



NOTICE OF MEETING

**Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday 23 October 2012, 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell**

To: Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Finnie (Chairman), Councillor McLean (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mrs Angell, Brossard, Ms Brown, Finch, Gbadebo, 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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Panel
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Bracknell**

AGENDA

Page No

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

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

2. 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 17 July 2012.

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3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to declare any personal 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. Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

4. 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.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive submissions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

6. THAMES VALLEY VISION - CARBON REDUCTION

Mark Stannard of Scottish and Southern Energy will give a presentation in respect of the Thames Valley Vision for Carbon reduction which aims to find new ways of managing the existing UK national electricity power grid in the future.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

7. QUARTERLY SERVICE REPORT (QSR)

To consider the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the QSR for the first quarter of 2012/13 (April to June) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities. An overview of the second quarter of 2012/13 will also be provided.

Please bring the previously circulated Quarterly Service Report to the meeting. The QSR is attached to this agenda if viewed online.

OVERVIEW AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

8. CAR CLUB SCHEMES

To receive a presentation in respect of Car Club schemes which seek to promote sustainable modes of transport and more efficient use of cars.

9. PUBLIC REALM SERVICES - SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR 2014

To note preparations for the procurement of the above services and make contributions to inform the Executive.

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10. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE REPORT

To receive a progress update in respect of the Borough's Local Development Framework and the Revised Local Development Scheme for the preparation of Local Plan documents.

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11. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

An update report regarding the emerging arrangements for the transfer of Public Health functions from the Primary Care Trust to the Council is attached for noting.

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12. PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CONCESSIONARY FARES REPORT AND WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The report of the review undertaken by the Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Working Group and an update on the other working groups is attached.

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13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT

To note the Bi-Annual Progress Report of the Assistant Chief Executive.

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HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

14. EXECUTIVE KEY AND NON-KEY DECISIONS

To consider scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Environment, Culture and Communities.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has been arranged for Tuesday 22 January 2013.

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

17 JULY 2012
7.30 - 9.15 PM



Present:

Councillors McLean (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Brossard, Ms Brown, Finch, Ms Miller and Mrs Barnard (Substitute)

Executive Member:

Councillor Mrs Hayes

Also Present:

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Mark Devon, Chief Officer: Leisure & Culture
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
Wayne Scott, Traffic Manager
Richard Walton, Head of Parks and Countryside

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Finnie, Gbadebo and Porter

1. **Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Finnie be elected Chairman of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2012/13.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2012/13.

COUNCILLOR MCLEAN IN THE CHAIR

3. **Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

The Panel noted the attendance of the following substitute member:

Councillor Mrs Barnard for Councillor Finnie

4. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 24 April 2012 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

5. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

6. Public Participation

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

7. Quarterly Service Report (QSR)

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report (QSR) for the fourth quarter of 2011/12 (January to March) relating to Environment, Culture and Communities (ECC).

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities gave a presentation in respect of the ECC Department's QSR and Service Plan. The Director thanked Chief Officer of Housing, Simon Hendey, for attending his last ECC Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting as the Housing function now fell under the remit of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

As at 31 March 2012, the revenue finance major variances under spend was £1,667,000. There had been major budget changes but no major effect on the funding available to spend as these were mainly technical adjustments. There had been major budget changes in relation to Waste PFI Accounting Entries, Highway Maintenance Capitalisation, IAS19 Person Accounting Entries, Recharges, Capital Charges, Street Cleaning, Bracknell Forest Homes and Additional Works, Highway Maintenance Pot Holes Grant, Supporting People Handyman Grant, and Housing Benefit Initial Claim.

Major variances in revenue had occurred in relation to cemetery and crematorium income, building control, concessionary fares, landscape services, waste management, housing benefit subsidy and administration, and departmental Human Resources. Considerably less funding was being spent on landfill and reserves would be carried forward where possible.

The current budget for 2012-13 was £51,076,000. There was not as much uptake of car park season tickets as companies were seeking alternatives. Current trends included additional income for Coral Reef and reduced income for Downshire Golf Complex. Golf courses nationally were suffering due to the particularly wet and windy weather. Section 106 funding was received intermittently from developments.

The Council's Executive had agreed to fund £300,000 this financial year on low cost home ownership. Staff vacancies at the Council were fairly static and sickness rates were good at present. Around 30,000 people had turned out to see the Olympic Torch pass through Bracknell on Tuesday 10 July 2012 at approximately 5.30pm to 6pm. The Victorian Fayre due to be held at South Hill Park on Saturday 21 July had been cancelled due to the heavy levels of rainfall making the ground too wet.

Congratulations were given to everyone involved in the roll out of the brown bins in the borough. Machines had been ordered for pay and display car parking and it was expected that these would be installed in September or October 2012. The consultation regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy was being held for six weeks until the end of August 2012.

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

- £350,000 funding had been spent on pot holes in the borough.
- There were issues with external contracts such as gas works and BT. There was an interface issue as the system Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) used differed from the system external contractors used.
- The use of computers in libraries was an important statistic to measure; as with any service provided by BFC, the uptake of the service was useful to know when planning future service provision. Some of the computers in libraries were old and in need of replacement, and so were not being used as much.
- A Building Control contract had been secured with a major developer which showed that BFC was able to compete with the private sector in this area.
- Research was being undertaken in the area of biomass in order to save money. Potential parties involved were meeting to discuss this further. An aim was to facilitate others to develop a tree station in the borough; it was hoped that plans for this would be finalised this year. The biomass plant at a local supermarket was operational.
- Figures in relation to net additional homes provided annually, the number of affordable homes delivered annually, and the processing of major planning applications were low due to effect of the recession. The targets set were national targets. Jennett's Park and The Parks were still delivering in relation to these targets but the smaller development sites were not delivering as much. Affinity Sutton Housing Association had taken ownership of some properties at the start of the financial year, affecting the figures in relation to affordable housing.
- The unclaimed carcasses of two abandoned horses had been removed from fields in the borough which was an unusual occurrence.
- The inclement weather had affected the grass cutting and landscaping duties of BFC due to the exceptional growing conditions and difficulty in cutting in wet conditions but this did not have a budgetary impact.
- The number of households currently in bed and breakfast was seven at the time of the meeting. The Housing Department had been able to achieve a reduction in the number of households in bed and breakfast recently by using other temporary accommodation solutions. The target was to keep no more than six households in bed and breakfast.
- Garth Hill College were using a high amount of energy due to the size of the College and the number of pupils attending but there were no conservation issues at the site which BFC was aware of. The matter would be explored and further information provided.

8. **Recycling and Waste Minimisation**

The Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection presented an update report on the 2011/12 full year landfill figures, the first quarter figures following changes to brown bin arrangements and work with Green Machine at Longshot Lane on the use and recycling of paint.

The key areas included a reflection of performance and the level of waste going to landfill which had decreased over the last three years now that 33% of waste was being converted into energy and households were throwing away less. Improvements in recycling were continuing in Bracknell.

The Environment Agency had said that street sweepings could not be converted for use as compost anymore due to possible contaminants in them but there was an ongoing debate regarding this. There were now over 13,000 brown bins registered at households in the borough. Green Machine was processing paint and selling it at an outlet at Longshot Lane which provided a good source of paint.

BFC had been encouraging people to bring in their old electrical goods, which could then be repaired and resold if possible. BFC was trying to reduce the amount of contamination in blue bins and to improve the process.

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

- Flats were a particular problem in relation to the contamination of blue bins as there was no single owner of the bins and this was a national problem. Refuse staff were encouraged to spot recycling contaminants and the cleaner the product the better the outcome of recycling.
- Wet leaves collected from drains were taken to landfill.
- A visit would be arranged for Panel Members to Smallmead civic amenity centre and to Green Machine at Longshot Lane, to witness the paint recycling process.

9. **Local Development Framework - Update Report**

The Local Development Scheme was a three-year project plan, which set out time scales for the preparation of planning documents. The current Scheme for Bracknell Forest came into effect on 8 August 2011 and therefore covered the period to 7th August 2014. A review of progress on the work programme and any issues arising was set out in the Annual Monitoring Report.

The two key development plan documents proposed for preparation within the three year period were the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and commencement of the Core Strategy Review. The Site Allocations DPD Draft Submission was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 June 2012. This followed approval by Council on 30 November 2011 and a further period of consultation from January to March 2012.

The Panel noted the documents that currently formed part of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Framework (LDF) and the stage reached in the preparation of other documents that would eventually form part of the Bracknell Forest Borough LDF on adoption.

10. **Working Group Update Report**

The Panel noted the update report in respect of the working groups of the Panel.

11. **Work Programme 2012/13**

The Panel noted the agreed Work Programme for the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for 2012/13.

12. **Consultation on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Greenspace Quality Improvements Programme - Forward Plan Item I034536**

The Head of Parks and Countryside gave a presentation on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Quality Improvements Programme.

The focus of the programme was recreational open spaces providing mitigation and infrastructure to enable the Council to deliver sustainable development and growth, such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs).

Priorities included access to land and strategic recreational corridors, empowering and involving local communities, and healthy active lifestyles. Objectives included provision, maintenance, and use and enjoyment. Sustaining and raising quality standards and meeting the needs of a growing population were important.

Standards focused on Green Flag criteria and included exploring and protecting rare heathland sites, accessibility, and clear signage. Section 106 contributions would be applied in relation to benchmark standards and there were specific legal constraints regarding the use of Section 106 contributions. BFC were consulting on a two phase project regarding improvements to the parks and open spaces of the borough. Phase one was to prioritise green spaces in need of improvement and networks to help map contributions.

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

- BFC had a broad portfolio of land holdings with different areas and functions. Management decisions lay with the land manager and the sectors in BFC were reviewed regularly in relation to the Council's priorities and portfolio's.
- Officers worked together to inform policies regarding the amount and quality of open space and these policies were implemented through Section 106 agreements.
- Links would be created to and between green spaces in the borough.
- A mailshot had been sent to all Borough Councillors and members would be further involved and invited to make suggestions on the Strategy and Programme at the next stage of the process.
- Housing numbers compared favourably in Bracknell against Natural England standards. The Strategy would not conflict with new housing in the borough; it would give opportunities to expand on and improve green spaces.
- There were projects to improve woodland quality and the path network in the borough, and with new housing there would be buffers between the housing and green spaces.
- The natural qualities of green spaces would be reinforced to keep their wild character, particularly in meadows and woodland areas.
- Plants were being introduced in certain places in the borough which were more sustainable in extreme weather conditions, such as at the Italian Gardens at South Hill Park and Crowthorne Woods. There was a higher biodiversity value and reduced costs due to less servicing.

13. **Highway Network Management Action Plan - Forward Plan Item I034415**

The Chief Officer: Planning and Transport, and the Traffic Manager, presented a report on the Highway Network Management Action Plan.

The report invited the Panel to consider and comment on the Highway Network Management Action Plan prior to its determination by the Executive Member for Planning & Transport on 31 July 2012. The Action Plan contained the key actions the Council would undertake to deliver its statutory Network Management duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004.

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

- BFC were limited by existing legislation and only had certain powers to resolve problems with utilities companies in the borough. BFC could enforce utilities work via a permit scheme where companies would need to notify BFC of their works and receive permission for them to be undertaken. In this way BFC could ensure that works were properly planned.
- The Highway Network Management Action Plan would give BFC support, endorsement and direction. The operation of works depended on the operator but BFC wanted to gain more control in this area.
- BFC could issue defect notices, charge financial penalties for over running and would litigate if necessary.
- A Section 58 restriction could be placed on works following road surfacing which would ban works other than service connections and emergency works. This was an automatic restriction.
- Panel Members would be provided with further information on where action had been taken by Bracknell Forest Council against utilities companies undertaking works in Bracknell and the penalties given.

14. **Executive Forward Plan**

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

CHAIRMAN

**TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012**

**PUBLIC REALM SERVICES – SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR 2014
Director of Environment Culture and Communities**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the Panel of the work that has been undertaken to help inform how the Council should procure a range of council services, some of which are currently contracted to external partners and due to expire in 2014. The Panel's comments are sought on the component parts of any contracts and outline agreement to length of contract and price / quality threshold. A detailed procurement plan is scheduled to be presented to the Executive in December.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the research undertaken and highlighted in the report which informs the Officer conclusions primarily detailed in paras 5.22 to 5.26, and 5.36 to 5.42; and**
- 2.2 **Highlights any matters or observation it wishes to be identified to the Executive meeting on 11th December.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To ensure the Council delivers its public realm services in the most efficient and effective manner and in a way which accords with the preferences of the Executive.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are numerous theoretical combinations of service delivery options, but those described in the report are felt to be most beneficial to the Council in ensuring cost effective services which can deliver quality public realm.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The contracts for highways maintenance and works (including gulley emptying), street cleansing, highway consultancy, and street lighting expire in 2014 and these must realistically be re-procured through an EU compliant procurement process. An officer working group led by the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities has been established to manage this process and its membership includes representatives from relevant service divisions and corporate services namely finance, legal and procurement.
- 5.2 Rather than simply focus on re-procuring the status-quo, the working group sought to examine what other options existed for the Council with the objective of delivering a high quality public realm in the most effective and cost efficient way. In addition to those services which are already being delivered by external contractors, the working group also considered service delivery options relating to transport policy and

strategy, traffic management and road safety, management of parks and countryside (routine maintenance is included in landscape services), and maintenance of land via landscape services.

Soft market testing

5.3 In order to inform the decision making process, the project team sought the views of contractors delivering a broad range of services, and other councils who have configured different service delivery models. The group has met with four major suppliers – Balfour Beatty, Ringway, Volker and May Gurney – and three councils – Buckinghamshire County Council, Surrey County Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The purpose of these meetings has been to discover what different methods of structuring, tendering and contracting the services have been used and how successfully. The information received is confidential, and the conclusions highlighted below are those of the project team.

5.4 The suppliers and councils were asked some fundamental questions:

- What scope of services do they consider could most effectively be combined for tender?
- What efficiencies have they realised in current contracts, and how have they arisen?
- What client-side do they consider most effective?

5.5 The services considered in this review were:

- Public realm maintenance – highways, paths, subways, drainage, bridges, public spaces, spaces used for services related to the public realm.
- Public realm works – large scale projects including capital programmes.
- Street and public lighting.
- Street cleansing.
- Landscape maintenance.
- Management of parks and countryside
- Highway consultancies.
- Transport planning and policy
- Traffic management and road safety

Some of these services are currently provided internally, and the research has included exploration of whether and how such services should be market tested. The approximate annual spend on these service blocks is detailed below:

Contractors

FUNCTION	TOTAL ANNUAL SPEND (approx)	COMMENTS
Highway Maintenance and projects	£6.5m - £7.5m	Capital and revenue, all sources
Street lighting	£500k	Excludes electricity
Street cleansing	£1.2m	Includes subways
Highway consultancy services	£360k	

Internal operations

FUNCTION	TOTAL ANNUAL SPEND (approx)	COMMENTS
Landscape Services	£1.4m	All BFC land inc schools
Parks and Countryside	£1.1m	Excludes landscape £: includes mandatory services
Transport Planning etc	£495k	
Traffic management and road safety	£415k	£ scheme expenditure in contractor value

- 5.6 The drivers for the review are considered as follows:
- To continue to drive out inefficiencies to give members a choice post 2014 – current service level at reduced cost or improved service at current cost.
 - Current strategy of investing in highways maintenance is unsustainable in that it is set to simply minimise the decline of our highways network.
 - Improving safety of the highway network is a national driver.
 - An increasing public demand for better quality public realm
 - The impact of the SPA on the borough's development

Observations from meetings with suppliers and councils

- 5.7 Efficiencies are possible by co-locating and integrating with the supplier. However, neither councils nor suppliers evidenced any tangible financial savings through co-locating in terms of a reduced workforce for example, but the need for close working relationships helped by co-location was probably the one consistent message from all the meetings. None of the councils had established separate organisations such as joint ventures. All had, to some extent, established practices which involved integrated teams staffed both by the council and the contractor, usually but not exclusively co-located. The councils and suppliers were enthusiastic about this approach, which was not static – changes to who did what continued through the life of the contracts.
- 5.8 All identified that evolution of services was better than revolution since it often appeared not immediately apparent where efficiencies could be derived from. This is probably particularly important for BFC since our resources are small when compared with Bucks or Surrey for example.
- 5.9 Perhaps not surprisingly, contractors felt the best evolution of the relationship between the Council and the supplier would be best achieved by ensuring that the 2014 contract is both wide in its scope and has flexibility for change in the relationship e.g. transfer of particular services to the supplier can happen at the point where it is appropriate, or not at all.
- 5.10 It is not clear how such flexibility to change (5.8 and 5.9) can be built into a compliant tender process, where there is a requirement to tender for a clearly defined set of services, and changing these services after contract award could introduce risk of challenge.
- 5.11 Pricing schedules, contract terms, and performance measurements are crucial for success. They may vary between different elements of the contracted services, and

may be changed over time (but see 5.10). While contractors were keen to see very long contracts put in place, discussions highlighted that up-front investments (in plant and equipment for example) were most efficiently written-off in about 7 years and therefore that may be a basis for contract duration. BFC successfully drove down the cost of the waste collection contract by financing vehicles, and this would be worth exploring again.

- 5.12 A commitment to spend beyond a one-year planning horizon was said to potentially generate a 10-15% saving on materials (e.g. tarmac) by allowing contractors to negotiate longer term supplies and therefore get lower prices. This was felt to be a reasonable assertion and is typically seen in other businesses. Other operational efficiencies were also said to be possible through longer term planning. While this commitment may seem to operate outside the annual budget cycle adopted by the Council, a detailed assessment of risk (of not funding what was planned) and reward (savings made by a commitment) remains worth exploring.
- 5.13 Some of the councils use the contract term and the potential for extensions to it as a reward for good performance. For example, in a five year contract, award an additional year's extension after two years of good performance. Or, in a ten year contract, reduce the contract by one year for consistently bad performance. Such an approach requires clear and agreed performance measurement and reporting.
- 5.14 Including as a performance measurement the alignment of the supplier's objectives or outcomes with the Council's.
- 5.15 Including as a performance measurement the delivery of efficiencies and/or savings to the Council by the supplier. One example noted was the inclusion as a performance measurement of a commitment to move from reactive maintenance to proactive preventative maintenance. It is unclear how the supplier can be held accountable when this is a client-led activity, and would certainly require a committed capital spend from the Council.
- 5.16 Some of the councils undertook a competitive dialogue form of tender, but limited the scope – by intensive effort over a short period of time and/or by limiting the areas which were in the dialogue. This approach is not favoured by the project group and it doesn't seem that we can meet the statutory conditions for using this form of tender
- 5.17 More than one supplier referred to cross-skilling the workforce. A trivial example mentioned was to ensure that a supplier's employee can pick up "sharps" when cutting the grass. On a larger scale, one council mentioned redeploying street cleansing staff to woodland clearance when appropriate.
- 5.18 Two of the councils use their prime contractor as a managing agent for other contracts – at Bucks many of the lots were won by other contractors but the prime contractor then manages these contracts on behalf of the council.
- 5.19 None of the contractors or councils were delivering the entire range of services that BFC were considering as part of its overall public realm contracts and in terms of financial scale and therefore focus, all of the contracts were biased towards highway maintenance and improvement works. While all the contractors stated that "biggest is best" in terms of contract scope, the financial or efficiency statements to support this assertion were unconvincing.
- 5.20 While there were different delivery models, all of the contracts and councils had retained a strategic client for integrated transport elements of highway improvements

primarily to retain local knowledge, for continuity, and to reduce risk. Buckinghamshire County Council had mixed teams working on highway design and strategy, but the majority of the “intelligent client” remained under the direct employment of BCC.

- 5.21 While Landscape Services are considered to offer an efficient and effective service, there is clearly a mature market for this type of work and therefore the opportunity should be taken to market test landscape services in 2014.
- 5.22 None of the contractors managed parks and countryside although some undertook minor maintenance works within parks and countryside and therefore further research was undertaken through local authorities to look at alternative service delivery models. The majority utilised a model similar to BFC’s in which management of parks and countryside was distinct from routine maintenance which were delivered either by an in-house team or by an external contractor. Milton Keynes has established a charitable trust to manage its parks and countryside and this is seen as an effective way of protecting the countryside from harm and to avoid forced budget economies. For the trust to agree to manage land, endowments are required to provide sustainable finance for maintenance. Surrey has an arrangement with a local wildlife trust to manage its countryside estate. These are primarily large estates with at least one Ranger on site so the land holding portfolio is quite different to Bracknell Forest’s. London Borough of Hounslow has virtually its entire leisure, culture and environment portfolio managed by John Laing Integrated Services over a 10 - 15 year contract.

Subsequent conclusions by the project team

- 5.23 Internal inefficiencies should not be outsourced. Outsourcing of inefficiencies allows the supplier to receive all or some of the saving. Inefficiencies should be removed internally. Such inefficiencies, whether related to organisational structure, processes or administration need to be identified by the relevant Chief Officers and included in BFC savings/ efficiencies prior to any tender process and as part of the Council’s budget setting process.
- 5.24 Although the project team felt it was feasible to consider in-sourcing the street cleansing contract since primarily this is a service based contract and had synergies with landscaping, the conclusion reached was that for all services currently outsourced, this should continue to be the case.
- 5.25 The Council should retain its own intellectual capability in terms of strategic highway management and design and decisions relating to the ongoing maintenance of the highway. There was no evidence given from the soft market testing about how an equivalent highway consultancy services provided through a contract, usually as part of sub-contract to a highways maintenance contract, was more cost effective than an in-house team which in BFC’s case was originally in-sourced to generate efficiencies and resulted in higher member satisfaction. This intellectual capability would critically ensure continuity in terms of highway strategy and maintenance, and retain the capability to prepare, issue and manage complex technical briefs.. However, specialist consultancy services that the Council only requires intermittently should continue to be provided through external sources. However, discussions with all the contractors highlighted that there may be efficiencies to be made in reviewing the relationship between client and contractor in specifying works and projects and this needs to form part of any implementation plan with a contractor.
- 5.26 Although landscape services have generated service efficiencies over the years, there is clearly a mature market for this type of work and it seems appropriate that the

service should be tested again against the market (there have been competition and best value reviews previously). The quality of work and responsiveness of the landscape team is good and therefore it is felt that an option to continue an in-house service should form part of the tender offer. This also allows local, specialist landscape services to bid for a "landscape only" contract thus increasing competition. Outsourcing will require the Council to have new client side costs and re-apportion overheads but these will form part of the overall decision.

- 5.27 While research showed there were various options for externalising the management of parks and countryside, these were not common and there was limited evidence of any financial economies or service efficiencies. Relationships with the charitable sector were apparently primarily established to protect open spaces but in BFC's circumstances this would not be a strong driver. Particularly relevant for BFC is its location adjacent to the SPA and the ongoing need to adopt new open spaces as SANGS, and to develop existing open spaces to be SANGS in response to development. While all service delivery models should be reviewed on a regular basis, the discussions and research highlighted that management of parks and countryside appear to be normally distinct from the other services under consideration for a 2014 procurement and therefore they should not be included in the range of services considered for contract in 2014.

Collaboration

- 5.28 The project group sought potential partners in order to create a more significant procurement package. The 5 other Berkshire authorities, the council's of the South East 7 (SE7), and the local town and parish councils were all written to asking them if they wished to participate. 7 of the potential partners responded but none expressed what could be considered a realistic and tangible offer of partnership. Critically, the timescale for the various procurements did not match up with BFC's. The project group therefore determined that with this lack of interest it would be un-productive to pursue a partner for the BFC contract(s).

Contract configuration

- 5.29 The team considered how best to structure the contract offers. While there are several options available and contractors in particular were keen to see very large contracts in terms of scope, the project team concluded that the best outcome in terms of service delivery, least risk and financial efficiency would come with developing two major contracts broadly relating to "works" and "services".
- 5.30 While it was accepted that in theory there could be some savings in management costs and overheads with a very large contract, the range of services delivered were so different that only modest savings would be likely to accrue from re-apportionment of senior management costs. In operational terms this means less management capacity to ensure contracts ran smoothly and performance remains high. Given the high public visibility of public realm this was felt to be an un-necessary risk with no obvious financial benefit. Poor performance would also require additional client side resource to be employed. The team also concluded that it would be extremely difficult (although not impossible) to terminate a contract if only one part was failing badly (eg good highway maintenance but poor landscaping). It was felt that a highway maintenance/works contract involving complex plant, consistently changing materials and a well trained work force was fundamentally different to street cleansing and landscape which utilise relatively simple equipment and a lower trained workforce.

Unrestricted

- 5.31 It is therefore recommended that the first contract bundle should include for all highway maintenance and improvement works including maintenance of street lighting, including gully emptying. .
- 5.32 Bundle 2 should relate to street cleansing and grounds maintenance but with an option for the services to be delivered either independently or as one contract. Members may wish to note that the “contract” with schools for grounds maintenance adds considerable complexity to the procurement process and options are currently being discussed with colleagues in Education.
- 5.33 Bundle 3 should relate to specialist highway consultancy.
- 5.34 Contractors could bid for all services but in anticipation that a combined bid would be less costly than single bids, they would be expected to demonstrate where the efficiencies were derived from as part of the council’s quality assurance processes. We would want to particularly assure ourselves that lower spend areas such as street cleansing but which are particularly important to the Council and residents would continue to receive the appropriate management focus.
- 5.35 Members should note that the management of public realm within the Town Centre once it has been developed is a matter for ongoing discussion and may affect the specifications that relate to contracts. However, no Member action is required at this time other than to note the complication.

Contract Term

- 5.36 The assessment is that it would be preferable to have a contract term of 7 years, extendable by up to a further 7 years subject to performance and long term investment plan. This is a base position since the detailed procurement plan will explore options to deal with either excellent or poor performance (e.g. by reducing the term in the latter case). The contracts for consultancy, which are not asset based, may have to be limited to 4 years depending on the type of contract

Price / quality weighting

- 5.37 While a detailed methodology has yet to be developed, the award of contract should be based on 60% price and 40% quality. The various contracts need not have the same weighting if Members prefer.

Tender options

- 5.38 While there are several possible configurations possible, the Officer group believe that the most effective combination is to offer 4 bundles to the market with the possibility of combining Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance: (1) Highways maintenance/street lighting: (2a) Street cleansing (2b) Grounds maintenance (4) Highway consultancy. In addition to allowing a stand alone contract for landscape services, this option encourages a joint bid to include street cleansing.
- 5.39 Bundle 1 Highways maintenance and improvement works/street lighting
- 5.40 Bundle 2a : Street Cleansing, with the option of combining with 2b
- 5.41 Bundle 2b: Grounds Maintenance, with the option of combining 2a
- 5.42 Bundle 3: Highway consultancy services

- 5.43 While the preferred position is to procure a works contract, a service contract and a consultancy contract, various “in combination” bids may be received and these would need to be assessed for value for money, efficiency and risk.

Other officers

Borough Solicitor

- 5.44 The legal issues that have emerged so far are discussed elsewhere in this report. The services required can only be procured through a Public Contracts Regulations compliant procedure, and the procurement timetable has been drawn up on the basis that the restricted procedure, which the Council has made use of many times before, will be used for this procurement.

Borough Treasurer

- 5.45 The figures presented in the report are a reasonable indication of the average annual cash spend of contracts and in-house services.

Head of Procurement

- 5.46 These are incorporated within the report.

Contact for further information

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**TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012**

**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in an area taking account of social and environmental factors. It comprises Local Development Documents (LDDs), which include Development Plan Documents (DPDs), that are part of the statutory development plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide further interpretation of the implementation of policies set out in a DPD. These documents form the primary basis for the Council's decisions on applications for planning permission. The LDF also includes the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 1.2 Since the system was introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004, significant progress has been made on producing a Bracknell Forest Borough LDF. This report summarises the position, and provides an update following an earlier report (24th April 2012).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the documents that currently form part of the Bracknell Forest Borough LDF and the stage reached in the preparation of other documents that will eventually form part of the Bracknell Forest Borough LDF on adoption.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To advise the Panel of the progress of documents forming part of the Bracknell Forest Borough LDF.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Documents that have been finalised

- 5.1 The Bracknell Forest LDF is a portfolio of documents. There is one main adopted document with development plan status; the Core Strategy. This sets out the overarching strategy for the area, including the level of housing growth.

- 5.2 Apart from the Core Strategy, a number of other LDDs have been produced for Bracknell Forest, including SPDs, the Annual Monitoring Report which reviews progress in implementing policies each year and the Statement of Community Involvement which specifies how stakeholders and communities can be involved in the process of producing planning documents. A list of the Council's adopted documents is at Appendix 1.

Documents that are under preparation or planned

- 5.3 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a three-year project plan, which sets out time scales for the preparation of planning documents. At the time of writing this report an updated LDS was scheduled for consideration at the Executive meeting on 16th October 2012.
- 5.4 The two key development plan documents proposed within the three year period are adoption of the Site Allocations DPD and commencement of a new Local Plan. As Members will be aware, the Site Allocations DPD Draft Submission was approved for submission to the Secretary of State by Council on 30th November. Consultation on the Draft Submission took place during January-March 2012. The document was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 June 2012 and examination hearings have been scheduled for 7th and 8th November and 11th – 14th December 2012. It is hoped to adopt the document in the Spring of 2013, but the date of adoption will depend on whether further consultation is required on any recommended changes following the examination.
- 5.5 The previously reported proposal to carry out a review of the Core Strategy has been reviewed in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in late March 2012. The NPPF makes no reference to Local Development Frameworks or Core Strategies. It refers instead to the production of Local Plans with additional development plan documents only being produced where this is clearly justified. The NPPF provides flexibility in plan-making by allowing for Local Plans to be reviewed in whole or in part.
- 5.6 The new LDS therefore proposes the preparation of a new Local Plan which will be a comprehensive document incorporating a review of the Core Strategy and the replacement of saved policies from the 2002 Bracknell Forest Local Plan. The new Local Plan will need to be based on a full assessment of the Borough's development needs for a period to at least 2031 and to allocate sites to meet those needs.
- 5.7 The NPPF is an important new government planning publication. It distils a large number of planning policy guidance notes and statements into a single framework document. One of its key elements is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.8 Officers have reviewed all the Bracknell Forest planning policies to identify where they do not accord with the new guidance in the NPPF. This has identified the following policies which are not fully compatible with the NPPF:

Saved Local Plan Policies

- EN8 Development on land outside settlements
- GB1 Building in the Green Belt
- GB2 Changes of use of land within the Green Belt
- H8 Affordable Housing
- SC4 Telecommunications provision

Core Strategy Policies

- CS15 Housing Provision
- CS19 Location of Employment Development

5.9 These incompatibilities will be addressed through the preparation of the new Local Plan. In the meantime our saved local plan policies will still carry weight in decision making in proportion to the extent with which they accord with the NPPF. Our Core Strategy policies can still carry their full weight for a 12 month period after which their weight will also depend on the extent to which they accord with the NPPF. We will need to ensure that the Core Strategy Review fills any policy gaps left by the withdrawal of all the previous government guidance (and the abolition of the regional strategy) and complies with the new requirements set out in the NPPF.

6. ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / CONSULTATION

6.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

Bracknell Forest Borough Local Development Scheme: August 2011

Contact for Further Information

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APPENDIX 1

Local Development Framework Update

ADOPTED DOCUMENTS

Development Plan Documents

Core Strategy DPD

- A high level document containing the Council's long-term aspirations for the Borough, and policies to guide and manage development in Bracknell Forest until 2026.
- Adopted - February 2008.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/corestrategy

Bracknell Forest Borough Proposals Map

- Shows Core Strategy designations and Saved Policies from the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan. It will be updated to show the areas of policies and proposed development sites in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (see below) following its adoption.
- Adopted April 2010
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/proposalsmap

Supplementary Planning Documents

Designing for Accessibility SPD

- Provides guidance on making development accessible, including for disabled and other less mobile people.
- Adopted at the 20 June 2006 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/designaccess

Parking Standards SPD

- Contains guidance on parking requirements for residential and other forms of development.
- Adopted at the 24 July 2007 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parking

Limiting the Impact of Development SPD

- Explains how the Council will secure funding for measures (including infrastructure like roads, schools and open space) needed to mitigate the impact of new development.
- Adopted at the 24 July 2007 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lid

Sustainable Resource Management SPD

- Provides guidance on renewable energy, climate change, efficiency and sustainable construction in relation to Core Strategy policies.
- Adopted at the 21 October 2008 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/srm

Amen Corner SPD

- Provides guidance for applications for a comprehensive mixed use development of the Amen Corner South Core Strategy site.
- Adopted at the 16 March 2010 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/amencorner

Character Area Assessments SPD

- Defines the character of specific areas in the Borough and interprets Core Strategy policy.
- Adopted at the 16 March 2010 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/characterareas

Streetscene SPD

- Contains design guidance for streets and other public spaces in residential developments
- Consultation of the Draft SPD undertaken in May 2010
- Adoption at the 29 March 2011 Executive meeting.
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/streetscene

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy SPD

- Explains how negative impacts of residential development on a special protection area for rare birds will be avoided and mitigated.
- Consultation on Draft SPD underway until 24 October 2011
- Adopted March 2012
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/SPA

Warfield SPD

- Provides guidance for planning applications for a comprehensive mixed use development of the Warfield site (formerly known as land North of Whitegrove and Quelm Park). The site is identified for development in the adopted Core Strategy.
- Consultation on the Draft SPD December 2010
- Further targeted consultation on a detailed concept plan during November 2011
- Adopted February 2012
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/warfield

DOCUMENTS UNDER PRODUCTION

Development Plan Documents

Site Allocations DPD

- Will implement the adopted Core Strategy. It will identify sites for future housing development, ensure that appropriate infrastructure is identified and delivered alongside new development and will also revise some designations shown on the Proposals Map.
- Options consultation took place in February-April 2010
- Preferred Options consultation took place November 2010-January 2011
- Council resolution for publication: 30 November 2011
- Consultation period on Draft Submission Document – Jan/March 2012
- Submission – June 29 2012
- Examination – 7-8 Nov and 11-14 Dec 2012
- Adoption – Spring 2013
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sadpd

Bracknell Forest Local Plan

- To provide the opportunity to review the long term vision and strategy for the Borough and produce a comprehensive set of policies in respect of, not only, the delivery of housing, employment, retail and Bracknell town centre, but also, the environment, recreation and transport
- Commencement March 2012
- Publication May/June 2013
- Submission March 2014

- Adoption January/February 2015

Limiting the Impact of Development (LID) SPD

- This SPD needs to be reviewed to take account of the changes to developer contributions arising from the introduction of CIL and updated information on infrastructure requirements and costs.

Proposals Map

- The adopted Proposals Map is based on saved policies in the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan and will be updated to incorporate changes resulting from the adoption of any subsequent Development Plan Documents.

**TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012**

**PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the emerging arrangements for the transfer of Public Health functions to Local Authorities in April 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATION

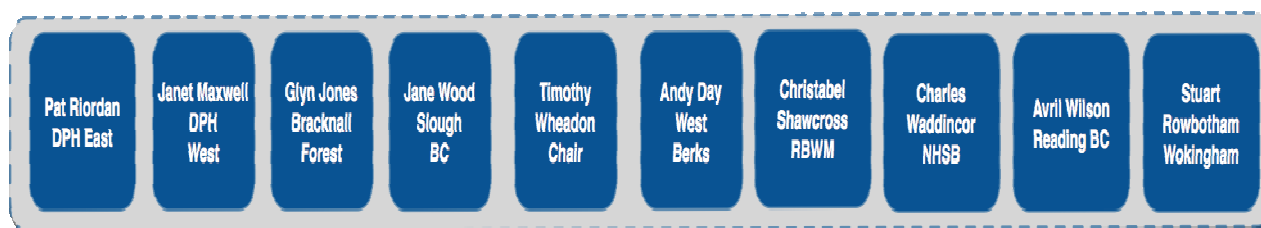
- 2.1 The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note this update report.**

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

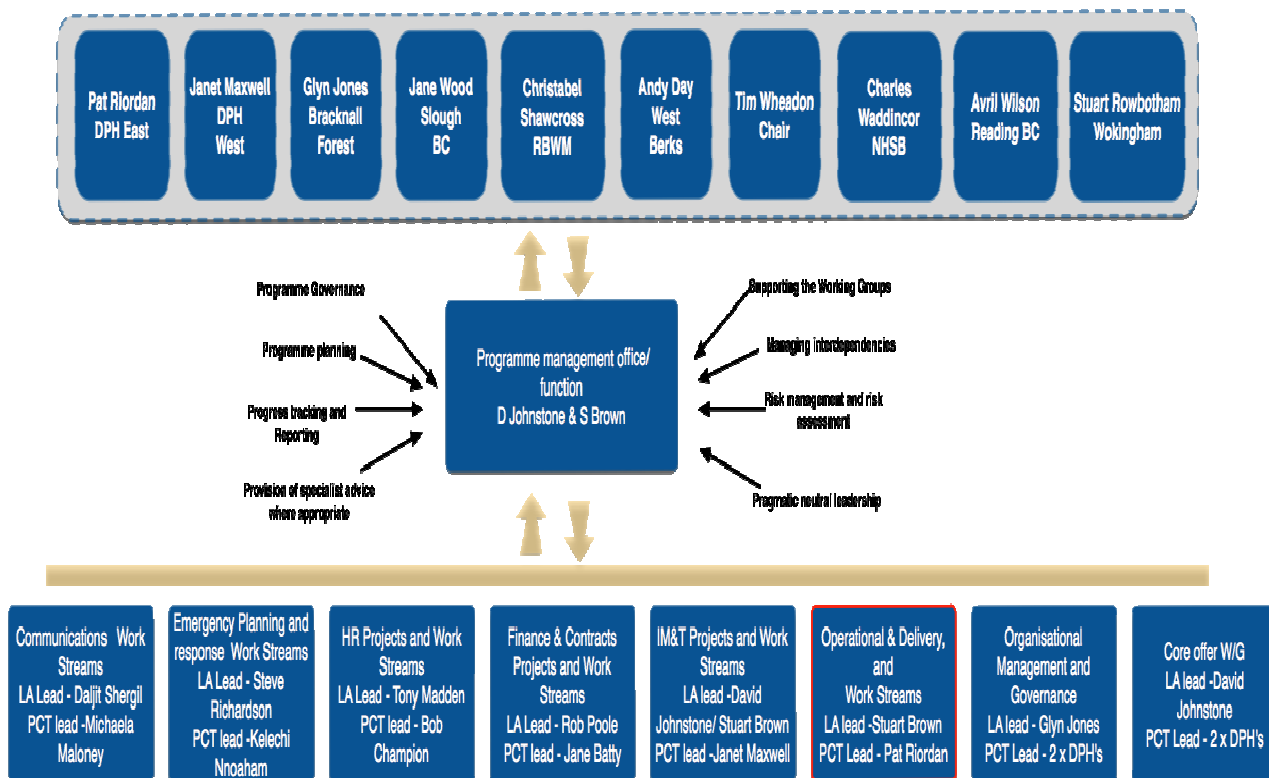
- 3.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 confirms the relocation of Public Health functions, resources and commissioning responsibilities from the NHS into Local Government. Local authorities will be required to discharge their statutory public health responsibilities, detailed in the Public Health Outcomes Framework 2012 from 1 April 2013.
- 3.2 The framework identifies four specific domains that local authorities are required to focus on:
- Domain 1 - Improving the wider determinants of health;
 - Domain 2 - Health improvement;
 - Domain 3 - Health protection;
 - Domain 4 - Healthcare public health and preventing premature mortality
- 3.3 The Act has major implications for the local health system and the relationship between that system and local government. In particular it provides for the:
- Abolition of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), led by GPs, to commission health services locally;
 - Transfers responsibility for public health to local government; and
 - Places a responsibility on Local Government to provide Public Health advice and intelligence back to CCGs and the NHS Commissioning Board;
 - Requires councils to establish Health and Wellbeing Boards;
 - GPs will have responsibility for commissioning a wide range of healthcare services, with some exceptions. The Act allows GPs to join together in consortia, and to commission services in the ways that they judge will deliver the best outcomes for patients

4. PROGRESS SO FAR

- 4.1 Members of the Panel will be aware that early consideration was given to a model based upon a single Strategic Director of Public Health (SDPH) across Berkshire. The preferred position of the Unitary Authorities was for a single SDPH, this was communicated to Charles Waddicor, Chief Executive of the PCT in a letter from Timothy Wheadon dated 14 February 2012. Since this, it has been agreed by the six UAs that Bracknell Forest Council will host the SDPH and Care Team on behalf of the partnership.
- 4.2 The six UAs are working in a spirit of collaboration to develop a framework that would lead to an effective and efficient Public Health model that would have two key objectives:
- To provide real focus and interventions for the local issues and concerns, not only around the health element but also to consider the wider determinants of health as highlighted in the Marmot Report published in February 2010;
 - To establish a public health function that could work across Berkshire and deliver real collaborative sustainable change and efficiencies that would make a real difference to health outcomes and demonstrate real value for money.
- 4.3 The Transition Board has led the transition programme since its inception. The structure of the Board is described in Fig 1 below, which is chaired by Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive, Bracknell Forest Council:



- 4.4 The Board has been supported by two Programme Managers who were engaged to support the transition programme on an East and West basis:
- David Johnstone - supporting the UAs in the West of Berkshire
 - Stuart Brown - supporting the UAs in the East of Berkshire
- 4.5 The CCGs are also represented on the Transition Board as key stakeholders and partners in the new world. They first attended the Transition Board meeting on the 8 May and have been continuously represented since.
- 4.6 The Working Group Approach**
- 4.6.1 Because of the complexity and the enormity of the tasks that needed to be undertaken if we were to deliver **a safe and stable public health service** into local authorities by 31 March 2013, it was decided to establish a number of working groups. The membership of the groups is drawn from all six UAs and includes at least one representative from Public Health.
- 4.6.2 This approach has proved to be a success with each of the UA assured that they are more than adequately represented. Fig 2 below describes the Board and the sub structure Working Group:



4.7 Governance and Structures Working Group

- 4.7.1 This group was established following the Transition Board meeting in April and tasked with designing the proposed structures for the PH teams that will be embedded in each of the UAs as of the 1 April 2013.
- 4.7.2 The group, consisting of the two DPHs, The Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing at Bracknell Forest Council and the two Programme Managers has held a series of workshops and meetings and has developed a proposed structure which was presented to the Transition Board on 12 June for formal approval. This then also formed the basis for discussions at the Chief Executive's Forum and the Berkshire Leaders Forum.
- 4.7.3 The group also completed the production of the Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for the Strategic Director of Public Health for Berkshire and the Lead Consultant role that will be located within each of the Unitary Authorities. Formal consultation on the proposed roles and the core structure commenced on the 23 July 2012.
- 4.7.4 Detailed work to define the specialisms and capacity that would be required within each of the Unitary Authorities began in early August and will complete in time for staff consultations to commence on 1 October.

4.8 Information Management & Technology Working Group

- 4.8.1 This workstream has made good progress since its inception and has already started to take on additional work around the core offer of Public Health advice to the NHS as the programme gathers momentum. A high level product breakdown structure has been completed which will define the deliverables and allow proper planning. Sub workstream leads and working groups have been established for the following areas:

- Information governance & security and its dependencies;
- Identification and recording of information/intelligence assets and liabilities ;
- Information and intelligence allied to commissioning cycles;
- Supporting information/intelligence infrastructure and standards;
- Core offer to the NHS

4.8.2 One of the challenges for local government with the transfer of Public Health services is that in some instances they are in possession of and working with patient identifiable data. The access to and use of which is governed by the NHS clinical information governance framework. This is recognised as a national problem and there is a Public Health task force in the NHS currently looking at this, lead by Professor John Newton.

4.8.3 There are indications that the public health data and intelligence databases will transfer to the new Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) - this has raised some concerns in local government about the possibility of CSUs wanting to charge for the provision of this information in the future - with local authorities having a mandatory duty to supply the Core Offer to CCGs free of charge this places a financial burden on local authorities because the substance of the core offer is dependent on the provision of reliable and accurate data and intelligence which Public Health currently have access to as part of the public health functions and resources.

4.8.4 It is anticipated that we will be able to resolve the issues around patient identifiable data and access the other challenge is around the IT infrastructure required to provide the intelligence service. Initial discussions with Berkshire Shared Services have explored the possibility of extending the current service level agreement.

4.9 Finance and Contract Working Group

4.9.1 During the last period, the following sub groups have been established and are undertaking a more detailed analysis of the contracts and spend using the 2011/12 data (this is the program spend and not staffing spend). These work groups are as follows:

- Acute Contracts
- Community Contracts
- GP provided services
- Other (inc. Drug, smoking etc.)

4.9.2 Each workstream is being led by one of the six UAs and has Finance, contracts/ commissioning (from PCT and UA) and Public Health as part of the group membership.

4.9.3 The initial data for 2011/12 has been produced by the PCT and this has been converted into a data pack (in the same formats that were produced for the 2010/11 data returned to DH) for each of the sub groups to use to ensure that the control total is maintained. Each of the working groups will be completing a detailed template (which has been reviewed and slightly amended following feedback from the working groups) to capture the required information in a consentient format. This may not capture all the data required, but should provide a more detailed picture of the likely commitments and contracts.

4.9.4 Currently work is progressing as planned, but with some slippage in terms of timescales has occurred which is causing some concern at Transition Board level. Based on this, the SHA are able to provide resource support funding, a mini business case to the SHA was submitted in support of a request for funding to the tune of £30K

which will be used to deliver a number of specific objectives around the finance/budgets and the contracts that we will inherit in 2013. The SHA have contacted the Programme Manager and given an assurance that they will indeed underwrite this amount.

4.10 Emergency Planning Working Group

4.10.1 The Emergency Planning Working Group was, at the time of submission of the transition plan, deemed to be of a lower priority for the UAs whilst planning and testing of plans for London 2012 was reaching a critical stage.

4.10.2 This Working Group has now been implemented and the vast majority of the work plan has been completed and the necessary transfer arrangements are identified and either implemented or ready to be implemented.

4.11 Finance & Funding

4.11.1 Clarity is still some way off about what the final allocations will be for each of the UAs for 2013/14. Some work has been done by the SHA around identifying a fairer and more realistic set of allocation figures which would rebalance the initial proposed allocations to give greater fairness and to some degree a figure based on some consideration of needs in each borough. It is anticipated that by December, we will be notified of final allocations.

5. FORWARD PLANNING 2013/14

5.1 Commissioning Intentions

5.1.1 Local government will need to play an important role in defining commissioning intentions for health services in their localities. The majority of the responsibility for this will sit with CCGs but local authorities will have an important role to play in ensuring that CCGs commission services that will improve the outcomes for their populations.

5.1.2 This will be achieved in a number of ways, not least of all through the JSNAs and Health and Wellbeing Boards, but also via the mainstream public health functions on a day to day basis.

5.1.3 The relationship(s) with the CCGs will play a critical role in ensuring that we get the right service in the right place for the right price. The seven Berkshire CCGs have already federated into East and West federations, which may or may not continue to be the alignment going forward.

5.2 Core Offer

5.2.1 The core offer is a range of services and/or information that has been defined as a necessary and important input from the public health service that is currently provided to NHS commissioners and other service areas within the NHS. Therefore, there is a clear need to continue to provide this service to the new commissioning structures post 31 March 2013.

5.2.2 A Working Group was established and a number of key principles proposed. Recently, progress accelerated and a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been produced by David Johnstone and will be discussed in detail at the next Core Offer working group meeting towards the end of September.

- 5.2.3 Following which, a formal paper and draft MOU will be presented to the October Transition Board meeting.

5.3 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

- 5.3.1 The JSNA is a statutory requirement that public health are tasked with leading on and publishing, this document should identify and inform the commissioning intentions based on the locality priorities. This statutory duty will transfer to local authorities on the 31 March 2013
- 5.3.2 This document often works on a 2-3 year cycle, but should be refreshed every year to ensure that it stays current and relevant. However, it is a matter for each Unitary Authority to determine the exact timing of these cycles so as to ensure that they provide the necessary and accurate input to CCG annual commissioning plans.
- 5.3.3 Public Health England (PHE) will support local communities by providing services, expertise, information and advice in a way that is responsive to local needs. It will support local authorities, CCGs and health and wellbeing boards by providing the most up to date information and evidence on what works to improve the public's health, including research and good practice. In addition, PHE will provide a public health service to the NHS Commissioning Board, and will support directors of public health and their teams in advising CCGs as required in the commissioning and delivery of health care services and programmes.

5.4 Risks and Issues

- 5.4.1 Overall a number of the risks have been identified and are being managed by the individual work stream leads although all risks have been escalated to programme level. Whilst some risks around contracts being novated in 2013, and taking into account the current stage we are at in the programme the trend is a reducing one. However, the fact that an agreement to extend existing provider contracts by 12 months from March 2013 has embedded and inherent risk that UAs may have to implement post transition contract adjustments to ensure that services are delivered in an affordable way for UAs.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Considerable progress has been made on the arrangements for transfer via the Working Groups.
- 6.2 It is a very sensitive time for staff as we prepare to consult on the detailed arrangements of posts and grades in the new structure. The next period will also continue to recruit to roles in the structure.
- 6.3 The priority remains as set out in 4.6.1 to ensure a safe and stable Public Health Service on 1 April 2013. Once this has been achieved then it will be possible to look at the synergies of being in local government, and how this can provide opportunities for further collaboration and improved commissioning.

Unrestricted

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TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CONCESSIONARY FARES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
REPORT AND WORKING GROUP UPDATE
Working Group Lead Members**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report introduces the attached draft report of the review of Public Transport and Concessionary Fares undertaken by a working group of this Panel and invites the Panel to re-convene the working group to contribute towards the development of a Bus Strategy for the Borough, as recommended in the attached report. This report also gives an update in respect of the other working groups of the Panel.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Panel

- 2.1 agrees and adopts the attached report of the review of Public Transport and Concessionary Fares undertaken by one of its working group for sending formally to the relevant Executive Member;**
- 2.2 re-convenes the above working group to contribute towards the development of a Bus Strategy for the Borough; and**
- 2.3 notes that the Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Working Group, the Highway Maintenance Working Group and the Commercial Sponsorship Member Reference Group have completed their work.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To seek the Panel's agreement to the attached report for sending formally to the relevant Executive Member, to re-convene the relevant working group to contribute towards the development of the Bus Strategy and to update the Panel in respect of the status of its other working groups.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Public Transport and Concessionary Fares

- 5.1 The report of this review is attached for agreement, adoption and sending formally to the relevant Executive Member.

Highway Maintenance

- 5.2 This Working Group has completed its work having submitted an interim report, now considered to be a final report, to the relevant Executive Member and considered the response. However, there is a possibility of it being reformed in the future to be involved in the highway maintenance contract re-tendering process, particularly concerning the possible addition of further contracted services in the interests of economies.

Commercial Sponsorship Member Reference Group

- 5.3 Having agreed that a commercial sponsorship scheme would be acceptable in principle, the Reference Group explored the possibility of introducing a viable scheme, having regard to relevant issues. Following the commissioning of a basic audit of assets in the Borough which could be utilised for commercial sponsorship purposes, the Group supported pursuing an eighteen month trial with a commercial sponsorship company to test the financial viability of a scheme. A decision in respect of whether to engage in a trial will now be taken through the usual Executive process.

**6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES
IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES /
CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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A Review of the Proposed Reductions to Public Transport Subsidies and Concessionary Fare Support

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



October 2012

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Acknowledgements

The Working Group would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the following officers from Bracknell Forest Council 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.

Bev Hindle
Sue Cuthbert
Abby Thomas
Andrea Carr

Chief Officer: Planning and Transport
Principal Engineer
Head of Community Engagement and Equalities
Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

1. Foreword by the Lead Member

- 1.1 The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel was invited to undertake this review by the Executive as it wished the implications of proposed reductions to the Public Transport and Concessionary Fares budget for 2012/13 to be explored fully before any decision was made to reduce funding in this area. My colleagues and I were pleased to form a working group to undertake this task as we recognised the importance of balancing budget savings with meeting the Council's responsibility to secure provision of public transport in the knowledge that it was a life line to many older and vulnerable residents who would be unable to access shops, medical services and social activities without it, to the detriment of their health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Undertaking the review has heightened our knowledge of the public transport needs and habits of the Borough's residents and our understanding of the associated scheduling complexities. It has also highlighted public transport aspirations and the need to develop a bus strategy with policies to align with modern transport requirements, rather than the present system which reflects historical routes and usage.
- 1.3 I wish to express thanks to my fellow councillors who worked with me on this review and to all the officers who supported us throughout the process. I would also like to commend the findings and recommendations to the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker.

Councillor Jim Finnie
Lead Working Group Member

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Bracknell Forest Council ('the Council'), like other local authorities, has a responsibility to provide reasonable access to transport for people living in the Borough. Not everyone has access to a car or is able to drive one, and over 1,500,000 journeys are made on buses in Bracknell Forest every year. Of these, around half are made by people who qualify for 'concessionary fares', on grounds of age or disability. Also, the Council pays 'public transport subsidies', in the form of Bus Service Operators grant, to keep some bus routes going, which would otherwise stop as they are not commercially viable. The Council has a statutory duty to deliver supported bus services, but the extent of this support is not defined.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 10 January 2012, the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny ('O&S') Panel considered the key themes and priorities for the Environment, Culture and Communities Department as outlined in the Council's draft budget proposals for 2012/13, and agreed to the Executive's request to establish a Working Group to review the proposed reductions to public transport subsidies and concessionary fare support.
- 2.3 This report describes the work of the Working Group Between February and July 2012, and it is organised in the following sections:

Part 3 Gives background information in respect of Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary fares, and summarises how we set about our review.

Part 4 Summarises the information and evidence gathered by the Working Group.

Part 5 Contains the conclusions we have reached following our review.

Part 6 Sets out our recommendations to the Council's Executive and to the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel.

At the end of our report is a glossary of terms used and appendices containing detailed supporting information.

- 2.4 Members of the Working Group hope that this report will be well received and we look forward to receiving responses to its recommendations.
- 2.5 The Working Group comprised:

Councillor Finnie (Lead Member)
Councillor Brossard
Councillor Gbadebo
Councillor Leake

3. Background

3.1 Many people who live in Bracknell Forest travel by car and rarely use public transport. However, a significant number of residents use the buses, and for some it is a necessity for their daily lives. Because this is important, local authorities provide financial support in two ways:

- Subsidising bus operators to keep buses running on certain routes which are important transport routes for residents, but which would not be commercially viable for the operators.
- Reimbursing operators for 'concessionary fares' journeys. The Council has a legal responsibility to support the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, which offers older people and those with certain disabilities free travel on local bus services throughout England.

The Council spent £0.87 million on these two forms of support in 2011/12.

3.2 The majority of bus routes in the Borough which are operated on a commercial basis (i.e. without any local authority subsidy to the bus company) are run by First Bus and are found in the south of the Borough. The commercial routes carry around 70% of all bus passengers in Bracknell Forest.

3.3 As the number of passengers using bus routes varies, so in turn the subsidy per passenger varies greatly. Estimates in May 2012 showed that the support cost varied from less than £0.20 to over £50 for each passenger.

3.4 In Bracknell Forest, reimbursement payments to bus companies for concessionary fares journeys are calculated through the Department for Transport's reimbursement methodology and calculator. The operator receives a set amount for each pass-holder who travels on each service, based on factors which include the average fare for that journey. Operators are paid a set amount each month which is reconciled against quarterly data returns.

3.5 The Council faced a very difficult budget round for the financial year 2012/13, with savings of £5m being required, throughout the Council. To continue to meet the challenges of balancing the Council's budget, a £200,000 economy from the Bus Contracts and Concessionary Fares budgets was put forward by the Executive for consultation. The Council's Executive had also given a clear steer that the Council should only provide financial support to services which contributed to town centre regeneration or economic development.

3.6 Early in 2012, the Council consulted with the public and other interested groups over the prospective reduction in subsidised bus services, and that a 'full year' economy on subsidies and concessionary fares of £200,000 should be achieved, as part of the Council's budget proposals. The consultation ran to the end of March 2012.

3.7 At the invitation of the Executive, the Environment, Culture & Communities O&S Panel decided to make an input to the consultation response, and formed a Working Group ('the Group') to progress this. At its first meeting on 29 February 2012, the Group was advised that the Local Transport Plan approved in March 2011 required the development of a Bus Strategy, to which the input of O&S was sought, in addition to the proposed 2012/13 budget reductions to

Public Transport and Concessionary Fares. At the time, it was agreed that the remit of this Group would consist of both aspects as they were linked. However, as the Group's work reached a natural break after responding to the budget consultation and the production of the Bus Strategy was postponed, it was decided to leave consideration of the Strategy to a future date.

- 3.8 The Group agreed that its first priority would be to consider and comment on the proposed budget reduction in order to inform the Executive's decision thereon. The remainder of the Group's role would be to concentrate on assisting with the development of the Bus Strategy from the initial stages. The aim was for the Strategy to be developed during 2012.
- 3.9 The key objectives of the review, and its scope were agreed at the outset by the Group, and are set out at Appendix 1. In the event, the Group decided to defer the meeting with representatives of the Bus companies until the Bus Strategy became available. The principal activity of the Group was to receive information from Council officers through reports and in discussions, and then to consider that information and reach conclusions on the Executive's proposals for public transport subsidies and concessionary fares, in the light of the results of a public consultation and a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

4. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis

Introductory Review Work

- 4.1 On 29 February 2012 the Working Group ('the Group') received an introductory briefing from the Council's Chief Officer: Planning and Transport and the Principal Engineer in respect of Public Transport and Concessionary Fares which outlined the current bus network in the Borough, commercial and contracted services, subsidised travel and concessionary fares, changes to the bus network and consultation in respect of proposed reductions to existing services. Maps showing all bus routes and highlighting which ones were commercial, supported or partially supported were circulated at the meeting.
- 4.2 The map depicting all key bus routes in Bracknell Forest showed that a concentration lay in Bracknell town centre from where they flowed to the north and south. In 2010/11, over 1.7m bus journeys had been made, of which 44.7% had been concessionary fares journeys on subsidised routes made by mainly vulnerable passengers.
- 4.3 Another map identified commercial services, the majority of which were in the south of the Borough where residential development was more dense and car ownership was lower. These routes linked the town centre with the Blackwater Valley. The north of the Borough featured lower residential density and higher car ownership. Some bus routes were cross-boundary for which the Council received subsidies from neighbouring local authorities to operate services.
- 4.4 Transport concessions consisting of reimbursement of bus operators to cover costs such as fuel related to supported and partially supported bus routes which were shown on Maps 3 and 4, respectively. The partially supported services involved the Council supplementing commercial routes by subsidising additional service to offer journeys on weekday evenings and during weekends.
- 4.5 Services were interlinked and one bus could be timetabled to serve several different routes, particularly outside peak travel times. The main three providers in the Borough were First Bus, Thames Travel and Courtney Coaches. Under a 'package' deal featuring complex inter-bus scheduling, Thames Travel operated the majority of subsidised services for a set annual amount. Although this approach enabled economies to be achieved, it was more difficult to reduce services under these circumstances owing to the complexities. Remaining routes were operated on a 'de minimis' contract basis by the other operators. Commercial contracts were not subsidised. There was no regulation of operators' choice of bus routes.
- 4.6 The Council has a legal responsibility to support the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, which offers older people and those with certain disabilities free travel on local bus services throughout England. The statutory minimum requires that all English pass holders have free travel on services from 09:30 – 23:00 weekdays and all day Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. In Bracknell the scheme has been enhanced beyond the minimum to allow travel at any time to all those eligible for the national concessionary fare scheme. The Council planned to spend a total of some £870,000 on local bus contracts in 2011/12, which comprised 'non-ring-fenced' Government grant for community transport (£131,412), contributions from neighbouring authorities for cross-boundary services (£59,237) and developer contributions through Section

106 contributions* (£301,659). The Council's overall budget for public transport was approximately £1m. Arrangements for reimbursement of funds due to operators was the Council's responsibility and involved complex calculations, which were reconciled against travel data from operators on a quarterly basis. Government funding was not based on the number of trips and, in the first instance, the amount paid to operators related directly to how many concessionary fares passengers were carried with greater use resulting in increased cost.

- 4.7 In 2010/11 over 1,706,600 passenger journeys were made on buses within Bracknell Forest, of which 762,782 were concessionary fares journeys, representing 44.7% of the total and a cost of £800k in subsidies.
- 4.8 Proposals to reduce subsidised bus services consisted of ceasing or reducing the frequency of a number of under-used services. The practicality of implementing some of the proposals was subject to confirmation by the current operator and the details remained to be developed. The revised network would continue to cover most of the streets currently served, with the exception of the Church Road/Terrace Road North area of Binfield, although with reduced frequency. The proposals were subject to a consultation exercise concluding at the end of March 2012. The views of vulnerable groups were sought in particular and the proposals would be shared with bodies such as the Over 50's Forum and Access Advisory Panel as part of the consultation, the outcomes of which would be analysed and form part of a report to the Executive for decision in April.
- 4.9 The following points arose from ensuing questions and discussion:
- a) Local factors applied to the level of subsidy reimbursed to operators and the Council sought to assist operators where possible.
 - b) The Council's concessionary fare data was subject to audit.
 - c) Subsidies were based on the number of passengers and not the distance of journey travelled. In cross-boundary journeys, reimbursement was paid by the local authority of the area in which the bus was boarded, irrespective of whether the passenger lived in the Borough.
 - d) The bus scheme in Reading operated differently from that in Bracknell Forest and smartcard compatibility was a factor in devising schemes.
 - e) As at 21 February, 206 consultation responses had been received via the Council's website raising concerns. The majority of responders had been older people. Completed and returned questionnaires were yet to be analysed. Further questionnaires had been circulated to relevant groups and those requesting them, including Town and Parish councils.
 - f) The developer contributions of £301,659 to concessionary fares received during 2011/12 would be spent by the year end. Although it was difficult to predict the level of such funding available in future years, an element was

* Contributions sought by local authorities from developers under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place.

expected in most years. Sustainable travel plans were sought in relation to new residential developments.

- g) In Bracknell Forest the concessionary fare scheme was extended beyond the statutory minimum in order to offer a good service. Whether or not to reimburse journeys undertaken during peak hours could impact on commercial services and was a factor to be taken account when designing the Bus Strategy.
- h) It was estimated that bus capacity utilisation was generally 60%. The majority of routes overlapped and required two buses to serve them at peak times.
- i) It was thought that operators collected and held much travel and passenger data which would be useful in informing the preparation of the Bus Strategy. The criteria which operators applied in determining routes and frequency of journeys would also assist. Demographics and demand were thought to be relevant factors.
- j) Where new residential development was concerned, it was suggested that the Bus Strategy should identify the most favourable combination of car and bus use. It was acknowledged that school travel should also be addressed in the Strategy.
- k) The Group agreed that, owing to funding constraints, the Bus Strategy should target funding towards meeting the Council's priorities.
- l) Although savings could be achieved by reducing the frequency of journeys, route operations, such as the number of buses required, was a factor which needed to be taken into account.
- m) Residents had expressed the view that there was an insufficient bus service from the outer areas to facilities such as the sports centre, cinema and South Hill Park. However, it was felt that there was insufficient demand to operate dedicated services to entertainment facilities. Brants Bridge health centre could possibly attract sufficient journeys to warrant a service.
- n) The Group welcomed the 'clean sheet' approach to developing the Bus Strategy as it would enable support needs to be established and the relevance of historical routes to be reviewed.
- o) The need to facilitate bus use by young people was highlighted.
- p) Negotiations were held with neighbouring authorities when contracts were renewed. Cross-boundary reimbursement was normally based on the pro rata number of passengers.
- q) The proposed reduction of £200k in subsidies emerged as a 2012/13 budget saving target, the amount was based on a 25% decrease. Attention needed to be given to providing the best service coverage within the reduced amount available. Providing value for money, supporting town centre regeneration, contributing to economic development and not providing uneconomic services had been identified as priorities.

- r) The reduction of 20% in Government grant to operators was likely to have an impact on bus fares, and possibly services also. Bus fares were self-regulated by competition amongst providers.

Review of Budgets for Bus Concessionary Fares Payments and Bus Services

4.10 On 14 March 2012, the Working Group considered a background note prepared by the Chief Officer: Planning and Transport which provided further detail in respect of the rationale behind the proposed budget reductions to public transport and concessionary fares. The note set out the components of the 2011/12 budget line totalling £1,367,332 and suggested a potential package of economies to achieve the proposed reduction of £200,000 together with a second alternative package. The Chief Officer advised that the packages were not firm recommendations for service reductions but represented the type of services which could be reduced with a view to meeting the savings target and as a basis for the related public consultation. Therefore there was flexibility for identifying alternative proposals should the Group so choose.

4.11 The following points arose from ensuing questions and discussion:

- a) Some Members expressed a view that the Executive's steer that bus services should only be subsidised where they supported town centre regeneration or economic development was narrow, prescriptive and to the detriment of serving the wider population of the Borough. In response, the Chief Officer advised that this was a strategic priority reflecting the need to meet the level of bus services stipulated in the planning permission relating to the town centre redevelopment and to promote regeneration. The cost per passenger trip, contract termination dates and the opportunity of reductions in terms of whole bus loadings were also significant factors to be taken in to account.
- b) The need to review subsidised bus services, particularly when the town centre was redeveloped, was highlighted. The majority of current services travelled to and around the town centre and it was anticipated that redevelopment would lead to improved bus services as a result of increased demand.
- c) Bus operators confirmed the officers' view that 60% of passengers were concessionary travellers such as elderly people and school children. 96% of people qualifying for subsidised travel were elderly and / or disabled. It was anticipated that these vulnerable groups would be most affected by the proposed service reductions and would therefore respond to the related consultation.
- d) Although it was anticipated that the proposed service reductions could impact on demand for community transport, this could not be quantified at present as full data was not available. The Council's support to community transport would also be reduced in respect of longer excursion trips. Developing the Bus Strategy would provide the opportunity to identify priorities and explore the implications for passengers and other service providers.
- e) The total proposed reduction of £200,000 involved the two separate budget heads of bus services support and concessionary fares payments, including a savings target of £87,000 in respect of the latter.

- f) A spreadsheet giving details of supported bus routes was explained to the Group, who noted an example given that all passengers travelling on route BFC 24 (Little Sandhurst) were undertaking concessionary journeys. Other journeys were only partly concessionary and none were viable on a purely commercial basis.
- g) Concessionary travellers were logged by bus drivers using bus machinery but not issued with a ticket.
- h) Services with the lowest percentages of concessionary fares were not necessarily the most commercial and bus operators' fees were partly concessionary fares and partly bus support.
- i) The total cost per bus service to Bracknell Forest per year comprised the bus support cost per year and the concessionary cost per year.
- j) Bus operators advised the Council of the amount of concessionary fare passengers and it reimbursed them accordingly. Although there was no actual evidence available to the Council to prove the number, checks and balances such as comparing numbers and trends with previous years' figures were possible.
- k) Members expressed a view that bus service 4C (Bracknell – Binfield – Maidenhead) could not be justified in terms of passenger numbers and cost per passenger (£52 per trip). Efforts were being made to ascertain the demographics of the geographical area served and it was assumed that the majority of passengers were over 65 years of age or disabled. The service would cease to operate without subsidy as it was not commercially viable.
- l) North to south travel connections in Berkshire were traditionally the weakest and a study undertaken approximately ten years earlier had sought to bridge this gap. It was presumed that demand for some bus routes travelling in these directions, such as 4C, had dwindled since.
- m) It was noted that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead contributed to the cost of subsidising bus service 53, which served Bracknell and Wexham Park Hospital. The contract in respect of route 1 (Ascot – Windsor) was managed by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, to which Bracknell Forest Council contributed £15,000 annually.
- n) Whilst it was clear that some bus routes were not well used and would therefore be considered for service reductions, other variables needed to be applied to ascertain value for money in relation to others. Lack of data was an issue and it was not known whether under-used routes were the only transport option available to their passengers. One question which featured as part of the consultation survey enquired as to alternative means of travel and consultation responses together with the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) would assist with identifying types of passenger and their travel alternatives. Future complaints and increased use of community transport would also be informative.

- o) Reducing or discontinuing individual bus services had not been costed and the anticipated collective saving to be achieved by pursuing the Option 1 proposal was £87,000. This involved halving the frequency of the 162 (Bracknell - Winkfield Row – Ascot High Street) and the 152 (Bracknell - Winkfield Row – Winkfield Village) routes and discontinuing the 151 (Bracknell – Binfield – Wokingham) route enabling the remaining services to be provided utilising one bus rather than two. Although the 152 was identified as not offering value for money, deleting the service altogether would have a negative impact on other services and was therefore not proposed. Although the 53/153 service between Binfield village and Bracknell town centre would remain under Option1, it was likely that the frequency would be reduced to enable a Bullbrook service to be provided. The route between The Parks and Bracknell town centre would discontinue when the Section 106 funding providing it was exhausted unless the service became commercially viable, which was unlikely. However, other routes included Broad Lane and could serve residents of The Parks.
- p) Following the possible discontinuation of the 151 service, Binfield residents wishing to travel to Wokingham would be able to do so utilising the 190 commercial service. Although the route would not be identical to that of the 151 service and would not include Church Lane or part of Terrace Road North, the frequency was greater. The Working Group sought route overlay maps of the two services for comparison purposes in order to identify affected areas.
- q) It was assumed that travellers on the subsidised evening services were young people.
- r) Option 2 involved:
- Cease running the 171 Bracknell Town (Crown Wood – Birch Hill – Hanworth – Great Hollands) (Monday - Saturday) evening services, and the 171/194 Sunday services (daytime up to 21.30).
 - Stop running the 153/154 early evening services (Warfield, Binfield and Bullbrook (Monday - Saturday).
 - Cease running the 598 Little Sandhurst Shopper (Little Sandhurst to The Meadows/Camberley) (One return journey, two days a week)
- s) Although Options 1 and 2 were expected to achieve the same level of savings, the advantage of pursuing Option 1 was that it was not expected to disadvantage any particular group of people whereas it was anticipated that Option 2 would have a greater adverse impact on those groups protected by equalities legislation and the night time economy.
- t) Discussions with bus operators had not taken place at the time of the meeting. It was envisaged that operators would have views on the proposals and be able to provide further information. It would be helpful to establish whether the gaps in services resulting from the proposed budget reductions could be filled by commercial services. The contract relating to the Jennett's Park 108 bus service, which was funded by Section 106 contributions, would cease in October 2012 and the operator had expressed a wish to discuss the matter with the Council. Although the intention had been to introduce residents to bus travel from an early stage, the decreased rate of house building on the site had reduced the viability

of the service. However, other routes could possibly link with the area in the future.

- u) It was suggested that the Bus Strategy could consider areas of new growth and investment when planning bus services. The Community Infrastructure Levy could be utilised to fund bus routes to serve the new residential development sites in Binfield and Crowthorne initially with a view to achieving commercial viability subsequently as they were near to other urban sites. There was a balance to be achieved between car and public transport use and 95 % of journeys to Bracknell town centre were currently by car. Planning routes to serve the remaining 5% would assist with reducing congestion and providing for those without alternative means of transport.
- v) Some Members of the Group indicated that they supported Option 1 with the addition of discontinuing service 598 (Little Sandhurst Shopper). One Member indicated that he would reserve judgement until the route overlay maps comparing the 151 and 190 services in Binfield were available.

Reduction in Budget for Bus Subsidy and Concessionary Fares - Full Equality Impact Assessment Report

- 4.12 On 24 April 2012, the Chief Officer: Planning and Transport introduced the draft Full EIA Report which looked at the issues, considerations and conclusions in respect of the potential reduction in bus service provision in Bracknell Forest and described the outcome of the EIA and results of the associated consultation. The Working Group was invited to consider the report and submit views for inclusion in it prior to its submission to the Executive for determination.
- 4.13 Members noted that the consultation had taken place over a twelve week period during which 1,013 questionnaire responses had been received from 600 affected groups and individuals and that the data provided gave an insight into the profile and transport needs of local bus users. Officers had also attended meetings of the Older People's Forum, the Access Advisory Panel and the Federation of Community Groups to obtain views.
- 4.14 The Full EIA* concluded that, based on the findings of the survey responses, the service reductions would have an impact on specific equality groups with protected characteristics†. The survey responses, and face to face meetings, pointed to particular impacts on specifically the age and disability related groups:
 - 50% of those responding to their ability status classified themselves as having health problems which were expected to last at least 12 months;
 - 57% of respondents were between 65 and 80+; as 63% of all trips on the subsidised network are concessions, this represents a significant proportion of the total trips on the network;

* The Equalities Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at [http://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/Published/C00000102/M00003772/AI00029103/\\$10bBusReportEqIAAppendix1.doc.pdf](http://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/Published/C00000102/M00003772/AI00029103/$10bBusReportEqIAAppendix1.doc.pdf)

† The protected characteristics, set in law are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnerships.

- A greater proportion of older persons used the bus to access health services;
- Approximately 50% of those over 65 said that they would not know how they would travel, or would not travel at all, if bus services were discontinued.

4.15 The Group considered three options which would be drawn to the Executive's attention when it was deciding whether to implement bus service reductions. These were:

- not making reductions to any supported services (perhaps looking only to reduce that portion of the concessionary fares budget which was not spent on an annual basis);
- only deleting those services or parts of services where it could be demonstrated that no harm would result, where an alternative was available, or where the cost of such service per passenger was so high that alternative modes could be sought to help compensate for that loss; or,
- develop a future Bus Strategy in partnership with the community and providers which, based on whatever bus subsidy budget remained, provided for the minimum level of service currently provided.

4.16 Although it was not possible to determine what proportion of the concessionary fares budget would be spent until later in the year as this depended on the level of travel undertaken, the amount could be predicted based on the amount spent in previous years and it was thought that a sum of £130,000 would be unspent in the current year as fewer people had travelled on buses than anticipated and could be identified as a budget saving without impacting on supported services. In this event, any increase in costs would represent a budget pressure.

4.17 The Group considered a map depicting route overlays of the 151 bus service (Bracknell – Binfield – Wokingham) and the 190 commercial service for comparative purposes in order to identify the areas affected in the event that the 151 service was discontinued. Some concern was expressed that discontinuation of the service would leave Binfield village without a bus service and that the GP surgery and elderly residents of Binfield House and Haddenhurst Court would be without nearby transport as a result. Although the redevelopment of the Binfield Nursery site was not expected to generate sufficient demand for an additional bus service, it could increase the viability of existing routes. There would also be an adverse impact on children travelling to St Crispin's and Embrook Schools.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- a) There had been a greater number of postal than on-line responses.
- b) Although the consultation response rate equated to only 1% of the Borough's population, as 95% of residents were car users and others used commercial bus services, this could be construed as a favourable 20% response rate.

- c) The qualifying age for the e-card would be increased incrementally from 60 to 65 years. However, as many users of supported bus services were 65 years and over the impact of this would be negligible.
- d) Regarding the consultation results indicating the percentage of people who would not travel in the event of subsidised bus services being reduced or discontinued, a Member queried whether this should be interpreted as would not, or could not travel as there was a significant difference between the two. It was felt that where the percentage of people who would travel by car as an alternative did not increase then this should be interpreted that some people would have no other means of transport and be unable to travel. The Chief Officer agreed to include in his report to the Executive that there was some doubt over this point.
- e) Reducing concessionary services could have funding implications for Adult Social Care transport and generate further grant applications from the voluntary transport sector.
- f) It was not possible to reduce the 194 bus service as it was not a supported route. Although the Group had previously favoured discontinuing the 598 service (Little Sandhurst Shopper), which consisted entirely of concessionary travel, consultation responses indicated that it was valued by local residents for shopping trips. Therefore there was a possibility that the 598 service could be commercially viable.

4.18 The Group noted that consultation responses, especially those from the elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, had indicated that they would be disproportionately affected by the proposed reductions in supported bus services, which were essential to their daily life enabling them to access key facilities. Many felt that service reductions would leave them without any other option for travel, possibly leading to social isolation and having a negative impact on health, quality of life and well being.

4.19 In conclusion, the Group accepted the report, supported the concept of options for lower impact budget reductions or not reducing supported bus services and considered that the saving of £130,000 could be achieved without affecting the current level of service provision. This would avoid disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups.

4.20 The Group's views and recommendations on the Executive's budget reduction proposals were sent on 27 April 2012, and are at Appendix 3. These views were reported to the Executive at its meeting on 22 May 2012, and the Executive's decision was consistent with the Group's recommendations (see paragraph 4.29 below).

Bracknell Forest Bus Strategy

4.21 The Working Group noted that the Environment, Culture and Communities Department possessed limited resources and direction concerning the preparation of the Bus Strategy as the current bus network was based on historical routes in the absence of any specific policy. Proposed developments sites; passenger information and data; the balance between commercial and contracted bus services; and the viability, profitability, quality, frequency and integration of services were all factors to be taken into consideration when developing the Bus Strategy. Officers had met representatives of the operators

of First Bus, Thames Travel and Courtney Coaches earlier in the day of the meeting to obtain their views on current and future bus services.

- 4.22 The Chief Officer: Planning and Transport advised that the majority of existing bus contracts expired on 31 March 2013 and in order to have an agreed Bus Strategy in place in time to inform the award of new contracts from 1 April 2013, it would be necessary for a draft Strategy to be developed by the second week of September 2012 owing to the preparation lead in time which included discussions with bus operators and a public consultation. As this timeframe was insufficient to allow for the in-depth work required to develop the Bus Strategy from its beginnings, which was an exercise previously favoured by the Group and officers to establish priorities and principles, Members were invited to indicate whether this approach remained their preference or whether consultation on existing routes would suffice. Bus operators had felt that they would be able to add value if consulted on an indicative Bus Strategy addressing priorities around the routes, frequency, quality and timings of bus services. As an alternative, emergency extensions to existing contracts for six or twelve months were possible to enable a robust Bus Strategy to be fully developed as a basis for the subsequent award of three to five year contracts. This would provide an opportunity to make contracts co-terminous without increased expenditure, unless they were de-minimis.
- 4.23 The following points arose from the ensuing discussion:
- a) It was possible that the more recent housing development in the Borough was not served by historic bus routes rendering bus services inaccessible to some residents. Future new development would influence the pattern and viability of bus services. The Council would have more control over the choice of its own contractors' routes than those of commercial operators.
 - b) Issues associated with the proposed Bus Strategy included the type and length of contract, the extent of services sought by passengers, the amount of grant and subsidy available, concessionary fare reimbursement and the impact of bus use on the need for community transport. The first principles of the Strategy would be developed utilising a 'clean sheet' approach to ascertain the type of network required to best serve the outlying areas of the Borough in addition to the town centre as transport, including evening travel, from outlying areas to access Bracknell town centre and sports, leisure and youth facilities was identified as a priority.
 - c) Section 106 funding arrangements would continue unchanged. Although it would not be possible to pool contributions from smaller developments to fund bus services, larger developments would generate sufficient contributions for this purpose to serve the development. It would be possible to spend Community Infrastructure Levy funds in respect of infrastructure improvements and maintenance in the future when the associated scheme had been agreed by the Council.
 - d) Obtaining passenger data from bus operators was proving to be difficult owing to their collection of embarking but not disembarking (possibly in a different local authority area) information, competition and commercial interests. For this reason, officers would meet representatives of bus operators separately to facilitate open discussion and information sharing. It was envisaged that such discussion would occur after September.

Surveys undertaken by the Council would inform passengers' travel requirements.

- e) The proposed bus gate providing a link to Great Hollands would be operational by the time developer contributions utilised to operate bus route 108 serving the Jennett's Park development ceased in October 2012. Although a commercial operator was keen to continue providing the service after that time, the Council would need to bridge a funding gap of approximately £200k between the existing concessionary fares payments and the new commercial contract. The Council was reluctant for a break in this service to occur at this stage as more houses were to be constructed and a school was to be opened which could generate an ongoing demand for viable public transport. In the absence of funding to bridge the gap, Section 106 contributions relating to the Wickery Copse development could be utilised for this purpose although a robust funding solution needed to be identified in the longer term. Reducing the frequency of the service was one option towards bridging the funding gap. It was suggested that bus operators were considering increasing fares in 2013 as they found it difficult to operate in Bracknell Forest, an area with high car ownership. However, new housing developments could increase demand.
- f) The Bus Strategy would consider connections to other towns and mainline railway stations in the interests of wider transport options including rail. Previous aspirations to introduce a park-and-ride system to serve the wider Blackwater Valley area and a bus service to transport local airport workers to Heathrow Airport had not come to fruition owing to lack of demand and practicality.

4.24 With regard to financial issues, the Working Group indicated that, whilst it had supported a reduction in a surplus concessionary fares budget allocation to meet a savings target in the 2012/13 budget, it did not support any further savings in 2013/14, particularly as alternative reductions could be more readily identified. Members felt that any further reductions would disadvantage many vulnerable people and that the concessionary fares budget should be protected. Also, service reductions might dissuade bus operators from pursuing new contracts and disadvantage partners such as Bracknell Regeneration Partnership, retailers and neighbouring local authorities. A view was expressed that the Environment, Culture and Communities Department was in a position to meet its 2013/14 savings target without further reducing the concessionary fares budget.

4.25 As there was insufficient time before 1 April 2013 to undertake a full review and EIA to inform the development of the Bus Strategy, the Working Group favoured awarding emergency 12 month extensions to existing contracts to enable a robust Bus Strategy to be fully developed in the meantime as a basis for the subsequent award of three to five year contracts. It was felt that the bus operators would be supportive of this move and welcome early discussions with a view to maximising route and service planning opportunities. It was important to establish operators' priorities and whether there were any routes they considered to be sacrosanct e.g. a service to a local hospital, although the Council would seek flexibility in this area. It was necessary to determine how best to integrate routes to achieve efficiencies and economies. Certainty, unknown costs and competition were issues which required careful consideration which extending contracts would allow.

4.26 The Chief Officer would prepare a project initiation report including terms of reference, timetable, issues, resources, demographics and GIS mapping information for consideration by the Corporate Management Team in mid September and by the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel at its meeting in October with a view to agreeing a Bus Strategy by October 2013 and preparing refreshed contracts consistent with the Strategy to take effect from 1 April 2014. The Working Group agreed that at its October meeting the Panel should consider whether to constitute a new group to focus on and inform the development of the Bus Strategy, which would be for at least a duration of five years from April 2014.

Meeting of the Council's Executive on 22 May 2012

4.27 At its meeting on 22 May 2012, the Council's Executive considered the views of the Group on the proposed reductions to Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary fares. The Minutes of the meeting record that the Executive resolved that, taking into consideration the appended Full EIA, the budget reduction would comprise:

- Retain the existing public transport subsidy budget but reduce the overall available concessionary fares budget by £130,000. This was expected to generate total annual savings of £130,000;
- Only remove those services where it can be demonstrated that no harm would result, where a commercial alternative is available, or where the cost of the existing service per passenger is excessively high and unjustified (i.e. the 4C service which only carried 124 passenger trips per year at a cost of over £52 per trip).

The Executive also noted that any budget reduction relating to bus contracts would be partially implemented in 2012/13 due to the nature of the existing contractual arrangements with bus operators, and that agreed budget reductions would come in full starting in 2013/14, informed also by the emerging Bracknell Forest Bus Strategy.

5. Conclusions

From its investigations, the Working Group (the Group) has drawn the following conclusions.

- 5.1 The Group has achieved its initial objective of contributing views on the proposed budget reductions in the lead-up to the decision by the Council's Executive. The Group might usefully re-form in due course to contribute to the development of the draft Bus Strategy for the Borough.
- 5.2 Our views on the proposed reductions in the financial support for bus services were reported to the Executive (at Appendix 3 to the report presented to the Executive at its meeting on 22 May), and reproduced at Appendix 3 to this report.
- 5.3 The Council makes a substantial investment from public funds into local bus services, for the benefit of the travelling public. In our view, the value of this to the community is under recognised.
- 5.4 Whilst the Group can understand that the need to achieve financial savings has been the main driver to date, it will be important to ensure that the forthcoming Bus Strategy does not detract from the aims of the Council's Older People's Strategy, which includes the following statements under the theme of 'Getting Out And About':

Issues for older people

Personal mobility and the means to travel are central to enabling people to participate in society, remain active, and maintain their independence. It is also crucial for them to be able to access services such as shops, leisure amenities, GP practices and hospitals which support their long-term health. However, as people get older their ability to drive or to get about physically can grow more limited. This is particularly relevant in our high car ownership area where 85% of households have a vehicle and our current transport system reflects current, rather than future, needs resulting in a low level of resident's satisfaction with public transport provision.

Our vision

- *Enjoying access to local and affordable public transport, which has routes to shops, activity centres and medical facilities.*
- *Accessing easily appropriate transportation to hospital where this is required.*

In this context we also draw attention to the passage from the Equalities Impact Assessment reported to the Executive:

Nationally the proportion of people aged 60+ who use a local bus at least once a week increased from 28% in 2005 to 40% in 2010. Over the same period the proportion of people in this age group who said they use a bus less than once a year or never fell from 46% to 32%.

- 5.5 The Group considers that the Council is at risk of over compensating bus companies for concessionary fare passengers. The payments are based on information provided by bus companies and there is no actual evidence available to the Council to prove the number. Some assurance is taken from

checks and balances such as comparing numbers and trends with previous years' figures, but we consider this falls short of the normal standards in local government for vouching payments.

- 5.6 The Group concurs with the Executive decision to curtail 'excessively high and unjustified' subsidies to bus operators, and considers that an indicative maximum cost of supporting each passenger journey should be adopted, substantially less than the upper amount of some £52 currently paid.
- 5.7 At the outset of this review, the Group set itself three main questions to address, and the conclusions we have reached on those are as follows:

Will the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services result in inadequate bus service coverage?

We consider that the reductions to the concessionary fares budget should not have any adverse impact, since the budget has been substantially under-spent in recent times. The remaining reductions, in terms of withdrawal of subsidy to certain routes will impact on the frequency of some services, but this is not expected to affect a large number of people. Furthermore, the reductions will be confined to those bus routes where the subsidy per passenger journey is unjustifiably high, representing unacceptably poor value for money.

Will vulnerable groups be adversely affected by the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services?

The Working Group is satisfied that the interests of vulnerable groups have been properly assessed and they will not be materially disadvantaged by the changes in 2012/13. However, looking to the future, the Group is uneasy with the Executive's 'steer' that bus services should only be subsidised where they support town centre regeneration or economic development. We observe that there are currently no measurements of the achievement of that. Furthermore, we consider this policy is unduly narrow, prescriptive and may be detrimental to serving the wider population of the Borough, for example in terms of green travel and sustainability, and helping the less-advantaged sections of our community.

Will the reduced subsidised bus services meet the aim of contributing to Bracknell town centre regeneration or economic development?

The changes determined to date do not, in our view, have any impact on the town centre regeneration or on economic development. A fuller view might be achievable once the draft Bus Strategy becomes available.

6. Recommendations

The Working Group is pleased to note that its recommendations on the proposed budget reductions (Appendix 3) have already been accepted by the Executive.

It is further recommended to the Executive that:-

- 6.1 Bus companies receiving financial support from the Council to operate bus routes should be required to publicise in their buses the existence of that support.
- 6.2 The forthcoming Bus Strategy should not be developed in isolation. In particular:
 - it must form a cohesive part of a public transport strategy for Bracknell Forest, which in turn must form part of the overall Local Transport Plan;
 - it should be demonstrably consistent with, and supportive of the Council's strategies to support disabled, disadvantaged and older people, relating to public transport availability.
- 6.3 The Council's Older People Strategy should recognise the contribution of public transport subsidies and concessionary fares towards helping people 'Getting Out And About'.
- 6.4 The Executive's policy stance that bus services should only be subsidised where they support town centre regeneration or economic development is too narrow and should be reconsidered. If the policy is retained, the actual contribution made towards those objectives by public transport subsidies and concessionary fares should be measured.
- 6.5 Consideration be given to improving the verification of amounts claimed by bus companies for concessionary fares.
- 6.6 For the purposes of determining which bus routes require subsidising, an upper financial limit should be set by the Executive for the subsidy for supporting each passenger journey. This would replace the description of 'excessively high and unjustified' which was adopted by the Executive, and which leaves too much to the judgement of officers.

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

- 6.7 The Working Group has completed its work and should be stood down.
- 6.8 The Panel, either directly or by re-convening the Working Group later in 2012/13, should make an input into and review the draft Bus strategy.

7. Glossary

Community Infrastructure Levy	A levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area to fund infrastructure.
EIA	Equalities Impact Assessment
O&S	Overview and Scrutiny
Section 106 funding	Contributions sought by local authorities from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place.
'The Group'	The Working Group of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
10 JANUARY 2012**

WORK PROGRAMME 2011 – 2012

Terms of Reference for:

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CONCESSIONARY FARES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
WORKING GROUP**

Purpose of this Working Group / Anticipated Value of its Work:

1.	To review the proposed 2012/13 budget reductions of £200,000 to Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary Fare support.
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Key Objectives:

1.	To gain an understanding of local bus services and the current Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary Fare support scheme.
2.	To review the proposed 2012/13 budget reductions to subsidised bus services in the light of the related public consultation responses and associated equalities impact assessment.
3.	To establish the impact of the proposed reductions in subsidies and fare support and express views to the Executive on the extent to which they should be pursued.

Scope of the Work:

1.	The extent and type of bus services that are operated in the Borough.
2.	The approach the Council takes to contracting bus services and managing concessionary fares.
3.	The data and criteria applied by bus operators in determining routes and frequency of journeys.
4.	Public consultation responses to the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services.
5.	Equalities impact assessment of the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services.
6.	The implications of the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services.

Not Included in the Scope:

Other budget reductions and aspects of public transport.
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Terms of Reference Prepared by:	Andrea Carr
Terms of Reference Agreed by:	Public Transport and Concessionary Fares O&S Working Group
Working Group Structure:	Councillors Brossard, Finnie, Gbadebo & Leake
Working Group Lead Member:	Councillor Finnie

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Brunel-Walker

Departmental Link Officer:

Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport

BACKGROUND

As part of the consultation in respect of the draft 2012/13 budget proposals, the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel was invited by the Executive to review the proposed reductions of £200,000 to subsidised bus services. The Executive had given a clear steer that the Council should only provide financial support to services which contribute to town centre regeneration or economic development. Accordingly, the Panel established this Working Group to undertake the review.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR THE WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS:

1. Will the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services result in inadequate bus service coverage?
2. Will vulnerable groups be adversely affected by the proposed reductions to subsidised bus services?
3. Will the reduced subsidised bus services meet the aim of contributing to town centre regeneration or economic development?

INFORMATION GATHERING:

Witnesses to be invited

Name	Organisation / Position	Reason for Inviting
Bev Hindle/ Sue Cuthbert/	BFC, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport BFC, Principal Engineer (Transport)	To explain the existing Public Transport Subsidies and Concessionary Fare Support scheme, the implications of the proposed reductions and the response to the public consultation.
Abby Thomas	BFC, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities	To advise on the production of the equalities impact assessment of the proposed budget reductions.

Site Visits

Location	Purpose of Visit
-	-

Key Documents / Background Data / Research

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Draft 2012/13 Budget Proposals Report |
| 2. | The Council's Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary Fare support policy |
| 3. | The response to the public consultation on proposed reductions to subsidised bus services |
| 4. | The results of the equalities impact assessment of the proposed budget reductions |
| 5. | Public transport data |

TIMESCALE

Starting: February 2012

Ending: Summer 2012

OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Views in respect of the proposed reductions in Public Transport subsidies and Concessionary Fare support to be incorporated into the report to the Executive on 22 May 2012 to inform its decision thereon. |
|----|---|

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Body	Date
Report progress to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	2012

MONITORING / FEEDBACK ARRANGEMENTS

Body	Details	Date
The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 22 May 2012.	Minute extract	2012

Supported Bus Services in Bracknell Forest

Service	Description	Operator	Funding
151	Bracknell – Binfield - Wokingham	Thames	Council/Contribution from neighbouring authorities
152	Bracknell – Winkfield	Thames	Council
53	Binfield - Bracknell - Maidenhead - Wexham Park Hospital	Thames	Council/Contribution from neighbouring authorities
153	Binfield - Bracknell - Warfield - Winkfield	Thames	Council/Section 106
162	Bracknell – Ascot High Street	Thames	Council
156	The Parks	Thames	Section 106
171/172	Town Services (evenings)	Courtney Coaches	Council/Section 106
194	Bracknell – The Meadows (evenings)	Courtney Coaches	Council
1	Ascot – Windsor	White Bus (on behalf of RBWM)	Contribute to RBWM
598	Little Sandhurst – Camberley	Yateley's	Council
108	Bracknell – Jennett's Park	Courtney Coaches	Section 106
199	Warfield Park Mobile Home Site	Courtney Coaches	Council
4c	Bracknell – Maidenhead (School Holidays)	Courtney Coaches	Council
154	Bracknell – Bullbrook	Thames	Council/Section 106

These views from the Working Group were presented to the Executive as an appendix to the Executive Report on 22 May 2012

Public Transport and Concessionary Fares Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel established this Working Group to consider proposed budget reductions of £200,000 in relation to public transport subsidies and concessionary fare support as part of the 2012/13 budget proposals. It is likely that a reconstituted Working Group will also contribute towards the preparation of a bus strategy for the Borough in due course.

The Working Group has met on three occasions. The first meeting focused on the extent and operation of the public transport and concessionary fares scheme. At its second meeting, the Working Group considered a report which provided further detail in respect of the rationale behind the proposed budget reductions. The report also suggested two alternative potential packages of reductions to achieve the proposed budget reduction as a basis for consultation, one of which was largely supported by the Working Group.

The draft Full Equality Impact Assessment Report concerning the proposed reduction, which would form the basis of a report to the Executive, was considered by the Working Group at its third meeting. The Working Group discussed the Equalities Impact report and noted that consultation responses – especially from the elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups - had indicated that they would be disproportionately affected by the proposed reductions in supported bus services, which were essential to their daily life. Many felt that service reductions would leave them without any other option for travel, possibly leading to social isolation and having a negative impact on health and well being. The Working Group supported the concept of options for lower impact budget reductions or not reducing supported bus services. The reason for this is that £130,000 of the budget for concessionary fares has not been spent, as fewer people have travelled on buses than anticipated. Therefore, the current service level provision would be unaffected by a budget reduction of £130,000.

In conclusion, the Working Group accepted the report, but considered that the savings identified in the preceding paragraph could be achieved without affecting the current level of service provision. This would avoid disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups.

For further information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest, please visit our website on <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/scrutiny> or contact us at:

Overview and Scrutiny, Chief Executive's Office, Bracknell Forest Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1AQ,
or email us at overview.scrutiny@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
or telephone the O&S Officer team on 01344 352283

This document can be made available in large print, in Braille or on audio cassette. Copies in other languages may also be obtained. Please contact the Chief Executive's Office, Easthampstead House, Bracknell, RG12 1AQ, or telephone 01344 352122.

**TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT Assistant Chief Executive

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report highlights:

- (i) Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity during the period March to August 2012.
- (ii) Significant national and local developments in O&S.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To note Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period March to August 2012, set out in section 5 and Appendices 1 and 2.

2.2 To note the developments in Overview & Scrutiny set out in section 6.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Chief Executive has asked for a six monthly report on O&S activity to be submitted to the Corporate Management Team, before it is considered by O&S Members.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Overview and Scrutiny Structure and Membership

5.1 Council approved the change of panel name to the Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Panel, consequent on the transfer of the Housing functions from the Environment, Culture and Communities Department. The membership of the O&S Commission and Panels was last set by Council and the Commission respectively at their annual meetings on 16 May 2012. The vacancy of the Church of England representative remains to be filled, and officers are in contact with the Oxford Diocese on that.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Working Groups

5.2 The programme for 2012-13 was approved as part of the Annual Report of O&S for 2011-12, including formal consultation with the Corporate Management Team and the Executive. The programme continues the increased focus on contributing to policy development and pre-decision scrutiny, through short reviews; with fewer major reviews reviewing important topics in depth, over several months.

5.3 A new routine report to O&S Commission meetings, which monitors progress against the O&S Work Programme using traffic light indicators, was introduced in May 2012.

- 5.4 The table at Appendix 1 sets out the current status of the O&S Working Groups, along with the list of completed reviews.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- 5.5 The O&S Commission met on 29 March, 3 May, 16 May (Annual Meeting) and 12 July. The main items included: agreeing the Annual Report of O&S for 2011-12; determining with the O&S Panels the work programme for 2012-13; appointing members of the O&S Panels; reviewing the quarterly performance reports for the Corporate Services Department, the Chief Executive's Office and the Council as a whole; meeting representatives of Thames Valley Police and the Community Safety Partnership to review their performance, the new Community Safety Plan, and the proposed Designated Public Place Order for Bracknell town centre; receiving a briefing on the implications of the Localism Act 2012 for the Council's corporate functions, particularly in relation to the 'Community Right to Challenge'; and considering the 2012/13 Service Plans. At each of its meetings, the Commission also reviewed corporate items on the Executive Forward Plan, and the progress of the O&S Panels and the Commission's own Working Groups.
- 5.6 The O&S Commission's next meeting is on 13 September, which will include an earlier start to scrutiny of the following year's budget, with a discussion of the main issues with the Borough Treasurer. Meanwhile, the Commission is running two Working Groups, as described in Appendix 1, and aims to commence a further Working Group on delegated authorities later in 2012.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

- 5.7 Meetings of the Panel were held on 24 April and 17 July. During the meetings the Panel considered and commented on: Quarterly Service Reports for the relevant quarters; the Schools Annual Environmental Management Report 2010/11; the Enforcement Policy; the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2012/13; the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Greenspace Quality Improvements Programme; the Highway Network Management Action Plan; and relevant Executive Forward Plan items. The Panel also received progress updates in respect of the Local Development Framework and Recycling and Waste Minimisation figures and monitored the progress of its working groups (see Appendix 1). The Panel's next meeting is on 23 October.

Health O&S Panel

- 5.8 The Panel met on 26 April and 14 June. The main items considered at those meetings included: meeting the Chairman of the Bracknell Forest & Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to review their progress; reviewing the findings of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; monitoring the progress on delivering the reforms to health arising from the Health and Social Care Act, specifically the transfer of Public Health responsibilities to the Council, setting up the Health and Wellbeing Board, and establishing Local Healthwatch; receiving an update from the Heatherwood & Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (H&WPT) on the closure of the Birthing Unit at Heatherwood Hospital; receiving a presentation from Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on treatment of Strokes and discussing with a patient of that service what her experience had been; and receiving a briefing on Dementia and the respective roles of service providers. At each of its meetings, the Panel also monitored the progress of its Working Groups (see Appendix 1).
- 5.9 Between formal meetings, the Panel's activities have included: producing letters in April 2012 commenting on the performance of five NHS Trusts in relation to their 'Quality Accounts'; holding a briefing for members about mental health on 12 April; having a tour of Frimley Park hospital on 15 May; and producing jointly with the Executive the Council's responses to a pre-consultation by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) on the 'Shaping the

Future' programme for health services in East Berkshire, also to the Department Of Health's consultation on the future of local authority scrutiny of the NHS in August. The Panel's next meeting is on 27 September.

Joint East Berkshire with Buckinghamshire Health O&S Committee

- 5.10 This Committee, formed jointly with Slough Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, and Buckinghamshire County Council had previously suspended its meetings from February 2011, owing to resource constraints and the absence of formal consultations on NHS service changes affecting the whole of East Berkshire. However, in view of the emerging proposals by the PCT and the H&WPT on the 'Shaping the Future' programme for health services in East Berkshire, since January 2012 the Committee has continued to meet regularly on an informal basis. The Committee agreed a joint response to the PCT's pre-consultation document, which was supportive of Bracknell Forest Council's own response. The next meeting of the Committee is planned for October 2012.

Children, Young People and Learning O&S Panel

- 5.11 The Panel met on 18 April and 4 July when it received: the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel; a presentation in respect of training and interventions to assist young people who are not in education, employment or training; information and trend data concerning key outcomes for children and young people as a measure of prevention and early intervention success; an update regarding English as an Additional Language (EAL) work following the review of EAL previously undertaken by a working group of this Panel; and an information report explaining the role and work of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. In addition, the Panel considered: the draft Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy for Children, Young People and Families; the report of the quality review of the Bracknell Forest Youth Service; the Executive's response to the report of the review of the Common Assessment Framework undertaken by a working group of this Panel; the 2011/12 Annual Report of the Complaints Manager for Children's Social Care; the findings of an internal review of the Common Assessment Framework in the Borough's schools; the Annual Report of the Foster Care Service 2011-12; and the Adoption Service Annual Report 2011-12. The implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy and 'Troubled Families' Initiative was reviewed by the Panel. A working group of the Panel is commencing a review of school governance on 13 September. The Panel's next meeting is on 3 October.
- 5.12 On 20 March the Executive considered its response to the O&S report on the Common Assessment Framework and the Executive report to Council on 25 April commented that this was '*...a thorough scrutiny of the CAF and a set of well informed recommendations. The Working Group is to be commended on the quality of their review*'. The Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board commented that, '*The LSCB welcomes the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's valuable review of the CAF and its role in supporting Early Intervention/Help. This review has been very thorough and follows up from the review of Safeguarding undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2011. It provides excellent analysis of the current arrangements and barriers to full implementation. The Executive have agreed with all 16 recommendations which include recognising the importance of investment in Early Intervention for improving children's outcomes and the need to ensure the full engagement of all partners.*'

Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Panel

- 5.13 The Panel's remit was extended to include the Housing, Benefit and Forestcare functions with effect from 1 April 2012 when these services were transferred from the Environment, Culture and Communities Department to form the new Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department. The Panel met on 17 April and 3 July. The main items considered at the meetings included: an introduction to Housing Services; the Annual Complaints Report 2011/12 for Adult Social Care; the 2011/12 Safeguarding Adults Annual Report; an update

in respect of the implementation of 'Staying Safe', the O&S review of safeguarding adults in the context of personalisation of Adult Social Care; progress towards establishing a statutory Health and Wellbeing Board in Bracknell Forest; and relevant Executive Forward Plan items. The Panel also: reviewed the implementation of the Adult Autism Joint Commissioning Strategy 2011; considered and commented on the recommendations and action plan within the Long Term Conditions and Sensory Needs Strategy prior to their approval by the Executive; responded to the consultation in respect of the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Assistive Technology 2012/2017; and contributed to proposals to form the Council's Local Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans Scheme. The Panel monitored the progress of its working groups (see Appendix 1). The next meeting of the Panel is taking place on 9 October.

- 5.14 Three members of the Panel had a separate meeting with the Chief Officer: Housing to discuss the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. This matter is now being considered by the O&S Commission.

Other Overview and Scrutiny Issues

- 5.15 The O&S Annual Report for 2011-12 was adopted by Council on 25 April.
- 5.16 Responses to the feedback questionnaires on the quality of O&S reviews are summarised in Appendix 2, showing a consistently high score across the various questions posed.
- 5.17 Quarterly review and agenda setting meetings between O&S Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, Executive Members and Directors are taking place regularly for the Panels (every two months for the O&S Commission).
- 5.18 The O&S Chairmen and Vice Chairmen are meeting on a regular basis to consider cross-cutting O&S issues. They last met on 22 August, and their next meeting is planned for 10 December.
- 5.19 External networking on O&S in the last six months has included an O&S officer attending the South East Employers Local Democracy and Accountability network event in March; the O&S Commission Chairman and an O&S officer attending the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference in June; and an O&S officer attending a Wokingham BC O&S meeting in August, concerning a Call-In.

6 Developments in O&S

- 6.1 The governance implications of the Localism Act relating to scrutiny are under consideration by the Majority Group.
- 6.2 As part of the drive to improve Public Participation, a leaflet on 'Speaking at O&S Meetings' was designed and published in March 2012.
- 6.3 Using the new powers in the Localism Act, on 25 April Council rescinded the O&S role in relation to Petitions.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 7.1 The monitoring of this function is carried out by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on a quarterly basis. Good progress has been made on the agreed programme of work by Overview and Scrutiny for 2012/13. Scrutiny Panels have continued to focus on areas of importance to local residents, and the quality of the work done continues to be high.

Borough Solicitor

7.2 Nothing to add to the report.

Borough Treasurer

7.2 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.3 Not applicable. The report does not contain any recommendations impacting on equalities issues.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.4 Not applicable. The report does not contain any recommendations impacting on strategic risk management issues.

Workforce Implications

7.5 Not applicable. The report does not contain any new recommendations impacting on workforce implications.

Other Officers

7.6 Directors and lead officers are consulted on the scope of each O&S review before its commencement, and on draft O&S reports before publication.

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

8.1 None.

Method of Consultation

8.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

8.3 None.

Background Papers

Minutes and papers of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels.

Contact for further information

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CURRENT WORKING GROUPS – 2012/13

Position at 6 September 2012

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	PROGRESS OF REVIEW	REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Community Infrastructure Levy	Leake (Lead), Angell, Mrs Birch, Heydon, Virgo and Worrall	Bev Hindle	Richard Beaumont	√	Around 50% completed			Seven meetings held to date. Recommendations made on CIL rates
Communications Strategy	Leake (Lead), Gbadebo, Thompson and Wade	Mike McCabe	Richard Beaumont	√	Views given on draft strategy at meeting on 30 July			Revised draft strategy with members for any comments

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	PROGRESS OF REVIEW	REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
New Health and Well-being Strategy	Virgo (Lead), Finch, Mrs Temperton, and Baily. Mr Pearce	Zoë Johnstone	Richard Beaumont	√	Around 70% completed			Awaits revised draft strategy
Implementation of the major NHS reforms	Finch (Lead), Virgo, and Mrs Angell	Glyn Jones	Richard Beaumont	√	Around 80% completed			Next meeting arranged for 12 October

Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	PROGRESS OF REVIEW	REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Review of Highway Maintenance	McClean (Lead), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Leake and Parish & Town Councillors: Mrs Cupper (Sandhurst), Mrs Doyle (Binfield), Kensall (Bracknell), Paxton (Winkfield) and Price (Crowthorne)	Steve Loudoun	Andrea Carr	√	Completed	Interim report issued	Response received to interim report	The working group may be re-formed at a future date to consider the Highways Asset Management Plan.
Member Reference Group – Commercial Sponsorship	Finnie (Lead), Brossard, Dudley, Gbadebo and Ward	Vincent Paliczka	Andrea Carr	√	Completed	N/A	N/A	The Director is now taking forward consideration of prospective commercial sponsorship income.
Public Transport Subsidies & Concessionary Fare Support	Finnie (Lead), Brossard, Gbadebo and Leake	Bev Hindle / Sue Cuthbert	Andrea Carr	√	Completed	Views fed back to the Executive on 22 May 2012 as part of the 2012/13	The Executive agreed to reduce the overall available concessionary	The working group may be reformed to assist with the development of a Bus

Unrestricted

							budget proposals.	fares budget in line with the Working Group's views.	Strategy for the Borough.
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Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	PROGRESS OF REVIEW	REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
School Governance	Ms Hayes, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Temperton, Mrs Cauchi (PGR) and Mr Jackson (Kerith Centre)	Bob Welch / Martin Surrell	Andrea Carr	To be undertaken	Review to commence on 13 September 2012			First meeting arranged for 13 September 2012

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Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	PROGRESS OF REVIEW	REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Substance Misuse	Virgo (Lead), Blatchford and Brossard	Jillian Hunt / Mira Haynes	Andrea Carr	√	Around 80% completed.			Information and evidence gathering nearing completion.
Modernisation of Older People's Services	Allen (Lead), Brossard, and Mrs Temperton	Mira Haynes	Andrea Carr	√	Information gathering completed	Report has been drafted		A final meeting of the working group will be held to agree the draft report.

Completed Reviews

Date Completed	Title
December 2003	South Bracknell Schools Review
January 2004	Review of Adult Day Care Services in Bracknell Forest (Johnstone Court Day Centre & Downside Resource Centre)
May 2004	Review of Community & Voluntary Sector Grants
July 2004	Review of Community Transport Provision
April 2005	Review of Members' Information Needs
November 2005	The Management of Coronary Heart Disease
February 2006	Review of School Transfers and Performance
March 2006	Review of School Exclusions and Pupil Behaviour Policy
August 2006	Report of Tree Policy Review Group
November 2006	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Review of the ASB Strategy Implementation
January 2007	Review of Youth Provision
February 2007	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2006
February 2007	Review of Library Provision
July 2007	Review of Healthcare Funding
November 2007	Review of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy
December 2007	Review of the Council's Medium Term Objectives
March 2008	2007 Annual Health Check Response to the Healthcare Commission
April 2008	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2007/08
May 2008	Road Traffic Casualties
August 2008	Caring for Carers
September 2008	Scrutiny of Local Area Agreement
October 2008	Street Cleaning
October 2008	English as an Additional Language in Bracknell Forest Schools
April 2009	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09

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Date Completed	Title
April 2009	Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check 2008/09 (letters submitted)
April 2009	Children's Centres and Extended Services in and Around Schools in Bracknell Forest
April 2009	Older People's Strategy
April 2009	Services for People with Learning Disabilities
May 2009	Housing Strategy
July 2009	Review of Waste and Recycling
July 2009	Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan
December 2009	NHS Core Standards
January 2010	Medium Term Objectives 2010/11
January 2010	Review of the Bracknell Healthspace (publication withheld to 2011)
January 2010	14-19 Years Education Provision
April 2010	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10
July 2010	Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan (Update)
July 2010	The Council's Response to the Severe Winter Weather
July 2010	Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies
October 2010	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in the context of Personalisation
October 2010	Review of Partnership Scrutiny
December 2010	Hospital Car Parking Charges
January 2011	Safeguarding Children and Young People
March 2011	Review of the Bracknell Healthspace (Addendum)
April 2011	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11
June 2011	Office Accommodation Strategy
June 2011	Plans for Sustaining Economic Prosperity
July 2011	Review of Highway Maintenance (Interim report)
September 2011	Performance Management Framework

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Date Completed	Title
September 2011	Review of the Council's Medium Term Objectives
October 2011	Plans for Neighbourhood Engagement
October 2011	Regulation of Investigatory Powers
October 2011	Site Allocations Development Plan Document
January 2012	Common Assessment Framework
February 2012	Information and Communications Technology Strategy
April 2012	NHS Trusts Quality Accounts 2011/12 (letters submitted to five Trusts)
April 2012	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12

Results of Feedback Questionnaires on Overview and Scrutiny Reports

Note – Departmental Link officers on each major Overview and Scrutiny review are asked to score the key aspects of each substantive review on a scale of 0 (Unsatisfactory) to 3 (Excellent)

	Average score for previous 15 Reviews ¹
PLANNING Were you given sufficient notice of the review?	2.8
Were your comments invited on the scope of the review, and was the purpose of the review explained to you?	2.9
CONDUCT OF REVIEW Was the review carried out in a professional and objective manner with minimum disruption?	2.7
Was there adequate communication between O&S and the department throughout?	2.7
Did the review get to the heart of the issue?	2.7
REPORTING Did you have an opportunity to comment on the draft report?	2.9
Did the report give a clear and fair presentation of the facts?	2.5
Were the recommendations relevant and practical?	2.5
How useful was this review in terms of improving the Council's performance?	2.6

¹ Road Traffic Casualties, Review of the Local Area Agreement, Support for Carers, Street Cleaning, Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, English as an Additional Language in Schools, Children's Centres and Extended Services, Waste and Recycling, Older People's Strategy, Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan, 14-19 Education, Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies, Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults, and the Common Assessment Framework.

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TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
23 OCTOBER 2012

**EXECUTIVE KEY AND NON-KEY DECISIONS RELATING TO
ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES
Assistant Chief Executive**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Environment, Culture and Communities for the Panel's consideration.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers the scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Environment, Culture and Communities appended to this report.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To invite the Panel to consider scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Consideration of scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions alerts the Panel to forthcoming Executive decisions and facilitates pre-decision scrutiny.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

No advice was sought from the Borough Solicitor, the Borough Treasurer or Other Officers or sought in terms of Equalities Impact Assessment or Strategic Risk Management Issues. Such advice will be sought in respect of each Executive Forward Plan item prior to its consideration by the Executive.

7 CONSULTATION

None.

Background Papers

Local Government Act 2000

Contact for further information

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Andrea Carr – 01344 352122

e-mail: andrea.carr@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	1037866
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TITLE: Bus Strategy Development

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To seek approval to review the Council's Bus Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None

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

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 5 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	1037366
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TITLE: Recycling Incentive Scheme

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To confirm details of a new recycling initiative to be introduced from 1st April 2013 across the Borough.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Nil. Costs will be covered by a grant and savings derived from diversion from landfill.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I037579
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TITLE: Release of Section 106 Funding for Crowthorne Library

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To seek approval for the release of Section106 funding for an improvement project at Crowthorne Library.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Section 106 funding of £8,702 is available for this project.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Users of Crowthorne Library.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Users of Crowthorne Library as part of routine surveys conducted within libraries have an opportunity to feedback their views regarding the service.

DATE OF DECISION: 19 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I037964
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TITLE: Interim Adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems

PURPOSE OF DECISION: For the Council to voluntarily adopt Sustainable Drainage Systems until Schedule 3 of the FWMA (2010) is implemented.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: No financial implications

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Not applicable

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 26 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I036179
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TITLE: Introduction of Parking Restrictions - Various Roads in Bullbrook, Harmans Water, Priestwood & Garth, Wildridings & Central, Great Hollands South, Warfield Harvest Ride, Binfield, with Warfield, Crowthorne, Great Hollands North, College Town, Hanwort

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the introduction of parking restrictions in various residential roads in Bullbrook, Harmans Water, Priestwood & Garth, Wildridings & Central, Great Hollands South, Warfield Harvest Ride, Binfield with Warfield, Crowthorne, Great Hollands North, College Town, Hanworth & Little Sandhurst & Wellington

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Planning & Transport

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Local Members, Winkfield Parish Council, Bracknell Town Council, Emergency Services, Local Bus Operators, Freight Transport Association & Road Haulage Association.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Letter, Public Notices (on-streets affected and in local newspaper)

DATE OF DECISION: 11 Dec 2012

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