

A Breath of Fresh Air

2011/12

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(Version 3)

DRAFT

Foreword

Welcome to '*A Breath of Fresh Air*' 2011-12. With the nation in a state of change following a deep recession and the creation of the first coalition government for more than 70 years, it is timely and appropriate that the West Berkshire Partnership take stock of its Vision for the district. This document sets out what we are striving for in improving the quality of life in West Berkshire.

We recognise that times are tough, particularly for the public and voluntary sector but also for our businesses. In an era of budget reductions and spending cuts, we think that partnership working is becoming more important. It is a way of maximising the resources we have available and achieving the best outcomes for our communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those involved in helping improve the social, economic and environmental well being of West Berkshire. By working together we earned just over £1.6 million of reward money for West Berkshire which has been re-invested to fund numerous projects to help achieve our vision. We have also allocated £50,000 to projects supporting local businesses and communities through the recession. Another big success has been the 'Greater Greenham Project', which has been recognised by the Berkshire, Community Empowerment Awards.

We recognise that the road ahead will be tough. Despite this, we are certain your commitment to improving life for those living and working in West Berkshire will remain strong.

Councillor Pamela Bale
Chairman, West Berkshire Partnership

Peter Atkinson
Vice Chairman, West Berkshire Partnership

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Section One: The Future of West Berkshire

Introduction

West Berkshire has had a strategy in place for improving local quality of life since 2003. Initially called “*A Better Future for All*” and succeeded by “*A Breath of Fresh Air*” the purpose of the ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’ is to set priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of West Berkshire.

The strategy is shaped by a range of influences and factors, including what local people think, what research says is happening in the local area and the views of a variety of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sector. This 2011/12 update has two sections - the remainder of this section sets out the vision and the strategic aims for West Berkshire in the future. The second section provides a useful summary of some major influences which have shaped the local priorities and shows how progress will be monitored.

The Vision for West Berkshire in 2026

West Berkshire has a population of just over 150,000 living in a largely rural area. It is seen as a desirable place to live, with 84 percent of residents describing themselves as happy with the area. The collective vision is that for existing and future residents, West Berkshire, will be (listed alphabetically);

- Greener
- Healthier
- Prosperous
- Safer
- Stronger

First published in 2008, “*A Breath of Fresh Air*” set out what West Berkshire should look like in 2026 and this vision remains. Supporting this is a commitment to keeping the strengths of the district and building on opportunities for improvement for all those living and working in West Berkshire. (For more detail on the commitment to equal opportunity, see Appendix C).

The following describes the collective vision for West Berkshire;

In 2026.....

... West Berkshire is still one of the most successful and prosperous local economies in the UK. Economic activity rates are high and there has been a notable increase over the past 20 years in the number of people with disabilities, lone parents and other potentially disadvantaged groups entering the labour market. Local examination results are in the top 25 of local authorities nationally and there has been a marked improvement in the skills base of the local economy. West Berkshire companies are able to source a high proportion of their workforce requirements locally and this is supported by a good supply of affordable local housing. This has had a positive impact on homelessness with fewer applications and people being able to move on more quickly from temporary into settled accommodation.

.....cont.....

... .. the population has continued to grow and has reached 170,000 with around 500 new homes continuing to be built each year. A significant proportion of this growth has been centred around Newbury, whose town centre has been transformed with a 20% increase in footfall in just twenty years. Both Newbury and Thatcham town centres now have a wide variety of shops supported by more places to visit. As a result most residents now do not have to travel out of the district to do most of their shopping.

.....the rural economy has been strengthened through supported diversification away from traditional farming practices and the attraction of new industries. There is a good range of local facilities and the local schools remain an important feature of the local community.

... despite growing congestion across the Thames Valley, West Berkshire remains an accessible place to get to and around. Local traffic improvement schemes around Newbury and Thatcham and around Tilehurst and Calcot have helped make travel in the rush hour easier. Accessibility in the rural area has been improved through a range of transportation measures including new public transport, improved cycling provision and greater car sharing. Working from home has also become a major facet of working life. Access to services has also been improved by local agencies working more closely together and by extending the use of electronic communication to the benefit of all who live and work in the district.

... West Berkshire is now greener than many other parts of the country. The much valued landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been conserved and enhanced. The range of wildlife has increased. The district has a substantial proportion of its energy needs sourced from renewable sources. 50% of the district's household waste is recycled and 5% of all the food consumed in West Berkshire is grown within the district. West Berkshire is well on the way to meeting the Kyoto target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

... West Berkshire is also now safer than many other parts of the South East. The crime rate is not only below the national and regional average it is also comparable with many of our neighbours. The level of anti-social behaviour has declined from that seen twenty years ago. West Berkshire now has one of the lowest road accident rates in the South East.

... the residents of West Berkshire and its many communities have become more healthy and cohesive. Residents have a strong sense of belonging to their local community and the most vulnerable feel safe. Inequalities in health have decreased and the gap between the most and least healthy has lessened. People are enabled to live healthier lives, with the opportunities to eat healthily and be physically active available in all communities. The population are informed about preventing ill health, promoting positive health and caring for themselves. Adults and children alike feel empowered to take control of their own lives and feel part of cohesive and participative communities.

... the number of older people has increased dramatically but a high proportion are now enabled to live a more independent life at home. Young people are more engaged, there is more for them to do and as a result they are enjoying life and achieving more. Individual communities at a parish level are active, engaged and inclusive, planning their own futures and working together to help realise their aspirations.

Overall, the quality of life for those living and working in West Berkshire is now higher than it ever has been before - not for some - not for the majority - but for all. That improvement is borne out - not only in official statistics - but by what people say themselves, irrespective of race, culture, gender, ability or background.

Strategic Aims

As illustrated above, the vision is divided up into a number of themes. A number of strategic aims for West Berkshire are detailed within each of these themes, which more specifically describe the areas where the Partnership collectively, and agencies individually are seeking to focus attention and resources to help turn the vision into reality.

To ensure that the vision and the achievement of its supporting strategic aims are properly managed, the West Berkshire Partnership and all sub-partnerships have a series of action plans. This is where the measurable outcomes, and the supporting activity to achieve each of these outcomes, are described.

THEME: Greener West Berkshire	
Strategic Aims	Evidence supporting the need to achieve
1. Reduce the carbon footprint of the district	The West Berkshire Climate Change Strategy* identifies that West Berkshire has high levels of CO2 emissions, especially in comparison to neighbouring authority areas.
2. Ensure local services remain accessible	Long term planning through the Local Transport Plan* and Local Development Framework* highlight the importance of travel choice and minimising congestion. The rural nature of West Berkshire means that access to local services can be limited in areas of the district. In addition to the social and public health aspects, ensuring local services remain accessible means a reduction in the dependence on private vehicles, reducing the number of vehicles on the road and their associated emissions which have an impact on local air quality and climate change.
3. Increase the use of local food and resources	Increasing the use of local food reduces the impact of associated food miles and therefore CO2 emissions.
4. Reduce the environmental impact of commercial waste	Feedback indicates that one area where local businesses can be more sustainable is by improving their recycling and waste management.

Sources:

* Climate Change Strategy can be found at: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16660>

* Local Transport Plan can be found via: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=842>

* Local Development Framework can be found at: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3225>

THEME: Healthier West Berkshire

Strategic Aims	Evidence supporting the need to achieve
1. Ensure children and young people can have a healthy lifestyle	<p>Data from West Berkshire Council Children's services and Berkshire West Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* both indicate significant concerns from schools on the growing number of pupils with mental health needs. This has a resulting effect on their learning, long-term outcomes and physical health. The use of drugs appears to be an increasing problem for some of the most vulnerable students.</p> <p>Chlamydia screening in West Berkshire in 2009 was one of the poorest nationally. In August 2010 the number of screens for Berkshire West (inc Reading and Wokingham) was 1103, which is still lower than the target number of 1625 per month. Also on sexual health, the reduction in teenage conception rates in West Berkshire is one of the lowest in the South East.</p>
2. Reduce the harmful impacts of alcohol on people and communities	<p>Alcohol and alcohol misuse has serious impacts on both the health and safety of West Berkshire (i.e. injury, disease, death, assault, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour etc). The Strategic Assessment* identifies that in 2009/10 of a total of 1747 Assaults, 35 percent (those with less serious injury or no injury, or affrays) or 612 were flagged on the crime recording system for having alcohol involved. The Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH), which covers the Berkshire West Thames Valley Police area, has highlighted that the drinking and fighting culture amongst 18 to 25 year olds has affected their workload and will continue to do so as long as this culture is encouraged. A multi-agency problem requires a multi-agency solution.</p>
3. Reduce the gap between the least and most healthy	<p>There are inequalities in health experience and health outcomes (i.e. gaps between those most and least healthy, including life expectancy), primarily related to deprivation and associated lifestyle factors.</p>
4. Improve the health and wellbeing of local people	<p>Berkshire West PCT's Strategic Plan* identifies that smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity are all major risk factors for the common causes of ill-health and mortality including cardiovascular disease and many cancers. There continues to be an urgent need to tackle lifestyle and risk factors such as smoking, alcohol, obesity, drug misuse and sexual health. There is a need for the effective prevention and early intervention of risk of cardiovascular problems and more effective cancer screening programmes.</p>
5. Promote the independence of older people	<p>The proportion of older people is expected to rise particularly sharply in West Berkshire, increasing the need for health and social care, with a notable increase in people affected by dementia. Long term planning for this is required in both health and social care.</p>

Sources:

*Berkshire West Joint Strategic Needs Assessment available from: http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk/_store/documents/b09-170d-jsna-west-berkshire.pdf

*The Strategic Assessment is conducted annually by the Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) to provide details of changes in levels of patterns of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse that have been perceived within West Berkshire. For more information on SCP, see: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1268>

* Berkshire West's Strategic Plan is available from: http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk/_store/documents/strategic-plan-2009-2014_jan2010.pdf

THEME: Prosperous West Berkshire

Strategic Aims	Evidence supporting the need to achieve
1. Increase knowledge and skills in local businesses (through training and support)	Data held in the Local Economic Assessment* shows that almost 99 percent of businesses in West Berkshire are Small or Medium Enterprises (SME's or small businesses with up to 50 employees). In addition there were 850 new business start-ups in West Berkshire in 2009 which is a drop from 2004 when there were 940 business start ups. There was also 915 'deaths' of businesses in 2009, which is the highest rate in 6 years. These statistics illustrate the need for business support and training for survival in the economic recovery.
2. Increase the number of residents employed locally	The Local Economic Assessment* states that there is an increasing need to bring local employers and training providers together, so that the necessary skills are available in the local labour market to support a vibrant local economy. Skills and labour gaps exist in certain key areas, particularly in the public sector, the construction industry and tourism sector. The aim is to reduce unemployment and enable employers to identify local people looking for local jobs.
3. Increase the skills of local people	The Local Economic Assessment shows that the working population of West Berkshire is relatively well qualified when compared to either the South East of England, or Great Britain as a whole. Despite the district's relatively good performance in education, considerable numbers of the working population (7.3%) have no qualifications; placing them at significant disadvantage. Training places for both young people and adult do exist but employers are hard to find particularly due to the high number of small businesses in West Berkshire. To increase the take up of apprenticeships amongst local employers, there is a need to advertise the benefits of apprenticeships to small businesses.
4. Ensure children and young people can maximise their individual potential	Education data from West Berkshire Council shows that at Key Stage 2 (age 7) the rate of improvement in children's achievement at school slows. There are gender gaps for boys in literacy and for girls in maths. There is also a larger than average gap in achievement of those receiving free school meals and their peers (throughout the school population). In the current economic climate, helping young people into Education Employment or Training (EET) is a top priority. In addition the full time education or training participation age will rise to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015.
5. Increase the economic prosperity of our Market Towns	Town centres play an important role for many people as places to find employment, shop, enjoy entertainment, leisure and cultural activities, and gain access to important transport routes (and therefore decreasing the need to travel by car). Because of this, government guidance promotes the town centres as an important asset to an area and the preferred location for investment and development.
6. Support and encourage the provision of appropriate, decent and sufficient housing	The Local Economic Assessment* identifies that a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows the demand for affordable housing is likely to rise as a consequence of economic growth. The level of housing planned in the Local Development Framework* for West Berkshire for the period 2006 - 2026 is 10,500 dwellings.

Sources:

* Local Economic Assessment was being drafted at the time of publication but will be available through:

www.westberks.gov.uk

*The Local Development Framework can be viewed at: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3225>

THEME: Safer West Berkshire

Strategic Aims	Evidence supporting the need to achieve
1. Improve the response to anti-social behaviour	The Strategic Assessment* identified that over the last three years reporting of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage to Thames Valley Police and arson to the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service has declined. Although the reasons for this are not known, data from the 2009 Residents' Attitude Survey showed that people do not report issues as they believe agencies will not be able to do anything about them.
2. Reduce the level of crime committed by known offenders	The Strategic Assessment* showed that during 2009/10 prolific offenders and recent prison releases were responsible for peaks of offending throughout the year and without effective monitoring and measures to prevent offending, there would have been further peaks and troughs in crime patterns. It also highlights the fact that effective offender management decreases the seriousness and volume of crime committed by prolific offenders
3. Reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse	Information held in the Strategic Assessment* shows that domestic abuse occurs among all sections of the community and throughout the whole district. There is a severe risk that it can be instrumental in family break up causing sociological issues and lead to crime, as it is one of the risk factors associated with offending amongst young people.
4. Improve public confidence in how crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled	The Strategic Assessment* identified that the 2009 Residents' Attitude Survey showed less residents thought that crime levels needed to be improved compared to the previous year. However attitudes expressed via local online fora showed a poor perception of the work undertaken to combat crime and anti-social behaviour. This could be partly due to communication issues as the Survey also showed that 72 percent of residents did not feel that they were well informed about the way Thames Valley Police and West Berkshire Council were tackling anti-social behaviour.
5. Reduce the level of crime committed by young people	Data in the Strategic Assessment* covering the period April 2009 - March 2010 shows that the ten most prolific young offenders committed 17.4 percent of all youth crime in West Berkshire and the top ten percent (34 individuals) committed 39.4 percent of all youth crime in West Berkshire. However, the proportion of young people worked with by the Youth Offending Team in full time education and employment has dropped by four percent over the last two years to 66.8 percent. This is a concern due to the strong link between involvement in education, training and employment and the reduced likelihood of further offending.
6. Ensure children & young people can experience safe parenting and healthy relationships	The number of referrals made to Children's Services has increased over the past two years by 20 percent and continues to rise, placing significant pressures on staff within the service. Data from Child Protection Conferences shows that since April 2009 Parental Domestic Violence has been a theme in 50 – 60 percent of Conferences. The nationally published report 'Grasping the Nettle', highlights the importance of good parenting in achieving successful outcomes for children and young people.

Source

*The Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) Strategic Assessment is conducted annually to provide details of changes in levels of patterns of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse that have been perceived within West Berkshire. For more information on SCP, see: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1268>

THEME: Stronger West Berkshire

Strategic Aims	Evidence supporting the need to achieve
1. Ensure resources are directed to the areas of most need	West Berkshire is an affluent district but has pockets of deprivation where the deprivation is multi-faceted and therefore requires a multi-agency approach. This strategy is intended to be long term and is targeted at the most deprived wards in the district (one of which is in the top 25 percent of the most deprived areas in England). The Child Poverty Act 2010 and associated local Child Poverty Strategy* supports work to tackle pockets of socio-economic deprivation in West Berkshire. Work has so far been targeted around Greenham.
2. Encourage and support communities to become stronger	The Coalition Government, elected in May 2010 articulated a desire to give “citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want”. Activities are well established and advanced in West Berkshire (e.g. through Community Planning) but there is a need to coordinate and strengthen this activity.
3. Protect and promote equality in the community	The Single Equality Act 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.
4. Encourage and support independent living for vulnerable people	“ <i>A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens</i> ” released by the Department of Health in November 2010 is focused on ensuring the best outcomes are achieved for those needing social care, their families and carers and the local community. Providing help and support to enable people to live independently for as long as possible empowers individuals to manage their own futures, improves their quality of life and sense of wellbeing and allows them to play a full and active role in their local community

Source

* West Berkshire Council and its partners have a duty to produce a Child Poverty Strategy to help tackle socio-economic deprivation, West Berkshire’s Strategy was being drafted at time of publication but will be available through: www.westberks.gov.uk

Section Two: The Changing Picture

Introduction

This section summarises the important factors shaping how the vision of improved quality of life in West Berkshire will be turned into reality.

Factors affecting West Berkshire

West Berkshire is predominantly a rural district, with a relatively strong local economy but the impact of the recent economic downturn is still being felt locally. This combined with a number of budgetary and policy announcements made by the Coalition Government means there are many challenges in delivering an improved quality of life. The following sets out the major influencing factors for West Berkshire.

The local economy

West Berkshire's economy is relatively strong, which should help it weather the ongoing impacts of the recent economic downturn. For example unemployment in West Berkshire is very low at around two percent, there are 7580 VAT registered businesses and a high number (99 percent) of local businesses are Small or Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's). In addition; skill levels are high, local earnings are higher than average and the horse racing industry is a unique strength, providing 1370 jobs and around £70 million to the economy.

This does not mean West Berkshire is without its challenges for economic recovery. They include the limitations of broadband internet access to rural areas, the need for business growth following the recession, and the need for more business investment in the district. In the housing market, although the percentage of house owner-occupiers is higher than the national average (74 percent compared to 69 percent), average house prices are high (in October 2010 was £213,100, compared to a national average of £160,167) and in April 2010, there were 4729 households registered on the Common Housing Register (CHR) for affordable housing. In terms of skills; the local population is generally well qualified (35.6 percent have NVQ level 4) but a small and significant number (7.3 percent) have no qualifications at all.

Finally, although West Berkshire ranks 329 out of 354 least deprived local authority areas, there are also pockets of deprivation largely clustered around Newbury, with other areas in Lambourn, Thatcham and Calcot. In these areas unemployment is often higher than the district average and skills levels are lower. These areas in particular require attention in tackling disadvantage.

Spending cuts

Shortly after its election in May 2010, the government announced mid-year cuts in spending to save £6.2 billion. This translated to an in-year reduction of £1.9 million for West Berkshire Council, a £5 million reduction in national 'New Dimension' funding for fire services and £3.4 million of in-year savings needed for Thames Valley Police. Alongside this, the Department of Health, although largely protected from cuts were required to make huge efficiency savings. Amongst the early announcements was a reduction in funding from Local Area Agreements which meant a cut of £1.6 million (from £3.2 million) to the West Berkshire Partnership to help deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Comprehensive Spending Review announced in October 2010 showed continuing spending cuts in the public sector. At an average of 25 percent cut over the remaining term of government (until 2015), cuts are spread evenly for some agencies (e.g. Police at four percent per annum) but not for others (e.g. cuts for Local Government are deepest in first two years). This provides an unprecedented level of challenge for all public sector agencies but will also have a serious knock-on effect for civil sector agencies with public sector contracts.

These dramatic cuts in spending have an impact on both organisations and partnerships to deliver basic services and improvements to local quality of life.

Policy changes

In addition to spending cuts, the government has made a series of announcements which will impact on the delivery of a greener, healthier, more prosperous, safer and stronger West Berkshire. They include the following:

- **Bonfire of the ‘quangos’.** The government announced a huge cull of quangos (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) to help improve accountability and cut costs. The impact of this locally is that a number of functions will change hands or stop. For example, in the 192 public bodies which are to be abolished and the 118 that will be merged, the Audit Commission, which had hitherto inspected local government and the NHS will come to an end by 2013. West Berkshire is therefore no longer directed by the ‘Comprehensive Area Assessment’ inspection regime.
- **End of Regional Government.** The October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed that the Government Offices for the Regions will close at the end of March 2011. Responsibilities for the Government of the South East (GOSE) have therefore transferred back to government departments.
- **Delivery of Economic Development.** The Regional Development Agencies (RDA), who deliver economic development programmes are to be abolished by 2012. Some of the functions of the RDA’s will move back to government departments but new ‘Local Enterprise Partnerships’ (LEP) will also take on some functions. ‘Thames Valley Berkshire’ will be the LEP covering Berkshire; new relationships will need to be established with this to ensure West Berkshire can share in any benefits.
- **Welfare Reforms.** In November 2010 the Government published ‘Universal Credit: welfare that works’ to lay out its plans to reform the working age benefits system. The aim of this is to increase the rewards of work and reduce the risks people face when moving into work. This welfare reform will be felt by residents receiving Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowances.
- **Social Housing Reform.** In November 2010, the Government announced plans for a reform of social housing which will shift power to local government. The key reforms include flexible tenancies, lasting a minimum of two years for new tenants and that Councils will be able to set their own rules about who qualifies to go on the social housing list. Also, from April 2011, there will be a new ‘Affordable Rent’, which will offer fixed-term tenancies at a rent higher than social rent, with social landlords able to set rents at up to 80 percent of local market rents. Grants to local authorities from the Homes and Communities Agency are to be reduced by 60 percent, the impact of this locally is a reduction in grant available for social tenancies.
- **Restructuring of the NHS.** The ‘Health and Social Care Bill’, which is set to be introduced, paves the way for GPs to be given control of most of the NHS budget from 2013. The NHS system in England will be reorganised, giving GP consortiums the responsibilities currently held by Primary Care Trust’s (PCT’s). Under the plans, all 10 strategic health authorities and 152 PCT’s would be abolished and an independent board will be given responsibility for setting standards and holding GPs to account. Full roll out of these plans are planned for completion by April 2013. Arrangements of local GP consortiums are yet to be agreed, but communication with these structures will be essential in ensuring outcomes are met for a healthy West Berkshire.
- **Health and Wellbeing Boards.** Linked to the reorganisation of the National Health Service, the white paper on health outlines plans to build on the wellbeing power of local authorities through new arrangements for Health and Wellbeing Boards. The Boards will join-up commissioning of NHS services, social care and health improvement. It is anticipated that local authorities would oversee Health and Wellbeing Boards. The geographic coverage of such Boards are not yet

clear but they will need strong relationships between local authorities and GP consortia as they develop.

- **Police Reform.** A Bill was introduced to the House of Commons in November 2010 which includes provisions for replacing police authorities with directly elected police and crime commissioner. The Bill also proposes more powers for local authorities and police. With these changes, the links between locally elected commissioners and local Community Safety Partnerships will be crucial. Further to this; Thames Valley Police are abolishing the Basic Command Unit structure, this means the West Berkshire Safer Communities Partnership will be even more important for identifying and addressing local community safety related issues.
- **School reform.** School reforms have been introduced including the creation of Free Schools and the encouragement of more schools to become academies. Academies are publicly funded schools which operate outside of local authority control and have more freedom than other state schools over their finances, the curriculum, and teachers' pay and conditions.
- **Performance information.** The national performance reporting framework is currently in a state of flux, with the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and withdrawal of the National Indicator Set (along with the Place Survey). These were a set of measures for local government and their partners. This is due to be replaced with a single comprehensive set of performance measures in April 2011 but there is not as yet any guidance on how collection or comparison of these will take place. While much of the data collection for national indicators is still being undertaken locally and reported to different government departments there is now no centralised method for collection or comparing performance across areas. This may become clearer in coming months but in the meantime the Council and partners continue to monitor and manage their own performance locally.
- **Big Society.** Part of the coalition's manifesto involved proposals to ensure 'society' (i.e. families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities) would be bigger and stronger than before. The vision around 'Big Society' involves people and communities having more power and responsibility to respond to the social, political and economic challenges Britain faces. All sectors within West Berkshire have a part to play in realising the Big Society, much of which is already occurring (e.g. through Parish and Town Council activity, individual and organisational volunteering and Community-Led Planning). There is a need to set out what the Big Society is in West Berkshire and encourage people to take part in their communities.
- **Localism Bill.** Published in December 2010, the Localism Bill makes provisions to help deliver Big Society objectives. This includes giving local people and organisations the right to buy community assets (e.g. shops and libraries) and allowing them to question how services are being run, and potentially take them over. This has the potential to have a fundamental impact on what local services are available and who delivers them in West Berkshire. It also includes more power to influence planning decisions, decide where new homes should go and protect green spaces, which could significantly affect the delivery of housing and supporting infrastructure in West Berkshire.

Section Three: Turning the Vision into Reality

Introduction

Realising the Vision for a greener, healthier, more prosperous, safer and stronger West Berkshire requires a joined-up approach. The efforts of communities, businesses, voluntary organisations and public organisations all help deliver the vision. It is the job of the West Berkshire Partnership to have an overview of, and coordinate, activity in the achievement of improved quality of life for everyone.

Who does what?

Section one of this strategy articulated the vision and strategic aims for West Berkshire. Previously, the West Berkshire Partnership attempted to draw together all of the activity to help realise this vision (whether being done in partnership or not). In doing so, the Partnership achieved a huge amount; its successes and achievements can be found in Appendix A. It is however now recognised that not everything is best achieved through the Partnership framework. The West Berkshire Partnership now only focuses on areas where it can add-value, over and above that which organisations would do alone.

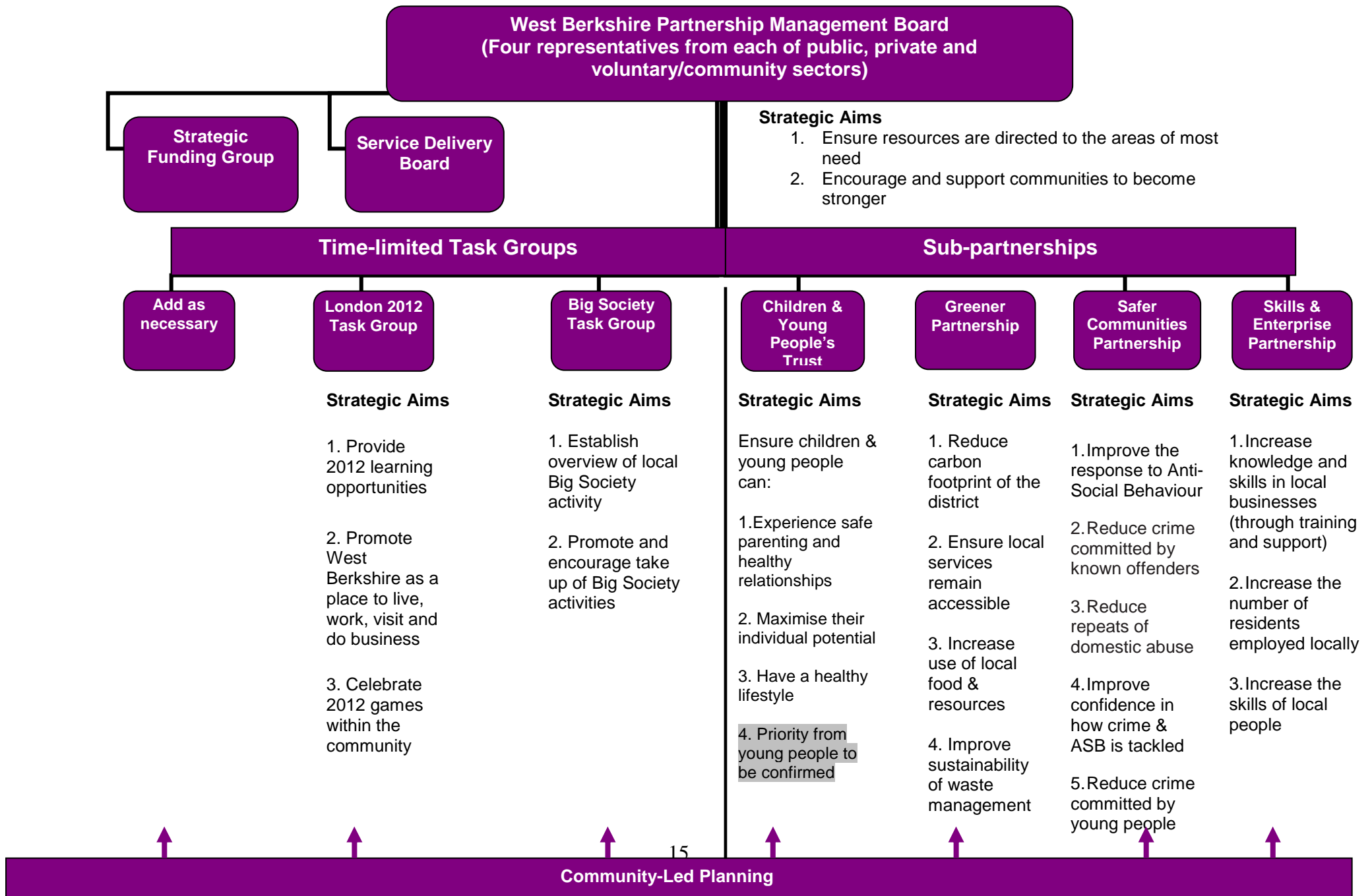
Appendix B outlines which organisations or groups are working hard to deliver which aspects of the vision. This includes local organisations, groups and partnerships (e.g. Newbury Town Centre Partnership and Thatcham Town Council who work to ensure the economic vibrancy of the district's retail centres).

The West Berkshire Partnership

The West Berkshire Partnership is responsible for overseeing many of the strategic aims for improving local quality of life. The structure, as shown in the diagram below, currently has a Management Board, four sub-partnerships and two task groups. The Partnership is supported by numerous communities across West Berkshire that are active in identifying local needs and producing 'Community-Led Plans'. Currently 42 Plans have been completed which cover 44 communities.

To ensure the vision and the achievement of its supporting strategic aims are properly managed, the West Berkshire Partnership and all sub-partnerships have a series of action plans. This is where the detailed work for achieving the outcomes is set out and can be found in the accompanying document '*Partnership Action West Berkshire*'. Those responsible for the action plans monitor their progress and report any problems to the West Berkshire Partnership Management Board.

West Berkshire Partnership Structure and Strategic Aims 2011/12



Appendix A: Achievements to date

Information set out below illustrates the achievements and detail of how working in Partnership has helped in working towards the Vision.

Greener

Strategic Aim: “Ensure local services remain accessible by walking or cycling”

Project: Biker’s Breakfasts

Details: During the summer term 2010 St Nicolas, Mortimer St Mary and Parsons Down Junior schools held biker’s breakfasts, supported by the School Travel Plan Advisor. Over 70 pupils cycled to School in Mortimer, supported by the local Police Community Support Officer and many parents who escorted the pupils down the hill from the Horse and Groom pub. All parents and pupils who took part in received croissants, fruit and drinks on arrival at Mortimer St Mary’s Junior School.

A similar breakfast awaited the mass of cyclists who made their way to St Nicolas Junior School in Newbury. Pupils were joined by the Mayor of Newbury who cycled through the playground in his full chain and robes and addressed the pupils to keep up cycling to school.

Strategic Aim: “Ensure local services remain accessible by walking or cycling”

Project: Steposaurus

Details: Steposaurus is a reward scheme designed to encourage more families and children to regularly walk, scoot or cycle to Nursery. Developed with Victoria Park and Hungerford Nursery Schools the scheme follows the success of Go Kinetic at encouraging children to walk to school. Children are given a Steposaurus card, and each time they walk to school they are rewarded with a sticker to stick on the card. Children are also able to collect hi-visibility zip-tags and snap wraps and after 15 walks to nursery the children receive a free activity session at a local leisure centre. The scheme is now run by many schools with nursery departments who felt that Go Kinetic was a bit too complicated for the under 5s to participate in but what to encourage walking to school at an early age to build up good habits for the future.

Car use to school since 2009 has dropped to 36% (from 38%), with walking and cycling to primary school increasing from 52% in 2009 to 54% in 2010.

Healthier

Strategic Aims: Ensure Children and Young People can “Be healthy”

Project: Health visitors working with children's centres

Details: At Burghfield and Area Children’s Centre, members of staff work closely with the health visitors to provide consistent information for families with regard to being healthy. The family support workers were able to run a session to talk about this and demonstrate cooking some basic recipes that families could then sample at the session.

This has been taken this one step further and the Children’s Centre is now in the process of working with Newbury College who will run a free 5 week “healthy lunchboxes” course for our families at the centre.

At Tilehurst and Area Children’s Centre, staff work alongside Health Visitors at the Purley Clinic, as an outreach group. This has led to the Health Team now using the Children’s Centre as a base for development checks on young children. This has benefits for everyone, as it saves time on visits for Health Visitors and introduces families to the Children’s Centre.

Through referrals from Health visitors to the Children’s Centre Family Support workers, support can be given to families on a number of issues helping to improve the emotional well-being of the whole family.

Strategic Aims: “Reduce health inequality” and Ensure Children and Young People can “Be healthy”

Project: Feel Good Fortnight

Details: Feel Good Fortnight is now becoming an annual event to raise awareness about activities that are available across West Berkshire which benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives and works in the area. The event aims to tackle health inequalities by targeting people not using traditional ‘health’ related services and making opportunities accessible to all.

A key aim of this event was also to encourage local community groups and organisations to promote themselves and engage with their communities. In 2009, over 200 events took place, involving 50 organisations promoting activities from Tai Chi to laughing workshops and at least 4,500 people took part in at least one event.

Prosperous

1. Advice for future Learning - Newbury College has held 3 Advice Days with an average of 150 attendees on each day.
2. Business events - Newbury College has run 3 events for small businesses including responding to redundancy.
3. Apprentices achieving level 1 or 2 in Literacy - 68 learners attended Newbury College.
4. Lifelong Learning - First Steps courses in CV writing and educational options. 50 people attended. WBC, JCP and Newbury College involved.
5. Local Apprenticeships and Train to Gain contracts leading to Level 3 qualifications – 273 learners. WBTC, WBC, Newbury College and involved.
6. Enrolment at Newbury College onto level 3 qualifications – 245 learners
7. NVQ 4 qualifications – Newbury College and WBTC have many learners each year of Management and Health & Social Care qualifications at Level 4. Target of 100 learners has been exceeded.
8. People into work placements - At least 30 learners have entered the workplace since April 2010. (Newbury College)
9. Employment Workshops for over 55's - Newbury College ran 3 workshops as part of a DWP funded project
10. Greenham Locality Project Mobile - JCP mobile unit and other partners held an event in Greenham on 15th July 2010. JCP are now holding advice sessions in the community centre in Greenham once per month.
11. Jobs Fayre – planned for May 2011. This will enable employers to exhibit their businesses and showcase any potential vacancies.
12. Rapid Response service – Advice and guidance sessions for those being made redundant. Companies supported include Abacus (10 people), John Lewis (10 people), Institute of Animal Health (23 people), Vodafone (25 people) and West Berkshire Council (offered to 74 employees)

Strategic Aim: “Take action to reduce worklessness” and “Improve access to information on training, employment and business advice”

Project: JCP Mobile Unit

Details: The Job Centre Plus mobile unit aims to take training, education and work options to the community. In partnership with other providers such as Newbury College, WBTC and WBEBP, the bus has a programme of visits and events which makes targets communities that traditionally do not engage with learning.

The Greenham Locality project has hosted the mobile unit on monthly basis during 2010 and target groups such as NEETs, single mothers, people with disabilities and those who have been out of work for some time. It is evident that these groups find it difficult to access learning and work options and that taking the service to them, is hugely beneficial.

Strategic Aim: “Tacking the effects of the Recession”

Project: Rapid response Service

Details: The Rapid Response Service has been delivered across West Berkshire and aimed to offer advice to people who were going to be made redundant, prior to their redundancy.

Working with the employer and the employee, Job Centre Plus, WBC and Newbury College have given advice on training and education options, alternative work and career options and Business Link training for those who may consider self employment.

The service proved to be well received and prepared those who attended for the alternatives available to them.

Safer

1. All crime reduced by 14.5% during April – December 2010 compared to the same period in the previous year and domestic burglary reduced by 23%
2. The Newbury and West Berkshire Neighbourhood Warden schemes are being expanded into Speen and Pangbourne parishes (from April 2011) with funding from these two parish councils.
3. Thatcham Vision Youth Club was launched in April 2010 with input from Thatcham Neighbourhood Wardens. The club is open fortnightly and engages with young people of all ages.
4. Anti-social Behaviour Service Standards setting out how victims will be supported, were produced following work with local residents and partners.
5. West Berkshire Council launched a Domestic Abuse Policy for staff and managers setting out how staff who are victims of domestic abuse will be supported.
6. The West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy was launched setting out what service residents experiencing domestic abuse can expect to receive.
7. A Safer Communities Partnership booklet was distributed to over 75% of West Berkshire households in February 2011. The booklet was fully funded by advertising and provided crime reduction information.
8. A Partnership Action Week was held in Tilehurst in June 2010, resulting in a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.
9. The Neighbourhood Wardens ran anti-dog fouling campaigns over 3 months during summer 2010 in Tilehurst, Holybrook, Purley and Theale, which led to a substantial reduction in dog fouling.
10. A Holiday Card was distributed during July 2010 to various retail outlets advising people how to protect their homes whilst on holiday.
11. A Third Party Reporting System was launched in Newbury in October 2010 to enable people with disabilities to report crime and anti-social behaviour anonymously.
12. A Safe Haven scheme was launched with retailers in Newbury Town Centre in October 2010, providing people with disabilities a safe place to go if they felt frightened or intimidated.

13. A Total Rob Out DVD was launched in December 2010. Based on the television series Total Wipe Out, it provides useful crime reduction advice and will be used at community events.
14. A drama competition was run with schools during autumn 2010 focussing on the consequences of being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
15. Radio campaigns highlighting how to get help for domestic abuse were run during the World Cup and over Christmas 2010, resulting in over 400% increase in hits in December 2010 compared to December 2009 on the domestic abuse website.
16. The Partnership Analyst gave a presentation at the 8th National Crime Mapping Conference in Manchester in June 2010 on the analytical work undertaken to identify our most prolific offenders.
17. Variation to Gating Order at Speen Lodge Court agreed which will allow non-residents of Speen Lodge Court to apply for a key to the gate that restricts access to the alley way.
18. The Safer Schools Partnership developed and rolled out "Crime & Consequences" workshops targeted at Yr 8 students from various West Berkshire schools. These were delivered in schools with the more challenging students.
19. The Safer Schools Partnership worked with a Police Community Support Officer to develop packages on safety aimed at junior school students to help them with their transition to secondary school.
20. The Safer Schools Partnership ran Alco Concern Workshops at various venues in West Berkshire to raise issues in relation to alcohol and safe drinking.

Strategic Aim: "Reduce crime and Anti-Social behaviour"

Project: Anti Dog Fouling Campaign

Details: The West Berkshire Neighbourhood Wardens identified dog fouling as being particularly problematic in a number of areas in each of the four parishes they patrol. Whilst they regularly clear up dog fouling, in an attempt to deal with the problem, they implemented a campaign across all four Parishes to raise public awareness of the hazards of dog fouling, and reduce the ensuing mess. The project involved a number of local partners, as well as the Dog Warden, and ran from June to October 2010. It included anti dog-fouling campaign patrols undertaken at various times during the day, promotional literature such as posters and leaflets obtained from ENCAMS (Keep Britain Tidy) and a supply of foul bags and antibacterial hand gel which were handed out to dog-walkers. As a result, incidences of dog-fouling in hot spot areas reduced significantly in all areas throughout the course of the campaign, from 148 in June, to 15 in October.

Strategic Aim: "Reduce crime and Anti-Social Behaviour"

Project: West Berkshire Schools, Crime & Consequences Drama Competition

Details: The purpose of the competition was to engage Year 9 students in producing crime reduction messages and then relaying them to their peers through drama. Theale Green, The Downs, Park House, Kennet, Denefield and Trinity Schools took part, drawing on the help of their local Neighbourhood Police Team in the development of their plays, which they then had to perform to the rest of the school.

The benefits of the project were that it engaged young people at all academic levels and provided a platform for them to discuss crime and its consequences. This resulted in them delivering a very powerful message to their peers across West Berkshire around the fact that every action has a reaction, the need to think ahead and not give in to peer pressure. This was all achieved with minimal resources and culminated with all six schools performing their plays at the Corn Exchange in November 2010 where the first prize was awarded to Park House School, second prize to Trinity School and third prize to Kennet School. The competition was supported by Thames Valley Police, the Safer Communities Partnership and West Berkshire Council Trading Standards, Education and Licensing Services.

Strategic Aim: “Reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse”

Project: Giving Tree

Details: The Giving Tree aimed to provide Christmas presents for victims of domestic abuse and their children and ran for the two week period before Christmas. This was the second year that the initiative had been run at Newbury College, with the Christmas tree being donated this year by Tree World in Ufton Nervet.

The Giving Tree was decorated with white ribbons and silver gift tags, with each one containing information on a person or child being supported by Berkshire Women’s Aid. The white ribbon signified a pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about domestic abuse and students and staff from Newbury College took a label and a ribbon and then bought a present for the person on the label and handed it back in. This resulted in 4 black sacks full of presents being received, all of which were delivered to the recipient before Christmas. A survey undertaken at the college recently of a snapshot of young people has shown that they have a very good understanding of what domestic abuse is and who to turn to for support.

Strategic Aim: Ensure Children and Young People “Stay Safe” and “Make a Positive Contribution”

Project: Crime & Consequences Workshops

Details: The main project with Safer Schools Partnership (SSP) was to develop and rolled out “Crime & Consequences” workshops targeted at Yr 8 students who had been highlighted by the schools as getting in trouble both in and out of school.

With parental support the SSP officer worked with small groups of Yr8 students from John O’Gaunt in Hungerford through to Denefield in Tilehurst. These were small series of 5 workshops that were delivered in schools centring on bullying, anti social behaviour, alternatives to mainstream education (working with the PRU Head), crime and the criminal justice system. Schools also included Trinity, Theale Green and Kennet with each package adapted to meet the need of the students / school. Attendance and performance in school tends to improve across the students that are worked with. In the case of John O Gaunt, all the students that were worked with have been able to turn things around which the school were really pleased about.

Stronger

Strategic Aim: “Reducing the harmful impacts of alcohol on people and communities”

Project: Alco Concern Workshops

Details: Alco Concern Workshops were initially developed to reach young people who had been caught 3 times by Police with alcohol. This was a partnership between the Police, the Ambulance Service, Trading Standards and the Council. Initially young people were asked to attend an evening session with parents but aside one session ran in the YOT these were not being terribly well attended. So the package was redesigned and taken directly into the schools.

So far Alco Concern Workshops have been delivered to Yr9, Yr 10 and Yr 11 in both Park House School and John O Gaunt in Hungerford. Willink School have expressed an interest for after Easter as have Kennet, and several other schools are planning on getting dates in the diary. They get an input on the Law, the impact on the wider community, the strain on all Emergency Services (& what they could be dealing with instead!) and what can be done to tackle crime around Alcohol. Into the future and we are looking at ways to develop something educational for parents.

Strategic Aim: “Supporting targeted areas and communities”

Project: Family Intervention Project (FIP)

Details: The FIP was funded through government grants. The FIP provides intensive multi-agency support to families with complex needs and whose behaviours impacts negatively on their own lives and those of their neighbours and communities. Local bids for two types of FIP were successful – one aimed at working with families involved in anti-social behaviour and another for families at risk of losing tenancies.

The successful bids included a wide range of partners, many of who work day to day with the families who access the project. The main partners are West Berkshire Council, Sovereign Housing and West Berkshire Primary Care Trust. Other partners include the police, housing services, drug and alcohol misuse services, Job Centre Plus, Benefits Agency, Schools and other education providers, Probation Service, Safer Communities Team and many others.

Working intensively with focused referral criteria and clear change targets for families the project is enabling a range of positive outcomes for families including: reducing offending behaviour, maintaining tenancies, improving school attendance, parent participation in support provision not previously accessed and improvement in family relationships.

Strategic Aim: “Support targeted areas and communities”

Project: Greater Greenham Project

Details: The Greater Greenham Locality project is in its second year, with the following successes to date:

- The Greenham Community Youth Project re-launched in February 2010 with a programme of activities on 4 nights a week. In the first week over 80 young people attended the youth club.
- The Playbuilder scheme allocated £200,000 to re furbish 4 play areas in Greenham at Bodin Gardens, Christie Heights, Pigeons Farm Rd and Greyberry Copse.
- Four newsletters have been published.
- An Intensive Financial Advisor is working with targeted families to help resolve debt and provide financial support.
- Several community events have been held including a Halloween party and Christmas craft fayre.
- A Greenham Facebook Page has been established and is becoming a useful resource.
- Work on the physical infrastructure (parking areas and walls) in the Nightingales estate has been started.
- A Health Trainer service has started which is allowing over 16s to self refer for health checks.

Appendix B: Governance

The table below shows the lead Partnership or organisation(s) in delivering each of the Strategic Aims in this Strategy. The diagram following shows how the West Berkshire Partnership structures itself to deliver Strategic Aims it is responsible for. It is recognised that the activities of communities themselves, via community planning play a vital role in helping deliver all of these Strategic Aims.

Strategic Aims	Led by
Greener	
1. Reduce the carbon footprint of the district	Greener Partnership
2. Ensure local services remain accessible	Greener Partnership
3. Increase the use of local food and resources	Greener Partnership
4. Reduce the environmental impact of commercial waste	Greener Partnership
Healthier	
1. Ensure children and young people can have a healthy lifestyle	Children and Young People's Trust
2. Reduce the harmful impacts of alcohol on people and communities	Safer Communities Partnership
3. Reduce the gap between the least and most healthy	Berkshire West PCT/West Berkshire Council
4. Improve the health and wellbeing of local people	Berkshire West PCT/West Berkshire Council
5. Promote the independence of older people	Berkshire West PCT/West Berkshire Council
Prosperous	
1. Increase knowledge and skills in local businesses (through training and support)	Skills and Enterprise Partnership
2. Increase the number of residents employed locally	Skills and Enterprise Partnership
3. Increase the skills of local people	Skills and Enterprise Partnership
4. Ensure children and young people can maximise their individual potential	Children and Young People's Trust
5. Increase the economic prosperity of our Market Towns	Town Councils/Newbury Town Centre Partnership/West Berkshire Council
6. Support and encourage the provision of appropriate, decent and sufficient housing	West Berkshire Council

Strategic Aims	Led by
Safer	
1. Improve the response to anti-social behaviour	Safer Communities Partnership
2. Reduce level of crime committed by known offenders	Safer Communities Partnership
3. Reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse	Safer Communities Partnership
4. Improve public confidence in how crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled	Safer Communities Partnership
5. Reduce the level of crime committed by young people	Safer Communities Partnership
6. Ensure children & young people can experience safe parenting and healthy relationships	Children and Young People's Trust
Stronger	
1. Ensure resources are directed to the areas of most need	WBP Management Board
2. Encourage and support communities to become stronger	WBP Management Board
3. Protect and promote equality in the community	All statutory service providers
4. Encourage and support independent living for vulnerable people	West Berkshire Council

Appendix C: Inclusion Statement

The West Berkshire Partnership recognises that inequality and disadvantage can occur as a result of a variety of circumstances and can impact profoundly on the lives of both individuals and communities.

The West Berkshire Partnership and its constituent organisations will therefore work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, tackle social inclusion and promote equality and good relations within all sections of the community. The West Berkshire Partnership further believes that promoting equal opportunities is everyone's responsibility, from children in the playground through to executives in the boardroom. The organisations working across the Partnership are committed to delivering services and carrying out activities that do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, race, disability, geography, immigration status, social, cultural or economic status, nationality, faith, religious beliefs, responsibility for dependents or sexuality.

A key focus therefore of this Sustainable Community Strategy is the drive to deliver improved outcomes for the district's most vulnerable people; this reflects our commitment to tackling social exclusion across West Berkshire.

All people should have a fair and equal chance to have a healthy, safe, successful, positive and happy life.