

**NOTE - this meeting will be preceded by a closed induction session for Panel Members at 6:00 pm in the Council Chamber. Sandwiches will be provided.**



## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel  
Tuesday 21 June 2011, 7.30 pm  
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell**

**To: Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

Councillors Mrs Angell, Brossard, Ms Brown, Finch, Finnie, Gbadebo, McLean, Ms Miller and Porter

**cc: Substitute Members of the Panel**

Councillors Angell, Mrs Barnard, Harrison, Mrs McCracken and Mrs Temperton

ALISON SANDERS  
Director of Corporate Services

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# **Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

**Tuesday 21 June 2011, 7.30 pm**

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

## **AGENDA**

Page No

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**2. APPOINTMENT 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 11 January 2011.

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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 PMR for the fourth quarter of 2010/11 (January to March 2011) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities. An overview of the first quarter of 2011/12 will also be provided.

**Please bring the previously circulated Performance Monitoring Report to the meeting. Copies are available on request and attached to this agenda if viewed online.**

## **OVERVIEW AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

### **8. REVIEW OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE - INTERIM REPORT**

To consider the interim report of the Panel's working group reviewing highway maintenance and to re-constitute the group to complete the review.

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### **9. COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP**

To receive an update in respect of the work undertaken to date by the Member Reference Group reviewing commercial sponsorship.

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### **10. WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12**

To consider the indicative work programme for the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for 2011/12 and select members to progress specific reviews in the work programme for the Panel.

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## **HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT**

### **11. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

To consider forthcoming items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to Environment, Culture and Communities.

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### **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has been arranged for Tuesday 18 October 2011. It is anticipated that agenda items will include the following:

- Community Infrastructure Levy Update
- Supporting People Strategy
- Environmental Management of Schools

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## **ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

**11 JANUARY 2011**

**7.30 - 9.12 PM**



### **Present:**

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

### **Executive Members:**

Councillors Mrs Ballin, Birch, Mrs Hayes and McCracken

### **Also Present:**

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer

Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture

Janet Dowlman, Head of Environmental Services

Jane Eaton, Chief Performance & Resources Officer (Environment, Culture & Communities)

Councillor Bob Edger, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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

Alana Razzell, Senior Communications Officer

Eric Redford, Waste Collection Manager

Emma Silverton, Democratic Services Officer

### **84. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 5 October 2010 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

There were no matters arising.

### **85. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

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

There were no other declarations of interest made at the meeting nor indications that Members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

### **86. 2011/12 Draft Budget Proposals**

The Panel received extracts from the proposed 2011/12 General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme reports relating to Environment, Culture and Communities which were agreed for consultation by the Executive on 14 December 2010. The covering report advised that further savings of over £1m remained to be

found in addition to those identified in the 2011/12 budget proposals subject to consultation, owing to the lateness, complexity and scale of grant reduction of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities introduced the budget proposals which included detailed information on budget pressures and savings, proposed fees and charges, the Capital Programme and proposed Capital Schemes. The Director drew the Panel's attention to the proposed Commitment Budget for 2011/12 to 2014/15.

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

- No areas had been removed from the Commitment Budget for Environment, Culture and Communities, however the Department's commitments had been reviewed in detail and adjusted where necessary. It was agreed that the Director would provide further details of areas adjusted.
- The Borough Treasurer would provide Members with an update on the recovery of the Council's investments in Icelandic banks.
- The rate of car parking charges was set to optimise income from the Council's car parks whilst ensuring no reduction in footfall for the Town Centre. Current charges were set in accordance with the market rate.
- It was expected that Downshire Golf Complex, Car Park Income and Easthampstead Park Conference Centre would experience a decline in income, however Downshire Golf Complex and Car park Income would continue to generate a surplus in 2011/12. Easthampstead Park Conference Centre would realise a loss for the first time primarily due to reduced business use.
- Alternative uses for Downshire Golf Complex had been considered in the past but had not been viable. Selling the Complex had been considered in the current fiscal year, however the Department had been advised that it was not the right time to release the asset to the market. The Downshire Golf Complex currently made an operational surplus for the Council.
- Easthampstead Park Conference Centre had previously been run by a private contractor, however this had not been profitable and Bracknell Forest Council had taken over management of the Centre. The Conference Centre was currently held jointly by the 6 unitary authorities in Berkshire on a 20 year contract, which commenced in 1998, after which the Centre would fall to this Council when the possibility of private sector management would be investigated.
- There would be a further reduction of £55,000 in the grant to the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership. The Partnership had been reorganised and efficiencies made which meant the same service would be received by Bracknell Forest without a reduction in road safety. The Partnership would be retaining speed cameras as they were considered to be a valuable safety feature.
- A £30,000 cost for dog control was due to an increase in the number of stray dogs, which the Council was legally obliged to rescue and home, and was not related to the post of Dog Warden which had been deleted as part of last year's budget savings.
- Opportunities to make reductions to the Council's Arts Development function had been pursued. The Council would be working closely with partners such as South Hill Park to deliver the arts function in Bracknell Forest.
- Additional income received by Forest Care was as a result of the service taking on new corporate clients such as neighbouring local authorities and an increase in client numbers.

- The Commitment Budget contribution to the Sandhurst Freedom March in 2012 had been agreed by the Executive previously.
- The fees for Development Control reflected current market rates and could be revised next year to meet costs when local fee setting would commence. It was intended that local fee setting would take account of retrospective planning applications.

The Panel noted the draft budget proposals for 2011/12 and agreed that comments made in relation to the Environment, Culture and Communities Department Budget would be passed on to the Executive.

## 87. **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 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2010/11. The presentation outlined the Department's finances as at November 2010, highlighted major variances on revenue and identified capital schemes that would be carried forward. Staffing issues, key highlights and a forward look were also included.

The Panel noted that there was an increase in net revenue of £331,000 which was a result of the Department being given additional areas of responsibility. It was noted that there was a Capital Finance underspend of 1.6%.

Carry forwards identified in the Capital Programme included: the Housing Transfer Receipt, Cemetery and Crematorium Mercury Abatement, South Hill Park Grounds Restoration Project, Programme of Leisure Section 106 Schemes and Highway works.

The Panel was advised that the Department had an average vacancy factor of 8.73%. Overall, vacancies had increased by 5 in the quarter due to little recruitment as part of budget efficiencies in the previous quarter and the vacancy freeze currently in place for non front-line posts.

Key highlights for the Department included: continued work on changes from the new Government's announcements, Bracknell Leisure Centre and Coral Reef achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award which had been held continuously since 1993, a Cryptosporidium incident at Coral Reef which had been successfully resolved with an independent inspection noting that the Centre was the best managed water facility they had visited to date, and the announcement of a new Waitrose foodstore in the Town Centre.

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

- Trading Standards & Services had worked with Thames Valley Police to check the weight of goods vehicles driving within the Borough. Over 50% exceeded the maximum weight permitted. The service could not be accessed on a regular basis due to cost and it was not currently known when another check would take place. Officers were developing actions to address the issue and build future checks in to the work programme.
- An improvement notice had been issued to National Grid Gas in relation to poor performance and safety measures on the mains replacement programmes in Bullbrook and Priestwood. Further details of the improvement notice would be provided to Members.
- Re-painting of Worlds End Footbridge had been deferred, however a judgement would need to be made on when to repaint the bridge as it was

part of essential maintenance to prevent large repair costs in the future. The bridge had not been re-painted for a period of 22 years.

Concern was expressed that Ward Members were not fully consulted on the allocation of Section 106 monies. It was agreed that the allocation of Section 106 monies would be sent to all Members for consultation when it was sent to the Parish and Town Council Liaison Group.

The Panel congratulated the Housing Team's Officers on the Homelessness Service which had returned to in-house management from a contracted service resulting in a saving for the Department.

The Panel thanked the Director and Officers on their successful management of the Department's performance and budget.

#### **88. Door-Stepping Waste Survey**

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Services and the Waste Collections Manager which detailed the results of the Bracknell Forest Waste Collection Doorstepping Project 2010.

2009/10 Waste Analysis indicated that Crown Wood and Great Hollands had higher landfill and lower recycling levels than other areas in the borough. The Doorstepping exercise was carried out in those areas to obtain clear understanding of the perceptions of residents in relation to what had led to the poor results, to increase participation in recycling and to ensure the best methods of communication about waste issues were used.

Doorstepping and road shows took place in August 2010 with questionnaires used as a basis for information gathering. 8,753 visits resulted in 2,518 residents spoken to which was 31.65% of the local population. Key results from the survey showed that 86.6% used the blue bins for dry recyclables, 83% recycled glass via local recycling sites, 2% thought all plastic could be recycled and 61% thought leaflets were the best form of communication.

Further work on waste recycling would include 'Are you doing it right?' leaflets, promotion of recycling through the new Waste Collection Contract August 2011, Waste Education through schools and Recycling Champions in different parts of the borough.

It was agreed that the full results report from the Doorstepping Survey and the questionnaire used to consult with residents would be circulated to Members of the Panel.

Arising from the subsequent discussion the following points were noted:

- There was a contamination scale for recyclable material. Contamination of over 10% would result in the affected load of waste being rejected from recycling. The contamination rate in Bracknell Forest was currently 14% and contaminants were sent to the Energy from Waste facility rather than landfill.
- A large proportion of contamination occurred when people collected recyclable goods in carrier bags before transporting them to the blue bins. These were then put in the bin full rather than being emptied out of the plastic bag which could not be recycled.
- Future work for the Department would focus on informing people of what to recycle and targeting specific areas. Reusable hemp bags had been



developed for storing recyclables before collection and would be distributed to reduce the number of plastic carrier bags being placed in the blue recycling bins.

- A Waste Education Programme was in place through the schools to increase children's awareness of recycling. Pupils were given the opportunity to visit the material recycling facility. Education and re-enforcing the message were key to increasing recycling in Bracknell Forest.
- Results of the Doorstepping survey showed that 62.4% of residents would like to see supermarkets reduce the amount of food packaging used. Supermarkets were currently working together under the Courtauld Commitment to address packaging nationally and a paper relating to the Commitment would be circulated to Panel Members for information.
- It was suggested that Officers share the Doorstepping information with Waitrose whose headquarters were located in the borough and work with them on a corporate level to address the issue.
- Shredded paper could be put in the blue recycling bins, however it needed to be contained within a paper bag or cardboard box to prevent it falling out of the sorting machine.

The Panel thanked Officers for their presentation, congratulated the Team for the work they had undertaken in encouraging residents to recycle and wished them luck on future projects to increase the awareness of waste collection and recycling.

#### **89. Supporting People Service**

The Chief Officer: Housing presented the report which provided an update on progress made on the Supporting People Service since the Supporting People Working Group last met in June 2010.

Two main changes had occurred since the Working Group met; firstly the withdrawal of the administration grant which led to restructuring of the Supporting People Administration Service. The Service had been reduced from two posts to one. This meant less service user reviews would take place however significant efficiencies had been achieved to optimise the service being run. Service providers now entered data themselves reducing the administration pressure.

The cost of the Supporting People Services in 2011/12 was predicted to be £1.739 million which was a 14% reduction in the cost of services but not a 14% reduction in the service provided.

Secondly retendering of the Supporting People Services Contract had been completed. Due to the uncertainty of future funding contracts had been let on a one year basis with an option to extend for a further year.

It was noted that the homelessness floating support service tender had been evaluated and further efficiencies had been secured.

The Panel thanked the Chief Officer for his update and noted the content of the report.

#### **90. Streetscene Supplementary Planning Document and Highways Guide for Development**

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the report which presented the outcome of the meeting of its Working Group to respond

to the Streetscene Supplementary Planning Document and linked Highways Guide for Development consultation drafts.

91. **Working Group Update Report**

The Panel noted a report providing an update on the Panel's Working Groups.

92. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Panel noted the items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to Environment, Culture and Communities.

**CHAIRMAN**

## ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 JUNE 2011

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### INTERIM REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE Assistant Chief Executive

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the attached interim report of the Working Group of this Panel reviewing highway maintenance in the Borough and seeks the appointment of a Panel member to fill a vacancy in the Group's membership following the resignation of a former member.

#### 2 SUGGESTED ACTION

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

- 2.1 **agrees the attached interim report of its working group reviewing highway maintenance for adoption by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission;**
- 2.2 **agrees that the highway maintenance review be completed; and**
- 2.3 **appoints a Panel member to the Working Group to fill the membership vacancy arising from the resignation of a former member (existing members are Councillors McLean (Lead Member), Brossard and Leake).**

#### 3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Having met on three occasions during the latter part of 2009, the Highway Maintenance Working Group was discontinued in January 2010 owing to a reduction in Overview and Scrutiny staff resources. However, when other pieces of Overview and Scrutiny review work had subsequently been completed and sufficient resources became available, the Working Group was reconvened in late 2010 to continue the review of highway maintenance. Owing to the recent local election and possible ensuing membership changes, the Working Group has prepared an interim report of its work to date to inform the completion of the review.

#### Background Papers

None.

#### Contact for further information

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## Highway Maintenance

**Interim report of a review of Highway Maintenance by a  
Working Group of the Environment, Culture and Communities  
Overview & Scrutiny Panel**



April 2011

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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.

Brian Moss                      Term Services Operations Director, Ringway

The following officers from Bracknell Forest Council:

Steve Loudoun	Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection
Anthony Radford-Foley	Head of Highways Asset Management
Phil Moir	Principal Engineer
Alan Nash	Chief Officer: Financial Services
Richard Beaumont	Head of Overview and Scrutiny
Andrea Carr	Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Bracknell Forest Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to manage and maintain the (public) highway network within the Borough (the Department for Transport is responsible for motorways and trunk roads and town/parish councils for some footpaths). The network is the single most important and valuable asset managed by the Council. Well maintained highways are essential places where residents and visitors live, work and travel upon. The network contributes to delivery of the Council's strategic objectives, to the shared priorities of national and local government and to the character and environment of the Borough.
- 1.2 Efficient transport links are vital for a thriving population and economy, providing access to employment, education, healthcare, retail outlets, leisure and to all the other services and supplies relied upon to support people's needs. Maintenance of the network is vital to ensure it can continue to provide the principal element of the overall transport network.
- 1.3 Being mindful of the importance of maintaining the Borough's highway network and the associated significant investment, a working group of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel was established to undertake a review of the plans and performance of highway maintenance and to determine whether improvements could be made, within a realistic understanding of the constraints on the Council's resources.
- 1.4 The Working Group has met on five occasions to date, having been suspended for a period of time until staffing resources became available to resume the review, and has produced this interim report to summarise work carried out to date and proposed for the future following the Borough Election in May 2011.
- 1.5 During its meetings the Working Group received presentations from Council officers concerning management of the highway asset and from a representative of the Council's highway maintenance contractor. It has also considered the reported condition of the Borough's roads, highway maintenance performance and funding arrangements.
- 1.6 This report describes the work of the Working Group to date and sets out its interim findings as a basis for continued work in the future.
- 1.7 The Working Group comprised:
  - Borough Councillor McLean (Lead Member)
  - Borough Councillor Beadsley
  - Borough Councillor Brossard
  - Borough Councillor Leake
  - Town Councillor Mrs Cupper
  - Parish Councillor Edwards
  - Town Councillor Kensall
  - Parish Councillor Withers
  - Parish Councillor Young

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Highway maintenance is a major statutory Council service of importance to all users and the wider community. Traffic growth in recent years highlights the importance of highway maintenance. The consequences of failure to invest adequately and effectively maintain the local highway network include the progressive deterioration of safety, reliability and quality, eventually requiring greater levels of investment in the future. Highway maintenance has not been the subject of an Overview and Scrutiny review previously and it has been included in the Overview and Scrutiny work programme since 2009/10.
- 2.2 A working group was established by the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September 2009 to review the plans and performance of the maintenance of the local highway network (principally roads, cycle paths and footpaths) and to determine whether improvements can be made. Although highway maintenance is a large and complex area of Council activity with many inter-connected factors, the Working Group decided that a narrowly focused review was necessary in order to keep it to manageable proportions and has therefore consciously set aside other interesting aspects of highway maintenance which could be worthy of separate Overview and Scrutiny reviews in their own right e.g. pathways and cycleways.
- 2.3 The Working Group met on three occasions between September and December 2009. At its first meeting, the Working Group received an introductory briefing in respect of highway maintenance and discussed the scope of the review. The scope was agreed by the Working Group at its second meeting when it received a presentation concerning highway asset management. The Working Group received a briefing at its third meeting in respect of the financial and other resources given over to highway maintenance, the sufficiency of the current level of investment to maintain the quality of the highway asset, whether the Council maximised government funding and how the Council's expenditure compared to other local authorities. In the light of the proposed 2010/11 highway maintenance budget reduction of £315,000, Members decided that in times of financial constraint, safeguarding the existing highway asset had a higher priority than improving that asset and submitted a report to this effect to the Panel to consider at the time they met to consider the proposed budget for 2010/11. Although this report was agreed and drawn to the attention of the Council's Executive, in the event funding for both highway maintenance and improvement was reduced. The Government subsequently allocated additional funds to repair roads damaged by the severe weather during the 2009/10 winter.
- 2.4 The highway maintenance review was discontinued in January 2010 owing to a reduction in Overview and Scrutiny staffing resources. However, as other Overview and Scrutiny review work was subsequently completed, resources become available to resume the review and the Working Group has been reconvened. It was agreed that the review should adhere to the original scope which is confined to the direct maintenance of the highway network in Bracknell Forest. The key objectives of the review are to:
- review the Council's plans, policies and legal obligations on highway maintenance;
  - review the Council's performance on highway maintenance;
  - review the key factors affecting the achievement of value for money; and



- make recommendations for improvements as appropriate and having regard to the budgets available.

2.5 Owing to the forthcoming Borough Elections in May 2011 and probable resulting changes in membership, the Working Group has decided to temporarily suspend its work until after the Election and has therefore prepared this interim report to inform its new membership of progress achieved to date and the future direction of the review.

### **3. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis to Date**

#### **Introduction to Highway Maintenance and Review Scoping**

- 3.1 The Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection, who is responsible for highway maintenance, gave an introductory briefing to Members at their first meeting in respect of highway maintenance in Bracknell Forest, setting out various factors to consider, and key questions which could be asked in order to help the Working Group better define what might be considered 'maintenance' and thereby set the terms of reference for its review. In the light of suggestions and observations made by the Chief Officer and information concerning highway asset management received at its second meeting, the Working Group agreed the scope of the review. The scoping document is attached at Appendix 1 (amended to reflect the changed timescales resulting from the suspension and reconvening of the review).

#### **Highways Asset Management**

- 3.2 The Working Group received a presentation in respect of highways asset management from the Head of Highways Asset Management, who is responsible for the maintenance but not improvement of the highway network including roads, bridges, footways, cycleways and streetlighting. The presentation included: the financial and other resources given over to highway maintenance; the sufficiency of the current level of investment to maintain the quality of the highway asset; whether the Council maximised government funding; and how the Council's expenditure compared to other local authorities. The presentation provided the following information:
- The highway consisted of: 456 km of roads; 700 km plus of paths and cycle ways; over 200 highway structures including bridges, underpasses, and other structures; 16,000 street lights; 270,000 drainage units; roadside gulleys; and signs.
  - Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 placed the Council under a statutory duty to maintain the highway in a 'safe condition'. Whilst the term 'safe' was not defined within the Act, it had been partially determined through case law and there were 3 nationally accepted Codes of Practice giving local authorities clear guidance. Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 introduced a new duty on a highway authority to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, that snow and ice did not endanger safe passage along a highway. Due to the highway inspection regime currently in place within the Borough, most claims for damages against the Council for non-repair of the highway could be defended successfully and Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 gave a highway authority a defence where it could prove that it had taken such care as was reasonably required to secure that the relevant part of the highway was not dangerous for traffic.
  - 7000 incoming queries from road network users were received each year and approximately 10,800 electronic works orders were issued each year to contractors.

- Annual major maintenance programmes were compiled from highway condition surveys, routine and reactive maintenance histories, recorded road traffic collision statistics, user observations and on-site checks.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Plan (LTP) financial settlements were calculated by reference to road length and condition. To date, the Council had 'passported' these sums through to highway maintenance, but the sums were not ring-fenced.
- It costs on average £60 per 1 metre square of road patching; £40 per 1 metre square of footpath patching; £3–£12 for re-surfacing per 1 metre square of road; £56 to maintain a street light annually; £800 – £1000 for replacing a single lighting column; £1.4 million to replace Mill Lane footbridge; and a total of £5,164,000 for highway maintenance as a whole in 2009/10 (including street lighting and bridges). Road repairs at night cost approximately 40% more than in daylight.
- Carrying out a temporary repair when a permanent repair would have been more appropriate was sometimes unavoidable as the priority was to effect the repair which was undertaken by a rapid reaction crew. Once completed, the work could be scheduled and a crew with the necessary skills and equipment would undertake any necessary follow up work.
- The estimated gross replacement cost of the highway assets was £800 million to £1 billion. 0.65 - 0.52% was the amount invested in 2009/10 in maintaining the assets, expressed as a percentage of the gross replacement value.
- Pressures on the budget included:
  1. Inflation on construction costs; which since 2004 had risen at an average of 7% annually.
  2. Growth; the network expanded as new roads were adopted.
  3. Deterioration due to wear and tear, weeds and the weather.
- Without sustained and adequate levels of investment in maintenance it was predicted that highway conditions would deteriorate leading to escalation of future maintenance costs, roads would receive patching in place of resurfacing, the defect repair intervention level would be delayed and public liability exposure would increase possibly resulting in higher insurance premiums.
- Concerns had been raised in the past in respect of issues such as signage and perceived over design which could potentially lead to a higher level of expenditure than might be necessary.
- Possible 'carbon agenda' issues could include the use of alternative materials or methods of construction in addition to the use and need for street lighting.
- The Council had inherited a large number of highway assets from the former Berkshire County Council and was continually building its knowledge of the highways and the condition of its assets to facilitate planned maintenance in preference to reactive maintenance. Although

the Highway Asset Management Plan, essentially an inventory of highway condition, was not complete at the time of the meeting, the Highway Maintenance and Management Plan had been produced and this set out how the Council currently delivered the services. The DfT encouraged each highway authority to have such a plan, although it was not mandatory.

- Highways asset management aspirations were the completion of a full asset (location and condition) inventory, development of whole-life cost road maintenance strategies and ascertainment of a depreciation replacement cost valuation for the total asset. Funding for these aspirations was an issue.
- Difficult asset management decisions lay around the standard to which estate streets should be constructed and maintained, whether to provide the additional street lights sought by residents or to reduce night time illumination to improve carbon reduction, and whether to recycle more road construction materials in-situ although this was currently more costly than importing new.
- Measurement against other authorities was necessary in order to address Bracknell Forest's value for money as a highway authority.

3.3 At its first reconvened meeting, the Working Group received a recap of past work and considered financial matters relating to highway maintenance and highway asset management data concerning the condition of the Borough's highways.

### **Highway Maintenance Finance**

3.4 The Working Group received an extract from a Transport Spending Review press notice dated 20 October 2010 setting out the Government's spending plans in respect of transport over the next four years, which reflected its commitment to reduce the current financial deficit, facilitate long-term sustainable growth and tackle carbon emissions. The extract indicated that the budget for English national roads would reduce incrementally from £1,124m in 2010/11 to £947m in 2014/15 equating to a 23% decrease resulting in a reduction in the Council's grant through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The funding was divided between highway authorities according to the length and condition of their networks. The mechanism for allocating funding through the LTP process was being reviewed following a consultation in summer 2010 and it was felt that Bracknell Forest's grant would reduce in all anticipated allocation scenarios being considered. However, this has not in fact been what has transpired in that the highway maintenance allocation for 2011/12 onwards equates to an increase of £705k over the 2010/11 allocation. The Government has also announced that it will allocate additional funds to highway authorities in 2011/12 for repairing potholes resulting from severe winter weather.

- 3.5 Financial budgets for Bracknell Forest from 2009/10 through to 2012/13 are set out below:

	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
Highway Maintenance	£1.070M	£1.162M	£1.867M	£1.867M
Integrated Transport	£0.945M	£0.958M	£0.526M	£0.526M
Section 106 Integrated Transport (highway infrastructure contributions from developers)	£0.750M	£0.750M	£0.750M	£0.750M

- 3.6 The highway maintenance budget relates to repairs to the highway infrastructure and integrated transport is the funding utilised to invest in highway improvements and safety projects in addition to supporting / encouraging bus travel. The Section 106 spend is more complex. Highway improvement schemes can only be progressed when sufficient Section 106 contributions have been collected for the works identified as part of the planning process. The £750k annual budget equates to the amount typically spent in recent years reflecting the number and complexity of schemes that can be developed each year. The total amount collected by way of Section 106 and as yet unspent as at 31 March 2011 was £3.3m. Section 106 agreements specify the time limit, area and radius of spend and require a direct link to the consequences of the development and therefore cannot legally be spent on other non-related schemes or on highway maintenance. The Working Group expressed some dissatisfaction with a perceived lack of transparency associated with the current system of formulating and prioritising Section 106 schemes. Although the current practice of the Council has been to allocate the LTP grant funds as suggested by the Government, the grant is not ring-fenced as such and the Council is able to reallocate it according to its own priorities. A statement must however now be given as to how the money is to be spent.
- 3.7 A note from the Chief Officer: Financial Services explaining the financial regime associated with highways maintenance was provided (attached at Appendix 2) and defined capital expenditure; explained capitalisation of highways maintenance; set out accounting arrangements and spending streams; and identified sources of external funding. The Working Group recognised that the capitalisation of highways maintenance funding was a complex area.
- 3.8 The Government grant of £1.867m for highway maintenance in 2011/12 was higher than in past years. Although the grant was not ringfenced, it was intended that it would be spent on highway maintenance in the next financial year. The grant equated to the cost of re-constructing the southbound carriageway of Bagshot Road between Coral Reef and Swinley Roundabout.
- 3.9 The additional Government funding of £135k for the repair of potholes and other damage resulting from the 2009/10 severe winter weather had been topped up by the Council to in excess of £300k and was spent in spring 2010. More than 50 roads were affected and it was felt that they had resumed their pre-weather condition and no complaints relating to damage had been received. Potholes were 'plugged' as a temporary measure until a full repair, such as patching the relevant section of the road, could be undertaken. Opladen Way had been adversely affected by the winter weather and was in good condition at the time of the meeting following the plugging of potholes and resurfacing.

## **Highway Asset Management Data – Condition Assessment**

- 3.10 The Head of Highways Asset Management gave a presentation to the Working Group in respect of Highway Asset Management Data concerning assessment of the condition of the Borough's roads.
- 3.11 The presentation included the amount of highway assets in the Borough, the methods of assessing and scoring the structural condition of classified and unclassified roads, highway maintenance performance against relevant national performance indicators and road condition comparison with the other Berkshire unitary authorities. The information in the presentation concerning the condition of the highway network was based on the 2009 annual survey data as the results of the 2010 survey were yet to be fully analysed at the time of the meeting. The 2010 survey would include the effects of the severe weather during the 2009/10 winter.
- 3.12 Performance against National Indicator 168 (Principal roads where maintenance should be considered) had improved from 8% defective in 2007/08 to 6% in 2008/09 and performance against National Indicator 169 (Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered) had also improved, from 11% to 8%. These results refer to the proportions of the networks in the worst condition category only. The underlying trend shows that the remaining greater proportion of the networks are not improving or are vulnerable to deterioration.
- 3.13 The surface skid resistance of the classified road network was measured by a Sideway-Force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM), which could travel at 50km per hour and was capable of surveying many kilometres of road during a day.
- 3.14 To protect road network users, the Highways Officer Team inspected every road and pathway at regular intervals; the town centre was inspected weekly; strategically important highway roads were driven monthly; street lights were checked at night, higher frequency inspections during winter months; the road condition was assessed by machine each year; and skid resistance surveys were also carried out. The Council maintained one of the lowest successful public liability claims records in the country.
- 3.15 Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network (SCANNER) of classified roads was undertaken by automated road condition survey machines which travelled at road speed and at 5 metre intervals measured a number of aspects of the road surface condition including cracking, rutting, potholes, texture depth and edge condition. The same survey technique, developed by the UK Roads Board, was used across the country to achieve a national picture of highway condition. Results were analysed by industry standard software (UK Pavement Management System) which awarded every section of road surveyed with a score. Three companies in the country owned SCANNER vehicles which were annually accredited at the Transport Research Laboratory. Road collision investigation reports also indicated areas where roads may be in need of maintenance or safety improvement such as high speed bends and roundabout approaches. An example of innovative approach was given in relation to the works to the surface of the on-slip road of Mill Lane. This was to be retexturised using a special machine that fired (and then recovered) small ball bearings down on the tarmac to improve its skid resistance.

- 3.16 Unclassified roads were visually surveyed as the large SCANNER vehicles were not always able to negotiate them due to parked cars etc. The visual surveys were subjective as opinions of inspectors varied, however, they remained the best available technique until a machine based survey method was developed which was unlikely in the current economic climate. Visual surveys consisted of either a Coarse Visual Inspection, usually carried out from a slow-moving vehicle allowing a large part of the Borough's roads to be assessed each year, or the more comprehensive Detailed Visual Inspection, a walked survey which categorised defects against a larger number of more detailed classifications and was typically targeted at stretches of road already identified as potentially being in need of treatment.
- 3.17 Analysis of SCANNER survey data resulted in the scoring of each 10 metre section of road surveyed within a Road Condition Index which indicated the condition of the road against a score from 1 to 70 plus where a low score represented a road in good condition whilst a high score represented a road that needed further investigation and may require maintenance treatment. Highway condition was also evaluated on the basis of a traffic light system, with green rated roads having the fewest defects and achieving a score below 40, amber rated roads scoring between 40 – 70 and red roads scoring over 70. Roads with a score of over 70 were considered to be in need of repair. The following national performance indicators (NIs) related to road condition:
- 3.18 The condition of 'A' roads in Bracknell Forest had improved over the past 5 years with 76% receiving a green rating, 19% an amber rating and 5% a red rating. Gradual improvements to 'B' and 'C' roads in the Borough had also been achieved with 69% green, 20% amber and 10% red. There had been a requirement to report nationally on the condition of unclassified roads since 2008/09. 57% of local unclassified roads were green rated whilst 19% were amber rated and 24% red rated. All these figures are to be regarded with caution as measurement and analysis processes have developed and altered over the period quoted. 25% of unclassified roads were surveyed each year as part of a 4 year rolling programme and 27% of those surveyed in 2009 fell into the red category. Overall, the percentage of roads categorised as red had reduced from 16% to 8% over the last 3 years and 500,000 m<sup>2</sup> of road had been repaired over the last 4 years. Investment in amber rated roads was undertaken to prevent them from deteriorating to the red level which required significant cost to repair. Scotland and Wales reported on amber and red rated roads whilst England reported on red roads only.
- 3.19 An unclassified road data set in the form of a spreadsheet was demonstrated to the Working Group. The data showed the condition of each unclassified road at 10m intervals. All raw data was entered into computer software which analysed and distilled data scoring it from 1 to 70. An overview map of 'A', 'B' and 'C' roads indicated that work to evaluate the quality of the condition analysis was in progress. Although resurfacing of an entire road was favoured, it was sometimes necessary to undertake a small repair to lift the road out of the red category. The footway network was surveyed visually in the same manner as unclassified roads and was also graded using the traffic light system. Although some of the footways were in poor condition, there was currently insufficient funding to repair / replace them. It was necessary for the Council to provide a highway asset valuation based on the gross replacement cost. In future the depreciated cost would be shown. The Council needed to demonstrate highway stewardship and indicate that sufficient funds were being invested to maintain the highway network.

3.20 Bracknell's new town legacy could potentially result in parts of the highway infrastructure nearing the end of their useful lives simultaneously. Although the original road network had generally been built to a high standard and was ageing well, some more recent estate roads were exceptions such as those in Owlsmoor.

3.21 The following points arose from subsequent questions and discussion:

- It was noted that Millennium Way fell into the red rating. Utility companies were due to carry out work under the road and therefore repairs would not be made until afterwards in 2011. Repairs to other roads which were due to be affected by the town centre redevelopment would now be considered as aspects of the redevelopment had been delayed or were no longer proposed.
- Members expressed some surprise that the Borough's unclassified estate roads were in as poor condition as the figures indicated. The Head of Highways Asset Management advised that there was a level of subjectivity and the condition could be the result of worn surface dressing.
- Being rated red did not signify that a road was in a dangerous condition. 8% of roads being red rated was considered to be a suitable break even point for investing in the Borough's roads.
- Developers were in future to be required to construct new estate roads in accordance with the standards specified in the Council's Highway Design Guide and roads would not be adopted unless they met the required standards<sup>1</sup>. Highways were inspected during construction and specification compliance certificates were issued during and at the completion of construction. This work was not part of the Highway Asset Management team. Adoption was a function of the other half of the Highway Authority function. Private roads were inspected prior to adoption to ascertain whether they met the required specification. A pragmatic approach to adoption was assumed as it was not necessary for all roads to meet motorway or dual carriageway standards. Although it was necessary for the Highway Authority to await a developer's request that a road be adopted, some pressure could be applied to expedite the process which involved the adoption of all other aspects such as sewers prior to the road itself.
- Prioritising maintenance of classified roads to facilitate commuting to / from / through the Borough was seen as being economical although a Member expressed some concern that this approach would not deliver the condition of estate roads sought by residents.
- Although whitelining was undertaken to restore road markings following repairs, insufficient funding was available to match new and existing road markings perfectly. There was also a general programme of renewing road markings.

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<sup>1</sup> When highways are adopted they fall into the ownership of the highway authority and are maintained at its expense.



- The purpose of the red surfacing on roads approaching pedestrian crossings was to increase skid resistance and extend the life of the section of road involved. It was provided as part of the highway improvement function.

### **Highway Maintenance Contract**

- 3.22 The Working Group's second reconvened meeting featured a presentation from, and discussion with, a representative of Ringway, the Council's highway maintenance contractor concerning how the company delivered the highway maintenance contract and whether any service improvements and economies could be identified. The presentation addressed the structure of Ringway and the products and services it delivered. The company, which was a privately owned subsidiary of Eurovia, was divided into the three sections of Term Services, Contracting & Production and Joint Ventures.
- 3.23 Term Services featured a wide range of varying forms of term contracts; a self delivery strategy; a full network management service; construction, design and management services; early contractor involvement; health and safety services; traffic management; vehicle restraint systems; street lighting; and pollution mitigation. Associated innovation included United Kingdom Accreditation Service testing laboratory, Ringway's technical centre, the Eurovia Central Laboratory and Technical Network, and learned bodies and academia.
- 3.24 The Contracting & Production teams operated nationally and delivered asphalt production and contracting, major construction schemes, specialist maintenance activities, thermoplastic manufacture, provision and surveying of roadmarkings, high performance markings, signs manufacture and installation, vehicle graphics including livery for police forces and ambulance services, bus shelters and other structures, light emitting diode developments, specialist and traditional surface treatments and dressings, footway treatments, decorative systems, stress absorbing layers, joint maintenance and repair, bondcoats between layers of tarmac and retexturing.
- 3.25 Joint ventures were undertaken with BEAR Scotland Ltd, South West Highways, Jacobs Engineering (which had acquired Babbie), Transport for London, Buckinghamshire County Council and the London Borough of Newham. Ringway also provided airport and runway services.
- 3.26 During the course of the presentation the Working Group was advised that:
- All of Ringway's term services contracts differed in terms of specification, services provided and payment arrangements. Some were on the basis of a client 'shopping list' up to a certain value whilst others featured target prices and schedules of costs.
  - The company rarely sub-contracted as it operated a self delivery strategy involving the up-skilling of the local workforce and any sub-contracting would utilise its own departments. However, specialist third parties would be drawn upon in the event that any operations were beyond Ringway's skills, or when the use of a local contractor with historical specialist knowledge would add some value.
  - Early contractor involvement was favoured to enhance service design and mitigate any potential problems.

- Pollution mitigation measures sought to reduce emissions by utilising a component that attracted and absorbed emissions which later washed away in a harmless form during rain.
- Vehicle restraint systems included crash barriers and specialist measures.
- Ringway's activities were regulated and required sector scheme accreditation.
- Industry innovations included the development of bitumen which was malleable at a lower temperature without a reduced melting point and which featured a colour changing component for road marking material that indicated when temperatures reduced to freezing point.
- The Contracting & Production teams provided the more specialist services such as bridge construction, surfacing with low noise asphalt, use of fibres to keep bitumen in place and white lining with a material which remained visible and dispelled water at times of rain.
- A white lining inspection service which operated in a similar way to the SCRIM and SCANNER assessments of road condition was available.
- Ringway was working towards reducing the carbon emissions of its own vehicle fleet which was compliant with the carbon credit scheme. Consideration was being given to the use of alternative types of fuel such as hydrogen. Electric vehicles were used in London. 89-90% of the company's carbon emissions were generated by producing the heat required to manufacture and lay tarmac and it was working with the UK Highways Term Maintenance Association to reduce its emissions and carbon rating.

3.27 The following points arose from subsequent questions and discussion:

- Ringway work with clients to provide value for money which could be achieved by increasing contracted services to realise economies of scale. They had changed the way it treated potholes and surface patching resulting in inspection regime cost savings for the Council. The provision of a local depot and salt barn as part of the current contract filled a gap in service and changed the Council's relationship with Ringway. Although the value of this change might not be fully realised under the current arrangement, it was an example whereby the Council was able to influence benefit.
- The company was also able to assist local authorities to reduce their spend in times of financial constraint by early involvement to advise on cost saving technical solutions without the need to make use of third party designers who could design unnecessarily complex schemes. This early involvement by Ringway in Bracknell Forest's highway solutions was identified as a beneficial improvement to contractual arrangements and high level quarterly meetings were held to facilitate this process and float any suggestions to maximise use of resources. At an operational level, meetings were held fortnightly to progress the contracted works. An IT system was currently shared between the Council and Ringway to

process work orders electronically although further work was required to achieve full integration. The Council had adopted Ringway's hand held technologies.

- Spending to the value of the contract was the main service cut off point. A schedule of agreed rates applied in respect of specific work orders and tendered rates were utilised to price large schemes. Economies of scale efficiencies were achieved when the contract value rose above a certain sum to the benefit of both parties.
- Although Ringway currently provided highway maintenance services, there was scope for the Council to make greater use of the company's expertise in areas such as design and build to ensure full use of the £1.867m grant funding as its own staffing resources were limited. Timing and availability of equipment were factors. Moving towards a scenario where the contractor was delegated greater freedom to work under its own initiative within set parameters with outputs monitored by the Council was favoured.
- The Council's contractual model with Ringway was constantly evolving and had sufficient flexibility for service improvements to be introduced. Ringway was pleased to advise on which models operated better than others from a commercial perspective, such as transference of risk to the contractor which would impact on the cost of the contract. Experience gained from the award of the refuse contract had shown that risk sharing could reduce costs. Contracts equated to long term relationships with clients and all of Ringway's contracts had been extended as clients were content with the standard and price of work. The Council enjoyed a good working relationship with Ringway and felt in a position to have an open dialogue regarding contractual matters. Its contract with Ringway was for a duration of five years and open to extension for a further five years. Owing to the lead-in time for re-tendering, which was costly, preparations would be commenced approximately two years before the conclusion of a contract and therefore an eight year contract with an eight year extension clause was favoured as it brought certainty, value and economies for both parties. Break clauses and safeguards could be built into contracts. Multiple one year extensions to contracts represented the worst scenario in terms of economy, investment and future planning.
- The existing contract was due to expire in 3½ years and the officers advised that the re-tendering process would commence in 18 months. Street cleaning had been added to Ringway's contract 18 months after it had been awarded. The core highway maintenance contract (repairs and improvement, winter maintenance and drainage) would be priced and separate prices relating to services which complemented and could be added to the core contract, such as street lighting, the provision and maintenance of traffic lights, gulley emptying and landscaping, could be obtained in the interests of seeking economies of scale. The European Union (EU) contracting regulations applied. The right to award a contract relating to one or more services was reserved. Ringway would be pleased to help and offer advice on the options in use in an attempt to ensure the best approach to delivering services through the contract.
- Although contract work orders specified timing, penalty clauses were not included. Any poor performance would be reported to the joint Bracknell /

Ringway management board. Any need to delay work was by prior agreement with the Council and usually resulted from a more urgent need arising.

- Points raised in discussion included the theft of aluminium road signs. As this had been an issue, alternative materials of lower value were being considered. The Council's contract featured heat resistant tarmac of improved durability. Many resurfacing difficulties arose from the instability of the sub-structure of the highway, and the weight increase from 38 to 42 tonne lorries allowed by EU regulations posed a problem by causing rutting in the highway. Some of the Borough's roads were of concrete structure which, whilst durable, had poor anti-skid qualities and were therefore surfaced with asphalt despite differing properties such as expansion rates between the two materials. The top surface coat was wearing off in some estate roads and the new design standards addressed this. There were set national standards in respect of road construction and, having adhered to Berkshire's standards previously, Bracknell Forest was now working to its own standards.
- Depending upon the nature of highway maintenance projects commissioned, the Council utilised the services of a number of consultants in the designing of schemes. As Ringway was able to advise on highway design and construction, contracting out these services to the company could possibly achieve a cost saving through reductions in consultancy and overhead costs. In Ringway's experience, other Councils had achieved savings from such an approach.
- The Council's Traffic Management Team was responsible for co-ordinating strategic cross boundary highway work programmes with neighbouring authorities and the Highway Agency and for integrating utility company operations. Utility companies were now subject to greater regulation concerning standards of work than in the past. The forthcoming closure of a road in Crowthorne for repairs to a gas main was recognised as a potential opportunity to undertake road maintenance or re-surfacing work to minimise future disruption.
- Members questioned the effectiveness of highway works being commissioned in respect of the same asset by two teams. The highway maintenance and improvement functions of the Council are split into two divisions and it was felt that it could be cost effective to combine them. This was notwithstanding the management arrangements in place that sought to achieve collaboration between the two services. The new Highway Design Guide was a welcomed step.

### **Future Work**

- 3.28 Remaining activities for the Working Group to pursue following the Borough Election include meeting the Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development to establish the Council's Executive's position on highway maintenance; engaging with residents, key road users and public transport providers to ascertain their views in respect of the condition of Bracknell Forest's highways; possibly undertake site visits to see at first hand examples of road maintenance works; and study the Highway Asset Management Plan, Highway Maintenance and Management Plan and background data and research.

## 4. Interim Conclusions

From its investigations, the Working Group concludes that:

- 4.1 The worth of the local road network extends far wider than transport and its asset value of approximately £800m as it can make a powerful and wide contribution to Bracknell Forest. It is fundamental to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community, and its management and maintenance should seek to maximise this wider contribution. Effective management of the local road network has the potential to aid regeneration, social inclusion, community safety, health and the environment, and this requires a planned long-term programme of investment, adequately resourced, efficiently managed and supported by effective technical and management systems.
- 4.2 Although the Government's spending review has resulted in an incremental budget reduction for English national roads by 23% over the next four years causing a reduction in the Council's grant through the LTP, its highway maintenance allocation for 2011/12 has increased by £705k over the 2010/11 allocation to £1.867m. The allocation of some further £350k of Government funding in 2011/12 towards pothole repairs is anticipated.
- 4.3 The current policy of the Council is to allocate the LTP grant as suggested by Government. The grant is not ring-fenced and the Council is therefore able to reallocate the grant according to its own priorities.
- 4.4 The accounting rules the Council is required to adhere to, which are largely controlled by statutory based guidance and involve a separation between capital and revenue funding, place greater pressure on revenue expenditure than on capital expenditure and prevent the Council from making the best use of its resources and assets. Accordingly, the Council aims to ensure that whatever flexibility does exist, such as capitalisation, is used to reduce the pressure on its revenue budget.
- 4.5 Performance against National Indicators relating to principal and non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered has improved resulting in Bracknell Forest's roads being amongst the best maintained in Berkshire.
- 4.6 At face value, the condition of 'A' roads in Bracknell Forest has improved over the past 5 years with 76% receiving a green rating, 19% an amber rating and 5% a red rating. Gradual improvements to 'B' and 'C' roads in the Borough have also been achieved with 69% green, 20% amber and 10% red. 57% of local unclassified roads are green rated whilst 19% are amber rated and 24% red rated. Overall, the percentage of roads categorised as red appears to have reduced from 16% to 8% over the last 3 years, however, as stated in paragraph 3.18 these figures need to be treated with caution.
- 4.7 Whilst the current condition of the Borough's highways, excluding unclassified roads, compares well to national averages, and there have been improvements in recent years, this improvement trend is at risk of being reversed if there is insufficient funding for future maintenance. The two successive poor winter seasons have demonstrated how vulnerable to deterioration the network is. The Working Group was concerned that the thinking behind the final budget

settlement for 2010-11 was driven more by the amount of funding available than by an objective assessment of need.

- 4.8 The current level of investment is only sufficient to deal with those roads in worst condition and at highest level of user risk. Priority therefore must be given to the primary and secondary routes. The network within the housing estates is being maintained at a basic safety level only. Many of those roads are suffering from the breakdown of the top surface layer and whilst this is not a safety issue, it results in a significant visually negative impact upon the area and in time jeopardises the structural integrity of the road. Surface dressing is a relatively inexpensive way of prolonging the life of a deteriorating highway. Although the 2009/10 highway maintenance budget reduction of £315k resulted in a cessation of the surface dressing programme, the negative result of this was partly off-set by the additional funds made available by the Government and the Council to deal with the significant detrimental impact of the winter weather on the highway network.
- 4.9 Full use should be made of the 2011/12 highway maintenance grant for maintenance purposes as, without sustained investment in maintenance, it is predicted that highway conditions will deteriorate leading to escalation of future maintenance costs and the risk of increased public liability exposure leading to higher insurance premiums and injury settlements threatening the Council's currently low public liability claims record.
- 4.10 The current system of formulating and prioritising Section 106 schemes lacks transparency and could be improved.
- 4.11 The performance of the Council's highway maintenance contractor, Ringway, is satisfactory and an effective partnership relationship is in place. The contractual model with Ringway is constantly evolving and has sufficient flexibility for service improvements to be introduced.
- 4.12 Although Ringway currently provide highway maintenance and street cleaning services in Bracknell Forest, there is scope for the Council to make greater contractual use of the company in additional related service areas to achieve economies of scale and greater use of its expertise in areas such as design and build as an economic alternative to using consultants. The company is also able to assist the Council to reduce its spend in times of financial constraint by early involvement to advise on cost saving technical solutions and to mitigate any potential problems as a beneficial improvement to contractual arrangements.
- 4.13 Owing to the lead-in time for contract re-tendering, which is costly, moving from the current five year contract with a five year extension clause to an eight year contract with an eight year extension clause may be preferable as it will bring certainty, increased value for money and economies for both parties.
- 4.14 The form of the Council's current highway maintenance contract is partly based on a schedule of rates. Ringway has explained that in its experience there are several models in use around the country. Contracts vary in levels of flexibility and some contracts do not serve the best interests of either party.
- 4.15 The recent provision of a local depot and salt barn has changed the Council's relationship with Ringway and offers potential benefits to both parties.

- 4.16 Although highway maintenance and improvement engineering works are currently split into two separate functions (falling under different Chief Officers), it is felt that it could be cost effective to combine them. The need is to ensure that both teams work to best effect to ensure that money is dedicated to greatest need and all works are designed to take account of future maintenance requirements.

## 5. Interim Recommendations

It is recommended to the Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development that:

- 5.1 As part of the Highway Maintenance and Management Plan, options be explored as to the potential to include percentage targets for the condition to be achieved for each type of highway in the Borough, utilising the SCANNER green/amber/red ratings as the principle driver for determining the resources required for highway maintenance each year, in recognition of the need for a structured, comprehensive and adequately resourced maintenance programme for a highly important and necessary community asset;
- 5.2 In the event that the Council's available resources do not permit full funding of the highway maintenance programme requirement each year:
  - the costs and benefits of alternative funding opportunities, such as borrowing external funds, be explored in recognition of the current low interest rates, the average annual increase of 7% in highway construction costs and the adage 'a stitch in time saves nine';
  - budget consultation papers provide a clear exposition of the impact of under-funding the highway maintenance programme;
- 5.3 The tackling of the restraints on borrowing and capital expenditure in the current accounting rules and other barriers be explored and include asking the Government to reconsider the current accounting regime referred to in paragraph 4.4 e.g. with a view to allowing borrowing to finance revenue expenditure and spending capital for highway maintenance purposes;
- 5.4 Full use be made of the 2011/12 highway maintenance allocation of £1.867m together with any other Government monies provided for maintenance purposes to sustain investment in maintenance to avoid deterioration leading to escalation of future maintenance costs and the risk of increased public liability exposure and associated higher insurance premiums;
- 5.5 The Council's new administration review its allocation priorities as part of the LTP process to ensure that such funding is allocated according to greatest need;
- 5.6 The process by which the spending of Section 106 monies is formulated be amended to allow for the early involvement of Ward Members and Town and Parish Councillors. This would enable greater transparency in the process of the formulation and prioritisation of local highway schemes prior to the agreement of the LTP by the Executive;
- 5.7 Priority be given to reinstating the surface dressing programme as it represents a relatively inexpensive way of prolonging the life of a deteriorating asset;
- 5.8 Current practices are reviewed as part of the ongoing budget review process to test the merits of contracting additional highway maintenance services, for example design and build, through the current contract with Ringway. Related



contractual changes be made should the review establish that such measures will achieve economies without giving rise to unacceptable levels of risk;

- 5.9 The practice of securing early contractor involvement to identify cost saving technical solutions and to mitigate any potential problems be continued and developed wherever possible;
- 5.10 The benefits of making greater contractual use of Ringway to provide additional services which complement highway maintenance, such as provision and maintenance of street lighting and traffic signals, be reviewed with a view to identifying economies and to ensuring that the contract provides for the best overall fiscal advantage to the Council and includes sufficient flexibility to allow for the continually changing financial environment;
- 5.11 All existing and potential opportunities for achieving savings in both client and service costs be explored as part of the contract renewal process. The potential scope, length and method of delivery should be examined through the scrutiny process with a view to helping ensure that the contract as tendered best fits the needs of the community;
- 5.12 Officers should review the current arrangements with Ringway upon completion of the depot and salt barn works and the transfer of the contractor's offices to ensure that the Council maximises the opportunities that arise both in the context of fiscal and value added service delivery; and
- 5.13 The existing management arrangements in relation to the split of the highway engineering functions are reviewed in the interests of cost effectiveness and collaboration between the two services to avoid conflicting objectives and to ensure that improvements are designed to take account of future maintenance requirements.

It is recommended to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel that:

- 5.14 This review be completed once the Panel has been reconstituted following the Borough Elections in May 2011.

## 6. Glossary

DfT	Department for Transport
EU	European Union
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NIs	National Performance Indicators
SCANNER	Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network
SCRIM	Sideway-Force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine
S106	Section 106 developer contributions to infrastructure
UK	United Kingdom



*Repairs to the Borough's roads following severe winter weather*

**BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2009 – 2010**

Terms of Reference for

**HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**

**Purpose of this Working Group / anticipated value of its work:**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | To review the plans and performance of highway maintenance and to determine whether improvements could be made. |
|----|---|

**Key Objectives:**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | To review the Council's plans, policies and legal obligations on highway maintenance.               |
| 2. | To review the Council's performance on highway maintenance.   |
| 3. | To review the key factors affecting the achievement of value for money.                             |
| 4. | To make recommendations for improvements as appropriate and having regard to the budgets available. |

**Scope of the work:**

The scope of this review will be confined to the direct maintenance of the highway network in Bracknell Forest.
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**Not included in the scope:**

Anything not directly related to the maintenance of the principal highway network ie roads, footpaths and cycleways, for example traffic management, road design, the condition of bridle ways and unadopted roads, road signage, street lighting, street cleaning, landscape maintenance of verges, winter gritting, the impact on carbon reduction and climate change, the links between traffic speed, road maintenance investment and road safety, and review of how Section 106 money is allocated and spent.
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**Terms of Reference prepared by:** R M Beaumont

**Terms of Reference agreed by:** The Working Group

**Working Group structure:**

McLean	Borough Councillors Beadsley, Brossard, Leake &
	Councillor Mrs Cupper, Sandhurst Town Council
	Councillor Edwards, Binfield Parish Council
	Councillor Kensall, Bracknell Town Council
	Councillor Withers, Crowthorne Parish Council
	Councillor Young, Winkfield Parish Council

**Working Group Lead Member:** Councillor McLean

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Mrs Ballin

## BACKGROUND:

Highway maintenance is a major Council service of importance to everyone who lives, works or travels through Bracknell Forest. It has not been the subject of an Overview and Scrutiny review previously, and it has been included in the O&S work programme for 2009/10.

Highway maintenance is a large and complex area of Council activity with many inter-connected issues. At its most basic level, the topic could be confined for example to the Council's performance in repairing pot-holes in roads. However the review could be as wide as to embrace issues such as traffic management, road design, road signage, street lighting, street cleaning, landscape maintenance of verges, winter gritting, the links between traffic speed, road maintenance investment and road safety, the impact on carbon reduction and climate change, and how Section 106 money is allocated and spent.

The Working Group has decided that a very focussed review is necessary, in order that it can be kept to a manageable size and be completed within a reasonable time-scale. The Working Group have therefore consciously set aside other interesting aspects of highway maintenance which could be worthy of separate O&S reviews in their own right.

The overall purpose of the review is to review the plans and performance of highway maintenance (principally roads, cycle paths and footpaths) and to determine whether improvements could be made. The scope of this review will be confined to the highway network and concentrates on the following issues which we consider are of greatest overall significance to highway maintenance.

## SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR THE PANEL TO ADDRESS:

### 1. What are the Council's plans and arrangements for highway maintenance?

1. What makes up the Borough's highway network, and what is its current condition?
2. What are the Council's legal obligations and policy commitments?
3. The main features of the Highway Management and Maintenance Plan; the involvement of Town and Parish Councils, Ward Members and others in the production of maintenance plans.
4. The planned and actual balance between planned and reactive maintenance.
5. The Council's internal organisation and the use of contractors.
6. How are members of the public and Ward Members informed and kept up to date about highway work being done, particularly in cases where works could potentially cause traffic delays?
7. How can a highway defect be reported? How are the public made aware of this?

### 2. How has the Council performed on Highway maintenance?

8. Performance indicators:
  - How satisfied are residents?
  - What is the performance against the government's national indicators?
  - How does that performance compare to other councils?
  - Does the Council communicate its performance to residents?
  - The outcome of highway inspections.

- Is the quality of roads getting better or worse?
- 9. What is the rate of complaints from residents in relation to roads maintenance, and the outcomes?
- 10. Are works usually completed on time? What percentage overrun?
- 11. Keeping the Borough moving: to what extent are traffic delays and disruptions due to highway maintenance?
- 12. The number of traffic casualties attributed to inadequately maintained roads.

### 3. Achieving Value for Money

- 13. The financial and other resources given over to highway maintenance, and the extent to which the roads maintenance is needs or resources-driven.
- 14. Is the current level of investment sufficient to maintain the quality of the highway asset?
- 15. Does the Council maximise government funding?
- 16. How much is BFC spending on highway maintenance compared with other councils in Berkshire and other former New Towns?
- 17. Procuring and managing the contractor (Ringway) on roads maintenance, particularly in carrying out lasting repairs.
- 18. The level of compensation payments for roads imperfections.
- 19. Working arrangements with the Utility companies and others who dig up roads.

## INFORMATION GATHERING: Witnesses to be invited

Name	Organisation/Position	Reason for Inviting
Steve Loudoun	Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection, Bracknell Forest Council	Responsible Chief Officer and Departmental Link Officer
Councillor Mrs Ballin	Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development	To establish the Council's Executive's position on highway maintenance
Brian Moss	Ringway	To explore their experiences and how that might be put to better effect locally
TBC/Chairman	Bracknell Forest Theme Partnership for Transport (no longer exists)	To establish the Partnership's position on highway maintenance
During the course of our review we will also ask residents, First Bus and other key organisations to send us their views, with reference to the best and worst maintained roads in the Borough, which we may then visit to see at first hand.		

## Site Visits

Location	Purpose of visit
TBC	To see at first hand examples of roads maintenance works

## **Key Documents / Background Data / Research**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Highway Asset Management Plan</li><li>2. Highway Maintenance and Management Plan</li><li>3. Background data and research as shown in detailed questions above</li></ol> |
|--|

## **TIMESCALE**

Starting: October 2009

Ending: July 2010

(The review was discontinued in January 2010 owing to a reduction in staffing resources and was reconvened in November 2010 when resources became available and is expected to be completed in autumn 2011.)

## **OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED**

1. Report of the Working Group with recommendations to the Executive
2. Build Members' knowledge of highway maintenance issues
3. Further build productive relationships between Borough, Town and Parish Councils through joint working.

## **REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

Body	Date
Report of the Working Group with recommendations to the Executive, to be adopted by the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.	Autumn 2011

## **MONITORING / FEEDBACK ARRANGEMENTS**

Quarterly progress reports to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

WORKING GROUP ON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE  
11 NOVEMBER 2010

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE

Because of the pressure on the Council's revenue budget the aim is to capitalise the maximum amount of expenditure that is permissible.

DEFINITION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital expenditure is defined within statutory based guidance. The following extract is taken from the Council's internal guidance and is designed to assist officers when bringing forward proposals to be included in the capital programme:

*Under standard accounting practices local authorities are required to account for revenue expenditure and capital expenditure differently. Capital expenditure is defined in the Local Government 2003 Act as expenditure which, in accordance with proper accounting practices, falls to be capitalised. Proper accounting practice is currently accepted to be the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.*

*Generally speaking capital expenditure results in a fixed asset which is reported separately in the Council's accounts from other expenditure. On this basis, capital expenditure essentially relates to the provision and improvement of significant fixed assets including land, buildings and equipment (such as schools, new houses and machinery) which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.*

*However, in practical terms, it is often quite difficult to easily distinguish between capital and revenue expenditure and as such there are a number of ways that we should consider expenditure in order to identify what is capital and what is revenue.*

*Revenue expenditure is expenditure incurred for the purpose of the organisation's daily activity, services or to maintain fixed assets. For example employees' pay; travel expenses and IT consumables are all deemed to be revenue expenditure.*

*The common definition of capital expenditure is*

***"Capital expenditure is expenditure that results in the acquisition or construction of a fixed asset (land, building, vehicle, equipment) or enhancement of an existing fixed asset."***

*Determining the acquisition or construction of a new asset is relatively straight forward and as such the greatest difficulty is often associated with identifying expenditure that can be said to enhance an existing asset.*

*To be an enhancement, the work undertaken must either*

- **Lengthen substantially the useful life of the asset** – beyond the current assessment of the useful life of the asset. For example, the assessment would usually assume that a property would always have effective paint coverage and therefore painting would only ensure that the property remained useful for the period originally anticipated. In contrast, the assessment might assume that the property will continue to have a flat roof in good repair. Its subsequent replacement with a pitched roof will be more effective at protecting the building from degradation by the elements and should result in a more optimistic assessment of the prospective useful life.
- **Increase substantially the market value of the asset** – if the asset were valued after the works substantially higher than prior to the works.
- **Increase substantially the extent to which the asset can or will be used for the purpose of or in conjunction with the functions of the authority** – for example extending a building to provide a wider service or making a building fit for a purpose that it would not otherwise be fit for.

*Distinguishing between expenditure on existing assets that maintains the use or value of that asset and expenditure that improves use or value can be difficult and judgement will always be required. The following key words can be indicators of whether expenditure is more likely to be Capital or Revenue expenditure.*

<b>Key words indicating Capital expenditure</b>	<b>Key words indicating Revenue expenditure</b>
<i>Enhance Upgrade Extend Improve Construct Purchase</i>	<i>Repair Maintain Replace Like-for-like Remedial Renew</i>

## **CAPITALISATION OF HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE**

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy has published specific guidance on the capitalisation of highways maintenance and the following paragraphs attempt to illustrate the difference between capital and revenue expenditure:

*Activities that do not improve the inherent strength or performance of the structure cannot be capitalised. For example, filling potholes in a carriageway would not normally be regarded as capital works because while they improve safety, they are in effect temporary repairs that do not directly affect the structure of the asset or prolong its life.*

*Preventative treatments may be categorised as either capital or revenue depending on the nature of the treatments. Gully cleansing, for example, is current (revenue) expenditure even though a failure to clean sufficiently often eventually leads to damage to the structure of the carriageway. This is because cleaning is not actually enhancing or restoring the service potential of a physical asset or component. On the other hand, surface treatments that prevent water penetration are capital works because they are providing a new or replacement component.*



*Works carried out for purely aesthetic reasons should not be capitalised.....for example, .if a bituminous footway has been dug up for statutory undertaker works and satisfactorily reinstated, but the authority chose to resurface it to produce a consistent appearance.*

## ACCOUNTING ARRANGEMENTS AND FUNDING STREAMS

The funding streams available to the Council in the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 can be summarised as follows:

Description	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
<b>Capital – Council Funding</b>		
Highways Maintenance & Integrated Transport Measures	1,640	1,501
Local Transport Plan Top Up Funding	250	0
Roads & Footway Resurfacing	200	200
Junction of John Nike Way/London Road & Dualling on London Road	470	0
	<b>2,560</b>	<b>1,701</b>
<b>Capital – Externally Funded</b>		
Local Transport Plan (Highways Maintenance)	400	0
Local Transport Plan (Integrated Transport)	315	319
Road Safety	44	43
Section 106 Schemes (Local Transport Plan)	750	750
Section 106 Junction of John Nike Way/London Road & Dualling on London Road	930	0
	<b>2,439</b>	<b>1,112</b>
<b>Revenue – Council Funding</b>		
Winter Maintenance	299	299
Lighting	1,108	1,080
Traffic Signals	57	57
Maintenance (resurfacing, bridges, verge maintenance, gully cleaning, road markings, patching, drainage, fencing etc.)	3,139	2,804
	<b>4,603</b>	<b>4,240</b>

As part of the Coalition Government's in year savings the 2010/11 budgets for integrated transport measures were subsequently reduced by £240,000 and the road safety budget by £43,000. The savings have been achieved by delaying the Maidens Green crossroads traffic scheme and deferring other minor junction safety schemes until funding is available in the future.

It should also be noted that within the revenue funding for 2009/10 provision was made for some surface dressing works. Based on the definitions above surface dressing can be treated as capital expenditure and at the end of the financial year £229,000 was capitalised in order to reduce the pressure on the Council's revenue budget. The Council's revenue

budget assumes that £400,000 of revenue expenditure will be available to be capitalised each year from a combination of highways, property and ICT works. No provision has been made for surface dressing works in the 2010/11 revenue budget.

## **EXTERNAL FUNDING**

The table above indicates that the Council receives substantial external financial support for its highways works. This usually takes the form of government grants or Section 106 contributions from developers. Each grant or Section 106 contribution will have conditions attached to it. These vary, but will usually include:

- The requirement to spend the money by a specified date
- The need to spend the money on a specific project or specific types of work, and
- The condition that the money be spent at a specific location or within a certain distance of a specified location.

## ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 JUNE 2011

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### **COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP - UPDATE** **Lead Working Group Member**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress achieved to date by the Member Reference Group reviewing the possible merits of the Council entering into a commercial sponsorship scheme and seeks the appointment of a member to fill a vacancy in the Group's membership following the resignation of a former member.

#### **2 SUGGESTED ACTION**

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

- 2.1 **notes this update report; and**
- 2.2 **appoints a Panel member to fill the vacancy in the membership of the Member Reference Group (the existing members are Councillors Finnie (Lead Member), Brossard, Dudley and Ward).**

#### **3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Member Reference Group was established to provide views and advice to the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities on a prospective procurement of an agency service to attract commercial sponsorship income for Bracknell Forest and has met on three occasions to date. At its first meeting the Group agreed that a commercial sponsorship scheme would be acceptable in principle and that the possibility of introducing a viable scheme be explored. The Group received briefings in respect of the Council's corporate identity standards and the planning and highway policies and constraints applying to signage and other issues relating to sponsorship at its a second meeting. The briefings informed the development of a framework around key policy, infrastructure and other limitations / issues which could apply to commercial sponsorship. A representative of a commercial sponsorship company attended the Group's third meeting to explain the company's terms and approach to commercial sponsorship and to answer members' related questions. On this occasion the Group also received information regarding commercial sponsorship practices and experiences of other local authorities.
- 3.2 The Group will meet again in the near future to discuss a prospective audit of the Borough's assets which could be utilised for commercial sponsorship purposes, and related matters.

#### Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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## ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 JUNE 2011

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### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel to consider and agree the proposed work programme for O&S in 2011/12, at Appendix 1 to this report. The O&S Commission is due to consider and agree the work programme for 2011/12 at its meeting on 9 June, and the Panel will be updated orally on the outcome of the Commission meeting.
- 1.2 The proposed programme incorporates the views of the former O&S Commission and Panels and, forming part of the Annual Report of O&S for 2010/11, it was endorsed by Council at its meeting on 27 April 2011.
- 1.3 The Constitution requires that the Corporate Management Team and the Executive shall be consulted on the work programme, and this was achieved by inviting their comments on the draft 2010/11 Annual Report of O&S. The Corporate Management Team commented that they were *'concerned about the resource implications of the proposed work programme. The Council has recently reduced support for Overview and Scrutiny and the Council faces at least three further years of budget reduction as the Coalition attempts to reduce the Country's deficit. Therefore there can be no expectation of additional resources to deliver this programme in the near future. The finally agreed work programme will need to be managed within the existing resources.'*
- 1.4 Since the work programme was produced earlier this year, other prospective topics for review have been identified, subject to programme approval and resources being available, as follows:
  - a) Site Allocations Development Plan Document (the report attached at Appendix 2 gives the background to this prospective item);
  - b) Bus services; and
  - c) Pay-as-you-go Car Club Schemes
- 1.5 During the past four years the Panel has regularly monitored the performance of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department, mainly through review of its quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports, has scrutinised the Department's budget and has exercised pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan. It has also reviewed waste and recycling, street cleansing, the Streetscene Supplementary Planning Document and Highways Guide for Development, the Housing Strategy, highway maintenance and commercial sponsorship.

#### 2 SUGGESTED ACTION

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

- 2.1 **considers and agrees its draft work programme for Overview and Scrutiny in 2011/12 having regard to the suggested action contained in the report attached at Appendix 2; and**
- 2.2 **selects members to progress the specific reviews in the work programme for the Panel.**

#### Background Papers

Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny, 2010/11.

#### Contact for further information

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### **Proposed Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny in 2011/12**

The proposed work programme for O&S in 2011/12 is shown on the following pages. The programme is aimed at maintaining a strategic and coordinated work programme based on major areas of Council and partner organisations' activity. The selection of review topics takes account of what is of direct and significant interest to residents, and what would be timely, relevant, and likely to add value. The programme incorporates the routine, on-going work of O&S and the completion of reviews currently underway. The overall programme is smaller than in recent years owing to the reduction in officer support for O&S, arising from the financial pressures facing the Council.

The O&S Commission has consulted the O&S Panels, the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Executive on the work programme, as required by the Council's Constitution.

The work programme will necessarily be subject to continual refinement and updating. The 'future proposed reviews' are those which are unlikely to be resourced until 2012/13 or later.

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION</b>	
1.	<b>Co-ordination of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels</b>
2.	<b>Routine monitoring of the performance of the Council's corporate functions</b>  To include: the Corporate Performance Overview Reports; the Performance Monitoring Reports of the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department; progressing the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre; and progress on strategic risk management.
3.	<b>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</b>
4.	<b>2012/13 Budget Scrutiny</b>  To review the Council's budget proposals for 2012/13, and plans for future years. Overview and Scrutiny Panels will also scrutinise the budget proposals in their departmental areas.
5.	<b>Crime and Disorder Committee</b>  To carry out the role of statutory 'Crime and Disorder Committee'.
6. (New)	<b>Policy Development</b>  To contribute to the formulation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Council's new performance management framework, following the ending of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the National Indicator Set. (Estimated start early 2011.)</li> <li>b) The Council's new Medium Term Objectives, following the 2011 local government elections. (Estimated start Autumn 2011.)</li> </ul>

	<p>c) Plans for neighbourhood engagement, in the light of the Localism Bill and local developments.</p> <p>d) The 2012 refresh of the Information and Communications Technology Strategy.</p>
7.	<p><b>Sustaining Economic Prosperity</b></p> <p>To contribute to the Council's approach to delivery of Priority 6, to sustain the economic prosperity of the Borough during the current economic downturn. (Estimated start – late 2011.)</p>

<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	
1.	<p><b>Monitoring the performance of the Adult Social Care and Health Department</b></p> <p>To include on-going review of the Performance Monitoring Reports, receiving statutory plans and reports (such as the annual reports on complaints received), monitoring the action taken by the Executive to earlier reports by the Panel, and being briefed on the implications of new legislation.</p>
2.	<p><b>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</b></p>
3.	<p><b>2012/13 Budget Scrutiny</b></p> <p>To review the Council's Adult Social Care budget proposals for 2012/13, and plans for future years.</p>
4.	<p><b>Policy Development</b></p> <p>To contribute to the update of the Carers Strategy, consequent on new statutory requirements.</p>
<b>Future Proposed Reviews</b>	
5. (New)	<p><b>A Review of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards</b></p>
6. (New)	<p><b>Substance Misuse</b></p> <p>A review of the Council's response, and that of its partners, to the government's new requirements in its 2010 Drug Strategy.</p>



<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	
1.	<p><b>Monitoring the performance of the Children, Young People and Learning Department</b></p> <p>To include on-going review of the Performance Monitoring Reports, receiving statutory plans and reports (such as the annual reports on the Children and Young People's Plan, and on complaints received) and monitoring the action taken by the Executive to earlier reports by the Panel.</p>
2.	<b>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</b>
3.	<p><b>2012/13 Budget Scrutiny</b></p> <p>To review the Council's Children, Young People and Learning budget proposals for 2012/13, and plans for future years.</p>
4. (New)	<p><b>Policy development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <u>Child Poverty Strategy</u> – to monitor the implementation of the new strategy and contribute to its future development.</li> <li>b) <u>School meals</u> – using the Member review of school meals, contribute to forming the procurement specification for the new school meals contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Future Proposed Reviews</b>	
5. (New)	<p><b>The Provision of School Places</b></p> <p>To review the Council's arrangements for providing places for children in Bracknell Forest's schools, to include the school admissions process.</p>
6. (New)	<p><b>Schools Governance</b></p> <p>To review the comments by Ofsted about governance in Bracknell Forest Schools, and the arrangements being made to achieve effective governance in all schools.</p>
7.	<p><b>English as an Additional Language</b></p> <p>To carry out a follow-up review to the issues which arose in the 2008 Overview and Scrutiny review of English as an Additional Language in Bracknell Forest schools.</p>
8. (New)	<b>School Record Keeping</b>
9. (New)	<p><b>Common Assessment Framework</b></p> <p>As a follow-up to the review of safeguarding children, to review the arrangements for the Common Assessment Framework in Children's Social Care.</p>

<b>ENVIRONMENT CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	
1.	<p><b>Monitoring the performance of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department</b></p> <p>To include on-going review of the Performance Monitoring Reports; review of any inspection reports or self-evaluations; and monitoring the action taken by the Executive to earlier reports by the Panel.</p>
2.	<b>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</b>
3.	<p><b>2012/13 Budget Scrutiny</b></p> <p>To review the Council's Environment, Culture and Communities budget proposals for 2012/13, and plans for future years.</p>
4.	<p><b>Monitoring significant departmental issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementation of the Local Development Framework</li> <li>• The implementation of the Supporting People Programme Action Plan on an annual basis.</li> <li>• Implementation of the new national structure for Housing and Council Tax benefits.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Highway Maintenance</b></p> <p>To complete the review of the Council's plans and performance for highway maintenance.</p>
6.	<p><b>Commercial Sponsorship</b></p> <p>To complete the Member Reference Group exploring the possible procurement of a commercial sponsorship scheme.</p>
7. (New)	<p><b>Policy Development</b></p> <p>Local Transport Plan – To review the outcome of public consultation, and to contribute to the development of the Implementation Plan for LTP 3.</p>
<b>Future Proposed Reviews</b>	
8. (New)	<p><b>Libraries</b></p> <p>To review the options for future provision of the Library Service, to include possible use of volunteers.</p>

9. (New)	<p><b>Public Health</b></p> <p>To carry out a joint review with other Scrutiny Panels on the Council's response to the transfer-in from the Primary Care Trust of public health responsibilities. To include measures to prevent ill-health and to promote good health.</p>
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<b>HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	
1.	<p><b>Policy development and monitoring the implementation of the major changes from the 2010 NHS White Paper</b></p> <p>Contribute to the Council's and NHS policy development, and monitor in particular (subject to legislation): the transfer of the Public Health responsibilities from the PCT to the Council; the creation of the GP Consortium, Local HealthWatch and the new Health and Wellbeing Board; and establishing the new arrangements for Health Overview and Scrutiny.</p>
2.	<p><b>In conjunction with the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, monitoring the performance and budget of the Berkshire East PCT and the NHS trusts serving Bracknell Forest</b></p> <p>This will include: the linkage with the Operating Framework and the national NHS priorities set by the Department of Health; the progress of health service providers on infection-control, particularly in relation to MRSA and C Difficile; the transfer and merger of Community Health Services; the financial position of Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Trust; the NHS Operating Framework which sets the priorities for health; and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</p>
3.	<p><b>Responding to NHS Consultations</b></p> <p>The Health O&amp;S Panel is a statutory consultee for any substantial variation in NHS services affecting the Borough, and usually up to 3-5 consultations occur each year.</p>
<b>Future Proposed Reviews</b>	
4.	<p><b>The New NHS Constitution</b></p> <p>To review the implementation by NHS organisations of the NHS Constitution, which brings together a number of rights, pledges and responsibilities for staff and patients.</p>
5.	<p><b>New Health Facilities in Bracknell</b></p> <p>As a follow-up to the 2010 O&amp;S report on the Bracknell Healthspace, to review the provision of health services from the new Healthspace also the Brant's Bridge centre for cancer and renal services.</p>

Note - This programme may need to be amended to meet new requirements arising during the year.

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
21 JUNE 2011**

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**SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PROPOSED WORKING GROUP  
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Executive and Council are scheduled to approve the next stages of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) in September. Given the importance of the proposals it contains, this report proposes a means for the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to provide its views to Executive and Council to inform the next stage of decision making.

**2. SUGGESTED ACTION**

- 2.1 **That a Working Group of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is established in order to consider and comment on the next stages of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document before consideration by the Executive and Council in September.**

**3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Council is required to identify a supply of available land to meet the Borough's development needs. This is being implemented through the preparation of the Site SADPD. Work on the SADPD is now at an advanced stage with consultation on the Council's preferred option having taken place during December 2010 – January 2011. The next stage in the process is the formal publication of the draft document which triggers a further round of consultation prior to submission of the document to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent inspector.
- 3.2 A revised Local Development Scheme (due to go to the Executive in July) will propose that the decision to publish and submit the document go to the Executive and Council in November 2011. Given the importance of the document to the future of the Borough, and the previous call-in at an earlier stage of the process, it is considered important that the matter is subject to effective scrutiny as part of the process. It is therefore proposed that a working group of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is established in order to consider the SADPD proposals and provide comments on them to form part of the consideration of the matter by the Executive and Council.
- 3.3 In order for the Working Group's comments to be available for the Executive in November, they will need to be provided by mid October. It is therefore proposed that the working group meet during September / early October. The first meeting could focus on the work to date and the planning and technical background to the proposed

approach. The second and any necessary further meetings could focus on the final publication document and the changes proposed following the preferred option consultation and the findings of further technical work.

### Background Papers

Bracknell Forest Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Preferred Option November 2010

### Contact for Further Information

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## ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 JUNE 2011

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

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

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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## ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

### EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	I028822
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**TITLE:** Crowthorne High Street - Modifications to Traffic Calming

**PURPOSE OF DECISION:** To seek approval to promote modifications to the existing road hump scheme within Crowthorne High Street.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Within existing budgets.

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

**PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:** Local Members & Parish Council consulted to date.

**METHOD OF CONSULTATION:** Public Notice/Consultation - to follow decision.

**DATE OF DECISION:** 15 Jun 2011

REFERENCE	I029229
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**TITLE:** Older Person Accommodation and Support Services Strategy

**PURPOSE OF DECISION:** Strategy to enable the development of accommodation and support services for older people.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** direction of the existing budgeted £1.5m to support part of the strategy.

**WHO WILL TAKE DECISION:** Executive

**PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:** Older people, developers of accommodation and providers of support services.

**METHOD OF CONSULTATION:** Older people were consulted via questionnaires as were developers of accommodation and providers of support services.

**DATE OF DECISION:** 5 Jul 2011

<b>REFERENCE</b>	I019818
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**TITLE:** Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document Draft & Legal Agreement for the Special Protection Area Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Project.

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

Also to seek authorisation to collect contributions from new additional dwellings to be spent on a strategic sub-regional project and sign a contract between Bracknell Forest Council, Natural England and 10 other local authorities.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Within existing budget.

**WHO WILL TAKE DECISION:** Executive

**PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:** None.

**METHOD OF CONSULTATION:** Public Notice

**DATE OF DECISION:** 5 Jul 2011

<b>REFERENCE</b>	I027268
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**TITLE:** Revised Local Development Scheme

**PURPOSE OF DECISION:** To approve an updated Local Development Scheme for the preparation of Local Development Documents.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Within existing budgets.

**WHO WILL TAKE DECISION:** Executive

**PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:** Public, Amenity Groups and Statutory Consultees.

**METHOD OF CONSULTATION:** All LDD Consultations to be in accordance with Statement of Community Involvement.

**DATE OF DECISION:** 5 Jul 2011

<b>REFERENCE</b>	I027471
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**TITLE:** Site Allocations Development Plan Document - Publication and Submission.

**PURPOSE OF DECISION:** Recommendation to Council to approve the publication of the proposed Site Allocations Development Plan Document and associated documents for a statutory period of six weeks and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Within existing budget.

**WHO WILL TAKE DECISION:** Executive

**PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:**

**METHOD OF CONSULTATION:** Consultation to be in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended.

**DATE OF DECISION:** 6 Sep 2011

<b>REFERENCE</b>	I023585
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**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:** 18 Oct 2011

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