how the planning application process is encouraging developers to design with long-term prevention and health promotion for all residents across the life-course of the development.

4.5.4 The scope of the review was broken down into three key areas:

- Part 1: Assessment of health needs in new developments
- Part 2: Health in planning policy and planning consultations
- Part 3: Funding and delivery of primary care and public health care services in new developments.

4.5.5 The task group identified a number of recommendations arising from this work, and its report will be presented at the Health Scrutiny Committee in June 2024, making recommendations for the Council and the ICB.

4.6 Engagement with the Health Scrutiny Committee

4.6.1 A key focus for the Health Scrutiny Committee in 2023/24 has been to build relationships with key stakeholders to inform and participate in Health Scrutiny Committee meetings and to ensure that the reviews undertaken are effective and collaborative.

- 4.6.2 Partners are brought together to produce reports collaboratively, they share experiences and barriers to help inform each other's ways of working. Many stakeholders leave the Committee meeting with specific actions and note improved understanding which will influence their decision making.
- 4.6.3 Key items are kept under review, which improves transparency of health services for residents of West Berkshire. There is a formal action and recommendations tracker for the Health Scrutiny Committee to ensure that any work is followed through.

5. Call-In of Decisions

- 5.1 The call-in process is used to hold the Executive to account. The purpose of a call-in is to scrutinise the decisions taken by the Executive, Individual Executive Members, or Senior Officers making delegated decisions.
- 5.2 The process enables further public debate to be held on the subject. The Scrutiny Commission can then consider whether, in their view, the decision was appropriate or if it wishes to make recommendations back to the Executive on potential changes.
- 5.3 The Scrutiny Commission considered four call-ins during 2023/24 as set out below.

Decision Called In	Scrutiny Resolution
ID4317: Active Travel Experimental Road Closures and Prohibition of Motor Vehicles on Lawrences Lane Thatcham, Station Road Newbury and Deadmans Lane Theale Consultation	That the Individual Executive Member Decision (ID4317) should stand, but that the proposal for a road closure and active travel scheme on Deadman's Lane be referred to Councillor Denise Gaines as the new Executive Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel for consideration as part of a separate scheme.
EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub – revised costs and seeking permission to sign the Development Management Agreement	To refer the matter back to the Executive for further consideration, particularly in respect of the following aspects: legal costs incurred by the Council; costs incurred by the Rugby Club; any penalty fees associated with not proceeding as planned; implications for the new Leisure Contract; and the need to revisit the Playing Pitch Strategy. West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 6th July, 2023
EX4402: Property Investment Strategy	To recommend to the Executive that: a) they should not seek to dispose of all of the Council's commercial properties; and b) they should not seek to dispose of properties by a particular date.

	<p>(NB: Property Investment Strategy was not revised, but the Board's terms of reference were updated to reflect the Scrutiny Commission's recommendations.)</p> <p>West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Tuesday, 6th February, 2024</p>
<p>EX4416: Newbury Town Centre Pedestrianisation Extension Trial</p>	<p>That the Executive decision should stand and be implemented with immediate effect.</p>

Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 11 – Appointment of Task and Finish Groups

Verbal Item

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Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 12 – Task and Finish Group Updates

Verbal Item

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Scrutiny Commission – 17 July 2024

Item 13 – Health Scrutiny Committee Updates

Verbal Item

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WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN 1 MAY 2024 - 31 AUGUST 2024

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

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

Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Strategy and Communications	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning and Housing	Councillor Denise Gaines
Finance and Resources	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Economic Development and Regeneration	Councillor Louise Sturgess
Adult Social Care and Public Health	Councillor Patrick Clark
Children and Family Services	Councillor Heather Codling
Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Councillor Nigel Foot
Environment and Highways	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Executive Member for Transformation and Corporate Programme	Councillor Vicky Poole
Public Safety and Community Engagement	Councillor Lee Dillon

4. Key decisions are those executive decisions which are likely to result in spending or savings which are "significant" in relation to the budget for the service or function in question, or in terms of the effect on communities living or working in two or more wards or electoral divisions. All contracts above £500,000 require a key decision in accordance with the Constitution.
5. The Regulations and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in this document in accordance with General Exception and Special Urgency provisions.

6. The Forward Plan will also contain details of intended review activity by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and its Sub-Committee(s) or another body e.g. Task Group associated with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.
7. Copies of the Council's Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council may be accessed on the Council's website.
8. For copies of reports or other documents, and for detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Executive, individual Member or officer please contact the named Lead Officer for the item concerned.
9. For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please email executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk or by writing to the address below.

Publication Date: 1 May 2024

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

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
10 Apr 2024	Contract Award for Thatcham Memorial Fields - Flood Alleviation Scheme	For information - contract award following full tender process. Expected cost £1.3-£1.6m.	Yes	Jon Winstanley - Service Director			Vickie Collins	Open
2 May 2024	2024-25 Network Management Works Programme	To seek approval of the proposed Network Management Works Programme for 2024-25	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing			Neil Stacey	Open
2 May 2024	Proposed Allocation of the Household Support Fund April-October 2024	To propose a continuation of the programme and agree the allocations for the funding period.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing			Sean Murphy	Open
16 May 2024	Bond Riverside programme update	To update and refresh the Bond Riverside regeneration programme to bring it into alignment with the position and	Yes	Executive			Sam Robins	Open

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		goals of the Council administration.						
16 May 2024	New Mental Health Fund 2024	To provide an update on the Surviving to Thriving fund. The report will outline a proposal to close the current fund and redirect the remaining funds to a new 'Let's Get Mindful' general mental health fund for adults and children	No	Executive			Rachel Johnson	Open
16 May 2024	Care Experienced as a Protected Characteristic		No	Executive			Dave Wraight	Open
16 May 2024	Standing item: Asset Disposal		Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open
16 May 2024	Hackney		Yes	Executive			Moira Fraser	Open

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	Carriage Tariffs - 2024							
16 May 2024	Armed Forces Covenant Update Report		Yes	Executive			Carolyn Richardson	Open
16 May 2024	Peer Review Report	To share the findings of the recent peer review.	No	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
16 May 2024	Review of CIL	To review how CIL exemptions are granted to householders, including approval of (1) a CIL Enforcement Policy and (2) an appeals process which could lead to reimbursement for those who were disqualified for exemption due to mistakes in their	Yes	Executive			Katharine Makant	Open

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		paperwork.						
20 Jun 2024	Appointment to Chair of HWBB		Yes	Portfolio Holder: Leader of the Council; Strategy and Communications			Stephen Chard	Open
20 Jun 2024	Membership of Outside Bodies	Various appointments	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Leader of the Council; Strategy and Communications			Stephen Chard	Open
21 Jun 2024	School Streets Francis Baily School - Experimental Traffic Order	To consider the responses received during statutory consultation.	No	Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing			Gareth Dowding	Open
	Newbury Racecourse S106 Contribution Review	The Highway Authority will not seek further funding towards highway improvements to the A339/A343	No	Jon Winstanley - Service Director			Jon Winstanley	Open

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		junction from the Racecourse Development in accordance with the terms of the S106 agreement as detailed below						
25 Jul 2024	Rights of Way Improvement Plan	To present the revised plan following public consultation.	Yes	Executive			Elaine Cox	Open
25 Jul 2024	Revenue Performance Report Outturn 2023/24		Yes	Executive			Melanie Ellis	Open
25 Jul 2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End		No	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
25 Jul 2024	Capital Financing Performance Report Outturn 2023/24		Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open

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25 Jul 2024	Home to School Transport Policy		Yes	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open
25 Jul 2024	CQC Inspection report	To share the findings of the recent CQC inspection.	Yes	Executive			Paul Coe	Open
25 Jul 2024	Dunstan Park - land clawback	To seek to agree how to treat the clawback for the open space land at Dunstan Park, Thatcham.	No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
25 Jul 2024	Contracts for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive	To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Lead or Service Director) to proceed with contract awards with a value in excess of	Yes	Executive			Liz Martin	Open

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		£2.5m						
25 Jul 2024	Budgeting Approach - 2025 onwards	To set out to the Executive the process for the delivery of the 2025-26 budget papers	No	Executive			Melanie Ellis	Open
25 Jul 2024	Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge 2024 Delivery Plan		Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
19 Jul 2024	Highway Defect (Pothole) Management Review	To report on the findings of an external review into how the Council prioritises and manages highway defects.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Jon Winstanley	Open
19 Jul 2024	Theale Village Pilot 20mph Project	To summarise the responses to the statutory consultation of the proposed 20mph speed	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Neil Stacey	Open

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		limit scheme in Theale and to make recommendations as to how to proceed in light of the comments received. To discuss potential implications for future similar schemes.						
25 Jul 2024	Amendment to the long term empty home premium	To amend the ability for the Council to charge the additional 100% premium on specific types of empty properties	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Finance and Resources			Melanie Ellis	Open
26 Jul 2024	Parking Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) 2024	To make decision on whether following the consultation(s) on off-street and on-street car parking and Newbury Wharf	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Emma Jameson	Open

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		<p>bus station, the orders for parking can be approved. At Full Council on 29 February 2024, the decision was made to introduce new parking fees and charges for 2024/25. To introduce these charges a formal Traffic Regulation Order is required and a period of consultation to take place. If any comments or objections are received it is necessary for a formal decision to be made on approving the orders.</p>						

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1 Aug 2024	A4 Bath Road, Calcot Bus Priority Measures Public Consultation	To make decision on whether a consultation about proposals for installing bus priority measures along the A4 Bath Road in Calcot (from the junction with the M4 to the West Berkshire boundary with Reading Borough) can proceed during the summer/early autumn of 2024.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Emma Jameson	Open
19 Sep 2024	Waste Strategy		Yes	Executive			Kofi Adu-Gyamfi	Open
19 Sep 2024	2023/24 Performance Report Quarter Four	To highlight successes and where performance	Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open

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		has fallen below the expected level, to present information on the remedial action taken, and the impact of that action.						
19 Sep 2024	Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q1 of 2024/25	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	Yes	Executive			Melanie Ellis	Open
19 Sep 2024	Capital Financial Performance Report - Q1 of 2024/25	To present the Q1 capital financial performance for Members to note.	Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open
19 Sep 2024	Future of Turnham's Green		No	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open
19 Sep 2024	Customer Charter	To review and update the Council's customer	No	Executive			Sarah Clarke	Open

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		charter.						
19 Sep 2024	Corporate Accommodation Review		Yes	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open
19 Sep 2024	2024/25 Performance Report Q1		Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
19 Sep 2024	Blagden Close - Complex needs Supported Living	Contract Award	Yes	Executive			Rebecca Braithwaite	Fully exempt Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
19 Sep 2024	Risk Management Strategy 2024-2027	To set out the overarching framework for managing risk at the Council, the Council's risk appetite and the risk management objectives for the next three years.	Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
19 Sep 2024	Options for Shaw House		No	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open

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19 Sep 2024	Response to the Council Motion on the Bond Riverside Culvert	The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive with further information to allow consideration of a motion presented to Council at its meeting of 26th March in respect of the Bond Riverside culvert.	No	Executive			Jon Winstanley	Open
19 Sep 2024	Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-27		Yes	Executive			Jade Wilder	Open
19 Sep 2024	SEND Strategy 2023-28	To seek approval of the SEND Strategy 2023-28 and authorisation for the strategy to be published.	Yes	Executive			Jane Seymour	Open
19 Sep 2024	Carers Strategy	The strategy is a key document	No	Executive			Hannah Cole	Open

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		in setting out how the council will support carers in the district.						
31 Oct 2024	Arboriculture Contract	To approve the appointment of a new arboriculture contractor for the period 2024-2029	Yes	Clare Lawrence - Executive Director			Paul Hendry	Open
7 Nov 2024	Care Homes Contract Award		Yes	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open
7 Nov 2024	Capital Financial Performance Report - Q2 of 2024/25	To present the Q2 capital financial performance for Members to note.	Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open
7 Nov 2024	Shaw House Options		No	Executive			Gabrielle Mancini	Open
7 Nov 2024	Adults Homelessness	Contract Award	Yes	Executive			Emma Jameson	Open

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7 Nov 2024	Wraparound Care	To inform Executive about the Wraparound Care Programme and the West Berkshire strategy for the delivery of this DFE programme	No	Executive			Kate Parietti	Open
7 Nov 2024	Procurement activity annual report	To inform the Executive of the procurements undertaken by the Council over the past 12 months and the impact of the Social Value procurement policy.	Yes	Executive			Kate Pearson	Open
12 Dec 2024	Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q2 of 2024/25		Yes	Executive			Melanie Ellis	Open

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12 Dec 2024	2024/25 Performance Report Q2		Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
13 Feb 2025	Future of the Shared Partnership for the Public Protection Partnership	To fulfil the requirement of the IAA which is due to expire in January 2027, which requires the partner authorities to review the current arrangements and adopt any changes 2 years before the current arrangement expires.	No	Executive			Sean Murphy	Open
13 Feb 2025	Capital Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2024/25	To present the Q3 capital financial performance for Members to note.	Yes	Executive			Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Open
13 Feb 2025	Revenue	To inform	Yes	Executive			Melanie Ellis	Open

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	Financial Performance Report - Q3 of 2024/25	Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.						
22 May 2025	2024/25 Performance Report Q3		Yes	Executive			Catalin Bogos	Open
	Leisure Strategy Delivery Plan	To present the plan for implementing the Leisure Strategy.	Yes	Executive			Jude Thomas	Open
	Joint Legal team (JLT) Review	To agree a revised Heads of Term Agreement and to delegate authority to the Service Lead, Legal and Democratic Services to finalise the same.	Yes	Executive			Nicola Thomas	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Information which reveals that the

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								authority proposes to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person Information which reveals that the authority proposes to make an order or direction under any enactment.
	LRIE lease acquisitions	To seek Executive sign-off to make an offer to buy-back the leases on plots 13U and 13T on the LRIE, subject to a satisfactory	Yes	Executive			Sam Robins	Open

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		price being agreed at negotiatuons which are currently underway with the leaseholders on the sites.						
	Review of Libraries Service	To evaluate the impact of the transformation of the library service which took place in 2017-18 and put forward any additional options for improving the service for residents.	Yes	Executive	Community Needs Assessment Stakeholder Surveys – volunteers, staff, service managers, hard to reach groups Public Survey including library users and non-users Parish and Town Council engagement sessions		Felicity Harrison	Open
	Parking Strategy	To consider and approve the West	Yes	Executive			Ian Martinez	Open

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	2023-2033	Berkshire Council Parking Strategy 2023-2033.						
	Contract Award report for West Point House Refurbishment Project	Contract value estimated to be £990k therefore included on the Forward Plan for information	No	Joseph Holmes - Executive Director			Vickie Collins	Open
	Kennet Valley Primary School SEMH Provision	Contract award report for the Kennet Valley expansion works following a full tender process. Contract value estimated at £1.8 million	Yes	Paul Coe - Executive Director			Vicky Pearce	Open
	Contract Award report for Mrs Blands Infant and Nursery School Heating Replacement	Contract award report for heating replacement works at Mrs Blands School following a full tender process. Contract value	Yes	AnnMarie Dodds - Executive Director			Vicky Pearce	Open

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		estimated at £500k.						

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Scrutiny Commission Work Programme

The following items will be considered as standing items: Capital and Revenue Financial Performance Reports (Quarterly), and Performance Report (Annually)

Last Updated:
26 June 2024

Item	Scrutiny Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?
September 2024 (TBC)*					
Adult Social Care Briefing	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To understand ASC spend with reference to anonymised case studies (joint session with Health Scrutiny Committee)	Paul Coe / Maria Shepherd	Cllr Patrick Clark (Adult Social Care and Public Health)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
24 September 2024					
Community Safety	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	Meeting in its capacity as West Berkshire Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive a presentation from the Building Communities Together Partnership.	Supt Andy Penrith/ Nigel Lynn	Cllr Lee Dillon (Public Safety and Community Engagement)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Review of SEND and the High Needs Block	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review current spend and transformation activity in this area	AnnMarie Dodds	Cllr Healthier Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Project Management	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director, iTrent and Faraday Road Football Ground	Melanie Best	Cllr Vicky Poole (Transformation and Corporate Programme)	Post-decision
Covid and Recovery Task Group Report	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To present the Task Group's report	Gordon Oliver	N/A	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Revenue Performance Report Q1 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Post-decision
Capital Financing Performance Report Q1 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Post-decision
October 2024 (Special)					
Thames Water	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To understand how Thames Water is upgrading its water supply and foul water networks to support planned development and pollution incidents in West Berkshire and how the Environment Agency is holding the water company to account.	Karen Nelson (Thames Water) Dave Willis (Environment Agency)	N/A	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Section 19 Water Act Report on 2024 Flooding	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To review the findings of the report and understand lessons learned in terms of flood alleviation and river management authorities.	Jon Winstanley / Paul Bacchus	Cllr Stuart Gourley (Environment and Highways)	Pre-Decision

26 November 2024

	Attainment of Children on Free School Meals	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the reasons for the persistent gap in attainment between those on free school meals and other children living in West Berkshire and the measures to address this.	AnnMarie Dodds / Rose Carberry(?)	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Budget Headlines	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the emerging draft budget, budget consultation and expected government settlement.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Revenue Performance Report Q2 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Capital Financing Performance Report Q2 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision

11 February 2025 (Budget Scrutiny)

	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consolidate the investments and borrowing strategy for the year ahead by detailing how and where the Council will invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. This strategy is monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report going to the Government and Ethics Committee as well as an annual report being presented to Members.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Medium Term Financial Strategy	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and how these align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that the Council Strategy will be delivered. The MTFs highlights the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances as well as how there are many different scenarios and uncertainty concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Capital Strategy. Financial Years 2025/26 to 2034/35	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2025/26 to 2034/35 and the supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.	Joseph Holmes/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision

	Revenue Budget 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the budget proposals for the year ahead that form the basis of the 2024-25 revenue budget and detail the respective Council Tax proposals and resolutions.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Capital Financing Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman- Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
13 March 2025						
	Review of SEND and the High Needs Block	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To receive an update on spend and transformation activity in this area	AnnMarie Dodds	Children, Education and Young People's Services	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Libraries Service	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the performance of the Libraries Service and its funding model.	April Peberdy / Felicity Harrison	Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Housing Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To agree the terms of reference for the Housing Task and Finish Group.	Gordon Oliver	N/A	Scrutiny Commission Decision

Council Strategy Priorities

- Services We Are Proud Of
- A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All
- Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency
- A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire
- Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice

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