

# Notice of Meeting

---



Scan here to access the public documents for this meeting

## Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 6.30pm**  
in the Council Chamber Council Offices  
Market Street Newbury

This meeting will be streamed live here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/rpsclive>

You can view all streamed Council meetings here:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/councilmeetingslive>

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday 9 March 2026

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

e-mail: [stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk)

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



**Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 17 March 2026**  
(continued)

- To:** Councillors Carlyne 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

<b>Part I</b>		<b>Page No.</b>
1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	1 - 2
2	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 3 February 2026 and 10 February 2026.	3 - 22
3	<b>Actions from previous Minutes</b> To receive an update on recommendations and actions following previous Committee meetings.	23 - 28
4	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> .	29 - 30
5	<b>Petitions</b> To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.	31 - 32



**Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 17 March 2026**  
(continued)

- 6 **Three-weekly refuse waste collections progress update** 33 - 78  
To update the Scrutiny Committee on the early performance and impacts of the move to three-weekly refuse (black bin) collections, outlining how the service change is progressing following implementation in September 2025.  
The report summarises initial operational outcomes, financial performance, environmental benefits, and resident engagement activity, providing assurance that the change is functioning as intended and remains aligned with the objectives set out in the Council's Waste Management Strategy 2025–2032.  
It also highlights emerging risks, lessons learned and areas requiring continued focus, enabling Scrutiny to review progress, offer necessary challenge, and consider any further actions that may support the continued successful delivery and long-term sustainability of this change.
- 7 **Procurement Governance** 79 - 86  
To set out details of the governance in place to ensure robust procurement of goods and services, particularly for contracts over £2.5m, in order to enable the Committee to respond to a proposal from a member of the public for a scrutiny review.
- 8 **Swift Bricks** 87 - 96  
To provide Members with information relating to Swifts and swift bricks, and their use in West Berkshire, following the Motion to Council by Councillor David Marsh and Councillor Carolyne Culver.
- 9 **Appointment of Task and Finish Groups** 97 - 98  
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.
- 10 **Task and Finish Group Updates: Project Management Task and Finish Group Report** 99 - 142  
To receive the report of the Project Management Task and Finish Group and consider their recommendations.
- 11 **Executive Forward Plan** 143 - 152  
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.



**Agenda - Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on Tuesday 17 March 2026**  
(continued)

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 12 | <b>Corporate Programme</b><br>To advise the Committee of the current Corporate Programme.  | 153 - 160 |
| 13 | <b>Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme</b><br>To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Committee. | 161 - 162 |

*Sarah Clarke.*

Sarah Clarke  
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  
17 March 2026

## **Item 1 – Apologies**

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

## 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 TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2026

**Councillors Present:** Carolyne Culver (Chairman), Ross Mackinnon (Vice-Chairman), Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read and Alan Macro (Substitute) (In place of Antony Amirtharaj)

**Also Present:** Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Richard Somner (attending remotely), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director (Resources)), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Director for Finance, Property and Procurement, Section 151 Officer), Gabrielle Mancini (Service Lead - Cust Engagement & Transformation), Stacey Bradshaw (Service Lead – Projects), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager) and Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer (Scrutiny & Dem Services))

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Antony Amirtharaj, Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Laura Coyle and Councillor Howard Woollaston

#### PART I

##### 1 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

##### 2 **Transformation Return on Investment**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 3) which provided an overview of transformation funding allocated between 2023 and 2025.

The report sought to provide a summary of how total investment had translated into organisational improvements, service enhancements, and measurable financial returns. The report focused on the most significant qualitative and quantitative benefits delivered by the transformation programme.

It was reported that transformation funding had supported major changes to systems, workforce capability, processes, and asset use, enabling the Council to improve service efficiency, strengthen resilience, and deliver better outcomes for residents.

It was noted that a Transformation Policy Development Group would be formed with Members asked to prioritise those projects that should be progressed in order to improve service provision and achieve savings.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members queried why the care homes were not included in the current report. It was confirmed that they remained an ongoing project but were excluded from the table as no savings had yet been realised. However, it was stressed that efforts were ongoing to transfer the care homes to the private sector. Unfortunately, market appetite had been limited.
- It was noted that there had been just one expression of interest to take on the care homes from the initial market testing exercise, which had been rejected. The offer was amended for the second round, but again this was unsuccessful. It was noted

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

that providers preferred to build new facilities rather than take over existing ones, which would require investment to meet their standards.

- Members asked whether a risk-averse approach was being taken to avoid adverse impacts on service capacity if care homes were transferred or closed. It was confirmed that the Council would put people first and it would not pursue any deal that risked service quality, even if it meant continuing to pay a premium.
- The Committee welcomed the savings achieved by repurposing Walnut Close for homeless families and noted the planned use of Chestnut Walk for a similar purpose, highlighting the benefits for families' access to schools and social networks.
- It was confirmed that a potential savings target of £1.2M p.a. had been identified from the care homes. Consultancy work had been commissioned to inform a further tender process. Currently, the care homes were showing as a deficit in the Adult Social Care Budget. This was because the budget included an expectation of delivering a saving.
- Members discussed the importance of including social value benefits in future reports, in addition to financial savings. It was agreed to explore how social value could be evaluated and included in future reports. Recent work around using volunteers in libraries was cited as an example.
- Officers were asked about grant funding. It was clarified that grant funding was included in the table for completeness, as it represented real money that could have been allocated elsewhere, but it was not a direct cost to council taxpayers.
- Clarification was sought on the presentation of officer costs in the report. It was explained that the £3.22M for officer costs were not included within the 'additional funding allocated' column.
- Members asked about mechanisms used to track the benefits of transformation projects. It was confirmed that benefits realisation processes had been tightened in response to previous reviews - an update would be provided later in the meeting.
- It was suggested that future reports should clearly separate grant funding from other funding sources to provide transparency for residents.
- The Committee queried whether the projected savings of £4.21M were recurring. Officers confirmed these were recurring savings, cost avoidance, and additional income, as set out in approved business cases.
- It was highlighted that the £3.91M in "additional funding allocated" was a one-off cost, and that the projected savings this would deliver represented good value.
- In relation to Children's Social Care placements, it was noted that in the past, the Council had not achieved value for money. However, a new, dedicated Commissioning Team would help address this. The team's ongoing costs would be incorporated into the revenue base budget, while savings would be recurring.
- Members suggested that, in future, an extra appendix be added to the revenue budget showing transformation savings from the last five years that were still recurring.
- In relation to children's commissioning, it was confirmed that most of the £1.8M would be used to employ officers within Children's Services, but monitoring of benefits realised would sit within Transformation.
- The Committee queried the payback period for the TVI projects. Officers stated that the conservative estimate for savings from the Adult Social Care Project was £120,000 per year. It was noted that there was potential for higher savings, so the

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

payback period could be shorter than seven years. The project would also deliver significant social benefits for service users, with improved quality of life, reassurance, and a reduced need for conventional care.

- Members asked about the Council's capacity to undertake transformation projects without risking operational stability. The need to balance ambition with organisational capacity was acknowledged - the optimal pace of transformation was a matter of judgement.
- The Committee asked about the decision-making process for selecting transformation projects. It was explained that Corporate Programme Board reviewed all projects and business cases before allocating funding.
- Clarification was sought as to whether talent attraction was transformation or HR business as usual. It was confirmed that the employee value proposition was attracting more staff, and agency staff had converted to Council employees, both of which represented a step change rather than BAU activity. The Talent Attraction Team was funded from transformation resources and elements were set up as formal Transformation projects. Funding was part of the £3.22M for officer costs between 2023-2025 – this paid for staff in both Transformation and HR.
- Further detail was requested in relation to the Business Support Review. It was reported that a staff consultation had concluded in December 2025. Work was ongoing with those affected by the review, which involved detailed, personal conversations. However, officers indicated that an update could be brought to a future meeting.
- Members discussed the need for clarity and consistency in reporting all transformation projects, including those ongoing or yet to deliver savings, such as care homes and resource centres. Members requested a consolidated list / tracker of all transformation projects to facilitate effective scrutiny.

**Action: Officers to develop a consolidated list / tracker of transformation projects (including care homes and resource centres), setting out all costs, savings, and opportunity costs of properties sold (including lost income). This should set out what was transformation and what was delivered by services and should be provided as an appendix to future reports.**

- It was noted that £3.9M mentioned in the report related to future savings, while the £3.22M of officer costs had already been accounted for and savings from projects already delivered were ongoing.
- Members discussed the need to clearly distinguish between transformation funding, grants, asset sales, and other sources, and to ensure project management costs were transparently reported. It was confirmed that project management costs for care homes were included within the £3.22M transformation funding, and that care homes would show a zero return on investment to date if included as a line in the table.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- The overall transformation investment made since 2023.
- The significant combination of financial savings, cost avoidance, and service improvements delivered through the 2023–2025 programme.
- The ongoing work required to secure long-term benefits from projects still in delivery.

### 3 **Asset Disposals**

Shannon Coleman Slaughter, Service Director for Finance, Property, and Procurement, presented the item on Assets Disposal (Agenda Item 4).

The presentation summarised government guidance and the Council's process as applied to transformation funding, specifically the flexible use of capital receipts for transformation expenditure.

It was clarified that not all transformation projects were funded by transformation expenditure, and that a review process was undertaken at year-end to determine whether expenditure satisfied the criteria for transformation funding, with changes applied in the accounts as appropriate.

It was confirmed that, in the last two years, only one asset (a commercial property in Northallerton) had been applied to the transformation reserve, resulting in an annual income foregone of £437,000.

Total expenditure funded by capital receipts for transformation was reported as £3.32 million, primarily covering posts for officers involved in supporting transformational activity. It was noted that not all activity was fully funded by transformation, with some projects having combined funding streams.

The details provided were consistent with the Council's audited accounts for 2023/24, with 2024/25 under audit, and that the final determination for 2025/26 would occur at year-end.

A list of capital receipts allocated to transformation funding was provided. These were mostly assets that were surplus to requirements and no longer in operation.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members expressed frustration that the slides were difficult to read and were only presented at the meeting rather than being circulated in advance - this made it challenging for Members to digest the information and ask informed questions.
- The Service Director agreed to share the slides with the Committee after the meeting and offered to answer questions offline or at a future meeting. Members agreed to revisit the item at the next meeting.

#### **Actions:**

- **Officers to share slides with the Committee after the meeting.**

**RESOLVED to review the asset disposals item at the next meeting.**

### 4 **Effectiveness of Project Management**

Councillor Jeff Brooks, Leader of the Council, and Stacey Bradshaw, Project and Programme Manager, presented the item on Effectiveness of Project Management (Agenda Item 5).

Upon taking over in 2023, the Administration had identified the absence of a central project office to control projects. Historically, individual departments had managed projects using their own project managers, but there had been no central control or standardised methodology. The Council had since established a central Project Management Office (PMO) to provide oversight and consistency across all projects, using recognised methodologies such as PRINCE2.

Opportunities for improvement had been identified through scrutiny, audit, peer review, and the annual governance statement. The focus was on outcomes, particularly:

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

improving delivery, benefit tracking and realisation, building capability and consistency, optimising the project portfolio, and strengthening governance and transparency.

Five key areas of focus were identified:

1. Skills and capability (addressing inconsistency in project sponsorship and delivery quality);
2. Fit-for-purpose methodology (adopting a dynamic approach);
3. Document standardisation and repository (ensuring robust assurance and audit trail);
4. Delivery playbook (embedding consistency and removing fragmented practice);
5. Portfolio prioritisation and return on investment tracking (ensuring corporate oversight and ongoing tracking of project benefits).

A phased approach was being adopted, which involved:

- stabilisation (baseline assessment, centralisation of resources, skills matrix, resource and pipeline management, and escalation routes for risks and issues);
- enablement (making the right way the easy way);
- assurance (improving and evolving processes and methodology).

The guiding principle throughout was to achieve lean, proportionate governance.

Ongoing assurance would be provided through mandatory reporting, routine health checks, a single source of truth (central repository and controlled templates), and benefits and return on investment tracking. Together, these provided clear line of sight, early warning of risk, and confidence in project governance and benefits realisation.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- It was confirmed that the Project Management Service had a team of approximately thirty, including project officers, business analysts, senior project managers, the portfolio management team, and the Project and Programme Manager. There were a number of staff on fixed-term contracts.
- Officers indicated that management of third party suppliers involved in delivering projects would be handled on a case-by-case basis, depending on the project scope. Where third-party resources were utilised, an internal project manager would be assigned to manage the contract through key performance indicators. It was confirmed that project managers were accustomed to matrix management.
- Members welcomed the centralisation and professionalisation of project management and asked about career progression and talent retention. It was explained that officers recruited to these roles were typically qualified project managers rather than junior members of staff. Talent retention was achieved through support for qualifications, involvement in a wide variety of projects, and providing the ability to specialise or shadow others within the PMO. It was felt that the PMO was an exciting place to work, with a high profile within the Council. Also, the multidisciplinary nature of the work and social benefits delivered, were key selling points.
- Recent recruitment campaigns had been very successful, with a high calibre of applicants and the Council seen as an attractive employer for project managers. The PMO included both experienced and newer staff.
- It was noted that there had been a culture shift, so departments were no longer delivering projects, but instead a project manager was assigned from the PMO.

**RESOLVED** to note the presentation.

### 5 Mosaic Briefing Note

Paul Coe, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health, presented the Mosaic Briefing Note (Agenda Item 6).

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

The presentation provided context regarding the implementation of the Mosaic system, a social care case management system essential for all work undertaken by the Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care departments. This would be used to provide management information, and to make reports to government and inspectors. It was a complicated system that needed to be integrated with a number of other software, including finance systems.

Mosaic had been procured to replace the ageing Care Director v5 software. A previous attempt to upgrade to Care Director v6 had been unsuccessful. It was noted that the supplier was quitting the social care market, which would leave just three suppliers of social care case management systems. The government was considering development of a unified system for the future.

The anticipated advantages of Mosaic were outlined, including improved support, up-to-date functionality, the ability to make changes, and enhanced robustness. New features would include a provider portal for direct engagement with care suppliers and improved payment processes. Also, the supplier was developing AI functionality for Mosaic.

The timeline for implementation of Mosaic was set out:

- Invitation to tender - January 2024
- Contract with The Access Group signed - August 2024
- Project kick-off - September 2024
- BetterGov appointed to provide project management – April 2025
- Initial target for implementation - November 2025
- Revised target for implementation – April 2026.

It was confirmed that the project was currently on track.

The following points were discussed in the debate:

- Officers confirmed that Mosaic was a cloud-based system.
- The Committee was informed that discussions with the supplier were proceeding on the basis of delivering functional releases over time, with incremental rather than major step changes.
- Previous challenges around the integration of Care Director v6 with other Council systems were acknowledged. However, officers confirmed that data migration and interface testing were progressing well and similar issues were not anticipated.
- Members asked about possible integration with NHS systems and the potential for Mosaic to support joint working, particularly in relation to telecare and telehealth. Officers explained that the Council already used Connected Care to share data with health partners and that Mosaic would continue to support such integration. Ongoing challenges in data sharing and collaboration with the NHS were acknowledged, but it was confirmed that opportunities for joint working would be pursued.
- Members challenged whether BetterGov should have been engaged earlier. Officers agreed that, with hindsight, earlier engagement would have been beneficial and noted that the enhanced Project Management Office (PMO) now in place would likely have improved project delivery. It was noted that the PMO was smaller at the outset of the project and that the Council did not frequently undertake projects of this scale.
- The Committee noted the bespoke nature of the Care Director system and the challenges of adapting processes to new software. The urgency of the project was highlighted due to the supplier's withdrawal from the market. Where possible, Council processes were being modified to fit the new system rather than customising the software.
- It was suggested that the Committee should continue to monitor major resource-related projects, possibly on an annual basis.

**RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES**

- Members requested that the slides from this presentation and the preceding ones be added to the agenda pack for future reference.

**Action: Slides presented for the Mosaic Briefing Note and the other agenda items to be added to the agenda pack.**

**RESOLVED** to note the presentation.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.04pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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

This page is intentionally left blank

# 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 TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2026

**Councillors Present:** Carolyne Culver (Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Laura Coyle, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Richard Somner, Howard Woollaston and Alan Macro (Substitute) (In place of Jeremy Cottam)

**Also Present:** Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director (Resources)), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director - Place), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Director for Finance, Property and Procurement, Section 151 Officer), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Councillor Dominic Boeck (Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Martha Vickers (Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Heather Codling (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services), Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources), and Vicky Phoenix (Principal Policy Officer - Scrutiny)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Ross Mackinnon and Councillor Jeremy Cottam

#### PART I

##### 1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 10 November 2025 and 25 November 2025 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

##### 2 Actions from previous Minutes

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

- **253** – it was noted that the business case and viability review for the solar farm would be concluded by the end of March 2026.
- **266** – this action, in relation to the Chestnut Walk Joint Venture, had been completed.

**Action: This would be communicated to the resident who raised a query on this matter.**

Members resolved to suspend standing orders to permit members of the public to address the Committee.

- **116/143** – Ms Paula Saunderson requested an update on this matter which related to pollution of the Northbrook stream. She queried if mud testing and camera inspections had taken place, and whether meetings were taking place between the three risk management authorities (West Berkshire Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water). Ms Saunderson highlighted the new DEFRA policy, Building A Safer Future Together, which included indicative actions to address legacy pollutants. The policy envisaged partner agencies working together to manage legacy contamination. Ms Saunderson urged the Council and partners to do everything within their power to mitigate this growing 30 year old problem. She referenced sources of

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

funding that could be accessed to assist with this work, such as the new National Housing Delivery Fund which could hopefully be used to free up brownfield lands which were part of the problem.

**Action: Councillor Carlyne Culver requested that a response be provided to Ms Saunderson on this matter.**

- **274** – Mr Paul Morgan clarified his request for information on contract awards permitted by officers under delegated authority, the value of which were in excess of £2.5m. This was a relatively recent change and Mr Morgan was concerned that such decisions were being made without being subject to a sufficient level of transparency and scrutiny. Contract awards of this value were previously subject to detailed reports. Mr Morgan felt that the justification for making this change had not been adequately evidenced. Sarah Clarke, Executive Director (Resources), confirmed that a briefing note was being prepared which would be provided to this Committee at its next meeting on 17 March 2026. She would take note of Mr Morgan's comments in finalising the briefing note.

Members resolved to reinstate standing orders.

**251** – as agreed at the special meeting held on 3 February 2026, information on capital receipts had been circulated to the Committee. Councillor Culver gave thanks for the provision of this information which clarified expenditure, savings and cost avoidance. Figures were noted as follows:

- Expenditure                      £3.3m
- Savings                            £581k
- Cost avoidance                  £1.2m

It was also noted that approximately £7m had been saved in agency costs with staff added to the Establishment in some cases.

Income of £875k had been foregone between 2023 and 2025.

The 2025/26 Q3 report showed a variance of £1.1m for Transformation. The Q3 report also referenced a saving of £1.9m related to care homes.

Councillor Culver reiterated the need expressed at the previous week's meeting for this information to be held in one place for future monitoring. She clarified that Transformation was being reviewed by the Committee in response to concerns raised by both CIPFA and KPMG. Scrutiny of Transformation work would be returned to once the 2025/26 budget had been finalised.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **4 Petitions**

There were no petitions received at the meeting.

### **5 2025/26 Q3 Financial Performance Report (EX4676)**

Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) presented the report (Agenda Item 6) which outlined the financial performance of the Council's revenue and capital budgets following the Q3 2025/26 outturn.

The forecast Q3 revenue outturn was £8.5m/4.5% adverse to the budget. Total net revenue was forecast at £192.0m in the Q3 outturn, vs £183.4m in the budget.

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

Following the Q2 reprofiling of £22.5m of capital budget, approved by the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, the revised position at Q3 for the expected capital expenditure in 2025/26 was £50.8m against an updated budget of £59.2m resulting in an underspend of £8.4m.

The report noted that in December 2025, a revised Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) request of £20m had been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This sum would enable the Council to maintain the required S151 recommended General Fund level at outturn in order to support the 2026/27 revenue budget and provide greater resilience to the reserves in future financial years.

The Q3 revenue outturn position, which had increased by £1.7m from Q2, was predominantly made up of the following areas:

- Adult Social Care overspend of £4.1m, which included £1.9m in relation to care homes.
- Children's Social Care overspend of £3.7m which included placement costs (£2.8m).
- Transformation, Customer and ICT (£1m).
- Finance, Property and Procurement (£800k).

The report also outlined the primary drivers for the £1.7m increase to the outturn position.

The Government had advised that it would be focusing on reducing costs of external placements.

Turning to capital, Councillor Cottingham highlighted that the weighted average cost of borrowing was 3.89%. The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rate stood at 5.6%. The Council was looking to maximise short-term borrowing and avoid higher long-term rates, alongside ensuring compliance with the requirement that no more than 30% of borrowing was short-term.

Councillor Cottingham concluded by highlighting the very recent Government announcement which proposed that it would meet 90% of existing costs being incurred against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) placements. This could be in the region of £27m. The full detail of this announcement needed to be analysed.

A number of questions were asked by the Committee the responses to which were as follows:

- Concerns were raised about the sustainability of projected borrowing which would increase over the course of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It was noted that this depended on the Council's ability to service debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)). There was therefore a reliance on the continued availability of EFS from Government.
- Controls on non-statutory spending were discussed and Members were advised of the Financial Review Panel which was in place to scrutinise expenditure (and had been for some time). However, Councillor Cottingham explained that it was the Administration's policy to maintain a broad range of services, such as libraries, sport, and culture, rather than cutting non-statutory services. This was despite the Government's unfair funding review.
- Shannon Coleman Slaughter (Service Director – Finance, Property and Procurement) explained that spend panels reviewed all non-contracted expenditure to ensure it was essential and supported by a sound business case.
- Demographic modelling had been undertaken for Adult Social Care. There was an ageing population, many of whom would need care in years to come. The importance

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

of early intervention and preventative investment, particularly in dementia care, was emphasised.

- The increasing reliance on EFS across local authorities was noted. The Local Government Chronicle had reported that a third of local authorities were in receipt of or planning to request EFS.
- Concern was voiced at the reducing level of Business Rate retention, with the majority of this funding going elsewhere in the country. The Council only expected to retain 13p in the pound in 2026/27.
- The increase in average costs for care providers was attributed to factors such as National Insurance uplifts, inflation, and renegotiated contracts. Costs could be reviewed, alongside care provision being maintained. A reduction in self-funding contributions was noted, possibly linked to cost of living pressures.
- The recent government announcement regarding funding for the DSG/SEND deficits was returned to and it was queried if this only related to historic debt. Councillor Cottingham reiterated that the full detail of this announcement would be analysed and explained that the potential financial benefit had not been taken into account in budgets. Councillor Heather Codling (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services) added that, after reviewing the Government statement, the Government would meet 90% of costs incurred to the end of the 2025/26 financial year, subject to meeting certain conditions, which included a SEND reform programme. There was however uncertainty about deficits incurred between 2026 and 2028.
- The Portfolio Holders advised that in-year financial pressures and/or mitigations had not led to reduced capacity or raised thresholds for service provision. The closure of a specific SEND unit was attributed to staffing issues rather than funding.
- The fact that the continued ownership of care homes had not been budgeted for as a contingency was queried and it was acknowledged that, with hindsight, this should have been the approach. However, final negotiations were ongoing when the previous year's budget was being set.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted. It would next be considered by Executive on 12 February 2026.

### **6 Medium Term Financial Strategy: Financial Years 2026-2030 (C4678)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 7). Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) explained that the purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was to determine financial planning assumptions for future years and align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that strategic objectives were delivered. The MTFS highlighted the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances and referenced the scenarios and wider uncertainties concerning the Council's future revenue streams in light of national and local economic factors.

Councillor Cottingham drew attention to the projected EFS funding requirement that was set out in the report - a revised EFS request of £20m for 2025/26.

The report highlighted a significant reduction in the funding settlement over the period of the MTFS. This was particularly concerning when considering increasing costs and with the risk of needing to fund, for example, a high cost placement.

It was noted that projections were based on a worst-case scenario with regard to EFS. If the announced SEND/DSG override materialised then this would improve the position. A realistic approach had been taken to financial forecasting.

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

There was an increasing reliance on Council Tax. A 4.99% Council Tax increase was proposed for 2026/27.

A number of questions were asked by the Committee, the responses to which were as follows:

- It was only possible to increase Council Tax in excess of 4.99% via a referendum or by making an application to Government as part of an EFS request (without triggering a referendum). It was noted that this was generally permitted for local authorities with historically low council tax levels.
- The Section 151 Officer recommended a General Reserve Fund of £10.5m. The forecast closing balance for the current year was £15.8m, giving headroom of £5.3m.
- The requirement for a £15m annual savings target was questioned for future years, when compared to £4.5million being identified for 2026/27. Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive) confirmed that the savings requirement needed to increase to reflect the reality of the Council's financial situation and the need to meet EFS conditions.
- Concerns were raised about the growing increase in EFS as a percentage of the capital financing requirement (CFR). The sustainability of operating with such high levels of borrowing was questioned. In response, it was explained that while EFS as a percentage of CFR was increasing, as a percentage of the overall revenue budget it was less concerning. The need to focus on the proportion of the budget funded by EFS, and to reduce this over the MTF5 period, was emphasised.
- The point was made that if the Council had been able to retain its business rates then it would not have been necessary to apply for EFS.
- The roles of the Finance Improvement Group and Financial Review Panel were discussed. The Finance Improvement Group would oversee the Finance Improvement Plan (with external representation for accountability and challenge), with the aim of reducing EFS requirements. The Financial Review Panel was internally focused and met on a weekly basis to review day-to-day expenditure and consider opportunities for in-year savings.
- The increasing proportion of revenue spent on debt interest and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was identified as a growing concern. This would continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted. It would next be considered by Executive on 12 February 2026, followed by Budget Council on 26 February 2026.

### 7 **Treasury Management and Investment & Borrowing Strategy (C4679)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 8). The report sought to consolidate the Investment and Borrowing Strategy for 2026/27 by detailing how and where the Council would invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. The Strategy was monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report considered by the Governance Committee, as well as an annual report being presented to Members.

Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) drew Members' attention to paragraph 6.15 which referenced the Prudential Code. This showed that the liability benchmark in 2027/28 would exceed the capital financing requirement (CFR). This would be closely monitored on an ongoing basis.

He explained that borrowing requirements would increase for capital financing. This was forecast to reach £470m by 2028/29.

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

Councillor Cottingham concluded by stating that these figures did not take account of the potential SEND/DSG funding override.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted. It would next be considered by Executive on 12 February 2026, followed by Budget Council on 26 February 2026.

### 8 **Capital Strategy and Supporting Programme: Financial Years 2026/27 - 2029/30 (C4681)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 9) which outlined the Capital Strategy and the supporting funding framework, providing a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finances and Resources) outlined the vision of the Capital Strategy which was to develop the Council's core strengths with a focus on Social Care, Education and local infrastructure improvements such as road enhancements and flood prevention. The majority of capital spend was directed towards these priority areas.

The capital programme's financial breakdown was outlined. This was made up of £10.4m of Council funding and £35.8m of external funding committed for the next financial year. External funding included grants and contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and from Section 106 agreements. The importance of an affordable capital programme was emphasised and that grant funding was ring-fenced for specific purposes.

The importance of ongoing investment in infrastructure was discussed, with the point made that underinvestment could have long-term negative impacts on the area's attractiveness to families and businesses. It was important to attract residents to the district and encourage them to remain.

The Council's success in securing external grants was noted, this was particularly important in the current financial climate. Officers were praised for their work in this area, although it was acknowledged by Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive) that Government funding was often targeted at areas with higher deprivation, limiting West Berkshire's opportunities.

The Council's capacity to continue to apply for grants was questioned. In response it was advised that while it was not financially possible to appoint dedicated officers for this purpose, officers did submit good quality bids for grant funding which achieved much success. Success in securing grants for highways and environmental projects were particularly highlighted. The potential to access grants from Homes England was raised.

The need for clearer reporting on the capital programme was raised, with a suggestion that it would be of benefit to be able to distinguish between annual, ongoing, and multi-phase projects/expenditure in future reports. The value of tracking long term investment in assets was discussed, with the view that this could inform future business cases and reveal patterns in maintenance and replacement needs.

It was noted that the Council's accounting system could track spend on a ward by ward basis which would help to understand levels of investment across West Berkshire.

The adequacy of capital investment in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision was questioned. It was discussed that demand for SEND places was high and it was felt that implications arising from the Covid-19 epidemic had contributed to this demand. Councillor Heather Codling (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

Children and Family Services) explained that the Council aimed to expand provision to further enhance inclusion and to enable pupils to attend their local school.

Councillor Cottingham added that placement decisions were made based on what was best for the individual, especially those who were vulnerable, rather than on cost. He added that investment in Education was a key priority of the Capital Strategy with expenditure focused on statutory requirements and projected need.

The importance of CIL funding was highlighted, and it was confirmed by Mr Holmes that the capital programme was based on an average of £3-4 million in CIL receipts per year. The use of CIL/Section 106 grants was restricted, but grant funding was always considered for capital works prior to the Council's own borrowing.

The retention of the Members' community bids fund was welcomed, with the view that it enabled delivery of tangible ward projects and helped to foster parish partnerships. It was noted that the process for accessing these funds was being streamlined to reduce bureaucracy and ensure fairer, more agile distribution.

Questions were raised about the Playing Pitch Action Plan and the 3G pitch at Faraday Road. Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Director – Finance, Property and Procurement) confirmed that feasibility funding was included for the action plan, and the 3G pitch was agreed for the in-year capital programme and would roll into next year's budget.

The funding and business case for the solar farm project were discussed. It was confirmed that alternative funding sources, such as the National Wealth Fund, were being explored. The primary aim of the project was carbon reduction, not yield, and a robust business case was being developed to satisfy scrutiny and government requirements.

The Chestnut Walk project was discussed, with clarification provided by Shannon Coleman-Slaughter that only the capital element (Section 106) was shown in the capital programme, while other funding streams were documented elsewhere.

Ongoing running costs for derelict buildings, such as business rates, security, and insurance, were explained. Clare Lawrence (Executive Director for Place) advised that the Chestnut Walk site was recently broken into.

The Chestnut Walk project was Council-led following the closure of the joint venture with Sovereign.

The procurement of a new social care case management system to replace Care Director was discussed. It was confirmed that the new system, Mosaic, was due to go live in mid-April and would improve efficiency and functionality.

The shop mobility scheme in Newbury Town Centre was discussed, with it being confirmed that there was a low-cost annual membership and affordable hire fees for users.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted. It would next be considered by Executive on 12 February 2026, followed by Budget Council on 26 February 2026.

### 9 Financial Year 2026/27: Revenue Budget (C4680)

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 10). The report detailed the budget proposals for the 2026/27 financial year and supporting Council Tax proposals and resolutions.

Councillor Iain Cottingham (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) advised the Committee that this budget had been an incredibly challenging one to set. A considerable

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

amount of work had been undertaken and a robust process followed in order to bring it forward. There had been focus on statutory services within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, where increased pressures were being felt.

Non-statutory services would however be maintained for residents, even though this meant there was the need to seek Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The Administration wanted to maintain such services.

The proposed General Fund net budget requirement for 2026/27 was £210.9m. This was an increase from £192m (2025/26 Q3 outturn).

Attention was drawn to the results of the resident consultation. The level of response was relatively low, but responses identified roads/highways as the top priority, followed by Education and Children's Services.

A question was asked regarding the 'Collection fund deficit on Council Tax'. It was clarified by Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Director for Finance, Property and Procurement, and Section 151 Officer) that the Council Tax collection rate had fallen. The cost of living was a significant contributing factor. These figures were derived from statutory returns, comparing anticipated collections with actual year-end outcomes, with the resulting deficit accounted for within the MTFS.

Councillor Cottingham acknowledged that the Council could be more robust in pursuing outstanding Council Tax debt, but efforts were on working with residents and supporting those in need of financial support. However, there was also the need to balance fairness to all taxpayers.

The issue of parish precepts was raised, noting that some parishes had managed to keep increases to a minimum, but it was queried whether these would need to increase should greater devolution be sought. Councillor Cottingham explained that services would not be devolved to parishes without funding. It was clarified that any devolution of services to parishes would be "pull" from parishes rather than "push" to. This linked to local government reorganisation and the potential for more proactive collaboration with parish councils. This would help to ensure that devolution empowered rather than distanced local communities.

The potential for unintended consequences of savings elsewhere in the budget was raised, such as increased referrals, exclusions, or care costs for children and young people. It was explained that the Council had protected external costs for children's services, with a £4.4 million increase in the budget for that area. Detailed analysis had been undertaken between colleagues in Finance and Children's Services to ensure that budgeting was realistic.

It was noted that transformation funding had enabled investment into the commissioning team and this was allowing the Council to commission care placements in expectation of need and helping to control costs. Positive relationships were also being built with providers. Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive) added that the Government had introduced a new prevention grant for children, with prevention a key aspect to achieving long-term financial sustainability.

Discussion on the importance of modelling the impact of savings in one area on outcomes in another was continued. Mr Holmes explained that analysis was ongoing to ensure that a saving identified in one area did not have a negative impact on another service provided to residents, which could result in additional costs being incurred in future. Reference was made to work with Public Health in order to achieve a 'health in all policies' approach as a way of preventing this.

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

It was queried whether the areas of risk facing the Council had been sufficiently taken into account and whether costs could exceed assumptions. In response it was explained that the budget included a 3.5% salary increase and a 4.8% increase for some Adult and Children's Social Care services. The budget was described as being both prudent and realistic, with provision for known risks such as the continued operation of care homes and resource centres. The potential was however acknowledged for unexpected pressures to occur, for example from a high-cost residential care placement.

The schedules of fees and charges were discussed, noting that Public Protection Partnership (PPP) discretionary charges were increasing by over 7%, while West Berkshire's own discretionary charges were rising by 4.8%. It was explained that the PPP's fees were agreed jointly with Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Councils as part of the joint partnership. These fees were also influenced by the average hourly rate for service provision.

The issue of planning enforcement fees was raised and it was felt that charges could be brought in cases of upheld enforcement breaches. It was explained that all fees and charges were being subject to a comprehensive review and there was the potential to extend these as it was important to ensure that cost recovery was being achieved. However, Clare Lawrence (Executive Director for Place) explained that planning fees were set nationally and were restricted. New legislation could increase the criteria for planning fees, but it was currently not possible to issue a charge for enforcement work or for the development of the Local Plan. Fines for enforcement breaches could be levied, but these were at a low level and did often serve as a deterrent. The Council could access proceeds of crime funding in certain cases, and had done so successfully in the past.

It was noted that other charges for planning services included provision to levy a charge for providing advice not covered by any of the listed categories. The Committee felt the use of this could be explored for the setting of planning fees.

The ability of the Planning Service to cover its costs was discussed, with it being confirmed that, at present, planning fees did not cover the full cost of processing a planning application, especially for minor and household applications. It was hoped that new legislation would allow local authorities to set fees at a level that achieved greater cost recovery.

It was noted that the Council was highly dependent on Council Tax in comparison to many other local authorities. A growth in Council Tax from development would be beneficial, although a concern was raised that Council Tax income might not be sufficient to cover increasing costs of a growing population. It was suggested that modelling on this point could be explored by scrutiny in future.

The potential for further scrutiny of revenue-raising opportunities was discussed, which could take place through a task and finish group.

The results of the resident consultation were referred to. While it was noted that roads and transport were the top concerns for residents, people-related services (such as social care) consumed the largest share of the revenue budget. It was suggested that the Council could do more to communicate this to residents to help widen understanding of this point.

The need to utilise the Council's assets was discussed, with Shaw House cited as an example where greater commercial use was being promoted. Mr Holmes confirmed that asset utilisation was a key theme in the Finance Improvement Plan, and that the Council was actively seeking to increase income and reduce costs from its property portfolio. This included, but extended beyond, the disposal of assets.

## **RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES**

The importance of consulting staff for ideas on savings and income generation was discussed. Mr Holmes confirmed that staff were encouraged to come forward. A staff suggestion scheme was in place, with ideas reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team every four weeks. The role of technology, such as AI, in improving productivity and generating savings was also being explored.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted. It would next be considered by Executive on 12 February 2026, followed by Budget Council on 26 February 2026.

### **10 Appointment of Task and Finish Groups**

The Chairman introduced the item on appointment of Task and Finish Groups (Agenda Item 11). There were no draft terms of reference to approve, and no changes to the membership of existing task and finish groups were proposed.

### **11 Task and Finish Group Updates**

Councillor Chris Read provided an update on the work of the Project Management Task and Finish Group (Agenda Item 12).

The group held its last meeting on 9 February 2026 and discussed its draft report. The report was predominantly focused on Care Director and i-Trent with 22 recommendations proposed. The report would be finalised once any comments had been received from witnesses to the review.

The report was scheduled to be received by the Scrutiny Committee on 17 March 2026. The Executive would then be asked to respond to the recommendations.

Councillor Read gave thanks to all involved for their work on the review. Councillor Carlyne Culver added her thanks.

### **12 Executive Forward Plan January 2026 to April 2026**

The Committee noted the Council's Forward Plan for the period up to 30 April 2026 (Agenda Item 13).

### **13 Corporate Programme**

The Committee considered the Corporate Programme (Agenda Item 14) and made the following comments:

- A closure estimate date was needed for the Future Care Home Strategy.
- It was noted that some of the projects had closed and should therefore be removed from the list of current projects for future meetings.

### **14 Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Work Programme (Agenda Item 15) and noted the items provisionally scheduled for the next meeting on 17 March 2026:

- Waste Strategy/update
- Swift Bricks (consideration of Council Motion)
- Pedestrianisation
- Briefing note on contracts awarded under delegated authority
- Receipt of the Project Management Task Group report

It was noted that the Playing Pitch Strategy was scheduled for the Executive on 19 March 2026. It could therefore be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 17 March.

**RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES**

The Business Support Review was due to be completed during the summer of 2026. It could therefore be scheduled for scrutiny in the autumn.

Councillor Richard Somner explained that he had been contacted by a number of residents with regard to the introduction of 20mph zones. Decisions on these were expected to be via Individual Member Decisions and the date(s) for these would be identified.

The need to promote public consultation exercises was highlighted in order to encourage responses, in particular from local residents.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 9.12pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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

This page is intentionally left blank

**Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Recommendations and Actions Tracker**

The Recommendations and Actions Tracker is a standing item, and documents the progress of formal scrutiny recommendations and suggested actions for improvement made by the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee at its public meetings. Items will remain on the tracker until a response has been provided to the Committee by the Executive, council departments, and/or external partners.

**Suggested Actions for Improvement to Council Departments/Partners**

Ref	Meeting date and agenda item	Action	Lead	Target date	Last update	Update	Status
116 & 143	<b>11 October 2023 &amp; 25 April 2024:</b> Thames Water and Environment Agency	Meet with the EA and West Berkshire Council to discuss the Northbrook in Newbury. Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether action would be taken following the results of the Northbrook tests.	Cllr Stuart Gourley/Jon Winstanley	17/03/2026	10/02/2026	TW have supported with testing of the Northbrook. WBC's business case is being finalised with the EA and will be managed in line with the emerging draft Section 19 report after the January 2024 district-wide flooding. This will require EA funding. The Environment Officer who joined us on the site visit, has requested a water quality monitoring device to be deployed along the Northbrook. 01/07/25 - concerns on this matter have been brought to the attention of Lee Dillon MP by a resident, the outcome of which would be monitored. 05/09/25 - Cllr Gourley has continued to chase the EA for further support with pollution testing, but all systems are deployed elsewhere currently. The EA do not consider this site as a priority at the current time. 16/09/25 - request made of the Council to take action as corporate landlord by requesting that testing take place of non-dissolvable pollutants and for cameras to be installed to monitor the situation and help identify ways to resolve it. This was informed by a member of the public, Ms Paula Saunderson, who is liaising with officers. 14/11/25 - Portfolio Holder is in discussion with officers on the available options and how best to take this forward. It is understood that the Lead Local Flood Authority's Principal Engineer has been tasked with preparing a further study of the flood risk.	In progress
						25/11/25 - agreed to request a written update for the Newbury Clay Hill Flood and Drainage Warden (Ms Saunderson). 10/02/26 - request repeated for a response to Ms Saunderson following her latest points on this matter.	In progress
141	<b>25 April 2024:</b> Actions from Previous Minutes	Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with Councillor Gourley's motion (in relation to Thames Water) that was passed at March Council.	Cllr Stuart Gourley	15/09/2026	14/11/2025	The Scrutiny Chairman is in dialogue with the Executive Portfolio Holder regarding the timing of future reports. 14/11/25 - TW are conducting a lot of work around the District, and small steps are being made by the government to improving the situation. The council continue to support TW with operational needs such as permits for works etc, and remain in dialogue on upcoming works, and requirements around the District. The scheduling of the annual meeting with WBC officers, Thames Water and the Environment Agency to discuss flooding, sewage and drought to be discussed under the Work Programme (provisionally September 2026).	In progress

212	<b>26 November 2024:</b> Response to Faraday Road Football Ground queries	Provide details of the project plan and objectives for Faraday Road.	Cllr Nigel Foot	tbc	16/09/2025	A draft is being produced. Cllr Foot to clarify some details and will provide a further update following the next meeting of the Faraday Road Steering Group in September. 16/09/25 - an update on the project plan and objectives for Faraday Road was provided at the Executive on 25 September 2025.	In progress
223	<b>11 February 2025:</b> Actions from Previous Meetings	Follow up with Thames Water regarding Thatcham Sewage Works.	Cllrs Stuart Gourley and Denise Gaines	tbc	16/09/2025	Cllr Culver has contacted Denise Kinsella and awaits a response. Cllr Gourley has also been asked to liaise with Thames Water on this point. 01/07/25 - Stephen Chard to seek confirmation on ownership of the Thatcham Sewage Works. Confirmed this is Thames Water. 16/09/25 - it was explained that the concerns with the sewage works being at capacity and action needing to be taken as a result were being progressed by the relevant Portfolio Holders (Councillors Stuart Gourley and Denise Gaines).	In progress
156, 157, 232	<b>17 July 2024 &amp; 13 March 2025:</b> Waste Strategy	Undertake benchmarking with other local authorities to check the link between affluence and waste volume.	Daniel Warne	17/03/2026	19/06/2025	Assigned to officer for action in Q4, following implementation of other key priorities.	In progress
		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		17/03/2026	06/02/2026	Action forms part of adopted Waste Management Strategy. Assigned to officer for action in Q4, following implementation of other key priorities. 01/07/25 - importance highlighted of ensuring that local communities and volunteer groups were aware that litter picking kits were held by parishes. 06/02/26 - Waste Strategy includes ongoing actions to enhance support for community led litter picking and to increase engagement with Town and Parish Councils, with the latter planned for a greater focus in 2027. We actively promote the availability of our litter picking equipment and publicise the work of volunteers when information such as photos or collected volumes is shared with us on social media, press releases and via council e-newsletters. To further improve accessibility and awareness, we will collate and publish a list of locations where litter picking equipment can be borrowed.	In progress
		A future report to be brought to the Scrutiny Commission on implementation of the new recycling scheme.		17/03/2026	16/09/2025	Discussion on the Waste Strategy is scheduled on the Work Programme for March 2026. This will include an update on the move to three weekly black bin collections.	In progress
237	<b>1 July 2025:</b> Corporate Programme	Councillor Iain Cottingham to provide an update on progress with the corporate landlord model.	Cllr Iain Cottingham	tbc	16/09/2025		In progress
242	<b>1 July 2025:</b> 2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn	Cllr Iain Cottingham to provide the invest to save business case to Cllr Antony Amirtharaj to provide a fuller explanation of the commissioning work that was involved with procuring SEND provision.	Cllr Iain Cottingham	tbc	01/07/2025	This will be more widely circulated once received.	In progress

246	<b>1 July 2025:</b> Task and Finish Group Updates	The three scrutiny chairmen and Democratic Services to carry out a piece of work to achieve clarity about the purpose and parameters of task and finish groups.	Scrutiny Chairmen	17/03/2026	15/01/2026	This is being progressed by Nicki Thomas, Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services, in the first instance. Draft guidance has been provided to the scrutiny chairmen for comment. 25/11/25 - would be progressed once comments had been received from all Scrutiny Chairmen. 15/01/26 - feedback received, could now be progressed through decision making cycle.	In progress
251	<b>16 September 2025:</b> Review of Transformation Programme	Information would be provided on the income from selling assets, alongside costs incurred/rental income lost to fully understand the benefits achieved from transformation. Information would also be provided on the costs of retaining an asset and using it in a different way vs the savings achieved.	Gabrielle Mancini/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	10/02/2026	10/02/2026	Information on capital receipts provided for the February meetings. This clarified expenditure, savings and cost avoidance. Request made that this information to be held in one place for future monitoring.	Complete
		Further information would be provided on savings achieved and cost avoidance, as well as all costs incurred to establish the net position and assist further scrutiny. This would capture the information in one document and could take the form of an enhanced Appendix A and/or the transformation cost tracker that had been tabled. Regular update reports were requested. The next update was received by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 February 2026.	Gabrielle Mancini/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	03/02/2026	03/02/2026		In progress
253	<b>16 September 2025:</b> Capital Financing Performance Report Q1 2025/26	A full list of reprofiling requests would be provided in future reports.	George Winterbourne	15/09/2026	06/03/2026	The current process is that reprofiling is reviewed and reported in Q1 and Q2.	In progress
		The business case for the solar farm would be circulated to the Committee.	Clare Lawrence/Jon Winstanley	31/03/2026	10/02/2026	05/02/26 - Business case is currently being updated following conclusion of the procurement exercise in December. It is anticipated the business case and viability review will be concluded by the end of March 26.	In progress
254	<b>16 September 2025:</b> Revenue Performance Report Q1	Greater clarification would be provided of the graphs presented in paragraph 6.2 of the report.	Toby Bradley/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter		16/09/2025		In progress
		Information would be provided on the profiling of short term borrowing and repayment.					In progress
		A private finance briefing would be arranged for Scrutiny Members, open to all Members, to aid Members' understanding of factors related to the budget, such as Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) and borrowing arrangements with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb), and how best to scrutinise them.		tbc			In progress
257	<b>10 November 2025:</b> Local Government Reorganisation - full proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire	In the event that the Ridgeway Council proposal is approved, bring a report to a future meeting of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee setting out next steps / preparatory work.			10/11/2025		

258	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Community Safety Partnership Update	TVP to confirm whether ethnicity categories were self-defined for stop and search.	TVP		25/11/2025		
259	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Community Safety Partnership Update	TVP to investigate whether crime rates per 10,000 population could be provided for next year's presentation.	TVP		25/11/2025		
260	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	Planning Members would need to be provided with information on the different options/tools that would be taken forward, subject to agreement. This would be requested for inclusion in planning training when appropriate.	Laura Callan	tbc	25/11/2025	Training materials being developed and worked into next Planning Committee Member Training sessions.	In progress
262	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	Connecting Communities in Berkshire would be invited to join the work of the vibrant villages PDG. All Members should be made aware of the work of this organisation.	Laura Callan	tbc	25/11/2025	Dates for the next PDG sub group in process of agreement and CCB will be invited to the sub group meeting.	In progress
263	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	The suggestion was made that almshouses could be a wider consideration for affordable housing, this could be taken forward with the Chair of the Almshouse Association. Councillor Gaines agreed this could be explored.	Laura Callan/Nick Caprara	tbc	25/11/2025	Meeting scheduled for Cllr Gaines and officers from Housing & Planning to meet with Chair of Almshouse Association on 10/2. Will also be considered further as part of PDG sub group	In progress
264	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	The targets for affordable housing and social housing for the Local Plan period (to 2041) would be confirmed to the Committee.	Cllr Denise Gaines/Clare Lawrence/Laura Callan	tbc	25/11/2025	Information is being prepared and will be circulated.	In progress
265	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	Information would be provided on specific projects that were expected to come forward for affordable/social housing units.	Clare Lawrence/Nick Caprara	17/03/2026	25/11/2025	Quarterly completion and pipeline reports are provided to Cllr Gaines at briefing sessions. Officers continue to negotiate with Registered provider partners over the delivery of affordable housing sites in the district. Meetings with Abri Housing have taken place with officers and portfolio holder regarding 3 sites in the district with an aim to deliver 100% affordable housing on each site. Work is currently underway on the first of these sites at Pound Street in Newbury. Further details on sites and schemes will be shared as they progress.	In progress
267	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery	The reasoning for the disposal by SNG of Newbury House would be confirmed.	SNG	tbc	25/11/2025		In progress
269	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Corporate Programme (Future Care Home Strategy)	Confirmation needed of when this Strategy could come forward for review.	Stephen Chard/Paul Coe	tbc	25/11/2025		In progress
270	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Corporate Programme (Grazeley Solar Farm)	Officers to come back with a suggested date for when the Committee could review the Grazeley Solar Farm.	Clare Lawrence/Jon Winstanley	tbc	05/02/2026	05/02/26 - Unable to give a date at this time until the business case and viability update has been completed. Expected this will be complete by the end of March 26.	In progress
271	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Work Programme	Arrange an additional meeting prior to 10 February to review the Transformation Programme, Business Support Review, Project Management, and Mosaic.	Stephen Chard	15/09/2026	03/02/2026	Meeting held on 03/02/26. Update on the Business Support Review to be scheduled for a future meeting.	In progress
272	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Work Programme	Members asked for an update on current flood risk and the Section 19 report. Officers to liaise internally and with Thames Water to agree an appropriate time to provide an update to Committee.	Jon Winstanley	15/09/2026	05/02/2026	05/02/26 - has been discussed with Scrutiny Chairman and expect that an update could be presented during Summer 2026.	In progress

273	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Work Programme	Officers to consider when an update could be given on plans in place for a potential drought.	Clare Lawrence	tbc	25/11/2025		In progress
274	<b>25 November 2025:</b> Work Programme	Officers to bring a briefing paper on the process and Scheme of Delegation for awarding contracts, addressing the concerns expressed in the resident's request.	Sarah Clarke	17/03/2026	10/02/2026	Provided with the agenda for 17/03/26.	In progress
275	<b>3 February 2026:</b> Transformation return on investment	Officers to develop a consolidated list / tracker of transformation projects (including care homes and resource centres), setting out all costs, savings, and opportunity costs of properties sold (including lost income). This should set out what was transformation and what was delivered by services and should be provided as an appendix to future reports.	Gabrielle Mancini/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter				In progress

**Formal Recommendations to Executive**

Ref	Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny recommendation	Lead	Target date	Last update	Response	Status
	<b>10 November 2025:</b> Local Government Reorganisation - full proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire	That the following text be added to the key vision statements for Ridgeway: 'We will deliver strong action on climate change and promote nature recovery.'	Sarah Clarke	28/11/2025		LGR proposal approved by Executive on 12/11/25.	Complete
	<b>10 November 2025:</b> Local Government Reorganisation - full proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire	That future analysis of consultation responses, should include a spatial analysis.	Sarah Clarke				
	<b>10 November 2025:</b> Local Government Reorganisation - full proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire	Continue to liaise with town and parish councils to discuss how they could be best engaged with and supported in future, the delivery of public services, and to review and disseminate best practice in this area.	Sarah Clarke				

	<p><b>25 November 2025:</b> Affordable Housing Delivery</p>	<p>That officers continue to proceed with reviewing the preferred options (the toolkit) to help facilitate increased delivery of affordable housing locally. The toolkit includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The establishment of an RP Framework with partner local authorities in order to formalise and incentivise development partners.</li> <li>•Exploring the implications of accepting commuted sums on sites and to undertake further modelling on how this may affect delivery through key strategic relationships with RPs locally.</li> <li>•The acceptance of a flexible approach to s106 agreements Implications and Impact Assessment.</li> <li>•Continue to engage with Lee Dillon MP and commence engagement with Olivia Bailey MP to lobby government and providers to tackle significant barriers to delivery at the current time.</li> <li>•Not to proceed with the development of a Housing Company due to financial viability issues remaining significant.</li> </ul>	Nick Caprara			<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berkshire wide RP forum held 3rd March &amp; attended by Homes England looking to agree minimum acceptable standards &amp; rent levels &amp; increase levels of Affordable Housing delivery</li> <li>• Meeting with Lee Dillon MP took place 6th March</li> </ul>	
--	---	--	--------------	--	--	---	--

**Formal Recommendations to External Partners**

Ref	Meeting date and agenda item	Scrutiny recommendation	Lead	Target date	Last update	Response	Status

# Agenda Item 4

Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee  
17 March 2026

## **Item 4 – Declarations of interest**

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee  
17 March 2026

## **Item 5 – Petitions**

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

# Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update

**Committee considering report:** Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Committee:** 17 March 2026

**Portfolio Member:** Councillor Stuart Gourley

**Report Author:** Daniel Warne

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Committee on the early performance and impacts of the move to three-weekly refuse (black bin) collections, outlining how the service change is progressing following implementation in September 2025.
- 1.2 The report summarises initial operational outcomes, financial performance, environmental benefits, and resident engagement activity, providing assurance that the change is functioning as intended and remains aligned with the objectives set out in the Council’s Waste Management Strategy 2025–2032.
- 1.3 It also highlights emerging risks, lessons learned and areas requiring continued focus, enabling Scrutiny to review progress, offer necessary challenge, and consider any further actions that may support the continued successful delivery and long-term sustainability of this change.
- 1.4 Recommendations and feedback obtained from Scrutiny will be considered and, wherever practicable, used to inform the continuous improvement of the Council’s waste management services.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee notes the effects of the move to 3 weekly refuse collections and to provide any relevant comments, as required.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	Expected efficiencies in year one (part year) of £288,000 (compared to original estimate of £150,000), increasing in year

**Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update**

	two, due to reduced waste being sent to landfill and Energy from Waste.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	There are no direct HR implications. The change increased the demand on the Waste team and Customer Services. However, the peak demand period has been passed, and the service is transitioning to embedding the change and BAU.			
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no direct Legal implications because of this report.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>The main risk identified:</p> <p>Initial public resistance when the change to the collection frequency of refuse bins was announced and then implemented. This risk has been suitably managed through continued stakeholder engagement, effective communications, suitable resourcing of relevant Council teams and mitigation activity as required.</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	There are no direct property implications because of this report.			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The change in refuse bin collection frequency relates to the Council’s policy to be Net Zero by 2030 and is aligned with the measures set out in the Council’s Waste Management Strategy (2025 – 2032).</p> <p>It also links to national Waste and Resource Strategy measures including ‘Simpler Recycling’, extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging, and the deposit return scheme (DRS). It also links to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) which will see energy from waste facilities included within ETS from 2028.</p>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				

### Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update

<p><b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>		x		<p>This report does not require a decision. An EqIA was completed ahead of implementation as part of the specific project.</p>
<p><b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>		x		<p>This report does not require a decision. An EqIA was completed ahead of implementation as part of the specific project.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Impact:</b></p>	x			<p>The change in refuse bin collection frequency will have a positive impact on the environment as it will increase our recycling rate, reduce waste generation by householders, and can help reduce associated carbon emissions. Early results indicate these expected improvements are being achieved.</p>
<p><b>Health Impact:</b></p>		x		<p>This proposal has already been implemented and is expected to have a neutral impact on health.</p>
<p><b>ICT Impact:</b></p>		x		<p>This proposal has already been implemented; there has been no impact in ICT.</p>
<p><b>Digital Services Impact:</b></p>		x		<p>This proposal has already been implemented; associated actions have already been completed.</p>

### Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update

<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	x			<p>Implementation of the reduction in refuse bin collection frequency will have a positive impact in supporting the Council priority of Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency by helping to achieve the Council's Net Zero ambitions.</p> <p>This will be supporting this priority by increasing recycling rates, encouraging waste minimisation and reducing carbon emissions.</p>
<b>Core Business:</b>		x		Not applicable.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		x		At this stage it is not envisaged that there will be any significant data impact associated with the implementation of the waste management strategy.

<p><b>Consultation and Engagement:</b></p>	<p>Several activities have been carried out focused on consultation and engagement as part of the Waste Management Strategy and project implementation, including:</p> <p><u>Waste Management Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scrutiny Committee 17 July 2024</li> <li>- Environment Advisory Group (EAG) Open Forum updates</li> <li>- Three workshops with members (held on 6 March 2023, 13 March 2023 and 3 July 2023) to gather feedback and foster dialogue.</li> <li>- A public workshop held with residents (on 23 May 2023) to gain valuable community perspectives.</li> <li>- Public consultation 25 September – 6 November 2024.</li> </ul> <p><u>Project Implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Two bin hanger deliveries and one direct mail to all kerbside properties ahead of the change. These bin hangers had relevant information about the change and what householders were to expect.</li> <li>– E-newsletters and social media updates</li> <li>– Numerous drop-in sessions across the district at local libraires, markets and schools.</li> </ul>
--	--

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Three-weekly black-bin collections were implemented on 22 September 2025 as part of the revised waste-collection model, designed to improve recycling performance, reduce refuse waste, and support the long-term sustainability of the waste service. Residents in the Council area enjoy weekly separate food-waste collections, fortnightly recycling and an opt-in garden-waste service. They also have access to two Household Waste Recycling Centres and 9 Mini Recycling Centres and our chargeable bulky waste collection service.
- 4.2 Early results from the first three full months (October – December 2025) demonstrate strong progress. Compared to the same time period last year black-bin waste reduced by 15% (1,049 tonnes), dry recycling increased by 6%

## Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update

(199 tonnes), and food-waste recycling improved by 22% (260 tonnes). Total waste fell by 162 tonnes, equivalent to 2.3 kg less waste per household.

- 4.3 Importantly, there is no evidence of significant displacement of waste to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). HWRC tonnages have risen slightly, but this increase is small compared to the substantial reductions seen at the kerbside.
- 4.4 Fly-tipping has not increased and has instead shown a small 5% decrease, compared to the same time period last year.
- 4.5 The waste team have delivered 60 drop-in outreach sessions so far in 2025/26, engaging more than 1,500 residents across libraries, markets, and schools.
- 4.6 Applications for extra black-bin capacity increased significantly following the announcement of the service change in May 2025, with 2,372 requests in 2025/26 to date, compared with 574 in the whole of 2024/25. Of these, 750 applications have been approved, up from 253 the previous year.
- 4.7 While reports of missed collections increased during the early adjustment period (524 reports from Oct–Dec 2025/26 compared to 161 in the same period of 2024/25), this still represents only 0.20% of all kerbside refuse collections made in Q3. numbers have fallen month-on-month as crews and residents are adapting to the new schedule.
- 4.8 The increase in missed collections has not resulted in additional operating costs, and because collections run sequentially from one day to the next in close geographic proximity, there has been minimal environmental impact from vehicle movements. Overall, the change is expected to reduce distance travelled by waste collection trucks by 9,700 miles per annum.
- 4.9 Financial performance is strong, and although the full details are still being worked out, the service is expected to exceed its £150k savings target, with total benefits for 2025/26 projected at around £280k (accounting for implementation costs), rising to approximately £488k in 2026/27.
- 4.10 Based on Q3 performance, if the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) had applied to Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities during this period, our costs would have been around £50,000 lower compared with the same period last year.

## 5 Supporting Information

### 1. Rationale for Change

- 5.2 Before implementation, analysis showed that a significant proportion of black-bin contents was recyclable materials (42%) and could have been diverted through existing weekly or fortnightly services. West Berkshire's relatively high per-head waste generation levels reinforced the need for a new approach, particularly in anticipation of future cost pressures such as carbon-related charges at Energy-from-Waste facilities expected from 2028.

### 2. Early Performance and Waste Movement

5.3 The first quarter of service data demonstrates a clear improvement in waste outcomes, compared with the same period in the preceding year:

- 15% reduction in black-bin waste (1,049 tonnes).
- 6% increase in dry recycling (199 tonnes).
- 22% increase in food-waste recycling (260 tonnes).
- 1% reduction in overall waste (162 tonnes).

5.4 Crucially, there has been no corresponding shift of waste from kerbside collections to HWRCs. While HWRC usage has risen, the increase is marginal and significantly outweighed by the reductions at the kerbside. Fly-tipping levels have remained stable, with a 5% reduction, indicating the change has not at this stage had a negative impact on responsible disposal behaviours.

### 3. Resident Support and Engagement

5.5 To support residents through the transition, the Council delivered a substantial programme of engagement, including:

- 60 outreach sessions at libraries, markets, and schools.
- Over 1,500 attendees receiving direct guidance.
- Free replacement and additional recycling containers.
- Additional black-bin capacity for eligible households.

5.6 Demand for additional capacity rose sharply when the service change was announced, with 2,372 applications in 2025/26, compared with 574 the previous year. Of these, 750 applications were approved (compared to 253 in 2024/25), reflecting both increased awareness of the scheme and households adjusting to the new frequency.

### 4. Operational Performance

5.7 As expected with any major service change, missed-collection reports increased during the early adjustment period:

- 524 reports (Sept–Dec 2025/26) vs. 161 (Sept–Dec 2024/25).

5.8 However, these figures have improved each month as crews and residents have become familiar with the new schedule.

5.9 Operational efficiency and service quality has been maintained throughout. On the limited occasions that issues have arisen e.g. due to missed collections or vehicle breakdown, the Council and the waste contractor have worked together to promptly resolve them.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 The decision to move to three-weekly refuse collections was originally made as part of the adoption of the Waste Management Strategy 2025–2032, during

which a range of alternative models were reviewed. This paper focuses only on reporting progress since implementation, rather than re-evaluating previously considered options. No new options have been assessed as part of this progress update.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The introduction of three-weekly black-bin collections is delivering encouraging early results and performing as intended. Refuse waste has decreased significantly, recycling levels continue to rise, and overall waste generation has fallen. HWRC use is stable relative to kerbside reductions, a 5% drop in fly-tipping, and decreasing missed-collection reports as the system beds in. It has to be noted though that we are still very early in the change journey and continued focus on customer engagement and operational delivery is required if the initial benefits are to be embedded and sustained.
- 7.2 Resident engagement has been high, demonstrated by more than 1,500 attendees at community events and a substantial rise in applications for additional bin capacity. This indicates awareness, adaptation, and active participation from households across the district.
- 7.3 Operationally, the service is running efficiently, with no unexpected additional cost and a positive environmental impact. Financial performance is strong, and although commercially sensitive details must be handled carefully, projections indicate the service will exceed its £150k savings target, with £280k forecast for 2025/26 and £488k projected for 2026/27.
- 7.4 Overall, the early evidence shows that the three-weekly collection model is likely to be a successful, sustainable, and responsible approach that supports both the Council's Waste Management Strategy 2025–2032 and the long-term needs of West Berkshire residents.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equity Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Slide Deck – Three Weekly Black Bin Collections – Update
- 8.3 Appendix C – Summary of selected outcomes

---

**Wards affected:** All

**Officer details:**

Name: Daniel Warne  
Job Title: Waste Manager

---

## Three-Weekly Refuse Waste Collections Progress Update

---

Tel No: 01635 503243  
E-mail: [Daniel.warne@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.warne@westberks.gov.uk)

---

# West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

## Contents

Section 1: Summary details.....	11
Section 2: Detail of proposal .....	13
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics .....	18
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts.....	20
Section 4: Review.....	21

Section 1: Summary details

<p><b>Directorate and Service Area</b></p>	<p>Place, Waste</p>
<p><b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).</p>	<p>Early impact and progress of changing general refuse collection from households from once every two weeks, to once every three weeks.</p>
<p><b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b></p>	<p>Existing function, policy change.</p>
<p><b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).</p>	<p>The general refuse (black bin) collection service changed from fortnightly to three-weekly collections on the 22 September 2025, as part of the Council’s Waste Management Strategy 2025-2032.</p> <p>The change involved all households receiving kerbside collections but not those who have shared communal bin.</p> <p>Positive impacts associated with this change include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of the recycling services the Council provide;</li> <li>• Environmental benefits through waste reduction and reduced carbon emissions; and</li> <li>• Cost savings for the Council, helping to achieve more value for money for ratepayers and to maintain other essential services provided by the Council.</li> </ul> <p>Negative impacts (which the Waste team have effectively mitigated) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased difficulty for larger-than-typical households that generate higher volumes of waste.</li> <li>• Challenges for selected residents with medical needs, such as those requiring incontinence products, who may need additional support.</li> </ul>

## Equity Impact Assessment

	<p>The recent change does not discriminate against any particular demographic. However, certain householders have received additional support from the Council to adapt to this change. Suitable mitigation measures taken by the Council to assist residents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering additional general waste capacity (e.g. larger bins) for eligible households;</li><li>• Continuing to provide medical waste collections for eligible households; and</li><li>• Providing enhanced service communications and waste reduction support to residents (e.g. Real Nappy give-aways and cash-back scheme, updates in our newsletters and on social media channels, targeted media campaigns and ongoing advice provision to customers).</li></ul> <p>English councils like Bracknell Forest, East Devon, Stratford-on-Avon, North and East Hertfordshire have successfully adopted similar changes, and achieved higher recycling rates and cost efficiencies. More English authorities such as East and Mid Suffolk, Cheshire East, South Gloucestershire are due to make a similar change in 2026. The Council's officers have continued to engage with peers in council areas who have already implemented this change to learn lessons, which can be used to enhance our implementation approach. Officers are reasonably confident that the identified mitigation measures will help ensure fairness and accessibility for all affected groups.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Daniel Warne
<b>Authorised By</b>	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi, Service Lead – Climate Change
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	11/2/2026

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Council’s shift from fortnightly to three-weekly refuse collections is part of resource efficiency measures set out in the Waste Management Strategy 2025-2032. This change aligns with national waste reduction policies and aims to significantly increase recycling rates, reduce waste generation and associated disposal costs, and support help achieve better environmental outcomes. Reductions in waste generation and improved waste management will also result in reduced carbon emissions and contribute to the achievement of the Council’s aspiration to get to Net Zero by 2030.</p>
<p><b>Proposals</b></p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The recent change has resulted in kerbside refuse collections switching from fortnightly to three-weekly on 22 September 2025, while maintaining food waste and dry recycling collections at their current frequency. Refuse collections from communal properties have also remained at their current weekly frequency.</p> <p>This approach was chosen as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces residual waste by encouraging recycling (42% of black bin waste is potentially recyclable).</li> <li>• Ensures sufficient bin capacity, West Berkshire was providing the highest in Berkshire (120 litres (l) per week), reducing to 80l per week is in line with comparable authorities. For example, Bracknell Forest currently provides their residents with a general waste bin capacity of 80l per week.</li> <li>• Mitigates financial risks, reducing exposure to £1.4m in potential annual UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) costs. The ETS costs are expected to come in from c. 2028.</li> <li>• Aligns with national waste policies for increasing recycling and reducing avoidable waste generation. It will also support the Council’s Net Zero by 2030 goal, and is aligned with the Council’s priority of Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.</li> </ul> <p>Our change implementation follows proven success from other UK councils, where three-weekly collections increased recycling rates and delivered improved VfM and service efficiency.</p>

**Evidence / Intelligence**

List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.

**Increased Participation:** A participation survey undertaken by officers in October and November 2025 identified an increase in properties presenting food waste at the kerbside for recycling, from 49% in March 2025 to 65.5% during the latest survey. With 36% of properties presenting black bins for collection still having space within the bin.

**Waste flow data:** Early results from the first three full months (October – December 2025) demonstrate strong progress. Compared to the same time period last year, black-bin waste reduced by 15% (1,049 tonnes), dry recycling increased by 6% (199 tonnes), and food-waste recycling improved by 22% (260 tonnes). Total waste fell by 162 tonnes, equivalent to 2.3 kg less waste per household. There is no evidence of significant displacement of waste to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). HWRC tonnages have risen slightly, but this increase is small compared to the substantial reductions seen at the kerbside.

**Impact on environment:** Comparing October – December 2025 to the same time period in 2024 we have not seen an increase in reports of litter or fly tipping.

**Extra black bin capacity:** We saw demand for additional capacity rise sharply when the service change was announced, with 2,372 applications in 2025/26, compared with 574 the previous year. Of these, 750 applications were approved (compared to 253 in 2024/25), reflecting both increased awareness of the scheme and households adjusting to the new frequency.

**Additional Recycling containers:** Since the announcement of the frequency change, we have seen a spike in requests for recycling container compared to previous years. 22,000 containers were delivered between April and December 2025, a 57% increase compared to the same period in 2024.

**Waste Composition Analysis:** Our last survey completed in May 2025 demonstrated that 42% of black bin contents could be recycled via the kerbside service. A subsequent survey is planned for June 2026.

**External technical advisors:** Modelling undertaken by Eunomia Research & Consulting demonstrates that this is the best practicable environmental option. The change is expected to increase our recycling rate by at least 5%.

**Capacity Comparison:** West Berkshire provided the highest black bin capacity per household in Berkshire at 120l per week, compared to the regional average of 85l per week. This proposal reduced capacity to 80l per week,

**Environmental Goals:** The change is aligned with the Council's Net Zero by 2030 target, and the need to divert waste from incineration and landfill.

**Legislative Changes:** The UK ETS will extend to Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities by 2028, adding c. £1.4 million in annual costs onto the Council's expenditure unless more waste is avoided or recycled.

**Financial Savings:** £288,000 (compared to original estimate of £150,000) for 2025/26, increasing in year two, due to reduced waste being sent to landfill and Energy from Waste.

**Proven Success Elsewhere:** Councils like Bracknell, East Devon, and Stratford-on-Avon have adopted similar changes, seeing higher recycling rates and cost efficiencies.

**Consultation response:** During a public consultation undertaken between September and November 2024 before the change was approved and implemented, 47% of respondents reported having space in their black bin on collection day, even before the recent expansion of kerbside plastic recycling to include plastic pots, tubs and trays.

Whilst majority of respondents indicated they would like to keep the existing collection frequency, 52% of respondents stated that their household could manage if non-recyclable (black bin) waste was collected every three weeks, out of that group of respondents, half stated '*maybe, although it might be challenging at certain times of the year*'.

**Alternatives considered / rejected**

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

Alternatives considered and rejected include (“✓” denotes a potentially positive outcome; and “✗” denotes a potentially negative outcome):

1. Four-Weekly Refuse Collections

- ✓ Would further improve recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging even greater waste reduction.
- ✓ Aligns with national sustainability goals and would result in greater cost savings over time.
- ✗ Likely to be impractical for many residents, particularly larger households and those with medical waste needs.
- ✗ High risk of non-compliance, leading to increased fly-tipping or waste contamination.
- ✗ Public resistance likely to be significantly higher, making implementation and enforcement more challenging.

2. Changing Bin Size Instead of Collection Frequency

- ✓ Reducing black bin size to e.g. 180l and still collecting the waste fortnightly would limit residual waste capacity, driving better recycling behaviours while maintaining fortnightly collections.
- ✗ High financial cost—estimated at £2 million+ to replace bins across all households.
- ✗ Operational challenges, including the logistics of replacing over 60,000 bins.
- ✗ Would not provide the same financial or carbon savings as reducing collection frequency.

3. Doing Nothing (Retaining Fortnightly Collections)

- ✗ Misses the opportunity to improve recycling rates, with 42% of black bin contents currently recyclable via kerbside services.
- ✗ West Berkshire’s waste generation remains high (427kg per person), making waste reduction efforts essential.
- ✗ Other councils adopting three-weekly collections have seen recycling increase, demonstrating that inaction would leave West Berkshire behind.

**Equity Impact Assessment**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✘ Fails to address key financial pressures, particularly the £1.4m annual cost from the upcoming UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) expansion.</li></ul>
--	---

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

**Equity Impact Assessment**

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Age</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Disability</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change from the current situation as the Council provides Assisted Collections to selected householders who are unable to physically present their bins for collection.			
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Race</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Sex</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Equity Impact Assessment**

<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
---------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--	--	--	--

**Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts**

<b>Additional community impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner</b> (*Job Title, Organisation)	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Displaced communities</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Care experienced people</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>The Armed Forces Community</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	
<b>Authorised By</b>	

EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources [hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

# Three Weekly Black Bin Collections - Update



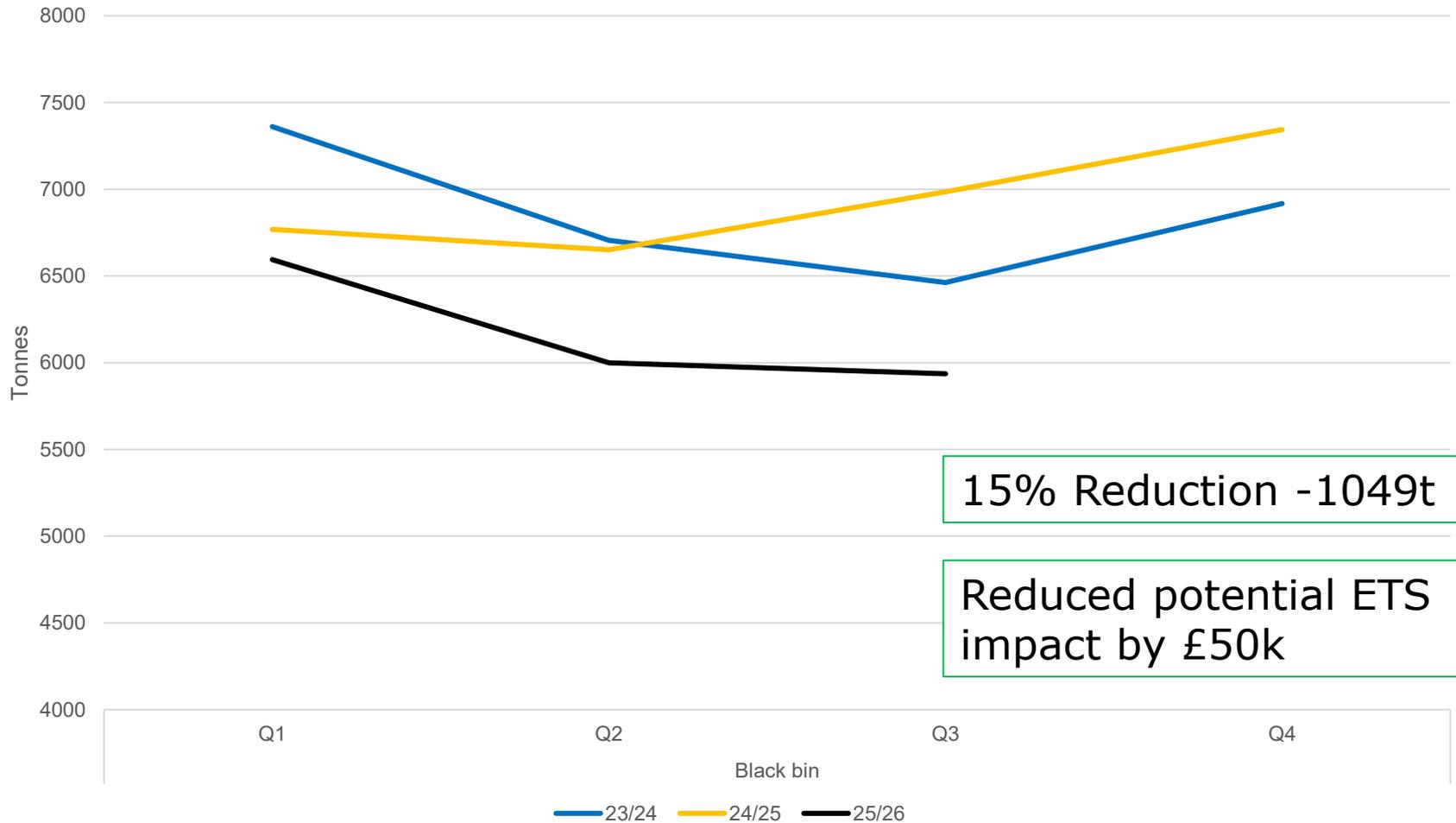
Resources and Place Scrutiny  
17/3/26

# What and Why

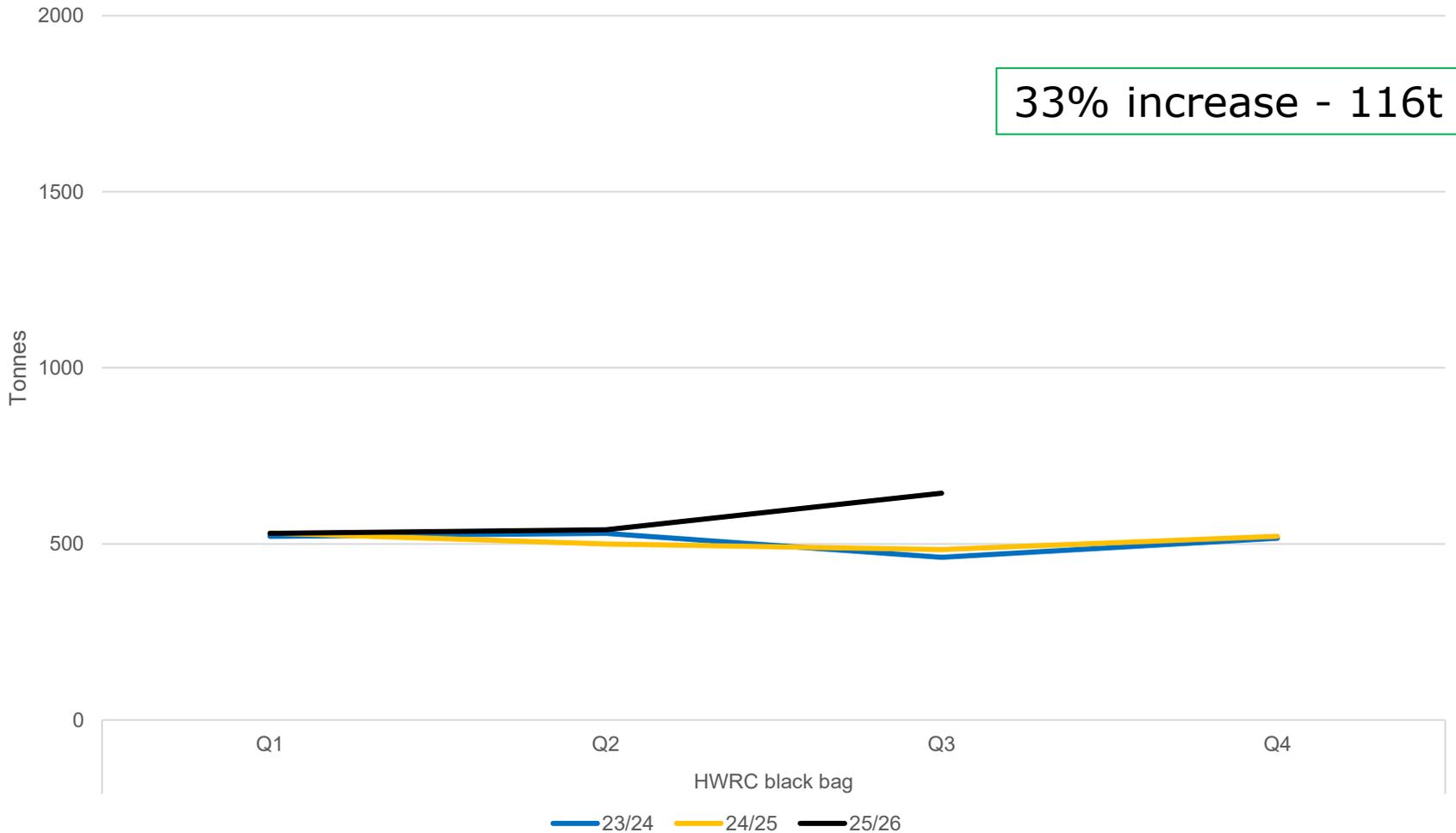
---

- ❑ Collections of non-recyclable waste (black bin) changed to once every three weeks on **22 September 2025**
- ❑ **42%** of the black bin contained waste that could be recycled using existing services
- ❑ **49%** properties participated in the weekly food waste service
- ❑ West Berks is among **heaviest 10% for waste produced per person** (437kg per person)

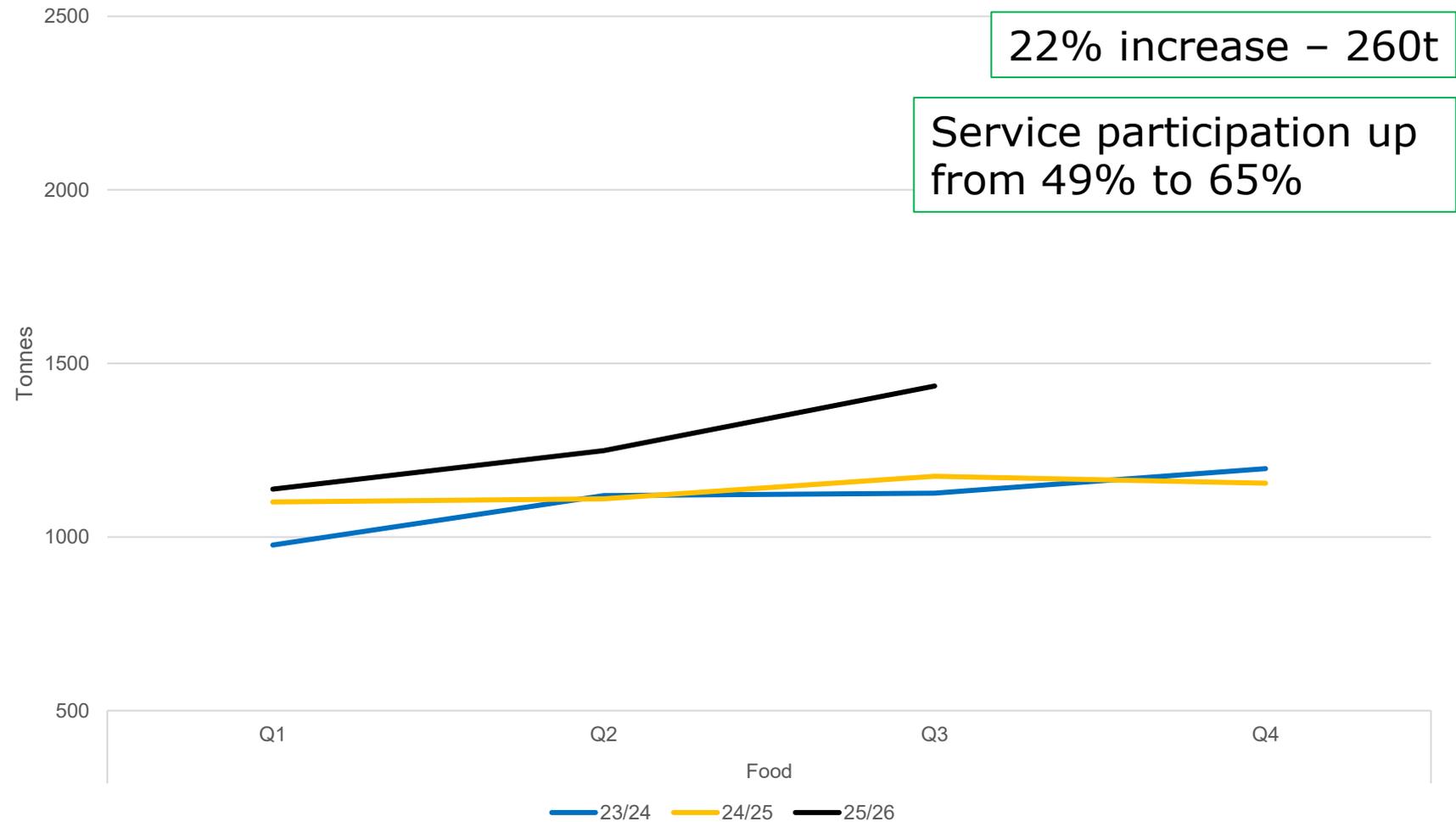
# Kerbside Black Bin Waste



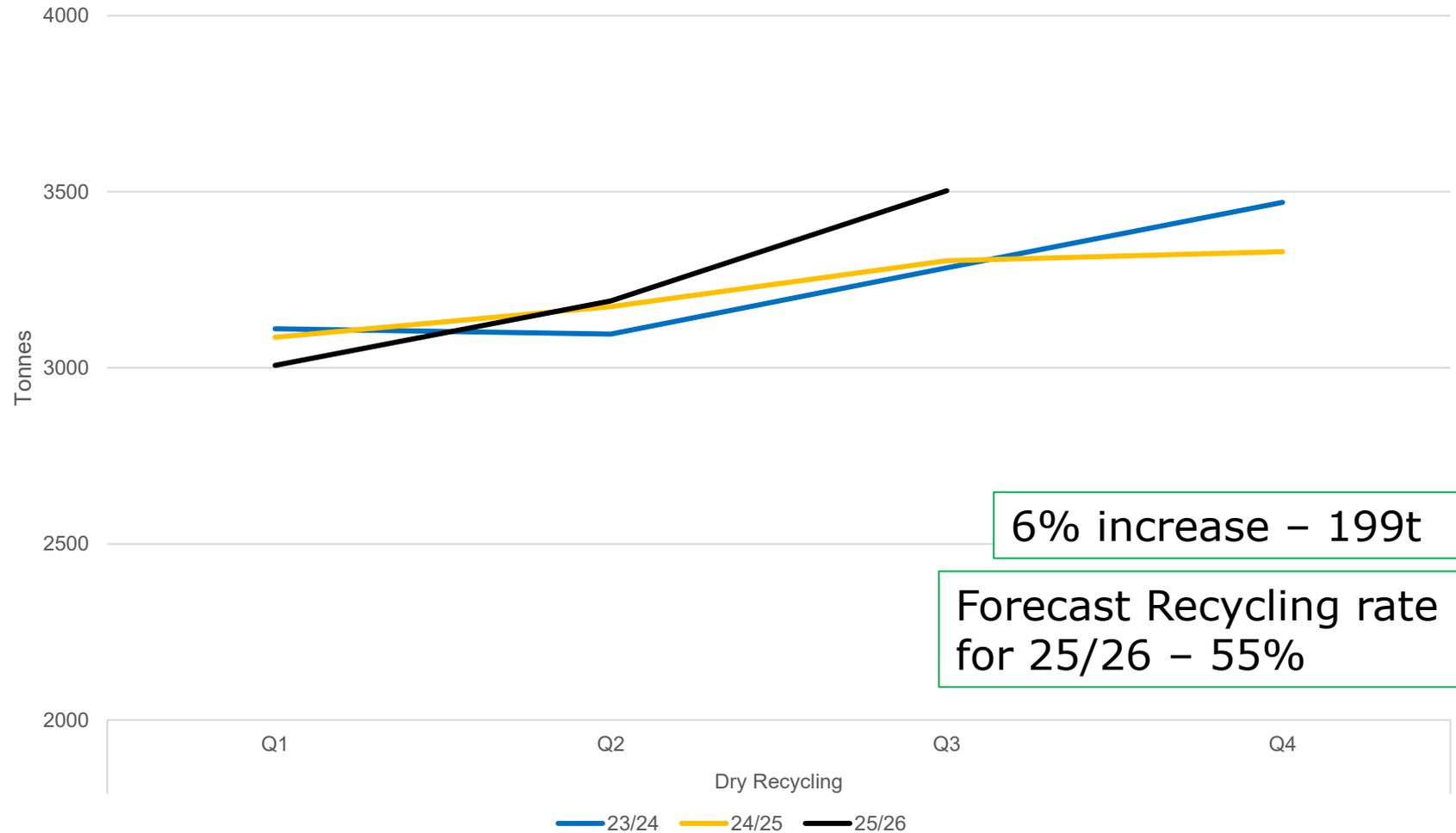
# HWRC Black Bag Waste



# Kerbside Food Waste

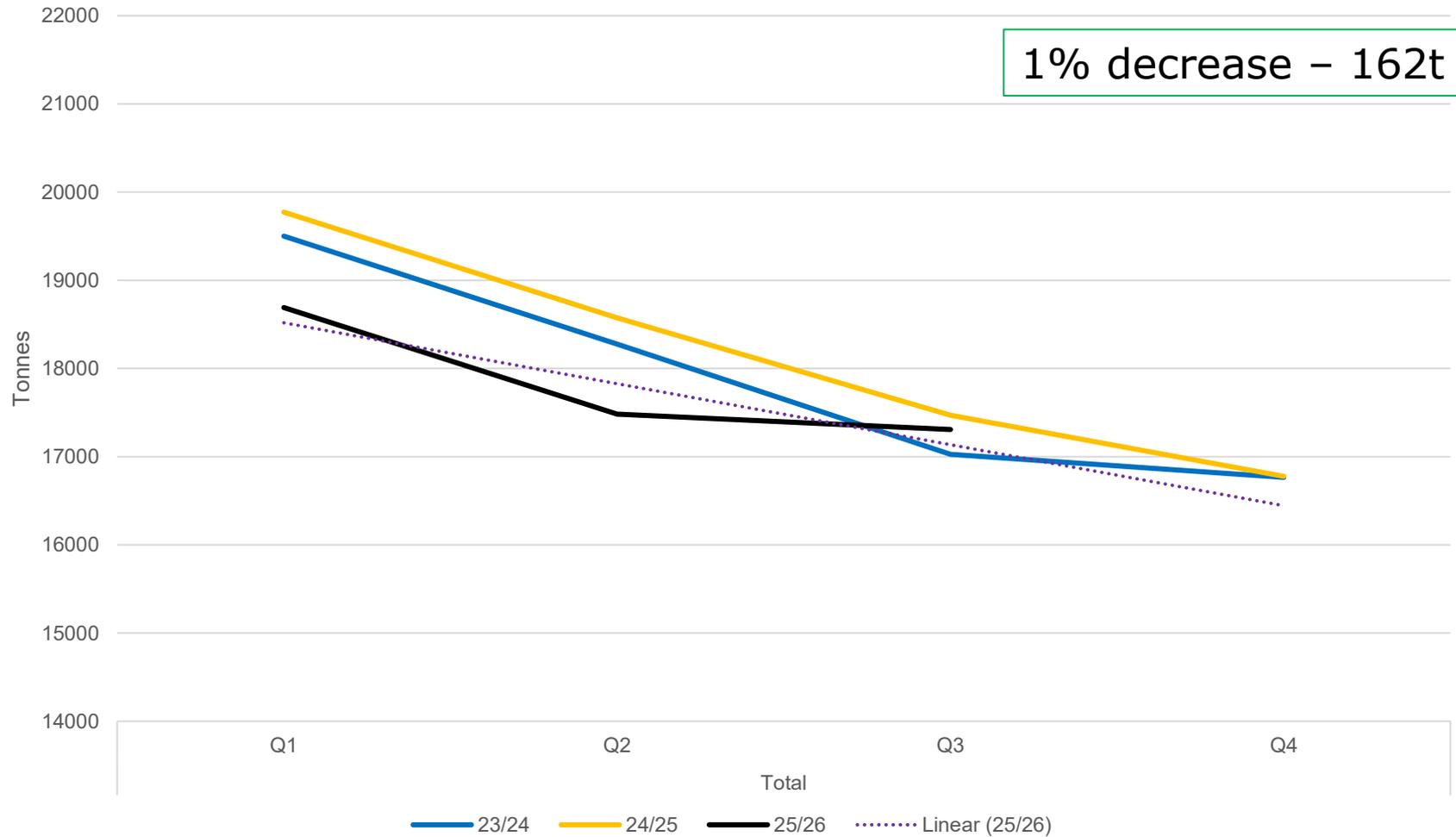


# Kerbside Dry Recycling



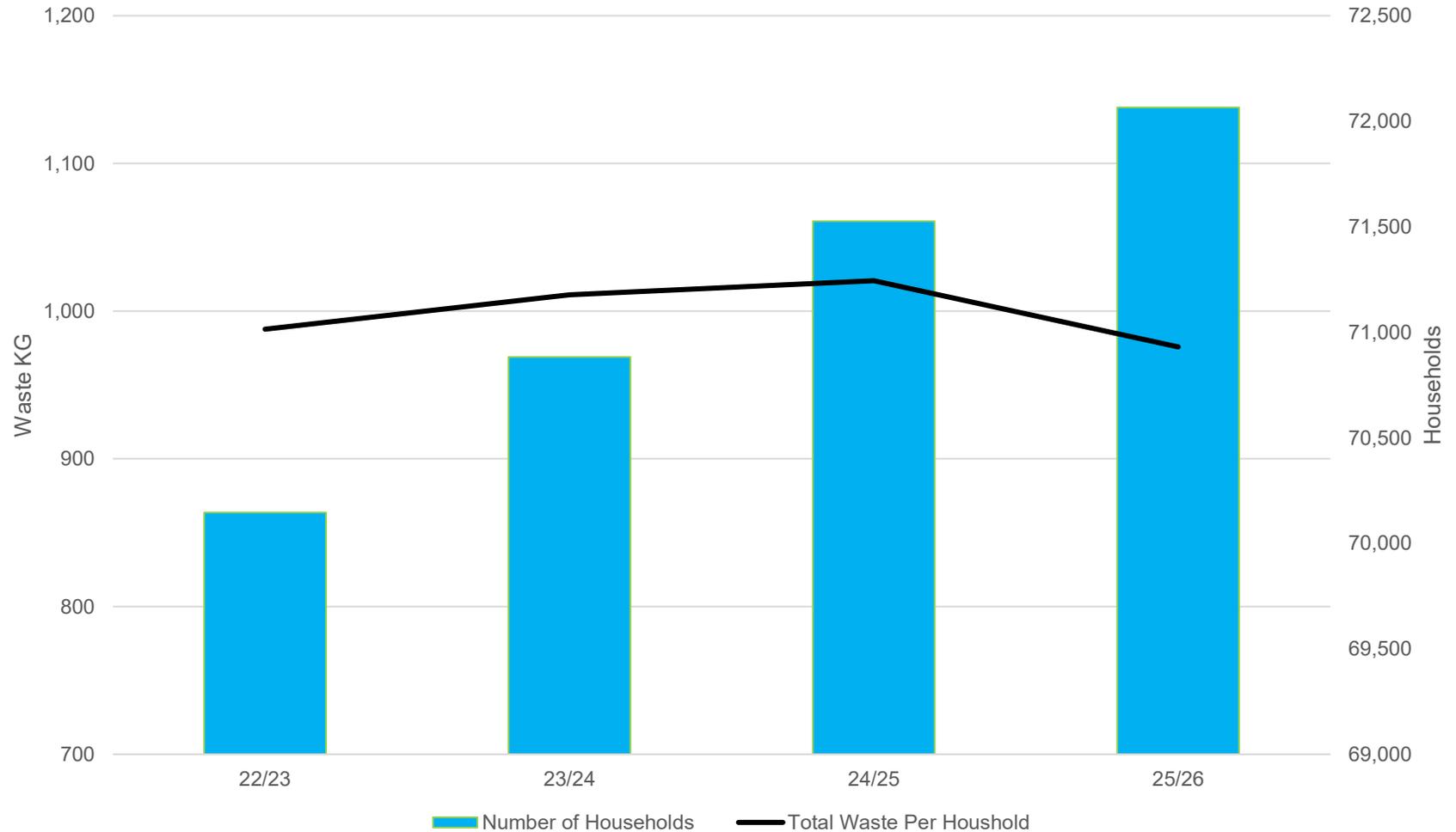
# Total Waste Collected

1% decrease – 162t



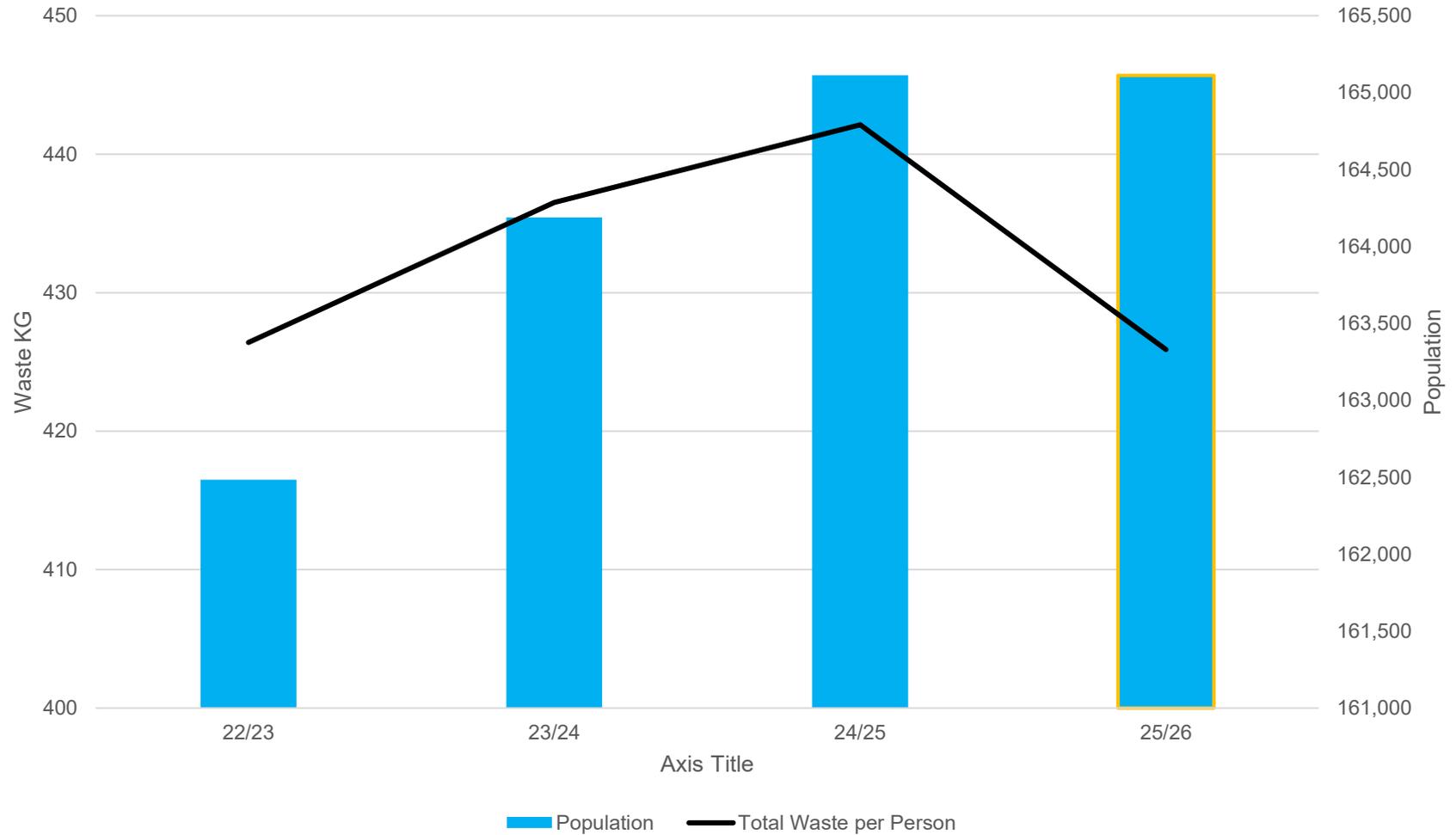
# Total Waste Per Household (KG)

*\*25/26 - Projection*

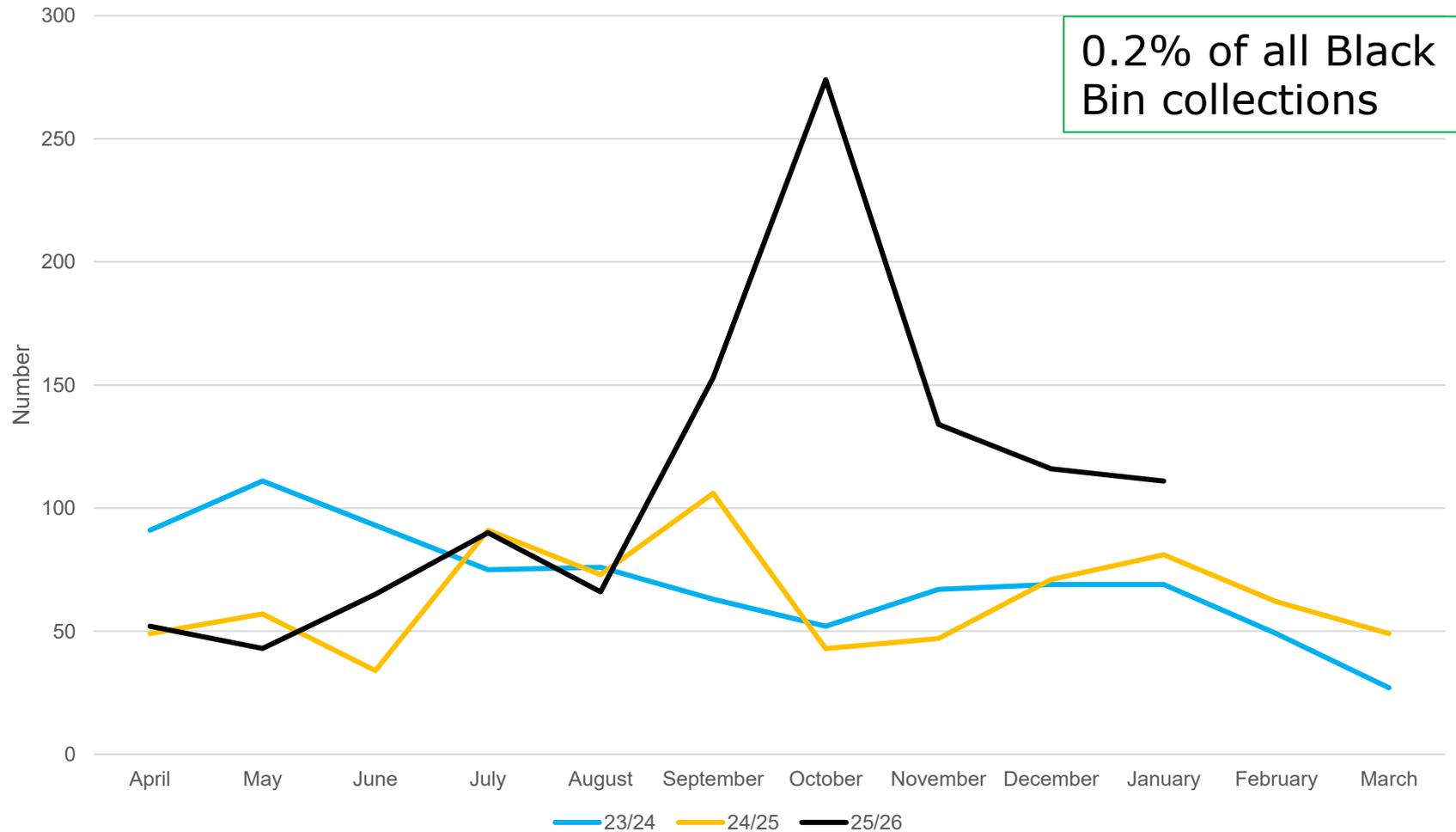


# Total Waste Per Person (KG)

*\*25/26 - Projection*



# Black Bin - Missed Collections

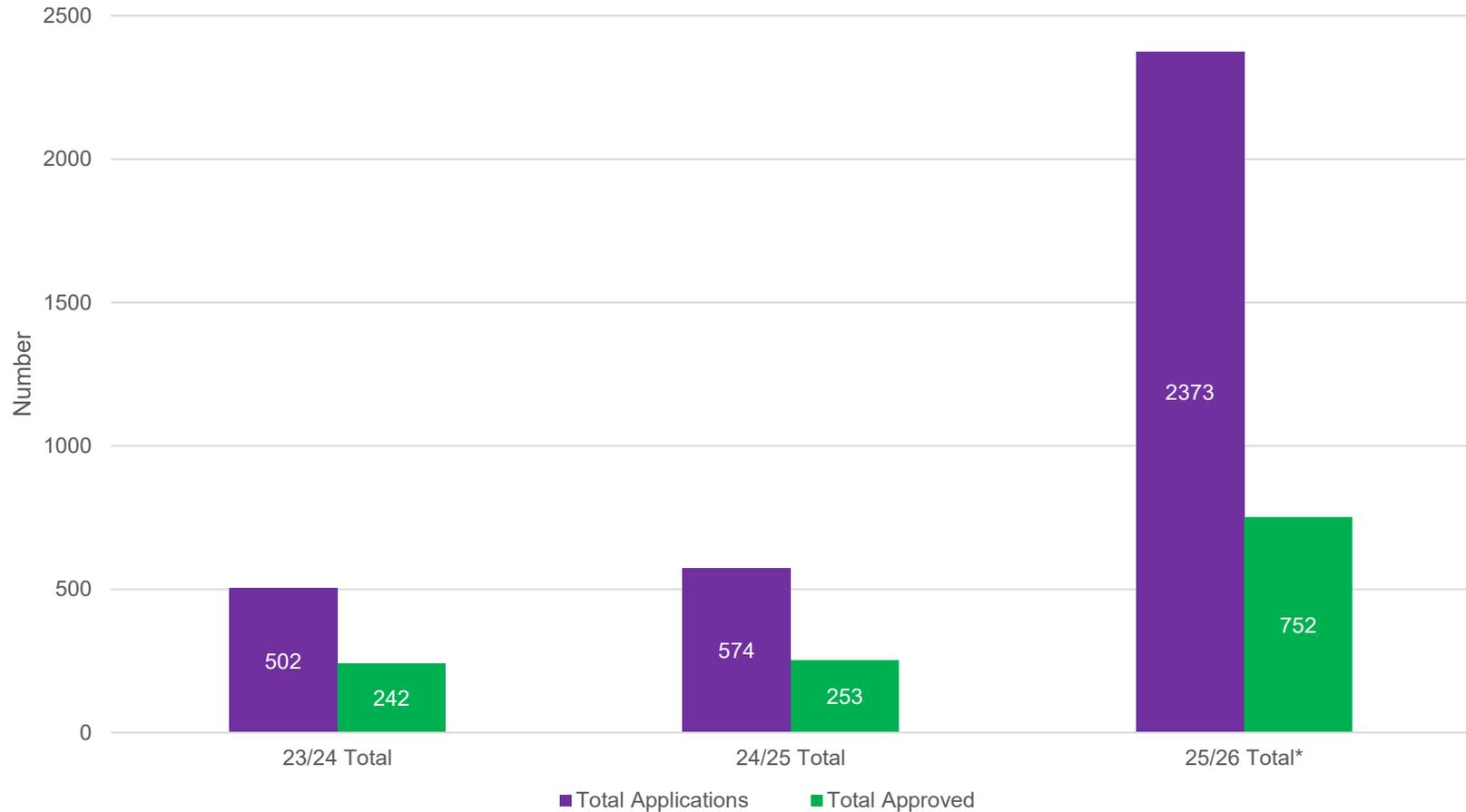


# Support Provided - April 2025 - January 2026

---

- ❑ Service Information Requests – **34% increase** 2,618.
- ❑ Assisted collections – **51% increase** 188 added, around 1,000 in total.
- ❑ Clinical Collections – no increase in demand
- ❑ Outreach – over 60 events, 1,500 residents attended

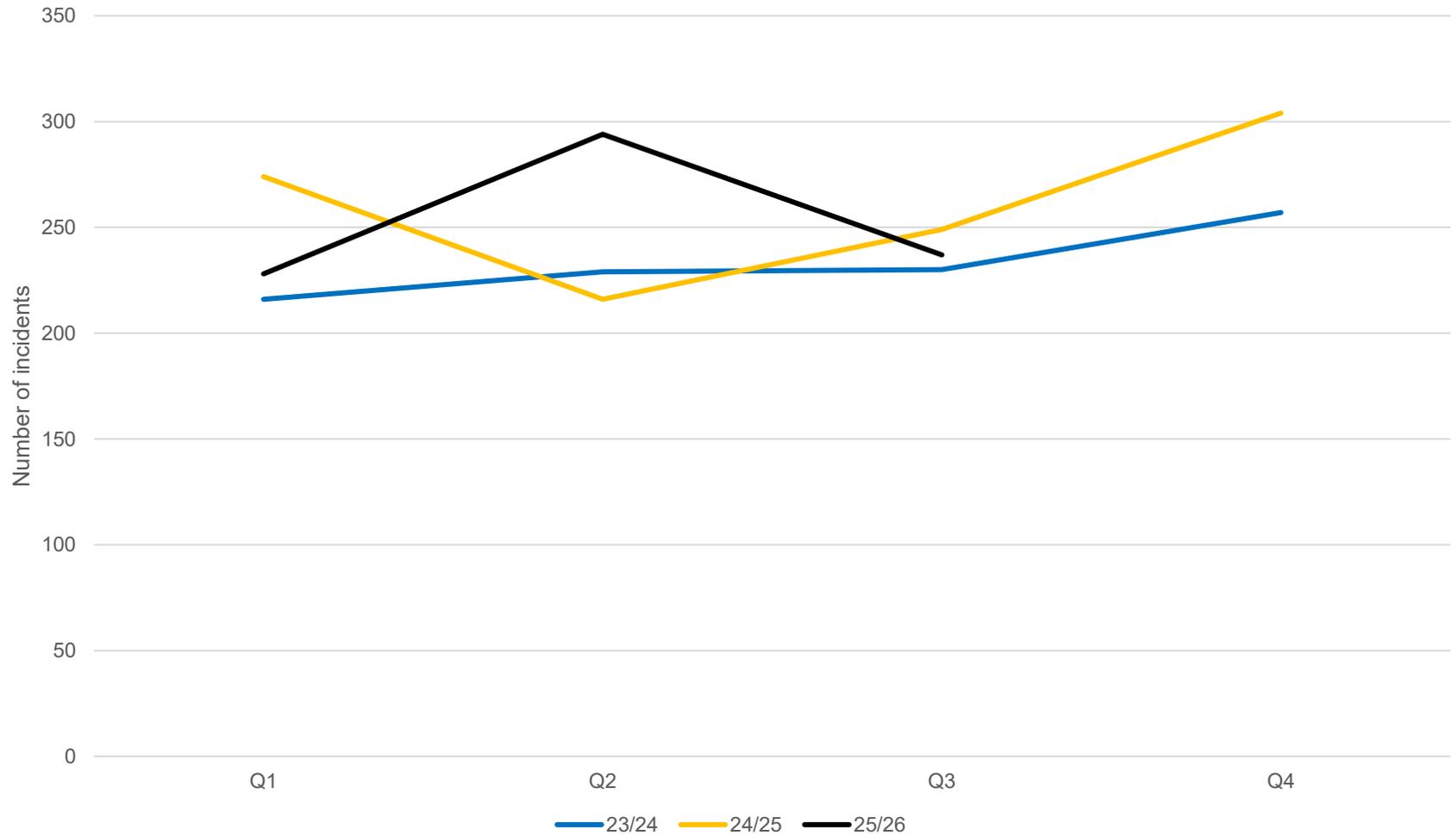
# Support Provided - Extra Capacity



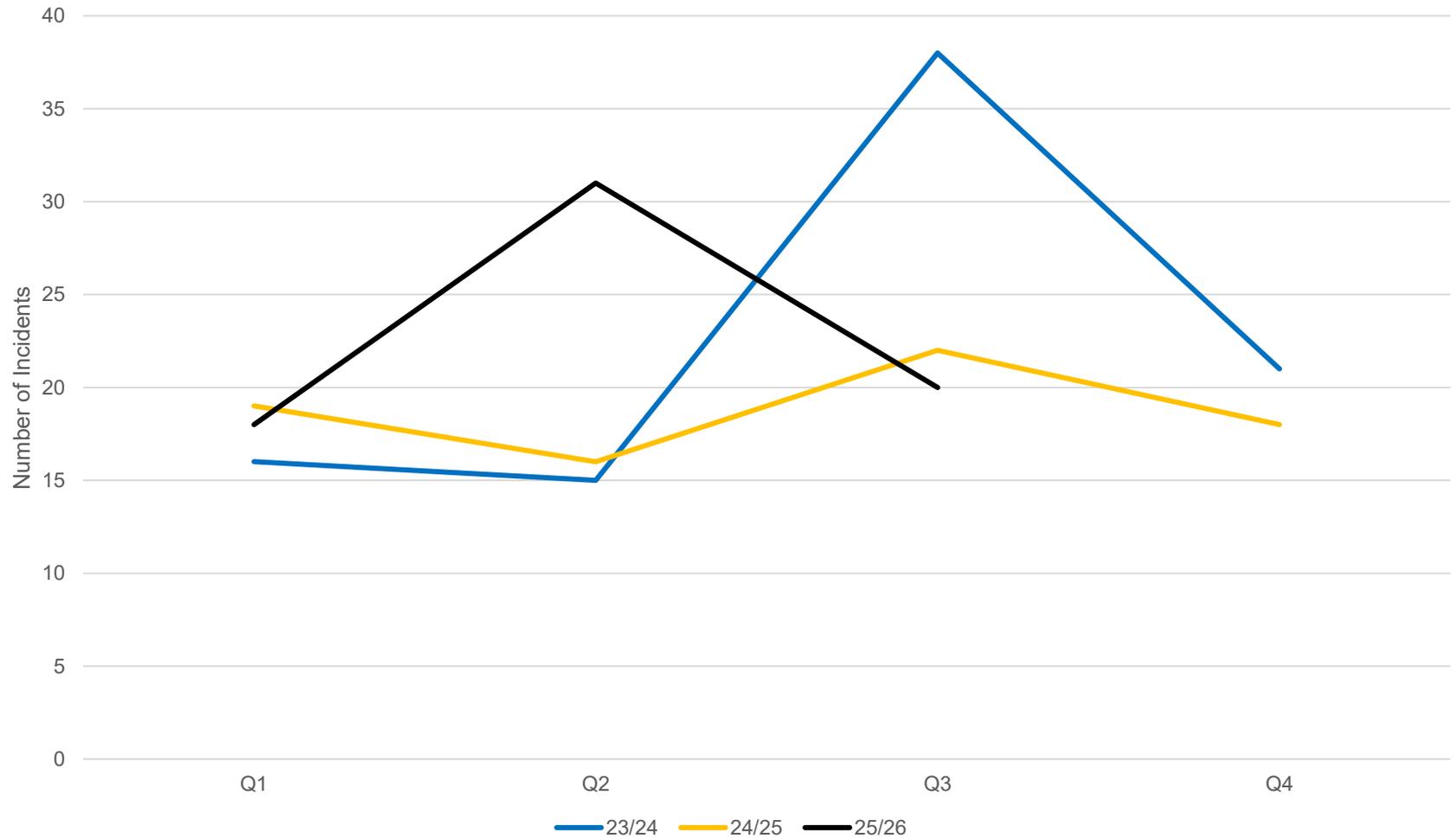
# Support Provided - Containers

Container type	Number delivered	Change from previous year	
Recycling box/bag	28,271	67%	
Food Caddy	6,645	88%	
Black bin (standard)	1,739	15%	

# Fly Tipping Incidents



# Fly Tips – Household Black Bags



# Lessons Learnt

---

- ❑ Bin day finder QR code on bin sticker
  - More prominent
- ❑ Calendar delivery
  - Allowed more time
- ❑ Calendar design
  - Use of 'Week Commencing' caused some confusion
- ❑ Christmas collections
  - Catch up period

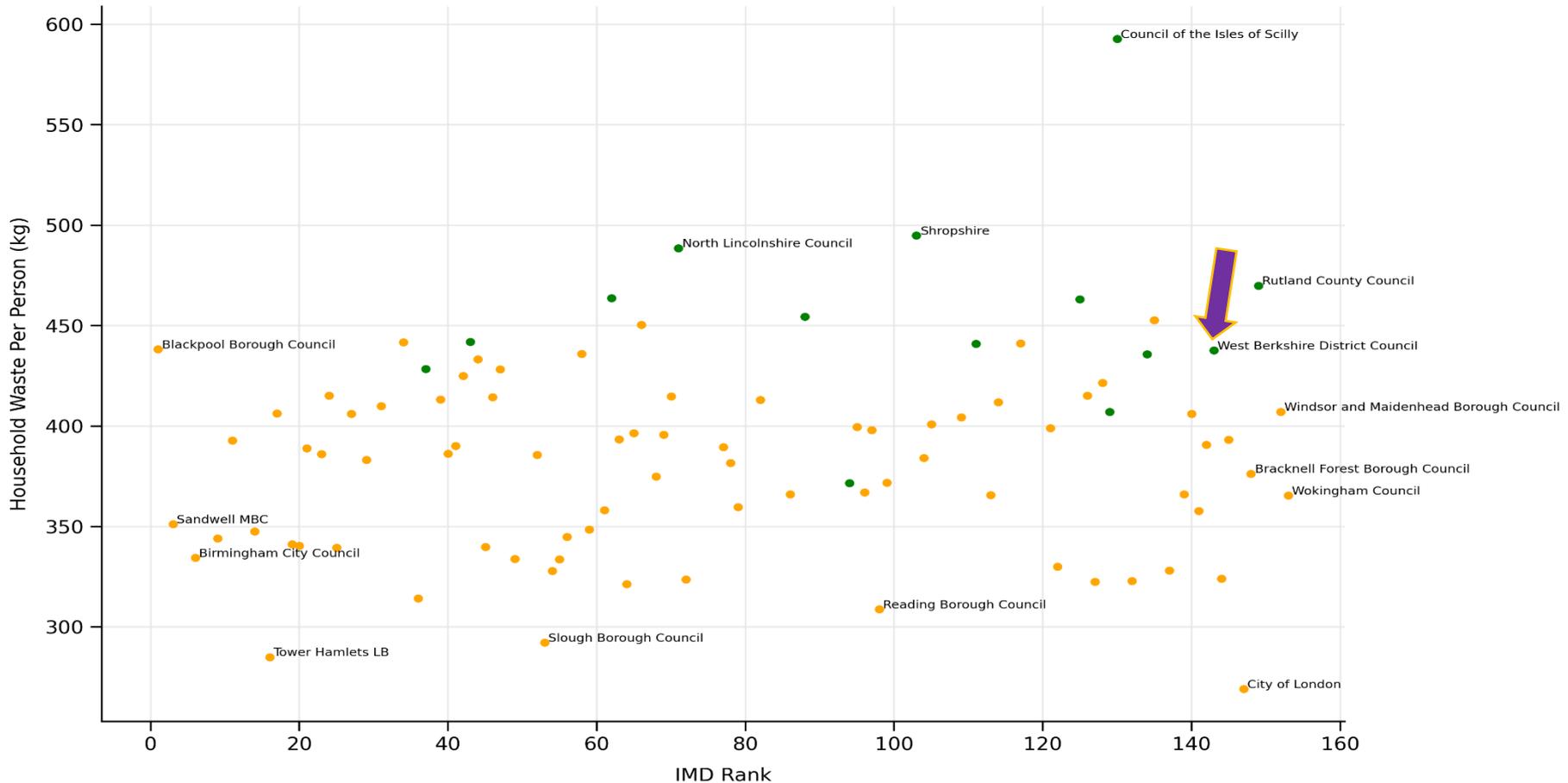
# Summary

---

- ❑ Delivering against objectives
- ❑ Record Recycling Rate – 55%
- ❑ Waste diversion & slight minimisation
- ❑ Increase participation
- ❑ Reduced milage – est 9,700 miles per year
- ❑ Next Steps
  - Maintaining and strengthen participation & support
  - Increase waste types collected for recycling
  - Recycling container review

# Action from previous Scrutiny: Affluence vs Waste production (Unitary LAs)

IMD vs Waste Produced Per Person



# Affluence vs Waste production (Unitary LAs)

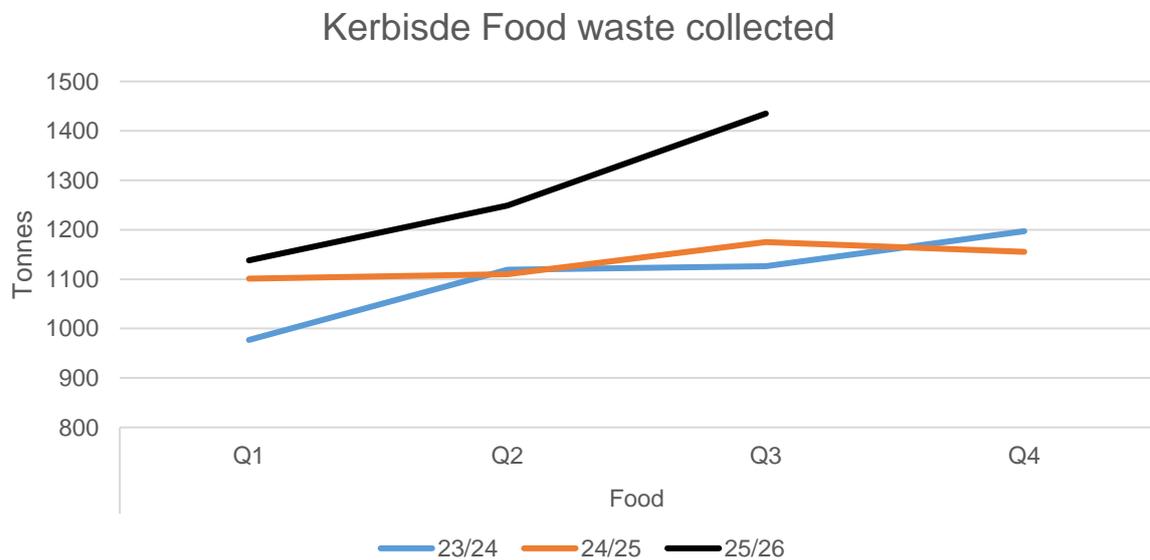
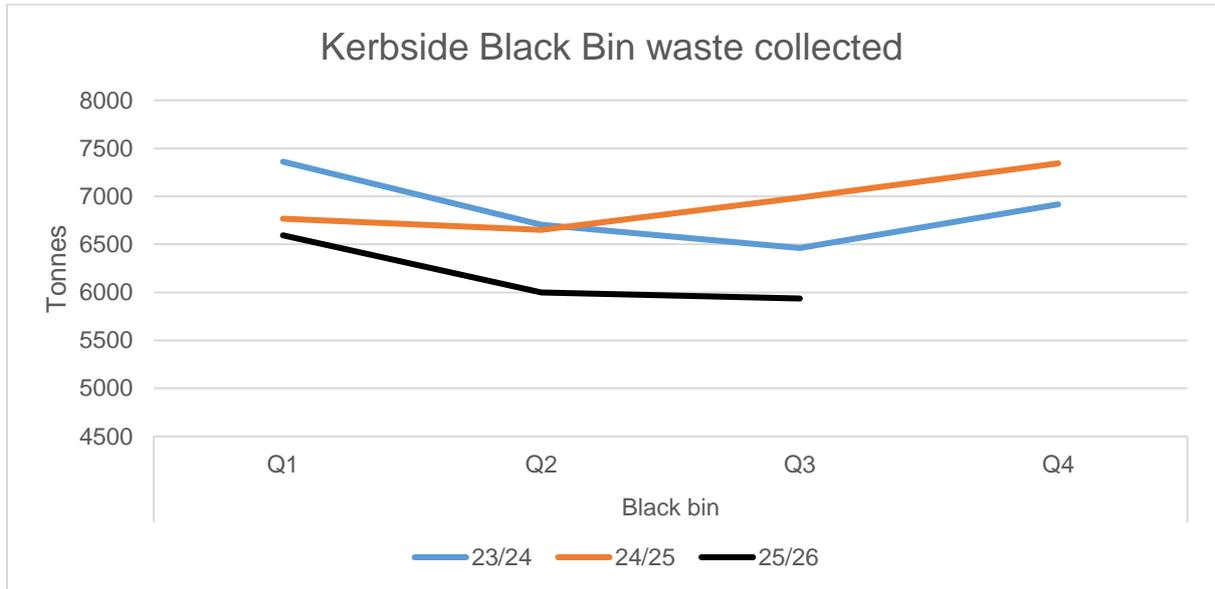
---

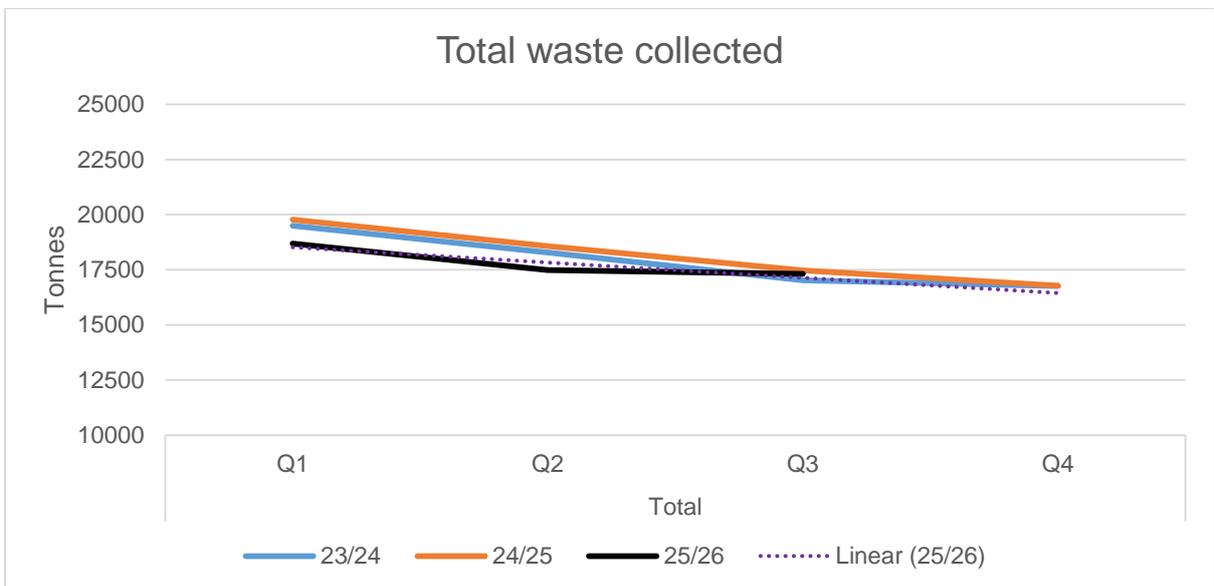
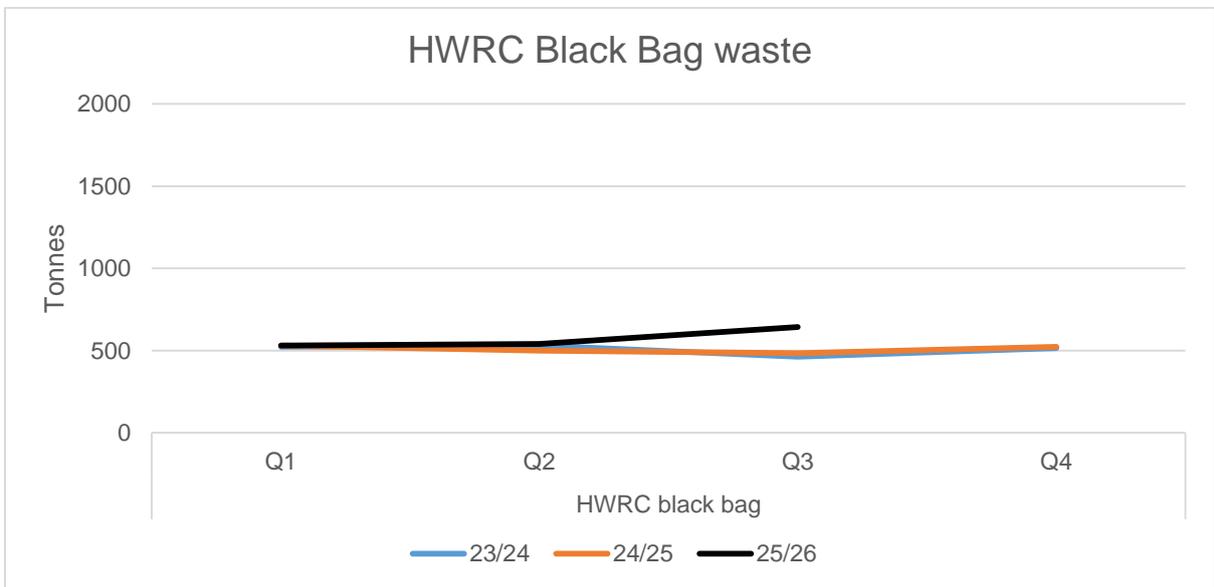
- ❑ Modest relationship between affluence and the amount of household waste produced per person
- ❑ A more significant factor is whether an authority is urban or rural. Rural areas generate, on average, around 80kg more waste per person than urban areas, regardless of income level.
- ❑ Possible factors include
  - Garden waste collections
  - Increased space for containers
  - Access to HWRCs
  - Fewer flats

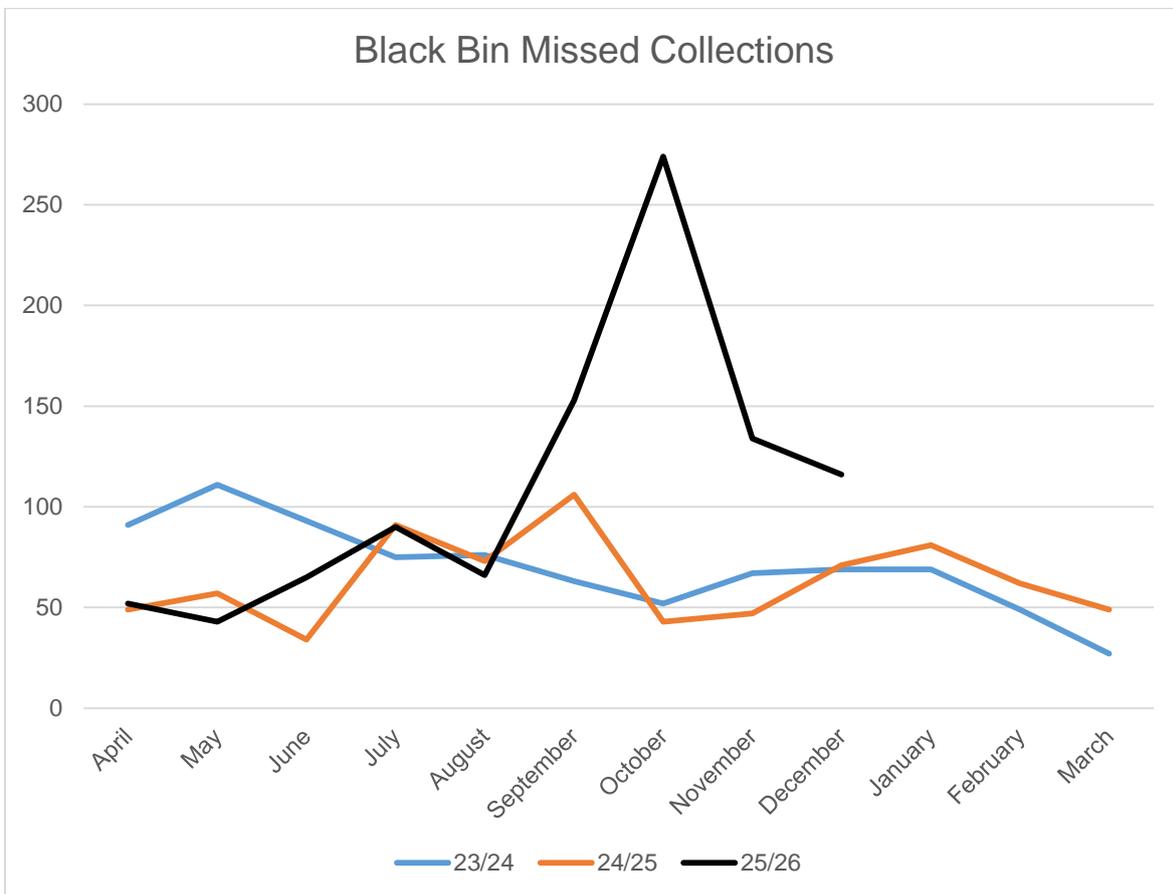
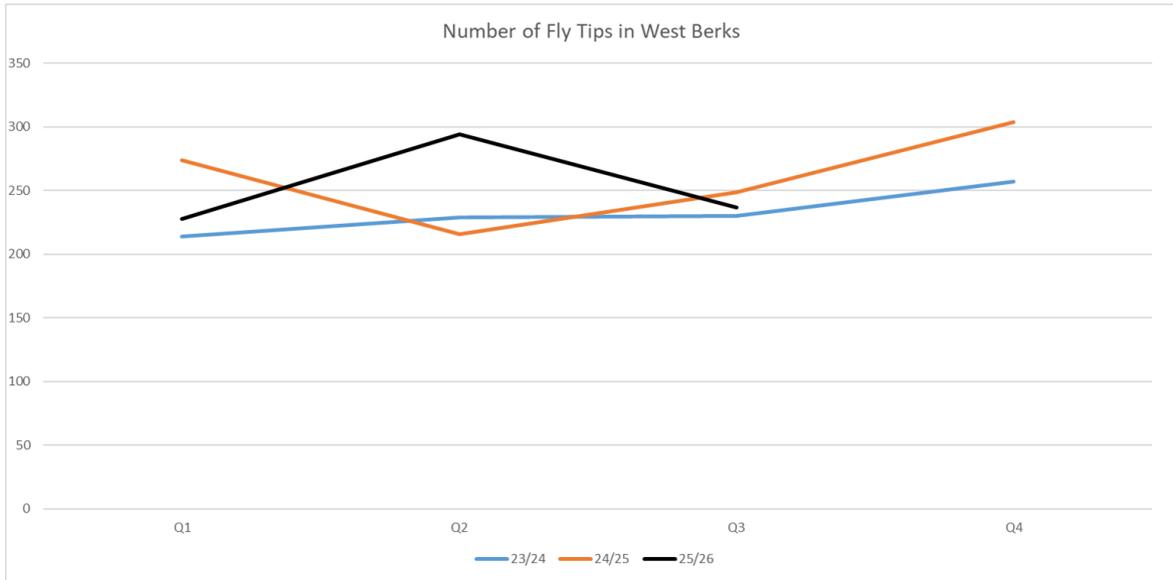
This page is intentionally left blank

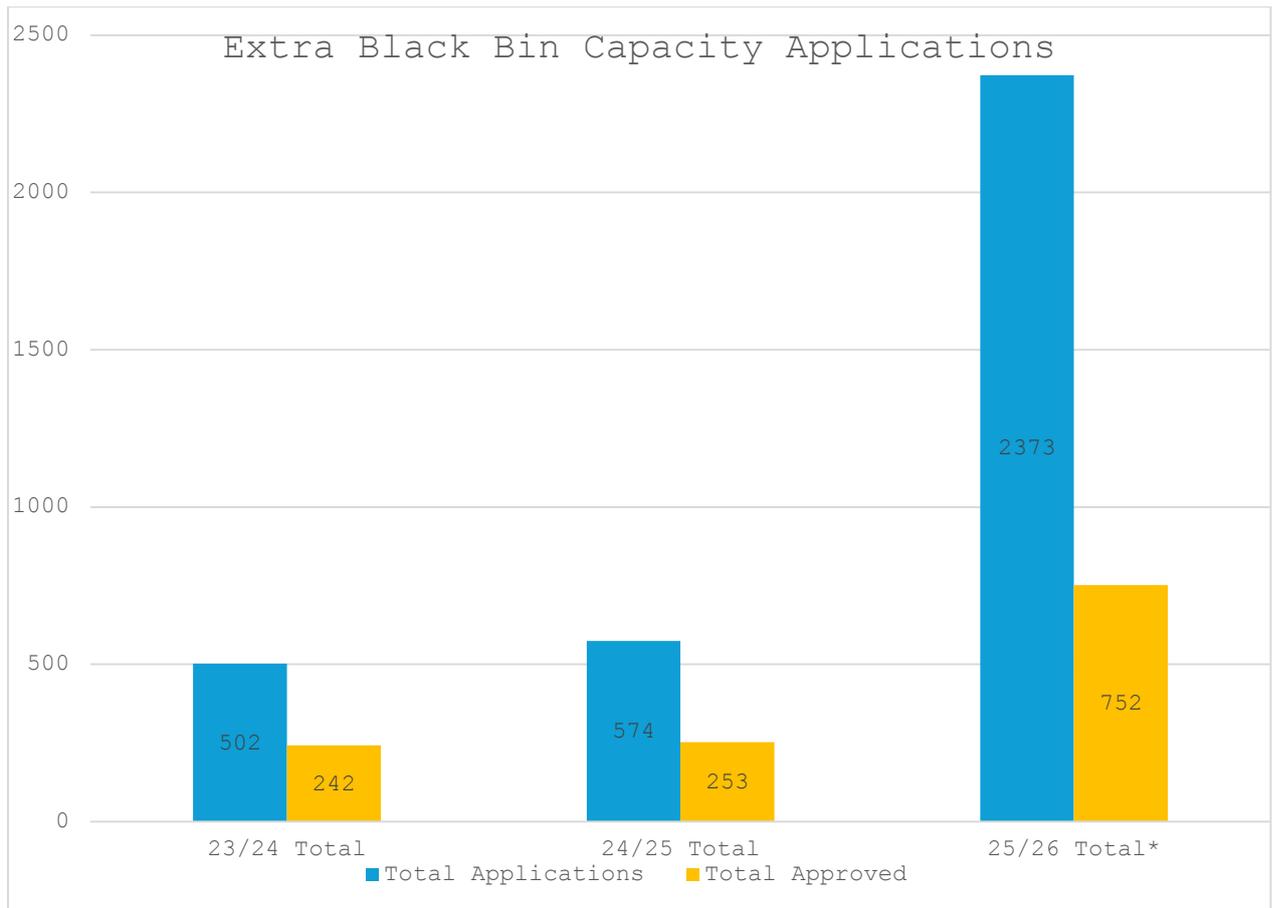
## Three-Weekly General Waste Collections Progress Update

### Appendix C - Summary of Selected Outcomes









## Procurement governance

<b>Produced for:</b>	Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee
<b>Requested by:</b>	Cllr Carolyne Culver
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Vicky Poole
<b>Service Director:</b>	Martyn Sargeant, Strategy and Governance
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	18 February 2026
<b>Briefing Author:</b>	Martyn Sargeant Service Director – Strategy and Governance

### 1 Purpose of the Briefing

- 1.1 This briefing note sets out details of the governance in place to ensure robust procurement of goods and services, particularly for contracts over £2.5m, in order to enable the committee to respond to a proposal from a member of the public for a scrutiny review.

### 2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The change to the process for awarding larger contracts was implemented in March 2023, in order to streamline the governance process and mitigate the risks caused by a delay in appointing a preferred supplier. This did not negate the requirements to follow both procurement legislation and the Council’s own Contract Rules. It was also in line with the Local Government Association’s peer challenge recommendation that West Berkshire Council should ‘simplify the governance structure to increase pace and agility’. The arrangements also help ensure the Council’s adherence to the Procurement Act 2023.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The Council encourages members of the public to engage and contribute to the scrutiny process. This includes making suggestions for subjects for scrutiny review. Such a suggestion has been received asking the committee to look at the process for letting larger contracts. A copy of the full proposal is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.2 In summary, the proposal is for a scrutiny review of:

*The justification, authority, approval process, governance, supporting documentation, transparency, accountability and consequences with respect to: “Contracts for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive Board; To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service*

Lead or Service Director) to proceed with contract awards with a value in excess of £2.5m”.

## 4 The Council’s approach

- 4.1 The Council’s arrangements for tendering for and letting contracts are set out in the Constitution, in particular Part 8 – the [Contract Rules](#). In accordance with good practice, these are kept under review on an ongoing basis and updated as and when required.
- 4.2 Authority to make a decision about entering into a contract is delegated from Council. The limits and thresholds of delegated authority are set out in [appendix A](#) to the Contract Rules. That section also sets out requirements for any such decision over £100,000 and up to £2.5m to be appropriately documented and approved by the Procurement Board. Decisions over £2.5m fall within the purview of the Executive, although they can be delegated to specific officers in consultation with stakeholders such as the portfolio holder, s151 Officer, etc. None of this negates the requirements to follow and document the process.
- 4.3 These requirements have not changed significantly in recent years, although an amendment to the process was made in March 2023 in order to address issues of delay caused by having to seek final approval from the Executive at the end of a procurement process. The report to the Governance and Ethics Committee (now simply the Governance Committee) sets this out, proposing:

*....a slight variation to the process by which contracts, requiring Executive approval, are dealt with. At present, contracts with a value over £2.5m are sent to Executive at the end of the procurement process, prior to contract award. This can present difficulties with the timing of an award. It is therefore proposed that the Executive will be provided with Quarterly Contract Update reports, which will seek delegated authority [to an officer] within the parameters detailed within that report, and which will require consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.*

- 4.4 The Council’s Procurement Board, which includes senior representatives from Legal, Finance and Procurement is responsible for ensuring that ‘the Council’s procurement activity is well governed, compliant with the law and constitution and delivers best value for money across the Council’s contracting activities’. The Executive Member for Strategy, Governance and Commercialisation is an attendee at the Board. As part of this, any procurement with a value of £2.5m has to be considered by the Board *before* a tender process commences (through scrutiny of the procurement strategy, i.e. the procurement approach to be followed) and *after* it has concluded (by considering the proposal to award report, which contains full details of the tender process, including costs, scores, etc.). In addition, the Board is required to bring to the Executive’s attention any future potential award of contract over £2.5m and seek appropriate delegated authority to award once the Board is satisfied with the process that has been followed in accordance with the Council’s Contract Rules. Under the updated rules, the Executive can opt to reserve contract awards to itself rather than delegating decisions to officers, as it has done recently for the proposed highways contract.

4.5 It is worth noting that, even when an award of contract decision is taken by the Executive, it is primarily to ratify the outcome of the procurement process. The Contract Rules require that:

(a) *All tendering procedures (including obtaining quotes), from planning to contract award and execution (seal or signature), shall be undertaken in a manner so as to ensure:*

- *sufficient time is given to plan and run the process;*
- *equal opportunity and equal treatment;*
- *openness and transparency;*
- *proportionality;*
- *probity;*
- *outcomes that deliver sustainability, efficiency and cost savings (where appropriate).*

4.6 There is a presumption in favour of competition under the Contract Rules, and therefore all opportunities over £1,000 are dealt with via the Procurement Portal, ensuring that contract awards are undertaken in an open and transparent manner.

4.7 The Procurement Board's responsibility is to ensure that the appropriate process has been followed, which will identify the successful tenderer based on the scoring matrix (assessing quality and price criteria). At the point the 'decision' is made, neither officers nor members could change the outcome of the procurement process without exposing the Council to risk of legal challenge. Having this additional stage simply prolongs the governance process and delays the award of contract.

## 5 Examples from the submission

5.1 The submission contains two particular examples of reports prior to the changes that the member of the public suggests demonstrate how the previous approach was more robust.

5.2 EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub – this is actually not an award of contract, as that had already been agreed previously (December 2021). Rather it seeks to adjust the original costs, which had been inflated whilst the initiative was delayed by a lengthy legal challenge.

5.3 EX4159: Northcroft Lido – this is a detailed report that sets out the results of public consultation and the business case for redevelopment of the lido. It delegates authority for an award of contract but contains little detail about the procurement process.

5.4 Neither of these reports demonstrate that the process prior to March 2023 was more robust than was previously the case.

5.5 Historically, reports for contract awards would provide a brief summary of the services to be delivered, an assurance that an appropriate procurement process had been followed, and a request that the contract be awarded to the successful bidder. The detail of proposed contract awards would be classified as commercial information that would generally be exempt from publication. The following are two examples of reports seeking awards of contracts up to March 2023:

- Contract award for Pelham House (EX4169)
- Contract award for leisure management (EX4221)

## 6 Next Steps

- 6.1 It is for the committee to decide whether it wishes to accept the proposal from a member of the public for a scrutiny review.
- 6.2 The rules governing the letting of contracts are set out in the Constitution, so, as an alternative, the Committee may wish to refer the matter to the Constitution Review Group for consideration as to whether the existing rules are fit for purpose and adhere to the Procurement Act 2023.

## 7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – proposal for a scrutiny review

## 8 Background papers

- 8.1 [The Council's Contract Rules](#)
- 8.2 [Updates to the Constitution](#) – report to the Governance and Ethics Committee, 6 March 2023
- 8.3 [Award of contract to build Newbury Sports Hub](#) – report to the Executive, 16 December 2021
- 8.4 [Newbury Sports Hub – revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement](#) – report to the Executive, 23 March 2023
- 8.5 [Contract award for Pelham House](#) – report to the Executive, 24 March 2022
- 8.6 [Contract award for leisure management contract](#) – report to the Executive, 23 March 2023
- 8.7 Procurement Board Terms of Reference [internal document]

## Appendix 1: proposal for a scrutiny review from a member of the public

Your suggested topic(s)	
<p><b>Your suggested topic for scrutiny</b></p>	<p>The justification, authority, approval process, governance, supporting documentation, transparency, accountability and consequences with respect to:</p> <p>“Contracts for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive Board; To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Lead or Service Director) to proceed with contract awards with a value in excess of £2.5M”</p>
<p><b>Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered (Please include your reasons for suggesting the topic and include details of any evidence you may have)</b></p>	<p>At the exec meeting on 6 July 2023 was the first time that this “new” process was submitted to the Executive (EX4407).</p> <p>EX4407 provided a summary table of 10 contracts, with each contract valued over £2.5 million. The justification for providing an “overview” only was / is “It follows the work by a constitution task group over last two years and resulting recommendations”.</p> <p>Since July 2023 key spending decisions (contracts) over £2.5 million are being made with little supporting detail, therefore it’s unclear what has been approved, at what cost, how it is being funded etc. These massive spending decisions (that go up to £20 million) are being taken without the full detail, evidence and justification that was previously required and provided. Examples of detailed reports provided BEFORE 6 July 2023 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">EX4332</a>: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement: dated 15 March 2023 (To approve the allocation of £3.878M)</li> <li>• <a href="#">EX4159</a>: Re-development of Northcroft Lido Northcroft Lido: dated 24 March 2022 (The cost of the lido is estimated at £5M with an annual repayment of £186,670 per annum which will include payment for both principal and interest over a 40-year term)</li> </ul> <p>Reports such as EX4332 and EX4159 are no longer being provided. Due to this change in process the biggest Council contract decisions, since July 2023, have been / are being taken with scant &amp; incomplete information based on a summary generic description only. The only information provided relates to the procurement status which comes at the end of the process. It should be informed by detailed objectives and a balanced report that is produced by the appropriate service area (e.g. Adult Social Care, Environment,</p>

	<p>Property Services / Education, Leisure etc.) – examples being EX4332 and EX4159. The scant information provided in the summary of “Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive” is written by officers in the procurement, finance, commissioning team and not by officers in the service areas. Also, the Portfolio Member and Portfolio Member who agreed the report is either Jeff Brooks or Iain Cottingham – why are the responsible service portfolio leaders being bypassed?</p> <p>Other consequences of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts that are expected to have a contract value of over £2.5m are now being discussed in Part II. The public and members are no longer being provided with reports that can be reviewed. If a decision made by the Executive or an Individual Executive Member, or a senior officer is disputed then it can be 'called-in' for review. Call-in has the effect of stopping the decision from being implemented until the relevant Scrutiny Committee has reviewed it. The Scrutiny Committee is unable to overturn a decision, but they can refer it back to the decision maker for further consideration with recommendations for changes.</li> <li>• How can decisions taken on high value and key projects / services be understood and if required be called in if there is no report to review? – This is a change - the public and press are no longer denied access key information / details.</li> <li>• Massive decisions are being made by less people on minimal data / evidence. No granularity, transparency or detail is provided in the Forward Plan summary.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The outcomes that you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide visibility / details of the recommendations of “Constitution task group over last two years”</li> </ul> <p>Copy of the report / audit trail / evidence / full details of the report / sign off process / date / objectives and resulting recommendations that “follows the work by a constitution task group over last two years”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justification / explanation of why supporting detailed reports (exemplified by EX4332 and EX4159) are no longer being provided?</li> </ul> <p>Since July 2023 (EX4407) to September 2025 (EX4726) qty 7 EX reports have been approved covering 23 contracts of over £2.5 Million.</p> <p>Can scrutiny request any / all supporting information supplied to the Exec for the 23 contracts of over £2.5 Million approved since July 2023?</p>

	<p>Since July 2023 has the Exec requested “further information regarding any of the contracts identified” in the EX reports?</p> <p>Can scrutiny request that all future contracts for high value contracts must be supported by a formal and detailed written report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can scrutiny undertake a review of why forthcoming contract awards, since July 2023 is now Part II.</li> <li>• Can scrutiny clarify and document the approval process required to approve large contracts?</li> </ul> <p>At a recent governance committee meeting a legal officer suggested that contracts over £2.5 Million should be approved by full council. What is the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can scrutiny recommend that ALL contracts over £2.5 Million are once again individually highlighted on the Forward Plan (not hidden under the generic title “Contracts for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive)</li> </ul>
<p><b>If you have already raised this issue with a Member or Officer of West Berkshire Council, please provide details here</b></p>	<p>Raised at Executive questions (Northcroft Dry side Project and Grazeley Solar Farm Project)</p> <p>Also raised with Councillor Howard Woollaston.</p>
<p><b>Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria.</b></p>	<p>(3) It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.</p> <p>(4) There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within the area.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

---

## Swift Bricks

---

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	17 March 2026
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Denise Gaines
<b>Report Author:</b>	Rachael Lancaster

---

### 1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report is to provide Members with information relating to Swifts and swift bricks and their use in West Berkshire following the Motion to Council by Cllr David Marsh and Cllr Carolyne Culver.

1.2 The motion states;

*“That Council notes that swifts, one of the oldest species on earth, fly thousands of miles (spending up to three years on the wing) to breed in the UK. Increasingly, they are finding their nesting sites blocked up. Their ancient forests with nest hollows now gone, they rely on cavities in buildings, but these too are disappearing, leaving this iconic creature on the RSPB “red list” of endangered species.*

*Swifts just need a brick with a hole in it to nest. The average two-storey new house contains 20,000 bricks and swift bricks– costing an estimated £30 each – can help save swifts, as well as other small nesting birds. The Labour government, having promised in opposition to incorporate a swift brick nest box into new buildings by law, has reneged on this pledge.*

*Council further notes, however, that a number of local authorities, with all-party support, have adopted policies requiring swift bricks to be included in new developments. These measures have proved popular with residents as well as local wildlife charities.*

*Council therefore resolves that:*

- A) Swift boxes will be installed at suitable Council-owned properties, including providing audio lures to attract breeding pairs, before the next nesting season in May 2026.*
- B) At least 50% of homes on new developments in West Berkshire shall be required to have at least two swift bricks installed. New commercial and industrial developments shall be required to have at least three swift bricks installed per appropriate unit.*
- C) This condition will be attached to all relevant planning permissions for new buildings, in line with Local Plan policy SP11, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, the Council's Environment Strategy (refreshed May 2025), the Berkshire Biodiversity*

## Swift Bricks

*Strategy, and other initiatives to maintain, restore and increase biodiversity in West Berkshire.*

*D) This is in addition to any biodiversity mitigation or enhancements normally requested through the planning process.”*

- 1.3 The Motion was referred to the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee, for their input before the motion would return to the Executive for debate.
- 1.4 This paper sets out some information about swift boxes and how they can be used to support swift, and other bird, populations.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The recommendation is that the motion as drafted cannot be supported for the reasons set out in the body of this report.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	There would be a financial implication from the installation of swift boxes on Council owned properties. The feasibility of exploring the installation of Swift nest boxes would have a resource and cost implication as well as the installation of the boxes. The boxes generally cost between £20 and £150 depending on the material, size and mounting design. The technology to add audio lures generally costs between £64 to £120 for the hardware, in addition they require a mains electricity supply. To install these on all existing suitable Council owned buildings would require budget to be allocated for this purpose. There is no available budget for this purpose in the forthcoming financial year 26/27.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	The development of a project to establish suitable council owned buildings and to source a supplier/contractor to install these would require resource allocation. At present there is no capacity for such a project in the forthcoming financial year 26/27.
<b>Legal:</b>	No legal implications
<b>Risk Management:</b>	No risk implications
<b>Property:</b>	Installing swift boxes upon Council properties would likely have wider impacts related to maintenance and longer term costs.

<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The draft December 2025 National Planning Policy Framework includes a requirement for swift boxes to be included in new developments.</p> <p>Policy SP11 Biodiversity and Geodiversity of the Local Plan Review, while not making specific reference to Swift boxes does require new developments to consider mitigation for wildlife which could include the inclusion of swift boxes.</p> <p>Policy SP7 Quality Design sets out that design proposals could create habitats for locally characteristic species, with opportunities to design wildlife habitats into the fabric of buildings.</p>
----------------	---

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		No impact on inequality
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		No impact on people with protected characteristics
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	X			Incorporating swift boxes into new developments or Council buildings will benefit the natural environment.
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		No health impact

<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		No ICT impact
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		No digital services impact
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	X			The inclusion of swift boxes in new development or council buildings will support Priority Area 3. Tackling the climate and ecological emergency.
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		No impact on core business
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		No impact on data

<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>Planning Service – conditions on planning applications must be justified on a case-by-case basis and pass the national policy tests for conditions. A general requirement for 50% of dwellings would not meet these tests. However, there is a strong existing policy framework and the draft NPPF indicates national policy will strengthen it further. Swift bricks and boxes are a commonly specified biodiversity enhancement and they are routinely sought on development already.</p> <p>Environment Delivery – there is no available budget to support funding of any potential Swift Boxes on Council owned buildings.</p>
-------------------------------------	---

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This paper responds to a Council motion regarding the increased use of swift bricks in West Berkshire both within Council owned properties and new developments. The paper outlines the ecological need, current policy framework and practical considerations for implementation.
- 4.2 Swifts, a migratory species have experienced a 60% population decline since 1995, mainly due to the loss of traditional nesting sites in older buildings. Swift bricks which provide integral nesting cavities within new or renovate structures offer a cost-effective means of creating long term habitat. They also benefit other declining bird species such as house sparrows, martins and starlings.
- 4.3 National policy support for swift bricks is strengthening. The draft NPPF (2025) explicitly encourages integrated nest boxes for priority species, including swifts. Locally, the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (2023–2041) already requires biodiversity enhancements, though it does not specifically mandate swift bricks. Swift bricks cannot be counted

## Swift Bricks

toward Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations, as they are considered artificial features. In practice, swift bricks and boxes are already specified in planning consents.

- 4.4 The Motion proposes four actions and a response to each of these is provided below;
- 4.5 Installation of swift boxes on suitable Council-owned buildings by May 2026, potentially including audio lures. It is not feasible to do this within the timeframe specified. This requires careful site selection, budget allocation, and consideration of potential noise impacts, particularly in residential areas. As such, this aspect of the motion cannot be supported.
- 4.6 Requiring swift bricks on new development – aiming for 50% of new homes to include two swift bricks each and commercial/industrial development three swift bricks per unit. To be applied as a condition on new development. It is not possible to apply this as a planning condition on every planning application as it would not meet the national tests for conditions. Each condition must be justified on a case by case basis, however there is a strong existing policy framework and the draft NPPF indicates national policy will strengthen it further. Moreover, Swift bricks and boxes are commonly specified and already routinely sought as a required enhancement on new developments. Whilst, this aspect of the motion cannot be supported, the Local Planning Authority will continue to secure swift bricks and boxes where appropriate and justified and consideration can be given to more specific policy wording through the next Local Plan.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 A motion was brought to Council in December regarding swift bricks and supporting the use of them in Council-owned properties and in new developments.
- 5.2 This paper sets out the background to swift bricks, and deals with each part of the motion in turn setting out what the Council already does, and what could be done to support the use of Swift bricks in new development and at Council owned buildings.

### Background

- 5.3 Swifts are a migratory bird which travels to the UK from Africa in April, returning in August. The species is classified as Red under the Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (2021). Traditionally swifts would have nested in trees and on cliffs, however, they have adapted to live in the roofs of old buildings. Swifts are site-loyal and typically return to the same nest site each year.
- 5.4 Between 1995 and 2020 swift numbers have decreased by 60% in the UK, with further decline likely due to the loss of nesting sites from the renovation of older buildings, removing cavities and gaps and the build quality and design of modern homes.
- 5.5 Swift bricks are a construction brick which contains a cavity to allow swifts to nest within it. They operate much like a nest box but can be built into the fabric of a building. They are usually installed high on the exterior of building facades, with their design and installation guided by British Standard BS42021:2022. They cost upwards of £25 depending on the specification of the brick.

## Swift Bricks

- 5.6 Swifts like to nest in loose colonies, with several families nesting close together, and therefore swift boxes, where installed, should be in groups of 2 or 3, at a height of at least 5m above the ground, and between 50cm and 100cm apart, with no obstruction from trees, ladders, creepers or window cleaning gear. Swift Conservation<sup>1</sup> have published a guide on the installation of swift bricks which suggests that typically a house would have two to four boxes, a small block of flats four to ten boxes, with larger infrastructure such as a school, office or warehouse should have between ten and forty depending on the size.
- 5.7 Swift Bricks have also been known to attract a range of wildlife, including house sparrows, house martins, blue tits and starlings. Therefore, the inclusion of them in new development can support a number of different species.

## Planning Policy

- 5.8 The recently published draft NPPF (published for consultation December 2025)<sup>2</sup> includes specific reference to swifts in policy N2 Improving the natural environment:
- para f: *Minimise impacts on biodiversity and include features for species which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use or would make them ineffective.*
- 5.9 This shows that there is a government commitment and expectation that swift boxes are included within new development.
- 5.10 The West Berkshire Local Plan Review (2023 – 2041) includes two policies which support the use of swift boxes, Policy SP7 Quality Design and SP11 Biodiversity and Geodiversity. While there is no specific reference to the use of Swift Bricks, there is the requirement to provide habitat mitigation and enhancements as part of development proposals.
- 5.11 The Council currently use the following condition to secure biodiversity measures, which has been used to secure swift bricks:

*The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until [stipulate the essential matter, e.g. bat boxes, bird boxes, artificial otter holt or badger sett] has been installed/constructed in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To ensure biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into the development. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Swift Conservation, Leaflet 4 – Swift Nest Bricks – installation and suppliers <https://www.swift-conservation.org/Leaflet%20-%20-%20Swift%20Nest%20Bricks%20-%20installation%20&%20suppliers-small.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6941965758a21370f58f304e/Draft\\_NPPF\\_December\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6941965758a21370f58f304e/Draft_NPPF_December_2025.pdf)

## Swift Bricks

5.12 On 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025 the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed that Swift bricks cannot be counted towards Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)<sup>3</sup>. BNG only considers natural features (eg. trees, ponds, lowland meadows), and swift bricks (along with features such as bat boxes) are considered artificial, and therefore cannot be counted in the BNG metric.

## Proposals

5.13 The Motion to Council included four proposals:

*A) Swift boxes will be installed at suitable Council-owned properties, including providing audio lures to attract breeding pairs, before the next nesting season in May 2026.*

5.14 The installation of swift boxes at suitable Council-owned properties is considered to be appropriate. However, it would not be possible to install these before the next nesting season as suitable sites would need to be identified. Further swift nest boxes generally cost between £20 and £150 depending on the material, size and mounting design. The technology to add audio lures generally costs between £64 and £120 for the hardware, in addition they require a mains electricity supply. The Council does not have a budget or resources available to establish the feasibility of a project to achieve this, nor for the purchase and installation of the boxes or the audio lures.

5.15 Audio lures are used to increase the rate of adoption of swift bricks (although it can still take 12 – 24 months for swifts to occupy the bricks) and the noise can result in noise complaints from members of the public. The audio lures require a loudspeaker, ideally mounted inside the nest box, with a mains electricity power supply and a device that holds the MP3 audio file for the swift call. The volume level should be set as loud as a real swift's call; however, it is acceptable if the call is muffled due to coming from inside the nest box. As the calls would introduce a new sound into a neighbourhood, consideration of neighbours would need to be taken into account. While it may be acceptable to play audio calls in office, school or commercial areas, this is less acceptable in residential areas.

5.16 On the basis of the challenges to find appropriate sites, finance and resources, and the risk of disturbance to residents, it is not recommended that swift boxes are installed at suitable Council-owned properties including providing audio lures to attract breeding pairs at this time. However, it is recommended that this is considered for new development.

---

<sup>3</sup> Swift Bricks, Question for Department for DEFRA <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-10-13/81318/>

## Swift Bricks

### 5.17 Estimated cost of installation:

Estimated cost		Notes / Assumptions
Installation of swift box plus audio lure	£660 per box	Includes hardware, power supply and installation.  Hardware estimate: £260 (based on market estimates)  Installation estimate: £400 (reasoned market estimation)
Ongoing maintenance	£50 per box per year	Swift boxes should last the lifetime of the building.  Inc. visual check, ensuing cable/speaker intact.  Does not include street cleaning.
No. Boxes per Council owned property	3	Based on motion request for new commercial buildings.  Buildings should have more than one box installed as Swifts like to live in groups.
No. Council owned buildings	235	Estimated half Council owned buildings might be suitable for a swift box.  <i>Source: <a href="#">Council-Owned Properties - West Berkshire Council</a></i>
Officer time to support the project	£50,000	<i>General working assumption</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£550,550</b>	Includes 1 year maintenance  Maintenance will have an ongoing annual cost of £35,250 (excluding officer time to coordinate and any additional street cleaning required)

*B) At least 50% of homes on new developments in West Berkshire shall be required to have at least two swift bricks installed. New commercial and industrial developments shall be required to have at least three swift bricks installed per appropriate unit.*

## Swift Bricks

5.18 It is assumed that this element of the motion means that on average across the district at least 50% of new homes should incorporate at least two swift bricks. With all new commercial and industrial development installing at least three swift bricks per unit.

5.19 For larger housing developments and commercial schemes, introducing a swift brick requirement would work well, as a definitive number of swift bricks could be required and secured via condition. Where there are small or single dwelling proposals, a specific requirement for swift bricks could add an unreasonable additional burden for applicants, especially when considered alongside other biodiversity/enhancement requirements (eg, BNG, bat boxes). However, the proposed draft NPPF does include requirement for swift bricks to be installed with new development, so the Council may be able to implement this without the need for specific local policy to be included within the new local plan. Further consideration of how this could be implemented, and what types of development would be included in any Council policy would be required.

5.20 Swift bricks generally cost between £25 and £40 per brick.

- C) *This condition will be attached to all relevant planning permissions for new buildings, in line with Local Plan policy SP11, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, the Council's Environment Strategy (refreshed May 2025), the Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy, and other initiatives to maintain, restore and increase biodiversity in West Berkshire.*
- D) *This is in addition to any biodiversity mitigation or enhancements normally requested through the planning process."*

5.21 A general biodiversity enhancement condition is already used when granting planning permission, which allows for specific enhancements to be listed within the condition. The precise biodiversity enhancement will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the development and its location.

5.22 It is not possible to commit through a Council motion to apply any planning conditions on every planning application, to do so would be *ultra vires*. Each condition must be justified on a case-by-case basis and pass the national policy tests for conditions. However, Council can be reassured that there is a strong existing policy framework, and the draft NPPF indicates national policy will strengthen it further. Moreover, Swift bricks and boxes are a commonly specified biodiversity enhancement, and they are routinely sought by the Planning Service.

5.23 The installation of swift bricks would form one part of the biodiversity mitigation enhancements proposed for new developments. It would be for the ecology team to determine the most suitable biodiversity mitigation for each development when considering the merits of the scheme, including the location and specific proposals.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 No other options have been considered, as this report is responding to the Motion presented at Council.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 The motion sets out how the Council wishes to support the migratory swift population, through the installation of swift bricks at appropriate council buildings and through

## Swift Bricks

requirements placed upon developers in the planning process. For the reasons set out, the Motion cannot be supported as the measures set out are unable to be implemented.

- 7.2 Whilst the Motion cannot be supported, existing Local Plan Policy provides the policy hook to secure swift bricks and boxes and the new draft NPPF (currently subject to consultation) includes a requirement for swift bricks to be introduced in new developments where appropriate, therefore, giving the Council a strengthened planning policy basis to secure swift bricks, where appropriate, along with other biodiversity measures, when considering planning applications.

## Background Papers:

Swift Conservation, Leaflet 4: Swift Nest Bricks – installation and suppliers leaflet

<https://www.swift-conservation.org/Leaflet%20-%20Swift%20Nest%20Bricks%20-%20installation%20&%20suppliers-small.pdf>

**Wards affected:** All

### Officer details:

Name: Rachael Lancaster  
Job Title: Team Leader - Place  
Tel No: 01635 519971  
E-mail: [Rachael.lancaster@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Rachael.lancaster@westberks.gov.uk)

### Document Control

<b>Document Ref:</b>	Swift bricks	<b>Date Created:</b>	29/01/26
<b>Version:</b>	3	<b>Date Modified:</b>	05/03/2026
<b>Author:</b>	Rachael Lancaster		
<b>Owning Service</b>	Development and Housing		

### Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	29/01/2026	Original	
2	23/02/2026	Report updated following Corporate Board.	
3	05/03/2026	Report updated following Executive Briefing (to add estimated costs for installation at Council owned buildings)	

# Agenda Item 9

Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee  
17 March 2026

## **Item 9 – Appointment of Task and Finish Groups**

Verbal Item

This page is intentionally left blank

# Project Management Task and Finish Group Report

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	17 March 2026
<b>Task &amp; Finish Group Chairman:</b>	Councillor Chris Read
<b>Date Task &amp; Finish Group Chairman agreed report:</b>	5 March 2026
<b>Report Author:</b>	Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer)

## 1 Purpose of the Report

This report presents the findings of the Project Management Task and Finish Group, which reviewed the Council's approach to managing major projects and sought to identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director v6, and iTrent (Phase 1). The report makes recommendations based on the evidence gathered, which (if implemented) would help to inform the Council's approach to project management in future.

## 2 Recommendations

To consider the Task and Finish Group's recommendations as outlined in Section 6 of this report and agree whether these should be referred to the Executive for consideration.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, although if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations are accepted, this may result in financial implications which will be assessed in detail in the response to the Executive.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	There are no HR implications arising directly from this report, although if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations are accepted, this may result in HR implications, which will be assessed in detail if they are taken forward.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no Legal implications arising from this report, although if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations are

**Project Management Task and Finish Group Report**

	accepted, this may result in financial implications which will be assessed in detail in the response to the Executive.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report, although if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations are accepted by the Executive, this may result in risk management implications, which will be assessed in detail if they are taken forward.			
<b>Property:</b>	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.			
<b>Policy:</b>	There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		The proposed decision does not have any impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		There are no environmental impacts arising directly from this report.
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		There are no health impacts arising directly from this report.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		There are no ICT impacts arising directly from this report.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		There are no impacts for Digital Services arising directly from this report.

<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>		X		There are no Council Strategy Priorities arising directly from this report, although if the Task and Finish Group's recommendations are accepted by the Executive, this would have positive implications for delivery of projects related to Council Strategy priorities in future.
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		Improving project management and project governance is part of the core business of delivering services.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		There are no data impacts associated with this report.

<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	A full list of stakeholders and expert witnesses consulted is contained in the Task and Finish Group's report.			
-------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report presents the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group set up by the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director v6, and iTrent (Phase 1).
- 4.2 Members of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee are invited to review the recommendations and consider whether these should be put to the Executive for consideration.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.2 At its meeting on 13 March 2025, the Scrutiny Commission agreed the terms of reference and membership for a Task and Finish Group to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director v6, and iTrent (Phase 1).
- 5.1 The scope of the review included the following elements:
  - Contract management
  - Project management methodology
  - Project management structure
  - Resourcing
  - Project governance

## Project Management Task and Finish Group Report

- Factors affecting project outcomes
- Lessons learned, changes to processes

5.2 A copy of the Task and Finish Group's terms of reference is provided as Appendix A.

### Background

- 5.3 The Task and Finish Group met five times between September 2025 and January 2026. Members heard evidence from a variety of West Berkshire Council (WBC) officers, including procurement professionals, project managers, client teams, project sponsors, technical specialists, and auditors. Supplier representatives were invited to give evidence, but those who had been involved in the projects had either left the organisation or had moved to new roles in different part of the business, so were unavailable.
- 5.4 The Task and Finish Group also undertook primary research via an online survey of staff who had been involved in user acceptance testing of Care Director 6.
- 5.5 In addition, best practice exemplars of local authorities that had already improved their project management practices were sought out to understand what changes they had introduced, and to see if any of the lessons they had learned could be applicable to West Berkshire Council. Local authorities contacted included Kent County Council and Winchester City Council.
- 5.6 Through evaluation of the evidence collected and with technical support from officers, Members have been able to highlight a number of issues and identify where it is considered that potential improvements could be made, or where further work would be beneficial.

### Proposals

- 5.7 The Task and Finish Group has developed a set of recommendations as set out below. Subject to the approval of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee, these recommendations will be referred to Executive for consideration at a later date, accompanied by a management response.

### Procurement and Contracts and Supplier Relationship Management

Ref.	Recommendation
1.	For all major projects, suppliers must be asked to confirm what project management methodology they will be using.
2.	The Council must look 24 months ahead to identify where software support agreements for business critical systems are due to expire and procure replacements in good time to avoid unnecessary risk.
3.	Before commissioning major IT projects, there should be a full evaluation of all potential procurement options. This should be informed by the views of technical staff and other stakeholders who work with existing systems and

## Project Management Task and Finish Group Report

	suppliers. Any concerns raised should be captured in the risk log, which should be passed to the project team once procurement is complete.
4.	The Council should develop and maintain a live list of all IT systems and how they are integrated. This must be consulted when procuring all new IT systems to ensure the necessary system compatibility and functionality is specified and could be delivered by the new supplier. Any procurement of new IT systems should be signed off by the Council's ICT Service and the Project Sponsor.
5.	Wherever possible, the Council should seek to adopt standard business processes/working practices to avoid the need for IT product customisation, since bespoke changes can lead to unnecessary delays, project costs and risks.
6	Contracts for new IT systems must require suppliers to provide complete systems (including all necessary middleware and technical integration software) and associated product support for the life of the contract.
7.	Procurement timescales should factor in the potential for slippages, or failure to secure a new contract or, in extremis, the need to restart the procurement process.
8.	As part of due diligence, financial checks must be carried out on all contracts for business critical goods and services in order to be assured of the providers' financial viability. This needs to be done as part of the tender process, and at least annually thereafter as part of routine contract management. This should be done by an officer from Finance, Audit, or Procurement & Commissioning.
9.	Contract payments should be aligned clearly with project gateway review success. Large pre-payments before projects commencement should be avoided. Final payments should be set at an appropriate level to cover snagging issues and incentivise providers to complete in a timely manner.
10.	Contracts for critical services should include exit clauses to facilitate the handover of work and the onboarding of the new supplier at the end of the contract. The professional service rates should be clearly stated in the contract for exit services to be provided by the supplier. In many cases, the project/contract manager will be agreeing the detailed exit plan within a certain time period of contract signature, so it may be useful to develop guidance on this.
11.	In addition to all project managers, all Managers at Service Lead and above should have contract management training as part of their induction, with refresher training every three years thereafter. Service Leads should ensure there is a documented service review of all major contracts under their purview at intervals according to Recommendation 8 above.

### Project Resources

12.	Cost benefit analysis should be undertaken over the lifetime of projects to inform decisions about delivery mechanisms. Similarly, there should be detailed up-front planning, mapping and costing of resources to inform the decision about whether to deliver projects using internal or external resources. A clear risk statement must be presented to the Project Board and Senior Leadership Team of resource commitment before approval of project commencement.
13.	Data ownership risk must be fully recorded in project and handed over to business on go-live. Full mitigation of the data loss risk must be adhered to at all times.
14.	<p>All major projects must make use of <b>RACI</b> matrices to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who is <b>R</b>esponsible for delivery of each task.</li> <li>• Clarify who is <b>A</b>ccountable for decisions or delegations related to that task.</li> <li>• Specify who must be <b>C</b>onsulted before decisions are made about the task.</li> <li>• Identify who needs to be kept <b>I</b>nformed of progress.</li> </ul>
15.	Staff, who need to manage major projects or be significantly engaged on these projects should not be asked to do this on top of business-as-usual activity. Instead, staff should have their substantive roles backfilled to allow them to focus on any major projects they are managing, or external project management support should be bought in. If this is not possible, then consideration should be given to what activities can be paused/scaled back for the duration of the project.
16.	Single points of failure should be avoided where an individual member of staff is the sole subject matter expert within the organisation.
17.	All projects must be properly scoped at the outset, with all West Berkshire Council actions and dependencies fully detailed. The scope must be signed off by all services that are key to delivery of a project, and resources must be allocated to tasks prior to project plans being signed off.
18.	Under the detailed project planning process, project dependencies must be identified, mapped, monitored and reported to the Project Board to highlight the implications of amending project timescales. Delays in the delivery of major projects must be taken into account when planning future staff workloads.

### Project Deliverables

19.	For each project, there must be a clearly stated set of requirements that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered successful.
-----	--

## Project Management Task and Finish Group Report

	Consideration should be given to use of the MoSCoW technique when defining these requirements. .
20	Large projects should be completed in phases, with business-critical aspects delivered first.

### Risk Management

21.	All major projects must have risk registers that are kept updated and reported to the relevant project board on a regular basis. This must not be delegated to the supplier.
22.	For ICT projects, adopting new/unproven solutions for critical systems, or moving a critical system from a server-based solution to a hosted platform at the same time as undertaking a complex change / upgrade are considered to be excessive risks and should be avoided.

### Project Governance and Decision Making

23.	All projects must define tolerances around time (project milestones), budget and resources at the outset, and these must be the central focus for RAG progress reporting. Any deviation (or risk of deviation) from baselined tolerances must be reported as project exceptions and options to either accept the deviation or to take another option must be recorded in the Project Board Decision Log.
24.	Change logs must be used to track all modifications to a project's scope, schedule, budget, or deliverables, documenting the "what, when, who, and why" for each alteration. The Change Log should indicate whether the project needs to be re-baselined. Every change should be analysed for any deviation this may or will cause to the agreed tolerances (see Recommendation 23).

### Audit

25.	It is recommended that Internal Audit should undertake a further review 18 months after this report has been considered by the Executive. This would establish whether the accepted Task Group recommendations have been implemented, and whether they have been effective in addressing the identified concerns. A summary of the findings should be reported to the Governance Committee.
-----	---

## 6 Other options considered

The Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee may choose to accept the Task and Finish Group's recommendations in full or in part, or amend the recommendations before putting them to the Executive. Alternatively, the Committee may choose not to put any of the report's recommendations to the Executive if it considers that they are not appropriate.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposals outlined in Section 6 above have been agreed by the Task and Finish Group, based on the evidence presented. It is considered that these could be applied to similar projects in future.
- 7.2 While some of these proposals could be actioned relatively quickly, at minimal cost and with existing resources, it is recognised that others may have financial and resource implications.

## 8 Appendices

Appendix A – Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

Appendix B – Task and Finish Group Report

---

### Background Papers:

None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

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

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position:

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

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** N/A

### Officer details:

Name: Gordon Oliver  
Job Title: Principal Policy Officer (Scrutiny and Democratic Services)  
Tel No: 01635 519486  
E-mail: [gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk)

# Appendix A: Terms of Reference

## Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix

**Review Topic:** Project Management

**Timescale**

**Start:** Apr 2025

**Finish:** tbc

### Review Rationale:

The Scrutiny Commission has agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director 6, and iTrent (Phase 1).

The scope of the review will include:

- Contract management
- Project management methodology
- Project management structure
- Resourcing
- Project governance
- Factors affecting project outcomes
- Lessons learned, changes to processes

### Terms of Reference:

The Task and finish Group will consider the following:

- **Session 1 – How we manage projects in West Berkshire Council**
  - Project management methodology and scalability
  - Project management structure
  - Project management resources
  - Project management training
  - Project governance arrangements
  - Document management
  - Factors affecting project outcomes
  - Learning lessons, reviewing processes, and communicating change
  - Handover to business as usual
  - Pre-procurement feasibility / market testing / budget setting
  - Procurement methodology / negotiation
  - Contract management / procurement timetables
  - Off-boarding for expiring contracts
  - Legal challenges
- **Sessions 2 and 3 – Care Director 6**
  - Governance arrangements
  - Project Board agendas and minutes
  - Audit of Care Director 5
  - Business case / continual business justification
  - Objectives
  - Budget
  - Timescales
  - Quality plans
  - Risk and impact assessment

- Options appraisal
- Delivery planning
- Consultation and engagement
- Procurement process
- Delivery partner
- Project management
- Management of resources
- Assumptions and dependencies
- Risk management
- Issue management
- Change control (including escalations / exceptions)
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Stage reviews
- Testing (including results and remediation)
- Project review
- Lessons learned
- Current status

- **Session 4 and 5 – iTrent (Phase 1)**

- Governance arrangements
- Project Board agendas and minutes
- Business case
- Objectives
- Budget
- Timescales
- Quality plan
- Risk and impact assessment
- Options appraisal
- Delivery planning
- Consultation and engagement
- Procurement
- Project management
- Management of resources
- Assumptions and dependencies
- Risk management
- Issue management
- Change control (including escalations / exceptions)
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Stage reviews
- Testing (including results and remediation)
- Project review
- Lessons learned
- Current status

- **Session 6 – Draft Report**

**Review Membership:**

Councillor Adrian Abbs  
 Councillor Paul Dick  
 Councillor Paul Kander  
 Councillor Alan Macro  
 Councillor Erik Pattenden  
 Councillor Chris Read

**Chairman:** Councillor Chris Read

**Scrutiny Officer:** Gordon Oliver

**Information Required:**

Project management methodology  
Structure chart  
Training plans  
Project management resources (including templates)  
Issues arising  
Lessons learned

**Documents/Evidence:**

Project mandates  
Project proposals  
Business cases  
Statements of work  
PIDs  
Project plans / Gantt Charts  
Risk and issues logs  
Lessons learned reports  
Examples of Project Board agendas, minutes, etc  
Relevant audit reports

**Witnesses:**

Session 1:

- Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources)
- Gabrielle Mancini (Service Director – Transformation, Customer and ICT)
- Melanie Best (Transformation and Programme Manager)
- Kate Pearson (Service Lead – Procurement and Commissioning)
- Dawn Bond (Legal Services Manager)

Sessions 2 and 3:

- Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care)
- Jo England (Service Lead – Adult Social Care)
- Rich Pask (Business Manager – Adult Social Care)
- Kate Toone (Programme Manager – Integration, Digital and Quality)
- Sarah Clarke (Interim Executive Director - Resources)
- Andy Best (Acting Head of ICT)
- Mat Scalpello (Applications Development Manager)
- Rob Sweetman (Systems Team Leader)
- Phil Cridge (Systems Integration Officer)

Sessions 4 and 5:

- Sarah Clarke (Interim Executive Director – Resources)
- Paula Goodwin (Service Lead – Human Resources)
- Rich Strange (Project and Programme Manager)
- Kate Pearson (Service Lead – Procurement and Commissioning)
- Lorraine Collins (HR Systems and Data Manager)
- Julie Gillhespy (Audit Manager)

**Measures Available**

- Project spend vs budget
- Project delivery timescale vs original plan
- Resources allocated vs original plan

**Desired Outcomes:**

Members will identify lessons to be learned about how project management can be improved so these can be applied to future projects. The Task and Finish Group will make recommendations in a report to the Scrutiny Commission. If approved, the recommendations will then go to Executive for consideration.

# **Report of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Project Management**

**(February 2026)**

## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Task and Finish Group that was set up by the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects.

The review started by looking at how projects are managed in general terms, before progressing to look at two recent examples of major projects. The projects considered were:

- **Care Director version 6** - software used to manage adult and children's social care caseloads and related finance functions; and
- **iTrent Phase 1** - software used to deliver the Council's HR and payroll functions.

The Task and Finish Group was originally due to review a third project, but project management of the Sports Hub was recently reviewed by a separate task and finish group, so this was considered unnecessary.

The Task and Finish Group has developed a set of recommendations based on the evidence presented. Subject to the approval of the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee, these recommendations will be referred to the Executive for consideration.

On the positive side there appears to be an increase in maturity in the approach and adoption of Project Management practices. There is now a well understood methodology consistent with government and industry good practice that covers the entire life cycle of projects from starting a project, through to directing a project and final project closure. In addition, the centralisation of the project management function is bearing fruit and hopefully will retain project management talent within the Council.

Setting of project tolerances of resource, time and cost, regularly reporting on these tolerances both in actual breach or risk of breach, does need to be managed more consistently, though there is strong evidence this is now carried out.

Senior Management and Leadership Teams must also be more challenging in formal reviews early on within a project cycle on defining the boundaries of tolerances. Again, it was good to see that one of the projects reviewed was "rescued" and delivered in a very tight timeline, however this approach should be a last resort as it can be very disruptive to the smooth running of the affected department. Project Boards and senior escalation routes to more senior boards are clearly an important control of bringing at risk projects back in tolerance for delivery.

It should also be noted, members of the Task and Finish Group were disturbed to find that some of the issues uncovered by this review echo those highlighted by the previous review of the London Road Industrial Estate project. It is hoped that officers will take the opportunity to embed these learnings in their working practices, so the same mistakes are not repeated in future projects.

In general, the Task Group was encouraged by the improvements to project management practices that are being rolled out through the Project Service. It is clear that there are pockets of excellence, with project managers and project sponsors who are delivering in accordance with agreed project management methodologies.

### **Procurement and Contracts and Supplier Relationship Management**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1.	For all major projects, suppliers must be asked to confirm what project management methodology they will be using.
2.	The Council must look 24 months ahead to identify where software support agreements for business critical systems are due to expire and procure replacements in good time to avoid unnecessary risk.
3.	Before commissioning major IT projects, there should be a full evaluation of all potential procurement options. This should be informed by the views of technical staff and other stakeholders who work with existing systems and suppliers. Any concerns raised should be captured in the risk log, which should be passed to the project team once procurement is complete.
4.	The Council should develop and maintain a live list of all IT systems and how they are integrated. This must be consulted when procuring all new IT systems to ensure the necessary system compatibility and functionality is specified and could be delivered by the new supplier. Any procurement of new IT systems should be signed off by the Council's ICT Service and the Project Sponsor.
5.	Wherever possible, the Council should seek to adopt standard business processes/working practices to avoid the need for IT product customisation, since bespoke changes can lead to unnecessary delays, project costs and risks.
6.	Contracts for new IT systems must require suppliers to provide complete systems (including all necessary middleware and technical integration software) and associated product support for the life of the contract.
7.	Procurement timescales should factor in the potential for slippages, or failure to secure a new contract or, in extremis, the need to restart the procurement process.
8.	As part of due diligence, financial checks must be carried out on all contracts for business critical goods and services in order to be assured of the providers' financial viability. This needs to be done as part of the tender process, and at least annually thereafter as part of routine contract management. This should be done by an officer from Finance, Audit, or Procurement & Commissioning.
9.	Contract payments should be aligned clearly with project gateway review success. Large pre-payments before projects commencement should be avoided. Final payments should be set at an appropriate level to cover snagging issues and incentivise providers to complete in a timely manner.
10.	Contracts for critical services should include exit clauses to facilitate the handover of work and the onboarding of the new supplier at the end of the contract. The professional service rates should be clearly stated in the contract for exit services to be provided by the supplier. In many cases, the project/contract manager will be agreeing the detailed exit plan within a

	certain time period of contract signature, so it may be useful to develop guidance on this.
11.	In addition to all project managers, all Managers at Service Lead and above should have contract management training as part of their induction, with refresher training every three years thereafter. Service Leads should ensure there is a documented service review of all major contracts under their purview at intervals according to Recommendation 8 above.

### Project Resources

12.	Cost benefit analysis should be undertaken over the lifetime of projects to inform decisions about delivery mechanisms. Similarly, there should be detailed up-front planning, mapping and costing of resources to inform the decision about whether to deliver projects using internal or external resources. A clear risk statement must be presented to the Project Board and Senior Leadership Team of resource commitment before approval of project commencement.
13.	Data ownership risk must be fully recorded in project and handed over to business on go-live. Full mitigation of the data loss risk must be adhered to at all times.
14.	All major projects must make use of <b>RACI</b> matrices to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who is <b>R</b>esponsible for delivery of each task.</li> <li>• Clarify who is <b>A</b>ccountable for decisions or delegations related to that task.</li> <li>• Specify who must be <b>C</b>onsulted before decisions are made about the task.</li> <li>• Identify who needs to be kept <b>I</b>nformed of progress.</li> </ul>
15.	Staff, who need to manage major projects or be significantly engaged on these projects should not be asked to do this on top of business-as-usual activity. Instead, staff should have their substantive roles backfilled to allow them to focus on any major projects they are managing, or external project management support should be bought in. If this is not possible, then consideration should be given to what activities can be paused/scaled back for the duration of the project.
16.	Single points of failure should be avoided where an individual member of staff is the sole subject matter expert within the organisation.
17.	All projects must be properly scoped at the outset, with all West Berkshire Council actions and dependencies fully detailed. The scope must be signed off by all services that are key to delivery of a project, and resources must be allocated to tasks prior to project plans being signed off.
18.	Under the detailed project planning process, project dependencies must be identified, mapped, monitored and reported to the Project Board to highlight the implications of amending project timescales. Delays in the delivery of major projects must be taken into account when planning future staff workloads.

### Project Deliverables

19.	For each project, there must be a clearly stated set of requirements that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered successful.
-----	--

	Consideration should be given to use of the MoSCoW technique when defining these requirements. .
20	Large projects should be completed in phases, with business-critical aspects delivered first.

### **Risk Management**

21.	All major projects must have risk registers that are kept updated and reported to the relevant project board on a regular basis. This must not be delegated to the supplier.
22.	For ICT projects, adopting new/unproven solutions for critical systems, or moving a critical system from a server-based solution to a hosted platform at the same time as undertaking a complex change / upgrade are considered to be excessive risks and should be avoided.

### **Project Governance and Decision Making**

23.	All projects must define tolerances around time (project milestones), budget and resources at the outset, and these must be the central focus for RAG progress reporting. Any deviation (or risk of deviation) from baselined tolerances must be reported as project exceptions and options to either accept the deviation or to take another option must be recorded in the Project Board Decision Log.
24.	Change logs must be used to track all modifications to a project's scope, schedule, budget, or deliverables, documenting the "what, when, who, and why" for each alteration. The Change Log should indicate whether the project needs to be re-baselined. Every change should be analysed for any deviation this may or will cause to the agreed tolerances (see Recommendation 23).

### **Audit**

25.	It is recommended that Internal Audit should undertake a further review 18 months after this report has been considered by the Executive. This would establish whether the accepted Task Group recommendations have been implemented, and whether they have been effective in addressing the identified concerns. A summary of the findings should be reported to the Governance Committee.
-----	---

## **1. Introduction**

This report has been prepared by the Project Management Task and Finish Group, which was set up to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director v6, and iTrent (Phase 1).

## **2. Purpose and Membership of the Task and Finish Group**

2.1 The Scrutiny Commission originally agreed the terms of reference and membership for a Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 24 September 2024. Responsibility for the Task and Finish Group was subsequently passed to the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee following restructuring of the Council's scrutiny function.

2.2 A copy of the Terms of Reference is provided in Appendix A. The scope of the review included the following aspects:

- Contract management
- Project management methodology
- Project management structure
- Resourcing
- Project governance
- Factors affecting project outcomes
- Lessons learned and changes to processes

2.3 In addition to considering how projects are managed across the Council, the Task and Finish Group undertook a deep dive on two projects – Care Director v6 and iTrent Phase 1.

2.4 The Task and Finish Group comprised the following Members:

- Councillor Chris Read (Chairman)
- Councillor Adrian Abbs
- Councillor Paul Dick
- Councillor Paul Kander
- Councillor Alan Macro
- Councillor Erik Pattenden

## **3. Meetings and Witnesses**

3.1 The Task and Finish Group met five times between September 2025 and January 2026. Members heard evidence from a variety of West Berkshire Council (WBC) officers, including procurement professionals, solicitors, project managers, client teams, project sponsors, technical specialists, and auditors. Supplier representatives were invited to give evidence, but those who had been involved in the projects had either left the organisation or had moved to new roles in different part of the business, so were unavailable.

- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group also undertook primary research via an online survey of staff who had been involved in user acceptance testing of Care Director v6.
- 3.3 In addition, best practice exemplars of local authorities that had already improved their project management practices were sought out to understand what changes they had introduced, and to see if any of the lessons they had learned could be applicable to West Berkshire Council. Local authorities interviewed included Kent County Council and Winchester City Council.

**Table 2: Meetings and witnesses interviewed**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus of Meeting</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
1 Sep 2025	<p><b>Project Management Practices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project management methodology and scalability</li> <li>• Project management structure</li> <li>• Project management resources</li> <li>• Project management training</li> <li>• Project governance arrangements</li> <li>• Document management</li> <li>• Factors affecting project outcomes</li> <li>• Learning lessons, reviewing processes, and communicating change</li> <li>• Handover to business as usual</li> <li>• Pre-procurement feasibility / market testing / budget setting</li> <li>• Procurement methodology / negotiation</li> <li>• Contract management / procurement timetables</li> <li>• Off-boarding for expiring contracts</li> <li>• Legal challenges</li> </ul>	<p>Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources)</p> <p>Gabrielle Mancini (Service Director - Transformation, Customer and ICT)</p> <p>Melanie Best (Transformation &amp; Programme Manager)</p> <p>Kate Pearson (former Service Lead - Procurement and Commissioning)</p>
20 Oct & 8 Dec 2025	<p><b>Care Director v6:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance arrangements</li> <li>• Project Board agendas and minutes</li> <li>• Audit of Care Director v5</li> <li>• Business case / continual business justification</li> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Timescales</li> <li>• Quality plans</li> <li>• Risk and impact assessment</li> <li>• Options appraisal</li> <li>• Delivery planning</li> </ul>	<p>Paul Coe (Executive Director, Adult Social Care)</p> <p>Melanie O'Rourke (Service Director, Adult Social Care)</p> <p>Jo England (Service Lead, Adult Social Care)</p> <p>Rich Pask (Former Adult Social Care Business Manager)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation and engagement</li> <li>• Procurement process</li> <li>• Delivery partner</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Management of resources</li> <li>• Assumptions and dependencies</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Issue management</li> <li>• Change control (including escalations / exceptions)</li> <li>• Stakeholder management and communications</li> <li>• Stage reviews</li> <li>• Testing (including results and remediation)</li> <li>• Project review</li> <li>• Lessons learned</li> <li>• Current status</li> </ul>	<p>Kate Toone (Programme Manager (Integration, Digital and Quality))</p> <p>Mat Scalpello (Applications Development Manager)</p> <p>Phil Cridge (Systems Integration Officer)</p> <p>Sarah Clarke (Executive Director, Resources)</p> <p>Dawn Bond (Legal Services Manager)</p>
12 Jan 2026	<p><b>iTrent (Phase 1):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance arrangements</li> <li>• Project Board agendas and minutes</li> <li>• Business case</li> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Timescales</li> <li>• Quality plan</li> <li>• Risk and impact assessment</li> <li>• Options appraisal</li> <li>• Delivery planning</li> <li>• Consultation and engagement</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Management of resources</li> <li>• Assumptions and dependencies</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Issue management</li> <li>• Change control (including escalations / exceptions)</li> <li>• Stakeholder management and communications</li> <li>• Stage reviews</li> <li>• Testing (including results and remediation)</li> <li>• Project review</li> <li>• Lessons learned</li> <li>• Current status</li> </ul>	<p>Sarah Clarke (Executive Director, Resources)</p> <p>Lorraine Collins (HR Systems and Data Manager)</p> <p>Julie Gillhespey (Audit Manager)</p>
9 Feb 2026	<b>Review of Draft Report</b>	n/a

## 4. Findings

4.1 Key findings from each of the three parts of the review are outlined below.

### **Part 1 – Project Management**

4.1.1 This part of the review looked at how projects are managed across the Council. Key findings are as follows.

#### Project Management Office

4.1.2 It was clear from the interviews with officers that many of the previous known weaknesses regarding the Council's approach to project management had already been or were in the process of being addressed.

4.1.3 Historically, project managers could either be within individual services or the Projects Service (PMO), with all projects tracked by the PMO. This had resulted in inconsistencies in abilities and approaches to project management across the organisation. However, this is changing such that all future projects will be delivered and tracked through the PMO (now Projects Service). This will help to achieve greater consistency of approach and will facilitate improved oversight and sharing of learning across the organisation.

#### Project Management Methodology, Skills and Training

4.1.4 A project calculator has been developed to determine the most appropriate project management methodology for any given project. There are four categories of project from 'business as usual' to 'large', with increasing levels of project governance, documentation, tools, and experience requirements for project managers / sponsors, which are considered to be commensurate with project value and complexity.

4.1.5 PRINCE2 is the default project management methodology for all WBC projects.

4.1.6 Project managers do not currently need to be certified in the relevant project management methodology, but the aim is to have a Projects Service (PS) where all project managers are sufficiently qualified and experienced to do their jobs.

4.1.7 A skills review is planned to ensure that there are appropriate levels of project management expertise within the Council. If planned projects would benefit from more advanced project management skills, then the Council would invest in training staff accordingly.

4.1.8 The Council has recently taken on a number of project managers who are well-qualified but lack experience. The ideal situation would be to have both, but it is challenging for the Council to retain experienced project managers who can often command larger salaries in the private sector.

- 4.1.9 For term contracts (e.g. Volker Highways), project management for day-to-day activity is provided as part of the contract. Larger, more complex schemes have a dedicated project manager. The option to use internal or external project management is considered in relation to the business case for each project.

#### Project Documentation

- 4.1.10 Previously, each service stored project documentation within their own areas on the server. However, the corporate programme is on Sharepoint, and all new projects are set up with their own Teams channel, which facilitates sharing.
- 4.1.11 A central data repository is being developed by the PS to capture learnings from projects in one place. However, further consideration is needed as to how to ensure project managers refer to this once it has been implemented.

#### Project Governance

- 4.1.12 All major projects have senior officer and Executive Portfolio Holder sponsors.
- 4.1.13 Corporate Programme Board (CPB) holds project managers and sponsors to account. This includes Executive Portfolio Holders as well as senior officers. Following a governance review, CPB replaced individual Programme Delivery Boards, which were inefficient, with senior officers having to attend multiple boards. The Corporate Programme is also a standing item at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings.
- 4.1.14 There is evidence that some projects have clear escalation processes in place where agreed tolerances for projects are breached. (However, this is not currently a requirement of the Project Management Methodology, and it is not always the case.) SLT seeks to address issues as they arise, while Corporate Programme Board focuses on projects with a red / amber RAG rating.
- 4.1.15 The above governance arrangements were brought in by the current Chief Executive and were not in place when Care Director v6 and iTrent (Phase 1) were being delivered.

#### Procurement and Contract Management

- 4.1.16 Links with the Procurement & Commissioning Team have improved over time such that working practices are more in line with best practice. Officers are looking up to 3-4 years ahead to see what contracts are coming up for renewal. They are also seeking to understand which contracts are likely to be more complex, with lengthy procurement processes, and which may require experienced project managers and / or extensive involvement from technical specialists. Previously, officers had lacked capacity to do this on top of their day jobs.

- 4.1.17 Officers work backwards from the contract end date and estimated the time needed to complete each activity. The worst-case scenario is always adopted, and buffers are built in to allow for unforeseen issues. However, significant issues can still derail these timescales, and a service area's resources might be diverted to deal with business-critical matters, resulting in delays. For larger projects, the timetable is owned by the project team, but for smaller projects, it is seen as the Procurement & Commissioning Team's timetable.
- 4.1.18 In preparation for local government reorganisation, work was carried out with neighbouring authorities to map systems and procurement pipelines, in order to identify opportunities to reduce duplication and take advantage of economies of scale.
- 4.1.19 Prior to going out to tender for new projects, pre-market engagement exercises are run via the government's central digital platform. This helps to inform the service specification and identify the best procurement route (i.e., frameworks that included the main providers, or an open tender to allow new entrants with innovative products to bid).
- 4.1.20 The Procurement & Commissioning does a market engagement event whenever a framework is used. (This is a legal requirement.) They provide a high-level specification, suggested delivery timescales, and draft terms and conditions. This helps to highlight if there is anything that would prevent businesses registered on the framework from bidding.
- 4.1.21 The tender specification sets out essential and desirable outcomes, as defined by the service area. While open tenders have to include a range of anticipated spend, this is not a requirement for frameworks. The Council sometimes indicates how much it is currently spending to act as a guide, but in some cases, projects involve moving to a different model (e.g., Software as a Service (SaaS)), so costs are not comparable. In all cases, relative weightings of price and quality criteria give a clear indication to bidders as to the Council's focus. In some cases, weighting may include demonstration of functionality.
- 4.1.22 A recurring challenge is where providers seek to renegotiate once the contract has been awarded, particularly for ICT projects. Where frameworks have been used, the Council has approached the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) for support, where it has been felt that suppliers are not acting in line with their obligations, but this has not been successful. While CCS have often been sympathetic, they have not acted. It should be noted that anticipated changes to procurement legislation will allow for a competitive flexible procedure where some negotiation would be permitted in future.
- 4.1.23 When tendering projects, bidders are expected to contract on the basis of the terms of the published draft contract. If anything is deemed unworkable, then this can be raised through a clarification request. If accepted, then an amendment can be made to the terms, which would be open to all bidders, so no commercial advantage would be given.

- 4.1.24 Financial credit checks are carried out with new suppliers following award of contract to form a baseline against which future checks can be compared. Subsequent checks should be carried out by individual contract managers as part of due diligence, but this has not been routinely done. The recent NRS Healthcare bankruptcy<sup>1</sup> highlighted the importance of this activity, and Procurement & Commissioning are looking to introduce changes to working practices as a result.
- 4.1.25 Procurement & Commissioning has acknowledged that contract management is an area of weakness within the Council. New managers are often asked to manage contracts, with little or no training. This does not form part of managers' induction, and it is not part of their ongoing mandatory training. Also, there are no relevant online courses available on WBC's Learning Hub. However, this will be addressed as part of the new Procurement Strategy.
- 4.1.26 It was noted that the Legal and Procurement & Commissioning teams are sometimes asked to do things that should sit with services. Assumptions are often made about who will do certain tasks, which highlights the importance of using RACI matrices to ensure everyone knows which parties are Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed in relation to individual elements of a project.
- 4.1.27 The issue of exit clauses in contracts was discussed. These can be invoked to require an outgoing provider to support the transition to a new provider. However, officers confirmed that it is not possible to simply attach a 'standard' exit provision, as the provisions of a contract will always vary according to the exact terms being used.
- 4.1.28 Local authorities routinely use frameworks to procure services. These frameworks are by their nature high level, so as to apply to a wide range of users and requirements. Therefore, areas such as implementation plans, business continuity and exit arrangements will be set out in schedules to the framework, with broad commitments to be supplemented by more detailed arrangements to be negotiated and agreed by the project and/or contract manager within the service. This may be something that could be covered as part of future project/contract management training for staff. Furthermore, standard expectations could be developed, and/or a list of points for consideration for use in procurement exercises and/or by project managers.

#### Project Resources

- 4.1.29 Officers cited implementation resource as being key to successful project delivery. In most cases, officers are required to deliver projects on top of their day jobs. The ICT Applications Team is very small, with individuals designated as subject matter experts.
- 4.1.30 Subject matter experts have to learn to use any new system that is delivered and to subsequently train colleagues. Also, it is often necessary to have

---

<sup>1</sup> [Healthcare equipment maker goes into liquidation](#)

parallel running of new and old systems. In many cases, subject matter experts are required to work on multiple projects at the same time, putting them under considerable stress. If these individuals were to fall sick, or leave the organisation, there would be a considerable impact on the service

- 4.1.31 West Berkshire Council is already a lean organisation, so there is limited scope to redeploy staff and backfill roles with people who have equivalent skills. External support has been bought in on some projects (e.g., BetterGov providing support for the Mosaic project). This can be very expensive, but it can deliver significant benefits for staff as well as the project.
- 4.1.32 Also, it is not clear if the Council is making the most of Artificial Intelligence. This could help to make officers more efficient when working on routine tasks and free up time to focus on projects.
- 4.1.33 The offline review of Project and Programme Management undertaken by Kent County Council concluded that WBC runs a similar good practice approach.

## **Part 2 – Care Director v6**

- 4.2.1 This part of the review sought to identify lessons that could be learned from the failed implementation of the upgrade to Care Director, which is a social care case management and financial system.

### Background

- 4.2.2 The Council currently uses Care Director Version v5 (CDv5). Originally developed by Care Works, it was subsequently bought out by Advanced. It utilises Microsoft Dynamics, which is an Enterprise Resource Planning solution that brings together customer, supply chain and finance elements into a single system, with advanced reporting tools, modular functionality, and industry-specific capabilities.
- 4.2.3 Microsoft eventually took the decision to withdraw support for the on-premises version of Dynamics, encouraging customers to move to its cloud-based Dynamics 365 platform instead. Mainstream support for the previous version ended in October 2021 with extended support ending in January 2023. This means that Microsoft no longer provides updates, hotfixes, or non-security support for the previous version.
- 4.2.4 However, in the original proposal (Tender Response Document – August 2015), the supplier (then Care Works who were later acquired by Advanced) stated *“The proposed software licence costs make provision for a technology refresh of the Microsoft Dynamics platform, so that it remains fit for purpose over the full 10 year contract lifetime.”* It should be noted that according to Microsoft’s official lifecycle policy for Dynamics 365 for Customer Engagement Apps, version 9.x (on-premises update), Extended Support ends on January

9, 2029.<sup>2</sup> Non-cloud based software systems (often termed “on-premises hosted”), such as Care Director v5 hosted at WBC, carry significant risks of end-of-life support.

- 4.2.5 Organisations that continue to use older versions of Dynamics are essentially running unsupported software, which comes with significant risks in terms of:
- Increased vulnerability to cyberattacks and consequent data breaches
  - Increased maintenance costs (extended support costs are normally higher than normal support costs)
  - Integration difficulties with newer applications and technologies (extended support typically includes no functional patching, just security patching)
  - Limited access to specialist support, as fewer professionals have knowledge and experience of the older versions of Dynamics.

### Commissioning

- 4.2.6 West Berkshire Council wrote to Care Works in December 2018 expressing concern about Microsoft Dynamics no longer being supported.
- 4.2.7 The supplier had come to WBC with a proposal to upgrade to Care Director v6 (CDv6), which used their own proprietary coding rather than relying on Dynamics. CDv6 was originally due to launch mid-2019 with all components by December 2019. CDv6 was new to market and unproven, and WBC was only offered demonstrations and sight of the functional specification.
- 4.2.8 Although it is thought that other local authorities may have been offered an upgrade to Dynamics 365, WBC was not. This could have been due to our combination of systems - interactions with other systems were complex (i.e. ContrOCC and Agresso). Also, West Berkshire used the platform in different ways to other local authorities, so a bespoke installation was required.
- 4.2.9 Senior officers appeared to be aware of the high level of risk associated with implementing a new / unproven product. However, this was not reflected in the minutes of the Executive meeting where it was agreed to implement CDv6.
- 4.2.10 Given that Advanced had come to WBC with a proposal, rather than WBC commissioning the work, it was dealt with as a contract variation. The decision to appoint Advanced went against the advice of senior officers in Adult Social Care who expressed concerns about the previous adversarial contractual relationship with the supplier and the challenges that had been experienced with implementing CDv5. Officers had advocated to go out to open tender instead.

---

<sup>2</sup> Key support dates for Microsoft Dynamics v9.1 (Service Pack 1) include:  
- Mainstream Support End Date: January 12, 2027  
- Extended Support End Date: January 9, 2029

- 4.2.11 Unfortunately, there are few alternative providers in the market, most of which have poor reputations amongst other local authority clients, although it is noted that a lack of resources and technical expertise is a common theme in the public sector, which can lead to delivery challenges regardless of the provider.
- 4.2.12 WBC is a small client, so there would be risks with switching providers. Additionally, there is always a risk of starting from scratch rather than transitioning to the next version of a familiar product, so there were pros and cons associated with either approach.
- 4.2.13 There was no purchase cost associated with CDv6, just consultancy support to implement it. Therefore, there would have been a big price differential compared to other options that required WBC to start from scratch.
- 4.2.14 At the same time as upgrading from CDv5 to CDv6, WBC had decided to move to a cloud-based system. This was part of a wider strategic shift to hosted environments. A key factor in the CDv6 decision had been that a hosted service would reduce the draw on ICT staff time. However, this brought additional resource requirement and implementation risk to an already high-risk project.
- 4.2.15 CDv6 introduced additional functionality – officers had fought hard to get the finance functionality included rather than being an additional cost item. However, the Statement of Works included a number of potential options, which introduced an element of ambiguity about what was to be delivered.

#### Project Management and Delivery

- 4.2.16 Despite a lack of resources being identified in the Lessons Learned Report for CDv5, this was not addressed for CDv6. CDv5 had taken 4 years to implement (with parallel running alongside the previous system).
- 4.2.17 Officers felt that the CDv6 project had been grossly under-resourced on both sides. Just one ICT resource had been allocated from WBC, who had been very stretched, due to being involved in delivering other projects and business as usual (BAU) activity. Similarly, the supplier only had one core technical resource allocated to the project, which officers considered insufficient.
- 4.2.18 Officers assigned to the project had quickly realised that the implementation would not be straightforward. The supplier's project plan focused on what they needed to do to implement the new system, and it did not include WBC's activity in any detail. Officers went through the supplier's project plan and mapped out WBC's activities and milestones. Although this was shared with the WBC project manager, it was not used for resource allocation. Concerns were raised by officers about the proposed timeline, based on experience with previous software upgrades, but these concerns were largely ignored. It was suggested that because WBC was one of the first local authorities to be upgraded to CDv6, Advanced did not properly appreciate the level of work

required. Also, there had been significant differences in how parallel running of finance systems was viewed by Council officers and by Advanced.

- 4.2.19 The subsequent WBC project manager took over from May 2021. She had previously worked on the project as a technical resource and consequently had a good technical understanding, so had got up to speed quickly and there had been no delay as a result of the change. It was clear from the documentary evidence and testimony of colleagues that the new project manager was effective and engaged in the project.
- 4.2.20 The supplier's project manager had also changed (at the request of WBC) part-way through the project, which had been disruptive, since the new person was not as technically adept as their predecessor.
- 4.2.21 A key challenge of the project was the first data migration, since the database includes a very large number of records. Unfortunately, the data migration tool provided by the vendor was not compatible with the version of CDv5 that WBC was using, so the migration failed, leading to delays. No other local authorities had used this tool previously. It was subsequently agreed to revert to a tried and tested system. Multiple failed data migrations meant that it took a long time to get to the point where testing was possible.

#### Project Governance and Decision Making

- 4.2.22 Prior to February 2022, reporting had been through normal project governance. However, as delays become significant, this was escalated. All subsequent date changes were reported through Resources Prioritisation Group, Corporate Projects Board, and Corporate Programme Board.
- 4.2.23 There were repeated problems and slippages in the programme, and there was a back and forth with the supplier about who was to blame. The WBC project sponsor started to hold monthly meetings with senior representatives from Advanced and WBC.
- 4.2.24 In April 2023, it was discovered that there was an issue with how CDv6 dealt with VAT, which would have cost a considerable sum of money to address. Other local authorities did not experience the same issue, probably because they were using different finance platforms.
- 4.2.25 At this point, the decision was taken to put the project on hold. A 'without prejudice' meeting was held with the supplier, seeking assurances that the problems could be resolved, but a way forward could not be agreed.
- 4.2.26 Members queried why there had been significant payments made to Advanced, despite the lack of progress. Officers explained that there had been dispute as to who was at fault, and it had been hard to pinpoint where the issues lay. Also, WBC had been liable for cloud costs regardless of progress. These costs were high due to the sheer volume of records. Members noted that the final payment was only 10%, which seemed insufficient to deal with snagging issues.

- 4.2.27 The Council sought external legal advice to see if they could recover costs from Advanced for failure to deliver the project. However, since fault lay on both sides, cost recovery was not considered an appropriate option.
- 4.2.28 By early 2024, both parties mutually agreed to stop work on the project.
- 4.2.29 There had been significant impacts on the Adult and Children's Social Care services as a result of the delays – a number of other initiatives could not be progressed, and the service was unable to meet statutory reporting requirements.
- 4.2.30 Members asked officers if concerns were listened to when escalated. There were regular meetings with senior representatives of Advanced, and they agreed to a change of project manager at the Council's request. Internally, officers felt that they were listened to, but there was pressure to complete. It was noted that a lot of work had been done on a critical system over an extended period of time, and it had appeared to be close to the finish line, so it was difficult to walk away.

#### Project Risk

- 4.2.31 The evidence presented to the Task Group highlighted a number of significant project risks.
- 4.2.32 Social care case management systems are critical to the operation of the Council, and loss of life is a potential risk associated with the system being unavailable.
- 4.2.33 There are few providers in the market, most of which have poor reputations amongst their local authority clients, so there would be risks with switching providers.
- 4.2.34 Officers had always enjoyed a good working relationship with the vendor's technical support team, with continuity of staff over a number of years, and support is still being provided for CDv5. However, implementation of CDv6 was carried out by a different team. Officers felt they were technically competent, and the problems stemmed from the fact that CDv6 was a new and unproven product.
- 4.2.35 Officers believe that there had only been one local authority where CDv6 had been successfully implemented before Advanced withdrew from the social care market. However, it was thought that West Berkshire Council was the only authority that had gone from CDv5 to CDv6 for both adults and children's social care.
- 4.2.36 WBC had not considered seeking independent support to upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics 365. However, Advanced had customised Dynamics and had control over the code.

## Lessons Learned

- 4.2.37 The Lessons Learned Report for CDv6 contained 52 lessons – mostly around project delivery and resourcing, particularly in ICT.
- 4.2.38 Common reasons for projects failing are post-procurement additions to the contract and not tying the supplier to key deliverables in the contract.
- 4.2.39 The Task Group considered that the project scope should have been clearly defined and agreed by all parties at the outset. It was clear that officers' concerns about resources had been ignored and timescales were unrealistic, but the project had pressed ahead regardless.
- 4.2.40 Officers conceded that the statement of works and contract had left them exposed. Also, having a clear statement of project tolerances to guide decision making would potentially have resulted in termination of the contract at an earlier stage, thus avoiding further unnecessary work and associated expense.
- 4.2.41 It was clear that ICT and Social Care staff had serious concerns about the incumbent supplier from the outset and would have preferred to go to tender, but their views were not reported/taken into account when making the decision to upgrade to CDv6.
- 4.2.42 By April 2022, the negative impact of the project on key WBC staff was considered to be a 'red flag', and when the focus turned to the contract, that should have been seen as the sign of a failing relationship.
- 4.2.43 Members noted the concerns raised in the survey of staff who were involved in testing CDv6 and asked if it would be appropriate to include regular temperature checks with staff as part of project reporting. It was confirmed that this was being done for Mosaic (the successor to Care Director), and that the Project Manager was sensitive to the needs of staff. The challenge was how to respond, since there were few options to relieve pressure on key individuals, and again staff are working to deliver a project and continue with BAU activity.
- 4.2.44 Moving systems to the cloud would reduce business as usual maintenance and free up time to do value-adding activity. However, this would need significant resource to manage the transition, which was not currently available within the ICT Service.
- 4.2.45 Software As A Service (SAAS) works best as an off-the-shelf product for standard applications. Officers indicated that although Adult and Children's Social Care has standard legal and reporting frameworks, the Mosaic interfaces still have to be tweaked for WBC. This is where delays and additional costs are incurred.
- 4.2.46 Some lessons do appear to have been learned and are being applied on the Mosaic contract. Although Mosaic was not reviewed in any detail, the Task

Group learned that external resource has been brought in to project manage and support the delivery of Mosaic workstreams. This support comes at a substantial cost, but there are significant benefits in terms of delivery in terms of access to experienced professionals who are able to hold the provider to account and reduce the pressure on in-house staff. However, no additional internal ICT resource has been allocated to Mosaic, and the existing ICT resource is stretched to breaking point. This suggests that issues exposed by Care Director v6 (and its predecessors) are being repeated.

### **Part 3 – iTrent (Phase 1)**

- 4.3.1 The final part of the review sought to identify lessons that could be learned from the procurement and implementation of iTrent (Phase 1), which is an HR and payroll system.

#### Background

- 4.3.2 iTrent was procured to replace three legacy systems (ResourceLink for HR and payroll, Jobs Go Public for recruitment, and Learning Pool for learning management) with a single, integrated system.

#### Commissioning

- 4.3.3 The ResourceLink contract end date coincided with the financial year end, which created additional pressures. This decision predated current management, but it was thought to be driven by financial considerations.
- 4.3.4 The Council was offered very unfavourable terms by ResourceLink to extend the contract beyond the existing term, so the decision was taken to go out to open tender. Unfortunately, the initial procurement exercise failed when the terms were rejected after the procurement exercise had concluded. The only lawful option available to the Council was to run the procurement again. Procurement Board agreed to use a framework to expedite the process. Due to the reduced timescale for delivery, bidders were asked to deliver a turnkey solution with minimal input from WBC staff. MHR was the successful bidder and was appointed to provide the iTrent platform.
- 4.3.5 Despite having the opportunity to raise points of clarification as part of the tender process, MHR sought to renegotiate terms once the contract had been awarded. Accepting this would have put the Council at risk of challenge from the other bidders. The matter had to be escalated to the MHR chief executive to achieve a resolution, which resulted in a five month delay.

#### Project Management and Delivery

- 4.3.6 Impacts from the compressed timeframe, included: additional pressure on resources and the need to bring in additional project management and ICT support. There was a significant risk of being unable to pay Council staff if the project was not delivered in time, so the decision was taken to split implementation of iTrent into phases with the initial focus on the critical Payroll

module and delivering a 'minimal viable product' (MVP) that only had essential functionality.

- 4.3.7 Despite bidders being asked to deliver a turnkey solution, significant local input was still required. Officers lacked knowledge of iTrent, so external consultants, Phase 3, were brought in to provide additional support. They had good knowledge of the old and new systems. This turned out to be critical to the success of the project.
- 4.3.8 Phase 3 had asked how the Council wanted iTrent to be configured, but officers did not know the system enough to specify this, since they had only seen a brief demonstration as part of the procurement process.
- 4.3.9 Internal workstream leads provided reassurance that the compressed delivery timescales were achievable – the project would not have proceeded otherwise. However, the project put considerable pressure on staff, resulting in a key officer going on long-term sick leave.
- 4.3.10 The project team had to work in a way that was less than ideal – they were unable to execute processes properly due to the compressed delivery timeframe, and officers had to write system blueprints before they had even received training.
- 4.3.11 ICT input was critical to the success of the project. However, project slippages meant that ICT staff were sometimes unavailable when needed. Officers indicated that misalignment of internal and external resources was a common reason for increased project costs on projects across the Council. Also, previous audits had highlighted that interdependencies were often not properly identified/mapped, and the impacts of slippages were not always fully appreciated/understood.
- 4.3.12 Despite having provided assurance that the project would be deliverable, just two days before data transfer was supposed to take place, ICT had indicated that it could not be completed in time. They had wanted to follow a textbook process, but Phase 3 found a pragmatic workaround. The project team acknowledged that Phase 3 had been critical to the successful delivery of the project.
- 4.3.13 It was highlighted that there was single point of failure in ICT due to reliance on one individual for middleware development. Officers acknowledged this as a recurring issue in Council projects and reflected the fact that small teams had to service a wide range of ICT systems.

#### Project Governance and Decision Making

- 4.3.14 Project governance arrangements included weekly project board meetings between the council and MHR, and regular updates to the Resources Prioritisation Board. Members also received regular updates during critical periods.

- 4.3.15 Officers highlighted concerns about the internal project management resource during the early stages of the project. No paperwork was provided for the initial Project Board meeting, and when asked for a copy of the risk register, the project manager had indicated that this was managed by MHR, and that there was no internal corporate risk register. This was established following escalation, and the Project Sponsor confirmed that risk management had proved to be critical to the success of the project.
- 4.3.16 Phase 3 was subsequently asked to undertake a project management health check, and the Internal Audit Manager was brought in to provide additional ongoing assurance.
- 4.3.17 It was noted that Corporate Programme Board had approved changes to completion dates at Stage Gate 1. This was necessary in order to hit the required delivery timescales.
- 4.3.18 Similarly, Members noted that there was qualified signoff for Stage Gate 3. This had been necessary in order to progress to parallel runs. User acceptance test results were below 100%, but the Internal Audit Manager, Phase 3 and MHR had all been comfortable with the pass rate. Despite the signoffs, all unresolved issues were captured and understood by both sides.
- 4.3.19 The project was highly pressured, but the Project Sponsor had been comfortable with the Stage Gate process, since she was receiving professional advice, and weekly updates were provided to Members.
- 4.3.20 Once the Project Board had been established, it was felt that the iTrent project had been managed effectively, particularly given the risks and issues that were identified. Apart from the initial meeting where paperwork had not been provided, the Project Sponsor felt she had access to the information necessary to make decisions. The Task Group commended the pragmatic decision making by the Project Sponsor.
- 4.3.21 The Task Group asked how the budget for the project was set. Officers confirmed that there was an existing budget for the three legacy systems. Officers had initiated discussions with neighbouring local authorities to understand what systems they were using and the associated costs. The budget had also been informed by the initial competitive tender process. It was confirmed that the budget had included internal costs. The project had remained within budget despite having brought in Phase 3 to provide additional support.

#### Project Risk

- 4.3.22 The greatest risk associated with this project was that 6,000 members of staff would not have been paid if iTrent had not been delivered in time.
- 4.3.23 Contingency plans had been put in place to mitigate this risk. The final payroll of 2023/24 was run through ResourceLink, with P60s printed and posted

rather than being issued electronically. Other back-up plans were developed based on different scenarios through to undertaking manual payment runs.

- 4.3.24 Initially, there had been concerns in relation to risk management. As mentioned previously, a corporate risk register had not been developed for the project, and risk management appeared to be delegated to the supplier. This reflected a similar finding of the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group.
- 4.3.25 A corporate risk register was established following escalation, and it was clear that risk management was critical to the project's success, particularly during the final stages.
- 4.3.26 Members challenged whether all current project managers were aware of the need to establish and maintain a corporate risk register. Officers indicated that project sponsors would ensure this happened. Also, centralisation of project management resource under the PS would improve the consistency of approach and the use of project documentation across the organisation. The team was relatively new, and this was still a work in progress.
- 4.3.27 It was acknowledged that there were challenges around communicating learning from projects, so any lessons were understood and acted upon across the organisation. The iTrent project was considered to be an exemplar in terms of effective risk management and it was felt that this should be a case study for project managers.

#### Lessons Learned

- 4.3.28 The failure of the initial procurement exercise and the challenges associated with MHR seeking to renegotiate terms after the tendering process had concluded resulted in compressed delivery timescales. However, these issues could not have been foreseen, and a reasonable timescale had been allowed for delivery when procurement had been initiated.
- 4.3.29 Delivery of iTrent had focused on achieving delivery of the MVP by the required deadline. There had been absolute clarity about the essential functionality that was needed from day one, with the remaining functionality postponed to future phases. This was the correct decision - as other local authorities and private sector organisations have found the consequences of failing to deliver employee relationship management (ERM) systems in time/incorrectly can be severe<sup>3</sup>. At present, officers don't routinely define project outcomes and how these will be measured. Undertaking a MoSCoW analysis<sup>4</sup> would help to set out requirements at baseline and could be used to define the MVP.

---

<sup>3</sup> [Further delay in fixing council's troubled IT system - BBC News](#)

<sup>4</sup> MoSCoW analysis is a prioritisation technique used to help understand and manage project priorities. The acronym stands for:

- M - Must have: Non-negotiable, critical requirements essential for project success and safety; the project fails without them.
- S - Should have: Important but not vital requirements; if left out, the project still functions, but value is reduced.

- 4.3.30 The Council does not routinely undertake cost benefit analysis to inform decisions as to whether projects should be delivered using internal or external resource. It defaults to the cheapest option on paper, which is usually to deliver in-house. However, slippage in timescales may result in internal staff being unavailable when need, leading to abortive costs. Detailed up-front planning, mapping and costing of resources would help to inform the decision about resourcing and delivery, as well as identifying where there are dependencies.
- 4.3.31 It was clear that Phase 3 were critical to the success of this project. They had knowledge of both the new and legacy systems, which was invaluable, as well as providing additional project management expertise and capacity. Delivery was achieved within budget.
- 4.3.32 A key lesson from the project is the need to provide additional support for staff working on major projects. Taking regular 'temperature checks' could help to identify where officers are experiencing unacceptable pressures and allow for mitigating action to be taken in a timely manner. If implemented on iTrent, this may have helped to avoid key staff going on long-term sick leave due to stress.
- 4.3.33 There is a need to identify and eliminate single points of failure, particularly within the ICT Service, since they are critical to the delivery of many projects. This is a particular concern for smaller unitary authorities, such as West Berkshire, that have to deliver the same breadth of services as a large county council, but with a much smaller team. Current financial challenges make it difficult to make the case for additional recruitment at this time, but there may be opportunities to address this following local government reorganisation.
- 4.3.34 There was evidence of changes to project scope and delivery timescales as the project progressed. The Council should consider the use of change logs to track all modifications to a project's scope, schedule, budget, or deliverables, documenting the "what, when, who, and why" for each alteration. This would help to maintain transparency, control scope creep, provide an audit trail, and ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of all changes.
- 4.3.35 It was suggested that gateways may not always be effective in providing challenge to project managers, due to the volume of projects that need to be considered. Tier 1 projects with red and amber RAG ratings are prioritised, but Corporate Programme Board is dependent on project managers providing accurate ratings and supporting information, having followed due process. The centralisation of project management resource is helping to improve standards and practices, but further assurance is needed that project management methodology is being correctly followed.

- 
- C - Could have: Desirable, "nice-to-have" items that have low impact if omitted.
  - W - Won't have (this time): Items recognized as out of scope for the current delivery cycle, often deferred to future, lower-priority releases.

## 5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group has developed a set of recommendations as set out below, informed by the testimony of the witnesses and the other evidence collected. The recommendations are not in any ranked order – all are considered important.
- 5.2 Members of the Task and Finish Group are encouraged by the improvements to project management practices that are being rolled out through the Projects Service. It is clear that there are pockets of excellence, with project managers and project sponsors who are delivering in accordance with agreed project management methodologies. However, it is disturbing to note that some of the issues uncovered by this review echo those highlighted by the previous review of the London Road Industrial Estate project. It is hoped that officers will take the opportunity to embed these learnings in their working practices, so the same mistakes are not repeated in future projects.

### Procurement and Contracts and Supplier Relationship Management

Ref.	Recommendation
1.	For all major projects, suppliers must be asked to confirm what project management methodology they will be using.
2.	The Council must look 24 months ahead to identify where software support agreements for business critical systems are due to expire and procure replacements in good time to avoid unnecessary risk.
3.	Before commissioning major IT projects, there should be a full evaluation of all potential procurement options. This should be informed by the views of technical staff and other stakeholders who work with existing systems and suppliers. Any concerns raised should be captured in the risk log, which should be passed to the project team once procurement is complete.
4.	The Council should develop and maintain a live list of all IT systems and how they are integrated. This must be consulted when procuring all new IT systems to ensure the necessary system compatibility and functionality is specified and could be delivered by the new supplier. Any procurement of new IT systems should be signed off by the Council's ICT Service and the Project Sponsor.
5.	Wherever possible, the Council should seek to adopt standard business processes/working practices to avoid the need for IT product customisation, since bespoke changes can lead to unnecessary delays, project costs and risks.
6.	Contracts for new IT systems must require suppliers to provide complete systems (including all necessary middleware and technical integration software) and associated product support for the life of the contract.
7.	Procurement timescales should factor in the potential for slippages, or failure to secure a new contract or, in extremis, the need to restart the procurement process.
8.	As part of due diligence, financial checks must be carried out on all contracts for business critical goods and services in order to be assured of the providers' financial viability. This needs to be done as part of the tender

	process, and at least annually thereafter as part of routine contract management. This should be done by an officer from Finance, Audit, or Procurement & Commissioning.
9.	Contract payments should be aligned clearly with project gateway review success. Large pre-payments before projects commencement should be avoided. Final payments should be set at an appropriate level to cover snagging issues and incentivise providers to complete in a timely manner.
10.	Contracts for critical services should include exit clauses to facilitate the handover of work and the onboarding of the new supplier at the end of the contract. The professional service rates should be clearly stated in the contract for exit services to be provided by the supplier. In many cases, the project/contract manager will be agreeing the detailed exit plan within a certain time period of contract signature, so it may be useful to develop guidance on this.
11.	In addition to all project managers, all Managers at Service Lead and above should have contract management training as part of their induction, with refresher training every three years thereafter. Service Leads should ensure there is a documented service review of all major contracts under their purview at intervals according to Recommendation 8 above.

### Project Resources

12.	Cost benefit analysis should be undertaken over the lifetime of projects to inform decisions about delivery mechanisms. Similarly, there should be detailed up-front planning, mapping and costing of resources to inform the decision about whether to deliver projects using internal or external resources. A clear risk statement must be presented to the Project Board and Senior Leadership Team of resource commitment before approval of project commencement.
13.	Data ownership risk must be fully recorded in project and handed over to business on go-live. Full mitigation of the data loss risk must be adhered to at all times.
14.	All major projects must make use of <b>RACI</b> matrices to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who is <b>R</b>esponsible for delivery of each task.</li> <li>• Clarify who is <b>A</b>ccountable for decisions or delegations related to that task.</li> <li>• Specify who must be <b>C</b>onsulted before decisions are made about the task.</li> <li>• Identify who needs to be kept <b>I</b>nformed of progress.</li> </ul>
15.	Staff, who need to manage major projects or be significantly engaged on these projects should not be asked to do this on top of business-as-usual activity. Instead, staff should have their substantive roles backfilled to allow them to focus on any major projects they are managing, or external project management support should be bought in. If this is not possible, then consideration should be given to what activities can be paused/scaled back for the duration of the project.
16.	Single points of failure should be avoided where an individual member of staff is the sole subject matter expert within the organisation.
17.	All projects must be properly scoped at the outset, with all West Berkshire Council actions and dependencies fully detailed. The scope must be signed

	off by all services that are key to delivery of a project, and resources must be allocated to tasks prior to project plans being signed off.
18.	Under the detailed project planning process, project dependencies must be identified, mapped, monitored and reported to the Project Board to highlight the implications of amending project timescales. Delays in the delivery of major projects must be taken into account when planning future staff workloads.

### Project Deliverables

19.	For each project, there must be a clearly stated set of requirements that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered successful. Consideration should be given to use of the MoSCoW technique when defining these requirements. .
20	Large projects should be completed in phases, with business-critical aspects delivered first.

### Risk Management

21.	All major projects must have risk registers that are kept updated and reported to the relevant project board on a regular basis. This must not be delegated to the supplier.
22.	For ICT projects, adopting new/unproven solutions for critical systems, or moving a critical system from a server-based solution to a hosted platform at the same time as undertaking a complex change / upgrade are considered to be excessive risks and should be avoided.

### Project Governance and Decision Making

23.	All projects must define tolerances around time (project milestones), budget and resources at the outset, and these must be the central focus for RAG progress reporting. Any deviation (or risk of deviation) from baselined tolerances must be reported as project exceptions and options to either accept the deviation or to take another option must be recorded in the Project Board Decision Log.
24.	Change logs must be used to track all modifications to a project's scope, schedule, budget, or deliverables, documenting the "what, when, who, and why" for each alteration. The Change Log should indicate whether the project needs to be re-baselined. Every change should be analysed for any deviation this may or will cause to the agreed tolerances (see Recommendation 23).

### Audit

25.	It is recommended that Internal Audit should undertake a further review 18 months after this report has been considered by the Executive. This would establish whether the accepted Task Group recommendations have been implemented, and whether they have been effective in addressing the identified concerns. A summary of the findings should be reported to the Governance Committee.
-----	---

## **6. Thanks**

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank all the officers who gave their time to provide the requested evidence and answer our questions.

# Appendix A: Terms of Reference

## Overview and Scrutiny Review Matrix

**Review Topic:** Project Management

**Timescale**

**Start:** Apr 2025

**Finish:** tbc

### Review Rationale:

The Scrutiny Commission has agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the Council's approach to managing major projects and identify lessons to be learned from recent projects, including Care Director 6, and iTrent (Phase 1).

The scope of the review will include:

- Contract management
- Project management methodology
- Project management structure
- Resourcing
- Project governance
- Factors affecting project outcomes
- Lessons learned, changes to processes

### Terms of Reference:

The Task and finish Group will consider the following:

- **Session 1 – How we manage projects in West Berkshire Council**
  - Project management methodology and scalability
  - Project management structure
  - Project management resources
  - Project management training
  - Project governance arrangements
  - Document management
  - Factors affecting project outcomes
  - Learning lessons, reviewing processes, and communicating change
  - Handover to business as usual
  - Pre-procurement feasibility / market testing / budget setting
  - Procurement methodology / negotiation
  - Contract management / procurement timetables
  - Off-boarding for expiring contracts
  - Legal challenges
- **Sessions 2 and 3 – Care Director 6**
  - Governance arrangements
  - Project Board agendas and minutes
  - Audit of Care Director 5
  - Business case / continual business justification
  - Objectives
  - Budget
  - Timescales
  - Quality plans
  - Risk and impact assessment
  - Options appraisal

- Delivery planning
- Consultation and engagement
- Procurement process
- Delivery partner
- Project management
- Management of resources
- Assumptions and dependencies
- Risk management
- Issue management
- Change control (including escalations / exceptions)
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Stage reviews
- Testing (including results and remediation)
- Project review
- Lessons learned
- Current status

- **Session 4 and 5 – iTrent (Phase 1)**

- Governance arrangements
- Project Board agendas and minutes
- Business case
- Objectives
- Budget
- Timescales
- Quality plan
- Risk and impact assessment
- Options appraisal
- Delivery planning
- Consultation and engagement
- Procurement
- Project management
- Management of resources
- Assumptions and dependencies
- Risk management
- Issue management
- Change control (including escalations / exceptions)
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Stage reviews
- Testing (including results and remediation)
- Project review
- Lessons learned
- Current status

- **Session 6 – Draft Report**

**Review Membership:**

Councillor Adrian Abbs  
 Councillor Paul Dick  
 Councillor Paul Kander  
 Councillor Alan Macro  
 Councillor Erik Pattenden  
 Councillor Chris Read

**Chairman:** Councillor Chris Read

**Scrutiny Officer:** Gordon Oliver

**Information Required:**

Project management methodology  
Structure chart  
Training plans  
Project management resources (including templates)  
Issues arising  
Lessons learned

**Documents/Evidence:**

Project mandates  
Project proposals  
Business cases  
Statements of work  
PIDs  
Project plans / Gantt Charts  
Risk and issues logs  
Lessons learned reports  
Examples of Project Board agendas, minutes, etc  
Relevant audit reports

**Witnesses:**

Session 1:

- Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources)
- Gabrielle Mancini (Service Director – Transformation, Customer and ICT)
- Melanie Best (Transformation and Programme Manager)
- Kate Pearson (Service Lead – Procurement and Commissioning)
- Dawn Bond (Legal Services Manager)

Sessions 2 and 3:

- Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care)
- Jo England (Service Lead – Adult Social Care)
- Rich Pask (Business Manager – Adult Social Care)
- Kate Toone (Programme Manager – Integration, Digital and Quality)
- Sarah Clarke (Interim Executive Director - Resources)
- Andy Best (Acting Head of ICT)
- Mat Scalpello (Applications Development Manager)
- Rob Sweetman (Systems Team Leader)
- Phil Cridge (Systems Integration Officer)

Sessions 4 and 5:

- Sarah Clarke (Interim Executive Director – Resources)
- Paula Goodwin (Service Lead – Human Resources)
- Rich Strange (Project and Programme Manager)
- Kate Pearson (Service Lead – Procurement and Commissioning)
- Lorraine Collins (HR Systems and Data Manager)
- Julie Gillhespy (Audit Manager)

**Measures Available**

- Project spend vs budget
- Project delivery timescale vs original plan
- Resources allocated vs original plan

**Desired Outcomes:**

Members will identify lessons to be learned about how project management can be improved so these can be applied to future projects. The Task and Finish Group will make recommendations in a report to the Scrutiny Commission. If approved, the recommendations will then go to Executive for consideration.

This page is intentionally left blank

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

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](mailto:executivecycle@westberkshire.gov.uk) or by writing to the address below.

Publication Date: 1 January 2026

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)
19 Mar 2026	Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Task Group Recommendations		No	Executive			Steven Bow	Open
19 Mar 2026	Motion to Council - decisions following public consultation		No	Executive			Martyn Sargeant	Open
19 Mar 2026	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
19 Mar 2026	Oral Health Needs Assessment		No	Executive			Steven Bow	Open
19 Mar 2026	2025/26 Performance Report Q3		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
26 Mar 2026	Stanford Dingley Parish Design Statement	To consider adoption of the updated Stanford	No	Portfolio Holder: Planning and Housing			Paula Amorelli	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)
	(2026)	Dingley Parish Design Statement						
27 Mar 2026	Parking Review Amendment Order No 37 (various locations)		No	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Alex Drysdale	Open
27 Mar 2026	Three Year Highway Improvement Programme 2026/27 - 2028/29	To seek the approval of the Executive Member for Environment and Highways to implement the Draft Three Year Highway Improvement Programme 2026/27 - 2028/29 and proceed with the first year 2026/27 of the programme.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways	Consultation is not formally undertaken as the programme is based on objective data from technical surveys. However, any comments received from stakeholders during the previous 12-month period are considered and all local Ward Members and Town/Parish Councils are		Andrew Reynolds	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)
					advised of scheme details in advance of work commencing. The full programme will also be published on the Council's website.			
10 Apr 2026	2026-27 Network Management Works Programme	To seek approval of the proposed Network Management Works Programme for 2026-27.	Yes	Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways			Neil Stacey	Open
21 May 2026	Review of Ethical Investment Policy Relating to the Council and Berkshire Pension Fund		No	Executive			Richard Howroyd	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)
21 May 2026	Environment Strategy Annual Progress Report		Yes	Executive			Emily Ashton-Jelley	Open
21 May 2026	All Age Autism Strategy		Yes	Executive			Hannah Cole	Open
21 May 2026	Highways Term Maintenance Contract		Yes	Executive			Sarah Wood	Open
21 May 2026	Energy Management Contract		Yes	Executive			Emily Ashton-Jelley	Open
21 May 2026	School Standards Report		No	Executive			James Stuart	Open
21 May 2026	Playing Pitch Strategy		Yes	Executive			Jude Thomas	Open
21 May 2026	Automatic Fire Suppression Systems		Yes	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)
21 May 2026	Planning Enforcement Plan	For the Executive to consider the outcome of the Draft Planning Enforcement Plan 6 week consultation and to approve the Plan.	Yes	Executive			Laura Callan	Open
21 May 2026	Care Quality Commission Self-Assessment	The purpose of the report is to share the self-assessment document developed in line with the requirements of the Care Quality Commission (CQC)'s programme of Local Authority Assurance. The assurance process focuses on Adult Social Care but takes account of associated	No	Executive			Paul Coe	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)
		<p>activity by other departments including Housing, Commissioning , Public Health, Human Resources and others.</p> <p>The development of an Annual self-assessment report is a new requirement. It forms part of the 'Information Return' to be shared upon notification of an Assurance visit.</p>						
21 May 2026	New Procurement Strategy & Think Local Social Value Policy		No	Executive			Richard Howroyd	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)
21 May 2026	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
2 Jul 2026	Standing item: Asset Disposal		No	Executive			Richard Turner	Open
2 Jul 2026	2025/26 Performance Report Q4		No	Executive			Beatriz Teixeira	Open
24 Sep 2026	Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report		No	Executive			Karl Davis	Open
24 Sep 2026	Early Help Response Hub Annual report		No	Executive			Georgie Hicks	Open
24 Sep 2026	Care Leaver Annual Report		No	Executive			Karl Davis	Open
24 Sep 2026	Youth Justice Annual Plan		No	Executive			Dave Wraight	Open
24 Sep 2026	West Berkshire	To ensure that the necessary	Yes	Executive			Steven Bow	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)
	Health Visitor and School Nurse (0-19s) Recommissioning	approval processes are followed and scheduled within the required timescales						
	Henwick Worthy Masterplan		Yes	Executive			Jude Thomas	Open

Mar-26

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
MOSAIC - Social Care Case Management (SCCM) System [The Access Group - TAG]	Procurement and implementation of a new Social Care Case Management (SCCM) system. [MOSAIC from The Access Group (TAG)]	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Paul Coe	Adult Social Care	People	01/04/2026
Future Care Home Strategy (Care Home Review)	WBC currently operate 3 care homes: Willows Edge, Birchwood and Notrees. Instructed by Members to secure the transfer of all three to another provider, retain market capacity whilst realising significant savings.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Gabrielle Mancini	Projects	Resources	TBD
DC supply issues	Reducing DC supply issues through digitally involving community in case - to implement Vocala across two priority cohorts (Older People with existing home care packages and Young people transitioning to adult services).	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 2	Active	Initiation	Paul Coe	Adult Social Care	People	30/05/2026
HOWZ	AI Powered Home Monitoring System	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 2	Active	Initiation	Melanie O'Rourke	Adult Social Care	People	30/05/2026
Continuing Health Care (CHC) / ASC Joint Funding	To reset the approach in Berkshire West relating to CHC or Shared Care funding. This should, in time, lead to a change in the decisions relating to eligibility.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 2	Active	Awaiting Closure	Paul Coe	Adult Social Care	People	30/08/2025
Technology Enabled Care (TEC) - Magic Notes // YourMeds // Companion Pets	Delivering Technology Enabled Care and Assistive Technology projects to help people to stay living safely at home and retain their independence.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Patrick Clark	Tier 3	Active	Delivery	Paul Coe	Adult Social Care	People	31/03/2026
Thatcham & Hungerford Town Centre Studies	Thatcham & Hungerford Town Centre Studies	Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and LGR	Justin Pemberton	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Development & Regulation	Place	31/03/2026
Newbury Town Centre Masterplan	Regeneration of Newbury Town Centre	Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and LGR	Justin Pemberton	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Development & Regulation	Place	30/04/2026

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
REPF Business Capital Grant Scheme	Capital grant scheme focused on increasing rural productivity, tourism, and diversification.	Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and LGR	MOSAIC	Tier 3	Active	Delivery	Philippa Venables	Development & Regulation	Place	9/31/2026
Improvements To Key Walking Routes [Recreational Walk Routes (Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan)]	Statutory document update. To improve selected pedestrian rights of way in order to increase their recreational value	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	BAU	Active	Delivery	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	29/12/2025
Henwick Worthy masterplanning for redevelopment	PPS Priority 2 - Master plan for use of site to try and better utilise a packed facility.	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	BAU	On Hold	Delivery	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	09/01/2026
Kennet Refurbishment (Leisure Centre)	Refurbishment of Kennet Leisure Centre	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	Original Works Completed 22/01/2025
Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)	Undertake a PPS to provide evidence to 2041.	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	31/05/2026
Museum Store Move		Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Felicity Harrison	Finance & Property	Resources	31/12/2026
Northcroft Re-Development (Dryside)	Renovation and redevelopment of Northcroft Leisure Centre	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	30/06/2025
Damp Works Project [Museum Damp Improvements}	Museum Damp Improvements	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Nigel Foot	Tier 2	Active	Initiation	Felicity Harrison	Communities & Wellbeing	Place	31/03/2027
I-College Alternative Education - East Of Area [Badger's Hill (School)]	iCollege - Badger's Hill (Schools)	Deputy Leader of the Council & Children & Family Services	Heather Codling	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31.05.26
Home to School Transport Savings	The aim is to realise efficiencies in the delivery of the Council's home to school transport service. (HTST) Benchmarking suggests the cost of delivering this service is more than that of comparable local	Deputy Leader of the Council & Children & Family Services	Heather Codling	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Gabrielle Mancini	Education	People	31/03/2026
Highway Improvement Programme [BAU / ONGOING]	Highway Improvement Programme (part of Annual Capital Highway Asset Management Programme)	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	BAU	Active	Delivery	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	31/03/2026

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
Active Travel Infrastructure	Creation of and improvements to core cycling/walking/wheeling routes within and adjacent to the Highway	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	BAU	Active	Delivery	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	31/03/2031
Carbon audits of leisure facilities/ Nortcroft Leisure Centre Decarbonisation	Annual Audit - baseline completed 2019/22 - BAU? to keep or remove? (NIC)	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	BAU	Active	Delivery	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	31/12/2024
Nutrient Neutrality	Develop and deliver projects which will deliver a reduction in nutrients entering the River Lambourn. This will unlock development which is currently stalled due to the anticipated impact of additional nutrients and phosphates on the Lambourn catchment.	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 1	Active	Design	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	03/01/2027
Renewable energy provision (Grazley Solar Farm)	Grazley Solar Farm	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	31/12/2025
Theale Railway Station upgrade	Improvement works to Theale Railway station	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 1	On hold	Delivery	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	31.08.2027
Padworth Solar Scheme	This project involves undertaking feasibility and delivery of rooftop and ground-mounted solar panels to generate renewable energy at the Council's Padworth facility.	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 2	Active	Design	Jon Winstanley	Communities & Wellbeing	People	09/01/2026
Three Weekly Refuse Collections	Change black bin (refuse) collections for households who receive a kerbside (street level) service from every two weeks to every three weeks. To encourage more recycling, reduce the amount of rubbish going to energy-from-waste facilities & landfill, and help manage future costs. Supporting and preparing for national changes to waste services.	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Kofi Adu-Gyamfi	Environment	Place	19/12/2025
Natural Carbon Reduction Measures		Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 2	Awaiting closure	Awaiting Closure	Jon Winstanley	Environment	Place	30/11/2024

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
Garden Waste Subscription Service 2026/27	To deliver clear service renewal communications, updated processes and digital forms to facilitate both subscription renewals and new subscriptions and suitable resource to effectively administer the peak in workload.	Environment and Highways	Stuart Gourley	Tier 3	NEW	Delivery	Daniel Warne	Waste Management	Environment	
Enhancement and Migration of Agresso to Unit4 SaaS	To include the below essential works as a minimum, with other requirements for 'nice to have' enhancements gathered through workshops, weighted and prioritised to deliver what is possible in	Finance and Resources	Iain Cottingham	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Projects	Resources	03/06/2026
Four Houses Corner	Refurbishment of the sixteen pitches at Four Houses Corner, Ufton Nervet	Planning and Housing	Denise Gaines	Tier 1	Active	Awaiting Closure	Clare Lawrence	Development & Regulation	Place	30.11.25
Implement PlanX Software	PlanX is a Permitted Development Rights checker, which allows members of the public to submit applications for works through this platform. (NIC)	Planning and Housing	Denise Gaines	Tier 2	Awaiting closure	Awaiting Closure	Clare Lawrence	Development & Regulation	Place	31/10/2024
Housing IT system Abritas	Integrated housing system for housing management and rental collection across the Council's housing portfolio.	Planning and Housing	Denise Gaines	Tier 3	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Development & Regulation	Place	28/10/2025
Education Capital Enhancement Programme	Education Capital Maintenance Programme	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	BAU	Active	Delivery	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31/03/2025
(SEMH)/(ASD) Expansion of Castle School	SEMH/ASD Expansion of Castle School ** [SEMH - Social, Emotional & Mental Health // ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder] (NIC)	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31.03.26

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
Falkland Primary School - Classroom Replacement	To replace two modular classroom blocks which are in a poor aged condition and to make more efficient use of the external areas of the school including the car park.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	Active	<b>Construction</b>	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31.12.27
The Castle School Basic Need Expansion: Projects	The Castle School does not have capacity to take on additional pupils within their current accommodation. This project is required to meet the expansion needs of the school for the start of the Academic year in 2024 by providing additional classrooms for 32 pupils. There are increased pressures in numbers in Reception, Year 1 and Year 7.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	Active	<b>Construction</b>	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31.05.27
SEMH / ASD Resourced Provision - Primary	The aim of this project is to deliver a specialist facility for up to 12 primary age KS1 and KS2 pupils with SEMH/ASD needs on the existing Kennet Valley Primary school site (RG31 7YT). SEMH/ASD Resourced Provision - Primary ** [SEMH - Social, Emotional & Mental Health // ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder]	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Neil Goddard	Education	People	31.03.26
Brookfields School Expansion – Early Years And Key Stage 3	Provision of additional classrooms and associated support spaces to meet pupil place pressures.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	Active	Design	Neil Goddard	Education	People	30.09.27
Corporate Landlord Model		Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	On Hold	In Development	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Projects	Resources	31/12/2024
Calcot Schools remodelling	The remodelling, refurbishment and rationalisation of accommodation to align with change of Admission Number.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 1	On Hold	Design	Neil Goddard	Education	People	30.06.32 31.03.32 31.01.32 10/31/2031

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
Thatcham Park Early Years	There is a building on the school site. The school has advised that the 'Link Building' has been allocated to the school to be used for educational purposes. The layout and state of disrepair of the building would require significant renovation to make it suitable therefore it is recommended to demolish and build a purpose-built modular building that would meet the needs of the school.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 2	Active	Construction	Neil Goddard	Children & Family Services	People	31.07.27 31.03.27 11/21/2026
Hungerford Leisure Centre extension	Hungerford Leisure Centre extension. Modular exercise studio. Dance studio.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 2	Active	Awaiting Closure	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	28/02/2025
Northcroft Leisure Centre Lido	Newbury Lido Phased approach to renovation and redevelopment of the Lido.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 2	Awaiting closure	Awaiting Closure	April Peberdy	Communities & Wellbeing	People	01/01/2025
Speenhamland – SEN (Outdoor Area)	The Keevill Unit is a Resourced Unit for pupils with physical disabilities. It is an integral part of the school, and provides pupils with a base for support and medical therapy. The aim of the unit is to enable children with physical disabilities to experience and access mainstream education with their peers.	Public Safety & Capital Projects (Built)	Tom McCann	Tier 3	Active	Awaiting Closure	Neil Goddard	Education	People	<b>31.01.26</b> 31.01.26 Currently in defects liability period 1/24/2025
HR & Payroll System Project (iTrent / MHR - formerly ERP)	HR & Payroll System procurement & iTrent implementation. [Phase 2 started July 2024]	Strategy & Governance & Commercialisation	Vicky Poole	Tier 2	Awaiting closure	Awaiting Closure	Sarah Clarke	HR & Payroll	Resources	30/09/2025
Shaw House Commercialisation	To identify options for the future use of Shaw House as it currently has a net cost of approximately £250k	Strategy & Governance & Commercialisation	Vicky Poole	Tier 3	Active	Delivery	Gabrielle Mancini	Projects	Resources	30/11/2024
Laburnum Conversion to Temporary Supported Accommodation	Convert the Laburnum Centre (ASC Central Locality Office) in to a 2-bed accessible bungalow for TSA Housing.	Transformation / Housing	Denise Gaines	Tier 3	NEW	Initiation	Gabrielle Mancini & Clare Lawrence	Projects & Housing	Resources	31/07/2026
Business Support Review	It is proposed that administrative services should be absorbed into a central business support function based on the nature of duties and volume of transactions being carried out rather than the service area being supported	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Initiation	Gabrielle Mancini	Projects	Resources	30/06/2025

Title	Description	Portfolio	Portfolio Holder	Size	Status	Phase	Project Sponsor	Service	Directorate	Current Closure Estimate
Gigabit by BDUK delivered by Openreach (West Berkshire)	Delivering Fibre broadband to rural properties to achieve 99% coverage by 2032. BDUK Lot 13	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Projects	Resources	31/12/2032
Gigabit by BDUK delivered by City Fibre for East Berkshire	Delivering Fibre broadband to rural properties to achieve 99% coverage by 2032. BDUK Lot 26 (East Berkshire & Buckinghamshire) Theale	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Projects	Resources	31/12/2032
Openreach Commercial Project	Multi Dwelling Units - roll out of fibre to the premises (MDUs) in West Berkshire led by Openreach. Little influence on their programme but potential for us to facilitate with landlord awareness.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Delivery	Clare Lawrence	Projects	Resources	31/12/2032
Rural Mobile and Broadband Not Spots	Project led by DIG looking at Bradfield and Lambourn specifically.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Initiation	Clare Lawrence	Projects	Resources	TBA
Superfast Broadband BT Phase 3 West Berks. Phase 6	Delivery of superfast broadband by OpenReach Phase 3 West Berkshire district.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Awaiting Closure	Clare Lawrence	Projects	Resources	30/11/2025
Expansion of Berkshire Records Office. Reading [Royal Berkshire Archives - Records Office - Extension - Reading]	Extension built onto the Royal Berkshire Archives building.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 1	Active	Design	Clare Lawrence	Communities & Wellbeing	People	31/03/2028
Chestnut Walk for Temporary Housing	Chestnut Walk will provide temporary supported accommodation for families, singles and couples experiencing homelessness within West Berkshire. The facility will support the Council's B&B elimination plan by offering suitable, cost effective	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 2	Active	Planning	Gabrielle Mancini/ Phillipa Venables	Projects	Resources	31/03/2027
LIFT (Low Income Families Tracker)	The LIFT project enables councils to use their data to identify and target people on low incomes by connecting them with employment and benefits support.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Gabrielle Mancini	Projects	Resources	31/12/2026
Turnhams Green Relocation	Relocation of TG-based staff to alternative site.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 2	Active	Delivery	Gabrielle Mancini	Projects	Resources	31/03/2025
Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity Relocation	To move the DR/BC function from Turnhams Green to a new location. Required due to TG sale.	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 3	Active	Planning	Simon Arter	ICT & Digital	Resources	30/06/26
QRoutes Snapshot - SEND HTST	To identify savings through the use of a route optimisation snapshot for SEND HTST	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 3	Active	Planning	Gabrielle Mancini	Transport & Countryside	Place	30/11/2025
Tablets Pilot	3-4 month trial of the use of tablets for use by staff when carrying out 'field' work	Transformation and Corporate Programme	Jeff Brooks	Tier 4	Active	Delivery	Lizzie Reeves	Projects	Resources	

This page is intentionally left blank

## Resources & Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Item	Scrutiny Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?
<b>16 June 2026</b>					
	Public Protection Partnership	To review the work of the PPP.	Sean Murphy	Councillor Tom McCann	
<b>15 September 2026</b>					
	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. Item to also consider flood risk and an update following the Section 19 report.	Jon Winstanley	Councillor Stuart Gourley	Scrutiny Committee Decision
	Business Support Review	To review the implementation of the Business Support Review	Gabrielle Mancini	Councillor Jeff Brooks	
<b>03 November 2026</b>					
<b>To Be Programmed</b>					
	Playing Pitch Strategy			Councillor Nigel Foot	
	Pedestrianisation	To review pedestrianisation in Newbury Town Centre.	James Read	Councillor Stuart Gourley	

### 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:**

09 March 2026

This page is intentionally left blank