

Notice of Meeting



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Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 6.30pm
in the Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday 23 June 2025

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager) on (01635) 519462

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WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 1 July 2025
(continued)

To: Councillors Carolynne Culver (Chairman), Ross Mackinnon (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeremy Cottam, Laura Coyle, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Richard Somner and Howard Woollaston

Substitutes: Councillors Adrian Abbs, Dennis Benneyworth, Paul Dick, Billy Drummond, Alan Macro, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes, Biyi Oloko and Clive Taylor

Agenda

Part I	Page No.
1 Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	1 - 2
2 Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held on 13 March 2025 and the Minutes of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee held on 15 May 2025.	3 - 12
3 Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on recommendations and actions following the previous Committee meeting.	13 - 16
4 Changes to the Scrutiny Structure and the Policy Development Group To provide an update on the changes that have taken place to the Scrutiny Structure and the creation of the Policy Development Group.	17 - 18
5 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 .	19 - 20
6 Petitions To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.	21 - 22

Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 1 July 2025
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|----|---|---------|
| 7 | Capital Financing Report Outturn: Financial Year 2024/25
The capital financing performance report provided to Members reports on the under or overspends against the Council's approved capital budget and proposed reprofiling of planned expenditure into subsequent financial years. This report presents the provisional outturn position for financial year 2024/25 and is subject to external audit scrutiny and review prior to finalisation. | 23 - 24 |
| 8 | 2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn
To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets. This report is Quarter Four, the provisional outturn for the 2024/25 financial year. The report highlights the financial position at outturn and the impact on the Council's General Fund position. This allows the Executive and Revenue and Place Scrutiny Committee to consider the implications of the outturn on the 2025/26 financial year. | |
| 9 | 2024/25 Performance Report Q4
To provide assurance that the priority areas in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 are being managed effectively, and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action. To ensure effective oversight to Councillors, staff and residents regarding progress made towards the achievement of the outcomes detailed in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan. | |
| 10 | Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25
The Annual Scrutiny report for 2024/25 provides a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission, and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. | 25 - 46 |
| 11 | Task and Finish Group Updates
To receive updates from the chairmen of task and finish groups appointed by the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee. | 47 - 48 |
| 12 | Appointment of Task and Finish Groups
To agree the terms of reference and membership for any task and finish groups that the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee may wish to appoint to undertake in-depth scrutiny reviews. | 49 - 50 |



Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 1 July 2025
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- 13 **Executive Forward Plan May to August 2025** 51 - 66
To advise the Committee of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council's Executive and for Members to decide whether to review any of the proposed items prior to the meeting indicated in the Plan.
- 14 **Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme** 67 - 68
To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Committee.

Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Interim Executive Director - Resources

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

Agenda Item 1

Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 1 – Apologies

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

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

SCRUTINY COMMISSION**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2025**

Councillors Present: Carolyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Martha Vickers and Billy Drummond (Substitute) (In place of Jeremy Cottam)

Also Present: Joseph Holmes (Interim Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Interim Executive Director (Resources)), Gabrielle Mancini (Service Lead - Cust Engagement & Transformation), Jon Winstanley (Service Director (Environment)), Kofi Adu-Gyamfi (Service Lead - Climate Change) and Daniel Warne (Waste Manager), Councillor David Marsh, Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Stuart Gourley, Gordon Oliver (Democratic Services) and Thomas Radbourne

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeremy Cottam

PART I**61. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2025 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62. Actions from previous Minutes

Members reviewed the actions from the previous meetings. The following points were noted:

- **218** – The Programme Office had confirmed that project closure statements were available for:
 - Teach West Berks
 - SLA Online procurement (schools traded services)
 - Laburnum (convert an unused former community space to accommodation for the Adult Social Care Central Locality team and their equipment)
 - Market Street Development (Grainger residential development)
- **219** – It was noted that it would not be possible to bring the report on the proposed changes to the Scrutiny Structure to the Scrutiny Commission prior to approval, but it would go to Governance Committee on 29 April before going to Full Council in May. Details of the changes were still to be agreed with the Leader. Several other actions were on hold pending the changes to the scrutiny structure.
- **89, 90 & 91** – It was noted that these actions were very old and Members suggested that it would be useful to have visibility of the corporate programme schedule to be assured that actions were taking place.
- It was suggested a target date and a date for the last update be added for each action.

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- **116** – It was confirmed that the next action would be an Individual Executive Member Decision on priorities related to the Section 19 report, including the funding for the Northbrook flood alleviation scheme.
- **141** – It was agreed that this action could be deleted, since this had become part of 'business as usual' activity.
- **143** – It was confirmed that this action needed to remain open, as the Environment Agency was yet to deploy pollution testing equipment.
- **156** – It was noted that Defra was expected to publish the data by the end of the month. Members challenged the relevance of this action.
- **178 & 180** – It was noted that the Executive Director – Children's Services had asked for these reviews to be deferred to July due to the Ofsted inspections.

Actions:

- **Confirm if Members could be provided with details of the Corporate Programme Schedule.**
- **Amend the Actions Log to include target dates for completion and dates of the most recent action.**

63. Declarations of Interest

During the course of the debate on Item 8, Councillor Ross Mackinnon declared an interest. He said that if a motion was proposed to move to Part II he would not take part in the vote. He considered that as a member of the then Executive he had been libelled by the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group report, which stated that either the Council had misled the High Court, or the Executive had misled the Council and the public. He said he had a direct financial interest in how widely the report is publicised tonight. Therefore, he had a personal and prejudicial interest, and he indicated that he would not take part in the vote.

64. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

65. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

Joseph Holmes (Acting Chief Executive) and Councillor Jeff Brooks (Leader) presented the item on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (Agenda Item 6).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- It was confirmed that financial devolution would be directed to the strategic authority, with integrated grant settlements related to the new powers and services that would be devolved to it, and there could also be a mayoral precept for the strategic authority. It was noted that there would be a fundamental review of local government finance later this year. While there had been some discussion about tax increment financing, and some councils had started to look at tourism taxes, significant financial devolution at local authority level was not being discussed.
- Members expressed concerns about potential impacts on staff, including possible redundancies and relocation. It was stressed that while there would be some economies of scale, it was too early to say how services would be shared across the three local authorities, but it was considered that it would be 'business as usual' beyond senior managers. Also, it was stressed that there would be opportunities

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arising from the change. It was confirmed that there had been no conversations about the location of future offices.

- Members considered that there was an advantage in West Berkshire Council getting ahead of the rest of Berkshire in the local government reorganisation process. This would be helpful in attracting and retaining staff, as well as providing increased certainty to support future planning and delivery of services. Members also welcomed the fact that there had been cross-party involvement in the decision-making process via a one-off devolution advisory group.
- It was suggested that town and parish councils should be engaged and encouraged to think about their future roles. It was confirmed that this would be discussed at the District Parish Council on 30 April. It was felt that there would be opportunities, but more direction was required from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to encourage parishes to step up and to support them with appropriate finance. It was also noted that parish councils could also raise money through their precepts. It was further noted that there were many best practice case studies available.
- It was confirmed that residents would be engaged in the process, with opportunities for face-to-face conversations. However, plans were yet to be agreed, since it was still very early in the process.
- There was discussion about Local Plans and housing targets. It was confirmed that work was underway to look at this, and this would continue over the spring and summer, with similar work being undertaken for other plans and policies.

RESOLVED to note the report.

66. **Waste Management Strategy**

Councillor Stuart Gourley (Executive Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways), and Daniel Warne (Waste Manager) presented the Waste Management Strategy (Agenda Item 7).

The following points were discussed in the debate:

- Concerns were expressed that the trolley system for recyclables would have reduced capacity compared to the current option.
- It was suggested that people who were not recycling should be given support. Officers indicated that they already offered 1-2-1 support to help people manage their waste and work out what could be recycled.
- Members asked how other local authorities that had already moved to three weekly collections had addressed concerns about odours from nappies, dog waste, etc. Officers confirmed that this had not been raised as a problem - issues were more around bin capacity. It was suggested that households should dispose of waste responsibly (e.g. using nappy sacks). It was also suggested that the Council should provide both leadership and support, working to mitigate issues as they arose.
- Concerns were expressed about disparities in collection frequencies between flats with communal bins (which would still have weekly collections) and other households. Officers indicated that there was already a disparity. Local authorities that had already moved to three-weekly collections had not raised this as a concern. It was considered impractical to extend the collection frequency for flats with communal bins.
- Members asked about the Christmas period when waste volumes were higher, and collection frequencies may extend beyond three weeks due to holidays. This was

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recognised as an issue, and allowance would be made for collecting extra bags of rubbish left out with bins during this period. Also, residents would be able to use the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

- Officers were asked if fly-tipping and use of public bins might increase with the move to three weekly bin collections. It was stressed that fly-tipping was undertaken by criminals/rogue traders. Some local authorities had seen a reduction in fly-tipping following the move to three-weekly collections. West Berkshire had seen an 8% decrease in fly-tipping last year, which was contrary to the national trend. Increased use of public bins had not been raised as an issue by other local authorities, but this would be monitored. Education and communication would be important to support the changes.
- Concerns were expressed that analysis of the consultation results was misleading - people who had answered 'maybe' when asked if they could cope with the move to three-weekly bin collections had been taken as confirming that they would be able to cope. It was accepted that people may have issues at certain times of year, but it was stressed that mitigations would be put in place to support those who answered 'maybe'.
- Members noted that savings from the move to three-weekly collections had been included in the budget, which pre-empted the adoption of the Waste Strategy. It was explained that this reflected the Administration's direction of travel and if the strategy was not adopted, then it would become a pressure and in-year savings would need to be found. It was suggested that this had been included subject to approval from Executive, however, Members stated that the budget papers had not included that caveat. The Leader stressed that the budget had to anticipate planned changes. Members felt that residents might perceive this as a 'done deal'.
- Officers highlighted that the saving from the move to three-weekly bin collections would be around £150,000, or 0.5% of the annual waste budget. Such a pressure was not considered significant and could readily be accommodated by in-year efficiency savings. If the introduction of the changes was delayed, then the Council would have much larger cost exposures related to the emissions trading scheme. However, Members stressed that £150,000 was a significant level of revenue spend, particularly in the context of the Day Centre closures.
- Members considered the move to a three-weekly bin collection to be a serious degradation to the service and it was suggested that this should have been set out in the Administration's Manifesto. It was refuted that the change was a degradation of service, and it was stressed that it was offset by improvements to kerbside recycling.
- It was noted that savings from the three-weekly collections still needed to be negotiated with Veolia. Members challenged why the Council was making the change if the savings would not be significant. It was suggested that better education could deliver the same improvement in recycling rates. It was acknowledged that change was difficult, but the proposed changes would improve efficiencies and recycling rates, while also delivering reductions in carbon emissions.
- Members asked what would happen if it did not meet statutory waste/recycling targets. It was explained that emerging legislation focused on producer responsibility and the Council would receive funding from producers of packaging waste. The amount that the Council would receive would depend on how effective and efficient its services were. Initial payments reflected the fact that West Berkshire was doing well relative to other local authorities. The proposals would improve effectiveness and efficiencies further.

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- It was noted that there had been an excellent response to the consultation and residents wanted to work with the Council. It was hoped that the proposed changes coupled with additional support would lead to behaviour change, with reduced carbon emissions and waste to landfill.
- Members stressed the need for careful monitoring following implementation of the strategy.
- Clarification was sought about the options for replacing the recycling receptacles. It was explained that the trolley system had 2-3 boxes/bags stacked on a trolley – this system was used in Wales and had received a favourable response in the consultation. The wheelie bin option was similar to the current set-up and provided additional capacity. It was noted that there would be a capital cost for any change.
- Members asked for a future report on implementation of the new recycling system and whether households were recycling their waste correctly.

Action: A future report to be brought to the Scrutiny Commission on implementation of the new recycling scheme.

RESOLVED to:

- note the report;
- request that if budget proposals are put to Council before strategies have been approved (in this case the waste strategy), the administration should make it clear that if the strategy is not agreed, then the proposed associated budget proposals will need to be revisited, and in the case of savings those will need to be found elsewhere;
- request that future Council consultations represent responses accurately, rather than combining 'maybe' and 'yes';
- request that the impact of the proposed changes be monitored; and
- request a future update about whether households are recycling correctly.

67. Sports Hub Task and Finish Group

The Chairman introduced the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group item (Agenda Item 8).

It was noted that the report had been put into the public domain and the Chairman did not consider that there was a constitutional basis for officers preventing this.

The Chairman noted that, in the Chairman's Briefing Sheet, officers' advice was that the report should be discussed under Part II as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in paragraphs 1-3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. However, further explanation had not been provided regarding which information should be exempt.

Concerns had been raised with the Chairman by the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. These had been shared with the other Task and Finish Group Members, but they had made the unanimous decision to proceed with publication.

The Chairman was not prepared to be the Member to propose moving to Part II and opened the floor to Members.

Members felt that the report's recommendations were valuable, but considered that the report should not be discussed in its current format and concerns were expressed about how it was presented and its content. Concerns were also expressed about the process that had been followed by the Task and Finish Group, since they did not believe that a

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right of reply had not been given to all stakeholders, so natural justice had not been served. It was suggested that consideration of the report should be deferred so further work could be undertaken.

Members of the Task and Finish Group refuted the allegation that they had not worked properly and appropriately - they had simply reported their findings. They were determined that it should be heard. They could not recall a similar report, written in good faith by Members with the support of officers, being blocked in this way. Concerns were expressed about the impact of this on the principles of scrutiny.

It was noted that the report contained recommendations relevant to the Playing Pitch Strategy, which was due to be finalised in June. If the report was to be deferred to the July meeting, this would be too late to inform the Strategy. It was suggested if consideration of the report was deferred, then it could be brought back to a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

Councillor Erik Pattenden proposed that the report should not be discussed at this meeting, and that it should be deferred so further work could be undertaken. Councillor Martha Vickers seconded the proposal. At the vote, the motion was carried.

The Chairman proposed that a special meeting be arranged to consider the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group report. Councillor Chris Read seconded the motion. At the vote, the motion was carried.

It was felt that the report was extremely well written and those Members who had proposed deferral were concerned that most of the recommendations be implemented. They would not have used the word 'libel'. They were concerned that there was nothing in the report that could get in the way of those recommendations going forward.

The Leader noted that some of the report's recommendations echoed those of the previous London Road Industrial Estate Task and Finish Group report. However, concern was expressed that witnesses who had given evidence to the Sports Hub review, may not have been aware that their statements would be reported almost verbatim. He cited the Rugby Club as an example. It was suggested that some of the comments could be considered to relate to the financial standing of organisations, and so the report needed to be carefully considered. He was grateful that the report would be deferred, however, it was acknowledged that the report had been put into the public domain and suggested that it could cause considerable embarrassment to those who wrote it. Also, he suggested that the report included statements that he was not convinced could be backed up by evidence. Additionally, it was noted that witnesses listed in the terms of reference, had not been called, and it was suggested that this should be put right.

RESOLVED that:

- the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group report should not be discussed at this meeting, and that it should be deferred so further work could be undertaken; and
- that a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission be arranged to consider the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group report.

68. Appointment of Task and Finish Groups

The Chairman introduced the item on Appointment of Task and Finish Groups (Agenda Item 9).

Councillor Chris Read had volunteered to chair the Project Management Task and Finish Group, and Councillors Adrian Abbs, Antony Amirtharaj, Paul Dick, and Erik Pattenden had volunteered to be members of the Task and Finish Group.

Action: Councillor Ross Mackinnon to confirm details of a second Conservative Member.

Members stressed the need to interview those affected by the projects as well as officers. However, the Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services advised that external witnesses would need to be approved by the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED to note the update.

69. Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Scrutiny Commission received an update from Councillor Martha Vickers on the work of the Health Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 10).

The Committee last met on 11 March 2025 and considered the following items:

- **Oral Health and Dentistry** – Public Health and the BOB ICB provided reports and responded to Members' questions. Access to dentistry was a key concern for residents. Actions for further work were identified and an update had been requested for September 2025.
- **South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)** – an update was provided on progress with implementation of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) improvement programme, alongside an overview of services and performance in West Berkshire. Members had been unaware that there had been problems with the ambulance service, but noted that the service had improved significantly. SCAS was awaiting re-assessment by the CQC. A further update would be programmed in six months. Members of the Scrutiny Commission were encouraged to view the recording.

A task and finish group was underway, reviewing children's mental health and emotional wellbeing in West Berkshire. Two sessions had been completed and the final session with witnesses was programmed for later March. Evidence was being gathered from various partners including health, education, the Council and the voluntary sector. A report would be completed following the sessions which would go to a future meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The next Health Scrutiny Committee meeting was planned for 17 June 2025. The agenda was in the process of being finalised and would include dementia and an update on continuing health care. A draft work programme for 2025/26 would also be reviewed at the next meeting. Members and residents were invited to submit suggestions for future agenda items. All proposals would be put through the prioritisation tool before being scheduled on the draft work programme.

RESOLVED to note the report.

70. Scrutiny Commission Work Programme

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

It was noted that the Executive Forward Plan had not been updated since the previous meeting, so this had not been included in the agenda papers.

Additional items proposed for inclusion in the work programme were:

- Difficulties with adoption of affordable homes built by developers by social housing providers.
- Safer Schools/School Streets

The Chairman had spoken with Councillor Heather Codling, since Health and Wellbeing Board had recently considered reports on housing aspects. Also, the Chairman had

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spoken with Councillor Denise Gaines as Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing. The Chairman also mentioned the sale of existing social houses and the failure of developers to meet their obligations for the number of social homes on new developments, and the consequent risk of attrition of the social housing stock. Members requested that a report should be added to a future scrutiny agenda.

It was noted that School Streets had been discussed at a recent meeting of Transport Advisory Group. TAG is a Part II meeting, so headteachers had been unable to attend to present their views. Councillor Stuart Gourley offered to meet with Councillor Antony Amirtharaj to discuss any remaining concerns he might have. Councillor Amirtharaj was still keen for specific aspects like Safer Schools to be considered at scrutiny.

The reviews of Attainment of Children on Free School Meals and the SEND High Needs Block had been deferred until July due to Ofsted inspections. Reports on the Transformation Programme and Libraries would also be considered at the July meeting.

It was highlighted that the work programme would need to be reviewed in the light of the proposed restructure of the scrutiny function.

RESOLVED to note the work programme.

71. Recommendations Tracker

The Chairman presented a proposal for a Recommendations Tracker (Agenda Item 12).

Officers had researched how other local authorities tracked progress with the implementation and impact of scrutiny recommendations. A version used by Brent Council was put forward for consideration.

The following amendments were suggested:

- That the tracker could seek the Executive Portfolio Holder's view of the impact of the recommendation prior to Scrutiny Commission reviewing it.
- That the actions and recommendations trackers be combined.
- That recommendations not accepted by the Executive should also be tracked to avoid unnecessary repetition in future.

It was suggested that the actions and recommendations trackers could be combined.

Action: That the Principal Policy Officer develop a template for a combined actions and recommendations tracker in consultation with the Scrutiny Commission Chairman.

RESOLVED to note the item.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

DRAFT

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

RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 MAY 2025

Councillors Present: Antony Amirtharaj, Jeremy Cottam, Carlyne Culver, Ross Mackinnon, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Richard Somner and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Sarah Clarke (Monitoring Officer and Interim Executive Director for Resources), Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), and Darius Zarazel (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Laura Coyle

PART I

1 Election of the Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Carlyne Culver be elected as Chairman of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

2 Election of the Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Ross Mackinnon be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

(The meeting commenced at 9.35pm and closed at 9.38pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Actions arising from previous Meetings Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.							
Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Target Date	Last Update	Comments/Update
89	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Consult with town / parish councils to understand what they wanted from the service	Felicity Harrison	In progress	20/06/2025	16/06/2025	It is proposed to bring an update on the Library service to the meeting on 16 September 2025. (NB: The Libraries Review has been removed from the Executive Forward Plan as it was a legacy item.)
90	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Ensure that 'priorities', 'review recommendations' and 'opportunities for future investment are aligned and that targets are set	Felicity Harrison		20/06/2025	16/06/2025	
91	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Libraries report to be updated before submitting it to the Executive	Felicity Harrison		20/06/2025	16/06/2025	
116	11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency Meet with the EA and West Berkshire Council to discuss the Northbrook in Newbury	Thames Water	In progress	20/06/2025		(Links to Action #143) Thames Water have supported with testing of the Northbrook. WBC have started an initial business case, and had initial conversations with the Environment Agency on potential funding opportunities for flood alleviation. The business case is being finalised, but will be managed in line with the emerging draft Section 19 report after the January 2024 district-wide flooding. This will require EA funding. (Also, see Thames Water Q&A #35)
141	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with Councillor Gourley's motion that was passed at March Council.	Cllr Stuart Gourley	In progress	20/06/2025		The Scrutiny Commission Chairman is in dialogue with the Executive Portfolio Holder regarding the timing of future reports.
143	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether action would be taken following the results of the Northbrook tests.	Cllr Stuart Gourley	In progress	20/06/2025		(Links to Action #116) The Environment Officer who joined us on the site visit, has requested a water quality monitoring device to be deployed along the Northbrook. We have a limited number of these devices available and for obvious reasons, they are all currently deployed at sewage treatment works across the Thames catchment. He has also had to focus his time on inspection visits to treatment works but did say he would repeat the request with the officers who manage this equipment, in case one can be made available but we cannot promise this will happen, nor say when this may be possible. Cllr Gourley is continuing to chase the EA for answers on this issue.
156	17/07/2024	Waste Strategy Undertake benchmarking with other local authorities to check the link between affluence and waste volume.	Daniel Warne	In progress	20/06/2025	19/06/2025	Assigned to officer for action in Q4, following implementation of other key priorities.
157	17/07/2024	Waste Strategy Consider how measurement and reporting of community litter-picking could be improved, and consider increased provision of community litter-picking kits as part of the Waste Strategy	Daniel Warne	In progress	20/06/2025	19/06/2025	Action forms part of adopted Waste Management Strategy. Assigned to officer for action in Q4, following implementation of other key priorities.

Actions arising from previous Meetings Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.							
Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Target Date	Last Update	Comments/Update
163	17/07/2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End Chairman of Scrutiny Commission to discuss issues relating to Housing First and empty homes with the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder.	Cllr Carolyne Culver	In Progress	20/06/2025	18/06/2025	Cllr Culver has contacted Cllr Gaines as housing portfolio holder and Cllr Codling as chairman of Health and Wellbeing, requesting that we establish between the three of us what is the best way forward to develop and scrutinise housing policy in a manner that does not duplicate effort.
178	21/09/2024	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value Bring the performance dashboard to a future Scrutiny Commission meeting	AnnMarie Dodds	Closed	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	This action has been allocated to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
180	21/09/2024	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value DfE Regional Director to be invited to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 13 March 2025.	Cllr Carolyne Culver	Closed	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	The DfE Regional Director is responsible for the Academy Schools in West Berkshire and is not responsible for the High Needs Block or SEND spending.
201	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Draft a letter to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in consultation with Councillor Stuart Gourley to lobby for water companies to be made statutory consultees for major planning applications.	Jon Winstanley	In progress	20/06/2025	10/06/2025	In progress.
212	26/11/2024	Response to Faraday Road Football Ground queries Provide details of the project plan and objectives for Faraday Road.	Cllr Nigel Foot	In progress	20/06/2025		A draft has been provided. Cllr Foot to clarify some details and provide a further update.
214	26/11/2024	Early Intervention and Family Help Timetable a future scrutiny review of youth services.	Rebecca Wilshire / Karen Attala	Closed	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	These actions have been allocated to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
215	26/11/2024	Early Intervention and Family Help Timetable a future scrutiny review of wraparound care	Neil Goddard	Closed	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	
219	26/11/2024	Health Scrutiny Committee Update Scrutiny Commission Members to see the report ahead of the Council meeting.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	20/06/2025	21/04/2025	All Scrutiny Members were sent details of the report that went to Governance Committee on 29 April 2025.
221	26/11/2024	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Liaise with the Executive Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing regarding the timing of proposed housing reports	Cllr Carolyne Culver	In Progress	20/06/2025		The Scrutiny Commission Chairman is in dialogue with the Executive Portfolio Holder regarding the timing of future reports.
222	11/02/2025	Actions from previous Minutes SEND High Needs Block report to include commentary on the effectiveness of the DBV appointments	AnnMarie Dodds/ Neil Goddard	Complete	20/06/2025	05/06/2025	A report on DBV went to CYP Scrutiny on 5 June 2025.
223	11/02/2025	Actions from previous Minutes Follow up with Thames Water regarding Thatcham Sewage Works.	Cllr Carolyne Culver	In progress	20/06/2025		Councillor Culver has contacted Denise Kinsella and awaits a response.

Actions arising from previous Meetings Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.							
Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Target Date	Last Update	Comments/Update
224	11/02/2025	Actions from previous Minutes Seek further details about the duration of the library sessions and the process for booking appointments.	Gordon Oliver	Closed	20/06/2025	16/06/2025	Feedback from partners, professionals, staff, children, young people, and families has been gathered to inform what Early Help needs to look like in West Berkshire, across the partnership. This Feedback having been analysed and will now lead to several workshops to be developed during June/July, these will around, parenting, digital offer, family hubs and co-location, early help plans, and assessment all based on the feedback received. The Social Care Reforms (Families First Partnerships) continues to be explored, with a staff engagement planned in June and learning from national pathfinders continue, this links more with Family Help but will require the development of Family Hubs for the right impact to be achieved. Remains in progress and will continue to be developed throughout 2025/26. This will be followed up through Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as required.
225	11/02/2025	Revenue Budget 2025/26 Provide assurance around the future of the family hubs	AnnMarie Dodd/ Rebecca Wilshire	Closed	20/06/2025	16/06/2025	
227	11/02/2025	Executive Forward Plan January to April 2025 Liaise with the Executive Director – Children’s Services regarding timings for her reports, taking account of data releases for primary and secondary schools	Cllr Carolyne Culver	Closed	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	
229	11/02/2025	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Discuss with Councillor Gourley whether headteachers could make representations to TAG re school streets.	Cllr Carolyne Culver	In progress	20/06/2025	18/06/2025	Cllr Culver has advised Cllr Amirtharaj to contact Cllr Gourley to ask whether this issue can be tabled at a meeting of the Policy Development Group, which has replaced the advisory groups.
230	13/03/2025	Actions from Previous Meetings Confirm if Members could be provided with details of the Corporate Programme Schedule	Stephen Chard	Complete	20/06/2025	20/06/2025	Members have been sent the most up to date list as provided by the Corporate Programme Office. Also, details of the Capital Programme are published alongside the Budget. Capital Programme 2025-26
231	13/03/2025	Actions from Previous Meetings Amend the Actions Log to include target dates for completion and dates of the most recent action.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	20/06/2025	25/04/2025	This will be carried over into the Actions and Recommendations Tracker
232	13/03/2025	Waste Management Strategy A future report to be brought to the Scrutiny Commission on implementation of the new recycling scheme.	Daniel Warne	In progress	20/06/2025	18/06/2025	To be considered as part of work programme discussions.
233	13/03/2025	Appointment of Task and Finish Groups Confirm details of the second Conservative Member for the Project Management Task and Finish Group.	Cllr Ross Mackinnon	Complete	20/06/2025	20/03/2025	Cllr Paul Kander has been nominated as the second Conservative Member.
234	13/03/2025	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Review the work programme in the light of the proposed restructure.	Stephen Chard	Complete	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	Items on the Scrutiny Commission Work Programme have been reallocated across the three committees.

Actions arising from previous Meetings Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.							
Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Target Date	Last Update	Comments/Update
235	13/03/2025	Recommendations Tracker Develop a template for a combined actions and recommendations tracker in consultation with the Scrutiny Commission Chairman	Stephen Chard	In progress	20/06/2025	17/06/2025	A version has been prepared for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - this will be rolled out to the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee for the September meeting.

Last updated: 20 June 2025

Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 4 – Changes to Scrutiny & Policy Development Group

Verbal Item

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 5 – Declarations of interest

Verbal Item

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 6 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

**Item 7 – Capital Financing Report Outturn
Financial Year 2024/25**

**Item 8 – 2024/25 Revenue Financial
Performance: Provisional Outturn**

Item 9 – 2024/25 Performance Report Q4

To follow reports

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Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	1 July 2025
Scrutiny Commission Chairman:	Councillor Carolyne Culver
Report Author:	Gordon Oliver
Forward Plan Ref:	C4705

1 Purpose of the Report

The Annual Scrutiny report for 2024/25 provides a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission, and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendation(s)

For the Scrutiny Commission to agree the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2024/25 for presentation to Council.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

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

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

Council Strategy Priorities:	X			The report demonstrates that the Council has had regard to the Council Strategy and the priorities of the Executive when developing its work programme.
Core Business:	X			The report demonstrates that the Council has had regard to the Council Strategy and the priorities of the Executive when developing its work programme. This includes areas where under-performance has been identified.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Cllr Carolyn Culver (Chairman of Scrutiny Commission) and Cllr Martha Vickers (Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee) Vicky Phoenix, Principal Policy Officer (Health Scrutiny)			

4 Supporting Information

Background

4.1 The Annual Scrutiny report 2024/25 provides a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission, and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The report provides:

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

4.3 Items of particular interest are described in further detail.

Proposals

4.4 It is proposed that the Scrutiny Commission agrees the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2024/25 for presentation to Council.

5 Other options considered

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

6 Conclusion

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

7 Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

Background Papers:

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

[Local authority health scrutiny - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-health-scrutiny)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

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

Wards affected: N/A

Officer details:

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2			

Appendix A

Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

(May 2025)

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Foreword

This has been another busy year for the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee and their task and finish groups. In the following pages you will see a summary of the work of our committees, including our important work scrutinising the council's finances. In spring 2025, the council successfully applied for Exceptional Financial Support from central government and the Executive, supported by officers, is working hard to avoid the issuance of a section 114 notice. This makes effective financial scrutiny more important than ever.

Scrutiny Commission examined the growing challenge of trying to provide services within budget for the special education needs and disabilities High Needs Block. Increasing financial deficits in this service area are faced by all top-tier local authorities and will only be resolved by bold action from central government, but while we wait for that day to come it is clear that West Berkshire Council officers are working hard to meet our statutory obligations.

The Health Scrutiny Committee responded to residents' concerns and represented the needs of the local population with health service providers and commissioners. It brought together key organisations who support and provide health services such as for mental health and primary care to ensure that local needs were considered in service delivery and commissioning plans.

We would like to thank everyone who has played a part in the scrutiny process over the past 12 months including Members of the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee, and backbenchers who have served on task and finish groups. The quality of scrutiny is only as good as the effort Members are prepared to devote to the task. We serve our residents by fulfilling our privileged role of challenging those with positions of power within the council and ensuring their accountability. We must act independently and transparently, and be seen to do so by residents, if we are to maintain their trust in scrutiny.

Our thanks also to the officers who have made such an important contribution to the scrutiny process, including Gordon Oliver and Vicky Phoenix. We would also like to thank external guests who have attended meetings to give evidence and submit their organisations' roles in service provision to scrutiny.

Councillor Carolyn Culver
Chairman, Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Martha Vickers
Chairman Health Scrutiny Committee

1. Key Information About Overview and Scrutiny

1.1 Scrutiny's Role

- 1.1.1 The role of scrutiny is to improve the lives of residents through improved public services and ensuring that public funds are spent effectively.
- 1.1.2 Scrutiny committees have the power to look at any issue which affects the area or the area's residents. This gives them a unique legitimacy to examine cross-cutting issues in a way that no other individual or organisation can.
- 1.1.3 Key roles for scrutiny committees include:
 - Holding the Executive and other decision makers to account;
 - Policy development and review;
 - External scrutiny;
 - Performance management.
- 1.1.4 The principles of good scrutiny are:
 - To provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
 - To amplify the voice and concerns of the public;
 - To be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
 - To drive improvement in public services.

1.2 Operation of Overview and Scrutiny in West Berkshire

- 1.2.1 West Berkshire Council currently has two scrutiny committees – the Scrutiny Commission and the Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2.2 The Scrutiny Commission is responsible for reviewing the decisions, policies and services of West Berkshire Council and, in some cases, those of other organisations and partners. In particular, the Commission acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, undertaking scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership.
- 1.2.3 It comprises of nine Members, reflecting the political composition of the local authority. During 2024/25, the Commission was chaired by Councillor Carlyne Culver. Other Members were Councillors Antony Amirtharaj, Dominic Boeck, Jeremy Cottam, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Justin Pemberton (prior to being appointed to the Executive), Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, and Martha Vickers (replacing Justin Pemberton).
- 1.2.4 The Scrutiny Commission had five scheduled meetings in 2024/25, plus a special meeting focusing on scrutiny of the council's section 19 report into the winter flooding of 2024, and the work of Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
- 1.2.5 Topics were either considered at a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission or delegated to a time-limited task and finish group, with findings reported back to the Scrutiny Commission.

- 1.2.6 The Health Scrutiny Committee focuses on matters related to the provision of health and public health services within West Berkshire and fulfils the statutory health scrutiny functions.
- 1.2.7 In 2024/25, it comprised of five Members, reflecting the political composition of the local authority. It was chaired by Councillor Martha Vickers. Other Members who sat on the Committee in the last year were Councillors Nick Carter, Owen Jeffrey, Jane Langford, Justin Pemberton (prior to being appointed to the Executive), and Stephanie Steevenson (replacing Justin Pemberton). The Health Scrutiny Committee had four scheduled meetings in 2024/25.
- 1.2.8 West Berkshire Council also has two Members on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (BOB JHOSC). For 2024/25, these were Councillors Martha Vickers and Stephanie Steevenson. The other Members of the BOB JHOSC are drawn from Buckinghamshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council, with numbers reflecting the population of each local authority, as well as the political composition for each Council. The BOB JHOSC reviews activities relating to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). Members attended one meeting in 2024/25.

1.3 Community Involvement

- 1.3.1 The Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee engage with a wide selection of groups, organisations and individuals when undertaking their reviews.
- 1.3.2 Healthwatch West Berkshire is invited to give an update at all Health Scrutiny Committee meetings to provide feedback from patients and service users. Other stakeholders are invited to give evidence in relation to specific reviews, either individually or collectively (e.g., via surveys).
- 1.3.3 All scrutiny meetings are open to the public and residents are welcome to come along and listen to the presentations and debates. Task and Finish Group meetings tend to take place in private, but their reports are made public and are discussed at the relevant scrutiny committee which agrees the recommendations to be referred to the Executive, relevant health body, or other external organisation.
- 1.3.4 Members of the public are able to suggest topics for scrutiny by [completing our online form](#). Members of the public are also invited to comment and inform Members' questions on Health Scrutiny Committee key agenda items to ensure that the voice of the local population is heard.

2. Scrutiny Work Programme

2.1 Complementing the Work of the Executive

- 2.1.1 The Scrutiny Commission seeks to complement the work of the Executive. Liaison is undertaken with Members of the Executive and senior officers to understand their priorities for the coming year and identify any areas where

there are concerns about performance. This helps to highlight areas where scrutiny could add value.

2.2 Pre-Decision Scrutiny

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

2.3 Post-Decision Scrutiny

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

2.4 Scrutiny of Partners and Third Parties

- 2.1.4 The Council has statutory duties to undertake scrutiny of services delivered by particular external partners, especially around areas such as crime and disorder, education, and health. These parties are legally required to attend scrutiny meetings, provide the information as requested, and answer questions. In the case of health partners, they must respond to any recommendations made by the Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.1.5 Health partners are also required to consult the Health Scrutiny Committee on proposed substantial variations to services that would be likely to affect residents of West Berkshire. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed with local NHS stakeholders to help inform this process.
- 2.1.6 The Local Government Act (2000) also gives scrutiny committees the power to investigate and report on any matter which affects a local authority's area or its inhabitants. This type of scrutiny brings its own challenges, as most other organisations are not legally obliged to participate in scrutiny reviews.

2.5 Prioritisation

- 2.1.7 Once potential review topics have been identified, it is important to prioritise them into a realistic work programme. The PAPER tool has been developed to help rank competing proposals. This considers the following aspects:
- Public interest
 - Area affected
 - Performance Issues / Local Priority
 - Effectiveness
 - Available Resources

3. Summary of Activity for 2024/25

3.1 Scrutiny Commission

3.1.1 The Scrutiny Commission met six times in 2024/25. Details of the topics considered are set out below.

Date	Topics
17/07/2024	Draft Waste Strategy
	2023/24 Performance Report Year End
	Revenue Financial Outturn 2023/24
	Capital Financing Report Outturn 203/24
	Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24
24/09/2024	Crime and Disorder Committee - Community Safety Update
	Adult Social Care Complaints Report 2023/24
	Children's Social Care Complaints Report 2023/24
	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value
	Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group Report
17/10/2024	Winter Flooding 2024 Debrief
	Section 19 Flood Report
	Thames Water and Environment Agency
26/11/2024	Response to Faraday Road Football Ground Queries
	Unregistered & Unregulated Provision in Children's Social Care
	Early Intervention and Family Help
	MTFS and Revenue Budget 2025/26 Planning
11/02/2025	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26
	Medium Term Financial Strategy
	Capital Strategy, Financial Years 2025/6 to 2034/35
	Revenue Budget 2025/26
	Financial Year 2024/25 Quarter Three Capital Financing Performance Report
	2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three
13/03/2025	Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation
	Draft Waste Management Strategy

3.1.2 The Scrutiny Commission ran two Task and Finish Groups in 2024/25. The Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group concluded its review of the

Council's response to the Covid pandemic and subsequent recovery. Its findings were reported to Scrutiny Commission in September 2024, with recommendations subsequently presented to the Executive in February 2025.

3.1.3 The work of the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group is ongoing.

3.2 Health Scrutiny Committee

3.2.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee met four times in 2024/25. Details of the topics considered are set out in the table below.

Date	Topics
11/06/2024	Healthcare in New Developments Task and Finish Group – Final Report
	Public Health West Berkshire – Annual Report
	Update on the Diabetes Service
23/09/2024	Adult Mental Health
	Suicide Prevention
10/12/2024	Eastfield House Surgery Proposed Relocation
	All Age Continuing Care
	Access to GP Services
11/03/2025	Oral Health and Dentistry
	South Central Ambulance Service
	Social Care Inquests

3.2.2 The Health Scrutiny Committee undertook deep dives via task and finish groups. The Healthcare in New Developments Task and Finish Group reported its findings in June 2024, with recommendations going Executive. The Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Task and Finish Group is due to report to the September 2025 Health Scrutiny Committee.

3.2.3 The Health Scrutiny Committee maintains watching briefs on topics such as the Royal Berkshire Hospital Redevelopment, Hampshire Hospitals new hospital programme (both of which were recently pushed back until at least 2040) and Continuing Healthcare. Members engage with the relevant key partners through informal briefings and other mechanisms. The Committee also responds to notifications of proposed changes to NHS services.

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

3.3.1 The BOB JHOSC met once in 2024/25 to consider the following topics.

Date	Topics
22/11/2024	Primary Care Update
	Digital and Data Update

4. Scrutiny Highlights for 2024/25

4.1 SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value

4.1.1 The Scrutiny Commission received an update on the High Needs Block (HNB) Deficit in September 2024. At that time the HNB deficit was forecast to reach at least £15M by the end of 2024/25 and £65M by the end of 2028/29. An update was also provided on work being done through the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme to address the HNB deficit.

4.1.2 Contributory factors for the HNB overspend were identified as:

- The rising level of need
- Increasing complexity of high needs services
- Insufficient places available to meet the needs of increasingly complex cases
- Increased use of independent provision
- Extension of post-16 support to 25 for pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Increasing numbers of pupil exclusions
- NHS services, such as CAMHS, failing to keep up with demand

4.1.3 The DBV programme aims to help local councils and partners improve their support for children and young people with SEND and to ensure these are sustainable. It does this by:

- identifying changes that will make the biggest difference in getting better outcomes
- supporting the council to use their resources in the most efficient way
- providing limited additional grant funding to support this work
- regular monitoring of progress by the Department for Education (DfE) to assess impact.

4.1.4 Questions were asked about the following aspects:

- How the success of the DBV programme would be measured.
- How the Council would reduce the number of costly Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) while still meeting the needs of service users.
- Where the Council was within the DBV process.

- What lessons had been learned from other local authorities who were further ahead in the DBV programme, and what positive outcomes had been delivered for pupils in these areas.
- The proposed restructure of Children's Services, the future of DBV temporary posts, and how the work of task groups would be embedded in the service.
- How the approach to pupil exclusions could be made more consistent across schools and whether the Council could get involved in exclusions from academies.
- Clarification in relation to changes to pupil funding banding arrangements.
- Reasons as to why educational psychologists employed by the Council were leaving, and what was being done to fill the vacancies.
- Whether the lack of educational psychologists was impacting on the support provided to pupils and expenditure on the HNB.
- Why EHCP annual reviews had not been carried out in all cases.
- When the next Ofsted SEND inspection would be due.

4.1.5 The Scrutiny Commission made the following suggestions:

- Officers should propose a formal programme at the national level to share findings/best practice relating to the DBV programme amongst all participating local authorities.
- Given the importance of the HNB deficit, for the Scrutiny Commission to receive further updates every 6 months, including details of the performance dashboard once this had been developed. (The March 2025 update was postponed until July 2025 because officers were focused on Ofsted inspections.)

4.1.6 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Tuesday 24 September 2024, 6.30 pm](#)

4.2 Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group

4.2.1 The Scrutiny Commission set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of the local response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent recovery and develop recommendations for lessons learned that could be applied to similar future events.

4.2.2 The review focused on five core areas:

- Local resilience and preparedness for the pandemic
- Public health and emergency community support
- Support for local businesses
- Support for the education sector
- Support for the care sector

- 4.2.3 The Task and Finish Group met seven times between October 2023 and June 2024 to hear evidence from expert witnesses in relation to all five aspects of the review. These included Council officers/former officers, and representatives from partner organisations who supported in delivery of the local response.
- 4.2.4 Members were keen to get the perspectives of representatives from organisations who were recipients of the services provided by the Council to understand how they viewed the response. Witnesses were interviewed from the business, education and adult social care sectors.
- 4.2.5 The Task and Finish Group also undertook primary research via online surveys of the local business community, headteachers, and town/parish councils and community groups.
- 4.2.6 Through evaluation of this evidence base and with technical support from officers, Members were able to highlight a number of issues and pinpoint where potential improvements could be made, or where further work would be beneficial.
- 4.2.7 The Task and Finish Group report was presented to the Scrutiny Commission on 24 September 2024. The Scrutiny Commission resolved that the report's recommendations be referred to the Executive for consideration, with minor amendments.
- 4.2.8 Councillor Patrick Clark, the portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health, provided a formal response to the report's 22 recommendations, at the meeting of the Executive on 13 February 2025. In summary:
- Ten of the recommendations had already been implemented by the date of the meeting
 - Eight recommendations were accepted or partially accepted
 - Four recommendations were rejected due to challenges related to practicality of implementation, uncertainties unique to each pandemic, and decisions being outside of the role of the local authority.
- 4.2.9 Implementation of the report's recommendations will help to ensure that the Council is better prepared for a future pandemic event.

4.3 Budget Scrutiny

- 4.3.1 The Scrutiny Commission received a report in November 2024 on the Medium Term Financial Planning forecasts, which set out the significant level of savings that would be required for the 2025/26 budget. The report also outlined proposals to deliver the required savings, which were the subject of a public consultation exercise between 11 November and 23 December 2024. This allowed Members to have earlier involvement and provided an opportunity to help shape the budget for 2025/26, which was welcomed.
- 4.3.2 Members challenged a number of points in relation to the public consultation exercise, particularly in relation to proposals to switch off street lighting between 12 – 5am, and Downlands Leisure Centre.
- 4.3.3 In addition, there was discussion about:
- The impacts of applying for Exceptional Financial Support

- Risks associated with inflation
 - The impacts of future increases in employers' NI contributions
 - The cost of children's social care
 - The government's approach to the High Needs Block
 - The impacts of proposed cuts to mobile libraries
 - The appropriate balance of short-term vs long-term borrowing
 - The potential impact of additional Council Tax contributions
- 4.3.4 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Tuesday 26 November 2024, 6.30 pm](#)
- 4.3.5 There was also an opportunity for detailed scrutiny of the budget in February 2025, before the budget went to Executive and onwards to Council for final approval.
- 4.3.6 This provided Members with a detailed explanation of the process that had been followed in developing the budget and an opportunity to challenge the underlying assumptions and allocations to ensure they were robust.
- 4.3.7 The Scrutiny Committee reviewed the following:
- Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - Capital Strategy, Financial Years 2025/26 to 2034/35
 - Revenue Budget 2025/26
- 4.3.8 Key points arising from the debate, included:
- Concerns about the impacts of the High Needs Block deficit and exploration of measures being used to address this.
 - Contingency plans to avoid breaching the Capital Financing Requirement in 2027/28 if the Dedicated Schools Grant override is withdrawn.
 - Questions related to the Council's investment risk profile and liquidity position.
 - Use of artificial intelligence to reduce costs.
 - Concerns about increasing costs associated with spend on social care and home to school transport.
 - Discussions about how emergency financial support would be used.
 - Reasons for the collection fund deficit.
 - Likely impacts of future changes to the local authorities funding formula.
 - Risks and benefits of the proposal to develop and operate a solar farm.

- Concerns about the Council potentially breaking its own best practice rule whereby annual capital financing costs was forecast to exceed 10% of net revenue.
- 4.3.9 Scrutiny of the budget was welcomed by both officers and Members of the Executive.
- 4.3.10 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Scrutiny Commission on Tuesday 11 February 2025, 6.30 pm](#)
- 4.4 Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Task and Finish Group**
- 4.4.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 4.4.2 The scope of the review focussed on three key areas:
- Assessment of the current needs and provisions in West Berkshire.
 - The system approach to prevention, early intervention and mental health support for young people.
 - Extensive, evidence informed treatment and crisis services.
- 4.4.3 The Task and Finish Group held five sessions between November 2024 and May 2025 to hear from key stakeholders. These included Council officers and representatives from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Berkshire Youth, Time to Talk, Swings and Smiles, and local schools.
- 4.4.4 To understand the local landscape of needs and provisions in West Berkshire, the Task and Finish Group convened witnesses from public health, youth services, counselling services and health. Members were provided with public health data, youth survey results and best practice guidance.
- 4.4.5 To drill down on the experiences of young people and the provisions available for early help and support, the Task and Finish Group brought together witnesses from a local primary and secondary school, the Local Authority's Mental Health Support Team, and the Emotional Health Academy. Youth services, health, education and voluntary sector colleagues supported the conversation. The evidence shared included overviews of the approach by services and schools, as well as the local opportunities and constraints faced.
- 4.4.6 Health colleagues shared with Members detailed evidence on the wide-ranging services provided by Berkshire Healthcare for supporting children and young people with more complex mental health needs. Members reviewed detailed reports provided on service delivery, performance, concerns and barriers faced.
- 4.4.7 During the sessions, partners shared experiences and expertise with Members and colleagues. Through the discussions partners collaborated, shared ideas and learnt from one another. This has helped to build relationships and generate ideas and actions for change.
- 4.4.8 The Task and Finish Group report will be presented to the Health Scrutiny Committee in September 2025 which will highlight the key findings and recommendations for improvements.

4.5 Eastfield House Surgery

- 4.5.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee were contacted by a number of local residents concerned about the relocation of a local GP surgery, Eastfield House, from its current location near to Newbury town centre to a purpose-built practice on land south of Newbury College.
- 4.5.2 In October 2024, Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee visited Eastfield House Surgery to meet with GPs and the Practice Manager to understand the challenges faced by the surgery at their current location and their plans to relocate.
- 4.5.3 The Health Scrutiny Committee invited representatives from Eastfield House surgery to provide information on their proposed move and to answer Members questions at a public meeting in December 2024. There was discussion on:
- The consultation process and engagement activities with patients, residents and other stakeholders.
 - The constraints and limitations currently faced by Eastfield House surgery.
 - The opportunities arising from a health hub with purpose-built facilities.
 - Concern was raised that the new location may be difficult to access for patients who did not have access to a car and that it would particularly impact people with limited mobility.
- 4.5.4 The Health Scrutiny Committee made the following suggestions:
- Eastfield House to consider the impact of increased travel for patients most affected by the move to the new location.
 - Consultation with patients to continue as the plans progressed.
 - Eastfield House Surgery to continue to engage with the Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.5.4 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for the Health Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 10 December 2024 1.30pm](#)
- 4.5.5 This is a notifiable reconfiguration that affects a large number of patients and is a substantial variation in service. The Commissioners (BOB ICB) must therefore formally notify the Health Scrutiny of this change and so this will remain in view of the committee as the plans progress.

4.6 Stakeholder Engagement and Monitoring Outcomes

- 4.6.1 The Health Scrutiny Committee work with service providers and commissioners outside for public meetings to review and monitor progress where concerns have been highlighted. These included Continuing Healthcare, Access to GP services, Dementia services, and South Central Ambulance Service. Oral Health and Dentistry has been highlighted for review in 2026.
- 4.6.2 Of particular note, the Health Scrutiny Committee has kept in view concerns raised by residents that approvals for patients in Berkshire West (which includes West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham) for Continuing Healthcare have

been consistently amongst the lowest in England, and significantly lower than those in other parts of the BOB footprint. NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) is a package of care for adults aged 18 or over which is arranged and funded solely by the NHS. During the last year, Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee met representatives from the BOB ICB and Adult Social Care informally outside of Committee meetings. These informal check-ins enabled scrutiny and oversight of the transformation programme and organisational change that the BOB ICB were undergoing. The BOB ICB were also requested to provide evidence and answer Members questions on their progress at a Health Scrutiny Committee in public in December 2024 and June 2025. This will continue to remain under review by the Health Scrutiny Committee.

- 4.6.3 Further details of this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website: [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for the Health Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 10 December 2024 1.30pm](#)

5. Call-In of Decisions

- 5.1 The call-in process is used to hold the Executive to account. The purpose of a call-in is to scrutinise the decisions taken by the Executive, Individual Executive Members, or Senior Officers making delegated decisions.
- 5.2 The process enables further public debate to be held on the subject. The Scrutiny Commission can then consider whether, in their view, the decision was appropriate or if it wishes to make recommendations back to the Executive on potential changes.
- 5.3 No decisions were called-in during 2024/25.

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 11 – Task and Finish Group Updates

Verbal Item

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee
1 July 2025

Item 12 – Appointment of Task and Finish Groups

Verbal Item

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

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

Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Strategy and Communications	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning and Housing	Councillor Denise Gaines
Finance and Resources	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Adult Social Care and Public Health	Councillor Patrick Clark
Children and Family Services	Councillor Heather Codling
Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Councillor Nigel Foot
Environment and Highways	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Public Safety and Capital Projects (Built Environment)	Councillor Tom McCann
Transformation and Corporate Programme	Councillor Vicky Poole
Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation	Councillor Justin Pemberton

4. Key decisions are those executive decisions which are likely to result in spending or savings which are "significant" in relation to the budget for the service or function in question, or in terms of the effect on communities living or working in two or more wards or electoral divisions. All contracts above £500,000 require a key decision in accordance with the Constitution.
5. The Regulations and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in this document in accordance with General Exception and Special Urgency provisions.
6. The Forward Plan will also contain details of intended review activity by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and its Sub-Committee(s) or another body e.g. Task Group associated with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.
7. Copies of the Council's Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Council may be accessed on the Council's website.
8. For copies of reports or other documents, and for detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Executive, individual Member or officer please contact the named Lead Officer for the item concerned.
9. For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please email executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk or by writing to the address below.

Publication Date: 1 May 2025

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

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
22 May 2025	LGA Peer Review Children's Services		No	Executive			Rebecca Wilshire	Open
22 May 2025	LGA Corporate Peer Review Follow Up		No	Executive			Joseph Holmes	Open
22 May 2025	Carers Strategy 2024-27		Yes	Executive			Hannah Cole	Open
22 May 2025	Environment Strategy Annual Progress Report and Environment Strategy 2025 Refresh		No	Executive			Jenny Graham	Open
22 May 2025	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Sadie Owen	Open
29 May 2025	Amendment to Streetworks	To review and approve	No	Jon Winstanley -			Neil Stacey	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Permit Scheme Order	changes to the Council's Streetworks Permit Scheme, principally to increase the fees charged to statutory undertakers for carrying out works on the highway.		Service Director				
3 Jul 2025	Response to Public Open Spaces motion	Response to Cllr Amirtharaj Motion	No	Executive			Laura Callan	Open
3 Jul 2025	Block Beds '9 Month Extension'	An extension to the current contract by 9 months	Yes	Executive			Thomas Bailey	Open
3 Jul 2025	Q4 Performance Report 2024/25		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
3 Jul 2025	New Developments Task Group	Recommendations of the New Developments	No	Executive			Laura Callan	Open

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		Health Scrutiny Task Group						
3 Jul 2025	Rights of Way Improvement Plan	To present the revised plan following public consultation.	Yes	Executive			Elaine Cox	Open
3 Jul 2025	Future of the Shared Partnership for the Public Protection Partnership	To fulfil the requirement of the IAA which is due to expire in January 2027, which requires the partner authorities to review the current arrangements and adopt any changes 2 years before the current arrangement expires.	No	Executive			Sean Murphy	Open
3 Jul 2025	Capital outturn report		No	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open
3 Jul 2025	Revenue Outturn report		No	Executive			Elizabeth Griffiths	Open

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3 Jul 2025	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
3 Jul 2025	Public Health Re-Structure		Yes	Executive			Dr Matt Pearce	Open
1 Aug 2025	Final Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Supporting Authority Consultation	To enable a response on the final version of the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be submitted to the Responsible Authority (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead).	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Elise Kinderman	Open
18 Sep 2025	Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report		No	Executive			Karl Davis	Open
18 Sep 2025	Youth Justice Annual Plan		No	Executive			Dave Wraight	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
18 Sep 2025	Care Leaver Annual Report		No	Executive			Karl Davis	Open
18 Sep 2025	Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q1 of 2025/26	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets and provide a year-end forecast.	Yes	Executive			Elizabeth Griffiths	Open
18 Sep 2025	ASC Annual Report		No	Executive			Melanie O'Rourke	Open
18 Sep 2025	Early Help Response Hub Annual report		No	Executive			Karen Atalla	Open
18 Sep 2025	2025/26 Performance Report Q1		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
18 Sep 2025	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
18 Sep 2025	Capital Financial	To present the Q1 capital financial	Yes	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Performance Report Q1 2025/26	performance for Members to note.						
6 Nov 2025	Capital Financial Performance Report - Q2 of 2025/26	To present the Q2 capital financial performance for Members to note.	No	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open
6 Nov 2025	Ridgeway Council Formal Proposal		Yes	Executive			Sarah Clarke	Open
6 Nov 2025	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
6 Nov 2025	Revenue Financial Performance Report - Q2 of 2025/26	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets and provide a year-end forecast.	No	Executive			Elizabeth Griffiths	Open
18 Dec 2025	Standing item: Asset		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Disposal							
18 Dec 2025	2025/26 Performance Report Q2		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
12 Feb 2026	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2026-27		Yes	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open
12 Feb 2026	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27		Yes	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open
12 Feb 2026	Capital Financial Performance Report Q3 2025/26	To present the Q3 capital financial performance for Members to note.	Yes	Executive			Shail Vitish	Open
12 Feb 2026	Revenue Budget 2026/27		Yes	Executive			Elizabeth Griffiths	Open
12 Feb 2026	Revenue Financial	To report on the financial performance of	Yes	Executive			Elizabeth Griffiths	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Performance Report - Q3 of 2025/26	the Council's revenue budgets and provide a year-end forecast.						
21 May 2026	2025/26 Performance Report Q3		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
	Legal Services - Childcare Committee considering report:	The report considers several options for providing legal services to Children's Services, to ensure that this is provided in the most cost-effective manner.	No	Executive			Sarah Clarke	Open
	Garden Waste Charging Options		Yes	Executive			Kofi Adu-Gyamfi	Open
	Waste Contract Paper		Yes	Executive			Kofi Adu-Gyamfi	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	Adults Homelessness	Contract Award	Yes	Executive			Rebecca Braithwaite	Open
	Leisure Strategy Delivery Plan	To present the plan for implementing the Leisure Strategy.	Yes	Executive			Jude Thomas	Open
	Joint Legal team (JLT) Review	To agree a revised Heads of Term Agreement and to delegate authority to the Service Lead, Legal and Democratic Services to finalise the same.	Yes	Executive			Nicola Thomas	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Information which reveals that the authority proposes to give under any enactment a

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
								notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person Information which reveals that the authority proposes to make an order or direction under any enactment.
	Gateway Plaza update		No	Executive			Sam Robins	Open
	LRIE lease acquisitions	To seek Executive sign-off to make an offer to buy-back the leases on plots 13U and 13T on the LRIE, subject to a satisfactory price being agreed at	Yes	Executive			Sam Robins	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
		negotiations which are currently underway with the leaseholders on the sites.						
	Parking Strategy 2023-2033	To consider and approve the West Berkshire Council Parking Strategy 2023-2033.	Yes	Executive			Ian Martinez	Open
	Proposed Allocation of the Household Support Fund April 2025 - March 2026.	To propose a continuation of the successful programme delivered with the voluntary sector and our partners at Greenham Trust and agree the allocations for the funding period.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing			Nick Caprara	Open
	Contract Award report	Contract value estimated to be £990k therefore	No	Joseph Holmes -			Vickie Collins	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	for West Point House Refurbishment Project	included on the Forward Plan for information		Chief Executive				
	Kennet Valley Primary School SEMH Provision	Contract award report for the Kennet Valley expansion works following a full tender process. Contract value estimated at £1.8 million	Yes	Paul Coe - Executive Director			Vicky Pearce	Open
	Contract Award report for Mrs Blands Infant and Nursery School Heating Replacement	Contract award report for heating replacement works at Mrs Blands School following a full tender process. Contract value estimated at £500k.	Yes	AnnMarie Dodds - Executive Director			Vicky Pearce	Open
	Parking Review Amendment Order No 35	To consider responses received during statutory	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Gareth Dowding	Open

Decision Due Date	Title	Purpose	Key Decision e.g. Yes/ No	Decision Maker e.g. Executive Individual Decision Officer decision	Consultation e.g. Members including shadow exec members	Background Papers (All Papers are available for inspection via the Lead Officer)	Lead Officer e.g report author	Report likely to be considered in private (i.e., it contains confidential or exempt information)
	(A4 Thatcham area)	consultation period.						
	Parking review Amendment Order No 36 (Kings Road Newbury area)	To consider responses received during statutory consultation period.	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Gareth Dowding	Open
	Parking Review Amendment Order No 37 (various locations)	To consider responses received during statutory consultation period.	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Gareth Dowding	Open
	Parking Review Amendment Experimental Order No 38 (Electric Vehicle Charging Bays - various locations)	To consider responses received during statutory consultation period.	No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Gareth Dowding	Open

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Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme						
Item		Scrutiny Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?
16 September 2025						
	Community Safety	Partnership Effectiveness	Meeting in its capacity as West Berkshire Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive a presentation from the Building Communities Together Partnership.	C/Supt Felicity Parker/ Joseph Holmes	Cllr Justin Pemberton (Public Safety and Community Engagement)	Scrutiny Committee Decision
	Libraries Service	Corporate Effectiveness	To review the performance of the Libraries Service and its funding model.	April Peberdy / Elizabeth Beverley	Cllr Nigel Foot (Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside)	Scrutiny Committee Decision
	Transformation Programme Update	Corporate Effectiveness	To receive an update on the Council's Transformation Programme	Gabrielle Mancini	Cllr Vicky Poole (Transformation and Corporate Programme)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Performance Report Q1 2025/26	Corporate Effectiveness	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets for Quarter One of the 2025/26 financial year.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Capital Financing Performance Report Q1 2025/26	Corporate Effectiveness	The report presents the provisional outturn position for financial year 2025/26 against the approved capital programme and financing implications for financial year 2026/27.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Sports Hub Task and Finish Group Report	Corporate Effectiveness	To report the findings and recommendations of the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group	Gordon Oliver	Cllr Carlyne Culver (Sports Hub Task & Finish Group Chair)	Scrutiny Committee Decision
25 November 2025						
10 February 2026 (Budget Scrutiny)						
	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Corporate Effectiveness	To set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and how these align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that the Council Strategy will be delivered. The MTFS highlights the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances as well as how there are many different scenarios and uncertainty concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision

	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consolidate the investments and borrowing strategy for the year ahead by detailing how and where the Council will invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. This strategy is monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report going to the Government and Ethics Committee as well as an annual report being presented to Members.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Capital Strategy. Financial Years 2025/26 to 2034/35	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2025/26 to 2034/35 and the supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Budget 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the budget proposals for the year ahead that form the basis of the 2024-25 revenue budget and detail the respective Council Tax proposals and resolutions.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Capital Financing Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
17 March 2025						
To Be Programmed						
	Thames Water and The Environment Agency	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To understand how Thames Water is investing in its networks to support planned development and manage pollution incidents in West Berkshire and how the Environment Agency is holding the water company to account.	TBC	N/A	Scrutiny Committee Decision

Council Strategy Priorities

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

Scrutiny Themes

- Policy Effectiveness
- Corporate Effectiveness
- Partnership Effectiveness

Last updated:

20 June 2025