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Executive

Thursday 12 November 2026 at 6.00 pm

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

Note: This meeting can be streamed live here: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/executivelive
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Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday 4 November 2026

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

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

West Berkshire COUNCIL

To:	Councillors Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling (Vice-Chairman), Iain Cottingham, Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Tom McCann, Justin Pemberton and Vic Poole

Agenda

Part I

Pages

1. **Apologies for Absence** 5 - 6
   To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).

2. **Portfolio Holder Announcements** 7 - 8
   Member of the Executive to make a statement (if any).

3. **Minutes** 9 - 16
   To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 September 2026.

4. **Declarations of Interest** 17 - 18
   To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

5. **Public Questions** 19 - 20
   Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

6. **Petitions** 21 - 22
   Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

Pages

7. **John O'Gaunt School - Specialist Inclusion Base** 23 - 52
   Purpose: to seek approval for capital funding and inclusion in the Council's capital programme to enable construction of a Specialist Inclusion Base as part of the DfE School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) project to rebuild John O'Gaunt School. To also seek approval to utilise the 'retained land' at the school for the purposes of temporary decant accommodation for the DfE School Rebuilding Programme project.

8. **Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive** 53 - 60
Purpose: to provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from Executive during the next quarter. The report provides Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding the contract identified.

9. **Members' Questions** 61 - 62
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

10. **Exclusion of Press and Public**
RECOMMENDATION: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraph 6 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. Section 10 of Part 10 of the Constitution refers.

Part II

11. **Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive** 63 - 68
(Paragraph 6 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)

Purpose: to provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from Executive during the next quarter. The report provides Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding the contract identified.



Sarah Clarke
Executive Director: -Resources

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

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Item 1 – Apologies for absence

Verbal Item

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Item 2 – Portfolio Holder Announcements

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

Councillors Present: Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling (Vice-Chairman), Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Tom McCann, Justin Pemberton and Vic Poole

Also Present: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Dominic Boeck, Richard Somner, Howard Woollaston, David Marsh and Adrian Abbs

Officers Present: Toby Bradley (Service Lead Financial Management), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director – Children's Services), Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Martyn Sargeant (Service Director Strategy and Governance), Nicola Thomas (Service Lead – Legal and Democratic), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Thomas Radbourne (Democratic Services Officer), Jon Winstanley (Service Director Environment) and George Winterbourne (Service Lead Finance and Strategic Assets)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Iain Cottingham

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2026, and of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 July 2026 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Leader.

Councillors David Marsh and Adrian Abbs to be recorded as present at the 2 July 2026 meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Stuart Gourley declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, as an employee of Atomic Weapons Establishment and reported that, as his interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest or an other registrable interest, he would be leaving the meeting during the course of consideration of the matter.

Councillor Vic Poole declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8, as a ward member of Burghfield and Mortimer and consequently determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

3. Public Questions

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

4. Petitions

Councillor Heather Codling presented a petition on behalf of Winterbourne Parish Council containing 115 signatures relating to a proposal to reduce traffic speed limits through Winterbourne and on approach roads to Winterbourne. The petition was referred to the Highways Improvement Group.

Sam Jones, a member of the public, introduced an online petition containing 258 signatures requesting reinstatement of the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm. The petition was referred to the Highways Improvement Group.

5. 2026/27 Q1 Financial Performance Report

Councillor Jeff Brooks introduced a report (Agenda Item 7), which detailed the financial performance of the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets following the Quarter One 2026/ 27 outturn. It was noted that the report had been debated earlier in the week at the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Brooks reiterated that all services other than Children's Services were broadly in line with the budget.

Councillor Heather Codling commented that the budget had anticipated 24 residential placements for children, however the number had already reached 36. The cost of the placements had also increased significantly, however Councillor Codling noted that all measures possible were being taken to counter and mitigate the trend with earlier intervention and prevention.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon described the £9.3 million Quarter One overspend as the largest in the Council's history and argued that it represented a financial crisis. He noted that Councillor Brooks had described himself as 'comfortable' with the financial position at the Scrutiny meeting and queried how he could be. Councillor Brooks rejected the description of the Council as being in a financial crisis, and distinguished that he was comfortable with the Council's delivery of savings and services but was obviously concerned about the wider funding environment and the exceptional pressures affecting local government.

Councillor Mackinnon queried how much additional funding would be committed towards intervention and prevention in Children's Services. Councillor Codling responded that funding for family hubs and early intervention was supported through the Best Start in Life grant, however did not have the precise amount to hand.

Councillor Dominic Boeck suggested that, without firm action, the position could become an existential crisis and requested further assurance. Councillor Brooks responded that further measures would be brought forward and invited the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to maintain close oversight.

Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that the Council was nearing its 30% short-term borrowing limit and queried what would happen if it was reached. George Winterbourne, Service Lead for Finance and Assets, explained that the position was monitored daily, that discussions were taking place with external public-sector treasury advisers and that the Council did not expect to exceed the limit.

Councillor David Marsh expressed concern that transformation activity appeared to be over budget and could face an additional pressure if planned disposals did not proceed. Councillor Brooks responded that transformation expenditure should not be considered solely on the basis of immediate payback because the benefits could continue over several years.

Councillor Brooks noted that the previous week the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), had allocated £5 million over two years to the Council to support transformation. Some of that funding was expected to be directed towards Children and Family Services, SEND, school improvement and Adult Social Care initiatives intended to help people remain in their own homes. The detailed allocation had not yet been finalised.

RESOLVED that: Executive was informed that

- Revenue: All services apart from Children's Services are broadly in line with Budget. Additionally, the savings target is forecast to be higher than Budget. However, the impact of volume and rate increases in Children's Services is the primary driver of a corporate net Q1 revenue forecast +£9.3m/ 4.4% adverse to Budget. Total net revenue is forecast at £220.2m in the Q1 outturn, vs £210.9m in the Budget.
- Capital: The forecast Q1 capital outturn is £47.0m/ 85.4% of expenditure against Budget of £55.0m. Of the £47.0m capital expenditure incurred, £14.7m is expected to be funded by the Council. The remaining £32.3m is expected to be financed from external sources, primarily grants, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 contributions. The impact this has on debt financing is covered in Section 8.
- Capital: £2.3m of the 2026/27 capital budget is proposed to be reprofiled into the 2027/28 capital programme. Included within the proposed capital reprofiling is planned Council funded expenditure (i.e. funded through planned borrowing) of £100k. Appendix A provides details of proposed Capital Reprofiling.

6. Grazeley Solar Farm Business Case

Councillor Stuart Gourley left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Jeff Brooks introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 8), which provided an update on the latest position for the Grazeley Solar Farm project and sought approval for the project to continue. It was noted that the report had been debated earlier in the week at the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee where Members had benefitted from the attendance and knowledge of the consultants who had produced the business case.

Councillor Ross Mckinnon reiterated a request made at the Scrutiny meeting for CO2 data and the costs of the project to date.

Councillor David Marsh referred to a recommendation agreed by the Scrutiny Committee which had suggested that the community be encouraged to buy into the project by the availability of public shareholding. Councillor Marsh further highlighted that Great British Energy had announced a fund to promote community energy and their relationship with public sector partners and encouraged the Council to explore any available grant opportunities. Councillor Brooks responded that the principle of looking for other funding streams and other partners was not dismissed

Councillor Heather Codling seconded the recommendations within the report.

Recommendations: (Vote to be taken in Part II)

- Executive is asked to approve continuation of the Grazeley Solar Farm project, subject to the allocation of appropriate funds through the Council's budget setting process, and to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder and Monitoring Officer, to enter into and let the necessary contract for delivery of the scheme.
- Executive is asked to endorse the addition of £4m to the 2026/27 capital programme and £11m to the 2027/28 capital programme, subject to approval by Council through the budget setting process.
- Executive is asked to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, to submit a tender for the sale of energy generated by the Grazeley Solar Farm to Atomic Weapons Establishment.

7. Membership of the South East Regional Care Cooperative

Councillor Heather Codling introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 9) which requested agreement for West Berkshire Council to become a member of the South East Regional Care Cooperative (the RCC). It was explained that the RCC was intended to help councils work collaboratively to address increasing pressures within the children's care market.

Councillor Dominic Boeck referred to a previous requirement for the Council to join a Foster Board and noted that it had led to a loss of control over some of the funding. Councillor Boeck sought assurance that joining the co-operative would not have the same result or remove local decision-making powers.

Councillor Codling explained the Council would retain responsibility for its statutory duties and that membership would enable collaboration rather than transfer responsibility to another organisation. It was anticipated that the co-operative would support commissioning and market-shaping activity while individual authorities would continue to make decisions about children in their care.

Councillor Jeff Brooks seconded the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive:

- Agrees the Council's membership of the RCC
- Authorises Legal Services to make any necessary amendments to and when finalised seal all agreements required to give effect to the above and support delivery against the expectations of the DfE with relation to the Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

8. 2026/27 Performance Report Q1

Councillor Vic Poole introduced the report (Agenda Item 10), which provided assurance that the priority areas in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 were being managed effectively as at the end of June (Q1 2026/27), and where performance had fallen below the expected level, presented information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action.

Councillor Jeff Brooks noted that the report had also been reviewed earlier in the week at the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Adrian Abbs queried whether it was appropriate to re-baseline project deadlines and then classify performance as green, noting a number of target dates that had moved from 2026 to 2027 but continued to show as green. He was concerned that changing targets could mask delays and reduce transparency. Councillor Brooks acknowledged the point and suggested there may be value in retaining visibility of original target dates alongside revised dates so Members could see whether milestones had moved.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon referred to questions raised at the Scrutiny meeting in relation to several performance indicators containing incomplete or missing data and noted that Portfolio Holders had indicated further information would be provided at Executive. Martyn Sargeant, Service Director for Strategy and Governance explained that some indicators were still work in progress, but that additional narrative would be included in future reports where data was unavailable.

Councillor Mackinnon noted that of the 11 high-priority measures, only five were green, and questioned whether the level of performance was acceptable. Councillor Vic Poole acknowledged that several indicators were below target but stressed that the performance framework used fixed thresholds, that some measures had been affected by

revised methodologies and that corrective action was already underway in several service areas.

Councillor Denise Gaines acknowledged disappointment in relation to high-priority measure HP5, and the delivery of only 24 homes against a target of 37. However, it was explained that there was often a lag between completions and registered provider reporting and that a further 92 homes were expected to be reported by Quarter Two.

Councillor Stuart Gourley referred to HP8 which measured completion of pothole repairs within target timescales noting that it was slightly below the 95% target at approximately 93.3%, however commented that there had been significant improvement from 73% in the previous year. He noted that the Council was currently transitioning to a new highways contractor but had confidence that target performance would be achieved.

Councillor Mackinnon reiterated his question as to whether performance was good enough for the high-priority measures, to which Councillor Brooks agreed that that performance was never good enough whilst any measures remained amber or red.

Councillor Dominic Boeck noted that only 5 out of 91 Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP), had been issued within the statutory 20-week timescale, which was significantly below target. Councillor Heather Codling responded that the Council had experienced a substantial increase in EHCP requests, as a consequence of national SEND reform, however staffing levels had increased and it was hoped that additional support would be provided through the new IDOX system funded through MHCLG transformation funding.

Councillor Mackinnon referred to a promise made by Councillor Codling at the Scrutiny meeting to explain why performance data relating to Children's Services had not been included within the report. Councillor Codling commented that the new Mosaic system was not yet producing all required performance reports. Alternative management information was available through internal reporting tools and officers were receiving operational performance reports even where Mosaic outputs were incomplete.

Councillor Brooks suggested that, where alternative data was available, it should be incorporated into future performance reports until Mosaic reporting functionality was fully operational.

Councillor Mackinnon expressed disappointment that whilst information had been promised at the Scrutiny meeting, it had not been provided. Councillor Brooks acknowledged that Portfolio Holders may have over committed and reminded officers that where there were future omissions of data, there needed to be adequate explanations recorded.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027 priorities scheduled for this financial year.
- To review those areas where performance is below target i.e., reporting as Red or Amber, and note that the appropriate remedial action is in place.
- To note a new measure proposed by Councillor Abbs and approved at the Council meeting on 16 July 2026 called "Report to Council on the deliverability, timescale and funding options for a new Community Sports Stadium at Faraday Road (31/03/2027)".

9. ASC Strategy post consultation outcome and Delivery Plan

Patrick Clark introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 11), which provided the Executive with a summary of the ASC Strategy public consultation, the impact of the feedback and accompanying Delivery Plan. It was noted that whilst it was not a statutory

requirement, having both the Strategy and an accompanying Delivery Plan provided a clear framework for priorities and implementation over the next three years.

Councillor David Marsh noted that only 88 responses had been received and questioned whether this level of engagement was sufficient. He argued that future consultations should seek broader participation. He further sought assurances about the future of the Council's resource centres and residential care provision. Councillor Clark responded that he could not provide an absolute guarantee covering the entire period of the Strategy because circumstances could change significantly over time. However, he stressed that any future proposals would be subject to full discussion and consultation.

Councillor Jeff Brooks further reiterated that there were currently no plans to dispose of resource centres or care homes.

Councillor Heather Codling seconded the recommendation within the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive approve the ASC Strategy and Delivery Plan.

10. Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

Councillor Heather Codling introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 12), which provided oversight of the annual Youth Justice Plan for 2026/2027 which would be submitted to the Youth Justice Board.

Councillor Justin Pemberton commended the work of the Youth Justice team as a successful partnership working across organisational boundaries which was consistently recognised as excellent.

Councillor Dominic Boeck echoed the praise and queried what work was undertaken to support and prevent children from entering the justice system. Councillor Codling responded that the Council worked closely with parents, Berkshire Youth, schools, Police and Health services in an attempt to prevent young people entering the criminal justice system.

Councillor Nigel Foot further highlighted a recent piece of co-production work which was being undertaken between the Council, Berkshire Youth and Get Berkshire Active, in relation to a particularly deprived estate in Greenham and which was hoped would provide a template for future work. Councillor Boeck welcomed the initiative and expressed interest in how its success would be measured. Councillor Foot promised to keep Members updated.

Councillor Jeff Brooks seconded referral of the report to Council.

RESOLVED that: Executive approved referral of the report and its recommendation to Council

- To agree and formally endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

11. Members' Questions

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

12. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, specified in brackets in the heading of each item. Section 10 of Part 10 of the Constitution refers.

13. Grazeley Solar Farm Business Case

(*Paragraph 6 - information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 15), which provided an update to Members on the latest business case for the Grazeley Solar Farm and recommended a way forward for the scheme.

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

Other options considered:

- A “Do Nothing” option has been considered. This would mean the Council not proceeding with the delivery arrangements required to construct and operate the solar farm. Although this would avoid committing to the capital delivery phase, it would also mean that the Council would not secure the strategic, environmental and long-term energy benefits associated with the scheme.
- The Do Nothing option would remove the opportunity to create a locally controlled renewable energy asset on Council-owned land and would require the Council to identify alternative ways to make a comparable contribution to its net zero commitments. It would also mean that the preparatory work already undertaken would not result in delivery of the intended renewable energy benefits.
- Alternative delivery and commercial approaches have also been reviewed as part of the wider business case work. The recommended approach remains for the Council to continue to progress the scheme while retaining ownership of the asset and procuring specialist expertise to deliver and operate it. This provides the best balance between strategic control, long-term value, risk management and deliverability.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN ……

Date of Signature ……

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Item 4 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Executive – 12 November 2026

Item 5 – Public Questions

To follow

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Executive – 12 November 2026

Item 6 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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John O'Gaunt School – Specialist Inclusion Base

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	12 November 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Mark Lewis

1 Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for capital funding and inclusion in the Council's capital programme to enable construction of a Specialist Inclusion Base as part of the DfE School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) project to rebuild John O'Gaunt School. To also seek approval to utilise the 'retained land' at the school for the purposes of temporary decant accommodation for the DfE School Rebuilding Programme project.

2 Recommendations

2.1 To approve capital funding and inclusion into the Council's capital programme to enable construction of a Specialist Inclusion Base as part of the DfE School Rebuilding Programme Project to rebuild the school.

2.2 To approve the temporary use of the retained land for decant accommodation for the DfE School Rebuilding Programme project.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The capital financial implications should be similar to any inclusion of a capital project on the council's capital programme. The capital funding allocated to the project sits within a proposed externally funded programme and fits within the current and likely future grant funding envelope. The project itself is proposed to be funded through existing capital grant (£3.75m) and a £700k contribution from CIL. Approval has been received from the CIL Team, as part of the capital programme refresh process, on the proposed use of CIL on this project.

CIL funding is dependent on the Council having sufficient receipts in the CIL reserve. In instances that the Council does not, the amount would, by default, be covered by additional borrowing, which would have a subsequent capital financing impact.

It is anticipated that five pupils will join the provision each year. Based on current demand, it is expected that two pupils per cohort may otherwise require independent or non-maintained specialist placements, generating an estimated avoidance of £70,000 per pupil per year. In addition, some pupils currently supported through alternative arrangements, such as Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) and Alternative Provision (AP) following exclusion, will access the provision, generating further cost avoidance as detailed in the table below. This has been estimated as one child per year from EOTAS and one from AP per year.

The annual cost avoidance against the HNB based on the above is set out in the table below:

Financial year	FY29/30	FY30/31	FY31/32	FY32/33	FY33/34	Total
Benefits						
Placement Cost Avoidance INMSS	(140,000)	(280,000)	(420,000)	(560,000)	(700,000)	(2,100,000)
Placement Cost Avoidance EOTAS	(30,000)	(60,000)	(90,000)	(120,000)	(150,000)	(450,000)
Placement Cost Avoidance AP (following exclusion)	(38,800)	(77,600)	(116,400)	(155,200)	(388,005)	(776,005)
Total Benefits	**(208,800)**	**(417,600)**	**(626,400)**	**(835,200)**	**(1,238,005)**	

On 29 October 2026, the Government announced a new minded-to decision following its review of earlier LGR decisions. Its preferred option remains as previously approved: West Berkshire Council will combine with the majority of the areas currently administered by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils to form a new unitary authority. A short further period for representations from councils and MPs is being allowed before a final confirmation is issued. If confirmed, the planned implementation date will be 1 April 2029.

The implications of LGR for the Council's financial, asset and contractual decisions could be subject to the timing and terms of any Section 24 Direction. Any such Direction may introduce additional approval requirements for decisions relating to this project. The applicability of these requirements will need to be confirmed against the terms of any Direction issued.

The project's currently anticipated completion and the Council's contribution at Practical Completion fall within the 2029/30 financial year, after the implementation date of 1 April 2029. The implications for the funding commitment, project governance and delivery timetable will therefore need to be considered as part of the transition to the new unitary authority, including any approvals required under a Section 24 Direction.

Human Resource:	The project is not expected to result in any transfer of staff or significant changes to existing employment arrangements, as it focuses on the provision of additional specialist educational accommodation at John O'Gaunt School. As such, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) are not currently expected to apply, although this will be kept under review should delivery or operational arrangements change. The Inclusion Base may require the recruitment or development of specialist staff to support pupils with complex autism. The school will be responsible for workforce planning, staff training and ongoing professional development, working with the SEND Service to ensure appropriate skills and qualifications are in place. West Berkshire Council and the school will continue to apply existing employment policies, staff wellbeing arrangements and consultation processes throughout the project to ensure that any workforce implications are appropriately managed.
Legal:	The Academy Trust occupies the John O'Gaunt School under an Academy Lease. A licence for alterations will be required under the terms of that lease for the proposed re-build. The licence (consent) for the proposed works is given by the Council as the freehold landowner. The DfE wish to use the 'retained land' on the site for the purposes of temporary decant accommodation. A licence to occupy the site will be needed for the duration of the proposed works. The council will not be party to any construction contract. The commitment from the council to fund the Specialist Inclusion Base will be with the DfE.
Risk Management:	There are several outstanding matters that need to be clarified, that would constitute risks, namely: • How financial contribution is calculated – a desk top cost estimation has been undertaken based on the likely accommodation requirements for a 25-place Specialist Inclusion Base for pupils with autism to create the proposed budget in the capital programme. Will need to clarify with the DfE as to how they intend to apportion costs. Will be progressed and clarity sought as soon as possible. • Financial commitment – need to establish the legal mechanism for confirming a financial contribution to the

	DfE. Will be progressed and clarity sought as soon as possible. • Project governance – need to establish the governance process for a DfE managed project, where the Council has a financial commitment in the project. Will be progressed and clarity sought as soon as possible. • Financial contribution – financial contribution may change from the initial budget that has been established. This is a risk for all capital projects and will be managed as part of the DfE project governance process. • Licences – an agreement for the DfE to utilise the retained land and for a licence to undertake the proposed SRP works will need to be established. Already in dialogue with Legal and Strategic Assets. • Statutory Process – the proposed provision of a specialist base falls under the Making significant changes to an academy guidance from the DfE. This requires academies to follow a significant change process, which requires a minimum 3-week public consultation and DfE approval. • Sports Hall – the DfE had confirmed that the re-built school would not be built with a sports hall due to the proposed size (pupil capacity) of the school. The equivalent of two activity studios would be provided. However, since then the DfE has confirmed that their current option is for a 3-court sports hall and a single activity studio. The impact on community use, health and leisure contract is being investigated by the Service Director Community Service and is the subject of a separate report.
Property:	The property related matters are covered under the Legal section above.
Policy:	The proposal relates to the School Rebuilding Programme, which is a national policy to address the most urgent condition needs across the whole school estate and more specifically to the SEND Reforms around increased inclusive capacity in specialist provision.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	**X**			The proposal aims to enhance inclusivity and accessibility for children with protected characteristics, focusing on local provision that reduce travel burdens and enable students to remain in their communities.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	**X**			The proposal will directly impact the lives of families and children and young people with SEND as it aims to ensure there is sufficient local places. By increasing sufficiency, a more inclusive and supportive environment is enabled for pupils with SEND.
Environmental Impact:	**X**			Local placements reduce the environmental impact associated with long-distance travel for pupils needing specialist provision.
Health Impact:	**X**			The proposal is expected to have a positive health impact by providing pupils with complex autism with a safe, accessible and appropriately designed learning environment, including spaces that support sensory regulation and emotional wellbeing. Access to suitable specialist support within a mainstream setting should reduce anxiety, improve engagement and attendance, and enable earlier, more coordinated support. Providing placements closer to home may also reduce the stress and fatigue associated with long journeys to out-of-area provision, benefiting pupils' wellbeing and reducing pressure on families.
ICT Impact:		**X**		No impact

Digital Services Impact:		**X**		No impact
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			Priority 2 – A Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all: It prioritises support for children with complex autism, expands local SEND capacity and responds directly to the commitment to review and improve SEND capacity and provision. It should improve access to suitable education, reduce inequality in outcomes and enable more pupils to remain within their local community. Priority 1 – Services we are proud of: It would strengthen the quality, sufficiency and resilience of the Council's SEND offer, provide more timely specialist support, and make more effective use of public resources by reducing dependence on higher-cost independent and out-of-area placements. Priority 3 – Tackling the climate and ecological emergency: Increasing local provision should reduce the need for long-distance journeys to out of area placements. Incorporating the base into the wider rebuild also enables it to benefit from the programme's modern and efficient building design.
Core Business:	**X**			The proposal strongly aligns with the West Berkshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2029, particularly its principles of early intervention, inclusion, person-centred planning, supporting children close to where they live and ensuring sufficient local provision for complex needs. The proposal makes a positive contribution to the Council Strategy, most directly supporting the priorities of A Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all and Services we are proud of. It will increase local specialist SEND capacity, improve access to suitable and timely support for pupils with complex autism, and reduce inequalities arising from a shortage of appropriate local placements. It should also strengthen service and

				financial resilience by reducing reliance on higher-cost independent, non-maintained and out-of-area provision. By enabling more pupils to be educated closer to home, the proposal supports thriving communities and should reduce long-distance travel and its associated environmental impact. It is also consistent with the Council's SEND and Inclusion Strategy, including its commitments to inclusion, early intervention, local sufficiency and supporting children close to where they live.
Data Impact:		**X**		No impact

Consultation and Engagement:	Sarah House, Principal Lawyer – Planning, Regeneration & Property. Brittney Marsh, Strategic Assets Development and Planning Manager. James Beresford, Strategic Assets Manager

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Department for Education's (DfE) School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) is a national programme established to address school buildings in the poorest condition and to provide pupils and staff with modern, safe, efficient and sustainable learning environments. John O'Gaunt School has been accepted into the programme, meaning that the school buildings will be rebuilt through DfE funded and delivery arrangements.

4.2 Alongside the inclusion of the school in the SRP plans for a 25-place Autism Specialist Inclusion Base at the school have been developed. The proposed specialist provision is to address the shortage of local specialist secondary autism places and reduce the reliance on costly out-of-area placements, by creating additional SEND capacity within West Berkshire.

4.3 It is proposed to provide the Specialist Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School as part of the wider DfE funded rebuild. The base would provide dedicated accommodation and support for pupils with additional needs, while enabling them to access mainstream curriculum, facilities and wider school life where appropriate. Locating the provision within the rebuilding project will allow the accommodation to be planned as part of the overall school design, ensuring it is fit for purpose, integrated into the site and delivered efficiently alongside the main construction programme.

4.4 The DfE require a commitment from the Council as to whether funding for the specialist provision will be available. This commitment needs to be in place ahead of their project

review meeting on the rebuild option and funding in November 2026. This is a formal milestone/decision gate for their project before it can move forward to the next stage. The report is therefore being brought forward to seek approval for the Council's capital funding contribution to support delivery of the Specialist Inclusion Base alongside the DfE-funded rebuilding project.

4.5 The current SRP programme anticipates some outline design work between December 2026 and March 2027 to confirm project viability, with the procurement of the Design and Build Contractor in April 2027. Completion of the project will most likely be during the 2029/30 financial year. The DfE will seek the WBC contribution for the specialist provision at Practical Completion of the project in the 2029/30 financial year.

4.6 The proposal is recommended because it would help meet identified SEND need locally, improve the range and sufficiency of provision available in West Berkshire, and make best use of the opportunity created by the SRP. Delivering the Specialist Inclusion Base as part of the rebuild would expedite a sustainable addition to the local education estate, support inclusion, and reduce reliance on more distant or higher-cost placements where pupils' needs can appropriately be met in a mainstream school with specialist support.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 This report seeks approval for the Council to provide capital funding for a 25-place Autism Specialist Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School and for the required funding to be included in the Council's capital programme. The provision would be delivered as part of the DfE's School Rebuilding Programme project to rebuild the school, enabling the specialist accommodation to be planned and constructed alongside the wider school redevelopment.

Background

5.2 The DfE's SRP is a national capital programme established to rebuild or substantially refurbish school buildings and blocks that are in the poorest condition across England. The programme is centrally led and funded by the DfE, with projects progressing through a structured business case, design, procurement and delivery process before moving into construction.

5.3 John O'Gaunt School was selected for inclusion in the SRP and the DfE has been undertaking surveys of the existing school buildings to determine project scope. The DfE has confirmed that these surveys have now been completed, and they will be recommending to their decision maker the full rebuild of John O'Gaunt School, albeit based on a 3FE intake (90 pupils) as against their current Published Admission Number or 120.

5.4 The school's inclusion in the SRP has created a time-limited opportunity for the Council to work with the DfE to incorporate additional specialist accommodation within the wider rebuild, rather than seeking to deliver the provision as a separate standalone project at a later date.

5.5 The proposed specialist provision at John O'Gaunt School is part of a wider programme of work to address the growing pressure on specialist SEND places, with a particular focus on expanding specialist capacity within mainstream school settings, where appropriate, so that pupils can benefit from targeted specialist support while remaining connected to a mainstream curriculum, peer group and wider school community. This approach is consistent with the direction of national SEND reforms, which emphasise earlier intervention, improved local sufficiency, greater inclusion and better value across the SEND system. It also aligns with DfE priorities to support more inclusive mainstream provision, including the development of specialist resource bases and inclusion bases that can reduce reliance on independent, non-maintained and out-of-area placements where pupils' needs can be appropriately met locally.

5.6 There are limited opportunities to establish secondary specialist resource base provision on mainstream school sites. Although DfE priorities and the direction of national SEND reform emphasise strengthening inclusion in mainstream schools, specialist provision must still be capable of being delivered safely, effectively and sustainably. A successful base requires suitable dedicated accommodation, access to appropriate support and outdoor spaces, effective safeguarding and circulation arrangements, and a host school with the ethos, leadership capacity and operational readiness to integrate specialist provision within mainstream school life.

5.7 Many secondary school sites are already constrained by accommodation pressures, building condition, site layout and likely planning issues. In some cases, establishing a base would require significant adaptation, displace existing teaching space or create operational difficulties for the wider school. For this reason, viable mainstream secondary sites for specialist autism provision are scarce. The opportunity to incorporate provision within the John O'Gaunt SRP rebuild is therefore significant, as it enables the accommodation to be designed into the school from the outset and aligned with both local SEND sufficiency needs and national priorities for inclusive mainstream provision.

5.8 The SRP follows a structured approvals process, with key decision points at which the DfE confirms the scope of works and the associated project funding before the scheme can progress to the next stage. The next decision gate for the John O'Gaunt School project is scheduled for November 2026, when the DfE decision maker will be asked to sign off the proposed rebuild scope and funding envelope.

5.9 The report has been brought forward at this stage because the DfE requires confirmation of the Council's funding commitment before this project decision gate, at which the scope of works and funding envelope for the rebuild will be considered. Securing approval now will enable the Specialist Inclusion Base to be incorporated into the DfE-led project, supporting the Council's objective of increasing local specialist SEND provision and reducing reliance on more costly out-of-area placements.

Proposals

5.10 Currently, the needs of secondary-aged pupils with complex autism are met through a combination of mainstream school support, existing specialist provision within West Berkshire, and placements in independent, non-maintained and out-of-area specialist settings. Demand for specialist autism provision continues to increase, placing pressure on local capacity and reducing the availability of suitable placements close to home.

5.11 Where local provision cannot meet need, the Council commissions specialist placements through the SEND assessment and placement process. This includes independent and non-maintained special schools, Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) packages and alternative provision arrangements. These placements are funded primarily through the High Needs Block (HNB) and represent a significant and growing cost as demand for specialist provision increases.

5.12 West Berkshire Council needs to increase local specialist secondary autism provision to meet growing demand and reduce reliance on independent, non-maintained and out-of-area placements. Current capacity is insufficient to meet projected need, resulting in increased pressure on the HNB and limiting the availability of suitable local educational provision for children and young people with complex autism.

5.13 Integrating a specialist base within a mainstream secondary school is complex and requires more than the identification of available accommodation. The provision must be capable of operating as part of the wider school while also providing a safe, calm and appropriately specialist environment for pupils with complex autism. This can present challenges around curriculum access, timetabling, movement around a large secondary site, social integration, sensory needs, safeguarding arrangements, behaviour support, staff expertise and the availability of suitable breakout, therapy and quiet spaces.

5.14 The success of a specialist base also depends on the culture and operating model of the host school. Inclusive practice needs to be embedded across leadership, teaching, pastoral and support staff so that pupils are not simply accommodated on the site but are able to participate meaningfully in mainstream school life where appropriate. This requires clear governance, strong links between specialist and mainstream staff, appropriate training, shared expectations and careful planning of how pupils will access wider school facilities and transitions during the school day. Without these conditions, there is a risk that provision becomes isolated from the wider school or places additional pressure on mainstream systems.

5.15 The John O'Gaunt SRP rebuild provides an opportunity to address these integration challenges from the outset by designing the specialist accommodation, circulation, access arrangements and operational links as part of the wider school plan, rather than retrofitting provision into an existing constrained site.

5.16 The Inclusion Base will be implemented on a phased basis, initially admitting a full Year 7 cohort and growing incrementally. It is anticipated that five pupils will join the provision each year. Based on current demand, it is expected that two pupils per cohort may otherwise require independent or non-maintained specialist placements, generating an estimated avoidance of £70,000 per pupil per year. In addition, some pupils currently supported through alternative arrangements, such as Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) and Alternative Provision Following Exclusion, will access the provision, generating further cost avoidance of £68,800 in year 1, £137,600 in year 2 and so on a so forth.

5.17 The estimated capital cost of delivering the proposed specialist provision is approximately £4.45 million, based on current desktop estimates. This includes construction, external works, project contingency, professional fees and associated project costs. In line with all internally managed projects the project cost estimate will

be refined as the project progresses through feasibility and design. Further work will also be undertaken with the DfE to establish how the project costs will be apportioned across the SRP and SEND elements.

5.18 Funding for the proposed project is made up from £3.75m of existing external grant and £700k of CIL funding. Approval has been received from the CIL Team, as part of the capital programme refresh process, on the proposed use of CIL on this project. CIL funding is dependent on the Council having sufficient receipts in the CIL reserve. In instances that the Council does not, the amount would, by default, be covered by additional borrowing, which would have a subsequent capital financing impact. The funding profile sought in the Detailed Business Case is based the usual project spend profile, but the DfE has confirmed that the financial contribution from the Council will be sought at Practical Completion, currently anticipated to be financial year 2029/30. On that basis the £4.45m (or whatever the revised figure is) expenditure is currently anticipated to be within the 2029/30 financial year only. Any reprofiling of the capital budget will be agreed per the standard constitutional process.

5.19 There are several activities that are a work in progress, as follows:

(a) Financial cost apportionment – establishing the mechanism the DfE intend to use to apportion the costs for the specialist inclusion base. The mitigation is to liaise with the DfE ahead of their decision milestone date and seek relevant officer approval to the proposed approach.

(b) Financial commitment – establishing the legal mechanism that covers a capital financial commitment from the Council to a DfE capital project. The mitigation is to liaise with the DfE ahead of their decision milestone date and seek relevant senior officer approval to the proposed approach.

(c) Project governance – establishing how project governance will operate to ensure sufficient protection for the Council. The mitigation is to liaise with the DfE ahead of their decision milestone date and seek relevant senior officer approval to the proposed approach.

(d) Financial contribution – the cost of the specialist provision is likely to vary from the desk-top estimation undertake to establish an expenditure budget in the capital programme. The mitigation is to establish project governance, input into design and specification and how costs are apportioned (particularly around abnormal costs) with the DfE ahead of their decision milestone date and seek relevant senior officer approval to the proposed approach.

(e) Licences – there are agreements to put in place for the DfE to utilise the retained land and to undertake the works. The mitigation is liaison with Legal and Strategic Assets has already taken place and will continue to liaise with the DfE ahead of their decision milestone date and seek relevant senior officer approval to the proposed approach.

(f) Supplementary Academy Lease – this is required to regularise the extent of the land the Academy Trust was due to acquire when it converted to academy status in 2016 in relation to the leisure provision. The draft lease has been sent to the Academy Trust's lawyers. The mitigation is that the work has been underway for

some time and should be completed ahead of the DfE decision milestone date in November.

(g) Significant change process – the Making significant changes to an academy guidance from the DfE requires academies to follow a significant change process, which amongst other things requires a minimum 3-week public consultation and DfE approval. Currently in communication with the school/Trust regarding the process and obtaining approval ahead of the November DfE decision milestone date.

6 Other options considered

6.1 There are two other options that were considered – do nothing and undertake the specialist provision construction after the SRP project has completed.

Do nothing

6.2 This option is not recommended. It would leave the identified shortage of local specialist secondary autism provision unresolved and would not create the additional local SEND capacity required to meet growing demand. As a result, the Council would continue to rely on existing specialist provision, independent and non-maintained special school placements, Education Otherwise Than At School packages and other alternative provision arrangements where pupils' needs cannot be met locally. This would sustain pressure on the High Needs Block and limit the Council's ability to provide suitable placements close to home.

6.3 Taking no action would also miss the opportunity to incorporate the Specialist Inclusion Base within the DfE-funded School Rebuilding Programme at John O'Gaunt School. If the Council does not commit funding at this stage, the provision is unlikely to be included within the scope of the rebuild ahead of the DfE's November 2026 project decision gate. Any future proposal would therefore need to be developed separately after the SRP project has progressed or completed, which is likely to be less efficient, more disruptive to the school and potentially more costly. For these reasons, doing nothing would not address the sufficiency need, would weaken the Council's ability to manage rising SEND placement costs, and would fail to make best use of the current capital delivery opportunity.

Deliver after SRP project

6.4 This option is not recommended. Delivering the Specialist Inclusion Base after completion of the SRP project would require a separate capital scheme to be developed, designed, procured and constructed outside the DfE-led programme. This would remove the opportunity to integrate the specialist accommodation into the overall school design from the outset and would risk a less coherent layout, weaker operational links with the wider school, and reduced ability for pupils to access mainstream curriculum, facilities and wider school life in a planned and inclusive way.

6.5 A standalone project after completion of the rebuild is also likely to be less efficient and more costly. It would require separate professional fees, surveys, site investigations, procurement, contractor preliminaries, site set-up and project management arrangements, rather than benefiting from the economies of scale and established delivery structure of the SRP. Construction after the school has been rebuilt and is fully

operational would also create additional disruption for pupils, staff and the wider school community, including potential impacts on access, safeguarding, circulation, temporary accommodation and day-to-day school operation.

6.6 Delaying delivery would also postpone the creation of much-needed local specialist secondary autism capacity. During that period, the Council would continue to rely on independent and non-maintained placements, EOTAS packages and alternative provision where pupils' needs cannot be met locally, sustaining pressure on the High Needs Block and delaying the anticipated cost avoidance from the proposed provision.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This proposal provides the most effective, deliverable and timely means of increasing local specialist secondary autism provision while making best use of the opportunity created by the DfE School Rebuilding Programme at John O'Gaunt School. The proposed Specialist Inclusion Base would help address an identified sufficiency gap, support more pupils with complex autism to be educated locally, and reduce reliance on independent, non-maintained, out-of-area placements and other alternative arrangements where needs can appropriately be met within a mainstream school with specialist support. It supports national and local priorities for greater inclusion, strengthens West Berkshire's local SEND offer, contributes to managing pressure on the High Needs Block, and secures a time-limited opportunity to deliver long-term specialist capacity as part of a wider funded capital programme.

7.2 Approving the capital funding now is necessary to enable the provision to be incorporated into the DfE-led rebuild ahead of the November 2026 project decision gate. This will enable the accommodation to be planned, designed and constructed as part of the wider school rebuild rather than being delayed until a separate future project can be developed. It will also improve the suitability, operational effectiveness and value for money of the provision, while avoiding the additional cost, disruption and delivery risk associated with a later standalone scheme.

7.3 Approving the use of the retained land at the school for the purposes of providing space for decant accommodation will enable officers to work with the DfE to establish a legal agreement to use the land, for the School Rebuilding Programme project to maintain its delivery programme and to help reduce capital costs.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment

8.3 Appendix C – Concept Business Case

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: Hungerford and Kintbury

Officer details:

Name: Mark Lewis
Job Title: Education Place Planning and Development Manager
Tel No: (01635) 519038
E-mail: Mark.Lewis@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

West Berkshire Council
Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Equity Impact Assessment

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	People Children's Services, Education and SEND
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	The proposal to include the provision of a Specialist Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School in the council's capital programme via the DfE School Re-building Programme project to rebuild the school.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	No
Summary of assessment 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).	To provide capital funding for a 25-place Autism Specialist Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School and for the required funding to be included in the Council's capital programme. The provision would be delivered as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) project to rebuild the school, enabling the specialist accommodation to be planned and constructed alongside the wider school redevelopment. The proposal does not bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community.
Completed By	Mark Lewis
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	08.09.26

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	The proposal is part of a wider programme of work to address the growing pressure on specialist SEND places, with a particular focus on expanding specialist capacity within mainstream school settings so that pupils can benefit from targeted specialist support while remaining connected to a mainstream curriculum, peer group and wider school community. This approach is consistent with the direction of national SEND reforms, which emphasise earlier intervention, improved local sufficiency, greater inclusion and better value across the SEND system. It also aligns with DfE priorities to support more inclusive mainstream provision, that can reduce reliance on independent, non-maintained and out-of-area placements where pupils' needs can be appropriately met locally. The school's inclusion in the SRP has created a time-limited opportunity for the Council to work with the DfE to incorporate additional specialist accommodation within the wider rebuild, rather than seeking to deliver the provision as a separate standalone project at a later date.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	This proposal provides the most effective, deliverable and timely means of increasing local specialist provision while making best use of the opportunity created by the DfE School Rebuilding Programme. The proposal would help address an identified sufficiency gap, support more pupils with complex autism to be educated locally, and reduce reliance on independent, non-maintained, out-of-area placements and other alternative arrangements. It supports national and local priorities for greater inclusion, strengthens the local SEND offer, contributes to managing pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB), and secures a time-limited opportunity to deliver long-term specialist capacity as part of a wider funded capital programme. The proposal enables the provision to be incorporated into the DfE-led rebuild. This will enable the accommodation to be planned, designed and constructed as part of the wider school rebuild rather than being delayed until a separate future project can be developed. It will also improve the suitability, operational effectiveness and value for money of the provision, while avoiding the additional cost, disruption and delivery risk associated with a later standalone scheme.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports	This assessment is based on multiple data sources, including the Department for Education (DfE) School Capacity Survey (SCAP), West Berkshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy, Inform data on SEND profile for West Berkshire, DfE's Local Authority Interactive Tool which compares West Berkshire against statistical neighbours and internal SEND data from MRI. The national evidence indicates sustained growth in SEND need. Department for Education school census data for 2024/25 recorded 482,640 pupils in England with an Education, Health and Care Plan, representing

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.	5.3% of the school population and an 11.1% increase from 2024. The data supports the need for local authorities to plan additional capacity rather than rely on existing provision remaining sufficient. Government policy increasingly prioritises inclusive mainstream education supported by specialist facilities. The Department for Education's £740 million capital investment was specifically intended to adapt mainstream schools and create specialist facilities capable of providing more intensive support.
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.	**Do nothing** – this would leave the identified shortage of local specialist secondary autism provision unresolved and would not create the additional local SEND capacity required to meet growing demand. There would be continued reliance on existing specialist provision, independent and non-maintained special school placements, EOTAS packages and other alternative provision arrangements where pupils' needs cannot be met locally. This would sustain pressure on the High Needs Block and limit the Council's ability to provide suitable placements close to home. It would also miss the opportunity to incorporate the proposal within the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP). Any future proposal would need to be developed separately after the SRP project has progressed or completed, which is likely to be less efficient, more disruptive to the school and potentially more costly. Doing nothing would not address the sufficiency need, would weaken the Council's ability to manage rising SEND placement costs, and would fail to make best use of the current capital delivery opportunity. **Deliver after SRP project** – this option would require a separate capital scheme to be developed, designed, procured and constructed outside the DfE-led programme. This would remove the opportunity to integrate the specialist accommodation into the overall school design from the outset and would risk a less coherent layout, weaker operational links with the wider school, and reduced ability for pupils to access mainstream curriculum, facilities and wider school life in a planned and inclusive way. A standalone project after completion of the rebuild is also likely to be less efficient and more costly. It would require separate professional fees, project management arrangements, etc. Construction after the school has been rebuilt and is fully operational would also create additional disruption for pupils, staff and the wider school community, including potential impacts on access, safeguarding, and day-to-day school operation. Delaying delivery would also postpone the creation of much-needed local specialist secondary autism capacity. During that period, the Council would continue to rely on independent and non-maintained placements, EOTAS packages and alternative provision where pupils' needs cannot be met locally, sustaining pressure on the HNB and delaying the anticipated cost avoidance from the proposed provision.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☐	☒	☐	Local specialist SEND facilities enhance accessibility.			
Disability	☐	☒	☐	Will benefit from targeted specialist support while remaining connected to a mainstream curriculum, peer group and wider school community. Will benefit from earlier intervention, greater inclusion and needs appropriately met locally.			
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	None			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	None			
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	None			
Race	☒	☐	☐	None			

Sex	☒	☐	☐	None			
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	None			
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	None			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	**No Impact**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Description of impact**	**Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts**	**Action owner** (*Job Title, Organisation)	**Timescale and monitoring arrangements**
Rural communities	☐	☒	☐	Improved access to specialist provision.			
Areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐	Improved local SEND services increase accessibility for economically disadvantaged families.			
Displaced communities	☐	☒	☐	Reducing out-of-borough placements supports community stability.			
Care experienced people	☐	☒	☐	Promotes local, consistent support for children in care,			

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				addressing their unique vulnerabilities.			
The Armed Forces Community	☒	☐	☐	None			

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.

Review Date	**N/A**
Person Responsible for Review	**N/A**
Authorised By	**N/A**

EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

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

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

Directorate:	People – Children's Services
Service:	Education
Team:	Place Planning and Development
Lead Officer:	Mark Lewis
Title of Project/System:	John O'Gaunt – Specialist Inclusion Base
Date of Assessment:	08.09.26

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

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

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

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

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Initiative Overview

Initiative Reference Number	ES015
Initiative Proposer	Neil Obbard
Initiative Title	John O'Gaunt School - Specialist Inclusion Base
Initiative Type	Capital - One Off
Directorate	People - Children's Services
Service	Education
Service Director	Ashley Milum
Portfolio Holder	Heather Codling
Council Priority	2. A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All
Priority Area Outcome:	
1. Services We Are Proud Of	
2. A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All	2.9 Good education attainment results, exceeding National levels
3. Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency	
4. A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire	
5. Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice	

Initiative Description	
In one sentence, what are we delivering?	To deliver a new 25 specialist ASD Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School, providing local autism provision within a mainstream setting and reducing reliance on out-of-area placements.
Problem Statement	
In one sentence, what problem are we solving?	To address the shortage of local specialist secondary autism provision and reduce reliance on costly out-of-area placements by creating additional SEND capacity within West Berkshire.
Impact	
What will improve if this succeeds?	More children and young people with complex ASD will have their needs met locally, experience improved inclusion and achieve better outcomes, while reducing reliance on out-of-area specialist placements.

Does the Initiative require:	
Internal consultation?	No
Public consultation?	Yes

Does the initiative involve capital spend?	**If Yes - please include the Ward the capital spend will impact**
Yes	Hungerford & Kintbury

Milestone Reviews:	
Review Date	30/07/2026
Service Director Recommended/ Not Recommended	Recommended
Service Director Recommended/ Not Recommended Narrative	
Portfolio Holder Recommended/ Not Recommended	Recommended
Portfolio Holder Recommended/ Not Recommended Narrative	
Recommended/ Not Recommended	**Recommended**

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This tab is used to set out a high-level business case for the initiative, explaining why change may be needed and capturing the potential options that could be explored further.
Complete this tab with concise, evidence-based information for each possible option. Summarise what each option involves, the expected costs and benefits, key success measures and other strategic, commercial, management and financial considerations. Focus on the information needed to compare options at this stage; detailed appraisal, costing and delivery planning will be developed later as part of the Detailed Business Case.

Complete the analysis below for ***at least one option*** *. Add further options where needed to document/compare the potential approaches for this initiative.*

Key:

Cell requires manual input	
Calculation cell - **DO NOT EDIT**	
Pre-populated cell - **DO NOT EDIT**	
Example cell - please **REMOVE** from completed business case	

The Initiative:	
Summarise the case for change, the proposed initiative and the options you plan to explore.	West Berkshire is experiencing increasing demand for specialist SEND provision, particularly for pupils with complex autism, creating pressure on existing placements and increasing reliance on costly independent and out-of-area provision. Expanding local specialist capacity within mainstream schools is a key priority within the West Berkshire SEND Reform Plan, enabling more children and young people to have their needs met closer to home while improving outcomes and delivering better value for money. The proposed Specialist Autism Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt School will provide 25 specialist places for pupils with complex autism. The provision would operate as a council-funded specialist inclusion base, enabling pupils to access targeted specialist support while maintaining meaningful links to mainstream education, social opportunities and wider school life. This model supports inclusive practice and provides a high-quality local alternative to independent placements. The requirement is to establish a dedicated specialist facility capable of accommodating the proposed 25 places and the associated teaching, intervention and support spaces required. The proposal will focus on identifying the most suitable accommodation solution on the school site, ensuring the provision can meet demand while supporting the Council's strategic objective of increasing local SEND capacity and reducing reliance on external provision

Current Arrangements:	
Describe how the issue is managed currently.	Currently, the needs of secondary-aged pupils with complex autism are met through a combination of mainstream school support, existing specialist provision and placements in specialist settings both within and outside West Berkshire. Demand for specialist provision continues to increase, placing pressure on available places and creating challenges in ensuring that pupils can access the right support at the right time and as close to home as possible. John O'Gaunt School does not currently have a dedicated Autism Inclusion Base capable of supporting pupils who require a high level of specialist provision while maintaining access to mainstream education. Existing support is delivered through mainstream SEND arrangements, alongside specialist advice and support services where appropriate. The West Berkshire SEND Reform Plan identifies the need to increase specialist capacity within mainstream schools to support inclusion and improve access to local provision. Expanding specialist provision at John O'Gaunt School would help address a gap in local secondary SEND capacity, enabling more pupils with complex autism to access specialist support while remaining connected to their local community and mainstream school

Financial Summary:

Remove / add number of options as required

	Option 1 - Autism Unit
Total costs	4,445,640
Total benefits	(626,400)
Net costs / benefits	**3,819,240**
Return on investment	-86%

Please complete the following analysis for each option you plan to explore under this Initiative.

Option 1 - Specialist Inclusion Unit:

Summary:	
Include a summary of what the option involves.	The proposed option is the development of a purpose-built Autism Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt to increase local specialist secondary provision for pupils with complex autism. The provision would provide 25 places for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and support West Berkshire's wider SEND sufficiency strategy by expanding specialist capacity within a mainstream school setting. The Inclusion Base forms part of John O'Gaunt's Department for Education (DfE) School Rebuilding Programme and is intended to be delivered alongside the wider redevelopment of the school. At this stage, it has not been determined whether the Inclusion Base will be delivered directly by the DfE as part of the rebuilding programme or separately by West Berkshire Council. However, the provision is being planned as an integral element of the overall redevelopment of the school site. The facility would comprise dedicated teaching, intervention and sensory spaces, staff accommodation, meeting areas, appropriate hygiene facilities and outdoor space designed to support pupils' wellbeing and learning needs. The provision would enable pupils to access specialist support while maintaining opportunities to participate in

Cost-Benefit Analysis:

Costs - Financial:

Summarise the expected financial costs of delivering this option and how they will be funded, for example through Council funding, grants, CIL, S106 contributions, transformation, revenue.

The estimated capital cost of delivering the proposed Autism Inclusion Base at John O'Gaunt is approximately £4.45 million, based on current feasibility estimates. This includes construction, external works, project contingency, professional fees and associated project costs.

The development of the Inclusion Base forms part of the Council's wider strategy to increase local SEND capacity and improve access to specialist provision within mainstream schools. The proposal will support the delivery of additional specialist places for pupils with complex autism and contribute to the Council's SEND sufficiency objectives.

As the Inclusion Base is being developed in conjunction with the Department for Education (DfE) School Rebuilding Programme at John O'Gaunt, the final delivery and funding arrangements are yet to be confirmed.

2026/27 - Basic Need (to be vired from SEND Infrastructure
2027/28 - HNPCA Grant
2028/29 - Basic Need Grant
2029/30 - £910,160 Basic Need Grant and £588,860 CIL funding
2030/31 - CIL funding

Include a breakdown of these costs and how they are expected to be profiled across a 5-year appraisal period below. Use additional tabs for calculations where required.

	(£'000)					
Period	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Total**
Financial year	**FY26/27**	**FY27/28**	**FY28/29**	**FY29/30**	**FY30/31**	
Costs						
	*Costs should be recorded as **positives** '+'*					
Design	78,260	156,520	84,280	42,140		361,200
Construction			2,383,980	1,191,990		3,575,970
Project Contingency			132,440	264,890		397,330
Retention					111,140	111,140
Total costs	**78,260**	**156,520**	**2,600,700**	**1,499,020**	**111,140**	**4,445,640**

Benefits - Financial:

Provide a summary of the financial benefits, i.e. how will the Council generate a return on the investment.

The proposed Specialist Autism Inclusion Base will deliver significant cost avoidance by increasing local specialist secondary autism capacity and reducing reliance on high-cost independent and non-maintained specialist school placements (INMSS), Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) packages and Alternative Provision (AP). The provision will create 25-30 specialist places enabling more children and young people with complex autism to be educated closer to home within West Berkshire.

The Inclusion Base will be introduced on a phased basis, with pupil numbers increasing annually towards full capacity. Based on current demand and placement trends, it is anticipated that a proportion of pupils attending the provision would otherwise require independent specialist placements costing in excess of £70,000 per pupil per year. The project is forecast to avoid approximately £626,400 of expenditure over the first five years through reduced INMSS, EOTAS and Alternative Provision costs.

Additional cost avoidance is expected through reduced Home to School Transport expenditure, fewer placement breakdowns and improved educational outcomes, although these benefits have not yet been quantified. The proposal therefore supports the Council's SEND Sufficiency Strategy whilst contributing to a more sustainable and cost-effective local SEND system.

Include a breakdown of these benefits and how they are expected to be profiled across a 5-year appraisal period below. Use additional tabs for calculations where required.

	(£'000)					
Period	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Total**
Financial year	**FY26/27**	**FY27/28**	**FY28/29**	**FY29/30**	**FY30/31**	
Benefits						
	*Benefits should be recorded as **negatives** '-'*					
Placement Cost Avoidance INMSS				(140,000)	(280,000)	(420,000)
Placement Cost Avoidance EOTAS				(30,000)	(60,000)	(90,000)
Placement Cost Avoidance AP (following exclusion)				(38,800)	(77,600)	(116,400)
[Benefit 4]						0
Total Benefits	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(208,800)**	**(417,600)**	**(626,400)**

Financial Metrics:	
Metric	
1) Net cost / (benefit)	£ 3,819,240
2) Return on Investment	-86%

Benefits - Non-Financial:

Provide details of any other non-financial benefits that would result from delivering the option, e.g. service / operational, social, environmental, strategic etc.	The proposed Autism Inclusion Base would deliver a range of non-financial benefits aligned with the Council's SEND, education and inclusion objectives. The provision would increase local specialist capacity for pupils with complex autism, enabling more children and young people to access education within their local community while maintaining appropriate links with mainstream education. This would provide greater opportunities for inclusion, participation in school life and the development of positive social relationships. Educationally, the Inclusion Base would provide an environment tailored to the needs of pupils with complex autism, including specialist teaching spaces, intervention and sensory areas, dedicated support facilities and outdoor provision to support wellbeing and regulation. This will improve pupil engagement, attendance, independence, wellbeing and educational outcomes.

Measures of Success:

What are the option's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for tracking success?

KPI	Measure	Purpose
Long-term cost savings for West Berkshire Council	*Annual cost avoidance compared to independent and non-maintained specialist*	*To measure the financial benefit of providing local specialist capacity*
Reduction in out-of-area placements	*Number of pupils educated locally rather than in external specialist placements*	*To measure the impact on SEND sufficiency and local capacity*

Other considerations:

Summarise any other important considerations at this stage across the strategic, commercial, management and financial areas below. Please ensure each section is completed.

1) Strategic - i.e. strategic priorities, policy alignment, outcomes, stakeholders and wider organisational objectives.	The proposal directly supports West Berkshire Council's SEND Sufficiency Strategy and SEND Reform Plan by increasing local specialist capacity for pupils with complex autism within a mainstream school environment. It aligns with the Council's objectives to improve inclusion, meet needs closer to home and expand local specialist provision for children and young people with SEND.
2) Commercial - i.e. market capacity, procurement route, supplier interest, contract implications, deliverability and value for money.	The Inclusion Base is being developed alongside the DfE School Rebuilding Programme at John O'Gaunt. At this stage, it has not been confirmed whether the Inclusion Base will be delivered directly by the DfE as part of the rebuilding programme or separately by West Berkshire Council. The preferred delivery route, procurement approach and contractual arrangements will be determined as the project develops. Further feasibility work, design development and stakeholder engagement will be required to confirm delivery
3) Management - i.e. governance, resourcing, delivery capability, timescales, risks, dependencies, change management and stakeholder engagement.	The project will be managed in accordance with the Council's established governance arrangements for capital and SEND infrastructure projects. Appropriate governance, reporting and decision-making processes will be applied throughout project development and delivery, with oversight through the Council's capital programme and SEND governance arrangements. The Inclusion Base is dependent on the wider redevelopment programme at John O'Gaunt and will require
4) Financial - i.e. affordability, funding sources, whole-life costs, savings, income, budget impact and financial risks.	The current estimated capital cost of the proposed Autism Inclusion Base is approximately £4.45 million. This estimate includes design fees, construction costs, project contingency and associated project costs based on current feasibility information. The project forms part of the Council's wider strategy to increase local SEND capacity and improve access to
Can this option be delivered using current resources?	Yes. We have a capable Education and property team who have experience in delivering this type of facility. The avaliabilty of WBC project managers is a concern due to recruitment challenges and high turnover of staff during
What specialist skills are required?	The project will be delivered using established Council resources and governance arrangements through the
What are the top 3 risks associated with delivering this option?	Risk 1 — Dependency on the DfE School Rebuilding Programme Risk 2 — Affordability / Future funding uncertainty Risk 3 — Agreement of Delivery Responsibilities

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Contract for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of committee:	12 November 2026
Executive portfolio holder:	Councillor Vic Poole
Date portfolio holder agreed report:	15 October 2026
Responsible director:	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter Section 151 Officer
Responsible officer:	Sarah Wood
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Key Decision:	Yes
Subject to call-in:	Yes

1 Purpose and Executive Summary

1.1 To provide details of forthcoming supply, service and works contract awards that will have a contract value in excess of £2.5m and as such will require approval from Executive during the next quarter. This report provides Executive with visibility of all high value contracting activity and the opportunity to request further information regarding the contract identified.

1.2 To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director) to proceed with the contract awards provided in this report, on the condition that a Procurement Strategy and a Contract Award report is granted approval by Procurement Board

2 Recommendations

2.1 Recommendation for Executive to:

(1) delegate authority to the relevant Service Director in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and relevant Service Portfolio Holder to proceed with award of the forthcoming contract that has been identified in this report for award approval during the next quarter of the financial year.

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

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Financial
Finance engage with the relevant Service and Procurement throughout the procurement process, to ensure financial risks and opportunities are appropriately identified and managed. Toby Bradley – 5 October 2026
Legal
Contracts will be procured in line with the Council's Contract Rules and the relevant Procurement Legislation (the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023). All contracts with a value in excess of £2.5m will have a procurement strategy and contract award report which has been approved by Procurement Board, Corporate Board and Executive Briefing. The Service Director in consultation with the Section 151 Officer shall have delegated authority to award the contract subject to such approval. The Legal team on instruction and in consultation with the relevant Service Director shall finalise the contractual documentation and execute in line with the Council constitution. Dawn Bond – 1 October 2026
Risk management
As part of each procurement process, supplier due diligence is carried out to include: review and verification of financial health, confirmation of insurances held, credit report, references and reassurance around the ability to evidence and deliver public sector contracts.
Procurement
Contracts will be procured in line with the Council's Contract Rules. All contracts with a value in excess of the relevant thresholds require approval of a Procurement Strategy before procurement is commenced and the award is subject to the approval of a Contract Award report by Procurement Board prior to the formal award of the contract. All contracts over £500k in value are considered key decisions and will be placed on the forward plan by the Service Area at point of Procurement Strategy.
Equalities Impacts: Neutral

Data Impacts: Neutral
Environmental Impacts: Neutral
Health Impacts: Neutral

Consultation and Engagement:	N/A

4 Background

4.1 As set out in the Council's Contract Standing Orders, contracts with a value in excess of £2.5million shall require Executive approval, which may be given as below. The Executive shall receive quarterly reports detailing contracts being procured and seeking delegated authority from Executive for the relevant Service Director / to award the contract following the procurement process in consultation with the relevant Service Portfolio Holder, S.151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

4.2 A consolidated report is considered the most effective way of complying with the Council's Contract Rules, whilst providing Executive with visibility of forthcoming high value contracts requiring approval. This in turn will help minimise any delays that may impact the procurement timetable for contract award and service mobilisation.

4.3 This report summarises contracts that have progressed through the approved procurement process and are expected to exceed the £2.5 million approval threshold based on the available budget information provided by the relevant service areas.

5 Proposals and Options Considered

Option	Comments
To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Director) to proceed with the contract awards when the contract exceeds £2.5m **This is the recommended option.**	- Provides early visibility of all forthcoming contract awards over £2.5m, enabling Executive oversight of significant procurement activity. - Allows Executive to request further information on specific contracts where

	appropriate, while avoiding the need for separate approval reports for each award. - Reduces delays to procurement timetables by obtaining delegation in advance, supporting timely contract award and mobilisation. - Maintains robust governance through the requirement for Procurement Board approval of both the Procurement Strategy and Contract Award Report. - Ensures decisions are taken by appropriately accountable officers, with consultation from the Section 151 Officer and relevant Service Portfolio Holder. - Reduces the administrative burden on officers and Executive through a single consolidated quarterly report. - Supports service continuity and programme delivery by minimising governance-related delays and providing greater certainty for suppliers and services.
All contracts over £2.5m taken through the Executive cycle after the procurement has been run and before the contract is awarded. This is not recommended.	- This option would add significant time to the process and could delay implementation. - Tender prices and provider commitments are often only valid for a limited period and may expire while awaiting approval. - If approval were not granted at the award stage, the procurement could need to be abandoned and re-run, resulting in additional cost, delay and uncertainty. - Delegated authority allows the Council to respond efficiently to tender outcomes, market conditions and implementation requirements while maintaining appropriate consultation with the Service Portfolio Holder, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

6 Supporting Information

6.1 The contract award summary tables below provides an overview of the contracts which are being tendered following approval of a Procurement Strategy by the Procurement Board. These contracts are expected to have a contract value of over £2.5m based on the available budget.

Contract Title	Residential Services for Older People Framework
Service Area	Adult Social Care
Budget	The budget for externally commissioned residential and nursing placements for 2026/27 is £22.2m for long term placements and a maximum of £2.5m for other services, such as short term and respite.
Contract planned start date	1st April 2027
Procurement Process	Light Touch Open Framework
Proposed evaluation weightings	This is subject to review and will be based around the Fair Cost of Care. The proposed weighting is Quality 70%, Price 20% and Social Value 10%.
Proposed contract term (years)	Open framework for up to 8 years, from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2035. The framework will be reopened at set points so that new providers can apply.
Estimated contract value	Minimum £200m over 8 years
Estimated annual value	Estimated £24m per annum based on 2025/26 expenditure
Tender status	Anticipated publish date November 2026
Further Information	Establishment of a multi-supplier light touch framework for the placement of eligible older people in good-quality, safe and person-centred residential care settings. The framework will support statutory Adult Social Care commissioning and individual placement activity, including services for people with dementia and other age-related needs. Call-off contracts will be awarded in accordance with the framework terms, the Care Act duties, assessed individual need, availability, value for money, location and the person's preferences. The framework does not, in itself, create any commitment to spend or award of work. Individual care placements will be awarded through separate placement agreements entered into under the framework, with each agreement operating in accordance with the

	framework's terms and conditions. The framework does not guarantee any level of business to an appointed provider. The framework is required to maintain a compliant, transparent and flexible route for individual placements from 1 April 2027. It will support choice, continuity of care, quality assurance, market oversight and consistent contractual terms while allowing placements to reflect each person's assessed needs and preferences.

Contract Title	Domiciliary Care Framework
Service Area	Adult Social Care
Budget	The 2026/27 budget for externally commissioned domiciliary care and reablement is £12.5m
Contract planned start date	1st April 2027
Procurement Process	Light Touch Open Framework
Proposed evaluation weightings	This is subject to review and will be based around the Fair Cost of Care. The proposed weighting is Quality 70%, Price 20% and Social Value 10%.
Proposed contract term (years)	Open framework for up to 8 years, from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2035. The framework will be reopened at set points so that new providers can apply.
Estimated contract value	Minimum £200m over 8 years
Estimated annual value	Estimated £24m per annum based on 2025/26 expenditure
Tender status	Anticipated publish date November 2026

Further Information	The Council needs a reliable group of providers that can deliver care across West Berkshire, including rural areas, seven days a week. The new arrangement will cover long-term home care as well as D2A, reablement, urgent care and enhanced care. It will also bring the service requirements, pricing, allocation process and contract monitoring into one clear arrangement. Establishment of a multi-provider open framework for domiciliary care across West Berkshire. The framework will cover long-term home care, short-term care, urgent care, Discharge to Assess, reablement, respite, live-in care, waking nights, sleeping nights and long sits. It will also be available for eligible NHS Continuing Healthcare packages where agreed with the ICB. The framework does not, in itself, create any commitment to spend or award of work. Individual care placements will be awarded through separate placement agreements entered into under the framework, with each agreement operating in accordance with the framework's terms and conditions.

Contract Title	Managed Service Provider for Agency
Service Area	HR
Budget	£5,700,000 per annum Budget for agency staff is held by each service area rather than by HR
Contract planned start date	5th March 2027
Procurement Process	Framework
Proposed evaluation weightings	50% quality, 10% social value, 40% price
Proposed contract term (years)	2 years plus 1 year extension (3 years in total)
Estimated contract value	£11.4 million – 2 years 17.1 million for 3 years
Estimated annual value	£5.7m

Tender status	Anticipated publish date November 2026
Further Information	Continued use of neutral vendor approach required to support ongoing short term staffing solutions.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report provides details of contracts which have been registered with the Procurement Team that are scheduled for award during the next quarter. Whilst every effort has been made to identify all contracts likely to require approval during the reporting period, there are projects within the Council's Capital Programme where it is not yet known whether delivery will require the procurement of supply contracts. Consequently, additional contracts may emerge during the period. Any such contracts, together with urgent or unforeseen requirements that meet the approval threshold, will be brought forward through separate Contract Award Reports in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements. Some contracts will also continue to follow the standard governance process and may therefore not be included within this report.

8 Appendices

Please note that a Part II report is provided.

Executive – 12 November 2026

Item 9 – Member Questions

To follow

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