



AGENDA

For the Council meeting to be held on
Wednesday 27 April 2016.

Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive



NOTICE OF MEETING

Council

Wednesday 27 April 2016, 7.30 pm

Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

To: The Council

Councillor Mrs Hamilton (Mayor), Councillor Virgo (Deputy Mayor),
Councillors Allen, Mrs Angell, Angell, Dr Barnard, Bettison, D Birch, Mrs Birch, G Birch,
Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Finnie, Ms Gaw, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE,
Ms Hayes, Heydon, Hill, Mrs Ingham, King OBE, Leake, McCracken, Mrs McCracken,
Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Ms Merry, Ms Miller, Peacey,
Phillips, Porter, Skinner, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Tullett, Turrell, Wade and Worrall



TIMOTHY WHEADON
Chief Executive

Council
Wednesday 27 April 2016, 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House,
Bracknell

Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media at meetings which are held in public are permitted. Those wishing to record proceedings at a meeting are however advised to contact the Democratic Services Officer named as the contact for further information on the front of this agenda as early as possible before the start of the meeting so that any special arrangements can be made.

AGENDA

Page No

The meeting will be opened with prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 February 2016.

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3. **Declarations of Interest**

Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Affected 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 Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

Including a presentation of a cheque to the Mayor's Charity, Make-A-Wish UK.

5. **Executive Report**

To receive the Leader's report on the work of the Executive since the Council meeting held on 24 February 2016.

17 - 24

Council is asked to resolve recommendations in respect of:

- **The 2016 refresh of the priorities and targets contained within Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) 2014-17**

6. **Establishment of an Appointment Committee**

To establish an Appointment Committee to recruit to the post of Borough Treasurer.

25 - 28

7. **Recommendation of the Governance and Audit Committee**
 To consider and adopt the changes to the Constitution Part 4 Section 11 – Contract Standing Orders. 29 - 46
8. **2015/16 Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny**
 To inform Members of progress made in respect of the operation and development of overview and scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2015/16, and outline proposed future activities. 47 - 90
9. **Member Development Annual Report 2015/16**
 To appraise all Members of the work and progress on Member Development during the year 2015-16 and to approve the new Member Development Strategy 2016-2020. 91 - 118
10. **Champions' Annual Report 2015/16**
 To appraise all Members of the work undertaken by the Council's four Champions during the year 2015-16. 119 - 132
11. **Standards Committee Annual Report**
 To appraise all Members of the work of the Standards Committee in 2015-16. 133 - 136
12. **Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**
By Councillor Mrs Temperton to Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council
- The New Council Plan states that the cost, quality and delivery mechanism of all aspects of the Council will be reviewed by 2019. The present cost of the political management of the council is just under £600K.
- When does the review of the political management of the Council and its associated allowances feature in this four year plan? The present allocation of the Portfolio Holders seems unbalanced. Could the number of executive portfolio holders be reduced? Are 'Champions' needed?

13. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

To consider the following motion:

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) (Item 14)

14. **Potential Acquisition of Property**

To seek approval for the funding to purchase property.

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COUNCIL
24 FEBRUARY 2016
7.30 - 8.55 PM



Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Dee Hamilton), Councillors Virgo (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Mrs Angell, Angell, Dr Barnard, Bettison, D Birch, Mrs Birch, G Birch, Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Finnie, Ms Gaw, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Hill, Mrs Ingham, King OBE, Leake, McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Ms Merry, Peacey, Phillips, Porter, Skinner, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Tullett, Turrell and Wade

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Ms Miller and Worrall

42. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 January 2016 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

43. Declarations of Interest

Councillor D Birch and Heydon declared, for transparency, in respect of Item 6 (Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2016-17) that they were Directors of Downshire Homes Board.

The Chief Executive, Timothy Wheadon declared, for transparency, in respect of Item 6 (Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2016-17) that he was the Chairman of Downshire Homes Board.

The Borough Solicitor, Sanjay Prashar declared, for transparency, in respect of Item 6 (Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2016-17) that he was the Director of Downshire Homes Board.

44. Mayor's Announcements

Donation to the Mayor's Charity

Rosemary Gurney, Chairman of itSMF UK, attended the meeting to present the Mayor with a donation to the Mayor's charity, Make a Wish UK. At a recent event for itSMF, a charity raffle had been held and Ms Gurney was pleased to present £2,500 to the Mayor's charity.

Executive Member for Adult Social Services, Health and Housing

Councillor D Birch reported the Intermediate Care Service at The Bridgewell Centre had been inspected by the CQC on the 6 and 7 January 2016. Councillor Birch was pleased to report that the centre had received a green rating in all areas. The Director

of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing was encouraged to feed back thanks and congratulations to staff and colleagues.

Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken reported that Great Hollands Library had held a smoking cessation group through 2015, and that 55 attendees had stopped smoking thanks to this initiative.

Councillor McCracken congratulated Sarah Kingston, Revenue Services Manager on achieving the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation Honours qualification. This made the Revenue Services Manager one of the most qualified Revenue Services professionals in the country.

Councillor McCracken was pleased to report that the council website had recently been awarded 4 stars in the SOCITM review. In addition, it was noted that there were 10,000 accounts open on the Customer Relationship Management system.

Councillor McCracken reported on the recent Workplace Challenge, in which Bracknell Forest had come first with 1.9m points recorded and 212 participants. Bracknell Forest Council also had three individuals ranked in the top 100 point scorers.

Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration

Councillor Brunel-Walker was glad to report on the progress of the town centre redevelopment, including the ongoing works on the new park at Station Green. It was reported that on 25 February 2016, there would be a topping out ceremony of the new Marks and Spencer building to recognise the first roof to be put on a Lexicon building.

45. **Executive Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 20 January 2016. The Executive had met three times on 26 January 2016, 9 February 2016 and 23 February 2016.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- The outcome of the Heathlands consultation on reprovision and closure was considered and changes to service model were agreed. Heathlands was a 1970s building with inferior standards, high vacancy rates and reducing attendance at the day centre. A team of experienced officers were working with residents and families to find alternative provision using the successful 'Ladybank model'.
- The School Places Plan had been agreed. By 2020, pupil numbers were expected to rise by 18% for Primary and 26% for Secondary. The Plan was based upon current house building programmes and had been proven historically to be accurate within 1%.
- Review of School Admission Arrangements had been needed due to the housing development plans and Charters School's decision to remove the feeder schools criteria. The Primary school feeder criteria has now been removed from the admission arrangements across the rest of the Borough. The arrangements

introduced more shared designated areas to accommodate phasing of housing growth. Protection had been given to siblings for six years.

- Great Hollands Primary School expansion had been agreed.
- The Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment was agreed with priorities largely unchanged from 2015.
- The Council had acquired the Magistrates Court plus in-borough commercial property as part of its emerging Property Investment Strategy.
- The Agency Workers Framework contract had been agreed.

46. **Appointment of Monitoring Officer**

The Council was asked to formally appoint the Council's Monitoring Officer to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

On the proposition of Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection, seconded by Councillor Allen it was

RESOLVED that the Borough Solicitor, Sanjay Prashar, be formally designated as Monitoring Officer and that such designation be retrospectively implemented from 29 June 2015 to coincide with his appointment.

47. **Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2016-17**

The Council considered the report by the Borough Treasurer which set out the financial plans and revenue budgets for the financial year 2016/17 and supporting information which presented the Council's spending plans for 2016/17 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and Capital Programme. It was noted that a replacement to page 25 of the agenda papers had been circulated as it contained updated information which was not available at the time of the agenda publication.

Councillor Heydon gave a comprehensive presentation placing a particular focus on:

- Council's initial budget plans were published for consultation on 15 December. The Council had set its financial plans and published its budget based on advice that Revenue Support Grant would be reduced by 40% over the Spending Review period.
- The provisional financial settlement was announced two days later and the actual grant cut was 80% which was £4.3m more than expected and was based on previously unannounced changes to the distribution of resources amongst authorities. The new approach, known as 'resource equalisation' is based on the presumption that where possible income should be raised locally.
- Following a delegation of Berkshire Leaders, headed by Bracknell Forest Council's Leader, meeting with the Minister for Local Government a new transitional grant was announced to assist those authorities that had been affected most severely by the cuts and the Council will receive additional funding of £0.9m in both 2016/17 and 2017/18. This was acknowledged as a short term solution but provided additional time to plan and implement a whole range of economies and savings that will place the Council's finances on sound foundations for the future.

- He thanked the Chief Executive and his senior team for the hard work that they have put into the process.
- Following five years of Council Tax freezes the key feature was the proposed Council Tax increase of 3.99%. Just under half of this would be used to support the continued delivery of vital front line services, with the remaining 2% being spent entirely on adult social care functions.
- To the average Band D Council Tax payer this would be an increase of just over £40 for the year, less than £1 per week, and as such still represented good value for our residents.
- The net spending next year, before the use of reserves and balances would be £70.3m, but overall gross expenditure would exceed £100m. This would include:
 - Support for those with a learning disability (£13.7m)
 - Support for those with physical disabilities (£9.5m)
 - Waste disposal (£6.7m)
 - Looked after children (£6.3m)
 - Recreation, sport and leisure (£3.2m), and
 - Open spaces (£2.2m).
- In addition to this the Council is passporting from the government to our schools over £83m. Schools are under additional cost pressures but schools will receive the same amount of funding in cash terms as last year. Some schools will see an increase in their budgets, if for example, their pupil numbers have increased.
- The budget for schools is challenging and action will need to be taken to manage costs to ensure school budgets remain on a sustainable footing, especially when more new schools come on stream in support of the housing development that is taking place across the Borough.
- Council has found initial savings of almost £4.5m across other Council services with an overriding approach to increase efficiency and reduce back office costs.
- By managing demand for services and taking the opportunity to increase income this means that impact on services to residents has been minimised.
- The scale of the financial challenge the Council are facing means that not all services can be maintained at their present level, but will follow the principles set out in the recently agreed Council Plan
- £79.8m of proposed Capital Programme spending next year to continue the Council's programme of investment in the Borough.
- Redevelopment of the town centre is now a reality with a total of £12.4m already spent or committed to fund the purchase of the bus station, invest in a new park and deliver further public realm and highways works. This was being supplemented with a further £2m per annum to facilitate transport movements around the Borough to ensure the regenerated town centre functions as a 'whole centre' and not just an isolated shopping outlet.
- The second area of significant capital spend will be the Binfield Learning Village which will deliver much needed schools places in the north of the Borough as well as delivering new housing and associated community facilities. The overall project was expected to cost over £39m over a four year period.
- Feedback from the consultation process was taken into account and he thanked everyone who had taken part by examining the proposals and providing feedback.
- He concluded that he was presenting a balanced budget supported by £5.1m from reserves but included a 3.99% increase in the rate of Council Tax.
- He stated that transferring from balances was unsustainable and the Transformation Programme was key in replacing balances.

- He added that the Executive had agreed a range of further savings proposals of almost £4m that would be consulted upon and were included for information on the blue pages within the financial plans and budgets supporting information. These would be considered by Full Council on 13 July.

On the proposition of Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, seconded by Councillor Bettison the recommendations as set out in the agenda report and in the supplementary report were moved.

As required by legislation a recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion and the voting was as follows:

FOR (39) Councillors Allen, Angell, Mrs Angell, Dr Barnard, Bettison, D Birch, Mrs Birch, G Birch, Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Finnie, Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Hill, Mrs Ingham, King OBE, Leake, Mrs Mattick, McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boye, McLean, Ms Merry, Peacey, Phillips, Porter, Skinner, Thompson, Tullett, Turrell, Virgo and Wade.

ABSTAIN (1) Councillor Mrs Temperton.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

1 Capital Programme 2016/17 - 2018/19

- i) General Fund capital funding of £59.983m for 2016/17 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 229 to 233 of the Supporting Information be agreed;
- ii) The inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for 'Invest to Save' schemes be agreed;
- iii) The inclusion of £2.440m of expenditure to be funded from S106 as outlined in paragraph 5.33 on pages 225 and 226 and included on pages 229 to 233 of the Supporting Information be agreed;
- iv) That those schemes that attract external grant funding be agreed for inclusion within the 2016/17 capital programme at the level of funding received;

2 Revenue Budget 2016/17

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 5) of the Summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 6.2 (page 6 and 7), 6.3 (pages 7 and 8), 7 (page 9) and 8.3 (pages 10 and 11) of the Supporting Information be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out on pages 97 to 186 of the Supporting Information be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £0.765m be approved;
- iv) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (page 25 of the Supporting Information);
- vi) The Schools Budget be funded at the level set out in section 9.1 (pages 11 to 12) of the Supporting Information subject to any amendments agreed by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning;

- vii) A contingency of £1.000m be included, use of which is authorised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Borough Treasurer in accordance with the delegations included in the Council's constitution;
- viii) Subject to the above recommendations the revised draft budget proposals be agreed;
- ix) A contribution of £5.174m (after allowing for the loss of interest on the use of balances of £0.013m) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure;
- x) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £65.104m, be approved;
- xi) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £49.795m;
- xii) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	758.40
B	7/9	884.80
C	8/9	1011.20
D	9/9	1137.60
E	11/9	1390.40
F	13/9	1643.20
G	15/9	1896.00
H	18/9	2275.20

- xiii) the following indicators, limits, strategies and policies included in Annex E (pages 53 to 74 of the Supporting Information):
 - The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2016/17 to 2018/19 contained within Annex E(i);
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy contained within Annex E(ii);
 - The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and the Treasury Prudential Indicators contained in Annex E(iii);
 - The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator in Annex E(iii);
 - The Investment Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annex E(iv);
- xiv) The formal Council Tax Resolution contained in section 3 be approved.

3 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

- 3.1 the recommendations of the Executive outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 be agreed.
- 3.2 the amounts calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are :-

(a) £43,772 TAX BASE FOR THE WHOLE COUNCIL AREA

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, as its council tax base for the year

(b) TAX BASE FOR PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA

EACH PARISH AREA

Binfield	3,697
Bracknell	18,601
Crowthorne	2,618
Sandhurst	7,720
Warfield	4,533
Winkfield	6,603

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as amended, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate

3.3 the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act):

(a) £286,745,061 TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, PARISH PRECEPTS AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY DEFICIT ON THE COLLECTION FUND

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act

(b) £233,993,587 TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY SURPLUS ON THE COLLECTION FUND

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act

(c) £52,751,474 BOROUGH AND PARISH PRECEPTS NET EXPENDITURE TO BE FINANCED FROM COUNCIL TAX

being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year

(d) £1,205.14 AVERAGE BAND "D" COUNCIL TAX FOR WHOLE BOROUGH

being the amount at 3.3(c) above, divided by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Parish precepts)

(e) £2,956,447 PARISH PRECEPTS

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act

(f) £1,137.60 BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX FOR BAND "D" PROPERTIES

being the amount at 3.3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.3(e) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year if there were an area of the Borough to which no special item relates

(g) Part of the Council's area BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH PARISH FOR BAND "D"

Binfield	£1,181.69
Bracknell	£1,216.26
Crowthorne	£1,208.99
Sandhurst	£1,210.89
Warfield	£1,171.59
Winkfield	£1,201.74

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate

(h) Part of the Council's area BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX IN EACH PARISH FOR EACH VALUATION BAND

Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	787.79	919.09	1,050.39	1,181.69	1,444.29	1,706.89	1,969.48	2,363.38
Bracknell	810.84	945.98	1,081.12	1,216.26	1,486.54	1,756.82	2,027.10	2,432.52
Crowthorne	805.99	940.33	1,074.66	1,208.99	1,477.65	1,746.32	2,014.98	2,417.98
Sandhurst	807.26	941.80	1,076.35	1,210.89	1,479.98	1,749.06	2,018.15	2,421.78
Warfield	781.06	911.24	1,041.41	1,171.59	1,431.94	1,692.30	1,952.65	2,343.18
Winkfield	801.16	934.69	1,068.21	1,201.74	1,468.79	1,735.85	2,002.90	2,403.48

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which

in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands

- 3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 the Police and Crime Panel have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley	111.31	129.86	148.41	166.96	204.06	241.16	278.27	333.92

- 3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 17 February, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	40.84	47.65	54.46	61.27	74.88	88.50	102.11	122.54

- 3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.3(h), 3.4 and 3.5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

(a) Part of the Council's area	TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND							
Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	939.94	1,096.60	1,253.26	1,409.92	1,723.23	2,036.55	2,349.86	2,819.84
Bracknell	962.99	1,123.49	1,283.99	1,444.49	1,765.48	2,086.48	2,407.48	2,888.98
Crowthorne	958.14	1,117.84	1,277.53	1,437.22	1,756.59	2,075.98	2,395.36	2,874.44
Sandhurst	959.41	1,119.31	1,279.22	1,439.12	1,758.92	2,078.72	2,398.53	2,878.24
Warfield	933.21	1,088.75	1,244.28	1,399.82	1,710.88	2,021.96	2,333.03	2,799.64
Winkfield	953.31	1,112.20	1,271.08	1,429.97	1,747.73	2,065.51	2,383.28	2,859.94

48. **Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**

(i) Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing the following published question:

It has been said that the decision to close Heathlands marks the end of Bracknell Forest Council being a Provider of Care; all care now being commissioned out. But what about the Intermediate Care service?

What has happened to the land swap plans between Bracknell Forest Homes and Bracknell Forest Council involving Dennis Pilcher House and Bridgewell? Residents were moved out of Dennis Pilcher House on the basis that there would be a new Intermediate Care Service provided there and much needed affordable homes built at Bridgewell.

When will the Intermediate Care Service be moving or is this too to be commissioned out?

In response Councillor Birch stated that the closure of Heathlands marked the end of Bracknell Forest Council being a provider of long term residential care but Community Intermediate Care would continue to be provided on a short term basis which was normally for up to 6 weeks. Provision of care would not be moving from Bridgewell unless it no longer provided good value for money and would therefore be commissioned elsewhere.

He reported that since the original asset swap was agreed with Bracknell Forest Homes, opportunities for offering intermediate care in people's own homes have changed and this was no longer taking place. He added that the demand for the residential bed-based service continued to reduce so therefore the model needed to support a more flexible commissioning approach. This would be a more cost-effective and suitable option.

He stated that the consultation with residents of Dennis Pilcher House was carried out at a point in time, and clearly whilst residential Intermediate Care was seen as the way forward. This was undertaken by Bracknell Forest Homes and not the Council. Many residents were developing increasing needs for personal care, and a significant part of the consultation was exploring alternatives for their future care, support and wellbeing. The residents were not moved out of Dennis Pilcher House on the basis that there would be new service developed there.

He reported that 10 of the residents chose to move to the new Extra Care development at Clement House, and have settled well into extremely high quality homes for life, where changing needs can be supported on the premises.

He concluded that the futures of the Bridgewell and Dennis Pilcher sites will be the subject of further discussions, but for the time being, Bridgewell will continue to offer its Intermediate Care services as at present.

MAYOR

To: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL The Leader

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council meeting on 24 February 2016, the Executive has met twice on 8 March and 12 April 2016. This report summarises decisions taken at these meetings by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall.
- 1.2 Updated Forward Plans are published every Friday and are available for public inspection at Easthampstead House in the usual way and online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk. Full details on the decisions taken by individual portfolio holders can also be accessed online through the Council's website.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to consider the recommendation set out at paragraph 5.3.7.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The reasons for recommendations are set out in the supporting information and in the reports considered by the Executive.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Alternative options are discussed in the relevant individual reports considered by the Executive

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Adult Services, Health & Housing

5.1 Advocacy Joint Commissioning Strategy 2016-2021

- 5.1.1 The Executive has approved the Advocacy Joint Commissioning Strategy for 2016-2021. The Strategy takes account of significant legislative changes since the last strategy was developed in 2012 that directly impact the commissioning and provision of advocacy services.
- 5.1.2 The Care Act 2014 introduced a broader advocacy duty, under which councils must provide access to independent advocacy for people with care and support needs, and unpaid carers with support needs, who have substantial difficulty engaging with care and support processes. Additionally, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred commissioning responsibility for Independent Mental Health Advocacy and NHS Complaints Advocacy from the NHS to local councils with social services

responsibilities. As a result, the council is now responsible for commissioning four types of statutory advocacy:

- Independent Advocacy under the Care Act
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy
- NHS Complaints Advocacy
- Independent Mental Health Advocacy

5.1.3 In order to understand how advocacy services can best be provided locally, the following has been taken into account when developing this strategy and defining the priorities within it:

- Relevant legislation, national guidance and research
- An analysis of the needs of the local population and how these may change in future
- The views and experiences of local people
- The current provision of advocacy services

5.1.4 The priorities identified from the research and analysis in the strategy are based around the four domains of the 2015-16 Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. These priorities are that:

- People have as much choice and control as they want over their support
- People understand what advocacy is and how it can help
- People can access the most appropriate type of advocacy when they need it
- People are supported by high quality services
- Advocacy contributes to keeping people safe from harm

Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection

5.2 Council Tax Penalties

5.2.1 The Executive has agreed to implement the Council Tax Penalties Policy, on which it has been consulting, with effect from 1 April 2016. The majority of responses to the consultation were generally in favour of the imposition of penalties where there was no reasonable excuse provided by the taxpayer for non-disclosure.

5.2.2 The Council has powers under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Schedule 3) to impose civil penalties to those charge payers who wilfully neglect to inform the Council of changes to their circumstances that affect their Council Tax liability. It also has a duty to ensure that the correct Council Tax charge is being applied to all of its domestic properties. The introduction of a penalty policy will help to educate customers on the importance of advising of relevant changes and also encourage them to do this in a timely manner. The penalties will be applied using a consistent, approach where a reasonable excuse has not been provided to the Council.

5.2.3 The most common occurrences where penalties are expected to be applied are as follows:

- Failure to notify the council that any discount (e.g. Single Person Discount) should no longer apply.
- Failure to notify that a property exemption should no longer apply
- Failure to notify of a change to the liable party
- A false application for Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS)

- Failure to notify of a change to the household or any other changes that affect their LCTRS entitlement.

5.2.4 The penalty will be applied where the taxpayer is unable to provide a reasonable explanation for the delay in providing or complete failure to provide the relevant information. The penalty is currently fixed at £70 and will be added directly to the taxpayers' Council Tax account and recovered alongside their usual Council Tax charge. Where a penalty has already been applied and further requests for the same information are made, additional penalties of up to £280 may be imposed. Taxpayers may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal for England within 2 months if they are aggrieved by the imposition of a penalty and are unsatisfied with the Council's internal review that will take place should a taxpayer disagree with the decision.

5.3 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2016-17

5.3.1 The Executive considered the 2016 refresh of the priorities and targets which are contained within Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) 2014-17 and has recommended it to Council for formal endorsement.

5.3.2 The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) to produce an annual strategic assessment and a three-year partnership plan to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse.

5.3.3 The Bracknell Forest CSP has a strong track record of partnership working which has contributed to the continued reduction in crime figures. Successful reductions (from 1st April 2015 up to 31st December 2015 compared to the same period the previous year) included the following:

- 0.9% reduction in Overall Crime
- 25.4% reduction in Burglary Dwelling
- 38.6% reduction in Burglary Non Dwelling
- 11.3% reduction in Theft of Vehicle
- 17.1% reduction in Bicycle Theft

5.3.4 The CSP has agreed two overarching themes for its coming work:

- Crime
- Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

5.3.5 The priorities that sit beneath them are set out in the CSP Plan following the outcomes and recommendations of the 2015 Strategic Assessment. Three criteria were used to identify strategic priorities: the paired comparison method of priority, current trends and projections as well as police priorities (as identified by partner and community consultation). Despite only scoring in one of these categories, largely because of the major reductions in recent years, the partnership recognises the impact that Burglary Dwelling has and it will remain a strategic priority. It has also been decided to include Burglary Non- Dwelling as a priority given that it was significant in the paired comparison and is highlighted in the police's priorities. This replaces the acquisitive crime category of Shoplifting, which has not been identified as a priority in the 2015 Strategic Assessment. Youth Crime Prevention and Drug Offences will continue to be a priority as trafficking of drugs and observation or suspicion of drug dealing emerged as priorities from the scanning exercise. Internet-related crime and abuse, child sexual exploitation and preventing violent extremism did not feature in the Strategic Assessment scanning exercise. However the

Partnership recognises the significant impact these issues have on vulnerable people and therefore has recommended a priority of Protection of Vulnerable People. Much of this work will involve awareness-raising, early intervention and prevention. As such the targets for this priority are largely based around the initiatives that will be delivered throughout the year in a variety of settings rather than traditional outcomes.

- 5.3.6 At the end of January 2016 crime levels were at their lowest in over 20 years. It was also notable that the reduction in all crime of 9% follows 5 years of consecutive crime reduction: 9% in 2014/15, 5% in 2013/14, 10.8% in 2012/13, 17% in 2011/12 and 10% in 2010/11.
- 5.3.7 The Executive recommends that Council endorse the 2016 refresh of the priorities and targets contained within Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) 2014-17.

Environment

5.4 Highway Maintenance Works Programme 2016-17

- 5.4.1 The Executive has approved the list of schemes in the Highway Maintenance Works Programme to which the budget for 2016-17 will be targeted. In order to ensure most effective use of resource, funding is targeted at those roads identified on a rolling list as being in greatest need.
- 5.4.2 The 2016/17 budget includes £1.560m for the non-routine highway maintenance schemes. This is the level of funding provided via the Department for Transport's (DfT) Highway Maintenance Capital Funding which is a reduction on last year. From 2016/17 onwards the DfT will award councils' further funding based on their 'efficiency' assessments. Councils will be graded in three bands following completion of a self-assessment questionnaire and those in the higher bands will receive, on a sliding scale, up to 100% of the available additional funding. In Bracknell Forest's case the maximum expected under this process is £94,000 in the financial year 2016/17. There is an additional £228,000 from the Council's own capital programme by way of capitalised revenue for road maintenance and street lighting.
- 5.4.3 The level of maintenance demand far exceeds available budgets. At this stage, the costings have to be considered 'indicative'. The list is therefore no more than a statement of intention subject to the funds. Ward Members are advised of the planned works in their ward and the overall progress against budget is reported via the QSR.

Planning & Transport

5.5 Adoption of the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document.

- 5.5.1 The Executive has adopted the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications validated from 1 July 2016 and the consequent revocation of the 2007 standards. The Executive has also approved the publication of the Consultation Statement and authorised the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to agree any minor changes to the Supplementary Planning Document and Consultation Statement prior to adoption.
- 5.5.2 The existing Parking Standards SPD 2007 had become out-of-date and in need of a review. It did not cover a number of current issues such as school drop-off and pick-up. The new SPD better reflects the current parking needs of the Borough and is

consistent with national policy. Adopting the new SPD will ensure that it becomes a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. However, planning applications validated prior to the new SPD's adoption which have been negotiated using the existing 2007 SPD will still be determined on that basis.

5.5.3 The standards have been developed with regard to national planning policy, existing local planning policies and the Local Transport Plan. In addition, local census data has been used along with residents' surveys and the results of the consultation exercise on the draft SPD.

5.5.4 The review has led to a number of changes including the need for larger garages, adapting parking for electric vehicle charging and ensuring that applications for school accommodation are accompanied by robust evidence to justify how many drop-off and pick-up spaces are provided. In addition, the need for adequate parking to allow businesses to grow and thrive has been recognised.

5.6 Residents Parking Scheme – Two Year Trial Update

5.6.1 The Executive has agreed to consult the existing householders living in the relevant areas surrounding Bracknell town centre regarding the extension of charging for parking permits following completion of the trial residents' parking scheme.

5.6.2 When complete, the regenerated town centre should create an additional 2,800 jobs and attract 8 million shoppers each year. This brings with it a potential pressure locally from workers and would be shoppers who may look to park in the streets so as to avoid car parking charges. The trial was introduced in response to this longer term threat but also possible parking pressures by the developer's workforce themselves during the construction period. To date this threat has been mitigated in the short term through an agreement for developers to use Charles Square Car Park.

5.6.3 At its inception the scheme had four principle objectives:

- To protect residents from increased parking pressures
- To be simple for residents to use
- To be cost effective to operate
- To be enforceable by parking attendants

When introducing the scheme in 2014, the Council was clear that it would fund the pilot whilst it established the cost of running the scheme but that it would need to cover its costs through charging if the scheme proved to be successful and residents wished to extend it.

5.6.4 The proactive residents' parking trial had now successfully run for just over a year, which recently included the first permit renewal period. During the first year of the trial, budget monitoring has enabled the officers to better understand the costs associated with its running. There is currently a shortfall in funding of approximately £90,000 per year. To continue to operate a subsidised scheme is not sustainable in the current economic climate. The fee proposals therefore seek to close that gap over the coming year and provide the basis of a sustainable residents' parking scheme.

5.7 Bringing the Binfield Neighbourhood Plan into Legal Force

- 5.7.1 The Executive has approved the “making” of the Binfield Neighbourhood Plan to form part of the statutory Bracknell Forest Development Plan and publication of the statement which will bring the Plan into legal force.
- 5.7.2 The Council has a statutory duty to make a Neighbourhood Development Plan and bring it into legal force if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of making the Plan at a referendum. Binfield Parish Council designated Binfield Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning on 11 February 2014 and submitted its Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documentation to the Council on 16 September 2015. Following a period of public consultation between 12 October 2015 and 23 November 2015, an inspector undertook the independent examination of the Plan, via the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service. The Examiner issued his report on 3 December 2015 which recommended that, subject to certain modifications, the Plan should be submitted to referendum. The referendum on the making of the Plan took place on 3 March 2016. The following question was asked to those entitled to vote in the referendum: *“Do you want Bracknell Forest Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Binfield Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”* A total of 938 votes were cast. Of these, 770 said yes and 166 said no. 2 were rejected. The turnout was 15.51 per cent. This meant that, as required, more than half of those in the community of Binfield Parish that voted were in favour of making the Neighbourhood Plan and bringing it into legal force.
- 5.7.3 The Neighbourhood Plan will have full weight and be used, along with other adopted plans that together form the Bracknell Forest Development Plan, in the determination of planning applications relating to land in Binfield Parish. This will also alter the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts that are payable to Binfield Parish Council. The Council currently receives a neighbourhood funding element of CIL receipts of 15%; this is capped at £100 per dwelling. As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan being ‘made’ and brought into legal force, this increases to 25% of Levy receipts and is uncapped.

Children, Young People and Learning

5.8 Amen Corner North/Binfield Learning Village: Appointment of School Sponsors

- 5.8.1 The Executive has chosen the school sponsors it wishes to recommend to the Regional Schools Commissioner to run the new schools at Amen Corner North and Binfield Learning Village. An academy provider needs to be appointed for the new schools required as a result of new housing developments. There is a presumption from Government that councils will seek academy providers for new schools.
- 5.8.2 The Council has sought expressions of interest from possible providers and undertaken a robust selection process, using the agreed weighted criteria, which resulted in the recommendations. The selection process, including the views of the Evaluation Panels and Education Review Group, led to the recommendations. The Department for Education (DfE) was satisfied that the Council could recommend any of the shortlisted proposers for them to run the academies and had no comments to make on any of them.

Transformation & Finance

5.9 Home to School Transport and Occasional Transport Services

- 5.9.1 The Executive has agreed that, subject to finalisation of contract conditions, the contracts for home to school transport should be awarded to three suppliers. It also agreed that the same three contractors should be awarded the contracts for occasional transport services. These contracts will commence at the start of the new academic year, 1 September 2016 for a period of four years to 31 August 2020.
- 5.9.2 The Executive wishes to establish transport service contracts which deliver best value for money and consistent levels of quality across the Council and comply with procurement legislation. This links to the new Council Plan which is underpinned by six strategic themes including value for money. Consideration was given to undertaking a collaborative procurement with one or more of the neighbouring Berkshire authorities. However this could have led to bids from regional or national companies rather than local companies for a borough largely within this borough and could have led to more complex and less cost-effective contract management.

Council Strategy & Community Cohesion

5.10 Corporate Performance Overview Report

- 5.10.1 The Executive has received and noted the Corporate Performance Overview Report for the third quarter of the 2015/16 financial year (October to December 2015). Overall progress has been positive with 222 actions either complete or on target and 42 of the Council's 53 key performance indicators being above or within 5% of the agreed targets.

6 NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE LEADER

- 6.1 On 15 March 2016 the Leader established the Standards Framework Working Group to review the effectiveness of the Council's standards framework for councillors. The Members of the Group are Cllrs McCracken (Chairman), Allen, Dale Birch, Mrs Temperton, Thompson and Mr Gordon Anderson.
- 6.2 In addition, the Leader has appointed two co-optees to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel. Doug Jennings will represent the Bracknell Forest Foster Carers Association and Stephanie Rae is a lay person.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The Borough Solicitor's comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Borough Treasurer

- 7.2 The Borough Treasurer's comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 Equalities issues, where appropriate, have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 Any strategic risks have been identified in the reports to the Executive.

Background Papers

Executive Agenda – 8 March and 12 April 2016

Contact for further information

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TO: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE (Chief Executive)

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Borough Treasurer has decided to retire, effective from 30 November 2016. In the current challenging financial circumstances, this post has a crucial role in providing high quality financial advice to the Council. The post fulfils the statutory role of the Section 151 Officer and is an important member of the Corporate Management Team. The Officer Employment Procedure Rules (Part 4, Section 12 of the Council's Constitution) are relevant to such appointments and this report invites the Council to establish an Appointment Committee to appoint to the post.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to agree:

- 2.1 That a Committee of the Council of five members (4:1), including at least one Member of the Executive (plus up to two substitute members per group) be appointed, with the following terms of reference:

“To interview and appoint on behalf of the Council to the post of Borough Treasurer. This post also has the statutory role of Section 151 Officer.”

- 2.2 That Councillors Heydon, McLean, Phillips, Leake and Mrs Temperton be confirmed as the nominated members.
- 2.3 That Councillors Allen, Dr Barnard, Thompson and Ms Miller be confirmed as the substitute members.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the appointment process is in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Appointment Committee

- 5.1 As is the case when all posts become vacant, a close examination of the ongoing need for the post has been carried out by the Chief Executive and Leading Members. In this case the Borough Treasurer post is responsible for leading the Finance function across the whole organisation; complying with and setting financial

standards and ensuring that the organisation operates within a robust financial framework; leading the provision of a high quality finance function across the Council; providing advice and support to Corporate Management Team and Members on matters relating to the Finance service; and acting as the Council's statutory role as the Section 151 Officer.

- 5.2 Each of these functions are essential to the effective performance of the Council and the Borough Treasurer role is pivotal within the Corporate Management Team, reporting directly to the Chief Executive on strategic financial matters. The current transformation review of corporate and support services does provide a potential complication, in that it may lead to changes in the way some of these functions are delivered, but the need for a high calibre individual with direct experience of financial management and strategy will not be affected.
- 5.3 Equally, the main focus of the Section S151/Treasurer role will be financial management. This means that, whatever the outcome of the support services review, the Council will need a Borough Treasurer who is an effective strategic manager with a financial background and qualifications.
- 5.4 It is also important that the recruitment is undertaken in a timely way to allow for an orderly handover in November to ensure that the budget preparations for 2017/18 onwards continue smoothly. On this basis the Council is asked to appoint a committee to interview and select a candidate now.
- 5.5 The Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules, which form Part 4, Section 12 of the Constitution, deal with the arrangements for the appointment of officers at director and chief officer level. Those rules dictate that if it is proposed that an appointment to a post at this level is not made exclusively from within the Council's existing staff, it must be advertised externally. This is the case with the Borough Treasurer post.
- 5.6 The Officer Employment Procedure Rules require that where a committee is to be established for the purposes of making an appointment it should include at least one Member of the Executive.
- 5.7 In accordance with standard practice for a Chief Officer post, the Committee will be responsible for approving the shortlist of candidates prepared by officers, for interviewing those candidates and for making the final appointment. It is suggested that the Committee should comprise five Members as detailed in the recommendations above.
- 5.8 The likely date for member interviews will be 1 July, to be confirmed.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Treasurer

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the establishment of the Appointment Committee.

Borough Solicitor

- 6.2 The Appointment Committee process accords with the Council's constitution particularly section 12 part 4 and S151 Local Government Act 1972.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The recruitment process will be conducted in accordance with the Council's employment policies.

Strategic Risk Management

- 6.4 Not to recruit to the post would expose the Council to risk as the functions identified in paragraph 5.1 could not be carried out effectively.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Group Leaders regarding composition of the Committee.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Discussion and email.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Not applicable

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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TO: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
(Director of Corporate Services – Borough Solicitor)**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Council endorsement to the recommendation of the Governance & Audit Committee agreed at its meeting on 30 March 2016 to amend the Contract Standing Orders set out in the Council's Constitution.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the changes to the Constitution Part 4 Section 11 – Contract Standing Orders, set out in the Annex to this report be adopted.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To give effect to the recommendation of the Governance & Audit Committee.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Enactment of new legislation

- 5.1.1 The Public Contract Regulations 2015 abolished the classification of procurements as "Part B" services, which were exempt from specific regulation, and largely replaced it with a new classification of procurement - Social and Other Specific Services, in addition to the existing classifications - Services and Supplies, and Works. Each of these classifications has its own procurement threshold and its own procurement rules. It is important that the Council classifies procurements in a consistent and reasoned way which ensures minimum risk of challenge.
- 5.1.2 Since Contract Standing Orders dovetail with PCR 2015, these changes need to be reflected in Contract Standing Orders. In addition, the sterling values of the three thresholds were updated on 1st January 2016.
- 5.1.3 Changes are made to Contract Standing Orders (Definitions, Sections 3.1 and 4.3, Appendix 3) to reflect the new classification, the new threshold values and the need to classify procurements consistently.
- 5.2 **Unnecessary sealing of contracts**
- 5.2.1 Under current arrangements the Council's seal must be affixed to any contract with a total contract value of £400,000 or more (sections 2.3.11 and 6.8). It is proposed that this requirement is removed.

Few documents need to be sealed to give them legal efficacy. Examples of such documents are Deeds, Agreements under Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act, documents creating or transferring significant interests in land and Byelaws. None of the contracts the Council enters into for the procurement of services, supplies or works require sealing, and may simply be signed by a responsible officer, normally a Director or someone to whom the function has been delegated.

- 5.2.2 It is proposed to remove the requirement for sealing contracts, except where required for legal efficacy as described in 2.1 above or to reflect established industry practice, so that time and administrative resources will be saved.

5.3 **Clarifications**

- 5.3.1 Contract Standing Orders deals with contract extensions. In their current form they are open to different interpretations and this could lead to confusion. Amendments are proposed to clarify section 8. Extensions specifically provided for in the contract must be approved by a Director. Extensions not specifically provided for in the contract must be approved by the Director for the first year, and by the Executive Member for subsequent years, with advice from the Borough Solicitor and Treasurer.
- 5.3.2 A recent audit of procurement highlighted a discrepancy in Appendix 1 (one of the “tick sheets”, which are used extensively by officers to easily understand the route their procurement must take). It appeared to require OJEU advertising above £100,000 rather than above the EU threshold, which is £164,176. This has been corrected.
- 5.3.3 Some minor changes have been made to wording in order to simplify and clarify.

6 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor is the author of this report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no financial implications directly arising.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Not applicable.

7 **CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Not applicable

Method of Consultation

7.2 Not Applicable.

Representations Received

7.3 Not Applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for Further Information

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SECTION 11 – CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

These Contract Standing Orders are made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Guidance regarding the use of these Standing Orders and further explanation as to how they operate can be found in the Procurement Manual.

DEFINITIONS

In these Standing Orders, the following expressions have the following meanings:

“Category Manager”	The officer of the Council to whom the Corporate Management Team has allocated responsibility for the delivery and management of a Category Strategy for a defined category of works, goods or services
“Category Strategy”	The written strategy for a defined Category, which has been formally approved by the Executive in accordance with these Standing Orders.
“Corporate Contract”	A contract relating to the procurement of supplies, works or services that has been tendered and managed by the Council
“Corporate Finance System”	Agresso or its replacement
“Director”	The Chief Executive or the most senior officer in a department of the Council or the Governing Body of a school with delegated responsibilities under the Local Management of Schools Regulations
“Executive Member”	Means the Member of the Executive with responsibility for the service for which a procurement is being carried out
“Executive”	Means a meeting to which the Leader and all those Members that are serving as Executive Members have been invited, or in the case of non-executive functions references to “the Executive” are deemed to be references to the Council or the committee or sub-committee to which the Council has delegated responsibility for that function
“Framework Agreement”	Means an agreement or other arrangement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more

	suppliers which establishes the terms (in particular as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which suppliers will enter into one or more contracts with the Council in the period during which the framework agreement applies
“Grant”	Means a grant as defined and described in paragraph 2.4 of these Contract Standing Orders
“Non Commercial Considerations”	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. whether contractors employ self-employed individuals,2. any involvement of the business activities or interests of the contractor with irrelevant fields of Government policy,3. the conduct of the contractor in industrial disputes,4. the country of origin or location of suppliers,5. any political, industrial or sectarian interest of the contractor,6. financial support or lack of financial support by the contractor for any institution,7. use or non use by a contractor of technical or professional services provided by the Council under the Building Act 1984.
“Procurement Plan“	Means the Procurement Plan available from the Procurement pages on the Council’s intranet
“Procurement Manual”	The manual containing guidance and mandatory rules on the procurement of all supplies services and works and any further matters referred to in these Contract Standing Orders
“Public Contracts Regulations”	The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 <u>2015</u> (SI 2006-2015 No <u>512</u>) as amended
“Responsible Officer”	The Director or a person to whom the Director has given clear written delegated responsibility to exercise a function which these Contract Standing Orders identify may be performed by a Responsible Officer to the extent of such delegation

Unrestricted

<u>“Social and Other Specific Services Threshold”</u>	<u>£589,148 (€750,000) as at 1st January 2016 or any different figure that may be substituted by European Commission Regulations from time to time</u>
“Supplies and Services Threshold”	£173,934 <u>£164,176 (€209,000) as at 1st January 2016</u> or any different figure that may be substituted by Statutory instrument <u>European Commission Regulations</u> from time to time
“Total Contract Value”	The whole of the estimated value net of value added tax which the Council expects to give under the contract, calculated according to the valuation rules set out in the Procurement Manual
“Threshold”	Means the Supplies and Services Threshold <u>or the Social and Other Specific Services Threshold</u> or the Works Threshold as the case may be
“Works Threshold”	£4,348,350 <u>£4,104,394 (€5,225,000) as at 1st January 2016</u> or any different figure that may be substituted by statutory instrument <u>European Commission Regulations</u> from time to time

1. Introduction and application of Standing Orders

These Contract Standing Orders set out the framework for the procurement of supplies, works and services. They are an essential set of rules and compliance with them will ensure that officers both seek and obtain good value for money and that public money is properly spent and accounted for. **These Standing Orders apply to all contracts for the procurement of supplies, the provision of services (including adults and children's care services) or the execution of works by the Council or on its behalf.**

- 1.1 In any procurement where quotations or tenders are required no matter what the value may be, officers must always apply procedures that allow a fair and non-discriminatory competitive process, and equal treatment of all potential suppliers and contractors.
- 1.2 Contracts must not be artificially split to avoid the application of the key thresholds contained in these Standing Orders.
- 1.3 Officers dealing with the procurement of standard or repetitive supplies and services should always consider the use of Framework Agreements and corporate contracts and should seek guidance from the Head of Procurement or from the Borough Solicitor.
- 1.4 These Contract Standing Orders do not apply to the following:
 - A contract for service for the employment of staff by the Council
 - The engagement of Counsel
 - The acquisition disposal or transfer of land or an interest in land and property
 - Hire of premises
 - Grants made by the Council
 - Direct payments to individuals for social care services or services brokered on behalf of individuals in receipt of an individual budget.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Directors are responsible for ensuring that chief officers and all staff with procurement responsibilities within their directorates fully understand and comply with these Standing Orders.
- 2.2 Directors are responsible for all purchase orders and contracts tendered and let by their directorates, are accountable to the Executive for the performance of their duties in relation to contract letting and management and must ensure that all council officers comply with these Standing Orders. The duties set out in paragraph 2.3 also apply to a Responsible Officer (except for paragraphs 2.3.5, and paragraphs 2.3.13 to .15 which are duties to be complied with by a Director personally)
- 2.3 Their duties are as follows:
 - 2.3.1 To seek and obtain value for money and secure continuous improvement in all procurements.
 - 2.3.2 To ensure no contract is entered into by their Directorate without there being adequate and agreed budget provision.

Unrestricted

- 2.3.3 To ensure compliance with all applicable UK and EU legislation, seeking advice from the Borough Solicitor or the Head of Procurement at an early stage in the process whenever appropriate.
- 2.3.4 To ensure that Non Commercial Considerations do not influence any decision to seek quotations or tenders or to enter into any contract.
- 2.3.5 To ensure all staff (including any agents or consultants acting on their behalf) dealing with procurement for their directorate are fully aware of and comply with these Standing Orders and those parts of the Procurement Manual which are stated therein as compulsory in accordance with these Standing Orders and to arrange adequate training on their operation.
- 2.3.6 To declare to the council any pecuniary interest whether direct or indirect they personally have in any contract to be let, and to make that declaration in writing to the Borough Solicitor.
- 2.3.7 In the event of any breach of these Standing Orders to take immediate action and report it to the Borough Solicitor and/or the Borough Treasurer.
- 2.3.8 To ensure every contract over £100,000 has a named officer with responsibility for it.
- 2.3.9 To keep securely proper records of all purchase orders, signed contracts and copies of all relevant documentation so as to provide a full audit trail of actions taken.
- 2.3.10 To comply with the Council's arrangements for the obtaining and opening of quotations and tenders as set out in the Procurement Manual.
- 2.3.11 To ensure that the council's seal is affixed to any contract where this is required to give the contract legal efficacy or to reflect established industry practice with a total contract value of £400,000 or more and to ensure that all other contracts are signed by a Director or by a person authorised under delegated powers to act on his or her behalf or placed through the Corporate Finance System.
- 2.3.12 To keep a record of any waivers of these Standing Orders.
- 2.3.13 To keep a written record of any delegations they make of their powers under these Standing Orders and ensure these are published on the Council's Intranet.
- 2.3.14 To ensure that records are kept in a manner that ensures reviews of contracts are undertaken in good time ideally at least one year in advance of termination dates and that appropriate action is taken.
- 2.3.15 To make arrangements for the publication of tenders and of contracts awarded as the Council may require from time to time.
- 2.3.16 To assist and support Category Managers in the preparation of Category Strategies and to comply with the provisions of Category Strategies approved by the Executive in accordance with these Contract Standing Orders
- 2.3.17 To ensure that all reports recommending the award of a contract for the procurement of works, supplies or services within a category, which are the subject of an approved Category Strategy, contain the comments of the relevant Category Manager.

2.4 These Standing Orders do not apply to grants awarded by the Council. A grant is an arrangement where money is given for the benefit of all or for a section of the local community for a stated purpose other than for the procurement of services whether the services are to be given to the ~~council~~Council or to third parties. An arrangement where payments are made to secure the provision of services whether to the Council or to some third party is a contract for services to which these Contract Standing Orders apply.

3. Consultation and approvals prior to advertising a procurement

3.1 Officers must take advice from the Head of Procurement or the Borough Solicitor on the relevance of the Public Contract Regulations for any procurement where the Total Contract Value is estimated to be more than £100,000, including advice on the classification of a procurement as Supplies and Services, Works or Social and Other Specific Services.

3.2 When it can reasonably be anticipated that the Total Contract Value might exceed £100,000 the Director must ensure that an estimate of the anticipated Total Contract Value is prepared and recorded in writing. The estimate should not be more than twelve months old when tenders or quotations are invited and is to be exclusive of Value Added Tax.

3.3 For all procurements of supplies and services with an estimated Total Contract Value in excess of £100,000, and procurement of works with an estimated Total Contract Value in excess of £400,000, a Procurement Plan in the form set out in the Procurement Manual and incorporating comments from the Borough Treasurer, Borough Solicitor and Head of Procurement, must be prepared for the approval of the Director and, if appropriate, the Executive Member (see Appendix Appendices 1, 2 and 3). In all cases the Procurement Plan must be approved before the contract is advertised ~~in accordance with paragraph 4.4 below.~~

4. Obtaining quotations and tenders

4.1 (a) Subject to paragraph 4.1(b) below, ~~where for~~ any procurement of supplies or services ~~has an estimated Total Contract Value of less than the Supplies and Services Threshold,~~ the required number of quotations or tenders must be sought in accordance with the financial limits and procedures set out in the Procurement Manual and Appendix 1 or Appendix 3 as the case may be. ~~Where the estimated Total Contract Value of any procurement of supplies or services is for more than £100,000, invitations to tender must be issued in accordance with the procedures set out below and in the Procurement Manual.~~

(b) Procurements of residential care placements, care and or support provided in the person's home or for the special educational or other needs of younger people (including fostering) shall be carried out in accordance with procedures authorised by the relevant Director in consultation with the Executive Member with the advice of the Borough Treasurer, the Borough Solicitor and the Head of Procurement and published in the Procurement Manual

4.2 Where any works contract is to be let the required number of quotations or tenders must be sought in accordance with the financial limits and procedures set out in Appendix 2.

- 4.3 The Responsible Officer must ensure that the selection of suppliers from whom tenders or quotations are sought is carried out openly, fairly and transparently. The requirements for advertising, which are made to ensure compliance with legal requirements for transparency and freedom from discrimination, are set out in ~~Appendices 1, 2 and 3 and Appendix 2~~ and must always be followed.

5. Contract documentation and standard contract conditions

- 5.1 The provisions of any Statute, Regulation, Treaty or Directive of the European Union take precedence over anything said in these Standing Orders, and all contracts entered into by the Council must comply with all of those requirements.

- 5.2 The Council's standard conditions of contract shall always be employed unless,

- (1a) Leasing arrangements are involved, or
- (1b) the requirement is particularly complex and the use of the standard conditions is inappropriate

AND in each such case the formal advice of the Borough Solicitor has been given, or

- (2) the supplier requires the Council to contract on terms supplied by it, and the total value is no more than £35,000.

In all cases where the Total Contract Value is expected to exceed the Threshold, the advice of the Borough Solicitor must be sought on any appropriate additions to the Council's standard terms.

6. Approval and acceptance of quotations and tenders

- 6.1 All requests for quotations and tenders for works, services or supplies must be carried out according to the procedures set out in the Procurement Manual .

- 6.2 The evaluation of written quotations and tenders and any pre-qualification of bidders must be carried out according to the procedures set out in the Procurement Manual, clearly documented and, if above the Threshold, advice must be sought from the Head of Procurement.

- 6.3 Where the estimated Total Contract Value is more than £100,000 and only one tender is received the Director must take advice from the Head of Procurement and the Borough Solicitor on the appropriate action.

- 6.4 The Responsible Officer may accept a tender or quotation for **works, supplies or services** where the Total Contract Value is not more than £400,000. Where the tender is above £100,000, a report should be submitted by officers to the Director, but if a Director has not delegated power to a Responsible Officer to accept a quotation the Director must prepare a report on the acceptance of the tender or quotation and keep it available for auditing.

- 6.5 The Director shall not accept tenders for supplies, services or works where the Total Contract Value is more than £400,000 and less than £1,000,000 without securing the written agreement of the Executive Member.

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- 6.6 For all contracts where the Total Contract Value is greater than £1,000,000, acceptance of the tender must be approved by the Executive upon a report by the Director.
- 6.7 Where the Director wishes to accept a tender other than the lowest acceptable tender, full supporting documentation must be kept to evidence why the lowest acceptable tender was not accepted. If the tender is one to which paragraphs 6.5 or 6.6 applies, the Director shall report the values of all tenders received and the reasons for selecting the preferred tender.
- 6.8 All contracts entered into by the Council shall be completed (subject to delegated financial limits) in accordance with the following requirements.

Total Value	Method of Completion	Signed By
Up to and including £5,000	Council's official written order	Responsible Officer
£5,000 to £100,000	Acceptance Letter or Council's official order	Responsible Officer
Over £100,000 – Threshold (currently £173,934)	Signed contract or execution under seal if required to give the contract legal efficacy or to reflect established industry practice	Responsible Officer or executed under seal by Borough Solicitor
Threshold – £400,000	Signed Contract or Deed as advised by the Borough Solicitor	Responsible Officer or in accordance with the requirements for sealing of contracts
Over £400,000	Execution under seal	Borough Solicitor

- 6.9 ~~It is advised that a~~All contracts should as a matter of good practice~~must~~ be signed or sealed before the supply, service or construction work begins.

7. Waiver of Contract Standing Orders

- 7.1 If there are special circumstances to waive or suspend any section or sections of Contract Standing Orders, the following approvals must be obtained depending on contract value:
1. for all contracts up to *and including* £35,000, the Director may approve.
 2. for contracts in excess of £35,000 but *up to and including contracts for* £400,000 the Borough Solicitor and the Chief Executive (taking advice from the Head of Procurement) may approve.
 3. for contracts over £400,000 a report must be made to the Executive, incorporating advice from the Head of Procurement, for approval save that where the Borough Solicitor and Chief Executive have confirmed that there is genuine urgency and it is not possible to obtain approval from the Executive in time, the Leader may approve, but shall report his decision to the next meeting of the Executive for information
- 7.2 The standard Waiver form is to be used unless reporting to the Executive in accordance with 7.1 above and the approval must be retained by the Director.

- 7.3 The Director must ensure that a record of all cases where Contract Standing Orders have been waived is sent to the Head of Procurement, including those authorised under the Director's own delegated powers, recording the reasons for waiver and the approvals obtained. The Head of Procurement shall maintain a full record, sequentially numbered, of all Waivers granted.

8. Contract extensions

- 8.1 Where a contract, which was not required to be advertised by the Public Contracts Regulations or any preceding Regulations, does not have any provision for an extension, one extension, where similar terms and conditions will apply, may be agreed for a maximum period of one year, but the written approval of the Director, who must consult with the Borough Solicitor and the Treasurer, must be given.

- 8.2 ~~Any extension specifically provided for in the contract~~ ~~Where a contract does provide for an extension, the extension~~ may be implemented, subject to the prior written approval of the Director being given.

- ~~8.3 If a contract has already been extended under a provision for extension it contains, it may not be extended further under 8.1 above.~~

- 8.43 If a contract has been extended in accordance with 8.1 or 8.2 above any further request for an extension must be approved by the Executive Member on a written report, with advice from the Borough Solicitor and the Treasurer.

Contract variations

- 8.54 A contract variation can be only be approved where the proposed variation does not materially alter the terms of the contract. Guidance on what constitutes a material alteration is given in the Procurement manual. The Director must obtain advice from the Borough Solicitor before proceeding to agree to a variation and must ensure there is an adequate budget for the variation.

9. Framework Agreements

- 9.1 Framework Agreements let by other contracting authorities may only be used in accordance with the requirements set out in the Procurement Manual.

10. Category Management

- 10.1 The Council has adopted the principles of category management in order to provide a more strategic approach to procurement and to help increase efficiencies and value for money through better coordination and aggregation of requirements across the Council.

- 10.2 A Category Manager shall be responsible for the preparation of a Category Strategy for the commissioning and procurement of any works, supplies or services relevant to the category in consultation with any Director who holds a budget that will be affected by the Category Strategy.

- 10.3 A Category Strategy shall identify responsibility for contract awards for contracts of up to £1 million that are in compliance with the strategy, but if no responsibility for such contract award is allocated, the Director to whom the Category Manager usually reports shall be responsible for making the decision. Corporate Contracts which are

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not within a Category Strategy shall be the responsibility of the Director of Corporate Services.

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Appendix 1								
Supplies and Services			Minimum Requirements			✓	= Mandatory	
	Total Contract Value	Up to £5K	>£5K to £10K	>£10K to £35K	>£35K to £100K	>£100K to £400K	>£400K to £1m	>£1m
Procurement Plan	Director* to approve, with advice from Head of Procurement					✓	✓	✓
	Executive Member to approve						✓	✓
Format	Request for Quotation (RFQ)	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓			
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				Optional	✓	✓	✓
Specification		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terms	BFC terms and conditions	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	✓			
	Special terms - contact Legal Services				Optional	✓	✓	✓
Competition	Minimum 1 quote	✓ oral	✓					
	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes			✓	✓			
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders					✓	✓	✓
	Order under a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement						
Advertising	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**				✓	✓	✓	✓
	European website (TED)					Mandatory above Threshold***	✓	✓
Contract SO Waiver	Director to record reasons on file	✓	✓	✓				
	Chief Executive and Borough Solicitor to approve				✓	✓		
	The Executive to approve						✓	✓
Contract Award	Director*	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Report to Director* for approval					✓		
	Report to Director and Executive Member for approval						✓	
	Report to the Executive for approval							✓
Contract Award Notice	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**				✓	✓	✓	✓
	European website (TED)					Mandatory above Threshold***	✓	✓
Form of Contract	Purchase Order	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓			
	Contract signed by Director*					✓	✓	✓
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice.						
* Or as delegated, or Governing Body for Schools								
** Schools don't have to use Contracts Finder								
*** Threshold is £164,176 as of 1st January 2016.								

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Appendix 2									
Works		Minimum Requirements						✓	= Mandatory
	Total Contract Value	Up to £5K	>£5K to £10K	>£10K to £35K	>£35K to £100K	>£100K to £400K	>£400K to £1m	>£1m	
Procurement Plan	Director* to approve, with advice from Head of Procurement						✓	✓	
	Executive Member to approve						✓	✓	
Format	Request for Quotation (RFQ)	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓				
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)					✓	✓	✓	
Specification		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Terms	BFC terms and conditions	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	✓				
	Special terms - contact Legal Services				Optional	✓	✓	✓	
Competition	Minimum 1 quote	✓ oral	✓						
	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes			✓	✓				
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders					✓	✓	✓	
	Order under a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement							
Advertising	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**						✓	✓	
	European website (TED)							Mandatory above Threshold***	
Contract SO Waiver	Director to record reasons on file	✓	✓	✓					
	Chief Executive and Borough Solicitor to approve				✓	✓			
	The Executive to approve						✓	✓	
Contract Award	Director*	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	Report to Director* for approval					✓			
	Report to Director and Executive Member for approval						✓		
	Report to the Executive for approval							✓	
Contract Award Notice	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	European website (TED)							Mandatory above Threshold***	
Form of Contract	Purchase Order	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓				
	Contract signed by Director*					✓	✓	✓	
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice.							
* Or as delegated, or Governing Body for Schools									
** Schools don't have to use Contracts Finder									
*** Threshold is £4,104,394 as of 1st January 2016.									

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Appendix 3								
Social and Other Specific Services			Minimum Requirements			✓	= Mandatory	
	Total Contract Value	Up to £5K	>£5K to £10K	>£10K to £35K	>£35K to £100K	>£100K to £400K	>£400K to £1m	>£1m
Procurement Plan	Director* to approve, with advice from Head of Procurement					✓	✓	✓
	Executive Member to approve						✓	✓
Format	Request for Quotation (RFQ)	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓			
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				Optional	✓	✓	✓
Specification		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terms	BFC terms and conditions	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	✓			
	Special terms - contact Legal Services				Optional	✓	✓	✓
Competition	Minimum 1 quote	✓ oral	✓					
	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes			✓	✓			
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders					✓	✓	✓
	Order under a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement						
Advertising	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**				✓	✓	✓	✓
	European website (TED)						Mandatory above Threshold***	✓
Contract SO Waiver	Director to record reasons on file	✓	✓	✓				
	Chief Executive and Borough Solicitor to approve				✓	✓		
	The Executive to approve						✓	✓
Contract Award	Director*	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Report to Director* for approval					✓		
	Report to Director and Executive Member for approval						✓	
	Report to the Executive for approval							✓
Contract Award Notice	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder**				✓	✓	✓	✓
	European website (TED)						Mandatory above Threshold***	✓
Form of Contract	Purchase Order	✓ oral	✓	✓	✓			
	Contract signed by Director*					✓	✓	✓
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice.						
* Or as delegated, or Governing Body for Schools								
** Schools don't have to use Contracts Finder								
*** Threshold is £589,148 as of 1st January 2016.								

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TO: **COUNCIL**
27 APRIL 2016

2015/16 ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to submit an annual report to the Council on overview and scrutiny activities and their outcomes. The attached report informs Members of progress made in respect of the operation and development of overview and scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2015/16 and outlines proposed future activities. The Commission recommends that Council adopts the report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the 2015/16 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted; and**
- 2.2 **That the commitment, role and value of the overview and scrutiny function be acknowledged and that non-executive Members continue to be supported in their role.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the Constitution.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Structure of Overview and Scrutiny

The structure of Overview and Scrutiny was unchanged in 2015/16.

5.2 Activities

The activities of Overview and Scrutiny in 2015/16 are summarised in the Annual Report. The Commission and the four Panels have all met regularly. Much of the detailed Overview and Scrutiny work was conducted in Working Groups.

5.3 Outcomes

The main outcomes in 2015/16 are summarised in the Annual Report and have covered a wide range of reviews, leading to recommendations to the Executive, contributing to policy development and performance improvement. In addition, the Commission and Panels have maintained a rolling coverage of various matters including budget scrutiny and rigorously monitoring the performance of all Council Departments.

Future Developments

- 5.4 The Annual Report includes a programme of Overview and Scrutiny work for the 2016/17 municipal year, which has been the subject of consultation with the Corporate Management Team and the Executive.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 6.1 The Annual Report demonstrates the depth and breadth of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and highlights the outcomes of this work. Overview and Scrutiny has exercised its functions in order to support the development of policy within the Council; to scrutinise the Council's financial proposals; and to improve services the Council and its partners provide with the overarching objective of seeking to benefit local communities.

Borough Solicitor

- 6.2 The Scrutiny function has an important role to play in providing local accountability and transparency in decision-making. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 primarily to serve as a check and balance on Executive powers. Subsequent legislation has conferred on Councils the responsibility for scrutinising local NHS Trusts, the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and other partners, such as the Environment Agency. It sits alongside the Council's Standards regime in delivering the accountability that constitutes one of the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.3 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The finally agreed work programme will need to be managed within the existing resources.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 This report has no impact on equalities issues.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 This report has no impact on strategic risk management issues.

Other Officers

- 6.6 Not applicable.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Corporate Management Team.

Method of Consultation

7.2 Through correspondence and at meetings to consider the draft report.

Representations Received

7.3 None.

Background Papers

Agendas, Minutes and papers of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and Panels in 2015/16.

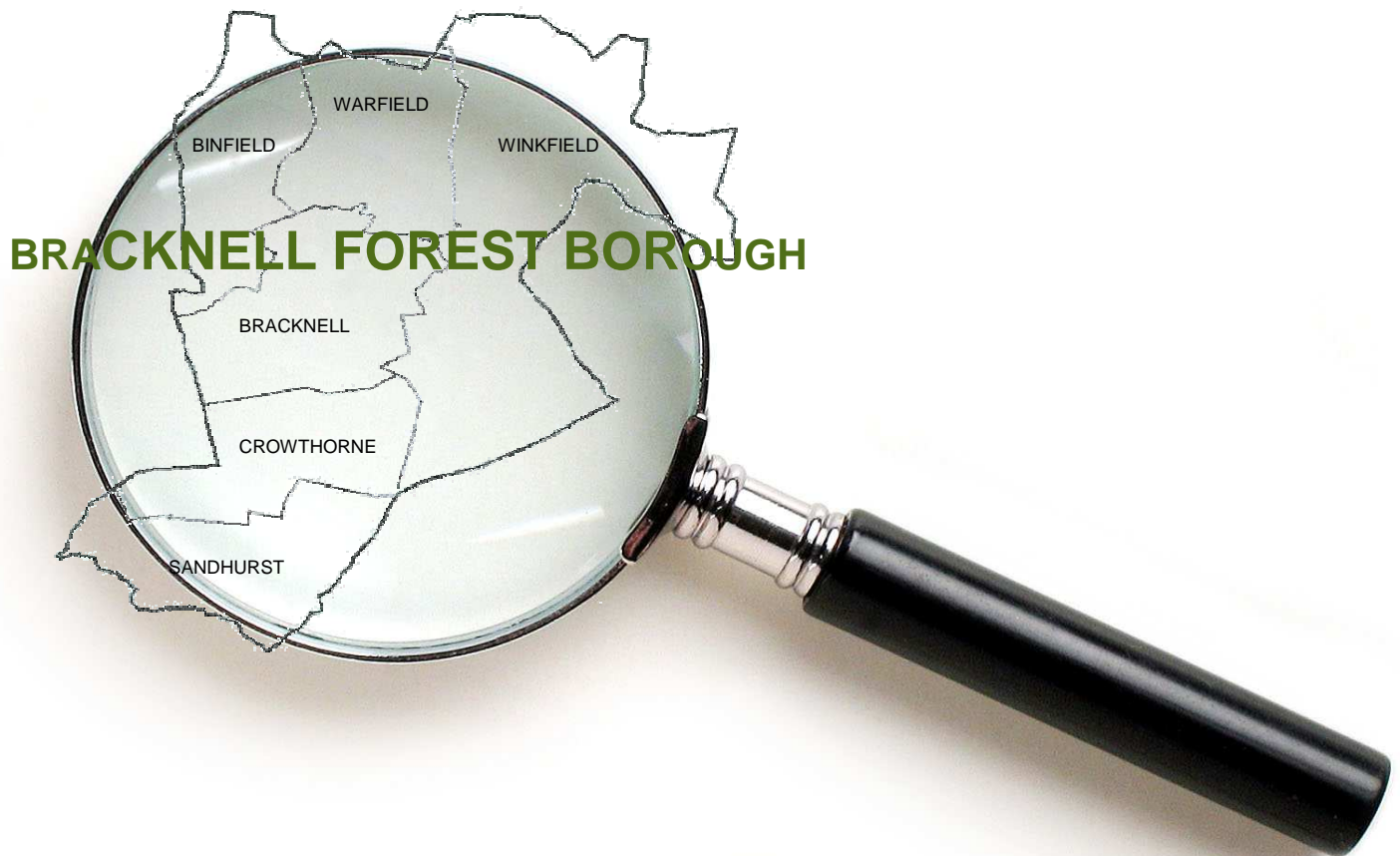
Contact for further information

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



April 2016

**Helping to make Bracknell Forest a place where all people can thrive: living,
learning and working in a clean, safe and healthy environment**

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FOREWORD

In my foreword to the last annual report of the Commission to last Council, I predicted that following the elections in May 2016, local government would face unprecedented challenges and that those Councils who succeed in those challenges would be the ones who would be prepared to be innovative and forward thinking.

The local government settlement that was announced in December 2015 more than fulfilled that part of my prediction. We, as a Council, now have to make the second part of the prediction come true.

Our Overview and scrutiny Commission is ideally placed to assist in this challenge. In addition to making a positive contribution and impact to what has been an extremely challenging budgetary process – the public consultation on which is still ongoing – we are able and have the experience and knowledge to make a significant contribution to the work of the Transformation Board which has been established to meet the challenges we face. That work will be on going throughout the coming months and will take priority in our work.

Notwithstanding these current challenges, the work of the Commission and its Panels- detailed in this report - has continued over the last twelve months with positive outcomes and well received reviews.

As always, I pay tribute to those members of the Commission, its panels and Working Groups who have put so much effort and dedication into their work. It is especially satisfying to see that our members who were elected for the first time in 2015 have such a prominent and enthusiastic part in work that is not always easy. Similarly our senior officers and departmental directors have been helpful and supportive.

I know that all our elected members would like me to, once again, express our appreciation and thanks for the work of our dedicated officer team of Richard Beaumont and Andrea Carr. They carry out what is by no means an easy task, often with an unremitting workload, with dedication and skill.

Finally, on a personal note, I thank all those members and officers who have helped and assisted me in my role as Chairman.

Councillor Ian Leake

Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

April 2016

INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a principal way of achieving open, democratic accountability for the provision of public services. The aim of O&S is to improve public services and quality of life for local residents. Its main value is in holding the Council and other service providers to account, rigorously monitoring performance and in its capacity to inform and influence the actions of the Council and its partners. O&S is a legal requirement which was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000; it was extended in later legislation, and was consolidated in the Localism Act of 2011. O&S allows Councillors to examine, question and evaluate various functions of the Council and other providers of public services on behalf of the public in an open and effective way.

Overview and Scrutiny has five broad functions:

- Holding the Council's Executive and its statutory partners to account in the public interest. This enables more transparent and effective decision making. This includes the power to 'call-in' a decision made by the Executive that has not yet been implemented. This effectively freezes the decision and allows the Commission and the Panels to consider the decision further and then to make recommendations, if appropriate, to the Executive.
- Supporting the development of effective policies and initiatives which have a beneficial impact on the community through policy review and development.
- Contributing to continuous improvement in services through monitoring quarterly departmental performance reports and the implementation of improvement plans.
- Having a positive impact on the work and outcomes of external agencies and providers of public services.
- Aiding Councillors in engaging with their communities and playing the role of community representatives and leaders.

The Structure of Overview and Scrutiny at Bracknell Forest

Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest is carried out by an O&S Commission and four Panels, which in law are sub-committees of the co-ordinating O&S Commission. The co-ordination role of the Commission includes overview of forthcoming Executive decisions, developing a work programme of O&S reviews and policy development projects and, with Council approval, appointing a number of O&S Panels. The Panels match the Council's departmental structure, except for an additional Panel for Health issues, and this structure is kept under review to ensure it remains efficient.

Each of the Panels and the Commission is made up of elected non-Executive Members of the Council (full details of O&S Membership can be seen on pages 23-24). As well as Council Members, some of the Panels include other representatives such as Church, Parent Governor and Teacher Representatives. Residents are encouraged to contribute ideas and concerns to the meetings of the O&S Commission and the Panels.

In addition, the Council is a member of the Joint East Berkshire with Buckinghamshire Health O&S Committee in conjunction with Slough Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This Committee, which looks at health issues across East Berkshire, was suspended in March 2013, and will reconvene in the event of a statutory consultation concerning National Health services in East Berkshire.

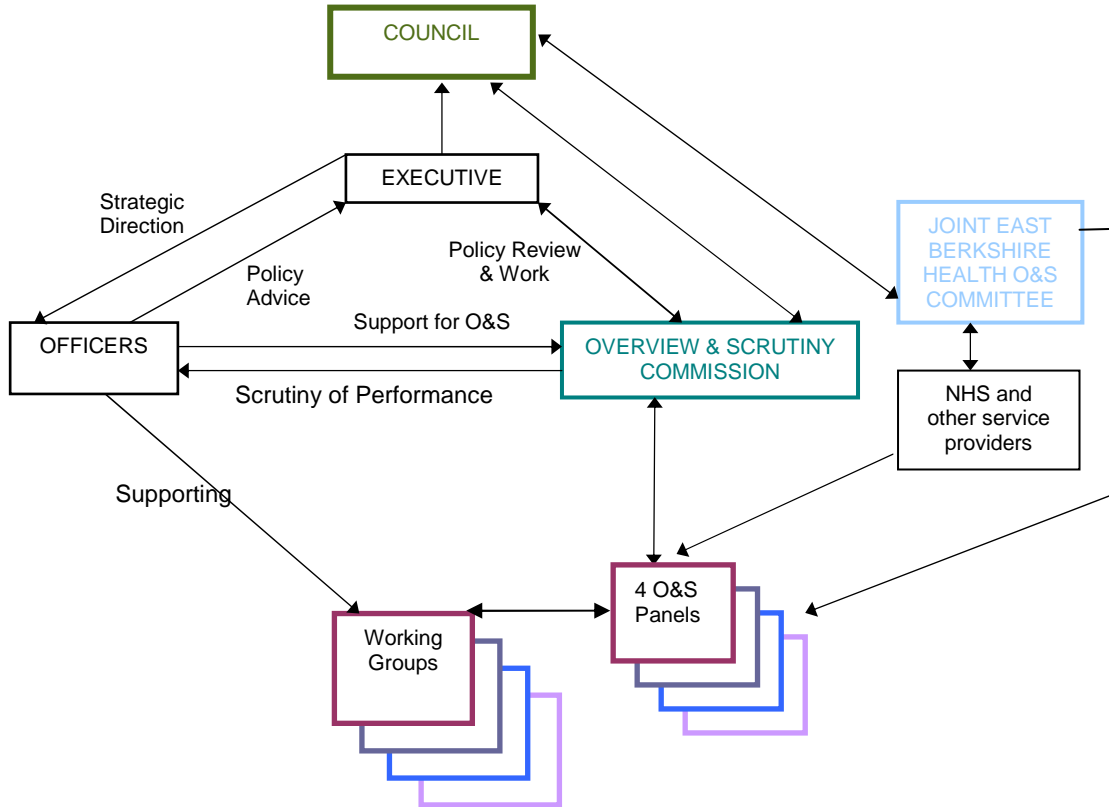


Diagram showing the structure of Overview and Scrutiny at Bracknell Forest Council

Much of the detailed O&S work is carried out by Working Groups. Some of these groups are formed to provide an input to policy development, and other groups carry out investigations and then produce a report on the specific issue. Council officers, expert witnesses, partner organisations and service users participate in these O&S reviews. Site visits and independent research may be carried out.

Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny Work

In addition to its co-ordination and general role, the O&S Commission specifically concentrates on holding to account the Council's Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department, with the same functions as the Panels below; it undertakes its own cross-cutting reviews when required; and it is the Council's statutory 'Crime and Disorder Committee'.

The work of the Commission and Panels is steered by a work programme which is agreed by the Commission at the beginning of each Municipal year in consultation with the Executive and Corporate Management Team. The work programme features policy reviews and performance monitoring in relation to policy objectives, performance targets and particular service areas through regular performance reports and budget consultation and monitoring. The work programme is flexible, allowing the addition of new reviews as the need arises. The Commission usually meet every two months, and the Panels usually meet quarterly.

Legislation requires every local authority in England with Executive/O&S arrangements to designate one of its officers as the Scrutiny Officer with statutory duties to promote the role of the authority's O&S, and to provide support and guidance on that function. This statutory Scrutiny Officer role is fulfilled by the Council's Director of Corporate Services, who is also the Deputy Chief Executive. Day to day officer support is provided by a dedicated O&S officer team reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive in the Chief Executive's Office.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION



Councillor Ian Leake

Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Commission co-ordinates the work of the O&S Panels and reviews corporate issues concerning the whole Council, holding the Executive to account. The co-ordination role includes appointing Panel Members, programming O&S reviews, developing the O&S processes and monitoring Panels' activities. Regularly scrutinised items include the quarterly Corporate Performance Overview Reports, and the Quarterly Service Reports for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department. A wide range of matters is reviewed, focussing on services for residents. The Commission regularly monitors the forthcoming decisions of the Council's Executive. The Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection routinely attends the Commission's meetings, and other Executive Members are required to attend as necessary.

As we were newly formed after local government elections in 2015, we invested some time at the outset on receiving introductory briefings in respect of the Council's role and functions in relation to the Chief Executive's office and the Corporate Services Department. We also had discussions with the Executive Members for Corporate Services and Transformation & Finance on their priorities and plans. These will continue and will focus on future developments, along with the developing Transformation agenda.

Performance Monitoring

The Commission embarked on a rolling programme of focussing our attention on each of the Council's corporate functions, in turn. During 2015/16, we received presentations and had discussions with senior officers at separate meetings on: Human Resources; the Customer contact strategy; and Information and Communications Technology, when we reviewed their current priorities and plans.

O&S continued to make an important contribution to the Council's very effective performance management arrangements. Our on-going review of the Quarterly Service Reports for the Chief Executive's Office, the Corporate Services Department and the Council as a whole enabled us to hold Executive Members and officers to account for the performance against service plan objectives and performance targets. These activities resulted in the raising of a number of questions and requests for additional information and clarification including:

- the allocation of car parking spaces to support a company's running of an Enterprise Centre;

- participation in volunteering;
- the time frame for Special Educational Needs assessments;

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- staff sickness absence levels;
- the number of visits to libraries;
- cost savings of using electric vehicles;
- arrangements for informing Members about schools becoming academies;
- the level of media interest in the Council's activities;

The Commission monitored the progress of all O&S work by receiving regular 'traffic light indicators' from the Chairmen of the Commission and all four Panels on their progress against the agreed annual work programme for O&S. We supplemented that by receiving six monthly progress reports from officers on O&S activities across the board, and national developments in O&S.

Budget Scrutiny

The O&S Commission, along with the O&S Panels, examined the Council's revenue and capital budget proposals for 2016/2017, together with the proposed fees and charges for Council Services. The Commission preceded this, in the autumn, by discussing with the Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, also the Borough Treasurer, the main issues influencing the design of the budget. Our views on the budget proposals, incorporating those of the O&S Panels, were reported to the Executive as part of the open consultation on the budget.

The provisional local government settlement in late December 2015 was surprising and caught many local authorities off guard. Whilst councils had been led to expect a 25 to 40% cut in central government funding over the next four years, the ensuing cut in funding for the Council had been closer to 80%. Consequently, the budget proposals issued for consultation in December 2015 would need to be supplemented by further savings. Unlike previous years, the Council's budget setting process needed to continue over a longer period to deal with this late addition to budget pressures.

Specific issues raised by the Commission included:

- Home to School transport;
- opportunities to increase Business Rates;
- the increase in National Insurance contributions;
- the culture and climate of the organisation was currently one of austerity;
- the printing of leaflets externally;
- resourcing of building maintenance surveying work;
- the rates charged by the Council's legal services team for their services;
- a review of all actual, and possible, Council charging rates for services it provides; and
- the Agresso finance system was coming to the end of its life and a new version would need to be installed.

Holding the Executive to Account

There were no 'call-in' requests during 2015/16. The Commission has kept a watching brief on the Executive's decisions and reviewed relevant forthcoming Executive issues at each meeting.

Councillor and Community Calls For Action

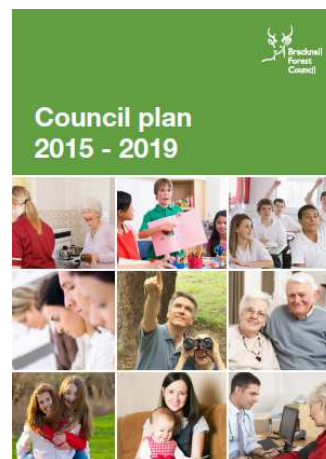
From April 2009, the legal provision for the 'Councillor Call for Action' also the 'Community Call for Action' came into effect, giving Members the opportunity to ask for discussions at

O&S committees on unresolved issues. There have been no Community or Councillor Calls for Action at Bracknell Forest Council in 2015/16.

Policy Development

The Commission continued making an active input to the development of Council Policy during 2015/16, for example:

- the Executive issued a positive response to the recommendations of the Commission's Working Group which reviewed Business Rates and discretionary relief;
- the Commission formed a Working Group, which met with the Chairman of the Economic and Skills Development Partnership and senior officers, to contribute thoughts to the draft Economic Strategy, during its formative stage; and
- the Commission held a workshop with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, to consider the draft Council Plan, which was later adopted by full Council to replace the former Medium Term Objectives.



Crime and Disorder

The Commission has continued to discharge the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee' requirements emanating from the Police and Justice Act, and the related statutory guidance from the Home Office on the O&S of Crime and Disorder.

We monitored crime and disorder issues, including the periodic performance reports of progress against crime indicators and key actions for community safety. In July 2015, we met with the Deputy Chief Constable also the Chief Inspector from Bracknell Police Station, together with the Chairman of Bracknell Forest's Community Safety Partnership. The principal issues discussed were the 2014/15 annual crime figures, the partnership's performance and the new priorities in the Community Safety Plan. These are useful and productive meetings which will continue.

8 ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



Councillor Robert Angell

Chairman, Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel

The Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel undertakes the Council's O&S function in relation to its Environment, Culture and Communities Department which provides environment and public protection, leisure, culture and library, and planning and transport services. The work of the Panel consists of monitoring the Department's performance, scrutinising its budget and exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to scheduled Executive key and non-key decisions. The relevant Executive portfolio holders regularly attend Panel meetings. The Panel assists with policy review and development by contributing to strategy development and by establishing working groups to undertake policy reviews, the outcomes and recommendations of which are submitted to the Executive for adoption and the Panel receives the Executive's response. The work programme of the Panel identifies other areas of work to be undertaken by the Panel.

Performance Monitoring

During 2015/16 the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel has continued to monitor the performance of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department mainly through review of its Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs). The QSRs enabled the Panel to question Executive Members and officers in detail regarding the trends, pressures and priorities for this major service area. This resulted in a number of questions and requests for additional information in areas including:

- the feasibility of a wind turbine and low level solar panels being installed in the Borough;
- the departmental risk register;
- the number of compliments received compared to previous quarters;
- Re3 waste disposal contract negotiations;
- the predicted costs of the Coral Reef refurbishment;
- replacement of existing street lighting with LED lighting;
- highway inspection intervals and intervention levels for road repairs;
- review of the pricing and pricing concessions for leisure activities;
- the capacity remaining at Easthampstead Cemetery before the Council needs to acquire land and make it suitable for burials in order to continue to provide a service for the interment of remains; and
- staff vacancy and sickness levels.

Budget Scrutiny

Although there was a need for further savings to be identified following notification of the Government grant settlement, the Panel was invited to scrutinise the budget proposals for 2016/17 which outlined the key themes and priorities for Environment, Culture and Communities. The initial preparations for the budget had focused on the Council's Commitment Budget for 2016/17 – 2020/21, bringing together existing expenditure plans, taking account of approved commitments, and the ongoing effects of service developments and efficiencies that were agreed when the 2015/16 budget was set.

A number of changes were proposed to the Commitment Budget since it was last considered by the Executive, amounting in total to an increase for the Council of £1.032m. Of particular interest to the Panel were a departmental saving resulting from the Street Lighting Invest to Save Scheme (-£0.175m) and updated Waste Disposal projections based on the latest tonnages for recycling (£0.179m). The Panel also noted the draft revenue budget pressures for the Department totalling £263,000 for 2016/17, although these were more than outweighed by savings proposals amounting to £1,161,000.

Arising from questions and discussion, the Panel noted the following in relation to the budget pressures and savings proposals:

- In response to the reduction in income at Bracknell Leisure Centre (due to competition from small scale local gyms), plans were in hand to enhance the offer included within the Platinum Card package and officers were recommended to publicise the new package as widely as possible.
- An outline of the duties of the posts of Strategic Planner (New Communities) and Development Engineer and the reasons for their continued funding were given.
- The dispute in relation to the waste contract had been settled and the additional recycle income was now assured.
- The additional income from increasing charges for brown bin emptying relied in part on continuing to sign up new customers for the service.
- The increases in Cemetery and Crematorium fees and charges were felt to be reasonable and had been set taking into account the fees charged by neighbouring authorities and the quality of the service offered in Bracknell Forest which was valued and appreciated by users.
- The e+card savings arose from lower running costs rather than any reduction in the discounts offered.

Turning to the Capital Programme, the Panel noted that total capital spending proposed for Environment, Culture and Communities in 2016/17 amounted to £20.185m (of which £4.733m was external funding). The most significant project was the Coral Reef Transformation at an estimated £8.358m in 2016/17. The acquisition of the former Magistrates Court building would increase the Council's landholding to support a possible future phase of town centre redevelopment. Referring to the new schemes in the programme, Members requested further information relating to a replanting scheme and the sites of the road junctions earmarked for traffic signal preventative maintenance. The Panel expressed its support for the Invest-to-Save scheme to provide an additional chapel at the Easthampstead Cemetery and Crematorium.

Overview and Policy Development

At its meetings in 2015/16 the Panel considered matters including: Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16; Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Updates; Draft Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document; Highway Maintenance Modelling

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System; Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan; Local Bus Services Update; Changes to the Method of Collecting Christmas Trees and Control of Horses Act 2015.

The Panel also received bi-annual O&S progress reports and regular updates concerning the review work undertaken by its working group reviewing the Council's planning function. In addition, consideration was given to review topics and the work programme for 2016/17.

Between formal Panel meetings, Members were provided with an explanation of the rationale behind the Rackstraw Road diversion and they requested that officers review the letter responding to residents asking for existing trees to be pruned and revise it if necessary, review a possible concession at Downshire Golf Complex, and consider the points raised by the Panel as part of the response to the Parking Standards consultation.

Planning Procedures

The Panel established a Working Group to review the Council's planning procedures. The Working Group first met on 24 August 2015 when Members received a comprehensive briefing from senior officers regarding the functions and structure of the planning function, and related matters. It has met on numerous occasions since, meeting the Executive Member, Chairman of the Planning Committee, and Council officers involved in planning applications, enforcement and developer contributions. Relevant information and data has been gathered from research and a variety of sources, including a visit to another local authority (Elmbridge Borough Council) with a highly performing planning function to learn about best practice. The Working Group met in February to agree its report, which contained a number of recommendations to the Executive designed to make improvements to the arrangements surrounding planning applications and enforcement. Subject to its adoption by the Panel at its meeting in March 2016, the report will then be sent to the Executive for its response.

Holding the Executive to Account

The Panel has kept a watching brief on relevant scheduled Executive key and non-key decisions which have been reviewed at each meeting. It has not had occasion to make or review any 'call-ins' during 2015/16.

Future Panel Work

It is anticipated that future work of the Panel during the latter part of 2015/16 will include review of scheduled Executive decisions and the quarter three QSR; receipt of an update in respect of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan; and consideration of Schools' Annual Environmental Management Report 2014/15, the Transformation Board's gateways and project initiation, and the report of the O&S review of planning procedures.



Councillor Susie Phillips

Chairman, Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Health Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel has a wide statutory remit to review the plans and performance of National Health Service organisations, and NHS-funded organisations providing health services to residents of Bracknell Forest. This includes responding to consultations concerning proposed major changes in service provision. The Panel also reviews the Council's Health functions and other activities that contribute to health improvements in the Borough. The Council's Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing regularly attends meetings of the Panel. Occasional working groups of the Panel undertake focussed work, with a view to improving services, and the resulting findings and recommendations are submitted to the Executive of the organisations concerned for action.

Performance Monitoring

The Panel continued to take a close interest in the performance of National Health Service organisations serving Bracknell Forest residents. We devoted one meeting to discussing with the Chief Executive of Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust the Trust's progress, with particular reference to overcoming the weaknesses previously found by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) at Heatherwood and Wexham Park hospitals. We devoted another meeting to meet the Chief Executive of the South Central Ambulance Service to review the Trust's performance and future plans.

The Panel also reviewed the Quarterly Service Reports of the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing department relating to health activities. We followed up with one GP Practice serving Bracknell Forest residents the actions being taken over a Care Quality Commission 'Inadequate' rating and the Practice having been put into special measures. We received constructive responses to all the Panel's concerns.

Other areas of focus for the Panel during 2015/16 included:

- considering items for inclusion in the Panel's work programme;
 - providing comments on the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy in advance of its consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - considering the results of inpatient surveys, NHS Choices and other independent information on the performance of NHS Trusts providing services to Bracknell Forest residents;
- reviewing the Healthwatch Bracknell Forest Annual Report for 2014/15;
 - making an input to the 'Quality Account' of one of the nearby NHS Trusts, which are annual reports to the public from providers of NHS healthcare services about the quality of services they provide; and

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- Receiving bi-annual progress reports on O&S activity across the board.

Working Groups

The Panel commenced a Working Group late in 2015/16, to explore a range of concerns about the sufficiency of General Practitioner capacity to meet the needs of Bracknell Forest residents, in the future. The anticipated value of the review is to conclude whether GP capacity needs have been properly identified and that sound plans are in place to meet those needs; and where they are not, to make recommendations accordingly.

Overview and Policy Development

The Panel has kept an on-going interest in the developing healthcare scene, asking for information as necessary and contributing our views. This included monitoring important developments to the NHS both nationally and locally, and the activities of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Budget Scrutiny

The Panel received and considered a report providing information on the Budget Proposals for 2016/17, and noted that the key features were:

- the Public Health budget reduction from the Department of Health;
- the Council taking on public health responsibilities for 0-5 year olds;
- the creation of a 0-19 year old Public Health service; and
- use of the surplus to support Social Care services.

Arising from local authority funding reductions, some services are to operate differently to become more cost-effective. There would be income generation from the Time for Change commission across Berkshire, and savings were being made by encouraging community assets to run Health and Wellbeing events for themselves.

Holding the Executive to Account

The Panel has kept a watching brief on relevant scheduled Executive key and non-key decisions which have been reviewed at each meeting. It has not had occasion to make or review any 'call-ins' during 2015/16.

Other Panel Work

As we were newly formed after local government elections in 2015, we invested some time at the outset on:

- receiving an introductory briefing in respect of the Council's role and functions in relation to health;
- receiving induction training on health O&S, delivered jointly by Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, also O&S officers;
- agreeing each Member's area of specialist activity, for them to lead the Panel's work on; and
- discussing with the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing his priorities for Health over the next four years.

Representatives of the Health O&S Panel also participated in:

- a Regional conference on Health O&S, organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- the Care Quality Commission's 'Quality Summit' following their inspection of Wexham Park Hospital;
- attending a meeting of Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group; and
- attending the annual general meetings of some nearby NHS Trusts.

Future Panel Work

It is anticipated that the work of the Panel during the latter part of 2015/16 will include:

- meeting representatives of the commissioners and service providers of the Urgent Care Centre in Bracknell, to discuss the actions needed on weaknesses found by the CQC;
- reviewing scheduled Executive decisions and departmental performance; and
- making an input to the 'Quality Accounts' of the nearby NHS Trusts.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



Councillor Mrs Gill Birch

Chairman of Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel

The role of the Children, Young People and Learning O&S Panel is to overview and scrutinise the work of Bracknell Forest's Children, Young People and Learning Department which provides education and social services for children and young people and lifelong community learning services to all residents in the Borough. The Panel monitors the performance of the Department and holds the Council's Executive to account by reviewing relevant scheduled Executive decisions. The Council's Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning regularly attends meetings of the Panel. Working groups of the Panel undertake policy reviews with a view to developing and improving services and the resulting findings and recommendations are submitted to the Executive for adoption. The Panel is consulted on the Council's budget each year and looks at other matters of interest in addition to reviewing statutory reports, performance assessments, inspection outcomes, annual service reports and other plans.

Performance Monitoring

The Children, Young People and Learning O&S Panel has regularly monitored the performance of the Children, Young People and Learning Department throughout 2015/16. This was undertaken principally through review of its Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs), the 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer service, the Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014/15 and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014/15.

The QSRs enabled the Panel to question the Executive Member and officers in detail about the trends, pressures and priorities for this significant service area. At recent Panel meetings specific areas have been identified for particular attention and these have included the outcome of Ofsted inspections of Bracknell Forest schools, achievement progress through the key Stages, headteacher recruitment, free school places, and recruitment and retention of children's social workers. This resulted in a number of questions and requests for additional information in areas including:

- Ofsted inspection of the local authority;
- the campaign launched to recruit more foster carers;
- the number of Looked After Children (LAC);
- unauthorised absences of pupils from schools;
- consultation on proposed school designated area changes;
- the school building programme; and
- pupil attainment.

Budget Scrutiny

Budget scrutiny by the Panel focused on consideration of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2016/17 which the Executive agreed in December 2015 as the basis for consultation with Overview and Scrutiny and other interested parties before recommending the budget to Council.

The proposals consisted of relevant extracts of the 2016/17 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme reports which comprised the revenue budget, commitment budget, proposed revenue budget pressures and savings, fees and charges proposals, and planned capital programme summary and schemes.

The Panel was advised that notification of the Government grant had been received subsequent to the draft budget proposals being agreed as the basis for consultation and as the settlement was lower than expected it would be necessary for further savings to be identified.

Members focused their attention on the draft revenue budget savings and pressures. Attention was drawn to savings arising from additional income streams, reduced placement costs for LAC and efficiencies resulting from revised delivery of services and support totalling £714,000. Budget pressures, which related to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Post 16 Education Transport and Special Educational Needs (SEN), amounted to £246,000.

In response to related questions and discussion the following points were made:

- There had been an underspend in the Emergency Duty Team budget for several years and the proposed budget reduction constituted a saving without a service reduction.
- The proposed reduction in Youth Justice support to parenting services would be partially compensated by work in other areas such as the Early Help Offer and Children's Centres and by signposting to other forms of support.
- As there had been low take up of some aspects of the Information, Advice and Guidance to young people service, the related contract had been reduced to achieve a saving and some services brought in-house to improve service provision and value for money.
- Efficiencies and cost reductions in the commissioning of the Joint Legal Team that provided a Berkshire-wide service hosted by Reading Borough Council had been sought.
- As part of the on-going process to improve efficiency, a review of the youth offer had resulted in a saving of £58,000. The service would continue to provide targeted work. Other measures to support emotional health and wellbeing included bids to NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Group's Innovations Fund, focused work in schools stemming from the Autism Strategy and training of professionals and volunteers through the Parents' Project.
- The streamlining of the management structure of the Children's Centres would increase consistency and efficiency.
- There was a budget pressure associated with the MASH which facilitated improved and more rapid decision making and information sharing consistently across Berkshire.
- The mandatory conversion of SEN Statements into Education, Health and Care Plans was a significant task requiring additional staff and posed a budget pressure.
- The Capital Programme included Phase 1 of the expansion of The Brakenhale School which had qualified for a grant associated with the condition survey.

Overview and Policy Development

During 2015/16 the Panel received the minutes of meetings of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) and considered matters including: Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16; update on the implications of the Children and Families Act; 2014/15 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer service; Elective Home Education; Annual Report of Children's Social Care Complaints, Concerns and Compliments 2014/15; consultation on changes to Annual Admissions Arrangements 2017/18 and School Designated Areas; School Places Plan 2015-2020; and Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014/15.

Regular bi-annual O&S progress reports and updates on the work undertaken by its Working Group reviewing Child Sexual Exploitation were received by the Panel which also considered its work programme for 2016/17.

Between formal meetings, the Panel received information concerning the under 18 conception rate, which schools had fewer than 60% of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at Key Stage 2, the independent audit of a school's Private Fund Accounts, and consulting parents/carers and neighbours on the Education Capital Programme for Great Hollands Primary School.

Substance Misuse

The Panel received the Executive's response to the report of the review of substance misuse involving children and young people undertaken by one of its working groups. In its response the Executive stated that: *'We would like to thank the Working Group for their very helpful and well informed report which will enable us to further improve and develop our services.'*

Child Sexual Exploitation

The Panel set up a Working Group to review Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the Borough owing to concerns associated with the increasing level of awareness of it following recent high profile cases in areas such as Rotherham, Rochdale and Oxford. The Working Group commenced its review in August 2015 when it received an introductory briefing in respect of CSE. It has met on numerous occasions since when it has met Council officers involved in all aspects of Children's Social Care, Youth Services and Community Safety, and also representatives of multi-agency groups working to prevent and tackle CSE, the police, a local charity and representatives of the NHS to discuss commissioning and providing sexual health services and the GP role in child protection. Relevant information and data has been gathered. Future work will consist of exploring preventative work in schools to raise awareness of CSE and meeting the Children's Commissioner for England.

Holding the Executive to Account

The Panel has kept a watching brief on relevant scheduled Executive key and non-key decisions which have been reviewed at each meeting. It has not had occasion to make or review any 'call-ins' during 2015/16.

Co-option

The external membership of the Panel includes statutory diocesan and parent governor representatives with voting rights in respect of education matters, a non-voting teacher

representative and a non-voting children's social care representative. There are vacancies for a Roman Catholic and a Church of England representative and measures to fill the vacancies are being pursued with the Dioceses.

Future Panel Work

It is anticipated that further work of the Panel during 2015/16 will include review of scheduled Executive decisions, the quarter three QSR and the minutes of the CPAP in addition to consideration of early intervention work with LAC and the Transformation Board's gateways and project initiation.



One of Bracknell Forest's Secondary Schools

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



Councillor John Harrison

Chairman, Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel

The role of the Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Panel is to overview and scrutinise the work of the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department in delivering housing services and all aspects of adult social care including safeguarding adults, providing services for older people and for people with learning disabilities, mental health needs and long term conditions. The Department also liaises with NHS partners in respect of health service provision. The Panel monitors performance of the Department and holds the Council's Executive to account, reviewing relevant scheduled Executive decisions. The Council's Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing regularly attends meetings of the Panel. Working groups of the Panel undertake policy reviews with a view to developing and improving services and the resulting findings and recommendations are submitted to the Executive for response, adoption and implementation. The Panel is consulted on the Council's budget each year and looks at other matters of interest in addition to reviewing statutory reports and performance judgements, inspection outcomes, annual complaints reports and other strategies and plans.

Performance Monitoring

During 2015/16 the Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Panel has regularly monitored the performance of the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department largely through review of its Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs), the Annual Report (Local Account) for Adult Social Care 2014/15, the Annual Complaints Reports for Adult Social Care and for Housing 2014/15, and the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report 2014/15.

The QSRs enabled the Panel to question the Executive Member and officers in detail around the trends, pressures and priorities for these important service areas. This resulted in a number of questions and requests for additional information in areas including:

- details of events taking place to enable Panel Members to take part if they wished to;
- information relating to various consultations to assist Panel Members to respond to them;
- a workforce review which had taken place over the past year;
- the timeframe for processing Housing Benefit applications;
- levels of homelessness and the number of households requiring Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
- the emergency personal care service provided by Forest Care;
- the number of affordable housing properties built last year; and
- winter pressure plans to minimise delayed transfers from hospital.

Budget Scrutiny

The Panel considered key themes and priorities for Adult Social Care and Housing as outlined in the Council's Draft Budget Proposals for 2016/17 which had been agreed by the Executive as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and other interested parties. The Executive then considered the representations made before recommending the budget to Council.

As the draft budget proposals had been agreed as the basis for consultation prior to the receipt of notification of the Government grant which was lower than expected, the Panel acknowledged that it would be necessary for further savings to be identified.

Relevant extracts from the 2016/17 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme were before the Panel for consideration. In particular, the Panel looked at budget pressures for 2016/17, which were common to most local authorities, and related to additional costs to the Council associated with the closure of the Independent Living Fund, the known number of young people moving into Adult Social Care during the year and residential placements.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The new charging policy for adult social care services would end the financial assessment for couples; all financial assessments would be carried out as though they were for single people. A saving estimated at £100k was expected as a result of an increased level of recipient contributions. There were 50 couples affected in Bracknell Forest and letters and/or home visits were proposed to explain the new arrangements.
- A saving estimated at £340k was expected to be achieved through the review of high cost care packages to ensure services did not exceed the assessed need. Reviews were carried out at least annually and it was common for people's needs to change over time.
- There may be a slight variation in the anticipated saving of £15k associated with the Local Housing Company.

Overview and Policy Development

During 2015/16 the Panel considered matters including: Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16; Adult Social Care Annual Report (Local Account) 2014/15; Annual Complaints Reports 2014/15 for Adult Social Care and for Housing; Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report 2014/15; Implementation of the Care Act 2014; potential impact of the National Living Wage; Sensory Needs and Advocacy Commissioning Strategies; and Heathlands Residential Home consultation.

Regular bi-annual O&S progress reports and updates on the review work undertaken by its Working Group contributing to the Homelessness Strategy were received by the Panel which also considered its work programme for 2016/17 and selected its next review topic.

Between formal meetings, the Panel responded to consultations in respect of the Council Tax Scheme, Housing Related Support and Charging in Social Care.

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The Homelessness Strategy

A Working Group of the Panel was established in July 2015 to contribute to the Council's emerging Homelessness Strategy. Members received an introductory presentation concerning the Homelessness Strategy, met representatives of local organisations involved in homelessness, observed at meetings of the Homelessness Forum Board owing to its involvement in developing the Homelessness Strategy and visited some of the homelessness accommodation utilised by the Council. The Working Group has formulated and fed back its views in respect of the draft Strategy and its work is now complete.

Holding the Executive to Account

The Panel has kept a watching brief on relevant scheduled Executive key and non-key decisions which have been reviewed at each meeting. The Panel has not had occasion to make or review any 'call-ins' during 2015/16.

Future Panel Work

Further work by the Panel during the latter part of 2015/16 is expected to include review of scheduled Executive decisions and the quarter three QSR, and receipt of the outcome of the consultation concerning the future of Heathlands Residential Care Home.



Tenterden Lodge has been purchased by the Council as temporary accommodation for homeless families.

DEVELOPING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

This part of the report outlines the main developments in Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) at Bracknell Forest in 2015/16, and it looks ahead to future developments, including the proposed work programme for O&S for 2016/17 (see Appendix 1).

Legislation and Government Guidance

The Council's O&S arrangements comply with legislation and government guidance, which are summarised on the Council's website.

There were no notable national or local developments in O&S in 2015/16.

Working in Partnership

Partnership working is a strength in Bracknell Forest, and O&S has contributed to this by maintaining its own partnership work in 2015/16. For example, we have:

- Worked collaboratively with other councils as the need arose, for example, a Working Group reviewing planning procedures visited Elmbridge Borough Council to learn about their arrangements, having been runner-up in a national quality award.
- Within the Council, we have maintained good collaborative working through measures such as: Lead Members on O&S reviews personally presenting O&S reports to the Executive; thorough consultation on our work programme; producing periodic progress reports on O&S for the Corporate Management Team and for the O&S Commission and Panels; and holding regular quarterly review meetings between O&S Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Executive Members and Directors.
- Maintaining our external networking on O&S, including participating in Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) events.

Public Participation and Engagement

As a main purpose of O&S is to act on behalf of residents in holding decision makers to account, it is important that we work to engage with the public. We have maintained our arrangements for:

- The Public Participation scheme for O&S, which gives residents an opportunity to raise issues of concern to them, at O&S meetings in public.
- Continuing to include residents in the membership of the O&S Commission, some of our O&S Panels and Working Groups.
- Keeping the O&S pages on the Council's website informative and user-friendly.
- Continuing to invite suggestions from residents for issues to be reviewed by O&S.
- Continuing to hold the great majority of O&S meetings in public.

Improving the Quality of Overview and Scrutiny

We have maintained and aimed to improve the quality of O&S, for example through:

- Continuing the trend of focussing O&S work towards issues of greatest public interest and which offer prospects of adding value.
- Learning from the feedback on the quality of O&S reviews from the officers in the area reviewed. The feedback scores have been consistently positive, with an average score of 90% overall (see Appendix 2).
- Induction training for new Members and specialised training for Members on Budget scrutiny and Health O&S.

Managing the Work of Overview and Scrutiny

We set out in Appendix 1 the proposed work programme for O&S in 2016/17 on which we have consulted the Council's Executive and Corporate Management Team, as required by the Constitution. The programme continues the revised focus since 2011 on contributing more to policy development and on pre-decision scrutiny, through short reviews, with fewer large reviews.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP 2015/16

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Commission Members:	Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Mrs Angell, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Finnie, Harrison, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McCracken, Phillips, Porter and Mrs Temperton
Church Representatives:	<i>Two vacancies</i>
Parent Governor Representatives:	Mr R Briscoe (Primary) Mrs L Wellsted (Secondary)
Substitute Members:	Councillors Dudley, King OBE, Thompson, Tullett and Worrall

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Members:	Councillors Harrison (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Finch, Finnie, Mrs McCracken, Ms Merry, Peacey and Mrs Temperton
Substitute Members:	Councillors Brossard, Ms Hayes, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie and Thompson

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Members:	Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Ms Hayes, Mrs McCracken, Skinner, Mrs Temperton and Virgo
Church Representatives:	<i>Two vacancies</i>
Parent Governor Representatives:	Mr R Briscoe (Primary) Mrs L Wellsted (Secondary)
Teachers' Representative	Miss V Richardson
Social Care Representative	Miss C Barrett (from March 2014)
Substitute Members:	Councillors Allen, Mrs Ingham, Ms Merry, Peacey and Porter

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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Members: Councillors Angell (Chairman), Porter (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Finnie, Mrs Ingham, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie and Mrs McKenzie-Boyle

Substitute Members: Councillors Dudley, King OBE, Leake, Ms Miller and Virgo

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Members: Councillors Phillips (Chairman), Mrs McCracken (Vice-Chairman), Graham Birch, Hill, Mrs Mattick, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Tullett and Virgo

Co-opted Member Dr D Norman

Substitute Members: Councillors Allen, Mrs Angell, Brossard, Harrison and Peacey

Note – Healthwatch Bracknell Forest are an official observer at meetings of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2015/16 MEETINGS

The agenda and papers for each overview and scrutiny meeting are published on the Council's website one week before each meeting, and are available in hard copy on request. Meetings, which are usually held in Easthampstead House, are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend and see local democratic accountability in action.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

- 27 May 2015 (Annual Meeting)
- 24 September 2015
- 28 January 2016
- 12 May 2016
- 9 July 2015
- 19 November 2015
- 10 March 2016

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 16 June 2015
- 19 January 2016
- 15 September 2015

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 10 June 2015
- 11 January 2016
- 30 September 2015
- 13 April 2016

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 7 July 2015
- 12 January 2016
- 22 September 2015
- 23 March 2016

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 2 July 2015
- 14 January 2016
- 1 October 2015
- 14 April 2016

Meetings in 2016/17

Dates for O&S meetings in 2016/17 are published on the Council's website and are available from the O&S officer team.

External Contacts in 2015/16

When conducting reviews, Members become involved in a number of ways of obtaining information. Throughout the year the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Panels have worked with many different people and organisations across the Council, Bracknell Forest and further afield to enable Members to gain first hand information and allow detailed consideration of a topic, and we were appreciative of their input to our work.

Last year, Working Groups visited Elmbridge Borough Council, also the GP Practices providing primary care services to Bracknell Forest residents.

As well as external visits, Members of Overview and Scrutiny heard evidence from officers within the Council and from a variety of individuals and organisations including:

- Bracknell & Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group
- Economic and Skills Development Partnership
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Healthwatch Bracknell Forest
- Onemedical
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Thames Valley Police
- Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company Limited
- Involve Charity
- Pilgrim Hearts Charity
- Homelessness Forum Board
- St Joseph's Church, Bracknell

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Working Group	Members
Draft Economic Development Strategy	Councillors Leake (Lead), Allen, Angell and Mrs Mattick
Draft Council Plan	O&S Commission workshop

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Working Group	Members
Draft Homelessness Strategy	Councillors Mrs Angell (Lead), King OBE, Mrs McCracken, Ms Merry, Peacey and Mrs Temperton

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Working Group	Members
Child Sexual Exploitation	Mrs McCracken (Lead), Mrs Birch, Ms Gaw, Peacey and Mrs Temperton

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Working Group	Members
Planning Procedures	Councillors Angell (Lead), Mrs Angell, Brossard, Finnie, Leake and Porter

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Working Group	Members
GP Capacity	Councillors Peacey (Lead), Mrs Mattick, Phillips, Mrs Temperton, Tullett and Virgo. Dr Norman. Ms R Addicott

28 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEWS COMPLETED SINCE 2009

Title	Date Completed
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09	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	April 2009
Housing Strategy	May 2009
Review of Waste and Recycling	July 2009
Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan	July 2009
NHS Core Standards (letters submitted)	December 2009
Review of the Council's Key Objectives	January 2010
Bracknell Healthspace	Publication deferred to 2011
14-19 Years Education Entitlement	February 2010
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10	April 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	July 2010
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in the Context of Personalisation	October 2010
Review of Partnership Scrutiny	October 2010
Hospital Car Parking Charges	December 2010
Safeguarding Children and Young People	January 2011
Review of the Bracknell Healthspace (Addendum)	March 2011

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11	April 2011
Office Accommodation Strategy	June 2011
Plans for Sustaining Economic Prosperity	June 2011
Review of Highway Maintenance (Interim Report)	July 2011
Performance Management Framework	September 2011
Review of the Council's Medium Term Objectives	September 2011
Plans for Neighbourhood Engagement	October 2011
Regulation of Investigatory Powers	October 2011
Site Allocations Development Plan Document	October 2011
Common Assessment Framework	January 2012
Information and Communications Technology Strategy	February 2012
NHS Trusts Quality Accounts 2011/12 (letters submitted to five Trusts)	April 2012
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12	April 2012
Commercial Sponsorship	June 2012
Communications Strategy	July 2012
Modernisation of Older People's Services	November 2012
Proposed Reductions to Public Transport Subsidies & Concessionary Fare Support, leading to review of the Bus Strategy	November 2012 October 2013
Preparations for the Community Infrastructure Levy	January 2013
'Shaping the Future' of Health Services in East Berkshire	February 2013
Substance Misuse (Adults)	February 2013
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13	April 2013
NHS Trust Quality Accounts 2011/12 (letter submitted to three Trusts)	April 2013
School Governance	July 2013
A Review of Delegated Authorities	September 2013

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Applying the Lessons of the Francis Report to Health Overview and Scrutiny	January 2014
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14	April 2014
NHS Trust Quality Accounts 2013/14 (letters submitted to two Trusts)	April 2014
Review of School Places	June 2014
Review of Cultural Services	September 2014
The Council's Role in Regulated Adult Social Care Services	October 2014
Review of Business Rates and Discretionary Relief	February 2015
Review of Substance Misuse Involving Children and Young People	March 2015
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15	April 2015
Draft Economic Strategy	August 2015
Draft Council Plan	September 2015
Draft Homelessness Strategy	November 2015
Planning Procedures	March 2016

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The proposed work programme for O&S in 2016/17 is shown on the following pages. The programme is aimed at maintaining a strategic and co-ordinated work programme based on major areas of Council and partner organisations' activity. The review topics take account of what is likely to be timely, relevant, and to add value. The programme incorporates the routine, on-going work of O&S and the completion of reviews currently underway.

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

The work programme will necessarily be subject to continual refinement and updating. The 'future possible reviews' are those which are unlikely to be resourced until 2017/18 or later.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION	
1.	<p>Co-ordination of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels</p> <p>This will include reviewing progress reports on the work of each Panel against the agreed work programme, and promoting consistency in the approach to budget scrutiny and other cross-cutting issues.</p>
2.	<p>Routine monitoring of the performance of the Council's corporate functions</p> <p>To include: the Council Plan Overview Reports; the Quarterly Service Reports of the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department; and on-going monitoring of departmental performance and expenditure.</p> <p>To receive periodic briefings on the implementation of key strategies, particularly the Local Economic Framework and Strategy.</p>
3.	<p>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>To selectively contribute to the formulation of new policies in advance of their consideration by the Executive.</p>
4.	<p>Transformation Programme</p> <p>To ensure a consistent O&S input to the Council's Transformation programme. Working Groups of the O&S Commission will provide input to Transformation projects of a corporate nature.</p>
5.	<p>2017/18 Budget Scrutiny</p> <p>To review the Council's budget proposals for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department for 2017/18, and plans for future years. To include a discussion with the Borough Treasurer during 2016 on the evolving budgetary position. Overview and Scrutiny Panels will also scrutinise the budget proposals in their departmental areas.</p>

6.	<p>Crime and Disorder Committee</p> <p>To carry out the role of statutory 'Crime and Disorder Committee', to include an annual meeting with representatives of the Community Safety Partnership.</p>
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ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	
1.	<p>Monitoring the performance of the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department</p> <p>To include on-going review of the Quarterly Service Reports, receiving statutory plans and reports (such as the annual reports on complaints received), and being briefed on the progress of any significant developments (such as the Care Act).</p>
2.	<p>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>To selectively contribute to the formulation of new policies in advance of their consideration by the Executive.</p>
3.	<p>2017/18 Budget Scrutiny</p> <p>To review the Council's Adult Social Care and Housing budget proposals for 2017/18, and plans for future years.</p>

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	
1.	<p>Monitoring the performance of the Children, Young People and Learning Department</p> <p>To include on-going review of the Quarterly Service Reports, receiving statutory plans and reports (such as the annual reports of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and on complaints received). Monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of the 'Learning Village' in Binfield • Schools' performance and educational attainment, particularly secondary schools; • The action taken by the Executive to earlier reports by the Panel
2.	<p>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>To selectively contribute to the formulation of new policies in advance of their consideration by the Executive.</p>
3.	<p>2017/18 Budget Scrutiny</p> <p>To review the Council's Children, Young People and Learning budget proposals for 2017/18, and plans for future years.</p>

ENVIRONMENT CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	
1.	<p>Monitoring the performance of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department</p> <p>To include on-going review of the Quarterly Service Reports; the performance of the Department, review of any inspection reports or self-evaluations, and monitoring significant departmental developments, particularly the Local Development Framework.</p>
2.	<p>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>To selectively contribute to the formulation of new policies in advance of their consideration by the Executive.</p>
3.	<p>2017/18 Budget Scrutiny</p> <p>To review the Council's Environment, Culture and Communities budget proposals for 2017/18, and plans for future years.</p>

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	
1.	<p>Monitoring the performance of the Local NHS Organisations and the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department in relation to health</p> <p>To include on-going review of the Quarterly Service Reports and monitoring significant developments, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Better Care Fund • The Care Act • Measures to promote self care and healthy living
2.	<p>2017/18 Budget Scrutiny</p> <p>To review the Council's budget proposals for public health in 2017/18, and plans for future years.</p>
3.	<p>Responding to NHS Quality Accounts and Consultations</p> <p>The government's statutory guidance states that the annual "Quality Accounts" submitted by providers of NHS services should contain observations of O&S committees. Also, the Panel is a statutory consultee for any substantial variation in NHS services affecting the Borough.</p>

2016/17 WORKING GROUPS	
O&S Commission	Transformation Programme To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on Council-wide support services.
	To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on citizen and customer contact.
	To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on Income generation.
Adult Social Care and Housing O&S Panel	Housing Supply: Older People's Accommodation A review of an aspect of Housing Supply, possibly the implementation of the Older People's Accommodation Strategy (with the Clement House development as a possible case study).
Children, Young People and Learning O&S Panel	Child Sexual Exploitation To complete the review of the Council's response to the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation, delivered in concert with community safety partner organisations. This might lead to further, focussed scrutiny of some aspects of CSE.
	Transformation Programme To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on Early Intervention and Prevention.
Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel	Transformation Programme To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on the Leisure Review.
	To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on the Libraries Review.
	To provide an input at key stages of the Transformation project on the Arts Review.
	Houses in Multiple Occupation A review of the Council's involvement with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
Health O&S Panel	GP Capacity To complete the Working Group reviewing whether there is sufficient GP capacity to match the long-term growth in the Borough's population and other demands.

FUTURE POSSIBLE REVIEWS (Unlikely to be resourced until 2017/18 or later)	
<u>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</u>	
1.	Procurement – Contract Management To review the Council's arrangements for effective management of significant contracts.
2.	Learning and Development To review the Learning and Development functions for officers, with an emphasis on E-Learning activities.
3.	Bracknell Town Centre – Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour To review the crime and anti-social behaviour issues arising from the growth in the night-time economy in the regenerated Bracknell Town centre.
<u>Adult Social Care and Housing</u>	
1.	Forestcare A review of the lifeline alarms and other services provided under Forestcare.
2.	Impact of the National Living Wage To review the likely impact of the National Living Wage on the capacity of the care home sector, and on day care.
3.	Housing Supply To review the Council's role relating to housing supply, particularly in regard to assisting home ownership, and the provision of affordable housing.
<u>Children, Young People and Learning</u>	
1.	Early Intervention Services To review the effectiveness of early intervention services for families and children, for example parenting skills and crime prevention. To include the outcome of the Transformation Board's project in this area.
2.	Supporting Disadvantaged Children and Families To review the impact of the Council's 'Family Focus' programme.

<u>Environment, Culture and Communities</u>	
1.	<p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>To review the Council's operations in relation to Parks and Open Spaces, with particular reference to the Ranger Service.</p>
2.	<p>Integrated Transport</p> <p>To review the work of the Transport Development section, with particular reference to integrated transport.</p>
3.	<p>Regulatory Services</p> <p>To review the work of the department's Trading Standards and other regulatory services.</p>
<u>Health</u>	
1.	<p>The Royal Berkshire Bracknell Healthspace</p> <p>To review the services offered at The Royal Berkshire Bracknell Healthspace (Brants Bridge), including cancer and renal facilities, the Urgent Care Centre and the GP Out of Hours service.</p>
2.	<p>Primary Care Health Services</p> <p>To review the adequacy of community primary care health services, specifically pharmacy, dentistry and ophthalmic services (excluding GP services, which were the subject of a 2015-16 O&S review).</p>

RESULTS OF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Results of Feedback Questionnaires on Overview and Scrutiny Reviews

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 24 Reviews¹
PLANNING Were you given sufficient notice of the review?	2.9
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?	2.8
Was there adequate communication between O&S and the department throughout?	2.8
Did the review get to the heart of the issue?	2.6
REPORTING Did you have an opportunity to comment on the draft report?	2.8
Did the report give a clear and fair presentation of the facts?	2.6
Were the recommendations relevant and practical?	2.5
How useful was this review in terms of improving the Council's performance?	2.5
Overall average score	2.7 (90%)

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, the Common Assessment Framework, Modernisation of Older People's Services, Community Infrastructure Levy, School Governance, Delegated Authorities, Applying the Lessons of the Francis Report, School Places, Cultural Services, Business Rates and Substance Misuse Involving Children and Young People.

38 HOW TO CONTACT US

For further information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest or for copies of any reports or reviews mentioned in this annual report, please visit our website on <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/scrutiny> or contact:

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If you have any views on this report or a specific topic you think Overview and Scrutiny should consider please 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

Please note that Overview and Scrutiny does not deal with individual complaints. If you are in any doubt about whether your concern is relevant to Overview and Scrutiny please contact us and we will be happy to offer you advice.

**TO: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016**

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16
Director of Corporate Services –Democratic and Registration Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The attached Annual Report appraises all Members of the work and progress on Member Development during the year 2015-16. The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities. The previous Member Development Strategy has been revised to reflect the narrative of the new Council Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Member Development Strategy 2016 – 2020 be approved**
- 2.2 That the Member Development Annual Report 2015 - 16 be noted.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As part of the previous Member Development Strategy the Council committed to considering annual reports on the Member Learning and Development progress.
- 3.2 The current Member Development Strategy has come to an end. The new Strategy spans the next four years and has been prepared in the context of achievement so far and focuses on recognising Members' role in ensuring the delivery of the Council's priorities for the benefit of Bracknell Forest residents. Bracknell Forest Council recognises the importance of learning and development for all those who work to deliver good public services and have therefore developed this strategy to support and guide the continuous improvement of Member Learning and Development.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Member Development Charter Steering Group has been focused upon the evaluation of the induction programme and consideration of a new Member Development Strategy for the next four years.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The costs associated with the Member Development work detailed in the Annual Report 2015/16 have been contained within the 2015/16 budgets for approved conferences (£9,610) and Member training (£13,050).

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The Member Development Strategy and the Charter framework have an inclusive approach embedded within them. Training in Equalities issues is also a component of the Member Development Programme.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Councillors have a pivotal role in taking forward the Council's objectives, therefore effective Member development is essential to ensure that councillors enhance their knowledge, capabilities, networks and experiences and learn new skills. Without it there is a risk that the Council will not be as well placed to deliver its objectives.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Member Development Charter Steering Group.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Meetings and emails.

Representations Received

- 7.3 All representations have been incorporated within the final documents.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Ann Moore, Head of Democratic and Registration Services – 01344 352260
ann.moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



Member Development

Annual Report 2015-16

April 2016



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Foreword

Following the elections in May 2015 the first priority was delivering a comprehensive induction to new Councillors joining Bracknell Forest Council.

The Council's ability to respond to the significant challenges facing the authority relies upon the effectiveness of its elected members. The induction was the foundation of the four year process to ensure that our elected members have the skills to deliver services which are equal to the commitments made in the 2015 election manifesto.

The Council Plan also focuses on delivery of these commitments whilst setting out the approach the Council is taking to address the financial challenges ahead. The Member Development Strategy has been revised to be a companion document for 2016-2020. All development activities will be closely tied to the Council Plan's strategic themes to support the delivery of the new approach.

Despite the inevitable challenges ahead Bracknell Forest residents can be confident that elected members will receive the support they require to make informed decisions for their borough.

As always, my thanks go to members of the Steering Group and all the officers who have made this progress possible.

Councillor Nick Allen
Chairman of Member Development Charter Steering Group

Message from Executive Member

Bracknell Forest continues to be committed to providing Members with the support to undertake their roles successfully and this is illustrated through the principles of the new Strategy. This commitment is particularly essential in an election year as newly elected members face a steep learning curve to understand the range of services delivered and the challenges the authority faces. In order to quickly engage with the decision-making processes the induction is a critical tool making use of multiple sources of information and delivery methods to share understanding.

I encourage all members to engage with the development opportunities and continue working with officers to find ways to maintain and build upon our existing high quality development programme.

Councillor Iain McCracken

Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to appraise all Members of the work and progress on Member Development during the year 2015-2016. The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

Member Development Charter Steering Group

The Steering Group meets as needed during the year with updates and important matters dealt with via email and Chairman's briefings. This year the Member Development Charter Steering Group has been focused upon the evaluation of the induction programme and consideration of a new Member Development Strategy for the next four years. The Steering Group comprised eight Councillors meeting with appropriate officers.

The Steering Group members in 2015-16 were Councillors Allen (Chairman), Wade (Vice-Chairman), McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, McLean, Ms Merry and Thompson.



Induction Evaluation

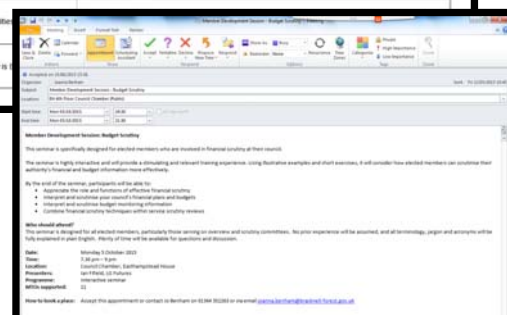
Following the elections in May 2015 an induction programme was undertaken to provide information to the newly elected members and an opportunity for returning Councillors to refresh their knowledge on key subjects.

Based on feedback from previous induction programmes the induction used a variety of methods to deliver information including:

- Welcome Pack folder drawing together information and signposting Members to relevant contacts and sources
- Borough Tour – guided bus tour of the borough
- Group discussions
- Member briefings
- Market style information sharing session
- Mentoring scheme

It was important to survey the new Councillors to discover what had worked well and identify where improvements could be made in 2019. Seven of the 12 Councillors attended a face to face session and in addition six assessment forms were completed. Both methods of feedback evaluated specific elements of the induction and the various methods used as detailed above.

Nothing provided was considered irrelevant or unnecessary and, as expected, everyone got something different from the sessions or information provided at that point. The necessity to deliver to a diverse audience was emphasised as the group of newly elected Councillors had a range of experience, interests and expectations.



Suggested improvements for 2019:

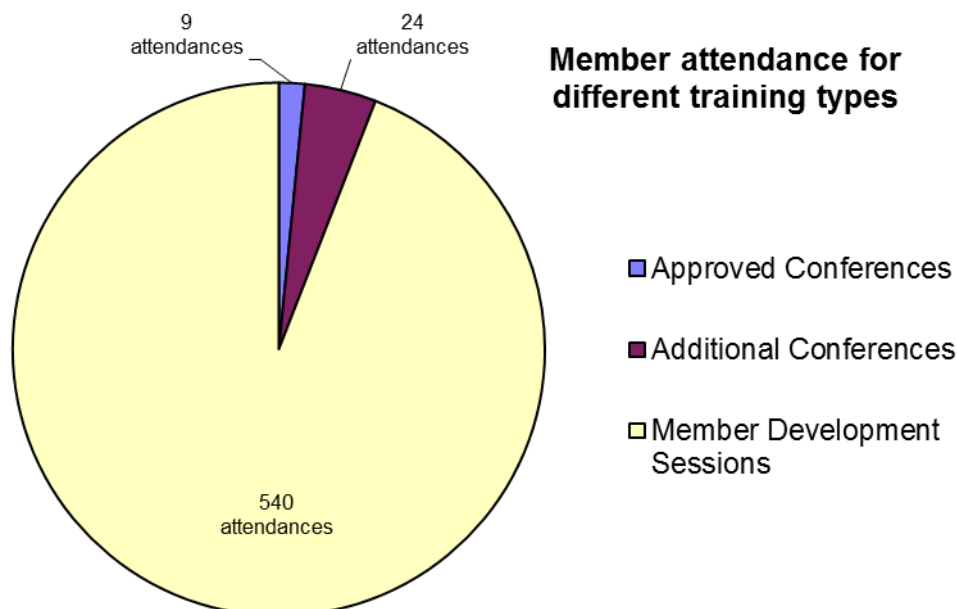
- Inclusion in the welcome letter, issued as results are declared, a brief overview of all the committees and their responsibilities together with the training and time commitment required to serve on them.
- Two additions for the Welcome Pack folder:
 - a borough map indicating ward boundaries
 - overview of each Executive Member's portfolio
- Tour of town centre office buildings to understand where key teams are located
- Detailed visits to key services within the first six months such as Forest Care, Waste management, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAT), Ladybank and Customer Services for example to understand support provided.

Five key activities / information:

Welcome Pack
Borough Tour
CMT Marketplace
Prepopulated diary
Organisation charts

Access to Development

- For 5 approved conferences there were 9 attendances
- For 18 additional conferences there were 24 attendances
- For 52 member development sessions, including externally facilitated sessions and briefing seminars, there were 540 attendances



In 2015-16 £448 was spent per Councillor on Member Development. This calculation excludes travel expenses and officer time to prepare and deliver Member Development sessions. The budget for member development has been profiled against development activities during a four year administration to ensure that appropriate levels of funding are available each year for example significantly more activity in year one due to the induction programme.

Budget Scrutiny

Delivered on 5 October 2015 and attended by 14 Councillors

Facilitated by Ian Fifield, LG Futures

The objective of this session was to provide Members with the ability to:

- *Appreciate the role and functions of effective financial scrutiny*
- *Interpret and scrutinise the council's financial plans and budgets*
- *Interpret and scrutinise budget monitoring information*
- *Combine financial scrutiny techniques within service scrutiny reviews*

Strategic themes supported: Value for money

Audience: All Members

Financial Scrutiny: Do's



- Recognise the overall financial position of the Council
- Consider Value For Money – but in the revised context
- Make links between financial and service plans
- Focus on strategic issues
- Consider both revenue and capital
- Be proactive and make recommendations for improvement
- Use the skills of finance professionals

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and PREVENT

Delivered on 22 October 2015 and attended by 15 Councillors

CSE session facilitated by officers from the Children, Young People and Learning department and the police.

PREVENT session facilitated by Justin Whitlock, Enhanced IOM Case Manager, Community Safety

The objective of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) session was to provide Members with a broad overview of safeguarding and information regarding CSE. The session enabled Members to develop their understanding of CSE in light of the issues identified in the case at Rotherham. The session included definitions of CSE, how Bracknell Forest address and monitor CSE, risk assessment, and learning from recent local authority high profile cases.

The objective of the PREVENT session was to provide Members with an understanding of the Prevent programme which is part of the Government's anti-terrorism strategy and aims to stop vulnerable people being radicalised into violent extremism of any kind. The briefing covered three sections to the Prevent agenda:

- *responding to the ideological challenge*
- *preventing people from being drawn into terrorism*
- *working with sectors and institutions*

In addition the members present were also advised of the tagging initiative being piloted in the Bracknell area.

Strategic themes supported: people have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive and strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

Audience: All Members

Homelessness and Affordable Housing - The Council's Role

Delivered on 7 March 2016 and attended by 18 Councillors

Facilitated by Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing, Adult Social Care and Clare Dorning, Head of Housing Strategy & Needs

The objective of this session was to provide Members with an understanding of the services the Council provides to homeless households in the borough, how households join the housing register and bid for affordable housing in the context of the Council's allocation policy and the housing options available to households.

Strategic themes supported:

A clean, green, growing and sustainable place

Audience: All Members

Mentoring - Information sessions

Delivered on 18 & 19 May 2015 and attended by 7 Councillors

Facilitated by Mary Francis

The objective of this session was to support Councillors taking part in the mentoring scheme to understand their role and how to support their mentees.

Strategic themes supported:

All themes

Audience: By invitation

CMT Marketplace

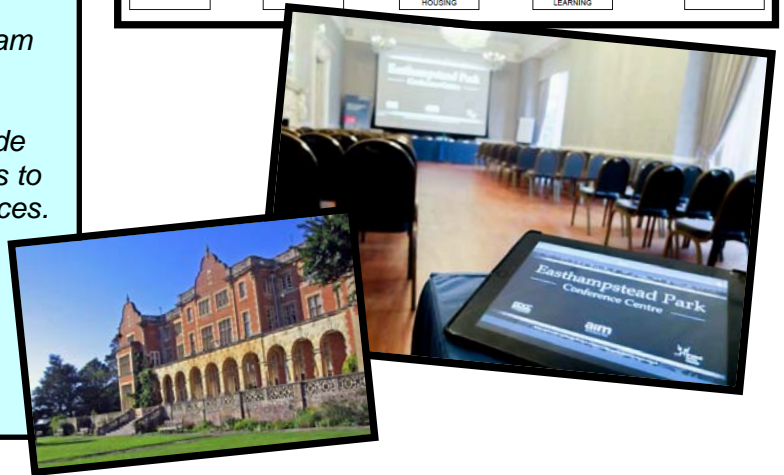
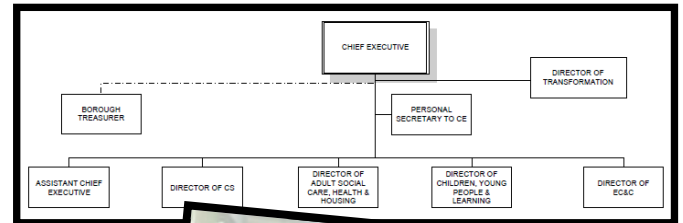
Delivered on 18 May 2015 and attended by 10 Councillors

Facilitated by Corporate Management Team and their senior officers

The objective of this session was to provide an informal environment for new Members to gain an overview of all the Council's services.

Strategic themes supported:
All themes

Audience: Newly elected members



Effective Ward Councillor

Delivered on 20 July 2015 and attended by 10 Councillors

Facilitated by Mark Palmer, South East Employers

This workshop on effective casework was intended to help councillors to discuss issues and good practices and look at the benefits of effective casework/ advice surgeries. In addition discuss how the role of the councillor is developing and evolving due to the modernisation agenda, changes in technology and how residents want to engage.

Strategic themes supported: All themes

Audience: All Members

SEE Workshop Content

- ❖ Ward work and case work
- ❖ Access to information
- ❖ Community leadership & engagement
- ❖ Skills for the effective ward councillor
- ❖ Action Planning

Our Borough: The Tour

Bracknell Forest Council
May 2015



Borough Tour

Delivered on 16 May 2015 and attended by 12 Councillors

Facilitated by Bobby Mulheir, Chief Officer: Customer Services and Andrew Hunter, Chief Officer Planning and Transport

The objective of this session was to provide newly elected Members with a full picture of the borough by exploring the location of key strategic and leisure sites across the borough.

Strategic themes supported: All themes

Audience: Newly elected members

Promoting Local Democracy

Local Democracy Week

The Mayor was very busy in October due to all the activities for Democracy week. The Mayor visited Meadow Vale School to speak about what the Mayor does, her average day and some of the children were excited to try on the Mayoral Robes.



Councillor Mary Temperton brought in the members of the Student Council at Great Holland's School to visit the Council Chambers. Deputy Mayor Tony Virgo answered very well thought out questions from the students. We hope some of these students were inspired to become the local councillors of the future.



The Mayor also visited Crowthorne Church of England and Wildmoor Heath Primary Schools to start their School Council elections. Ballot boxes and voting booths were provided to seven schools so that their election experience could feel as realistic as possible. The children were very enthusiastic about the event and thanked the Mayor for taking time to visit them.



Take Over Day



On the 20th November 2015 the Council welcomed 15 enthusiastic young people, 7 Executive Members, the Mayor and Senior Council Officers who got involved in this years shadowing programme. The project was an even bigger success than last year and is proving to be a popular and interesting day for all participants.

Activities this year included showing the students what the new town centre will look like on completion. Jack Ranger who is an apprentice said “I found the day very informative. I really enjoyed learning about the different services that are around Bracknell Forest and how they are run. A favourite of mine was listening to the Customer Service team take the calls and how they do it in such a professional manner. I also enjoyed visiting Ocean House and found it fascinating that Bracknell Forest is a very green area. It also gave me a great insight of how the new town is going to look like and what a great asset to Bracknell Forest it will be”.



Ellis Johnson from Ranelagh who shadowed Councillor Chris Turrell said ‘The meetings which I took part in helped me to understand the different bus systems within Bracknell. I learnt that there are several bus routes which are subsidised by the Council; this is so that residents of non-profitable routes can keep using those bus services, and commercial ones. I also learnt about further expansions, such as the ones being done at Coral Reef and at local primary schools.



Community visits by the Deputy Mayor

In December the Deputy Mayor Tony Virgo visited New Scotland Hill Primary School to present the Carol Concert Programme Competition winner with her prize which included a WHSmith Voucher, glass plate and an engraved plinth.



The Deputy Mayor was invited to speak at the Sandhurst Day Centre Members Christmas Party. He spoke about how and why he became a councillor as well as how he is enjoying being the Deputy Mayor.



Opening Little Acorns Nursery Play Area

The Mayor opened a new play area at Little Acorns Nursery in Bracknell which will allow the children to play outside all year. The Mayor spoke about the importance of children playing outside and made a special thank you to Councillor Ms Miller for using her Members Initiative Fund monies to pay for the play area.



Promotion of the Office of Mayor

The Bracknell Forest Mayor Twitter account was taken over by the incumbent Mayor, Councillor Mrs Hamilton and the civic office continues to tweet about upcoming events and report activity which are regularly re-tweeted by followers and the local press. Followers are increasing with 590 at the time of writing.

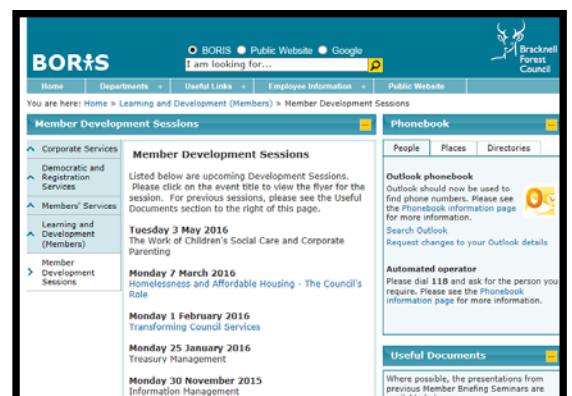
Follow Bracknell Forest's Mayor at www.twitter.com/MayorBFC



Members' Pages on Boris

The Members' pages on BORIS, the Council's intranet site, continue to be maintained to signpost Members to advice, guidance and various resources such as policy documents, briefing notes and previous Member Briefing Seminar presentations.

The pages can be found at <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/corporate-services/democratic-and-registration-services/democratic-and-registration-members-services.htm>



Member Development Strategy 2016-2020

The Strategy has been revised to reflect the new narrative of the Council Plan revised to support the new Council's priorities and is appended to this report as Annex B.

The draft will be considered by Council at its meeting on April 2015 and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.



Member Development Programme 2016 - 2017

The Member Development Charter Steering Group continues to be committed to improving Member Development at Bracknell Forest to ensure that its Members are equipped to provide the best possible services to its residents. The Member Development Programme is being developed for 2016-2017.

Members have been canvassed for proposals for development sessions. Once finalised the development programme will be circulated to all Members and published on Boris.

Events Delivered 2015 – 2016

Additional Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
1 st Annual School Leaders Conference	Primary Headteachers Association, Bracknell	1
Annual Life Chances Team Conference 2016	Bracknell Forest Council	6
Leadership Essentials: Children's Services	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Essentials: Effective Scrutiny	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Essentials: Finance for Leaders and Finance Portfolio Holders	Local Government Association	2
Leadership Essentials: Highlighting Political Leadership x 2	Local Government Association	2
Leadership Essentials: Planning - Leading Planning Services x 2	Local Government Association	2
Leadership Essentials: Planning - The New Government & Planning	Local Government Association	1
Leadership Essentials: Planning - Updating Local Plans	Local Government Association	1
Planning Policy under the New Government	Westminster Briefing	1
Political Leadership Masterclass on Risk Management	Local Government Association	2
Pupil Premium Conference	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Surviving to Thriving – Transforming Public Services	Aylesbury Vale District Council	1
Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation	Policy Communications	1
The Housing & Planning Bill, Starter Homes & Affordable Housing	Westminster Briefing	1
UK Bus Summit	Transport Times Events	1

Sub Total – Attended 25

Sub Total – Cost £1,992.00

Approved Conferences	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	Centre for Public Scrutiny	1
CIPFA Annual Conference	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy	1
Institute of Licensing: 'Annual Training Conference for 2015'	Institute of Licensing	1
LGA Annual Conference	Local Government Association	3
The National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Local Government Association / Directors of Adult Social Services	3
Sub Total – Attended		9
Sub Total – Cost		£5,624.00

Member Development Sessions	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
"Do You Know?" Training x 3	Bracknell Forest Council	4
Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel Induction Training	Bracknell Forest Council	9
Overview & Scrutiny Commission Panel Induction Training	Bracknell Forest Council	11
Budget Scrutiny	LG Futures	14
Child Sexual Exploitation and PREVENT	Bracknell Forest Council	16
Children, Young People and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel Induction Training	Bracknell Forest Council	8
Code of Conduct x 3	Bracknell Forest Council	28
Communications Training	Rada in Business	8
Environment, Culture & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel Induction Training	Bracknell Forest Council	9
Governance Workshop	Bracknell Forest Council	7
Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel Induction Training	Bracknell Forest Council	6
Homelessness and Affordable Housing - The Council's Role	Bracknell Forest Council	18
Induction - Borough Tour	Bracknell Forest Council	12
Induction - Budgets & Finance	Bracknell Forest Council	18
Induction - Corporate Management Team Market Place	Bracknell Forest Council	9
Induction - Effective Ward Work	South East Employers	13
Induction - Member / Officer Relations	Ronnie Farley, Councillor Skills	15
Induction - Mentoring Session x 2	Mary Francis, Consultant	6
Induction - Overview & Scrutiny	Bracknell Forest Council	12
Induction - Planning Training x 3	Bracknell Forest Council	43
Induction - Planning Training - Planning Policy	Bracknell Forest Council	13
Induction - Planning Training - SUDS	Bracknell Forest Council	10
Induction - Quasi-judicial Committees	Bracknell Forest Council	9

Induction Meeting - School and Children's Centre Performance Advisory Panel	Bracknell Forest Council	4
iPad Training	Bracknell Forest Council	1
Licensing Hearings 2015	Institute of Licensing	4
Licensing Panel Training	Bracknell Forest Council	4
Licensing Panels Training for New Committee Members	Bracknell Forest Council	3
Media Training x 2	Media Friendly Ltd	4
Mentoring	IDEA	1
New Councillor Induction Seminar	South East Employers	4
Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen Training	University of Birmingham	10
Town Centre Briefing	Bracknell Forest Council	28
Town Centre Update including Branding	Bracknell Forest Council	28
Transforming Council Services	IODA	23
Treasury Management	LG Futures	16
Welcome - All Members	Bracknell Forest Council	32
Welcome - Newly Elected Members	Bracknell Forest Council	12

Sub Total – Attended **472**

Sub Total – Cost **£11,198.64**

Information Sessions	Facilitators	Number of Councillors Attended
Bracknell Forest Homes	Bracknell Forest Homes	15
Heathrow Airport	Bracknell Forest Council	24
Information Evening	South Hill Park	13
Visit to Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Services	Bracknell Forest Council	4
Visit to Clement House x 2	Bracknell Forest Homes	11

Sub Total – Attended **67**

Sub Total – Cost **£0.00**

Overall Total - Attended **573**

Overall Total - Cost **£18,814.64**



Bracknell Forest Member Development Strategy

2016 – 2020



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Introduction

Bracknell Forest Council has always recognised the importance of learning and development for all those who work to deliver good public services and has sought to continuously improve Member learning and development, in the knowledge that organisations with effective learning and development are open, accountable and make better decisions. The Member Development Strategy provides a framework for the Council to deliver effective Member learning and development.

This is Bracknell Forest Council's third Member Development Strategy. The first strategy culminated in the award of the South East Charter for Elected Member Development; the first Council in the South East to achieve the accreditation. This commitment to Member learning and development enabled the Council to build on its strong tradition of providing Members with appropriate learning and development opportunities and commitment to the Charter's principles enhanced the Council's ability to strengthen and improve its arrangements through additional advice and robust external assessment.

The second strategy took this work forward and enabled the Council to achieve Charter Plus accreditation in January 2015; again, the first Council in the South East to do so. Charter Plus is based on the same criteria as the Charter although the evidence requirements and assessment processes are more rigorous.

This is the third strategy and spans the four year period from 2016 to 2020. The strategy builds on the work that has gone before and provides a robust framework within which Members will be given access to a high standard of development opportunities, support and information to drive forward the Council's goals. The strategy will be delivered in the context of achieving excellent value for money and responding to the changing priorities of the organisation resulting from the impacts of economic challenges facing the Council. The focus in the final year will be on the induction of Members following the Borough elections in May 2019.

The Strategy Vision

Bracknell Forest's vision for Member development is for all Members to be engaged in the learning and development programme, taking advantage of learning opportunities and accessing support that will assist them in fulfilling their roles and helping the Council to deliver its services and objectives for the benefit of the Borough and its residents.

The Aim of the Strategy

The Strategy outlines the principles and key themes for Member learning and development over the four years 2016 – 2020 and aims to maintain an embedded culture whereby Member development is considered to be a key factor in Bracknell Forest Council's success. It provides a framework for the provision of support that enables Members to acquire the necessary skills, information and knowledge required to fulfil their roles effectively. Members will be better equipped to balance conflicting and competing priorities and to work constructively with officers to achieve the best outcomes for Bracknell Forest residents.

Member development is defined as any learning or development activity, training programme, or provision of information specifically designed to improve the skills, knowledge and ability of Members in their varied roles.

The Strategic Context

The Council currently faces an unprecedented financial challenge which means it is more important than ever that Members are provided with the information and development opportunities they need to respond effectively.

The Council Plan sets out the approach being taken to address the financial challenges ahead and to deliver the commitments made in the 2015 election manifesto. This approach is expressed in a new narrative for the organisation:

- Bracknell Forest is a good place to live with a mainly affluent, well educated and independent population
- the council will provide leadership and work with others to keep the Borough a place where all residents can thrive and benefit from core services. What we do ourselves we aim to do well, but we must prioritise to live within our means
- we will provide an essential safety net, and target this to people and areas with greatest need. In targeting our services, we will continue to prioritise early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent

This narrative is supported by six strategic themes which are underpinned by a number of key measures of success:

- value for money
- a strong and resilient economy
- people have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive
- people live active and healthy lives
- a clean, green, growing and sustainable place
- strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

Elected Members are responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Council's goals which is dependent on them having the key skills and knowledge to help to provide the best possible services to its residents.

Key Principles and Objectives

The principles of the South East Charter Plus for Elected Member Development form the core of this strategy and set out below are the actions required to support these principles:

- To maintain a clear commitment to Member development
- To foster a strategic approach to Member development
- To ensure that Member learning and development is effective in building capacity
- To support councillors in their various roles (detailed Member roles can be found at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/your-council/yc-members-of-the-council/yc-members-roles.htm>)

These principles are underpinned by the requirement to sustain a Member Development Programme.

What we will do to maintain a clear commitment to Member development

- seek commitment to and approval of the strategy and our approach to Member development from Members and officers
- make planning and delivery of Member development the responsibility of Members and officers
- support the Member Development Charter Steering Group to oversee Member development and monitor the implementation of this strategy
- manage the Member development budget effectively
- ensure equality of opportunity and access for all learning and development activities
- provide appropriate training to Members Services staff

What we will do to foster a strategic approach to Member development

- oversee the Member Development Programme and additional briefings and activities with the Member Development Charter Steering Group – to include consultation, communication and monitoring and evaluation
- annually refresh the Member Development Programme based on Member need
- champion and promote learning and development activities within political groups through representatives on the Member Development Charter Steering Group
- deliver an Induction Programme to all newly elected Members
- provide appropriate training to Members dependent upon their roles and responsibilities
- involve external partners in relevant learning and development activities

What we will do to ensure that Member learning and development is effective in building capacity

- ensure that Members are clear about the outcomes and benefits of learning and development activities for them as individuals and for the Council
- develop Members' skills and capabilities across a range of areas including personal development, leadership skills, communication skills and ICT competencies
- develop Members' knowledge of particular issues or legislation
- develop Members' awareness of local and national issues
- develop Members' understanding of key issues, for example community development, community cohesion and equalities and diversity
- utilise a range of methods to deliver the Member Development Programme
- provide opportunities for Members to network with each other, other authorities, other partners and the community
- evaluate the outcomes and benefits of learning and development activities through participants' feedback
- monitor and record attendance at learning and development activities
- report annually to Council as part of the Member Development Annual Report

What we will do to support Councillors in their various roles

- schedule learning and development activities into the Council diary and publicise forthcoming activities
- schedule learning and development at appropriate times and offer multiple sessions where possible
- provide assistance for those with caring responsibilities to attend learning events

- endeavour to meet individual identified development needs in the way that is most appropriate for the Member concerned
- make the best use of technology and resources to support Members
- actively promote local democracy, the role of councillor and civic life
- promote and improve the work/life balance of members

What we will do to sustain a Member Learning and Development Programme

- develop a varied Member Development Programme covering induction; core knowledge and skills; service specific issues; Council and Committee issues; and individual needs
- support Members in identifying their own learning and development needs
- encourage Members to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP)
- encourage Members to complete 360° self assessments at least once each four year Council term
- provide Members with the opportunity to identify and take into account their own preferred learning style
- ensure that learning and development opportunities, including PDPs link back to the one of the Council's six strategic themes

Responsibility for delivery

The following Members and officers have a direct involvement in Member learning and development.

Member Development Charter Steering Group

The Member Development Charter Steering Group will lead and innovate the Council's approach to Member development, in conjunction with the Executive Member who has responsibility for Member Development.

The terms of reference of the Steering Group are:

- To monitor the progress of the Member Development Strategy
- To advise officers and the Council on Member development activities
- To report annually to the Council on progress with Member Development

Councillors

All councillors will be responsible for:

- Identifying their own learning and development needs and engaging in the personal development plan and 360° self-assessment process
- Engaging in the Member Development Programme
- Sharing learning with others
- Accessing learning opportunities

Directors and senior officers

Relevant officers will:

- Provide briefings to Members on key areas of service delivery and development
- Positively contribute to the development and delivery of the Member Development Programme
- Support the work of the Member Development Charter Steering Group

Democratic and Registration Services

The Head of Democratic and Registration Services and Principal Democratic Services Officer (Governance) will be responsible for working with the Member Development Charter Steering Group to:

- Develop and evaluate the Member Development Strategy
- Maintain the Charter Plus Standard
- Identify Member learning and development requirements and work collaboratively to facilitate their delivery
- Promote the Member Development Programme
- Ensure a suitable infrastructure is in place to support Member learning and development
- Represent the Council at relevant regional and national network meetings

Support and Resources

In addition to officer time there is a dedicated budget for Member learning and development. The budget holder is the Head of Democratic and Registration Services. There will usually be a mixture of internally and externally provided sessions with costs contained within the allocated budget. There is also provision for Member attendance at agreed conferences.

Any request to attend a conference or seminar that is not on the approved list, or any other individual training activity, will be considered in line with the procedure set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme, and authorised attendances will be funded from the Member Services budget.

Individual Members' needs will be considered once the core work programme has been determined and may need to be prioritised if there are insufficient funds to meet demand. Priority will be given to those training needs identified through the PDP and 360° self-assessment processes.

The Head of Democratic and Registration Services will bid for additional funding for specific initiatives if opportunities arise.

In order for Members to be able to carry out their roles effectively, they will be provided with the most up to date and relevant information from both internal and external sources. Each Member will be given support to access ICT facilities in the home, within the Council and, where applicable, on the move. The Council's intranet system, BORIS, will contain the most topical information regarding the Council's services and democratic issues. It will also include information and presentations provided at briefing seminars.

Equality

Access to training and development will be equitable, based upon individual and Council needs. In practice this means making sure that there are no physical, social, religious or cultural barriers to Members wishing to take advantage of development opportunities.

Access

Learning and development will be delivered in ways which allow the greatest take-up, taking into account different personal and domestic circumstances and preferred learning styles. A number of methods will be used in a positive attempt to address Members' needs including;

- Briefing notes, learning manuals and literature
- E-learning packages
- External conferences, seminars and network meetings
- In-house briefings, seminars and workshops presented by senior and specialist officers
- Joint Member and officer sessions
- Peer coaching and mentoring
- Sharing knowledge and best practice using the Members' pages on the Council's intranet site BORIS
- Training with partner organisations and neighbouring authorities
- Visits to other authorities

Monitoring the Strategy

The Member Development Charter Steering Group will review the Strategy at least annually and update it as appropriate to ensure that it reflects changes and continues to meet Members' needs.

The date, time and location of all learning and development events will be reviewed on a regular basis and recommendations for change will be made if required.

Indicators of success will include:

- Positive feedback in Member Services surveys
- Engagement in the Personal Development Plan and 360° self-assessment processes
- Engagement in the Member Development Programme
- Positive satisfaction rates with learning and development activities
- Positive satisfaction rates with learning and development providers
- Retention of the Charter Plus accreditation

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TO: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016

CHAMPIONS' ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16
Director of Corporate Services – Democratic and Registration Services

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The attached Annual Report appraises all Members of the work undertaken by the Council's four Champions during the year 2015-16. The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes.
- 1.2 As part of the Council's Constitution one of the Champions' key tasks is to submit an annual report on work undertaken throughout the year for consideration by the Council.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its discretion, the Council may, from time to time, designate Champions from amongst Councillors who are not Members of the Executive. The Council currently has four Champions:
 - Business Champion - Councillor Wade
 - Commuters' Champion - Councillor Harrison
 - Older People's Champion - Councillor Thompson
 - Voluntary Sector Champion - Councillor Finnie
- 2.2 The role and function of a Council Champion is to act as a positive focus for the local community at elected member level in respect of the relevant section of the community or range of activities designated by the Council. This is to ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of Council activities and decisions upon the section of the community or range of activities.
- 2.3 The key tasks of Council Champions are to:
 - (a) To make contact with local organisations concerned with the designated section of the community or range of activities and to establish effective and regular consultation arrangements with those organisations.
 - (b) To represent the views of such organisations to Officers, the Council, the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and other Committees, on all relevant aspects of the Council's activities.
 - (c) To act as an advocate on behalf of the relevant section of the community or range of activities within the Council as an organisation and to the wider community.
 - (d) To become familiar with the needs and priorities of the relevant section of the community, or range of activities concerned, and to weigh up interests expressed in order to provide sound advice on the implications of alternative courses of action.

- (e) To feedback decisions of the Borough Council and to explain the Council's position on specific issues of concern to relevant organisations and to individuals involved.
- (f) To publish an annual report on work undertaken over each year for consideration by the Council.
- (g) To appoint Panels to support their work where this would not overlap with other established liaison or consultative mechanisms, in line with the requirements of the Council's constitution.

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The role of Council Champion is ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of Council activities and decisions upon the section of the community or range of activities which they represent.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None relevant to this report.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

Ann Moore, Head of Democratic and Registration Services – 01344 352260
ann.moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



Champions' Annual Report

2015-16

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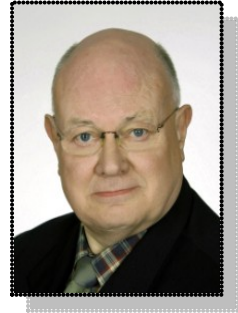
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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to appraise all Members of the work and progress undertaken by the Council's Champions during the year 2015-2016.

The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

Business Champion Councillor Wade



1 The Business Environment

On the 23 June the UK may decide to leave the EU. If the UK were to leave, there would be intense negotiations whereby the UK seeks to reach agreement with the EU, for example, on free trade.

Although the world markets are collectively much bigger than Europe; many trade agreements dealing with the rest of the world will need to be reviewed and negotiated by the UK in the event of leaving the EU.

Whatever happens in June; either way the business world will find new challenges. Here in Bracknell Forest the opinions vary and as yet no clear view has been established.

2 Businesses and the EU

Circa 95% of all UK businesses do not trade directly with the EU. The large multi-nationals will carve out their future around whatever the outcome of the referendum.

SME (small and micro) businesses may find it difficult to engage in the EU arguments, but are concerned about the potential political, economic and emotional reactions to leaving the EU impacting their UK markets.

The British Chamber of Commerce survey indicated around three quarters of their membership would prefer the status quo.

3 Economy

The world's "stuttering" economic recovery is set to continue to disappoint into the next year, the head of the International Monetary Fund has warned. Rising US interest rates, a Chinese slowdown and disappointing world trade will all weigh on growth prospects in 2016.

The IMF estimates the global economy will expand by 3.6pc, but growth is likely to be "disappointing and uneven."

4 Bracknell Forest - Economic & Skills Development Partnership

The Economic and Skills Development Partnership was set up in 2008 to combat the effects of the recession. In 2013, the Council had funded prime economic development in the borough, and formed a new Business and Enterprise team in 2014.

To date, the Economic and Skills Development Partnership alongside the Business and Enterprise team had:

- Developed a new customer contact system

- Conducted two business surveys
- Recruited new and additional businesses to the partnership
- Promoted the council as a key economic player in the borough
- Secured £14m real grant funding from the LEP for infrastructure development
- Received an increase in the number of business enquiries
- Developed elevate and the elevate hub
- Pioneered the business contact programme
- Attracted inward investment from China, including five delegation visits
- Supported Honda in their relocation
- Supported Sharp, Boehringer Ingelheim and Fujitsu in their relocation and consolidation
- Launched Small Business Saturday
- Supplied 96% of premises in the borough with superfast broadband
- Been the biggest beneficiary of the Berkshire local authorities for highways funding
- Held four careers events for young people

The ESDP and the Business and Enterprise Service are collectively a good news story, but now there are major financial challenges within the council.

However, the council is keen to continue supporting economic development in the borough, but due to budget restrictions, the Business and Enterprise Service has been reduced.

The ESDP have been asked three questions to consider going forward:

- What were the most important priorities for the partnership?
- How could the business community in Bracknell Forest be developed further?
- What did ESDP partners want to do to move forward with the partnership?

A meeting of the sub-group chairmen to discuss future tactics, priorities and the appropriate ESDP sub-group structure has been held and a way forward has been agreed. The focus will be on retention of our existing firms and attracting new companies to the borough.

5 Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership (TVB LEP)

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a business-led partnership. To date they have allocated £140m of public funds (UK and EU) to deliver economic growth initiatives in Thames Valley Berkshire.

The LEP has contributed to the sustainable economic growth of TVB through the implementation of a Strategic Economic Plan, which has four programmes:

Enterprise & Innovation

The LEP has funded initiatives to improve the business support available across the area, including the Thames Valley Berkshire Funding Escalator, a Business Growth Hub where all companies can start their growth journey and ConnectTVT, where ideas from tech start-ups can be shared and flourish.

Employability & Skills

To achieve the highest levels of education in our workforce, TVB is helping to develop five new Solutions Labs, which will equip young people with the STEM skills needed.

Infrastructure

The LEP prioritise infrastructure that supports growth through investment in transport improvements to enhance connectivity (£16.6m has been allocated for 2015/16.)

£1.5 million was allocated from Growing Places Fund to Bracknell Forest Council for a new infrastructure regeneration initiative. The money will help with much needed infrastructure improvements to the town centre - including the bus station which is a vital transport hub for the town.

International

Continue to promote the area's key growth sectors and its value proposition in order to encourage international businesses to invest and grow their supply chains in TVB.

6 Superfast Berkshire (Broadband)

The majority of people in Bracknell Forest now have access to superfast broadband (96% of premises in the borough.) The issue was pursued by Bracknell Forest Council with residents and businesses getting behind a campaign together with the MP for Bracknell Forest, Dr Phillip Lee.

7 Bracknell Forest Council – Business Support and Advice

BFC has created a website page as a 'one stop shop' for businesses in Bracknell Forest and sign posts to providers of support and advice.

The links provided to relevant organisations save time and enable individuals to start, grow or enhance their business.

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/business>

8 Networking

The primary way in which SMEs enhance their businesses is through networking.

This takes the form of both large organisations and small groups, e.g:

- The Federation of Small Businesses
- Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
- Business Biscotti
- Bracknell Enterprise and Innovation Hub
- The Business Forum

- BNI etc.

The big question is: “Are these networking events effective?”

Generally, business entrepreneurs conclude that the importance of face-to-face introductions for building relationships is paramount in developing potential business opportunities.

Networking is the main stay for SMEs

9 Conclusion

The Bracknell Forest Council business team has been actively involved with the commercial needs of the borough through the Bracknell Town Regeneration project, the Economic Skills and Development Partnership, the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and involvement in networking groups.

In spite of the BFC financial cutbacks, the business team will continue promote Bracknell Forest as a place for investment and growth; especially in forging links with fast growing economies such as China.

On the European issue small business owners do not feel fully informed and are still unsure on the EU referendum vote. They say more information on the impact of the EU to their businesses is needed; particularly the administrative burden of complying with EU regulation and more detail on the cost of EU membership.

Small businesses make up over 98% of all businesses in the UK and create two thirds of the jobs in this country. Both sides of the EU “in/out” debate should be helping small businesses (and the public) understand the issues, so they can make a fully informed decision. This is vital to our future prosperity.

Councillor Bob Wade

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Councillor Harrison



Overview

Over the past year the Bracknell Forest Commuters' Champion, Councillor Harrison, has consistently pushed forward the priorities of commuters in Bracknell Forest, listened to new concerns arising as the result of developments and the changing economic situation and carefully monitored the progress of improvements to Bracknell Forest's infrastructure.

Councillor Harrison would like to thank residents for being forthcoming with their views on commuting from Bracknell Forest and thank officers and members of the Council for their support in pushing for improvements to commuter services.

Priorities

Two years ago, the Commuters' Champion related that the top priorities for the area's commuters were:

- Overcrowding on railway services
- Slow services from Bracknell to London compared with other towns at similar distances
- Rising train fares

Since that report two other issues have been raised:

- Disruption to road travel caused by changes to the A329(M)
- An approach to rail passenger refunds by South West Trains which is out of step with the best in the industry

Activity

Rail Services

Overcrowding

The Commuters' Champion, together with the Executive Member for Transport and Planning and the Executive Member for Economic Development and officers from the Planning and Transport Department have held regular meetings with the SWT-Network Rail Alliance. It would be extreme narcissism to claim that the South West Trains investment programme resulted from the work of the Commuters' Champion, but by drawing attention to the issue and demonstrating the solid support of BFC we have encouraged SWT to invest in extra capacity on the Reading to Waterloo line.

- Towards the end of 2015, South West Trains completed the roll out of 108 Class 456 refurbished carriages. The first part of the delivery of a programme of extra capacity, which will provide an additional 250 carriages and 10 car trains on the Bracknell-Waterloo line has started.
- Work to extend the Bracknell platform to accommodate 10 car trains is planned.
- The opening of Waterloo platform 20 to Reading services has provided more capacity to run extra services and works to lengthen platforms 1-4 are planned.

Train Fares

The Commuters' Champion welcomed a decision by the Government to extend the fares regime introduced in 2014, which limits regulated rail fare increases to 2%. It also means that for the first time since 2003, people's earnings are on average rising more quickly than fares. Latest figures show that earnings are increasing by 2.4%.

Bracknell Station Facilities

In support of the recommendation by the Commuters' Champion, Bracknell Forest Council has offered to help South West Trains improve facilities at Bracknell Station. Design work has progressed well and it is likely that the public will soon see significant work to the concourse.

Rail Refunds

The Commuters' Champion has written to the Office of Road and Rail consultation about passenger refunds for delays making the case for -

- Automatic refunds where possible
- Better information to passengers about how to claim
- Better information to travellers as to what is going on during disruption
- All Train Operating Companies should follow the practice of the best when it comes to service disruption refunds, for example the 'Delay Repay' scheme, where passengers are eligible to claim for compensation for any delay of 30 minutes or more. CrossCountry, East Midlands, Virgin Trains and several other Train Operating Companies operate this policy, but SWT and FGW do not.

The Office of Road and Rail has indicated in its response that it agrees with many of the points raised and will impose new refund policies on the franchisee, when the franchise is next awarded.

Road Transport

The Commuters' Champion regularly attends the Berkshire Local Transport Body and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to push forward the priorities of commuters and businesses in Bracknell Forest. Through participation in these fora, Bracknell Forest has been successful in gaining funding through the LEP for schemes to improve traffic movement in the Borough, including the Coral Reef junction and Martins Heron roundabout.

Residents have recently suffered traffic delays on the A329(M) between Bracknell and Reading, as a result of changes to the road layout in conjunction with the M4 Smart Motorway scheme. The Commuters' Champion has written to the Highways Agency to emphasise the issue and open up a dialogue about how it might be solved.

Councillor John Harrison

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Older People's Champion Councillor Thompson



During the year 2015 to 2016 my activities as Older People's Champion have followed much the same pattern as in recent years.

One of the regular features is my participation in the Older People's Partnership Board which, as might be deduced from its name, is concerned with matters affecting elderly people locally.

- Various initiatives and developments are regularly reported to it. For example at the last meeting there was a report from Forest Care on the latest appliances that could be worn or carried about, including one relating to monitoring of falls and suspected falls and another which can pinpoint the whereabouts of the holder. The latter is of particular relevance to dementia.
- Another initiative reported to the Board relates to loneliness and isolation, a subject of ongoing concern.

A matter which I have raised is the absence of an active forum to follow on from the Over 50's Forum, which was a successor to the Senior Citizens' Forum. At its best it was a useful organisation dedicated to identifying and raising matters of concern and which held regular public meetings where speakers would talk about topics such as money management. The question asked is - Is there a demand for it and, more pertinently, who would organise and run it? Without overt demand, there seems little likelihood of a successor.

Another aspect of life is that of people living and working longer and providing training to facilitate this. This is something which is available for Older People in Bracknell and there are non-vocational courses - something which can help towards combatting loneliness and isolation, as can the different organisations within the Borough. Recreation facilities are available at the Leisure Centre in Bagshot Road.

Health is a matter of concern to the elderly. I am a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel which, through a working group, is looking at GP capacity within the Borough.

Going to the shops is a day to day activity for many of our older residents and, prior to the commencement of the redevelopment of the Town Centre, representations were made through the Access Group of concerns of disadvantaged and elderly residents. The new town centre will be welcomed.

The Look In continues as a café for the elderly, but personally I note that I no longer see those who were regulars at its earlier location.

In the year there were issues with public transport, which followed cessation of service by one of the operators. I believe that the problems arising have now largely been overcome.

Later this year, probably in early October, a conference is to held in Bracknell with the theme 'Planning for Later Life.' All will be welcome. Not only those who have later life to look forward to, but those for whom later life is an actuality. The Conference follows in the paths of the 'Voice of Experience Conferences' and more information will be available soon.

In preparing this report I am aware that I have not mentioned digital inclusion, the Buy with Confidence Initiative, the Better Care Fund and Self Care.

There is a wide spectrum of activity affecting the elderly. As Champion I will continue to try to keep abreast.

I commend my report to the Council.

Councillor Clifton Thompson

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Voluntary Sector Champion Councillor Finnie



The Borough of Bracknell Forest is very fortunate to have an outstanding voluntary sector who provide a wonderful service which is gratefully appreciated by our residents. It is particularly appreciated at this time, when the voluntary sector has been facing the additional challenge of central government having to introduce the strictest financial controls for many years, and the unavoidable disturbances resulting from the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre. Hopefully we should see an end of these two challenges in the not too distant future and then we will be able to work together in a more relaxed manner.

Due to current financial constraints, the Borough Council has been forced to limit their voluntary gift giving to three major voluntary groups – INVOLVE (formerly known as Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action,) Shopmobility and Victim Support. These three organisations have had their grants cut this year and have to reappraise their organisations, and I am very grateful to them for the economies which they have made so that they can continue supporting the voluntary sector.

Two voluntary food banks continue to provide a superb service to the more needy in our community. Some people question the need for these facilities – the wonderful volunteers who run these facilities will assure you of their need.

Concern continues to be expressed about the possible lack of suitable facilities for the voluntary sector in the future – particularly in the new Bracknell Town Centre. This is a very important matter which will be kept under review.

No one should ever underestimate the importance of the voluntary sector and how much we rely on volunteers throughout our lives.

I would be pleased to hear from any volunteer who requires assistance, or anyone wishing to volunteer.

Many thanks to all our volunteers.

Councillor James G. Finnie

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TO: COUNCIL
27 APRIL 2016

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT
Director of Corporate Services – Legal Services

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The attached report advises Council of the work of the Standards Committee during the last municipal year and of emerging ethical governance challenges.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Standards Committee is an advisory committee which has responsibility for advising Council on the Code of Conduct for Members and other protocols concerning Member and officer conduct. The Committee also oversees the processes put in place by the Code for determining any allegations that a Member (including Parish or Town Councillor) may have contravened the Code of Conduct or other protocol.
- 2.2 The attached report appraises Council of the work of the Committee during 2015/16 referencing two Code of Conduct complaints submitted during the year. It also highlights concerns raised in a survey of public attitudes towards conduct in Public life published in 2015 and the work emerging locally to improve local standards processes

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Not required.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

1. The Standards Committee (“the Committee”) is an advisory committee which formulates recommendations to the Governance and Audit Committee. The Committee is charged with overseeing arrangements to ensure that both Members and Officers conduct the business of the Council with appropriate propriety. The Committee has responsibility for formulating and reviewing Codes of Conduct and Protocols relating to the behaviour of Members and Officers. In addition, the Committee hears those complaints alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members which have not been resolved or determined at an earlier stage under the Council’s procedure for the consideration of such complaints.
2. Throughout the municipal year the Committee Membership comprised four* independent (i.e. non-Councillors) persons, one of whom (Mr Gordon Anderson) was the Chairman, three Conservative Group Members, and one Parish Council representative. The Independent Person appointed by the Council under the Localism Act 2011 (Dr Louis Lee) and his Deputy (Mr Elwyn Hopkin) are able to attend any meetings of the Committee as observers.
*(*one of the four independent roles is currently vacant)*
3. Although several meetings of the Committee were scheduled for the 2015/16 municipal year only one meeting has taken place due to the paucity of business for the Committee to transact. This reflects the commendably low level of complaints against Members of both the Borough and Parish/Town Councils

Complaints

4. Under the procedure for the handling of complaints alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members put in place following the enactment of the Localism Act 2011, a complaint is first considered by the Chairman of the Committee and the Monitoring Officer. The options available to the Chairman/Monitoring Officer at that stage are:-
 - refer for investigation
 - refer for some other form of action
 - determine that no further action is required.

If a complaint is referred for investigation the ensuing report is considered by the Chairman, the statutory Independent Person and the Monitoring Officer. At that stage the options are:-

 - refer to the Standards Committee for consideration.
 - refer for resolution by some other form of action (e.g. if the investigation finds that there has been a breach and the Member agrees to apologise)
 - no further action required (investigation finds no breach which conclusion is the Chairman, independent person and Monitoring Officer)
5. During 2015/16 the Monitoring Officer has received two complaints alleging breaches of Codes of Conduct for Members. Both complaints were against Borough Members. The Chairman and the Monitoring Officer agreed that the first complaint, which alleged that the Member concerned had disclosed confidential information contained in a Pre Planning Notice to Members, should be dealt with informally (ie by way of “some other action”). The Member apologised to the Monitoring Officer in writing for his infringement of the Code and has accepted a requirement to undergo a session of

Code of Conduct training from the Monitoring Officer. The second complaint referred to an incident between two Members and a member of staff at a local junior school and is currently being investigated.

National Context

In March 2015 the Committee for Standards in Public Life published the results of a survey of public attitudes towards conduct in public life. Its headline findings were as follows;

Overall standards of conduct of public office holders

More respondents rated the standards of conduct of people in public life as low (36%) than rated them as high (18%). This is the first time in a survey commissioned by the Committee that those who said they thought standards were low outnumbered those who thought they were high.

Change in standards of public office holders

More respondents thought the standards of conduct of public office holders had got worse (36%) than had improved (16%).

Confidence that authorities are committed to upholding standards in public life

Most respondents (56%) were not confident that the authorities are committed to upholding standards in public life.

Confidence that authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office

Most respondents (61%) were not confident that the authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office.

Confidence that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office

Most respondents (58%) were confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office.

Confidence that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong

Most respondents were not confident that people in public office caught doing wrong would be punished (63%).

Satisfaction with Britain's political system and public attitudes towards conduct in public life

A consistent pattern emerged across several variables measuring different aspects of satisfaction with Britain's political system. Those who were positive about Britain's political system also gave more positive answers about standards of conduct in public life, suggesting an association between attitudes towards the political system in general and perceptions of standards of conduct in public life.

6. The findings reveal a declining public confidence in the standards of conduct of those engaged in public life including local authority councillors. It is therefore necessary to continue promoting good ethical governance through the enhancement of local processes.
7. The Council is currently in the process of updating its Councillor Code of Conduct and introducing a Procedure for dealing with Standards Investigations. These developments are set out elsewhere in the agenda and relate to the granting of

dispensations, a mechanism for hearing code of conduct complaints and the imposition of sanctions.

8. There has been a general disquiet amongst local authorities since the Localism Act was introduced in 2012 that notwithstanding the removal of much of the bureaucracy previously associated with the management of code of conduct complaints, an absence of effective sanctions undermines the credibility of the local Standards regime. Further activity is envisaged in the coming year in consultation with Members to improve the effectiveness of the Standards regime by exploring the scope to widen the range of sanctions available to Panels hearing Code of Conduct complaints

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