

Notice of Meeting



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Executive

Thursday 12 December 2024 at 6.00 pm

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

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

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday 4 December 2024

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

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



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday 12 December 2024 (continued)

To:	Councillors Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling, Iain Cottingham, Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines (Vice-Chairman), Stuart Gourley, Justin Pemberton, Louise Sturgess and Vicky Poole
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Agenda

Part I

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	7 - 8
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 November 2024.	9 - 14
3. Declarations of Interest To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct .	15 - 16
4. Public Questions Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.	17 - 18
5. Petitions Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.	19 - 20

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

	Pages
6. Financial year 2024/25 Quarter Two Capital Financing Performance Report (EX4514) Purpose: to present the forecasted outturn position for financial year 2024/25 against the approved capital programme and financing implications for financial year 2025/26.	21 - 30
7. 2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two (EX4517) Purpose: to report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets, as at Quarter Two for the 2024/25 financial year. The report highlights the financial position at each quarter of the financial year and impact on the Council's General Fund position.	31 - 46



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday 12 December 2024 (continued)

8. **Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive (EX4583)** 47 - 52
Purpose: to provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from Executive during the next quarter. The report provides Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding the contract identified.
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9. **Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-24 (EX4598)** 53 - 110
Purpose: the annual report of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel, details the Panel's activities during the 2023–24 period and outlines developments planned for the coming year.
The report provides corporate parents with an overview of the panel's work, the council's commitments to children in care and care leavers, and to ensure corporate parenting duties are fulfilled.
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10. **Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-24 (EX4643)** 111 - 136
Purpose: the report presents the work of the service more broadly, raising awareness about the support provided to Care Leavers and fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities.
The report is intended to give all corporate parents insight into the council's commitments to children in care and Care Leavers, ensuring corporate parenting duties are fully met.
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11. **Early Response Hub Annual Report 2023-24 (EX4639)** 137 - 162
Purpose: the report provides an annual update of the West Berkshire Early Response Hub, detailing activities during the period April 2023–March 24.
The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Board with an overview of the Early Response Hubs wide and varied work, bringing earlier help and support to children in need across West Berkshire.
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12. **Commercial Property disposal - Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough (EX4635)** 163 - 168
Purpose: to seek approval for the disposal of the Council owned investment property, Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough, TS14 7FE in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy and to seek delegated authority to consider and accept any offers received in compliance with the Council's S123 LGA best consideration duty and to negotiate, agree and enter into the relevant documents necessary to complete the disposal of the property.
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13. **Risk Management Strategy (EX4547)** 169 - 204
Purpose: the report presents the Council's Risk Management Strategy for the future. It is important that the Council has an overarching strategy for how it manages risk; risk can never be eradicated, but it is important that



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday 12 December 2024 (continued)

the Council is clear on how it proposes to manage different risks. This report proposes a changed risk management matrix to a '5x5' matrix as well as a new Risk Appetite.

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14. **2024/25 Performance Report Quarter Two (EX4541)** 205 - 248
Purpose: 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.
-
15. **Members' Questions** 249 - 250
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
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16. **Exclusion of Press and Public**
RECOMMENDATION: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. [Section 10 of Part 10 of the Constitution refers.](#)
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Part II

17. **Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive (EX4583)** 251 - 254
(Paragraph 3 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)
Purpose: to provide an update to the contract included and referenced in the above report, including on this meeting agenda.
18. **Commercial Property disposal - Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough (EX635)** 255 - 268
(Paragraph 3 - information relating to financial/business affairs of a particular person)
Purpose: to seek approval for the disposal of the Council owned investment property, Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough, TS14 7FE in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy and to seek delegated authority to consider and accept any offers received in compliance with the Council's S123 LGA best consideration duty and to negotiate, agree and enter into the relevant documents necessary to complete the disposal of the property.



Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Interim Executive Director: Resources

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



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Item 1 – Apologies for absence

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2024

Councillors Present: Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling, Iain Cottingham, Denise Gaines (Vice-Chairman), Stuart Gourley, Justin Pemberton, Louise Sturgess and Vicky Poole

Also Present: Councillors Dominic Boeck, Richard Somner, Howard Woollaston and Carlyne Culver

Officers Present: Melanie Booth (Group Executive), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Sam Chiverton (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice), Sarah Clarke (Service Director Strategy and Governance), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director – Children and Family Services), Joseph Holmes (Interim Chief Executive), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Maria Shepherd (Service Manager – Adult Social Care)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillors Adrian Abbs, Nigel Foot, David Marsh, Ross Mckinnon and Jo Stewart

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. Local Plan Statement

Councillor Denise Gaines made a statement concerning the Local Plan. To view the speech in full please access this [link](#).

4. Public Questions

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

5. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

6. Wraparound Care Project (EX4578)

Councillor Heather Codling introduced a report (Agenda Item 6), which outlined details about the West Berkshire Wraparound Care Programme Strategy to enable its roll out across the district.

Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that he was pleased to hear of the extension to the provision and queried whether the self-sustaining aspect of the scheme meant parents would have to pay. Councillor Codling advised that parents would pay anyway and that the grant aspect was to enable initial set up of the schemes.

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Councillor Carlyne Culver noted that Wraparound Care was on a list of items for Scrutiny Commission to review, and queried when it would be effective to do so. Councillor Codling advised waiting a year prior to review.

RESOLVED that:

- Executive understands the delivery plan and process for distributing these funds.

7. Provision of Care for the Elderly at Two West Berkshire Care Homes Including Dementia and Nursing (EX4529)

Councillor Patrick Clark introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 7), which informed Executive of the outcome of the tender process following the decision that the Council should exit operation of its own care homes and seek delegated authority to award the contract. Councillor Clark noted that West Berkshire Council was unusual as one of the few local authorities that owned its own care homes, with most others opting to utilise the provision of care from the private sector.

Councillor Clark commented that recommendations within the report were being proposed in order to provide an improved service to care home residents and to reduce the financial burden of the Council and taxpayer.

Councillor Jeff Brooks seconded the recommendations within the report and noted that the provision of care homes was expensive and the experience available in the private sector would deliver a significant saving.

Councillor Phil Barnett sought assurance from the Executive that the current dedicated staff delivering services within the care homes would be fully protected when awarding the contracts. Councillor Brooks reassured Councillor Barnett that the proposed new provider was experienced, and it was hoped was that the new staff would transfer under protected employment rights. Councillor Clark acknowledged that it was important to ensure that staff had been considered and reassured Councillor Barnett that this had been a serious consideration.

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

- a) delegate authority to the Executive Director (Adult Social Care) in consultation with the s.151 officer and portfolio holder to award the contract in relation to the services to be provided at Willows Edge and Birchwood care homes to the successful bidder;
- b) delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services in consultation with the Executive Director (Adult Social Care) to:
 - finalise the terms of the agreement as set out in the tender documents and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments (such amendments shall not be substantial or material) to the terms of the agreement necessary to produce a final agreement for execution and to enter into that agreement; and
 - finalise and enter into appropriate leases and/or subleases, and appropriate documentation to record A2 Dominion's consent to the grant of a sublease, required for the contractor's occupancy of each property managed by the contractor under the contract for services.

8. Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26 planning (EX4593)

Councillor Iain Cottingham introduced a report (Agenda Item 8), which set out the financial planning assumptions for the four years ahead over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Councillor Cottingham noted that costs continued to exceed the rates at which the Council was able to increase its revenues and that there

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had been significant increase in Children's Social Care due to the complexity of demand, and rising costs in Adult Social Care.

It was highlighted that the latest forecast projected a £2m overspend, with reserves remaining static at £4m, but that the Strategy aimed to increase resilience and build the reserves to £9m by the end of the financial year. Councillor Cottingham noted that all was being done to avoid the risk of the Council seeking exceptional financial support from the Government.

Councillor Cottingham highlighted an error in table 6.4 on page 48 of the Agenda Pack, noting that 'Proposals delivered through efficiency, transformation and income that did not require consultation' should have been recorded as £3.7m, and 'Proposals that require consultation with service users and the public' £1.2m.

Councillor Jeff Brooks commented that page 49 of the Agenda Pack detailed the savings measures for which the Executive proposed to consult residents. It was noted that the consultation was a necessary annual process which the Executive took seriously. Councillor Brooks explained that Executive was concerned to avoid Government support as this would lead to Government interference in the decision-making processes of the Council.

In response to a query from Councillor Carlyne Culver, Councillor Brooks confirmed that any extra financial support would need to be repaid, in addition to the wages of the external staff that would be appointed to help manage the finances.

Councillor Culver referred to the proposal to remove Downland Sports Centre from the leisure contract and noted that The Downs School had been contacted only three weeks prior to inform them of the general consultation process. Councillor Culver noted that there were plans to build an additional 200 houses in the area which would potentially lead to an increased demand for the site. It was requested that more details relating to the outreach programme be included prior to consultation. Councillor Culver noted that the impact study had been written in March 2023, yet discussions between the Council and school discussing the refurbishment of the facility had continued after that date, which had confused the school. Councillor Cottingham explained that the date on the template was misleading, and reflected the date that the template had been created rather than completed.

Councillor Brooks commented that it had been the intention of the Executive to discuss the proposal with the school prior to the meeting and that he would investigate why that had not occurred. It was clarified that the sports hall would remain for the school to make use of, and that the decision related to its continued use as a Council Sports Centre. Councillor Culver acknowledged that whilst the building would remain, substantial capital involvement would not progress which the school had intended to use as part of the plans for the site.

Councillor Dominic Boeck supported the Executive's approach to make savings rather than seek Government support.

Referring to Downland Sports Centre, Councillor Boeck reiterated concerns that communities outside Newbury and Thatcham appeared to have been forgotten. Councillor Brooks responded that the Sports Centre was currently only used by two members of the community. Councillor Boeck expressed his concern for the rural communities in West Berkshire suggesting that they were poorly served. Councillor Culver noted that she had received statistics for 2022/23 which recorded 9,093 visits to the facility, which indicated more than two members.

Councillor Boeck sought clarification on the proposal to invite band G and H properties to donate to a Council led charity. Councillor Cottingham advised that the proposal was to

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invite people in these bands to donate money to a council led charity, which was based on a similar scheme which generated between three and four hundred thousand pounds for Westminster Council.

Councillor Boeck suggested that Westminster and West Berkshire were very different financially and sought clarification as to whether the scheme would supplement the Council's budget. Councillor Cottingham advised that it would become a source of revenue if taken up. Councillor Boeck queried why the scheme was restricted to band G and H properties. Councillor Cottingham clarified that it was an initial trial to understand resident appetite.

In response to a query from Councillor Richard Somner it was clarified that blue light services were a statutory consultee on matters such as street lighting.

Councillor Richard Somner queried whether road gritting had been explored as an area of devolution, to allow parishes to contribute toward the gritting of specific roads. Councillor Brooks agreed to review the suggestion. Councillor Stuart Gourley clarified that the proposal to reduce winter gritting was based on the Council's investment in temperature sensors which used artificial intelligence to measure the temperature of the roads and would provide a benchmark in the future for more tactical gritting.

Councillor Howard Woollaston noted the proposal to discontinue the mobile library and sought assurance that there was a volunteer system working to service those residents that were housebound. Councillor Cottingham confirmed that improving and enhancing the voluntary service was a significant priority for the administration.

RESOLVED that: Executive is informed of the consultation timescales and the financial planning assumptions contained within the report.

9. Members' Questions

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

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

11. Provision of Care for the Elderly at Two West Berkshire Care Homes Including Dementia and Nursing (EX4529)

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

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 11), which informed Executive of the outcome of the tender process following the decision that the Council should exit operation of its own care homes and seek delegated authority to award the contract.

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

Other options considered:

- Do nothing – this would mean the council would continue to overspend and not achieve best value for money.
- Tender as a single lot – this risks limiting the range of potential bidders.
- Procure a fixed price annual service contract – this is unlikely to be attractive to market providers as revenue upside is limited.

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- Procure an operator/operators to take over operations, including a commercial rent on the properties – although this would generate additional revenue, lease negotiations will add complexity and potentially limit suppliers.
- Procure an operator/operators to take over operations, with lease agreements with a peppercorn rent.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Item 3 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Item 4 – Public Questions

To follow

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Executive – 12 December 2024

Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Financial Year 2024/25 Quarter Two Capital Financing Performance Report

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Richard Quayle
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4514

1 Purpose of the Report

This report presents the forecasted outturn position for financial year 2024/25 against the approved capital programme and financing implications for financial year 2025/26.

2 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- (a) The forecast outturn position of planned expenditure of £60.1 million against the annual budget of £64.9m, creating a forecast £4.8 million underspend.

2.2 It is recommended that the following budgetary amendments are approved:

- (a) The proposed reprofiling of planned expenditure from 2024/25 into 2025/26 of £8.1 million, detailed by service in appendix A.
- (b) The proposed transfer of council funded expenditure budget totalling £0.47 million from 2025/26 into 2024/25 for support of the Playing Pitch action plan.
- (c) £2.9 million of external funding relating to the Superfast Broad Band project is allocated and the planned project expenditure is funded accordingly.
- (d) £0.76 million of external funding (s106, CIL and DFT grant), relating to Street lighting improvements, Essential maintenance budgets, Drainage & flood risk projects and Car park improvements is allocated to cover in year expenditure.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary

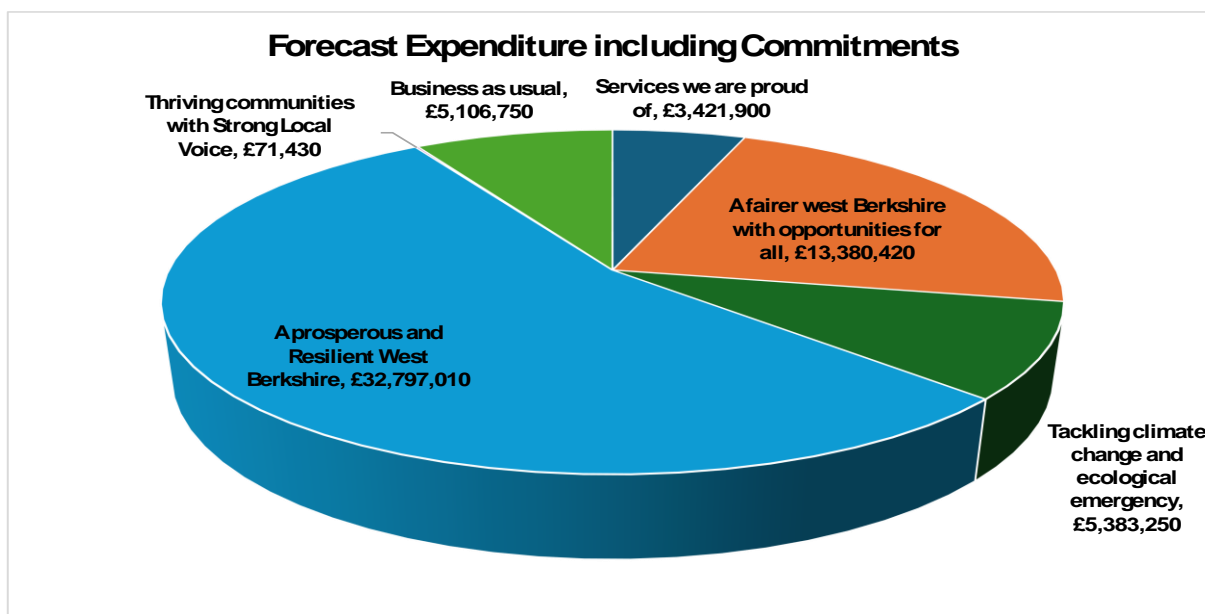
Financial Year 2024/25 Quarter Two Capital Financing Performance Report

Financial:	<p>£60.1 million has been forecasted to be spent by the end of this financial year against a revised budget of £64.9 million, resulting in an overall forecast variance of £4.8 million.</p> <p>£8.1 million from year 24-25 is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2025-26. Furthermore, council funded expenditure budget totalling £0.47 million is brought forward from 2025/26 into 2024/25 for the project “Playing Pitch action plan”.</p>			
Human Resource:	Not applicable			
Legal:	<p>There are no projects planned within the approved capital programme for 2024/25 that are purely for yield purposes. The Council is therefore protected from violating the borrowing protocols determined in the Prudential Code December 2021 that prevents Local Authorities from accessing financing in support of yield-based projects. Should an authority be found to be financing purely yield based projects, that authority would lose all access to the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing facility. PWLB financing underpins the Council funded element of the approved capital programme.</p>			
Risk Management:	<p>The Council is also exposed to inflationary cost pressures across the capital programme. Furthermore, any changes in PWLB borrowing rates will impact on any new borrowing undertaken and the Council’s weighted average cost of borrowing. Both 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.</p>			
Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	Not applicable			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:		X		

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter, Deputy s151 Officer and Service Director for Finance, Property & Procurement.			

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 Quarter Two £21.4m of expenditure across capital schemes had been incurred with a further £38.7million forecast to be spent by outturn. £60.9 million of planned expenditure incurred at outturn against the approved programme budget of £64.9 million would result in a £4.8 million underspend position. Total planned expenditure by Council priority is detailed below.



- 4.2 The total forecast expenditure to be incurred of £60.1 million is split across Council funded (i.e. debt funded expenditure) of £31.2 million and externally financed expenditure of £28.9 million.
- 4.3 As part of the forecast outturn position £8.1 million of future planned expenditure is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2024/25. £0.47 million of Council funded expenditure budget is proposed to be brought forward from financial year 2025/26 into 2024/25 to fund completion of the Playing Pitch action plan project (the funding forms part of the approved ten-year capital programme. Capital programme reprofiling occurs for several reasons including delays with projects through third party contractors, economic conditions and reprioritisation due to unforeseen events. No capital expenditure is financed until it is incurred, protecting the capital financing budget which is funded through the revenue budget.
- 4.4 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 £206.6 million. The Council’s liability benchmark (included in appendix B) identifies the Council as a long-term borrower. The approved Investment & Borrowing Strategy for 2024/25 includes provision for financing of capital expenditure incurred in financial year 2023/24 and the 2025/26 strategy for approval in March 2025 will include provision for financing of 2024/25 capital expenditure. A copy of the Council’s liability benchmark based on assumed forecast expenditure at outturn is included in appendix C. The benchmark demonstrates that the Council is a borrowing authority, i.e. the capital financing requirement is externalised, and borrowing is required to support ongoing capital expenditure and delivery of the capital programme.

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 The 2024/25 capital programme was agreed by Council on 29th February 2024 with a gross expenditure budget of £53.8 million split between externally funded expenditure of £28.4 million and £25.4 million of Council funded expenditure (i.e. application of capital receipts and external borrowing). The repayment of principal sums and interest on loans used to fund capital expenditure are met from the revenue budget for capital financing. During the financial year budget changes may occur, mainly as a result of budgets brought forward from prior financial years, additional grants, s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations received in year or expenditure re-profiled in future financial years. As part of the budget monitoring process, the forecast year end position of the capital projects is reviewed and proposals for unutilised budgets to be re-profiled is reviewed by Capital Strategy Group (CSG). As at quarter two, the revised capital programme budget pre proposed expenditure reprofiling into financial year 2025/26 is £64.9 million. The inflation of in year budgets relates to agreed reprofiling of expenditure from financial year 2023/24 at outturn.

5.4 At quarter two, expenditure of £60.1 million has been forecast to be incurred against the revised capital programme of £64.9 million. The capital programme is aligned to the approved Council Strategy (2024/25 -2034/35) and its key themes.

Strategy Theme		Revised Budget	Forecast Expenditure
Services we are proud of		£3,596,940	£3,421,900
A fairer west Berkshire with opportunities for all		£15,683,930	£13,380,420
Tackling climate change and ecological emergency		£8,229,190	£5,383,250
A prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire		£31,309,650	£32,797,010
Thriving communities with Strong Local Voice		£23,070	£71,430
Total Planned and Forecast Expenditure		£58,842,780	£55,054,010
Business as usual		£6,142,870	£5,106,750

5.5 The Council invests heavily in ensuring that West Berkshire remains an area that is prosperous, resilient and supportive of the most vulnerable. Key projects to be undertaken in year include: Investment across the education estate including basic need expansion project at the Castle School (£1.4 million), additional Special Educational Needs and mental Health provision improvements at primary school level (£2.4 million), enhancements to educational buildings across the district (£1.3 million). £5.4 million is planned to be spent in year redeveloping the dry side provision at Northcroft Leisure Centre, with further improvements to provision across the leisure estate (£648k). £3.9 million of carbon reduction and solar initiative projects are planned, including initiating provision of a solar farm in year. In excess of £12 million of

expenditure is planned on enhancements to bridges, highways and public infrastructure across the district, including on going improvements to Newbury and Theale rail stations (£2.3 million and £2.0 million respectively).

- 5.6 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. £6.1 million of expenditure has been budgeted for in the financial year against with £8 million forecast to be incurred by the yearend. Key projects planned are: replacement of aging ICT infrastructure (£1.1 million), implementation of a new social care management system (£871k), enhancement of the new HR and payroll system (£662k), investment in telephony infrastructure (£245k) and enhancements to the corporate estate (£459.7k).

Proposals

- 5.7 At quarter two £8.1 million of expenditure is proposed to be reprofiled into financial year 2025/26, with a further transfer of a council funded expenditure budget totalling £0.47 million from 2025/26 into 2024/25 for support of the Playing Pitch action plan. Net reprofiling of £7.6 million is proposed.
- 5.8 Proposed reprofiling will result in a forecast net overspend of £3.3 million against the capital programme. However, £2.9 million of external funding in support of the Superfast Broadband project is to be built, mitigating the majority of the forecast overspend.

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 of £382.9 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 £20 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).

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A - Proposed Reprofiling of Planned Expenditure at Quarter Two Financial Year 2024/25.
- 8.2 Appendix B – Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and Liability Benchmark

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
-

Officer details:

Name: Richard Quayle
Job Title: Service Lead for Financial Reporting & Property
Tel No: 01635 519055
E-mail: Richard.quayle@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

Proposed Reprofile of Planned Expenditure at Quarter 2

Service	Q1 Budget	Forecast Expenditure	(under)/Overspend	Reprofilng into 2025/26	Funding from 2025/26
Adult Social Care	£1,973,010	£1,902,110	(£70,900)	£348,250	£0
Children's Social Care	£35,000	£20,560	(£14,440)	£0	£0
Education & SEND	£8,533,250	£6,736,850	(£1,796,400)	£708,310	£0
Community Services	£11,462,620	£9,117,740	(£2,344,880)	£2,369,000	(£477,820)
Development & Housing	£7,494,730	£7,849,730	£355,000	£100,000	£0
Environment	£28,854,110	£24,766,100	(£4,088,010)	£4,605,800	£0
Finance, Property & Procurement	£2,216,150	£1,876,200	(£339,950)	£0	£0
Strategy, ICT & Governance	£4,416,780	£7,891,470	£3,474,690	£0	£0
Total Council	£64,985,650	£60,160,760	(£4,824,890)	£8,131,360	(£477,820)

Appendix B

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and Liability Benchmark

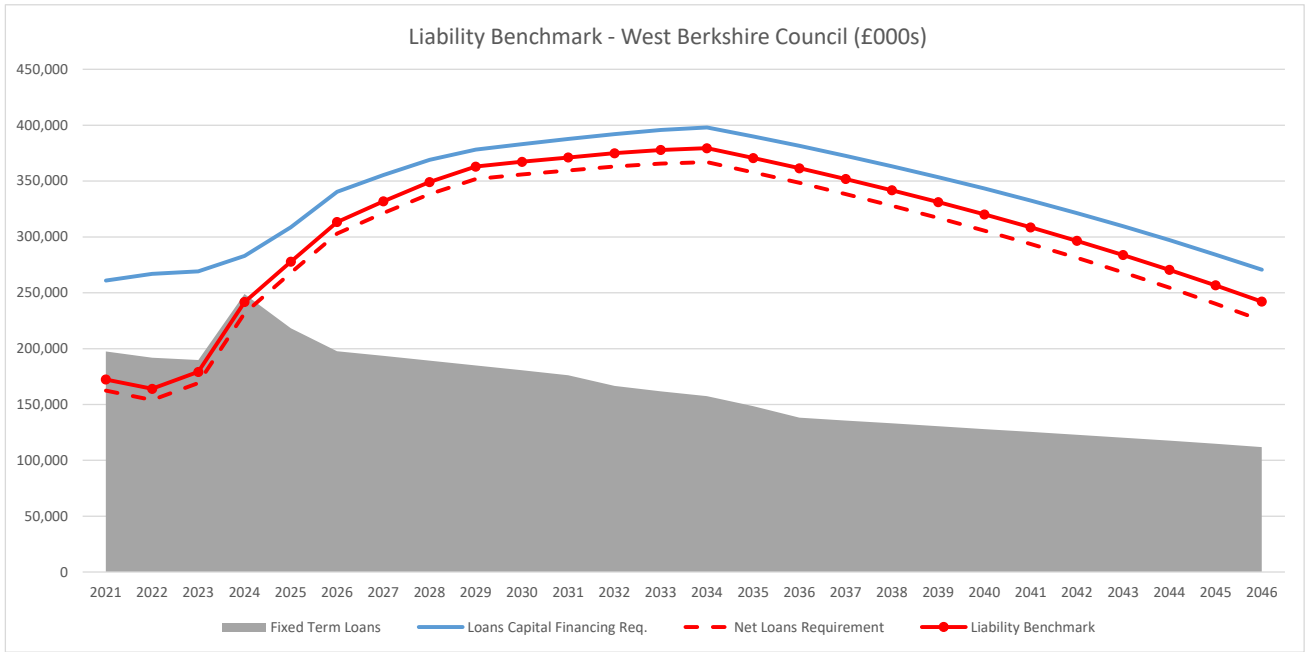
The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2024/25 unfinanced capital expenditure, and prior years' net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actual	Actual	Projection	Projection
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing requirement	279,896	292,870	317,560	348,393
Less other debt liabilities	-10,670	-9,807	-8,892	-7,920
Loans Capital Financing Req.	269,226	283,063	308,668	340,473
Less: Existing External Borrowing	-189,890	-248,973	-218,242	-197,732
Internal (Over) Borrowing	79,336	34,090	90,426	142,741
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	-100,006	-51,363	-40,885	-37,385
Investments / (New Borrowing)	20,670	17,274	-49,541	-105,355

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.

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actual	Actual	Projection	Projection
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Loans Capital Financing Req.	269,226	283,063	308,668	340,473
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	-100,006	-51,363	-40,885	-37,385
Net Loans Requirement	169,220	231,700	267,783	303,088
Preferred Year-end Position	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,250
Liability Benchmark	179,220	241,700	277,783	313,338

Financial Year 2024/25 Quarter Two Capital Financing Performance Report



2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Melanie Ellis
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4517

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is Quarter Two for the 2024/25 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 being taken to mitigate and manage the position.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 There are no recommendations made within this report. Members are asked to note:
- (a) The Quarter Two budget manager forecast of £11.1m overspend (Q1 £9.3m) against a net revenue budget of £164.6 million.
 - (b) The actions to reduce the overspend totalling £5m and Service Action Plans containing further mitigations and transformation of £4m, which if achieved would reduce the forecast overspend to £2.1m (Q1 £2.1m) and result in a General Fund balance of £3.9m.
 - (c) The key areas of pressure relating to demand led services driving the forecast overspend position detailed in section 5.5 of this report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The forecast position at Q2 has significant financial implications. The General Fund is at £4.1m, with a minimum recommended level of £7m. There is a planned £1.9m contribution to reserves in 2025/26.

	<p>The minimum level of General Fund balance recommended by the s151 officer is £7m and this would put the Council significantly below this for future budget setting. This would mean an increase in future budget savings over and above initial forecasts for 2025/26 in order to replenish the reserves.</p> <p>With mitigations underway, a forecast overspend of £2.1m would result in a General Fund of £3.9m.</p>			
Human Resource:	Not yet discussed in detail with HR			
Legal:	None			
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 continue to be 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:				
	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 General Fund reserve is currently at £4.1m (per the 2023/24 Financial Statements), which is £2.9m below the S151 officer’s minimum recommended level, as set out in the 2024/25 budget papers. In order to replenish the general fund reserve, £1.9m has been set aside in the 2024/25 budget and further amounts over the following two years to return the general fund to £7m.
- 4.2 The Quarter Two budget manager forecast variance is an overspend of £11.1m. A number of actions are in place totalling £5m to help reduce expenditure / increase income, together with Service Action Plan mitigations totalling a further £4m. These bring the forecast overspend down to £2.1m as summarised below:

2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

	Current Budget £000	Net Income/ Expenditure	Quarter One					Quarter Two					Change from Quarter One £000
			Budget Manager Forecast Variance £000	Actions to reduce forecast £000	Forecast variance £000	Further mitigations & Transform- ation £000	Year end forecast variance £000	Budget Manager Forecast Variance £000	Actions to reduce forecast £000	Forecast variance £000	Further mitigations & Transform- ation £000	Year end forecast variance £000	
People - ASC & PH	69,885	72,080	1,469	(1,131)	338	(1,000)	(662)	2,195	(2,361)	(167)	(1,270)	(1,437)	(774)
People - CS	34,905	40,003	4,725	(883)	3,842	0	3,842	5,098	(1,202)	3,895	0	3,895	53
Place	36,085	37,216	1,018	(396)	622	0	622	1,131	(263)	868	(199)	669	47
Resources	12,439	15,062	2,255	(1,498)	757	(2,500)	(1,743)	2,624	(1,440)	1,184	(2,500)	(1,316)	427
Chief Executive	577	577	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	10,718	10,815	(173)	185	12	0	12	97	185	282	0	282	270
Total	164,610	175,753	9,295	(3,724)	5,571	(3,500)	2,071	11,144	(5,082)	6,062	(3,969)	2,094	22

4.3 A Star Chamber has been established consisting of members and officers. Any overspending service attends this each month to explain the reasons for overspend and present their Action Plan of mitigations in order to reach a break even position by year end. These further mitigations are risk rated green, amber or red, with the green mitigations being included in the forecast above.

4.4 The Financial Reporting Panel continue to meet weekly to review all agency and recruitment and expenditure over £50k in overspending services.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.2 The 2024/25 net revenue budget of £165m was set in March 2024. The Quarter Two budget manager forecast is an overspend of £11.1m. After use of £0.2m of specific earmarked reserves, £3.8m of transformation funding and £1m service mitigations totalling £5m the forecast would be reduced to £6.1m overspend. Service Action Plans totalling £4m further reduce the forecast to an overspend of £2.1m.

5.3 If this was to be the final outturn position then the General Fund would have a balance of £3.9m. At £3.9m General Fund, it is unlikely that the Council will seek financial support if the mitigations can be delivered. If the mitigations cannot be delivered then the Council may be in the position where a section 114 notice would need to be issued or a capitalisation directive sought. It is therefore vital that the Corporate Board and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) continue with further mitigations to reduce expenditure / increase income to reduce the forecast overspend.

Quarter Two 2024/25

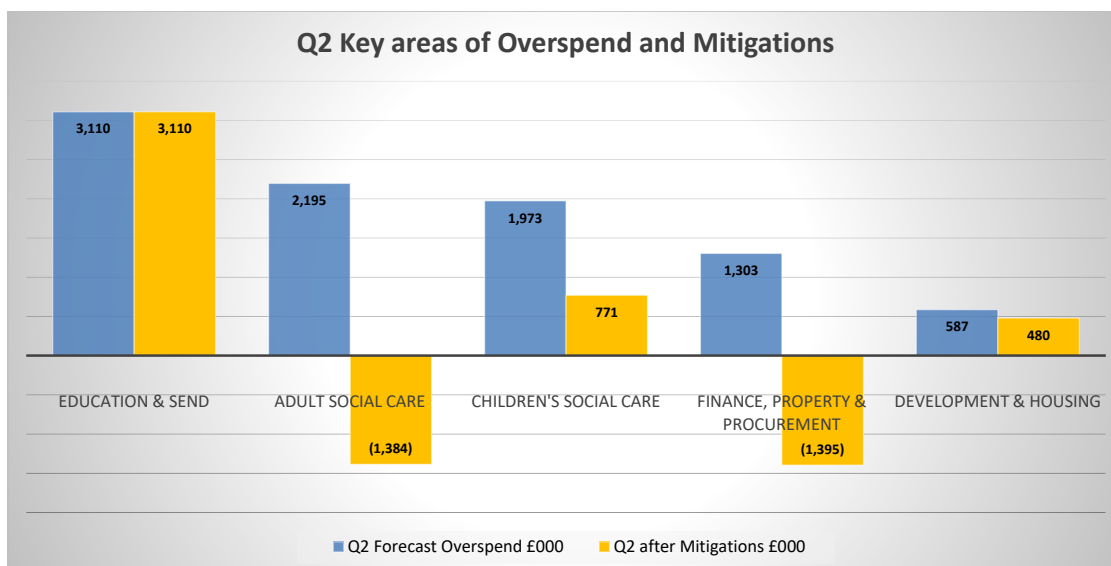
5.4 The Quarter Two forecast overspend of £2.1m represents 1.3% of the net revenue budget.

2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

	Net Budget	Net Income/Expenditure	Quarter One					Quarter Two					Change from last quarter	
			Budget Manager Forecast Variance	Actions to reduce forecast	Forecast variance	Further mitigations & Transformation	Year end forecast variance	Budget Manager Forecast Variance	Actions to reduce forecast	Forecast variance	Further mitigations & Transformation	Year end forecast variance		
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director - ASC&PH	259	259	(0)	(53)	(53)	0	(53)	0	(53)	(52)	0	(52)	0	
Adult Social Care	69,706	71,901	1,469	(1,079)	391	(1,000)	(610)	2,195	(2,309)	(114)	(1,270)	(1,384)	(775)	
Public Health & Wellbeing	(80)	(80)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
People - ASC & PH	69,885	72,080	1,469	(1,131)	338	(1,000)	(662)	2,195	(2,361)	(167)	(1,270)	(1,437)	(774)	
Executive Director - CS	285	299	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	14	0	14	0	14	14	
Children's Social Care	23,470	25,444	1,513	(883)	630	0	630	1,973	(1,202)	771	0	771	141	
Education & SEND	11,594	14,704	3,212	0	3,212	0	3,212	3,110	0	3,110	0	3,110	(102)	
Education DSG funded	(444)	(444)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
People - CS	34,905	40,003	4,725	(883)	3,842	0	3,842	5,098	(1,202)	3,895	0	3,895	53	
Executive Director	82	241	146	0	146	0	146	158	0	158	0	158	13	
Community Services	5,145	5,267	126	(133)	(7)	0	(7)	122	0	122	(45)	77	83	
Environment	27,614	27,877	263	(263)	0	0	0	263	(263)	0	(46)	(46)	(46)	
Development & Housing	3,245	3,832	483	0	483	0	483	587	0	587	(108)	480	(4)	
Place	36,085	37,216	1,018	(396)	622	0	622	1,131	-263	868	-199	669	47	
Executive Director	416	712	346	(125)	221	0	221	296	(143)	153	0	153	(68)	
Finance , Property &	2,982	4,286	938	(402)	536	(2,500)	(1,964)	1,303	(198)	1,105	(2,500)	(1,395)	570	
Strategy, ICT & Governance	9,041	9,718	715	(715)	0	0	0	677	(751)	(74)	0	(74)	(74)	
Transformation	0	347	256	(256)	0	0	0	347	(347)	0	0	0	(0)	
Resources	12,439	15,062	2,255	(1,498)	757	(2,500)	(1,743)	2,624	(1,440)	1,184	(2,500)	(1,316)	427	
Chief Executive	577	577	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Capital Financing	12,403	12,500	(173)	0	(173)	0	(173)	97	0	97	0	97	270	
Risk Management/Reserves	(1,685)	(1,685)	0	185	185	0	185	0	185	185	0	185	0	
Capital Financing/Risk Mgt	10,718	10,815	(173)	185	12	0	12	97	185	282	0	282	270	
Total	164,610	175,753	9,295	(3,724)	5,571	(3,500)	2,071	11,144	(5,082)	6,062	(3,969)	2,094	22	

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

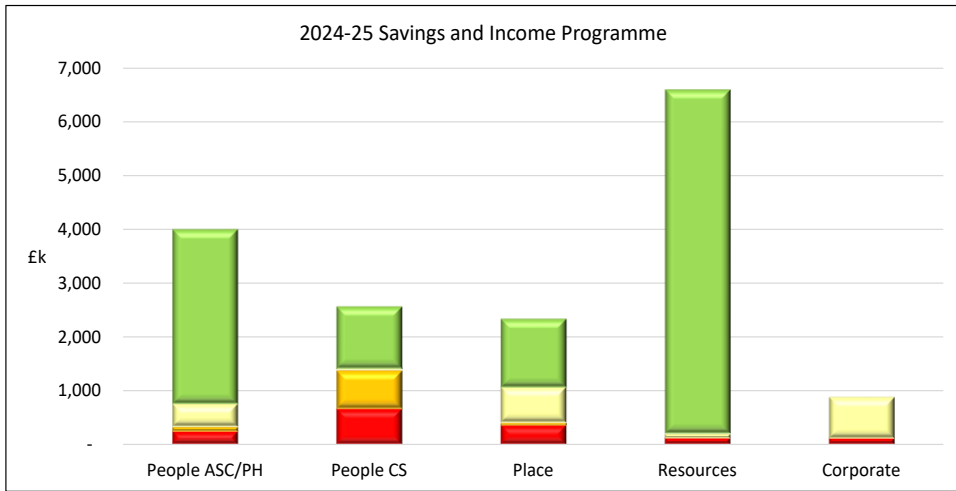
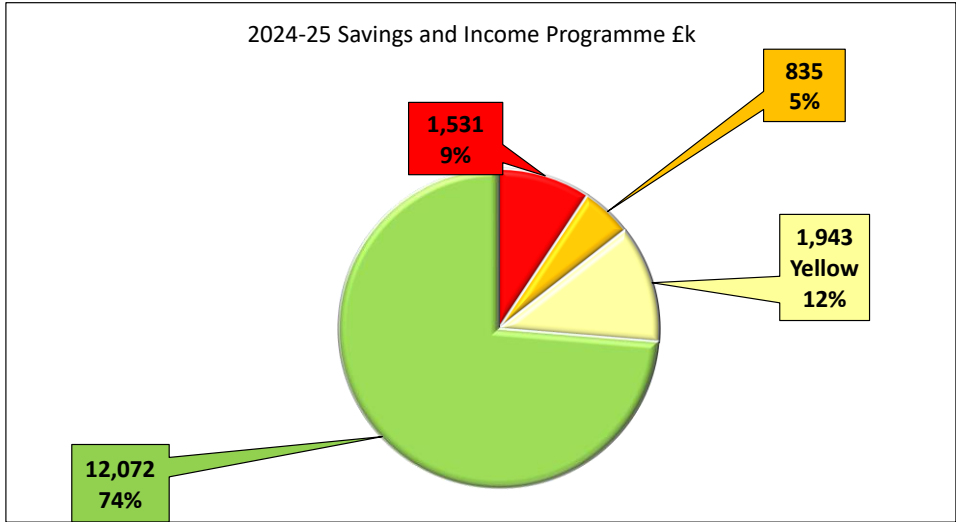
5.5 The key areas of overspend are shown below with the forecast after mitigations shown alongside. The drivers of these overspends are covered in Appendix A together with details of actions being taken.



2024-25 Savings and income generation programme

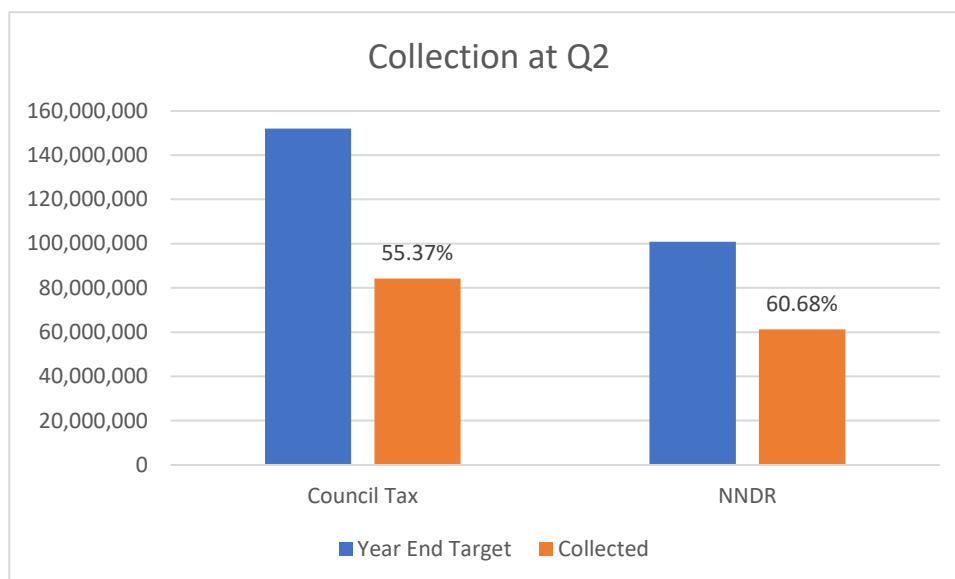
5.6 In order to meet the funding available, the 2024/25 revenue budget was built with a £16.4m savings and income generation programme (£14.3m ongoing, £2.1m one off). The programme is monitored using the RAYG traffic light system. The status is shown in the following charts:

2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two



Collectible Council Tax and Business Rates

- 5.7 At the end of 2023/24 we had collected 97.53% in Council Tax and 98.63% of Business Rates. In Berkshire we were placed 3rd out of 6 in each type behind Wokingham and Windsor & Maidenhead.
- 5.8 Nationally, the collection for 2023/24 was upper quartile (top 25%) for both Council Tax and Business Rates for a Unitary Authority, the average being 95.9% for Council Tax and 97.2% for Business Rates.
- 5.9 The collection during the first two quarters of this year is shown in the following chart.



5.10 The service has also collected over £2.6m of Council Tax and Business Rates arrears and is looking at how they can continue to focus on these arrears whilst also trying to maintain current in-year levels of collection and day-to-day work.

Proposals

5.11 None.

6 Other options considered

6.1 None

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Council is facing an unprecedented level of financial pressures due a range of factors. The Council is taking proactive steps to reduce this expenditure as highlighted in this report, but the Quarter Two position is placing a significant pressure on the Council's financial resilience. This position will be monitored very closely in the coming days, weeks and months to measure progress on reducing expenditure whilst mitigating the impact on frontline services.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Key Pressures, Overspends & Action Plans

Background Papers:

Quarter One Revenue Report

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Officer details:

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Appendix A: Key Pressures, Overspends and Action Plans

2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two

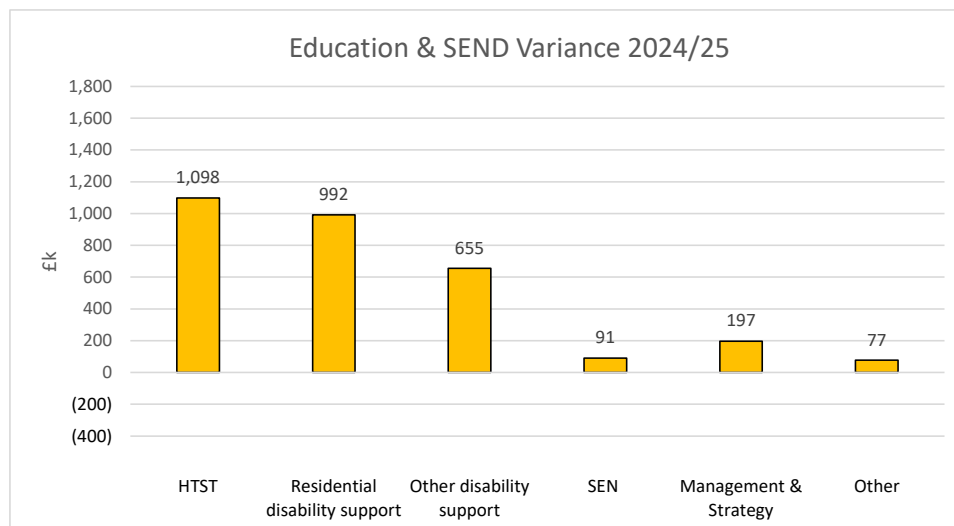
1. Summary

1.1 This appendix covers the main areas of overspend and the action plans underway to address this.

Service	Quarter Two Forecast Position				Further Mitigations in Forecast	Year End Forecast Variance (under) / over (£)
	Budget Manager Forecast over / (under)spend (£)	Transformation Funding in Forecast (£)	Reserves/ Mitigations in Forecast (£)	Revised Forecast Variance (under) / over (£)	Achievability Green (£)	
Adult Social Care	£2,194,610	(£1,355,260)	(£953,610)	(£114,260)	(£1,269,918)	(£1,384,178)
Children's Social Care	£1,973,360	(£1,159,340)	(£43,140)	£770,880	£0	£770,880
Education & SEND	£3,110,250	£0	£0	£3,110,250	£0	£3,110,250
Community Services	£121,890	£0	£0	£121,890	(£45,000)	£76,890
Environment	£263,000	£0	(£263,000)	£0	(£46,000)	(£46,000)
Development & Housing	£587,380	£0	£0	£587,380	(£107,600)	£479,780
Finance, Property & Procurement	£1,303,410	(£133,380)	(£64,829)	£1,105,201	(£2,500,000)	(£1,394,799)
Strategy, ICT and Governance	£677,000	(£751,400)	£0	(£74,400)		(£74,400)
Transformation	£347,200	(£347,200)	£0	£0		£0
Directors & Chief Exec	£468,830	(£195,540)	£0	£273,290		£273,290
Capital Financing	£96,860	£0	£0	£96,860		£96,860
Risk Mgt	£0	£0	£0	£0		£0
Transformation	£0	£0	£0	£0		£0
Use of Reserves	£0	£0	£185,000	£185,000		£185,000
DSG	£0	£0	£0	£0		£0
Public Health SSR	£0	£0	£0	£0		£0
Total Forecast Outturn	£11,143,790	(£3,942,120)	(£1,139,579)	£6,062,091	(£3,968,518)	£2,093,573

2. Education and SEND

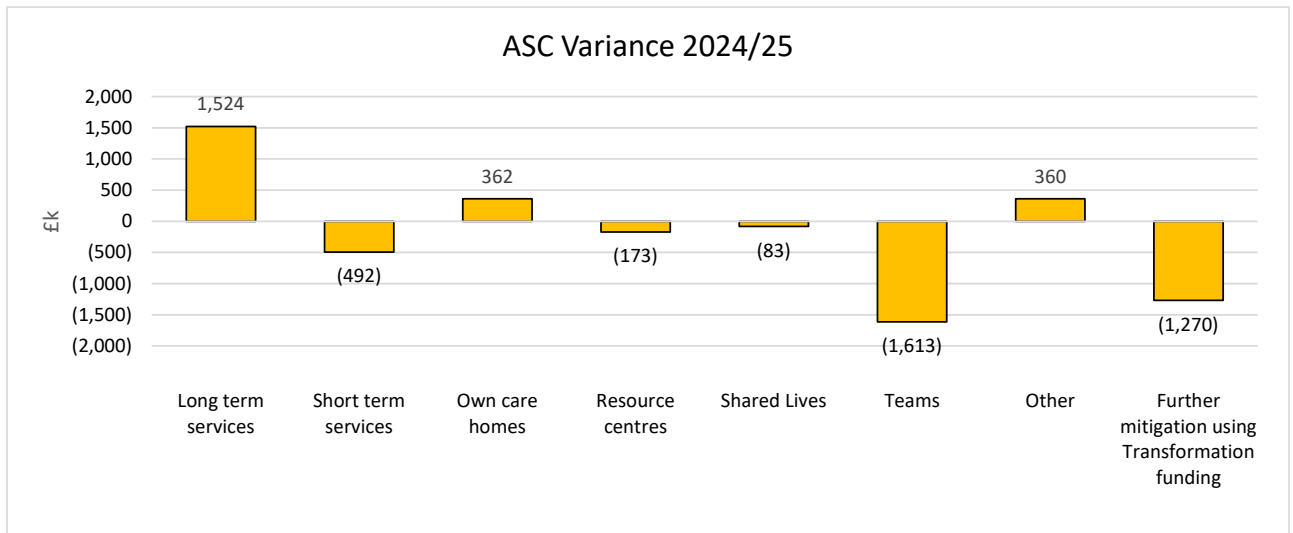
2.1 The Education and SEND forecast is a £3.1m overspend, which is 27% of the £11.6m budget.



- 2.2 Home to School Transport (HTST) is overspending by £1.1m as increased demand continues to be seen in pupils entitled to transport in both mainstream and SEN. The forecast has reduced by £0.5m from last quarter. The client team have been reviewing contracts, retendering, merging and bringing in house which has led to a day rate saving for some routes.
- 2.3 Residential disability support packages are forecast to be £1m overspent due to increasingly complex and high level care packages.
- 2.4 Other disability support is forecasting a £0.7m overspend due to the increased level of requests for support for families in their own homes.
- 2.5 The 2024-25 savings target of £0.9m is £0.4m red, £0.2m amber, and £0.3m yellow and green. The red is due to the HTST review, which although is finding savings, increased demand means the target cannot be met. The amber is from residential disability increases in costs and the managed recruitment process.
- 2.6 Action plan:
- Actions to breakeven are focussed on reducing spend in all areas apart from business critical spend and reducing use of agency staff where possible.
 - A Home to School transport group has been set up and meet regularly. A Transformation project has been proposed to look at savings. This focuses on contractual and procurement issues with a view to ensuring the Council is consistently achieving best value.
 - A sufficiency strategy for both mainstream and SEND education is being finalised and will identify where additional capacity is required to ensure all pupils needs can be met as close to home as possible. This will reduce the call on HTST as there will be reduced need to access high cost provision outside of West Berkshire.
 - A review of HTST expenditure has shown that some costs should be funded as part of an individual child's package of support, linked to their Special Educational Needs. Addressing these issues will reduce the pressure on the HTST budget but increase pressure on High Needs Block.
 - These items are all included in the forecast.

3. Adult Social Care

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care budget manager forecast is an overspend of £2.2m at Quarter Two. This could be reduced to a £114k underspend with the use of £1.4m transformation funding and £0.9m mitigations. Further use of transformation funding totalling £1.3m is being proposed, which would bring the service to an underspend of £1.4m.



3.2 Long term services are forecasting an overspend of £1.25m generated by:

- (a) Higher annualised client numbers than modelled, 1964 compared to 1946, at September 2024, which can be attributed to higher levels of new requests for support. This includes a high demand for Mental Health support.
- (b) Lower than modelled occupancy within one of our own care homes has meant clients have been placed in externally commissioned beds.

3.3 Our own care homes have an overspend of £362k.

There is a pressure of £549k at Willows due to 11% of posts being vacant and cover required through agency. The home has a high proportion of high needs clients where additional care is required. This overspend includes a savings target of £250k relating to the Care Home transformation project which will not be achieved in year.

The overspend at Willows is partially offset with underspends at Birchwood (£82k) and Notrees (£106k). Birchwood are currently forecasting an overachievement on income and Notrees has a saving on staffing.

Following a consultation exercise for the Council’s 2024/25 budget, the public were asked for their views on the closure or transfer to another provider of the Willows Edge Care Home. Subsequently Members have decided that they want to look to transfer both Willows Edge and Birchwood at the same time. We are in the process of issuing and Invitation to Tender (ITT) for these two homes. The current proposal is to award a contract in November 2024 with final transfer in March 2025.

3.4 There has been an increase in Transport costs from January 2024, causing a pressure of £212k which is currently being investigated.

3.5 Teams are forecasting an underspend of £1.6m, of which £1.4m is the use of transformation funding towards staffing costs on prevention projects.

3.6 An underspend of £492k on short term services is forecast by budget managers due to reduced demand within Physical Support 65+, Mental Health 18-64 and Learning Disability 18-64 mostly due to changes within some transition client’s packages

where they were forecast to have further educational placements, which are classed as short term, but have now moved onto long term services.

3.7 The 2024-25 savings target of £4m is £0.25m red, £0.1m amber, £0.4m yellow and £3.2m green. The red is due to a delay in the care home transformation. The amber is due to learning disability reviews.

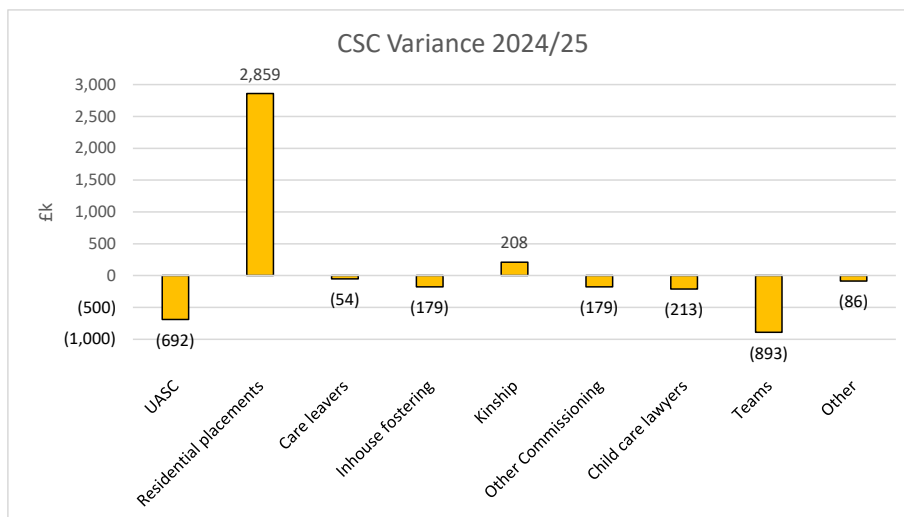
3.8 Action Plan:

The action plan items included in the forecast total £2.4m.

- £150k of this relates to a review of the domiciliary care provider hourly rates with the intention to standardise rates.
- The remaining items are the use of transformation funding to support prevention activities. These include Tier 1 conversations to avoid long term services and provision of reablement services to reduce the need for long term services.

4. Children’s Social Care

4.1 In CSC, the forecast is a £0.8m overspend, which is 3.3% of the net budget of £23.5m. This is after the use of Transformation Funding and reserves of £1.2m.



4.2 There is a £2m overspend in placements (which incorporates UASC, residential, care leavers, inhouse fostering, kinship and other commissioning).

- The children in care population has stabilised in the last year with 180 children currently in care. However, there is increased complexity in the needs of children who have recently entered care alongside shortages of placements nationally.
- Placements for mental health and emotional wellbeing needs, and provision for teenagers continue to be a particular challenge. There is a cohort of young people with very high care needs requiring specialist residential provision at significant cost.
- Many children in high-cost residential provision were initially supported in foster placements, however due to the complexity of their needs those placements

broke down, with their care needs proving too great to deliver safely, resulting in residential placements.

4.3 Teams across CSC are forecasting an underspend of £893k after being funded for transformation projects.

4.4 Use of the childcare lawyer service has decreased during the last quarter resulting in a £216k forecast underspend.

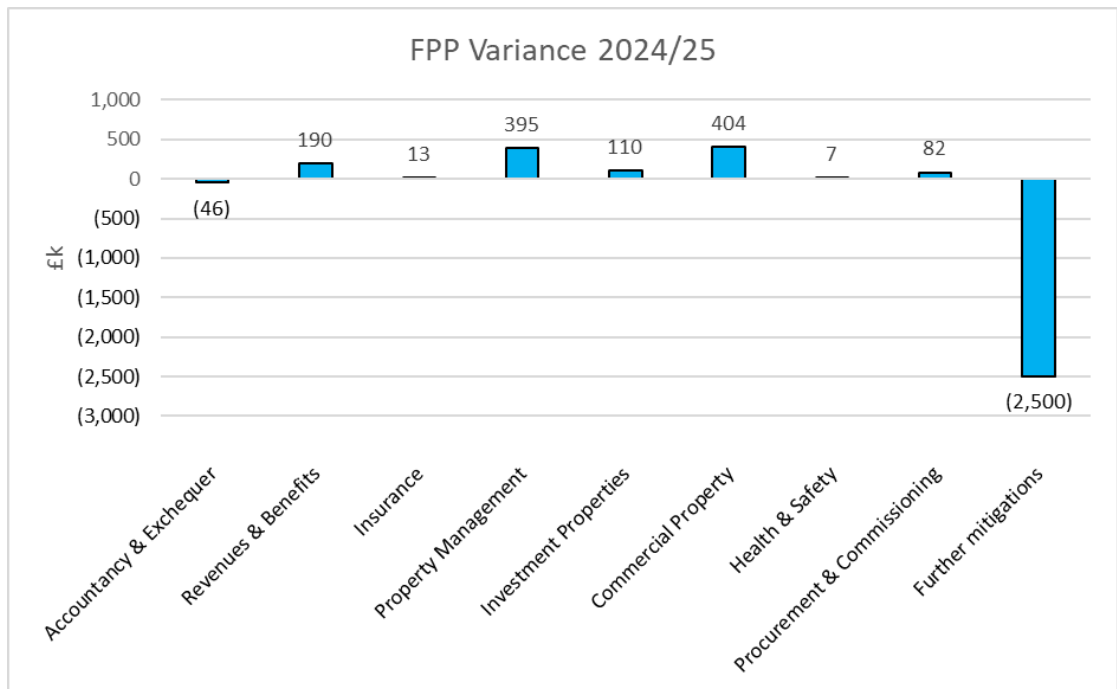
4.5 The 2024-25 savings target of £1.7m is £0.3m red, £0.5m amber, and £0.9m yellow and green. The red is due to delayed recruitment for a foster carer recruitment post. The amber savings are for delayed recruitment to a placement funding post.

4.6 Action plan:

- Within the current forecast there is £1.1m use of transformation funding supporting the project to recruit and retain staff to build a permanent workforce.
- Further plans will be brought to the Star Chamber and are not yet included in the forecast.

5. Finance, Property & Procurement

5.1 The Finance, Property & Procurement Service has a forecasted overspend of £1.1k at Quarter Two, which after mitigations could be reduced to an underspend of £.



5.2 Revenues & Benefits have a £190k pressure due to ICT system costs, staffing pressures, print and postage.

5.3 Property Management have a forecast £395k overspend. This is largely due to two corporate buildings awaiting sale where savings have been taken in anticipation of the properties being sold. If they are sold within the current financial year then there will not be an impact to 2025/26.

5.4 Commercial Property has a loss of income from the sale of a commercial property at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, which hadn't been anticipated at the point the income target was built. This target will be removed as part of the next budget build.

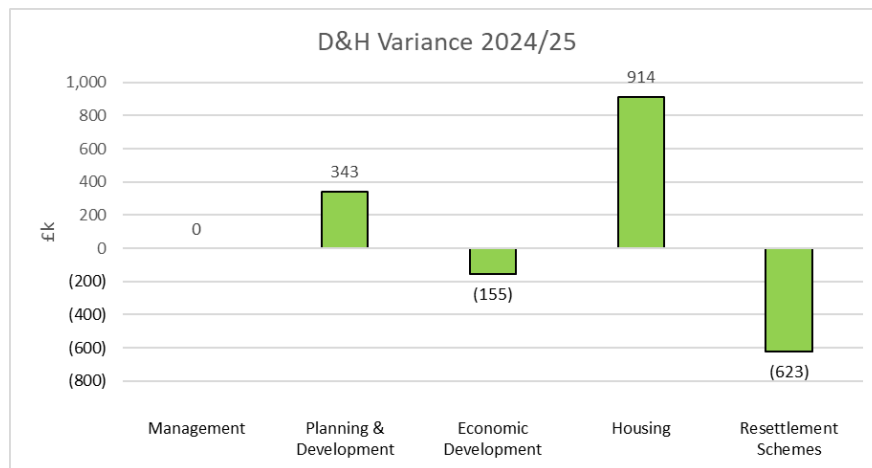
5.5 The 2024/25 savings target of £5.7m is £127k red and £5.6m green. The red relates to the corporate buildings awaiting sale.

5.6 Action Plan:

- Mitigations have been identified from a review of accruals policy which would amount to a forecast saving of £2.5m.

6. Development and Housing

6.1 The Development & Housing Department has a forecasted overspend of £587k at Quarter One. This could be reduced to £480k after mitigations.



6.2 Planning and Development have a pressure of £343k across Planning Income streams.

- Planning Applications are down by 23% compared to the same period over the last six years.
- There has been a reduction in the number of major applications, which attracted the higher fees.
- The pressure for Planning Application Fee income will likely continue in the next financial year if there is not an increase in applications, specifically any major applications which would attract a larger fee.
- The current trends may be due to new requirements for some applications by way of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), particularly on the larger application types, and applicants, particularly housebuilders, may be holding off due to the current issues with the economy.

6.3 The £0.9m Housing overspend is largely from emergency accommodation which is currently forecasted to overspend by £833k due to the level of demand / presentations of families. Last financial year the average presentations per month

were 79 households per month. In the first half of 2024/25 there have been an average of 65 households per month. The annual budget is based on an average of 25 households per month.

6.4 The 2024/25 savings target of £0.5m is all yellow and green.

6.5 Action plan:

- As part of the Place Action Plan which is being developed for Star Chamber on 19th November, a review of vacant posts is being undertaken.
- Following Quarter Two Budget Monitoring the Place Directorate are looking at options to help mitigate the impact of the two main pressures within the department – Emergency Accommodation & Planning Income.
- Work is being undertaken in partnership with MHCLG to develop a B&B elimination plan which would significantly reduce the cost of housing families in emergencies.
- There are other projects, such as Walnut Close being converted into Temporary Accommodation to help increase capacity and reduce the requirement for B&B placements to support families presenting as homeless.
- Further review of repairs and maintenance of Temporary Accommodation portfolio, where only emergency works will be carried out during tenancies. There will be additional reviews on whether works can be capitalised as part of a larger refurbishment works when properties are void when multiple repairs can be grouped together.
- Finally, there is potential for additional income from the various migration support schemes the Housing Service is providing. Numbers of arrivals are unknown so it is difficult to forecast the potential income to be received, as well as the level of support the arrivals will require.

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Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Thomas Bailey
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4583

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from Executive during the next quarter. This report provides Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding the contract identified.
- 1.2 To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director) to proceed with the contract awards provided in this report, on the condition that a Procurement Strategy and a Contract Award report is granted approval by Procurement Board.
- 1.3 A consolidated report is considered the most effective way of complying with the Council's Contract Rules, whilst providing Executive with visibility of forthcoming high value contracts requiring approval. This in turn will help minimise any delays that may impact the procurement timetable for contract award and service mobilisation.
- 1.4 In addition, to provide an overview of contracts with a value in excess of £2.5M which are anticipated to be awarded during the following quarter, further details of which will be subject to inclusion in a future report.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director) to proceed with the award of the contract in table 4.5 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, following the completion of the appropriate procurement process and Procurement Board approval of a Contract Award report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

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

Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive

	All contracts over £500k in value are considered key decisions and will be placed on the forward plan at point of Procurement Strategy.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:		X		
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:				Business as usual
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		

Consultation and Engagement:	N/A
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 To gain approval from Executive on forthcoming contract awards due to take place during the next quarter of the financial year.
- 4.2 Following the completion of the procurement process, the service area will be required to submit a Contract Award report to Procurement Board for approval prior to awarding the contract. The Service Director will consult with Portfolio Holders, the s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer prior to contract award to ensure necessary consultation has been completed.
- 4.3 There are a number of projects listed on the Council’s Capital programme where it is not known at this stage if the delivery of these projects will require tendering for supply contracts. Whilst every effort has been made to include all contracts which are likely to arise, it is possible that other, urgent requirements may emerge. Such cases will need to be reported separately to the board as individual contract award reports for approval. It is acknowledged that there will also remain the need for some contracts to follow the standard governance process rather than be included in this report.
- 4.4 The contract award summary table (4.5) provides an overview of the contract which is being tendered following approval of a Procurement Strategy by the Procurement Board. This contract is expected to have a contract value of over £2.5m based on the available budget.
- 4.5 Forthcoming Contract Award Summary Table – subject to approval within this report

Contract Title	Service Area	Budget (inc. tolerance)	Contract planned start date	Procurement Process	Evaluation weightings	Proposed Contract Term (years)	Estimated contract term award value	Tender Status
Adult Homelessness Accommodation Contract	Planning	Budget is capped at £360,000, however we have built in the CPI or maximum of 5% model Cost centres are 76220 L060W PCON.	1 st April 2025	Open Tender	40% quality 50% cost 10% social value	5+2	£2,502,000	Procurement Board June 2024

5 Supporting Information

5.1 Introduction

The contract presented in this report has an estimated value in excess of £2.5m for the whole life of the contract term, including any optional extensions. The budget information is currently provided by the service area leading the procurement strategy.

5.2 Background

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

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

5.4 Further detail regarding the contract set out in 4.5 is included as a Part II report for Executive meeting.

6 Other options considered

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

7 Conclusion

7.1 For Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director) to proceed with the award of the contract in table 4.5 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, following the completion of the appropriate procurement process and Procurement Board approval of a Contract Award report.

7.2 Executive resolves to:

- (1) delegate authority to the relevant Service Director in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer to proceed with award of the forthcoming contract that has been identified in this report for award approval during the next quarter of the financial year.
- (2) delegate authority to the Service Director and Democratic in consultation with the relevant Monitoring Officer to finalise the terms of any agreement as set out in the procurement documents and make any necessary drafting or other amendments (such amendments not to be substantial or material) to the terms of the agreement necessary to produce a final agreement for execution and to enter into that agreement.

8 Appendices

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: The named contract above related to services for West Berkshire as a whole authority rather than specific areas.

Officer details:

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Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-24

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Karl Davis
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4598

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel, detailing the Panel's activities during the 2023–24 period and outlining developments planned for the coming year.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide corporate parents with an overview of the panel's work, the council's commitments to children in care and care leavers, and to ensure corporate parenting duties are fulfilled.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Recommendation is that this annual report is noted, and that this supports further awareness raising around corporate parenting duties.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
Human Resource:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no HR arising from this report.
Legal:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
Property:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
Policy:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with children in care and care leavers, who often face inequalities and reviewing the service, and the work annual enables us to continue to address and challenge any inequalities.</p>

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers. As a Council Care Leaver/Care Experienced is seen as a protected characteristic and this annual report review annual activity in ensuring young people with protected characteristics is fully supported.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Services we are proud of 2) Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all <p>The annual report sets out the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and its duties to children in care and care leavers, building a service we are proud off and ensuring children in care and care leavers and support to thrive and have the right opportunities.</p>
Core Business:	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which outlines core business of the Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>
Data Impact:		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, this will include information, feedback from partners, children, young people, families, and carers.</p> <p>This report has been presented to Corporate Parenting Panel</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Corporate parenting involves promoting the same outcomes any good parent would want for their child.
- 4.2 This responsibility, mandated for local authorities and their partners, is set out in legislation, government publications, and statutory guidance.
- 4.3 During the 2023-24 financial year, the Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly. The panel is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families Service and a care-experienced young person.

- 4.4 The Panel received and scrutinized several reports over this period concerning children in care or care leavers. This included annual reports from:
- Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service - Independent Reviewing Officer
 - Health of Children in Care - ICB Annual Report
 - Fostering Annual Report
 - Adopt Thames Valley Annual Report
 - Virtual School Annual Report
 - Local Authority Designated Officer Annual Report
 - Foster Carer Independent Reviewing Officer Report
 - Youth Justice Plan
- 4.5 Each Panel meeting included a review of comprehensive data, providing oversight of the lived experience of children in local authority care. This data covered social care, education, and health information, fostering robust discussion and scrutiny by panel members.
- 4.6 Although there is more to accomplish, the Panel has effectively ensured that the voices of children and young people are heard, with West Berkshire foster carers as active panel members. A care-experienced young person serves as co-chair, adding critical insights and maintaining a focus on outcomes for children and young people.
- 4.7 In several instances, young people contributed to the reports and presentations shared with the Board, especially on items concerning leaving care. The children's council, 'R'Vue,' attended two Panel meetings, providing insight into their activities and sharing their experiences.
- 4.8 This is West Berkshire's first Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 This Annual Report of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel for 2023-2024 is designed to share information on the Panel's work more strategically and to raise awareness.
- 5.2 As a Local Authority, corporate parenting is a shared responsibility, and positive corporate parenting is already underway. However, there is always room for improvement to ensure our children receive the best support.

Background

What is corporate parenting?

5.3 Local authorities and their partners must ensure that care-experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility, called 'corporate parenting,' applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate parenting is the duty of social workers, health services, housing departments, police, schools, and other service agencies supporting children in care, including young people leaving care.

Legal background

5.4 The collective responsibility for local authorities was first established in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

5.5 The role of councils as effective corporate parents has been highlighted in several government publications and legislative updates, including:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Other relevant regulations and guidance

5.6 Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties, include:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Other relevant regulations and guidance

Principles of corporate parenting

5.7 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlines seven principles for corporate parenting, requiring local authorities to:

1. Act in the best interests of the children and young people, promoting their physical and mental health and well-being.
2. Encourage them to express their views, wishes, and feelings.
3. Take into account their views, wishes, and feelings.
4. Help them access and benefit from services provided by the local authority and partners.

- 5. Promote high aspirations and seek the best outcomes.
- 6. Ensure their safety and stability in home, relationships, and education.
- 7. Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.
- 5.8 The Act also mandates local authorities to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers,' extending adviser support up to age 25 and enhancing education guidance.
- 5.9 In West Berkshire, we strive for the best outcomes for all our children, young people, and families, ensuring corporate parenting is understood and practiced across the Council to enable effective services.

6 Proposals

- 6.1 It is recommended that this Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report is noted for information and for members of Exec to reflect on their role as a corporate parent.
- 6.2 As this is an annual report there are no implications identified.

7 Other options considered.

- 7.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provider overview of service delivery.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This inaugural Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report demonstrates how corporate parenting duties have been met over the past year. It outlines the Panel's activities and governance related to children and young people.
- 8.2 The report reflects positive achievements, and the services working with children and young people show dedication and commitment to making a difference.
- 8.3 The report also identifies priority areas for 2024-2025.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-2024

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

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West Berkshire
Corporate Parenting Panel
Annual Report 2023-2024
Children and Family Services



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Welcome to the annual report of West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel. This sets out the activity of the Panel for 23/24 period and will outline some development happening over the coming year.
- 1.2. Corporate Parenting means giving the same level of care and support that any parent would want for their own child. Parenting does not simply stop as a young person reaches maturity, so this responsibility extends to helping children in care successfully transition to independent adulthood.
- 1.3. Celebrating children and young people is also important, many will have attended this year celebration event and the care leavers summer party.
- 1.4. Our young people are part of our Panel, and bring their lived experiences to enable a constant review of the work completed and offer provided to children in care and care leavers.
- 1.5. The report is intended to give all corporate parents oversight of the Panel, our pledge to children in care and care leavers and to ensure both as a council and a partnership we fulfil our duties as a corporate parent.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Corporate parenting means promoting the same outcomes that any good parent wants for their child.
- 2.2. This responsibility for local authorities and their partners is set out in legislation, government publications and statutory guidance.
- 2.3. During the financial year 2023-24, the Corporate Parenting Panel has met quarterly, the Panel is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families Service and a care experienced young person.
- 2.4. The Panel received and scrutinised a number of report over this period relating to child rein care or care leaver, this includes annual reports by:
 - Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service- Independent Reviewing Officer - Annual Report
 - ICB Annual Report- Health of Children in Care
 - Fostering Annual Report
 - Adopt Thames Valley Annual Report
 - Virtual School Annual Report
 - Local Authority Designated Officer Annual Report
 - Foster Carer Independent Reviewing Officer Report
 - Youth Justice Plan
- 2.5. The Panel, each time they meet, review a wealth of data to ensure oversight, and scrutiny of the lived experience of children in local authority care, this allows for debate and challenge from Panel members. This data includes social care, education and health information.
- 2.6. Although there is more to do, the Panel has ensured children and young people voice is present and heard and West Berkshire foster carers are active members of the Panel. A care-experienced young person co-chairs the panel which brings a critical element to the panel and ensure all discussions remain focused on outcome for children and young people.

- 2.7. In many cases, young people contributed to the reports and presentations which came to Board, particularly the leaving care item. The children in council 'R'Vue' attended panel on two occasions, giving the panel insight into their activities and sharing their experiences.
- 2.8. This is West Berkshires first Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.

3. Governance and Statutory Context

3.1. What is corporate parenting?

- 3.2. Local authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that care-experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called 'corporate parenting' and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate parenting duty rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also any other agency that provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police and schools. Corporate parents have specific duties for young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

3.3. Legal background

- 3.4. The collective responsibility for local authorities was first laid out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The central role of councils as effective corporate parents has been emphasised by government in the publications *Care Matters: Time for Change* (DCSF 2007), *Care Matters: Time to Deliver* (DCSF 2008), and consolidated in aspects of the Children and Young Persons Act (2008). Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties include:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (as amended by the Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2000

3.5. Principles of corporate parenting

- 3.6. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided a welcome distillation of corporate parenting responsibilities through seven principles of corporate parenting, which local authorities and their partners are required to adhere:
1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people.
 2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
 3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
 4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
 5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
 6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 3.7. The Act introduced some new responsibilities relating to children in care and care leavers. These include a requirement to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers,' setting out the services available to young people leaving care, extend the provision of personal adviser support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 and to provide education advice and guidance to young people formerly in care. The Act also introduces several requirements to ensure that court processes are focussed on long term plans for and specific needs of the child.

3.8. The Care Leavers Charter and Pledge to Children in Care

- 3.9. The Care Leavers' Charter is a set of promises to care leavers, published by the Government in 2012. It is "Designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good corporate parents." The Charter will "Remain constant through any changes in legislation, regulation and guidance." We promise:
- To respect and honour your identity
 - To listen to you
 - To believe in you
 - To inform you
 - To be a lifelong champion
 - To support you

- To find you a home

3.10. West Berkshire are reviewing and revising the Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers, and this will be a priority for the coming year.

3.11. The current pledge can be found at Appendix 1

3.12. Children in Care Council

3.13. R:Vue (West Berks' Children in Care Council) is for young people in care aged 11 - 17. R:Vue with the intention to ensure young people's voices are heard and help West Berkshire Council to improve the services that children in care and leaving care receive. It is also an opportunity for young people in care to socialise with each other and have fun. R:Vue regularly attend Panel alongside care experienced young people to ensure their voice is heard by those people making decisions.

3.14. R:Vue activities during 2023-24 include:

3.14.1. R:Vue have been involved in several projects including reviewing the Pledge. The group had a tour of West Berkshire Council Chamber, and the Chief Executive's Office led by Dave Wraight. They also discussed with him the topics that are included in the Pledge that are important to them. In other sessions they discussed the leisure activities/facilities in West Berkshire that contributed to the WBC leisure local offer. R:Vue supported children in care to complete in the 'Big Survey' from the Children's Commissioner for England. The Watermill Theatre visited R:Vue to explore projects they would like to take forward into 2024.

3.14.2. Some of the young people from R:Vue sat on interview panels and helped recruit to the following positions in West Berkshire Council: The Virtual School Headteacher, Service Director for Children's Social Care and Service Director for Education and SEN.

3.14.3. R:Vue delivered Total Respect Training to West Berkshire Staff in April 23, July 23, October 23 and February 24. The training is aimed at all those working with children in care and policy makers to ensure the voice of children is heard and incorporated into decisions made about children in care and care leavers. It is hoped that all panel members will have attended the training by the end of the next financial year.

3.14.4. The group really enjoy the social element of R:Vue and some of the activities the group have done include baking, arts and crafts like making clay models, playing pool, basketball and video games. In the Summer holidays there were days out to Cotswold Wildlife Park, Chessington World of Adventures, Blue Reef aquarium and Southsea Beach. At Christmas the group went out for their annual meal at a local restaurant chosen by them.

3.14.5. R:Vue also attend activity days with the Children in Care Councils in Berkshire that include Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham, Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead. They are held in Windsor and always have a theme that the groups come together and discuss. In October they discussed 'what makes a house a home' and in February they discussed 'what makes a good Foster Carer' and this was shown at the recent Foster Carers Conference.

3.15. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

3.16. It is of note that approximately half of the young people receiving leaving care services are, or were, unaccompanied asylum seeking children. West Berks has a history of providing good

quality services to care leavers and we have been an active member of the National Transfer Scheme for a number years and before it was mandated by Government. Our Personal Advisers offered training to our South East Local Authority colleagues during the summer of 2023 on how we respond to new arrivals, help them settle and thrive.

- 3.17. The council receives a grant for each young person seeking asylum. The grant money is to cover all costs in relation to the services provided to them including accommodation, staffing, subsistence and support. The grant money does not meet the full costs, particularly for those over 18 years.

4. Panel Activity

4.1. Membership

- 4.2. The panel is formed of Council Members; Care Experienced young people; Council Officers; Foster Carers and partner agencies including health and education. The core membership is:

Member	Position/Organisation
Cllr. Heather Codling	Portfolio Holder, Liberal Democrats. Co-Chair
Elisha Stephens	Apprenticeship SEND Youth Participation Worker. Care experienced member, Co-Chair
Cllr. Martha Vickers	Liberal Democrats
Cllr. Justin Pemberton	Liberal Democrats
Cllr. Christopher Read	Liberal Democrats
Cllr. Dominic Boeck	Conservative
Nigel Lynn	CEO West Berkshire Council
AnnMarie Dodds	Executive Director, People- Children's Services
Cheryl Cooper	West Berkshire Foster Carers Association
Pauline Etheridge	West Berkshire Foster Carers Association
Charlotte Duly	Interim Virtual School Headteacher
Paul Coe	Executive Director, People- Adult Social Care
Dave Wraight	Interim Head of Service, Children and Families
Karl Davis	Service Manager Children in Care
Dora Gouveia – Scholfield	Principal Social Worker
Jane Bell / Lianne Lewis	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children & Children
Tiegan Phillips	Care Experienced Member
Rachel Fairhurst	Care Experienced Member
Lucy Phillips	Care Experienced Member
Sasha Charlesworth	Apprentice Business Support Administrator (YOT). Care experienced Member
Melissa Perry	Service Manager Education Welfare
Nicola Robertson	QAAS Service Manager
Michelle Sancho	Interim Head of Education
Andy Higgs	Bucklebury School Headteacher

4.3. Panel Dates and agendas

4.4. Panels were held on July 11th 2023, October 3rd 2023, December 11th 2023 and March 19th 2024.

4.5. Following the change in administration after the local elections in May 2023 the focus of the July 2023 panel was to introduce new members to the concept and duties of corporate parenting, alongside the operations and responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel. In addition the panel were briefed on:

- The role of the Children in Care Council- by R:Vue young people
- The role of the Virtual School
- Apprenticeships and work opportunities for care leavers
- Health assessments and health support to children and young people

4.6. At the October panel we heard from R:Vue about their summer programme and the activities enjoyed by children in care during the holidays. The budget proposal for next year was recommended by the panel.

4.7. The panel was presented with the annual report from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in relation to the health of Children in Care (CiC) including an update on the CiC Child and Adolescents Mental Health (CAMH) project, which has brought about stability for several children experiencing difficulty in placement and settling in children who have experienced placement moves. Young people spoke about the success of the Care Leavers Summer Party and the celebrations. The Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Standards (QAAS) presented the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) annual report and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report.

4.8. A focus of the December 2023 panel was reflecting on the learning from the Ofsted Focussed visit that took place in October 2023 with regards to care leaver services. The panel had several care leavers attend and contribute to the debate. There was learning from the visit for corporate parenting in general and these are being incorporated into action for the coming year. The outcome letter was positive about the progress and experiences of care leavers, particularly the service provided by the Personal Advisors and the relationships they form with young people. The services to young people in specific circumstances- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, Care leavers who are parents and those in custody received praise. However, the impact of the corporate parenting panel on driving the progress for children and young people was identified as an improvement area. Actions are taking place into 2024 to improve the panel's oversight and influence. The letter can be found at Appendix 2:

4.9. The March 2024 panel reviewed and supported the proposal for 'Care Leaver' to be treated as a protected characteristic within the council and this is now successfully adopted within the council and related policy and procedures. In addition, there was reflection and congratulations on the successful Annual Achievement Awards. Some ideas were discussed about the arrangements for the next awards and that the ceremony will revert to its October date in 2024.

4.10. Performance and scrutiny

4.11. Each panel scrutinises a suite of performance data in relation to children in care and care leavers.

4.12. This includes data with regards to outcomes for children and young people's placements, education and health.

4.13. The performance data scrutinised at panel for 2023-24 can be found at Appendix 3:

4.14. Corporate Parenting Sufficiency Strategy

- 4.15. Every local authority is required by law to take strategic action, as far as is practicable, to provide sufficient local accommodation to meet the needs of children in care. Local authorities are required to publish a 'sufficiency statement' that sets out how this will be achieved. West Berkshire Sufficiency Statement was written in 2023 and can be found at Appendix 4.
- 4.16. **Care leaver local offer**
- 4.17. Ofsted identified the local offer for care leavers to be basic and not easily accessible. The offer needs to be explicit about the benefits offered to care leavers and evidence the offer being developed in partnership with young people and partner agencies. We have set up a multi-agency working party that includes care experienced young people and members of the panel working towards making the offer more definitive, transparent and accessible. Young people have been working with the council's design team to create web pages for the local offer. A revised version of the offer will be presented to Corporate Board in November.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. This year has seen significant changes in the council and membership of the panel following the change of administration after the May local elections. All activity at the council has been against a backdrop of significant budgetary pressures. This was noted during the Ofsted focussed on the end of 2023. There has been a change of leadership at the very top of children's services with a new Executive Director and a new Service Director arriving in June 2024. Leaders have needed to learn about services and practices and impart their vision for children in care and care leavers.
- 5.2. There has been good progress made in some areas during the year, for example the council adopting 'care leaver' as a protected characteristic and the positive findings by Ofsted about the experiences of care leavers in West Berks. There are several workstreams in place to improve outcomes for children and young people and the panel will keep its focus on driving these improvements and overseeing progress. The panel will ensure all those working with, or have influence over, children's lives are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and ask them to report on activity and plans that ensure the highest standards for our children and young people.

6. Plans for 24/25

Objective	Action	Owner
To have a strong and robust Corporate Parenting Panel	Provide mentoring opportunity for CPP chairs	AMD/RW
To have a strong and robust Corporate Parenting Panel	Introduce a detailed and themed forward plan for all panels throughout the year	RW
To be an excellent corporate parent	To update the Pledge and adopt at Panel	KD
Provide young people with clear, up to date, relevant information about their entitlements	Update the Local Offer including both the core entitlements and any discretionary offer from the Local Authority and partners	KD
To be an excellent corporate parent	To ensure the local offer is accessible and available to all care leavers on the council's website and social media	KD
To be an excellent corporate parent	To take up the offer from the National Leaving Care Adviser to undertake a 2-day	KD

	evaluation of services in WB	
To support Care Leavers financially	Review and update the financial offer to Care Leavers including reduction in council tax	KD
To support Care Leavers	Influence other organisations locally to further broaden their Corporate Parenting offer	RW/HC
That Corporate Parent Panel drives the response for children/young people	Increase the voice of the child/young people in the Corporate Parenting Panel by supporting children and care leavers to take part in the panel and advocate for their needs.	KD/RW
To put the voice of children and young people at the heart of decision making	Formalise participation and voice of the children and Care Leavers in a participation strategy and plan that has a reach across the whole organisation.	AMD/RW

7. Appendices

7.1. Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers

7.2. Ofsted Focused Visit

7.3. Data Information for Corporate Parenting Panel

7.4. Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2026

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call Children and Family Services on 551111.

**West Berkshire Council
Children and Family Services**

Market Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5LD

T 01635 551111
www.westberks.gov.uk

WBC/C&FS/RW/0924

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THE PLEDGE 2021

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

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



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

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

7 November 2023

Paul Coe
Interim Executive Director-People
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
West Berkshire
RG14 5LD

Dear Mr Coe

Focused visit to West Berkshire children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the focused visit to West Berkshire children's services on 3 and 4 October 2023. His Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Amanda Maxwell and Michelle Woodward.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for care leavers. Specifically, they considered the quality and suitability of accommodation that young people live in. Inspectors looked at the support available to enable young people to access employment, education and training and how they are prepared for adulthood. Within this, inspectors also explored the experiences of care leavers with specific needs (for example, unaccompanied asylum seekers, young parents or those who have had contact with the criminal justice system).

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

Headline findings

Care leavers in West Berkshire continue to be well supported by their personal advisers (PAs). They live in homes which they have chosen and feel safe in. Since the previous inspection in March 2022, there have been several changes within the corporate and political leadership of West Berkshire. The transfer to the new political leadership has been hindered by poor information-sharing. Senior leaders know of these challenges and have plans in place to address these matters. However, the impact of this is not evident.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice?

- The quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.
- Performance management, quality assurance and audit processes.

- The impact of the corporate parenting panel on driving progress for all children and young people.

Main findings

Care leavers in West Berkshire are well supported by their PAs who know them well. PAs provide practical help and support when it is needed. Most young people have effective, open and honest relationships with their PAs, whom they see frequently. Young people are in regular touch with their PAs and communicate their needs, worries and aspirations. Some young people benefit from attending sessions where they can socialise, share experiences and receive support from other care leavers.

Young people live in homes that meet their needs and in which they feel safe. PAs ensure that young people are informed and advised about their accommodation options. This helps young people decide what type of accommodation would best suit their needs.

Young people are supported to develop independence skills that equip them for adulthood. Many young people live in supported accommodation and so can access as much support and assistance as needed.

Young people can access support and assistance from their PAs up until the age of 25, if this is what they need and want. PAs have open conversations with young people about the level of involvement and support they would like to receive as they become older. Some PAs are still in touch with young people who they previously supported, as they may be involved in helping to run the community groups or other activities on offer. The local authority operates a 'mentoring scheme', which is a support system through which care-experienced young people mentor other younger care-experienced young people. This is a positive scheme appreciated by the young people who have been involved in it.

PAs provide practical help and advice to young people about a wide variety of topics. There is also additional information provided in the 'independent living handbook'. Young people are supported to access and engage with appropriate physical, emotional and specialist healthcare services. If a young person needs emotional healthcare, PAs support young people to access specialist therapeutic support.

Young people are consistently encouraged and supported to be engaged in education, employment and training. Some young people have been successful academically and are attending university. Others have been supported and prepared to secure apprenticeships or other employment opportunities.

Those care leavers who are parents, in custody or are seeking asylum are very well supported. Each young person is provided with person-centred support that enables them to make progress and positively plan for their futures. PAs form strong

relationships with young people and provide them with the appropriate support, advice and guidance needed to assist them in their day-to-day lives.

Pathway plans are variable in quality. Stronger examples are well written with and to the young person. There are a small number of plans that have not been reviewed regularly or updated to reflect young people's current circumstances and situations. Young people are provided essential information about their rights, entitlements and finances. They also have access to their key documents and are informed of their rights to access their records.

The local offer is under review. It is basic and senior leaders would like the offer to be enhanced. The information provided in some of the booklets about the local offer is not up to date or easily accessible.

Management oversight and the supervision of PAs is variable in quality and impact. It does not occur regularly and lacks robust support and challenge of casework.

Strategic leaders recognise that the needs of children and young people in West Berkshire should be prioritised. However, leaders have not collectively ensured that they consistently focus on the outcomes of their children and young people and the impact of the corporate parenting panel. The focus of strategic and senior leaders is on their financial challenges, which has led to insufficient focus on children's experiences. There has been a lack of cohesion and support by political leaders to ensure that the transition to the new political administration has been smooth and remains child focused.

There have been changes in the leadership of the corporate parenting panel. These changes have delayed the actions and focus of the panel. Members of the panel have had recent training to fully understand their roles and accountabilities. Care-experienced young people and children in care have also provided corporate leaders and staff with 'total respect' training, which provides a powerful insight into the lives of the children, for whom the authority acts as a corporate parent. Senior leaders acknowledge that more work is needed to ensure that the planned developments are timely and impactful for children. They recognise that children in care and care-experienced young people have limited opportunities to influence and develop services in West Berkshire.

The quality assurance process, and specifically the quality and impact of audit activity, has declined since the previous inspection. Leaders have not fully utilised audit activity to provide clarity about the quality of practice and identification of what needs to improve. This has been further hindered by the local authority's electronic recording system. Additional 'workarounds' have been created to provide clarity and check data produced by the system. This is an interim measure while leaders await an updated system to be provided. Leaders know this and have created plans to address both quality assurance processes and recording systems. The impact of these plans is not yet evident.

There have been interim senior leadership arrangements within children's social care in West Berkshire for several months. These are being addressed through the imminent appointment and arrival of a permanent director for children's services. Current senior leaders are clear about the need for service improvement. However, the local authority self-evaluation is not explicit about the areas of weakness, nor are plans sufficiently smart to ensure that there will be timely action in addressing these weaknesses.

Senior leaders continue to work collaboratively with their partners to improve the offer of services for care-experienced young people in West Berkshire. They have focused on continual improvement to the local housing offer and supported accommodation offer. They have also focused on increasing the number of apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young people. More young people are benefiting from these developments.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning the next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Maxwell
His Majesty's Inspector

Information for The Corporate Parenting Panel - June 2024

Children in Care - Starters

Age Band	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Under 1	3	2	2	1	2	2	3
1 to 4	10	2	3	5	1	2	2
5 to 9	6	2	6	4	0	4	8
10 to 15	9	3	4	5	3	2	3
16 and plus	6	7	13	6	5	6	7
Total	34	16	28	21	11	16	23

Gender	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Male	17	11	17	14	7	13	13
Female	17	5	11	7	4	3	10
Other							

UASC By Age	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Under 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 to 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 15	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
16 and plus	2	5	10	4	1	3	3
Total	4	5	10	4	2	3	3

Legal Status	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
C1: Interim care order	18	1	4	12	2	3	4
C2: Full care order	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
J1: Remanded to local authority accommodation or to youth detention accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
J2: Placed in local authority accommodation under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
L1: Under police protection and in local authority accommodation	2	1	2	1	2	2	4
L2: Emergency protection order (EPO)	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
V2: Single period of accommodation under section 20	14	14	20	8	7	7	11

Children in Care - Leavers

Age Band	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Under 1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
1 to 4	1	3	4	2	8	2	6
5 to 9	0	4	2	1	9	0	4
10 to 15	3	0	0	0	5	1	6
16 and plus	9	12	16	6	9	8	13
Total	13	20	22	9	32	11	29

Gender	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Male	7	10	19	6	19	7	19
Female	6	9	2	3	13	4	10
Other		1	1				

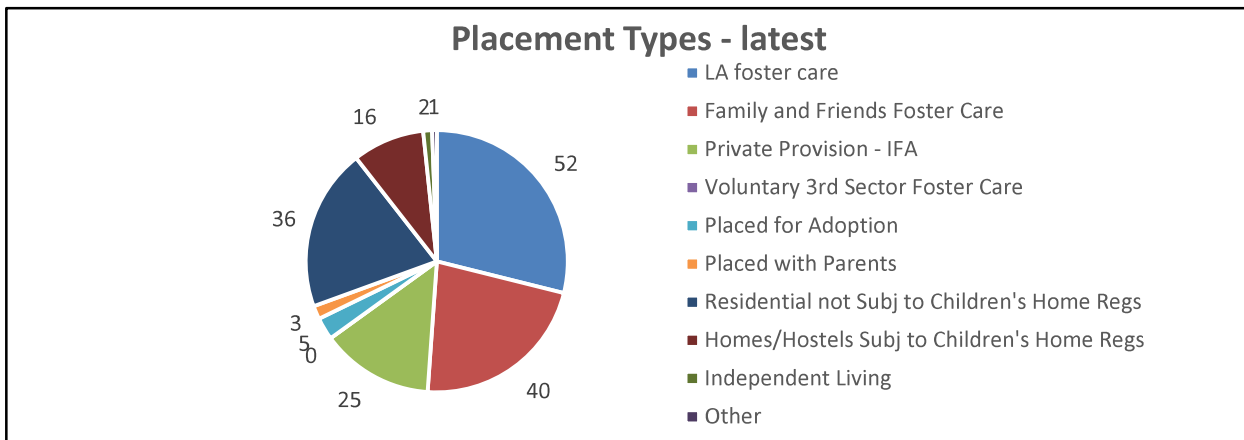
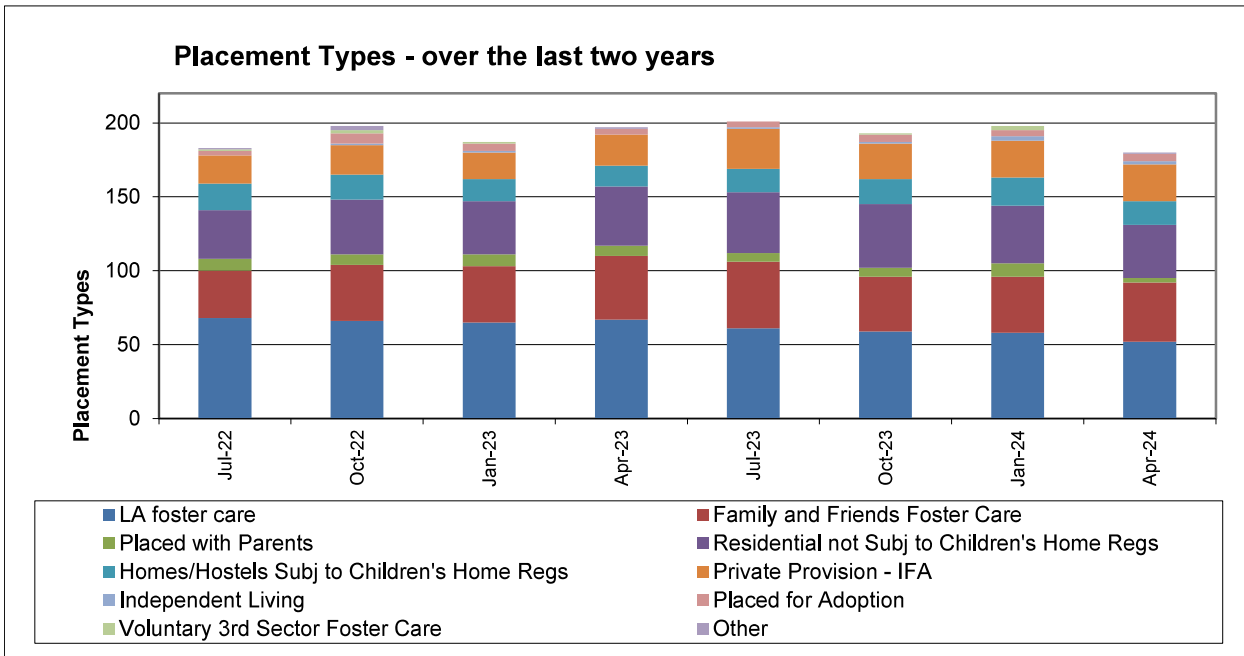
UASC	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
	4	8	14	1	4	3	7

The Number and Profile of Children in Care as at 30 April 2024

The Placements Types:

Placement Type	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24	
LA foster care	68	66	65	67	61	59	58	52	29%
Family and Friends Foster Care	32	38	38	43	45	37	38	40	22%
Private Provision - IFA	19	20	18	21	27	24	25	25	14%
Voluntary 3rd Sector Foster Care	1	2	1	0	0	1	3	0	0%
Placed for Adoption	3	7	5	4	4	5	4	5	3%
Placed with Parents	8	7	8	7	6	6	9	3	2%
Residential not Subj to Children's Home Regs	33	37	36	40	41	43	39	36	20%
Homes/Hostels Subj to Children's Home Regs	18	17	15	14	16	17	19	16	9%
Independent Living	0	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	1%
Other	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1%
Total Numbers CiC	183	198	187	197	201	193	198	180	
<i>of which UASC</i>	31	33	25	27	27	27	28	25	14%
<i>CiC rate per 10,000 children aged under 18</i>	51	55	52	55	56	54	55	50	28%
Mean for All LA's in England (2022)	70								
Mean for Children's Services Statistical Neighbours(2019/20)	49								

The number of children under 16 years in an unregistered placement	5
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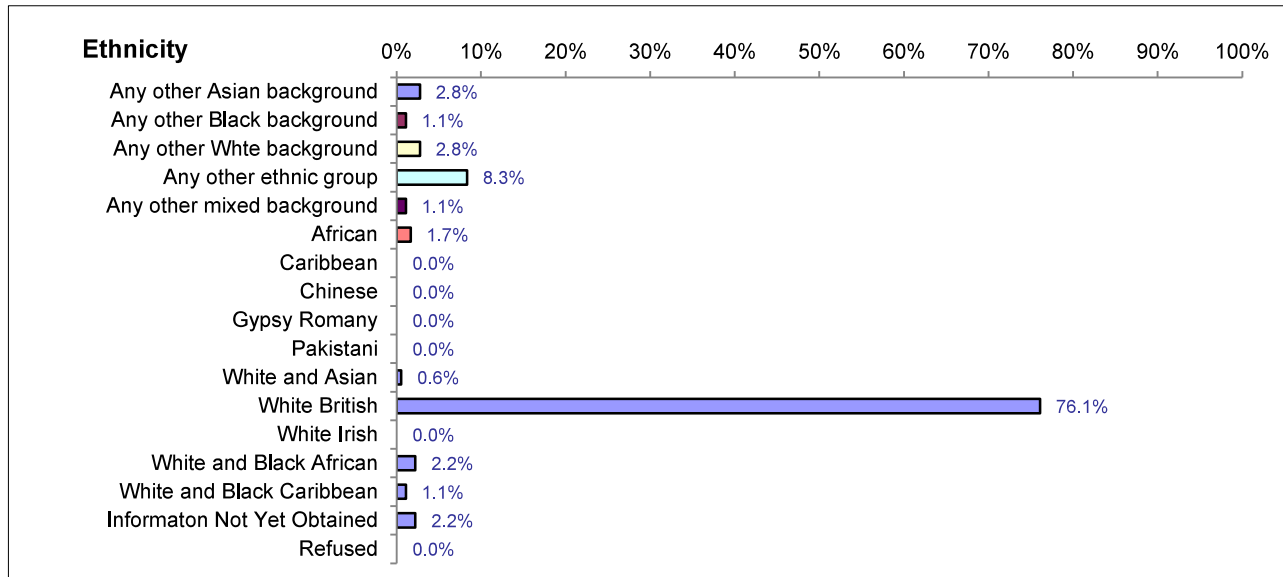
Foster Carers	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
Number of new foster carers recruited - YTD (commencing in April)	4	7	11	1	8	12	16	2
Number of foster carers that have left - YTD (commencing in April)	14	17	19	0	2	12	15	2

LAC Age and Ethnicity profiles

Age Group and Gender	Male	Female	Other	Total
Under 1	6	2		8
1 to 4	13	6		19
5 to 9	22	19		41
10 to 15	41	19		60
16 and plus	37	15		52
Total	119	61	0	180

%	England % 22/23
4%	5%
11%	13%
23%	18%
33%	38%
29%	26%

Ethnicity (including UASC)	Nos	%
Any other Asian background	5	2.8%
Any other Black background	2	1.1%
Any other White background	5	2.8%
Any other ethnic group	15	8.3%
Any other mixed background	2	1.1%
African	3	1.7%
Caribbean	0	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Gypsy Romany	0	0.0%
Pakistani	0	0.0%
White and Asian	1	0.6%
White British	137	76.1%
White Irish	0	0.0%
White and Black African	4	2.2%
White and Black Caribbean	2	1.1%
Information Not Yet Obtained	4	2.2%
Refused	0	0.0%
Total	180	



Education

The Educational Record of Children in Care		Summer Term 2021/22	Autumn Term 2022/23	Spring Term 2022/23	Summer Term 2022/23	Autumn Term 2023/24	Spring Term 2023/24	Summer* Term 2023/24
Children with fixed term exclusions	West Berks	5	5	5	10	9	12	5
	Out of Area	0	2	4	2	4	2	1
Permanent Exclusions	West Berks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Out of Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children on a reduced timetable	West Berks	0	0	1	1	6	10	11
	Out of Area	5	3	3	3	4	3	3
Children not attending school		7	7	4	4	8	9	8

*Current term is ongoing

Performance Indicator - PEP	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
% of CiC of statutory school age with up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP)	100%	95%	99%	96%	96%	95%	92%	96%

Jan 24 PEP % was impacted by staff absence, now back to normal

Numbers of CiC of statutory school age	Total
SEN	28
With Statement/ EHCP	47
No Identified SEN	28
Total	103

LAC Care plans and reviews of plans

Performance Indicator - Plan	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
CiC with an up to date Care/ Pathway Plan	170	197	187	197	201	192	196	178
Number of CiC	181	198	187	197	201	193	198	180
Percentage	94%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%

Performance Indicator - Reviews	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
CiC Reviews held on time	170	186	179	189	189	165	169	168
Reviews Due CiC (in care 4 weeks or longer & exclu short term breaks)	170	186	182	192	202	184	191	176
Percentage	100%	100%	98%	98%	94%	90%	88%	95%

Performance Indicator - Review Contribution	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
CiC (aged 4+) who have contributed in their review YTD *	121	214	313	17	106	209	303	18
Nos of CiC Reviews YTD *	137	246	359	18	116	220	329	19
Percentage	88%	87%	87%	94%	91%	95%	92%	95%

* Note that a reporting year runs from April to March with new figures commencing in April each year

Placement changes

Performance Indicator	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
CiC who have had three or more placements within the year	19	22	22	22	19	17	22	28
Nos of CiC excluding children on short-term breaks	183	198	187	197	201	193	198	180
Percentage	10%	11%	12%	11%	9%	9%	11%	16%
Mean for All LA's in England (2022)	10%							
Mean for Children's Services Statistical Neighbours(2019/20)	11%							

Permanence outcomes - Children left care for other legal status

Performance Indicator	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
Number of CiC Adopted YTD	0	2	4	1	1	1	2	3
Number of SGO's YTD	1	1	1	0	0	4	4	0

Care leavers (18+)

Numbers and Percentage of CiC Relevant, Former Relevant leaving care with up to date Pathway Plans								
Relevant clients for After Care	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
Relevant clients for After Care	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	2
of those with up to date Pathway Plans	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	2
% of those with up to date Pathway Plans	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Former relevant clients for After Care	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
Former relevant clients for After Care	121	125	143	155	127	132	136	145
of those with up to date Pathway Plans	98	100	112	117	101	109	108	105
% of those with up to date Pathway Plans	81%	80%	78%	75%	80%	83%	79%	72%

Missing/ at risk

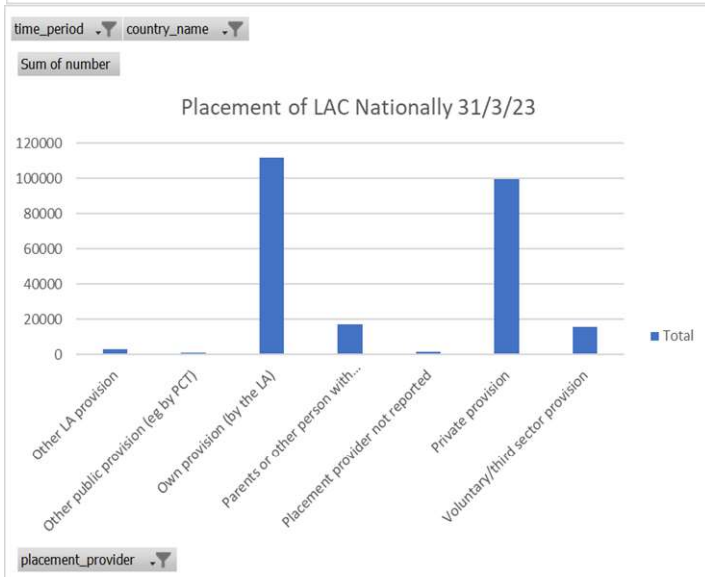
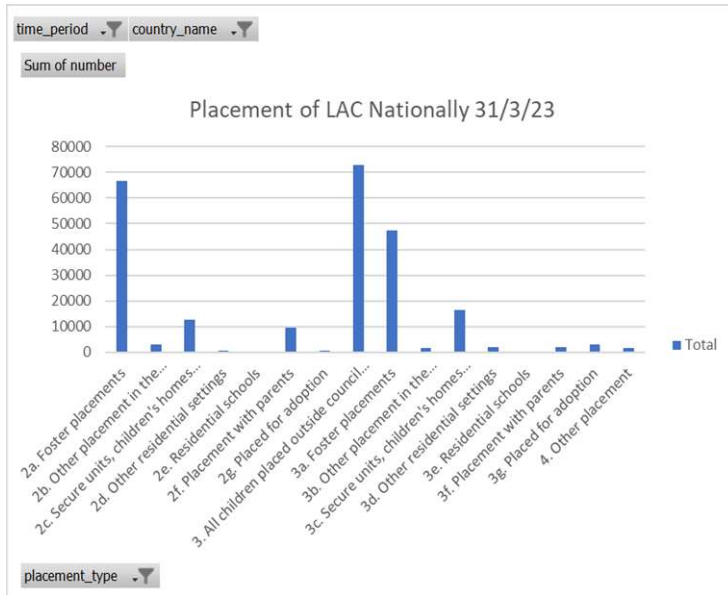
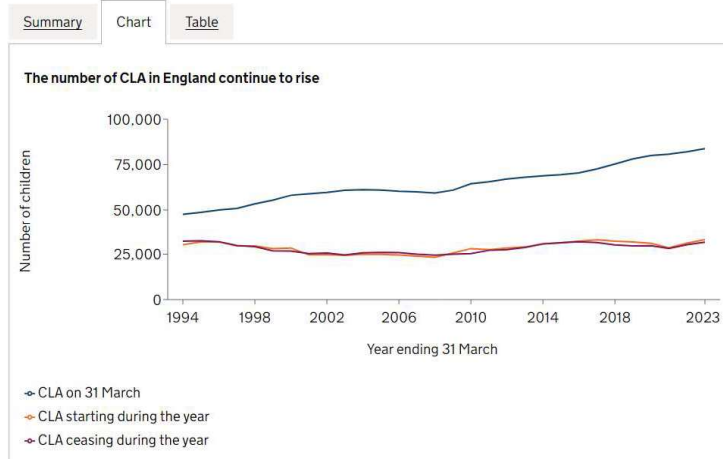
Number of CiC (from West Berks) that went missing during the quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
Number of missing C&YP in care (incl. living within WB and OLA)	9	17	7	8	6	12	10	12
Missing Episodes	15	45	10	12	9	38	23	26

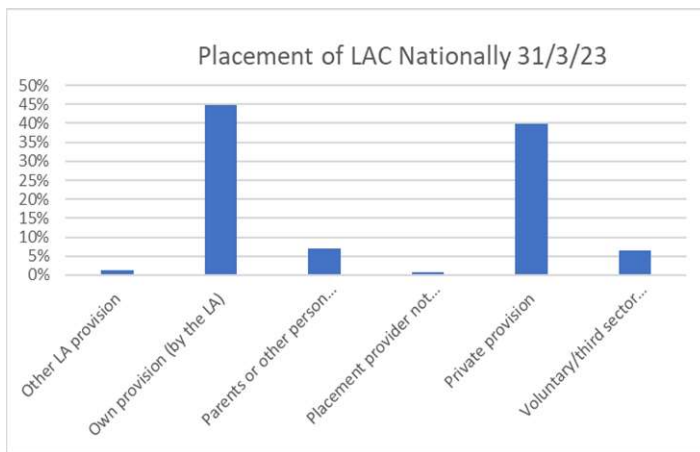
Number of CiC currently identified as being at risk of CSE/CCE	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24
Number	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	0

National Context

Based on reporting data 2021-22

Headline facts and figures - 2023





Source: ONS Looked After Children data 22/23 national_da_on_31_march_by_placement_provider_placement_type_and_locality

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Sufficiency Statement for Children and Young People in Care 2023-2026



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1. Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this Sufficiency Statement for Children and Young people. The purpose of this document is to provide assurance that the resources, plans and processes in place are sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in care.

As you are aware, children and young people in care face unique challenges and require a high level of support and care to help them thrive. It is a fundamental responsibility of society to ensure that they receive the love, protection, and guidance they need to grow into happy and successful adults.

This statement represents a thorough and comprehensive examination of the current state of affairs and a projection of future needs and capabilities in West Berkshire. It has been developed with the goal of ensuring that children and young people in care receive the best possible support and care. We hold high ambitions for them and we are committed to giving them the support they need to reach their full potential.

As you read through this document, I encourage you to consider the level of detail and rigour that has gone into its preparation. It is a testament to the commitment and dedication of everyone who supports our children and young people.

I hope that this sufficiency statement serves as a valuable resource for you and assures you that we have everything in place we need to support the children and young people in our care.

Cllr Heather Codling

Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

2. Introduction

The provision of good quality services to children in care is a core strategic priority for West Berkshire Council. The Council has a high functioning service for children in care which received a 'Good rating' from Ofsted in the March 2022 inspection. The publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in 2022, the extensive media coverage of rising costs have placed a greater focus on the experiences of children in care and those young adults who have left care.

Performance of services for children in care in West Berkshire across is strong when compared with the English national average and statistical partners. Partnerships and multi-agency arrangements to support children in care are robust and well developed. When children can no longer live at home or with family, our aim is to provide the best quality care in West Berkshire or as close to home as possible, enabling children to stay connected to their families, communities, school, and friends.

Maintaining high quality care is challenging in the current environment, with a combination of rising demand, increased costs and a backdrop of a national shortage of places for children. There is particular concern for children with the most complex needs and sourcing residential placements that meet the regulatory requirements for this group.

This Sufficiency Strategy describes the current demand and supply situation for children in care, assesses the likely future state of the market and sets out the strategy by which West Berkshire Children and Family Service (CFS) will ensure future provision meets the needs of children in the care of the council to a high standard

3. Our Legal Duties

The Children's Act 1989 requires local authorities to ensure they secure and provide a range of sufficient accommodation that meets the varying needs of children in care.

Section 22G of the Act requires local authorities to take strategic action in respect of those children they look after and for whom it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation within their local authority area. In those circumstances, .

Section (22c) Children Act 1989 sets out additional factors that local authorities must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement.

- allowing the child to live near his/her home;
- not disrupting the child's education or training;
- enabling the child and a looked after sibling to live together;
- meeting the needs of disabled children; and
- providing accommodation within the local authority's area unless that is not reasonably practicable.

4. Our ambition and aims for our children

We hold high ambitions for all our children in care and care experienced young people. We are committed to ensuring that they live in loving homes providing support and other services that are always of a high quality and appropriate to their needs. We know that stable, sustainable placements and the relationships that are built as a result are the foundation for our children's healthy development and future success helping them to achieve their potential and dreams.

We place permanence at the heart of our planning decisions, making sure that all of our work with children and young people focusses on the best options for them to achieve or retain permanent, lifelong relationships with people who are the most likely to meet their needs to the best standard possible.

We know our children in care well through reviewing in detail the needs of our children, so that we have a thorough and up to date knowledge about the types of placements and other help that they require. By doing this, we will develop our services to address the current needs of our care population, and we will be more able to accurately predict the future needs of those children in our care, promoting more effective future planning.

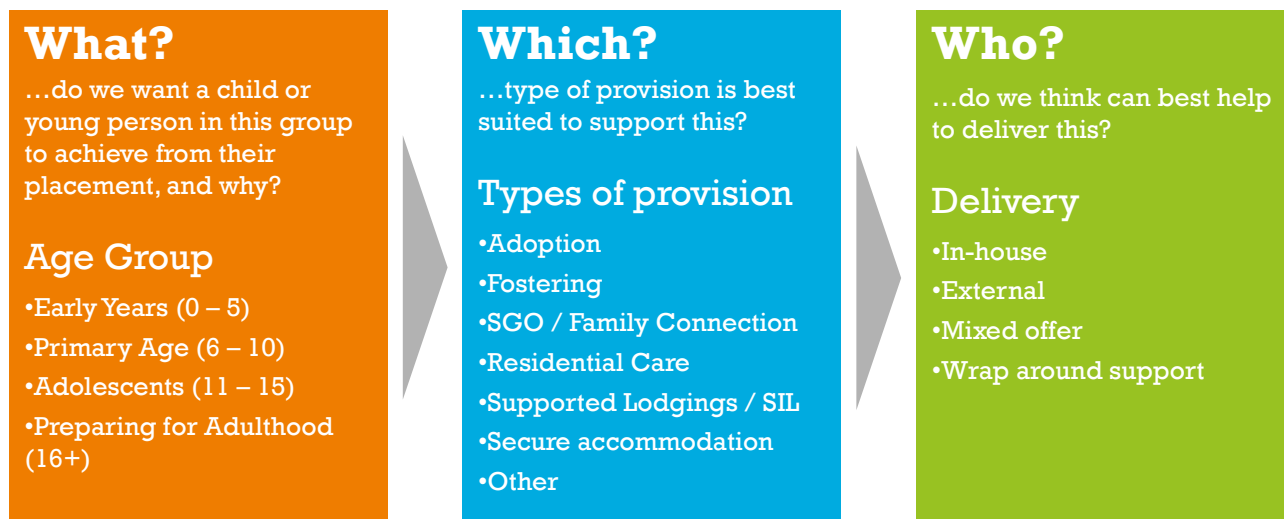
We will drive a partnership approach to children in care by maximising the contribution that partners make to the education, health and other needs of children in care. We will promote the joint ownership of the corporate parenting function, sharing decision making functions and costs to the right level, and jointly commissioning services in the interests of our children.

We will always keep our children close to West Berkshire when this is right for them and suitable to their needs. We will create and source local placements with our foster carers and local providers to meet the assessed needs of our children. We will use commissioning frameworks and local contracts to secure good quality, value for money placements for our children. We will always seek to listen and act on the views and experiences of our children in care by finding a range of ways to engage with and seek the views of children in care, so that they inform our work and inform developments and improvements across the council and with partners.



Preferred provision for age groups

Identifying the strategic approach for core placement provision



5. The profile of our children

The 2021 census shows that in West Berkshire the proportion of the population aged 5-14 has grown by 8% the last decade, while that of 0-4 has declined by 18%. The fall in numbers of young children might suggest a fall in demand in future years, however, the impact of the pandemic and cost of living has increased pressures on families and demands on Children and Family Services.

Children in care in numbers

Studies undertaken by the ADCS over a 12 year period evidence increasing demands on children's social care nationally. Since 2021 demand has grown significantly in West Berkshire. The disruption to support services and household routines from Covid, economic pressures, a reduced service offer across some agencies and high profile child abuse cases have all contributed to more 'front door' demand. Key partner agencies in safeguarding such as the Police and NSPCC helpline all report noticeable increase in demand.

The numbers of children in need and subject to child protection plans have also risen from 199 in December 2021, to 278 in December 2022. There is a proven correlation between the rise in numbers of children on protection plans and a future rise in children in care. We should expect the number of children in care to rise during 2023.

Numbers of children in care- West Berks

2018-19	151-171
2019-20	171-158
2020-21	158-146
2021-22	146-166
2022 - 23	166-198

In previous years the number of children in care in West Berks has remained consistently around 150-160 children, however, towards the end of 2022 the number was approaching 200 children. This figure shows a 36% increase against the 2020 figure and a 19% increase against the 2021 figure.

	Children coming into care	Children ceasing to be in care	Net CiC population change
2018-19	77	53	+24
2019-20	60	77	-17
2020-21	47	58	-11
2021-22	78	58	+20
Nov 2022	70	38	+32

A contributing factor to the increase is a higher number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in care. In January 2021 West Berkshire had 12 UASC in its care, in January 2022 this had risen to 27 and at the end of 2022 the number has increased to 33. Changes in the National Transfer Scheme in December 2021 mandated all Local Authorities to take responsibility for a number of UASC equivalent to 0.01% of its child population. In West Berkshire this number is 35 and we should expect to have this number of UASC in our care for the foreseeable future.

The ethnicity of children in care West Berkshire does not wholly reflect the wider population mix. In 2022 the proportion identifying as White stood at 84%, while the 2021 census indicates that 88% of the West Berkshire school age population identified as White. However, when adjusting the figures by excluding UASC, the proportion changes to 90%/10%, which is closer to the general population mix.

Age profile for children in care snapshot in 2022

Age groups	West Berkshire	England Avg. 2020-21
Under 1	3%	6%
1 to 4	17%	13%
5 to 9	18%	19%
10 to 15	29%	39%
16 to 17	33%	23%

According to the available figures in the table above, West Berkshire has a higher comparable proportion of 16 and 17 year olds in care than the national average but the England average is taken before the mandated changes to the National Transfer Scheme. This is also an explanation for the higher numbers of children in West Berkshire for children accommodated under section 20 Children Act 1989, a voluntary arrangement. The systems for reviewing the legal status of children in care in West Berks is robust and we are confident that we seek parental responsibility through the Courts when necessary. Our lower figure for the 10-15 age group might show we are better able to support children to remain at home but teenagers remain our biggest pressure in terms of placement finding.

Legal status for children in care snapshot in 2022

Legal status	West Berkshire	England Avg. 2020-21
Placement order	6%	6%
Section 20	25%	15%
Care Orders	69%	79%

Placement Types

Placement provider for children in care snapshot in 2022

Own provision- Fostering	104
Independent Fostering Agency	20
Placed for adoption	7
Semi-independent/supported lodgings	39 (30 UASC)
Residential Care	17
Other	2
Parents or other person with parental responsibility	9

The vast majority of children are placed in a family setting, mostly through foster care and either with in house carers or with connected carers (family and friends). We also currently have a relatively high number of children (7) placed with their adoptive family and who will be adopted in the coming months. Most of our unaccompanied asylum seeking children live with supported lodgings carers and this is our most cost effective and successful route for this group.

6. What our children and young people say

Our Children in Care Council is called 'R Vue' and it represents all children in care and care experienced young people in West Berks. Our pledge to children in care recognises the importance of ensuring that children in care and care experienced young people have access to the right placements, at the right time, with the right support. This helps them to achieve success and ensures they maintain family relationships, friendships and interests.

We are committed to ensuring children are involved in the decisions that affect them both as a group and in individual care planning. Children tell us they want to live in stable homes that support them achieving well in education or employment, keeping healthy and having a good sense of wellbeing. We give children and young people a say in where they live, who they live with and where.

7. Prevention, Intervention and Early Help

West Berkshire has developed a Prevention and Early Help programme whose effectiveness was recognised by Ofsted in its 2022 inspection. This has a strong focus on reducing the risk of families and children reaching a stage where more significant intervention is needed. This is complemented by our partnership work with health, public health, Children & Family Services and the voluntary sector which are pivotal to ensuring a strong and robust offer to families. Key initiatives that will be maintained and/developed are:

Family Safeguarding

The social work model in West Berks is the Family Safeguarding Model (FSM). This was introduced in April 2018 and has been fully embedded and operational for the past four years. All practitioners are trained in Motivational Interviewing. The model continues to be effective, reducing risk for children, helping children remain with their families, parents accessing services they need to bring about changes in behaviour for them. Feedback from families through independent consultation and evaluation showed they feel they have been worked with and not “done to”. Most also said that their chances of making lasting beneficial changes to their lives had improved as a direct result of Family Safeguarding



Early Response Hub

Within the Contact Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS) is the Early Response Hub (ERH). This service has embraced an ‘Earlier Response’ model to meet the needs of those children and families whose needs require a higher level of input than Universal help, but do not yet reach statutory threshold.

Family Hubs

The three West Berkshire Family Hubs provide direct support for families through individual support, targeted and universal group sessions and by working closely with health, schools and local early years providers. Initiatives such as Flying Start have been developed to operate through the Family Hubs.

Emotional Health Academy

The Emotional Health Academy (EHA) is unique to West Berkshire and its purpose is to provide emotional health support to children, young people and their families earlier, before problems become severe and enduring.

8. Children coming into care

Any agreement for a child to come into care is made by the Head of Service for Children and Families or Head of Service for Education. All children coming into care are referred to the Family Placement Team to search for a fostering placement unless the child can be placed with their extended family.

If no in house fostering placement is found, our Commissioning Team will look for an external placement, either independent fostering, residential placement (or secure accommodation if needed). The commissioning provision dedicated to placement finding for children supported by workers in the Family Placement Team.

When children are placed with connected persons under regulation 24, the assessment is carried out jointly between the child's allocated social worker and a social worker from the Family Placement Team.

Support and Solutions Panel

We strongly believe that children and young people have the right to be brought up by their parents and within their families unless there is clear evidence that doing so is harmful to their overall wellbeing and development. Where possible, services should be provided to enable children to remain at home and when they have come into care in an emergency help them return home or to their extended family.

The Support and Solutions Panel was introduced to ensure that children and young people and their families, receive the appropriate level of intervention/support before a decision is made that they enter the care of West Berkshire.

The multi-agency panel consider all the requests for voluntary admissions into care are appropriate and that an early return to family or other options for permanence are facilitated and actioned as soon as possible.





9. Commissioning arrangements

West Berkshire Council is a member of the South Central Frameworks for both Independent Fostering Agencies and Residential Placements. This is a consortium of 14 Local Authorities established with the region to commission care from private providers, agreeing unified terms and conditions and negotiating placement costs for members. West Berkshire have been a member of the Frameworks since 2017. In the past there was proven positive outcomes in terms of standards and collective purchasing power, but more recently the reality of the shortage of supply, particularly for residential care placements means they have struggled to deliver meaningful value with the majority of new placements being spot purchased outside of the Framework.

West Berkshire will continue to part of the regional frameworks as these are renegotiated over the coming years. However we note that the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in 2022 made strong statements on the way the market is not meeting current needs. Its key recommendation is that Local Authorities need help to take back control of the care home system through establishing new Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs). These RCCs will take on responsibility for the creation and running of all new public sector fostering, residential and secure care in a region, as well as commissioning all not-for-profit and private sector provided care for children as necessary.

It is suggested that the scale and specialist capabilities of RCCs will address the current weaknesses in the system and establish organisations able to transform the care system for the future. Local Authorities will have direct involvement in the running of RCCs but to work they must be mandated rather than voluntary arrangements. Children will continue to be in the care of individual local authorities.

10. Fostering

In house provision

The Family Placement Team is made up of social workers, family support workers and business support who undertake a number of statutory functions, ensuring good quality services meeting the National Minimum Standards. These functions include:

- The recruitment, training and support of foster carers.
- Assessing, matching and supporting new placements for all children coming into care or existing children who require a new home.
- Completing a range of assessments including Form F's, Viability Assessments, Regulation 24, and Special Guardianship Order Assessments.

Children in Foster care provision

	LA foster carers	Connected Persons Carer	Independent Foster Agencies (IFA)
31 March 2019	72	23	31
31 March 2020	53	25	32
31 March 2021	49	26	26
31 March 2022	59	26	20
Nov 2022	66	38	20

In recent years we have increased the numbers of children placed with in house carers relative to IFA's and we currently have 104 children placed with in house carers compared with 20 placed with IFA carers. There are currently 87 households fostering in West Berks.

Connected Persons Carers (Family and Friends)

West Berkshire has a good record of supporting children to live within their family and friends network. We ensure that, where it is assessed as the right thing for the child, the family member is supported and equipped to become a foster carer, with many of them committing to this for the remainder of the child's childhood. As a result, over the last five years we have seen an increase in the number of connected persons carers and we have increased the percentage of Foster placements with family carers as shown below (Figure 5).

The focus on family placements is recognised by OFSTED in the March 2022 inspection, they state that

'A real priority is given to trying to place children within their wider family networks under connected carer arrangements, explored in family group conferences. As a result, many children are safely and securely living with connected family members, maintaining and developing their familial cultural ties and identities'.

The Hub model

In June 2021 we introduced a 'Fostering Hub Pilot' and this is now expanded to a fully developed model with three hubs operating across West Berkshire. The model identifies a geographical group of foster homes and we recruit an experienced foster carer to take the lead in providing and coordinating support to other families in the hub. The model is based on the notion of the extended family where members are available to provide day to day support and build lasting relationships.

The hubs are supported by a Supervising Social Worker and a Family Support Worker. The Supervising Social Worker provides regular support and supervision to the hub carer and ensure that the hub expectations are met. The Family Support Worker offers more practical support to the families within the hub (such as assisting with training and transport support of the non-driving carers). The Family Support Worker also attends regular coffee morning events and provides feedback to the service.

The hub model has proved successful and foster carers report that they feel well supported and engaged with the model. The hub model is leading to improved support to children in placement and increased stability for children.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers

The recruiting of in house foster carers remains a high priority but this is in a climate of a highly competitive market, with Local Authorities and IFA's attempting to recruit and train new carers. There are documented studies in the fostering press of a shortage of foster carers nationally. In August 2022, Community Care reported that half of the nation's foster carers were considering quitting due to the cost of living crisis. This is compounded by there being less households with a spare bedroom as more bedrooms are used as home offices following Covid.

Our Strategy:

- To recruit a wide range of foster carers that can meet the needs of our children in care population using a variety of marketing initiatives.
- To provide a high-quality support service, supervision, and training to our current foster carers to ensure they feel valued and part of our fostering community.
- To develop the Team and Service to meet the needs of our children in care, to ensure we have a workforce who have a variety of expertise and committed to building the service and going the extra mile for our foster carers and children.
- Using the hub model to ensure the highest level of supports to our children and carers
- Provide out of hours social work support
- Access to, and support from the Children in Care Mental Health service
- Events and activities to ensure foster carers feel valued and part of a successful team
- Careful matching of children with foster carers to ensure right children are placed with right foster carers
- Valuing foster carers as professionals who play a significant part in the child's life, ensuring they are part of the planning and communication about the child

- Buddy and mentor scheme to support new and existing carers
- Actively support the activities of West Berkshire Foster Care Association and regularly meet with them
- regularly review our fostering payments scheme and the financial incentives to foster

Children in care Mental Health project

This is an initiative with health partners and the three Berkshire West Local Authorities, Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading. The aim of the project is to ensure children in care have quicker access to dedicated specialist mental health and wellbeing services. The main objective being improving the stability of placements; supporting carers and professionals to form plans and strategies to prevent placement moves and breakdowns. It is funded by the Integrated Care Board paying half the costs and the remainder split between the three local authorities.

The objectives of this specific service are:

- To prevent placement breakdown and placement moves for children in care.
- To provide evidence based mental health assessments for children in care.
- To inform multi-disciplinary care planning and inform interventions (clinical and non-clinical) that are available to support children in their placements.
- Share knowledge, expertise and advice, providing guidance to professionals (including foster carers) to make better and more informed decisions for, and with children about their lives.
- Provide training to professionals (including Foster carers) about children's presentation of need to enable adults to identify needs earlier, respond in a knowledgeable and empathic way.
- Provide evidence based therapeutic interventions directly with children and carers that support improved outcomes for emotional wellbeing and mental health.

The service is funded for 2022-2024 and recruitment began early in 2022. There has been difficulties recruiting to the full complement of the staffing establishment due to staff shortages and other difficulties in the NHS, but the top tiers of management and clinicians are in place and have been providing services to the relevant children across Berkshire West during the latter months of 2022. There is some early evidence that this service is bringing stability to our most volatile and risk taking children and young people.

The outcomes and impact of the project will be formally evaluated and reported on in the autumn of 2023.

11. Achieving Permanence

Our aim for all children in care is for them to live somewhere which is seen as their home for the whole of their childhood and wherever possible, into early adulthood. For some children this might be by securing a forever home outside of the care system, for others we strive for children to live in an arrangement that is a long term match and again, wherever possible, within a family.

Adoption

West Berkshire remains part of the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Thames Valley (ATV), in partnership with a number of local authorities. West Berkshire maintain good performance across all adoption KPI's and children are placed with their adoptive families within good timescales.

Most of our children are placed with ATV adopters with a small number going through voluntary adoption agencies secured by ATV. We have always achieved very good figures on timeliness and matching and we anticipate this will continue with the current cohort. We have a number of young children we are parallel planning for whilst we are in care proceedings to ensure no delay should the final outcome be a Placement Order. We have four children in 'early permanence' meaning they are with foster carers who intend to adopt

Adopt Thames Valley provide a good service and a regional adoption agency increases efficiencies and offer value for money. We anticipate a further eight adoptive placements per annum over the next three years.

Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) carers

We strongly believe that children should be supported to live with their 'forever family' outside of the care system wherever possible. We have a robust assessment and support framework for carers applying to be Special Guardianship carers. In most instances this will be family or other 'connected persons' coming forward to be assessed during care proceedings. In addition, we have a small number of foster carers supported to become SGO carers for children they have fostered. We agree a post SGO support plan for all families which is endorsed by the courts. This details the financial and practical support that will be given to families.

Prior to 2021, support for carers following an SGO was provided via the contractual agreement with Adopt Thames Valley (ATV). This service was brought back in house in 2021 when we concluded that this service could be better provided in our Family Placements Team. We have a specialist social work post within the team to contribute to the review and delivery of support for post SGO carers. We currently support 84 children at varying levels, and evidence suggests this has had a positive impact for children in SGO placements.

12. Private Provision- Independent Fostering Agencies and Residential Placements

Expanding the IFA market locally

Our provider of Supported Lodgings (Step By Step) is a registered charity and is in the process of setting up an IFA agency in addition to their supported lodgings scheme. They have had a registered manager in post for a number of months and are in the process of meeting the regulatory requirements with Ofsted. Their experience is with teenagers and young adults and they are hoping to convert some of their supported lodgings carers to foster carers in the early months of 2023. We have held a number of discussions with them about our needs and they are keen to work with us a 'preferred partner' given our long history of working well together. We are hoping to have our first matches for children late spring/early summer.

Residential Care

Our numbers of children in residential care have remained consistent over recent years, being between 17 and 20 children. However, the costs associated with this provision has increased substantially as private providers have been able to increase costs where there is no capacity in the market, placements in high demand and provided at a premium.

As with other Local Authorities, we have been in the unfortunate position of having to use unregistered placements on a small number of occasions during 2022, but in all instances we have secured Deprivation of Liberty Orders to ensure the oversight of the Courts on the veracity of plans and kept Ofsted informed of all actions being taken to secure a registered placements as quickly as possible.

There has been evidence of movement in the market over recent months and we have been meeting with two separate providers about how to meet the needs of West Berkshire children into the future through local residential provision.

- A not for profit company currently operating in the West Midlands looking to expand in the local area and open a number of children homes, including in West Berkshire. This is an initiative with the South Central Framework and places will be available to Local Authorities within the framework.
- A local provider of a number of children's homes already operating a number of homes in West Berkshire. They already have planning applications in for two small homes and plans for at least one more. We are working closely with them to help achieve planning permission and secure placements solely for West Berkshire children. This is a highly respected, experienced provider keen to work with us.
- Discussions have taken place within the Thames Valley Local Authorities to develop a new project with the aim of setting up a number of small (one or two beds) residential provision across the region for those children who currently have the highest need but where placement finding is proving extremely difficult. All the LA's are finding themselves in the position of having to place a very small number of children in highly expensive, unregistered placements. This project aims to provide for this cohort of children. Oxfordshire are leading on the project and are creating an implementation plan.

- An existing and well respected provider of semi-independent provision has made an application to Ofsted to open a children's home and we have already identified a young person to move into this provision once approved.

We hold regular 'Step Down' meetings to review the circumstances all children in residential care to explore whether an alternative option is available, appropriate and can be planned for. In many instances we have active plans, including family finding to help children move from residential when it is right to do so and we are confident a move can be supported to be successful. We have moved three children through this initiative this year.

Strategy

- Work with our Supported Lodgings provider to identify early potential matches for children through the Step Down project.
- Work with our planning department to ensure they are aware of the council's need for local residential placements. The Service Manager for children in care is now on the consultation list for any new applications.
- Continue to explore and secure preferred partner relationships with residential providers through commissioning and contracts.
- Consider signing up to the Thames Valley residential care initiative once the project plan is produced and discussions have matured.



13. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

West Berkshire Council has a long history of supporting refugees and asylum seekers. This was partly due to the motorway service stations located in the area where freight from the south coast ports regularly stop. There are now very few children presenting as UASC through this method and we now have a regular flow of children through the National Transfer Scheme. The scheme has been mandatory since December 2021 with an expectation that each local authority expected to have a number of UASC equivalent to 0.1% of its child population. For West Berks, this number is 35 children. We reached that figure in November 2022. The number of UASC reduced to 25 during January 2023 as a number reached 18 years old. We should expect to get up to, or near 35 quickly as we receive children through the NTS as the Home Office allocate children in hotels in Kent.

When children arrive they are matched with a mentor from our existing community of UASC to help them settle in and navigate living in a new country. We have various groups and activities for the children to participate in and these are well attended and developed. We support young people with appointing a solicitor and attending appointments with them and the Home Office.

All young people in our care have regular health reviews. We support the young people to register with universal health services and ensure they are all offered Blood Born Virus (BBV) screening. Working closely with colleagues such as the child in care nursing team we promote healthy living and escalate any health concerns in a timely way.

Education is offered to all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children through both schools and college. We also access additional tutoring services to support with learning English for those that need it.

In the Ofsted Inspection in March 2022 Ofsted said that unaccompanied asylum seeking children received high quality services and were 'greeted with kindness'.

Living options for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

All children presenting as under 16 are found a foster family. Most of the children present at 16 or 17 years old and are placed in the emergency accommodation within our Supported Lodgings Scheme whilst an assessment of their needs is undertaken. Some 16 or 17 year olds will move to a foster family but most have lived independently for some time and their history of travelling means a supported living environment best meets their needs. We have a block contract with Step by Step to provide 20 supported lodgings beds in addition to the three emergency beds and this is our preferred option for our asylum seeking children. That said, some 16 or 17 year olds move on to semi-independent living in the community when they are unable to remain in supported lodgings for various reasons.

We also support 18 year olds to remain with their supported lodgings carers whilst there asylum claim is finalised and/or whilst we support them to secure permanent social housing. However the rise in numbers of UASC arriving through the National Transfer Scheme means that the scheme is full. We secured a further three spot purchased beds in October 2022 and plan to commission a further three in early 2023 for one year. This will mean the supported lodgings service offered by Step by Step will be 23 contracted beds and 6 spot purchased beds during 2023/24.

The need for move on accommodation

There is an increasing demand for accommodation for young people aged 18-21 who were, or remain asylum seekers. We have some young men placed in supported lodgings who want to move on and who we want to help move on but their options are limited, often meaning they move to expensive semi-independent provision in the absence of other options. This is an issue that has developed with a reduction in available rented properties and securing tenancies for people without a settled status and access to public funds. We further experience difficulties in securing tenancies and licences for this group of young adults. The need has been exacerbated by the growing numbers of UASC reaching 18.

We have been working closely with our housing team on this problem and have a plan to secure HMO's or similar lodgings agreements in the local community. This may involve the local authority taking on the management of properties on behalf of Landlords or by providing HMO's with a small support element from our social housing provider. We have an immediate need for a 15 beds at the end of March 2022 and anticipate this rising to a consistent 25 beds during 2023..

Strategy

- Extend the provision of supported lodgings to 29 beds through spot purchasing a further 6 beds.
- Secure up to 20 beds in HMO's or similar lodgings agreements (mainly in the east of the district or in Reading) for UASC aged 18+.

14. Unregulated placements

There is provision in the Children act 1989 for children aged 16 or 17 years to be able to live in environments not regulated by Ofsted if this is in line with their care planning and wishes and feelings. West Berks is fortunate to have a number of providers operating locally who provide a good service for this group. The largest number in this cohort are UASC and the majority of the provision for them is through the supported lodgings scheme as outlined previously. We have a small but consistent number of 16 and 17 year olds who are unable to live in a family or residential setting for many reasons, including those who present as homeless. We spot purchase semi-independent beds from a number of providers and we regard these as good quality services.

Ofsted are to introduce a new set of regulations for this group of providers during 2023. This is a step we welcome and all of our providers intend to register with Ofsted.

15. Care experienced young adults

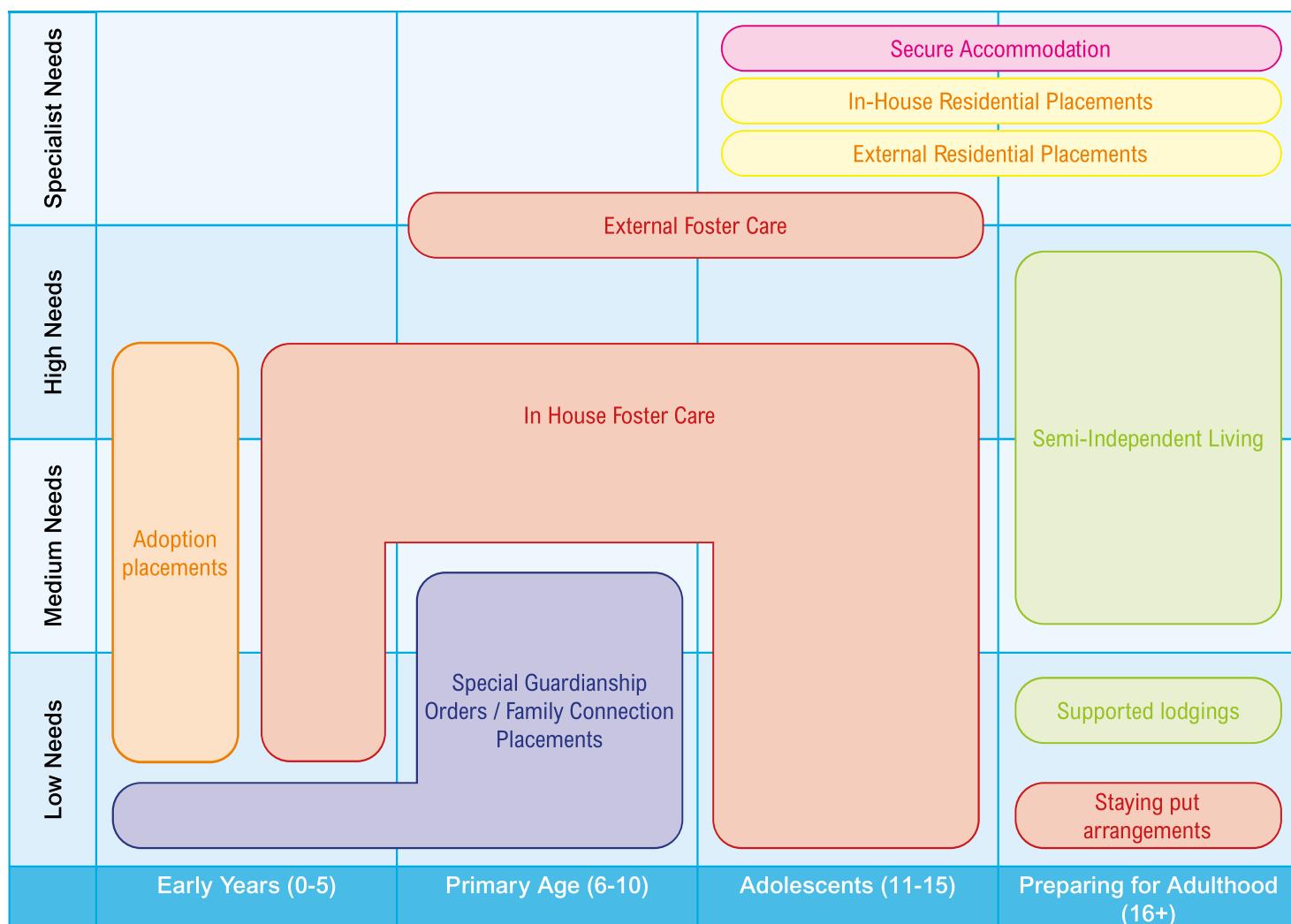
Under the provisions set out in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 the local authority has a duty to support care experienced young adults aged 18-21 years, in 2018 this was extended to care leavers up to 24 years (if the young person requests advice and support after their 21st birthday).

There are currently 100 young people aged 18-21yrs receiving support from the leaving care team. Of the 100, 36 presented as unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). There are a further 23 young people receiving Personal Adviser support aged 22-24 years. We always encourage our children to remain with their foster carers under a 'staying put' arrangement and we currently have 26 young adults who are supported to continue living with their carers.

The housing allocations policy was updated in early 2021 to include 5% ring fenced provision for care leavers. This has made a real positive impact for young people accessing social housing with 18 young people being allocated social housing since the change. Prior to this there were very few allocations to care leavers with their claims being assessed and prioritised in line with the general population. Some 18 year olds continue to have needs that mean they are not ready for independent living and there is ongoing work to help them with this important and often, difficult step. In these circumstances we often support young people to remain in their semi-supported accommodation with an agreed plan on the actions needed to help reach readiness for independence. We have access to a number of group living options through private providers

All of our children in care are offered one or two further 'statutory reviews' chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer to help with transition planning and settling into the new world of adulthood.

16. Developing the Market



In order to have an effective development strategy we must:

Understand existing and emerging trends in demand In addition to increased volumes of children. There has been a rise in the number of children and young people requiring specialist and targeted provision and similar increase in children or young people presenting in crisis. Their accommodation and support requirements are as varied as the young people themselves. Using evidence, insight and analysis we intend to respond appropriately to this increase in demand, complexity and volatility by developing new partnerships and growing in-house provision to meet the specific needs of individual children.

Understand and work with the local market. As a unitary authority, West Berks is surrounded by other LA's looking to place children near to home, including within West Berks. This has led to an extremely competitive local market which in turn is limiting the supply available for our own children and driving up prices. We intend to monitor, manage and engage more proactively with existing and emerging suppliers to ensure a sustainable and affordable market of both IFA and residential care. We will continue to work with colleagues in neighbouring authorities and across the South East to build the sufficiency of good quality, local provision for children in care and care experienced young people.

How can we effect change in the local market of care providers?

- Share market intelligence: ensure providers and partners understand the existing and emerging trends and demands
- Consider use of leased, owned or acquired assets to stimulate investment and sustain sufficiency
- Adopt a more proactive and supportive approach to relationships with providers e.g. through planning applications
- Jointly design, develop and deliver new and specialist types of provision with the market which reflect emerging specialist accommodation
- Redesign purchasing arrangements through stronger commissioning to strengthen availability and affordability of supply

This statement should be read in conjunction with West Berkshire's Council's strategic plan.

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Care Leaver Annual Report 2023-24

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Karl Davis
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4643

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report on our work with Care Leavers.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the work of the service more broadly, raising awareness about the support provided to Care Leavers and fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 1.3 This report is intended to give all corporate parents insight into the council's commitments to children in care and Care Leavers, ensuring corporate parenting duties are fully met.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that this annual report is noted, supporting greater awareness of our work with Care Leavers.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
Human Resource:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no HR arising from this report.
Legal:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
Property:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
Policy:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers, who often face inequalities and reviewing the service, and the work annual enables us to continue to address and challenge any inequalities.</p>

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers. As a Council Care Leaver/Care Experienced is seen as a protected characteristic and this annual report review annual activity in ensuring young people with protected characteristics is fully supported.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Services we are proud of 2) Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all <p>The annual report sets out the work provided to care leavers its duties to children in care and care leavers, building a service we are proud off and ensuring children in care and care leavers and support to thrive and have the right opportunities.</p>
<p>Core Business:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which outlines core business of the services delivered to care leavers.</p>
<p>Data Impact:</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, this will include information, feedback from partners, children, young people, families, and carers.</p> <p>This report has been presented to Corporate Parenting Panel</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report provides an update for West Berkshire Council on the performance of the Leaving Care Service for 2023-2024.
- 4.2 As of March 31, 2024, there were 182 young people classified as Care Leavers, with 127 aged 18-21 and 55 aged 22-25.
- 4.3 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 mandates that local authorities plan to ensure appropriate support for Children in Care as they transition to independence.
- 4.4 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to fund Care Leavers for home setup allowances, increased to £3,000 in 2023 following the independent review of children's social care.

- 4.5 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty for local authorities to provide Personal Adviser (PA) support to all Care Leavers up to age 25.
- 4.6 Transitions guidance emphasizes principles for supporting Care Leavers, including:
- Is this good enough for my child?
 - Providing a second chance if needed.
 - Tailoring support to individual needs.
 - Ensuring no young person leaves care prematurely.
- 4.7 The Children and Families Act 2014 mandates local authorities to support Staying Put arrangements, allowing young people to stay with foster carers beyond 18.
- 4.8 This is West Berkshire's first Care Leaver Annual Report.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 This annual report outlines the West Berkshire Care Leaver Service's work for 2023-2024, aiming to raise awareness and address the council's duties to Care Leavers.
- 5.2 Corporate Parenting is a collective responsibility. While positive actions are ongoing, continuous improvement is necessary to ensure all children receive optimal support.

Background

Legal Definition of a Care Leaver.

- 5.3 Definitions of eligible, relevant, former relevant, and qualifying children are provided in this report.
- 5.4 The local authority has specific duties to support Care Leavers according to their classification.
- 5.5 In West Berkshire, Care Leavers receive support through the 16+ and Care Learning Service.
- 5.6 The number of Care Leavers in this team is increasing, supported by additional staffing funded through grants for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
- 5.7 Local authorities and their partners share responsibility for the well-being of care-experienced children. Corporate parenting extends beyond social workers to include agencies such as health services, housing departments, the police, and schools.
- 5.8 These definitions are further detailed in the annual report.
- 5.9 The local authority has particular duties it is expected to undertake in its support of care leavers, and these vary according to the 'category' of a care leaver.

- 5.10 In West Berkshire, care leavers are supported within the 16+ and Care Learning Service.
- 5.11 The number of care leavers in the team continue to grow and this we have secured more staffing using grant funding secured by supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).
- 5.12 Local authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that care-experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called 'corporate parenting' and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families.
- 5.13 Corporate parenting duty rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also any other agency that provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police, and schools. Corporate parents have specific duties for young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

Legal background

- 5.14 The collective responsibility for local authorities was first laid out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
- 5.15 Key documents reinforcing corporate parenting roles include "Care Matters: Time for Change" (2007), "Care Matters: Time to Deliver" (2008), and the Children and Young Persons Act (2008).
- 5.16 Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties, include:
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
 - Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 Children and Adoption Act 2006
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Children and Social Work Act 2017
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (as amended by the Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
 - The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
 - The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
 - Adoption and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014
 - The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
 - Borders, Citizenship, and Immigration Act 2000

Principles of corporate parenting

5.17 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines seven principles of corporate parenting that guide local authority responsibilities to care for children and young people, promoting their well-being, safety, and readiness for adulthood.

5.18 In West Berkshire, we aim to support our children, young people, and families and strive to ensure that corporate parenting is well-understood and effectively implemented across the council.

Proposals

5.19 It is recommended that this Care Leaver Panel Annual Report be noted to inform and increase awareness of our work and duties toward Care Leavers.

5.20 As this is an annual report, no additional implications are identified.

6 Other options considered.

6.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provider overview of service delivery.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This first Care Leavers Annual Report for West Berkshire offers council colleagues an overview of legislative and corporate parenting responsibilities, facilitating better oversight of our young people.

7.2 West Berkshire is committed to supporting children in care and Care Leavers and values ongoing learning and development to continue providing high-quality services.

7.3 The report identifies priorities for 2024-2025

8 Appendices

8.1 Care Leaver Panel Annual Report 2023-2024

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

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Care Leavers Annual Report

2023-2024



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1. Introduction and Overview

- 1.1. The aim of this report is to update West Berkshire Council on the performance of the Leaving Care Service for 2023 / 2024.
- 1.2. On March 31st 2024, there were 182 young people classified as Care Leavers. Of which 127 were aged 18-21 and 55 aged 22-25yrs.
- 1.3. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced requirements on local authorities to plan for Children in Care to ensure that they have the correct support as they undertake their transition from care.
- 1.4. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 placed a duty on the local authority to provide funding to Care Leavers in relation to a setting up home allowance. The independent review into children's social care in 2023 recommended that the minimum amount to be increased to the amount of £3000 from April 2023. This is now embedded into practice for West Berkshire Care Leavers.
- 1.5. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, to provide PA support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support.
- 1.6. The Transitions guidance Volume 3: Planning transition to adulthood for Care Leavers reiterated the principles that it expects local authorities to consider when dealing with Care Leavers. These include:
 - Is this good enough for my child?
 - Providing a second chance if things don't go as expected.
 - Is this tailored to their individual needs?
 - No young person should be made to leave care before they are ready.
- 1.7. The Children and Families Act 2014 made it a duty for local authorities to support Staying Put arrangements which enables young people to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18.

2. Legal definitions of a Care Leaver

2.1. Eligible children

- 2.2. Eligible Children [paragraph 19B (2) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 and Regulation 40 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010]:
 - An eligible child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is looked after and has been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16. [Can become an eligible child at any point from 16th to 18th birthday as long as they have completed 13 weeks] [must complete 24 hours looked after age 16/17].
 - The 13 weeks can be continuous period or a series of episodes.
 - In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.

2.3. **Relevant children [Section 23A(2)]:**

- A relevant child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who was an ‘eligible’ child’ but is no longer looked after.
- Additional relevant children:
 - Detained, or in hospital on 16th birthday, and
 - Looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached age 14 and looked after at point of being detained, or entering hospital.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.
- A child who has lived with someone who has parental responsibility or a residence order for a continuous period of 6 months or more, and has ceased to be looked after (whether that period commenced before or after they ceased to be looked after) is not deemed a Relevant child (but is deemed a qualifying child):
 - If the above arrangement breaks down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child becomes a relevant child.

2.4. **Former Relevant children:**

2.5. There are 2 cohorts of Former Relevant children (age 18 to 21, or until the education or training programme set out in the Pathway Plan and being undertaken on their 21st birthday is completed): [Section 23C (1), (6) and (7)]

- A young person who was previously an ‘eligible’ child or a ‘relevant’ child

2.6. Former Relevant children: PA to 25 (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CA (1)]

- Young people who inform the local authority that they want to pursue education or training between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former relevant child.

2.7. **Qualifying Children**

2.8. For persons Qualifying for Advice and Assistance (aged 16 to 21, and under certain circumstances aged under 25):

- A Qualifying Young person aged at least 16, and under 21 who were subject to a special guardianship order and were looked after before the making of that order
- Young people who were previously subject to a private fostering arrangement
- Young people who successfully returned home for six months (aged 16/17) and were previously eligible and/or relevant
- Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between the age of 14 to 18, but were looked after for at least 24 hours aged 16 and 17
- Young people aged 16, and under 21 who were looked after in a series of pre-planned short breaks.

3. **Local Authorities duties towards Care Leavers**

3.1. The local authority has particular duties it is expected to undertake in its support of Care Leavers. These vary according to the “category” of care leaver.

3.2. **Eligible Care Leavers**

3.3. The local authority has the same statutory obligations to eligible Care Leavers as for every other looked after child including the duty to maintain a care plan, carry out regular

reviews of the case and appoint an independent reviewing officer (IRO). In addition, an assessment (16+ assessment) must be completed of the young person's views regarding what support, assistance and advice should be provided, this should inform the Pathway Plan. The Pathway Plan must be kept under regular review. The local authority must also appoint a personal adviser.

3.4. Relevant Care Leavers

3.5. For relevant Care Leavers the duties are slightly different and include taking reasonable steps to keep in touch, prepare an assessment and use this to inform the Pathway Plan, keep the Pathway Plan under review and appoint a personal adviser.

3.6. Former relevant Care Leavers

3.7. The local authority must take reasonable steps to keep in touch; keep the Pathway Plan under review; continue to allocate a personal adviser if their welfare requires it; provide financial assistance by contributing to expenses in living near a place of employment and if they attend higher education to pay a higher education bursary.

3.8. Qualifying young person

3.9. The duties include to advise, befriend and give assistance to the young person and to give financial assistance to secure vacation accommodation if the young person is in higher or further education.

4. 16+ Team and Care Leaving Team

4.1. Establishment

4.2. The establishment consists of a Team Manager, 1 Senior Social Worker, 3 Social Workers, 4 Personal Advisers, 1 Senior Youth Worker, 1 Support Worker.

4.3. The numbers of care leavers the team work with continue to grow and this year we secured more staffing using extra grant money secured by taking unaccompanied asylum seeking children from hotels in Kent. We secured an extra £150k above our grant money and were able to staff the team at a level more able to meet demand.

4.4. The team during this year was made up of a Team Manager, 1 Assistant Team Manager, 4 Social Workers, 6 Personal Advisers, 1 Senior Youth Worker, 1 Support Worker. This constitutes an increase of 1 Assistant Team Manager and 2 Personal Advisers.

4.5. Functions and legal responsibilities

4.6. The team support young people until the age of 25. A Personal Adviser, who is also the allocated Social Worker is allocated to young people following their 16th birthday and meet both the Children Act 1989 requirements and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 requirements up until the young person's 18th birthday. A Personal Adviser is then allocated to the young person who works with them at least until they reach 21, at which point young people are given the choice to continue receiving support and at what level, this includes PA support. We attempt to keep in touch with all our care leavers and they can ask for support and advice at any time up to their 25th birthday.

4.7. The Personal Adviser have particular functions as laid out in legislation. These functions include:

- To provide advice (including practical advice) and support,
- To participate in assessment and preparation of Pathway Plans,
- To participate in the review of the Pathway Plan,
- To liaise with the responsible authority in the implementation of the Pathway Plan,
- To co-ordinate the provision of services and take reasonable steps so that Care Leavers make use of available services; and to be kept informed about Care Leavers' progress and wellbeing,
- To keep full, accurate and up to date records of contacts with the Care Leaver and services provided.

4.8. Social Workers and Personal Advisers are focused on helping young people to make the most of their skills and abilities and to help them to access opportunities and services which will be useful to them in developing a positive pathway to adult life. For over 18's, the Personal Adviser acts as a focal point to ensure care leavers are provided with the correct level of support and to promote all of their entitlements as a care leaver. Personal Advisers will support in all aspects of Pathway Planning as outlined in the statutory guidance for care leavers.

4.9. **Caseloads**

4.10. The caseloads of the workers has increased over the last couple of years due to the numbers of children entering care, mainly through the arrival of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) through the National Transfer Scheme. UASC make up approximately 50% of the leaving care population. The total number of young people open to the team in March 2020 was 132, of which 80 were over 18. For March 2024 we have seen an increase to 237 young people open to the team, of which 182 were over 18 years. This is an increase of circa 80% in 3 years. The average caseload for Personal Advisers is currently 37 young people.

4.11. On 31st March 2024 the Service was supporting 127 young people aged 18-21 and 55 young adults 22-25. It is expected this number will continue to increase.

4.12. In general, the caseload within the Service has been rising which has created demands upon the Service. The caseload also continues to rise due the number of Care Leavers over the age of 21 opting to remain an 'open' and seeking local authority support until the age of 25 or, returning post 21 for support. The increasing cost of living has impacted considerably upon our Care Leavers and has led to an increase in demand for support in terms of supporting with emotional wellbeing, supporting with budgeting and general crisis management.

4.13. The lack of housing provision for care leavers for 18yrs old has also lead to increased financial pressure and demand as move on options for these young people is limited.

5. **Outcomes for care leavers**

5.1. **Ofsted Focussed Visit October 2023**

5.2. In October 2023, a Focused Visit for Care Leavers took place. The outcome letter was positive about the progress and experiences of care leavers, particularly the service provided by the Personal Advisors and the relationships they form with young people. The services to young people in specific circumstances- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, Care leavers who are parents and those in custody received praise. They found young people lived in homes where they felt safe and were supported to reach independence. However, the impact of the corporate parenting panel on driving the progress for children and young people was identified as an improvement area.

Actions are taking place into 2024 to improve the panel's oversight and influence. The outcome letter can be found [here](#).

5.3. Pathway Plans

5.4. Every young person who is in care has have a Care Plan which is completed and updated by their allocated social worker. For eligible and relevant children, the pathway plan serves as the care plan. We aim to complete pathway plans with all our former relevant young people.

5.5. A pathway plan is a written to plan to show how young people will be supported in all areas of their lives and achieve independence. The pathway plan makes sure that care leavers get their entitlements in order to feel confident when living independently. This includes suitable accommodation; health support; finance management; family time and relationships; education, training and employment; as well as a focus upon careers goals and aspirations.

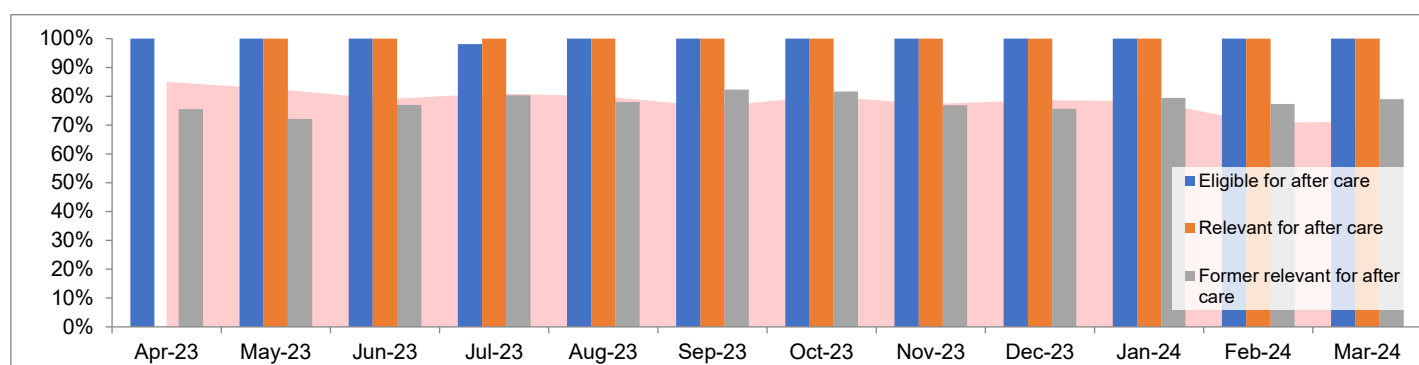
5.6. Pathway plans are quality assured by the Team Managers who endorse the plan.

5.7. Performance Board newly formed chaired by the Principal Social Worker, to ensure there is an opportunity to review performance, data and practice. It also enables a collective approach to Service Development and aspirational planning within the management group.

5.8. Completion of Pathway Plans:

COMPLETION OF PATHWAY PLANS FOR LOOKED AFTER AND FORMER CHILDREN IN CARE

	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Eligible for after care	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Relevant for after care	NA	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Former relevant for after care	76%	72%	77%	80%	78%	82%	82%	77%	76%	79%	77%	79%



5.9. The completion rate of pathway plans for care leavers aged 19-21 years has remained pretty much static at around 80%. The number of young people not wishing to engage in pathway planning increases as they reach 21. We always try to encourage young people to work with their PA's on completing a pathway plan. At 18 years old, nearly half of our young people take up the offer of having their allocated Independent Reviewing Officer continue reviewing the plan into adulthood.

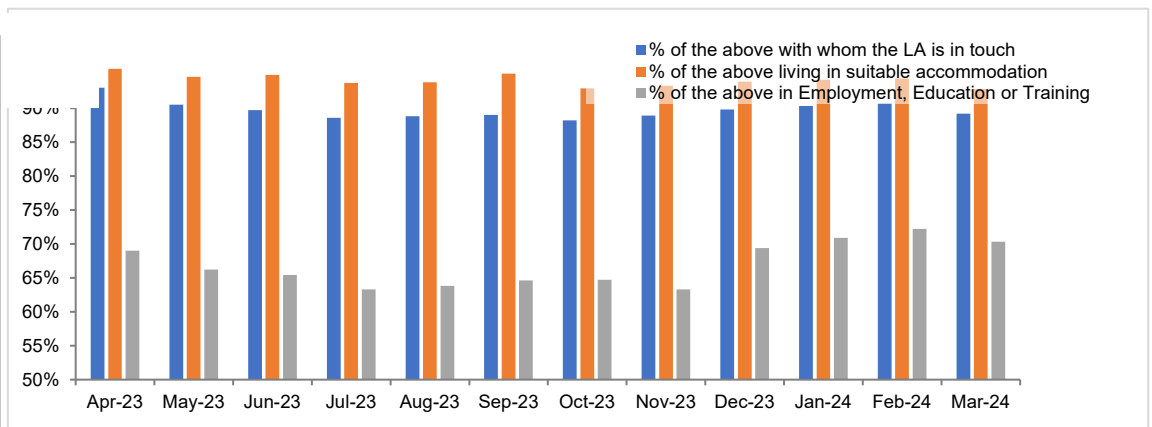
5.10. **Care Leaver KPI's**

5.11. The local authority are required to report to central Government on three KPI outcome areas for care leavers:

- In touch
- In suitable accommodation
- In Education, Training or Employment

5.12. The performance in relation to these outcomes for the year are:

CARE LEAVER OUTCOMES												
	Apr -23	May -23	Jun -23	Jul- 23	Aug -23	Sep -23	Oct -23	Nov -23	Dec -23	Jan -24	Feb -24	Mar -24
Number of Care Leavers aged 19-21	71	74	78	79	80	82	85	90	98	103	108	111
% of the above with whom the LA is in touch	93%	91%	90%	89%	89%	89%	88%	89%	90%	90%	91%	89%
% of the above living in suitable accommodation	96%	95%	95%	94%	94%	95%	93%	93%	94%	94%	94%	93%
% of the above in Employment, Education or Training	69%	66%	65%	63%	64%	65%	65%	63%	69%	71%	72%	70%



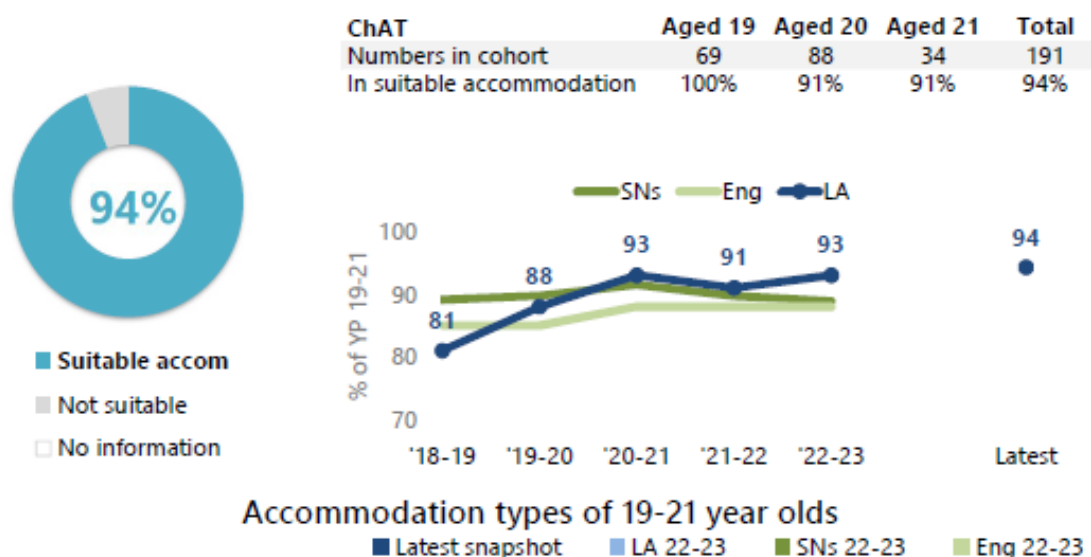
5.13. **Education Training and Employment**

5.14. Our PA's support young people to attend interviews, providing interview clothing, support to complete applications forms etc but the reality of being in a new workplace, feeling vulnerable and low in confidence, is often the barrier that many of our young people struggle to overcome. We recognise that this feeling of helplessness and lack of perceived motivation often comes down to confidence and self-esteem. We meet the costs of any specialist equipment for vocational training or for work. This includes uniforms, tools and equipment. We explore

5.15. To assist in developing the confidence and employability of our Care Leavers, we are working with training providers and the voluntary sector to provide opportunities; we have recently been working with the Canal Trust to provide outdoor opportunities which also support our young people to develop routines, employability skills and an understanding of different employment opportunities that may be available to them.

- 5.16. We are also working with adult learning to create bespoke packages of maths and English for our Care Leavers in the recognition that many struggle to engage in more formal educational settings. It is our aspiration to have a Care Leavers Hub where this offer can continue to grow, with further engagement with employers envisaged with targeted groups of Care Leavers.
- 5.17. We have four care experienced young people working at the council in apprenticeships and we aim to expand this next year including ring fencing apprenticeship posts to care leavers. Where young people are not engaged in ETE, the most common reasons are because of a disability or being a young parent.
- 5.18. **Bursary for Higher Education**
- 5.19. The council continues to offer financial support for Care Leavers who attend university. Care Leavers receive a statutory bursary of **£2075** as well as an additional financial support of **£5000** per year (over 3 years) The Council also fulfils its legal requirement of vacation accommodation costs when they are required. We have supported 9 young people at University throughout the year and we anticipate this will grow next year.
- 5.20. We are also working in collaboration with the virtual school to explore the Higher Education (HE) route for looked after children and what “wrap around” approach is needed to increase figures of carer leavers successfully moving on to University.
- 5.21. **In touch**
- 5.22. Local authorities are required to report on whether they are ‘In-touch’ with Care Leavers. This requires the LA to have seen the young person in the 4-month period around their birthday.
- 5.23. In March 2024, 95% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 years were in touch with the Local Authority (based on last Care Leavers details update). The in-touch figure demonstrates the strength of the relationship between Personal Advisers and Care Leavers.
- 5.24. There are a small percentage of young people who have requested to remain not ‘in touch’. We are able to evidence how we have encouraged keeping in touch and attempted to maintain contact with this cohort of young people. At 21 years, young people are asked what kind of service they would like going forward, including the level of contact. For all care leavers we say we will attempt to contact them on or around their birthday up to the age of 25 to check in and see they are OK.
- 5.25. **Accommodation**
- 5.26. Part of the duties of the local authority is the requirement to ensure that Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation. For former relevant Care Leavers this falls outside of the powers of Children’s Social Care and relies on robust partnerships in order to ensure sufficient accommodation options are available for young people leaving care.
- 5.27. We have consistently performed better than the England and West Midlands statistics in terms of suitable accommodation and have done since 2015-16. We were slightly behind our Statistical Neighbour Average for 2019-20 but improved by 9% when compared to 2018-19. Our latest position at March 2024 is 94% for Care Leavers aged 19-21.

Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds (former relevant)



- 5.28. 17% of Care Leavers aged 19-21 remained with former foster carers in a 'Staying Put' arrangement which, provides an opportunity to ensure that young people can remain with their former carers until they are prepared for living independently, much like other young people. It allows them to experience a transition akin to their peers, avoids social exclusion and is more likely to avoid a subsequent housing and tenancy breakdown.
- 5.29. We have no young people aged 19-21 years currently in custody. There are four 22-24 year olds in custody and none of these young people were in care prior to custody and have become 'looked after' due to their remand status.
- 5.30. We have a well established 'Supported Lodgings' service provided by a local charity 'Step by Step'. They offer young people the opportunity to live with host families up to the age of 19. They currently provide 26 beds and 3 emergency beds. The service is currently out to tender for an extended provision of 30 beds plus 3 emergency beds. This provision is particularly used by unaccompanied asylum seeking children and enables us to move newly arrived children allocated to West Berks by the National Transfer Scheme quickly and safely to good quality provision.
- 5.31. There are concerns for a small percentage of Care Leavers turning 18 and their ability to manage their own tenancy. This cohort are at an increased risk of eviction and homelessness. These young people are supported by their PA's, housing and sometimes adult social care to remain in their properties and maintain their tenancies. We have a particular need for move on accommodation at present, there are very few private social housing options for young people moving on from supported living. We are working with our housing colleagues to secure private rented options in the local community and in Reading, where many of our young people live.
- 5.32. 5% of all social housing offered in West Berks is ring-fenced to Care Leavers as part of the local offer. This was introduced in 2021 and has led to a significant increase in the numbers of our Care Leavers securing their permanent homes and supported to live in the local community.
- 5.33. **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**
- 5.34. The numbers of UASC has increased over the past 12 months, the majority of requests are through the National Transfer Scheme with 3 spontaneous presentations. Currently there are 26 UASC aged 14 -17 and 43 aged 18 – 24. This equates to just under half of our leaving care population. There is a higher take up of leaving care support over 21 by

young adults who were UASC and this is leading to an increasing population. The increase in leaving care numbers is further compounded by the fact that the majority of new arrivals are approaching their 18th birthday.

5.35. UASC are supported to attend ESOL courses at a number of colleges across Berkshire (English for speakers of other languages), however due to rising numbers, local colleges are now often oversubscribed, this is a particular problem for Reading College as UASC provision tends to be in that area and accessed by many local authorities. During the early part of the year, as an interim measure, the virtual school set up classes in house with a private tutor.

5.36. **Community Club:**

5.37. Community Club is a monthly group for our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people. The aim of the group is for the participants to gain new skills and develop a sense of community and belonging.

5.38. The types of activities we deliver are as follows:

- Sports & Fitness Activities
- Outdoor Education such as Team Building Activities & Rock Climbing
- Cooking & Independence Workshops
- Music & Drumming Workshops
- We also work with partner agencies such as Housing, Thames Valley Police and the children in care nursing service to deliver workshops on things like accessing Health Services and Staying Safe in the Community

5.39. The group consists of Senior (Care Leaver) Leaders that help plan the programme and act as interpreters for the new young people plus a number of young people that have only been in the country a short time. We can have up to 10 different nationalities at any particular session.

5.40. **Mentoring & Peer Support:**

5.41. The 16 Plus & Leaving Care Team deliver a Mentoring Scheme for our asylum seeking young people. Our Mentors will meet and welcome new asylum seeking children and take them out to things like visiting their local Mosque, to their first day at college or around their local town. We also find during these sessions they are introducing skills such as how to use public transport, shopping and our currency.

5.42. An outcome from the scheme is that as our Mentors skills develop so does their roles & responsibilities as a Mentor, we now have young people supporting others with things like how to find employment, how to manage their tenancies in Social Housing and attending Child in Care Reviews.

5.43. **Outcomes from the UAS Programmes**

5.44. We have had a wide range of outcomes from the scheme but the main ones are:

- Our young people feel settled in placement much earlier and develop a sense of community & belonging
- The young people now want to stay local and no longer want to move to big cities
- West Berks have the best statistics for keeping our asylum seekers in the local area within the South East Region
- The young people also continue to support each other years after their engagement in our programmes, we now have 10 young people from our original club all living in the same neighbourhood in Social Housing

5.45. **Leading the Way**

5.46. West Berkshire are now leading the way with working with asylum seeking young people in the South East Region. Last year we delivered a number Regional Training Events delivering presentations alongside the Department for Education and National Transfer Scheme to showcase our way of working to other Local Authorities. This year we delivered follow up workshops to both Milton Keynes and Bracknell Forest Council to introduce West Berkshire Council's 16 Plus Team's UAS engagement programmes.

6. Participation and Engagement

6.1. **Care Experienced Young Mum's Group**

6.2. The mother and baby group has four mothers who regularly attend and 5 babies/toddlers. The group is for care leavers who are mothers up to the age of 25. The group originated from two care leavers who were parents and didn't feel confident to attend mother and baby groups in the community and wanted peer support from other care leavers who are parents. The group meet monthly and communicate regularly through the WhatsApp group chat and the mothers decide where they would like to go. The group aims are:

- To provide peer to peer support with other care leavers who are mothers.
- To socialise with other mothers and babies/toddlers
- Provide fun enrichment activities for the children.
- Improve wellbeing and learning around parenting

6.3. The group currently enjoy the social element of the group and choose to do fun activities rather than have professionals visit the group, e.g. health visitor to talk about nutrition etc. This may evolve over time as the group are given the opportunity each month to decide what they want to do for the session.

6.4. The group have participated in the following: An easter egg hunt at Shaw House, a visit to the Blue Reef aquarium, Southsea beach, pumpkin picking at Wasing park. The group like to regularly attend Tiny Town café. This provides a safe environment where the children enjoy imagination play, and the mothers can interact with them as well as socialise and talk with the other mums and the staff. One child already attends nursery and three are due to start in September 2024.

6.5. **Total Respect Training**

6.6. Care leavers have delivered the Total Respect training to West Berkshire Staff in April, May, July August and October 2023. There are currently four care leavers in the training team (that also include children in care) and they have delivered the training to over 40 West Berkshire Council Staff this year. The trainers deliver the day course as well as do the prep work beforehand and are supported by WBC staff in both. The aims of the course are to:

- Encourage participants to think about the assumptions that are made about young people
- Allow participants to understand the experiences of young people who use their service (get them to walk in the young people's shoes)
- Gives the participants time to think about young people as individuals (not as cases/numbers)

- Concentrate on skills needed when working with children who use services (active listening; effective communication; observation; report writing)
- Support participants to know how to promote participation for individual young people in their care planning and in wider policy and service development

6.7. **Care Leaver Interview Panels**

6.8. There have been three young people's interview panels that care leavers have been part of that helped recruit to the following positions in West Berkshire Council: The Virtual School Headteacher, Service Director for Children's Social Care and Service Director for Education and SEN. One care leaver sat on the main interview panel with West Berkshire Staff for the Service Director for Children's Social Care. The care leavers had a prep session before each one to come up with the interview questions and organise the panel.

6.9. **Annual Summer Party**

6.10. We held our annual Summer Party to celebrate the achievements of our care leavers, this year we had Music provided by a DJ, a Pizza Street Food Company, a Rock Climbing Tower and sports activities. A highlight was a rapping performance from one of our young people currently engaging in our Music Recording Studio. The event was well received and attended with over 60 care leavers attending.

6.11. **Care Experienced Personal Trainer:**

6.12. We have a Care Experienced Personal Trainer who offers free sessions to our care leavers, improving fitness and confidence. Carl delivers a bespoke Fitness Programme for our young people, this includes group sessions such as Boxercise & Fitness Bootcamps plus one to one fitness sessions that include Mentoring. For many years we have been investing in Carl's professional development and supporting him to develop his business.

6.13. **Music Programme**

6.14. The 16 Plus Team have a Music Programme, the aims for these sessions are for our young people to develop skills such as confidence and communication. The music sessions also give the young people and opportunity to express themselves through their music, we also give our young people opportunities to perform their music at events. Our Music Tutor delivers the following sessions:

- Music & Drumming Workshops for Groups
- Guitar & Drumming Lessons
- Singing & Rapping in a Recording Studio
- DJ Lessons
- Lessons in Producing, Recording & Sound Engineering
- Performances at events such as our Celebration Event for Education and the annual Community Club Summer Party

6.15. **National Care Leavers Week**

6.16. Amongst the celebrations for National Care Leavers Week in October 2023 we held an activity and diversity afternoon where we had young people from Albania, Eritrea,

Sudan, the UK and Afghanistan. During the session we celebrated with specially made cakes from around the world followed by a fun Sports Session.

6.17. **The Participation Ladder**

6.18. We follow the Participation Ladder Model when delivering our programmes, see below examples of how our young people can progress through our schemes and hold positions to support service delivery and direct work with young people.

- New young people attend groups, trips and activities
- Senior Leaders are used to help plan & deliver the activities and support others
- Senior Mentors help young people move into independent living and find employment
- Young people have a direct influence on our service such as attending Corporate Parenting Panel and Interviewing new West Berkshire staff members
- We also have young people volunteering for us, working for West Berks on apprenticeships and a Care Experienced young person that is now a Supported Lodgings Host

6.19. **Summer activities**

6.20. In the summer holidays care leavers attended three trips, which were Thorpe Park, Southsea beach and Guildford lido. Twenty-two care leavers accessed these trips and positive outcomes were that people made new friends, they were able to access trips that they wouldn't normally get to do due to finances and transport, and participation opportunities were promoted to them.

6.21. **Newsletter**

6.22. A participation newsletter is completed 3 times a year to share what young people have been doing in the participation groups as well as promote opportunities that care leavers can get involved in.

6.23. **Plans to build on participation for care leavers April 24 – March 25**

- Care leavers to be involved in consultations and to coproduce WBC local offer and make it available online.
- Write business plan and set up the Reverse mentoring - Reverse mentoring is a scheme where young people aged 16 – 25 who have a range of experience of working with West Berkshires Children and Family Services act as mentors for senior leaders. The mentors meet regularly with their designated leader to have their voices heard about their own experiences as a service user and to work with those in leadership make positive changes within the service. The mentors would also form a care leavers forum.
- For two care leavers to help run and support R:Vue (Children in Care Council) as young leaders.
- Train another one/two care leavers to deliver the Total Respect training.

7. **Corporate Parenting Principles**

7.1. This Act makes it a duty on local authorities to:

- act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

7.2. Local offer for Care Leavers

7.3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 ensures that all Local Authorities establish a Corporate Parenting Board/Panel, and publish a 'local offer for Care Leavers', setting out the services on offer from both the local authority and other agencies.

7.4. There is a requirement to publish information about:

- services which the local authority offers for Care Leavers as a result of its functions under the Children Act 1989;
- other services which the local authority offers that may assist Care Leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services relating to:
 - health and well-being;
 - relationships;
 - education and training;
 - employment;
 - accommodation;
 - participation in society
 - The Local Offer has now been reviewed and is to be published on the new council's website very soon. The Local Offer has followed the government guidance and also consulted with care leavers. A presentation to the Corporate Parenting Panel took place in February displaying the co-produced format to panel members.

7.5. Offer of advice and support to 25

7.6. In accordance with legislation, the Council continues to provide support to Care Leavers until they turn 25, if this is their wish.

7.7. Below is a chart showing the percentage of Care Leavers open to the service post 21.

Current Age	Number of Care Leavers	Percentage of overall Care Leaver cohort:
21	33	18%
22	35	19%
23	8	8%
24	9	4%

8. Summary

- 8.1. This annual report is our first in West Berkshire for Care Leavers and is intended to give colleagues across the council an overview of the legislation, duties and responsibilities as a corporate parent and enable oversight of our young people.
- 8.2. West Berkshire is very committed to supporting our children in care and our care leavers and we passionate about learning and development to ensure the service continues to develop and provide high quality support and a high quality service.

9. Actions

- 9.1. The Service consists of a devoted team who are knowledgeable and passionate about the outcomes for Care Leavers. We continue seek ongoing improvement and development.
- 9.2. Actions and Priorities for 24-25

Actions	Delivery dates
Undertake a Care Leaver Survey	September 2024
Review survey and consider learning, responding with a you said we did paper	October 2024
Increase Audit Activity in the service to measure impact and outcomes	June 2024
Children's Services will work with Housing and Adult Services to jointly commission a range of Supported Accommodation that Care Leavers can stay in until they are 21 years and can meet the range of needs that our young people have.	July 2024-March 2025
Review Care Leavers Offer	July 2024
Relaunch the West Berkshire Care Leavers Offer with a new website	September 2024
Development of a Care Leavers Newsletter	July-September 2024
Ensure all PA's have access to specialist training in relation to the role	March 2025
Explore introducing reverse mentoring for council leaders and care leavers	October 2024
Complete the tendering processes and implementation for Supported Lodgings Service and Supported living 16-25 years	March 2025

Author:

Karl Davis

Service Manager Children in Care, Care Leaving and Family Placement Team

September 2024

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call Children and Family Services on 551111.

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Early Response Hub Annual Report 2023-24

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Karen Atalla
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4639

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report of the West Berkshire Early Response Hub, detailing activities during the period April 2023–March 24.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with an overview of the Early Response Hubs wide and varied work, bringing earlier help and support to children in need across West Berkshire.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Recommendation for this annual report to be noted, and that the oversight for the delivery of service supports decisions regarding the future strategic direction of early help.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during April 2023-March 2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
Human Resource:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Human Resource matters arising from this report.
Legal:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
Property:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
Policy:	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with Children in Need, including children who go 'Missing' from home or care and Young Carers, all of whom often face multiple inequalities. Reviewing the service and its effectiveness, supports improvement and innovation to ensure that we adapt to changes in policy whilst continually striving for better outcomes for children and their families, challenging inequalities through collaborative working.</p>

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>		X		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Help others to help themselves and others • Services we are proud of • Improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through appropriate interventions • Support everyone to reach their full potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help people to help themselves and others ○ Improve the health and wellbeing of our resident through appropriate interventions • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnership Expand our work with partner organisations and communities to improve service for residents
<p>Core Business:</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which sets out the work of the Early Response Hub and its different elements of responsibility, that deliver its core business.</p>
<p>Data Impact:</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, and incorporates data, feedback from partner agencies co located and virtual within CAAS and ERH.</p> <p>Feedback from families and professionals has also been incorporated.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Early Response Hub provides support and intervention to families and Children in Need of support at the time they need it, with the aim of preventing worries from escalating to avoid costly statutory intervention.
- 4.2 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 & 2004 places a 'general duty' on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need and to make arrangements with partners to provide services through interagency working that promote the wellbeing of the child at home. Working Together 2018 & 2023 statutory guidance states that there should be a comprehensive range of effective services to address assessed needs earlier.
- 4.3 The report illustrates that during the 2023-24 financial year, there has been an increase in numbers of children who have accessed support and provides a hypotheses and data for the seen increases that we continue to collate and analyse to inform service delivery.
- 4.4 An online digital referral form for ERH was launched in October 2023. The take up in the use of the form by partner agencies has been at a slower pace than required. We continue to promote the benefits and use of the referral form with our partner agencies.
- 4.5 There are several different elements of work within ERH, each element has a focus on prevention and intervention. One important element of the work is identifying and supporting Young Carers. This cohort of children are some of our most vulnerable who have been supported to make time for themselves and meet with other children like themselves for peer support and respite.
- 4.6 There is a great emphasis placed on obtaining feedback from children and their families that has championed the creation of online feedback surveys to facilitate the voices of children and their families being incorporated into service delivery.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

Early Response Hub (ERH) plays an important role in supporting children in need of help and support across West Berkshire, this is a well established and respected service that continually strives to increase the footprint of early help to support the Right Service at the Right time.

- 5.1 ERH sits within the Children's Services front door and has several different elements of responsibility. This Annual Report of the Early Response Hub for 2023-2024 is designed to share information on the work, highlighting the impact of the work, its intricacies and parts.
- 5.2 Each area of work has a focus on Intervention and Prevention.
 - 5.2.1 ERH Triage (responding to families within three days or five days with a home visit) – these are families who typically require a single agency referral to a community service and referrals are made by the ERH Triage with the family's agreement, to break down barriers to services.

- 5.2.2 ERH Assessment (completing Family First level2b assessments) - non statutory assessments completed over a maximum of 25 working days and can act as a foundation to a statutory s17 single assessment if level 3 concerns are identified during the assessment.
- 5.2.3 ERH Intervention on families in receipt of statutory intervention (six weeks of intervention focused on a particular worry or issue) – as part of the Family Help and Achievement Model, families may require secondary allocation to an Intervention Worker, to work alongside the social worker with the family, on a bespoke intensive plan of intervention, to reduce the worries and concerns.
- 5.2.4 Young Carers – identifying, assessment and supporting young carers in West Berkshire via assessments, reassessments and respite activities.
- 5.2.5 Reducing Parental Conflict (for co-parenting parents and training for professionals) – delivering reducing parental conflict training for separated parents to enable them to co-parent more effectively and delivering training to professionals to help them to understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse.
- 5.2.6 My Family Plan consultation service - the My Family Plan facilitators provide a consultation and advice service to lead professionals in My Family Plans which are a community led support plan.
- 5.2.7 Family Group Conferences (and Restorative Conferences) – the opportunity for a family to come together to identify a family plan to respond to the worries or concerns for children and families.
- 5.2.8 Family Help and Achievement Model – a new model of responding to families across the spectrum of need.

Background

- 5.3 Early Help is a shared responsibility across agencies and communities and the ERH is an excellent example of interagency working that needs to be replicated with partner agencies with collective strategy and policy. There is a duty placed on agencies to cooperate to promote wellbeing of children.

Legal Background

- 5.4 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on councils to safeguard and promote the welfare of 'children in need' within their area.
- 5.5 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the legal framework for multi-agency 'cooperation to improve wellbeing'.
- 5.6 The Stable Homes Built on Love Strategy (SHBOL) was published in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (2022). This strategy outlines a major reset

of 'family help' and how we respond to those children in need of help and support with a key focus on this being a shared endeavour across the partnership.

6 Proposals

6.1 It is recommended that this Early Help Annual Report is noted for information.

6.2 As this is an annual report there are no implications identified.

7 Other options considered.

7.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provide an overview of service delivery.

8 Conclusion

8.1 This Early Response Hub Annual Report demonstrates the effectiveness and growth of the Early Response Hub and its impact on service and how we are striving to better support our children in need across West Berkshire.

8.2 The report reflects the positive achievements, the challenges, and the innovative ways that the Early Response Hub works with different agencies to bring a collaborative response to the challenge of demand on the service.

8.3 The report also identifies priority areas for 2024-2025.

9 Appendices

9.1 Early Response Hub Annual Report 2023-2024

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by 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"/> |
-

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Contact, Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS)

Early Response Hub

Early Response Hub Annual Report April 2023-March 2024

"To quote Bishop Desmond Tutu, 'There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in. '



Steph Coomber, Team Manager, Early Response Hub, June 2024

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Introduction

The Early Response Hub (ERH) was launched in November 2019 within the front door at Children's Services in response to data and feedback highlighting that some children and their families were being repeatedly referred into Children's Services and did not require a statutory intervention.

Focused auditing found that onward referrals to community services for these families, placed expectations on families to connect with services and re tell their story. The families' 'reachable moment' which in many seen examples was facilitated at the point of contact with our front door service, was lost when children and their families were subsequently signposted to community services.

The Early Response Hub provides support and intervention to families at the point that they need it, with the aim of preventing worries from escalating to a point where the family do require statutory intervention.

Additional focused auditing also identified that a high proportion of families progressed for longer term statutory intervention under a child in need plan but then closed to the service within six weeks, suggesting that a child in need plan was not the most suitable plan of support for the family. As a result, in April 2023 the ERH re-launched the level2b intervention offer to families, promoting early help and intervention as an alternative to statutory child in need planning. The ERH also launched a new assessment of need for families under level 2 of West Berkshire Threshold Documents. These assessments are called Family First Assessments.

There is evidence from the Early Intervention Foundation that avoiding statutory intervention and intervening earlier has better outcomes of children and can also represent a cost saving for the Local Authority as statutory intervention is more costly.

The ethos of the ERH is based on a strengths based approach that highly values partnerships with families alongside co-located and virtual partnerships with a wide variety of agencies who have different skills, expertise and specialisms who can work together with children and families as equal partners to identify realistic and achievable support plans informed by what is important to the child and family that in turn will enable, empower and facilitate solutions to identified challenges. A key focus of the ERH is to remove barriers for families who require access to services and ERH place an emphasis on the removal of referral paperwork being required to enable direct access to services which removes the need for children and families to retell their story.

ERH service delivery

The ERH has eight different elements of responsibility –

- ERH Triage (responding to families within three days or five days with a home visit),
- ERH Assessment (completing Family First level2b assessments),
- ERH Intervention (six weeks of intervention focused on a particular worry or issue),
- Missing young people and those at risk of exploitation,
- Young Carers,
- Reducing Parental Conflict (for co-parenting parent and training for professionals)
- My Family Plan consultation service,
- Family Group Conferences (and Restorative Conferences)

The ERH is a multi-agency co-located hub made up of eighteen different agencies (as shown in the ERH logo), ensuring that support plans identified for children and their families are holistic and address different areas of concern.

The ERH is comprised of 2 managers, 0.6 Early Help and Prevention Lead, 1 senior Intervention Worker, 5.6 Intervention Workers, 1 Young Carers project worker, 2 FGC coordinators, 1 Missing and Exploitation Coordinator, 3 MFP Facilitators (funded by Supporting Families grant funding), 0.6 Reducing Parental Conflict Coordinator (government funded until March 25) and 1 apprentice (time limited government funding until March 25). ERH FTE resource minus government funding is therefore 13.2 members of staff.

Family First level2b assessments mirror the format of a statutory s17 single assessment in terms of what the assessment is looking at (assessment of need) but the concerns are at level 2 of West Berkshire Threshold Document rather than level 3 or 4 (statutory threshold). If level 3 (or 4) concerns are identified within the course of completing a Family First Assessment, the Family First Assessment acts as a foundation to the s17 single assessment/ Family First Assessments are completed within twenty-five working days and if a statutory assessment is required from a Family First Assessment, the resulting s17 assessment is completed within the remaining twenty day period, meaning a total assessment period of forty-five working days.

Delivery of service of the last 12 months

ERH Triage

ERH Triage responds to families who require a community support plan to respond to their presenting worries/concerns.

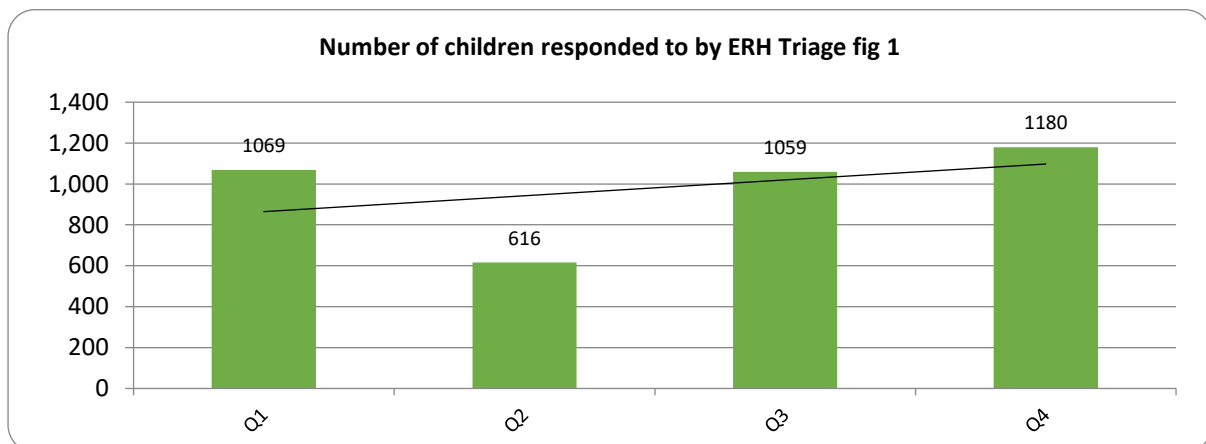


Fig 1 shows that there has been an increase in children who are responded to within ERH Triage across the previous 12 months with quarter 4 being the highest quarter. One hypothesis around this could be that CFS are seeing greater need amongst families in relation to issues such as parental acrimony and difficult parental separations, the impact of poverty on factors such as parental mental health, families needing support through charity grants and food parcels. Children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health is also a significant factor of concern within ERH. Another hypothesis for this increase could be that as awareness of ERH and the service offer increases, more referrers/professionals are making use of this resource.

Risk factors identified for families referred in ERH

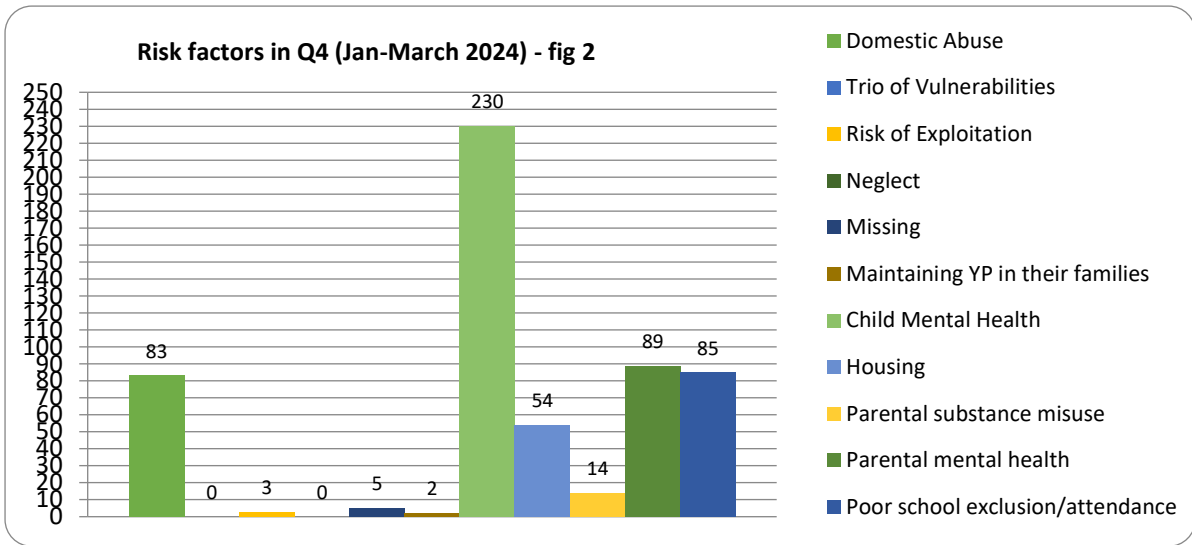


Fig 2 evidences that the highest risk factor of concern into ERH in quarter 4 was child mental health, followed by parental mental health, poor school attendance/exclusion and domestic abuse. Child mental health is consistently the highest risk factor of concern within ERH across the previous twelve months. Of note, in relation to all enquiries into CAAS triage (the front door of CFS which responds to all enquiries), one of the highest risk factors of concern is domestic abuse (recorded as such on police reports). One hypothesis could therefore be that new enquiries about children with a risk factor of domestic abuse are presenting at a higher threshold of need (statutory threshold). However, it is also noted that a high proportion of police reports identify a risk factor of domestic abuse, which when explored further, is identified to be parental conflict rather than domestic abuse. Within ERH, we are part of a government funded project for three years and have recruited a Reducing Parental Conflict Coordinator as part of the project, in order to train professionals in identifying parental conflict (and distinguishing it from domestic abuse), in addition to delivering a programme directly to parent/carers to support them in communicating more effectively. Some police colleagues have attended the professionals training however there would need to be a much larger scale piece of work completed in order to address the issue of parental conflict being incorrectly identified as domestic abuse.

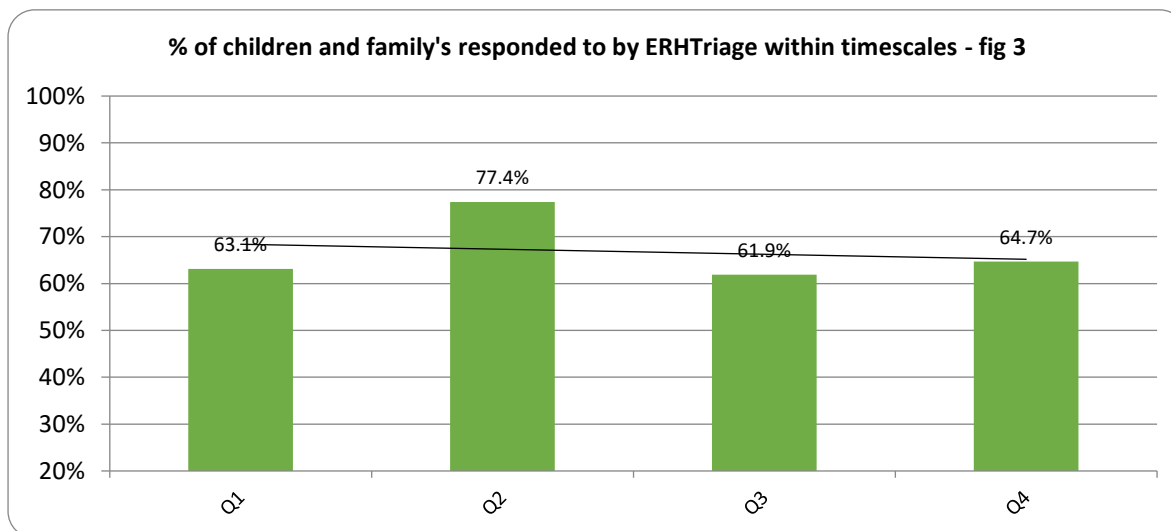


Fig 3 shows that there has been a slight reduction in the percentage of children and families responded to within timescales in ERH Triage (3 working days or 5 working days with a home visit). However, it is important to note that following the launch of the new ERH digital referral form in Oct 2023, referrers are given up to two weeks to complete the digital form which does impact on ERH timescales as this fortnight period for referrers is outside of stipulated timescales.

Also, of note which is interesting, some of the referrers who have telephoned wishing to make a referral about a child and their family and were subsequently advised to complete an ERH digital referral form, when ERH followed up due to non-receipt of the digital referral form, some referrers advised that they wished to 'retract' their referral as they had communicated with the family and resolved/addressed the referred concern. It appears that the nature of having a digital referral form in place, requiring referrers to speak to parent with parental responsibility about their concerns, has sufficiently reduced the concerns for some referrers. In other examples we have seen that from the conversation with parents, they have identified other support agencies in place which also reduced concerns for example if there is an active early help plan in place via a My Family Plan (MFP), the referrer has then been able to speak to the lead professional in the MFP which subsequently then reduced their concerns to not requiring input from CFS. A hypothesis from this could be that the digital referral form for ERH encourages communication and encourages earlier intervention.

Digital referral forms for ERH

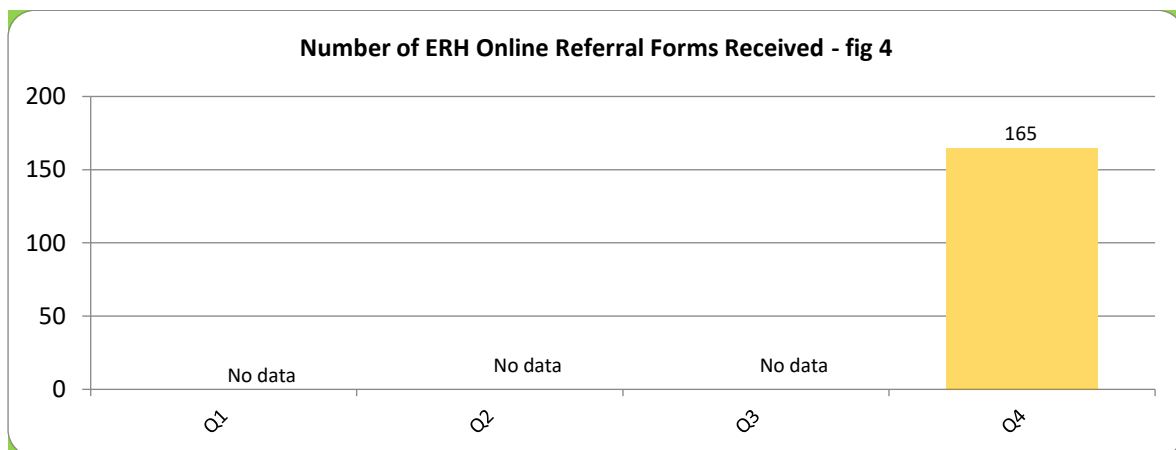
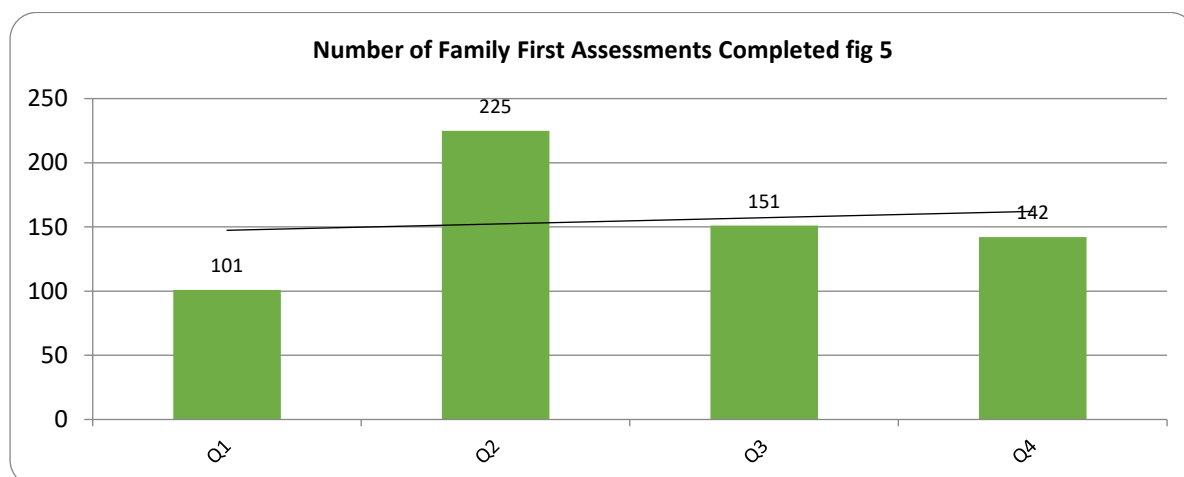


Fig 4 evidences that there were 165 children referred to ERH via the digital form in quarter 4. It is hoped that continued promotion of the use of the digital form as a direct pathway into ERH via rather raising a safeguarding concern via CAAS Triage.

Family First Assessments



Family First Assessments launched in April 23 and therefore are a new type of assessment which consider children and family’s needs. Further data analysis development work is required and it is hoped that this will be available in the new electronic system however it is possible to evidence how many Family First Assessments have been completed per quarter. The data evidences that there are numerous children who have a Family First Assessment and prior to the creation of these assessments, these children may have been recommended to have a s17 statutory assessment instead. Whilst there is a lack of data analysis available currently, anecdotal evidence tells us that very few of the children who have a Family First Assessment, go on to require a statutory s17 single assessment and even fewer then require longer term statutory intervention under CIN or CP planning via the Family Safeguarding Teams. Therefore, CAAS can positively report that ERH are successfully reducing the number of children requiring statutory intervention. This is further evidenced within the Datazone which shows a significant reduction in referrals by month in 24/25 compared with referrals in 23/24.

ERH Intervention

ERH offers intervention for families who require targeted support in order to address concerns about a specific issue following statutory assessment. The intervention is typically between 6-8 weeks in duration and if required, can include a multi-agency meeting (MAM) at the commencement and conclusion of the intervention, if this is required/if there is a concern that the family are on the cusp of requiring level 3 statutory intervention. The purpose of intervention is to offer an alternative offer of service delivery rather than requiring a child in need plan, in order to maintain and then reduce the concerns within level 2 of West Berkshire Threshold Document.

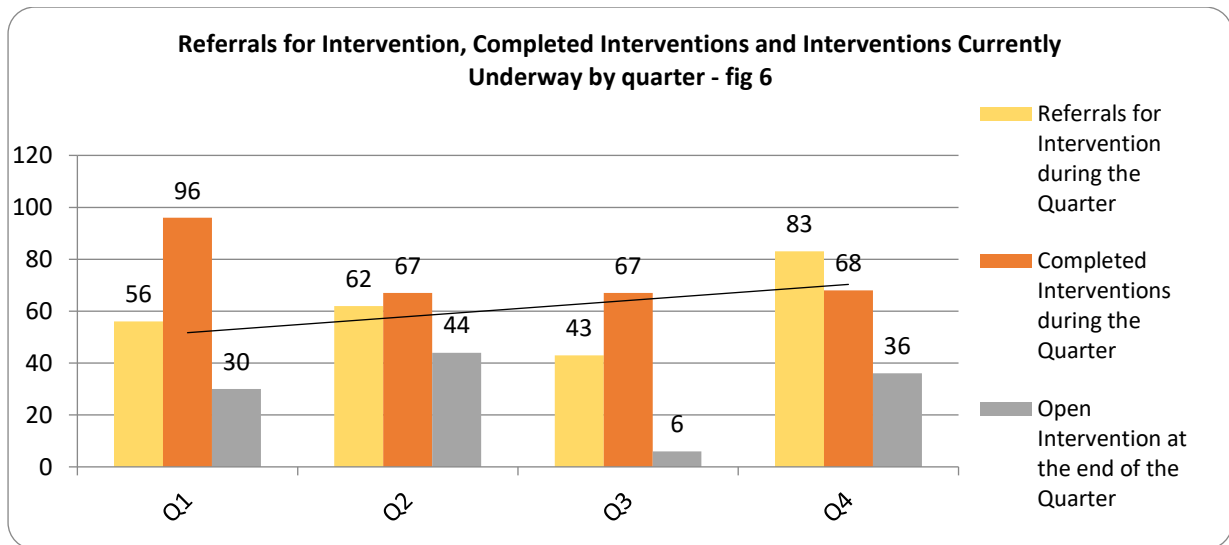


Fig 6 evidences that there has been an increase in referrals for ERH intervention across the previous twelve months from around 60 children a month to 83 children in q4. Whilst this number can appear quite low in comparison to children open to child in need planning, the staffing resource to deliver intervention is the same staffing resource as those undertaking Family First Assessments (4 intervention workers).

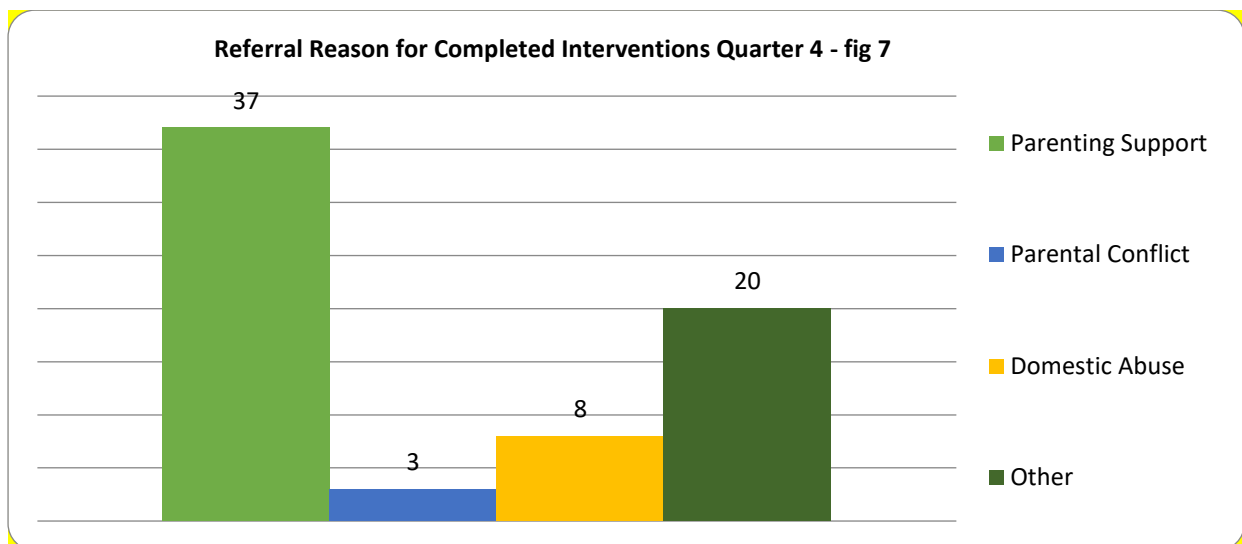
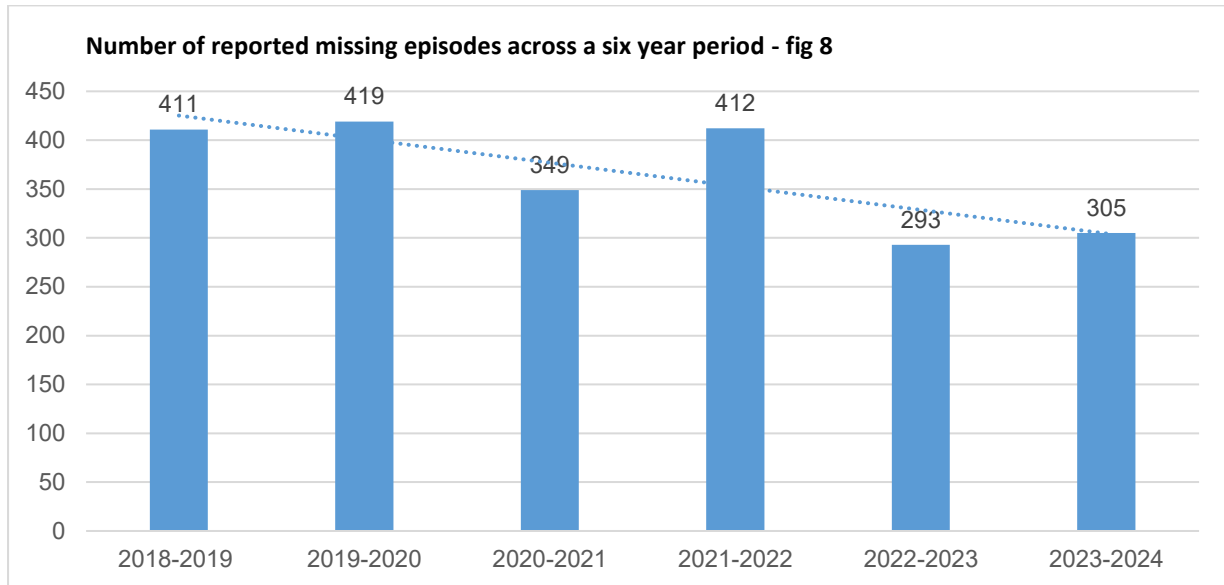


Fig 7 evidences that the most frequent referral reason for ERH intervention in Quarter 4 is for parenting support, followed by 'Other' which is anything that isn't parenting support, parental conflict or domestic abuse.

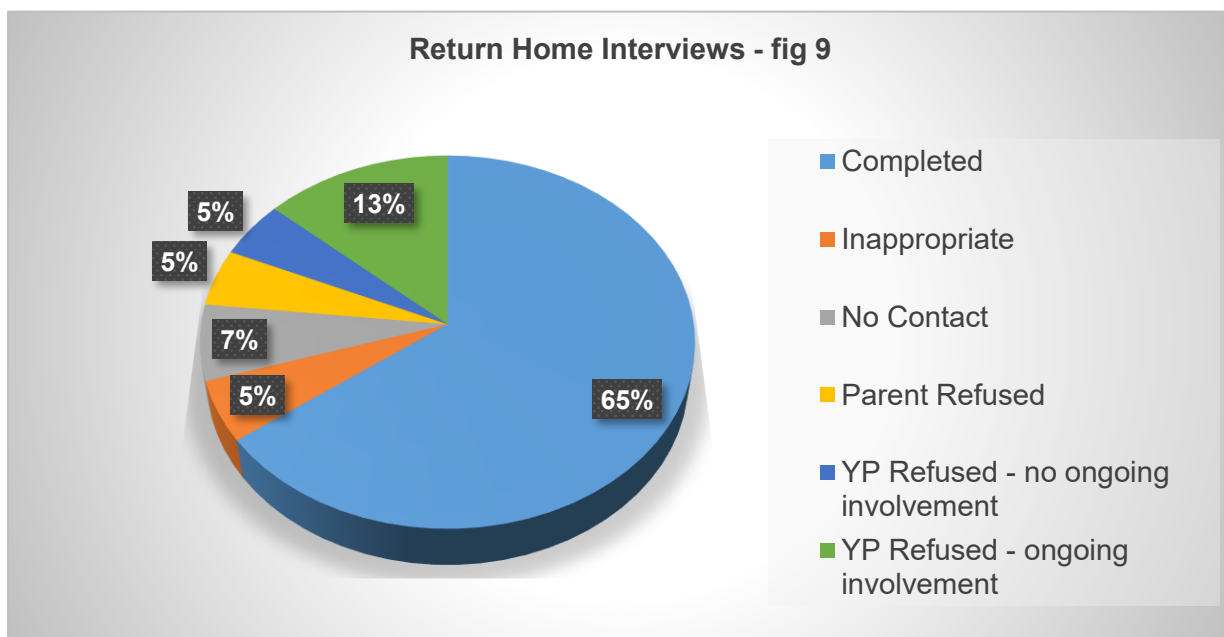
Missing and Exploitation



As shown in Fig 8, between April 2023 and March 2024 there were 305 reported missing episodes in West Berkshire. In comparison to 2022-23 data, this is an increase of 12 reported missing episodes.

Across a six year period since 2018-2019, there is a downward trajectory of reported missing episodes which appears to be a positive downward trajectory in terms of a reduction in young people going missing. However, there is a concern that some missing episodes go unreported and therefore the reliability of this data in relation to measuring positive outcomes for children and young people is limited.

The 305 reported missing episodes in 23-24 relate to 132 young people which is an increase of 18 young people from the previous year 2022-23. Across a three year period since 2021-2022, the number of young people experiencing missing episodes has decreased from 170 in 2021-22 to 119 in 2022-23 and then has risen again to 132 in 2023-24.



198 (65%) of return home interviews were successfully conducted with young people.
 16 (5%) were inappropriate for various reasons (a young person may be in hospital for example)

20 (7%) were closed with no contact being able to be made with the family

15 (5%) were closed as the parent declined

15 (5%) were closed when the young person declined and there was no ongoing involvement with CFS

41 (13%) were closed when the young person declined and there was ongoing involvement with CFS.

23 of the 305 missing episodes related to 13 children in care placed in West Berkshire by other Local Authorities.

28 missing episodes related to 12 children in care living in West Berkshire, with the home Local Authority also being West Berkshire.

73 missing episodes related to 12 children in care living in other Local Authorities with the home Local Authority being West Berkshire. One of West Berkshire's children in care living in another local authority went missing 37 times which is very significant. This specific young person is considered to be at very significant risk of harm, so much so that deprivation of liberty arrangements were being explored in an effort to keep her safe. One hypothesis from this data could be that children in care placed outside of their home local authority are at greater risk of having missing episodes. However equally, another hypothesis could be that children who require placements outside of their local authority are placed there due to increasing concerns and risks related to their wellbeing and safety and by that nature, may be more at risk of having missing episodes.

For additional information about Missing and Exploitation please read Missing and Exploitation Annual Report

Young carers

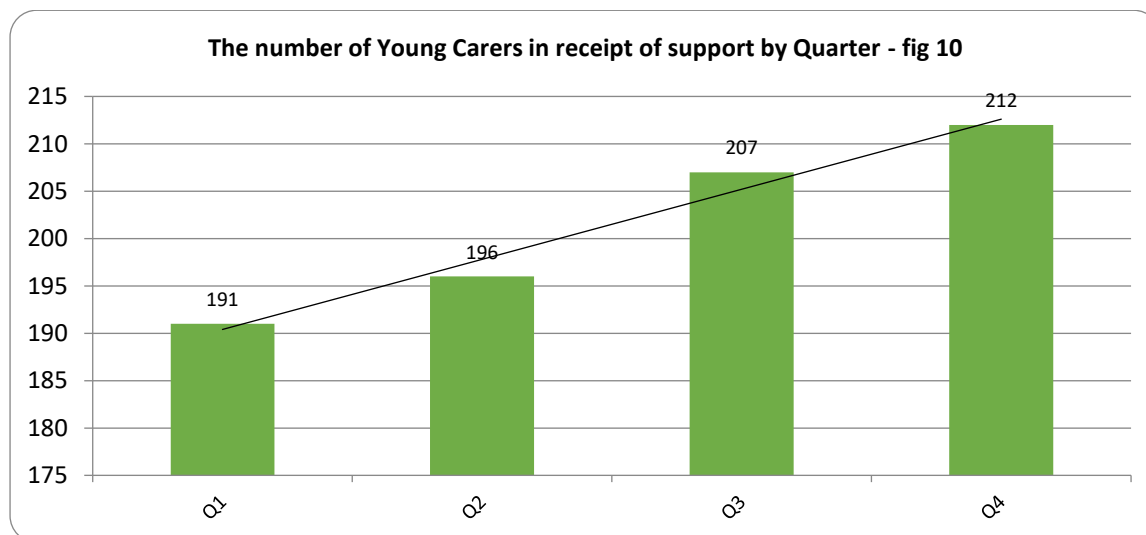


Fig 10 tells us that the number of children who are open to the young carers service has increased from 191 in q1 to 212 by q4.

As of today's date (7th June 2024) there are 222 children open to the Young Carer's Service. Of those 222, 32 children are also open to the FSM service (CIN, CP, PLO, court).

It is positive that more young carers within West Berkshire are being identified. One hypothesis could be that greater awareness and a relatively new referral system (digital referral form) has increased the number of young carers being identified.

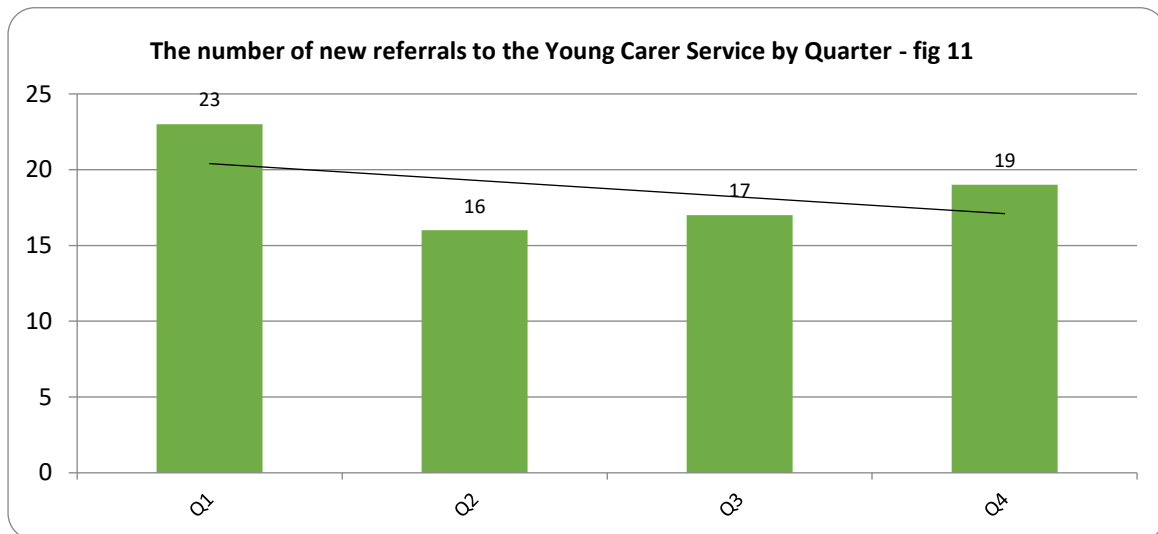


Fig 11 tells us that there has been a small downward trend in the number of new referrals being made to the service across each quarter however in the last three quarters, this has increased from 16 to 19 in q4.

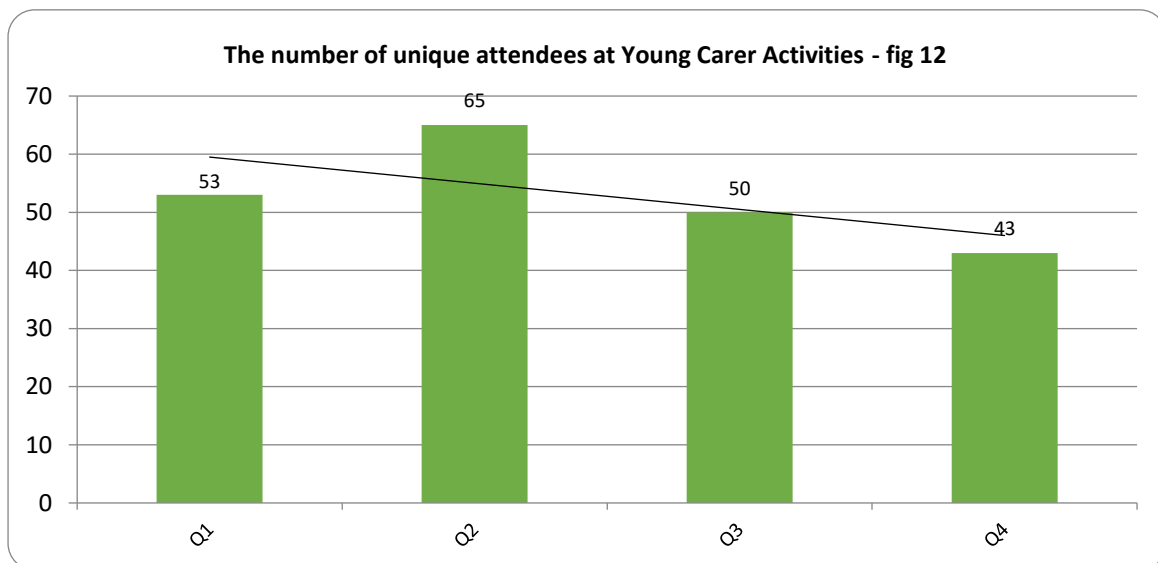


Fig 12 shows the unique attendees at young carers activities (rather than the number of attendances as one young carer may attend multiple times). Requests for spaces on holiday activities are reviewed by the service and attempts made to include as many different young carers as possible.

Whilst it is accepted that the number of unique attendees is much lower than we would hope for, this is significantly impacted by transport issues affecting young carers. Often families are unable to transport their young carers themselves due to the nature of having a parent/carer or sibling requiring care. The weekly youth clubs for young carers are only located at Greenham Youth Centre in Newbury as this is a free venue. There is a very

limited transport budget of charity funding that was secured until March 2025 which pays for the Handybus which can collect up to 8 children within a limited geographical location.

Reducing Parental Conflict

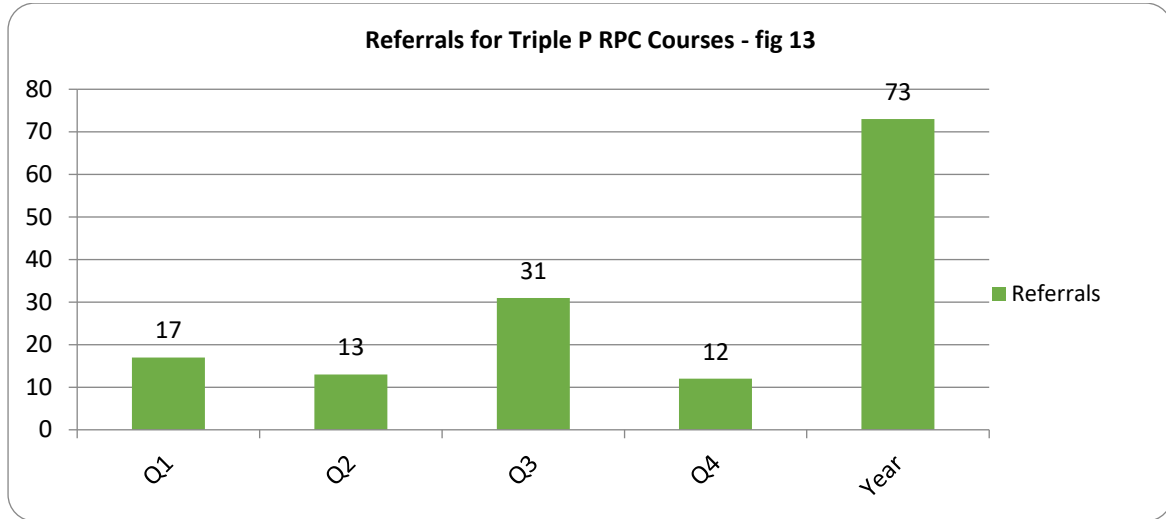
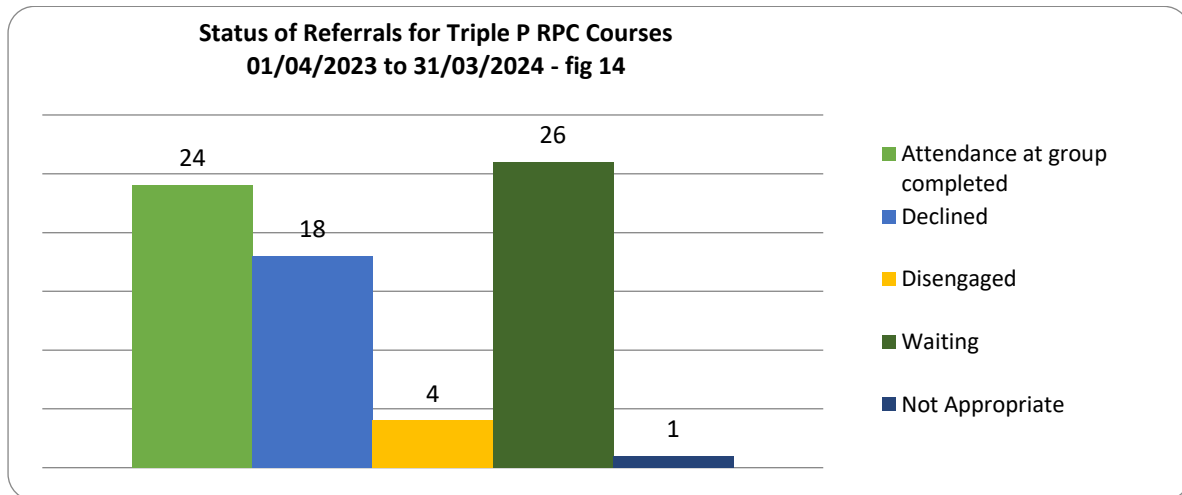
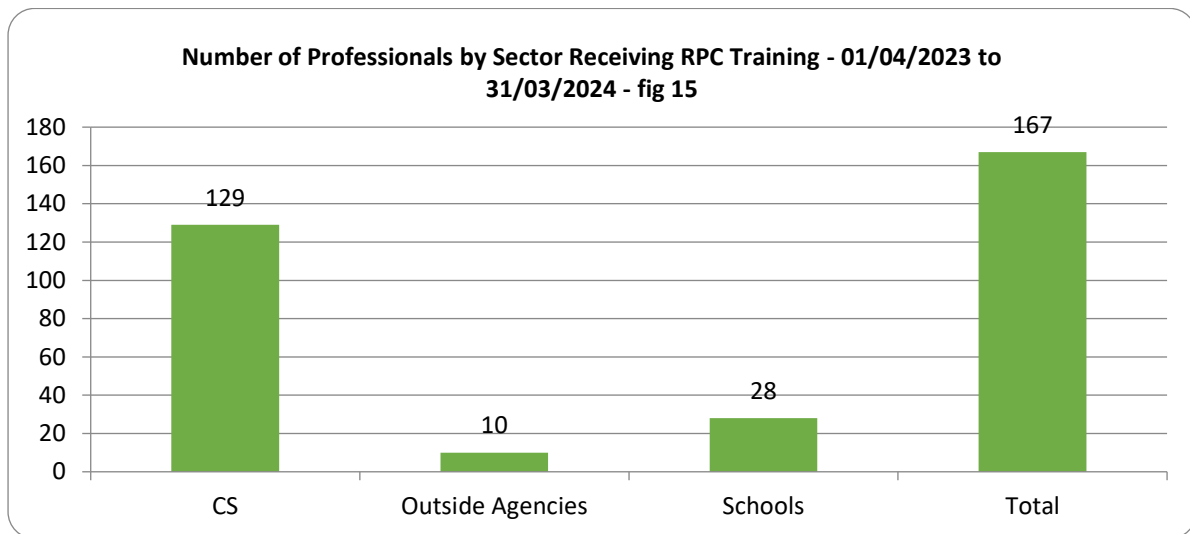


Fig 13 shows the referrals for parents to the RPC course. All quarters have been quite low, apart from q3. Further work is required in the next year to promote awareness of the course and to encourage parents to be referred as it is really important to address issues of parental conflict as research tells us that if parental conflict is present and not addressed, other interventions that are attempted will be less successful.



N/B those waiting as at 31.3.24 were all booked onto future courses. A referral would be considered to not be appropriate if there was confirmed current domestic abuse as parental conflict work is not appropriate in domestically abusive relationships due to the power and control present meaning that parental conflict cannot be successful.

Professionals trained in Reducing Parental Conflict:



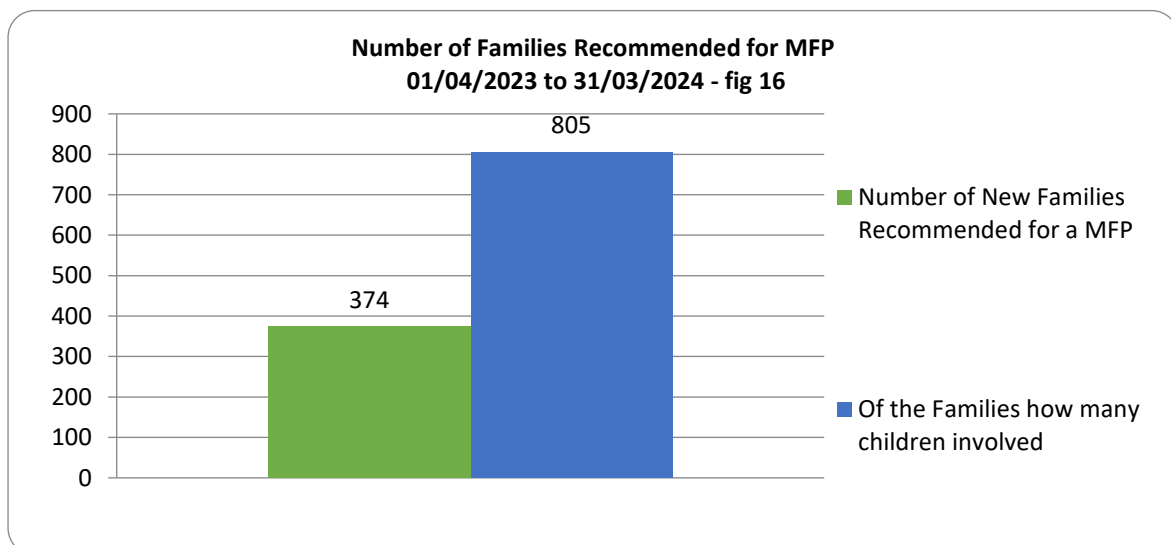
This data tells us that over the previous 12 months, 167 professionals have been trained in parental conflict. This also includes some police staff members. This is particularly useful in trying to encourage the correct identification of parental conflict rather than labelling all matters as domestic abuse. Consideration for the upcoming year will be around how to continue to positive trend of training professionals, including after the project ends in March 2025.

More information about Reducing Parental Conflict can be found here:

[Parental Conflict: Information for Professionals - West Berkshire Council](#)

My Family Plan (MFP)

A MFP is the earliest opportunity for professionals to support families with a presenting need, prior to those worries/concerns from escalating to requiring statutory intervention. Community based professionals can start a MFP without any contact with Children and Families Services (CFS) however the majority of MFP's are started following a worry or concern being shared with CFS. Lead Professionals can request support with 'stuck' MFP's via ERH's MFP consultation service.



N/B MFP's are whole family plans and not counted on individual children.

Fig 16 evidences that across the year 374 families were recommended for a MFP. My Family Plan Facilitators came into post with their current remit and responsibility in Sept 2023 so this data is the first year we have tracked MFP recommendations.

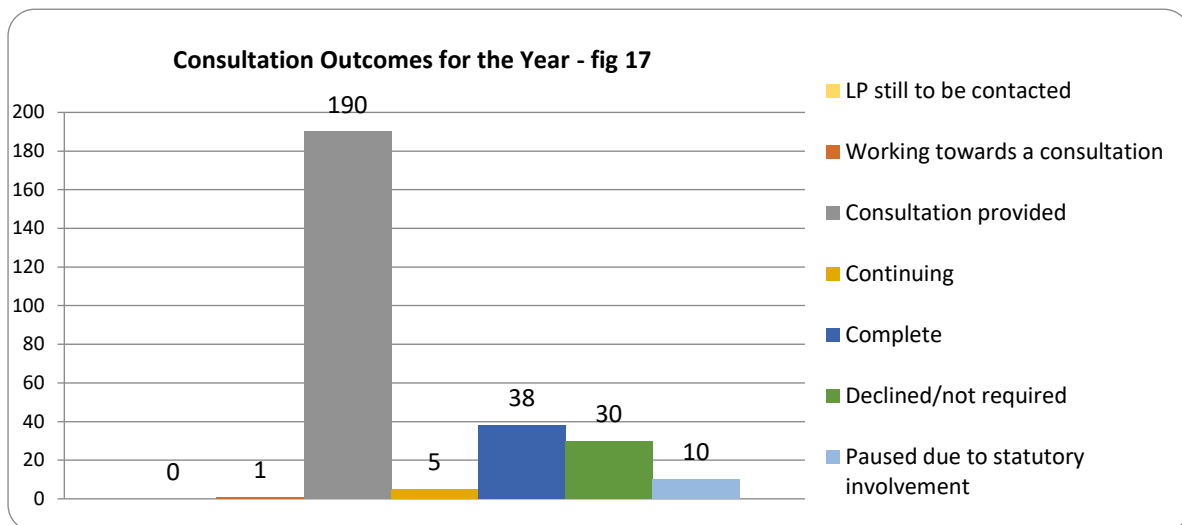
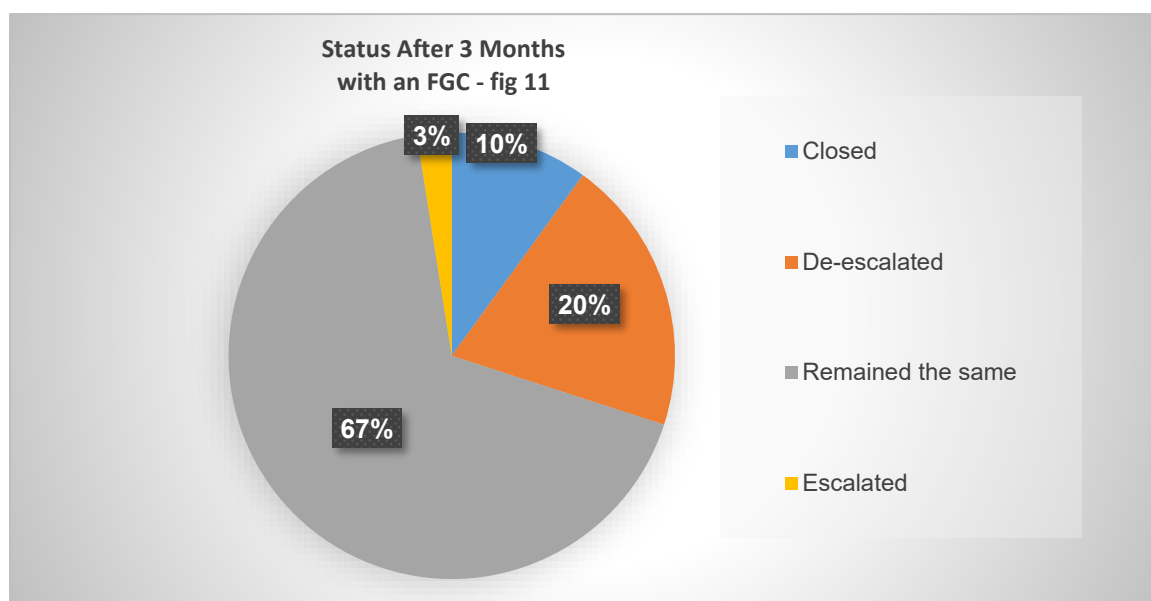
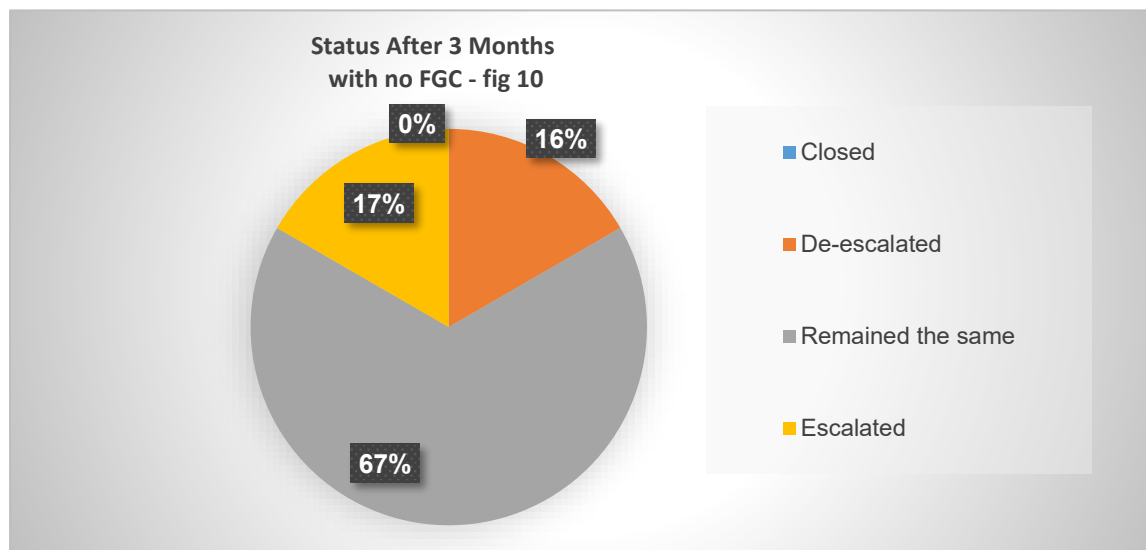


Fig 17 shows that across the year, 190 MFP consultations have been completed which are consultations offered to lead professionals in MFP's if a MFP has become stuck or is not progressing as was hoped. The aim of the consultation is progress the MFP and to prevent the worries and concerns from escalating to requiring a higher threshold of intervention. 38 MFP's are recorded as successfully completed. 30 MFP's are recorded as having been declined or not required. It would be useful to know, of those where the MFP was declined or deemed to not be required, was that determination by the family or by the recommended lead professional? And of those, which, if any, returned to CFS for further intervention within the subsequent 6 month period. This will require data analysis which is a recommendation for the next year's ERH activity as it will require the capability of the new electronic system, Mosaic. 10 MFP's were paused due to subsequent statutory intervention.

Family Group Conferencing Service (FGC)

Between April 2023 – March 2024, the FGC service received a total of 82 referrals equating to 176 children. Total of 72 referrals for Family Group Conferences and a total of 10 referrals for Restorative Conferences. The service also worked with 12 families who were already open to the from the previous year. Therefore, this year the service has worked with a total of 94 families comprising of 202 children. Of those 94 families, 44 conferences (FGC and restorative) were successfully held.

Out of the 44 families who took part in an FGC or Restorative Conference, below are the statuses of the children 3 months following the conference from the status at the time of the referral.



Out of the 44 families who had a conference:

- In 20% of families the concerns/worries had de-escalated.
- 67% of families remained the same which means the concerns for the children didn't get worse.
- 10% of families escalated compared to 17% which escalated with no FGC.

This data suggests that that an FGC helps to support families move from a higher threshold of worry/concern to a lower threshold and also helps to prevent existing worries and concerns from escalating to a higher threshold of need.

For further analysis of the FGC service please see FGC Annual Report.

Additional support for families

In June 2023 the ERH identified that we were seeing a high demand need for food bank parcels from our families. There are local food banks that accept referrals but through discussion with the food bank we were able to get direct access to their voucher issuing system, to be able to issue vouchers to families directly and without delay.

Between June 2023 and April 2024 we have directly issued 24 families with food vouchers.

ERH also have a direct referral pathway into the Household Support Fund. Applications made for households where there is a young carer present can be issued with an additional grant of £100 in addition to the standard £200 grant.

Conclusion

The Early Response Hub is a team with many different roles and responsibilities but is well regarded within both the service and externally amongst our partner agencies.

The Early Response Hub plays an important role in supporting children and families and the wider CFS service data evidences that since the launch of Family First Assessments in April 2023, the statutory referral rate has significantly reduced.

The Early Response Hub is a well functioning service but is very stretched in terms of staffing and resources as no additional staffing or resource was given at the point of launching the ERH in 2019, it was built on the existing resource within CAAS, in addition to grant funding, the majority of which is either ending or due to be reviewed in March 2025 (My Family Plan Facilitators, Apprentice in Young Carers and Reducing Parental Conflict Coordinator).

Further analysis and auditing is required to consider the longer term impact of the Early Response Hub to better understand if the ERH is reducing the worries and concerns for children over a longer period of time or if children do return for a higher threshold of intervention at a later point. If the data suggests that children are returning at the higher threshold at a later period of time, consideration could be given to extending the duration of time that ERH works with families. For example, the time limited ERH interventions of 6 weeks, if the intervention was over a longer period (with a greater staffing resource), would the children who are returning at a higher threshold of need (if they are returning), be reduced?

The Early Response Hub is already modelling and working in the way that is recommended by the new Working Together, as well as the Independent Review of Social Care by Josh McAllister. This new model of working is both beneficial to our children and families who are receiving earlier help and intervention but also beneficial to our workforce as we have supported Intervention Workers from ERH to train and qualify as social workers to then be able to join our statutory workforce.

We need to encourage improved 'self-service' of families who are able to access the community support that they require without needing a pathway to that support via CFS.

We need to increase our partner agencies awareness and use of community services, if the presenting need of a family is best met via community services. We also need to continue to increase awareness of and use of the earlier help tool, My Family Plan.

Recommendations

- This recommendation relates to process and the impact of opening all children at the first point of enquiry, including those recommended for early help via ERH:

If the concerns identified for children are stated by the referrer to be early help threshold concerns, I recommend that consideration is given to only opening children to ERH once an ERH digital referral has been received rather than at the first point of new enquiry into CAAS triage. This would reduce the current difficulty of children being opened to ERH but without the detail of the concerns and without parent's being aware of the referred concerns, making it very difficult for ERH to progress families. Whilst I appreciate the need to ensure that children are not 'missed', the narrative received from professionals who do not subsequently complete the ERH form is because the issues that they thought were present, had been resolved/addressed via the conversation they had with parents or via a conversation they had with a different professional working with the family. We should support and encourage those conversations to be taking place prior to enquiries being made with CFS as it is creating unnecessary demand at the very front door of CFS.

For those referrers who are uncertain about the threshold, I agree that those children should still be opened at the first point of enquiry in CAAS to ensure that possible safeguarding concerns are not missed. This would bring the practice of West Berkshire CFS in line with other LA's who only consider a referral to have been made upon receipt of the referral. This practice may naturally occur anyway as CAAS Triage are moving to a practice of the new enquiry pathway being primarily digital referrals and a telephone referral pathway only being available for level 4 child protection concerns.

The above considerations may naturally resolve themselves by Sept 2024 following a proposed launch of safeguarding digital referral forms as this will dramatically reduce the volume of telephone calls into the front door.

- Consideration needs to be given to how ERH can ensure the value of the RPC programme can be utilised beyond the end of the government funding of the project in March 2025.
- Consideration to be given to how our Young Carers Project can increase the number of unique attendees. This can only really be addressed either via virtual attendance at groups, the current transport issues being resolved or more groups being run at different venues across West Berkshire.
- Following the implementation of the new electronic system Mosaic in Oct 2025, it is hoped that better quality data analysis will be available in relation to work being completed in the early help space/threshold and therefore greater analysis and exploration of data could be completed in relation to the question of whether or not children and families are returning at a higher threshold of need later on in their lives, post ERH intervention.

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Commercial Property disposal – Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Richard Turner
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4635

1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the disposal of the Council owned investment property, Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough, TS14 7FE in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy and to seek delegated authority to consider and accept any offers received in compliance with the Council’s S123 LGA best consideration duty and to negotiate, agree and enter into the relevant documents necessary to complete the disposal of the property.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Executive delegate authority to:

- 2.1 the Service Director – Finance, Property & Procurement in consultation with Executive Member for Finance & resources (Risk Management & Procurement) and the Service Director for Strategy & Governance to consider, review and accept any appropriate offer made in accordance with this report and in the parameters of the information contained in the Part II appendix to this report and;
- 2.2 the Service Director (Strategy & Governance) having consulted with the Service Director (Finance, Property & Procurement) to enter into the relevant sale documentation in accordance with agreed sales heads of terms for the disposal of:
Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough TS14 7FE

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Disposal of the asset will result in a significant capital receipt for the Council but with a corresponding loss of income from the asset, that loss being recognised within the Council’s balance sheet. However that loss is mitigated through income streams yielded from the asset since purchase in 2018.</p> <p>Disposal of the asset results in income foregone in future years, however this loss is offset through the Council having a capital receipt to future finance ongoing capital expenditure on the Council’s core estate. Capital receipts are a powerful resource for the Council offsetting the need to undertake debt financing at a time when PWLB borrowing rates are in excess of 5%, compared with historic averages of 2-3%</p>
Human Resource:	Not applicable
Legal:	<p>The Council has a statutory duty under S123 Local Government Act 1972 (S123 LGA) to secure the best consideration reasonably obtainable for the property.</p> <p>There are exceptions to the obligation to obtain best value. Those exceptions are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short tenancies (i.e.; terms of 7 years or less); • With Secretary of State Consent; and • Where the proposed disposal falls within the criteria set out in The Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 (The General Consent Order). <p>The General Consent Order enables a local authority to dispose of any interest in land at an undervalue where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the undervalue does not exceed £2million pounds; and • the disposal is likely to contribute towards the promotion or improvement of any one or more of the economic well-being, social well-being or environmental well-being of its area. <p>Section 123 LGA does not specify or oblige a local authority to follow a particular process to secure the outcome of achieving</p>

	<p>best consideration. However, case law has shown that the best consideration can be demonstrated by marketing a property or by obtaining an appropriate independent valuation or by a combination of both.</p> <p>Best consideration is not limited to the purchase price but may include a term or condition which identifies a specific commercial benefit to the seller.</p> <p>If applicable, when determining whether or not a proposed disposal of property at less than best consideration meets the criteria of the General Consent Order, a local authority should comply with the prudent commercial practice of obtaining a valuation from an independent professionally qualified valuer (a member of RICS) setting out the likely amount of the undervalue.</p> <p>Any such valuation should set out the restricted and unrestricted values of the property. The restricted value being market value of the property having regard to the terms of the proposed transaction and the unrestricted value being the amount that would be received where the principal aim is to maximise the value of the capital receipt.</p> <p>In addition to the valuation, the local authority should demonstrate how the disposal would contribute towards the well-being of its area.</p> <p>It should also be noted that if a disposal is made at an undervalue, the local authority could be considered as providing a subsidy to the buyer and would need to comply with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>The Council currently does not make revenue provision for maintenance of the property investment portfolio. Furthermore, there is no revenue or earmarked reserve provision for future voids or repairs. Any void risk and maintenance requirements are carried at risk against the Council's General Fund.</p>
<p>Property:</p>	<p>The disposal does not impact on the Council's core estate.</p>
<p>Policy:</p>	<p>The proposal is in accordance with the reviewed Property Investment Strategy approved at Executive on 2nd November 2023 (ref EX4402).</p>

Commercial Property disposal – Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough

	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:	Property Investment Board (PIB)			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Council has invested in a commercial property portfolio of £62 million (inclusive of purchasing costs). The portfolio currently generates income which supports the delivery of Council core services, total gross income generation since adoption of the strategy is approximately £22 million (to September 2024).
- 4.2 Taking into consideration the current economic climate faced by Councils with rising inflationary pressures, surges in looked after / supported populations and increasing capital financing costs, the Executive approved at its meeting on 2 November 2023 a revised Property Investment Strategy for the Council to disinvest from the existing commercial property portfolio and utilise resulting capital receipts to future fund capital financing of investment in the Council's core estate and transformation programmes.
- 4.3 Of the commercial properties in the portfolio, the Council successfully disposed of the asset, Sainsbury's, High Street, Northallerton, DL7 8EA at the end of March 2024.
- 4.4 The remaining properties held by the Council are:
- | | |
|--|-------------|
| (a) Units 1 and 2, Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough | Retail |
| (b) 104 Terminus Road, Eastbourne | Bank tenant |
| (c) 303 High Street, Lincoln | Retail |
| (d) 3 The Sector, Newbury Business Park, Newbury | Office |
| (e) 4 The Sector, Newbury Business Park, Newbury | Office |
| (f) 85 Dudley Port, Tipton | Retail |
| (g) 79 Bath Road, Chippenham | Industrial |
| (h) Discovery House, Mere Way, Nottingham | Office |
- 4.5 The Council's Property Investment Board (PIB) acting as the operational governance for the commercial property portfolio received a report by the appointed property agents to discuss the planned disposals and it is recommended that the Council now progress with the disposal of the Cleveland Gate, Guisborough asset.
- 4.6 The Council has instructed its property agent Montagu Evans to progress with the marketing stage of the disposal and the agent is now seeking offers from the market.
- 4.7 The expectation is to complete the disposal of this asset within the current financial year ending 31 March 2025.

5 Other options considered

- 5.1 The alternative option would be for the Council to retain ownership of the asset and continue to receive the income from the tenants.

This option does not align with the Property Investment Strategy approved by the Executive on 2nd November 2023 (ref EX4402) and would not achieve the capital receipt the Council wishes to achieve.

6 Conclusion

6.1 In accordance with the revised Property Investment Strategy, and in agreement with the Council's Property Investment Board, it is recommended the Council proceed to market and dispose of Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough TS14 7FE in accordance with the Council's S123 LGA best consideration duty and within the parameters of this report and the Part II appendix to this report.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Part 2 report including marketing material.

Background Papers:

West Berkshire Council report to Executive of 2nd November 2023 (EX4402)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected: Not applicable

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Risk Management Strategy

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes (interim Chief Executive Officer)
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4547

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report is the Council’s Risk Management Strategy for the future. It is important that the Council has an overarching strategy for how it manages risk; risk can never be eradicated, but it is important that the Council is clear on how it proposes to manage different risks. This report proposes a changed risk management matrix to a ‘5x5’ matrix as well as a new Risk Appetite.

2 Recommendation

2.1 For the Executive to approve the Risk Management Strategy.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The report sets out updated parameters for financial risk management
Human Resource:	None identified
Legal:	The report sets out updated parameters for compliance risk management
Risk Management:	The report highlights a change to the overall risk management approach and risk appetite. There is a risk of non-compliance with the revised approach though this is mitigated by the Council having good compliance historically and regular reporting to the Governance committee

Risk Management Strategy

Property:	None identified			
Policy:	None identified			
	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		No decisions change through the introduction of this strategy.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		See above
Environmental Impact:		X		None identified
Health Impact:		X		None identified
ICT Impact:		X		None identified
Digital Services Impact:		X		None identified
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		None identified
Core Business:		X		Continues to support the effective delivery of core business

Risk Management Strategy

Data Impact:		X		None identified
Consultation and Engagement:	Portfolio holder for risk			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Strategy in appendix A is the new risk management strategy for the Council. It builds on the existing risk management framework and its key changes include:

- Adoption of a 5x5 risk management matrix to provide greater clarity of risk management and control
- A new risk appetite to articulate the levels of risks accepted by the Executive and provide a framework for officers to work within

5 Other options considered

5.1 The Council could keep its existing risk management strategy, though this would not include changes and improvements identified to further enhance the Council's approach to risk management.

6 Conclusion

6.1 For the Executive to approve the Risk Management Strategy

7 Appendices

Appendix A – Risk Management Strategy

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Wards affected: All

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Appendix A

West Berkshire Council

Risk Management Strategy 2024-27

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Risk Management Strategy is an integral component of West Berkshire Council's (WBC) risk management framework. The strategy provides the details in which the risk management activities are aligned with other Council activities and the role that they play within WBC's internal control environment.
- 1.2 **Mandate and commitment** – The Risk Management Strategy was produced following consultation with Corporate Board, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, Councillors and approved by the Executive. It was also submitted to the Governance Committee for endorsement.
- 1.3 The management of the Council and the Executive are committed to ensure that the risk management is an intrinsic part of the governance arrangements and that the risk management process adds value by informing decision making processes to ensure the delivery of the Council's objectives.
- 1.4 **Applicability** - This strategy applies to the whole of West Berkshire Council core functions, covering both business-as-usual and improvement/transformation.

2. Risk Management Policy Statement

2.1 The risk management strategy for the Council is set out in the following risk management policy statement:

Risk Management Policy Statement for West Berkshire Council (WBC)

As part of West Berkshire Council's arrangements to ensure best practice governance, effective risk management provides assurance that the Council is 'risk aware'. This entails identifying risks associated with the Council's objectives, evaluate their potential likelihood and impact, and determine the most effective methods of mitigation.

The Council believes that risk can be managed rather than avoided and that corporate-wide approach to risk management will support a transformational culture of innovation and creativity

This Strategy includes a risk management policy (see Appendix A) which outlines the approach the Council takes with regard to its responsibility to manage risks and opportunities using a structured, focused and proportional methodology. Risk management is integral to all policy planning and operational management throughout the Council. It integrates with our corporate governance, performance management and project management process and supports the Annual Governance Statement.

This approach to risk management actively supports the achievement of the agreed actions, projects and programmes as set out in the Council Strategy, but also the objectives set out in service plans.

Objectives:

Based on the information detailed in this document, the objectives of the Risk Management Strategy are to:

- Implement the updated risk matrix reflecting a **changed** risk appetite and the tolerances set in the risk management strategy.
- Continue a systematic process of risk identification, analysis, assessment, treatment and reporting, based on a quarterly cycle, **except for project risks, some of which are based on a monthly cycle**
- Further integrate risk management and performance management processes with particular focus on project management integration and identification of Key Risk Indicators (KRI) and Key Control Indicators (KCI).
- Maintain a risk aware culture through a common language, training and engagement, with a particular focus on the involvement of Councillors through more in depth training.
- Increase communication regarding risk exposure especially in relation to fraud risk, and the actions being taken to mitigate risks.
- Support the re-introduction of a controls assurance process.
- Strengthen the links to the crisis management process/handover from crisis management to business as usual

3. Context

- 3.1 The internal and external context within which the Council delivers its objectives must be considered in order to ensure that the management of risk is effective.

Internal Context

- 3.2 The significant points relating to the internal organisational context of risk management are:
- a. **Adoption of the revised three lines model of defence arrangements** –external audit has been unable to sign off our financial statements for 2021/22 and 2022/23 due to their own resourcing pressures and wider Local Government auditing difficulties.
 - b. **Significant increase of the financial pressures** compared to the one experienced before 2020/2021.
 - c. **High demand on services** (in particular on social care, education health and care plans in education, and housing).
 - d. **Need to further streamline internal governance arrangements** – recommendation from the LGA peer review to simplify and communicate the new arrangements.
 - e. **Implementation of the organisational restructure** - Senior Management Review 2019 and relatively new administration, would require training and support for the new 'top team'.

a. The three lines model

- 3.3 The revised version published by Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) sets out 3 areas of responsibility (the 3 A's of Accountability, Action and Assurance) and 6 principles.

- i) **Accountability:** The Governing body is accountable to stakeholders for oversight.

Principles 1 (Governance) and 2 (Governing body roles) confirm that governance of an organisation requires appropriate structures and processes that enable accountability, action and assurance. It is the role of the Governing body to ensure appropriate structures and processes are in place for effective governance.

- ii) **Actions:** Management is responsible for taking actions (including risk management), including designing and implementing the controls and procedures necessary to achieve organisational objectives.

Principle 3 states that Management's responsibility to achieve organisational objectives comprises both first and second line roles. First line roles are most directly aligned with the delivery of products and / or services to clients of the organisation and include the roles of support functions. Second-line roles provide assistance with managing risk.

Risk Management Strategy

- iii) **Assurance and advice:** by an independent internal audit function to provide insight, confidence and encouragement for continuous improvement.

Principle 4 requires that in its third-line role, internal audit provides independent and objective assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance and risk management. It achieves this through the competent application of systematic and disciplined processes, expertise, and insight. It may consider assurance from other internal and external providers.

Principle 5 reiterates that the independence of internal audit from the responsibilities of management is critical to its objectivity, authority, and credibility.

Principle 6 recognises that all roles working collectively contribute to the creation and protection of value when they are aligned with each other and with the prioritised interests of stakeholders. The emphasis is upon collaboration and communication across the “lines” with the collective aim of the achievement of business objectives.

- 3.4 The risk management function is an integral part of the Council’s governance arrangements. The three lines concept is widely known among the insurance, audit and banking sectors as a risk governance framework. The concept can be used as the primary means to demonstrate and structure roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for decision making, risk and control to achieve effective risk management, governance and assurance.
- 3.5 Risk management arrangements are functioning as expected overall, as reported in the latest Interim Auditor’s Annual Report on West Berkshire Council 2021/22 and 2022/23, produced by Grant Thornton (March 2024), which concludes that “the council has effective arrangements in place for risk management internal control and budget setting and monitoring”.
- 3.6 Accounts not signed off by external auditor. The Financial Statements for 2021-22 and 2022-23 are likely to have a ‘no-fault disclaimed’ opinion. This is because the external auditor, Grant Thornton, have not had the sufficient resource to complete the audit of the Council’s financial statements. The Government have been consulting on a disclaimer opinion to enable the backlog of local government audits to be cleared by the early 2025 and beyond.

b. Significant pressure on the Council’s finances

- 3.7 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy MTFS 2024 shows that significant pressures on Council finances during 2022/2023 and 2023/24 required utilising almost all earmarked reserves, especially risk reserves. Similarly to other places in the country, the financial pressures here are due to increase of inflationary costs for adult and children social care, increase in complexity and quantity of demand for social care services, increase of Home to School Transport costs, to High Needs Block in the

Risk Management Strategy

Dedicated School's Grant and increase of costs in housing services. Given the Councils comparatively low level of reserves over many years, the Council has lower levels of financial resilience compared to other Councils. The MTFS prioritises the financial resilience in the medium term for the Council, to ensure that there are sufficient levels of the general fund reserves to enable greater financial sustainability and the need for a cost base reduction of over £30m.

c. High demand – social care

- 3.8 Performance data for 2022/23 and 2023/24 shows a significant increase in demand for children's and adult social care services, and housing services. Whilst the former has peaked during the previous year and shows signs of declining (albeit at the end of 2023/24 at levels still above the maximum from before 2022), the latter is following an increasing trend.

d. The streamlined internal governance arrangements

- 3.9 During 2019, the organisation re-assessed and streamlined its internal governance arrangements to ensure clarity of decision making, coordination and oversight of business as usual but also transformational activities. However, the report following the Corporate Peer Challenge conducted by the Local Government Association includes a recommendation to "Simplify the governance structure to increase pace and agility."

e. Implementation of the organisational restructure – Senior Management Review 2019

- 3.10 The restructure of the organisation following the Senior Management Review 2019 has been completed. As Executive Directors and Service Directors have been appointed. As a result, previous service risk registers have been amalgamated into Department Risk registers. Whilst the areas of responsibility for the Department Risk Registers' owners is expanding, positive benefits are expected in terms of further identifying and managing the cumulative effect of risks. In addition to implementing the Senior Management Review 2019, senior management structure has been strengthened by the creation of additional posts, such as Service Director – Transformation and Service Director for Delivering Better Value and SEND Transformation.

External Context

- 3.11 The external risk context for the organisation is dominated by a number of issues:
- Economy – Bank of England (BoE) has raised the interest rates over the last two years (2022/23 and 2023/24) to help slow down the inflation, which peaked at 11% in 2022 but reduced to 2.2% in August 2024. However, this is

Risk Management Strategy

still higher than the 2% inflation target and the BoE maintains the interest rates at 5%.

- Ongoing international conflict elsewhere – impact at local level in terms of arrivals and support needs following displacement of persons.
- Pressure on public sector finances – over the last two years an unprecedented number of Council either issued a S114 report or have requested Exceptional Financial Support from the Government.
- National political environment – elections results at national Government level with potential changes in national policy framework.
- The updated National risk register 2023 – identified the following high risks:
 - Pandemic (Catastrophic Impact)
 - High scale Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) attacks (Catastrophic Impact)
 - Failure of the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) (Catastrophic Impact)
 - Terrorist attacks in venues and public spaces (Almost certain Likelihood)
 - Technological failure at a UK critical financial market infrastructure (Almost certain Likelihood)
 - Attack on a UK ally or partner outside NATO or a mutual security agreement requiring international assistance (Almost certain Likelihood)
 - Major outbreak of plant pest – bacterial disease *Xylella fastidiosa* (Almost certain Likelihood)
 - Cyber attacks on infrastructure
 - Low temperatures and snow
 - Reception and integration of British Nationals arriving from overseas

3.12 Council Strategy 2023 – 2027, highlights the strong social, economic and environmental features of the District and the resilience to significant challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus of the Strategy is to build on these strengths and achieve further improvements. This is another important factor considered in defining the Council's risk management approach, including the risk appetite.

3.13 It is expected that any amendments to the Council's Strategy, associated strategies and delivery plans to be robustly reflected in the risk management process.

4. How do we evaluate risks?

Risk analysis and Risk evaluation

4.1 Risks are evaluated each time at the following levels:

- **Gross level** – likelihood and impact without additional, specific mitigation action.
- **Actual level** - this is the current likelihood and impact, based on mitigation action already put in place but excluding further mitigation action planned.

Risk Management Strategy

- **Expected level** – this is a future level of likelihood and impact based on any additional mitigation action (if any) planned to further address the triggers and the consequences of risks. The additional actions and the associated deadlines are listed in the risk register.

4.2 The Council evaluates its identified risks on a five-point scale on the likelihood or probability of the risk occurring (rated between rare and certain) and the impact caused should the risk occur (rated between negligible and critical).

Impact Rating

4.3 The following table provides the definitions which should be used when determining whether a risk would have a Negligible (1), Minor (2), Medium (2), Major (4), or Critical impact(5):

Impact Rating	Financial loss to Council	Personal / Staff or Customers	Assets / Physical / Information	Reputation	Compliance (litigation, regulatory, contract)
5 Critical	> 1% annual WBC budget >£2m	Death	Destruction of building, IT infrastructure	Front page of national press	Probable legal challenge with penalties. Probable regulatory intervention.
4 Major	0.25% - 1% annual WBC budget £500k £2M	Permanent disability	Majority loss of main building / Loss of main ICT system – e.g. Email / Payroll / network	Adverse publicity nationally HSE / Fire Authority prosecution	High possibility of legal challenge. High possibility of regulatory intervention.
3 Medium	0.1% - 0.3% annual WBC budget £175k -500k	Major injury / hospitalisation	Partial loss off main building or total loss of minor building. Temporary loss of major ICT system – up to one week, total loss of minor ICT system	External agency criticism – EG Auditor, Ofsted etc. HSE / Fire Authority enforcement action	Reasonable possibility of successful legal challenge. Reasonable possibility of regulatory interest.
2 Minor	0.01% - 0.1% of annual WBC budget £17.5k - £175k	Major financial loss £1,000+ Illness e.g. stress / minor accident / RIDDOR	Partial loss of minor building. Temporary loss of minor ICT system – up to one week. Loss of Major system – up to one day	Ombudsman complaint upheld	Low possibility of legal challenge. Low possibility regulatory interest
1 Negligible	Less than 0.01% annual WBC budget £17.5k	Minor Financial loss up to £1,000 / complaint / Grievance	Loss of minor ICT system - up to one day	Adverse publicity locally	Negligible possibility of legal challenge or regulatory interest

Table 1. Impact Ratings

Likelihood Rating

Risk Management Strategy

- 4.4 It is unlikely that in many cases the probability of a risk occurring can be calculated in a statistically robust fashion, as we do not have the data to do so. However, as an indicator, the likelihood is defined by the following probability of a risk occurring:

Likelihood Rating	Incidents	Probability
5 Certain	Risk will occur within a 12 month period	100%
4 Almost Certain	Risk is almost certain to occur within a 12 month period	70% - 99%
3 Likely	Risk is likely to occur within a 12 month period	30% - 69%
2 Unlikely	Risk is unlikely to occur within a 12 month period	2% - 29%
1 Rare	Risk is very rare and highly unlikely to occur within a 12 month period	<2%

Table 2. Likelihood Ratings

- 4.5 Over the short and medium term, due to the ongoing international crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, risk management and in particular risk assessment, need to consider this external context factor.

5. How we respond to risks – Risk Appetite / Risk Criteria

- 5.1 The response to the identified risks is guided by the risk appetite and risk criteria.

Risk Appetite

- 5.2 The HM Treasury and the Government Finance Function define risk appetite as “*The level of risk with which an organisation aims to operate*” (Source: [Government Finance Function – Risk Appetite Guidance v.2., August2021](#)). A clearly understood and articulated risk appetite statement assists with the risk awareness for the Council and supports decision making in pursuit of its priority outcomes and objectives.
- 5.3 The Council’s Risk Appetite Statement is an integral part of the Council’s Risk Management Strategy and ensures that the opportunities the Council is willing to take to achieve its strategic outcomes and objectives are measured, consistent and compatible with the Council’s capacity to accept and manage risk and do not expose the Council to unknown, unmanaged or unacceptable risks.
- 5.4 This statement will be reviewed during the period of the strategy. The Council may decide to move the line up or down based on a number of influencing factors including financial and capacity, and the Council may have a higher ‘aspirational’ risk appetite once sufficient assurance is gained and processes put in place to manage the higher levels of risk.

The Council’s Risk Appetite 2024/25 – 2027/28

- 5.5 The Council, during the course of a year, will take fair, measured and targeted levels of risk to achieve the priority objectives included in the Council Strategy. There will be opportunities for the Council to be innovative or work differently and any identified risks will need to be considered against the anticipated cost and efficiency benefits.
- 5.6 The Risk Appetite Statement supports Members and officers in decision making, by setting out where the Council is comfortable taking different levels of risk, and which levels of risk are unacceptable. The Council’s Risk Appetite should be considered in conjunction with the risk section of all committee reports when decisions are made.
- 5.7 Risks that fall above the risk appetite ‘line’ may still happen and should still be managed effectively and transparently.
- 5.8 The potential range of the Council’s appetite for its significant risks included in the Corporate Risk Register is shown in the diagram below, with shaded areas identifying the Council’s risk appetite levels:

Risk levels	Averse	Cautious	Flexible	Open	Seeking
Risk description					
Financial/ Asset – amount of financial loss prepared to put at risk through lost investment and/or financial loss	Up to £100k	£100k - £250k	£250k - £500k	£500k - £1m	£1m +
Compliance Exposure to legal challenge. Risk of regulatory interest/ involvement	Following approved standards and practices, engaging in business as usual, low value transactions	Following approved standards and practices, engaging in business as usual, increased value transactions	Following approved standards and practices as far as possible, innovating, public interest, high value transactions	Innovating, new area of work, significant public interest, high value transaction	Innovating in unprecedented environment
Reputation Exposure to reputational damage or enhancement	No chance of any repercussions / negative comments	Little chance of significant repercussions and mitigation in place beforehand	Exposure of greater scrutiny and public interest. Management through listening and active engagement. Risk of	Experimental– possible significant reputational damage or enhancement	Unprecedented – probable significant reputational damage or enhancement

Risk Management Strategy

			reputational damage.		
Operational Related to the delivery of Council Strategy	Essential development of core business only	Maintain status quo; new schemes are tried and tested only by others	Encourage innovation through new schemes offered to the Council	Proactive pursuit of innovation and crafting solutions that have not been attempted before	Desire to 'break the mould' and challenge current working practices

Table 3. West Berkshire Council Risk Appetite

- 5.9 An additional concept, important in defining and understanding the Council's risk framework, is the risk tolerance. The HM Treasury and the Government Finance Function define risk tolerance as “*The level of risk with which an organisation is willing to operate*” (Source: [Government Finance Function – Risk Appetite Guidance v.2., August2021](#))
- 5.10 This Strategy reflects the Executive's risk appetite and provides clarity about its levels as follows:

Financial Risk Appetite – Flexible

- The Council aims to operate with a **financial risk between £250k – £500k**. This relates primarily to the transformation activities rather than the core business areas in order to stimulate the initiatives to digitise service delivery or to achieve better, faster and cheaper service delivery more effectively delivered in partnership.

Compliance Risk Appetite – Flexible/Open

- The Council aims to operate with a legal risk that **finely balanced between flexible and open, following approved standards and practices as far as possible but also allowing for innovation**, willing to engage in new areas of work, of significant public interest, and related to high value transactions.

Reputation Risk appetite – Open

- The Council's reputation is one of the most important assets which employees and Councillors aim to protect to ensure there is little chance of significant repercussions. This relates primarily to the core business areas. As custodians of the public's trust and public's funds, even the transformational activities are delivered with sound governance arrangements in place and follow a strong and consistent corporate project management methodology. However, in the process of seeking the benefits of new ways of achieving or improving outcomes for the residents the Council is seeking an **open reputational risk**, with possible significant reputational damage or enhancement.

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Operational risk appetite – Open

- The Council aims to operate with an **open appetite for innovation** and for crafting service delivery models and initiatives that redefine the ways in which residents and stakeholders are enabled to achieve their outcomes.

Risk criteria and response

5.11 The Council has chosen to divide the rating into bands as shown on the risk matrix below, defining the criteria used to manage the risk exposure and reflecting the risk appetite levels described above.

<u>5x5 Risk Matrix Assessments</u>						
Impact ↑	5 Critical	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Major	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Medium	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2. Minor	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1. Negligible	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5
		1 Rare	2 Unlikely	3 Likely	4 Almost Certain	5 Certain
		Likelihood →				

Figure 1. 5x5 Risk Matrix Assessments

5.12 The risk score, as illustrated by the risk matrix, triggers a particular type of response for risks relating to the council’s objectives.

5.13 Once a risk has been identified, the Council needs to decide and agree what it is going to do about it as described in the following table:

Risk Level (RAG)	Current Score	Escalation	Response
Extreme (Red)	15 -25	Add to Corporate Risk Register and mitigation action.	Allocate to Executive Director to oversee and Service Director implement agreed actions.
Medium - High (Amber)	8-12	Seek assurance that identified controls are effective	Allocate to Service Director to put in place Controls Assurance.
Moderate	4 - 6	None	Monitor risk
Low (Green)	Up to 3	None	Consider at next annual review

Table 4. RAG Levels, Risk Scores, Escalation and Responses

5.14 Positive and Negative amendments are made regularly to risks in light of the above to respond to the risk and continually update risk registers.

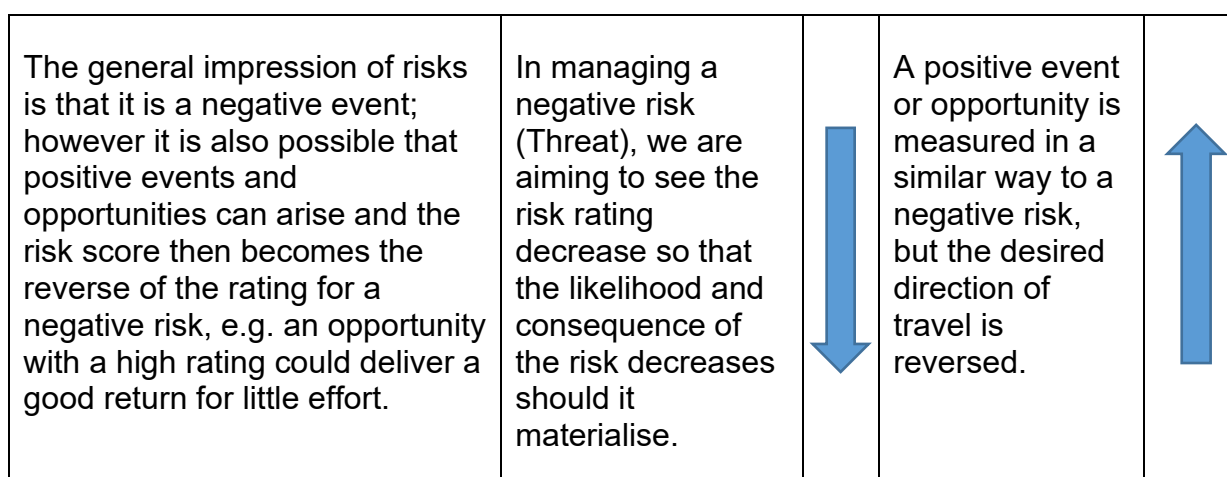


Figure 2. Positive and negative amendments

5.15 The recognised approaches to controlling risks are described as the five key elements or 5 T's; tolerate, treat, transfer, terminate and take the opportunity. These are described in more detail below. It is generally accepted that where a risk can be

Risk Management Strategy

reduced through some form of treatment or mitigation in a cost effective fashion then it is good to do so.

5.16 As a general principle once a risk has been identified, consideration needs to be given to the five T's and that the chosen approach is seen as being cost-effective so that the control of the risk is not disproportionate to the expected benefits.

5.17 The five T's are:

Treatment	By far the greatest number of risks will be addressed in this way by using appropriate control countermeasures to constrain the risk or reduce the impact or likelihood to acceptable levels.
Transfer	For some risks the best response may be to transfer them and might be done by transferring the risk to another party to bear or share the risk; e.g. through insurance or partnership. Reputation risk can never be transferred.
Tolerate	Where it is not possible to transfer or treat the risk, consideration needs to be given to how the consequences are managed should they occur. This may require having contingency plans in place, for example, Business Continuity Plan which creates capacity to tolerate risk to a certain degree.
Terminate	Some risks will only be treatable, or containable to acceptable levels by terminating the activity that created them. It should be noted that the option of termination of activities may be severely limited in local government when compared to the private sector; a number of activities are conducted in the government sector because the associated risks are so great that there is no other way in which the output or outcome, which is required for the public benefit, can be achieved. This option can be particularly important in project management if it becomes clear that the projected cost / benefit relationship is in jeopardy.
Take the opportunity	This option is not an alternative to those above; rather it is an option which should be considered whenever tolerating, transferring or treating a risk. There are two aspects to this. The first is whether or not at the same time as mitigating threats; an opportunity arises to exploit positive impact. For example, if a large sum of capital funding is to be put at risk in a major project, are the relevant controls judged to be good enough to justify increasing the sum of money at stake to gain even greater advantages? The second is whether or not circumstances arise which, whilst not generating threats, offer positive opportunities. For example, a drop in the cost of goods or services frees up resources which can be re-deployed

Figure 3. Managing Risk - Five Ts

5.18 The delivery of controls to mitigate risks' likelihood and/or impact is the responsibility of the Heads of Service/Service Directors.

Objective resulting from the section above:

Implement the new risk matrix reflecting an increased risk appetite and the tolerances set in this risk strategy

6. Risk Recording and Reporting

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to assess risks associated with their work and projects and to escalate any potential risks which they feel cannot be managed within sensible parameters to their Directorate Management Team. These risks may then be escalated further as part of the quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register at Corporate Board.
- 6.2 The Council’s risk management framework is built on the basis of risks being escalated from a service/department level through to a corporate level. As part of risk being managed the framework requires consideration of the mitigation measures being suggested and whether the tolerance level is appropriate.
- 6.3 Where risk levels are considered to be extreme (Red) on the risk matrix, the appropriate Service Director must escalate the risk to the Executive Director for a discussion at Directorate level so that consideration can be given as to whether the risk should be moved to the Directorate Risk Register or the Corporate Risk Register. Risk escalation to the Corporate Risk Register is the responsibility of the Service Director and Executive Director.

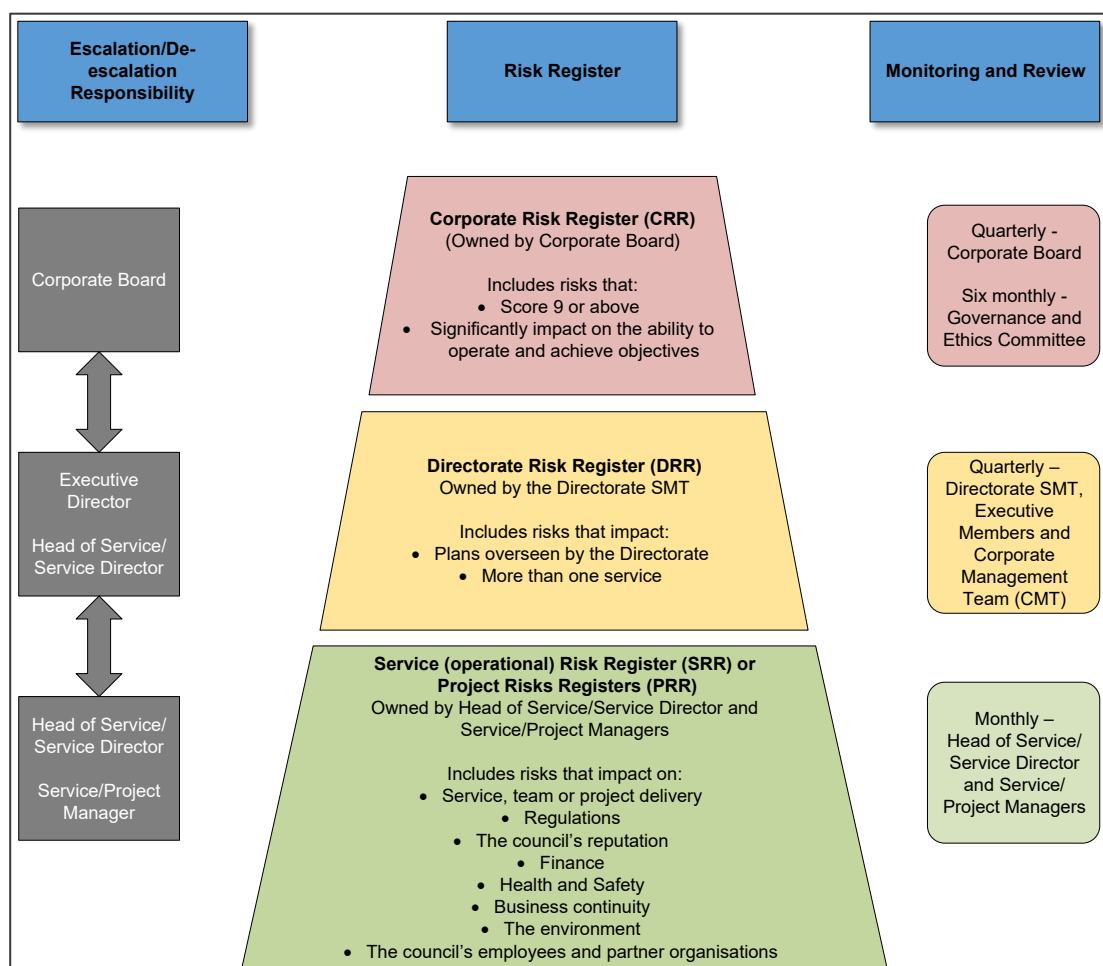


Figure 4. Risk Escalation

Objective resulting from the section above:

Support the introduction of a control’s assurance process

Risk Management Strategy

6.4 Effective Risk Management requires that there is clarity of the responsibilities for risk and ownership of those risks identified. This policy identifies where the responsibility lies for identifying, considering and controlling risk and opportunities.

Members	Responsibilities
Operations Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine overall risk appetite and tolerance for the Council and for each corporate risk. • Ensure consideration of risk in decision making. • Quarterly review the Corporate Risk Register.
Executive Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee risks relating to their portfolio, including projects in the corporate programme.
Governance Committee	<p>Provide independent assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of risk management and internal control by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Corporate Risk Register to ensure it is reflective of the strategic risks to the delivery of the Council's objectives and management of risks is effective. • Scrutinise the Annual Governance Statement to ensure that it is a correct reflection of internal control, risk management and governance. • Receive reports from Internal Audit, External Audit and other inspection bodies indicating strengths and weakness in internal control, risk management or governance. • Participate in training and development sessions.
Officers	Responsibilities
Head of Paid Service	<p>Overall responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Annual Governance Statement is an accurate reflection of internal control risk management and governance. • Oversee corporate and cross cutting risks, and resolve conflicts and competing demands for resources. • Lead the quarterly review of corporate risks with Corporate Board. • Arrange the review of the Risk Management Policy.
Executive Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there is effective risk management in their Directorates in line with this policy.

Risk Management Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the Directorate Risk Register, ensure that it is reviewed at least quarterly by the DMT and that risks are escalated or de-escalated to/from the Corporate Risk Register where appropriate. • Approve action plans with residually high risk (i.e. those outside of the Council's risk tolerance).
Service Directors / Service Leads/Service Managers	<p>Ensure that risks to services are properly managed and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Team Risk registers are maintained and regularly reviewed. • Any significant new risk identified to be fed up to the Service Director and/or Directorate SMT. If required the risk could then be escalated to Corporate Board. • The Risk Management Framework is embedded in their service areas and that staff are aware of the underlying risk management principles. • Ensure that the controls put in place to mitigate risks are adequately deployed and maintained when necessary. • Ensure awareness of risk impacting other areas than the one they manage (e.g. through the CMT meetings) and highlight cumulative effect of risks. • Support the identification of strategic risks, including strategic governance risks relevant for the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) (R3)
Second Line of Defence Officers/ Risk Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Manager - develops and updates the risk management policy/strategy, facilitates a risk aware culture, establishes internal risk management processes and procedures, provides advice, guidance and support in relation to risk management, coordinates the risk management activities, compiles risk management information and prepares reports. • Other officers in Finance, Legal Services, Performance and Risk Management, HR, Joint Emergency Planning and Insurance – see paragraph 3.6.
Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan audit work to take into account key risks and how effectively they are managed providing assurances for the Annual Governance Statement, the Corporate Risk Register and Governance Committee. • Undertake periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the risk management framework. • Prepare, on behalf of the Head of Paid Service, the Annual Governance Statement.
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the Risk Management Policy. • Maintain an awareness of risks, and feed into the formal process, alerting management to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risks which are effectively managed, or the level of current risk is unacceptably high (red). ○ Issues that arise or near misses.

Objective resulting from the section above:

Increase communication regarding risk exposure and the actions being taken to mitigate risks

7. Risk Registers

7.1 The risk registers are reference documents that summarise the different risks that might occur and impact the Council. Just because a risk is included on a risk register, does not mean that the Council thinks it will happen, but it does mean that the Council thinks it is worth seeking to manage. The risk score is, therefore, based on a 'reasonable worst case scenario'. The methodology for the scoring of risks is included in section 5 above.

7.2 The Council maintains several risk registers, and these are:

- **Corporate Risk Register** – this register records the most significant risks for the Council or those risks which may prevent the Council from achieving its strategic objectives as set out in the Council Strategy. This is considered by the Corporate Management Team, Corporate Board, Operations Boards and the Governance Committee.
- **Directorate Risk Registers** – include the risks from the Corporate Risk Register but also risks that might affect the delivery of individual directorates, but would not in isolation threaten the Council's overall objectives.
- **Service Risk Registers** – include the risks from the Corporate Risk Register and the Directorate Risk Registers but also risks that might affect the delivery of individual services but would not in isolation threaten the Council's overall objectives. Operational risks are managed by Heads of Service/Service Directors or service managers.
- **Project Risk Registers** – provide a register of the risks that, if occur, will have a positive or negative effect on the achievement of the project's objectives. Significant risks from project risk registers are escalated by the Service Director/Head of Service to their Service Risk Registers and follow the normal procedure for further escalation if necessary.

Objectives resulting from the section above:

Maintain a risk aware culture through a common language, training and engagement, with a particular focus on the involvement of Councillors through more in-depth training

Further develop actions to ensure that the cumulative risk exposure is appropriately identified and managed

8. Project Risk Management

- 8.1 The Council's approach to risk management from a project and programme perspective has improved through increased training on the Project Management Methodology (PMM) based on PRINCE 2 principles.
- 8.2 At the inception of each new project, the project board should review and approve the risk appetite or, where they are not the Governance Board, present to their overarching Governance Board for approval.
- 8.3 All projects should have a risk register which is regularly reviewed at project board meetings and adjusted accordingly once mitigating action is taken. The stakeholders should be regularly briefed on any changes in risk. A risk, in terms of project delivery, is defined as anything which could be potentially harmful to the delivery of the project detrimentally affecting budget, delivery timescales or the project outcome.

9. References

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Appendix 1 - Risk Management Policy

1. Purpose

This policy details West Berkshire Council’s approach to risk management. It includes details of each stage of the risk management process, providing methodological guidance in order to ensure consistency and clarity of approach.

2. Definitions

2.1 There are numerous definitions for risk¹, all of them including reference to event, probability and impact on objectives. The Council adopts the definition of risk used by the ISO 31000 Guide 73:

2.2 Risk management is defined as the rigorous and coordinated process of identifying significant risks relevant to the achievement of the Council’s strategic and operational objectives, evaluating their individual and combined likelihood and impact, and implementing the most effective way of mitigating, managing and monitoring them.

2.3 The definitions for the other key risk management terminology used in this document are listed as part of Appendix 1.

3. The three lines model

3.1 As a key function of the Council’s governance arrangements, the risk management approach is based on the three lines concept aiming to ensure the delivery of a sound level of assurance, accountability and awareness based on access to multifaceted and responsive intelligence.

3.2 July 2020 IIA published revised 3 Lines Model The following diagram is an example of the three lines concept:

Chart 1. Three lines



¹ Definitions are provided by the Institute of Risk Management, HM Treasury, Institute of Internal Auditors

Risk Management Strategy

- 3.3 **First line role** - As the first line, Service Directors own and manage risks within their service area with the assistance of their Service Leads and Service Managers. They are also responsible for implementing appropriate corrective actions to address, process and control weaknesses. Service Directors / Heads of Service are also responsible for **maintaining effective internal controls** and managing risk on a day to day basis. They identify, assess and manage risks ensuring that their services are delivered in accordance with the Council's policies in order to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.
- 3.4 **Second line** - The second line relates to the strategic direction, policies and procedures provided by the Council's oversight functions (e.g. Finance, Legal Services, Performance and Risk Management, HR, Joint Emergency Planning and Insurance). These teams are responsible for designing policies, setting direction, ensuring compliance and providing assurance, including with regard to the existing controls put in place to mitigate risks. Included within the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy is the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which encourages staff to report concerns which may expose the Council to risk.
- 3.5 **Third line** - Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the organisations' operations. It helps the organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.
- 3.6 The aim of internal audit's work programme is to provide assurance to management, in relation to the business activities, systems or processes under review, that the framework of internal control, risk management and governance is appropriate and operating effectively; and risks to the achievement of the Council's objectives are identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level.
- 3.7 Such risks are identified through senior management liaison and internal audit's own assessment of risk. External audit, inspectors and regulators also provide assurance on the management of risk and delivery of objectives.

We recommend that the link to the crisis management process/handover from crisis management to BAU should be documented in the Risk Management Policy. The Policy should include documentation of the approach to alternative escalation/risk reporting routes for rapidly changing/ time-critical risks where steering is required. **Emergency Response Framework**

4. Our corporate approach to risk management

- 4.1 Risk management is about providing assurance by being 'risk aware'. Risk is ever present in everything that we do and some risk taking is inevitable if the Council is to achieve its objectives. Risk management is about making the most of opportunities when they arise and achieving objectives once those decisions are made. By being 'risk aware' the Council is better placed to avoid threats and take advantage of opportunities. Proper project management and service planning processes and principles will identify potential risks early in the process and set out how these can be avoided or mitigated. Staff training in project management principles is essential to embed these good practices.

Risk Management Strategy

4.2 By embedding a culture of risk management into the Council, Members and officers are able to make effective decisions about services and the use of financial resources to ensure that the Council's objectives are met.

4.3 The assessment that the culture of the organisation is 'risk aware' is based on the following:

- **Leadership** – there is strong leadership within the organisation in relation to strategy, policy and operations as evidenced by the drive to ensure a strong approach regarding the Council Strategy, additional supporting strategies and associated delivery plans, all backed up by a strong service planning approach.
- **Involvement** – all stakeholders are involved in all stages of the risk management process. This is evidenced by the continuous activity at service/department level, directorate level, Corporate Board, Operations Board and the Governance Committee. In addition, the involvement of all three lines in risk management is also evident.
- **Learning** – training on risk management and learning from events are covered through formal training sessions for Councillors and specific advice, support and 'critical friend' challenge to risk owners and strategic decision makers.
- **Accountability** – the approach of the Council is not an automatic blame culture but is based on encouragement to identify and address issues, report likely underperformance at the earliest stages and agree corrective actions, on a background of clear accountability for objectives and actions.
- **Communication** – the approach to accountability is supplemented by an openness on all risk management issues, reporting of causes of underperformance and actions implemented to address them (up to the public arena at the Executive and scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission – see performance framework). Risk information is also reported to Corporate Management Team, Directorate Management Meetings, Corporate Board and Operations Board. In terms of public meetings, risk is reported as a Part II (confidential information) report to the Governance Committee.

4.3 An effective corporate approach to risk management will:

- Make it more likely that the Council's objectives will be achieved,
- Safeguard the organisation and provide assurance to Members and officers,
- Become part of every manager's competency framework, job description and performance appraisal,
- Provide support to the overall governance of the organisation,
- Improve decision making,
- Identify issues early on,
- Provide a greater risk awareness and reduce surprises or unexpected events,
- Develop a framework for structured thinking,
- Ensure better use of finances as risks are managed and exposure to risk is reduced,
- Facilitate achievement of long-term objectives and
- Ensure a consistent understanding of and approach to risks.

The principles

4.4 It is important to maintain a sense of proportionality with day to day risk and the following principles will be applied:

- Managers have a good understanding of their services and service developments, and are able to adequately identify the risks involved.
- Managers understand the limits that the organisation places on the action that can be taken by any individual officer. There is a general awareness of what management action is appropriate and where further consultation and approval are required with colleagues and more senior managers. The organisation therefore recognises its risk appetite in relation to the decisions it takes.
- There is a good level of understanding, of what risk it is acceptable to take, during the normal course of work and the organisation recognises its risk appetite in relation to its ongoing activities.
- Unnecessary bureaucracy should be avoided, in particular by preparing documentation solely to demonstrate (rather than support or enhance) effective management. The cost (in terms of the time involved) relative to the benefit gained by defining every possible risk in detail and assigning impact and likelihood scores to each risk associated with every planned or current activity is deemed too great to be generally worthwhile. However, where there are known concentrations of risk, such as in new service developments or relating to our programme of projects, managers understand that they should document, monitor and manage these risks using the Council's scoring framework. Similarly, the corporate management team (or specific services that deliver specific corporate functions) should seek to identify, assess and manage those risks that seem likely to cause problems or bring benefits at a corporate level.
- The internal audit team works with the Executive Director (Resources) and Service Director (Strategy & Governance) and Corporate Board to consider the Council's assurance needs, and makes its own assessment of the internal audit work required to provide this assurance. This is presented to the Governance Committee annually.
- Managers are encouraged and supported to consider the potential threats and opportunities, involved in any new service developments and improvements, and to monitor ongoing performance. Documentation of risks, related controls and mitigating action plans should be considered where this is helpful and appropriate and, where this is the case, risk registers should be prepared. This is likely to be appropriate for specific service development projects, when project risk registers should be monitored closely by the lead project manager and sponsor. Individual teams should also consider risk, specifically when updating annual service plans.

Risk Management Strategy

- Partnership risks are managed and owned by the Council's service that has entered into such a partnership with the aim to achieve specific service objectives. Risks are identified in relation to these objectives in the service risk register.

5. Our risk management process

5.1 The Process arrangements that support risk management at the Council include the following components:

- Risk Assessment:
 - Risk identification and the Council's strategic and operational planning processes (see Section 6)
 - Risk analysis and Risk evaluation (see Section 7)
- Risk response/treatment, including the Risk Appetite (see Section 8 and Section 9)
- Risk recording and reporting (see Section 10)

5.2 The diagram below shows the Risk Management process and the systematic approach to the identification, evaluation, prioritisation and control of risks and opportunities facing the Council.



Graph 2 Risk Management process

Objective resulting from the section above:

Continue a systematic process of risk identification, analysis, assessment, treatment and reporting, based on a quarterly cycle.

6. How do we assess risks?

- **Risk Assessment - Risk identification and the Council's strategic and operational planning processes**

6.1 A Council Strategy is produced every four years and refreshed every two years and is accompanied by a Strategy Delivery Plan which is reviewed annually. Additional supporting strategies are developed with supplementary delivery plans. Annual

Risk Management Strategy

Service/Department Plans are produced to detail the delivery of the Council's objectives by its services/departments.

- 6.2 The report templates for the approval of strategies, delivery plans and the associated specific decisions with actions from the service plans, require authors to consider and comment on risks. This translates into a risk identification process, with significant risks being reflected in the Service/Department Risk Registers and in Project Risk Registers.
- 6.3 A significant aspect of the Council's performance management framework, with implications for this risk management strategy, is that the strategic goals of the organisation are grouped in two main categories:
- Core business – reflecting the 'business as usual', highly visible functions of the Council for residents and stakeholders. These include typically objectives for maintaining/continuing the delivery of high performing activities.
 - Priorities for improvement – more transformational type objectives, which are aiming to improve outcomes, either where they are judged below expected levels or where they are already strong (compared with similar local authorities) but, given the importance at local level, the decision is to improve even more.
- 6.4 The efforts made by the performance management function to ensure the planning approach is non-silo working, together with centralised governance arrangements for approval of strategies and plans (including risk implications) are factors that contribute to creating an overall picture of risk exposure.
- 6.5 The Council is using a sophisticated approach to performance management, monitoring contextual intelligence (measures of volume), performance measures (targeted KPIs) and measures of corporate health. Many of these measures are also Key Risk Indicators that inform the risk assessment process.
- 6.6 Similarly, the developments relating to the Corporate Programme Office enhance the governance arrangements and ensure that the corporate project management approach is followed by all projects. As part of the corporate approach all projects are required to ensure they identify, assess, manage and report risk and performance.

Objective resulting from the section above:

Further integrate risk management and performance management processes with particular focus on project management integration and identification of Key Risk Indicators (KRI) and Key Control Indicators (KCI).

- 6.7 When identifying risks, it can be helpful to use the following sources of risk as prompts to ensure that all areas of risk are considered:

Sources of Risk	Risk Examples
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Risk Management Strategy

Infrastructure	Functioning of transport, communications and utilities infrastructure. The impact of storms, floods and pollution.
Politics & Law	Effects of change of government policy, UK or movement from EU legislation, national or local political or control, meeting the administration's manifesto commitments. Issues of timing. Following the organisation's stated/agreed policy. Legality of operations. Includes regulatory issues, Ofsted or Care Quality Commission's inspection outcomes, and Ombudsmen's decisions.
Social Factors	Effects of changes in demographic, residential and social trends on ability to deliver objectives.
Technology	Capacity to deal with obsolescence and innovation, product reliability, development and adaptability or ability to use technology to address changing demands.
Competition & Markets	Affecting the competitiveness (cost and quality) of the service and/or ability to deliver value for money and general market effectiveness.
Customer & Stakeholder – related	Satisfaction of: citizens, users, central and regional government and other stakeholders. Managing expectations – consulting & communication on difficult issues
Sustainability / Environmental	Environmental consequences arising from option (e.g. in terms of energy efficiency, pollution, recycling emissions etc.)
Finance	Costs, long term financial sustainability/ reliance on finite or vulnerable funding streams. Financial control, fraud and corruption.
People Management Human resources	Managing changes to services that may affect staff and/or ways of working. Resourcing the implementation of the option. Employment Issues (TUPE etc.). Maintaining effective health & safety of staff and users.

Risk Management Strategy

Contracts & Partnerships	Dependency on, or failure of, contractors to deliver services or products to the agreed cost and specification. Procurement contract and relationship management. Overall partnership arrangements, e.g. for pooled budgets or community safety. PFI, LSVT and regeneration.
Tangible Assets	Security of land and buildings, safety of plant and equipment, control of IT hardware.
Reputation	Affecting the public standing of the Council, partnerships, or individuals in it (affecting you). Management of issues that may be contentious with the public or the media.
Professional Judgement & Activities	Risks inherent in professional work such as assessing clients' welfare or planning or response to the Human Rights Act.

Appendix 2 - Definitions of key terminology that is part of West Berkshire Council's risk management framework

Risk - is the effect (a positive or negative deviation from the expected) of uncertainty on objectives. Risk is often expressed as a combination of the consequences of an event and the associated likelihood.

Risk management - is defined as the rigorous and coordinated process of identifying significant risks relevant to the achievement of the Council's strategic and operational objectives, evaluating their individual and combined likelihood and potential consequences, and implementing the most effective way of managing and monitoring them.

Risk aware – term relating to the risk culture within the organisation and denoting a higher maturity level of the risk management processes.

Risk response - once a risk has been identified, assessed and analysed actions are put in place to respond/manage the risk. British Standard 31100 and ISO 31000 use the term 'Risk treatment' as 'the process of developing, selecting and implementing controls' or 'the process to modify risk' respectively.

Gross risk rating - likelihood and impact without additional, specific mitigation action. Size of the event when a risk materialises and representing the inherent level of risk.

Current risk rating - this is the likelihood and impact at the time of assessment and each re-assessment, based on mitigation action already put in place but excluding further mitigation action planned.

Expected Net risk rating - this is a future level of likelihood and impact based on any additional mitigation action (if any) planned to further address the triggers and the consequences of risks

Risk appetite - the level of risk with which an organisation aims to operate (Source: [Government Finance Function – Risk Appetite Guidance note V1.0, October 2020](#)), similar definitions are:

The amount of risk that an organisation is willing to seek or accept in the pursuit of long-term objectives. (IRM 2011)

The amount and the type of risk that an organisation is willing to pursue or retain (ISO Guide 73 (2009)

Risk tolerance - The level of risk with which an organisation is willing to operate (HM Treasury and the Government Finance Function) (Source: [Government Finance Function – Risk Appetite Guidance note V1.0, October 2020](#))

Risk Control / Mitigation – Actions to reduce the likelihood and/or the magnitude of a risk, being owned by a Service Director.

Risk Management Strategy

Impact – the effect on the finances, infrastructure, reputation and marketplace when a risk materialises at a particular likelihood level.

Likelihood – evaluation or judgement regarding the chances of a risk materialising, sometimes established as a ‘probability’ or ‘frequency’.

Risk Owner - The individual officer stated to be responsible for "day-to-day" management of a risk, in effect the person accountable for this risk. The risks are owned by Heads of Service / Service Directors and, for risks on the project risk registers, by Project Managers. Even cross-cutting risks are allocated each to a specific Head of Service/Service Director to own.

Cross-cutting risks - West Berkshire Council defines cross-cut risks as those that affect more than one Service/Department.

Key Risk Indicators (KRI) - A key risk indicator (KRI) is a metric for measuring the likelihood that the combined probability of an event and its consequence will exceed the organization's risk appetite and have a profoundly negative impact on an organization's ability to be successful. West Berkshire Council is using an extensive number of performance indicators, many of them acting as the organisation's KRIs.

Key Control Indicators (KCI) - A Key Control Indicator (KCI) is a metric that provides information on the extent to which a given control is meeting its intended objectives in terms of loss prevention, reduction, etc. In so doing KCIs can be used to measure the effectiveness of particular operational risk controls at a particular point in time.

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2024/25 Performance Report Quarter Two

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 December 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Report Author:	Jenny Legge / Beatriz Teixeira
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4541

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 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.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027 priorities scheduled for this financial year.
- 2.2 To review those areas where performance is below target i.e., reporting as ‘Red’ or ‘Amber’, and note that the appropriate remedial action is in place.

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 on performance for this financial quarter on measures used to monitor the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027](#). For details of performance year to date, please view Appendix A or online via our Performance [Portal Performance](#).
- 4.2 Alongside our targeted measures, we monitor other datasets which provide context and demand on our services themed by economy, social care and the environment.
- 4.3 To present assurance on the health of our organisation, an overview of turnover, sickness absence, and financial management are also included.
- 4.4 The delivery of the activities and actions used to monitor the Council Strategy Priority Area continued to progress well.

- 4.5 The status of two priority areas were Green (achieved and/or exceeded): (i) Services We Are Proud of, and (v) Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice
- 4.6 One was Amber, (5% within target or behind schedule): (ii) A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All
- 4.7 The remaining two were Red, (5% below target or had not been achieved): (iii) Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency, and (iv) The Prosperous and resilient West Berkshire
- 4.8 The **Influencer measures** indicated that the district's economy continued to be robust overall. The unemployment rate and number of empty business premises rose slightly, but the average house price grew as did the number of parking tickets sold in WBC car parks. Crime numbers increased sharply, and pressure on our social care and housing services remained high.
- 4.9 The council's **corporate health indicators** focus on resource management and a controlled financial approach to manage service demand. This quarter the budget manager forecast was an overspend of £11.4m, however actions were in place to potentially reduce this to £2.1m, with a General Fund balance of £3.9m
- 4.10 The turnover figure for all staff has increased to 13.77% for the current year, from 12.47% in 2023/24.
- 4.11 Sickness absence has increased to 10.24 days per worker in the current year from 8.75 days per worker for the same period in 2023/24.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.2 The Council Strategy 2023-27 was approved by Full Council in October 2023, and is a four-year strategy accompanied by a detailed Delivery Plan divided into the Priority Areas:
- (a) Services we are proud of
 - (b) A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all
 - (c) Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
 - (d) A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire
 - (e) Thriving communities with a strong local voice
- 5.3 **Council Strategy Priority Areas** – data returns at the end of this quarter showed that two of the five priority areas had a status of Green (on schedule or delivered), one of Amber (behind schedule, within 5 % of target), and two of Red (ceased/delayed or more than 5% below target).
- 5.4 For details of performance please view Appendix A of this report or online via our Performance [Portal Performance](#).

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

5.6 Overall, the status of this priority area was Green. Activities to note were:

5.7 The level of litter and graffiti across the district was judged as “Good”.

5.8 Staffing issues impacted the number of council functions that were digitised, and the amount of Council Tax collected this quarter.

5.9 [Our Employee Value Proposition and Careers site](#) was launched to encourage people to join West Berkshire Council.

5.10 The number of staff on training funded by the apprenticeship levy and young people involved in work experience and project work opportunities were much higher than targeted.

5.11 We continued to employ fewer agency staff, saving money, and providing consistency for our clients.

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

5.13 Overall, the status of this priority area was Amber. Activities to note were:

5.14 The conversion of West Point into five homes was completed and ready for people to move in to.

5.15 Echoing a national trend, the number of rough sleepers in West Berkshire continued to rise and be much higher than targeted (21 v 6).

5.16 Although, we recruited more [Shared Lives](#) carers (adult fostering), the overall number reduced due to placements ending and some carers retiring. The service continued to work to hard to recruit more carers to support adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems or other needs that make it harder for them to live on their own.

5.17 Recruitment of [children’s Foster Carers](#) continued to be a high priority. The recently launched regional Fostering Hub will also support those thinking about fostering. The service ran recruitment campaigns to support this area further.

5.18 Our refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy was approved at the [Executive Committee on Thursday, 25 July 2024](#).

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

5.20 Overall, the status of this priority area was Red. Activities to note were:

5.21 Of the 22 suitable WBC car parks, 9 now have 20 or more spaces for electric vehicle charging points (EVCP), and as one of these was in the Kennet Centre, the Car Club can place a fully electric car there. A further 12 were installed on streets without off-street parking.

5.22 So far this year, our residents recycled, composted or reused 55% of their household waste, and we continued to deliver activities designed to educate about the benefits of recycling.

5.23 Priority Area 4: A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire

5.24 Overall, the status of this priority area was Red. Activities to note were:

5.25 The first phase of works on Newbury Wharf neared its completion.

5.26 Plans for sports at Faraday Road supported by the local sporting community were agreed.

5.27 The percentage of pothole/road edge repairs completed (92% this quarter, 88.6% for the year so far), was impacted by staffing issues. Although the defects were temporarily "made safe" by the contractor, they were not completed.

5.28 60% of flood prevention and drainage improvement schemes were completed as scheduled (3 out of 5)

5.29 Priority Area 5: Thriving communities with a strong local voice

5.30 Overall, the status of this priority area was Green. Activities to note were:

5.31 The number of arts-based events provided in community libraries, which included author interviews, Storytime and craft sessions, was well above target.

5.32 The implementation of a "Health in all Policies" approach was on schedule. This aims to improve health and health equity through cross-sector action on the wider determinants of health: the social, environmental, economic and commercial conditions in which people live.

5.33 Refurbishment projects for Hungerford, Kennet and Northcroft leisure centres were all on track to be delivered to time.

5.34 Non-targeted **Influencer measures** were monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across council services.

5.35 To view detailed information on our Influencer measures visit our Performance Portal via this link: <https://westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance> or Appendix B of this report.

5.36 Overall, the local **economy remained strong**. The unemployment rate rose slightly and there was a 20% spike in the number of empty business rated industrial properties.

5.37 A new data supplier and collection method has been contracted to capture footfall in Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford town centres and data has been recorded from 1 April 2024 onwards.

5.38 The sale of parking tickets in WBC managed car parks was 8% higher than the same period last year and 7% higher than last quarter. In June, the average house price increased overall and for first time-buyers by 7% on the previous quarter. The number

of planning applications had been trending downwards over the last year but had increased by 6% on the previous quarter.

- 5.39 The number of all crimes rose significantly by 32% on the same period last year and by 42% on last quarter. An increase of 17% on the same period last year in anti-social behaviour incidents reflected the national picture.
- 5.40 The **social care indicators**, for children's social care referral and enquiry numbers were generally fewer than in previous quarters, although numbers of children in care cases, and children subject to a child protection plan were higher. Requests for support on our Adult Social Care services continued to increase, along with the number of people needing long-term care. The number of households on the Housing Register remained high as did the number of households prevented from becoming homeless.
- 5.41 Within the **Environment** indicators, the number reported fly-tipping incidents, which had been increasing for the last four quarters, returned to the June 2023 level. The amount of pothole/edge of road repairs completed was impacted by sub-contractor availability. A number of defects were temporarily "made safe" instead of being completed.
- 5.42 **Corporate Health:** This quarter the budget manager forecast was an overspend of £11.4m. There were actions to reduce the overspend totalling £5.1m and Service Action Plans containing further mitigations and transformation of £4m, which if achieved would reduce the forecast overspend to £2.1m and result in a General Fund balance of £3.9m.
- 5.43 As reporting on the halfway point of the year, turnover has been calculated as both a 6 monthly and projecting annualised figure. Using the annualised turnover, this would see turnover of 13.77% if the same number of staff left in the second half of the year. This would see an increase from 12.47% to 13.77%.
- 5.44 Q1 and Q2 shows annualised working days lost to sickness per person was at 14.5% (1.49 working days) above the reported Q2 2023/24 annualised figure of 8.75 days lost per employee. The Q2 2024/25 figure of 2.88 working days lost per person is 28% (0.64 working days) above the reported Q1 2024/25 figure of 2.24 days lost per person.

Proposals

- 5.45 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. (For detailed performance data, please refer to Appendix A)
- 5.46 To note the action plans put in place to address under performance for measures rated "Amber" and "Red".
- 5.47 No requests to amend/reprofile targets were made during this quarter due to the work being undertaken to refresh the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This quarter's results show that good progress had been made towards the delivery of the majority of measures under all five Council Strategy Priority Areas. Strong performance levels have been achieved as some of the initiatives listed in the Delivery Plan were completed and key services delivered to our district.
- 7.2 Action plans are in place to address performance for measures rated "Amber" and "Red". Councillors are asked to note these actions and overall performance summarised above and detailed in Appendix A.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: Detailed year to date performance tables.
- 8.2 Appendix B: Influencer measures dashboard.
- 8.3 Appendix C: Other achievements and news.
- 8.4 Appendix D: Purpose and background.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

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

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

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High Priority and Business as Usual (PAMs) Performance

Priority Area	Reporting Type	30 Sep 2024	
		Count	Performance (YTD)
Services we are proud of	High Priority	3	1 x ▲ 1 x ★
	Business as Usual	22	3 x ▲ 1 x ● 9 x ★ 3 x ?
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	8	1 x ▲ 4 x ★ 2 x ?
	Business as Usual	37	7 x ▲ 1 x ● 14 x ★ 3 x ?
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	High Priority	2	1 x ★ 1 x ?
	Business as Usual	24	4 x ▲ 9 x ★ 7 x ?
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	High Priority	4	1 x ▲ 1 x ?
	Business as Usual	16	2 x ▲ 1 x ● 9 x ★ 1 x ?
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	6	1 x ▲ 5 x ★
	Business as Usual	26	4 x ▲ 10 x ★ 7 x ? 1 x ?!

	30 Sep 2024
Total	148







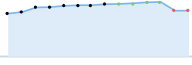


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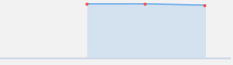

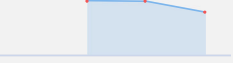

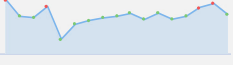

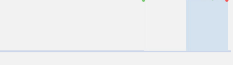

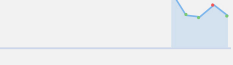

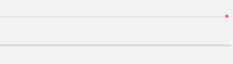
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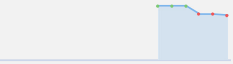

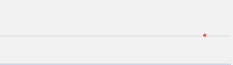

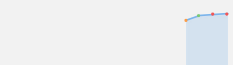

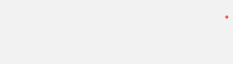


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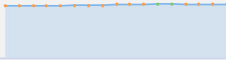




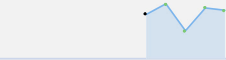

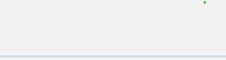

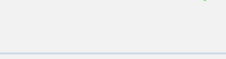
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Clear all

Needs Improvement									
Sub Measure Category	Reporting Type ↑	Measure Reference	Measure Name	Reporting Freq.	Period Actual Sparkline	YTD RAG	YTD Actual	YTD Target	
Services we are proud of	High Priority	SIG-KPI-029	No. of Council services/functions digitised and/or transformed	Quarterly		▲	13	18	
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	CSC-KPI-022	No. of children's social workers who have more than 18 cases allocated to them	Quarterly		▲	21	0	
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	High Priority	ENV-KPI-052	% of permanent pothole/road edge repairs completed within 28 days of order date, excl. exemptions	Quarterly		▲	88.6%	95.0%	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	ENV-KPI-010	Adopt the Parking Strategy (31/03/24)	Quarterly		▲	Delayed (R)		
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-052	% of Executive Committee decisions made in private (Part II)	Quarterly		▲	3.6%	1.0%	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-024	Amend the Investment and Borrowing Strategy to consider social, ethical and environmental impacts	Annual		▲	Delayed (R)	Complete (G)	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-001	No. of people subscribed to WBC e-newsletters	Quarterly		▲	66,719	76,000	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-006	Produce and adopt a Council Strategy Delivery Plan to be reviewed annually by end of September	Quarterly		▲	Delayed (R)	Complete (G)	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-022	Total revenue spend variation compared to net budget set	Annual		▲	£3,500,000	£1,000,000	

A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-039	% achieving the national standard for reading, writing and maths combined (KS2)	Academic Year		▲	54.5%	60.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-014	% of Children in Care who've had 3 or more placements during the past year	Quarterly		▲	16.1%	12.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-041	% of disadvantaged pupils achieving national standard for reading, writing and maths combined (KS2)	Academic Year		▲	25.3%	44.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-053	% of households where relief duty ended with secure accommodation for at least 6 months	Quarterly		▲	50.2%	55.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-011	% of repeat plans for children subject to a CP Plan for a second subsequent time (within 2 years)	Quarterly		▲	20.6%	15.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-002	% of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better	Quarterly		▲	80.0%	100.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-020	Increase in the number of shared lives carers (households) compared to Mar 2023	Quarterly		▲	36	38
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-051	No. of rough sleepers at the end of each quarter (maximum)	Quarterly		▲	21	6
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-055	No. of weeks taken to be assessed by the Emotional Health Academy (Average)	Quarterly		▲	7	6
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-035	% of Car Club vehicles that are electric	Quarterly		▲	14.3%	16.7%
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-009	% of Contract Award reports, for contracts worth £100k+, that included a Carbon Impact Assessment	Quarterly		▲	0.0%	100.0%




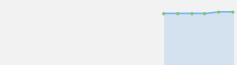

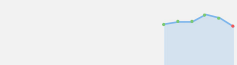



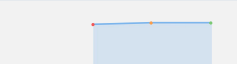

Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-002	% of council light vehicle fleet that are ultra-low emission	Quarterly		▲	57.1%	68.0%	
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-031	Agree a minimum EPC assessment rating for all WBC owned properties (31/12/24)	Quarterly		▲	Ceased (R)	On schedule (G)	
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-042	Launch a mentoring programme for children with local businesses (31/03/24)	Quarterly		▲	Ceased (R)	Ceased (R)	
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-036	No. of meetings with our rural cluster businesses to understand key needs and actions	Annual		▲	0	1	
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-088	Review Adverse Weather plan to ensure the Drought Framework is up to date (31/10/24)	Quarterly		▲	Delayed (R)	On schedule (G)	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	PH-KPI-019	% of weekly Activity for Health Programme class capacity being met (quarterly average)	Quarterly		▲	61.3%	65.0%	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-075	Adopt the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (30/06/24)	Quarterly		▲	Delayed (R)		
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-043	Investigate discounted travel through ticketing for activities in town centres (31/12/24)	Quarterly		▲	Ceased (R)	Ceased (R)	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-005	No. of people attending physical events and activities across Culture and Library Services	Quarterly		▲	14,563	26,000	
Near Target									
Sub Measure Category	Reporting Type ↑	Measure Reference	Measure Name	Reporting Freq.	Period Actual Sparkline	YTD RAG	YTD Actual	YTD Target	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-035	Council Tax collected as a % of Council Tax due	Quarterly		●	55.4%	56.1%	

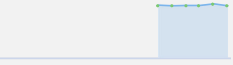
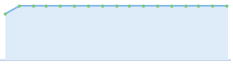
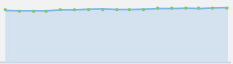
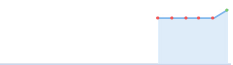


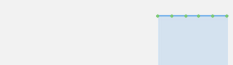

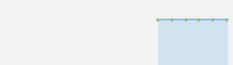


A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-032	% of all schools (inc. Academies and iCollege) judged good or better by Ofsted	Quarterly		●	93.8%	96.3%
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-039	Hold a Local Business Conference to promote the district and create more jobs (31/12/24)	Quarterly		●	Behind schedule (A)	On schedule (G)
Achieved								
Sub Measure Category	Reporting Type ↑	Measure Reference	Measure Name	Reporting Freq.	Period Actual Sparkline	YTD RAG	YTD Actual	YTD Target
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-055	Hold Advisory Group Open Forums	Quarterly		★	3	2
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-030(i)	No. of corporate and school staff enrolled onto training funded through the apprenticeship levy	Quarterly		★	90	28
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-030(ii)	No. of young people attending/involved in work experience and project work opportunities	Quarterly		★	29	10
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-044	No. of school holiday sessions (including lunch) delivered	Termly		★	23	22
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-071	No. of activities delivered to increase education about recycling	Quarterly		★	14	12
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-027	No. of meetings held with Thames Water and Environment Agency to report on activity and investment	Annual		★	1	1
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-057	No. of new EV charging points installed on streets without off-street parking	Quarterly		★	12	10
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-034	No. of schemes delivered for residents to install solar panels and other clean energy systems	Annual		★	1	1


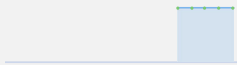
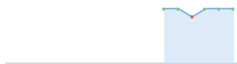
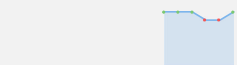





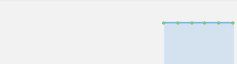
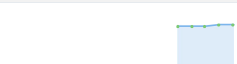
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-033	No. of schemes delivered for residents to switch to greener energy providers at lower cost	Annual		★	1	1
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-010	No. of arts-based events provided in community libraries by arts providers	Quarterly		★	51	10
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-105	No. of Community forums held	Quarterly		★	1	1
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-102	No. of initiatives implemented with partners to reduce and prevent crime in West Berkshire	Quarterly		★	11	2
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-087	No. of visits to West Berkshire sports and leisure centres	Quarterly		★	506,903	500,000

Services we are proud of	High Priority	FPP-KPI-023	Maintain the general fund at the Section 151 minimum (as per budget setting papers)	Annual		★	7,000,000.0	7,000,000.0
Services we are proud of	High Priority	SIG-KPI-093	No. of posts filled by agency staff at West Berkshire Council	Quarterly		★	153	160
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	ASC-KPI-024	CQC rating of at least "Good" for our Adult Social Care Service	Quarterly		★	Good	Good
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	FPP-KPI-030	Deliver 5 housing units for displaced persons at West Point (31/08/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	Complete (G)
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	DR-KPI-063	Develop a strategy to bring back empty home into use (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)

A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	ES-KPI-061	Refresh and adopt the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (30/09/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	Complete (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	High Priority	ENV-KPI-074	Adopt a Local Transport Plan (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	High Priority	ENV-KPI-050	% of non-principal road network (B and C roads) in need of repair	Annual		★	3.0%	3.0%
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	High Priority	ENV-KPI-049	% of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair	Annual		★	3.0%	3.0%
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	CW-KPI-098	Refresh the Playing Pitch Strategy (30/06/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	CW-KPI-095	Refurbish Hungerford Leisure Centre (30/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	CW-KPI-093	Refurbish Kennet Leisure Centre, Thatcham (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	CW-KPI-094	Refurbish Northcroft Leisure Centre (30/06/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	High Priority	PH-KPI-042	Set up a new fund with Greenham Common Trust for mental health support initiatives (31/10/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-054	% of petitions responded to within a maximum of 4 months	Quarterly		★	100.0%	80.0%
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-053	% of public questions at formal meetings responded to in writing within 5 w/days of the meeting	Quarterly		★	100.0%	100.0%

Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-038	Develop and introduce WBCs Employee Value Proposition (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	On schedule (G)
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-068	Maintain at least a satisfactory level of litter, detritus and graffiti (YTD)	Q2, Q3 & Q4		★	Good	Satisfactory
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-040	Non domestic rates collected as a % of non domestic rates due	Quarterly		★	60.7%	60.7%
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-006	Review the Community Infrastructure Levy customer journey (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	On schedule (G)
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-020	% of 'Major' planning applications determined within time	Quarterly		★	92.3%	66.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-021	% of 'Non-Major' planning applications determined within time	Quarterly		★	79.0%	77.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-003	% of desired outcomes of a S42 safeguarding enquiry, expressed by the subject, 'fully' achieved	Quarterly		★	69.9%	68.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-015	% of our Care Leavers (aged 19-21) in employment, education or training	Quarterly		★	68.7%	60.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-001	% of parents receiving support from the Early Response Hub reporting that their concerns had reduced	Quarterly		★	64.8%	65.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-015	% of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Foundation Stage (EYFS)	Academic Year		★	66.8%	67.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-003	% of repeat referrals to Children's Services within 12 months of a previous referral	Quarterly		★	21.5%	22.0%





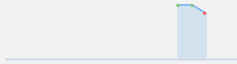

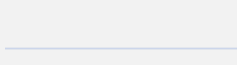

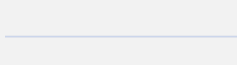

A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-005	% of S42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and that risk was reduced/removed	Quarterly		★	97.2%	90.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-050	% of verified rough sleepers in West Berkshire offered accommodation when first identified	Quarterly		★	100.0%	100.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-018	% of vulnerable adults supported through the Three Conversations Model - preventative level (Tier 1)	Quarterly		★	92	87
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-022	Adopt the Adult Social Care Home Provision Strategy (31/05/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-033	Av. No. of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims	Quarterly		★	18.3	18.5
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-004	No. of affordable homes completed	Annual		★	238	125
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-048	No. of local authority maintained schools	Quarterly		★	64	64
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-020	Ofsted rating of at least "Good" for our Children and Family Service	Quarterly		★	Good	Good
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-056	Produce a plan to support school staff and governors for Ofsted inspections (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	Complete (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-003	% of all suitable WBC public car parks with 20 or more spaces to have EV charging available	Quarterly		★	40.9%	36.0%
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-066	% of household waste recycled, composted and reused	Quarterly		★	55.2%	53.0%

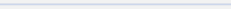

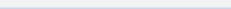

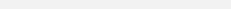

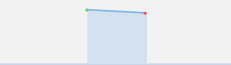



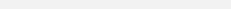
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-013	Approve an approach to ensure new contracts over £100k include carbon neutrality plans (30/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	Complete (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-069	Complete a full review of kerbside recycling (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-058	Complete the A4 Crown Mead, Thatcham cycle route improvements (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-070	Confirm plan to phase out the charge on garden waste collection (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-029	Update the Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-027	% of businesses interested in investing in WB provided with guidance, support and signposting	Quarterly		★	100.0%	100.0%
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-048	% of flood prevention and drainage improvement schemes, listed in the capital programme, completed	Quarterly		★	60.0%	50.0%
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-051	% of the unclassified road network in need of repair	Annual		★	5.0%	5.0%
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-054	Adopt the Highway Asset Management Plan (31/12/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-055	Adopt the Potholes Strategy and Plan (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-009	Adopt the Public Transport Plan (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	On schedule (G)




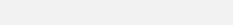

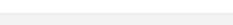
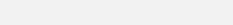

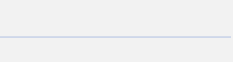

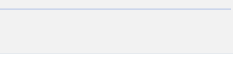
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-090	Agree plans for sports at Faraday Road through working with the local sporting community (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-031	Complete the first phase of works on Newbury Wharf (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-037	Pilot first Estate Plan (31/12/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-033	Review & update the Bond Riverside regeneration programme, incl. a Place-Making Strategy (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)

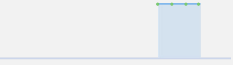

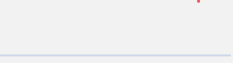

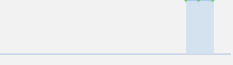

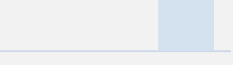

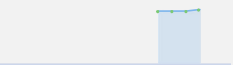

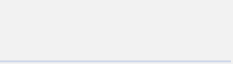
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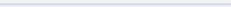
Sub Measure Category	Reporting Type ↑	Measure Reference	Measure Name	Reporting Freq.	Period Actual Sparkline	YTD RAG	YTD Actual	YTD Target
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-099	% of physically inactive adults (16+ years old) (as per the Active Lives Survey)	Annual		★	22.7%	21.0%
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-101	Deliver the annual Members Bids funding programme (Annually in November)	Ann - Q3		★	Complete (G)	Complete (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	PH-KPI-041	Implement a "Health in All Policies" approach at West Berkshire Council (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-063	Implement a pilot 20mph limit zone with a view to District wide roll-out (31/03/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-096	Increase accessibility accreditation levels for our sports and leisure facilities (30/06/25)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-059	Plan a refreshed offer for Home to School Transport (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	Complete (G)	On schedule (G)

Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-046	Resurrect the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership (31/12/24)	Quarterly		★	On schedule (G)	On schedule (G)
Sub Measure Category	Reporting Type ↑	Measure Reference	Measure Name	Reporting Freq.	Period Actual Sparkline	YTD RAG	YTD Actual	YTD Target
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	ES-KPI-058	Adopt a plan to close the attainment gap focussing on early years and deprivation (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?		On schedule (G)
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	DR-KPI-003	No. of affordable homes granted planning permissions	Annual		?		125
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	High Priority	CSC-KPI-027	No. of Children in Care aged under 16 placed in unregistered provision	Quarterly		?		0
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	High Priority	DR-KPI-089	Commence trial of extended pedestrianisation hours Newbury Town Centre (31/03/24)	Quarterly		?		
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	High Priority	DR-KPI-090	Adopt the West Berkshire Local Plan (30/06/25)	Quarterly		?		On schedule (G)
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-034	% of employees who would recommend West Berkshire Council as a great place to work (EES)	Biennial		>>		
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-014	% of residents reporting they feel they can influence decision making (31/03/2025)	Biennial		>>		
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-017	% of residents satisfied with the way WBC runs things (31/03/25)	Biennial		>>		
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-061	% of total turnover in West Berkshire Council	Quarterly		?		13.8%

Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-033	Employee engagement score recorded in the Employee Experience Survey (EES)	Biennial		>>	
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-010	Refresh and approve the West Berkshire Vision (31/12/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Services we are proud of	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-039	Review how we recognise staff performance and make changes accordingly (31/12/24)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ASC-KPI-014	% of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family	Quarterly		?	78.0%
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-011	% of affordable dwellings (social rent and shared ownership) that are social rent	Ann - Q3		>>	
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-032	% of all schools judged good or better by Ofsted in Leadership & Management and Quality of Education	Quarterly		>>	
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-036	Average attainment 8 score (KS4)	Academic Year		?	54
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-043	Average attainment 8 scores for disadvantaged pupils (KS4)	Academic Year		?	35
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-037	Average Progress 8 score per pupil (KS4)	Academic Year		?	0.0
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	CSC-KPI-021	No. of active fostering households (including family and friends)	Quarterly		?	93
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-005	No. of affordable housing units delivered through partnership working	Ann - Q3		>>	

A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-001	No. of residential completions	Annual		?	513
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-002	No. of residential units granted planning permission	Annual		?	538
A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-057	Review the structure of WBC education provision to maintained schools (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-030	% of total zero carbon tariff electricity used	Annual		?	100.0%
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-062	Adopt the Active Travel Plan (31/12/24)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-060	Complete a cycle storage audit of the District (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-061	Create a plan to provide new / additional secure bike storage at key locations (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-032	Develop a plan to ensure all WBC owned properties meet the minimum EPC rating (30/04/26)	Quarterly		>>	
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-028	Go live with Grazeley solar farm (31/05/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-037	No. of additional kWp installed for generating renewable energy	Quarterly		?	100
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-020	No. of District-wide initiatives to enable local action on carbon reduction	Quarterly		?	2

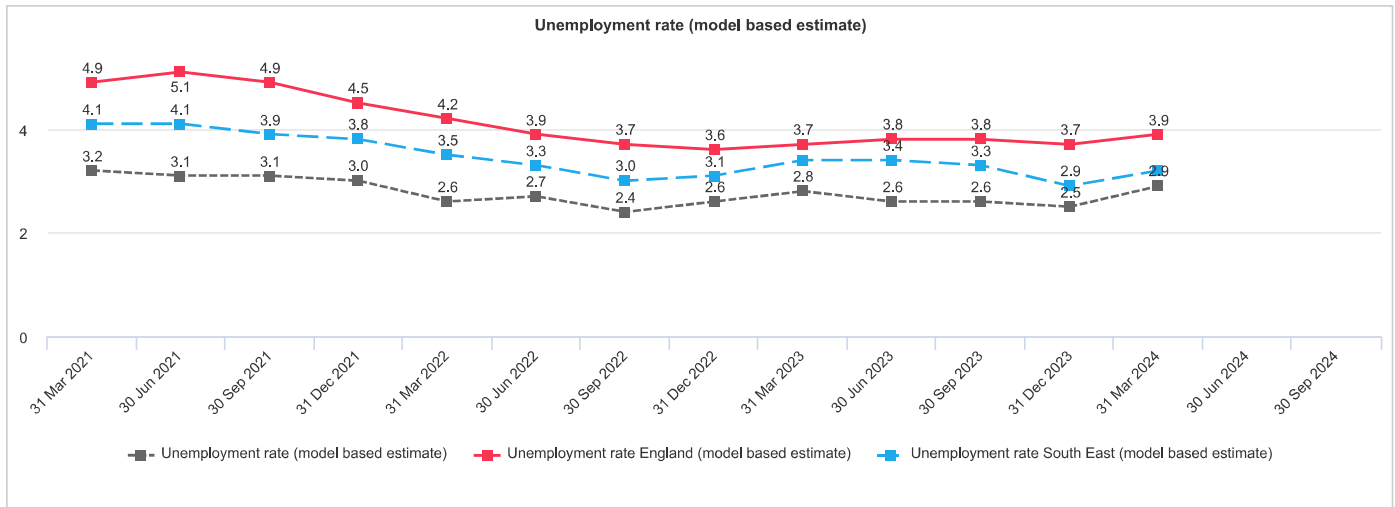
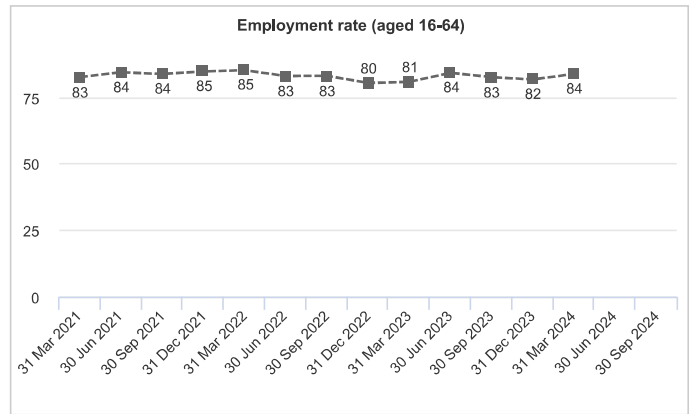
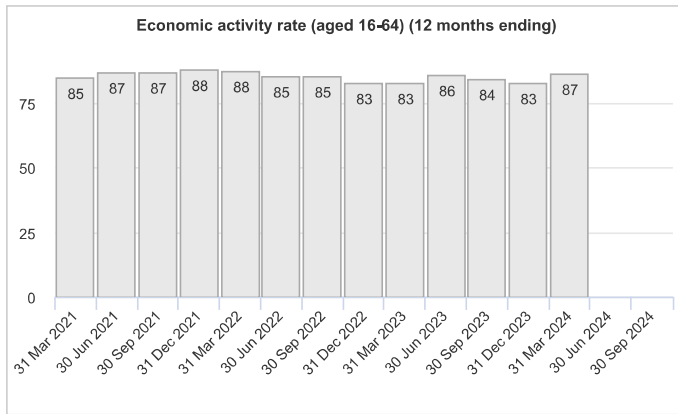
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-016	Work with partners to review the AONB strategy for our area (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-046	No. of residents engaged in WBC funded life-long learning	Academic Year		?	800
A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire	Business as Usual	ES-KPI-060	No. of supported internships for young people with EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plans)	Quarterly		?	4
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-013	% of newly built playgrounds that have disabled access equipment installed	Quarterly		?	100.0%
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-010	% of parish/town councils requesting support to develop Neighbourhood Development Plans assisted	Quarterly		?	100.0%
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	SIG-KPI-015	% of residents 16-24 reporting they feel engaged in decision making (Biennial Residents' Survey)	Biennial		>>	19.7%
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	PH-KPI-043	Adopt a plan to tackle social isolation, especially in rural areas and for young people (31/12/23)	Quarterly		?	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-092	Adopt a renewal and re-provision programme for our council-owned leisure facilities (31/12/24)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-100	Co-produce a framework for C&YP accessing work experience with local companies (01/06/24)	Quarterly		?	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	DR-KPI-041	Funding available as grants for village halls through Rural England Prosperity Fund	Annual		>>	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	ENV-KPI-064	No. of Electric Vehicle charging points in our villages	Quarterly		?	

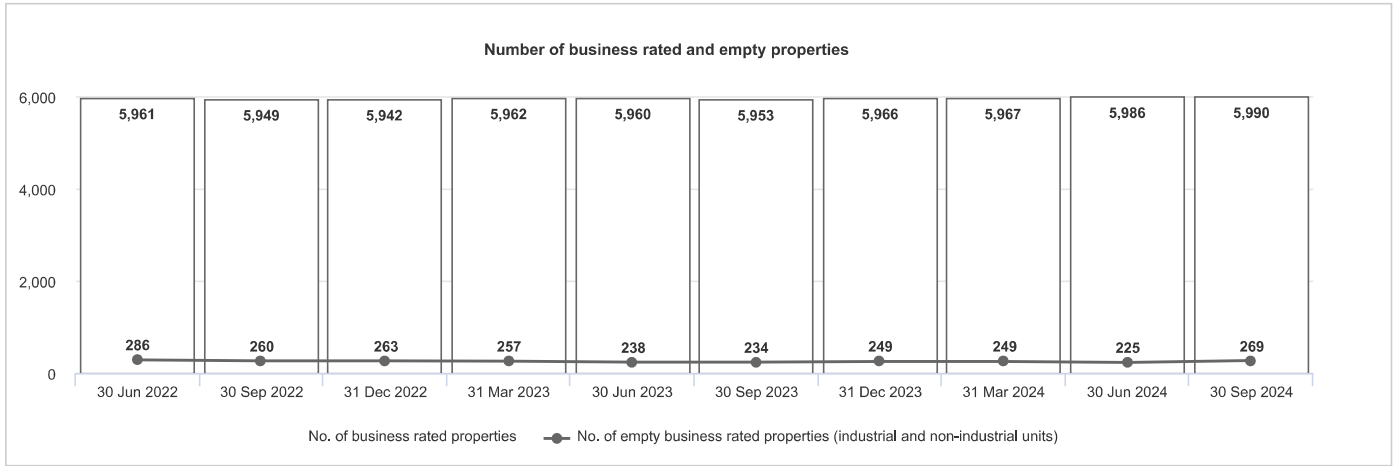
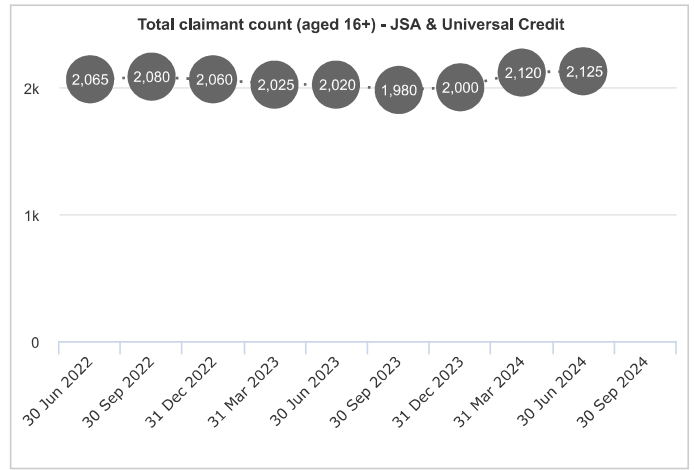
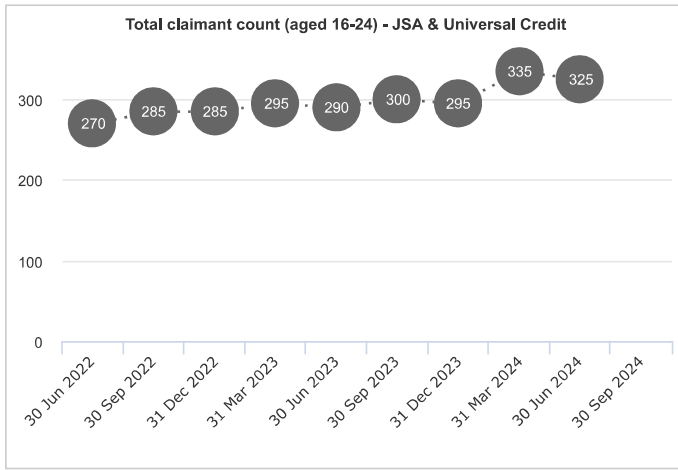
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	CW-KPI-097	Refresh the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan (31/03/24)	Quarterly		?	
Thriving communities with a strong local voice	Business as Usual	FPP-KPI-014	Retender the outcomes based Voluntary Sector Prospectus (31/03/25)	Quarterly		?	On schedule (G)

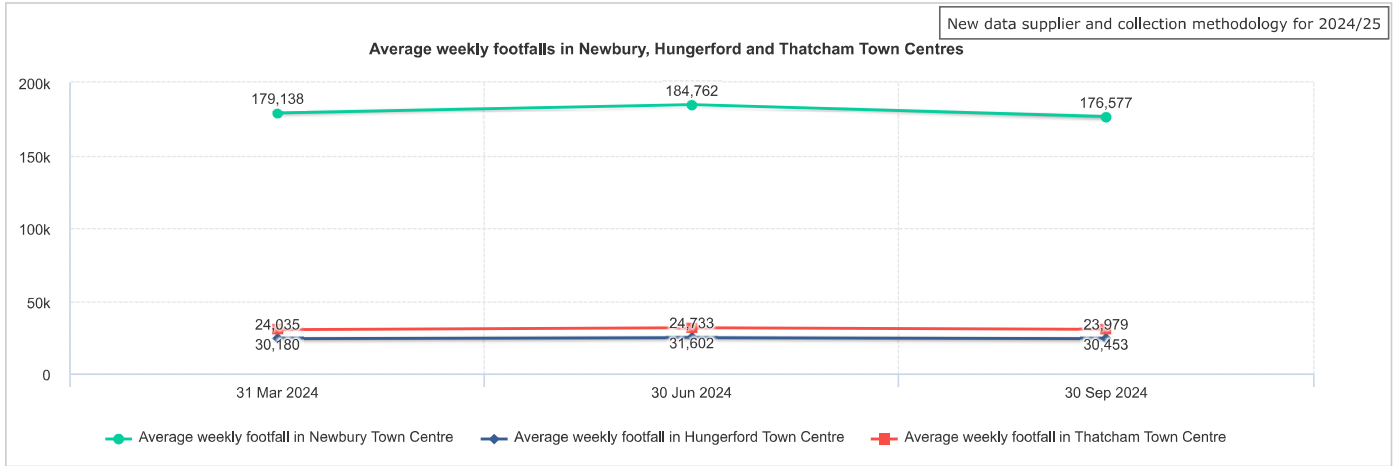
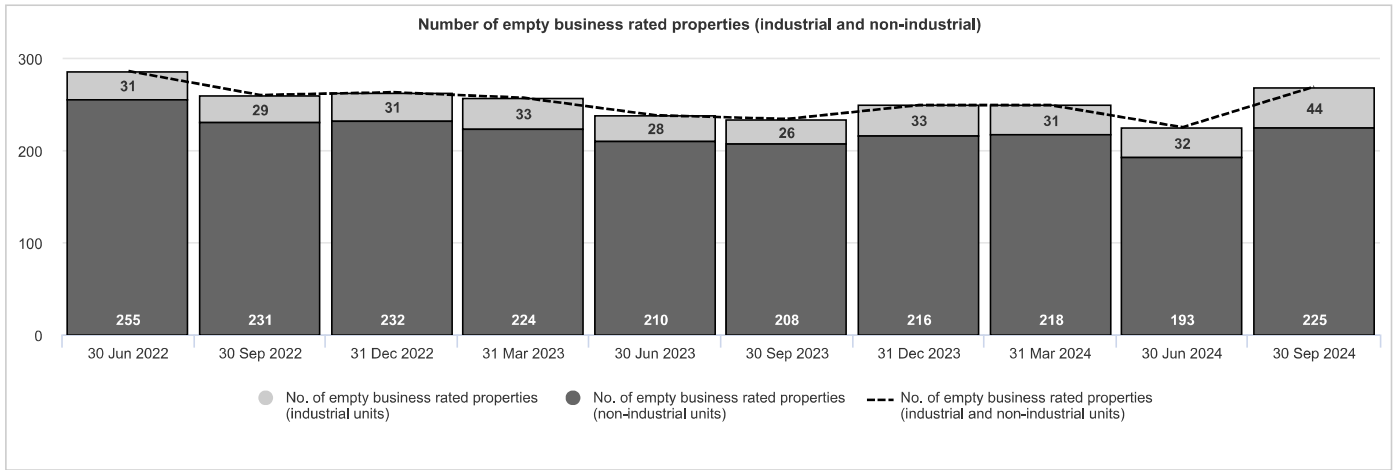
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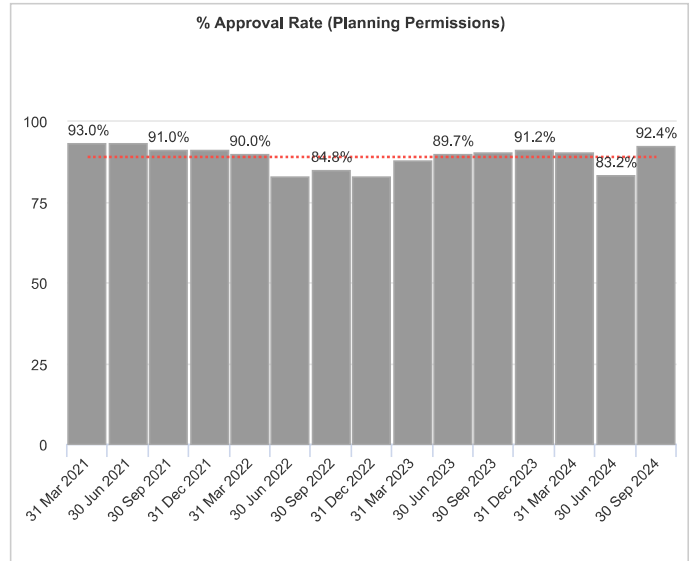
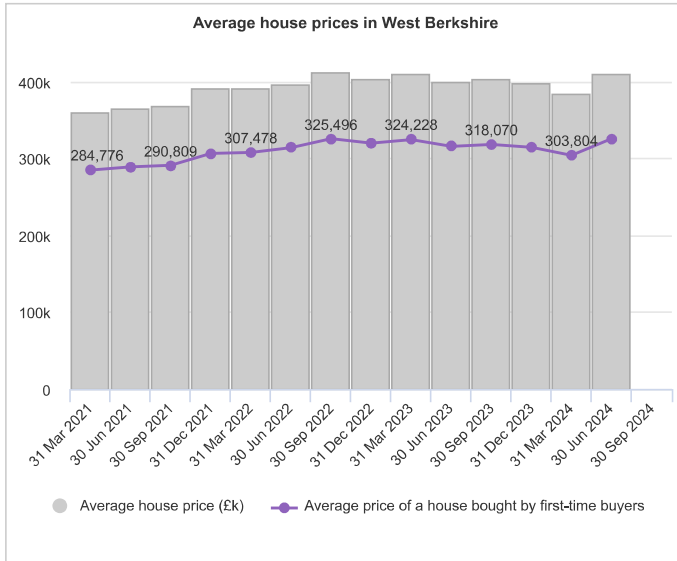
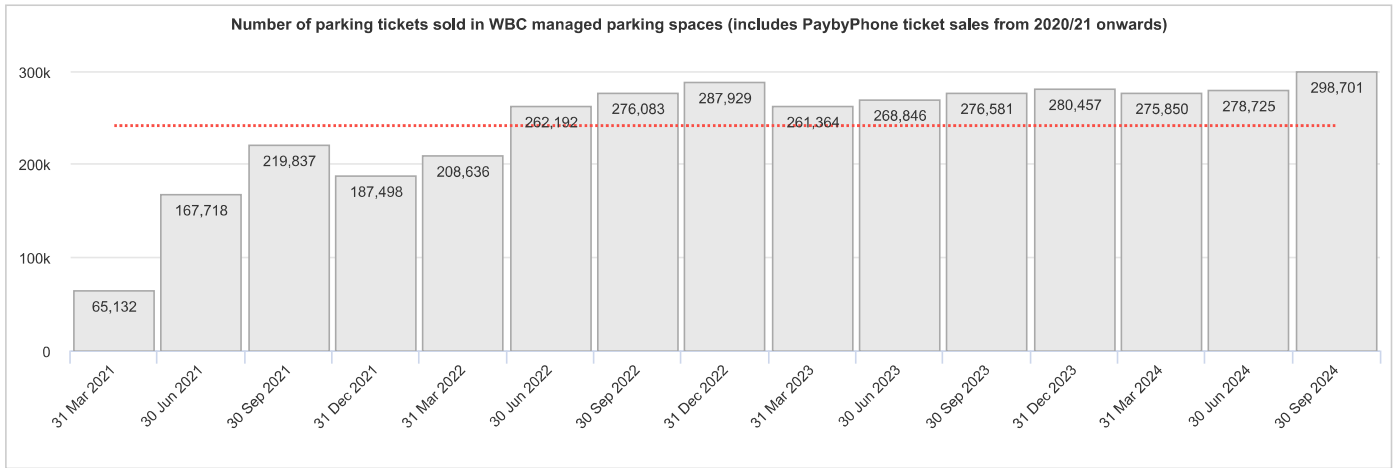
Appendix B: Influencer Measures Dashboard

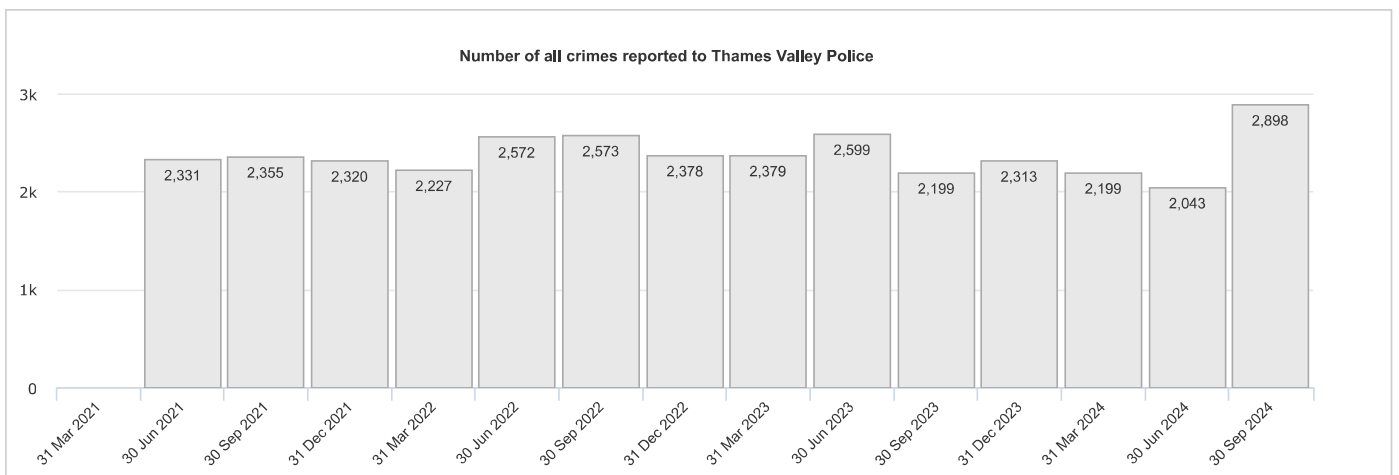
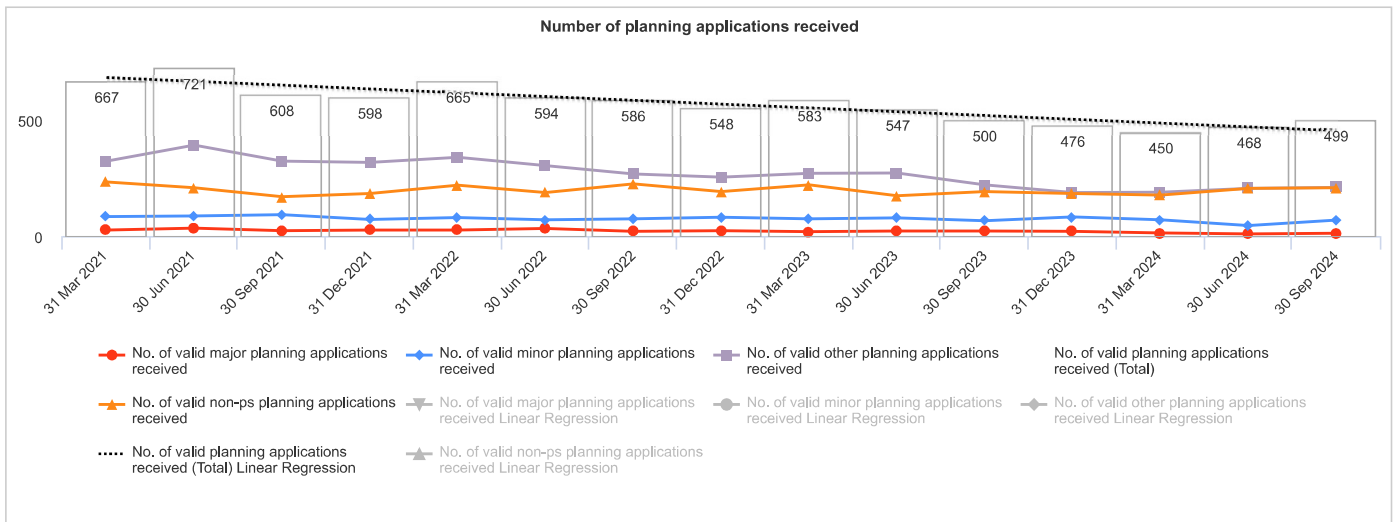
Economy



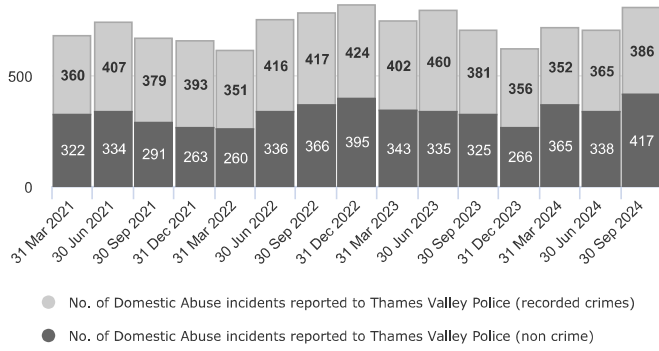




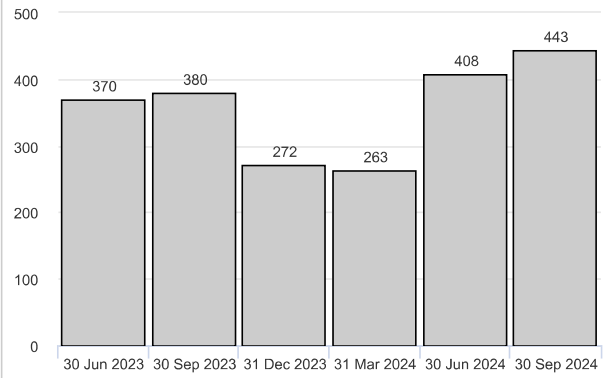




Number of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to Thames Valley Police (crime and non-crime)

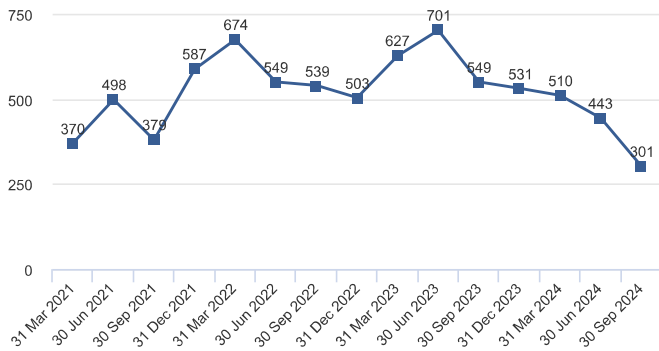


Number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to Thames Valley Police for West Berkshire Local Policing Area (LPA)

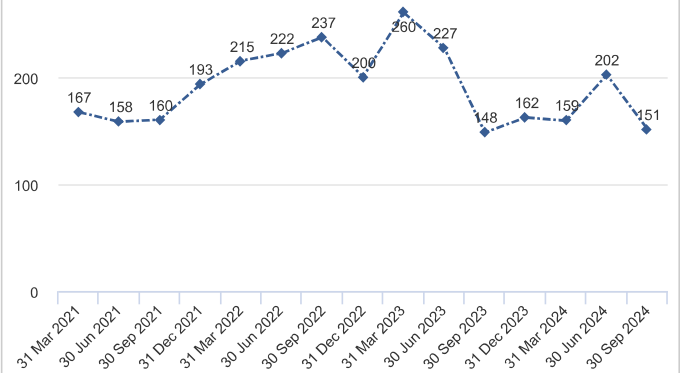


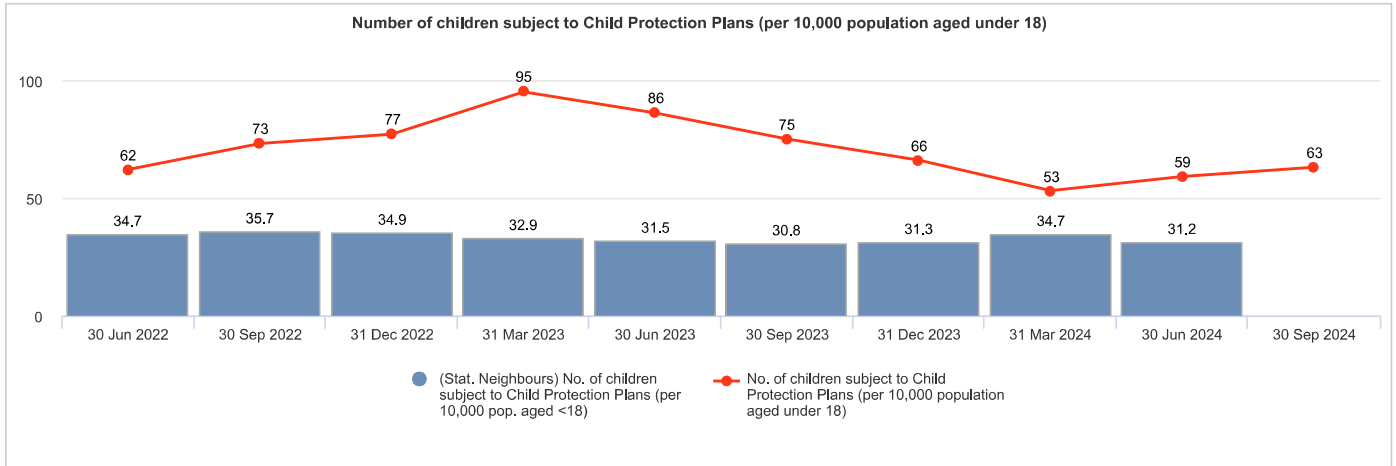
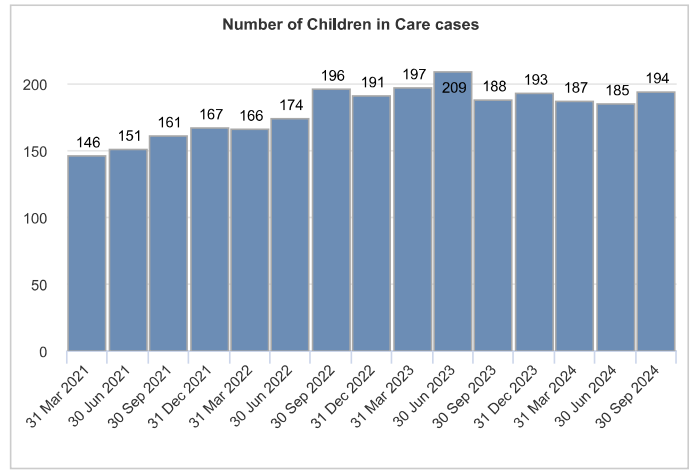
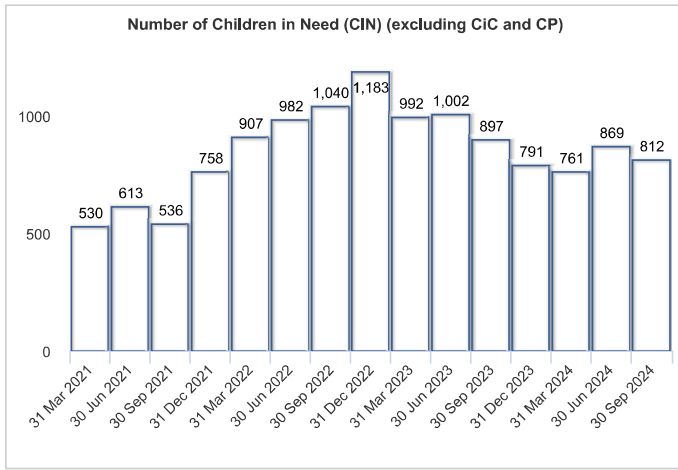
Social Care

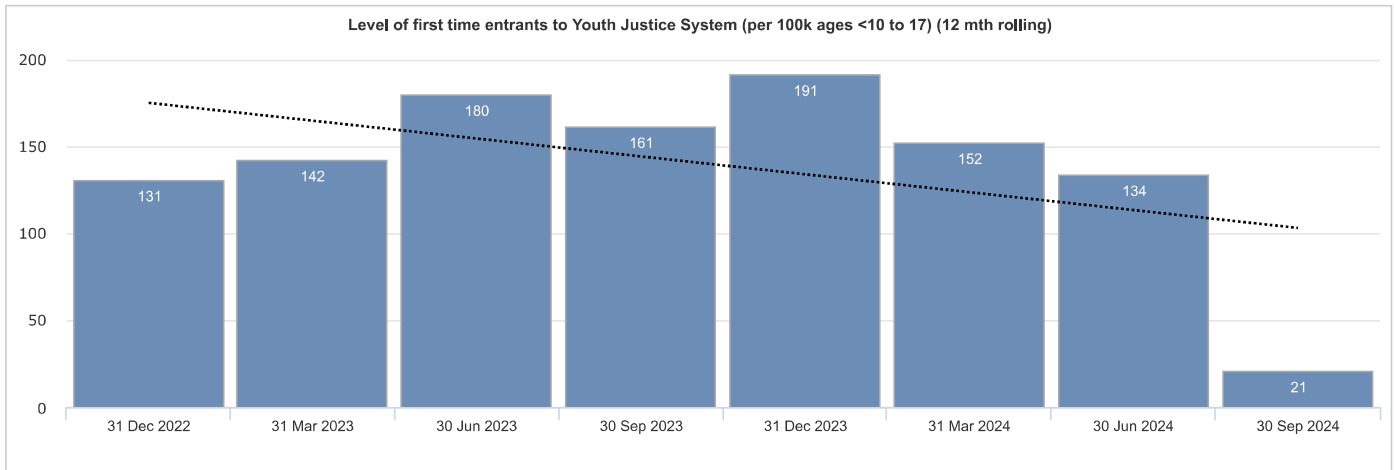
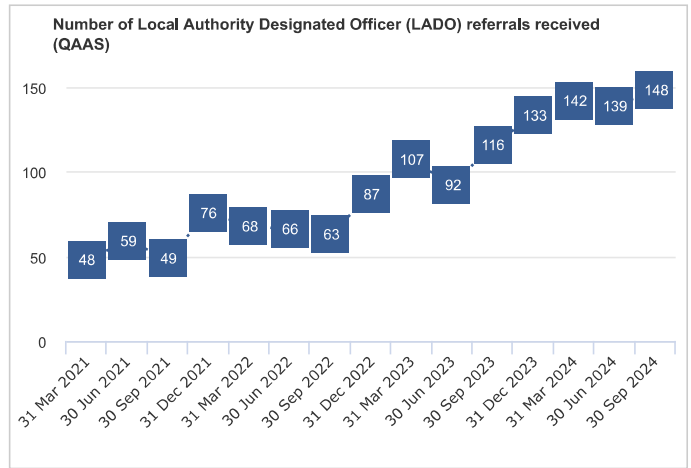
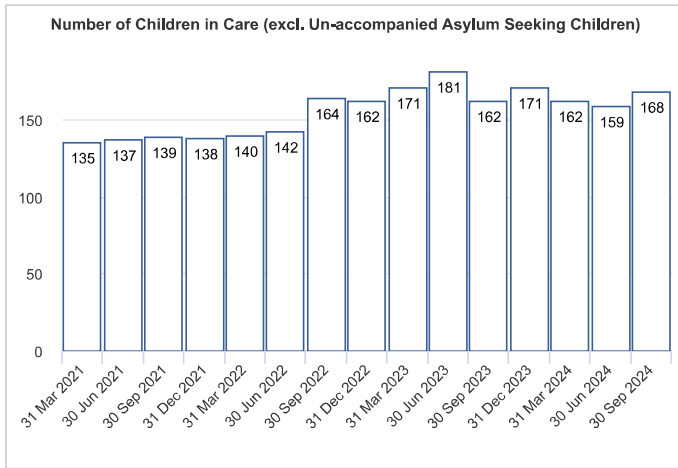
Number of referrals received (as a subset of Contacts) (Children and Family Services)

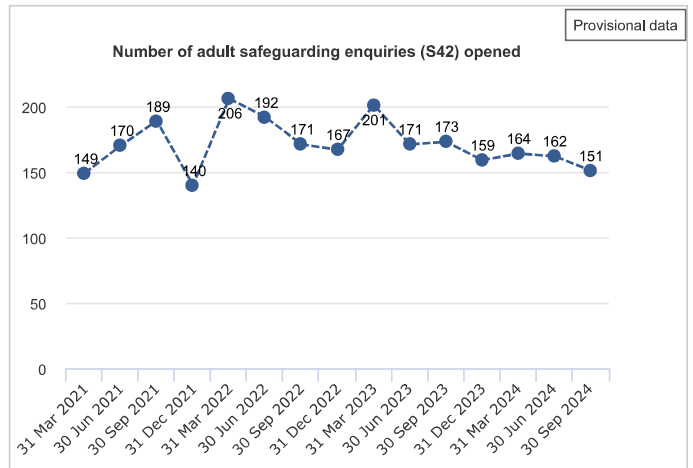
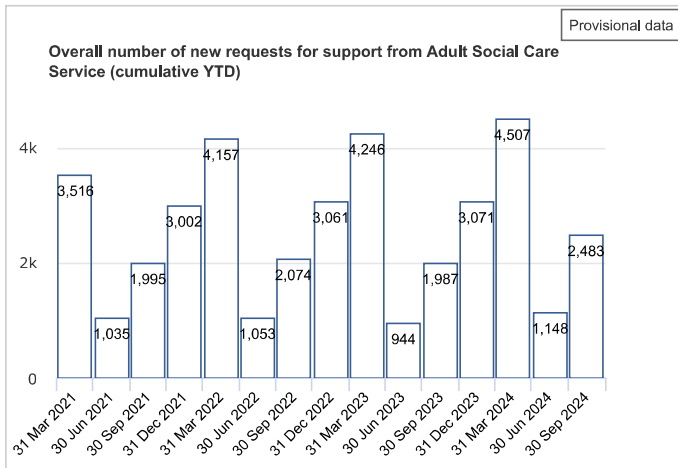
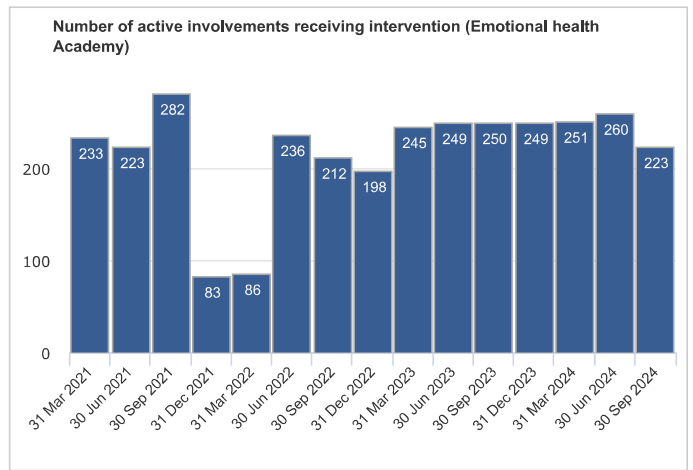
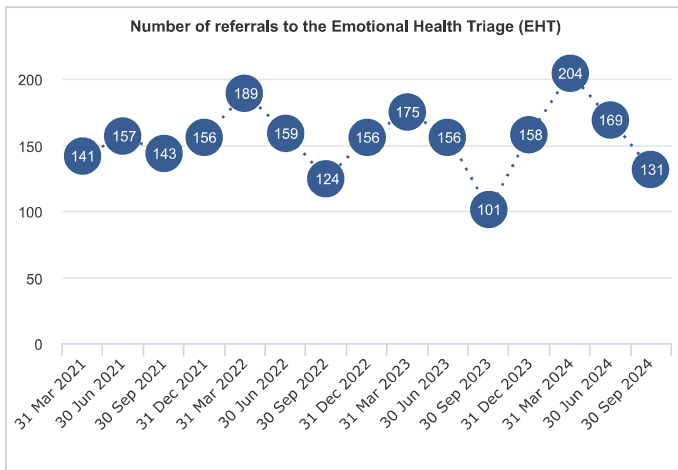


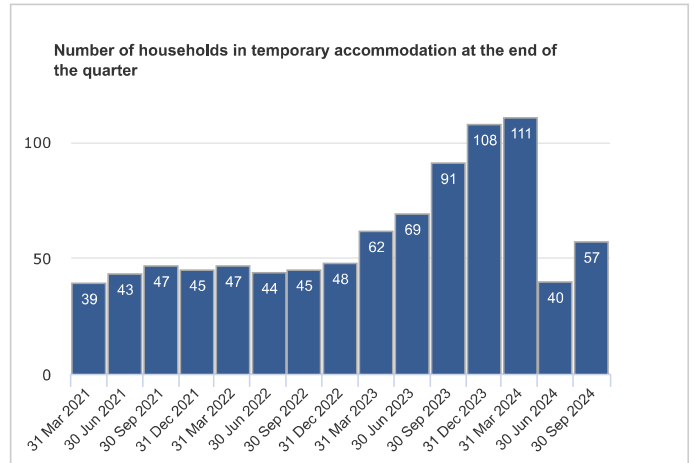
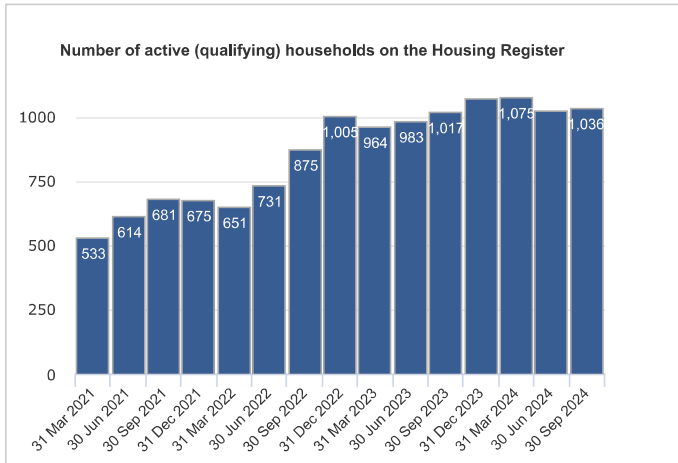
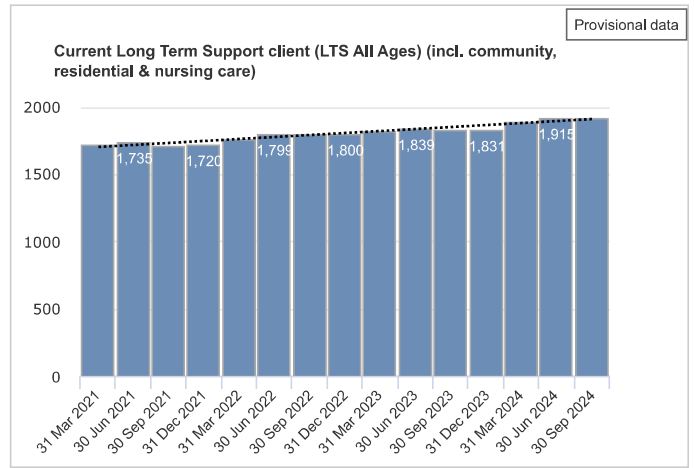
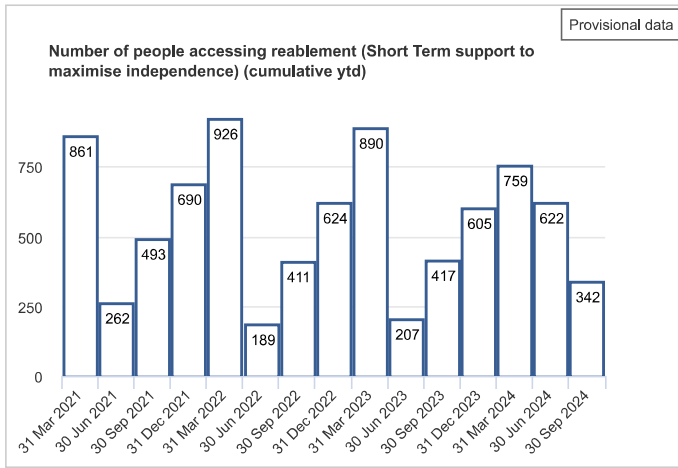
Number of S47 (Child Protection) enquiries initiated



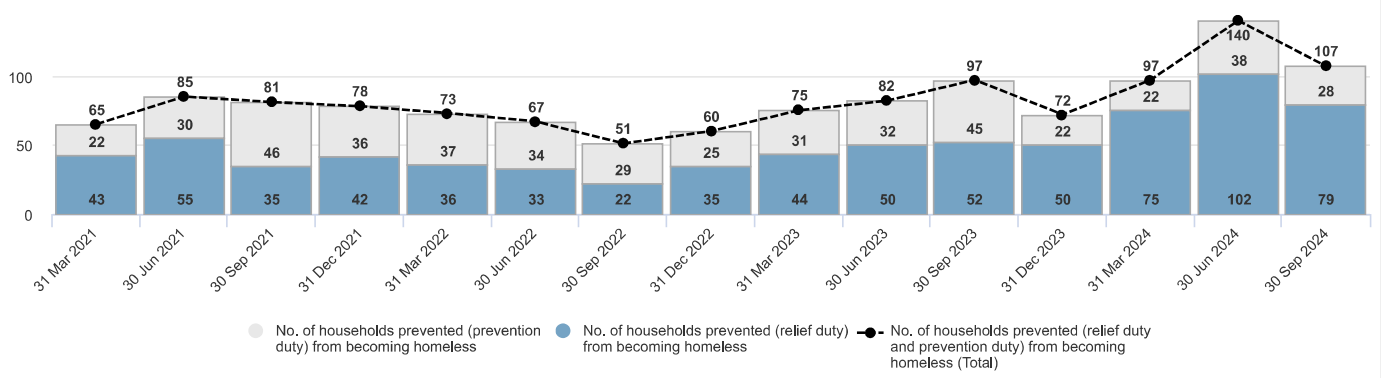




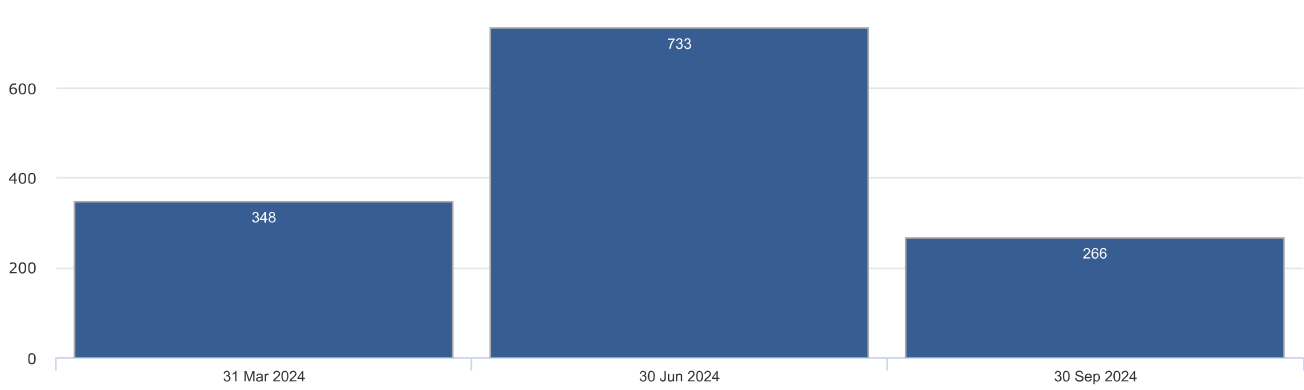




Number of households prevented (relief duty and prevention duty) from becoming homeless (TOTAL)

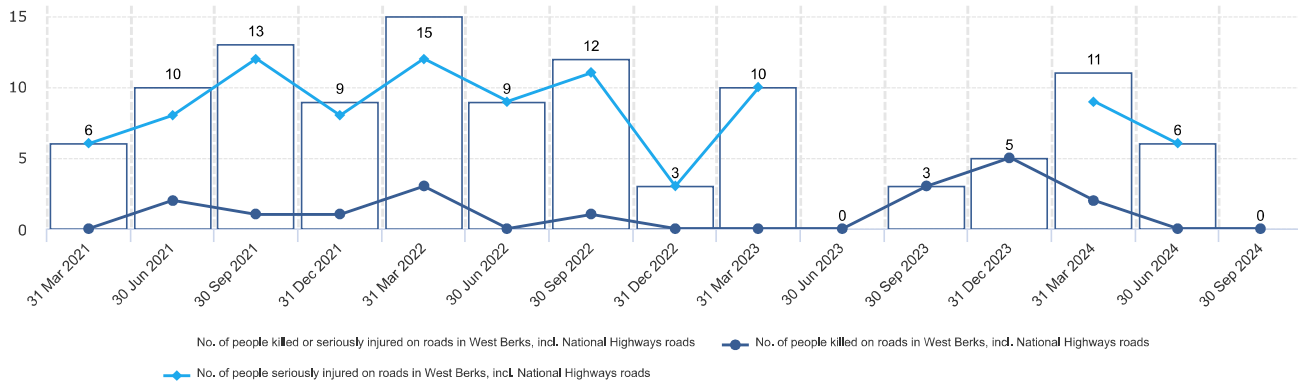


Number of Household Support Fund applications approved



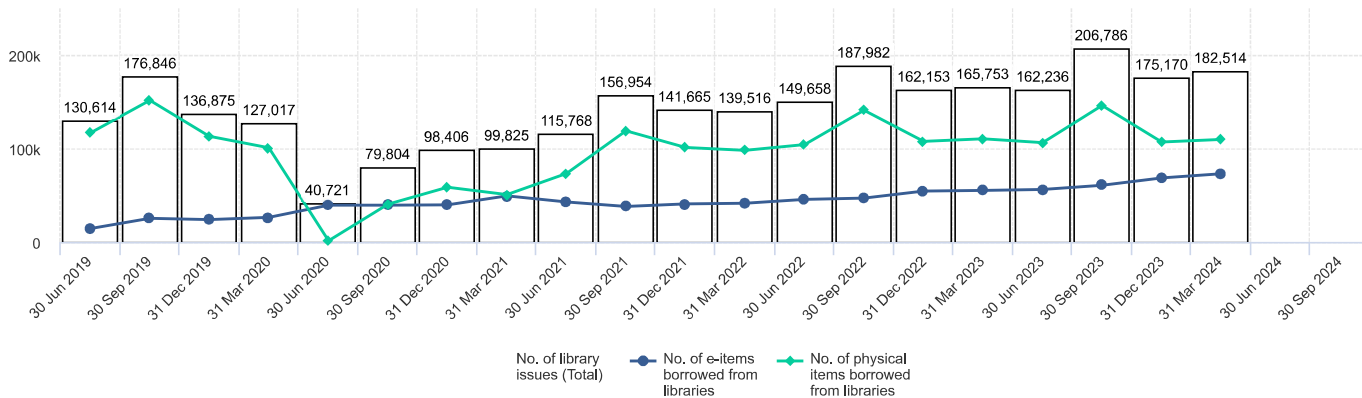
Seriously injured data not yet available from the Police at Q2 2024/25

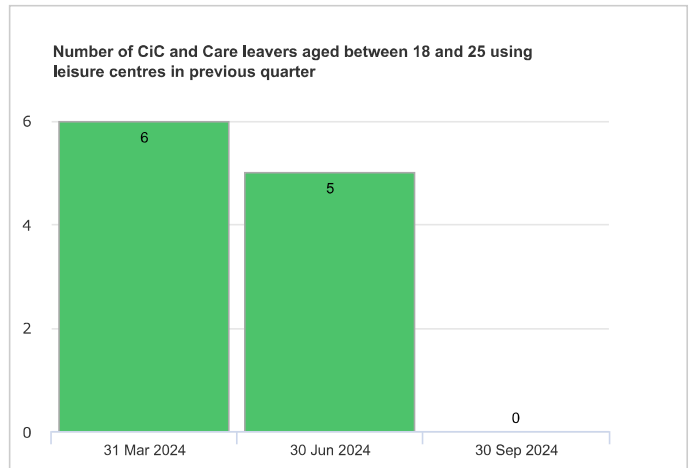
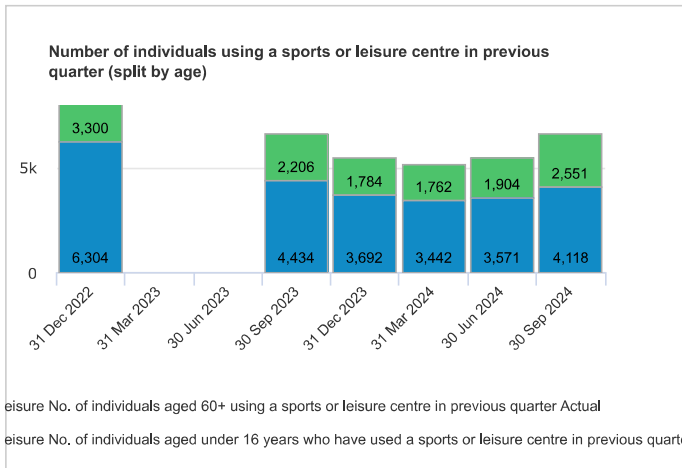
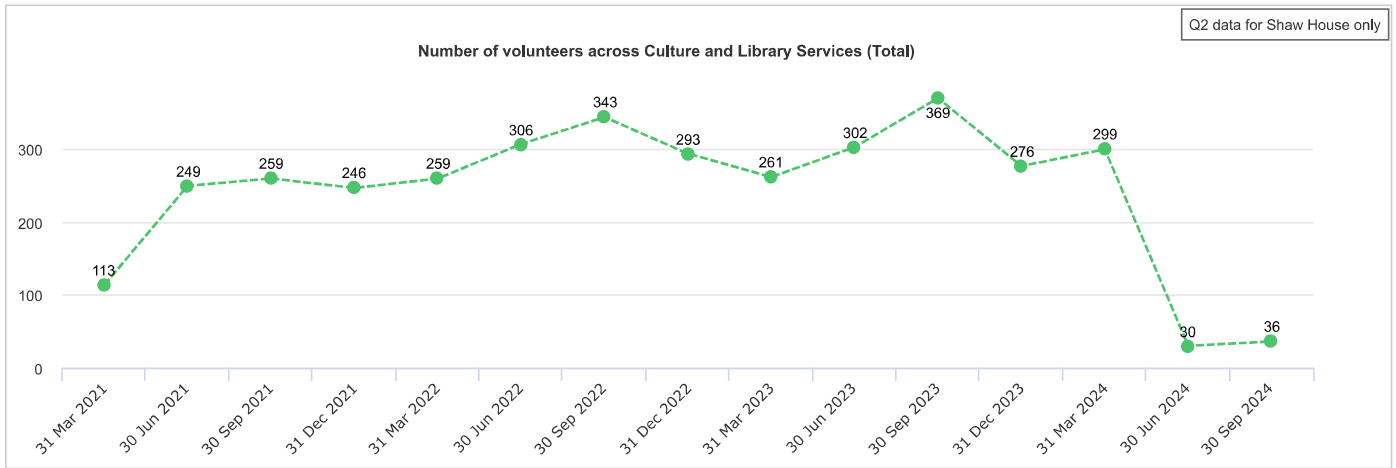
Number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in West Berkshire, incl. Highway Agency roads (Total)



Environment

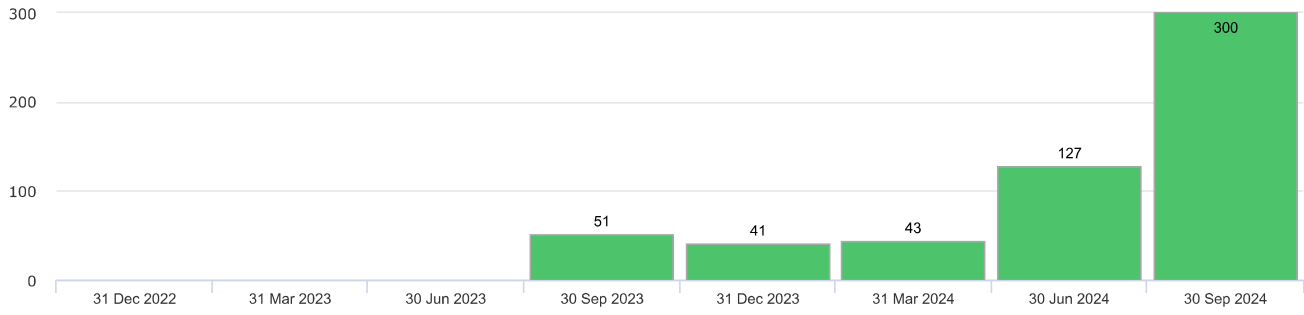
Number of library issues (Total)





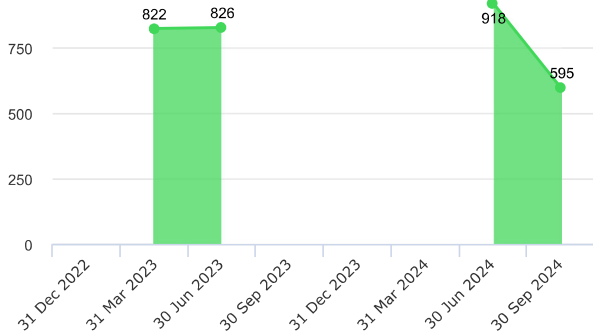
Inconsistencies in the data are due to the move over to a new contract/supplier.

Number of individuals who have attended the Activity for Health programme in previous quarter

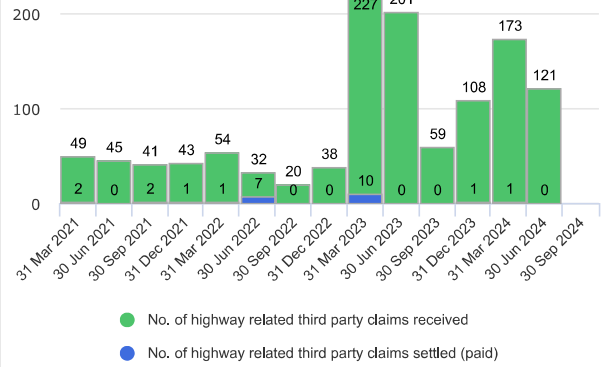


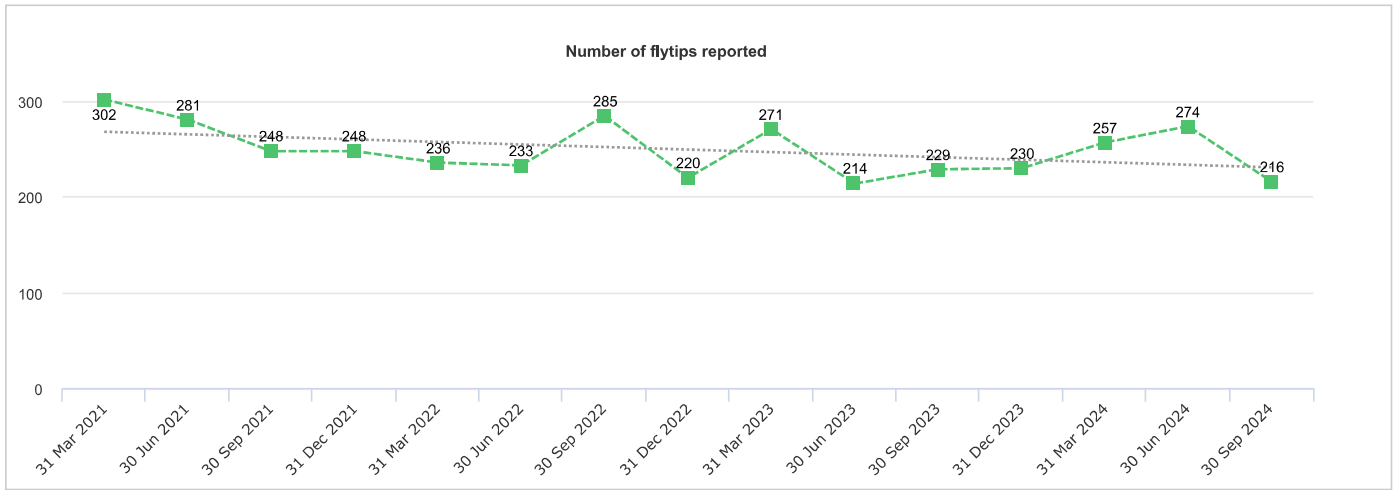
Number of permanent pothole/edge of road repairs (single defects) completed

(NB: New dataset for 2022/23 - Can be more than one pot hole per order (includes Edge of road, Permanent Carriage Repair, Permanent Pothole Repair of less than 1m2))



Number of highway related third party claims received and settled





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2024/25
July -
September

1,000,000
Online bookings



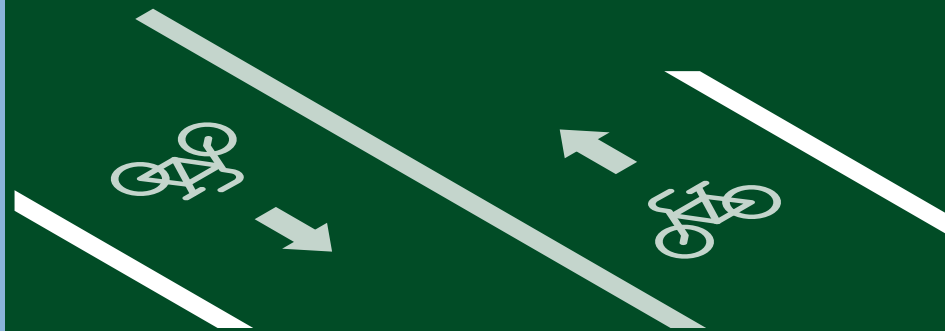
Summer Reading
Challenge returns!



£4.6m

Northcroft leisure
centre refurbishment

Stockcross Village
to Newbury
Linkway opened



Berkshire
Prosperity Board



Community Connect
– winning bus name
is Jam Buster

Cheaper
through-pavement
charging in WB



Rural businesses benefit
from grants totalling

£160,000



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Appendix D: Purpose and Background

Purpose and Background

To set out the Council's performance against a suite of performance measures, called Influencer measures, Priority Area Measures (PAMs), and Corporate Health Indicators e.g. mandatory training, and provide assurance that the priority areas in the [Council Strategy 2023-2027](#) are being managed effectively. Where performance has fallen below the expected level, information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action will be presented 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.

Conventions Used

The measure categories are:

Influencer Measures	Non-targeted measures that are reported to either illustrate the demand on a Department/Service, or provide context for the demand, e.g. economic activity.
Priority Area Measures (PAMs)	Targeted measures, reporting as a number, percentage or progress rating. These are taken from measures provided in individual Department/Service Plans, which show the council's progress against the high level Priority Areas in the Council Strategy, e.g. 'A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all'.
Corporate Health Indicators	A mix of targeted and non-targeted measures that show performance/levels against a suite of measures, including mandatory training, turnover and establishment, and sickness absence.

In-year, quarterly performance is captured for all performance measures to allow for analysis of actual progress. The RAG rating for number and percentage measures is based on a 5% tolerance from target. For progress rating measures, the RAG rating is based on a service's prediction of whether the target will be achieved by the end of the financial year or target date.

A series of symbols is used throughout the report to illustrate the status of a measure:

Symbol	Description
★	Performance is equal to, or better, than target
●	Performance is just below target, and within the 5% tolerance
▲	Performance is below target, and outside the 5% tolerance
?	No actual value
n/a	Performance scheme is 'No target', e.g. used for Measures of Volume
n/r	Actual value is not reported for that reporting period, as the measure has a different planning pattern, e.g. annually instead of quarterly

The statuses for progress measures (those with a target date) are:

- On Schedule (G) - on target to meet the deadline (Green)
- Complete (G) - completed on time (Green)
- Behind schedule (A) - behind schedule, but is expected to be completed by the deadline (Amber)
- Delayed (R) - the target deadline has been missed (Red)
- Ceased (R) - the activity is no longer being carried out (Red)

A summary of the council's Corporate Health measures are also included, which are a mix of targeted and non-targeted measures that show the organisations performance/levels against, e.g. turnover and establishment, and sickness absence.

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Executive – 12 December 2024

Item 15 – Member Questions

To follow

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Agenda Item 17.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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