



NOTICE OF MEETING

**Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday 22 June 2010, 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell**

To: Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Councillors Mrs Barnard, Beadsley, Bowers, Finch, Finnie, Mrs Fleming, Leake, Mrs McCracken and McLean

cc: Substitute Members of the Panel

Councillors Mrs Angell, Mrs Beadsley, Brossard, Harrison, Mrs Shillcock, Thompson and Turrell

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

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Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday 22 June 2010, 7.30 pm

**Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House,
Bracknell**

AGENDA

Page No

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.

4. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 9 March 2010.

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5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest, including the existence and nature of the party whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

6. **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.

Performance Monitoring

7. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

To consider the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Performance Monitoring Report for the fourth quarter of 2009/10 (January to March) relating to the Environment, Culture and Communities Department.

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Overview & Policy Development

8. **SUPPORTING PEOPLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT**

To consider the update report of the Supporting People Working Group monitoring the implementation of the Supporting People programme.

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9. **COUNCIL TAX AND HOUSING BENEFITS WORKING GROUP REPORT**
To consider the report of the Working Group reviewing the implementation of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan. 107 - 108
10. **SEVERE WEATHER WORKING GROUP REPORT**
To consider the report of the Working Group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to review the Council's response to the severe weather conditions during December 2009 and January 2010. 109 - 130
11. **"BE PREPARED" - REPORT ON PREPAREDNESS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES**
The report of a working group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel established to review preparedness for public health emergencies is attached for this Panel's information as its coverage includes emergency planning and environmental health matters which fall within the remit of this Panel.. 131 - 216
- Holding the Executive to Account**
12. **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**
To consider forthcoming items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to environment, culture and communities. 217 - 224

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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

09 MARCH 2010

7.30 - 8.55 PM



Present:

Councillors Finnie (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Barnard, Beadsley, Finch, Mrs Fleming, Leake and Mrs McCracken

Executive Members:

Councillors Mrs Ballin, Mrs Hayes and McCracken

Also Present:

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Scrutiny)
Janet Dowlman, Head of Environmental Services
Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture
Jane Eaton, Chief Performance & Resources Officer
Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing
Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport
Steve Loudoun, Chief Officer: Environment & Public Protection
Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture & Communities
Emma Silverton, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

50. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 12 January 2010 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

Matter Arising

Although there had been discussions with Parish and Town Councils concerning dog control, the Council decision on 03 March 2010 had been to make the post of Dog Warden redundant from 01 April 2010.

51. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs Barnard declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive member for Children and Young People.

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection and the Chairman of the Cultural Partnership.

52. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

53. Performance Monitoring Report

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities gave a presentation in

respect of departmental performance with reference to the Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) for the 3rd quarter of 2009/10 ending 31 December 2009. The presentation outlined the Department's revenue and finances at January 2010. Staffing issues, key highlights and the forward look were also included.

The Department had been working hard to identify additional economies in 2009/10 to balance the budget and offset pressures caused by the recession and severe weather events. It was predicted that the Environment, Culture and Communities Department would not exceed their budget for 2009/10.

The Panel noted that there was a £2,000 change in the Gross Revenue Budget. The Net Revenue Budget was £35,939,000 with major variances totalling £126,000 which included; a fee generated from film recording at the Look Out, reduced income from Easthampstead Park Conference Centre, in years savings from the Libraries Book Fund and a smaller than anticipated spend on Landfill Tax.

Capital Finance as at January 2010 was £11,863.10, with an anticipated spend of 64.03%. It was reported that London Road dualling was completed 6 weeks ahead of schedule and under budget by £160,000, contributing to an underspend of 2.55%. Capital schemes identified for carry forwards included:

- South Hill Park Grounds Restoration Project
- Three legged Cross Junction Improvement
- Help to Buy a Home Schemes
- Bracknell Leisure Centre Roundabout Capacity Improvements
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Resurfacing Highway

The average vacancy factor for the Department was 10.60% which was lower than the previous levels for the same period and reflected stability in the Department. The number of Full Time Equivalent's on sick leave was lower for the quarter than for the same period in 2008, reflecting active management of staff sickness.

It was reported that 'Sport, Leisure and Culture' were sited most often in the Neighbourhood Consultation Survey 2009, as what residents liked best about living in the area. This was followed by 'Access to Nature' and 'Parks and Countryside'.

The Director highlighted key areas in the Department's forward look. It was noted that the Cultural Services Section were using an Improvement Toolkit which would be externally assessed to identify any improvements that could be made. An additional £200,000 had been allocated for highway repairs. Consultation of the Site Allocation Development Plan was underway. This was an important document that would define the shape of the borough for the next 10 years.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Issues investigated by Trading Standards included fake England football shirts.
- The reduction in residents sending waste to landfill should be highlighted to encourage residents to continue reducing waste.
- Registered Social Landlords were looking to provide rented accommodation at 80% of the open market rent to diversify tenure on new developments. This would allow tenants to access mortgages with more ease in the future and would not result in implications for the Council.

- It was planned to allow BFC, My Choice card holders to pay council debt via the PayZone using their e+ card. This was being implemented to replace the swipe card provided by Bracknell Forest Homes which was previously used by tenants of temporary accommodation to pay council debt.
- Although they did not win, the e+ Smartcard Team were pleased to be nominated for an award in the e-Government National Awards.
- Section 106 funding used to part fund Whitegrove Library refurbishments had been allocated before new procedures were put in place to consult with Ward Members on the allocation of Section 106 monies.
- The Car Park Management Contract evaluation to be reported to the Executive in March 2010 was a possible missed opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to input on a decision before it was taken by the Executive. It was agreed that raising areas for scrutiny input needed to be identified at an earlier stage if possible.
- The number of Lektrievers, which were large metal filing systems, was to be reduced in Time Square.
- Details of the outcome of the investigations in to food poisoning cases linked to local takeaway premises was requested by Councillor Beadsley.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Housing and Council Tax Benefit Working Group would have an opportunity to look at the work of the Benefits Customer Focus Group held on 26 November 2009 at their next meeting due to be held in April 2010.
- The Department had received 40 Freedom of Information requests during the quarter which were processed by the relevant officers and could take up a large amount of resources to fulfil. It was requested that members be provided with further information regarding Freedom of Information requests made to the Council. It was suggested that this may be a matter for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

The Panel congratulated officers and the Director on their successful management of the Department's performance and budget in the third quarter, particularly for the extra work undertaken to provide services during the severe weather.

54. **Waste Satisfaction Survey**

The Panel received a presentation from Janet Dowlman, Head of Environmental Services in respect of the results of the Bracknell Forest Waste Satisfaction Survey and Waste Collection Analysis by the re3 waste disposal partnership.

A Waste Satisfaction Survey was undertaken in November 2009 in response to the poor waste satisfaction results of the Place Survey 2008 to help the department obtain a clear understanding of residents' perceptions and to identify key areas of dissatisfaction and any barriers to recycling.

It was thought that the reasons for the poor results were; that Longshot Lane was closed, it had only been 2 years since refuse collection had changed from weekly to fortnightly and separate boxes were used for paper and card.

Improvements that had taken place since the Place Survey in 2008 included; Comingled collections of Kerbside recyclables from December 2008, the redeveloped Longshot Lane facility fully opened from July 2009 and improvements to recycling bring sites.

Key results from the survey and comparisons with the 2008 survey were:

- From 3,500 surveys issued in both cases, there was a response rate of 47% in 2008 compared with 46% in 2009.
- Overall satisfaction with refuse collection had increased from 55% to 70%.
- The perception the refuse collection had got worse over the last 3 years had fallen from 47% to 23%.
- 91% of respondents used the Council's kerbside collection to recycle, with 82% satisfied with the service.
- 62% thought Longshot Lane had improved over the last 3 years.
- 49% thought recycling sites had improved over the last 3 years.
- 28% thought garden waste collection had improved with 42% indicating it had stayed the same.

Conclusions drawn from the survey were that overall levels of recycling in Bracknell Forest were good with kerbside recycling having a high level of satisfaction. Further information about specific items that could or could not be recycled was needed as results showed respondent satisfaction and participation was linked with information available. There was greater satisfaction with refuse collection than in 2008.

A joint Waste Analysis was undertaken in October / November 2009 with re3 partners using MEL research to analyse residual waste for recyclables, contamination of kerbside recycling, bags of waste taken to Longshot Lane, street sweepings and litter bin waste.

Acorn Groups were used to compare the waste analysis with the socio demographics in the borough. Key trends highlighted from the analysis included:

- There was a high level of garden waste in residual bins, particularly in Acorn 1 – wealthy achievers.
- There was a high level of paper and cardboard in residual bins, particularly in Acorn 5 – hard pressed.
- There was a high level of contaminated glass in recycling containers particularly in Acorn groups 3 – comfortably off, and 4 – moderate means.
- The waste generated across all groups had dropped by 7.4% between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and was predicted to drop again for 2009/10.

Analysis of street sweepings and litter bins showed that 36% of litter bin waste was recyclable and 87% of street sweepings were recyclable. With 2.5 tonnes of street sweepings collected annually, developing a process to recycle this waste would reduce landfill tax paid by the Council.

As a result of the two surveys the department would be targeting the poor performing areas, working with re3 on joint initiatives such as leaflets and posters explaining which recyclables should go in which containers. Local focus would be on Crown Wood and Great Hollands, with community groups and schools being used to raise awareness.

Arising from the subsequent discussion the follow points were noted:

- Only certain types of plastic could be recycled. The majority of plastic bottles could be recycled however plastic tubs could not currently be recycled. It was noted that the lids from bottles needed to be removed however the plastic ring could be left in place.
- It was not known if the large level of paper and card found in the residual waste bins was contaminated by plastic or another non-recyclable material, and therefore could not be recycled.

- Further investigation of the survey data was required to identify specific areas of recycling that groups were having difficulty understanding.
- The Council were not intending to chip refuse or recycling bins in Bracknell Forest.
- Dual purpose recycling bins were to be installed in the town centre, neighbourhood shops and the train station to increase recycling of public litter.
- It was reported that further details of Acorn Groups may be available through the 'Up My Street' website. Further to a question concerning the validity of the Acorn assessment to Ward level, the Panel was advised that officers had a related report from the Acorn Group and there was a general report in respect of the entire country.
- It was reported that many European countries were ahead of the UK in their commitment to recycling as they had focused on waste from an earlier stage. A relatively recent increase in funding and targets for recycling in the UK had meant a shift in focus towards recycling in local authorities.
- It was suggested that it was possible to recycle some contaminants, which was being trialed in some parts of the country. Councillor Leake referred to a newspaper article relating to the recycling of contaminated materials.
- It was noted that there was emerging technology to increase recycling capacity however much of this still needed testing and was currently very expensive.
- The council was working towards encouraging manufacturers to produce recyclable containers to make it easier for the public to understand what could be recycled.

The Panel thanked the Head of Environmental Services for her presentation and congratulated the team for their achievements so far.

55. Working Groups Update

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Working Groups Update Report.

56. Indicative Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed its indicative work programme for 2010/11, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

57. Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Progress Report

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Overview and scrutiny activity over the period November 2009 to January 2010, set out in the Overview and Scrutiny - Quarterly Progress Report.

The Panel noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Severe Weather Working Group was not included in the list of current working groups as the report had been finalised before this group was established.

58. Executive Forward Plan

The Executive Forward Plan items relating to Environment, Culture and Communities were noted.

It was noted that public consultation for the Private Sector Housing Strategy would include an article in Town & Country, a report to the Strategic Housing Partnership and the landlord Letting Agent Forum. The Strategy was being developed to shape

how the Council provided advice for, and support to, the private housing sector in the borough.

CHAIRMAN



Performance Monitoring Report

for

Environment, Culture & Communities

Fourth Quarter 2009/10
January – March 2010

Portfolio holders:
Councillor Mrs Mary Ballin
Councillor Dale Birch
Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes
Councillor Iain McCracken

Director: Vincent Paliczka

Section One: Executive Summary

Dealing with the severe winter weather formed a focus for the Department and Council in January. The weather events created issues in many service areas but the Council as a whole responded well. Countryside staff supported Adult Social Care in delivering some of their services and Landscape staff, together with SITA staff, literally rolled up their sleeves to help keep highways and footpaths open as best they could. Communication and IT teams were also working hard to ensure the public were well informed. Although on the whole, the Council's response was robust, there are learning points and options to consider should this type of weather re-occur. An officer working group led by the Director and an Overview and Scrutiny Group led by Cllr Harrison are both identifying what these might be. In response to the effect the weather has had on our road network, the Executive approved £200,000 of additional expenditure for highway repairs which was supplemented by a further £165,000 awarded by the Government. To put both these figures into perspective, the most damaged street in Bracknell will cost about £80,000 to repair properly; this street cannot be described as particularly lengthy.

While partnership can be an overly used word, it is striking to note the range and type of partners the department engages with to good, tangible, effect. Trading Standards and Environmental Health are working with the Police; Parks and Countryside are supporting Social Care and Education and working with South Hill Park; various sections working with neighbouring Councils such as Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham and Reading; Arts, Sports and Culture working with the Voluntary Sector; Bracknell in Bloom bringing together Bracknell Town Council, BRP, sponsors, schools and the Voluntary Sector; close working with our contractors bringing efficient services. There are others but it is worth reflecting that a lot of our work is now delivered in partnership, whether this is formal or not.

Operationally, the department continues to deliver an amazing range and quantity of services to the public. Of particular interest is the success of the Trading Standards team of driving down unlawful purchasing of goods and services and by mediating between consumers and traders helped save the residents involved about £65,000. The economic conditions have had a huge impact on income related services and the workload of the Benefits team, due to be inspected in May, has risen considerably. There is continued success in reducing the incidents of flytipping but the costs to the Council remain high. The opening of the Energy from Waste facility in Slough means that we have reduced our 'send' to landfill from 58% to 48%.

Members will also note the considerable amount of contracting that is being undertaken. Of particular success is that of car park management where a change in how the entire car parking services is managed together with a change in how we have procured new car parking equipment has meant a saving in revenue and capital expenditure.

Customer care remains a key theme for the department and initiatives to improve our performance continues. Mystery customer shopping, customer care courses, letter writing courses and working with members all serve to re-enforce our commitment to the highest levels of customer care.

Section Two: Progress against Service Plan

Annex C provides details of performance against relevant National Indicators this quarter, as well as an update on the operational risks identified in the Service Plan. The Environment, Culture & Communities Service Plan for 2009/10 contains 61 detailed actions to be completed in support of the 13 Medium-Term Objectives. Annex C also provides information on progress against each of these detailed actions.

Overall 57 actions were achieved or on target at the end of Quarter 4, while none missed their target. Of the remaining 4 actions the Chief Officer: Planning and Transport changed the prioritisation of 3 actions when he started work at the Council in quarter 1. These are:

3.1.3 - undertake partial review of core strategy (public participation), deferred to 2010/11;

3.1.5 - recommence Development Management Development Plan Document, deferred until 2010/11; and

3.16 - complete public participation of Whitegrove and Quelm Park area action plan, reviewed this as part of Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

The final action, 10.5.3, was for the department to work with Children, Young People and Learning to review the use of the Easthampstead Park accommodation with the aim of increasing income by selling more space in the conference centre. The Corporate Management Team decided not to continue this project when the recession reduced Easthampstead Park's income from its current space, removing the potential to raise any more income by creating extra space.

Section Three: Resources

Staffing

See Annex A for more detailed information.

Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Committee's revenue budget for the year 2009/10 was set at £34,184,000. This is shown in more detail at Annex B Table 1, and also highlights the changes to the revenue budget in the period 1 January to 31 March, which together with the changes previously reported of £1,757,000 increases the overall budget to £35,939,000. A summary of these changes are shown below.

	£000
Forest Care – A saving as a result of vehicle leasing costs has arisen which forms part of the Transport Review, is being transferred to Corporate Services.	-2
TOTAL	-2

Performance Against Approved Budget

There have been variances totalling £598,000 in this period, a description of which is shown overleaf.

Reported variance	Explanation
£'000	
-247	Variences Previously Reported
168	Severe Weather Conditions - As a result of the snow in January a number of Leisure sites had to close or customers were unable to travel to the sites which had a negative impact on income, this together with the loss of income in the car parks amounted to £91,000. Additional tree works were also required to be carried out due to safety issues, this expenditure totalled £14,000. The Winter Maintenance service within Highways had to carry out extra salting runs and hand salting during the snow in January and this has resulted in a projected overspend on Winter Maintenance of £31,000. There were also a number of areas where overtime had to be worked in respect of snow clearance and within refuse collection to catch up on collections.
200	Severe Weather Conditions - Orders have been placed in respect of repairing the potholes resulting from the bad weather, a substantial amount of work has been completed but some has been delayed due to the wet weather. It is not yet known whether all the work will be completed by the end of March.
44	Downshire Golf Complex - As has been reported throughout the year as an emerging issue income has been lower than that budgeted for in this financial year. The estimated shortfall in income is £59,000 however, savings of £15,000 have been identified from various expenditure heads.
280	Easthampstead Park Conference Centre - As has been reported throughout the year as an emerging issue income has been significantly lower than that budgeted for. The estimated shortfall in income is £320,000 however, staffing and other associated costs have been reduced where ever possible and a saving on expenditure of £40,000 can be made.
-144	Waste Management - Actual figures for the 3rd quarter Waste PFI have now been received. The projected spend for Bracknell is £5,163,505, this includes a refund from the Dilapidation Fund of £20,104. This and the reduction in spend attributable to reduced tonnage results in an additional economy of £144,000 to be declared against the Waste Management budget.
-25	Car Parking - Due to the usage in the car parks over the last quarter being much better than projected, the shortfall of income is reduced by £25k to £236k. This is mainly due to increases in the High Street and Charles Square car park in both daily charges and visitors passes. It is still difficult to monitor the usage accurately without a management station to provide this information.
270	Development Control - As has been reported throughout the year as an emerging issue income has been significantly lower than that budgeted for as a result of the continued downturn in the housing market and construction industry. The estimated shortfall in income is £270,000 for the year.
-143	Development Control - The final allocation of the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant for 2009/10 has now been received. The allocation to Bracknell is £394,000 resulting in an economy of £143,000.
-7	Forest Care - The Forestcare business plan shows the potential to deliver a surplus of £72,000 income in this financial year. From that £65,000 has already been offered up as a saving and therefore at this time the balance of £7,000 is being offered as a saving.
30	Joint Arrangements - As a result of adjustments to the final costs of joint arrangements in respect of previous years, additional charges of £30,415 have been made to services in this department. There are adjustments to Joint Arrangements in other departments that result in a corresponding
-75	Further in year savings of £75,000 have been identified by the Departmental Management Team in order to balance the reported cumulative variances of Environment, Culture & Communities (excluding the additional costs as a result of the severe weather), a list of which is shown in the attached worksheet.
351	Total

Capital Budget Monitoring

The Committee's capital budget for the year was set at £9,506,000. This included £4,548,000 of externally funded schemes. A carry forward from 2008/2009 of £2,686,100, gives an available spend of £12,192,100. A sum of £346,700 has been transferred to Corporate Services in relation to Community Centres, there has been a net reduction of £243,100 in governments grants for various schemes, and an additional £40,000 for an invest to save scheme for Forest Care. Therefore the total budgeted capital spend for 2009/10 is now £11,642,300, it is currently estimated that £4,219,800 of this sum will not be spent by 31 March 2010.

The capital monitoring statement including performance against budget is shown in Annex B Table 2.

Complaints received

Stage	No. rec'd Q4	Nature of complaints (bulleted list)	Action taken and lessons learned (bulleted list)
New Stage 2	1	1. Pre-application planning delay and details of TPO disputed	2. Notified of process for objection of TPO and happy with explanation of delay.
New Stage 3	0		
New Stage 4	0		
Ombudsman	0		

Explanation of new complaint stages

Stage 1: Informal notification to, and attempt at resolution with, the team providing the service in question.

Stage 2: More formal contact (in writing or by phone) with the manager or chief officer responsible for the service. Attempted resolution is by investigation and written response to the complainant.

Stage 3: Formal written complaint to the relevant director. Attempted resolution involves investigation by the director or appointee and written response to the complainant.

Stage 4: Formal written complaint to the Chief Executive, who decides whether the complaint has been dealt with appropriately at each of the previous stages. If not, a review panel consisting of two independent persons and a Council Member is convened, at which the complainant may be present. The panel makes recommendations to the Chief Executive on whether to uphold the complaint and what remedial action should be taken.

Local Government Ombudsman: If the complainant remains unsatisfied at the end of Stage 4, s/he may contact the Local Government Ombudsman, who will review the case and form a judgment as to whether the complaint should be upheld.

Internal audit assurances

All 7 audits finalised in the period received a satisfactory assurance opinion from our internal auditors. None received a limited assurance.

Equality impact assessments

Two equality impact assessments were published during the quarter for Community Arts Strategy Refresh and Spatial Policy.

Section Four: Forward Look

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

The emergency contact arrangements changed from 1 April and out of hours arrangements are managed slightly differently. Chief Officers are now required to undertake an enhanced role and a training programme needs to be developed for service area managers who may support the response. The emergency planning framework needs to be rewritten and Forestcare are undertaking an analysis of service specific out of hours arrangements.

The Director has established a task and finish group has been established to track progress in relation to the learning to be taken on following the severe weather experience. The first meeting is due to take place on 19 April. A corporate severe weather plan is required to support this work. Flood risk management is high on the agenda for the forthcoming year with examples of surface water management plans being sought to inform the way forward.

A review of business continuity management within the organisation has been undertaken by Sunguard Consulting and feedback is expected shortly. This should assist in developing the way forward for BCM.

Environmental Health

The draft Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan 2010-2011 was reported to the Licensing and Safety Committee on 4 February 2010 and the final draft outturn report and work plan for the year ahead will be reported to Members for adoption on 1 July 2010. The draft Food Law Enforcement Plan for 2010-2011 and outturn report for the previous year will be reported to the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection in the next period. The final figures for 2009-10 in relation to both plans have yet to be finalised but performance is expected to show that business and food premises rated as high risk have been inspected as planned despite a vacancy of one member in the first six months of 2009-10.

The costs associated with removing fly tipped waste is estimated to cost the Council over £74,000 per year - Flycapture Data Base 2007-2009 (DEFRA). Our mobile CCTV cameras will continue to be used at locations that have been associated with persistent flytipping. Publicity will be sought as appropriate to help highlight the problems and as a warning to other potential fly tippers and used to promote legal waste disposal.

Noise Action Week is an annual national initiative coordinated by Environmental Protection UK that aims to raise awareness of the problems caused by neighbour noise and solutions to tackle it. The theme for this year's campaign is Barking Dogs. Of the 700 noise complaints investigated each year 20% relate to barking dogs. The event provides an opportunity to raise awareness and promote practical solutions which will be achieved through the use of community TV, road shows, updating the Council's web site and a press release.

Environmental Services

The rugby club banks are next to be refurbished. Real Nappy Week event is being held on 28 April at the Look Out, which is one of their toddler days. National Compost Awareness Week is 2-8 May, at the end of the week over the weekend of 8-9 May, re³ and Environmental Services team officers are participating in Going Greener at the Look Out and promoting composting, recycling and waste minimisation.

On Friday 14 May there is Garden Centre event in Bracknell Town Centre and with re³ officers the recycling team will have a stand to promote home composting and garden waste collection as well as promoting "Your Gardens" for Britain in Bloom. Recycle Week is 21-27 June and there is an event organised by re³ on 24 June in the Town Centre to promote food waste minimisation and recycling the correct materials. The Recycling Manager and re³ officers are working with Bracknell Forest Homes to raise awareness about recycling and answer questions at Estate Action Days. These are planned for April and June. The event planned in June in Wildridings is part of a wider partnership project with BFC, BFH and BTC, the school and the Gospel Hall and community groups to tidy up the area and install new planting schemes, clear graffiti and generally brighten up the amenity areas between the Neighbourhood shops and the school. It is hoped that this regeneration partnership project will feature in the Britain in Bloom entry.

Poor performing areas in relation to recycling as identified from the waste analysis are to be targeted. The initiative will involve waste and recycling officers going into the community and talking to residents by "doorstepping", providing information and holding roadshows. There will also be community events to raise awareness and encourage higher participation in recycling. Crown Wood and Great Hollands areas will be the main focus for attention in 2010/11.

Landscape Services

Capital funded building works at the Binfield are expected to commence on 20 April. Bracknell Forest Homes are expected to have their own GIS system which will be beneficial in terms of the management of land responsibilities and in particular, to customer services enquiries. We have agreed to share common datasets. Meetings are planned to investigate land management anomalies in the GIS system and agree service area responsibilities with Parks & Countryside and Landscape management teams. This will help reduce the confusion that can occur as to responsibilities. A push is planned to encourage more sponsorship of local roundabouts.

Highways Asset Management

The highway maintenance capital works programme has been compiled taking into account the effects of the past winter and will be carried out during the summer/autumn seasons following Member approval.

Work will continue on the production of our asset management plan as more asset data is collected on the network and the details entered into the databases. This work will in turn contribute to the first whole scale valuation of the highway network asset as required by the Whole of Government Accounting system.

The highways winter service plan will be reviewed in the light of this year's experiences although our own local service will always remain vulnerable to the national road de-icing salt supply chain dysfunction.

Operational Support

The new contract arrangement for stray dogs will come into effect as of 1 April. The web site has been updated and all key partners have been informed of the implications of the loss of the post. The Council will still be able to meet its minimum legal obligations in the new arrangement. In addition with the award of the new contract in respect of car park management there will be a period of intense work in order to put in place the new arrangements to not only manage the existing car parks but also take on all of the enforcement related work to our specification.

Trading Standards & Services

It is intended that the service will look to adopt another memorandum of understanding with other Trading Standards services and Police forces across the south east on a range of crime issues including doorstep crime, intellectual property crime and unfair and deceptive trading crime. The purpose of the MOU is to have a joined up and consistent approach which delivers for our residents, many of whom are elderly or vulnerable, a quicker and more effective response. The MOU will provide for improved exchanges of information and intelligence, a speedy and effective response for victims and earlier identification and tackling of the offenders.

The Service will also be working with Thames Valley Police on Operation Liberal which targets rogue traders who seek to rip off residents on the doorstep by selling them mis-described goods or charging them highly inflated prices for those goods or works which are either very poor quality, not needed or both. The early part of the spring and summer is a popular time for such traders to appear and call at resident's homes. This will be accompanied by a press release warning residents about the problems with such traders and how to avoid them.

The combination of alcohol, children and antisocial behaviour is a common complaint by residents who fear for their safety and damage to property. Over the next six months the service will be leading in the setting up of a Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) which will draw together elements of the public sector including the Council, Police and Primary Health Authority. It will also include businesses, residents, parents and the children themselves. The primary objective of a CAP which has operated successfully in other areas is to bring together the interested parties with an aim to reducing the levels of consumption of alcohol by children, through education and peer pressure and through limiting the sources of supply of alcohol to children. Also there is a complementary objective to break down the fear of crime by some residents associated, often incorrectly, with children in groups using common areas.

Licensing

The first quarter will see the start of the process to review the Council's "statement of licensing policy" which sets the framework within which decisions upon the licensing of premises for the supply of alcohol and entertainment is made. The policy must be reviewed every three years through a full public consultation process and then approved by Council. The reviewed policy must be in place by January 2011.

New legislation has been enacted to control those premises that provide entertainment of a sexual nature. This would include events such a strip tease, lap, pole or table dancing which has a purpose of sexually stimulating the audience. Members will be aware that establishments have provided such entertainment under the provisions of the Licensing Act. This new legislation has been provided to enable

fuller control over such activities by local authorities. The Council will have to adopt the legislation prior to any new controls being available and a report is to go to the Licensing and Safety Committee at its meeting on 29 April seeking Members approval for adoption.

Royal Ascot will shortly be upon us with all the issues of getting people to and from the racecourse safely. Officers will be working with colleagues from Windsor and Maidenhead and Thames Valley Police to ensure that visitors who use taxis or private hire vehicles as their transport option will do so in vehicles with drivers which are licensed and safe. It is also a very important event for the profitability of our own trade and the removal of unlicensed vehicles and drivers will help to protect their interests.

As the days grow longer and warmer the potential for higher levels of noise to emanate from pubs and clubs and disturb nearby residents evenings increases and traditionally the number of complaints of this nature rise dramatically during this period. Officers will be monitor compliance with license conditions where complaints have been received.

Car Parks

Following the appointment of a new contractor for the Management Contract we will be working with the new contractor to ensure a seamless transfer of services so there is minimum disruption to the car park users. Schedules and costings are to be agreed for the structural remedial works in the Charles Square and High Street Car Parks for the year 2010/2011. New tariffs will need to be agreed once the car parking equipment is installed and commissioned.

Cemetery & Crematorium

The installation of the pathways and landscaping to the new burial area will commence towards the end of this quarter. The new burial area will enable the Council to provide for a minimum of fifteen to twenty years burial for the community. We will be adding a dedicated Children's burial area which will commence installation at the same time. This area will provide for the burial of children from 0-12 years. It will also include a Children's Memorial area with a sensory garden. Within this garden we will install a memorial area.

re³ Partnership

Work will continue during the period to improve the fire precautions at Smallmead. Post completion it has been evident that some changes can be made to the structure and management of the site in order to manage fire safety risk even better than was planned. The re³ team will continue with their promotional work over the next twelve months but will be moving into a new phase which is around waste minimisation rather than the promotion of the new facilities. They are particularly aware of the need to influence the level of contamination going into the recycling bins. They are also to work more with businesses to try to help them reduce waste.

HOUSING

Housing strategy

Consultation on the strategy to improve the existing housing stock and the discretionary assistance policy for mandatory disabled facility grant works will be completed during the quarter.

In the next quarter we will launch a strategic housing newsletter which will be distributed to all stakeholders. This will include an update on strategic housing initiatives and information on the housing market.

The first meeting of the older person accommodation and support services programme board will take place in the quarter. The Board now has good representation from a variety of providers of accommodation for older people.

Homelessness

Officers met with the housing advice charity Shelter to discuss arrangements on referrals and joint working and this is expected to be formalised in the quarter.

Work will begin on the new homeless strategy with the homeless forum during the quarter.

Supporting people

The process of formalising contracts with the Supporting people providers will be completed in the quarter.

The new handy van service jointly commissioned with adult social care will now be in place at the end of June. The slippage on the tendering has been due to the need to follow OJEU procurement route due to the increased value of work by jointly commissioning with Adult social care.

Home ownership

There will be two households who will buy a home with the help of cash incentive grant in the quarter. There are a further two households who are in the process of identifying properties.

The Council's mortgage scheme will be launched in early May.

Choice based letting – BFC My choice

A new housing and employment connection service, called BFC My Job Search, will be launched in May. This is a web based information service which provides information and advice on employment and training opportunities in the local area, and will help local people to plan their way into training and employment. BFC My Job Search will also provide links to live job pages providing information about current job vacancies

In terms of the implementation of the Abritas system the finance modules and interface with the Council's financial systems will be completed within this quarter.

Benefits

The inspection of the benefit service will take place in the week beginning May 24th. A self assessment of the service will be submitted on the 26th April with accompanying documents. During the week there will be interviews with officers and members connected with the service. The inspection regime is demanding and to date there are only two local authorities that have scored two stars (good service) with all other inspection results being either one star (fair) or poor. The result of the inspection will be made available to the Council towards the end of the quarter.

The system replacement project is running to plan. Training on the new system and the first data cut of data held on the current system will take place during the quarter. Go live with the new system is still scheduled to take place towards the end of October 2010.

Forest care

Forest care has won new corporate business; providing a mobile response to sheltered housing schemes in Wokingham for Wokingham Council and will start taking Out of Hours calls for Windsor Housing later in April.

The service will be recruiting a new part time Officer to deal with the additional call volumes that Windsor Housing will generate (from a vacant post unfilled to reduce costs). We are also hoping to take on a new Future Jobs Fund trainee to help with Administration for the team.

Forest care are still working on the upgrade to PNC6 which will be completed in the quarter. We hope to continue to create efficiencies by using our new IT systems more effectively. This quarter we will be training staff on the new systems and ensuring that they bed in successfully.

The service will be continuing to explore new business opportunities.

LEISURE AND CULTURE

Leisure

The new financial year opens up new opportunities to the leisure sites to start again with renewed vigour ensuring that they offer the range of products and services to move the sites forward as the country looks to be starting to move forward from its economic challenges of the past year.

Bracknell Leisure Centre - a range of new and old favourite activities are on offer to the customers and the take up on courses for the new financial year is looking promising. There will be a summer promotion on the platinum membership along with Body beats Classes. Bracknell Leisure Centre has developed an on line membership calculator so a customer can enter the number of visits they are planning and it will give them the most cost effective option, this will go live shortly.

Coral Reef - from 1 April Coral Reef is operating on its revised opening times and is now open from 9.30am Monday to Friday for the sauna and lessons and 10.30am for the general public until its normal closing times. Coral Reef is looking forward to welcoming more visitors who chose to stay at home this year. The recently installed childrens feature is going down very well with the younger customers

Downshire Golf - the Downshire is hoping for a dryer year which will encourage golfers to use the excellent facilities that it has to offer. The Mayors Golf Charity Day on Friday 30 April is full with 18 teams of 4 players. They are continuing to attract new people to golf through (YMG) Young Master Golf at the weekends and kids camps in the school holidays, they also run (LMG) Ladies Masters Golf for young ladies learning to play golf.

Edgbarrow - Edgbarrow Sports Centre will be partially re-opening from 26th April. Facilities on offer will include the Main Sports Hall, Squash Courts, Fitness Suite, Outdoor Pitches and associated changing rooms, which will all be accessed via a temporary reception cabin positioned at the School PE entrance. The School's PE Department will also be able to use their PE office.

The main reception, small hall, and bar/café/multi purpose space will remain closed for the time being.

Required repairs will continue in the remainder of the building, especially the boiler room. Full re-opening is currently targeted for the start of the September term.

Staff members continue to stay in touch with customers, with efforts now focused on ensuring that customers return as soon as possible from 26th April. Efforts will be made to re-start as many activities as possible, although this won't be entirely possible due to the small hall being unavailable. Corporate Communications have already issued information regarding the partial re-opening, and further details are available on the BFC website page.

Easthampstead Park- the team at Easthampstead Park have been planning to ensure that the forthcoming year can be as successful as possible in the current challenging market conditions. The new entrance ramp will be completed in this period and will result in improved access to the site, and also improved aesthetics at the front of the mansion.

The Look Out - The Look Out Discovery Centre is looking forward to the challenges of the new financial year, and will be progressing more innovative ideas to make customers visits more enjoyable, as well as making it's new On The Road Outreach Scheme available to schools.

Horseshoe Lake - Horseshoe Lake has opened its doors for the 2010 season with its Easter Holiday Programme. Site management are confident they will have a good year. The Club House has also received some decorative improvements to keep it fresh for the new season.

Bracknell Half Marathon preparations are well on track for the event on 9th May, with entries having been closed during March.

Libraries, Arts and Heritage

Library ICT staff are working with colleagues in the ECC web team to upgrade the library online catalogue. Work has already begun with the supplier to upgrade to their latest product, which is a far more flexible and accessible web interface than our current offering. We hope to have the new site ready for testing in the summer with a go-live date of Autumn 2010.

Some design delays have held up progress at Whitegrove library, however a contractor has now been appointed to carry out the refurbishment work, which should begin in late Spring. Also at Whitegrove, library staff will be hosting a new monthly reminiscence event for residents of Montgomery of Alamein Court.

Forthcoming Events
Public Art Advisory Panel
Heritage Forum Meeting

1st June
15th June

Parks and Countryside

Five swift nest boxes will shortly be installed on the new Bracknell and Wokingham College building. Proposals are being considered by Bracknell Forest Homes to install a further 10 boxes on residential properties for this declining 'Bracknell 24' species.

A new leaflet for Biodiversity and a guide to the Blooming Biodiversity Trail will be printed in time for the Bracknell in Bloom launch.

Support is being given to Adult Social Care and Health to set up a 'youth and family community festival' at Longhill Park on 19th of June.

Playbuilder (led by Early Years Childcare and Play) – new play facilities for 8 to 13 year olds at Evenlode, Westmorland and Farley Wood are nearing completion. Official openings are due to take place during the end of May / beginning of June half term week, along with the town and parish council managed sites, in conjunction with the Play Partnership. Priorities are being assessed for year 2 sites.

Improved play facilities targeted for children up to 8 years old will be placed at Chaucer Woods in the spring.

South Hill Park, Parks for People Project – following confirmation of the successful contractor, landscape restoration work is due to start on site in June, beginning with improvements to the front of the mansion and Wilde Theatre and moving sequentially to other areas of the park. The works are planned to be complete within 18 months of the start date.

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES

Administration

We intend to meet all targets, including letter sampling each month for customer care monitoring. We will issue procedure notes for workstation risk assessments and reorganise space in the basement store for new archives. The Document Management Team will complete Phase 2 of Planning's back-scanning project and is ready to start scanning Housing Options' daily post as soon as ICT give them the go ahead. We will transfer the postal function to Corporate Services as agreed as part of last year's post review.

Business Systems

We will upgrade the Confirm IT system used by highways, trees, landscape and network management. We will roll out mobile devices for the Highways Inspectors mobile devices to improve the inspection process. On Uniform we will install the new

Public Access and Uniform Enterprise products. The former will improve the customer experience when viewing and commenting on planning applications. It will also enable the public to setup alerts in their area. On M3, we will be going live with the address loader, FSS UK and AMES interfaces. The address loader manages property address on M3, while the interfaces enable food samples to be downloaded from the Food Standards Agency and animal welfare information to be exchanged electronically with DEFRA. We will go live with the call system for Forestcare.

We will be starting work on a major IT project to upgrade the Corporate GIS system. This includes a new intranet-based GIS Explorer for all of the Council's staff. We will continue to support the current Corporate GIS system and produce numerous maps for the department.

We will start creating and migrating the department's online forms to the new online form system. We will be involved in creating web content for the BFC my job search web site being set up by housing options. This site will help people on the housing register find employment. We will begin work on populating the web pages in the new online product purchased by the library service.

e+ Smartcard Programme

We will introduce the cheaper DESFire card into the e+ scheme during April. This card only works in a contactless mode. The dual interface JCOP31 cards will still be available for any scheme that may need them

We plan to develop the special needs software SNAPI to work on a DESFire card, once that is done the SNAPI option can be offered to cardholders. It is the intention that the e+ card will work with the new parking equipment being procured allowing residents to receive a better deal on their parking at certain times and certain places. We plan to introduce e+ Card use for PLD clients at Coral Reef.

Lincolnshire County Council will visit for a SmartConnect demonstration in May

Finance

In addition to the core functions of accounting, budget monitoring, financial advice and debt control the main task in the quarter is to close the 2009/10 accounts.

Human Resources

HR will continue to significantly support the Job Evaluation scheme at every level from presence on Steering Group to supporting employees complete Job Information Questionnaires.

Mentor training will be delivered for both mentors and mentees and the scheme will officially start.

The team will provide support to the Future Jobs Fund Scheme by organising a series of workshops and ensuring the young people are supported in their day to day work.

The Head of HR in conjunction with the Head of Learning and Development, will deliver a Stress Awareness workshop. This will hopefully lead to further work on better managing stress.

Contracts

Engineering Consultancy Contracts (Jacobs Babbie Replacement)

In quarter 1 we will start using the contracts for Highways Condition Assessments, Public Transport Coordination, Scheme Assessment & Traffic & Transport Data Collection.

We will complete a mini-competition to procure the Bridges and Structures Management & Maintenance Contract appointing one of the framework contractors from the South East Pan Government Collaborative Highways Professional Services Framework. We plan to identify the preferred bidder by 21st July.

Car Park Management Contract

In Quarter 1 the implementation details will be agreed with the preferred bidder, with a target handover date of 27th June.

Mercury Abatement/Replacement Cremators Contract

In quarter 1 we will evaluate the returned tenders and report back to CMT and Executive, with award planned for early July.

South Hill Park Contract

In quarter 1 we will sign a contract with the preferred bidder, subject to Executive approval.

Refuse Collection Contract

In quarter 1 we will advertise in OJEU and issue pre-qualification questionnaire, evaluate responses and produce a shortlist of suppliers who will be invited to tender. We will complete the specification and issue the tender to those qualified suppliers expressing an interest. Return of tenders is in July.

Equalities

We will continue to support corporate colleagues in preparing for the Equalities Framework achieving level assessment. As the department with the broadest range of customer interactions we expect to be at the forefront of preparing this inspection. The remaining managers who have not had their equalities training should do so in this quarter. Two EIA's were published in the quarter for Community Arts Strategy Refresh and Spatial Policy.

Business Continuity

We will complete the annual update of the flu pandemic plan in the quarter.

Performance Management

We will support implementation of the new performance management system in April and work with corporate colleagues on developing a strategy to extend its use.

Customer Care

We will hold some workshops for teams seeking further guidance on letter and email writing.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Building Control

Work should be underway on developing a new model for our charging scheme in accordance with the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010.

It is hoped that the pilot scheme with the CLG for risk assessing Building Regulation applications will be concluded.

A further trip to the Building Research Establishment's Innovation Park will be arranged for the remainder of the team who didn't attend the first visit to witness sustainable methods of construction aimed at reducing CO2 emissions.

Land Charges

Work will continue in the evaluation of our legal position when charging for producing or allowing access to search information.

Development Management

The key focus for the DM Service in the coming months remains the need to balance budgetary pressures against the expectations of maintaining a high performing service which contributes proactively to delivering the Council's objectives.

An assessment of the entire planning service has commenced in the coming quarter, which includes reviewing the following:

- decision making procedures and arrangements
- public consultation and engagement arrangements
- current arrangements for enforcement and compliance.
- accessibility of the service to users including introduction of a Planning Alert system for the public and overhaul of the planning web pages
- priorities for the service
- opportunities for different methods for delivery

The review is looking closely at how the service uses resources and its processes and procedures, with all staff who are employed in the planning service or contribute to it through specialist advice (e.g. trees and transportation) being involved in a time recording exercise during May. This review is linked with other reviews being undertaken by planning services across the country (currently some 50 authorities' are involved with this project which is supported by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). By comparing with other planning authorities using consistent data collection methods the Council will gain a far better understanding of how resources are used and the choices it can make to ensure an effective planning service.

Other tasks in the coming year are:

- Establishing a service user panel and other initiatives to ensure greater customer focus within the service indexing of the recently completed electronic capture of planning micro-fiches.
- Introducing new arrangements for specialist listed building and conservation advice
- Making available for internal use the planning records back to 1948 which have been captured electronically
- Continued involvement in the POS Development Management Project.
- Working with CLG on the performance indicator pilot, an exercise which also will contribute to the data collection informing the service review
- Work closely with the Planning Policy Section in the formulation of planning policy documents.
- Construction of new intra net web pages to assist other departments in their dealings with the Development Management Service.

The planning service is organising urban design training which has been offered to other planning services across Berkshire to provide a more cost effective training course.

Arising from the increasing number of breaches of planning regulations a number of legal actions and enforcement actions will in the coming months place demands on the services resources, both staff time and financially .

On the development front the Bracknell Town Centre remains the key priority for the service. Activity continues to be centred on proposals for a number of 3rd party sites, including continuing pre-application negotiation on the Bracknell Health Space but it is anticipated that the coming year will see the service engaged closely with the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership.

Highway Network Management

Co-ordination Headlines

- In order to improve member communication Councillors are to be sent information about major works affecting their wards, commencing April 2010.
- National Grid Gas continue with their 5-7 year mains replacement program with Bullbrook being the next area to be tackled after completion of the Priestwood schemes. NGG acknowledge their poor performance in Priestwood and plan to complete works in a slower more sequential manner.
- Jennetts Park / A329 roundabout works likely to commence April 2010.
- Junction capacity improvements are scheduled to commence in April/May 2010 on A322 Bagshot Road, Sports Centre roundabout.
- National Grid Gas have requested occupation of South Hill Road, Mill Lane and Twin Bridges roundabout for medium pressure gas main renewals. They were directed to reschedule for after Jennetts Park and Sports Centre roundabout works are complete however, an opportunity presented itself for South Hill Rd when the Sports Centre Roundabout design was altered. An opportunity is being investigated for Twin Bridges as carriageway resurfacing works are needed.
- Thames Valley Police in partnership with BFC placing Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at numerous locations across the borough for crime prevention purposes. Subject to planning permission where necessary and to be installed by March 2011.

- Trial holes being dug to prove a route for Scottish and Southern Energy between Bracknell and Camberley. Commencement dates not yet known.
- Scottish and Southern Energy planned high voltage cable route between Bracknell and Ascot trial holes completed awaiting program of works.
- Next generation of broadband is commencing in Crowthorne and Yateley BT exchange areas from April 2010.
- Olympic Route Network 2012 – an alternative route runs through the borough in the form of A322/A332 and A322/A329 to Eton Dorney. It is expected that 30,000 spectators plus the Olympic family will be accessing this venue each day. The number of vehicles taking the alternative routes is currently unknown.

The annual sample for 2010/11 will be negotiated during April & May. The team will continue to focus on safety inspections and inspections of reinstatements within 6 months of completion in order to tackle defects at the earliest possible stage.

Spatial Policy

Options consultations have been carried out on the Site Allocation Development Plan Document. Further evidence base material is being secured and commissioned to enable the document, and its supportive infrastructure Plan, to be published in December 2010. We will also be holding local area-based workshops to explore the potential of the provisional development locations.

The Supplementary Planning Documents to guide the comprehensive mixed use development at Amen Corner, Binfield and in the southern part of the Parish of Warfield has been adopted following consideration of the responses to consultation on the draft document. The Character Areas SPD was also adopted in March following consideration of comments received through the consultation. Final versions of both adopted SPDs will be published and made available. Work has progressed on the production of the Streetscene SPD. A draft has been considered by the Departmental Management Team and further work is under way prior to consideration by Executive.

Consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths SPD has been completed but further work has been delayed while critical legal issues are resolved relating in particular to the mechanism for securing funding for access management and monitoring within the SPA. The resolution of the legal issues is being actively pursued.

Climate Change and Carbon Management

The Climate Change Working Group has refreshed the Climate Change Action Plan for 2010/11 for endorsement by the Carbon Management Board on 21st April prior to Executive approval.

A report on the feasibility study for a distributed energy scheme between Bracknell Leisure Centre and adjacent sites is scheduled for the Executive meeting on 29th April 2010.

The Climate Change Partnership is holding its Annual General Meeting at Bracknell Town Council Chamber at 17.00 Thursday 22nd April 2010.

Transport Management Section

Traffic and Safety Group

Casualty Reduction – Local Safety Schemes:-

In order to sustain the good progress being made on casualty reduction, in-depth accident analysis work has been carried out on the latest available accident data, which has identified 4 Road Safety schemes. Subject to funding, the preliminary design work on these schemes will begin shortly in preparation for future construction.

Other Traffic Management Schemes:-

The following schemes will have been completed:

- Western Road / Downshire Way – bus gate
- Pitts Bridge – traffic signalisation
- Pedestrian radar review at signalised crossings (phase 1)

Preliminary design work will have started on the following scheme:

- Speed Limit Gateways – phase 3

Speed surveys will have been completed and the assessment work will be on-going for the following scheme

- Speed assessment of locally important roads (phase 1)

Negotiations will have progressed with landowners at Maidens Green Crossroads regarding the introduction of traffic signals.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO):-

The contents of the next on-street parking restriction TRO will have been formally advertised.

Road Safety Education, Training & Publicity:-

The following Education, Training and Publicity activities will have taken place:

- Older & Wiser Driver's Event
- School Crossing Patrol Training
- Parent talks in Schools and day centres.
- Louis Taylor Road Show for KS1
- Business sector input.
- Inter School Road Safety Quiz
- New Off Road Cycle Training implementation.
- Teddy Bears Picnic

Transport Implementation Group

Transport Model:

- Work will continue on two corridor studies, the A322 and the A329, testing possible improvements and providing the basis for engineering solutions to be developed. Once complete, these models will be used to assess the effectiveness of a range of improvement schemes.

- The strategic model will be an essential tool in identifying the transport impact of the Borough's housing allocations, as well as any phased development of the town centre. It is also being used regularly to identify existing and future capacity issues at key junctions along the two corridors.

TIF/UCF

- BFC will continue to attend the cross boundary working groups for Readings Transport Innovation fund including officers and Executive members

Bracknell Railway Station Improvement Work:

- Works will continue and will be complete in the coming weeks.

LTP3

- Following meetings with internal managers and team leaders work will now begin on forming the strategies that will support the plan. Work has already begun on the infrastructure requirements to support the core strategy and further modelling work will be required to support this work which will then help form the Implementation plan

Passenger Transport

- Contracts for the new services in north Bracknell will be issued shortly, and implementation of the new contracts will be from 29 May 2010.
- A number of other minor changes to commercially operated bus services are anticipated to be implemented from the same date.

Travel Choice

- Launch of 'Red Route' cycle corridor in April
- Walk to Work week event at end of April
- Walk to School week mid May
- Bike Week and Green Transport week in June

Engineering Projects and Adoptions Group

In the Highway Capacity and Roadspace Allocation Programme:-

- Works are due to start in May on the Sports Centre Roundabout capacity improvement scheme

In the Public Transport Programme:-

- Construction is due to be completed on improvements to the railway station forecourt
- Construction is due to start in June on the new bus stop linking footway along Church Road, Winkfield.

In the Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements Programme :-

- Construction is due to be completed on the Market Street Signalised Pedestrian Crossing
- Construction is due to be completed on the Wokingham Road (between Turnpike Road Roundabout and Stoney Road) footway/cycletrack scheme

In the Parking programme:-

- Further Planning applications are to be submitted for a number of schemes in high priority roads to increase parking capacity
- In the next 3 months construction is due to start on the second phase of parking improvements in Balfour Cres, Ollerton, Waverley, Moordale Ave and Rosedale Gdns

Section 278 Highway Works:-

- Works are due to commence in June 2010 on the new A329 Roundabout and Spur Road as part of the Jennett's Park Development off-site highway improvement works

Annex A: Staffing information

Staffing Levels

	Staff in Post	Staffing Full Time	Staffing Part Time	Total Posts FTE	Vacant Posts	Vacancy Rate
Directorate	11	10	1	10.68	0	0%
Environment & Public Protection	104	89	15	101.29	9	7.96%
Housing	65	54	11	61.59	10	13.33%
Leisure & Culture	379	168	211	261.97	56	12.87%
Performance & Resources	40	30	10	37.98	2	4.76%
Planning & Transportation	87	66	21	82.23	13	13.00%
Department Totals	686	417	269	555.74	90	11.60%

Overall the vacancies have increased by 16 this quarter. Leisure & Culture account for 11 of these.

This quarter, we were successful in recruiting to some hard to recruit posts, including Heritage Officer, Assistant Engineer (Transport Monitoring), and Manager of Procurement Projects. Following a restructuring in Housing recruitment has now been undertaken for Benefit Assessment Officer, Benefit Assessment Advisor, Housing Resource Officer and Housing Strategy and Support Manager.

Staff Turnover

For the quarter ending	31 March 2010	2.20%
For the year ending	31 March 2010	9.88%

Total turnover for BFC, 2008/09: 13.7% excluding schools and BFH
 Total turnover for local authorities in nationally 2007/08: 15.2%
 (Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey 2008)

There were 15 leavers this quarter, which is a decrease of 3 compared to last quarter and a decrease of 6 to the same quarter in the previous year. Of those leavers, 2 retired, 1 came to the end of fixed term contracts, and the remaining 12 resigned.

Quarterly Staff Turnover was down to 2.20% this quarter compared to 2.62% last quarter, and compared to 3.02% the same quarter last year. Annual turnover is down to 9.88% this quarter compared to 10.65% last quarter, and 14.94% in the same quarter last year.

This could be attributed to the current economic climate and the desire for people to stay in stable jobs and environments.

Sickness Absence

Staff Sickness (1 January – 31 March 2010)

Figure 1. Total Sickness by People in Post

Section	Total staff In Post	Quarter 4 Number of days sickness	Quarter 4 average per employee (People in post)	2009/10 average per employee (People in Post)
Directorate	11	16	1.45	2.95
Environment & Public Protection	104	170	1.63	11.76
Housing	65	205.5	3.16	8.97
Leisure & Culture	379	613	1.62	5.55
Performance & Resources	40	47	1.18	7.60
Planning & Transportation	87	84	0.97	4.41
Department Totals (Q4)	686	1135.5	1.66	
Department Totals (09/10)		4629.5		6.36

Comparator data	All employees, average days sickness absence per employee
Bracknell Forest Borough Council 08/09	5.67 days
All sectors employers in South East 2008 (Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey 2008)	7.6 days
BVPI figure 08/09	7.43 days per FTE

The above figure of 1,135.5 days lost due to sickness absence includes 11 employees with long term sickness, totalling 407 days for the quarter. This included:

- 6 employees in Leisure and Culture – 217 days
- 1 employee in Environment & Public Protection - 42 days
- 1 employee in Performance & Resources – 35 days
- 3 employees in Housing – 113 days

5 of these employees are now back to work. The 6 remaining cases are being managed through Occupational Health and performance improvement procedures.

The total number of sickness days this quarter has decreased by 105 days compared to last quarter and by 90.5 days to the same quarter last year.

The decreases in sickness this quarter are 5 employees in Environment & Public Protection and 1 employee in Performance & Resources returning to work after long-term sickness. The increase in Leisure & Culture is due to a mixture of increases in both short-term and long-term sickness absence.

Long-term sickness, that rose earlier in the year, is now decreasing. One contributing factor is that long-term sickness is managers are handling these cases in a more proactive way with more employees being referred to Occupational Health at an early stage and an increase in dealing with cases through the Capability and Sickness Procedures. However, despite the overall fall in long term sickness, there is an increase in employees suffering from cancer. Six employees are currently

managing the disease. Managers have been working closely with employees to support their attendance and requirement to work flexibly. This means they have returned to work so are not on long term sickness. The knock on effect has been an increase in short term sickness.

In general, we feel managers are being more proactive when dealing with absence and that they are holding informal reviews of sickness more regularly. Managers are now approaching HR with regards to employees they feel have sickness issues, rather than HR raising the issue with the manager as happened in previous years.

Annex B: Financial information

	Net Original Budget	Virements & Budget C/fwds	Current Approved Budget	Departments Projected Outturn	Variance Over/(Under) Spend	Variance This Period
2009/10						
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities						
Director and Support	173	104	277	277	0	
Training, Marketing, Research & Development	25	-1	24	19	-5	-5
	198	103	301	296	-5	-5
Chief Officer Leisure & Culture						
Archives	136	1	137	129	-8	
South Hill Park	554	-5	549	549	0	
Community Arts & Cultural Services	113	21	134	134	0	
Community Centres	93	-93	0	0	0	
Parks, Open Spaces & Countryside	2,148	-48	2,100	2,115	15	15
Environmental Initiatives	205	-6	199	189	-10	-10
Sports Development & Community Recreation	122	-18	104	104	0	
The Look Out	184	21	205	185	-20	
Edgbarrow / Sandhurst Sports Centres	173	4	177	177	0	
Bracknell Leisure Centre / Coral Reef	988	35	1,023	1,165	142	54
Harmanswater Swimming Pool	18	0	18	18	0	
Easthampstead Park Conference Centre	-243	11	-232	71	303	289
Horseshoelake Water Sports	26	0	26	26	0	
Downshire Golf Complex	-165	1	-164	-91	73	64
Libraries	1,878	51	1,929	1,929	0	
	6,230	-25	6,205	6,700	495	412
Chief Officer Environment & Public Protection						
Waste Management	6,857	-47	6,810	6,719	-91	-111
Street Cleaning	1,133	97	1,230	1,232	2	2
Closed Circuit Television	108	0	108	108	0	
Highway Maintenance (Including Street Lighting)	4,488	115	4,603	4,831	228	228
On/Off Street Parking	-697	-136	-833	-589	244	-17
Easthampstead Park Cemetry and Crematorium	-525	-4	-529	-574	-45	
Environmental Health (Including Pest and Dog Control)	784	24	808	810	2	-5
Trading Standards (Including Licensing)	385	-11	374	357	-17	-17
Emergency Planning	103	2	105	100	-5	-5
Bracknell Market	0	0	0	0	0	
Landscape Holding Account	-174	27	-147	-144	3	3
Other	199	-58	141	134	-7	5
	12,661	9	12,670	12,984	314	83
Chief Officer Planning & Transport						
Transport Policy, Planning and Strategy	618	-31	587	577	-10	
Traffic Management and Road Safety	771	-19	752	764	12	12
Public Transport Subsidy including Concessionary Fares	1,211	369	1,580	1,567	-13	
Building Control	-10	-14	-24	-24	0	
Development Control	215	-50	165	359	194	127
Planning Policy (Including Local Transport Plan)	836	39	875	869	-6	-6
Local Land Charges	-110	-7	-117	-82	35	
Other	117	4	121	121	0	
	3,648	291	3,939	4,151	212	133
Chief Officer Housing						
Housing Options	297	-14	283	283	0	
Strategy & Enabling	360	-51	309	299	-10	-10
Housing Management Services	-37	-22	-59	-59	0	
Forestcare	109	-22	87	15	-72	-7
Supporting People	152	-17	135	135	0	
Housing Benefits	418	-29	389	389	0	
General Grants, Bequests & Donations	17	0	17	0	-17	
Other	30	-16	14	14	0	
	1,346	-171	1,175	1,076	-99	-17
Chief Officer Performance & Resources						
Departmental Management	594	17	611	611	0	
Departmental Support Services	1,190	-61	1,129	1,046	-83	-3
Departmental Personnel Running Expenses	88	-33	55	55	0	
Departmental Office Services Running Expenses	191	-22	169	169	0	
Departmental IT Running Expenses	255	-36	219	219	0	
Smartcard	72	82	154	149	-5	-5
	2,390	-53	2,337	2,249	-88	-8
In Year Savings		478	478	0	-478	
Total Cash Budgets	26,473	632	27,105	27,456	351	598
Non Cash Budgets						
FRS17	885	0	885	885		
Corporate / Departmental Recharges	3,343	1,123	4,466	4,466		
Capital Charges	3,483	0	3,483	3,483		
	7,711	1,123	8,834	8,834	0	0
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE SERVICES	34,184	1,755	35,939	36,290	351	598

	Total Budget 2009/10 £'000s	Cash Budget Revised 2009/10 £'000s	Expenditure to date £'000s	Total Commitments For 2009/10 £'000s	Amount left to spend £'000s	Estimated Total Funding Required for the Year £'000s	Cash Budget 2010/11 £'000s	(Under)/Over Spend £'000s	(Under)/Over Spend Section 106 £'000s
ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION	2,921.9	2,169.0	1,610.6	562.3	749.0	2,169.0	752.9	0.0	-
HOUSING	1,943.7	382.6	379.9	38.3	1,525.5	382.6	1,561.1	0.0	-
PLANNING & TRANSPORT	4,178.5	3,424.6	2,323.1	510.1	1,345.3	3,113.1	753.9	-24.7	-286.8
LEISURE & CULTURE	2,451.0	1,328.4	1,073.2	228.5	1,149.3	1,332.9	1,122.6	4.5	-
SUPPORT SERVICES	147.2	117.9	90.0	24.6	32.6	117.9	29.3	-	-
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME	11,642.3	7,422.5	5,476.8	1,363.8	4,801.7	7,115.5	4,219.8	-20.2	-286.8
Percentages			47.0%	11.7%	41.3%		36.2%		

Annex C: Corporate strategic risks owned by Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
Demographic and socio economic changes	6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13	B2	<p><u>Migration</u> Short term impact of migration on housing addressed through the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation.</p> <p><u>Housing Planning</u> procedures mitigate impact of unplanned housing development.</p>	<p><u>Migration Revised</u> Homelessness and Bed and Breakfast Strategy has been developed and has been approved.</p>	Ongoing	✓	Migration unlikely to have short term impact on homelessness – If not UK residents Home office will have housing responsibility and if UK residents local connection tests under statutory guidance will mitigate any increased demand		No change from Q1.	No change from Q1.

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
				Housing Housing Strategy and emerging planning policies relating to housing will be considered in the Spring	Ongoing	✓	The Housing strategy 2009 – 2014 was agreed by Executive on the 14 th July 2009 The emerging planning policies will be subject to delay pending the Government Decision on the Regional Spatial Strategy which is anticipated in late spring 09.	Review of Housing related Planning Policies to be delayed pending preparation of the Site Allocations DPD “Saved” Local Plan Policies (including Housing policies) are still capable of implementation and are being supported at Appeal.	TRL site identified in SHLAA and likely to be	TRL site identified as possible development
				Planning – TRL/ Former RAF Staff College The Council has raised objections	31/3/09	✓	Appeal decision awaited – likely date mid summer 2009.	Both Appeals Dismissed but TRL decision	TRL site identified in SHLAA and likely to be	TRL site identified as possible development

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
				<p>which resulted in planning application being turned down. The Developer's appeal will only be successful if they can set out reasons justifying the development, satisfactorily address the Council's objections to the scheme and demonstrate the scheme would not adversely affect the community.</p> <p>Should the appeal be upheld, the Developer would be expected to work with the Council to address areas of concern.</p>				would suggest that some reduced scale of development would be appropriate for the site. The future of the TRL site will be considered under the Site Allocations DPD. GOSE has been asked to prompt the HCA to divulge its proposals for the future of the Staff College site.	promoted through Site Allocations DPD GOSE confirm the developers are considering their options – no change being promoted at this time.	in SADPD consultation
Demand Led Services	5, 6, 7 & 9	B2	Benefits Additional resource	Benefits Level of applications	Ongoing	✓	Contract for off site processing		A reduction in the	

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			<p>is purchased to address high levels of applicants by outsourcing processing of benefits applications.</p> <p><u>Homelessness</u> Use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Loans provided for deposits to encourage take up of private accommodation.</p>	<p>will continue to be monitored and processing outsourced where necessary.</p>			<p>successfully tendered. Restructuring of the benefit service has taken place to increase the officer resource for assessment. At present performance targets are being maintained despite a 22% increase in caseload from this time last year.</p>		<p>administration grant for 2010/11 will require a review of the structure and officer resource to bring costs in line with income.</p>	
			<p><u>Homelessness</u> Increasing flexibility through revised Homelessness and Bed and Breakfast Strategy. Additional £300k to be released to purchase properties and lease more properties as a more cost effective</p>	<p><u>Homelessness</u> Increasing flexibility through revised Homelessness and Bed and Breakfast Strategy. Additional £300k to be released to purchase properties and lease more properties as a more cost effective</p>	Ongoing	✓	<p>Currently no households in bed and breakfast accommodation. Homeless prevention activity showing a high level of success with many</p>		No change from Q1.	

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
				alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation.			households helped to find a new home in the private rented sector with the help of a rent in advance and deposit loan.			
				Under the revised Strategy the provision of loans is to be extended to provide loans for the first month's rent for private accommodation to further encourage take up of private accommodation.	Ongoing	✓	New policy implemented and has reduced homeless demand.		No change from Q1.	
Town Centre	1, 11, 13	B2	<u>Monitoring</u> Monthly meetings now being held with Legal and General and Schroders Regular reporting	<u>Monitoring</u> Establishing financial monitoring system with Bracknell Regeneration Partnership	Ongoing	✓	Monitoring meetings with BRP now established			

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			to Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee Monthly meeting of Steering Group monitors situation on workstreams.	<u>Risk Management</u> Risk register currently being developed for the town centre regeneration project	Ongoing	✓	Risk register drafted for town centre			
				<u>Strategy</u> Regeneration Plan is currently being reviewed in the light of the economic downturn	Ongoing	✓	To be reviewed as part of the town centre review			
				<u>Planning</u> Developing a protocol for 3 rd party applications followed by exploration of a PPA to cover BRP reserved matters applications.	Ongoing	✓	BRP re-thinking approach to implementing Reserved Matters			

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
Income Projections	10	B2	<p><u>Fees and Charges at Leisure Centres and Downshire Golf Club</u> These are reviewed on an annual basis. Prices are set based on what the market will bear.</p> <p><u>Income Projections at Leisure Centres and Downshire Golf Club</u> Demand estimated based on previous trends and taking into account expected economic downturn.</p> <p><u>Promotions/Marketing</u> Impact of economic downturn to be mitigated by enhanced marketing and promotions where considered</p>	<p>Revenue Optimisation PWC have now completed their review of revenue optimisation across the Council. Action is now being taken to review the results to establish which are the valid areas for further income generation. The Director of ECC and Head of Finance are reviewing the report to interpret and analyse the findings and recommendations and will seek further clarification from PWC where necessary.</p>	31/12/08	X	There are likely to be mounting pressures on income received from customers paying for Leisure Services as the general economic conditions worsen.	There is no change from Q1.	<p>Planning Application Fees/Building control Income and Land charges Fees – these income areas continue to under – perform due to the recession. The recent optimism in markets has not translated into more applications at present- particularly slow are applications for large or major development, either commercial or residential.</p>	<p>Throughout the 2009/10 financial year income has been carefully monitored against targets and where necessary pressures have been reported and budgets revised. This has resulted in the income target for EPCC and DGC being lowered during the year. However, the revised budget targets have been met.</p>

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			<p>appropriate following cost-benefit analysis, for example 2 for 1 offers.</p> <p><u>Easthampstead Park Conference Centre</u> Weddings are arranged a long time ahead. Hence wedding functions and income from weddings is committed a long time in advance so weddings are already booked for the next year. Marketing and promotion is undertaken to</p>							

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			<p>maximise future income.</p> <p>Conference income is declining due to the fall in the number of delegates attending. This is being mitigated by reducing costs. Maximisation of income is sought through catering and bar sales to mitigate fall in delegates.</p> <p><u>Planning Applications/Land Searches</u> These have fallen. Given that the Council cannot increase volume of applications and searches, the reduction in income will be mitigated by reducing costs.</p>	<p><u>Planning Applications/Land Searches</u> Should surplus capacity arise, would consider option of offering planning and land search services to other Councils in the area who may be under resourced.</p>	Ongoing	<p>✗ ✓</p>	<p>Currently the number of planning applications has dropped back to 06.07 levels and year close income is projected to be above budget. One post within planning has been deleted from establishment (with effect from 01/04/09) but vacancies remain in planning policy and there is no surplus capacity at the present time.</p> <p>Land charge income however has falling significantly</p>			<p><i>Development Management Officers have been re-allocated to Spatial Policy to reduce income pressure along with reduction in admin capacity.</i></p>

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
							below budget and a budget pressure reported. Several staff have been diverted to the planning microfiche project and are currently funded from the Planning Delivery Grant. Further review of options for the Land Charge service will be considered in quarter 4.			

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
Programme Management Capacity	1, 6 & 10	C2	<p><u>Project Management</u> Project managers are appointed with responsibility for delivery and project boards established for individual projects with responsibility for overseeing project delivery, for example restoration of South Hill Park Grounds, Choice Based Lettings</p> <p><u>Project Methodology</u> Council project methodology principles applied to all significant projects.</p> <p><u>Project Monitoring</u> Project progress in monitored in accordance with</p>	<p><u>South Hill Park Grounds</u> Lottery funding has been provided for this. Heritage Lottery Fund requires completion of returns on delivery against plan in accordance with the conditions of the funding.</p>	Ongoing	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Stage 2 application was submitted by the required deadline of the end of March. The Council has received a verbal indication that our application has been successful. We are awaiting formal written confirmation on the assumption we have been successful. The next phase of the project will require a significant procurement exercise.</p>	<p>We have received official notification that we have been successful in being awarded the HLF grant. The contract with HLF has been duly completed. A major procurement exercise has commenced.</p>	<p>5 companies have been shortlisted at PQQ stage. ITT has been issued (tender return date 1st February). Planning application has been submitted.</p>	<p>In relation to the South Hill Park improvement project a report has been submitted to the Executive to appoint the successful contractor to deliver the major landscaping works. The planning application has also been submitted to the next planning committee with a Planning Officer recommendation for</p>

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			<p>Council project methodology.</p> <p>Updates on significant variances on major projects are included in quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports which are presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel by the Director of ECC and also distributed to the Chief Executive and all Executive Members.</p> <p>Progress on the Capital Plan which cover capital projects is discussed at ECC DMT, for example the Choice Based Lettings Project.</p>	<p><u>Choice Based Lettings</u> This is supported by a Member Steering group who have specified that a project specific risk matrix be developed and monitored</p>	Dec 2008 and ongoing	✓	<p>The Council has agreed the new allocation policy to facilitate choice based letting</p> <p>The IT system to implement the choice based letting scheme has been purchased and is now being developed . The new system is scheduled to be available for the first week in November.</p>			approval.

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
South East Plan	3	B2	Core Strategy in place. Robust “Limiting the Impact of Development” policies. Effective enforcement policies. S106 agreements in place. Regular communications. Member input to Regional Planning Processes.	Reviewing and Implementing review Local Development Scheme. Preparation of Development Management Development Plan Document Partial review of Core Strategy Continued Member involvement at regional and national level.	Ongoing	✓			Site Allocations DPD being prepared to accommodate final SE Plan housing levels. Approach agreed with GOSE through LDS process. No longer pursuing a Development Management DPD or review of the Core Strategy, but now concentrating on delivering a Site Allocations DPD to deliver sites which will meet	COP+T working as part of Regional Sounding Board to provide early warning of emerging issues. Executive Member part of Regional Planning Advisory Committee

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
Potential failure of key contractors	10	D2	Ringway (highways and street cleansing); SITA (waste collection); WRG (waste disposal) – performance under regular review at both an operational and strategic level. Payments made in arrears and contracts provide		Ongoing		No current additional risk	No current additional risk	No current additional risk	expected needs and growth to 2026. Officers and Portfolio Holder continue to work at a regional level to provide inputs to emerging/cha nging regional planning process. No current additional risk

Risk short name	Link to MTO	Risk Score	Action already in place	Further action to address risk	Target date	Progress on action to address risk status	Q1 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q2 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q3 2009/10 – Update Commentary	Q4 2009/10 – Update Commentary
			for non performance. RE3 Project Failure of Partnership arrangements if Joint Working Agreement is not signed	BFC and Wokingham have signed, Reading BC are putting through process	30 June 2010					Report drafted by Reading BC.

Annex D: Operational Risk Factors

The following table shows all the operational risk factors listed on the 2009/10 Service Plan for Environment, Culture & Communities. Progress on mitigation of these factors has previously been reported with Service Plan actions and indicators as part of the quarterly data set which is attached to PMRs. Paris, the Council's new performance management software, is not yet configured to work with risks, so as an interim measure operational risk factors are reported here, in a separate annex, in Quarter 4.

Ref	Risk	Mitigation	Q4 update on progress	Q4 revised risk
PRIORITY ONE: A TOWN CENTRE FIT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY				
MTO 1: Build a vibrant Bracknell town centre that residents are proud of.				
1.8	Commercial/ financial market deteriorates.	Financial monitoring with BRP at monthly steering group.	BRP and BFC working on a joint framework for delivering Town Centre which reflects current market demand – developing TC risk register to identify threats to strategy as we proceed to implementation.	None.
1.9	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No key staff lost in the quarter.	None.
1.10	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
1.11	Lack of available funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.	Meeting with investment director of HCA with a view to agreeing an investment protocol in the Borough.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
1.12	Construction costs higher than budget.	Accurate specification, partnership work.	No additional risk this quarter.	None.
PRIORITY TWO: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT				
MTO 2: Keep our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities accessible and attractive.				
2.1	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
2.2	Political will	Good preparation, Member	No change to risk in	None.

	or commitment.	briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	the quarter.	
MTO 3: Promote sustainable housing and infrastructure development.				
3.1	Commercial/ financial market deteriorates.	Financial monitoring with BRP at monthly steering group.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
3.2	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No vacancies in the quarter.	None.
3.3	Lack of officer resource to undertake the volume of large housing projects in the year.	New enabling officer recruited. Resourcing of improvement plan reviewed against existing vacant posts.	No current vacancies.	None.
3.4	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
3.5	Lack of available funding for the affordable housing development.	Meeting with investment director of HCA with a view to agreeing an investment protocol in the Borough.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
3.6	Inability of ICT suppliers to meet Council timescale for system replacements .	Using framework contract.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
3.7	RSL and development industry not able to respond to availability of transfer receipt.	Consultation with partners via the Housing Strategy.	Two potential opportunities identified.	None.
3.8	Lack of private rented sector property or interest in renting.	Establish good links with letting agents and developers. Maintain good relations with developers.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.

MTO 4: Keep Bracknell Forest clean and green.				
4.5	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No key staff lost in the quarter.	None.
4.6	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
PRIORITY THREE: PROMOTING HEALTH AND ACHIEVEMENT				
MTO 5: Improve health and well being within the Borough.				
5.2	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No loss of key staff in the quarter.	None.
5.3	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
MTO 7: Seek to ensure that every residents feels included and able to access the services they need.				
7.11	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
PRIORITY FOUR: CREATE A BOROUGH WHERE PEOPLE ARE, AND FEEL, SAFE				
MTO 8: Reduce crime and increase people's sense of safety in the Borough.				
8.11	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
PRIORITY FIVE: VALUE FOR MONEY				
MTO 10: Be accountable and provide excellent value for money.				
10.18	Lack of adequate benchmark data for housing benefits.	Joined CIPFA benchmark club.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
10.19	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No key staff lost in the quarter.	None.
10.20	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.

PRIORITY SIX: SUSTAIN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY				
MTO 11: Promote the Borough's economic activity and potential				
11.6	Lack of suitable locations.	Locations agreed with town centre management.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
11.7	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No key staff lost in the quarter.	None.
11.8	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.
MTO 13: Limit the impact of the recession				
13.4	Loss or absence of key staff needed to deliver the outcomes.	Workforce Plan in place which prepares for known losses. Monthly monitoring of vacancies at DMT. Quarterly review of sickness at DMT.	No key staff lost in the quarter.	None.
13.5	Political will or commitment.	Good preparation, Member briefings and appropriate lobbying. Good consultation and forward planning.	No change to risk in the quarter.	None.

Annex D: Operational Risk Factors

MTO1 - To build a vibrant Bracknell town centre that residents are proud of				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
1.2 delivering 200 new homes in and around Bracknell Town centre				
1.2.1 - Deliver 29 new affordable homes on sites within the periphery of the town centre.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	The target was achieved
1.3 improving access to the new town centre by providing: extensive new parking facilities, a major package of junction improvements, more bus lanes and a "park and ride" scheme				
1.3.1 - Improve the junction at John Nike Way.	28/02/2010	ECC	✓	Scheme completed.
1.3.2 - Enhance the station forecourt at Bracknell.	31/12/2009	ECC	✓	Scheme open for use. Further enhancements in development.
1.3.3 - Develop a residential parking strategy.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	High level strategy complete - for inclusion in the over-arching Parking Strategy of LTP3.
1.3.4 - Develop an urban traffic management control strategy.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	High level strategy complete for inclusion in the ITS strategy of LTP3
1.7 assessing options for future accommodation for library, democratic function, customer services and offices				
1.7.1 - Undertake improvement works at Bracknell library.	31/12/2010	ECC	✓	Library service is working with building surveyors on identifying improvements to the layout of Bracknell library.
MTO2 - To keep our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities accessible and attractive				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
2.1 Restoring South Hill Park grounds				
2.1.1 - Obtain Stage 2 approval from Heritage Lottery Fund for South Hill Park project.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Completed.
2.5 Improving the quality of the countryside and open space by targeted projects and by engaging the voluntary sector				
2.5.1 - Improve the quality of the countryside and open space by targeted projects and by engaging the voluntary sector.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Urban woodland project underway. Two Breathing Spaces projects completed.
2.6 Implement the cultural strategy, to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Borough				
2.6.1 - Implement the cultural strategy.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Action plan progressing. Next meeting in April.
2.7 Review and update the Parks and Open Space Strategy				

2.7.1 - Review and update the parks and open spaces strategy.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Consultation received and draft being produced.
MTO3 - To promote sustainable housing and infrastructure development				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
3.1 Producing a Local Development Framework that protects the Green Belt and balances the demand for new housing with the need to protect the wider environment				
3.1.1 - Complete the strategic housing land availability assessment.	30/06/2009	ECC	✓	Draft complete – to be presented to Members in Quarter 4. Publication at same time as SADPD consultation agreed by LDFSG.
3.1.2 - Complete the employment land review and retail study.	30/06/2009	ECC	✓	Complete.
3.1.3 - Undertake partial review of core strategy (public participation).	31/12/2009	ECC	N/A	Deferred until 2011/12.
3.1.4 - Hold an examination of Amen Corner action plan.	30/11/2009	ECC	✓	The Amen Corner Action Plan is being progressed as a Supplementary Planning Document, so there will be no examination. Adoption is scheduled for March.
3.1.5 - Recommence Development Management Development Plan Document.	31/01/2010	ECC	N/A	Deferred until 2011/12.
3.1.6 - Complete public participation of Whitegrove and Quelm Park area action plan.	31/10/2009	ECC	✓	The Whitgrove and Quelm Park Action Plan is being progressed as the Warfield Supplementary Planning Document. Adoption is scheduled for December.
3.3 Implementing a strategy to mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area				
3.3.1 - Complete mini-plans and begin implementation of plans.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	First draft of South Hill Park Plan produced, which is the last of the agreed sites.
3.3.2 - Review Special Protection Area mitigation strategy.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Consultation on SPD ended in December – to be agreed by Members late Quarter 4 or early Quarter 1 2010/11.
3.4 Implementing the Local Transport Plan				
3.4.1 - Implement integrated transport schemes identified in the local transport plan.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Revised Capital programme approved to move delayed schemes to next year and deliver some of next year's schemes early.
3.4.2 - Prepare a highway network management plan.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	In progress – draft anticipated during January.
3.6 Providing more choice for social housing applicants through the				

introduction of Choice Based Lettings				
3.6.1 - Implement choice based lettings.	30/07/2009	ECC	✓	BFC My Choice went live in January 2010 and is now operating successfully
3.6.2 - Purchase and implement an IT system for choice based lettings and strategic housing.	30/06/2009	ECC	✓	System now fully operational
3.7 Increasing the number of affordable houses in the borough, including directly funding 100 new units				
3.7.1 - Work with RSL partners to deliver 58 new affordable homes in Bracknell Forest.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	The target was exceeded
3.7.2 - Invest £1.155 million of transfer capital receipt in new housing.	31/03/2010	ECC	N/A	The Council has been unable to secure any development opportunities and as such the funding has been carried forward into 2010/11 to enable a different approach to be considered to achieve the objective of delivering more affordable housing
3.8 Implement the Housing Strategy to provide the right homes for the diverse housing needs of the community in Bracknell Forest				
3.8.1 - Establish a private sector housing strategy	30/09/2009	ECC	✓	Executive agreed draft strategy for improving the existing housing stock subject to consultation
3.8.2 - Implement the bed-and-breakfast reduction plan.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Use of bed and breakfast accommodation continues to be avoided unless required as emergency accommodation.
3.8.3 - Establish a supporting people strategy and re-tender for housing support services.	30/11/2009	ECC	✓	In march Executive agreed to waive standing orders to allow contracting with some supporting people providers. Contract negotiations are now being completed and following that the five year strategy will be drafted.
3.8.4 - Select preferred partner registered social landlords to implement the housing strategy targets.	30/04/2009	ECC	✓	preferred partners agreed and partnership protocol to be signed in May 2010
3.8.5 - Implement the Housing and Council Tax Benefit improvement plan.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	The 2009/10 improvement plan has been completed and a new plan has been developed as part of the 2010/11 benefit service plan.
3.8.6 - Establish a private sector housing forum.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	the forum has agreed that they will meet on a six monthly basis from now on and discussions are taking place with neighbouring boroughs about joint working

MTO4 - To keep Bracknell Forest clean and green				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
4.1 Raising standards of landscape maintenance				
4.1.1 - Develop and implement a streetscene improvement plan.	30/04/2009	ECC	✓	Complete.
4.1.2 - Clarify maintenance responsibilities for all Council-owned land.	31/05/2009	ECC	✓	Ongoing. Work focussing on key areas of land. Officer group working though detail and clarifying responsibility on GIS. Budget implications will follow once maintenance regime has been agreed.
4.3 Keeping satisfaction in the streetscene above 75%				
4.3.1 - Publish a draft Streetscene Development Plan Document.	30/09/2009	ECC	✓	Consultation early in 2010 – delays due to priority work to other projects.
4.4 Increasing recycling rates to 50% through the RE3 initiative				
4.4.1 - Complete the 2009/10 actions in the RE3 strategy and progress the actions for future years.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	The action plan is under review.
4.6 Developing a local climate change strategy by 2009, in line with the Nottingham Declaration				
4.6.1 - Implement a local climate change strategy in line with the Nottingham Declaration.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Strategy was submitted and approved in Quarter 3.
4.6.10 - Reduce water use in Council buildings: Establish water monitoring and targeting system for all council premises, provide quarterly water reports to departmental management teams, investigate feasibility of dual-flush toilets and time-controlled t	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	OGC framework established for automatic meter readers (AMRs). Assessing priorities for energy and water AMRs. SystemsLink water management software established for all sites.
4.7 Improving energy management in Council and school facilities				
4.7.1 - Improve energy management in Council and school facilities.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	
MTO5 - To improve health and wellbeing within the borough				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
5.3 Focusing on prevention, for example by increasing the number of adults participating in at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise per week				
5.3.1 - Maintain and promote services that will contribute to increasing the percentage of adults participating in 30 minutes of moderate-intensity sport	30/03/2010	ECC	✓	The percentage of the adult population participating in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport or physical activity on at least three days in any week is measured through Sport

or physical activity on at least three days in any week.				England's Active People survey. Results of the Active People survey were released in December. Bracknell Forest's score for NI 8 was 23.5% which does not meet the LAA target of 28% within the 93% confidence level. This reflects no overall change, which puts the borough in a similar position to the overwhelming majority of other local authority areas.
5.3.2 - Reduce the number of people and children killed and seriously injured in road accidents.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Figures for the 12 months to the end of the annual reporting period (end December 2009) are now in and show that all targets (Killed or seriously injured - all ages; Killed or seriously injured - children; and Slight injuries) have been met.
5.3.3 - Develop a sustainable mode of travel to school strategy.	31/12/2010	ECC	✓	Proposed strategy now ready for approval by Executive.
5.7 Enabling more people to remain in their own homes through the use of Telecare				
5.7.1 - Enable more people to remain in their own homes through the use of Telecare.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Over the year an additional 191 households received the lifeline monitoring service
MTO7 - To seek to ensure that every resident feels included and able to access the services they need				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
7.5 Implementing a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme and implementing the Council's Race Equality Scheme				
7.5.1 - Implement the disability, race and gender equality schemes' actions due for completion in 2009/10, and progress those actions due for completion in later years.	31/03/2010	ASCH CS CXO CYPL ECC	✓	CS: Proceeding satisfactorily. CXO: Ongoing. ECC: All remaining actions in progress.
7.6 Increasing access to services by electronic means				
7.6.2 - Provide e-enabled access for bookings at BLC, ESC, SSC and DGC.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	The facility for E-enabled bookings have continued to be offered at the Bracknell Leisure Centre, Downshire Golf Complex, and Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centres for a range of activities.
7.6.4 - Provide e-enabled access to the library management system.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Completed.
7.7 Implementing the Community Cohesion Strategy and through the LAA focusing on the use of culture and sport to give people a chance to				

shape their sense of belonging and identity as members of their communities				
7.7.2 - Improve community cohesion through culture and sport.	31/03/2010	ECC		Arts Week in February will be in Easthampstead and Wildridings. Crowthorne Age to Age successfully completed and the next one will be around Priestwood.
7.8 Working within the Bracknell Forest Partnership to show continuous improvement in equalities and diversity in the Council and its services, and to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard				
7.8.1 - Conduct equality impact assessments (EIAs) for new services, strategies and policies, and review existing EIAs as part of a rolling three-year programme, ensuring all actions resulting from these are built into business/work plans.	31/03/2010	ASCH CS CXO CYPL ECC		CS: Three EIAs completed and published in Q4 for CS: the fresh meat contract, appointments made by the Council, and the fixed line telephony contract. CXO: Ongoing. ECC: Two EIA's were published in the quarter for Community Arts Strategy Refresh and Spatial Policy.
MTO8 - To reduce crime and increase people's sense of safety in the borough				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
8.4 Using the 'speedwatch' anti-speeding teams to reduce the incidence of speeding				
8.4.2 - Implement speed management schemes.	31/03/2010	ECC		Speed management scheme in Longhill Road complete.
MTO9 - To promote independence and choice for vulnerable adults and older people				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
9.3 Developing a Borough-wide Strategy for Older People				
9.3.2 - Implement the actions from the older people's strategy.	31/03/2010	ASCH CS CXO ECC		CS: Work is ongoing. Will provide support and assistance as required. CXO: Work is ongoing.
9.6 Reducing fuel poverty by reducing the number of cold damp homes of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low efficiency rating				
9.6.1 - Target household occupiers, in particular those who are receiving benefits, to increase the uptake of insulation.	01/03/2010	ECC		Preparing an application to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge to target mobile home residents at Warfield Park.
MTO10 - To be accountable and provide excellent value for money				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
10.5 Implementing the priority areas of the Service Efficiency Strategy to				

deliver savings and improve service operation				
10.5.3 - Complete joint education/leisure review of space allocation at Easthampstead Park mansion.	31/03/2010	ECC	N/A	
10.5.5 - Implement the ForestCare business plan actions for 2009/10.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Business plan targets met and income targets for Forest care exceeded for the year
10.5.6 - Achieve the best benchmarked benefit administration cost.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Benchmark costs data suggests Bracknell Forest has one of the best benefit administration costs for 2008/09 in comparison with the 18 Councils selected as benchmarking partners.
10.5.7 - Complete the housing options project outlined in the January 2009 business case.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Restructure of housing options service complete
10.5.8 - Complete the joint waste strategy project outlined in the January 2009 business case.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Ongoing with re3 waste managers.
10.8 Implementing all appropriate actions to ensure staff are in place with the right skills and capacity to deliver service outcomes and maximise service efficiency				
10.8.1 - Implement the actions due in 2009/10 in each departmental workforce plan.	31/03/2010	ASCH CS CXO CYPL ECC	✓	ECC: Managers continued to make preparations for employees retiring. A programme on customer service training completed in quarter. ECC completed its programme of training courses to employees on safeguarding and this now moves into the mainstream training workload. CS: We worked with colleagues across the Council to improve the management development centre ready for its relaunch in April. Continuing to action other items in workforce plan
MTO11 - To understand and promote the borough's economic activity and potential				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
11.1 Working closely with partners to produce a programme of local action to support the local economy				
11.1.6 - Hold an annual benefits open day event to enable residents to maximise their income.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Complete.
11.1.8 - Implement range of congestion reduction	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Schemes at London Road, Pitts Bridge and Hilton Roundabout

schemes.				complete ongoing programme of feasibility study and design continues.
MTO13 - To limit the impact of the recession				
Detailed Action	Due Date	Owner	Status	Comments
13.1 Maintain invoice payment performance				
13.2.1 - Promote the take-up of housing and Council Tax benefits.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Over the year £ 112,000 of extra benefit was claimed by households as a result of the take up campaign
13.2.2 - Promote concessions offered at leisure facilities.	31/03/2010	ECC	✓	Concessions have continued to be promoted at leisure facilities through the year. The Leisure Saver scheme for persons in receipt of certain benefits operates across Leisure sites. The wellbeing team runs activities for persons with disabilities. The team of two operate across Bracknell Leisure Centre, Coral Reef and Downshire Golf Complex. Disabled access prices are available at all sites. The Red diamonds disabled activities sessions take place at the Bracknell Leisure Centre on Sunday evenings.

Annex F: Additional Departmental Progress Information

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

The severe weather event in December 2009 and January 2010 tested the organisation's response for a prolonged period. The key learning points have been captured and work is underway to progress these.

NI 189 (flood risk management) targets for Year 2 were all met with the exception of the development of a Surface Water Management Plan. A key achievement is the establishment of an internal flood group and Loddon Valley Catchment Local Authority Liaison Group,

Environmental Health

The number of disabled facility grant completed in the year reached an all time high at 69 compared to 36 the year before. The grants cover the cost of the essential works related to the need. Grants are awarded at a level according to the financial circumstances of the applicant and are mandatory. By the year end a total of £420,000 had been paid out by way of fiscal support.

Good progress continues to be made on checking the potential contamination from historic areas landfilling. Originally some 2500 potentially contaminated land areas were identified using desktop methodology and now over 1000 of those have been cleared as posing no risk. The Cleaner Borough Group continues to report a downward trend in relation to fly tipping/dumped rubbish - there has been a fall of over 22% since the beginning of the year. During two Cautions were issued to those caught fly tipping at a local recycling site making a total of 3 that had been issued. In addition 1 fixed penalty notice was served for littering during the period making the year end total 21.

Environmental Services

The snow in January delayed all services with refuse collection causing disruption to residents after the thaw but this was not helped by the need to catch up with the post Christmas collection. The majority of residents were very understanding as this affected all Councils in the area.

As reported to the last meeting the waste analysis undertaken by re³ in November highlighted areas in the borough where significant improvements can be made to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill and increase recycling. In addition there are still areas where there is high contamination in the recycling bins where residents are putting the wrong items in the blue bins eg carrier bags and other plastics when only bottles can be recycled. The re³ partners are working on a major campaign to inform residents of the correct materials and have already produced colourful fridge magnets with pictures of what can go in the blue bin.

With the Colnbrook Energy from Waste plant fully up and running we can now see a reduction of the amount of waste landfilled. This has reduced from 58% in Quarter 1 to 48% year to date at the end of Quarter 3 (Quarter 4 results are not yet available). The full year effect will see this decline still further. During the period improvements

have been completed as planned to the recycling sites at Larks Hill, Quelm Park and Leppington, Birch Hill.

Work has commenced on the tendering process for the waste collection contract which expires on 31 July 2011. All schools, Leisure sites and other Council premises have been sent a letter requesting that they advise us whether they wish to continue to be part of the household waste collection contract. Enhancement works have been completed in the Town Centre to improve the raised walkway in Charles Square and chewing gum removal has been undertaken in March in the High Street following receipt of some external funding.

The main routes through the borough (Berkshire Way, Bagshot Road, Foresters Way) were cleared of litter and fallen branches in March and shrubs cut back as required funded from the environmental enhancement budget.

The landscape contract inventory has been reviewed and checked onto the services IT system. This required a great deal of "housekeeping" to update the system and ensure accuracy of all works and budgets. In that context 32 schools have opted to remain with council and commission their grounds maintenance services from us until 2015 when the contract will come up for renewal. All schools have now been re-measured in readiness for the contract extension and individual contracts have been revised and sent to each school detailing the services requested and giving a break down of costs. All schools contracts have now been added to the Landscape inventory system and live invoicing will commence from April. Service Level Agreements for all internal clients utilising the service are being updated. Landscape Services are now providing quotations for works for Social Care and Learning centres to manage the grounds maintenance at 9 sites. The service is also pricing landscape maintenance works to include snow clearance for Schools, Professional Primary Centres, Parks and Countryside and additional works for Highways. Work is also progressing well to update the management layer in the GIS system. Work has been completed in Wildridings and is well underway in Great Hollands. During the summer work will commence to link this to the Landscape inventory measurements.

Britain in Bloom 2010 co-ordination is going well in terms of identifying new projects and planning the route for this years judging and ordering of plants. There have also been fresh ideas from new members of the committee which has improved the partnership working and should prove beneficial to Bracknell's 2010 entry. Work is also going on to engage more local businesses in Britain in Bloom this year as the commercial aspect is the one area that was highlighted as needing improvement.

Landscape area teams were re-structured to improve efficiency and the teams have had the winter to adjust to their new areas and have made improvements in terms of the visual environment of those new areas. A workshop was held for all managers and team leaders in March to consider service improvements and address weaknesses; these workshops will continue and will involve all other landscape staff.

Highways Asset Management

The past winter season is considered to have been the worst for many years. The team and our Contractors were severely tested in their efforts to maintain the highway network in as safe condition as practicable, bearing in mind the repeat of last year's salt supply difficulties. The use of de-icing road salt had to be strictly rationed to ensure that the strategically important traffic routes were treated as frequently as possible to maintain the Borough's links with the wider regional and

national community. The primary routes were salted on 59 occasions and the secondary routes on 15. The relatively few times secondary routes were salted reflect the difficulties experienced, locally and nationally, with road de-icing salt production and deliveries.

Following the freeze/thaw cycle during the winter the highway network was exposed to almost countless potholes and local surface failures. The full extent of which manifests as more potholes continue to appear several weeks after the change of season. The additional revenue money made available for pothole repairs has been fully utilised but several streets still require more extensive repairs than mere patching. The damages to the highway network will take several months to repair fully.

The Council's highway maintenance Contractors have been instrumental in keeping our roads salted during the winter and subsequently in carrying out the extensive repairs already evident throughout the Borough.

Operational Support

In the last quarter the priority is to ensure the various returns can be made and accounts closed down for the year. The team were also involved in setting up the alternative arrangements from 1 April in respect of stray dogs. Priority has been given to supporting the development of the IT system used by Highways and Landscape. The anticipated move of the Lektriever filing system has yet to happen but the file culling is complete and a substantial reduction in filing space has been achieved. This will continue over time with the ever increasing use of IT. As yet the service does not have the benefit of having a document management system which would obviously help reduce filing space need still further.

Trading Standards

The final test purchases programmed for age-restricted products were completed within the quarter. In total 82 purchases were attempted with 5 sales and 77 refusals. This gives an overall non-compliance rate of 6% which compares very favourably with the previous year of 19.5%. The section has worked closely with local businesses to improve compliance and this drop indicates that our strategy might be working. Looking at individual products alcohol still remains the most sold product (16%) and the impact of alcohol on the behaviour of children causes the most concern for residents. A local performance indicator is to have sale rates below 10% by 2011 and for all other products we have hit that target early; however more work is required with regard to alcohol products.

Overall the year has been a challenging one but it has also been successful. A major target for us was to work with those residents within vulnerable groups and save at least £50,000 by assisting residents to resolve justified complaints with businesses. Often, if we do not intervene, the only option for a resident is to take the matter to the County Court which can be a lengthy, expensive and daunting process and many do not feel able to undertake it. Officers have received training in mediation and through our efforts we have negotiated refunds, reductions and replacement goods to a value of over £65,000 for the benefit of residents. This compares to a figure of £36,000 in 2008/09.

The demand for our services from residents and businesses alike rises year on year and 2009/10 has shown a further rise of 22% in the amount of complaints by residents being investigated and mediated by officers. With the economic recession

we also have an important role to support our local businesses by giving them advice and assistance and by protecting them from unfair competition from rogue traders. We have increased membership of our trader approval scheme Buy with Confidence by 9 (20%) and continue to receive excellent reports from residents who have used these local businesses. An investigation was initiated and conducted by officers into what we regarded as a fraudulent practice by a company offering online job advertisements to local authorities, including Bracknell Forest, and Primary Health Care Trusts. Due to our intervention we prevented public organisations paying many hundreds of thousands of pounds to the company involved and we can directly identify in excess of £60,000 savings due to our actions. The matter is now being investigated by a regional fraud squad.

An investigation into the supply of counterfeit England football shirts by a resident through an on line auction site was concluded in February when the resident accepted a formal Caution and confiscation of his illegal stock.

Licensing

The last quarter saw the completion of the review of the Council's Gambling Policy which sets out the framework for decisions to be made on the establishment and running of gambling premises within the borough. The Policy is required by legislation to be reviewed on a three year cycle and the present process commenced in May 2009 before receiving Council approval in January this year.

Licensing legislation continues to evolve with new regulations and acts being added regularly. Members of the Licensing and Safety Committee and officers attended a full day update session on changes to legislation in the fields of the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, taxi, street collection and street trading legislation.

The year as a whole has been a successful one for the Licensing Section with many of the objectives set within the work plan being achieved. Of particular note is that targets for inspections of licensed premises and time limits within with licence applications are processed and issued were exceeded. Despite the economic recession income from fees and charges also remained within predictions.

In response to a request from the taxi trade the Council commissioned a self funded an unmet demand survey. Following the survey the Licensing and Safety Committee imposed a temporary limit on any new licences being imposed whilst further investigations were carried out as to how the taxi service could be improved for the benefit of the users. A new taxi rank was opened at the Railway Station as part of the overall redevelopment.

Delivering services in partnership with others enables the best use of resource. Memorandums of Understanding have been drawn up with Thames Valley Police in relation to enforcement procedures within Licensing Act premises. A second arrangement has been agreed with all Berkshire authorities which allows for joint authorisation and working across boundaries in the areas of Licensing, Trading Standards and Environmental Health.

Car Parks

The following an EU procurement process a contract is to be given to Vinci Park Ltd for the following services:

- (a) The management of the existing multi-story and surface parks, including the provision of a full parking office administration service.
- (b) On street and off street enforcement.
- (c) The procurement and installation of car park control equipment within both Multi Storey and Pay & Display Car Parks

Planned maintenance has been completed to the multi story car parks that include for the replacement of the expansion joints in the High Street Car Park. There is a dispute with the contractor that has to be resolved before final payment can be made. The work forms part of a priority list of remedial works that will be undertaken over the next 3 years. Finally, Cash income increased during this quarter and this has helped reduce the shortfall against expected budget.

Cemetery & Crematorium

The facilities remained open throughout the adverse snowy weather conditions. Some families decided to cancel a service due to other family members and friends travelling from elsewhere but all were re-booked at a later date.

Plans to bring into use other parts of the premises have been drawn up so that we can ensure that there is sufficient burial space to cope with future demand. The new area will have a dedicated Children and Babies burial area which will also include the Children's Garden. The Rose Irrigation system has now come into use and we expect to see a huge improvement in the quality of our memorial roses. The service books have also been replaced and positive feedback has been given by clients.

EU tenders were placed for the replacement of the cremators and provision of mercury abatement equipment. The equipment must be in place by 31 December 2012 otherwise the council will be forced to pay a surcharge on all cremations.

Other notable achievements for the year at the Cemetery & Crematorium were:

- Rose Irrigation System
- Replenishment of dead or dying roses (ongoing)
- Bush rose replacement scheme
- New Road markings with the Cemetery & Crematorium
- Design of New Sanctum Memorial area for Cremated remains

re³ Partnership

The last element of the PFI contract so far as it relates to delivery came to a conclusion during the quarter when Lakeside was fully opened and started taking some of our waste to be converted into energy. Each year we will now divert in the region of 20,000 tonnes from landfill. A fall in waste tonnages over the period mirrors that nationally which is attributed as much to the impact of the recession as it is to our efforts to encourage greater levels of recycling. The drop has led to budget savings over the period. Work continues at Smallmead to try to make the recycling/sorting plant (the MRF) more efficient. The reject rate is higher than we would have expected. At the same time more effort is being made to improve the quality of the product going in. Whilst not a function of the Board, consideration was given by this collective forum as to how shared collection services may be effected in the future. All parties agreed to retender their contracts with a mutual review date in 2019. Work will continue over the coming years to look at how this might be achieved and what needs to be addressed. The Board also considered how it might

be able to effect an arrangement to enable the disposal of food waste if the Councils were to offer a service. Whilst there are potential benefits of diverting more waste from landfill, the collection costs for each council relative to the alternatives and need are disproportionate. The cost of plant would be in the region of £10m and each council would have additional revenue costs in excess of £1m a year. There would also be significant start-up capital costs as new vehicles would be required. The option is being kept under review but in the meantime we know we still have huge potential in the use of the blue bins.

HOUSING

Housing Register / allocations

At the end of March there were 3420 households registered on the Council's housing register. This is an 18% reduction on the number of households who were registered before BFC my choice went live. This reflects the one off re-registration exercise that took place for all applicants which led to applications being cancelled who did not re-register. Such applications would have been cancelled over the year previously and be compensated by other households joining the register. At the time of writing lettings information had not been provided by RSL's for the month of March and therefore it is not possible to report on that aspect of performance.

Supporting people

The all inclusive forum took place on the 16th April.

We had representatives from all our main client groups together with a number of Bracknell Forest Councillors.

Preliminary figures show that 81 people definitely attended. Confirmation is still awaited regarding the attendance of some 18 people, most of whom were service users. Of those definitely attending 34 or 42% were service users. This is a far higher percentage of service users than have attended previous events where around 30% have been service users. Service users had assisted in planning the event and assisted on the day, ensuring that car parking arrangements ran smoothly and that refreshments were served. Service users also helped to clear up after the event.

The remaining 42 attendees or 52% were providers or representatives of other organisations.

The HECS system also generated considerable interest and Home Connections will now be making some changes to the Bracknell system following feedback at the event from delegates.

Homelessness

There were ten homelessness decisions over the quarter of which a homeless duty was found for seven households. This compares with 5 households who were owed a homeless duty in the previous quarter. The reasons for homelessness were as follows; one household due to violent relationship breakdown, three households who had been asked to leave by friends or relatives and three households who had lost rented accommodation.

In terms of homeless prevention there were 58 cases of homeless prevention. This is a 26% increase on the level of homeless prevention from the previous quarter.

Forestcare

The Forestcare service was accredited in all parts of the new Telecare Services Association (TSA) standards and are now a premium member. Previously the service was only Part I and II accredited whereas we are now accredited for our mobile response too.



Forest care monitors over 6,300 connections and in March took a record 38,233 calls through the Alarm Calls Handling System. Despite the bad winter the service still managed to:

- Complete 206 Lifeline demonstrations
- Attend 49 faults
- Fit 17 telecare add-ons
- Install 6 telehealth-hubs
- And fit 41 keysafes

The Control Centre had a facelift with new carpets and decoration.

Benefits

At the end of March 2010, there was a benefit caseload of 6812, which was a 3% increase from the caseload at the end of December 2009. This is a higher percentage increase than previous quarters. Overall, this is a 13% increase in the caseload compared to the position at March 2009

The following table provides workload figures for the last quarter.

Area of activity	Previous quarter	January/ March	Percentage change
Telephone calls	6811	7313	3.4%
Visitors to the office	3225	2837	-20.12%
Scanned items of post	18332	18956	3.4%
New claims received	830	852	2.6%
Total change events and new claims assessed	3794		-0.2%

There were benefit user focus groups in February and March which covered issues of service standards and proposed amendments to standard correspondence.

LEISURE AND CULTURE

Leisure

The leisure section facilities have endured a challenging year to date due to continuing economic uncertainty and further bad weather. Despite the difficulties all facilities have continued to provide high quality services.

Coral Reef has picked up very well after its extended closure for tiling the base of the pool along with its annual planned maintenance programme, finishing the year in line with its budgeted target.

Bracknell Leisure Centre has had its challenges over the year but has continued to offer a full service to its customers and has continued to try and attract new users to the extensive range of activities and courses it offers. The Forest Suite and Crèche have had a minor refurbishment to encourage new customers.

The Look Out Discovery Centre exhibition has performed well in the previous period, with high attendance numbers. The end of the period saw the official launch of their outreach scheme 'On The Road' which promises to be a popular way for hands on science to be delivered into schools.

Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centres are a valuable asset to their local communities. However, Edgbarrow was damaged by a fire in the boiler room just before Christmas and remained closed during this period. Extensive efforts have been made to keep customers and stakeholders informed of the progress being made with repairs, which are now with the Council's insurers. Edgbarrow staff have been based at Sandhurst Sports Centre, and have also been used on occasion to assist other sites. In the meantime Sandhurst Sports Centre has been performing well during this period.

Downshire Golf Complex has continued to find it difficult to meet tough financial targets as first heavy rain and then snow forced closures during the period. The course has been unplayable for 33 days this year compared to 20 in 2008/09. Continued efforts have been made to encourage new players, including a number of promotional ideas and ongoing improvements to the course.

Easthampstead Park Conference Centre has continued to find trading conditions challenging during this period. Management team efforts to mitigate decline in income where possible have been successful, and should ensure the site finishes the year within its agreed pressures. While business such as team building events continue to be low, there remains a solid base of conference business to build upon and wedding bookings have remained strong.

Horseshoe Lake was closed for the period as it was out of season, whilst Harmanswater Leisure Centre experienced pleasing business levels based around the extensive school swimming programme and good fitness suite update during the New Year period.

Initiatives to improve access to leisure facilities continue to do well. Over 8,679 on-line bookings were made for the financial year and the Leisure Saver Scheme now has almost 500 members. The Leisure and Wellbeing Team continues to provide an excellent service to disabled adults. This scheme will be extended to disabled young people through the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme.

The Young People in Sport Scheme enjoyed another excellent term. Despite the disruption caused by the snow early in the New Year, all activities went ahead, with good support for all of them. Bracknell Forest schools provided 42 teams at the Swinley Forest Cross Country Relays, all schools with infant age children took part in the Infant Sports Skills Scheme, 20 schools took part in the Primary Hockey Festival and both the senior and junior sports hall finals produced some really exciting athletics.

The Quintiles Bracknell half marathon sold out for the 4th consecutive year and in record time.

Libraries, Arts and Heritage

The Library and Information Service continued to promote the service to the public through a series of events and activities across the Borough. Over this quarter, the average number of events per month in Bracknell Forest libraries was 88, and the average number of attendees at events per month was 1,245. The Community Services team has completed the task of updating the community profiles for each library catchment area. These provide valuable information to help plan service developments. Highlights from among the many promotional events that took place were :

- Simon Kernick author event at Sandhurst Library: the Library Service continues to attract such high profile authors as Simon Kernick, encouraging additional visits to the library as well as developing and widening customers reading tastes.
- A Young Crimewriters creative writing event at Sandhurst. Additionally the teen reading group at Sandhurst has settled into a regular event for a core group of young people, allowing them to build there confidence of interacting within a group and encouraging them to discuss their views and opinions while respecting those of others. A competition was held in March for them to judge a book against the film version.
- Energy Roadshow at Ascot Heath.
- Volunteer recruitment events at Crowthorne.
- Percy Park-keeper and Beatrix Potter activity days at Sandhurst.

Arts Development - the LPSA II funding which was available for arts and cultural projects in the community came to an end in March 2010. The aim was to contribute towards the indicator to improve on the *percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.*

Baseline from Best Value User Survey 2003	52.6%
2009/10 LPSA II Target	57.6%
Place Survey 2008	82.1%
LPSA 2 adjustment from the place survey	57.38%

As BFC was so close to meeting this target, BFC will receive reward funding £199,296.3.

During the last 3 years, we have managed projects across all 6 town and parish council areas. We have worked with people of all ages and abilities and the work has included the following projects:

- Age to Age (*Harmans Water, Birch Hill, Priestwood and Crowthorne*)

- Black History Month 2007 (*Borough wide*)
- People's Museum (*Borough wide*)
- Snap Bracknell (*Bracknell Town*)
- Crowthorne Carnival
- Northern Parishes Arts Week
- Arts Spaces (*Great Hollands, Jennetts Park, Hanworth and Birch Hill followed by Easthampstead and Wildridings*)

Age to Age IV - a presentation on the Crowthorne project was given to the Extended Services Seminar at Easthampstead Baptist Church in March. The fourth project was completed with a performance to pupils and staff at Meadow Vale School and then to an intimate audience at Birdsgrove residential home on the 30th March. We are still waiting for feedback from pupils which will be included in our final evaluation. Bracknell Forest Homes has expressed an interest in continuing with Age to Age and in funding the project from April.

Young Carers Drama Project - in January, the young people performed their drama pilot performance to over 200 pupils and staff from Easthampstead Park School. Out of the 160 returned pupil questionnaires, 148 pupils said that the performance had helped them to understand what a young carer is and 155 said it would be helpful to a young carer and 10 pupils identified themselves as a young carer.

We are now in the process of submitting funding applications for the three year drama project and providing a reference for the BFVA's application to Comic Relief for the funding of ongoing work. The young people will be involved in the selection of the theatre company which will work with them on the longer term project.

Crowthorne Carnival - the youth steering group has been successful and has attracted 18 young people to plan for the carnival float in July. The group have been involved in designing the project with Street Processions, including posters and writing an application to the Youth Opportunities Fund.

In addition, we have worked with artist Victoria Spearing who has designed a downloadable art pack for anyone who would like to make something for the carnival to wave and hold during the procession. In March, a pilot workshop took place with 26 elderly people at the Coats to test if the ideas would work and to get their feedback. 25 people said they'd enjoyed the workshop and 23 said they'd found the instructions easy. We also received comments like:

*It was something for a change from what we usually do
We enjoyed the afternoon very much, Thank-you
[I enjoyed] Playing & trying things out
[I enjoyed] Being creative / doing something different*

The Carnival Pack will be ready for public use in May and is suitable for all ages and makes use of affordable and easy to use materials

Lift Off - over 350 dancers performed to sell out nights at South Hill Park for the schools, youth and community galas, including street dance, Bollywood, flamenco and contemporary dance. We were pleased to see Brakenhale School perform for the first time in many years. We have reduced the number of dancers taking part to raise the standards and to give better access to audiences. Evaluation is now underway to see how we can improve for 2010.

Art Spaces 2010 with the Theatre of Making - over 270 people attended the Open Learning Centre on the 20th February taking part in workshops and performances. There were also events in the community run by the voluntary sector; at The Rowans and with the play rangers. School based arts activities took place in the following weeks.

Community Arts Strategy (2009-2013) - this strategy has now been approved by the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Advice, information and developing partnerships

- Youth Dance England – Regional Steering Group
- Bracknell Forest Homes

Public Art Audit - we have identified over 40 pieces of public art in the borough and with the aid of the student placement from Reading University we are slowly putting together important information on each piece. As we uncover sufficient information, this will be put on line for the public to view.

The Public Art Advisory Panel will be doing a site visit to Jennetts Park at the end of April as background information for future commissions. Advice is also being given on the strategy and briefs for this development.

Other sites for public art commissions include The Parks (formerly RAF Staff College) and Wykery Copse.

Heritage - Snap Bracknell! - we now have over 700 images taken by local people documenting the town centre. These are available with captions and a selection will be made for display as part of Heritage Open Days 2010 and for the website. We are also working with Bracknell Camera Club on this project.

The People's Museum - 166 people have submitted their drawings of their objects for display and the artist, Jon Lockhart is currently piecing the exhibition together. The project has taken place in each parish and town council area, and involved children, the Nepalese community, family groups, elderly and disabled people. The artwork will go on display in various venues and for Heritage Open Days 2010 in Bracknell town centre.

Mile Stones - planning applications have been submitted for the restoration of two milestones to be restored by the Red Lion Pub and London Road, Lily Hill Park.

Heritage Strategy 2010-2014 - a final draft will be ready for comments by the Forum in June 2010.

Advice, information and developing partnerships -

- Involvement in the HLF audience development plan for South Hill Park
- Bracknell Forest Society – training in Blue Plaques (February 2010)
- History talk to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support Group, Kerith Centre
- Museums Network for Berkshire

Parks & Countryside

Adverse weather - staff from both the Ranger and the Tree teams were busy the weeks following the heavy snowfall with organising the clearing of fallen trees and branches. Overall, the impact was lower than could be expected following such

adverse conditions, reflecting the value and significance of previous pro-active management.

During the main period of heavy snow fall, the Ranger team (and service vehicles) provided support to Adult Social Care and Health, helping with 'Meals on Wheels' deliveries and transporting carers in the evenings.

Marketing and Interpretation - 'Capturing our Natural World' exhibition - winning images from the parks annual photo competition 2009 were exhibited in the community gallery at South Hill Park from the official opening on the 5th February until 7th April 2010. Winning photographers and runners-up attended the gallery opening evening, and photographs have been enjoyed by visitors to South Hill Park Arts Centre.

New interpretation and information boards have been designed for Caesars Camp and Shepherd Meadows. The boards provide key information on wildlife and history, adding to visitor understanding and enjoyment.

Site Quality Improvements - Urban Woodlands projects have been completed at School Hill (Sandhurst), Wentworth Way, Osmans Close (Winkfield), Frog Copse (Bracknell) and Napier Woods (Crowthorne). Works include improved path surfaces, tree and undergrowth management, and making entrances to sites more welcoming. Improvements to Frog Copse also include a carved timber frog made using timber from a local tree. Improvements were funded through use of S106 Developer contributions.

Management work at The Greenway (Sandhurst) - site rangers have been working in liaison with the local Police Community Support Officer to improve natural surveillance and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour. This includes scrub clearance, fencing and path works. Similar work has also been carried out at The Chestnuts (Warfield).

Savernake Park had an organised 'spruce-up' event which was very successful - there was a good turn out from local residents with many bags of litter collected. More community events are planned, with a view to setting up a 'friends of' group.

Tree Works - substantial tree works have been carried out to large willows along Edmunds Lane, including pollarding to improve health of the tree and for the safety of visitors and residents.

A historic Cedar has had to be taken down at South Hill Park near to Frobisher. The tree was found to be heavily diseased with high risk of significant limbs falling onto a footway/cycleway. The work was carried out in close liaison with local residents.

As part of landscape/streetscene enhancement new tree planting has been carried out at Trevelyan and Tawfield.

The Tree service co-ordinated a Thames Valley Tree Officer meeting to identify and share good practice with neighbouring authorities and other bodies. The event included bringing in an external speaker to give a talk about the uses of thermal imaging technologies for decay detection.

Heritage Lottery Fund - South Hill Park - the SHP project has been focussed on the tendering arrangements to secure a specialist contractor to implement the restoration proposals, previously drawn up during Stage 1. 5 companies were shortlisted in the

autumn and then subsequently invited to tender. All submitted valid bids which have now been assessed. An Executive Decision on the Contract Award is due in April.

In order to keep the public informed about the Project, a new e-mail address has been set up in addition to an informative web page:

shprestation@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/shprestation

Lily Hill Park – implementation of the Management and Maintenance Plan is running well. The Bracknell Conservation Volunteers have undertaken two days of work laying a hedge near one of the entrances to improve the visual impact of the site and increase its biodiversity value. Approximately £3,000 was spent on necessary tree works at Lily Hill Park following the heavy snowfall. Drainage has been improved and new site signs have been installed at all the entrances improving the experience for all visitors. Public events have been well attended including;

- History Presentation: to Bracknell Methodist Tuesday Fellowship covering the past, present and future management of Lily Hill Park
- Spring Stroll: A seasonal staff led guided walk through the site
- RSPB Big Park Birdwatch: In partnership with the local RSPB group, this was a guided walk around the site on the weekend of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch
- RNLI Sponsored Welly Walk – Over £300 was raised for the Mayor's Charity on a sponsored walk around Lily Hill Park led by the Mayor Cllr Bob Wade and his wife Maggie Wade

Landscape Design - Jennett's Park, countryside park. Planting works have been undertaken this year and the paths are due to be surfaced in May. Work to paths through Tarman's Copse is due to start soon, including the route of Bracknell Footpath 17. The three public art installations for open spaces are to be included in one single brief and commission. A draft outline brief has been prepared by Parks and Countryside and Arts and Heritage Officers working together with Planning Officers to assist the Consortium in delivering its public art strategy.

The Elms Access Improvements Project - designs were agreed with Bracknell Town Council and work has started on site. S106 developer contributions have been secured for hard landscaping including a new block paved access path through the car park, a speed hump, block paved entrance feature and path surfacing. Soft landscaping and fencing works have been carried out by Bracknell Town Council grounds maintenance staff. Work to provide a specific area of parking for visitors is due to be complete by May.

Library terrace landscape enhancement - ornamental planters have been placed and filled with a diverse range of plants. The old tarmac surface has been repaired and new resin bound surfacing added.

Great Hollands Neighbourhood Centre - the service has been involved in the landscape design for proposed environmental improvements to the shopping centre including installation of planters, the planting and replacing of trees and new co-ordinated street furniture and signage.

Biodiversity - in February, Shepherd Meadows was successfully entered into Higher Level Stewardship to provide funding for grassland and woodland management of

the Site of Special Scientific Interest over the next 10 years. This attracts funding support from Natural England of approximately £5,000 per annum.

New barn owl boxes have been installed at Easthampstead Park and will be in place shortly at Shepherd Meadows to encourage this 'Bracknell 24' (Biodiversity Action Plan priority) species.

A new practical protected species work guide has been given to staff in Parks and Countryside and Landscape Services with accompanied talks to raise awareness and improve protection of biodiversity in our work.

New GIS data sets have been created for hedgerow surveys in the northern parishes and Crowthorne veteran trees provided by local volunteers.

The Parks and Countryside Policy & Strategy team have been providing ecological, landscape and open space advice on several major planning policy documents: Site Allocations (including sustainability assessments), Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Warfield SPD and the Local Transport Plan.

PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES

Administration

Our targets were met during the quarter including processing 39 Freedom of Information requests for the department. The 4th floor Admin Team made good progress with the Tree Preservation Order Review – 424 out of 839 files have been completed. The Document Management Team completed Phase 1 of a large Planning back-scanning project.

Business Systems

We continued work on improving the accessibility of the department's online web products to help achieve the 'AA' standard defined by the Disability Discrimination Act. We set up the new choice-based lettings website - www.bfcmychoice.org.uk ready for its go live in January and provided web content for the online licensing application system, ELMS, written by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. This was to meet a new EU service directive implemented on 28 December 09. Also we received training on the new online forms system in early February so they could begin conversion of existing online forms to the new software.

We completed the Confirm IT system upgrade once the snow had disappeared. We purchased Forestcare's new out of hours call system and implementation is well underway. We started work on configuring mobile devices for the highway inspectors as well as FSS (uk) and AMES interfaces for M3. The former enables food samples to be downloaded into M3 from the Food Standards Agency and the latter, to exchange animal welfare information electronically with DEFRA.

We continued to work with Grounds Maintenance to capture inventory information as well as contributing to the Land Management Project. Customer location and tendency information produced using Experian MOSAIC data has been provided for the marketing team in Leisure and other ways to exploit MOSAIC and OAC demographic data are being researched. We updated the Corporate property gazetteer to resolve anomalies raised by the Census 2011 project.

Contracts

Engineering Consultancy Contracts (Jacobs Babbie Replacement)

In quarter 4 contract terms were agreed with the approved suppliers. Most contracts have been signed, with a few outstanding on minor points. Work has started on handover from Jacobs Babbie.

We have started the specification for the Bridges & Structures Contract, which will be procured through the South East Pan Government Collaborative Highways Professional Services Framework. We have met with Hampshire County Council to understand the mini-competition mechanism.

Car Park Management Contract

We evaluated the returned tenders and identified the preferred bidder. The award was approved by CMT and Executive and is in standstill period. We have started work on implementation planning.

Mercury Abatement/Replacement Cremators Contract

This quarter we completed the specification, tender and other contract documents. We advertised in OJEU and issued tender documents to interested parties. Two tenders had been received by the closing date and evaluation is starting.

South Hill Park Contract

In quarter 4 we evaluated the returned tender documents and identified a preferred bidder. Award report has gone to CMT.

Refuse Collection Contract

In quarter 4 we completed work on the pre-qualification questionnaire and made progress on the specification document.

e+ Smartcard Programme

The e+ card has been successfully implemented as photo ID for the BFC My Choice Scheme.

People are now able to apply for their ENCTS disabled bus pass and rail card replacement voucher at Customer Service points in the Council Offices. The sliding age eligibility for the bus pass, announced in the Government's pre-budget report, has been successfully automated in the SmartConnect card management system.

We demonstrated SmartConnect to Surrey County Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Liverpool City Council.

Finance

During the quarter work was completed on the 2010/11 revenue and capital budgets. The revenue budgets have been loaded on to the general ledger, capital estimates are to be loaded in April. The team also carried out their core functions of accounting, budget monitoring, financial advice and debt control.

Human Resources

HR supported staff through the restructuring process. This included a number of redundancies as well as having a significant consultation programme in place for Library staff.

We are pleased to have chosen a training company to provide mentor training for our pilot mentoring scheme for new managers.

In relation to safeguarding we have now received the new ISA application form and have been working on the implementation.

The team supported job evaluation at many levels: we had presence on the steering group, helped present workshops, advised individuals on how to complete Job Information Questionnaires and sat on the senior panel for the benchmarking jobs.

We delivered a network event for junior managers discussing conflict and ran an Investigation Officer training course.

The team positively supported the Job Centre's Future Jobs Fund scheme by recruiting 6 young people to the department and helping managers put in place plans to gain valuable office experience to help him find permanent employment. As 3 of these young people work in the Performance and Resources division we are able to keep a close eye on their progress.

The team has continued to support managers on a range of complex staffing issues and formal hearings. This quarter there have been 4 formal hearings: 1 disciplinary, 3 performance improvement/capability hearings of which 2 related to sickness absence. We also supported managers, through the provision of advice and guidance, for a number of informal sickness and performance issues.

This quarter there has been a lot of internal recruitment activity, mainly in Housing due to some restructuring, for posts such as Benefit Assessment Officer, Benefit Assessment Advisor, Housing Resource Officer and Housing Strategy and Support Manager. We have also recruited several Recreation Assistants at Coral Reef, and have filled a few hard to recruit posts such as Heritage Officer, Assistant Engineer (Transport Monitoring), Manager of Procurement Projects and have made an offer for the Team Manager Environmental Protection post.

Equalities

We published Equalities Impact Assessments for the Spatial Policy service and the refresh of the Community Arts Strategy. We arranged training for all our remaining managers. We wrote some case studies for the Council's attempt to gain the achieving level of the equalities framework in July.

Business Continuity

We continued to support the arrangements around Time Square roof works during the final closure of the programme.

Performance Management

We prepared the Service Plan and Workforce Plan for the department and continued to support the implementation of the new performance management system, PARIS, ready for go live in early April.

Customer Care

We carried out some mystery shopping of the department's services in the quarter and discussed its implications at DMT and with colleagues in Customer Services. We will run another exercise in the autumn. We continued with our programme of customer care and letter writing workshops. We circulated the customer services plans from the Members workshop to the department.

Health and Safety

We carried out our annual review of the department's health and safety procedures and launched the department's local health and safety page on Boris.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Building Control

This quarter we have received assurances that we have successfully won two large projects in the Borough; the proposed developments associated with various local schools and a proposed health centre, in addition to our regular workload from within the borough. We have also won a second health centre through our Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Partnership Scheme. Work via the Partnership Scheme has been increasing over the last couple of months after a period of decline and we have managed to secure two new partnerships, one with a reputable local architect and one with a national construction company who have appointed us for seven sites in Slough allocated for the conversion of old garage blocks to residential units.

In February Andy Ingram and David Constable attended a ceremony to recognise the commitment and dedication they have made in working for Bracknell Forest Borough Council for 20 years each. The ceremony was held at Easthampstead Park Conference Centre and they were joined from colleagues across the council achieving the same milestone.

The team have been undertaking a pilot scheme with Communities and Local Government (CLG) working on the development of a risk based inspection program for Building Control nationally. This work is still on-going. We are one of seven Local Authorities and 4 Approved Inspectors working on the pilot nationally.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), LABC and CLG guidance has finally been released to cover the requirements of the new Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010. The new Regulations come in to force in April with a suggested implementation by October 2010. The new Regulations are coming in to promote greater transparency in the setting of charges by Local Authorities under the Building Regulations as well as allowing provisions for charging for pre-application advice, charging for additional work as well as refunding where a lower level of service has been provided than originally anticipated. Work can begin on this in the next quarter now that the guidance has arrived. Work was undertaken this quarter to review our current charging scheme in alignment with the Council proposed increases in charges across the service.

One team member attended the BRE Code for Sustainable Homes Assessor training course and will be presenting an overview of the Code to Building Control and the Spatial Policy team shortly.

Two members of the team attended a scaffold safety course to give them an insight into the safe construction of scaffolding and this can be applied when a member of the team has to issue a scaffold licence. Information from this course was fed back to the rest of the team. A trip was also made to Ecobuild in London to witness the latest technology being employed in construction to reduce CO2 emissions and combat global warming.

A series of handbooks have been produced for our customers as a joint effort through the Berkshire Building Control Partnership. The first is a marketing prospectus for clients selling Bracknell Building Control explaining who we are, what we do and what service we offer. We are awaiting receipt of an electronic version to go onto our website. Further handbooks are in development for other topic areas.

Land Charges

Following several challenges against Local Authorities about the legality of charging for search information and the classification of such data under the Environmental Information Regulations, work has begun on checking our position as an authority and our right to charge.

The statutory fee for personal searchers was increased but it has not had the impact of reducing the number of personal searches in favour of Local Authority searches as had been hoped.

The search market remains fairly slow generally in comparison with previous years.

Development Management

Whilst the year up to the end of June 2009 saw a steady drop in the numbers of planning applications received the last three quarters has seen no further decline in application numbers. However the number of larger scale proposals which bring in the bulk of the planning fee income remains low compared with the peak of activity in 07/08. The service continued to maintain its record of exceeding National Indicator targets for speed of application determination and is one of 23 planning authorities selected by CLG to pilot possible new performance indicators for a 3 month period. In recognition of the additional work this places on the service a one of grant of £5000 will be paid to the Council.

At the same time areas of work which are none fee earning continue to place considerable demands on the services resources, most notably investigation and subsequent actions relating to planning breaches and dealing with corporate projects.

Developers continue to approach the service in respect of proposals which they intend to bring forward as the economic climate improves.

The redevelopment of Bracknell's Town Centre continues to be a high priority for the service, with officers working with the preferred provider of the Bracknell Health Space. Whilst this project has not advanced as quickly as the provider originally anticipated they are shortly to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with the

Council. The service has also been working closely with the West London Mental Health Trust on proposals to provide a new hospital at Broadmoor as well as secure the long term future for the original 19th century listed buildings. Again a Planning Performance Agreement will be concluded in the coming quarter which will set out the arrangements for the Councils engagement with the Trust.

Whilst a slowdown in residential development has occurred sites such as Jennett's Park and Wykery Copse continue to result in activity for the service, including reserved matters applications, work on developing proposals for the Jennett's Park neighbourhood centre, school site and condition discharge. Other school expansion proposals along with the provision of children's centres are also an important area of work for the service; here the arrangements for dealing with council projects introduced early in 2009 have resulted in improvements in the speed of delivery and avoidance of abortive design work. The Development Management Service is now briefed early on capital programmes and are involved from the initial design stages

The quarter also saw continued work on the indexation of electronically captured planning micro-fiches and involvement in the CLG/POS Development Management Project. The quarter also saw the Development Management Service held up as an example of good practice by the CLG in relation to the Planning Performance Agreement entered into with the developer of Jennett's Park.

Spatial Policy

Work has focused on the preparation of a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD). This document will identify land to accommodate the balance of the 12780 dwellings allocated to the Borough in the South East. The SADPD will be accompanied by the preparation of an Infrastructure Plan.

Work on the project in this quarter has included commencement of a major options consultation in February-March-April 2010. This included preparation of major participation document and establishment of an on-line consultation system. Consultants have been appointed to carry out masterplanning work on the potential sites and have produced an initial baseline report. Work has progressed on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan with all infrastructure providers having been contacted and provided with information about the levels of future development and potential locations. Further Strategic Flood Risk Assessment work has been commissioned and tenders invited for an update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Landscape assessment has been carried out on the potential development sites.

Work continued on the preparation of the Streetscene Supplementary Planning Document. The Character Areas and Amen Corner SPDs were both adopted in March 2010. Work on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document has been unavoidably delayed while legal issues are resolved which affect all the SPA authorities..

Work has been undertaken to assess the implications of possible changes to the Section 106 and conditions attached to the Town Centre outline planning permission.

Climate Change and Carbon Management

Executive approved the first year's progress report on the Climate Change Action Plan to October 2009 in January 2010 and agreed for the 2010 revision of the Action Plan to be aligned with the annual financial year commencing April 2010.

The annual return for NI187: Tackling fuel poverty was submitted to Defra in March 2010. GOSE confirmed that the return meets our Local Area Agreement target for this indicator for 2009/10.

A feasibility study, co-funded by the Carbon Trust, for a district heating scheme between Bracknell Leisure Centre and adjacent sites was conducted from January – March 2010 by Camco Services UK. Interim and final workshops were held between the BFC project team, the Carbon Trust and Camco Services and a draft final report was presented. A report on this project is scheduled for the Executive meeting on 29th April 2010.

The Carbon Trust funded study for a smaller scheme between Harmans Water Pool and Primary School concluded that this site is not suited to a district heating scheme.

The SALIX energy efficient loan scheme, available to schools, closed in January 2010. Edgebarrow School's application for £8,000 for heating zone controls was approved and the works were implemented in the previous quarter. Wildridings School's application for £12,500 has been approved for lighting controls, pool cover, heating controller and roof insulation. These works have commenced and will be completed in the next quarter.

A project funding bid to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge to address hard to treat mobile home communities, targeting Warfield Park as a pilot project was unsuccessful. The bid resulted in BFC being invited to identify 10 mobile homes to participate in an OFGEM national thermal performance assessment of mobile homes by Alba Sciences. The study is aimed at establishing a national funding scheme for mobile home insulation.

Support has been given to Bracknell Town Council to assess energy efficiency and renewable energy options for Brook House and other BTC premises.

Transport Management Section

Transport Implementation Group

Local Transport Plan 3

- The first consultation on Objective for LTP3 expired at the end of Qtr3. Responses were received from a broad cross-section of interest groups, organisations and the public. The feedback was used to further inform the Draft Objectives and to provide officers with an indication of their priorities for transport. These results were published in first E-Newsletter which can be found on our dedicated LTP3 website www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/LTP3
- Work has just been completed on identifying challenges and measures to meet our new objectives. This work was carried out internally and with these in mind we can work towards a more sustainable transport system that is capable of meeting the needs of our community, economy and environment.

Bracknell Railway Station Improvement Work:

- Works are nearing completion on the new station forecourt with improvements for all modes of interchange including, importantly, for pedestrians. New features will also include a larger taxi rank, corporate bus bay and shelter, improved cycle parking facilities, additional short term car

parking, a new pedestrian crossing, improved lighting and new seating and landscaping

Transport Model:

- The 2026 transport model has recently been used to test the impact of almost 8,000 new homes located at five sites in the borough to the north of the Waterloo railway line. The test identified the likely trip generation and distribution that will result from the new developments. It will also assess alternative road configurations that best accommodate the traffic generated or displaced by the development. This exercise will enable the council to identify key locations in the transport network that will require developer contributions towards improvements.
- The model is also being used in to assess several alternative proposals to redevelop the Broadmoor Hospital site.
- The base year AM Peak VISSIM micro-simulation of the A322/A329 corridor is still being refined to assist in a programme of improvements proposed along that corridor. A similar model will be developed to represent the PM Peak hour once this is complete. VISSIM models will also be developed to represent the A329 London Road corridor.
- Several VISSIM models have been developed to assess alternative improvement options for the Sports Centre roundabout on the A322. This exercise identified a solution involving widened approaches on all arms and signal control on the Bagshot Road north and south.

Reading Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) Bid:

- BFC have now agreed to sign up in support of the TIF bid but only as a infrastructure (background) partner as involvement will be minimal
- The Department for Transport(DfT) are replacing the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) with the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF). However this does not mean Readings TIF bid is no longer valid. In fact the Minister of State for Transport, Sadiq Khan, stated that the Reading Partnership TIF Bid “has informed the emerging processes for the Urban Challenge Fund” and “that it is an exciting and worthwhile bid that should move well into the Urban Challenge Process”.
- Officers will continue to attend the group set up by Reading BC and involving South Oxfordshire, West Berks and Wokingham to promote integrated transport initiatives within the sphere of influence of the regional centre of Reading.

Passenger Transport

Progress

- Announcement of some major ‘Kick Start’ bus funding schemes has been made by DfT. We have not yet had any communication, so it is possible there will be a further announcement of minor schemes, although this seems unlikely.
- Based on data received for the third quarter of 2009/10 (i.e. to end December), bus patronage appears still to be falling, and the bad weather in January 2010 is likely to have affected patronage adversely. This trend puts at risk performance towards LTP, LPSA and National Indicator targets.
- The Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2010/11 was published in line with legal requirements in March 2010.
- The award of contracts for new local bus service contracts to replace the current emergency contracts has been delayed by the original preferred operator withdrawing their bids shortly after a decision was made by the

- The annual bus passenger satisfaction survey took place in March, and appears to show a slight fall in passenger satisfaction.

Travel Choice

- Worked with Planning and Education colleagues to assess School Travel Plans associated with capacity increases Meadow Vale, Sandy Lane and Holly Spring Infants and Juniors.
- Worked closely with Sandy Lane to help set up a 'walking bus'
- Worked closely with St Margaret Clitherow School, attending two parent evenings, to develop proposals for increasing sustainable travel to school
- Bus passenger surveys conducted to evaluate customer satisfaction of the bus services
- Further preparation on promotional materials for launch of the 'Red Route' cycle corridor

Engineering Projects and Adoptions Group

In the Safe Routes to School Programme:-

- Works were completed on providing cycle/scooter shelters at Sandhurst, Wildridings and Wooden Hill Schools

In the Public Transport Programme:-

- Works continued on the railway station forecourt improvements. Features completed in the last 3 months have included additional new paving, lighting and landscaping.
- Works were completed on a new footway link to bus stops on Ringmead from Wheatley
- Design work commenced on a bus stop footway link along Church Rd, Winkfield

In the Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements Programme :-

- Works were substantially completed on the footway/cycletrack link on the south side of Wokingham Road between Turnpike Road Roundabout and Stoney Rd.
- Works were completed on the installation of a new Puffin Crossing on Market Street in as part of the Railway Station Improvements
- Works were completed on the first phase of Red Route Cycle Signage

In the Parking Programme :-

- Further Planning Applications were submitted and detailed designs carried out on a second phase of off-street parking including Balfour Cres, Ollerton, Rosedale Gdns, Moordale Ave and Waverley.
- Works were completed on the first phase of off-street parking schemes in Drovers Way, Calfridus Way and Ennerdale.

In the Highway Capacity and Roadspace Allocation Programme:-

- A re-design of the Sports Centre Roundabout capacity improvement scheme was undertaken this quarter to minimise the impact on mature trees within the central island and to cater for future traffic growth.

Traffic and Safety Group

Casualty Reduction – Local Safety Schemes:

Works have been completed on the following schemes:

- A3095 Maidenhead Road / Hawthorne Hill - safety improvements to the bend
- A3095 Crowthorne Road/Ringmead - bus gate enforcement measures

Construction is nearing completion on the Local Safety/Capacity Improvement Scheme to signalise Pitt's Bridge

Other Traffic Management Schemes:

The following schemes have been completed:

- Speed Limit Gateways – phase 1, Maidens Green Area
- Speed Limit Gateways – phase 2, Binfield Area
- Long Hill Road – Speed Management scheme
- Wareham Road / New Forest Ride roundabout – visibility improvements
- Holly Spring Lane – replacement bus gate

Works have been ordered on the following:

- Pedestrian radar facilities at signalised crossing

Construction has been started on the following scheme:

- Western Road / Downshire Way – bus gate

Negotiations have been on-going with landowners at Maidens Green Crossroads regarding the introduction of traffic signals.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO):

Ward Members have been consulted on the latest on-street parking restriction TRO and the Order is in preparation for formal advertisement.

The TRO for a Taxi Rank in Station Road has been completed.

The TRO for revised waiting restrictions in Bull Lane awaiting final approval by the Executive Member.

Applications are currently being assessed as part off the next phase of disabled parking bays.

Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity

The following Education, Training and Publicity activities have taken place:

- Parent & children talks in schools.
- Pre-driver talks at B&W College
- Development of Older Driver's Booklet
- Organisation of Older Driver's Event
- For My Girlfriend Event at B&W College
- Speed and seatbelt/mobile checks with TVP
- Walking bus training at Sandy Lane School

Highway Network Management

Occupation of the Highway

Street works may be conducted during a time called the reasonable period as agreed between the street authority and the statutory undertaker. In real terms this is the period determined by the actual start date of works and the proposed completion date in their notice subject to any challenge by the street authority. The performance of statutory undertakers in this regard for 2009/10 has resulted in 235 days unreasonable occupation of the highway and 216 days for the highway authority. The number of duration challenges issued by the street authority has meant a saving of at least 504 days of occupation of the highway.

Street Works Inspections

The quality and safety of street works is measured by random sample inspections, the quarterly results of which should show less than 10% failure rate at each inspection category. The highlighted figures are likely to result in either warnings or enforcement action.

The annual sample was successfully completed ensuring optimum recovery of costs and identification of potential reinstatement liabilities.

Administration

The Highway Network Management have received 23755 notices during 2009/10 which is an increase of 70% for statutory undertakers and 498% for the highway authority as works promoter. From October 2009 onwards fixed penalty notices were introduced in a phased approach for street works noticing offences. During the period from commencement to year end a total of 103 FPN's were issued to undertakers amounting to a potential income of between £8240 to £12360 a further 159 received warnings. The highway authority as works promoter triggered 751 potential offences in the first full year of them noticing.

Highway Network Management (continued)

Openreach (BT)										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
22	19	86.36	0	0	3	13.64	0	0	0	0
31	26	83.87	5	16.13	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	22	95.65	1	4.348	0	0	0	0	0	0
76	67	88.16	6	7.895	3	3.947	0	0	0	0
National Grid Gas										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
25	10	40	0	0	15	60	0	0	0	0
26	14	53.85	12	46.15	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
51	24	47.06	12	23.53	15	29.41	0	0	0	0
Virgin Media										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
5	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	19	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	28	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scottish & Southern Energy										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
5	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	19	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	28	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
17	15	0	0	0	2	11.76	0	0	0	0
38	31	81.58	7	18.42	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	24	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
79	70	88.61	7	8.861	2	2.532	0	0	0	0
South East Water										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
40	40	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
64	63	98.44	1	1.563	0	0	0	0	0	0
110	109	99.09	1	0.909	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Gas Networks										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
7	5	0	0	0	2	28.57	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	5	31.25	9	56.25	2	12.5	0	0	0	0
Veolia Water										
1 January to 31 March 2010										
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%
5	4	80	0	0	1	20	0	0	0	0

4	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	16	84.21	2	10.53	1	5.263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thames Water														
1 January to 31 March 2010														
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%				
5	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
5	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Bracknell Forest Council - Works For Road Purposes														
1 April 2009 - 30 June 2009														
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%				
38	37	0	0	0	1	2.632	0	0	0	0				
38	37	97.37	0	0	1	2.632	0	0	0	0				
Bracknell Forest Council - Works For Road Purposes (SEC Street Lighting)														
1 April 2009 - 30 June 2009														
Inspected	No Inadequacy	%	Reinstatement Failures	%	Signing Equipment Failures	%	Signing Not Actioned	%	Signing Other Failures	%				
2	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0				
2	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0				
Poor performance enforcement action may follow.										Adequate overall performance but continued monitoring recommended.				
Good performance.														

Annex G: Integrated Transport Schemes Progress to 31 December 2009

Subject	Team Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
DEMAND MANAGEMENT AND TRAVEL CHOICE							
Mobility Improvements	EP&A	Various	Programme of local improvements and removals of barriers to movement	Ongoing			Minor improvement works completed
HIGHWAY CAPACITY AND ROAD SPACE ALLOCATION							
John Nike Way/B3408 London Rd junction imp and dualling between Coppid Beech Rbt and John Nike Way	EP&A	Binfield	Design and construction	Works Complete			Works completed 6 weeks ahead of schedule
Bracknell Sports Centre Roundabout Capacity Improvement	TI - EP&A	Bracknell	Design and construction	Detailed design completed.	Jun 10	Sept 10	Alternative design required to avoid impact on mature trees within the central island. Work due to start June 2010
Swinley Bottom to A329 Berkshire Way Roundabout Corridor Package Development	TI leading	Various	Route Study and Package Development	Study ongoing			Queue surveys completed to help validate VISSIM model of corridor

Subject	Team Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
Work							
A329 Coppid Beech Roundabout to London Red/Ferbank Rd Junction Corridor Package Development Work	TI leading	Various	Route Study and Package Development	Study ongoing			Queue surveys completed to help validate VISSIM model of corridor
Capacity/Congestion Improvements at Signalised Crossings	T&S	Various	Pedestrian Radar Review and Works (Phase 1)	Signal supplier appointed	Mar 10	May 10	Reduces unnecessary traffic delays and improves convenience to pedestrians. Awaiting new signal controller specification.
Three Legged Cross	EP&A	Warfield	Junction Improvement	Awaiting landowner's response.	TBA		Detailed design shows unexpected need for additional land. BFC Valuers trying to enter into land purchase negotiations. Progress held up due to lack of response from landowners.
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT							
UTMC Development Phase 1	T&S leading	Various	Strategy completion and initiation				

Subject	Team Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
Maidens Green Crossroads Traffic Signals	T&S	Winkfield	Implementation of signalised priority junction	Scheme on hold	TBA		Further land negotiations underway on a revised scheme. Scheme proposed to be included in next year's programme if agreement can be reached.
Easthampstead Road junction with /Old Wokingham Rd	T&S	Bracknell	Improvements to visibility at junction	Consultation with Land Owner	TBA		Negotiations between WBC and the adjacent land owner are underway
Pitts Bridge Traffic Signals	T&S	Binfield	Provision of traffic signals to give priority working and reduce accidents	Works complete			Signals due to be commissioned in April
Holly Spring Lane	T&S		New physical control to enforce the TRO	Works complete			
Assessment of speed limits on B class Roads	T&S	Various	The assessment of the suitability of the existing speed limits on B class Roads.	Assessments ongoing			
On-street Parking Traffic Regulation Order	T&S	Various		TRO in progress			Proposals to be advertised March/April following completion of consultation with Local Members

Subject	Team Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
Next order commenced							
PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING							
Cycle Network	EP&A	Various	Direction signing improvements Phase 1	Works complete			
B3408 Wokingham Rd	EP&A	Binfield with Warfield	Footway/Cycletrack (Pollardrow Avenue to Stoney Road)	Works substantially complete		Apr 10	
Market Street	EP&A	Bracknell	Puffin Crossing outside Bracknell Railway Station	Works substantially complete		Apr 10	Civil engineering work complete. Signals due to be commissioned in April.
Aysgarth	EP&A	Great Hollands North	Footway/Cycletrack link from Avebury to Ringmead	Complete			

Subject	Team Leader Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
LOCAL SAFETY SCHEMES							
Crowthorne Road / Ringmead	T&S		Bus Gate sump traps	Works complete			
Minor Roundabout Review	T&S	Various	Feasibility work into safety improvements at minor roundabouts (less than 40m dia)	Review complete			
Replaced with A3095 Hawthorn Hill	T&S	Bracknell	Urban safety management scheme	Works complete			One of 2 schemes provided using the Govt Grant arising out of the TVSRP
PUBLIC TRANSPORT - BUS AND RAIL TRAVEL							
Bus Contracts	TI	Various	Re-tender of bus contracts for north Bracknell Network and The Parks	Contracts about to be signed			New services start 29 May. Detailed liaison with operator and neighbouring councils in hand
Concessionary Fares	TI	All	Continue to monitor budget. Final settlement for 2009/10 year, Publish Scheme for 2010/11	2009/10 Data from bus operators awaited. 2010/11 Scheme published 5			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to publicity material and website completed to achieve better integration with e+card. NFI data sharing measures completed on schedule

Subject	Team Leader Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
				March			
Bus Stop Location Data	TI	All	Reconciliation between NAPTAN data held by Transept (consultants), GIS Section and current position on the ground	Surveys completed			Most updates made by Transept. GIS update to follow
Quality Partnership and Punctuality Improvement Partnership	TI	All	Implementation of Partnerships	PIP drafted			DfT Guidance on PIPs has changed – need to review draft PIP
Bus Stop Improvements	EP&A	Various	Various hardstanding improvements and pole upgrades	Works complete			
Route specific quality partnership works	TI	Various	194 Route Study	Study complete			
Bus Priority Measures	TI	Various	Western Rd / Downshire Way Bus Gate	Civils Work substantially complete		May 10	Signals for right hand turn for buses only into Western Rd from Downshire Way due in May as part of next year's programme.

Subject	Team Leader Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
Ringmead connecting footway	EP&A	Great Hollands	Connecting path along Ringmead from Wheatley to Bus Stop on the other side	Works complete			
Temple Way Bus Stops and connecting footway	EP&A	Binfield	New Bus Stops on Temple Way as part of the new 152 route	Works complete			
Church Road Footway	EP&A	Winkfield	Connecting path to Bus Stop	Detailed Design Stage			Consultation work in progress
Bracknell Railway Station	EP&A	Bracknell Town	Forecourt Enhancements	Works nearing completion		May 10	Works behind programme due to adverse weather conditions
PARKING							
Residential Street Parking	EP&A	Borough	Residential parking improvement schemes	Work complete on 3 schemes			Rolling programme 3 schemes completed 5 schemes submitted for planning 5 schemes in design Other schemes being investigated

Subject	Team Leader Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
Broadway Car Park	EP&A	Sandhurst	Car Park Extension	Works complete			
TRAVEL TO SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL							
Ascot Heath Schools Improvement Package	EP&A	Ascot	Various Improvements in the vicinity of Ascot Heath Schools	Complete			
Travel to School Strategy	EP&A		SRTS Project	Strategy work ongoing			Development of draft strategy through the year
Improvements Identified from Individual School Travel Plans	EP&A	Various	Various Improvements in the vicinity of Schools on the Travel Plan priority list	Complete			

Subject	Team Leader Responsible	Town or Parish	Description	Current Status	Est. Start on Site	Est. Finish on Site	Comments if Applicable
MISCELLANEOUS							
New Developers Guide	EP&A	N/A	Preparation of new highway design guide for developers	Work in progress			Draft guide out to consultation
Jennett's Park	EP&A	Bracknell Binfield	Administration of S38 agreements and inspection of works	Work in progress			
Jennett's Park	EP&A	Bracknell Binfield	Preparation of S278 agreement for A329 Roundabout Works	Agreement at engrossment stage	May 10	Feb 11	Works delayed due to downturn in housing market. Works due to start in May 10
Staff College	EP&A	Bracknell	Administration of S38 agreements and inspection of works	Work in progress			Further phases now being progressed
Two Orchards	EP&A	Bracknell	Preparation of S278 agreement and inspection of works	Works part complete			Works completed at the Western Rd/ Cain Rd junction. The improvements at Easthampstead Rd / Western Rd junction to follow.
Garth Hill College	EP&A	Bracknell	Bull lane Highway Improvements as part of the new Garth Hill College	Complete			Project management of improvements in Bull Lane on behalf of Education Dept.

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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
22 JUNE 2010

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT
(Lead Working Group Member)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the attached report prepared by the Working Group of this Panel annually monitoring the implementation of the Supporting People programme, a Government funded initiative which requires local authorities to provide housing related support, enabling people with specified and assessed need to live independently in their own accommodation.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Panel agrees the attached report monitoring the implementation of the Supporting People programme undertaken by one of its working groups and commends it to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for adoption and sending formally to the relevant Executive Member.**

Background Papers

None.

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Doc Ref

08 Supporting People Cover Report

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'Supporting People' Programme

Update report by a Working Group of the
Environment, Culture and Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Panel



June 2010

INTRODUCTION:

The '**Supporting People**' programme is a Government funded initiative which requires local authorities to provide housing related support, enabling people with specified and assessed need to live independently in their own accommodation. The funding was ring-fenced until April 2009. From April 2010 the funding has been included in the Area Based Grant, a sum of money which local authorities are able to spend however they see fit according to their own local priorities, and has reduced each year by approximately 12%.

The administration grant for managing the Supporting People project has also been reduced, by 5% which equates to a reduction of £13,000 and spend needs to be reduced commensurately.

If a local authority redirects Supporting People funding to other uses the Government requires justification.

A House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee was established to look into the delivery of the '**Supporting People**' programme and was tasked to consider the implications of lifting the ring-fence. The Select Committee report, which was published in October 2009, states that:

'The committee expresses strong support for Supporting People, and the report is a timely reminder that Supporting People funding has improved the lives of many thousands of vulnerable people. The programme has proved to be extremely good value for money, providing low level and joined up support to retain people's independence or help to move people into more independent lives.'

The Working Group concurs with this view. The Government's response to the Select Committee report, which was published in January 2010, states that it:

- provides a positive endorsement of the Government's decision to lift the ring-fence from the '**Supporting People**' programme in order to devolve decision making and control over budgets to the local level;
- agrees with the Government's view that local authorities should be free to manage their own budgets – but they must also be prepared to justify any decisions to redirect '**Supporting People**' funds to deliver other locally targeted services;
- recognises the need to maintain stability by continuing with three-year financial settlements – particularly important for third sector providers of '**Supporting People**' services; and
- acknowledges that the 'invest to save' nature of the '**Supporting People**' programme has been a success and has been demonstrated in robust financial terms.

BACKGROUND:

The '**Supporting People**' initiative was launched nationally on 1 April 2003. In 2005 an Audit Commission inspection of the Bracknell Forest '**Supporting People**' programme was very critical of most aspects of our work, in particular the effectiveness of the Supporting People Commissioning Body, a lack of understanding of who our clients should be and the need to tighten up the eligibility criteria.

A concern that a loose eligibility criteria led to support being given to individuals who were able to access other resources meant that those who should have been receiving support were reduced in number. There was also insufficient clarity around who was eligible for **'Supporting People'** services and which services were not eligible.

Following the Audit Commission report, **'Supporting People'** roles and responsibilities were clarified and the Supporting People Commissioning body is now chaired by the Executive Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

The Audit Commission has closely monitored our **'Supporting People'** progress for a period of time and has now indicated that it is satisfied with progress made.

In order for the **'Supporting People'** programme to be classified as an excellent service, Members need to be well informed of its activities and performance and there is an expectation that this will occur. It has therefore been agreed that a small working group of two Councillors should continue to monitor progress on an annual basis and report back to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

OVERVIEW:

- **Eligibility**

The eligibility criteria has been overhauled and now defines precisely those services eligible for **'Supporting People'** funding. It also outlines activities which are not eligible, to ensure that the criteria is appropriately implemented – this document is available on the **'Supporting People'** pages of the Council's website (www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk). A breakdown of the financial spend on each of the groups currently being supported is attached at Appendix 1. The apportionment for 2009/10 and 2010/11 have remained the same, this was the Commissioning Body's decision as the basis for the re-commissioning of services.

- **'Move On' Strategy**

The 'Move On' Strategy (moving on from supported housing to independent living) was finalised in September 2008. The lack of suitable accommodation to which service users can move on to remains the greatest single impediment. Housing allocation has now changed and the Council and its housing association partners are operating a Choice Based Lettings system. In order to ensure that the 'Move On' Strategy can be effective, the Council's new Allocations Policy prioritises 'move' on from supported housing schemes in the Borough and has introduced a Lettings Plan which includes a quota of properties for 'moving on' tenants.

The Homelessness Strategy is in preparation and will link to the 'Move On' Strategy.

- **Funding**

As mentioned above, the **'Supporting People'** programme funding is now included in the Area Based Grant and is to be reduced year on year. The amount for 2010/11 is £1,799,000. Appendix 1 outlines how the funding has been allocated for 2010/11, the apportionment between groups of service users for 2010/11 mirrors that for 2009/10.

- **Contracts**

All **'Supporting People'** provider contracts were awarded on a three year basis and expired in November 2009. Slippage has occurred in the contract renewal process. Negotiations are ongoing and efficiencies are being sought in line with the 12% budget reduction.

- **Performance Monitoring**

The Audit Commission has indicated that it is satisfied with progress made by Bracknell Forest's **'Supporting People'** programme and as the current inspection regime is on a risk basis, it is not expected that the service will be re-inspected unless a problem occurs. Officers are self-assessing the programme against the key lines of enquiry (KLOE) used by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate when assessing the **'Supporting People'** programme and these have been translated into an Action Plan which is in the process of development. The Action Plan is designed to identify any gaps in service provision and currently lists seven actions for completion during 2010 to fill the gaps. Officers are striving to reach the 'Excellent' standard.

- **Progress Over Last Year**

As part of the Supporting People Team's pursuit of excellence, progress has been made on comparing the development and delivery of the Bracknell Forest **'Supporting People'** programme against the Audit Commission's KLOE.

1. **Corporate Commitment and Links.** The Supporting People Commissioning Body receives regular performance reports which include reporting on the two national indicators that relate to the **'Supporting People'** programme.
2. **Supporting People Commissioning Body.** The Commissioning Body has undertaken a review of its governance arrangements to ensure its objectives are fulfilled. As a result of this review, a service provider and a service user have been elected to join the Commissioning Body in a non-voting capacity.
3. **Accountable Officer.** The role of the Accountable Officer is undertaken by the Chief Officer: Housing.
4. **Partnerships.** The Commissioning Body has received a report on the Communities and Local Government Outcomes Framework which has been in place since July 2008. The Commissioning Body has agreed to include a further two local performance outcomes in the monitoring of service provider performance.
5. **Voluntary and Community Sector.** Officers have met with Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action to explore ways of improving links between service providers and voluntary sector agencies. The voluntary sector was invited to contribute to the Inclusive Forum event on 16 April 2010.
6. **Grant Compliance, Strategy and Needs.** There are performance indicators covering grant compliance and service reviews. The eligibility of services is reviewed regularly through service reviews to ensure the programme is funding appropriate activities.

7. **Strategy for Access to 'Move On' Accommodation.** A 'Move On' Strategy is in place and a 'Move On' quota has been agreed as part of the new Allocations Policy.
8. **Delivery Arrangements.** A new management structure for the Supporting People Team has ensured that the necessary skills and knowledge at appropriate levels are in place.
9. **Adult and Child Protection.** Staff have recently received refresher training in these areas. As safeguarding is compulsory for all service providers, the Council offers safeguarding training to its service providers.
10. **Local Area Agreement.** The Commissioning Body receives regular reports on national performance indicator NI 42 concerning independent living for vulnerable people.
11. **Fairer Charging.** At present there are no 'Supporting People' service users who are also assessed under fairer charging.
12. **Individual Budgets / Direct Payments.** The re-commissioning of learning disability services on a framework contract basis will enable service users to exercise choice in how they purchase services.
13. **Communities and Local Government (CLG) Monitoring.** Data is uploaded regularly into the CLG's data collection system.
14. **Risk Management.** A risk register for 'Supporting People' is in place.
15. **Performance Monitoring and Management.** The implementation of a new computer system has improved the ability to link performance management to financial management. The performance monitoring reports prepared for the Commissioning Body are also shared with the Provider Forum.
16. **Procurement.** A Corporate Procurement Strategy is in place and 'Supporting People' services will be procured in line with these requirements.
17. **Contracts.** The Working Group has been advised that robust contract managing arrangements are in place with service providers.
18. **Quality Assurance.** Formal reviews of service providers are undertaken using the Quality Assurance Framework standards.
19. **Improvement Planning.** Improvement plans are put in place following a service review. These plans have agreed timelines for achieving the required improvement.

- **Work in Progress**

1. **Five Year Strategy.** The revised Five Year Strategy is a working document in progress.
2. **Needs Mapping, Analysis and Review.** A review and analysis of needs has been undertaken by the Commissioning Body as decisions in respect of the re-commissioning of services have been made. Needs mapping is in progress across Berkshire with a view to possible future joint working with other Berkshire unitary authorities and a resulting report is expected by the end of Summer 2010.

3. **Work Planning.** A review of work plans will be undertaken to ensure all appropriate links to the service plans and targets of other key services are made.
4. **Commissioning.** There is a need to review how current and emerging needs are monitored at the Young Persons and the Adults Panels.
5. **Joint Commissioning.** Joint commissioning with other authorities is not in place at present. The Council leads a Berkshire Supporting People Services liaison group which is looking at issues of common interest such as joint commissioning and the intention is to establish a schedule of all contracts across Berkshire authorities so that opportunities for joint commissioning in the future can be identified.

CONCLUSIONS

We feel that the '**Supporting People**' programme is now well bedded down, that progress made since 2006 has been steady and that there is good quality service user involvement. Challenges remain around funding and there is a need to be vigilant to ensure that the funding is not used for other purposes but continues to provide what is now a good service to a range of vulnerable adults. The Working Group supports the officers' aim to deliver an excellent '**Supporting People**' service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The '**Supporting People**' programme provides critical support to the most vulnerable adults in the Borough and it is important that Councillors are kept well informed of how the programme is implemented and progress is made. Therefore it is recommended that:

- (a) a small working group continues to monitor the service and report its findings back to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on an annual basis.
- (b) Member induction and briefings include information relating to the '**Supporting People**' programme to enhance Members' knowledge and involvement.

APPRECIATION

Councillors Anne Shillcock and Anne Fleming would like to record their thanks to Simon Hendeby, Clare Dorning and Andrea Carr for their time and support given in monitoring the '**Supporting People**' programme and in compiling this report.

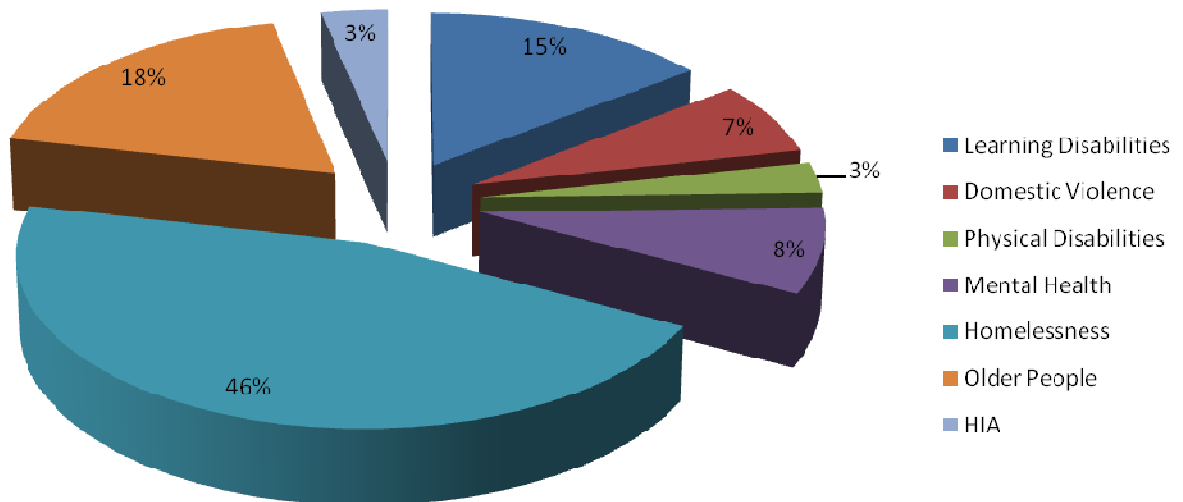
Councillor Anne Shillcock (Lead Member)
Councillor Anne Fleming

Documents to view:

- ***Supporting People Spend 2009/10 and 2010/11 (attached at Appendix 1)***
- ***Notes of meetings held with Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing, and Clare Dorning, Head of Housing Options, on 22 February and 10 May 2010***
- ***The Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate's Key Lines of Enquiry***
- ***The 'Supporting People' Action Plan***
- ***The 'Supporting People' Eligibility Criteria***
- ***The House of Commons' Communities and Local Government Select Committee report in respect of 'Supporting People' published in October 2009 (a briefing summary is available)***
- ***The Government's response to the Select Committee report published in January 2010***

Please contact Andrea Carr for any of these documents.

Apportionment of Supporting People Grant Funding 2010/11



The total amount of Supporting People grant funding for 2010/11 is £1,799,000

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
22 JUNE 2010

**REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Working Group Lead Member

1 INTRODUCTION

This report invites the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel to note the conclusions of the Working Group's (WG) review of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan, and to consider the related recommendations of the WG.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

2.1 That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- (a) notes the conclusion of the Working Group's (WG) review of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan in paragraph 3.3;**
- (b) agrees that the Working Group's work has been concluded;**
- (c) receives the report of the inspection of Housing and Council tax Benefits at its next meeting in October 2009;**
- (d) is provided by officers with an annual update on the Benefits Improvement Plan;**
- (e) refers this report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for its consideration;**
- (f) invites the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider reviewing the progress on procuring and implementing the new IT system for Benefits administration.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1** The Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Improvement Plan, in June 2009 contained the following recommendation, which was accepted by the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

'The Working Group should continue to operate and intend to review the H&CTB Service Improvement Plan for 2009/10 once it has been prepared, and again before the end of the year to review progress on implementing the plans' objectives and how any new processes and/or procedures are affecting the H&CTB Service.'

- 3.2 In furtherance of that agreed recommendation, the Working Group, comprising Councillors Finch, Beadsley and Burrows, met on two further occasions, on 7 December 2009 and 20 May 2010. At those meetings, the WG reviewed a range of issues, with the assistance of officers, including: the Executive response to the WG's O&S report; progress on the 2008/09 and 2009/10 Housing and Council Tax Benefit Improvement Plans; the design of the 2010/11 Improvement Plan; preparations for and initial feedback from the Audit Commission's inspection of the benefit service in May 2010, including the self assessment produced by officers; preparations for the new Benefit Service IT system, replacing the current system which is due to become unsupported by the software supplier; and receiving information on the outcomes of the Benefits User Focus Group
- 3.3 On the basis of the further work described above, the Working Group has concluded that:
- (i) Good progress has been made on the improvement plans for the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Service.
 - (ii) The WG endorses the Benefits Improvement Plan for 2010-11.
 - (iii) The Benefits Service is well placed for the inspection by the Audit Commission in May 2010.
 - (iv) As the report of the inspection of Housing and Council tax Benefits will not be available until later in July, this report should be reviewed by the Panel at its next meeting in October 2009.
 - (v) Replacing the 'Pericles' Benefits service IT system will be an important IT project. As the IT function falls within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, the Panel should invite the Commission to consider reviewing the progress on procuring and implementing the new IT system for Benefits administration.
 - (vi) Starting in April 2011, the Panel should be provided by officers with an annual update on the Benefits Improvement Plan.
 - (vii) The Working Group thanks the officers for their assistance throughout this review.
 - (viii) The Working Group's work has been concluded.
 - (ix) This report should be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for its consideration.

Background Papers

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Improvement Plan, June 2009.

Contact for further information

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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 22 JUNE 2010

RESPONSE TO THE SEVERE WEATHER WORKING GROUP REPORT Working Group Lead Member

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report introduces the report resulting from the review of the Council's response to the severe weather experienced in Bracknell Forest during December 2009 and January 2010.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Panel agrees the attached report of the review of the response to the severe weather in Bracknell Forest undertaken by an overview and scrutiny working group and commends it to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for adoption and sending formally to the relevant Executive Member.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Working Group has undertaken a review of the Council's response to the severe weather in Bracknell Forest experienced on 21 December 2009 and during the period 5 -14 January 2010. Snow and ice caused widespread disruption across the Borough on both occasions.
- 3.2 The Working Group was established at the request of the Leader to review the Council's response to the severe weather conditions with a view to making recommendations on any action to be taken based on lessons learned from these events.
- 3.3 The Working Group review took into account the Officer Review of the Council's response and hoped to provide any further comments or amendments on actions to improve the Council's future response.

Background Papers

None

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**RESPONSE TO SEVERE WEATHER
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP REPORT**
Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. On 21 December 2009 and then during the period 5 -14 January 2010 freezing temperatures and snowfall were experienced across the borough and nationally. Snow and ice caused widespread disruption across the borough on both occasions.
- 1.2. The Working Group was established at the request of the Leader to review the Council's response to the severe weather conditions during December 2009 and January 2010 with a view to making recommendations on any action to be taken based on lessons learned from these events.
- 1.3. The Working Group review took into account the Officer Review of the Council's response and hoped to provide any further comments or amendments on actions to improve the Council's future response.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

- 2.1. The Working Group was established with the following membership: Councillors Harrison (Co-Chairman), Turrell (Co-Chairman) and Finnie.
- 2.2. The scope of the review was to consider:
 - The Council's ability to maintain traffic movement on the highway;
 - How the Council maintained its normal services;
 - Use of resources;
 - Information available.

3. MEETINGS

- 3.1. The Working Group met on 6 occasions:
 - 15 February 2010
 - 3 March 2010
 - 14 April 2010
 - 4 May 2010
 - 14 May 2010; and
 - 7 June 2010
- 3.2. In addition Bracknell Forest Borough Councillors were contacted for their views on the Council's response to the severe weather and any issues that may have arisen in their wards during the periods of severe weather. The Group received a number of responses which were taken into account and considered during the review where appropriate.
- 3.3. The Working Group also contacted the Borough's Parish and Town Councils to ask for their views on the whether the Borough Council's response was appropriate and timely and if anything could be done to improve the response during future severe weather events.

- 3.4. The Group held discussions with Bracknell Forest Council staff from the Adult Social Care & Health, the Children, Young People & Learning and the Environment, Culture & Communities departments.
- 3.5. Discussions were also held with representatives of SITA and Ringway, two of the Council's partners.
- 3.6. Councillor Edger joined the working group for their meeting held on 4 May 2010.

4. FINDINGS

Context

- 4.1. The Group noted that occurrences of severe weather were rare and recognised that the Council was not able to keep all services running as they would in normal circumstances. The two severe weather events that occurred in 2009 and 2010 were different in their nature and so impacted on the Council in different ways with each event requiring a different response.

Borough Councillor responses

- 4.2. Input was received from several councillors, which taken together cover most of the Borough. The Working Group would like to thank Councillors Thompson, Brossard, Mrs Fleming, Beadsley, Kendall, Kensall, Mrs Pile, Brunel-Walker and Mrs Shillcock.
- 4.3. A number of key points were raised by members:
- 4.4. Communication - Members appreciated the regular severe weather email updates although they generally felt that the updates to the public-facing website could have been better co-ordinated. Members felt the Council's team had done a good job but that the full extent of the effort to keep the Borough moving could be improved upon.
- 4.5. Travel - Members noted that the severe weather was an exceptional event out of keeping with the relatively mild weather experienced by the UK over recent years. It was noted that the combination of rain on the 21st December 2009, followed by freezing temperatures and snow during the rush hour had prevented salting of roads from being effective. This led to traffic delays in many areas, not just Bracknell Forest. Once the snowfall had stopped, major routes were cleared relatively quickly allowing access for residents and the major stores to re-stock.
- 4.6. Following the snowfalls, people in many areas of the Borough had difficulty moving their vehicles out of residential roads to access the primary routes which were passable. There was praise from councillors for residents who got together in numerous cases to clear their own roads.
- 4.7. Refuse Collection - Several members noted a number of complaints from residents about the time it took for the refuse collection service to return to normal.

Officer recommendations for improvement/action

- 4.8. The working group received an interim report from the Director for Environment, Culture and Communities which summarised the results of the officer review of the severe weather and set out potential recommendations for improvement/action following the snow events in December 2009 and January 2010.

- 4.9. The report by officers looked at two aspects of the council's response to the severe weather which were; firstly the Council in its role of 'highway authority' and secondly, how the various service areas in the Council were managed and how robust their continuity plans were.
- 4.10. The action plan drafted as a result of the report covered key issues identified during the severe weather and recommendations to address concerns raised.

Highway impact - first event

- 4.11. The first event occurred on 21 December 2009 and resulted in massive traffic congestion and gridlock across the Borough and the Region. Although the snow and ice caused disruption on the roads during the afternoon and evening of the 21 December and to a lesser extent the following day, the short lived nature of the event meant that there was not a big impact on the Council or the services provided. The Councils' response during the event was focussed on trying to keep the main highway network in a safe condition by salting as per the borough's Highway Winter Service Plan.
- 4.12. The extreme traffic congestion during this period of time occurred for a number of reasons; firstly heavy rain during the morning of the 21 December meant that the roads could not be gritted in anticipation of the forecast snow as the brine solution would have been washed away. Secondly when the snow began to fall as had been forecast, the wet roads turned to ice which led the Met Office to issue a severe weather warning. In response to this warning the majority of staff from organisations in and around the borough were advised to make their way home resulting in hundreds of staff leaving their places of work within a short period of time. The large volume of traffic on the roads prevented the gritting machines from spreading on the roads both within the Borough and the Region. This situation was repeated throughout the region and there was gridlock even on the motorways as a result.

Highway and other impacts – second event

- 4.13. The scale of the impact on the Council and its services during the second severe weather event was far greater. The Police Gold Command was open during the second period of severe weather. The Police opened up their command and control centre to help facilitate joint working across the region and better work together to respond to issues where appropriate. Information was given to Gold each day by the Emergency Planning Officer under the direction of the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection. The Council did not formally activate its emergency plan.
- 4.14. During the first days of the snow the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection focused the main highway resources on the maintenance of the Borough's highways as before. Help was also provided to ensure the delivery of meals by using the Parks and Countryside Rangers and their four wheel drive vehicles. Help was co-ordinated via a multi-service group which fed back to the Chief Executive and via him to all Members. However by day 3 other service areas in the Council were requesting help to meet their service demands. These requests meant that resources within the ECC Department needed to be reprioritised across the Council, altering the focus of the response. Through the multi-service group some help was made available by redeploying landscape and/or refuse collection crews to key sites to assist with snow clearance work as by then many of the priority areas had at least been gritted.

Material resources – grit and salt

- 4.15. The total length of the road network in Bracknell Forest is 450km. The borough has over 700 km of paths/ cycleways. The primary salting route (principle and heavily trafficked roads) is 164km and the secondary salting route (less frequently used roads) is 63km. In light of the experience in 2009 the Council had increased its stock level in advance of the winter in excess of the 5 days supply recommended by Government. At the beginning of winter the Council had 600 tonnes in stock in a salt barn owned by Surrey County Council located in Bagshot.
- 4.16. Keeping all primary routes serviceable throughout the severe weather proved to be a challenge. Not all secondary routes could be salted as salt supplies ran low and priorities had to change caused by the uncertainty in the supply chain. In some instances parked and abandoned cars obstructed the gritting vehicles from accessing roads. However, most primary and secondary routes were kept passable throughout the severe weather.
- 4.17. Bracknell Forest Council has access via the highways contract to 4 gritters which were also used as snow ploughs. Prior to winter the Council had stored in excess of the government recommended level of grit. On the onset of the second phase of severe weather the National Salt Delivery Scheme process was under the control of the Government. They monitored stock levels through daily reporting. They also issued a briefing to all councils to reduce their use of salt. Bracknell Forest had a lack of salt stock due to uncertainty in the national salt supply chain.
- 4.18. Salt Bins were located throughout the borough according to council approved policy. Keeping them restocked required two full time crews working all day. Some residents took grit to use on their own driveways from these bins. More salt bins in the borough would not be practical without more crews being available to restock them. Also, salt bins are an attraction for anti-social activity during the rest of the year and are regularly upturned and moved.

Public expectations/perceptions

- 4.19. It was noted that one of the problems with public perception and expectation was the fact that roads were salted with wetted salt which was white. It can not be seen until after the snow has gone and the roads then have a white sheen on them. At the time many residents claimed the roads were not being salted. Below minus 5°C salt becomes less effective and below minus 10 °C no longer works. For the salt to work it needs traffic as soon as possible after the fall. Temperatures at these low levels were experienced in Bracknell Forest during both periods of severe weather.

Demands from other services

- 4.20. The car parks of residential homes were initially an issue as access was needed particularly for ambulances and the sites had made no provision to help under the circumstances experienced. However once this problem had been highlighted staff from the landscape department were deployed to help clear the snow from these areas.

Schools

- 4.21. At the beginning of the severe weather there were problems with access to some school sites not directly on a primary route. The responsibility within the grounds falls to the schools and many sites were cleared by school staff, parents and members of the community, some of whom had access to diggers which could remove the snow

from car parks and playgrounds. Some schools required additional help to open and the Council's landscape team was contracted to assist with snow clearance. Priority for clearance was given to Kennel Lane School due to the nature of the school site and to those schools with examinations due to take place. Initially a number of schools opened only for the year groups who were required to take the exams. As resources allowed then priority was given to helping clear areas outside schools for parents to drop off children. Some help was also given to a number of schools located off a primary route e.g. St Josephs but cars were often found causing access problems.

Contractors

- 4.22. The Group discussed the issues faced by the Council's contractors SITA and Ringway to gain their perspective on the Council's response to the severe weather and if resources and support were focused as well as they could have been in the circumstances. The Group met with Steve Holgate from SITA and Ian Thorpe from Ringway.

Ringway (highways and street cleansing)

- 4.23. Ringway use a localised weather prediction service and ice monitoring stations on the highway network to predict weather conditions and when the roads would need salting. Plans were made based on these predictions however they could not always be 100% accurate. Sometimes salt is applied in anticipation but it transpires not to have been necessary. Sometimes the forecast changes during the period and by the time the salt is applied it is later than we would wish.
- 4.24. The cost of Ringway providing an additional gritting vehicle for Bracknell Forest would be £60,000- £80,000. The gritting vehicles used in Bracknell Forest were modern with the fleet renewed 3 years ago. On the market there are other items of equipment such as quad bikes that could be used in a limited way e.g. for clearing pedestrian paths. The cost of a demountable unit would be circa £5,000- £6,000 and would sit on an existing flat bed truck. The possibility of increasing the number of these units was being investigated by officers. The use of other equipment such as the quad bike needs careful consideration to ensure that it has a use during the rest of the year for different Council services.

SITA (refuse collection)

- 4.25. During the first period of severe weather in December 2009 the refuse collection provided by SITA was not affected. The severe weather in January 2010 was for a longer period of time and caused major collection disruption not helped by it being the Christmas period. Collections had to be suspended because the estate roads were not safe due to ice and the many parked cars. When collections were resumed crews still had to be very careful when accessing estate roads and there were many issues along footpaths and pavements used by refuse collectors. The crews were given assistance by landscape services particularly in relation to them facilitating access for the trucks by gritting key points.
- 4.26. It was suggested that the licensing restrictions preventing Longshot and Smallmead from opening on a Sunday could be lifted during periods of severe weather allowing the refuse collection to 'catch up' if weather allowed. The issue of additional opening times did not have to just consider the capacity of these sites but also take in to account access to landfill sites. Normally during the severe weather landfill sites are closed for health and safety reasons. Refuse could not be moved on from Longshot and Smallmead in these circumstances. With the two sites having a limited holding capacity for refuse additional opening hours would not allow refuse from bins to be

collected any faster. When Longshot Lane opened the staff there kept the weighbridge open beyond normal hours in order to help.

- 4.27. Once the weather began to clear, SITA brought in extra vehicles to increase collection capacity. Joint working between SITA, Ringway and Council Departments also took place to ensure that services ran as smoothly as possible during the severe weather and that the clean up operation was efficient once the weather allowed.

Vulnerable residents

- 4.28. The biggest problem for vulnerable residents was snow and ice on pavements which meant access was very difficult. For the most part it was understood that the Council would not be able to clear all areas of pavement and pathway in the borough. Public expectations needed to be managed through improved use of communication as council resources meant it was not possible to clear and grit all roads and pavements in the borough. The highway plan includes for the clearance of key areas of pathways.
- 4.29. Although many vulnerable people were not able to leave their homes due to the severe weather, staff from the Adult Social Care Department were able to keep in contact with them or members of their family by telephone on a daily basis to make sure that their needs were met and issues were resolved. In many cases staff were able to visit vulnerable people on foot or a 4X4 vehicle aided by Parks and Countryside officers.

Communications

- 4.30. The communication between schools and the Council was good. During the severe weather the Council's website received 40,000 hits and was continually updated from 6.00am each day with current information about which schools were open. Local Radio was also kept up to date with the latest position although they also had difficulty keeping up with the volume of calls. A SOCITM report on council use of digital channels in local emergencies dated February 2010 indicated that, after assessing 121 councils over two days, the BFC website was rated as very good and was listed as one of the top 15 'examples of good practice'. The Council's website stated that the opening of schools was the decision of the head teacher and that the Council would do everything they could to help schools to open.
- 4.31. IT systems were crucial for keeping officers, staff and parents informed. It was important that the public website and the internal staff site had regularly updated and consistent information to allow staff and the community to stay up to date. Many schools used the online learning platform which allowed children and teachers who were at home to access work. Some schools used a text messaging system to keep parents informed of whether the school was open that day. These systems proved to be very successful and helpful in keeping staff, parents and pupils informed.
- 4.32. Daily briefings were given to customer services staff and Members to allow them to deal effectively with resident's queries. Whilst there was much praise from around the Borough for all of the efforts communication could have still been improved with the public to keep them better informed of the situation and what was currently being done to resolve issues. Officers reported concerns in being able to effect this at the time due to capacity problems.
- 4.33. The Council received a particularly high volume of calls from residents requesting assistance during the second period of severe weather. To help ensure good intelligence rather than just react to calls Council highway inspectors were sent to locations to report back an objective view of the situation. This meant that response to

issues raised may have been slightly delayed but it ensured that resources were focused on areas most in need.

- 4.34. From Wednesday 6 January to Friday 15 January the customer services centre took 8,583 calls which was 3,000 more calls than the same period the previous year. From Tuesday 5 January to Sunday 17 January 12,730 people visited the severe weather webpage and it was viewed 14,924 times during this period.
- 4.35. An issue that needed to be addressed was the promotion of the good work undertaken by staff and volunteers under difficult circumstances during the severe weather. Whilst good use was made of the Council's intranet to keep staff informed and seek volunteers, better use could have been made of the Council's website and local media to keep the public informed of what services were being provided. Many older vulnerable people did not have access to a computer or the internet. By promoting the councils work on local news and radio vulnerable people would have been better informed of the work council staff were undertaking.

Departmental preparedness

- 4.36. All departments were required to have business continuity plans in place which meant that most service areas in the council were in some way prepared for an unexpected event. Departments who already had good procedures in place were able to better cope with the severe weather than those who were not as well prepared. There was a combination of unusual circumstances which lead to the severe weather experienced and existing plans provided a good basis for action. The nature of some departments work meant that solutions to issues had to be found to protect the borough's vulnerable residents.
- 4.37. Many staff worked extra hours to ensure services were delivered. Contingency was needed to make sure staff were remunerated for the extra hours of work they undertook.
- 4.38. The severe weather incidents had resulting in learning points which could be acted on to improve the Council's response to severe weather events in the future. The Council's Highway Plan was implemented successfully and effectively given the constraints imposed. Practical improvements (e.g. extending snow clearance routes) could be made however were likely to need significant additional resources and the Council will have a choice between additional investment during a period of budget constraints and improved response to relatively rare severe weather events.

Parish and Town Council experience

- 4.39. The Working Group contacted the Borough's Parish and Town (P&T) Councils to ask their views on whether the Borough Council's response was appropriate and timely and if anything could be done to improve the response during future severe weather events. The Working Group asked P&T Councils 8 questions, as a result of the observations from Parish and Town Councils the following points were noted: (the full response from each of the P&T Councils can be seen in Annex A).
- 4.40. Whilst some P&T Councils were understanding of the unexpected nature of the severe weather, many felt that the Borough Council did not react fast enough to grit and salt roads across the Borough and roads were then not re-gritted on a regular basis. The Northern Parishes in particular felt that the level of road salting in their areas was not sufficient and prevented residents from leaving home.

- 4.41. There were mixed views from the P&T Councils with regard to issues dealt with particularly well by the Borough Council. A couple of P&T Councils felt the Bracknell Forest Council did not perform well in any area, however many of the P&T Councils recognised that the Council gritted the primary routes across the borough well, replenished the grit bins as far as was possible to do so and that many Council staff had made great efforts to continue to provide services, particularly to vulnerable residents.
- 4.42. It was felt by all P&T Councils that the Borough Council should ensure that a sufficient supply of grit and salt is available to deal with prolonged periods of severe weather. The frequency of road gritting should be increased and snow ploughs should be used to clear roads. More focus should be given to clearing residential roads as residents were unable to reach the primary routes that had been gritted. Schools and doctors surgeries should be given priority for snow clearance.
- 4.43. P&T Councils suggested that a larger supply of salt that was kept closer to hand would ensure that BFC had a sufficient supply to last through a period of severe weather. A larger supply would allow for more salt bins to be provided and kept fully stocked for residents to use. It was also suggested that residents could be provided with snow shovels. Some P&T Councils felt that additional snow ploughs should be purchased to fit on Council vehicles and provision should be made to ensure outside contractors and operators could be contracted in if required.
- 4.44. All P&T Councils felt that keeping primary roads clear and gritted was a priority. Access to facilities such as schools and doctors surgeries was also a priority. The welfare of all residents particularly the vulnerable was mentioned by a number of P&T Councils. It was suggested that clear advice should be more readily available for residents, such as whether clearing of residential roads and pavements could result in being sued.
- 4.45. All P&T Councils had their own salt bins which were placed strategically in their area. Many staff from the P&T Councils assisted with snow clearing where required.
- 4.46. All the P&T Councils experienced problems with roads that had a gradient and found that even a small gradient resulted in problems for roads users. A list of problem areas was provided by each of the P&T Councils and can be seen in Annex A.
- 4.47. P&T Councils felt that advice given to residents was not always easy to find and needed to be more consistent and easily accessible. Planning and provision for future events should be taken seriously, particularly holding a sufficient supply of grit.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The working group noted that occurrences of severe weather were rare; however they could happen with little or no warning. It was important that the Council had clear plans in place to be able to successfully cope under extreme circumstances and ensure that essential services continued to run as smoothly as possible.
- 5.2. The working group fully support the recommendations made by officers as a result of the officer review of the response to the severe weather, and note that it will be a matter for the Executive in determining which recommendations can be taken forward.

Highway impact - first event

- 5.3. During the severe weather on 21 December 2009 there was major disruption to the highway network within the Borough and the region generally. The weather forecast

predicted snow and the crews were on standby. However, during the morning there was heavy rain and salt could not be put down. When the rain stopped heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures resulted in icing and a thick covering of snow.

- 5.4. Whilst this caused major disruption to traffic movement for a time the normal Council services continued to operate satisfactorily although there was disruption to household waste collection due to refuse vehicles being unable to access all areas. Local employers should be advised to stagger staff leaving times on any similar occurrence as the mass staff departure created considerable traffic congestion.

Highway and other impacts – second event

- 5.5. The second occurrence of severe weather in January 2010 created greater difficulties than the first. During this time the Police opened their Gold Command to aid with communications with national government agencies. However, the severity of the weather and the lack of resources meant that Departments of the Council, who may have been caught unprepared through a failure in not having up to date action plans for such an event, did very well in taking innovative action to deal with the problems they faced. This was evidenced by the way in which meals supplied to, and contact with vulnerable people unable to leave their homes were dealt with.
- 5.6. The Council did not activate its emergency plan but the arrangements referred to above were very much based upon it. In retrospect it might have been better if the Council had activated its emergency plan but whether or not this would have improved the overall response to the problems faced is a matter for further enquiry by the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

Material resources – grit and salt

- 5.7. The Council pre-salt approximately 36% of the total road network length which is at the higher end of the Audit Commissions recommendations for this service. This may need to be reviewed in a period of severe weather such as that experienced over the period under review.
- 5.8. The Council held in reserve in excess of the government's recommended salt stock supply which because of the inadequacy of the national supply chain was insufficient to meet demand and the spreading rate had to be reduced even before the national advice to do so was given. Future stock holdings need to be re-assessed.
- 5.9. The location of the salt barn in Bagshot proved to be a further problem to the Council under such conditions. The difficulties in getting vehicles to Bagshot to stock and re-stock in road conditions that had deteriorated resulted in poor turn around times and inefficiencies in the use of the gritting vehicles available to the Council.
- 5.10. Gritting bins located around the Borough place a heavy demand upon Council resources to fill and refill. Given that the contents of these bins were misused in some cases, the Council, in times of emergency, should review restocking in view of the restricted resources. It may be possible to agree access for Parish & Town Councils to the Boroughs salt supply if there was found to be an excess to allow them to restock grit bins in their areas.

Public expectations/perceptions

- 5.11. A judgement always has to be made about public expectation and perception and what the Council can sensibly provide in times of emergency. If the Council is seen to be doing what it can to deal with an extreme situation the general public will endorse this.

Demands from other services

- 5.12. In the case of severe weather one of the priorities, after primary routes have been cleared, is to ensure that access to those facilities and accommodation used by elderly and vulnerable people is maintained. It is essential that there is free movement to and from these places by emergency vehicles.

Schools

- 5.13. The safety of school grounds is a matter for head teachers. However the Council has a responsibility as far as it can to keep the access, footpaths and routes to schools as free as possible. Whilst the closure of school is again a matter for head teachers every effort must be made to keep them open for the benefit of the children. Whilst the issue of staff attendance is perfectly understood, closure of schools must be seen as a very last resort and head teachers should be held to account to explain the reason for closure when this decision is made. The fact that some schools remained closed whilst others remained open may be due to the different nature of school sites however should be a matter for investigation.

Contractors

Ringway (highways and street cleansing)

- 5.14. The cost of extra equipment needs to be considered relative to risk and ability to use it. There is little point in having equipment that is never used. Equally there is no point in having additional salt spreading kit that needs salt if we don't have sufficient salt stocks to be able to use in it. If we have more equipment available at the time then the effectiveness of the whole operation should improve. The value of having more large gritting vehicles is questionable because of salt supply restrictions. Having a demountable unit might be a worthwhile investment. The dilemma over a decision to have more vehicles and equipment on permanent standby must be measured against the way in which those resources available to the Council are managed. If vehicles are engaged in journeys to Bagshot for supplies then clearly they not being used efficiently. The working group consider this issue has to be resolved.

SITA (refuse collection)

- 5.15. Decisions to cancel waste collection are a matter for management and however problematic this is for residents common sense has to prevail. Taking collection vehicles into roads that have not been cleared of snow and ice and where cars parked or abandoned on the highway are causing obstruction is not conducive to safety of crews, residents, or resident's property.

Vulnerable residents

- 5.16. There were key areas that needed to be properly cleared but the speed in which they were attended to was not as fast as would be wished for. However, the WG understand that with limited resources this will always be a problem and officers and home managers must do what they can to overcome the obstacles.
- 5.17. The fact that contact was maintained with vulnerable people throughout the period of severe weather and that no serious emergencies occurred that could not be dealt with says a great deal about the dedication and efficiency of our staff.

Communications

- 5.18. In time of emergency and in a civil context the importance of creating and maintaining clear and regular lines of communication are crucial. Whilst there is evidence that our communication function was adequate to the task our systems must be tested against a worse case scenario and every effort made to ensure the public are kept informed. In this context it should be realised that not all residents have access to computers and so local radio announcements are an essential tool in keeping the population informed.
- 5.19. One potential issue in the current system relates to the diverse role of Executive Members. With three members responsible for different aspects of our infrastructure i.e. Emergency Planning, Highways and Environment, the information pathway was in some ways obscure. If one Executive Member was given the responsibility of ensuring that there was a co-ordinated response in place across the council once the Emergency Plan function had been activated, this would allow a strategic overview of the Council's response to be maintained. Importantly, it would also provide a single source of contact for all Members should they perceive a strategic failing in the Council's response to the emergency.
- 5.20. In many cases the severe weather brought together community members as neighbours worked together to clear driveways and purchase groceries for those who were not able to leave their homes. It was noted that there was local and national concern that individuals could be sued if they attempted to clear a pathway and someone slipped on the cleared area. Best practice guidelines for path clearing could be of use for residents.

Departmental preparedness

- 5.21. The WG acknowledge that whilst the majority of staff responded extremely well to the challenges that presented themselves during the two periods of severe weather they are concerned that some Departmental Plans may not have been sufficiently robust to give a proper and instant response to the situations that developed. In this respect they believe that it would be helpful if all Departments took immediate steps to update their emergency procedures, and test them against an extreme scenario, in preparation for future climatic consequences of the type we have recently experienced.

Parish and Town Council experience

- 5.22. The conclusion reached after reading responses from the Parish and Town Councils was that they highlighted the problems already raised in this review. In the more rural parishes of Binfield, Winkfield and Warfield there was inevitably greater concern over the perception that less effort was spent on keeping their roads clear of snow and ice than was the case elsewhere.
- 5.23. Open lines of communication between Towns and Parishes and BFC are essential so that they are able to help input to the overall situation, the WG are conscious of the fact that it is very easy for Parish and Town Councils to feel isolated and neglected if they are kept unaware of what resources are available and what of these are being allotted to help them. This issue is worthy of discussion at the Town and Parish Liaison Group held in the autumn so that a fair discussion can take place on arrangements being made for the forthcoming winter.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group makes the following recommendation to the Executive:

- 6.1. The Council's strategy for dealing with emergencies and severe weather should be reviewed. The overall strategy should include an instruction to all Departments to review their individual plans and responsibilities and ensure that their staff are aware of these. This review must include an update of strategy for keeping primary and secondary routes open especially those known to have caused particular problems over this period of severe weather.
- 6.2. This review has established that for the conditions that prevailed in December 2009 and January 2010 the Council is not well enough equipped with severe snow and ice clearing equipment by way of small gritting machines to service secondary roads or 4x4 vehicles to support vulnerable areas where normal vehicles cannot cope. The Council should consider this deficiency in detail to decide if the investment in more equipment, including snow chains for staff cars, quad bikes and other items is appropriate.
- 6.3. Whilst reserves of grit and salt were adequate to cope with normal winter weather they were insufficient to meet the demands of a sustained period of severe weather without regular restocking. This and the storage of stocks should be given immediate consideration. The fact that the Council's reserves of salt and grit are located at Bagshot should be reviewed. It is an inefficient way of safeguarding reserves and causes further logistical problems of recovery in periods of severe weather. Reserves, or at least a proportion of them, must somehow be located in central Bracknell as a matter of priority.
- 6.4. Since some gritting bins appeared to be misused during the severe weather the Council should review whether to replenish them when resources are scarce. The Council is concerned that contents were misused in some cases. A judgement will have to be made at the time as to which bins can and cannot be maintained, in view of demand and available resources. Officer judgement should be used in this respect. A review of partnership working should be undertaken with Parish and Town Councils to investigate the sharing of resources available to re-fill grit bins during severe weather if salt stocks were sufficient.
- 6.5. Access to facilities such as sheltered accommodation, doctor's surgeries and schools must be high on the Council's list of priorities. These routes should be considered as part of the officer review.
- 6.6. Whilst the closure of a school is ultimately the responsibility of Head Teachers and the Governing Body every effort must be made to keep them open. Closures should be justified and only be undertaken where the safety of pupils and staff is clearly shown to be compromised if such action (as closure) is not taken.
- 6.7. Sustaining clear communications in extreme circumstances is essential. The Council should review its communication procedure and practice to ensure that these are robust enough to cope with all emergencies. The use of local radio, web links and other media is also essential. The Council should remind itself that not all households in Bracknell Forest have computers and that the Council should communicate accordingly.

- 6.8. In respect of paragraph 6.7 above a dedicated communications officer should control and update the Council's website and be responsible for the input of public information.
- 6.9. Some concern has been expressed about whether or not property owners are vulnerable to litigation if they clear the front of their premises or accommodation in the instance of accident. The Borough Solicitor should consider this and give appropriate advice in the autumn issue of 'Town and Country'.
- 6.10. It is recommended that in the event of another occurrence of severe weather an Executive Member is given the responsibility of ensuring that the Council's response is co-ordinated at a strategic level once the Emergency Plan function has been activated.
- 6.11. That officers look outside the borough for learning points highlighted from the experiences of other local facilities and organisations and that these are incorporated into planning for future occurrences of severe weather where appropriate. It is strongly recommended that the results of the Central Government Review of Transport Response to Severe Weather are also taken in to account.
- 6.12. In the autumn meeting of the Parish and Town Council Liaison Group, officers should explain how severe weather will be dealt with in their areas next year based on the lessons learned this year.

Background Papers

Recommendations for Improvement/Action following the Snow Event in December 2009 and January 2010 – 3 March 2010
Severe Weather Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Scoping Document

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Doc. Ref

O&S Severe Weather WG Report May 2010

	Binfield Parish Council	Bracknell Town Council	Crowthorne Parish Council
<p>Was the Borough's response appropriate and timely?</p> <p>124</p>	<p>No. Whereas we absolutely recognise the difficulties of keeping roads free from snow and ice as far as possible, there was very little attempt that we could see to even try to keep the primary gritting roads clear within the Borough. Even if these roads had been gritted, the additional falls of snow on top of the gritting ensured that the entire exercise was a waste of time and money. Roads need to be gritted and then re-gritted regularly in order to keep them clear.</p> <p>A Councillor who lives at the top of Forest Road in Binfield reports "The first day the snow fell was horrendous with cars abandoned everywhere on this road. No effort appeared to have been made to clear the road. In fact it seemed as though the Borough was expecting vehicles to clear the way. Forest road was almost a single lane track for the entire length of time that snow lay on the ground. I work at Bracknell and Wokingham College, which closed for two days at the start of the snowfall because people could not get in to work. I used that time to help dig out the road I live in because this is not a road that the Borough would clear. When more snow fell later, the problems were even more severe because snow fell on top of ice and nothing was gritted anywhere. On this occasion, I left home and went to work at 7.15 am (a ludicrous time to go as I only live a couple of miles from the College). I was really glad that I did, because, even at that time of the morning, Bracknell Town was gridlocked! One of my fellow lecturers was disgusted at the lack of gritting in the Borough. He lives in Maidenhead and had no difficulty getting to work until he came to the Borough boundary".</p>	<p>Council felt that the Borough's response was appropriate and timely given the very exceptional weather but there are improvements that could be made and lessons to be learned – see below. It was understandable that to some extent people were caught out but there was insufficient salt, grit, equipment etc. to go round.</p>	<p>The weather reports predicted heavy snow fall and therefore more resources should have been put in place to ensure main arteries were kept open. Unfortunately the severe weather started falling in the early afternoon and by Rush Hour the roads were impassable with snow and traffic jams and the Crowthorne Bypass was closed, which made it impossible to use any machinery.</p>

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	Binfield Parish Council	Bracknell Town Council	Crowthorne Parish Council
What was done particularly well?	Nothing.	Clearing the main roads (however this was at the expense of minor roads) The efforts of staff to get out to and help vulnerable residents Clearing the Town Centre Clearing at the Great Hollands shops	The placement of the grit bins and replenishment during the prolonged severe weather. Gritting of the main road arteries in Bracknell, although this had little affect on the prolonged snow fall.
What could have been improved?	<p>Either increase the frequency of gritting (at least the major roads) and consider the possibility of using snow ploughs to clear the roads.</p> <p>In fact, clearing the major and primary gritting roads is an almost useless exercise for many of the residents of Binfield. Many people could not get out of the roads they live in because of the gradient of their road. None of the residential roads in the Borough are gritted and there are very few salt bins. The number of salt bins should be increased immediately and kept full or refilled during the winter months. Residents are more than willing to dig themselves out so long as the tools are available for them to use.</p> <p>You might even consider buying job lots of large shovels for residents to purchase at cost in order for them to do the job. Garden spades are too small and heavy for the labour of snow clearance.</p>	<p>School access should have been a priority Clearing around doctor's surgeries. Early clearing footpaths so people could get to work – when the snow is compacted it is more difficult to shift. More salt and grit made available Abandoned cars should not have been clamped and / or ticketed. Communication with and advice to residents must be improved. The problem was exacerbated by residents who were confused about whether they should clear the snow from outside their own properties – they were frightened by advice that they might be sued. The TV gave mixed messages. In 1963 everyone cleared their own properties. People don't know how to drive in the snow and ice, or what to do when they got stuck. People don't understand the purpose of salt The Borough could have used its website better to give advice and forewarn people</p>	<p>Planning for such severe weather Continued overnight gritting and snow clearance on major Roads and Hills. Clearance of the snow in the High Street, which was not completed until two weeks after the first snow fall. The gradients on the Crowthorne Sandhurst Road caused significant problems. There was no 'grading to keep the roads clear' as defined in the winter plan. Clearance of snow from public footpaths and walk ways To help reduce the volume of traffic during rush hour large local companies to allow staff to leave work on a rotational basis.</p>
What precautionary measures could reasonably be taken, bearing in mind that we may not experience these conditions again for many years?	<p>You say that the conditions may not prevail again for a number of years but we had almost exactly the same problem in 2009. Our weather is changing (due to global warming) to wet winters and dry summers. You cannot guarantee that many years will pass before a wet winter is also very cold.</p> <p>In our view, residents should be provided with salt bins and snow ploughs should be provided</p>	<p>The Borough must have stocks of salt and grit stored closer to hand. Consider purchase of multi-task equipment – can tractors and 4x4s be adapted? Better monitoring of the weather forecast through the Met Office web site Doctors surgeries need their own locked grit bins.</p> <p>Messages should be given out well before the onset of bad weather advising people to prepare</p>	<p>To ensure that BFC have an appropriate stock pile of grit and can easily replenish to stock should it run low. BFC to investigate if there is a better alternative product to keeping roads clear other than gritting, which could be used during very heavy snow fall To include an emergency action plan which can be invoked should extreme conditions such as these occur in the future</p>

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	Binfield Parish Council	Bracknell Town Council	Crowthorne Parish Council
	that can be fitted to a number of different Council vehicles. Even using a JCB or two would help surely. You might consider increasing the frequency of gritting as well during very severe weather. We did not see one gritting lorry at any time anywhere in the Borough during the severe weather.	and take responsibility for themselves and their neighbours ‘don’t wait for someone to dig you out’. Low cost measures should be encouraged for individuals i.e. the purchase of snow shovels, salt and snow chains. The Borough needs a comprehensive Plan including how to get its own workforce to work.	To ensure outside contractors with the required machinery and operators can be contracted in if required. Also local farms with ploughs/ tractors could be put on standby.
What does your council consider to be the most important priority in responding to severe weather?	Keeping the roads clear (including helping to keep residential roads clear - and that means the main roads through residential estates like Turnpike Road and Benetfeld Road!)	Clearing safe access to schools, doctor’s surgeries and so vulnerable people can get to the shops etc. Clearing main roads for emergency vehicles and so people can get to work. Proper advice e.g. on being prepared and on clearing without the risk of being sued Have a robust plan in place (including the Parishes) – don’t rely on DIY and last minute solutions	Over night gritting of main arteries to keep roads clear Keeping Roads and Footpaths safe, Ensuring that there is enough Grit in stock, operators and machinery
Did your council have any plan in place for severe weather events? How did your council cope, and what actions did it take?	The Parish Council has discussed some of the issues arising from the severe weather. We are currently conducting a survey of all the roads in the parish and looking at the gradients of each road. We already fund several salt bins and are considering where further bins can be placed in the future. Our concern is for the residents and their ability to get out onto the so-called gritted roads.	No plan was in place. Many staff walked in to work and they were used to clear paths to the Pavilion entrances and to help out with snow clearing where required. On the worst days they were instructed to stay at home. The Council was conscious of the danger it was putting its own staff to and the added affects of putting more vehicles onto the roads. The Council’s tractors were well used. After the snow the Council’s tree surgery team were kept busy for several weeks and were able to help out the Borough.	Crowthorne Parish Council has Grit Bins in strategic places in the village and tried to ensure that they were kept filled.
Were there any particular places in your area where the gradient of the roads caused problems.	Binfield is a particularly hilly parish. These roads have experienced particular problems: Forest Road, Emmets Nest, Emmets Park, Red Rose, Rose Hill, York Road, Tilehurst Lane, Cressex Close, Alben Road, Chase Gardens,	Wooden Hill was terrible Couldn’t get out of Great Hollands Crowthorne Road past St Michael’s church Churchill House development (car owners were parking their cars on Crowthorne Road making it dangerous). Anywhere where cars had to stop at a junction	All the roads leading up to Broadmoor, the Sandhurst Road and Crowthorne High Street.

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	Binfield Parish Council	Bracknell Town Council	Crowthorne Parish Council
	Knox Green, Mill Green, Boltons Lane, Holbroke Gardens, Dunford Place, Hitherhooks, Fletcher Gardens, Tippits Mead, Farley Copse.	and then take off up-	
127	<p>We am well aware that snow clearance costs money, but people still have to get to work, buy food, take the kids to school etc. Our experience of the snow was that non-residents (people passing through the Borough) were treated far better than the residents, who pay Council Tax and should expect a better service from you. You ought to be concentrating on us, not strangers.</p> <p>We believe that Bracknell Forest Council and other agencies should ensure that the advice given to residents in these circumstances should be entirely consistent. For example - schools should not record "unauthorised absence" for a child when the advice for from the police is not to travel unless necessary.</p>	<p>A comprehensive assessment of troublesome gradients should be made.</p> <p>Schools should be encouraged to develop a People Power Policy to work together to clear snow etc.</p> <p>When are the pot-holes going to be mended? Reconsider the positioning of grit bins and their use – do residents understand what they are for and how to use them?</p> <p>Can BFBC indemnify volunteers who help with snow clearance in the way it indemnifies SID volunteers?</p>	<p>Although this weather was severe and not common to our area, the threat of climate change may suggest that this could become frequent in years to come. Therefore procedures and improved planning for possible future events should be taken seriously. Also as climate change affects all seasons, does BFC have any emergency plans in place for summer flooding?</p>

	Sandhurst Town Council	Warfield Parish Council	Winkfield Parish Council
Was the Borough's response appropriate and timely?		No. Roads were neither salted nor cleared quickly enough. In the first extended freeze, residential roads in Quelm Park were not salted until less than 48 hours before the thaw. In the second freeze, no salting was performed at all. This led to widespread immobilisation.	Primary/secondary routes dealt with quite promptly. However, residential roads and pavements/footpaths were poorly serviced making it almost impossible for residents to go about their usual business.
What was done particularly well?		Nothing of note.	Again, primary routes notably London Road through Winkfield and Ascot.
What could have been improved?		Roads with even slight gradients were impassable to many vehicles. These could have received priority treatment.	A gritting policy aimed towards keeping the local community operational not merely major roads.

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	Sandhurst Town Council	Warfield Parish Council	Winkfield Parish Council
<p>What precautionary measures could reasonably be taken, bearing in mind that we may not experience these conditions again for many years?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">128</p>		<p>Communication of what was being done.</p> <p>The council could ensure that it has sufficient stocks of rock salt to deal with these occurrences. Though there is a cost to acquiring and storing the product it is much less than the economic</p> <p>Consequences of failing to deal with it. It should not be assumed that these conditions may not recur for many years, since the world is undergoing climate change. The University of Southampton Oceanography department has an ongoing programme to monitor ocean currents and their potential for inducing rapid climate change (cooling) in W Europe. If this ongoing survey were to indicate rapid cooling then a comprehensive policy would be required of BFC to mitigate it, not merely "precautionary measures".</p> <p>Is there an option for additional gritting facilities? Be clear about what will never be cleared and publicise to manage expectations.</p> <p>Consider central repository of bins that could be distributed to key sites for local residents to manage.</p>	<p>There is a perception that BFCs reserves of salt were insufficient to achieve all that should have been achieved although possibly sufficient to meet the limited operation planned in the current gritting policy. Elsewhere in the country snowploughs moved slush and show to the side of the road to prevent the problem of frozen slush troughs and lumps. Do we have at least one, possibly improvised, snowplough in Bracknell?</p>
<p>What does your council consider to be the most important priority in responding to severe weather?</p>		<p>Welfare of residents, particularly the vulnerable with regards to heating/food etc</p> <p>Mobility of essential services</p> <p>Allowing people to remain mobile and thereby economically active.</p>	<p>'Speed and Spread'. A rapid initial major road and primary route response needs also to be supplemented by attention to feeder roads and shopping area pavements.</p>
<p>Did your council have any plan in place for severe weather events? How</p>		<p>No plan in place as not accountable for the provision of key services. However, insurers advised to do nothing with regard to snow clearance at parish amenity.</p>	<p>We pay for two supplementary salt bins. We have requested that the Mill Ride/Fernbank Road junction be included in the primary gritting schedule - so far without success.</p>

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	Sandhurst Town Council	Warfield Parish Council	Winkfield Parish Council
did your council cope, and what actions did it take?			
Were there any particular places in your area where the gradient of the roads caused problems. 129		<p>Even the most marginal gradients caused problems across the whole parish. Traffic lights at Plough & Harrow crossroads a particular problem as cars couldn't get going again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest Ride (Eastbound approach to Quelm Park roundabout), Newport Drive (both directions - many abandoned vehicles), Darby Vale (uphill between Marbull Way and Lyon Oaks), Tocker Gardens (uphill, vehicle recovery lorry trapped) • Kennel Lane • Gloucestershire Lea • Corner of Malt Hill and A330 Maidenhead/Ascot Road, accidents as cars skidded onto the main road from Malt Hill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction Mill Ride & Fernbank Road (Major problem) OS Grid Ref 9090.6975 • Junction Mill Ride and Whitelands Drive (problem) OS Grid Ref 9077.6975 • Junction Mill Ride and Ranelagh Crescent (right angled bend on gradient) OS Grid Ref 9065.6980. • Junction Ranelagh Crescent and Whitelands Drive (problem) OS Grid Ref 9062.6965 • Junction Ranelagh Crescent and Asher Drive OSA Grid Ref 9036.6973
Are there any other comments you wish to make?		No	<p>The present gritting policy of only holding sufficient grit to treat the primary and 'A' Roads is not adequate for severe snowfall. It may be acceptable for, say 1 to 1.5 cms of overnight snow which thaws in a couple of days. For heavier snowfall of longer duration attention to feeder roads needs to follow quickly after the primary routes have been treated. Otherwise pedestrians cannot access the bus routes on the major roads nor can vehicles escape from their residential areas. Bracknell is rightly proud that it conserved stocks and retained salt until the emergency was over. However there is a perception that in neighbouring areas more roads were treated after the primary routes had been attended to, using more salt. Salt is very expensive in December, but surely it could be purchased in spring and summer with a cheaper price negotiated at that time of year.</p>

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	Sandhurst Town Council	Warfield Parish Council	Winkfield Parish Council
130			<p>When BFC stated they were removing some salt bins as an economy measure but that Parish Councils could retain them if they funded their installation and maintenance, WPC opted to retain two bins to grit specific dangerous areas of road and pavement. Can you please clarify whether the salt bins are intended for use on Pavements only. If the Bins are NOT to provide grit/salt for roads then it is unacceptable for BFC to implement a policy which avoids gritting dangerous junctions at an early stage, followed by feeder roads as soon as possible after the main routes have been treated.</p> <p>In summary, appropriate stocks of salt need to be maintained in conjunction with a gritting programme tailored to meet the reasonable expectations of the residents. Gritting alone may be insufficient when snowfall is heavy - are there additional feasible measures that could usefully supplement the gritting operation?</p> <p>Salt bins are a poor substitute for an adequate gritting/snow clearing operation but in the absence of a comprehensive policy they may be the only alternative. If so, their purpose needs to be clearly defined and the public made aware.</p>

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
22 JUNE 2010

**'BE PREPARED' – A REVIEW OF PREPAREDNESS FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES
Lead Working Group Member**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the attached draft report resulting from the review of preparedness for public health emergencies undertaken by a working group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The report is due to be considered by that Panel on 17 June 2010 when it is invited to agree the report and commend it to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for adoption and sending formally to the relevant Executive Members and partners. The report is attached for this Panel's information as its coverage includes emergency planning and environmental health matters which fall within the remit of this Panel.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the attached report reviewing preparedness for public health emergencies be noted.**

Background Papers

None.

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11 Be Prepared Cover Report

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'Be Prepared'

**A review of Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies
by a Working Group of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel**



June 2010

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Acknowledgements

The Working Group would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the following people for their co-operation and time. All those who have participated in the review have been thanked for their contribution and received a copy of this report if wished.

Angela Snowling	Public Health Consultant and former Acting Director of Public Health, NHS Berkshire East
John Pullin	Deputy Director of Commissioning (Strategy and Planning), NHS Berkshire East
James Amos	Emergency Preparedness Manager, South Central Ambulance Service
Alyson Smith	Consultant in Health Protection, Emergency Planning Lead, Thames Valley Health Protection (HP) Unit, HP Agency

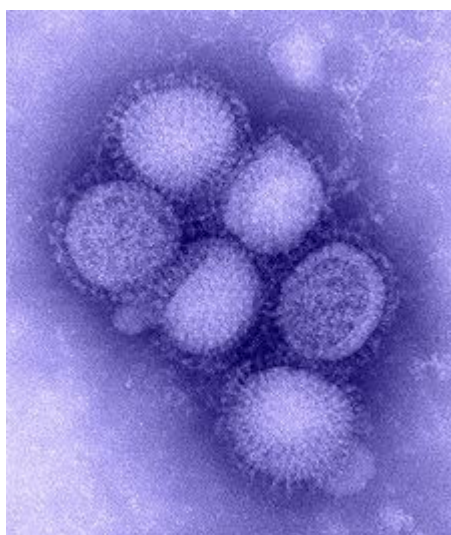
The following from Bracknell Forest Council:

David Steeds	Head of Environmental Health and Safety
Louise Osborn	Emergency Planning Manager
Richard Beaumont	Head of Overview and Scrutiny
Andrea Carr	Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Victoria Bale	Former Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Wishing to review an aspect of health services from the patient's perspective, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel established a Working Group to pursue this task. From a lengthy list of possible review topics, the Working Group identified preparedness for public health emergencies as the theme of the review as it was felt that a significant number of occupants of the Borough would view it as being relevant and important to them in the light of growing threats to human health such as influenza pandemics and terrorism.
- 1.2 Although preparedness for and response to public health emergencies is seen largely as a function of health services, other bodies such as the ambulance service, fire service and local authority can become involved as a multi-agency approach is often required. Accordingly, the Working Group met representatives of and researched the role and responsibilities of numerous relevant agencies during the course of its review as part of the evidence gathering process.
- 1.3 This report describes the work of the Working Group and sets out its findings. Members hope that the report will be well received and look forward to receiving responses to their recommendations.
- 1.4 The Working Group comprised:

Councillor Burrows (Lead Member)
Councillor Mrs Angell
Councillor Thompson
Local Involvement Network Representative Mrs Mattick



Electron microscope image of the Swine Flu virus.

2. Background

- 2.1 In October 2007, a working group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel commenced a patient focus review. Although this review was discontinued in August 2008, a patient focus on local health services was felt to remain relevant and a new working group with different membership was established to undertake more work in this area from a different perspective.
- 2.2 The new working group selected the preparedness of the Council and its partners for public health emergencies as the theme for its review which was timely and relevant as it coincided with the outbreak of Swine Influenza A/H1N1 (Swine Flu). The Working Group felt that the review theme met the criteria of being relevant to a sizeable number of residents, not over-complex, open to carrying out some original work which had the prospect of adding value and making worthwhile recommendations.
- 2.3 The key objectives of the review were to:
- Examine the arrangements for identifying risks of public health emergencies;
 - Establish the respective roles of the Council, NHS Berkshire East (the local Primary Care Trust) and other partners;
 - Review the plans and resources for responding to public health emergencies;
 - Compare the plans and arrangements to any national requirements and best practice; and
 - Recommend improvements as appropriate.
- 2.4 The scope of the review consisted of the arrangements of the Council and other public bodies to prepare for public health emergencies in Bracknell Forest.
- 2.5 Specific questions identified for the Working Group to address were:
- What are the respective roles of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Health Protection Agency (HPA), the Council, NHS Berkshire East and other partners relating to preparing for public health emergencies in Bracknell Forest?
 - What are the national requirements relating to preparing for public health emergencies, and how does Bracknell Forest measure up to these?
 - What examples are there of best practice relating to preparing for public health emergencies, and how does Bracknell Forest measure up to these?
 - What are the arrangements for identifying risks of public health emergencies, and what is on the list for Bracknell Forest? How frequently is that list reviewed?

- What detailed plans exist, and what resources have been made available for responding to public health emergencies?
- Have these plans been tested in practice? If so, what issues arose?
- How did the arrangements work in practice in relation to the Swine Flu pandemic in 2009?
- Are any improvements needed to existing policies and practices?



Flooding Emergency

3. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis

- 3.1 Having met on two instances to agree the theme and scope of the review, the Working Group met on six further occasions to gather information from representatives of organisations identified as playing a significant role in emergency preparedness and response in Bracknell Forest. The review also included ascertaining the role of the WHO in public health and researching the role of other organisations, particularly the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), in preparing for and responding to emergencies. The structuring of General Practitioner (GP) surgeries to respond to health emergencies and offer support was also looked at. Research undertaken by the Working Group to inform the review included consideration of the NHS Berkshire East Influenza and Emergency Response Plans, Bracknell Forest Council's Influenza Pandemic Response Plan, the Thames Valley Health Protection Unit's (TVHPU's) Joint Outbreak / Incident Control Plan and the Berkshire Major Incident Protocol.
- 3.2 Public health emergencies fall within the remit of the health profession to lead the response and other agencies, including the Council, are involved in a co-ordination and support role. The Council's main partners in preparing for and responding to public health emergencies are NHS Berkshire East, the HPA, South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SCAS), Thames Valley Police, RBFRS and the Environment Agency. Their related roles and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix 1 and elaborated upon below. Slides included in Appendices 2 and 3 indicate how they interlink at different command levels and their responder categories. The voluntary sector also provides support in response to public health emergencies.
- 3.3 Owing to the amount of time required for the Working Group to complete its review together with the fluid and rapidly changing nature of the Swine flu pandemic which is cited in this report as an example of a potential public health emergency, the information gathered by the Working Group in the earlier stages of the review reflect the development of the pandemic at that time and not necessarily the outcomes.

Meeting with the Former Acting Director of Public Health

- 3.4 The Working Group met Dr Angela Snowling, a public health consultant and Acting Director of Public Health at NHS Berkshire East at the time of the meeting with 'on call' responsibilities depending upon whether an operational or public health response to an incident or emergency was required. In addition to giving a presentation in respect of Swine Flu and NHS Berkshire East's Influenza Pandemic and Emergency Response Plans, Dr Snowling described Scientific and Technical Advice Cells (STACs), the roles and responsibilities of local agencies and the role of the WHO in public health.
- 3.5 Dr Snowling advised that the WHO had redefined the phases of Influenza pandemics (global and rapidly spreading virus) which were now categorised into three stages, namely, Inter-pandemic, Pandemic alert and Pandemic. There were six Alert Levels within these stages and the United Kingdom (UK) was at Level 5 at the time of the meeting in an extended pre-surveillance stage where there was evidence of significant human-to-human transmission. Influenza Pandemic Plans, which had been tested nationally, became operational at Level 6 (efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission). Whilst recognising the international alert system, the UK operated a separate

alert level plan where Levels 2 to 4 would trigger action. When assessed in March 2009, NHS Berkshire East's Influenza Pandemic Plan received a success rating of 89%. The 11% gap related to dealing with vulnerable groups and development work to close this gap was being progressed by Bracknell Forest's Emergency Planning Team. This involved working with the British Red Cross voluntary organisation to establish a 'flu friends' process (people that could collect anti-virals for sufferers who were vulnerable and did not have a support network around them). As Swine Flu did not ultimately have the expected impact and the number of symptomatic vulnerable people was less than anticipated, the system developed with British Red Cross was not activated and small numbers of vulnerable people were accommodated by NHS Berkshire East. There was also some discussion nationally to provide a centralised process.

- 3.6 The Plan was sufficiently flexible to change if needed and it was recognised that there was always scope for improvement. Dr Snowling felt that the voluntary sector was overstretched and assistance from organisations such as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and British Red Cross would be sought when serious alert levels were reached and they were able to assist. In the worst case scenario of up to a 50% mortality rate, the army could become involved in a theoretical response. Although serving officers were catered for by international medical teams, NHS Berkshire East remained responsible for the health of their family members. Military hostel accommodation for those who had become infected with flu was a possibility depending on the army's level of preparedness.
- 3.7 There had been monitoring in March 2009 to assess how plans were being progressed and health direction was received from Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) which took the lead for the South Central Strategic Health Authority area and liaised daily with NHS Berkshire East.
- 3.8 The Working Group was apprised of the spread of Swine Flu at the time of the meeting. The Acting Director of Public Health had access to airline manifests and was therefore able to track possibly infected travellers from Mexico, the source of the outbreak, although bookings through numerous flight booking services complicated the process. There was a national information cascade system which was being tested for effectiveness.
- 3.9 The flu emergency response was modelled on a worst case scenario pandemic which envisaged a sixteen week flu wave followed by a second sixteen week wave peaking at six weeks resulting in a mortality rate of 25-50%. One to three days was the incubation period for Swine Flu and patients were ill from seven to ten days. If no flu symptoms were present after seven days of possible transmission, it could be assumed that people were not infected with the virus. Dr Snowling expressed an opinion that incomplete information in respect of Swine Flu had been received from Mexico which had led to the WHO accelerating the response level. It was felt that Mexican port authorities should have undertaken an algorithm for the management of suspected cases of Swine Flu. Fatalities could occur where a contractee was suffering from another condition such as a respiratory problem. It was possible for the virus to mutate into a different more virulent strain hindering treatment and immunity.
- 3.10 At the early stage of the viral outbreak endeavours were made to contain and prevent its spread, these included tracing close contacts who were defined as a person with whom the sufferer had been within a metre's distance for an hour or

more. Some schools had been closed on the advice of the local HPU. Analysis of swabs taken from the nose and mouth of suspected sufferers were undertaken to confirm contraction of the virus and 3,000 was the maximum number of cases that could be investigated. Other people could self-assess their condition with the benefit of on-line information and contact their GP by telephone. Although there was no treatment specific to Swine Flu, immediate administration of general anti-virals would reduce severity, and symptoms by one day. Stocks of anti-virals were high at the time of the meeting and doctors had been instructed against prescribing medicine on a private basis or before contraction had been confirmed. There was a model for action in the event of the failure of Tamiflu, a main anti-viral, and work to develop a flu vaccine was ongoing although this involved a certain amount of speculation as to which strains would pose the greatest threat to life each year. Two 'A' strains from Australia and one 'B' strain from the USA had been the most virulent in recent years. Although Swine Flu did not compete with these in terms of virulence and was less dangerous than seasonal flu, it transmitted rapidly, could combine with other strains, be fatal in 25-50% of cases and become the carrier of a more dangerous virus. As explained above, Swine Flu did not have the impact that was initially suspected.

- 3.11 Information provided to GPs was appropriate to the stage of a pandemic and there was a national communication strategy with phased responses that was launched when Alert Level 6 was reached. Information leaflets in respect of Swine Flu were delivered to all households and care had been taken to communicate sufficient warning without causing hysteria. A county radio channel and some local newspapers had assisted with communicating a positive ideology through intelligent reporting. Doctor managers and community nurses were equipped with telephone numbers to cascade information as part of a national plan involving extended flu lines manned by an Emergency Response Team and involving the out-of-hours service.
- 3.12 NHS Berkshire East had a budget to fight Swine Flu and anti-viral distribution centres were established when flu pandemics occurred. National guidance advised people to establish a network of 'flu friends' and symptomatic people were asked to avoid their GP surgeries, flu centres and local Accident and Emergency (A&E) centres to reduce transmission unless they were seriously ill. However, NHS Berkshire East was in daily contact with hospitals and sought an isolation area within an A&E ward to cater for the symptomatic.
- 3.13 The Thames Valley Influenza Planning Committee, which included an element of emergency planning, had been established three years previously. Its membership included representatives of the unitary authorities in Berkshire, human resources workers and pharmacists and its papers were circulated to the Berkshire East Community Health Service, Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust, Broadmoor Hospital Trust and the police to keep them informed of developments. Public Health Team members were available to cover in the case of emergencies and there were replacements for provider staff. Local authority emergency plans included procedures for networking with the voluntary sector in the case of an emergency event. Changes to the Criminal Records Bureau checking system with effect from October 2009 enabled data to be linked to a national computer system resulting in the need for only one check per volunteer for all purposes.
- 3.14 Dr Snowling referred to daily communication with councils in East Berkshire during the Swine Flu pandemic and indicated that good relations with local

authorities had been experienced. NHS Berkshire East was obliged to report on lessons learnt in such circumstances and a report would be prepared when the Swine Flu outbreak had passed.

- 3.15 The Working Group received an overview of emergency preparedness which included the identification of risks, the planning and response roles of the Thames Valley HPU and NHS Berkshire East's duties and responsibilities in relation to national Core Standard 24 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Act classified NHS Berkshire East as a Category 1 responder with a statutory duty to undertake both emergency and business continuity planning in order to respond to disasters. NHS Berkshire East commissioned emergency planning and response work whilst community health services had a response rota with resources to fund and manage it. In the case of public health emergencies, the Director of Public Health 'on call' would be the lead director in any response which could include requirement to establish a Silver Tactical Team at King Edward VII Hospital or chair a STAC at Gold Command, Kidlington. In the event of an emergency, the NHS resource was energised, a police chain put in place and advice and support was received from the STAC and the HPA. The Centre for Hazards and Poisons, a national organisation formed by the Government, offered specialist advice in the event of chemical, radioactive, biological or nuclear incidents. Local emergency response plans were 'living' documents and had been updated and tested with the benefit of advice from a national team. The Council's Emergency Planning Team had a plan in place to activate in the event of mass fatalities which was in the domain of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and Mass Fatalities Sub Group. Organisational charts in the NHS Berkshire East Emergency Response Plan depicted responses under the categories of Alert & Informing Cascade and Command, Control & Co-ordination in relation to health and whole system emergencies. Whilst the NHS took the lead and co-ordinated the response in the case of a health emergency such as a flu pandemic, the most appropriate agency would be identified in other situations e.g. the Environment Agency / local authority would undertake this role in a flooding disaster and SCAS would in the event of an explosion. The local authority tended to have greater involvement in health emergencies at the recovery stage.
- 3.16 Other public health emergencies recently experienced included Norovirus issues and damage to a cyanide gas pipe in a school playground. Although there had been no local radiological disaster, there was a response model for this owing to the moderately close location of Aldermaston. There were also models for specific sites such as Broadmoor Hospital. The Working Group was advised of NHS Berkshire East's methods of identifying public health risks. The duration and extent of exposure were factors and pathways to the cause of public health threats were checked. An example of identifying public health issues associated with flooding in Winkfield Row was given and the Working Group was advised that NHS Berkshire East's website provided advice for affected residents to follow in such situations. There was an intention that all schools should have a business continuity plan which operated at a level below NHS Berkshire East's Plan and involved communication with schools and the Council's Environmental Health Team. This Team was under a statutory obligation to involve NHS Berkshire East where there was an evidence base of acute and chronic effects of contamination in areas such as proposals to build on brown field sites. Part 2A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 included a significant harm to health land designation which triggered referral to the Environment Agency. There had been 380 investigations of contamination by Environmental Health during the 2008/09 financial year which involved

Health Impact Assessments. It was possible to take remediation action and acquire planning permission to redevelop contaminated sites such as landfill areas and NHS Berkshire East would assist the local authority with the intervention process in the event that such a situation arose. Under such circumstances the polluter was required to cover the cost of remediation action.

- 3.17 Dr Snowling felt that more engagement with care homes and training of their staff was required as they housed vulnerable people and achieving this was one of her next pieces of work. The Council endeavoured to support this by engaging with private care homes to provide them with information, and offer vaccinations etc. There was a Public Health Working Group where constructive joint working between the Council and the Acting Director of Public Health was achieved.

Meeting with the Head of Environmental Health and Safety

- 3.18 The Working Group met Mr David Steeds, Head of Environmental Health and Safety at Bracknell Forest. Mr Steeds described his position within the authority and outlined his role and duties.

Food Safety

- 3.19 Mr Steeds advised that there were over 900 registered food businesses in the Borough for which the Council enforced food safety legislation. The premises were risk rated to ensure the businesses that presented the highest risk to the public were visited at a greater frequency than those of a lower risk. Whilst on the premises officers checked for cleanliness, identified hazards and sampled food if required. Officers were empowered to control hazards through the use of notices and closure of parts or all of the business if required. Action could lead to prosecution. These powers were used infrequently and compliance was usually achieved through informal means by way of on site coaching, training and the provision of advice. Closure represented an emergency and was the last resort. Where closure had been confirmed by the court, the Council could appeal for the food proprietor to be prohibited from running a food business. The officer must prove that there was a risk to public health. Cases such as these were rare but usually involved a range of issues from a pest infestation to an immediate risk of a food poisoning outbreak for example. In general terms, officers checked food that came into the Borough and that which left the Borough when required. In rare cases the Food Standards Agency (FSA) were empowered to intervene or provide direction to the Council where a situation had regional or national implications. Officers monitored daily food alerts that were issued by the FSA warning of potential food safety hazards from food from within or outside the UK. In such circumstances officers responded by checking relevant food businesses to ensure the Borough's food businesses were not implicated in the alert. The Working Group received copies of the TVHPU's Joint Outbreak / Incident Control Plan for information and noted that the local Director of Public Health became involved where significant problems were encountered. In addition, the FSA had the power to maintain a local presence if it was perceived to be necessary and assist the Council in the event of need.

Health and Safety

- 3.20 There were over 1,350 premises where the Council had statutory responsibility for health and safety at work matters. Premises were visited according to a national risk rating system. The Council had a duty to inspect the premises

under Health and Safety legislation. Once on the premises, officers had powers to serve prohibition and improvement notices where contraventions were found but in general most contraventions were resolved informally through co-operation with the business.

- 3.21 Officers were responsible for identifying key public health issues during visits. Two examples where there was a potential for the hazard to be a threat to public health were Legionnaire's Disease and asbestos. Legionella, which was a potentially fatal bacteria, was found widely in the environment. It thrived in warm enclosed water systems and spread via water droplets. A potential source of Legionella in the Borough were cooling towers of which there were currently 25 in Bracknell Forest. Businesses were required to notify the Council of their location. To prevent an outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease, officers were required to ensure that the correct routine maintenance procedures were followed. Officers were empowered to prohibit the operation of cooling towers or any other source of Legionella if necessary. A key partner agency with whom the Council worked in such cases was the HPA which provided ongoing surveillance to identify cases of infectious disease and provide medical advice. Businesses were required to survey their premises for the presence of asbestos. Removal was not always the first option as there was a need to minimise the risk of disturbance by any work carried out by contractors, for example, and to ensure generally that any identified asbestos was maintained in a sound condition as any broken or friable asbestos if disturbed could release fibres into the atmosphere. As was the case with Legionella, officers were responsible for focussing on this area during visits as, although the disease associated with asbestos was slow to develop, the potential public health risk was high.

Infectious Disease Control

- 3.22 The responsibility for the surveillance of infectious disease was split between the HPA, which provided the consultation, and the Environmental Health Section, which carried out active surveillance through investigations. The Council had only the remit to undertake food poisoning and gastrointestinal investigations whilst other key diseases such as measles, mumps and diphtheria were the responsibility of the HPA. Although Environmental Health often became aware of food poisoning at first hand, the main notification was via GPs who had a duty to report any case of suspected or confirmed food poisoning to the HPA, which in turn informed the Council. Officers then made an investigation as to the source and cause. Although most instances were individual cases or family outbreaks caused in the home, periodically the source was identified as a food business either in or from outside the Borough. In either case, investigation involved consultation with the HPA and if the outbreak was wide spread, an outbreak control team could be set up with the HPA to control the investigation. An example of joint working with the HPA was outbreaks associated with institutions such as schools, colleges and residential care homes, which carried a high risk rating owing to their vulnerable occupants. Winter vomiting disease was caused by a virus. Where an individual posed a threat to health by virtue of working with food or vulnerable people, the Council had powers to prohibit the person from working until they were free from infection.
- 3.23 The Council had signed a statement of intent with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) committing to working in closer partnership. Part of this was the introduction of flexible warranting during 2009. The agreement enabled

officers who were based locally to enter business premises previously outside their remit as enforcement was the responsibility of HSE which was regionally based. This arrangement enabled the Council to cope with serious situations that posed an immediate risk to the employees and public more rapidly than otherwise would be the case without acting outside their legal powers. An example being the initial investigation of an accident on a building site, such as the collapse of scaffolding, could now be dealt with by the Council's officers.

Water Quality

- 3.24 It was the responsibility of water companies to liaise with the Council, provide water samples for testing and advise of any issues. The Drinking Water Inspectorate had a relationship with the Council and various other bodies and there were national standards in respect of water quality utilising red, amber and green alerts. Bracknell Forest also undertook pollution tests in inland waterways. A micro organism had established itself in water and caused some problems in the 1990's. Thousands of water samples were taken and reports indicated that water quality was now very good and much improved on past standards.

Air Quality

- 3.25 The Council continuously monitored the Borough's air quality. Nitrogen Dioxide (caused by incomplete combustion of petrol) had been identified as the cause of air pollution. Consequently, Environmental Health staff monitored the air quality at main roads to ensure that national air quality standards were achieved. The Council undertook this by the use of air quality stations and diffusion tubes. The data was collected and sent to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for scrutiny. The Council could be directed by DEFRA to take additional measures to reduce pollution levels if national standards were exceeded. The Council was awaiting DEFRA to decide on the next stage of the Council duty to monitor air quality and may require measures to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations at specified locations in the Borough. Air quality was unlikely to pose an emergency situation as it was ongoing and evolved over a number of years. Notwithstanding that, the Council was dependent on other agencies to undertake some analysis and maintenance of equipment. Such dependencies had been identified in the Business Continuity Plan.

Environmental Health and Emergency Planning

- 3.26 As Environmental Health staff had investigation and risk assessment skills and were routinely briefed on emergency planning and roles in incidences, they could be deployed to assist the Council during a major incident.

Business Continuity Plan

- 3.27 Environmental Health contributed to the divisional Business Continuity Plan and dependencies had been identified to enable the section to cope with an emergency situation outside its control.

Meeting with the Emergency Planning Manager

- 3.28 The Working Group met Louise Osborn, the Council's Emergency Planning Manager, who described her position within the authority and outlined her role and responsibilities.
- 3.29 The Emergency Planning Manager's role was to ensure that the Council was equipped to respond to emergencies, disasters and major incidents and support the work of the emergency services. Ms Osborn was Bracknell Forest's main emergency contact who was informed of, and central to, its emergency response structure and she maintained effective communication links and liaised with partners to ensure that they were aware of available assistance from the Council. Although the remit of the role was Borough-wide, the Emergency Planning Team worked jointly with neighbouring Berkshire unitary authorities and other relevant parties. Bracknell Forest was a low risk Borough in terms of potential emergencies and received fewer emergency call outs than many other Boroughs such as Reading. However, a call from the RBFRS had been received on the day of the meeting to advise that there had been a chemical spill at one of the schools in Bracknell Forest.
- 3.30 The Council was responsible for the care and welfare of people evacuated owing to emergencies such as fire or flooding. The standard generic response to an emergency situation would be to house displaced people in a rest centre and treat all equally. Enquiries would be made at an initial stage to ascertain whether the affected people had any medical, dietary, religious or other requirements which the Council would accommodate as far as possible. Vulnerability would be assessed and being elderly or vulnerable were factors taken into consideration when suitable rest placements were identified. Response work to emergencies was generally of a short term nature. The public did not normally have high expectations of services to assist them when evacuated owing to an emergency as they recognised the associated difficulties and were grateful to be accommodated in a rest centre, however, dissatisfaction could arise when such a situation continued for any length of time.
- 3.31 In terms of capacity to respond to emergencies, the Council had a robust structure in place which included 24 hour 7 day emergency rotas of contact people, including chief officers, to authorise expenditure and liaise with the media, and education officers to deal with incidents affecting schools. The Emergency Planning Team had links with social care staff to advise on setting up rest centres. There was also wide awareness within the authority of actions to be pursued in response to emergencies.
- 3.32 Although the response to Swine Flu was health service led, the Council sought to respond jointly to such emergencies and work consistently with its health partners supporting them as required. This resulted in involvement on a daily basis to formulate responses including the identification and provision of anti-viral drug distribution centres to distribute drugs from key points in the Borough to well people to pass to the symptomatic. Transport issues were also being considered as the Council may be able to assist in that area. Subsequently during the Swine Flu event, the Council also supported NHS Berkshire East and took responsibility for managing and delivering the vaccination programme to front line health and social care staff. This included social care staff within independent providers who were not affiliated with the Council in any way.

- 3.33 Unhelpful media coverage had prompted disproportionate fear and panic by exaggerating the severity of Swine Flu and the press had reported incidents of ineffectiveness of the Tamiflu anti-viral drug against Swine Flu. Although the spread of the virus was at an early stage at the time of the meeting and anticipated by the medical profession to increase in the autumn when seasonal flu occurred, this was not the case. Whilst public health messages and information in respect of Swine Flu had been very clear and comprehensive at the outset, the initial level of communication had not been reinforced and had reduced to underlying media coverage other than when a newsworthy event occurred. These factors were possibly the reasons for the numerous GP contacts from people falsely suspecting that they had contracted the virus and enquiries from schools. Although there had been fewer cases of Swine Flu in Bracknell Forest schools than in those of the neighbouring authorities in East Berkshire, the majority of cases in the Borough were associated with schools. Two deaths had resulted from Swine Flu at the time of the meeting and both victims had suffered from other underlying health issues. As a key partner, the Council assisted NHS Berkshire East to convey health messages such as including relevant information on its website to complement the key NHS sites e.g. NHS Direct.
- 3.34 Although all Berkshire GPs received Swine Flu information from NHS Berkshire East, dissemination of the information was at their discretion and the Council did not have a structure in place to intervene. GPs did not change their regular practices in order to treat the virus and had business continuity strategies in place to plan service delivery in the event that significant numbers of doctors and other staff were affected by Swine Flu. Staff resourcing was a key issue and NHS Berkshire East determined the necessity for some GP surgeries to temporarily close if they could not all be adequately staffed.
- 3.35 East Berkshire was declared a Swine Flu 'hot spot' in Summer 2009 when it was no longer possible to contain the virus. As a result, NHS Berkshire East developed a 'flu line' advising patients to send their 'flu friend' to one of the three anti-viral distribution centres in East Berkshire, namely, Heatherwood, Wexham Park and St Mark's Hospitals, to ease the burden on GPs and discourage further spread. Due to the spread, Swine Flu was diagnosed on a clinical basis in place of swabbing and, in the event that GPs were overwhelmed, they could direct potential sufferers to the 'flu line' where an algorithm would be performed by telephone to establish whether the caller's symptoms matched and they had contracted the illness. Unlike Avian Flu, there had been no lead-in preparation time with Swine Flu owing to its sudden appearance and therefore planning and responding had taken place simultaneously. Other PCTs requested copies of East Berkshire's model as it had been actioned sooner than some owing to the early 'hot spot' declaration.
- 3.36 The Council circulated regular e-mail updates in respect of Swine Flu to its staff and schools.
- 3.37 Whilst the Council had a Flu Response Plan in place, flexibility and constant review were required to meet changing situations and differing types of flu, the particular characteristics of which may not be ascertained until first contact was made. Following a Berkshire-wide event considering what had been learnt over the few months following the outbreak of Swine Flu, Bracknell Forest's plans were reviewed.

- 3.38 In an emergency scenario, contact with the Council could be made through the Forest Care out-of-hours emergency service and all partners were aware of this and knew that all emergency plan calls were to be routed through this service which would then contact the appropriate duty rota officer(s) to take the matter forward. This initial communication structure was vital to effective response to an emergency. A meeting room at Time Square was designated as an emergency operations centre and one hour was required to set up the room for this purpose. In furtherance of the duty to warn and inform people, the Emergency Planning Manager had instigated an emergency preparedness campaign during the previous year which had consisted of distributing the leaflet 'How Prepared are You?' to every household in the Borough. The campaign, known as ICE (in case of emergency), sought to promote self-help and resilience in an emergency and, for example, advised on the equipment that motorists should have available in the event of being stranded in their cars. Unfortunately, the campaign was less successful than hoped as many residents had not attached sufficient importance to it. The Council was seeking to take emergency planning to a local level and an event in Sandhurst was proposed. Such events would inform mapping of local circumstances, such as the extent of vulnerable people in an area, with a view to assisting towns and parishes to tackle local community related incidents. Relevant information was stored on a Geographical Information System which facilitated mapping of public buildings that could be utilised as rest centres, including the majority of community centres that were owned by and could be utilised by the Council in an emergency scenario. Some local hotels had indicated that they were amenable to providing accommodation in case of emergency subject to payment. Bracknell Forest had a basic supply of sleeping bags, toiletries and baby equipment and could call on additional supplies from its neighbouring East Berkshire unitary authorities if necessary as they maintained similar stocks. Alternatively, necessary purchases could be made from retailers which had 24 hour per day opening practices. Evacuation and rest centre procedures were practiced on a regular basis.
- 3.39 Colleagues across Berkshire were available to assist in an emergency when needed through the Berkshire Memorandum of Understanding which involved approximately two members of staff in each unitary authority, one of whom would take the lead for a particular work stream. Monthly meetings were held with Berkshire colleagues and meetings with the police and RBFRS also took place.

Meeting with John Pullin, the Deputy Director of Commissioning (Strategy & Planning), NHS Berkshire East

- 3.40 Mr Pullin described his emergency preparedness brief which included the preparation and updating of NHS Berkshire East's public facing five year Emergency Response Plan that had been agreed by the organisation's Board and mapped all activities to be pursued over that timeframe. As it was not possible to legislate for all eventualities, the plan was a framework tool to aid co-ordinating staff. A second internal operational document supported co-ordination of a response to any emergency situation for use by on-call staff.
- 3.41 The commissioning element of NHS Berkshire East had a role under the 2005 Emergency Preparedness Guide which involved maintaining an overview of the local health community. Health leadership in an emergency situation, such as an outbreak of flu or Legionnaire's Disease, required a specific response from the local PCT and HPA. The latter organisation would provide the appropriate

clinical expertise and undertake a surveillance role offering guidance. As a strategic manager, the Deputy Director of Commissioning tended to remain remote from emergency events and had an arm's length role of notifying, co-ordinating and responding where needed by offering support, for example, the lead PCT would contact the DoH to obtain emergency equipment and staff resources where necessary. Emergencies were directly responded to by workers on the ground who were trained to do so and refer casualties to A&E hospital departments. Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust responded well to emergency situations and undertook regular drills in preparedness.

- 3.42 The Police Authority would normally lead in the case of a sudden impact event such as a bomb explosion requiring immediate action when the Strategic Co-ordination Group at Gold Command, Kidlington, would co-ordinate a multi-agency response.
- 3.43 In the case of a 'rising tide' event, the Deputy Director would monitor the situation having regard to the 'at risk' register and put mechanisms and responses in place to support local agencies dealing with the event. Where necessary a response would be escalated and may include use of the Control Room at King Edward VII Hospital or the reserve facility at Upton Hospital. Duty managers, Directors and Assistant Directors on-call would be summonsed and there was administrative support to co-ordinate responses.
- 3.44 A local call centre would be established in the event that results of national health screening or vaccination programmes were called into question and patients needed to be re-called. Reputation management and press inquiry issues arose in such situations and the Deputy Director became involved at this stage. Although NHS Berkshire East was not an operational responding organisation in a major incident, its Level 1 responder status required staff to be given a level of training to meet this.
- 3.45 Volunteers and the goodwill of the public played a significant and valuable role in assisting in sudden impact emergencies and were addressed in the Emergency Response Plan. The availability of 1,200 acute beds in three hours during the London bombing, reduced use of A&E facilities by those unaffected by the emergency and blood donorship, although artificial substitutes were utilised in mass emergencies, were examples of such goodwill. However, during a 'slow rising tide' event such as a flu outbreak the public were anticipated to act only as far as they were obliged to. Although NHS Berkshire East had the support of GPs in such circumstances, this was not greater than usual. Bracknell Forest had fewer flu centres than other areas in East Berkshire as more cases had been identified in Slough and Windsor in the early stages of the pandemic and NHS Berkshire East had responded rapidly and called in GPs to respond with payment being made subsequently. The logistics of responding to the Swine Flu outbreak, including setting up equipment and securing qualified nursing support, had significant resource implications for NHS Berkshire East which had benefited from much support and goodwill. The Deputy Director advised that having diagnosed Swine Flu the national flu line had operated a unique reference patient numbering system to ensure that the correct dose and type of anti-viral was prescribed according to patient age, weight and risk factor. The local flu line involving NHS Berkshire East and the LEA had been successful. The mechanism to deliver anti-virals to flu sufferers without 'flu friends' had been considered and was identified as a further area where volunteers could assist. In cases where patients had waited 48 hours for

anti-virals, medication had been delivered by the 'flu car'. Although NHS Berkshire East had a distant relationship with the public this was not the case at Wexham Park Hospital where volunteers offered non-specialist support and provided added value and pastoral support and care.

- 3.46 The algorithm used for telephone diagnosis of Swine Flu was bespoke to flu pandemics and had been approved by all medical colleagues to ensure that it was flu specific and that other serious illnesses such as Meningitis could not be mistaken for flu and overlooked. The initial containment of Swine Flu had allowed response resources and preparations to be put in place and following the containment stage, the Swine Flu pandemic had developed into a gradual 'rising tide' event requiring rapid and daily response planning with the benefit of effective co-ordination and a multi-agency approach.
- 3.47 NHS Berkshire East featured a public health unit that assessed local healthcare needs and worked with local authorities to undertake an annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). When local and global healthcare needs had been established, services would be commissioned to meet those needs. Planning the response to the Swine Flu pandemic had resembled the JSNA process to determine need and commission the response. Although the power of the public health unit was limited, people and organisations tended to accept and respond to its recommendations.
- 3.48 As flu pandemics did not follow a particular pattern, it was difficult to predict the spread or severity of Swine Flu during winter 2009/10. The emerging of Australia from its winter season informed Swine Flu developments. The flu pandemic which had followed the first world war and claimed more casualties did not inform the current situation as immunity and vaccination scenarios differed. Although Swine Flu appeared to remain mild and be more of a threat to younger people as they had not had the opportunity to develop immunity to flu, there was no guarantee that the elderly would have more evolved immunity. At the time of the meeting, Swine flu was entering its second wave and although it was not as widespread as predicted, response planning assumptions were based on it mutating with seasonal flu, which had led to more deaths last year than Swine Flu to date.
- 3.49 The chain of response progressed from NHS Berkshire East to the lead PCT in Oxfordshire to the Strategic Health Authority to the DoH at Richmond House in Whitehall where a national response to flu outbreaks or a fuel crisis would be co-ordinated involving business continuity matters.

Meeting with James Amos, Emergency Preparedness Manager, South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) NHS Trust

- 3.50 James Amos, who was one of five SCAS Emergency Preparedness Managers, gave a presentation to the Working Group in respect of the role of SCAS in public health emergencies, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 2. The following points arose from the resulting questions and discussion:
- 3.51 The responsibilities of the service during a public health emergency were:
- To save lives.
 - To provide medical assessment of the incident to include clinical indicators of chemical, biological or radioactive substances.

- Provision and co-ordination of all NHS resources i.e. Health Command and Control Structure (as detailed in the presentation slides).
 - Triage, decontamination, treatment and transportation of casualties.
 - To maintain normal operational service delivery.
- 3.52 The process of decontamination involved contaminated people passing through decontamination equipment housed in a large tent into the clear casualties area. Powered respirator protective suits were worn by staff assisting with contamination emergencies, which involved the use of hoses to remove contaminants from victims as soon as possible. There was, however, a risk of run off water entering drains and contaminating water supplies. A risk agreement existed between SCAS and the Environment Agency to cover such situations and required SCAS to alert the Agency to emergency decontaminations and use dyes to identify contaminated water.
- 3.53 Triage, the process of identifying by clinical condition the priority and order in which casualties needed to be treated or decontaminated, was a responsibility of SCAS. All walking casualties were classed as 'delayed' - priority 3.
- 3.54 In terms of mass casualty vehicles, SCAS had:
- National Reserves of Nerve Agent antidote combo pens.
 - 2 specialised vehicles paid for by central government and equipped with sufficient kit for 100 priority 1 & 2 victims and 250 priority 3 victims.
- 3.55 There were three control centres across SCAS and upon receiving information in respect of an incident, SCAS alerted the following in the health system:
- The receiving hospital.
 - Neighbouring ambulance trusts.
 - Other emergency services.
- 3.56 In the event of a public health emergency, the lead PCT for the Thames Valley area, Oxfordshire, would be contacted and then communication would pass from there to NHS Berkshire East from where news could filter through its system and information be circulated rapidly. Victims were able to attend any NHS service for assistance and therefore it was important that SCAS worked with NHS partners. Hospitals were able to 'lock down' areas to prevent contamination spreading. SCAS was well supported by its neighbouring ambulance services, and provided good support in return.
- 3.57 Issues faced by the service after an incident had occurred included:
- Identification of contaminated equipment which would need to be decontaminated, which was the responsibility of the local authority and the Environment Agency.

- The nature of the incident in question would dictate when a return to normality could be achieved and what that normality would consist of. For example, a nuclear disaster could destroy an area and leave it uninhabitable for many decades or longer.
- 3.58 In Bracknell Forest there were sufficient emergency dressing packs for 500 people. This preparation was in response to a previous disaster from which lessons had been learnt and subsequent changes implemented.
- 3.59 SCAS used voluntary community responders and had a strong link with voluntary organisations such as St Johns Ambulance.
- 3.60 The relief staff scheme, present as part of a strong business continuity plan, could be used in the event of a disaster / incident. SCAS utilised all staff who were on leave and undergoing training.
- 3.61 The ambulance service vehicles had good off-road capability and the service felt that it could also rely on help from the militaries.
- 3.62 The Emergency Preparedness Manager provided an overview of progress achieved by SCAS at the time of the meeting. The following had been in response to terrorism and had been rolled out nationally since 2002:
- The National Memorandum of Understanding was in place.
 - HART (hazardous area response teams) would be rolled out in 2010.
 - A mass casualty vehicle was provided in December 2009 and there were 10 incident support vehicles.
 - Continued collaborative working with partner organisations.
- 3.63 Suggested improvements to SCAS were:
- Increased resources.
 - More recruitment – although active campaigns were ongoing it was difficult to recruit staff due to relatively low pay and the high cost of living within the area.
 - Increased funding - whilst the SCAS annual budget was in excess of £100m, NHS Berkshire East was unable to meet this which produced funding gaps.
 - More paramedics and technicians - there were currently 12,000 paramedics and technicians but ideally there would be 15,000.
 - A system whereby the emergency services were funded through a central pot, for instance the system in place in Australia where it was funded through insurance, would be ideal.

Meeting with Alyson Smith, Consultant in Health Protection, Thames Valley Health Protection Unit

- 3.64 Alyson Smith gave a presentation to the Working Group in respect of the Thames Valley Health Emergency Preparedness System from the HPA's perspective, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 3. The presentation explained the status, functions, role, purpose, staffing teams and structure of the HPA. It also listed health organisations in the Thames Valley; identified national to local resilience links; and outlined the types of incident responded to, the legislative framework for civil protection from emergencies in the UK, legal and government requirements, the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations and how the HPU added value to emergency response. Emergency command, control and briefing, the sequence of response events to major incidents including radioactivity, incident and emergency response plans, issuing health advice, lessons learned from the Buncefield Oil Depot fire, and new legislative powers and duties to prevent and control risks to human health from infectious diseases and contamination by chemicals and radiation were also addressed. The following information emerged from resulting questions and discussion:
- 3.65 A carbon monoxide poisoning incident some weeks prior to the meeting had involved the HPU's chemical response team and there was on going work around chemical and radiation incidents, such as the Pullonium contamination in London.
- 3.66 Health protection policies and plans were reviewed following incidents to take account of lessons learned and ensure that they remained robust and effective.
- 3.67 The Health and Social Care Act 2008, to be implemented in April 2010, would introduce an all hazards approach to responding to human health threats and operational guidance was being developed. The new powers would enable the HPA to apply to have a contaminated person quarantined. At present, tuberculosis was the only threat where detention in the interests of public health was possible.
- 3.68 Responses to emergencies would depend on the nature of the event and could include the TVHPU contacting hospital A&E departments via the PCT, alerting walk-in centres and advising on the type of contamination experienced together with associated decontamination needs. Information mechanisms, which featured local stakeholder networks, were in place and would advise on who should be contacted under certain circumstances, for example the local authority could identify vulnerable people. However, data protection regulations were an issue under these circumstances. Communication with the public to reassure the 'worried well' was also necessary to overcome fear and relieve unnecessary pressure on emergency services, particularly where the media sensationalised events.
- 3.69 In terms of the HPA becoming informed of and involved in emergencies, the RBFRS was often the organisation to make first contact. Although the HPA was contacted in the majority of instances where its support and advice were required, there were examples of situations when it had been unaware of emergencies and therefore the Agency promoted the importance of it being informed of such events. The HPA was accessible to the public who would contact it under circumstances such as a meningitis outbreak in a school.

- 3.70 With regard to school closures under circumstances such as seeking to contain Swine Flu, the Working Group was advised that, although the HPA would offer advice on the safest course of action, the final decision to close a school was that of the headteacher. Where a headteacher decided against advice from the HPA to close a school on public health grounds, the HPA could approach a Justice of the Peace to seek closure under the new strengthened legal powers to respond to human health threats. However, schools generally followed HPA advice concerning closure. It was acknowledged that a balance needed to be struck in relation to school closures as issues such as child care arose which impacted on the workforce.
- 3.71 The HPA worked with the Meteorological Office to model likely characteristics of emergencies such as the behaviour of a plume of contaminated smoke under different weather conditions.
- 3.72 Business continuity was a significant issue for the TVHPU and some remote working had taken place during the heavy winter snow falls which had prevented staff access to the Unit's building.
- 3.73 Although protect, prevent and prepare were elements of the HPA's work, on occasions it could act as a reactive service only such as during the Buncefield Oil Depot fire. Hoax emergency calls were experienced occasionally. Although there was a national plan to respond to Swine Flu, this had not been implemented as a different sequence of events took place. There were other plans in place which featured provision of advice relating to coping with heat waves, cold winter temperatures and flooding. As other organisations also had plans with similar themes and there was a danger of conflicting advice being circulated, a more central strategic response with dovetailing of plans had been adopted which took account of local perspectives. The last response exercise undertaken had related to Swine Flu and further exercises would be beneficial.
- 3.74 The response to Swine Flu had been positive and a good test of the HPA's resilience. As the NHS had not been prepared to respond as rapidly as required and had not been involved in the containment stage, the HPA had stepped in with contingency plans. Subsequent de-briefings in the Thames Valley had addressed resulting criticisms, mainly directed at the NHS and HPA, and acknowledged that media sensationalism had exacerbated the situation and created management difficulties.
- 3.75 There had been fewer incidents of seasonal flu during the past winter than was the norm and Swine Flu, which had occurred out of the normal flu season during the summer, had less impact than anticipated. Results of the outbreak of Swine Flu were awaited and data sources included mortality rates, hospital admissions, rest centre registers and the SCAS. The figures would be incomplete as many sufferers had Swine Flu without knowing or self-treated at home without accessing health services. The Strategic Co-ordination Group was a central information repository and had provided daily updates in respect of school closures and answered media enquiries during the outbreak.
- 3.76 There had been numerous outbreaks of Norovirus with which the TVHPU had been closely involved. The NHS had been tackling outbreaks by hospital ward closures whilst the TVHPU's work had concentrated on residential care homes and schools. Discussions had been held with the 18 care homes in the Thames Valley which had been advised to minimise movements between the sites and notify the NHS of outbreaks. Although the outbreaks had been mild, they

spread suddenly and posed a threat for vulnerable people. There had been no need to close any schools.

- 3.77 South East Berkshire Emergency Volunteers were involved in direct action rather than emergency response planning during events.

Civil Emergencies - Trauma Support Service

3.78 The Council provides a Trauma Support Service to assist the Borough's residents and visitors in the aftermath of a major incident which can leave many people, such as survivors and their families and friends, bereaved families and friends, responders and the local community, deeply affected by their experiences of it which can lead to strong emotional and physical reactions. This service involves the Council working closely with voluntary and statutory agencies with teams of trained, skilled, organised and supported workers and volunteers who can assist in meeting the practical and emotional needs of individuals in centres that have been set up, or in their homes. The support includes:

- Assistance with communication.
- Care of children and pets.
- Clothing and bedding.
- Documentation.
- Emotional support, befriending and listening.
- First aid and health care.
- Liaison with other organisations.
- Medical and mobility aid equipment e.g. wheelchairs.
- Refreshments.
- Sign-posting to other organisations.
- Transport.

WHO Update

3.79 As of 21 May 2010, worldwide more than 214 countries and overseas territories or communities have reported laboratory confirmed cases of Swine Flu, including over 18,097 deaths amongst confirmed cases. At least 4,874 of these deaths were reported by the WHO's Regional Office for Europe. The WHO is actively monitoring the progress of the pandemic through frequent consultations with its Regional Offices and member states and through monitoring of multiple sources of information.

4. Conclusions

The Working Group is generally satisfied that there are sufficient emergency preparedness and response plans in place for the Council and its partners to respond effectively to public health emergencies. The Swine Flu pandemic, which occurred at the outset of this review, provides a good example of how the emergency preparedness and response system operates.

From its investigations, the Working Group concludes that:

Swine Flu

- 4.1 The 2009 outbreak of a new strain of flu, Swine Flu, demonstrates that continuing vigilance, planning, and strong public health research capability are essential defences against emerging health threats. A significant amount of work is undertaken locally, regionally, nationally and globally to anticipate and respond effectively to flu pandemics and other threats to human health.
- 4.2 A co-ordinated multi-agency response is necessary to tackle such threats and the preparation for and coping with the Swine Flu pandemic locally confirms that Bracknell Forest's extended partnership worked well together. We particularly commend the creation of the Thames Valley Influenza Planning Committee (paragraph 3.13). Communicating that successful outcome would assist public confidence.
- 4.3 It is difficult to plan finite responses to flu pandemics until the characteristics of a particular outbreak, such as the incubation period, rate of transmission, virulence and mutation of viral strains, are known.
- 4.4 There was a sufficient amount of anti-virals available at the time of the Swine Flu outbreak.
- 4.5 The Swine Flu pandemic did not reach anticipated levels or have the expected impact in terms of severity and mortality rates.

General Public Health Emergencies

- 4.6 Residential care homes carry a high food poisoning risk rating, are a possible source of Legionnaire's Disease and are at threat of the Winter Vomiting virus. Further engagement with care homes to tackle these risks to their vulnerable residents would assist.
- 4.7 Regular drills in preparedness are undertaken by the Council and its emergency preparedness and response partners.
- 4.8 The new comprehensive Thames Valley emergency preparedness advice booklet, 'Are You Ready?', is welcomed and will complement the emergency preparedness booklet produced by the Government.
- 4.9 The capacity of the voluntary sector to assist in dealing with public health emergencies is very valuable.
- 4.10 Whilst the Army is not an integral part of the emergency planning response mechanism, it is possible that it may be available to provide assistance at the

time of need via the appropriate route, for example through military aid to the civil community.

- 4.11 Although responsibility within the Council for co-ordinating the response to public health emergencies lies in the Environment, Culture and Communities Department, the response to the Swine Flu pandemic, which was led by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, is an example of a different line management chain and there are a number of information routes into the Council whereby information is received and passed.
- 4.12 Whilst we acknowledge that incidents of chemical or nerve agent cases requiring decontamination are rare, we are please to note that the South Central Ambulance Service has acquired two specialised decontamination vehicles to respond to varying potential future emergencies.
- 4.13 Notwithstanding the shortfall of paramedics and technicians reported by the South Central Ambulance Service, it appears to be ably staffed to meet current demands.
- 4.14 There are concerns that the Health Protection Agency claim not to have been made aware of all emergencies which implies that links between partners are not sufficiently strong in some instances.
- 4.15 Although the Council stores relevant information on a Geographical Information System which facilitates mapping of public buildings that can be utilised as rest centres in an emergency scenario, including the majority of community centres that are owned by the Council, there is no evidence of associated plans being shared with community centre lessees or keyholders.



Fire Emergency

5. Recommendations

Although existing emergency preparedness arrangements are robust, the Working Group has identified some recommendations that seek to maintain good practice or secure improvements. It is therefore recommended to the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection, the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing, and the relevant partners of the Council that:

- 5.1 Good hygiene campaigns and practices be encouraged at all times;
- 5.2 More engagement with residential care homes be undertaken to mitigate the risks to their vulnerable clients posed by high food poisoning risk rating, possible source of Legionnaire's Disease and threat of the Winter Vomiting virus;
- 5.3 The Thames Valley emergency preparedness advice booklet, 'Are You Ready?', be continued and updated as appropriate and distributed as widely as costs allow.
- 5.4 As the Voluntary Sector's resources fluctuate, its capacity to provide support during public health emergencies be monitored by the Council and its partners at the time of need depending on the situation.
- 5.5 As the Army is not integral to any emergency response mechanism, the Council and its partners seek to identify the parameters within which military aid may be available.
- 5.6 As public health emergencies can emanate from a great many sources and affect different departments, and changes in Council structures may result in related personnel being relocated across departments, the system for identifying the appropriate Director to lead a response and rapidly establish an effective emergency response group be monitored to ensure that communication links are maintained and that there are no gaps in coverage;
- 5.7 The South Central Ambulance Service ensures that it has adequate contingency arrangements with other strategic health authorities to ensure that sufficient resources, such as staff and specialist decontamination vehicles, are available on demand when required to respond to public health emergencies;
- 5.8 Communication systems between the Council and its partners be reinforced to ensure that all agencies are made aware promptly of all public health threats and emergencies to prevent incidents such as the Health Protection Agency being uninformed of situations from re-occurring.
- 5.9 The Council communicates its plans for the potential use of its community centres as rest centres in an emergency scenario to the lessees and keyholders of the community centres.

6. Glossary

A&E	Accident and Emergency
BECHS	Berkshire East Community Health Services
DoH	Department of Health
EA	Environment Agency
EP	Emergency Preparedness
FSA	Food Standards Agency
Flu	Influenza
GP	General Practitioner
HPA	Health Protection Agency
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
MIO	Medical Incident Officer
NHS	National Health Service
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RBFRS	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
SCAS	South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advice Cell
TVHPU	Thames Valley Health Protection Unit
UK	United Kingdom
WHO	World Health Organisation



UK Resilience Logo

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL AGENCIES

The emergency services, i.e. the ambulance, fire and police services, maintain a state of readiness to enable them to provide a rapid initial response and alert local and health authorities and other services to public health emergencies as soon as possible. All organisations that are required to respond rapidly to a disaster need to have response arrangements that can be activated at short notice. These arrangements should be clearly established and promulgated to all who may be involved with the response, and all those who could be involved have a responsibility to ensure that they are confident to do so.

Each service or agency working at the scene of an incident in the region has its own role and functions. These are outlined below:

1. **Police Services**

The police co-ordinate all the activities of those responding at and around the scene, which must, unless a disaster has been caused by severe weather or other natural phenomena, be preserved to provide evidence for subsequent enquiries and possible criminal proceedings. Where practicable, the police establish cordons to facilitate the work of the other emergency services in the saving of life, the protection of the public and the care of survivors. They oversee any criminal investigation and facilitate enquiries carried out by the responsible accident investigation body, such as the Health and Safety Executive, Railway Inspectorate or the Air or Marine Accident Investigation Branch. The police process casualty information and have responsibility for identifying and arranging for the removal of the dead. In the latter task they act on behalf of HM Coroner who has the legal responsibility for investigating the cause and circumstances of deaths arising from a disaster.

2. **Fire and Rescue Services**

The first concern of the fire service is to rescue people trapped in a fire, wreckage or debris. They will prevent further escalation of the disaster by extinguishing fires or undertake protective measures to prevent them. They will deal with released chemicals or other contaminants in order to render the incident site safe. They assist the ambulance service with casualty handling and the police with recovery of bodies. The fire service is responsible for the health and safety of personnel of all agencies working within the inner cordon and will liaise with the police in respect of who should be allowed access to ensure that they are properly equipped, adequately trained and briefed. However, in the event of any situation which is, or is suspected to be, the result of a terrorist incident, all activities within the cordon are under the direct control of the police.

3. **Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)**

The overall responsibility for the health of the population lies with the PCTs. First line emergency response for health services will continue to be through the ambulance service, receiving Accident and Emergency hospitals and Directors of Public Health.

Elements of national and regional NHS emergency planning form part of the remit of the Health Protection Agency in collaboration with the Strategic Health Authority.

4. Acute and Foundation Trusts

Casualty receiving hospitals are able to respond to requests from the ambulance service to accept casualties for medical treatment and to provide appropriately trained staff to act as Medical Incident Officers (MIOs) and contribute to Mobile Medical Teams at the scene of an incident.

5. Ambulance Service

The ambulance service has responsibility for co-ordinating the on-site NHS response and determining the hospital(s) to which injured persons should be taken. If necessary, the ambulance service will seek the attention of a MIO. The ambulance service, in conjunction with the MIO and medical teams, seeks to save life and limb through effective emergency treatment at the scene, to determine the priority for release of trapped casualties in conjunction with the fire service, and to transport the injured in order of priority to receiving hospitals.

6. Local Authorities

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, the principal concerns of local authorities are to provide support for the emergency services, continue normal support and care for the local and wider community, use resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordinate the response by organisations other than the emergency services. The local authority can provide support, for example by sourcing equipment, services or specialist knowledge. As time progresses, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the local authority will take a leading role to facilitate the rehabilitation of the community and restoration of the environment processes, which can take years.

7. The Environment Agency (EA)

The EA has primary responsibilities for the environmental protection of water, land and air in England and Wales. The EA has key responsibilities for maintaining and operating flood defences on rivers. These responsibilities cover direct, remedial action to prevent and mitigate the effects of the incident, to provide specialist advice, to give warnings to those likely to be affected, to monitor the effects of an incident and to investigate its cause. The EA also collects evidence for future enforcement or cost recovery.

8. HM Coroners

The role of the coroner is defined by statute. The coroner must determine who has died and how, when and where the death came about in relation to those bodies lying in his district who have met a violent or unnatural death or a sudden death of unknown cause. This function is regardless of whether or not the cause of death arose within the coroner's district and is normally undertaken at a formal inquest. The powers and duties of coroners do not vary with the number of people who are killed or the circumstances in which the deaths occur. Only the coroner may authorise the moving of a body at the scene of an incident and only the coroner may authorise a post-mortem and the release of a body to relatives. The police act as the coroner's officers when dealing with fatalities arising from an incident.

9. **(Local) Chamber of Commerce**

The chamber of commerce provides an invaluable two-way pipeline into the private sector (industrial or commercial organisations) who may play a direct part in the response to disaster if their personnel, operations or services have been, or may become, involved.

10. **Scientific and Technical Advice Cell**

A Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) is an important part of the health and environmental protection responses to serious or major incidences at the strategic level. It provides a collective route for the generation of authoritative advice to multi-agency Command and Control structures on the health and environmental consequences of an incident and guides tactical and strategic policy making in addition to providing tactical advice to the operational response. A STAC comprises senior health protection professionals trained to provide an incident commander with information to support policy making at a strategic level. Advice is provided through a STAC directly to the incident commander, or Strategic Co-ordinating Group, by a nominated STAC Adviser. The STAC Adviser sits in addition to other representatives of the health sector, for example the ambulance service. Health Protection Units, in collaboration with PCT public health staff, will often be expected to organise and establish a STAC for a major incident in their area. Potentially there can be several locations for a STAC to work from, dependent on the type and scale of the incident.

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The Role of the Ambulance Service at a Public Health Incident



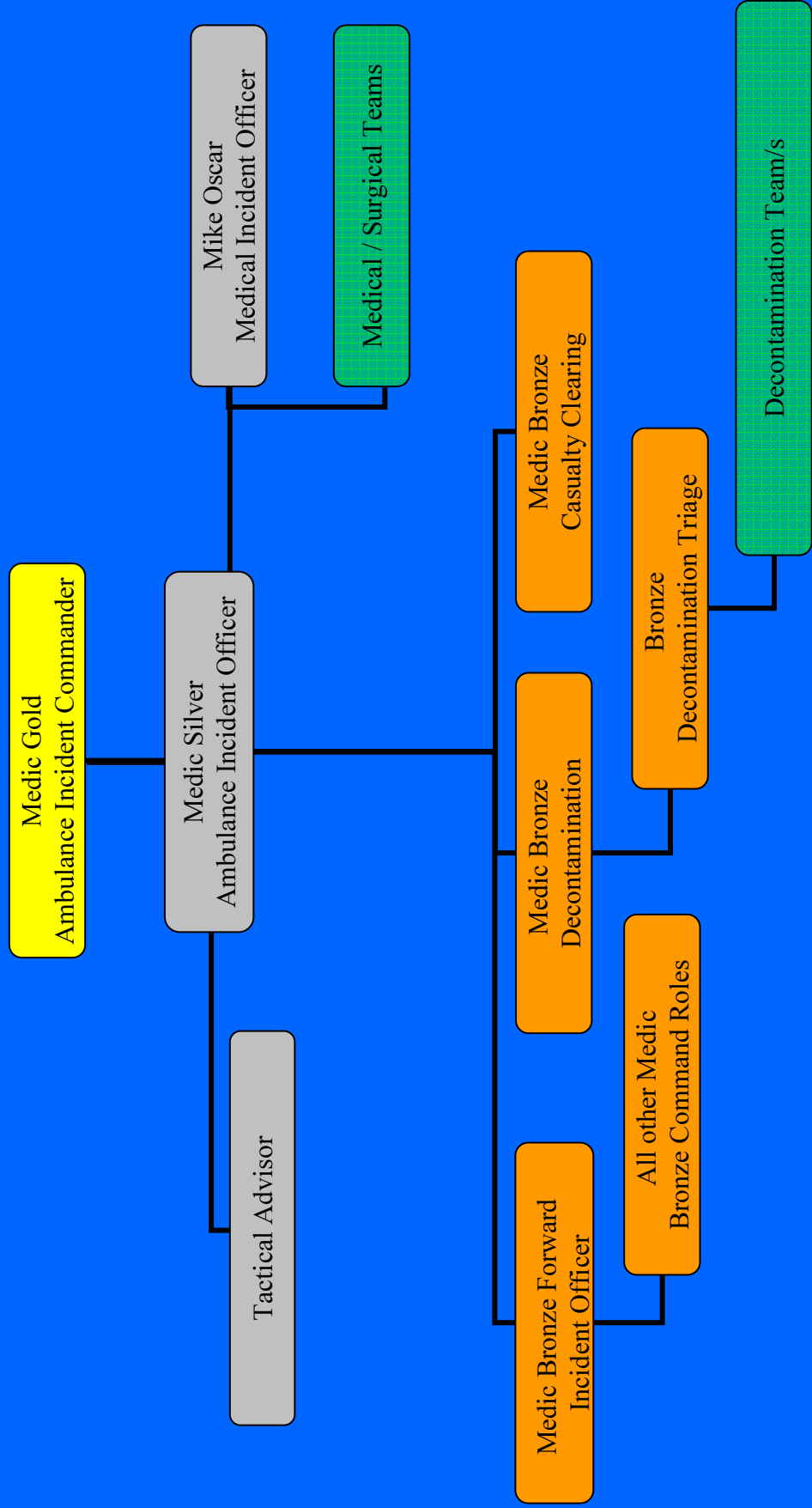


Ambulance Service Responsibilities

- The Saving of Life
- Medical Assessment of the Incident to include clinical indicators of CBR substances
- Provision & Co-ordination of all NHS resources i.e. Health Command & Control Structure
- Triage, Decontamination, Treatment and Transportation of Casualties
- Maintain normal Operational Service Delivery



Command & Control





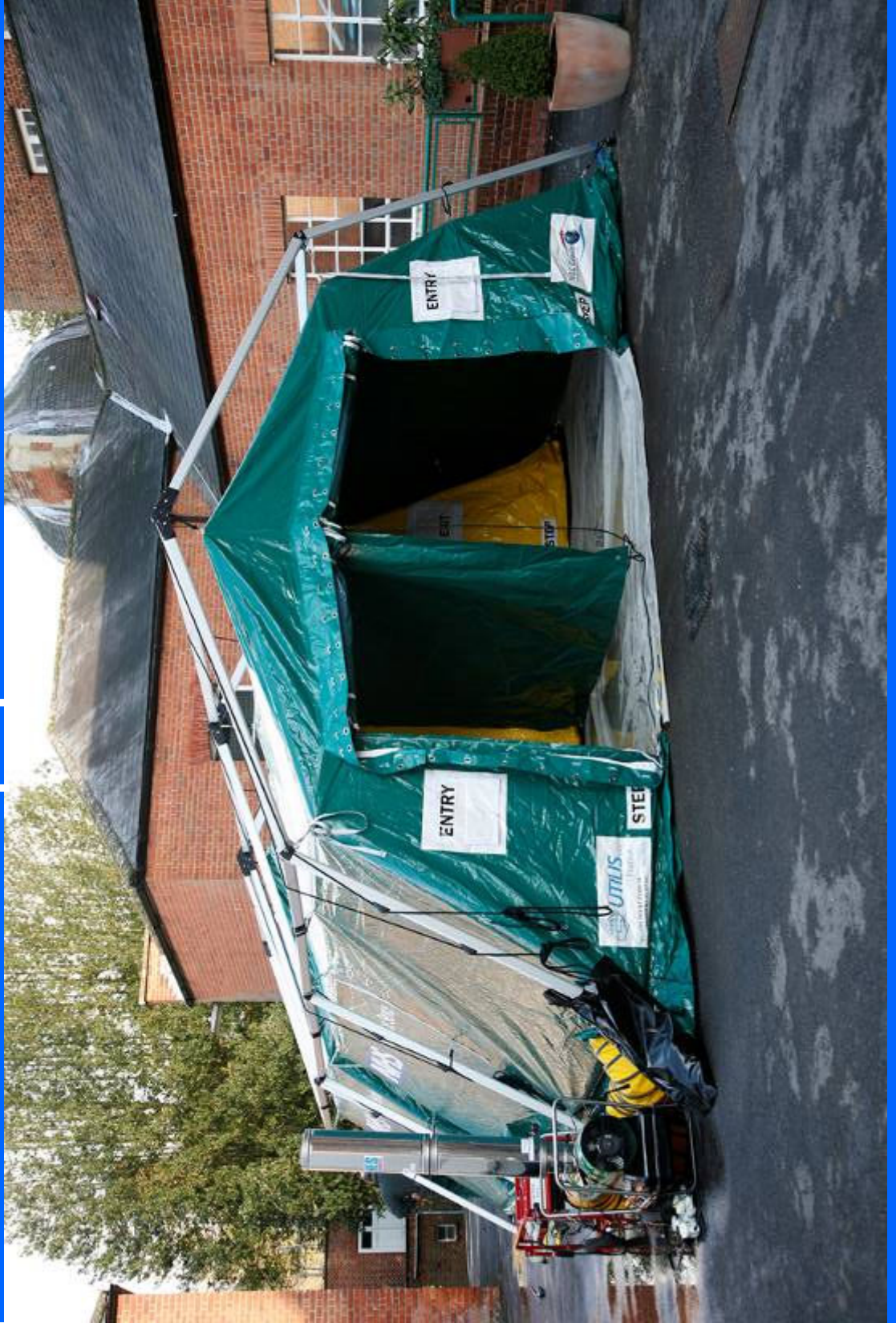
Responsibilities for Decontamination

National & Local Memorandum of
Understanding between Ambulance and
Fire Services

Invoked for incidents involving Mass
Casualties



New Decontamination Equipment





Tyvek TK Powered Respirator Protective suits





Decontamination

.....is a procedure employed to remove hazardous materials from people, equipment, buildings and/or the environment.



Clinical Decontamination

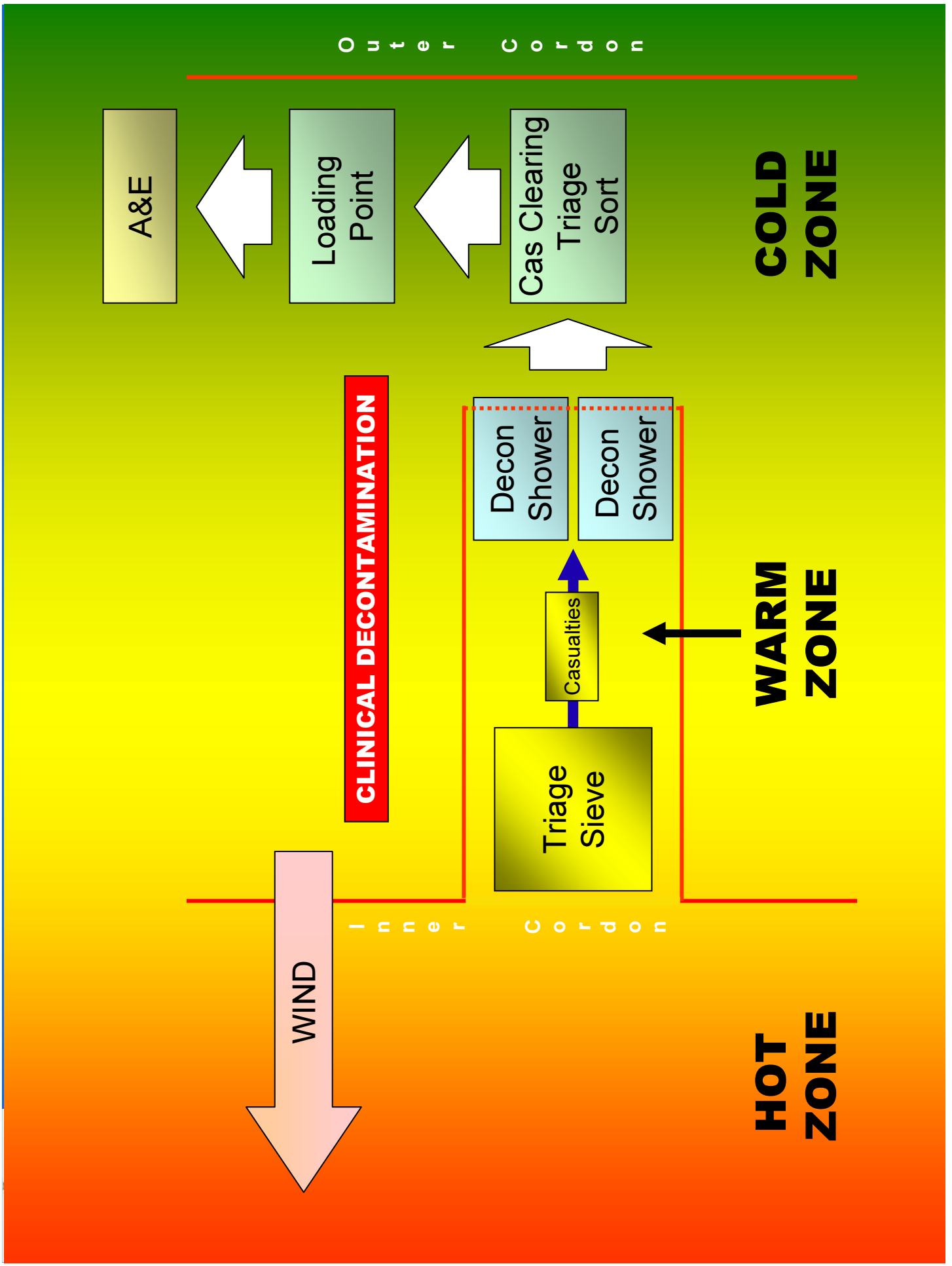
.....is the medical procedure to treat patients affected by or contaminated with hazardous materials. The prioritisation of casualties prior to decontamination requires the input of specialist NHS staff.



Emergency Decontamination

.....is a procedure carried out when time does not allow for the deployment of specialist NHS resources and it is judged as imperative that decontamination of people is carried out as soon as possible. Improvised equipment may be used in lieu of dedicated facilities.

It is recognised by all that emergency decontamination may carry risks to certain groups. The process should fall under the clinical control of the NHS





Triage - *To Sort*

- Process of identifying by clinical condition the priority and order in which casualties need to be treated / decontaminated
- ALL Walking casualties will be classed as Delayed – Priority 3, and as such directed to new dimensions mass casualty showers



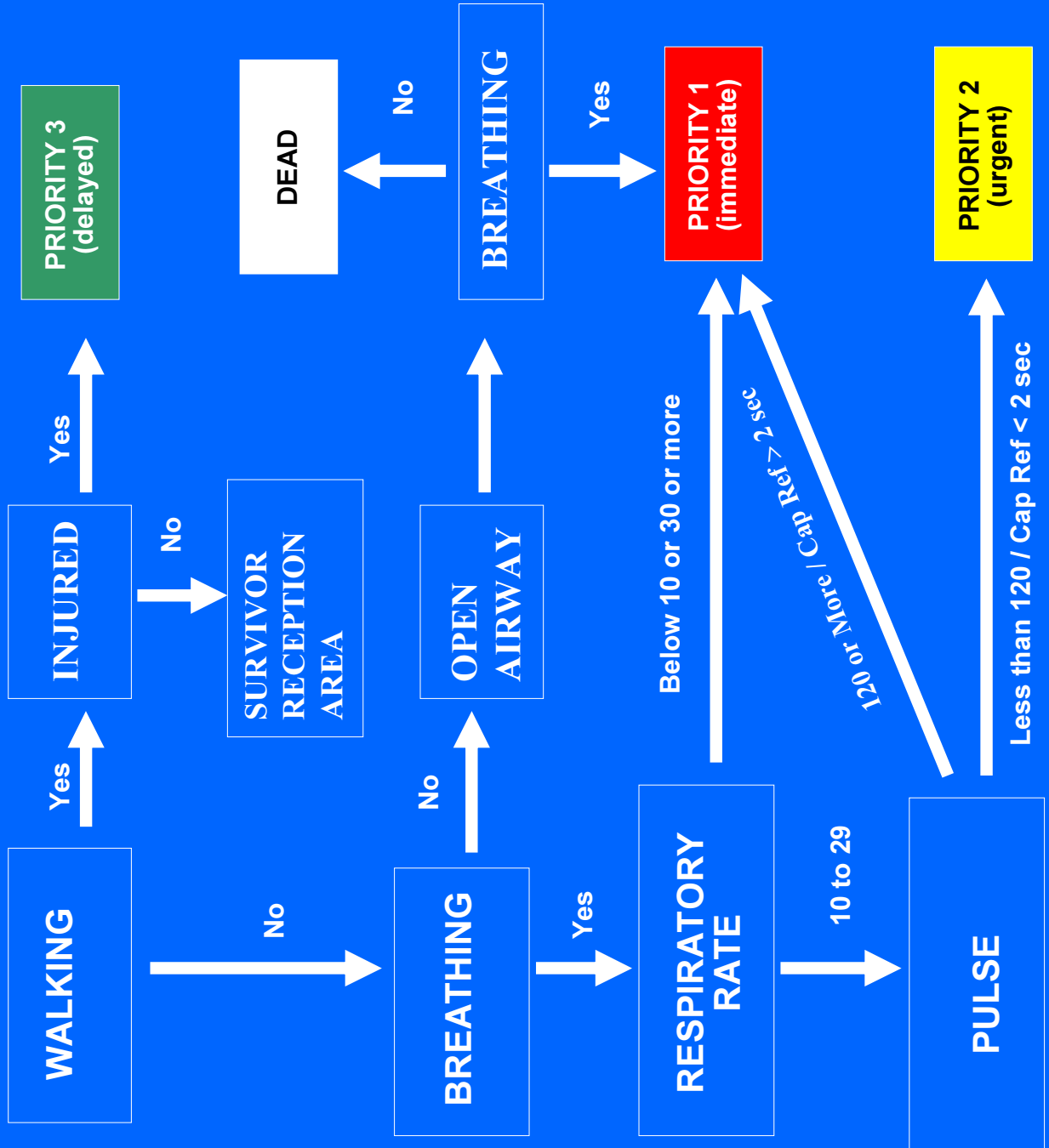
Triage

Triage Sieve takes place in the Warm Zone prior to Clinical Decontamination, whilst wearing CPPE

Triage Sort takes place in Casualty Clearing in the Cold Zone following clinical decontamination

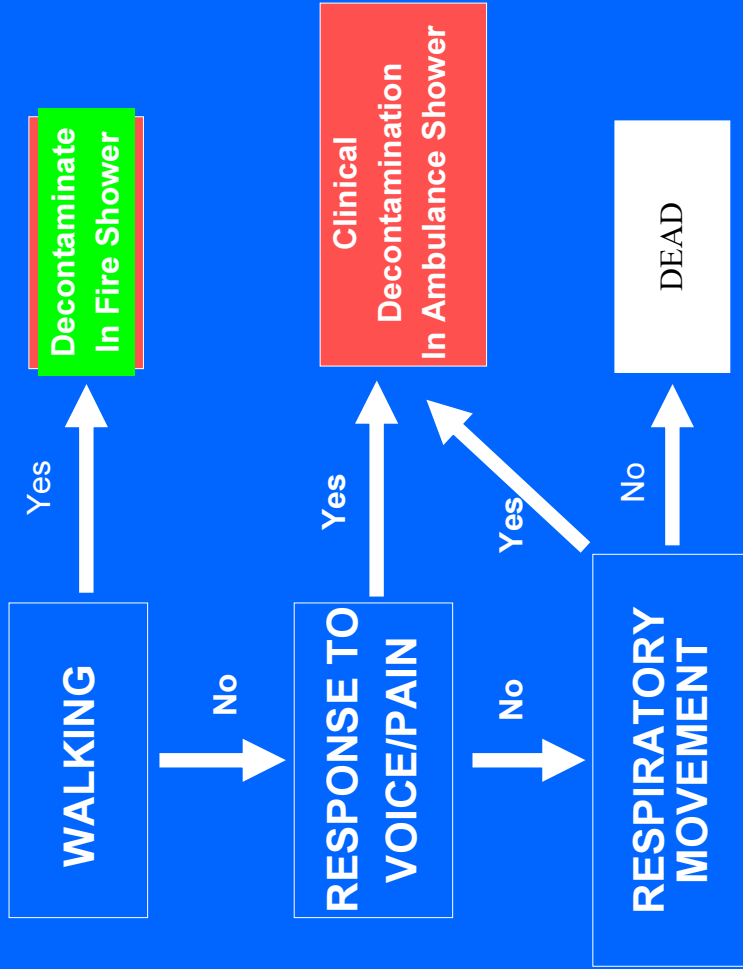


Triage Sieve





Triage in CPPE





Mass Casualty Vehicles

- Specialised Equipment Vehicle
- 100 Priority 1 & 2 Patients
- 250 Priority 3 Patients
- National Reserves of Nerve Agent Antidote combo pens



Alerting the Health System

- Other Emergency Services
- Receiving Hospitals
- Neighbouring Ambulance Services
- Lead Primary Care Trust
- HPA or Local Health Protection Unit
- The local Health economy





The “Knock on” effect if CBR

- Self presentation of mass casualties at Hospitals and other Health Centres
- Hospitals invoking “Lock down” Procedure’s
- Mutual Aid required at site and Hospitals
- Normal service severely disrupted due to possible contamination at hospitals
- **PANIC!!!!**



Issues

- What is left behind?
- What is the new normality?



Where are we now?

- National Memorandums of Understanding
- National Procurement & Training
- 6 Units of Equipment kept in six vehicles across South Central Area.
- 10 Incident Support Vehicles being rolled out
- HART roll out 2010
- Mass Casualties Vehicles Being delivered next month
- Continued collaborative working with partner agencies

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Thames Valley HEALTH EP System: HPA Perspective



Alyson Smith – Consultant in Health Protection
Emergency Planning Lead
Thames Valley Health Protection Unit
Health Protection Agency
Feb 2010

The Health Protection Agency (HPA)



Non-departmental Governmental Body

Function

Protect the community (or any part of the community) against infectious diseases and other dangers to health

Provides

Support & advice

Integrated approach to protecting UK public health

What does the HPA do



Protect health, prevent harm, prepare for threats

Chemicals, radiation, other NIEH, communicable diseases

New public health threats

Public health expertise

Local HPU's - Consultants, nurses, information specialists

CHaPD – Consultants, toxicologists, environmental scientists

Rapid response to health protection emergencies

Information and advice

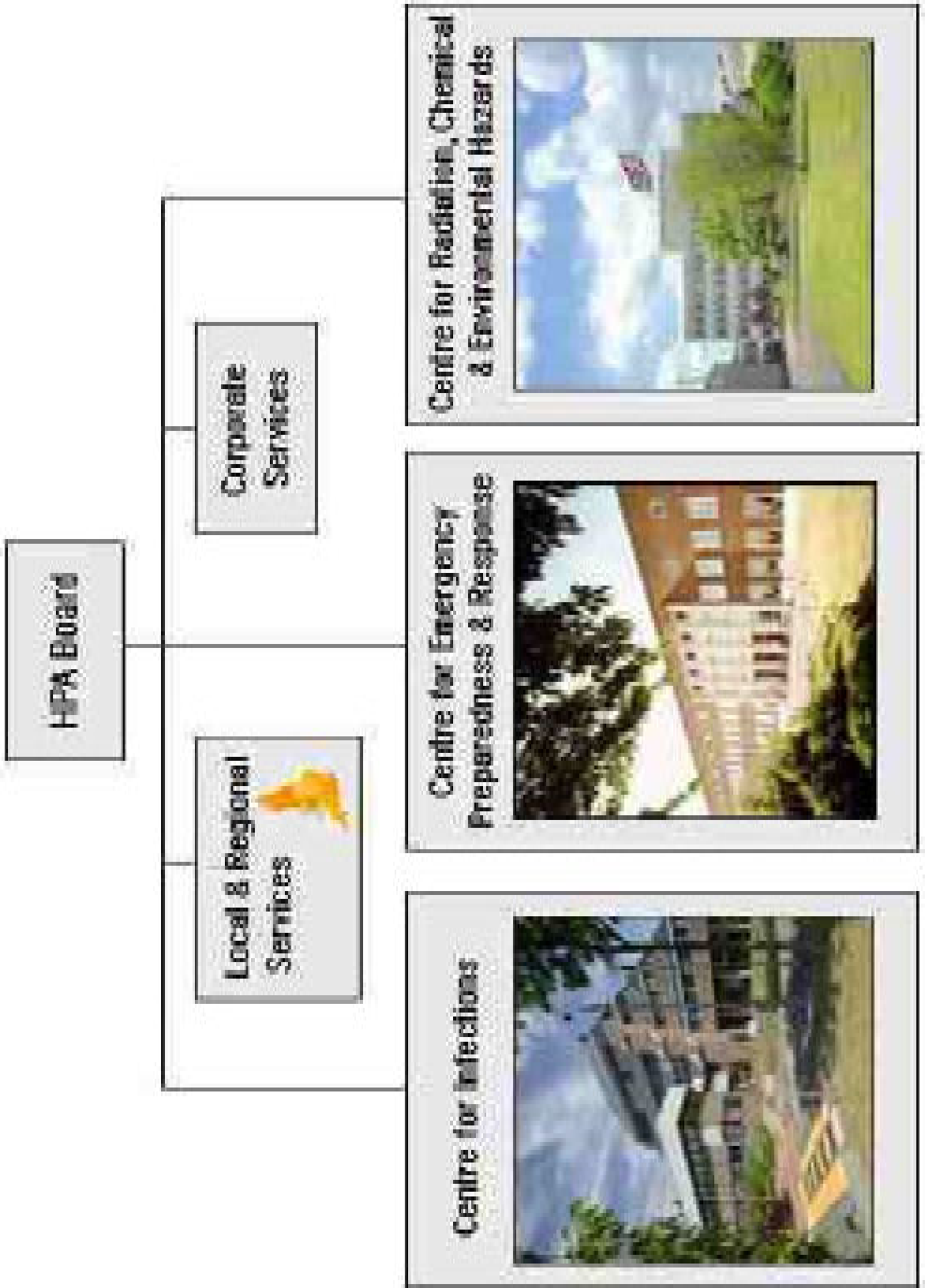
‘Independent voice’

Strategic planning

Thames Valley HPU



Eamonn O'Moore – Interim Unit Director
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control
Consultants in Health Protection
Health Protection Practitioners
Surveillance team
Admin team
Trainees on attachment
Based at Chilton



HPA: TYPES of INCIDENT



Type	Example
A. Infectious disease events	Localised meningitis outbreak Avian influenza National salmonella outbreak
B. Chemical incidents	Spills & discharges Fires Poisonings
C. Naturally occurring events	Flooding, heat wave, cold Major transport accidents Challenges to CNI
D. Radiological and Nuclear	Source found in public domain Contaminated area Nuclear installation release
E. Event in Devolved Administration	Any of above - MoU
F. Overseas Incident	SARS, Tsunami, Chernobyl
G. Terrorist or security incident	Intelligence led event Bombings, CBRN attacks

Civil Contingencies Act - 2004



Legislative framework for civil protection for emergencies in the UK.

Two parts; local arrangements for civil protection (Part 1) and emergency powers (Part 2).

In addition to the CCA, there is statutory guidance entitled 'Emergency Preparedness' and non-statutory guidance entitled 'Emergency Response and Recovery' to complement the Act and provide advice on how the provisions of the Act should be implemented.

Clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level.

Local responders are divided in to two categories – Cat 1 and Cat 2

Civil Contingencies Act - 2004



Category 1 responders:

Those organisations at the core of emergency response e.g. emergency services, NHS PCTs/ other Trusts, HPA, Local authorities. They are subject to the full set of CCA civil protection duties as follows:

Cooperation, information sharing, risk assessments, emergency planning, business continuity planning, and warning and informing the public, emergency response

Category 2 responders - those agencies and organisations which, in general terms, support the Category 1 responders especially during the recovery phase e.g. utilities – including water, power & communications, transport, Health & Safety Executive.

Their duties are to co-operate with Category 1 responders in building and maintaining the resilience to cope with emergencies.

Civil Contingencies Act - 2004



CATEGORY 1 responders

Emergency services

- **Police forces**
- **British Transport Police**
- **Fire authorities**
- **Ambulance services**
- **Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

Local authorities

- **All principal local authorities (i.e. Metropolitan districts, Shire counties, Shire districts, Unitaries)**
 - **Port health authorities**
- Health bodies
- **Primary Care Trusts**
 - **Acute Trusts**
 - **Foundation Trusts**
 - **Local Health Boards (in Wales)**
 - **Any Welsh NHS Trust that provides public health services**
 - **Health Protection Agency**
- Government agencies
- **Environment Agency**

CATEGORY 2 responders

Utilities

- **Electricity distributors and transmitters**
- **Gas distributors**
- **Water and sewerage undertakers**
- **Telephone service providers (fixed and mobile)**

Transport

- **Network Rail**
 - **Train operating companies (passenger and freight)**
 - **London Underground**
 - **Transport for London**
 - **Airport operators**
 - **Harbour authorities**
 - **Highways Agency**
- Health bodies
- **Strategic Health Authorities**
- Government agencies
- **Health and Safety Executive**

HEALTH – National to Local - Resilience



- Department of Health (DH) – national policy leads NHS
- Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) *regional* HQs - NHS
- SE region – two SHAs (others have one)
- SHAs and HPA SE link to GOSE for regional resilience
- SHAs - strategic leadership & ensure effective local health services
- NHS locally is led by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)
- Ox PCT – coordinates across TV for EP/ resilience
- HPA national, regional and local – HPU – TV front door
 - Suite of Emergency Response Plans
 - Generic/ Incident specific

Health Organisations – Thames Valley



South Central Strategic Health Authority

PCTs (5):

- Oxfordshire PCT – LEAD PCT for EP – LINK to Local Resilience Forum (LRF)
- Berkshire East Teaching PCT
- Berkshire West PCT
- Buckinghamshire PCT
- Milton Keynes PCT

Acute Trusts - Thames Valley (6):

- Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Milton Keynes General Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust (specialist)
 - Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation NHS Trust
- Ambulance - South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust

And Isle of Wight Ambulance Service (Community Trust)

Non Acute: Thames Valley (3)

- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership Trust
- Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust

HPA: TValley Health Protection Unit (HPU)

COMAH – Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations



- The aim of COMAH is to prevent and mitigate the effects of major accidents involving dangerous substances – notably chemicals
- Applies where dangerous substances identified in the regulations are kept or used in quantities over defined thresholds
- Mainly applies to chemical industry and some storage activities, explosives & nuclear sites & other industries
- Site operators fall into 2 categories:
 - “top tier” (more onerous duties)
 - “Lower tier” – defined by quantities

COMAH – HPU Engagement



- Civil Contingencies Act – HPA - First Line Responder
- CCA: LRF - Risk Register. Duty to share information
- The COMAH Site LA's Off Site Emergency Plan
- Prepare, review, revise, test off-site emergency plan
- Information to public who may be affected by activities
- Plan deals with off-site consequences of major accidents at top tier sites
- Off-Site Planning Group – HPU rep key member
- Regulator – HSE/ NII – will want to be assured key partners are engaged

COMAH – HPA Advice



- personal protective equipment
- decontamination and evacuation
- toxicological and epidemiological advice on impact on public health
- clinical advice on antidotes and medical treatment
- the public health impact of industrial sites
- health effects from chemicals in the environment (including water, soil, waste)
- But – HPU ltd resource - prioritise

Emergency Response – HPU Added Value

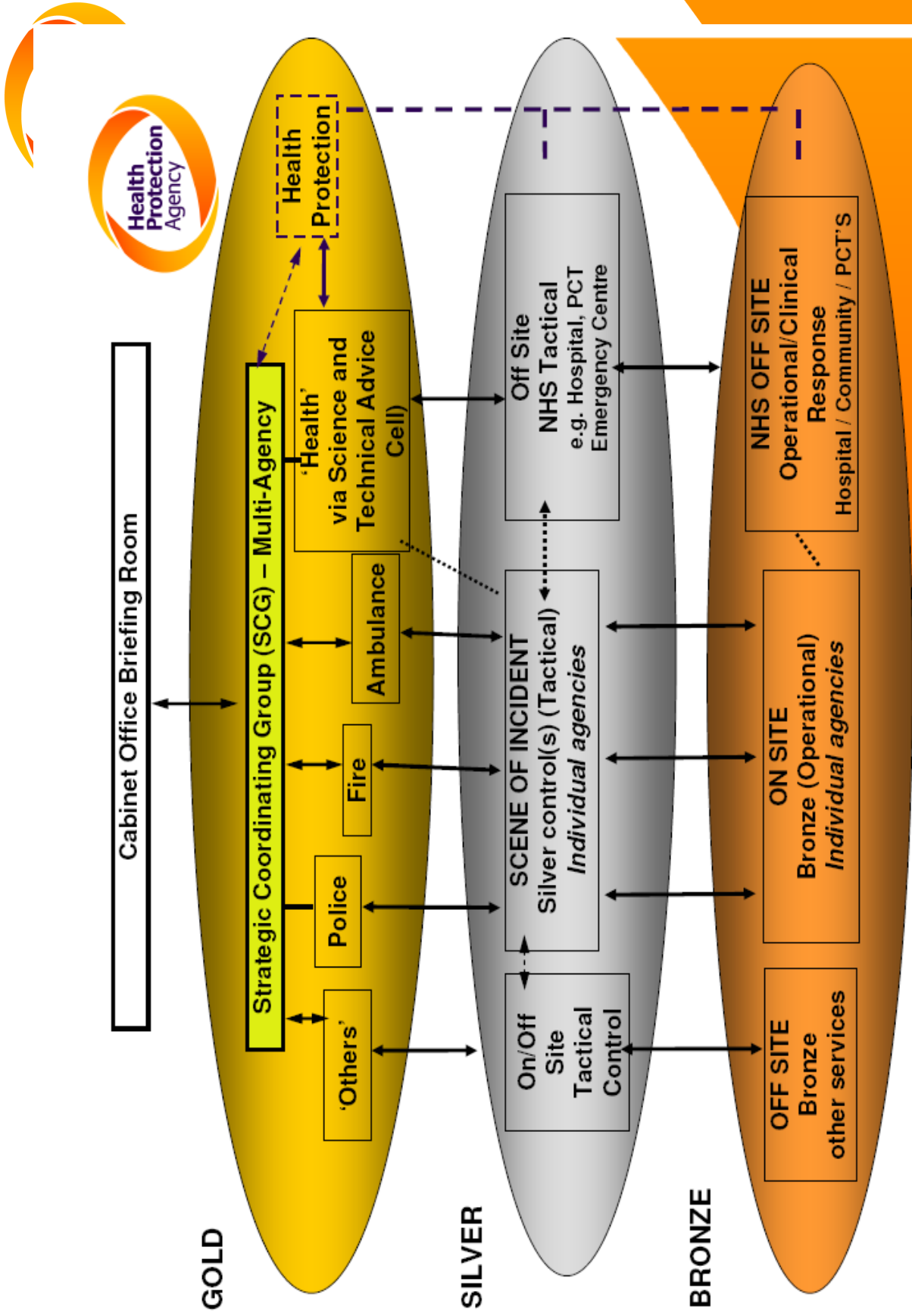


- HPU is the local “front door” into the HPA
- Competence - plans, training and exercising
- HPA specialised services and divisions on chemicals, radiation and infections – accessed through the HPU
- HPU is a key member of the Local Resilience Forum and its multi agency emergency response system
- HPU has a valuable network of contacts and working arrangements with key partner agencies
- HPU is a key member of the “family” of local health NHS services – Ambulance, PCT, hospitals, health authority

Emergency Response – HPU Added Value



- HPU – 7x24 Duty Room – emergency response system
- Key interfaces
 - Infections/ Chemicals & Poisons/ Radiation Divisions
- Acquires database of invaluable local knowledge
- STAC member
- PPE – advice
- Countermeasures – plume modelling
- Fire and police – Silver/ tactical links – as well as Gold
- Media/ public information on health – comms links



Command and Control in Thames Valley



Police lead multi agency command and control

SCALE may necessitate county or Thames Valley wide co-ordination of the NHS response

Lead PCT - Health Strategic Control – for TV

SHA may set up their EOC – depending on incident

Health Function: Overview, co-ordinate/ support/ troubleshoot, diverting demands, whole system capacity management, PR, link to Gold and region/ RDPH and DoH Ops Room

HPU EOC activation

Set up STAC (Scientific & Technical Advisory Cell) at Gold/ SCG

Recovery phase.....

Disease:
Public
Health
Surveillance

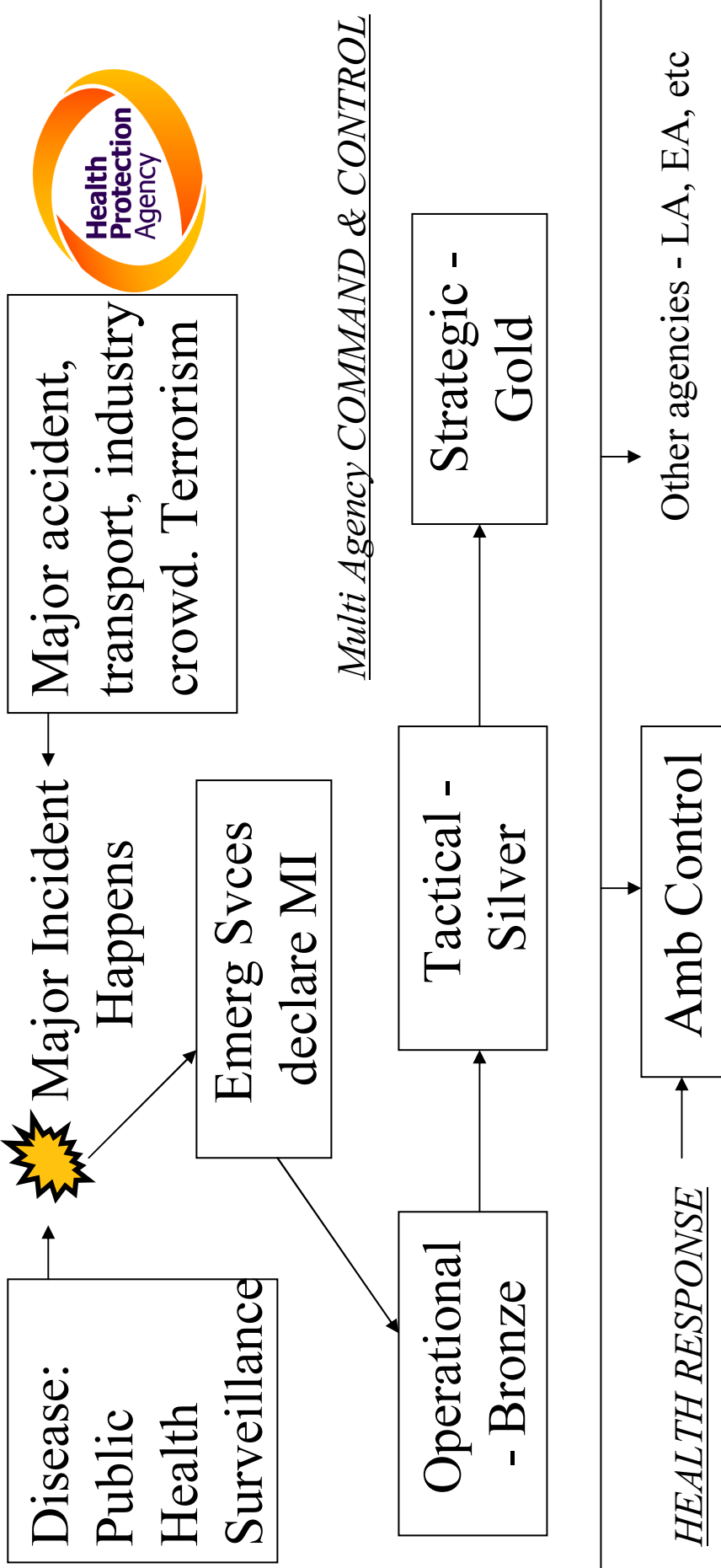


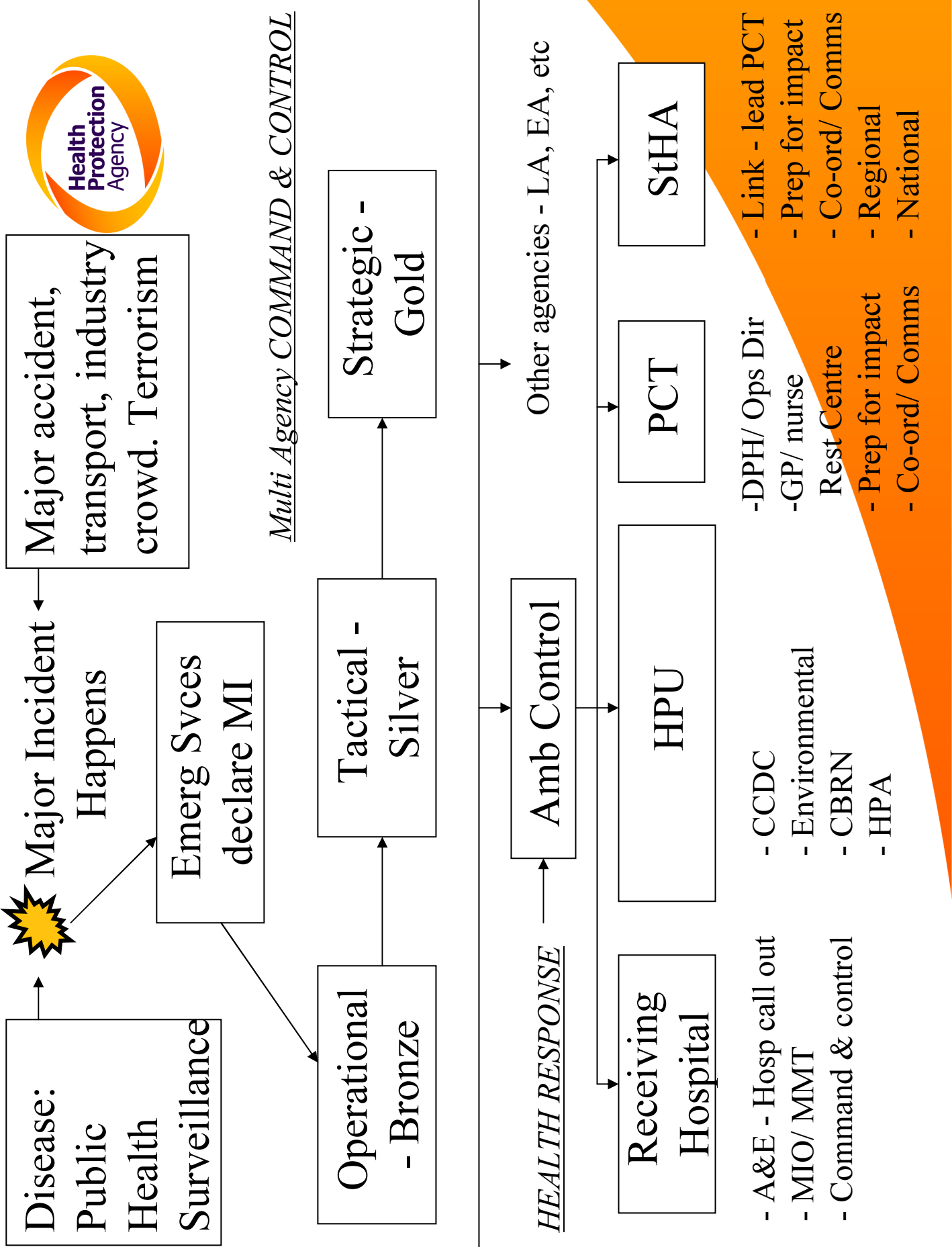
Major Incident
Happens



Major accident,
transport, industry
crowd. Terrorism







Multi Agency COMMAND & CONTROL

HEALTH RESPONSE

Emergencies and Radioactivity



Police activate NAIR - minor incidents.

(Nat Arrgts Incidents Involving Radiation)

Designated Hospitals (ORH, RBH) - facilities:

A&E, Med Physics, haemat, path, biochem

Capability to measure & monitor contam – decontam as with chem

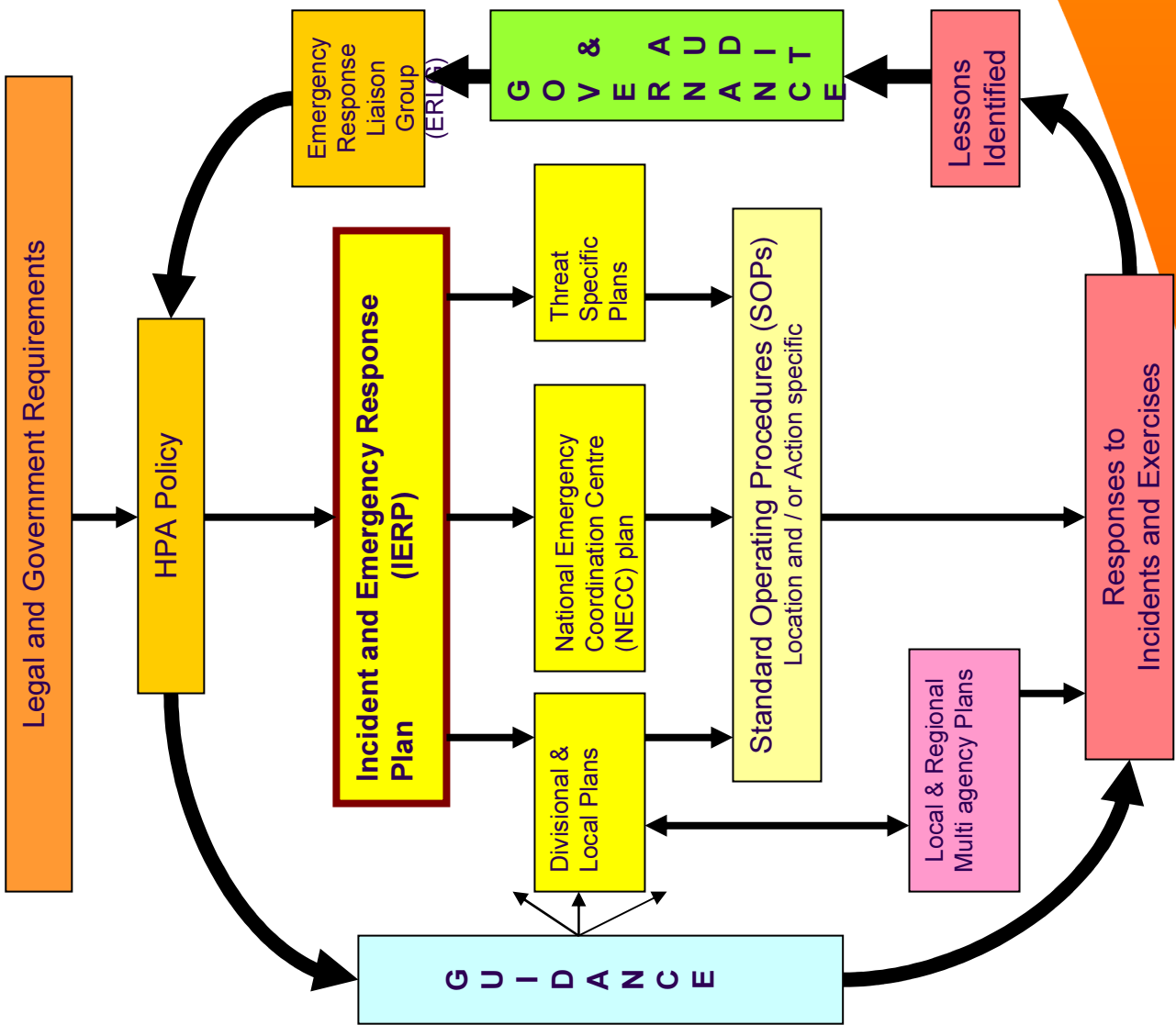
Life saving - priority over decontam. Safe working practices

Countermeasures: shelter, evacuate, iodine, food, water, environment

Nuclear Installations: Off Site Plans

Radiation Protection Div - HPA response role

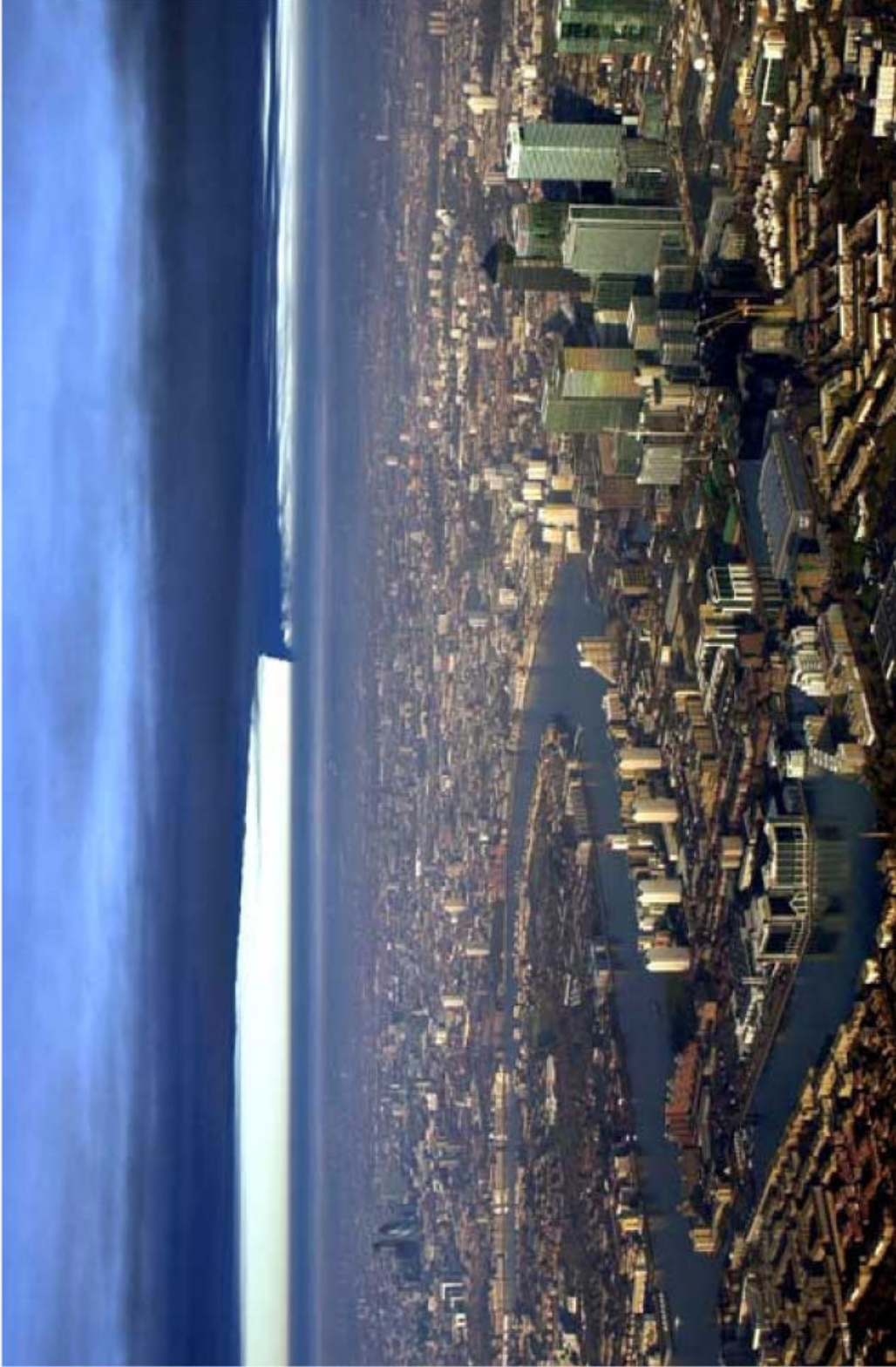
Mass Monitoring of the Worried Well. Recovery



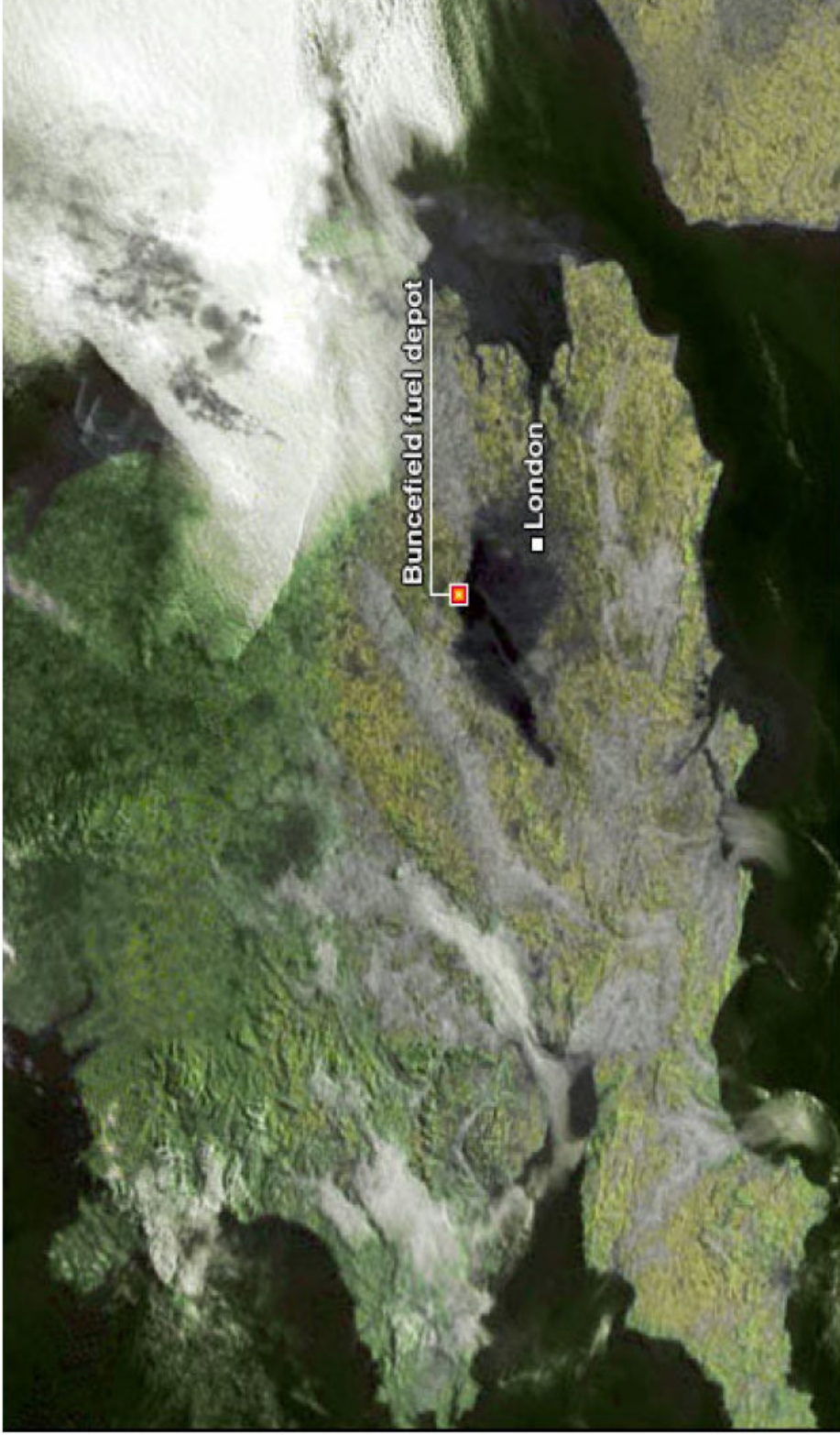
HPA Incident & Emergency Response Plan - Incident Response and Resource Matrix



Level	Impact	LaRS	Rest of HPA
5	Catastrophe, overwhelming impact on HPA. CCC will sit	NECC established, all parts of HPA involved, Likely to have protracted recovery component	
4	Severe impact, major disruption to parts of HPA CCC will sit, 1+ SCGs	>>1 Region Support required Divisional lead	NECC overall Command 1+ Divisional EOCs
3	Significant impact on 1 or more parts of HPA SCG, HAT or national outbreak team	1+ regional resources Divisional lead	Support from other Divisions. Full or Core EOCs CEO decision on NECC
2	Wider local impact, can be managed within local or regional resources	Resources of 1 region	Consulted, Support team as necessary
1	Limited local impact	Resources of 1 HPU	Consulted as needed



Plume rising over central London on Sunday 11th AP Photo Barry Phillips Image licensed through EMPICS



Satellite image of the plume over England. Image courtesy of MODIS Rapid Response Project at NASA/GSFC

Example of Incident

Initial concerns - risks to health of burning petrochemicals

- Blast injuries
- Particulate matter $<10\mu\text{m}$ – acute phase - exacerbation of respiratory disease – vulnerable groups
- Potential for and fear of:
 - carcinogenicity and teratogenicity - partial combustion e.g. polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and other chemicals
 - drinking water contamination – hydrocarbon contamination; contamination from fire fighting foam including perfluorooctane sulphonate (PFOS)



Buncefield Miracles



- Sunday
- Time of initial explosions
- No deaths, few casualties
- Perfect weather to minimise plume grounding in UK
- Environmental sampling confirmed the theoretical toxicological risk assessment
- Links to other agencies and organisations and availability of air quality monitoring network

Agencies involved

Police
Fire
Ambulance
National Health Service and related agencies
Health Protection Agency
Met Office
Institute of Psychiatry
London Fire Brigade Scientific Advisers
Health and Safety Laboratory
Environment Agency
National Poisons Information Service

Defence Science and Technology Laboratories

**Environmental Research Group
King's College**

NETCEN (Harwell) Defra

**Pan London Local Authority
Environmental Health Officers
Network**

Local Authorities in Surrey

Ministry of Defence (RAF)

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Three Valleys Water

Thames Water

Food Standards Agency

etc





The Public Health Impact of the Buncefield Oil Depot Fire



July 2006

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/publications/2006/buncefield/buncefield.pdf>

Health advice following floods – chemical and environmental hazards



The recent flooding in central parts of England has affected domestic, industrial and agricultural premises. Therefore, it is inevitable that some chemicals may have been released into the floodwater. The advice given so far by the Health Protection Agency on avoiding possible infections from sewage in floodwater is also generally applicable to chemical pollution. (See the leaflet **Health advice following flooding** for more information.)

The sheer volume of water will dilute chemical pollution but there could be local problems and so precautions should be taken when cleaning up after flooding.

Important – risk from Carbon Monoxide

Be aware of the dangers of using **indoors** portable generators, camping stoves or other gasoline, propane or natural gas devices that are meant for outdoor use.

These devices should not be used indoors for heating or, ideally, for boiling water. Use of these devices indoors can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, which can be fatal. If you have to use

HPA advice covers

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/flooding/default.htm>



- General advice on protecting against infection
- Hand washing guidance
- How to clean up
- If you are returning to your home
- If you are still in the home
- Food preparation and storage
- Water for infants during disruption to public water supplies
- If your drinking water becomes contaminated
- If your water supply has been interrupted
- Private water supplies during flooding
- How to deal with chemical and environmental hazards
- Precautions during clean-up
- The safe use of emergency generators

Health Protection Regulations



Health Protection legislation in England has been updated to give public authorities new powers and duties to prevent and control risks to human health from infectious diseases and contamination by chemicals and radiation. (Health and Social Care Act 2008).

The change introduces an all “hazards” approach to health protection

Implementation 6th April 2010

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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 22 JUNE 2010

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN ITEMS RELATING TO ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES Assistant Chief Executive

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents current Executive Forward Plan items relating to Environment, Culture and Communities for the Panel's consideration.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers the current Executive Forward Plan items relating to Environment, Culture and Communities appended to this report.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Consideration of items on the Executive Forward Plan alerts the Panel to forthcoming Executive decisions and facilitates pre-decision scrutiny.
- 3.2 To achieve accountability and transparency of the decision making process, effective Overview and Scrutiny is essential. Overview and Scrutiny bodies are a key element of Executive arrangements and their roles include both developing and reviewing policy; and holding the Executive to account.
- 3.3 The power to hold the Executive to account is granted under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 which states that Executive arrangements of a local authority must ensure that its Overview and Scrutiny bodies have power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive. This includes the 'call in' power to review or scrutinise a decision made but not implemented and to recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the body / person that made it. This power does not relate solely to scrutiny of decisions and should therefore also be utilised to undertake pre-decision scrutiny.

Background Papers

Local Government Act 2000

Contact for further information

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Doc Ref

12 Exec Forward Plan Cover Report

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	I023481
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TITLE: Allocations Policy Review

PURPOSE OF DECISION: A review of the Council's Allocation of Affordable Housing Policy after the first six months of operation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within the report.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Directly with housing applicants and Registered Social Landlords.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Consultation via telephone interview and written consultation.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I023399
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TITLE: Climate Change Action Plan - Revised April 2010

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve revisions to the Climate Change Action Plan, aligned to the Council's financial year from April 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Financial impact of individual actions outlined in the plan and subject to approval.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Climate Change Working Group
Climate Change Partnership
Carbon Management Board

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Plan was compiled by the Climate Change Working Group, in consultation with the Climate Change Partnership and endorsed by the Carbon Management Board.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	1023226
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TITLE: Joint Berkshire Unitary Authorities Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework Core Strategy

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Regulation 25 (Public Participation) version of the Minerals and Waste LDF Core Strategy for consultation purposes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Consultation is determined by Regulations.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: To be determined.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	1023475
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TITLE: Review of Housing Strategy

PURPOSE OF DECISION: Review of the Council's spending programmes that support the Council's Housing Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within report.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Households registered for shared ownership and Strategic Housing Partnership.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Focus Groups and by written representations.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I019944
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TITLE: Highways Consultancy Renewal Report

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To confirm the award of contract following completion of an EU tender exercise.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None at this time. Further details on the financial impact will be provided once the outcome of the tendering exercise is known.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Planning, Transport & Economic Development

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Not before 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I019818
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TITLE: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document Draft

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To note the draft Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Public Notice

DATE OF DECISION: 14 Sep 2010

REFERENCE	I020424
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TITLE: Warfield Supplementary Planning Document

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Warfield Supplementary Planning Document for consultation purposes

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Prescribed by Statutory Regulations

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: To be determined

DATE OF DECISION: 14 Sep 2010

REFERENCE	I020719
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TITLE: Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework Site Allocations Development Plan Document

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the publication (Regulation 27) version of the Site Allocations Development Plan and its mapping provisions as to their soundness and to subsequently approve both for submission (Regulation 30) to the Secretary of State.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: All Bracknell Forest Council Chief Officers.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Consultation by meetings, presentations and e-mail.

DATE OF DECISION: 19 Oct 2010

REFERENCE	1023585
------------------	---------

TITLE: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document Adoption

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To adopt the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Public Notices

DATE OF DECISION: 14 Dec 2010

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