Bracknell Forest Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Executive
Tuesday 27 September 2016, 5.00 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

To: The Executive

Councillor Bettison OBE (Chairman), Councillor Dr Barnard (Vice-Chairman), Councillors D Birch, Brunel-Walker, Mrs Hayes MBE, Heydon, McCracken and Turrell

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

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Published: 16 September 2016

**The Executive
Tuesday 27 September 2016, 5.00 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

1. **Apologies**

2. **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.

3. **Minutes**

    To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting of the Executive   5 - 8
    held on 18 July 2016.

4. **Urgent Items of Business**

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

5. **South Hill Park Trust: Governance**

                                                                                 9 - 12
    To agree the Council's future role in the governance of South Hill Park Arts Trust following the outcome of the analysis phase of the Council's current "Transformation Review" of the role of the Council in the arts, and as a consequence allow South Hill Park Arts Trust to undertake and complete its governance review in the knowledge that there will be no BFC nominations to its Board.

6. **Housing Strategy**

    To consider the draft Housing Strategy report as the basis for   13 - 48
    developing the Council's Housing Strategy Statement via consultation.

7. **Housing Allocation Policy**

    To consider changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.   49 - 72

14. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

    To consider the following motion:

    That pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 15, 16 & 17 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

    (1)   Information relating to any individual. (Part Item 15 – annexes
                                                                                                only)

    (3)   Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Item 16 & 17)

**EXECUTIVE
18 JULY 2016
5.05 - 6.12 PM**

Bracknell
Forest
Council

Present:
Councillors Bettison OBE (Chairman), Dr Barnard (Vice-Chairman), D Birch,
Mrs Hayes MBE, McCracken and Turrell

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Brunel-Walker and Heydon

12. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

13. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive on 14 June 2016
together with the accompanying decision records be confirmed as a correct record
and signed by the Leader.

14. **Urgent Items of Business**

Pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman
decided to take the following item as an urgent item: Arrangements for the National
and Regional Dispersal Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and
Refugee Children. The reason for urgency was that the Government's proposals
were being implemented from July 2016 and had been sent to the Council at very
short notice. The next meeting in September 2016 would be too late to respond to the
Secretary of State.

RESOLVED that

1. The Council will be part of the national and regional dispersal scheme,
    accepting up to 0.7% of our general child population over time.

2. Council Services make the necessary plans to receive children from the
    regional dispersal scheme on the basis of one or two a month as that is
    considered to be manageable for dispersal and coordination arrangements.

3. Funding to support UASC in excess of the Government Grant, be met from
    the contingency in the current year.

4. Relevant partners are included in the planning process, especially health services as there is expected to be additional health service needs associated with this vulnerable group.

Executive Decisions and Decision Records

The Executive considered the following items. The decisions are recorded in the decision sheets attached to these minutes and summarised below:

15. **Revenue Expenditure Outturn 2015/16**

    RESOLVED that

    1. The outturn expenditure for 2015/16 be noted, subject to audit, of £76.477m, which represents an under spend of -£2.702m compared with the approved budget.

    2. The budget carry forwards of £0.315m as set out in paragraph 5.9 and Annexe C of the Borough Treasurer's report.

    3. The earmarked reserves as set out in Annexe D of the Borough Treasurer's report be approved..

    4. The virements relating to the 2015/16 budget between £0.050m and £0.100m set out in Annex E of the Borough Treasurer's report be approved.

    RECOMMENDED that:

    1. Council note the Treasury Management performance in 2015/16 as set out in Annexe B of the Borough Treasurer's report.

    2. Council approve the virements over £0.100m set out in Annex E of the Borough Treasurer's report.

16. **Capital Programme Outturn 2015/16**

    RESOLVED that

    1. That the outturn capital expenditure be noted, in particular the key variance identified in paragraph 5.5 of the Borough Treasurer's report.

    2. That the carry forward of £20.967m from the 2015/16 capital programme to 2016/17 including £0.339m relating to projects approved in 2014/15 be approved.

    3. That the financing of capital expenditure as detailed in Table 2 of the Borough Treasurer's report be noted.

    4. That the additions and virements to the 2016/17 Capital Programme be approved as outlines in paragraphs 5.14 to 5.18 of the Borough Treasurer's report.

17. **RE3 Waste Strategy**

    RECOMMENDED that the draft re3 Strategy set out in Annex 1 of the Director of Environment, Culture & Communities' report be endorsed.

18. **Community Access at Edgbarrow & Sandhurst Sports Centres**

RESOLVED that

1. The proposed two delivery options are approved as the main focus for public consultation.

2. That the accompanying public consultation questionnaire is approved for circulation and feedback.

19. **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

RESOLVED that

1. The Commitment Budget for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20, summarised in Annex A of the Borough Treasurer's report be approved.

2. The Government's offer of a four year funding settlement be accepted, subject to the agreement of an efficiency plan at the Council meeting on 14 September 2016.

3. The proposed budget process and timetable for 2017/18 as set out in paragraphs 5.18 to 5.22 of the Borough Treasurer's report be approved.

20. **Youth Offending Service Inspection**

RESOLVED that

1. It should be noted that the HMIP report of Short Quality Screening of youth offending found the quality of work in Bracknell Forest to be excellent.

2. The completed action plan be endorsed.

21. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 6 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

(3)   Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority).

22. **Proposed Changes to the Commissioning & Delivery of Drug & Alcohol Services**

RESOLVED that the decision of Corporate Management Team be agreed in order for option 3 of the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing's report to proceed.

23. **Binfield Learning Village at Blue Mountain - Award of Works Contracts**

RESOLVED that

1. The update to the Binfield Learning Village Procurement Plan in Appendix 1, Part 2 of the Director of Children, Young People and Learning's report be approved.

2. The award of the Enabling Works contract for the construction of the Binfield Learning Village to Mace Limited for a value up to £850k be approved.

3. The award of the Main Works contract to Mace Limited for a value of £36.3m (up to £37.15m including the Enabling Works) for the construction of Binfield Learning Village be approved

4. A supplementary capital approval of £3.3m as referred to in Part 2 of the Director of Children, Young People and Learning's report be recommended to Council.

24. **Award of Framework Agreement for Supported Bus Passenger Transport Services**

    RESOLVED that the Framework Agreement for Supported Bus Passenger Transport Services be awarded to the transport operators identified in the Confidential Annex 1 of the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities report.

25. **Contract Award for Health Visiting Services**

    RESOLVED that the Health Visiting Service contract due to commence on 1 January 2017 be awarded to Tenderer A, Option A (commercially sensitive details in confidential annexes of the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing's report).

CHAIRMAN

**TO: EXECUTIVE
27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**SOUTH HILL PARK TRUST: GOVERNANCE
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To agree the Council's future role in the governance of South Hill Park Arts Trust following the outcome of the analysis phase of the Council's current "Transformation Review" of the role of the Council in the arts, and as a consequence allow South Hill Park Arts Trust to undertake and complete its governance review in the knowledge that there will be no BFC nominations to its Board.

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   That South Hill Park Trust be informed that, for the reasons outlined in this report, the Council no longer wishes to have any nomination rights on to its Board; and

2.2   Although entirely at the discretion of South Hill Park Trust, the Council would be pleased to nominate a non- voting observer to attend Board meetings to ensure the continuation of full and transparent dialogue between both organisations.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The Analysis phase of the Transformational Review of the Council's role in arts provision and South Hill Park Arts Trust in particular identified that the Trust's governance arrangements were not as effective as they might be in helping the Trust manage what is an increasingly complex business. In particular, it is vital that the Trust has the exact range of skills and experiences it needs on its Board and Council nominations cannot guarantee this. The recommendations are intended to better allow SHPT to appoint Directors with the right mix of skills, knowledge and abilities to ensure the most effective governance, and to remove any possibility that anyone may perceive a conflict of interest between an elected member 's responsibilities as a Director of the Trust and their role as a Member of this Council.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   The Council could continue to have nomination rights on to the Board at South Hill Park Arts Trust at the current or reduced level, and indeed the Board at South Hill Park has expressed this would be its preferred option, but it is not considered this would guarantee that the Board had the right mix of skills to ensure effective governance in the challenging financial times ahead, and would not eradicate the potential for a perceived conflict of interest to be present in the dual role of councillor and Board Member.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   South Hill Park Trust last reviewed its Governance arrangements in 2000/2001 which as far as the Council was concerned had the effect of de-coupling the link between a Board Member to SHPT nominated by the Council and the need for that Member to remain an elected Councillor to retain their seat on the Board. This was intended to better ensure continuity of Board Membership and allowed Council representatives who were nominated whilst being an elected member to remain on the Board as the Council's representative even if subsequently they ceased to be an elected member.

5.2   While recognising that changes in Company Law and the Council's own rigorous processes had long since removed what in the past was considered a legitimate "lobbying" role of board members of charitable organisations in their role as councillor, the well-established partnership between the council and SHPT meant that the governance arrangements at SHPT was felt to be effective enough. Being on the Board at SHPT was also a welcomed and popular nomination for elected members and therefore the arrangements were felt to be adequate. However, in general this was in a less urgent and less difficult financial environment and the governance arrangements were perhaps not fully challenged.

5.3   The 2016/17 support grant and the 4 year projections from central government required significantly more economies than the council had planned for, despite planning for the previous "worse case" scenario, made it clear that all council services would have to make significant economies in order to meet the new budget targets and that this would need to include South Hill Park Arts Trust. The process adopted by the council to review services is termed a "transformational review" and SHPT was identified as one of the first. One of the findings of this review was that the Governance arrangements were not really fit for purpose in the current much more challenging economic environment in which the Trust, and Council, must operate.

5.4   The Trust itself has relatively recently considered whether its governance arrangements were fully fit for purpose but probably because the previous arrangements have worked quite well determined not to pursue a full review. However, the analysis phase of the Transformation Review concluded that the 50% representation of local councillors on the Board (4 from this Council and 2 from Bracknell Town Council) was looking "increasingly anachronistic for a charity which needs to innovative and adapted to a more commercial and entrepreneurial culture, with a much wider funding base and set of stakeholder relationships"

5.5   The Trust has recognised the need and has appointed Trustees with more business background and the benefits of this are already bearing fruits with the Chief Executive of SHPT receiving excellent support in the preparation of various plans required by this Council as a consequence of the transformational review which are intended to make the Trust more sustainable and less reliant on this Council.

5.6   The recent Member Gateway Review of the Analysis Phase considered the Governance arrangements at South Hill Park and the minutes record:

The Members support a governance review of SHPT to ensure that the Trust is more independent from the Council and has the capacity to become more financially self sufficient.

5.7 Subsequently, the matter has been considered in more detail by the Council's Transformation Board and been discussed by the Council's Executive Members. The conclusions drawn by both are that the current way in which the council engages in the governance of the Trust does not necessarily guarantee that the Trust has access to all the skills and knowledge that it needs and that the current arrangements also give rise to the perception that there is a conflict of interest in Councillors who are both Directors of the Trust and part of a Council that may have to make difficult decisions regarding the Trust – even though our processes guarantee that this cannot happen.

5.8 In terms of how to address these issues, it is considered that were the Council not to have any nomination rights to the Board of South Hill Park, this would bring benefits to the Trust and the Council:

The Trust would have more space on the Board to appoint board members with the skills, knowledge and experience that it requires at any given time. While obviously nominated councillors may have the right skills and experience, currently this is a matter of chance and the pressing need for the Trust to have effective governance in place looking to the future means it should have the flexibility to ensure this is the case as best as possible.

With no nominations on to the Board, there is no possibility that conflicts of interest could reasonably be cited to the Council and South Hill Park Trust would be seen to be fully independent from the Council.

The Council has maintained a strong relationship with SHP since it was constituted in 1973 and this should continue but it is felt more effective for this to be done through a non-voting observer. Ultimately, this would be a matter for the Trust, but it is considered that the clear division between the Trust and the Council's representative would allow even tighter communication between both parties

5.9 For the avoidance of doubt, the Trust has indicated that it is content with the current arrangements although recognise that in the pursuit of best governance practice even this would have to change (for example fewer nominations, the Council having regard to the skill sets required by the Board when making nominations) but also recognise the benefits of a different type of relationship made possible by what the Council has already indicated to the Chief Executive of the Trust. The Trust has indicated it will respond positively to whatever decision the Council takes regarding its role in SHPT's governance.

5.10 This report focusses on the Council's representation on the Board, but as identified by the Gateway Review, the Trust is undertaking a comprehensive review of its governance including a skills audit, and a thorough examination of its polices and procedures.

5.10 SHPT has responded positively and vigorously to the recommendations from the analysis phase of the transformation review, and it is considered that the recommendations in this report will support them more effectively into the future.

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

Borough Solicitor

6.1   South Hill Park Trust is a Charitable company. As such its Directors will also be the Trustees of the Charity and be bound by duty under the Companies Act 2006 to promote the success of the company in achieving its charitable objectives. This duty can however give rise to conflicts of interests for Council nominees having regard to their role as Elected Members of the Council. Indeed, when acting for SHP Councillors should put the interests of SHP above the duties they owe to the Council or withdraw from any Board consideration of that matter.

Whilst Directors are not generally liable for the debts of the company when it is wound up such liability can arise when there has been some form of wrongdoing (such as misfeasance, wrongful or fraudulent trading) creating a liability to pay compensation for the wrongful act to the company's creditors

Borough Treasurer

6.2   There are no financial implications as a consequence of this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3   There are no equality impacts a s a consequence of this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4   The recommendations should reduce the risk of any perceived conflict of interest in the Council's relationship with South Hill Park Trust.

7   CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   Members attending the Gateway Review agreed the need for a governance review.

Transformation Board and Executive Members

Chief Executive of South Hill Park Trust

7.2   Method of Consultation

Reports, e-mails, verbal communication

Representations Received

7.3   General support for the proposals in this report; SHPT would be content though if no changes were made to the existing arrangements.

Background Papers
Transformation Review of Arts Provision: Analysis Phase
Arts Gateway Review: Minutes

Contact for further information
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Vincent.paliczka@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

TO: **EXECUTIVE**
        27 SEPTEMBER 2016

DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To ask Executive to consider the draft Housing Strategy report as the basis for developing the Council's Housing Strategy Statement via consultation.

2   RECOMMENDATION

That Executive agrees:

2.1   **To the draft Housing Strategy as at Appendix A providing the basis of consultation to develop the Housing Strategy Statement.**

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1   Local Authorities have a statutory obligation under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 to periodically undertake reviews of housing needs in the Districts and to develop strategies to address those needs.

3.2   The Council's Annual Plan 2015 to 2019 has set six strategic objectives. The Housing Strategy will directly support the objective to support a strong and resilient economy as well as strong, safe, supportive and self reliant communities.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   There is no alternative than to develop a Housing Strategy statement.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   The Council's previous Housing Strategy statement ran from 2009 to 2014. There has been significant legislation recently such as the Housing and Planning Act which will have a major impact on the development of the Housing Strategy.

5.2   Appendix A includes the draft Housing Strategy which it is proposed as a basis for consultation to develop the Housing Strategy Statement. The report proposes the following main points as the basis of Council intervention in the housing market place;-

- Visioning for Bracknell Forest 2036 by supporting the communities of Bracknell Forest to think through where, their children and their grandchildren and parents will live.
- Taking the debate about future economic growth, health and social care, and housing affordability to the community to inform about options and requirements to secure and or keep a home in Bracknell Forest.

- Undertaking a review of the Council assets or development vehicles, land and property and the scope for prudential borrowing to formulate a strategy for their blended deployment in promoting, incentivising, triggering and enhancing the scale and pace of residential and mixed use development in line with the recommendations of the Housing and Finance Institute.
- Exploring the scope for enlarging the role of Downshire Homes in line with the recommendations of the Housing and Finance Institute to widen the Council's direct involvement in the local housing market and lead new initiatives subject to the Downshire Homes Board agreement.
- Engaging and marshalling the resources of registered providers around the formulation of a Bracknell Social Housing Community Charter which establishes a long term strategic relationship and commitment to the maintenance of a sustainable stock of affordable homes for rent and the stewardship of social investment schemes to support sustainable tenancies.
- Mobilising registered providers to promote, animate and sustain a programme of support for self build housing and to sponsor custom build, co-housing, cooperative and mutual home ownership initiatives targeted on private and social housing tenants and emerging households in the local community.
- Engaging and marshalling the resources of private landlords and lettings agents in the borough around the formulation of an National Landlord Association (NLA) led review which aims to provide assurance and stability to both landlords and tenants in the PRS marketplace, extending rental periods and landlords' indemnification and facilitating discharge of duty into the private rented sector.
- Engaging with Pension Funds and Insurance Companies proposing investing in private rented portfolios and off site construction to offer opportunities for large scale demonstration projects to establish Bracknell as a beacon authority in hosting and promoting this approach.
- Undertaking with service providers, an impact assessment of the welfare benefits, workplace pension and living wage reforms on the ongoing availability, viability and cost of current and future local domiciliary care services.
- Establishing a Bracknell Forest Extra Care and Retirement Village Developers Forum to actively develop a market for these older people's housing developments.

5.3   It is recommended that the report at Appendix A is used as a basis for consultation with stakeholders so as to develop the Council's Housing Strategy.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   The relevant legal issues are addressed within the body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   The draft strategy for consultation contains no direct financial implications for the Council. The costs of the consultation will be met from existing resources.

Chief Officer planning and Transportation

6.3   The comments of the Chief Officer: Planning and Transportation are included in the draft Housing Strategy report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4   This report proposes a draft strategy to be offered for consultation. It will be necessary to undertake an equality impact assessment once the strategy proposals are formalised. An equality screening record is included at Appendix B.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5   There are no strategic risks stemming from this report. However, failure to develop a housing strategy that can effectively intervene in the housing market to address the identified needs would generate risk for the Council.

7   CONSULTATION

7.1   Consultation will take place with the Council's existing partnership groups such as registered provider groups, and the Older Persons Partnership. It will also take place with key stakeholders such as residential developers. In addition consultation will take place with the wider community. Consultation methods will include meetings as well as the Council's consultation portal. It will be necessary to undertake pro-active consultation with the local community so as to manage future housing aspirations as well as develop an on going dialogue for the life of the strategy.

Contact for further information

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Bracknell
Forest
Council

Housing Strategy report for Bracknell Forest

2016 - 2036

BRACKNELL FOREST HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-2036

Contents

1.0   Executive Summary

1.1   This Housing Strategy report seeks to align the Council's housing and housing-related existing and emerging planning policies with the six strategic themes which underpin the Council Plan 2015 – 2019 albeit within a national policy framework.

1.2   The four strategic priorities identified in the Council's 2009-2014 Housing Strategy were:

- supporting a vibrant housing market;
- providing affordable housing;
- providing the right homes for vulnerable people;
- contributing to sustainable communities

and remain central to the Council's thinking notwithstanding the major national policy changes introduced since that strategy was approved.

1.3.   However the pursuit of these priorities has had to be substantially reinterpreted within the new policy context substantially introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework introduced in 2012.as well as the Housing and Planning Act recently obtaining Royal Assent.

1.4.   The Comprehensive Local Plan and Neighbourhood Planning processes currently in train and emerging changes in national legislation policy and guidance have and will set the context in which these national policy changes and the longer term implications of the recently completed Berkshire and South Bucks Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 – 2036 will be analysed and interpreted by Bracknell and its neighbouring local authorities.

1.3   The national context demands a proactive strategy. In particular such proactive intervention might include:

- Visioning for Bracknell Forest 2036 by supporting the communities of Bracknell Forest to think through where, their children and their grandchildren and parents will live.
- Taking the debate about future economic growth, health and social care, and housing affordability to the community to inform about options and requirements to secure and or keep a home in Bracknell Forest
- Undertaking a review of the council assets or development vehicles, land and property and the scope for prudential borrowing to formulate a strategy for their blended deployment in promoting, incentivising, triggering and enhancing the scale and pace of residential and mixed use development in line with the recommendations of the Housing and Finance Institute.
- Exploring the scope for enlarging the role of Downshire Homes in line with the recommendations of the Housing and Finance Institute to widen the Council's direct involvement in the local housing market and lead new initiatives subject to the Downshire Homes board approval.
- Engaging and marshalling the resources of registered providers around the formulation of a Bracknell Social Housing Community Charter which establishes a long term strategic relationship and commitment to the maintenance of a sustainable stock of affordable homes for rent and the stewardship of social investment schemes to support sustainable tenancies.

- Mobilising registered providers to promote, animate and sustain a programme of support for self build housing and to sponsor custom build, co-housing, cooperative and mutual home ownership initiatives targeted on private and social housing tenants and emerging households in the local community.
- Engaging and marshalling the resources of private landlords and lettings agents in the borough around the formulation of an National Landlord Association (NLA) led review which aims to provide assurance and stability to both landlords and tenants in the PRS marketplace, extending rental periods and landlords' indemnification and facilitating discharge of duty into the private rented sector.
- Engaging with Pension Funds and Insurance Companies proposing investing in private rented portfolios and off site construction to offer opportunities for large scale demonstration projects to establish Bracknell as a beacon authority in hosting and promoting this approach.
- Undertaking with service providers, an impact assessment of the welfare benefits, workplace pension and living wage reforms on the ongoing availability, viability and cost of current and future local domiciliary care services.
- Establishing a Bracknell Forest Extra Care and Retirement Village Developers Forum to actively develop a market for these older people's housing developments.

1.4   Such an approach provides a framework for a process within which local tactical responses to the unfolding outcomes of government policy innovation can be engaged and addressed as well as setting the direction of travel against which policy responses at a neighbourhood, borough and sub regional scale can be formulated.

1.5   This strategy proposes that the prevailing and ongoing uncertainties and challenges will be best addressed by the Council adopting a stronger and more proactive role in influencing the local housing market in order to protect and promote local economic growth by maximising the speed, quantum and sustainability of housing supply and optimising the value of council assets and the leverage they can deliver.

2.0   Unfolding National Policy Context

2.1   Since the adoption of the 2009-2014 Housing Strategy there have been significant national policy changes impacting upon the Council, its house builder and housing association partners and its residents.

2.2   The White Paper 'Laying the Foundations, a Housing Strategy for England', (published November 2011) provided the framework for the previous government policy on housing. The focus was on tackling housing shortage, boosting the economy, creating jobs and giving people the opportunity to get onto the housing ladder. The strategy led to the introduction of:

- New equity loan scheme aimed at first time buyers called 'Help to Buy'. This scheme enabled buyers with a 5% deposit and the capacity to raise a 75% (loan to value) mortgage to access the remaining 20% as an interest free loan for five years; the ceiling on the value of the property was set at £600,000.
- Subsequently Help to Buy ISAs have added further support by way of tax incentives to expand access to home ownership.
- Increased cash incentives for right to buy applicants from £16,000 to £75,000 thereby enabling many more social housing tenants to be able to buy their own homes.

2.3   In addition the Build to Rent programme was initiated providing loans to developers wanting to build private rented sector homes together with reforms to Council Housing Revenue Accounts and facilitation of real estate investment funds.

2.4   The Localism Act 2011, updated in May 2015, introduced:

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally including:
  o Neighbourhood Planning
  o Community Right to Build and to Reclaim Land
  o Community Right to Challenge
  o Enabling Councils to establish their own allocation policies for social housing;
  o Discharging the homelessness duty into the private rented sector.

2.5   The National Planning Policy Framework introduced in March 2012 established the presumption in favour of sustainable development and replaced most of the previous suite of planning policy guidance and policy statements focussing on three key roles for the planning system:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible

local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

2.6   Specifically the NPPF required local planning authorities:

- to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to ascertain housing needs going forward;
- to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish the availability, suitability and viability of land for housing development
- to provide a 5 year land supply to achieve the strategic requirement
- to produce a Housing Implementation Strategy and a Housing Trajectory to inform delivery

2.7   In 2012 the Welfare Reform Act introduced a wide range of reforms designed to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer, simpler and more affordable, improving financial incentives to encourage work, reduce poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency, and reduce levels of fraud and error. It introduced the Personal Independence Payment to progressively replace Disability Living Allowance; reassessed Employment Support Allowance claimants; introduced a cap on the amount working age benefits claimants can receive and the JSA Claimants Commitment.

2.8   Notwithstanding the benefits to be realized from these reforms, the ongoing process of implementing capped Universal Credit to be paid directly to the tenant, the introduction of Housing Benefit property size criteria, the setting of the Local Housing Allowance at the 30th percentile of market rents, and increasing the single room rate age threshold from 25 to 35 have increased local housing pressures on councils, landlords and tenants alike.

2.9   As part of the Government's approach to addressing the national deficit, in 2011 the DCLG through the Homes and Communities Agency changed its approach to grants for social housing developments requiring developers and housing associations to build units at lower levels of subsidy and let at a new 'affordable rent level' of 80% of market rent levels in the area. The model was based on the view that developers and housing associations could raise capital from investors and, on the basis of sharing benefits and risks, guarantee a return on investment and generate surplus for the development of further stock. At the same time the Homes and Communities Agency introduced new funding support for the development of private rented homes through the Build to Rent Programme with a target to build 10,000 new homes by 2015.

2.10   The 2011 Build to Rent programme promoting institutionally backed purpose built private renting was given further shape and focus in 2012 with the publication of the Montague report which recommended that Local Authorities use the planning system to encourage and facilitate Private rented sector (PRS) developments. Central Government was to release land holdings for PRS and was to provide targeted incentives to stimulate rapid development of new business models from a range of promoters:- public sector landowners, registered providers, or private sector house-builders.

2.11   More recently the Housing and Planning Act proposes 20% discount "Starter Homes" that will have to be provided on qualifying sites for the Council to be able to provide a planning consent. The concern is that this will displace the supply of new affordable rented homes and despite 20% discounts will still be out of reach for the majority of people in need of an affordable home. The average household income for those households purchasing shared ownership homes in Bracknell Forest was £ 38,000 in 2015/16 and 60% of those purchases were to local people. Such household income levels would require substantial deposits if they are to be able to take advantage of a starter home.

2.12   The Housing and Planning Act has significant implications for housing deliverability, affordability, regulation and enforcement and whilst many of the proposals will require secondary legislation the summary below outlines some of the key themes and ambitions.

- Providing a statutory framework for the delivery of Starter Homes and for self-build and custom house building, for tackling rogue landlords and recycling abandoned homes.
- Extending Right to Buy discount levels to housing association tenants with cross funding from the sale of vacant high value local authority housing to fund replacement.
- Deregulating Housing Associations and requiring tenants in social housing on higher incomes of over £30k (£40k in London) to pay market rents and simplifying the assessment of housing and accommodation needs of the community,
- Introducing a more stringent 'fit and proper' person test for landlords, requiring Tenancy Deposit Scheme data to be shared with local authorities and amending the Estate Agents Act 1977 to allow the Secretary of State to appoint the regulating authority, and some leasehold enfranchisement reforms.
- Making proposals to simplify and speed up the Neighbourhood Planning process and taking further intervention powers if Local Plans are not effectively delivered and devolving further powers to the Mayor of London
- Requiring local authorities to hold a register of various types of land, with the intention of creating a register of brownfield land to facilitate unlocking land to build new homes; and giving housing sites identified in the brownfield register, local and neighbourhood plans planning permission in principle, and providing an opportunity for applicants to obtain permission in principle for small scale housing sites
- Levelling up the enabling power to attach conditions to development orders for physical works so that they are consistent with those for change of use
- Extending the planning performance regime to apply to smaller applications; and putting the economic benefits of proposals for development before local authority planning committees.
- Allowing developers who wish to include housing within major infrastructure projects to apply for consent under the nationally significant infrastructure planning regime
- Creating a faster and more efficient process for establishing Urban Development Areas and Corporations whilst ensuring that those with an interest locally are properly consulted at an early stage and improving the compulsory purchase regime, so it is clearer, fairer and faster.

2.13   This last proposal is intended to complement the further development of "Garden Settlements" as recently outlined in the "Locally led Garden Villages Towns and Cities" White Paper (March 2016) which states:

"We are proposing to strengthen national planning policy to provide a more supportive approach for new settlements. We are committing to legislate to update the New Towns Act 1981 to ensure we have a statutory vehicle well-equipped to support the delivery of new garden cities, towns and villages for the 21st century.

3.0   Current Challenges

3.1   Recently, the Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area Study and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment have joined the accumulating evidence base that is underpinning the development of the Bracknell Comprehensive Local Plan and joined the raft of other documents which have emerged across the Thames Valley in the past couple of years and which are influencing the spatial, social, economic and environmental shape of the sub region 20 and more years into the future.

3.2   In 2014, the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published and concluded that over 100,000 new homes are needed in Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031. This was followed in 2015 by the publication of the Central Bucks Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) which identifies a need for 43,000 homes in the central Buckinghamshire area between 2013 and 2033. These projections have now been joined by the Berkshire SHMA showing a need for 112,000 homes between 2013 and 2036.

3.3   The result is a 'policy off' local authority identified housing need over a 25 year period in the above central Thames Valley area of over 250,000 homes. It is even possible that following scrutiny of the evidence base and application of any policy drivers this figure could increase further. Bracknell forest along with the rest of the Thames Valley authorities is in the midst of Local Plan preparation, alongside which the Borough is trying to shape a coherent and deliverable local housing strategy against a background of rising homelessness, an increasing shortage of affordable housing to rent or buy and an over 65 population projected to more than double by 2036.

3.4   Many of the local authorities currently undertaking consultations have, like Bracknell, a number of constraints, especially Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whilst 'constrained' authorities may look to the adjoining councils to assist in meeting this need, the significant level of housing need may mean that the few 'unconstrained' authorities simply cannot take all of the unmet need of the others.

3.5   The increase in density impacts on dwelling typology and intensifies the use of service infrastructure. It can score positively on environmental sustainability however and provide a more convenient setting for combating social isolation. It is however, unlikely to achieve all the quality outcomes that Bracknell has come to expect unless it is promoted within a dynamic programme of master planning, design coding and de-risking such has ben achieved in the town centre. Such an approach is resource intensive and probably outwith the council's future financial capabilities. Nonetheless if such densification requirements are applied to current council owned land – typically establishing 100+dph as the norm, the value added to the council's asset base could be significant.

3.6   Moreover where such landholdings were exploited through a development partnership, the upside to the council could be realised over the medium to longer term providing a buffer against the austerity driven volatility in the public finances. Clearly the typology implications suggest more terraced housing and flatted developments; a more "urban" massing and articulation albeit within the prevailing green envelope.

3.7   Acceleration in the development of "retirement villages" and "extra care" schemes, developments which are currently heavily oversubscribed by downsizing, mortgage free older home owners, will bring larger low density suburban semis and detached

properties into the market place, meeting that demand and fuelling even more older person housing in turn as Bracknell's over 75 age cohort doubles as we enter the 2030s. Commuted sums could enable existing 4 bed and larger homes to be purchased for large households out of this vacated stock given the dearth of such new build provision by registered providers and avoiding the new build premium associated with build for sale.

3.8   Delivering more value per hectare generally will enable some value capture to cross subsidise affordable housing though this will be easier to engineer within institutionally driven private rented developments rather than homes for sale. Shared ownership or discount market sale with appropriate covenants delivered by registered providers and/or equity held by the council would be more likely to deliver durable long term affordability measured against lowest quartile household incomes. Local employer participation in such development projects as land contributor, enabler, investor or simply end leaseholder would also help to dampen the ratio of housing costs against local incomes.

3.9   All of this requires a long term view and sufficient certainty to strike deals, not within the timescale of the typical house builder, nor the municipal or national government election cycle, but within a time horizon more familiar to insurance companies and pension funds if it is to be deliverable. However over the past twenty years local authority housing strategies have generally embraced a 3 to 5 year timescale and have concentrated on engaging the backlog of unmet need for affordable housing by bidding for resources from Central Government and coordinating the efforts of registered providers to deliver new homes and provide sustainable tenancies.

3.10   Such strategies were promoted and pursued in the belief that the gap between supply and the demand for affordable housing would be progressively narrowed, that homelessness would be largely eliminated and that emerging households could expect to access decent, secure and affordable homes in which to become active and productive citizens. However the post recession landscape has seen a fundamental shift in housing market conditions nationally, particularly in relation to confidence and credit availability; the growth in owner occupation has stalled and the renaissance in private renting has faltered.

3.11   Housing costs in Bracknell and neighbouring areas for both purchasing and renting are generally high reflecting the buoyancy of the local economy and proximity to London. Affordability pressures are also significant as the affordability of median and lower quartile market housing is on average around nine times the equivalent earnings. Coupled with constraints on access to mortgage finance, such a ratio is likely to preclude many from entering the property market without a significant deposit.

3.12   This has contributed to a significant shift in the tenure profile in Bracknell and neighbouring areas with a notable reduction in the number of homeowners with a mortgage or loan and a similarly significant growth in the private rented sector together with increased levels of concealed households, people living in shared and overcrowded households and a significant rise in homelessness largely arising from private rented sector churn.

3.13   However a range of initiatives aimed at increasing access to affordable owner occupation and stabilising the private rented sector initiated by both the previous and the current government have mitigated these negative outcomes to some extent. Nonetheless the fact remains that so long as the economic vibrancy of the Thames

Valley Berkshire LEP area continues, the gap between what increasing numbers of local people can afford and the cost of housing to buy or rent will widen.

3.14   Given these challenges, re-engineering the local housing market to enable local needs to be better served in the long term is not a task likely to be completed within a 3 to 5 year timescale. On the other hand, the opportunity of formulating the Bracknell Comprehensive Local Plan and associated Policies Map covering the period to 2036, coterminous with the SHMA policy horizon, provides the basis for framing a long term vision for the housing market and formulating a 20 year housing strategy for achieving it.

4.0   Local Context and Background

Bracknell Forest Profile

4.1   Bracknell Forest lies 28 miles west of London, at the heart of the economically buoyant Thames Valley and is already a premier business location within Berkshire. The local economy is of above average size and productivity compares well with the county and nationally but the aspiration is to make the local economy even more successful for the benefit of all within the borough.

4.2   Good access links, a well educated labour force and the quality of the environment are key attractors to the companies that have and continue to locate here, including a number of multi-national organisations. Because of its popularity, the borough has experienced pressures on housing, infrastructure services and environmental assets including sites designated as being important for nature conservation at an international, national and local level.

4.3   The borough's estimated midyear 2016 population is 119,700 and is projected to rise to 138,000 by midyear 2036. The population is relatively young (median age 38.4 years) and whilst only 14% of the population (16,900) is aged 65 or over, compared to 17.7% nationally, this is expected to grow to 21% (29,600) by 2036 when borough population is expected to be 138,000. More particularly the growth in the over 85 cohort is expected to rise from 2,100 currently, to 5,300 by 2036 and then up to 10,500 by 2061 with significant implications for health, housing and social care going forward.

4.4   Currently the health of people in Bracknell Forest is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy is increasing and is currently 81.3 years for men and 84.2 years for women, which is higher than the England average which is 79.3 years and 83.0 years respectively. Smoking related deaths (261 per 100,000 population) and early deaths from heart disease (36.8 per 100,000) and strokes (66.4 per 100,000) are below national levels.

4.5   Bracknell Forest covers 109sq km of central Berkshire and includes the former New Town of Bracknell, together with Sandhurst town and the villages of Crowthorne and Binfield, along with a number of smaller settlements including Warfield and Winkfield. Close to London, the area has easy access to the motorway network (M3, M4, M40 and M25), Heathrow, and direct train links into London. The north and east of the borough form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, whilst land south of Bracknell and east of Crowthorne is internationally important for nature conservation.

4.6   Before its new town designation in 1949, Bracknell was a small settlement of around 5,000 people. Bracknell Forest was earmarked for development as a 'new town' to alleviate the housing crisis after World War II. Bracknell New Town was designed on the neighbourhood principle with a primary school, shops, church, community centre and public house at the heart of each of the nine neighbourhoods. The original New Town development planned for a population of 25,000. However in 1961 the planned population was increased to 60,000 leading to major new development in and around the town centre which up until recently has largely reflected the legacy of New Town development though the commercial core is currently benefitting from major investment. The £240m town centre regeneration programme, called The Lexicon Bracknell, is well under way and due to open in Spring 2017. This will create a centre

10

which provides a vibrant economic, social and cultural heart to the borough bringing a high-quality mix of shops, restaurants and entertainment within vibrant public spaces.

4.7 Between 1949 and 1982 approximately 18,000 homes were built by both the Bracknell Development Corporation and private developers creating a somewhat different age profile to the housing stock to both that for England as a whole and the South East. Bracknell Forest consequently has a very low proportion of pre-1944 dwellings compared both to England and the South East whereas the proportion of dwellings built after 1964 is significantly higher than both national and regional averages.

4.8 Similarly, as a result of the extensive building programme of the Bracknell Development Corporation, Bracknell Forest initially benefited from a large social housing stock relative to other Boroughs in the south east although this has declined significantly since 1981 as a result of Right to Buy sales. Bracknell Forest now has approximately 48,280 properties within the Borough with 73% of these being owner occupied.

4.9 The average house price has remained well above the national average for many years. Prices continue to rise, reaching £ 334k in Q3 2015, up from £236k in Q3 2009 when the previous housing strategy was published. Average prices for flats and terraced houses over the same period have risen from £158k and £187k to £194k and £273k respectively. Finding acceptable locations for new housing and providing appropriate infrastructure continue to be major challenges for partners and residents.

4.10 The Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document requires approximately 11,000 net new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 to be built at a rate which should have delivered 5,148 homes by 2015. However only 3,178 were completed in that period, a significant shortfall attributable to a number of factors including issues associated with the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, the economic downturn, the shortage of available sites and the longer lead in and implementation timescales associated with larger strategic sites.

4.11 The 2011 Census showed that 84.9% of the population was 'White British' and 15.1% of the population was BME and 'white other'. The proportion of school pupils from Minority Ethnic Groups has increased steadily from 10.8% in 2005 to 19.5% in 2015. 11.3% of pupils in Bracknell Forest schools have English as an Additional Language (EAL). There are 84 known first languages other than English spoken in Bracknell schools, although many of these in very small numbers.

4.12 The Council has undertaken research to understand the increasing diversity amongst faiths and beliefs across the borough. Census 2011 data showed that whilst Christianity (64.8%) remains the majority religion in the borough, Hindus are the largest religious minority group at 1.7% of the local population, followed by Muslims at 1.2%, Buddhists at 0.8% and Sikhs at 0.4%. Despite the steady change in the composition of the population, the area is generally a cohesive community where people get on well together.

4.13 Bracknell Forest is one of the least deprived areas of the country (ranked 287 out of 326 local authorities in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015). Property prices and levels of car ownership are significantly higher than the national average. However, these headline figures mask significant pockets of deprivation. For instance, 8 out of 19 wards in the borough have free school meal eligibility of over 10%. The borough rate is 8.5% compared to 15.2% nationally (Source: School Census January 2015). 9.3% per cent of 0-15 year olds in the borough are living in

poverty, compared to a national average of 19.0% and a South East average of 12.8%.

4.14 Bracknell Forest has 31 primary phase schools, 6 secondary schools (including 1 academy), 1 special school and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. Educational attainment of children and young people has improved significantly in recent years. Overall results are consistently in line with or above the national averages.

4.15 GCSE results nationally have decreased significantly following a range of changes to curriculum, assessment and examinations. The proportion of young people obtaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C including English and mathematics was 56.2% in 2014/15, just below the national average of 56.3%. The proportion of young people achieving the other main measure of attainment at Key Stage 4 (5 or more GCSE grades A* - C) is at 68% above the national results of 66%.

4.16 The number of people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance has fallen from a peak of 2.5% in March 2010, to 0.8% in August 2015. The figure remains lower than both the national and South East averages (1.7% and 1.0% respectively).

4.17 In March 2014, the estimated proportion of young people aged 16-18 in Bracknell Forest who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 4.5% (representing around 160 young people).This remains a key priority for the area.

4.18 The overall number of crimes in Bracknell Forest was 4,921 in 2014/15 - a reduction of 41% since 2008/09. Anti-social behaviour fell by 23% in 2014/15. In particular, personal anti-social behaviour is down 17.7%, Nuisance anti-social behaviour is down 19.1% and Environmental anti-social behaviour is down 27.5%.

5.0 Local Outcomes and Way Forward

5.1   The previous housing strategy had four strategic priorities and the outcomes and proposals in connection with those priorities are summarised below:

Priority 1 - Supporting a Vibrant Housing Market

5.2   The Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted in February 2008 required approximately 11,000 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 to be built at a rate which should have delivered 5,148 homes by 2015.

5.3   Though significant allocated sites have recently come forward, disappointingly only 3,178 were completed by 2015, a significant shortfall attributable to a number of factors including issues associated with the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, the economic downturn, the shortage of available sites and the longer lead in and implementation timescales associated with larger strategic sites.

Net Completions

Monitoring period	No. of Dwellings planned (net)	No. of Dwellings delivered (net)
Completions 2006/07	572	131
Completions 2007/08	572	501
Completions 2008/09	572	467
Completions 2009/10	572	325
Completions 2010/11	572	410
Completions 2011/12	572	264
Completions 2012/13	572	390
Completions 2013/14	572	314
Completions 2014/15	572	376
Total completions to date	**5,148**	**3,178**

5.4   Moreover as at 1st April 2016 the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply as required in Para 47 of the national Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, the HLS now being 3.59 years.

5.5   Going forward however the latest Authority Monitoring Report noted a significant increase in the number of newly permitted dwellings (2,615) due in large measure to the approval of a number of strategic sites. The Council has also produced a number of planning briefs to provide additional guidance where sites are in multiple ownerships or are subject to landscape and heritage constraints with a view to enabling development.

5.6   However the pace of exploitation of the available opportunities has continued to lag behind expectations as set out in the Council's Core Strategy and feedback from both commercial housing developers and registered providers have pointed to a number of difficulties which have contributed to this outcome from their viewpoint.

5.7   Whilst the feedback has included the usual raft of issues associated with planning processes, some Bracknell Forest –specific issues have been identified which have contributed to the Borough's low "hit rate" against its Housing Trajectory. This is of particular concern as going forward it will influence the Borough's relative attractiveness to residential developers as a place to do business and further

undermine performance against plans especially if the prevailing wider policy uncertainties impact upon market confidence.

5.8   For the Council to recover the position on housing supply it is suggested that it will need to project and position itself at the top of the league table of local councils that developers like to do business with. That is not to relax any of those policies or practices that protect design quality, sustainable principles or functionally efficient infrastructure, in some kind of race to the bottom in housing standards; but rather to align the Council's approach with the ambitions of the best developers to create desirable homes in great places by becoming more proactive in the development process.

5.9   More employment of community-led master planning approaches at the outset to secure stakeholder engagement to drive popular proposals for the delivery of quality development will not eliminate dissent - but if such approaches are framed within a long term vision for the borough in which communities are invited to take responsibility for the economic and social well being of the next and future generations they should help create the momentum the Council needs to ramp up the pace of supply.

5.10   The issues of policy and practice which have been cited as impediments to securing shovel-ready sites in Bracknell in particular are the pace of section 106, section 278 and section 38 determinations. In addition there is a view that the current residential car parking requirements, particularly in proximity to public transport hubs are inconsistent with sustainability principles and are reducing land value and its efficient utilisation.

5.11   A further sustainability observation relates to the densities at which new residential development is currently being delivered which could be substantially increased with the attendant increased dwelling yield if this was more actively pursued at pre application stage within an "open source" stakeholder engagement framework.

5.12   Whether such perceived impediments to the achievement of housing trajectory supply targets are either significant or susceptible to remediation requires investigation but it is clear that defence of the status quo is unlikely to bring the step change in delivery performance which the achievement of current and future Core Strategy targets and LEP aspirations requires.

Priority 2 – Providing affordable housing

5.13   Since the inception of the 2009 – 2014 housing strategy there have been 2,079 net completions of which 613 (29%) have been affordable. Whilst the Council has sought to maximise affordable housing in connection with relevant residential planning applications, increasingly discussions around viability have impacted upon the proportion of affordable housing able to be secured.

YEAR	Affordable housing completions (net)	Housing Completions (net)	Affordable as a %
2006/07	29	131	22.1
2007/08	192	501	38.3
2008/09	197	467	42.2
2009/10	152	325	46.8
2010/11	113	410	27.6
2011/12	49	264	18.6

2012/13	66	390	16.9
2013/14	115	314	36.6
2014/15	118	376	31.4
Total	**1,031**	**3,178**	**32%**

5.14 The quantum of affordable housing delivered by residential developers is a function of total supply either on or off site or by way of commuted sums and augments the directly funded provision of additional affordable housing by the Council and registered providers through either HCA grant or Council/registered provider resources.

5.15 In particular the Council has made substantial contribution to affordable housing supply since 2011/12 through the investment of over £14m of stock transfer receipts delivering over 300 affordable solutions to meet housing need.

STOCK TRANSFER CAPITAL RECEIPT USE						
Programme	YEAR					
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	ALL YEARS
Enabling More Affordable Homes	19	63	122		200	404
My Homebuy	18	2	1	1	1	26
Council Mortgages	10	2	1	1	0	14
Cash Incentive Scheme	10	1	1		3	15
Temporary to Permanent	5	5	5	3	8	26
Best Use of Affordable Housing	2	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL OUTPUT	64	73	133	5	212	487
TOTAL SPEND	£4,358k	£2.189k	£3,520k	£1,813k	£2,777	£14,657k

5.16 Registered providers remain the main engine of new and existing affordable supply for local people via BFC My Choice and the current review of the future of the Homes and Communities Agency has once again raised the possibility of housing associations becoming more accountable to local government. Whatever the outcome of that review the change in RP business plans in recent years stimulated by the steady reduction in grant support and upcoming reduction in rent levels suggests a close and continuing engagement to clarify and check the ongoing commitment of RPs to support housing need in Bracknell.

5.17 The breakdown of RP development-starts outside London in the third quarter of 2015 was 3% Social Rent; 13% Affordable Home Ownership; 56% Affordable Rent; and 29% Market Sale. This increasing dependency of RPs on Market Sale to make their business plans stack up is likely to increase. Add to this upcoming Right To Buy losses and increasing disposals of expensive to maintain stock and the Council's need to drive development to increase section 106 funded new supply becomes even more imperative.

5.18 In this situation securing the accountability of the Council's RP partners for delivering on stretched targets covering affordable housing delivery, tenancy sustainability, rebalancing under and over occupation, minimising major repairs voids, optimising relet turn round times and levels of investment is essential. RP's role in suppressing avoidable increases in housing demand by inter alia: sustaining existing tenancies through supporting income maximisation for tenants; preventing family break up; and dealing effectively with domestic violence and anti social behaviour is clearly critical.

5.19 In addition RP's stock investment strategies should minimise the need for major void works and their day to day management of their rented portfolios should minimise relet void times. In all these areas and in connection with RPs social investment the Council should expect balanced scorecard reporting and aim to encourage all Bracknell RPs to achieve at least "upper quartile" performance. RPs should also be expected to finance adaptations for the benefit of their tenants and not expect to divert Disabled Facilities Grant resources from needy owner occupiers and private tenants.

5.20 Beyond the basics of good performance the Council should also expect leading-edge innovation from its RPs or failing that certainly the early introduction of the latest industry initiatives for maximising the range and quantum of affordable housing products for rent and for sale. A typical programme would have three main aims: – to maintain rent levels at traditional social rent levels; (guaranteeing tenants low rents for the first 5 years of their tenancy with a review at year 5 to assess if they have accessed work); to help 1,000 tenants into work within 3 years; and to assist 500 tenants to access home ownership within 3 years. Such programmes additionally offer lifetime tenancies to residents with support needs.

5.21 Where RPs are performing well and actively innovating and aligning their resources with the pursuit of the Council's housing policy objectives collaboration including joint ventures should be explored to increase supply or enhance the quality or affordability of schemes by making available investment by way of debt or equity in addition to land, buildings or other assets. Typically, prudential borrowing, commercial lending and HCA grant are blended to invest in acquisition and improvement of problem properties to promote neighbourhood regeneration.

5.22 RPs should also be expected to support the Council in promoting, facilitating, driving forward and supporting Self Build; Custom Build; Co-Housing; Mutual Housing; and Co-Operatives. Whilst these arrangements currently make only a small numerical contribution to housing supply they offer opportunities for people currently poorly housed or unfulfilled as social housing tenants to seek more autonomy often in a cooperative setting – meeting their needs and often releasing an affordable property for someone else.

5.23 Custom Build, endorsed by the Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis as recently as 4th February this year, offers a route to homeownership for the resourceful, determined or simply desperate. The existence of a register alone is unlikely to secure much activity but RPs and entrepreneurial house-builders can provide the hand-holding required from "site and service" for the bold, to a labouring role alongside trade operatives for the more timid – the sweat equity route to affordable home ownership and of which the government says it is "determined to ensure self build and custom house building grows significantly".

5.24 Co-Housing schemes typically comprise 30+ homes, ranging from one bedroom flats to five bedroom houses plus a common house with a kitchen where meals and other

community-based social activities take place. RPs are well placed to raise awareness and develop and mobilise interest in Co-Housing amongst existing tenants as part of their social investment activities. Co-Housing is about individual homeownership in a setting which contributes to the Council's sustainability strategic theme by reducing the carbon footprint of individual households through collaboration and sharing. Another example of RP innovation is a 'mutual home ownership scheme' (MHOS) that helps people on modest incomes get on to the property ladder and is designed to remain permanently affordable for future generations.

5.25   All of these initiatives contribute to social cohesion and community resilience, essential building blocks of stable civil society and offer safe environments that are ideal residential settings for the support of vulnerable people and the Borough's RP partners should be expected to reflect these innovative projects in proposing bespoke initiatives that speak to the Bracknell situation.

Priority 3 - Providing the right homes for vulnerable people

Homelessness

5.26   Homelessness pressures have fluctuated since the 2009/14 Housing Strategy was adopted but despite the contribution of a number of agencies and the housing advice, housing options and homeless prevention services delivered by the Council, homeless demand increased significantly from 2013 onwards.

5.27   It is unlikely to reduce going forward. In 2014/15 the homeless acceptance rate of 2.25 per 1,000 households in Bracknell was the second highest in Berkshire and above the national average of 1.91 per 1,000 households.

	Applications	Main Causes of Homelessness				
		Family eviction	Violent relationship breakdown	Loss of private rented home	Other	Total
2011/12	139	17	5	40	0	62
2012/13	124	23	5	25	11	64
2013/14	202	29	9	56	14	108
2014/15	226	29	13	56	10	108
2015/16	214	52	16	54	19	141
TOTAL	908	150	48	231	54	483

5.28   The table above taken from the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2015 -2020 summarises homeless demand over the last five years and demonstrates the significant increase from 2013 onwards largely attributable to loss of private rented accommodation which accounted for 38 % of all acceptances in 2015/16.

5.29   The table below shows the rise in private sector rents which over the period 2012 to 2015 increased by an average of 6% whilst the Local Housing Allowance for housing benefit purposes only increased by 3%.

Year	Room rent per month		One bed rent per month		Two bed rent per month		Three bed rent per month	
	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT
2014/15	341	426	663	735	816	933	961	1143

| 2013/14 | 328 | 418 | 656 | 714 | 808 | 910 | 924 | 1178 |
| 2012/13 | 325 | 421 | 650 | 691 | 800 | 878 | 915 | 1069 |

5.30 The ongoing rise in private sector rents in part driven by the impact of adverse tax changes on the Buy To Let market is projected to exceed the rise in average incomes which along with the further anticipated reduction in the welfare benefit cap from 2017 suggests ongoing and increasing homeless pressures.

5.31 The rise in homelessness combined with a reduction in access to affordable accommodation – from relets and from new supply – has increased the Council's dependency on temporary accommodation which more than doubled from 2012 to 2015 as did the number of households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation with families largely placed outside the borough.

5.32 To combat this trend and reduce the rising cost of Bed & Breakfast accommodation the Council set up a Local Housing Company, Downshire Homes, towards the end of 2015 to procure accommodation to provide homes for homeless households, households with learning disabilities and/or autism and care leavers; and an initial portfolio of 20 two and three bedroom properties has already been acquired.

5.33 The Borough's registered providers estimate that the welfare benefit changes alone could impact on over 300 households suggesting an urgent need to stabilise the churn in the private rented sector, increase support for better budgeting for households at risk and ramp up the flagging supply of additional affordable homes whilst ensuring an adequate affordable short term provision of decent temporary accommodation. These imperatives are captured within the four key objectives of the Council's draft Homelessness Strategy:

- To deliver good quality advice and prevention services
- To work in partnership to avoid duplication
- To meet the need for emergency accommodation and
- To maximise access to housing

5.34 Resources are being deployed along the homeless pathway in pursuit of these objectives aligned with complementary activities to safeguard the local economy; increase job opportunities and disposable incomes; stabilise churn in the private rented sector; support young people leaving care and combat domestic violence.

5.35 The direction of travel is to attain the DCLG 10 point Gold Standard for Homelessness Services.

   i.   To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services
   ii. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
   iii. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
   iv. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
   v.   To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
   vi. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
   vii. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme

To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
ix. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in B&B accommodation
x. To not place any families in B&B accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than six weeks

Older People

5.36 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment projections for older persons housing need by broad tenure 2013-2036, including specialist housing were summarized as follows:

	Market	Affordable	Total
NEED	1,340	856	2,196
SUPPLY	339	537	876
NET NEED	1,001	319	1,320

5.37 The Housing Learning and Improvement Network's SHOP@ tool for assessing the likely demand for various forms of older persons housing provision in the period 2014 to 2036 provided the details in the table below.

5.38 Future need for 2,448 Sheltered, Enhanced Sheltered and Extra Care is at predicted split of 1,490 rent (61%) and 958 (39%) leasehold. However the figures have been accompanied by some significant health warnings.

Category	Current Needs 2014	Supply	Future Needs 2035
Sheltered Housing	900	849	1,800
Rent	540	510	1,080
Lease	360	339	720
Enhanced Sheltered	144	27	288
Rent	144	27	288
Lease	0	0	0
Extra Care	180	0	360
Rent	167	0	122
Lease	13	0	238
Registered Care	792	450	1,584
Residential	468	269	936
Nursing Care	324	181	648
TOTAL	2,016	1,326	4,032

5.39 Firstly SHOP@ acknowledges that there is clear evidence that the restrictions on central block funding and the move to personalization at a time of reduced revenue funding will restrict the public sector extra care market. Most extra care growth will therefore be in the leasehold sector going forward.

5.40 Secondly the traditional sheltered housing market is unlikely to receive much capital investment for new facilities and many schemes which require regular high maintenance or investment to upgrade facilities will no longer be viable. Again growth will be in the leasehold sector as already evidenced in Bracknell where three Category 2 Sheltered Schemes have already been decommissioned and a flagship Extra Care Scheme developed.

5.41 Thirdly the underlying assumptions are based on ONS/POPPI predictions derived from 2001 and 2004 baselines respectively and therefore current local research is required to inform a reliable local strategy.

5.42 The Housing LIN recognizes that there will be a significant shift at some future date from the current 61%-39%% market split in favour of rental units to a 67%-33% split in favour of leasehold units, a market shift dependent on the attractiveness of an area to the private sector.

5.43 Recent discussions with commissioners have led to a review of the above figures. The following table provides a general framework to consider the future market tenure split for a locality based on its relative affluence/deprivation.

5.44 On the basis of these figures it is suggested that Bracknell should be planning for somewhere in the region of a 75% Leasehold – 25% Rental split going forward.

SHOP@ MARKET SPLIT 2035 OPTIONS - DEPRIVATION/AFFLUENCE SPLIT

	Most Deprived		Deprived		Affluent		Most Affluent	
	Rented	Leasehold	Rented	Leasehold	Rented	Leasehold	Rented	Leasehold
Sheltered	75	25	50	50	33	67	20	80
Enhanced Sheltered	80	20	67	33	50	50	20	80
Extra care	75	25	50	50	33	67	20	80

5.45 Closer analysis of the extra care figures nationally shows a huge discrepancy in the level of extra care provision within individual authorities. Those authorities that have embraced extra care development have expressed concerns that SHOP@ does not challenge the development of extra care sufficiently and is too reliant on retaining registered care beds. Housing LIN has suggested that it is becoming clear that the extra care commissioning strategy becomes self-fulfilling.

5.46 If an authority is fully committed to extra care, for example pump priming some revenue in from the preventative agenda, they will be successful and reduce residential care and placements and sheltered housing need. If extra care is funded from critical and substantial personal budgets only it will struggle in areas of limited leasehold markets and extra care will be lower than expected with residential care remaining high. It seems therefore SHOP@ should offer a matrix of need for authorities promoting an extra care growth strategy and those looking to developers to lead. Developers will naturally support authorities that are actively seeking growth so the current differences in provision of extra care are likely to further increase.

5.47 The need for the local authority to be proactive in driving the development of predominantly leasehold extra care provision has emerged as a key finding in a case study which examined a Council's leadership role, the need for dynamic stakeholder engagement to address behaviour and culture and the process of change management. The study found that the essential prerequisite is to create a vision of the future that all the key players can understand and own.

5.48 The three powerful drivers of the change process derive from an understanding that "demographic challenge will outstrip the capacity of existing services; financial

pressures are likely to increase; and the need to radically transform social care services to meet older people's changing expectations". Bracknell's Older Persons Accommodation and Support Strategy implicitly recognises that the current pattern of services is simply not affordable as the basis for meeting the needs of future generations of older people and the recognition that residential care does not provide a home.

5.49 Conversely majority leasehold extra care will not only deliver that extended continuum of home ownership central to the Council's housing philosophy but also enable some cross subsidy to support affordable rented provision within the same developments thereby raising the profile of older person as citizen rather than service user.

Priority 4 – contributing to sustainable communities

5.50 The three preceding strategic priorities; supporting a vibrant housing market; providing affordable housing; and providing the right homes for vulnerable people; will, if successfully accomplished make a major contribution to the sustainability of the Borough's communities which fundamentally rely upon local economic growth.

The contribution of a vibrant housing market

5.51 According the Montague Report 2012, £1m spent on house building supports 12 additional jobs per annum (7 directly and 5 indirectly) and for every pound invested in construction, £2.60 is generated in the supply chain. A simple overview would be to observe that the opportunity cost of failing to meet the Core Strategy target of new supply at an average construction cost of £200k (net of land cost) over the 2007/15 period has been 1970 x £200k or £394m. In jobs the opportunity cost has been 4,728 and in the wider supply chain a cost of over £1bn.

5.52 Going forward the value to the economy of achieving the delivery of an additional 635 homes per annum over the next 20 years at current average construction cost of £250k will contribute £3bn or 36,000 jobs and £7.8bn in the wider supply chain. In addition the tax take to the exchequer, the council tax and new homes bonus income and the spending power of additional households will also make a substantial contribution to the local economy directly or indirectly, reinforcing community sustainability.

5.53 New supply is only part of the story however as in the owner occupied stock BRE research has found that significant investment occurs within 12 months of resale of an existing home. A combination of DIY and contractor investment in kitchens, bathrooms and window replacement supports an average of £10k on building contracting and materials supply and significant purchases of furniture and soft furnishings are also associated with a change of ownership – the latter often also occurring with a change in tenancy.

5.54 Turnover of existing residential stock in Bracknell Forest was running at around 3,000 per annum in the early 2000s but declined rapidly to 1,000 in 2008/9. Sales have now reached 2,000 per annum delivering an estimated contribution to the local economy of £2m.

The contribution of affordable housing

5.55   Bracknell Forest Homes remains the premier resource for the ongoing supply of affordable homes and currently owns and manages around 6,000 rented homes, including 400 sheltered housing flats, as well as 1,100 leaseholder properties. Set up in February 2008 following the successful ballot of tenants and leaseholders to transfer homes from Bracknell Forest Council it has been a major contributor to community sustainability.

5.56   BFH is a major local employer turning over £37m per annum and providing 240 jobs with a direct and substantial contribution to the local economy. In addition its flagship Extra Care scheme is likely to be a game changer in older persons housing provision with a huge future economic and social benefit to the Borough's communities.

5.57   Moreover its top ratings for governance and viability make it a strong partner for the Council in addressing the challenges of the widening gap between incomes and housing costs that lie ahead. However whilst over the next 5 years BFH plans to build an additional 988 homes with 65% for Affordable Rent and 35% Shared Ownership only 248 of these homes are planned to be delivered in Bracknell Forest.

5.58   This loss of a potential investment in the Borough is unfortunate and in future the Council should aim to maximise opportunities for BFH's development capacity, derived from its Bracknell based assets, to be beneficially applied for the benefit of the Borough and its communities if at all possible.

5.59   A number of other registered providers have delivered affordable homes in the Borough and have significant forward programmes but few are able to make a clear commitment on future delivery unless already near shovel ready implementation.

The contribution of providing the right homes for vulnerable people

5.60   The Council contribution to combating homelessness through the Family Intervention Team, the Care Leavers Team, Environmental Health Officers and partners including Look Ahead Housing Association, Berkshire Women's Aid and numerous other agencies has had many successes since the 2009- 2014 Housing Strategy was adopted.

5.61   Whilst the current challenges are at present straining the Council's capacity to respond, the new Homeless Strategy, will if adequately resourced provide a strengthened safety net delivered with the professionalism and sensitivity upon which Bracknell's communities have come to rely.

5.62   Similarly community sustainability has been a core theme of the Older Persons Accommodation and Support Strategy ensuring that older people have access to the best opportunities and options for securing and remaining safely in the home of their choice.

5.63   The extension of Telecare services and their extension to hospital discharge has provided further support to people wishing to live independently. Equity release mortgages provided on a commercial basis are supporting repairs and improvements, augmenting Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations for older people and for families with disabled children.

In the period 2008/9 – 2014/15 DFG activity was as set out in the table below:

YEAR	Total DFG Apps	DFGs Apps from Older People	Total DFGs Completed	DFGs completed for Older People	Total Grant Approved £	Average Grant £	Average Grant Older People £
2008-2009	38	21	43	NR	286,977	6,674	NR
2009-2010	54	37	82	NR	577692	7816	NR
2010-2011	75	50	67	44	638,643	6050	£6460
2011-2012	92	46	88	43	531282	6724	£5935
2012-2013	85	62	80	60	513108	7205	£4574
2013-2014	96	59	77	79	461983	5999	£4779
2014-2015	66	48	58	50	413240	5655	£4383

5.64 As forecast, the Department of Health substantially increased the national allocation for Disabled Facilities Grants through the Better Care Fund and the recently announced allocation for Bracknell Forest is £658,685.

5.65 Whilst the Borough's housing stock is relatively young as illustrated by the table below,

Age	Bracknell Forest	South East	England
Pre-1919	6.0%	17.9%	20.8%
1919-1944	4.9%	13.2%	17.7%
1945-1964	18.6%	23.1%	21.2%
Post 1964	70.5%	45.8%	40.3%

it has just under 1,000 mobile homes (park homes) with low standards of thermal efficiency arising from poor insulation and the use of expensive fuels. Following consultation with Mobile Home Park owners and residents to discuss options for resolving this problem some 65 mobile homes are being fitted with external wall insulation under the Green Deal Communities Project. Generally the legacy of post war New Town housing development standards and substantial use of energy efficiency programmes including Warm Front in recent years has meant that over 40% of homes have a SAP rating of 65+ whilst only 0.5% have a SAP rating of less than 35 – reduced from 9% in 2008.

5.66 However, modelling using BRE data estimated that 14% of private sector dwellings had a Category 1 HHSRS hazard and 5% of households were living in fuel poverty.

5.67 Combating these conditions is a high priority for the Council's Environmental Health Officers as it can lead to ill health and loss of accommodation and homelessness through dampness and mould growth. In addition fuel poverty is associated with hypothermia, falls and excess winter deaths and the Council is exploring the development of a mapping system to enable efficient intervention.

5.68 Downshire Homes current raison d'être is to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households to reduce the expenditure otherwise incurred in procuring bed and breakfast accommodation from the commercial sector. There are a range of other opportunities that the Downshire Homes board and Council could consider as set out below.

5.69 Having committed to a £6.6m loan to Downshire to acquire a portfolio of some 20 two and three bedroom houses the Council could consider enlarging this resource through further municipal or commercial lending or by way of equity investment to accommodate rising homeless demand for temporary accommodation and accommodation for the most vulnerable including people with learning disabilities and care leavers if such a request was made by the Downshire homes Board.

5.70 Another potential opportunity that Downshire Homes could pursue is to procure a portfolio of accommodation for market rent which could act as a hedge against the risk of the financial integrity of the homeless temporary accommodation portfolio being jeopardised by HB/Management Allowance changes downstream. Such a portfolio could include flatted accommodation both furnished and unfurnished available for leasing directly or indirectly to key workers in partnership with local employers.

5.71 A strengthened Downshire could enter into a joint venture with one or more developers or registered providers to enhance its ability to deliver market rent housing with the JV benefitting from short term PWLB interest rates on partner or third party land. Such opportunities would obviously be more attractive to prospective partners where the Council put its own land into the equation.

5.72 Such de-risking of housing development and rented portfolio management would need to be packaged to deliver a proportion of affordable/sub-market solutions such as to avoid state aid challenges necessitating the adoption of robust legal agreements and business plans. Once a built or acquired tranche of stock was in place and generating a surplus, commercial refinancing would allow recycling of the Council loan to support other projects. Clearly scale and equity contributions would increase the likelihood of affordable refinancing where debt/equity, interest cover and asset cover ratios could be satisfied.

5.73 With an appropriate understanding between the Council, Downshire and a private housing developer Downshire could also provide a conduit for section 106 commuted sums and sub-market sale properties within a growing portfolio of mixed market-rented and affordable sale and rent products, optimising the development value of Council owned land in line with the recommended approaches of the Housing and Finance Institute.

5.74 The Council could augment its current home ownership initiatives by supporting Downshire's development of new build homes for sale by packaging and targeting its assistance to prospective home buyers vacating social rented accommodation.

5.75 Downshire could also collaborate with volume build to rent organisations in providing a platform for innovation in construction such as fast-build off site housing systems, of the kind being promoted by Legal &General.

5.76 Downshire's development programme could also provide a laboratory for up-skilling homeless households, developing social capital through volunteering and other strategies for enabling them to acquire the resilience to sustain future tenancies such as the Enterprise Cube "Strive" courses for social tenants to start up their own businesses.

5.77 Clearly the careful consideration and prudent professional advice that has informed Downshire's design and development thus far will continue to be required to evaluate and monitor these potential opportunities .unfolding roles and their contribution to the achievement of the Council's long term strategic objectives. It will be for the Downshire Homes board to consider the future business of the Company in the context of its shareholders expectations.

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Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: August 2016	Directorate: Adult social care health and housing	Section: Housing
1. Activity to be assessed	Housing strategy	
2. What is the activity?	x Policy/strategy ☐ Function/procedure x Project ☐ Review ☐ Service ☐ Organisational change	
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	x New x Existing	
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Simon Hendey	
5. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Simon Hendey / Clare Dorning	
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	To establish a housing strategy to strategically support provision of housing and housing related services in Bracknell Forest.	
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	Households who are unable to meet their housing needs in the market	

Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no		Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments.
9. Racial equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
10. Gender equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
11. Sexual orientation equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals

				are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
12. Gender re-assignment			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
13. Age equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
14. Religion and belief equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality			There will be a neutral impact	The housing strategy statement will aim to address all housing needs in the locality. If actins and proposals are developed they will be subject to individual EIA assessments
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carer's/ex-offenders) and on promoting good community relations.	The Housing strategy statement will operate at different levels in terms of supporting the local economy and meeting a range of diverse housing needs.			
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A			
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	N/A			
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?		N		

46

21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	Consultation will take place with all sections of the community		
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	Yes		

23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?			
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?			
26. Chief Officers signature.	Signature: Date:		

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website.

47

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TO: EXECUTIVE
27 SEPTEMBER 2016

HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To consider changes to the Council's Allocations Policy.

2   RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agrees:-

2.1   **To change the residency requirement before customers can join the housing register from one year to four years from the 1 November 2016.**

2.2   **To allow those customers who have lived in the Borough for 3 years at the time of implementation to remain on the register.**

2.3   **That the Council will make offers of suitable private rented sector property to homeless households so as to discharge its homeless duty.**

2.4   **That families whose children are taken into care by Bracknell Forest Council can remain on the housing register upon advice of the Chief Officer: Children's Social Care so that their housing prospects are maintained if the children are returned to them.**

2.5   **To agree a maximum of three lettings are year are made to households under the right to move proposals.**

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1   The Council's Housing Allocation Policy supports the Council's plan to support strong safe, supportive and self-reliant communities where resources are targeted at those most in need.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   An alternative to the proposals would be not to implement the change in residency requirements, discharge of homeless duty into the private rented sector and also the local policy to support children in need. However, as the Council's new plan required service to be targeted at those most in need and these proposals achieve that aim that course of action is not recommended.

4.2   The change in residency requirement to join the housing register could be a different period of time other than the four years recommended. However, the recommended four years strikes a balance between the residency requirements in neighbouring boroughs, improving the chances of households who are registered to be housed

more quickly and also addressing any possible future changes in the immigration status of EU nationals.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   In formulating the Council's Allocation Policy due regard should be taken of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2012. Of particular relevance to this report is part 6 of the Localism Act which enabled housing authorities to better manage their housing waiting list by giving them the power to determine which applicants do or do not qualify for an allocation of social housing The Statutory Guidance Allocation of accommodation guidance for Local Authorities in England 2013 provides guidance as to interpretation of the legislation. In addition immigration regulations provide guidance as to who may be considered as an eligible person for the purposes of receiving an allocation; EEA nationals and their family members who have a right to reside in the UK that derives from EU law are not persons subject to immigration control and thus are eligible.

5.2   In April 2012 the Council made a number of changes to its Allocation Policy; that Band E in the Council's Allocation Policy for those applicants who are adequately housed is removed, that applications from households in Bands C and D can move up a band but not to Band A based on how long they have been waiting on the Council's housing register, that a residency requirement is introduced for applicants to the Council's housing register so that households must have lived in the borough for one year continuously before their application will be considered, that those households who are working are prioritised above those who are not working when bids are received for properties and that those applicants who have the financial resources to meet their housing need are prioritised below those who do not have the financial means to meet their housing need, that applications from households who are considered to have deliberately worsened their housing situation are placed in the band below the need they present, that households who move to resolve overcrowding must only bid to the maximum sized property they are eligible for. That households who are owed a statutory homeless duty by the Council are offered the first available property that meets their housing need, that households living in affordable housing who are under-occupying by one bedroom are placed in Band B, that households who have applied for affordable housing and have been agreed by the Chief Officer: Children's Social Care as suitable as foster carers are placed in Band B, and that an Arrears Policy is introduced so that applicants who have housing related debts will not be nominated unless there is evidence of at least six months consistent regular repayments of debts in line with an agreement.

5.3   Consultation has taken place to amend the current Allocation Policy. Consultation began in April 2016 and concluded on the 10th June 2016. The first proposed change is to increase the residency requirement before a household in housing need can join the housing register from one year to four years. The four year criteria has been based on comparing neighbouring Local Authority criteria and also any potential changes that may arise in the immigration status of EU nationals in the future. The residency requirements in neighbouring Boroughs are set out in the table below:

Borough	Residency requirement
RBWM	2 years
Slough	5 years
Wokingham	No requirement but priority to Borough residents
W. Berks	2 years or has close family member who has lived in Borough for 5 years or applicant has worked in Borough for 2 years
Reading	3 years

It needs to be recognised that Bracknell Forest Council's Allocation Policy only allows customers onto the housing register who have a housing need and this may not the same in neighbouring local authorities. There is the risk that if those in housing need cannot joint the housing register and thus resolve their housing need for a period of four years they may approach the Council as homeless as an alternative way of accessing appropriate housing. If the proposal to require four year residency was introduced it would lead to customers being removed from the housing register. Case law has established that Council's should not operate blanket policies when implementing policy and should take each application on its merits. Thus the Council should take into account exceptional circumstances when applying residency requirements. For example if an elderly customer needs to move near to a carer/relative in the Borough the Council could waive the residency requirement. For clarification, members of the armed forces or ex-members of the armed forces are not required to meet residency requirements.

5.4   If Council is minded to amend the residency requirement to four years it will lead to the following applications being removed from the housing register based on a 1st November 2016 implementation date.

Bedroom size required	Priority band B	Priority band C	Priority band D	Total
1 bed	1	30	53	84
2 bed	7	33	12	52
3 bed	13	20	0	33
4 bed plus	13	6	0	19
Total	34	89	65	188

The following table sets out the number of households who would be removed from the register if the Council were minded to choose a residency requirement for less than four years.

Band	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Band B	0	15	14	5	34
Band C	1	27	45	16	89
Band D	0	32	24	9	65
Total	1	74	83	30	188

5.5   Removing the applications from the register will mean that those applicants will have to wait until they can demonstrate that they have lived in the Borough for four years before they can apply again. When they do apply their application date will change so that they have in effect lost the time they have waited to date. There are 30 households who have lived in the Borough for 3 years.. As it does not seem neither fair nor good use of Council resources to cancel an application and then reinstate it a

51

year later to start all over again it is recommended that those customers are allowed to remain on the register despite not having four year residency. There is a risk that those households are offered a property before they reach the four year residency requirement but realistically that will only probably be those applications in band B .

5.6.   An alternative to removing applicants from the register would be to give those on the register without four years residency amnesty and only require four year residency for new applicants. That is not recommended as it would expose the Council to challenge from those households who would not be allowed on the register as they did not have a four year residency as there would be households with the same circumstances who not only were allowed on the register but could even be housed.

5.7   The removal of applications from the register will improve the prospects of those households who remain on the register to be housed more quickly. It is difficult to quantify the improvement in how quickly households will be rehoused as we will not know the properties they will bid on in future. However, as an example in 2015/16 there were 10 four bed Band B customers housed. Out of the 13 Band B customers that would be removed there are two who are coming within the top 10 in shortlists for properties. If they are removed there will be two more Band B households in Band B (who had lived in the Borough for four years) needing a four bedroom property who will be housed who would have had to wait a further twelve months all things being equal.

5.8   The second proposal follows the ability of Local Authorities to discharge their main housing duty to applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by making an offer of appropriate housing in the private rented sector. To date the Council has made such offers and if applicants have refused the duty has not been discharged and subsequent offers have been made. If a policy was introduced to make offer of private sector rented property as a discharge of homeless duty and the offer was refused the Council would only provide advice and assistance to homeless customers so that they can find a new home themselves.

5.9   The third proposal is a local policy change that would give families where their children are taken into care by the local authority the ability to stay on the housing register with their housing need so that they have better chances of being housed when their children are returned. Situations have arisen where children who have been taken into care are ready to be retuned to their parents but the housing is not suitable so the return has not taken place or been delayed. Clearly, that is not in the child's, families or Council's interests and this local policy would allow the Chief Officer: Children's Social Care to identify families where this policy would apply.

5.10   Lastly, in 2015 the Government introduced statutory guidance on the Right to Move. This requires Local Authorities to support customers who need to move into an area for employment purposes so that they are not disadvantaged by residency requirements. This applies to customers who are already tenants of affordable housing outside the Borough and they would need to demonstrate paid employment in Bracknell Forest and that the inability to move due to residency requirements or any other means of moving would cause hardship. Government guidance suggests that 1% of annual lettings should be made available for such applications each year so that could amount to 3 lettings to such applicants each year.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   The relevant legal issues are addressed within the body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that there no financial implications arising from this report..

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3   An equality impact assessment is included at Appendix A.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4   There are no strategic risk management issues arising from this report

7   CONSULTATION

7.1   Registered providers have been consulted on the proposals. Bracknell Forest Homes response is as follows:

"We have no objection to 4 year eligibility rule but would comments that this is less generous than our other partner councils. One of the consequences could mean a further increase in homelessness applications as thy will not b subject to time restriction. We are happy with the right to move proposal. With regard to the children in care we will need assurance via evidence that the children will be returning to avoid the risk of gross under occupation and as part of our own allocation review will consider offering short term tenancies."

7.2. Consultation has taken place with the wider community and those customers already on the Councils housing register. The result of that consultation is included in the equality impact assessment.

Contact for further information

Simon Hendey, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing - 01344 351688
simon.hendey@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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Housing Register and Allocations Policy Changes
Full Equality Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1   This Full Equality Impact Assessment looks at the Council's proposals for changing the residency criteria for joining the Housing Register and elements of the Allocations Policy. The assessment is based on the results of consultation which has been carried out via the Council's consultation portal.

1.2   An equalities impact screening was completed at the start of the consultation, and in view of the impact that some of the proposed changes may have on households, it was recognised that there was a need to undertake a full equality impact assessment. A copy of the screening is included at the end of this impact assessment. Full copies of all responses to the consultation can be provided upon request.

2. Background

2.1   The purpose of the Allocations Policy is to ensure social rented housing in the borough is let to those in greatest need, to ensure best use is made of the social rented stock in the borough, to encourage sustainable communities, and to make sure the housing needs of vulnerable applicants and those in priority need are given reasonable preference.

2.1   The Localism Act 2011 includes the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order which gives an authority the power to arrange an offer of private rented sector accommodation as a suitable offer to discharge its homelessness duty. The Council should include the implementation of this power in its Allocations Policy.

2.3   In April 2015, the Government introduced the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015. The purpose of this regulation is to enable social tenants to move to another authority to take up a job or live closer to employment or training.

2.4   Recent case law has highlighted the need for an Authority's allocations policy to allow for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account when applying any policy restriction.

2.5   The Council works with and supports a number of families who may have children taken into the care of the local authority. Where the Council considers that a child's best interests is to return to the care of a family member, the accommodation that is currently occupied by that family member may be inadequate for the child to return to. In these cases, it is proposed that the family is given a "head start" by enabling the housing need of the family to be assessed as if the child were resident in the property.

2.6   The following changes to the Housing register and Allocations Policy are proposed:

- Changing the eligibility to join the housing register from 12 months to 4 years residency in Bracknell Forest

- Making offers of private rented accommodation to homeless households for whom the Council has a statutory duty to house as a discharge of duty.

- Introducing the "Right to Move" which will allow social housing tenants living outside Bracknell Forest to move to a housing association property in Bracknell Forest to enable them to take up employment of keep employment in the Borough.

- Introducing the opportunity for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account when considering applicants from outside the borough

- Where families have children in care and Children Services are working with the family to enable the children to return home, these families will be prioritised as if the children are living with them so that they do not have to wait until the children are returned to come on to the housing register.

3. Consultation Responses

3.1 There were 295 responses to the consultation, although not all respondents answered every question or completed the equalities questions. The following tables summarise the responses that have been received across the Bracknell Forest community.

3.2 Changing the eligibility to join the housing register from 12 months to 4 years.

There were 291 responses to this question

Gender

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Male	62	16	11
Female	118	34	17
No response	26	7	0
Total	**206 (71%)**	**57 (20%)**	**28 (10%)**

The same percentage of males and females agreed or strongly agreed to the proposal to increase the residency eligibility for the housing register.

Age

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
18-34 yrs	87	18	14
35-49 yrs	64	27	9
50-64 yrs	22	3	5
65+ yrs	8	2	0
No response	25	7	0
Total	**206 (71%)**	**57 (19%)**	**28 (10%)**

A higher proportion of all age groups agreed with the proposal to increase the residency criteria for joining the housing register from 12 months to 4 years.

Ethnicity

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	153	30	15
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	1	0	0
Show people/Circus	0	0	0
Any other white background	8	6	3
White & Black Caribbean	0	1	1
White & Black African	3	1	0
White & Asian	1	1	0
Any other mixed background	2	1	0
Indian	0	0	1
Pakistani	1	0	0
Nepali	0	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Filipino	2	2	2
African	4	9	3
Caribbean	1	0	1
Any other black background	0	1	0
Arab	2	0	1
Other ethnic group	0	0	1
No response	26	7	0
Total	**204 (70%)**	**59 (20%)**	**28 (10%)**

The proposal to increase the residency criteria from 12 months to 4 years is supported across all ethnic groups, with the exception of African respondents. As mitigation, the proposal to take into account exceptional circumstances could also be applied to cases where a household wishing to join the housing register does not meet the 4 year criteria.

Religion/Belief

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
None	103	16	11
Christian	66	30	14
Buddist	0	0	1
Jewish	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0
Muslim	3	2	0
Sikh	0	1	0
Other	6	1	2
No response	28	7	0
Total	**206 (71%)**	**57 (19%)**	**28 (10%)**

The proposal to increase the residency criteria from 12 months to 4 years is supported by the majority faith groups.

Health Problem or Disability

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Yes	48	12	8
No	128	38	19
No Response	30	7	1
Total	**206 (71%)**	**57 (19%)**	**28 (10%)**

A higher proportion of disabled and non disabled respondents agreed with the proposal to increase the residency criteria from 12 months to 4 years.

Sexual orientation

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Heterosexual/straight	166	45	27
Gay man	0	0	0
Lesbian/gay woman	0	1	0
Bi sexual	0	1	0
Prefer not to say	11	3	0
No response	29	7	1
Total	**206 (71%)**	**57 (19%)**	**28 (10%)**

3.3   Making offers of private rented accommodation to homeless households as a discharge of duty

There were 288 responses to this question. Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to make offers of private rented accommodation to homeless households as a discharge of duty, although a third of respondents did not express a view on the proposal.

Gender

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Male	53	10	25
Female	71	37	60
No response	15	6	11
Total	**139 (48%)**	**53 (18%)**	**96 (33%)**

A higher proportion of males and females support the proposal to discharge the Council's main homelessness duty by making offers of private rented accommodation.

Age

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
18-34 yrs	52	27	40
35-49 yrs	54	17	28
50-64 yrs	13	3	13
65+ yrs	7	0	3
No response	13	6	12
Total	**139 (48%)**	**53 (18%)**	**96 (33%)**

Ethnicity

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	91	37	70
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0	0	1
Show people/Circus	0	0	0
Any other white background	11	0	6
White & Black Caribbean	1	1	0
White & Black African	1	1	2
White & Asian	0	2	0
Any other mixed background	2	0	1
Indian	1	0	0
Pakistani	1	0	0
Nepali	0	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Filipino	5	0	0
African	7	4	4
Caribbean	2	0	0
Any other black background	0	0	1
Arab	2	1	0
Other ethnic group	1	0	1
No response	14	6	11
Total	**139 (48%)**	**52 (18%)**	**97 (33%)**

Religion/Belief

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
None	69	26	36
Christian	46	18	44
Buddist	1	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0
Muslim	4	0	1
Sikh	0	1	0
Other	5	2	2
No response	14	6	13
Total	**139 (48%)**	**53 (18%)**	**96 (33%)**

Health Problem or Disability

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Yes	30	21	17
No	96	26	62
No response	13	6	17
Total	**139 (48%)**	**53 (18%)**	**96 (33%)**

Sexuality

	Strongly	Strongly	Neither

	agree/agree	disagree/disagree	
Heterosexual/straight	119	40	77
Gay man	0	0	0
Lesbian/gay woman	0	1	0
Bisexual	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	4	6	4
No response	15	6	15
Total	**139 (48%)**	**53 (18%)**	**96 (33%)**

3.4   Banding families with children in care as if the children were living with them

There were 285 responses to this question. The responses to this proposal were more mixed, although this may reflect the fact that this proposal relates to a small population of families with whom Children Services will be working. However, the majority of responders did agree with the proposal overall.

Gender

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Male	41	16	30
Female	60	65	42
No response	9	12	10
Total	**110 (38%)**	**93 (33%)**	**82 (29%)**

Age

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
18-34 yrs	38	57	24
35-49 yrs	51	15	34
50-64 yrs	10	7	9
65+ yrs	2	2	6
No response	9	12	9
Total	**110 (38%)**	**93 (33%)**	**82 (29%)**

The populations least supportive of this proposal are females, and households aged 18 – 34 years. It is expected that the number of families assisted via this policy will be very small (an estimated 2/3 a year). It is proposed that the impact of this policy is kept under review to ensure that other families on the housing register are not disadvantaged.

Ethnicity

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	69	72	55
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0	0	1
Show people/Circus	0	0	0
Any other white background	12	0	5
White & Black Caribbean	0	2	0
White & Black African	1	0	3
White & Asian	0	0	2
Any other mixed background	2	1	0

Indian	0	0	1
Pakistani	1	0	0
Nepali	0	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Filipino	2	0	3
African	10	4	1
Caribbean	1	0	1
Any other black background	1	0	0
Arab	1	1	1
Other ethnic group	1	0	1
No response	9	11	10
Total	**110 (38%)**	**91 (33%)**	**84 (29%)**

Religion/Belief

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
None	51	48	31
Christian	40	29	39
Buddist	1	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	0
Muslim	4	1	0
Sikh	1	0	0
Other	4	2	2
No response	9	13	10
Total	**110 (38%)**	**93 (33%)**	**82 (29%)**

Health Problem or Disability

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Yes	23	17	26
No	78	63	43
No response	9	13	13
Total	**110 (38%)**	**93 (33%)**	**82 (29%)**

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neither
Heterosexual/straight	93	73	68
Gay man	0	0	0
Lesbian/gay woman	0	1	0
Bisexual	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	5	6	3
No response	11	13	11
Total	**110 (38%)**	**93 (33%)**	**82 (29%)**

3.5   Introducing the "Right to Move" to enable social housing tenants to move into Bracknell Forest to take up employment.

61

There were 287 responses to this question. More females and respondents between the ages of 35 -49 years agreed with the proposal to allow social housing tenants to move into the borough to take up employment.

Gender

	Yes	No
Male	49	40
Female	94	73
No response	20	11
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Age

	Yes	No
18-34 yrs	58	60
35-49 yrs	60	39
50-64 yrs	19	10
65+ yrs	6	4
No response	20	11
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Ethnicity

	Yes	No
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	97	99
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	1	0
Show people/Circus	0	0
Any other white background	14	3
White & Black Caribbean	2	0
White & Black African	4	0
White & Asian	2	0
Any other mixed background	2	1
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	1	0
Nepali	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Filipino	2	3
African	10	6
Caribbean	2	0
Any other black background	1	0
Arab	2	1
Other ethnic group	2	0
No response	20	11
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Religion/Belief

	Yes	No
None	66	63
Christian	66	43
Buddist	0	1
Jewish	0	0

Hindu	0	0
Muslim	5	0
Sikh	1	0
Other	6	3
No response	19	14
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Health Problem or Disability

	Yes	No
Yes	42	26
No	100	83
No Response	21	15
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Sexual Orientation

	Yes	No
Heterosexual/straight	134	101
Gay man	0	0
Lesbian/gay woman	0	1
Bisexual	1	0
Prefer not to say	6	8
No response	22	14
Total	**163 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

3.6 Enabling exceptional circumstances to be taken into account when considering applicants from outside the borough

There 288 responses to this question. The majority of respondents across all populations supported this proposal.

Gender

	Yes	No
Male	55	33
Female	93	75
No response	16	16
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Age

	Yes	No
18-34 yrs	66	53
35-49 yrs	58	41
50-64 yrs	20	10
65+ yrs	5	4
No response	15	16
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Ethnicity

	Yes	No
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	105	91
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	1	0
Show people/Circus	0	0

Any other white background	12	5
White & Black Caribbean	2	0
White & Black African	3	1
White & Asian	2	0
Any other mixed background	3	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	1	0
Nepali	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Filipino	4	1
African	9	7
Caribbean	1	1
Any other black background	1	0
Arab	2	1
Other ethnic group	1	1
No response	16	16
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Religion/Belief

	Yes	No
None	68	61
Christian	70	39
Buddist	1	0
Jewish	0	0
Hindu	0	0
Muslim	3	2
Sikh	1	0
Other	3	6
No response	18	16
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

Health Problem or Disability

	Yes	No
Yes	38	28
No	104	81
No Response	22	15
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

	Yes	No
Heterosexual/straight	136	100
Gay man	0	0
Lesbian/gay woman	0	1
Bisexual	1	0
Prefer not to say	8	6
No response	19	17
Total	**164 (57%)**	**124 (43%)**

4. Conclusions

4.1   The proposed changes to the housing register eligibility and Allocations Policy changes have received support across all parts of the Bracknell Forest community. Where policy changes relate issues which affect a specific population, such as discharging the Council's main homelessness duty for homeless families into the private rented sector and allowing families with children in care to be banded in advance of their children being returned to them, there was a higher lever of no response given.

4.2   It is proposed to apply the opportunity to take exceptional circumstances into account when considering requests to join the housing register from households who have not been resident in the borough for 4 years. This will mitigate an adverse impact on any minority group.

4.3   The policy to allow families with children in care to be banded in advance of their children being returned to them will be kept under review to ensure that other high priority households on the housing register are not disadvantaged.

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Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: 9 June 2016	**Section:** Housing
Directorate: Adult Social Care, Health and Housing	
1. Activity to be assessed	*Please give full details of the activity and summarise the budget reduction proposal* The Council is reviewing it's policy for the allocation of social housing in the light of new government guidance and legislation. The Allocation Policy review proposes the following changes: • Changing the eligibility to join the housing register from 12 months to 4 years residency in Bracknell Forest • Making offers of private rented accommodation to homeless households for whom the Council has a statutory duty to house as a discharge of duty. • Introducing the "Right to Move" which will allow social housing tenants living outside Bracknell Forest to move to a housing association property in Bracknell Forest to enable them to take up employment of keep employment in the Borough. • Introducing the opportunity for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account when considering applicants from outside the borough • Where families have children in care and Children Services are working with the family to enable the children to return home, these families will be prioritised as if the children are living with them so that they do not have to wait until the children are returned to come on to the housing register. There are no budget reductions proposed in these changes
2. What is the activity?	X Policy/strategy ☐ Function/procedure ☐ Project ☐ Review ☐ Service ☐ Organisational change
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	☐ New x Existing
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Clare Dorning
5. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Clare Dorning – Head of Housing Strategy and Needs Janet Weekes – Housing Strategy and Resources Manager Lisa Jones – Welfare and Housing Team Leader

6. What is the purpose of the activity?

Please describe briefly its aims, objectives and main activities as relevant. Provide further details of the budget reduction proposal that you will be assessing the impact of.

The purpose of the Allocations Policy is to ensure social rented housing in the borough is let to those in greatest need, to ensure best use is made of the social rented stock in the borough, to encourage sustainable communities, and to make sure the housing needs of vulnerable applicants and those in priority need are given reasonable preference.

The Localism Act 2011 includes the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order which gives an authority the power to arrange an offer of private rented sector accommodation as a suitable offer to discharge its homelessness duty. The Council should include the implementation of this power in its Allocations Policy.

In April 2015, the Government introduced the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015. The purpose of this regulation is to enable social tenants to move to another authority to take up a job or live closer to employment or training.

Recent case law has highlighted the need for an Authority's allocations policy to allow for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account when applying any policy restriction.

The Council works with and supports a number of families who may have children taken into the care of the local authority. Where the Council considers that a child's best interests is to return to the care of a family member, the accommodation that is currently occupied by that family member may be inadequate for the child to return to. In these cases, it is proposed that the family is given a "head start" by enabling the housing need of the family to be assessed as if the child were resident in the property.

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7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?

Households on the My Choice Housing Register applying for social rented housing.

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8. a Racial equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N

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8. b What evidence do you have to support this?
E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc.

The following table summarises the ethnic profile of the housing register:

Minority ethnic households	395
White British households	1,599
No response	15

20% of applicants on the My Choice housing register are from minority ethnic groups. These households are evenly

distributed across each of the register bands. The proposed changes to the residency criteria will impact households who have lived in the borough for less than 4 years. While there will be minority ethnic households among this population, White British households are equally likely to be impacted as they may have moved in and out of the borough for reasons such as employment, changes in relationships or property availability.

13% of households for whom the Council has accepted a duty to rehouse under the homelessness legislation are from minority ethnic groups. The proposal to discharge duty by housing in the private rented sector will be applied to all homeless households and will therefore not have a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic homeless households.

9. a Gender equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N	
		We have no evidence to suggest there is a differential impact on applicants from a particular gender

9. b What evidence do you have to support this?

62% of applicants on the housing register are female. However, where there is a joint application, the gender is taken from the primary applicant, therefore the data cannot be taken as an accurate reflection of the makeup of households on the register.

The distribution of female applicants is similar across all bands and should therefore not be disproportionately affected by the proposed policy changes.

10. a Disability equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N	
		We have no evidence to suggest there is a differential impact on applicants with a disability.

10. b What evidence do you have to support this?

The disability equalities strand is measured using a social model of disability as opposed to the medical model, ie, applicants are asked to define for themselves whether they consider they have a disability. 14% of applicants consider themselves to have some form of disability. While applicants with a disability may not have lived within the borough for 4 years, the introduction of an exceptional circumstances consideration will allow households who may have a special need to live in Bracknell Forest to have their needs reviewed and an exception to be made.

11. a Age equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N	
		We have no evidence to suggest there is a differential impact on people from particular age groups.

11. b What evidence do you have to support this?

The following table summarises the age profile of applicants on the housing register:

16-24 yrs	327
25-44 yrs	1,201
45-59 yrs	300
60+ yrs	181

9% of applicants on the housing register are over the age of 60years. Only 5 applicants are under 18 years. The majority of the housing register is therefore of working age.

The proposal to introduce an exceptional circumstances consideration will allow households who may have a special need to live in Bracknell Forest to have their needs reviewed and an exception to be made.

12. a Religion and belief equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N	
		We have no evidence to suggest there is a differential impact on people from particular religious or belief groups at this time.

12. b What evidence do you have to support this?

The following table summarises the religion/belief profile of the housing register.

Buddhist	5
Hindu	11
Christian	875
Jewish	2
Muslim	41
None	719
Other	97
Sikh	2
Do not want to answer	197

13. a Sexual orientation equality - Is there an impact?
What kind of equality impact may there be?
Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.

Y	N	
		We have no evidence to suggest there is a differential impact on people on the basis of their sexual orientation.

These groups are distributed across all bands and household types.

13. b What evidence do you have to support this?

The following table summarises the sexual orientation of applicants on the housing register.

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	17
Gay	11
Heterosexual	1,577
Lesbian	7

Other	41
Do not want to answer	259

These applicants are distributed across all bands. None of the proposed policy changes should impact disproportionately on any specific sexual orientation.

14. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carer's/ex-offenders) and on promoting good community relations.

There will be a positive impact for families with children in care, where the family needs a larger property before the child can return home. This policy change will also reduce the length of time a child may be required to remain in care by enabling the housing need to be registered earlier, thereby allowing the family a longer effective date.

15. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?

The proposed changes to the Allocations Policy are in response to new legislation and case law. Some of the changes are necessary to ensure the Council's Allocations Policy is lawful.

16. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?

The most significant impact of the proposed changes is for households who have not resided in the Bracknell Forest Borough continuously for four years. An estimated 200 households will be affected by this change and will be removed from the housing register. Households from all sections of the community are likely to be included in this population.

17. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?

Y | N

18. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?

Consultation has been carried out on the proposed changes via the consultation portal. The results of the consultation will be included in the final report to the Executive.

19. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?

Y | N

20. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria

21. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?

Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

22. Have any current actions to address issues for any of the groups or examples of good practice been identified as part of the screening?

23. Chief Officers signature.

Signature: Date: 15/6/16

24. Which PMR will this screening be reported in?

Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication

TO: **EXECUTIVE**
27 SEPTEMBER 2016

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT SCHEME (LCTDS)
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To seek Executive consideration of a new model of the Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme (LCTBS) and as such to agree consultation on the new scheme

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive agrees:

2.1   To develop a new LCTDS for working age households which provides a discount on a household's Council Tax based on household income, rather than an assessment of needs.

2.2   That subject to agreement to the new model a consultation programme takes place so as to inform the LCTDS to be implemented for 2017/18.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The Council established its Local Council Tax Benefit / Reduction Scheme in 2013/14. In 2015/16 the Council introduced a revision of the Council Tax Discount Scheme but the scheme still reflected the previous national Council Tax Benefit Scheme. The Council's Annual Plan 2015-2019 has set the aim, "**In targeting our services, we will prioritise people and areas with the greatest need, early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent**". The proposed new Local Council Tax Discount Scheme targets financial support to those who most need it whilst encouraging and rewarding employment and households increasing their earnings as well as simplifying administration.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   It could be decided not to review the LCTDS. However, that would miss the opportunity to support the Council's Annual Plan in targeting the Council's resources to those most in need and encouraging independence and incentivising households seeking better paid employment or income whilst at the same time reducing administration costs of the scheme for the Council.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the national Council Tax Benefit Scheme thus paving the way for localised schemes. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 makes provision for the localisation of Council Tax Support in England by imposing a duty on all billing authorities to make a localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31 January 2013 and to consult with major precepting authorities and such other persons as it considers likely to have an interest in the scheme about the scheme. The Local Government Finance Act prescribes certain classes or groups who must

receive reductions. This includes classes of eligible pensioners based on the same factors that have determined pensioner eligibility and award under the Council Tax Benefit System. The proposals contained in this report refer to the local scheme that will affect working age households.

5.2   The following table sets out the budget for the LCTBS in 2016/17:

Precepting authority	£'s
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	3,354,669
Thames Valley Police Authority	492,348
Thames Valley Fire Authority	180,670
Parish Councils	216,960
Total	**4,244,647**

5.3   Any change in the scheme will lead to less or more reductions in Council Tax liability for customers and as such will either reduce or increase the costs of the scheme. The reductions in the costs of the scheme will accrue proportionately to the precepting authorities. For example Bracknell Forest Council provides £ 3,354,669 to the total scheme value of £4,244,647 which equates to 79%. Therefore, any reduction to the cost of the scheme will accrue to the Council on that basis. The same approach will apply to any decisions that will result in increased support and thus increased expenditure.

Proposed changes to scheme

5.4   The following proposals and consequential financial impact is based on modelling the LCTDS caseload as at August 2015. As this is a snapshot of the impact of any changes reflecting the circumstances of customers at the time the changes are implemented. It does not take into account any increase in Council Tax in future years. The Council has to operate a nationally prescribed scheme for pensioners and has no option but to fund any increase in the scheme resulting from an increased Council Tax. For example based on the August 2016 pensioner caseload a 4% increase in Council Tax would lead to a £95,516 increase in the costs of the Local Council Tax Scheme.

5.5   Although the Council has introduced some changes to its Local Council Tax Discount Scheme since 2012 the essence of the scheme is the same as that original national Council Tax Benefit Scheme. Each household has an applicable amount of income they should receive which is the minimum the Government thinks they should have to live on based on their circumstances. If their income equates to that amount they receive a 80% discount on their Council Tax and if their income exceeds their applicable amount then the discount is reduced by 21 pence in the pound until they no longer receive a discount. For example a household of two adults and one child would have an applicable amount of £199.20 per week. If they received income of £250 and their weekly Council Tax liability was £25 they would receive £14.33 Council Tax discount (£250 – £199.20 = £50.80 X 0.21 = £10.67, Council Tax of £25 minus £10.67 = £14.33. It can be argued that this scheme does not incentivise a household increasing their income as for each extra £1 they earn they lose 21 pence in Council Tax discount.

5.6.   The proposed scheme moves away from using an applicable amount reflecting household needs to placing household income into a pre-determined band which will generate a discount on the household Council Tax liability. Thus there is an incentive for a household to increase their household income within the band as they will not lose any of their Council Tax discount. In terms of administration of the scheme it will be easier to explain to households the discount they will be entitled to based on their household income and also households will only receive one Council Tax demand and no revised bills as long as their income remains within the income band. The new scheme aims to incentivise households to increase their household income. However, there are some households who are disabled or who have a disabled member in the household and therefore are not able to work and increase their income and so it is necessary to protect that group and provide them with the highest current discount on their council tax which is 80%.

5.7.   The following table sets out the proposed structure of the new scheme.

Band	Discount on Council Tax	Household income band £ per week	Households who would receive higher discount compared to current scheme	Households who would receive lower discount compared to the current scheme
A(household in receipt of disability premium, sever disability premium and enhanced disability premium	80%		48	
1	75	0-80*	4	908
2	70	80-140	61	61
3	60	140-200	46	115
4	50	200-260	81	125
5	40	260-320	61	81
6	30	320-380	28	54
7	20	380-440	11	41
Households no longer receiving a discount				44
Total			340	1429

Band 1 reflects those households who are in receipt of an out of work benefit such as Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit. Thus, their income is based on an assessment of need but the remaining bands reflect households earned income from work minus disregards.

5.8   The calculation of household income remains the same as the current scheme except that carers allowance has been disregarded at £62.10 a week. This disregard of Carers Allowance has been brought in as part of national welfare reform and reflects the fact that households in receipt of carers allowance may have less ability to earn income due to caring responsibility which requires them to care for someone for 35 hours a week.

5.9   Although there are significantly more households who lose discount under the proposed scheme that does not take into account the ability for a household to earn more income without losing discount compared to the old scheme. For example a

couple working with three children with an income of £326 a week taken into account under the schemes would have received a discount of £19.75 a week under the old scheme yet would receive a discount of £7.40 under the new scheme as they would be in band 6. However, under the old scheme if the household increased their income by £25.98 a week they would have lost all their discount but in the new scheme they keep the discount of £ 7.40 a week until their income takes them into band 7 by increasing by £54 a week or more. The following table provides some examples of case studies based on the old and new scheme.

Household All Council Tax liability based on band C liability of £1,283.99 a year	Current CTax payment after LCTBS current scheme £ per week	Total income £ per week taken into account for income band after disregarded income	Proposed Income Band	Maximum proposed CTR % of liability	New CTax payment £ per week	+/- Change £ per week from current scheme
Single person disabled working and in receipt of disability living allowance. (entitled to a disability premium)	3.69	104.25	A	80%	3.69	0.00
Lone parent receiving Income Support	3.69	244.08	1	75%	4.62	+0.93
Single person working	8.78	97.36	2	70%	5.54	-3.24
Couple working with one child	4.92	131.26	2	70%	7.39	+2.47
Couple working	12.03	148.68	3	60%	9.85	-2.18
Couple working with one child	10.58	202.67	4	50%	12.31	+1.73
Couple working with two children	15.48	316.40	5	40%	14.77	-0.71
Lone parent working receiving £50 a week child maintenance	10.24	279.01	5	40%	11.08	+0.84
Couple working with three children	4.92	326.61	6	30%	17.23	+12.31

5.10   If following consultation the Council is minded to adopt the new scheme it will reduce expenditure on Council Tax discounts by £106,321 a year based on the August 2016 caseload and incomes.

5.11   There will be reduced administration costs generated from the new scheme in that there will be reduction in Council Tax bills being generated when there is change in household income as long as they remain in the same income band. However, to date the Council's discount scheme has mirrored the previous national benefit

scheme and the majority of Council's have adopted such schemes administered via the Northgate software system. As the Council's scheme becomes unique it will be reliant on the software provider to write bespoke changes to the system rather than sharing costs with Council's who run similar systems. The proposed changes to the system can be contained within existing budgets in 2016/17.

5.12   The Council provides a hardship scheme to provide financial assistance for households to help them pay their Council tax if they are faced with an increased liability that was unforeseen due to a change in circumstances or if the scheme changes take them out of the discount scheme.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   The Council is required under Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992   to consider each year whether to revise its Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Where it chooses to so do it must, before making a scheme:

- Consult any major precepting Authority which has the power to issue a precept to it
- Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit; and
- Consult with such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

   Such consultation should:

- Be at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage
- Provide sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration
- Provide sufficient time for consideration and response
- Ensure that the product of the process is conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

Any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme must be made no later than 31 January 2017.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   The relevant financial provisions are contained within the report.

Chief Officer: Customer Services

6.3   Whilst it is not expected that there will be a large increase in the net collectible Council Tax debit as a result of changes to the scheme, it could mean that a large number of households, who may already be struggling to meet their liabilities, will receive a reduction in the level of support that they receive. As such these debts are likely to be challenging and resource intensive to collect. It is expected that any reduction in the number of Council Tax bills that are issued will result in a negligible saving.

However, it is positive to see a simplified scheme that may incentivise households to increase their income without the fear of a large loss in support. A scheme with this

kind of design will also allow for a simpler and more streamlined administration process.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4   A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken following consultation results.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5   It will be necessary for the Council to undertake consultation to ensure the impact of any proposed changes has been considered by the affected groups and that the Council takes into account the views of those affected before making any changes to the scheme.

6.6   The proposals identify the reduced cost of the LCTBS but when customers receive less support they will be required to pay the resulting Council Tax liability. The Council's ability to collect the liability will determine the ultimate total cost of the scheme when changes have been made.

7   CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   The purpose of this report is to seek authority to consult on a range of proposals to review the current LCTBS. Consultation will take place with the following groups:

Precepting authorities
Thames Valley Police
Berkshire Fire and rescue services
Bracknell Town Council
Binfield Parish Council
Warfield Parish Council
Winkfield Parish Council
Crowthorne Parish Council
Sandhurst Town Council

Consultation will take place with customers of the LCTBS
Consultation will take place with the wider community and interested groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau

Method of Consultation

7.2   Consultation will take place via meetings, correspondence and the Council's consultation on line portal.

Background Papers

Reports from Northgate modelling software.

Contact for further information
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Unrestricted

TO: EXECUTIVE
27 SEPTEMBER 2016

DESIGN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) – CONSULTATION DRAFT AND PROCESS

Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of the development of a new draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on planning design issues, as attached at Appendix A, and to seek approval for the proposed period of public consultation set out at section 8 of the report to commence in autumn 2016.

2   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1   The Design SPD provides design principles and best practice to guide the design quality of developments proposals. It builds on the design guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Council's own policies as set out in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007; the saved policies of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 and the current Streetscene SPD and Character Area Assessment.

2.2   The content of the Design SPD is structured as follows:

Chapter One - Introduction

This sets out the scope of the document, who it is aimed at, and the weight to be given to the information within it.

Chapter Two - Design and Context

This chapter details some of the more high level principles relating to understanding the site and context of the area, responding to existing character and, where needed, creating "places" with their own identity and the standards of quality expected in new development in the Borough.

Chapter Three - Built Form and Spaces

Detailed guidance is provided on the basic principles of design to create places that will provide good communities and pleasant homes for our residents in the future.

Chapter Four – Extending Your Home

This includes much of the information already set out in the Householder's Leaflet: A Guide to Extending Your Home, with additional information and up to date references and sources.

Chapter Five – Design and Access Statements

The document includes information relating to what should be provided within a Design and Access Statement, checklists and where to go for additional information.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Executive notes the draft Design SPD and approves the (Consultation Draft) Design SPD at Appendix A for public consultation for the six week period set out at section 8 of this report.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Council has reviewed its current design guidance and considers that a Design SPD would assist with the implementation of current planning policies and provide prospective applicants with a clearer idea of the Council's expectations for the design of development schemes. A public consultation that accords with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be required as part of this process.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not producing the draft Design SPD could result in the continuation and possible increase of officer time being expended upon assessing the standard of design included within planning applications to ensure that an acceptable standard is achieved throughout the borough. In addition, the Council's current guidance does not have the legal status afforded to an SPD, which are material planning considerations and therefore carries limited weight in planning terms.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 153 that SPDs should be used to assist applicants to make successful applications. This new SPD is seen as assisting and clarifying policy implementation. It also details the Council's desire to achieve high quality development across the Borough. The key policies relevant to this new Design SPD will be policy "CS 7 Design" in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007 and Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 saved policy "EN20 – Design considerations in new development". The document also complements and cross references to the current Streetscene SPD, Parking Standards SPD and the Character Area Assessments SPD.

6.2 The Council currently has a design leaflet entitled "Extending Your Home: A Householders Guide". This is available to download on the Council's website and provides guidance for residents on extending their homes. This leaflet is well liked and very useful for both members of the public and technical consultants, agents and officers. However, this document has never been through a public consultation process or adopted as an SPD and is therefore limited in terms of the weight that can be attributed to it. The scope of the design advice within it is also very limited.

6.3 The new SPD is intended to be similarly simple and easy to use, but with a wider scope to provide more general advice on design principles, including information that could be used in connection with both small and large scale new developments. The information for householders on extending their homes has also been reviewed and updated and is included as one of the chapters of the document.

6.4 Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design consultancy were appointed to produce the document. A copy of the draft document is attached at Appendix A.

6.5　The draft Design SPD seeks to achieve the right content and tone for a wide audience of both technical professionals assessing large scale developments and the general public submitting small scale householder planning applications. The aim is to keep the document focussed and easy to use and not to reproduce design advice found in other Council documents.

6.6　The document has been through an internal consultation process with the relevant divisions in the Environment, Culture and Communities department. The document has also been to the Local Plans Working Group in June and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in July. Appropriate changes have been made to the document following this internal consultation and the Member meetings.

6.7　The Council has undertaken a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Design SPD under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. As part of this process the three statutory bodies, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency have been consulted. The consultation period ran from 7th July 2016 – 18th August 2016. None of the statutory bodies specified the need for an SEA. A copy of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report is attached as Appendix B. The Design SPD Strategic Report Environmental Assessment Determination will be attached as part of the public report for the Executive in September 2016.

6.8　The draft Design SPD now needs to go through a public consultation process. The proposed consultation is set out in section 8 of this report. This will be completed in accordance with the Council's SCI, Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment Scoping requirements and Paragraphs 11 – 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which sets out procedural issues for the adoption of a SPD.

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

Borough Solicitor

7.1　As stated in the report, SPD's are local plan documents that add further detail to policies in a local plan and can be used to provide additional guidance on a particular issue, such as design. Once adopted a SPD becomes a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and will form part of the Council's statutory Local Development Framework.

7.2　Paragraph 6.7 of the report, advises that the draft Design SPD has completed the initial process of SA scoping and consultation with statutory consultees. The next step of the draft Design SPD adoption process will be the public consultation stage. This will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's SCI, subject to the approval of the recommendation.

7.3　As SPDs are not Development Plan documents that form part of the Development Plan they are not subject to the requirement to undergo independent examination in the same way as Development Plan Documents. However, the Council is still legally required to undertake a process of public consultation before they can be adopted in accordance with paragraph 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 and Section 19(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

7.4　The Council is required to adhere to the public participation requirements set out in paragraph 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England

Regulations 2012 prior to the adoption of a SPD. This includes the production of a statement confirming the persons who have been consulted, setting out a summary of the main issues raised by those persons and explaining how those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

7.5   Section 19(3) specifically requires local planning authorities to comply with their adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) when undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the adoption of a SPD. The Council's SCI provides for a period of 4 weeks of formal public consultation and the recommendation therefore accords with this statutory requirement.

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7.6   After reviewing responses received, the Council will consider the need for any further consultation, which may relate to a specific topic. These matters will be addressed in subsequent reports as part of the decision making process.

[Equality Impact Assessment
The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single public sector equality duty. This duty requires the Council to have due regard in its decision making processes to the need to:
a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
c) foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As part of the consultation process the Council will consult a broad range of stakeholders and make every effort to be inclusive. A detailed Equalities Assessment in relation to the SPD will be undertaken at the appropriate stage of the decision making process.

Human Rights Considerations
The SPD will potentially engage certain human rights under the Human Rights Act1998 ('the HRA'). The HRA prohibits unlawful interference by public bodies with convention rights. The term 'engage' simply means that human rights may be affected or relevant. In the draft SPD, a number of rights are potentially engaged:-

• **The right to a fair trial (Article 6)** – giving rise to the need to ensure proper consultation and effective engagement of the public in the process;
• **The right to respect for private and family life (Article 8)** – for instance the Final Design SPD could impact on viability of housing provision or re-provision. Other considerations may include impacts on amenities or the quality of life of individuals based on design considerations being too prohibitive;
• **Article 1, Protocol 1 (Protection of Property)** – this right prohibits interference with individuals' right to peaceful enjoyment of existing and future property/homes. It could be engaged, for instance, if the final Design SPD makes future development unviable.

It is important to note that few rights are absolute in the sense that they cannot be interfered with under any circumstances. 'Qualified' rights, including Article 6, Article 8 and Protocol 1, can be interfered with or limited in certain circumstances. The extent of legitimate interference is subject to the principle of proportionality whereby a balance must be struck between the legitimate aims to be achieved by a local planning authority in the policy making process against the potential interference with

individual human rights. Before making their decision members will be advised to have regard to human rights considerations and strive to strike a fair balance between the legitimate aims of adopting the SPD for the benefit of the community against the potential interference with individual rights]

Borough Treasurer

7.7 The costs associated with the public consultation can be met from within the existing Local Development Framework Revenue Budget.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.8 A draft Equalities Screening Record has been undertaken for this stage of the process (refer to Appendix C) which will be completed with the final adopted Design SPD and included as an appendix for the Executive agenda in March 2017

Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.9 None as a consequence of this report.

Other Officers

7.10 The preparation of this SPD has been informed by technical evidence and consultation with officers across the Council.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The future programme for the Draft Design SPD is:

- Public consultation is proposed to start on Monday 17th October and will run for 6 weeks, concluding on Friday 25th November 2016.
- Consideration of comments received and revision of Draft SPD – December 2016 to January 2017.
- Executive decision on adoption of the Design SPD March 2017.

Principal Groups to be Consulted

8.2 The principal groups which will form part of the public consultation to be undertaken are proposed as follows:

- Parish and Town Councils;
- Local Development Framework (LDF) consultees (those who have asked to be consulted on all LDF issues);
- Statutory consultees;
- Neighbourhood Plan groups;
- House builders, developers, architects and designers;
- Highway consultants; and
- Other interested groups or individuals requesting further information.

Additionally, a statement will be released to the press and copies of the document will be available on the Council's website, in all local libraries, Parish and Town Council Offices, and in the Council reception areas.

Method of Consultation

8.3   The document will be placed on the Council's website and letters will inform those detailed above of where they can view the document. Hard copies will be delivered to each of the Council's libraries and to the Parish and Town Council's offices.

Representations Received

8.4   Representations received will be fully considered and a final document incorporating any appropriate changes will be produced for adoption in the Spring of 2017.

Background Papers

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Consultation Draft Design Supplementary Planning Document

Bracknell Forest Council

October 2016

Bracknell Forest Council

Environment, Culture and Communities
Bracknell Forest Council
Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Achieving good design through the planning system

1.1.1   Bracknell Forest Council is committed to securing high quality new development. The requirement for good design is at the heart of this commitment and is central to the assessment of all development proposals within the Borough.

1.1.2   Government Policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) , emphasises the importance of good design. The NPPF defines places that achieve good design as being those that:

- *"Function well … over the lifetime of the development"*
- *"Establish a strong sense of place"*
- *"Sustain an appropriate mix of uses … support local facilities and transport networks"*
- *"Respond to local character … surroundings and materials, while not preventing innovation"*
- *"Create safe and accessible environments"*
- Are *"visually attractive … [with] good architecture and appropriate landscaping".*

1.1.3   The Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2008) sets spatial objectives for the development of the Borough. Policy CS7 Design requires good design for all development, together with a series of series of criteria as follows:

- *"i. build on the urban, suburban and rural local character, respecting local patterns of development and the historic environment;*
- *ii. provide safe communities;*
- *iii. enhance the landscape and promote biodiversity;*
- *iv. aid movement through accessibility, connectivity, permeability and legibility;*
- *v. enable a mix of uses;*
- *vi. provide high quality usable open spaces and public realm;*
- *vii. provide innovative architecture; and*
- *viii. provide well designed and integrated public art."*

1.1.4   Saved Policy EN20 and emerging design related policies in the Comprehensive Local Plan further strengthen the Council's commitment to high quality design within the Borough.

1.1.5   The Council has also adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to provide guidance on aspects of design. These include:

- the Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments SPD which assesses local character in key parts of the area and provides guidance on how it can be retained and enhanced;
- the Streetscene SPD, which sets out how to create positive streetscenes;
- the Sustainable Resource Management SPD, which provides guidance on how to make buildings more environmentally friendly; and
- the Parking Standards SPD.

1.1.6   Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design also requires proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve good design, through Design & Access Statements, clear and informative drawings, including streetscenes, and other material that may define the future quality of development proposals, including concept statements, development briefs, masterplans or design codes.

1.1.7   The Council assesses all new development against 'Building For Life 12' criteria. Performance is measured at all stages of the planning process and once a development is completed its score is reported as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Therefore all applicants should consider fully meeting the Building for Life criteria from the outset of the design process.

1.1.8   The Council is currently developing a Comprehensive Local Plan (CLP) which will set the long-term spatial vision and development strategy for the Borough up to 2036. Once adopted, it will replace many of the saved policies in the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002) and the Core Strategy (2008). It will be wide ranging in terms of the issues that it will cover. Please keep up to date on the progress of the CLP by referring to the Planning Policy pages of the Council's website.

1.2 Design SPD

1.2.1 This Design Guide document provides design principles and best practice to guide the design quality of development proposals. It elaborates on the design principles set out in both the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. Saved Policy EN20 has also informed this guide.

1.2.2 In particular it focuses on design principles for built development in order to complement the other SPD documents that the Council has already adopted (identified above). In particular, the Streetscene SPD focuses on developments where new streets are to be created so this guide makes reference to it where relevant.

1.2.3 The Council intends to adopt this document as a SPD following a thorough public consultation process. Once adopted, it will form part of the Council's policy context and will be a material consideration when applications are being considered. It is also intended to be of help to householders who may wish to make changes to their properties under their Permitted Development rights.

1.2.4 The content is split into five sections:

■ **Section 1:** Introduction (this section);

■ **Section 2:** Design and Context;

■ **Section 3:** Built Form and Spaces;

■ **Section 4:** Extensions and Alterations; and

■ **Section 5:** Design and Access Statements.

1.2.5 **Section 2:** Design and Context, focuses on how development proposals should respond to their surroundings. This is relevant to all development proposals, for residential and commercial developments as well as for householder extensions and alterations.

1.2.6 **Section 3:** Built Form and Spaces, provides general design principles for buildings and spaces, and how to relate them together to create positive places. It also provides principles for the design of buildings, and for the associated requirements that need to be accommodated on plot, such as parking, servicing and amenity space. It also provides guidance on the relationships with neighbouring properties. These design principles apply to all forms of development, although the examples focus on residential development, the most common form of development in the Borough.

1.2.7 **Section 4:** Extensions and Alterations, provides design principles for the design of residential extensions and alterations to existing properties.

1.2.8 **Section 5:** Design and Access Statements, sets out the Council's expectations for Design and Access Statements where they are required to accompany a planning application.

1.3 How to use this document

1.3.1 This document is relevant to different types of development although not all sections are relevant to all proposals.

1.3.2 This document refers to 'designers' in a number of places. The design role is vital to securing good design and high quality development. In most cases, it should be carried out by the architect for a project, or another suitably experienced professional (for instance a masterplanner, on a large scale development). However, it should also help and guide local residents wishing to improve their home.

2 Responding to the Context

2.1 Key principle

2.1.1   A well designed development relates well to its surroundings. It should be integrated into its context and should respond positively to local character. Where appropriate, new development should also create new places with a positive character. It should also make a contribution towards environmental sustainability.

2.1.2   To achieve this, designers need to understand the site and its context.

2.2 Understanding the site and its context

2.2.1   **Principle: Good design starts from an understanding of the place, the local context and the site. Development proposals should be informed by a thorough analysis of the physical and policy context and character of the area as well as the specific conditions of the site. This should be summarised and the opportunities and constraints identified for pre-application discussion and to support application material. The steps include:**

- **a site visit;**
- **site and context analysis;**
- **character appraisal; and**
- **identifying opportunities and constraints.**

Site visit

2.2.2   Before starting to design, a visit to the site and its surroundings is absolutely essential. On the site visit, designers should identify local features and characteristics that may influence the design or technical approach, including site features (for instance trees), key views in and out of the site and technical issues (for instance drainage). In some cases a site visit will provide enough information. In others, technical surveys will be needed to feed into the design process.

Site and context analysis

2.2.3   As a minimum, designers should consider the issues set out below and, where relevant, include them in their site and context analysis. The table shown on the following page provides guidance on which issues are likely to be relevant to different scales of development proposal.

2.2.4   Designers will be expected to identify and analyse the range of issues relevant to their particular site and development proposal. The amount of detail required for each development proposal will depend on its size, the type of development and the complexity of the project.

Design influences		Development scale
Scale	Relevant issues	Likely to be relevant to
Wider context	• Strategic role and function of the site • Settlement pattern • Accessibility to facilities, services and public transport by all modes of transport • Housing need and/ or market assessment	• Major development
Local context	• Pattern of blocks, plot sizes and buildings • Townscape character (see 2.2.5 below) • Landscape character including open spaces, wildlife corridors and designations (SSSI, • SPA etc) (see 2.2.5 below) • Local mix of uses including community facilities • Topography • Views into and out of the site • Movement pattern including all modes of transport • Drainage • Site allocations	• Major development • Infill development
Local context for householders	• Built heritage including conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, locally listed buildings • Planning policy designations	• Major development • Infill development • Householder development

Design influences		Development scale
Scale	Relevant issues	Likely to be relevant to
Site features, characteristics and conditions	• Site levels • Buildings and structures • Landscape including trees, hedgerows, ponds, etc • Ecology • Views within/ out of the site • Heritage, including archaeology • Flood risk and drainage • Pollution including contamination • Ground conditions • Access for all modes of transport • Utilities • Microclimate • Daylight/ sunlight • Boundary conditions	• Major development • Infill development • Householder development

91

Character appraisal

2.2.5   To demonstrate an understanding of the existing character, designers should carry out an appraisal of the townscape and landscape character of the site and its local context.

2.2.6   First check whether the site is within a Conservation Area or forms one of the Bracknell Forest Character Areas, as identified in the Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments SPD. The Council has carried out an appraisal for each of these areas and this should be the starting point. However, it is likely that designers will need to carry out a detailed appraisal of the site in its surroundings to supplement the information that is already available.

- Conservation Areas are statutory designations for areas of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Bracknell Forest's Conservation Areas can be found at: http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bfconservationareas.

- The Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments SPD identifies and assesses areas with distinctive and positive character in the Borough. It makes recommendations for maintaining and enhancing the character of specific areas, including recommendations for future development proposals. It can be found at: http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/spds

Binfield and Popeswood Study Area, taken from Character Area Assessments SPD 2010

Historic Map 1

Historic Map 2

The northern approach to the area is set within small to medium sized fields enclosed by strong tree belts;

Parkland features of Binfield Park contributing to the character area include Park Lodge, South Lodge, North Lodge, park gates and substantial perimeter tree cover;

Tilehurst Lane retains remnants of its rural character: partially bounded by hedgerows; and roadside ditch/stream;

The open designed landscape features of Blue Mountain Golf Course within Temple Park Open Clay Estatelands contribute to the character area include the scalloped golf course landscape, perimeter hedgeline, and views eastwards

Newbold College historic park and garden lies partly within the area. Parkland features contributing to the character of the area include clumps of trees, open grassland and views eastwards

The eastern approach is marked by a large roundabout overlooked by the grounds of Farley Hall and open spaces which contrast strongly with character area C

To the south and east, the character area is heavily influenced by the urban form of north Bracknell, although the parkland grounds and mature trees of Farley Hall separate the two areas

The area is separated from the open countryside to the west by modern housing

Parkland features of Popes Manor contributing to the character area include Popes Meadow, a pond enclosed by trees, and tree groups

90 m AOD

The southern approach to the area is marked by large roundabouts with large scale modern development which contrasts strongly with character

2.2.7   The area to be assessed will depend upon the nature and scale of the development proposal. It may be at the level of the neighbourhood, the street, or the site together with neighbouring plots.

2.2.8   The character appraisal should identify and assess the positive and negative characteristics of the site and its immediate context.

2.2.9   The Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments SPD and the Streetscene SPD together identify a number of elements to be assessed:

- landscape setting;
- townscape and built form;
- streetscene;
- width of street;
- boundary treatments;
- building line;
- plot sizes;
- building heights and sense of enclosure;
- landscaping – soft and hard; and
- parking solutions.

Identifying opportunities and constraints

2.2.10   Designers should identify the opportunities and constraints that affect the design approach to their site and should explain how these have influenced their development proposals. Positive opportunities for placemaking should be identified as well as constraints to development. There should be a clear link between the opportunities and constraints plan and the development proposals.

Understanding the site and context – critical review	
Is there evidence of a visit to the site and context?	
Is there a site and context analysis that covers the appropriate issues?	
Is there a townscape and landscape character appraisal that identifies both positive and negative characteristics of the area?	
Is there a clear link between opportunities and constraints that have been identified and the development proposals?	

2.3   Integrating the site into its surroundings

2.3.1   **Principle:** It is important that proposals for new development, whatever their size, are well integrated into the existing context. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- linking new routes and access points into the existing movement network;

- respecting existing desire lines and making connections to local destinations, such as schools, shopping and employment areas;

- relating well to the existing hierarchy of routes, in terms both of function and character, so the relative importance of routes is clear, to help people find their way around;

- using development blocks and/or plots that relate to the existing grain of development (i.e. the pattern or arrangement of built development and spaces) in terms of size and configuration; and

- responding to prevailing building heights, plot sizes, densities and degrees of variation in the local context.

2.3.2   The Streetscene SPD addresses these issues in more detail.

Integrating into the context – critical review	
Do the proposals create connections to existing streets, pedestrian and cycle paths and public transport stops?	
Have new connections been made, reflecting existing desire lines and creating routes to local destinations?	
Has a clear street hierarchy been established and do proposals support the existing street hierarchy?	
Do the development blocks and plots relate to the existing grain of development ?	
Do building heights and densities respond to the prevailing pattern in the context?	

2.4   Placemaking

2.4.1   **Principle:** New development should exploit opportunities to create a positive sense of place that enhances the existing character of the site and also of the local area. This may include:

- incorporating existing positive site features into new development to provide continuity and create an instant sense of maturity;

- creating a sense of place that responds positively to the character of the local area in terms of urban design, architecture, landscape and public realm; and

- creating new places with a positive character appropriate to their role and function within the wider area, eg a new neighbourhood centre or open space/ local park.

2.4.2   For many aspects of design, the 'right' approach will depend on the site, the nature of the proposed development and the context. The sense of place and character of a development will depend upon a number of choices that a designer makes in relation to the elements included in section 3 of this guide. Where a choice may have a particular influence on the character of a development, this is highlighted in the relevant section.

Placemaking – critical review	
Do the proposals incorporate existing positive site features into the new development?	
Have local characteristics influenced the design	
Do the proposals create new places with a positive character that is appropriate to their role and function?	
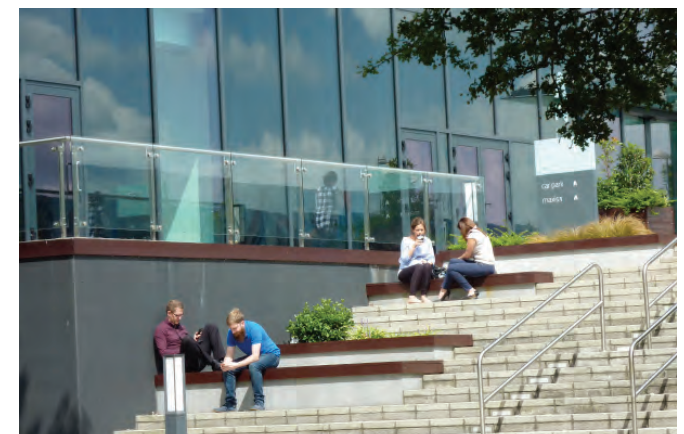
Positive integration of existing mature trees in The Parks, Bracknell and creating usable amenity for office workers

2.5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Principle: SuDS should be considered from the outset and be one of the key factors to inform development proposals, housing layouts and the public realm.

2.5.1 SuDS have been introduced to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, remove pollutants from urban run-offs at source and combine water management with green spaces, enhancing the visual amenity of neighbourhoods, habitats for wildlife and, in some places, recreation areas. SuDS is the opposite to historic ways of dealing with surface water management and therefore piping water away from a site is no longer acceptable unless there is no other way of managing water where it falls.

2.5.2 Surface water drainage is a material consideration and all new development proposals are required to incorporate SuDS and use SuDS to inform layouts and how water will be accommodated on site. Experience tells us that dealing with water where it falls is actually a more cost effect approach for developers than traditional piping systems. This is in addition to the benefits for future residents with higher quality multi-functional public realm, visual amenity and space for wildlife to live alongside us.

2.5.3 The Council is now the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and is a statutory consultee for all planning consultations. Drainage information is also required to validate planning applications. There are many sources of information and guidance on how to achieve successful SuDS. The following are examples:

■ CIRIA guidance – The SuDS Manual.

■ DEFRA – Non Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

■ NHBC Foundation – A Simple Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems for Housing.

2.5.4 Outline applications will need to submit a general drainage strategy setting out how water flows naturally on the site, what is the flood risk, where will water flow after the development is completed and how water will be managed? The general principles for maintenance should also be set out.

2.5.5 For full or reserved matters applications, applicants will need to demonstrate how guidance and technical standards are met, how water is dealt with on the site, design calculations to support the proposals, a detailed management strategy, exceedance routes and temporary drainage during construction.

Sustainable Drainage Systems – critical review	
Does the Drainage Strategy follow the principles of SuDS	
Has sufficient information been supplied for the LLFA to assess?	
Has the layout or proposal clearly been informed by SuDS?	
How is the public realm used to accommodate water where it falls?	
Are there any foreseen management issues that are not addressed?	

2.6 Sustainability

2.6.1   The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development, i.e. development that balances economic, social and environmental sustainability.

2.6.2   The Council has adopted a Sustainable Resource Management SPD, which sets targets and provides guidance on how to make development more environmentally friendly, based on the Code for Sustainable homes and BREEAM standards.

2.6.3   However, the government has now withdrawn the Code for Sustainable Homes. For the time being the Sustainable Resource Management SPD is still in place with some limitations on its application. Please contact the Planning section of the Environment, Culture and Communities department for more details. The council is carrying out a review as part of the preparation of the emerging Comprehensive Local Plan.

2.6.4   The BREEAM standard for non-residential development still applies for commercial development.

2.6.5   **Principle: Proposals should contribute to the environmental sustainability of the development itself and of the local area where possible, including consideration of:**

- **climate change mitigation and adaptation;**
- **sustainable construction;**
- **water efficiency; and**
- **the long term robustness of the development proposal, ie how it will perform as lifestyles and technologies change, for instance in terms of its flexibility and adaptability.**

Sustainability– critical review	
Do the proposals address climate change mitigation and adaptation?	
Do they incorporate a sustainable approach to construction?	
Do they include proposals for water efficiency?	
Will the development provide flexible and adaptable accommodation?	

3 Built Form and Spaces

3.1 Key principles

3.1.1   Well-designed developments compose buildings and spaces into a successful whole. This applies to a range of scales and includes the following elements:

- streets, blocks, open spaces and landscape;
- plots;
- frontages; and
- built form.

3.2 Streets, blocks, open spaces and landscape

3.2.1   **Principle: For large sites, the street network should define:**

- **a connected network of routes for all modes of transport;**
- **a clear hierarchy of routes, so people can find their way around; and**
- **a pattern of development blocks and open spaces that provides a basis for creating character and a distinctive identity for the development.**

3.2.2   The Streetscene SPD provides further guidance for new developments and housing layouts.

Connectivity

3.2.3   Developments should create a connected network of routes through the site, preferably in the form of streets. These routes should be direct, convenient and attractive for people on foot and cyclists, as well as suitable for vehicles.
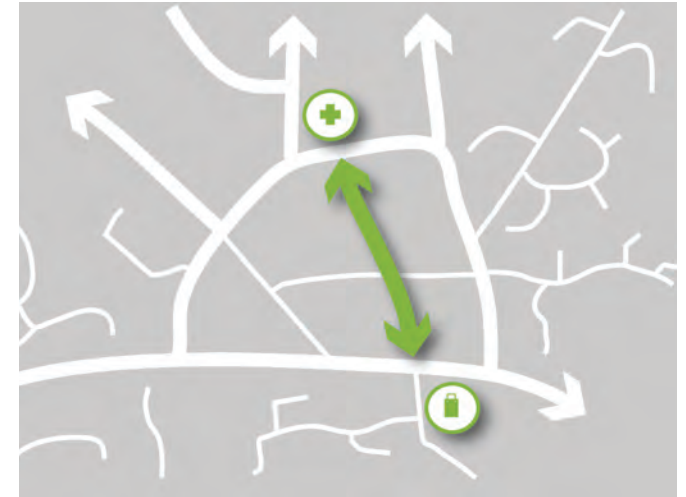
New development should connect destinations and help people get to where they want to go.
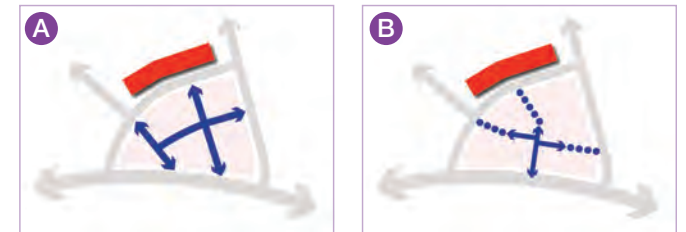
A Make connections to local facilities and create an extension to the existing road network.

B Where vehicular links are not possible, pedestrian / cycle links should provided.

97

Street hierarchy

3.2.4   A clear hierarchy of routes should be defined, based on consideration of how each street should be used, including: the relative amounts of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, parking, speed of vehicles, width of carriageway, and the use of the buildings adjoining the street.

3.2.5   The design of the movement network, the streets and open spaces, and the built form adjoining them should reinforce one another so that people can find their way around and understand the development.

3.2.6   A variety of street types helps to create variations in character in large scale developments.

Existing layout: The street hierarchy is incoherent, unsupported by street design, buildings or land uses.

Revised layout: The street hierarchy is improved by realigning the main route and improving junction arrangements, street treatments and the location of community uses.

Development blocks and open spaces

3.2.7   Principle: **The pattern of blocks for built development and/ or open spaces should be based on a perimeter block structure that creates well-defined streets and open spaces. This form of development enables a clear distinction between the fronts and backs of buildings, a good sense of enclosure and active edges.**

3.2.8   Each development block should be defined by street frontages and/ or open spaces and will be sub-divided into a plot pattern. The block and/ or street space will need to accommodate parking and the appropriate private amenity space for residents.

3.2.9   How a street is designed, and the parking strategy for how parking is accommodated within a block or the streetscene, will significantly affect its character and so will need careful consideration.

3.2.10   The size, shape and configuration of the development blocks, the spaces between the buildings, and open spaces all influence the form of development and its character, so need to be considered together with the mix of uses, the type of units and other matters such as parking.

3.2.11   All open spaces should have a clear function and should be located in a suitable position for that function. They should also be sited and designed to play a positive role as focal points in the development, whether to help create a sense of identity, or to bring existing and new communities together.

3.2.12   The pattern of streets, development blocks and open spaces will influence how people find their way around. Designers should consider potential views, both into and out of the development. Potential views within a new development are also important and the creation of focal points or local landmarks should be considered. Views within streetscenes should also be concluded (or terminated) positively (see section 3.7.3 below).

3.2.13   Active edges are created by buildings with entrances off the street and windows overlooking it. Entrances bring activity and animate the street. Windows create a sense of supervision. Both contribute to making the street feel safe and secure to use.

New development area has a well connected street network that links into existing local streets and surrounding destinations. It is based upon the historic street pattern but has transformed parts of it into pedestrian and cycle routes through small open spaces.

Landscape

3.2.14   Landscape plays an important role in much of the Borough, creating a strong context and character for built development, with significant parts of the area formerly being forested. Different parts of the Borough have a different landscape character, based on their soils and underlying geology.

3.2.15   The strategic approach to landscape should be integrated into the form of development from the earliest stage and not simply added in to a scheme that has already been designed.

3.2.16   The Streetscene SPD provides guidance on incorporating landscape and landscape character into new developments. The Character Area Assessments SPD identifies landscape characteristics within the defined character areas. The Council has also carried out Landscape Character Assessments which provide evidence for the emerging Local Plan. Please contact the Planning section of the Environment, Culture and Communities department for more details.

Streets, blocks and open spaces– critical review	
Do the proposals create a connected network of routes for all users?	
Do they define a clear hierarchy, based on both function and character, and with variation in large developments, so that people can find their way around?	
Is there a clear pattern of perimeter blocks with open spaces suitably positioned to perform the function and role identified for them?	
Is the pattern of streets, blocks and open spaces appropriate to the type of development being proposed, with a clear distinction between fronts and backs?	
Is the approach to landscape an integral part of the development proposal?	

3.3   Plots

3.3.1   Development blocks should be sub-divided into a series of plots for different buildings to be developed, or to break down the scale and impact of a large-scale development.

3.3.2   The pattern of plots and how they are developed affects how a development functions, the success of the plot and the character of the wider area. For instance wide fronted plots allow room for parking to be on-plot next to a house, whereas narrow fronted plots would need a different parking solution.

> 3.3.3   **Principle: Development plots should be large enough to accommodate the proposed built development and the requirements associated with it (such as amenity space, parking, servicing, refuse collection) in an arrangement that is practical and attractive. They should be configured to make sure that new development relates well to its neighbours.**

3.3.4   Where a development is proposed on an existing plot, it should be of a form that responds positively to the existing character of the area. For instance, where there are existing large houses set in large plots, new large houses or a block of apartments are more likely to be able to respond to the existing character than a terrace of smaller houses.

3.3.5   See section 3.9 below for more detail on these issues.

Plots– critical review	
Are plots of a size and configuration to be able accommodate the requirements of the development?	
Do they relate to the pattern of plots in the surroundings?	

3.4 Frontages

3.4.1   Principle: **The buildings that are set alongside a street should be considered and designed together as a group. Development should face onto the street to create a frontage. The two frontages together define and enclose the streetscene and establish an appropriate character for that particular street.**

3.4.2   Successful frontages have many different elements that come together to create a pleasant whole. These are:

- building lines and set backs;
- continuity of built development;
- boundary treatments; and
- size of front gardens.

The Streetscene SPD provides detailed guidance for the design of streets.

3.4.3   Principle: **Frontages should be designed to create a streetscene with a distinctive character that relates to the context of the area. In particular the relationships between existing building lines, set backs, landscaping and the continuity of the frontage should be considered carefully.**

3.4.4   The Streetscene SPD sets out how the different elements can be combined to create a range of different characters that may be appropriate in different parts of the Borough.

3.4.5   In general, frontages with a positive character have some elements that are consistent or repeated. These create a framework for other elements to vary. So, for instance, where there is a strong landscape structure in front gardens and on boundaries, the building lines and the buildings themselves may vary without threatening the positive character. Or where there is a regular pattern of semi-detached houses with consistent set backs and spaces between them, the treatment of boundaries may vary.

3.4.6   Together the two frontages to a street will set the character for the street, so they should generally have common features to establish a degree of consistency between them.

3.4.7   Well designed frontages have:

- the fronts of buildings addressing them along their length;
- window openings that overlook the street;
- entrances activating the street;
- no rear elevations or flank walls onto them; and
- any garages being less prominent elements on the frontage than the associated housing.

Building lines and set backs

3.4.8   Principle: **The building line is the line created by the main facade of buildings in relation to a street. The design approach to building lines should be justified and should relate to the existing building lines in the area. In particular, the building line for infill developments should follow the existing building line.**

3.4.9   Streets with a positive character tend to have a distinctive building line. In most cases, this will be a consistent distance between the front of buildings and the street. However, in some cases, every building is set back a different distance from the street, in which case the variation is characteristic.

3.4.10   The set back of a building line from the street creates space for front gardens. See section 3.4.17 below for more detail.

Continuity of frontages

3.4.11 Principle: The continuity of built form is a measure of how built up the area is. Designers should make sure that the continuity of the frontage is appropriate to the context and local character and the nature of the development proposal.

3.4.12 A continuous frontage makes a street space feel more enclosed, which is likely to be appropriate to the character of an urban form of development, or a centre. Frontages with gaps between buildings are more appropriate to suburban or rural forms of development.

3.4.13 It is important that the degree of continuity suits both the type of development and the character that is proposed. For instance, large detached houses placed very close together are unlikely to create a successful character – the result will be neither urban nor suburban in character. In general, units with larger footprints need space around them, whereas those with smaller footprints are more appropriate to sit on smaller plots.

3.4.14 In some rural and existing suburban areas buildings are spaced far apart and there is no continuity of built frontage. In these cases, continuity is provided by the landscape and boundary treatments, which become the defining characteristic. Strong hedgerows and planting can tie an otherwise discontinuous built form together to create a well defined streetscene.

3.4.15 Topography influences the continuity of frontages. On a sloping site, designers should preferably create more continuous frontages parallel to the contours and use a more broken frontage perpendicular to the slope. Detached houses or short groups of houses can be designed to step up slopes more simply than longer terraces, in terms both of entry levels and roof forms.

Front gardens

3.4.16 Principle: The set back of buildings from the street should be designed positively to accommodate various requirements that may be associated with the development, as well as to contribute to the character of the development. For a residential development the set back should generally take the form of a front garden.

3.4.17 The depth of front gardens has an impact on the feeling of enclosure of the street and reinforces the street hierarchy and character. In a large scale development front gardens should vary in depth across the development, contributing to areas of different character, but they should be consistent in depth along any given street.

3.4.18 Front gardens should:

- be clearly defined as private space belonging to a particular dwelling;

- be rational in size and shape, avoiding awkward fence and boundary lines; and

- relate to the street hierarchy and volume of traffic in terms of treatment and depth, for instance houses set close to a shared surface street with narrow privacy strips are appropriate to a courtyard or mews street with no through movement.

3.4.19 Front gardens should generally include some elements of soft landscape as well as hard landscape, although in some locations hard surfaced privacy strips may be appropriate. They may also need to accommodate parking spaces, refuse storage, utilities boxes, and projecting building elements, such as bays or porches. These elements all need to be designed into the space with some care, so they do not undermine the quality of the frontage.

Continuous frontage: Urban character associated with central urban or village locations - these help to create a high degree of enclosure.

Non-continuous frontage: Formal and regular building line with rhythm. Strong design feature associated with a suburban location.

Non-continuous informal frontage: Informal and irregular building line with building set in large plots. Associated with edge of settlement locations.

Local examples of varying frontages.

102

Boundary treatments

3.4.20 Principle: Boundary treatments such as hedgerows, walls or railings should enclose private spaces in front of buildings.

3.4.21 Generally boundary treatments to front gardens should allow some views between street and dwelling, so that the development overlooks the streetscene.

3.4.22 Private gardens should not back onto public spaces such as streets, footpaths or open spaces. Where the boundary of a property is clearly visible within the streetscene, a certain quality of boundary treatment will be expected - close boarded fences will not be acceptable in such situations.

3.4.23 Boundary treatments should:

■ be consistent within each street and with the local character; and

■ where possible and appropriate, use natural screens and hedges complementing the landscape design and enhance biodiversity, or brick walls to provide solid boundaries with a natural appearance and longevity, especially when the material is characteristic of the local area.

3.4.24 Where there is a conscious design decision to have no boundary treatment, then open plan privacy strips or front gardens should be consistently designed so that they contribute to the character of the street and a planting scheme should be provided for these private spaces.

Frontages – critical review	
Do buildings overlook the street with main entrances creating activity and movement within the streetscene?	
Is there a clear approach to the building line and is it justified in relation to the existing or new character of the street?	
Is the degree of continuity of the frontage appropriate for the development proposal and the context?	
Do the proposals handle any slopes well?	
Does the development create front gardens of an appropriate depth, enclosed with suitable boundary treatments?	
Does the design approach to these elements create a consistent character for the frontage and for the street as a whole, one that is appropriate to the development and its context?	

Where front gardens are open and minimal, care is needed to ensure some space for planting is provided to visually soften the streetscene.

An example of consistent and high quality boundary treatment.

An example of a typical garden depth with railings that clearly define private space from public space.

Consultation Draft Design Supplementary Planning Document

3.5 Addressing edges

3.5.1   In certain locations, frontages should respond to their specific location and site conditions, as well as to the general principles outlined above. These include:

- settlement edges; and

- edges to open space.

3.5.2   **Principle: Development should generally be designed to face outward when it overlooks a route or open space, or there are existing houses facing towards the site boundary.**

In this example, dwellings front onto an open space, which provides a focal point in the layout.

Settlement edges

3.5.3   **Principle: Development on the edge of a settlement or in the countryside should respond to the unique character and setting of each site, taking into consideration a thorough understanding of the local pattern of settlement and its setting in the wider landscape.**

3.5.4   The location, siting and design of new development on the edge of settlements should be carefully designed to:

- create an edge to the built up area that relates to the local development and landscape pattern; and

- incorporate soft landscape to soften the edge of settlements and to help integrate new housing into its rural setting.

3.5.5   New development and associated landscape should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and biodiversity of the area. This includes elements such as:

- field patterns and lanes;

- landscape features, such as trees and hedgerows;

- wetlands and watercourses;

- typical species of vegetation; and

- characteristic local habitats.
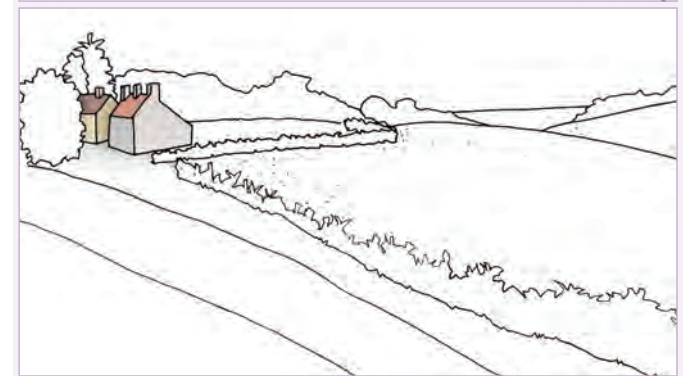
Settlement edges, views towards them as well as from them should be carefully considered and respond to local characteristics.

Edges to existing open spaces and routes

3.5.6   **Principle: Development should face outwards onto all existing and proposed open spaces and routes, and provide active frontages to animate and overlook them, particularly where there are existing houses facing towards the site boundary.**

Addressing edges – critical review	
Does the development create a settlement edge that responds to the character of other edges, and it is softened by landscape?	
Does it face outwards to animate and overlook open spaces and routes?	
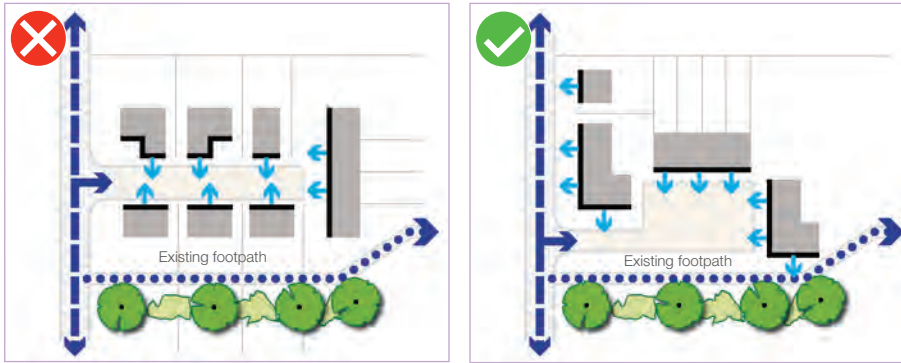
Where development lies adjacent to existing pedestrian routes, it must help to improve their quality and pedestrian safety.

Sketch illustrating how buildings can successfully provide overlooking and enclosure to an open space.

The sketch illustrates the idea for an informal character that relates well to the homes on the other side of the road.

3.6   Backland development

3.6.1   Some applications for development relate to sites that are located behind street frontage properties and so only partially visible from the street. These sites are known as backland sites.

> 3.6.2   **Principle: All backland development should be subordinate, ie it should occupy a minor proportion of the block in which it is sited; should be designed to the highest standards and should have a positive a legible entrance**

3.6.3   Backland development should:

- not harm the existing character of the local area;

- relate positively to the existing layout and existing urban form;

- create a positive and legible entrance to the backland site;

- maintain the quality of environment for existing residents;

- create a satisfactory living environment for the new home owners and existing surrounding properties;

- relate to a site of sufficient size and suitable shape to accommodate the number of dwellings proposed when compared to the existing grain of development in the area, together with their external space, access and parking requirements;

- not be taller than the existing buildings nor be highly visible from the main street frontage;

- be accessible without harming the character of the existing street frontage, and with no loss of important features, whether these are existing buildings, or trees and planting between existing buildings; and

- contribute to the public realm, where there is more than one dwelling proposed, by creating public streets and/ or courtyard spaces that are not designed solely around technical highways requirements.

Backland development – critical review	
Is backland development subservient to the block that contains it and is it designed to the highest standards?	

Houses should not be facing rear boundaries

Houses set facing the public realm generally create a more positive environment for residents

Houses should be arranged to face each other across a road or space.

106

3.7 Built form

3.7.1 **Principle: The design of the built form should be specific to its location and role within the proposed development and the context. The height, shape and form of buildings should be considered at the scale of the street frontage and the street as a whole, in terms of how they contribute to the streetscene and create character.**

Building heights

3.7.2 **Principle: The height of buildings should respond to a number of factors:**

- **the existing heights and degree of variation in height in the local context;**
- **the scale and importance of the space that the building will define or enclose;**
- **its position in the street hierarchy;**
- **the position of the building line in relation to the street;**
- **whether it is a focal point or landmark location in the development; and**
- **the density of the development.**

3.7.3 Within large developments taller buildings should be positioned in strategic locations to help people find their way around the development. These may include centres, focal points, landmark locations, the gateways or entrances to the development, and along main streets.

Key buildings – corners, landmarks and focal points

3.7.4 **Principle: Key buildings are prominent because of their siting – they may terminate views along key streets, or define and enclose focal points or open spaces, or they may mark key decision points for navigating around a development. These buildings should be designed to reflect the importance of their role in the development.**

3.7.5 In some (but not all) cases, key buildings should be taller than the buildings around them. Key buildings may also stand out because of their form (including at roof level), the design of their elevations, or a degree of contrast between them and adjoining buildings, for instance in terms of materials. The extent to which they should be distinguished from their surroundings will vary from situation to situation.

3.7.6 All key buildings should be designed and built to the highest quality, as they are the most prominent elements of the development and so must be special.

3.7.7 The Streetscene SPD identifies that buildings on corners should be designed to respond to their position in the layout. Generally they should have two front elevations with windows to habitable rooms on each. In prominent locations, it will also be appropriate to design them as high quality landmark buildings that fit within the character of the area.

3.7.8 Where a new building is proposed in an established context, then it should not block, compete or distract from an important view towards an existing landmark building.

Key

— Central area boundary
▨ Residential development
⌐ Key frontage
⌐ Rural frontage
⌐ Open space frontage
▨ Public realm node / key space
▨ Primary public open space
★ Key building
→ Strategic transport link
⇢ Strategic greenway
✳ Potential location for public art
◁ Key vista
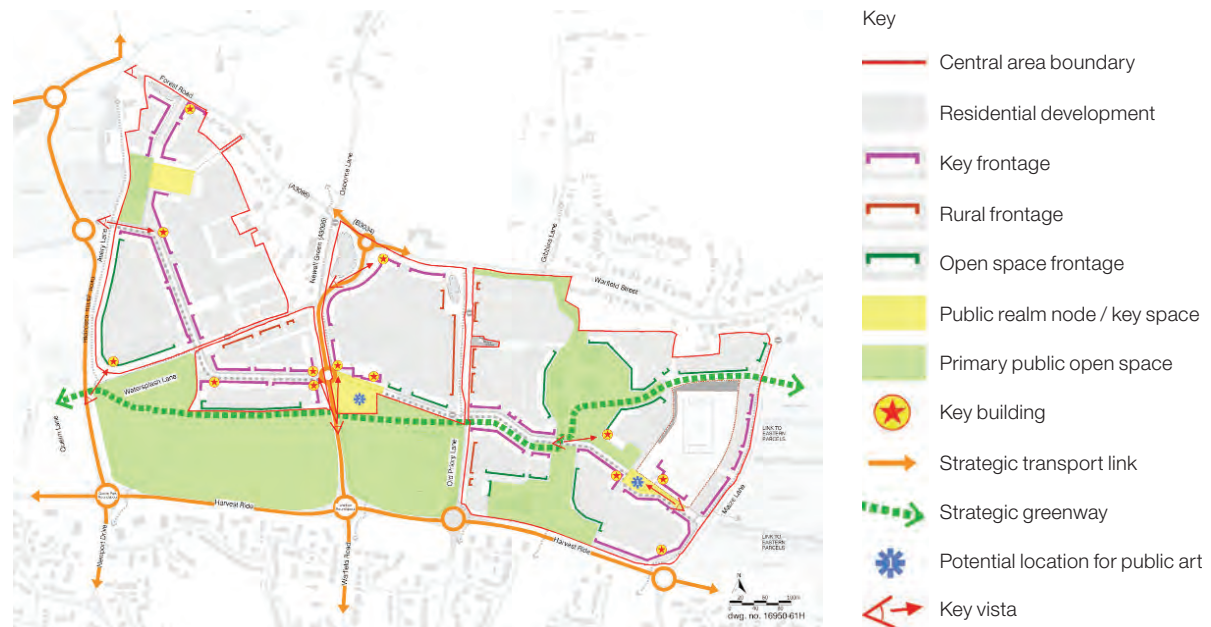
Key buildings and focal points should be carefully considered and clearly detailed on masterplans and layout proposals. Image courtesy of Barton Willmore.

3.7.9   Important vistas should be terminated with buildings of an appropriate scale, massing and quality of design. Buildings that are visible at the end of a street/road have the function of 'concluding' or 'terminating' the view. The form of the building or group (including its roof) should be coherent at a distance, and its elevations (including the pattern of openings and the combination of materials) should be designed to have a formality that is appropriate to the vista. A symmetrical composition is one way to create a suitable scale and formality.

3.7.10   Groups of more than one building may also be used to enclose and define focal points within a development– for example buildings around a public square, or an open space.

3.7.11   When designing groups of buildings in key locations, designers should:

■ meet the expectations of their location and visual prominence;

■ follow an overall design concept for the group, including details, features and materials;

■ consider the composition as a whole in terms of harmony, balance, symmetry and rhythm – elevations and axonometric drawings of key building groups should be provided to test these compositions; and

■ use high quality materials effectively, and detail to create impact.

Composition of buildings

3.7.12   **Principle: Compose buildings as three dimensional forms in groups, so that the relationships between them (the roof forms in particular) are specifically designed to create an attractive frontage when viewed from all directions.**

3.7.13   This is particularly important for residential developments, where different house types may be grouped and arranged in different ways to suit the street network in different parts of the site. Small changes to the position of dwellings in the plan form of units can have a bigger impact upon the resulting form of the development.

3.7.14   Apartment blocks may take different forms depending upon the location, context, and local character. Their layout and plan form should be designed to respond to these factors as well as to provide high quality homes. For instance, a deep plan apartment building may introduce a bulky built form that does not relate well to an established context, whereas a shallower plan may relate more positively to its surroundings. Height is also an important consideration and should relate to the character of the area and the development surrounding the block. Apartments should also be placed on plots where a good balance between the built form, parking and usable amenity space can be achieved. (See section 3.9 below).

Built form – critical review	
Do building heights relate to their position in the development and the context?	
Are key buildings appropriate to their siting and designed to the highest quality?	
Have buildings been designed successfully as groups and is this demonstrated in three dimensional drawings?	
Is the form of any apartment blocks appropriate for the context and local character of the area?	

3.8   Building design

3.8.1   Principle: Design new buildings with a coherent design approach that influences the whole building or development, from its form to the elevations, including the use of materials and detailing, whatever the architectural style may be.

3.8.2   The Council's Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design specifically encourages innovative architecture. Where a contemporary approach is adopted then the proportions of the form and elevations and the quality of materials and detailing will be of particular importance. Designers will need to be able to explain how their design approach is appropriate to the context and local character as well as to the client's brief for the site.

3.8.3   Generally, design buildings to reflect some of the attractive qualities of the local form of housing, for example in terms of scale and proportion of elevations.

3.8.4   If a traditional approach is to be followed then the design of a building should correctly use traditional proportions and details and a similar quality of materials to the source for its inspiration.

Roofs

3.8.5   The form of new buildings, including roofs, should relate well to those found in the local context. This may include:

- how forms are orientated, with ridges parallel or perpendicular to the street with either eaves or gables on the building frontage;
- the roof type and pitch, for instance whether it is a hipped roof or has gables;
- the, scale and position on the roof of gables, dormers or mansard roofs;
- projecting elements, such as bays or porches; and
- consider how the roofscape will be viewed from higher levels or longer distances, in particular where development is located in undulating landscape, on hillsides and ridge lines.

3.8.6   Generally, in new development, design buildings so that their roofs:

- have ridge lines parallel to the longer side of the building or building block, creating buildings that are better proportioned and with a less dominating roof;
- are simple and uncomplicated, avoiding difficult and unnecessary detailing;
- can be continuous, avoiding unnecessary stepping and staggering of the building line, as this looks unattractive along the street and makes the verge details very prominent; and
- relate well to the existing topography.

Inappropriate detached development, there is insufficient space for meaningful gaps and no room for planting.

Detached housing can sit comfortably in its site with space for planting and sufficient gaps between buildings.

Semi-detached houses designed as a symmetrical building.

Semi-detached houses designed as a 'terrace of two'.

Creating balanced semi-detached buildings: These should generally be handed so that they are symmetrical, resulting in a more considered façade.

3.8.7   Gables have a stronger presence in the streetscene than roofs with eaves, even when the buildings are the same height. Gables can be used where a key building is required, for instance on corners to mark the presence of a junction. However, where they are sited on the street frontage it is important that they are designed with care, to be well proportioned, and with openings at ground floor level to create an active frontage in the streetscene.

3.8.8   Roof pitches affect the character of a development. Traditional buildings generally have steeply pitched roofs with a narrow span, also with chimneys. New development is often deeper in plan than existing buildings. In an existing context, roof forms will need to be designed with care so that the result is not much taller or more bulky than the surrounding buildings.

3.8.9   Mansard roofs should be smaller than the building they span, so that they are set behind a parapet, and do not overhang the walls of the building at any point.

3.8.10   Dormer windows may either take the form of small gables on the line of the façade or should be inset from the eaves line. They should be designed in three dimensions to make sure their position and proportions relate well to the roof and the building as a whole.
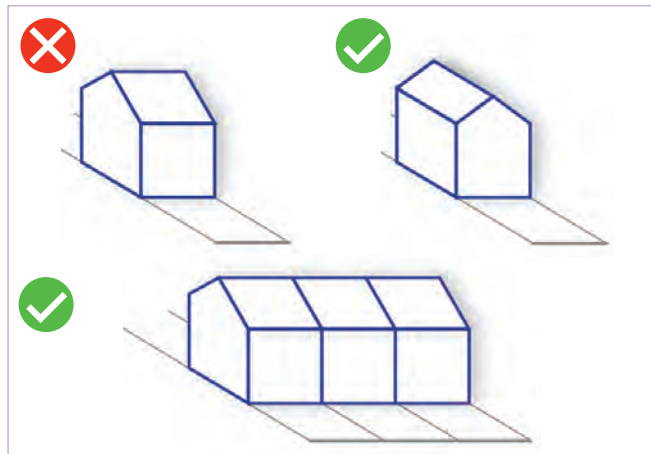
Ridge lines parallel to the longer side of the building are better proportioned.
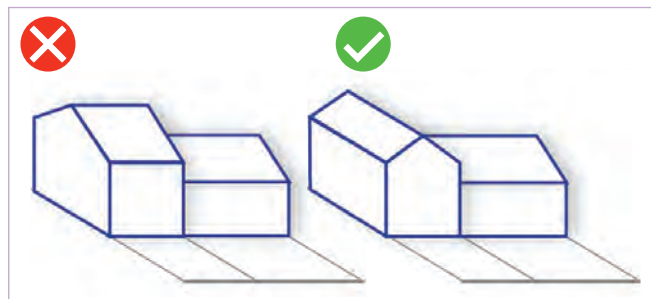
Where house types of different depth are combined with each other we have to take particular care of the roof forms. Ridge lines that are parallel but not of similar height or in a continuous line create awkwardly shaped roofs and details. It can help to change the orientation of the roof to create a better design.

Elevations

3.8.11   Design elevations to:

- respond to the local context;

- be well balanced;

- follow a consistent design approach/ architectural style;

- reflect their position, i.e. elevations fronting the street must be designed as a welcoming frontage; and

- respond to their aspect, for instance with larger openings on the south side of the building.

3.8.12   The proportions of the windows and their positioning within the overall elevation are important to the quality of the design.

3.8.13   The style of window should relate well to the proportions of the opening.

3.8.14   All entrances should be from the street frontage. Apartment blocks may also have a secondary entrance from parking areas. It is important to provide independent access to all ground floor flats facing onto streets to create activity and movement within streetscenes.

Windows and doors

Random sizing and placement of windows attempts to create a frontage, but lacks any sense of proportion and composition.

Semi-detached building with a clear primary frontage and secondary frontage, each entrance positively addresses both the green and the street.

The front of the building is clearly oriented towards the street with a few windows facing onto the car park.

Clear and consistent placement of windows and doorways creates a positive street scene.

Materials

In these two examples the change in material appears random and adds unnecessary complications.

Elevation

Building of three townhouses sets out to create symmetry without following through in the design of the facade.

Well proportioned building with formal symmetry.

An elevation should contribute towards creating a positive street environment. The elevations of groups of houses should be considered as a whole in order to create a positive street-scale, in terms of proportion, materials, roofing and the placement of windows.

Materials and details

3.8.15   Generally, changes in material should relate to the form of the building and should have a clearly identifiable role in its design.

3.8.16   In traditional buildings, generally a change of material is associated with a set back or projection rather than being on a flush façade. Where designers are adopting a traditional approach, it is important to make sure that the design includes the modelling that is associated with traditional buildings.

3.8.17   A change in materials, if well designed, can help to articulate a building form and elevation and relate it to the scale of its context. However, it cannot successfully overcome the problems of a form that is too bulky for its context, or an elevation that is not well proportioned.

3.8.18   Design quality can be achieved through simple, well proportioned forms and elevations with limited decoration, using high quality materials and detailing.

3.8.19   Where materials are used to reflect traditional building forms and vernacular architecture, they should be real, rather than 'stick-on' features. For instance, chimneys should be genuine and relate to fireplaces.

3.8.20   Plant, for instance air conditioning units, or lift overruns, should be enclosed within designed structures and not be visible from the streetscene.

Building design – critical review	
Is there a coherent design approach to the building or buildings?	
Are key buildings designed to be appropriate to their siting and of the highest quality?	
Are the roof forms well designed and appropriate to their location and role in the development? How will they be viewed from the immediate streetscenes and in more distant views? Has the topography and site levels been considered?	
Are elevations well proportioned, appropriate to their siting, and coherent in their architectural style?	
Are high quality materials proposed and do they have a clear role in the design?	

3.9 Other residential requirements

3.9.1 Principle: Site dwellings so that all of their associated requirements, including outdoor space, parking and refuse storage/ collection, can also be arranged appropriately within a plot, and function well for the end user. The development, as a whole, should also relate well to neighbouring properties and its surroundings.

Outdoor space

3.9.2 Principle: All new dwellings should have easy access to usable outdoor space (private or communal).

3.9.3 All gardens should be able to accommodate activities such as playing, drying clothes, cycle and refuse storage.

3.9.4 The sizes of private gardens should be proportionate to the size of the dwelling, the potential number of occupants and the location of the development. Generally in town centres or urban areas, people have a lower expectation for garden size, compared with suburban or rural areas. Therefore garden sizes should vary according to the context.

3.9.5 External access to private gardens at least 1 metre wide should be provided for each unit, unless incompatible with local character.

3.9.6 All gardens, terraces and balconies should receive direct sunlight for at least part of the day at all times of the year. For this reason, areas that are fully shaded by tree canopies are not suitable for private or communal outdoor space. This applies to private or communal gardens for apartment blocks as well as to houses.

3.9.7 Cycle and refuse storage in gardens should be accessible through the garden and the levels fully considered. Steps leading to refuse collection areas are not acceptable.

3.9.8 Where a block of apartments is proposed, a careful balance is needed between the building footprint, its position on the plot in response to local character, parking provision and usable open space for residents.

3.9.9 Wherever possible, upper floor inhabitants of apartments should have access to a communal garden area, a communal or private roof terrace, or a private balcony.

3.9.10 Careful consideration will be given to issues of overlooking and privacy where balconies are proposed. The design of balustrades should balance the benefits of allowing light into the space against those of providing a visual screen. North facing balconies are unlikely to receive adequate sunlight and should be avoided.

Balconies and roof terraces can provide amenity space for people living in urban areas or in flats.

Privacy

<div>

3.9.11   **Principle: All development should be arranged on plots to achieve reasonable levels of privacy for the inhabitants and for residents of neighbouring buildings.**

</div>

3.9.12   Reasonable levels of privacy can be achieved by considering the distance between windows on different plots.

3.9.13   For two storey houses a minimum back to back distance of 22m between facing windows is accepted as providing a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupants of both dwellings. With a building(s) with windows above first-floor level, a back-to-back separation of no less than 30m is considered reasonable. As storeys rise additional separation distances may be necessary to mitigate against overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impacts. In addition to providing adequate back-to-back separation, overlooking impacts can be mitigated by oblique siting relationships, where within the building habitable rooms are located, window design (e.g. use of obscure glazing for non-habitable rooms, high-level windows and rooflights) and screening such as outbuildings or vegetation. In applying these separation distances the impacts of levels differences on sloping sites will also be taken into account.

3.9.14   Blocks of flats do not necessarily have private 'backs' the way most houses do. In considering siting relationships between blocks of flats a minimum distance between facing habitable windows of 22m will be sought to avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking. However, each case will be considered on its own merits and it being demonstrated that a development proposal adheres to the additional guidance to safeguard residential amenity as set out in section 3.9 of this SPD.

3.9.15   Issues of privacy and overlooking of private garden areas, particularly sitting out areas immediately behind dwellings, also needs to be considered. To avoid unacceptable overlooking, first-floor windows should be a minimum of 10m from a boundary with a neighbouring back garden. Where a building has facing windows above first-floor level, a minimum distance of 15m to a neighbouring garden boundary is considered appropriate."

3.9.16   Generally a distance of 12m between windows on the street side of dwellings is accepted as providing a reasonable degree of privacy to the occupants of both buildings. This distance is likely to be the minimum required to accommodate the carriageway, footway(s), services, and privacy strips or front gardens.

3.9.17   Where the building line is close to the street, a reasonable degree of privacy can be achieved through one or more of:

- a small planted privacy strip;
- the internal planning of accommodation, such as kitchen facing the street and bedrooms at the rear;
- a boundary treatment that creates some degree of screening, for instance a hedgerow; and
- vertically proportioned windows that are not too large in size.

3.9.18   Ground floor residential accommodation will feel more overlooked in mixed use areas than in a residential area, so may require all of the above measures to create a reasonable level of privacy.

3.9.19   On a sloping site, accommodation that is raised above the level of pedestrians will feel private, whereas accommodation below the level of pedestrians will feel overlooked. Designers should consider carefully the relationship of routes to dwellings to achieve a reasonable level of privacy for all residents whilst maintaining accessibility for all.

The careful orientation of terraces and placement of windows can ensure that both privacy and high density is achieved.

12m   22m   12m

Street   Rear gardens   Street
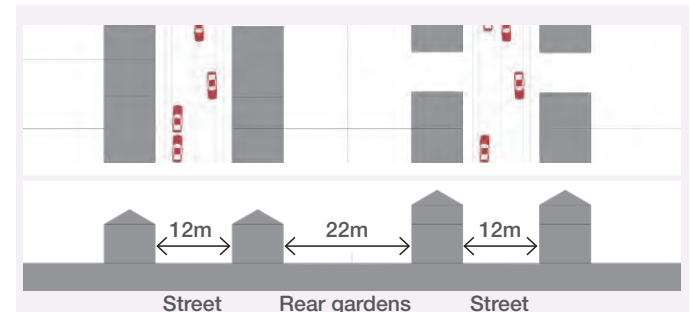
22 metres is considered an acceptable rule of thumb distance for there to be no overlooking between buildings at the rear where people expect more privacy. 12m Is a generally accepted rule of thumb distance for there to be sufficient privacy across streets.

114

Relationship to neighbouring properties/ surroundings

3.9.20 Principle: New development should be sited and designed to minimise any potential impacts on neighbouring properties and/or its surroundings.

3.9.21   New development should make sure that neighbouring properties continue to receive adequate levels of sunlight and daylight and that new development is not unduly overbearing.

3.9.22   The appropriate distance from an apartment block to on-site assets such as trees, or to neighbouring properties, and between different buildings that form part of the development, should be governed by:

- sunlight and daylight considerations, so that each dwelling has some sunshine in its living spaces for part of the day, and habitable room windows should be assessed in accordance with BRE standards; and
- how the blocks enclose the space to create attractive places that are comfortable to use, whether these are communal outdoor spaces or parking areas.

3.9.23   The Streetscene SPD provides guidance on enclosing street and other spaces.

3.9.24   New development of more than two storeys will generally need a degree of separation from a boundary with the garden of an existing property.

This is particularly important for new apartment blocks and commercial/office accommodation, where planting may also be required to soften the impact.

Parking

3.9.25   Principle: Parking should be accommodated within the development in convenient positions, to encourage people to use the designated locations.

3.9.26   The Parking Standards SPD sets out the required levels of car parking for new development. The Streetscene SPD provides detailed guidance on how parking within the streetscene can affect character.

3.9.27   Parking for houses should be:

- sited so that it does not dominate the streetscene or development;
- designed as positive and attractive spaces and incorporate planting where appropriate to soften parking areas;
- conveniently located for the property it serves providing a safe and easily accessible route;
- garages should generally be set behind the building line or positioned so as not to be visually dominant within streetscenes; and
- designed to contribute to a sustainable drainage system.

3.9.28   Where a block of apartments is proposed, parking should ideally be located underground in a basement. Where is not a viable option, parking should be integrated into the landscape around the building.

3.9.29   The Streetscene SPD and Parking Standards SPD provide detailed guidance on parking layouts, design and the level of provision required.

Example of well integrated car parking fronting onto a public space, including an example of a flat over garage (top).

Consultation Draft Design Supplementary Planning Document

Refuse and recycling storage/collection

3.9.30 Principle: Refuse storage should be designed into the development in convenient positions both for collection and to encourage people to use them.

3.9.31   Generally for houses, refuse storage should be provided in private gardens, accessed externally.

3.9.32   For apartment blocks, refuse storage areas should ideally be incorporated into the ground floor layouts, integral to the building. However, where an external store is necessary, this should be sensitively designed and located where it is not be highly visible within the streetscene, but still within the required carry distances for both residents and refuse collectors. As new Waste Management technologies are developing, consideration should be given to providing up to date ways of dealing with waste and its collection for dwellings and commercial premises. Suitable provision will therefore be required by the Council's Waste Management team.

3.9.33   The Streetscene SPD provides detailed guidance on refuse stores and collection, including for blocks of apartments.

Other residential requirements – critical review	
Does the development provide usable outdoor space for all dwellings with sunlight for part of the day?	
Is there a reasonable level of privacy between the new development and existing properties and for the inhabitants of the new development?	
Is parking well designed and convenient?	
Is refuse storage well designed and convenient?	

Examples of attractive well considered storage designs with robust, sturdy waterproof materials that compliment architecture.

4 Extensions and Alterations

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1   Extensions and alterations to houses do not always need planning permission since Permitted Development rights, a national grant of planning permission, allows certain building works to be carried out without having to make a planning application.

4.1.2   The exercise of Permitted Development rights is subject to conditions and limitations (for example limits on height, size or location etc.) to control the impact of a development and to protect local amenity.   Please contact the Planning section of Environment, Culture and Communities for more information or refer to the Planning Portal at https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do_you_need_permission.

4.1.3   It is important to note that extensions or external alterations to apartments do not, in general, have Permitted Development rights and there are a range of exclusions which apply to protected areas, such as a Conservation Areas.

4.1.4   This section of the Design SPD provides guidance for designing extensions and alterations to houses that are not Listed Buildings or within Conservation Areas. Proposal for extensions and alterations in Conservation Areas or on a Listed Building should be discussed with the planning section at an early stage to identify whether or not permission will be required.

4.1.5   Many residential areas in the Borough have a distinctive and attractive character, which is created by the combination of buildings and landscape. This helps to make each place a unique and attractive place to live, somewhere that people feel they belong. In most cases, this character is not something that will result in a formal designation such as a Conservation Area but, nevertheless, it is important locally.

4.1.6   Over time, lifestyles change and people use their homes differently. Alterations or extensions allow homes to be adapted so that people can continue to live in their local area.

4.1.7   Each alteration or extension, in itself, makes a small change to an area and to its character. However, many such alterations and extensions can erode the attractive qualities of a house, the residential environment for inhabitants and neighbours, and can undermine the character of the area.

4.1.8   However, if well designed, extensions and alterations can relate well to the home, the neighbouring properties and the character of the area.

4.2 General guidance

4.2.1   In addition to the guidance given in this section, guidance is also given in chapter 3 of this document on issues of separation and overlooking of neighbouring properties which will also be relevant and should be considered. The design of an extension or alterations to a property should start from:

■ the original design of the building in its plot; and

■ the character of the street or area.

4.2.2   Extensions or alterations should respond to the scale, proportions and design of the original building. This may include:

■ the shape of the building, in particular its roof, and original features such as bay windows, porches, dormers or chimney; and

■ the relationship with neighbouring properties, including the building line, the roof pitch and slope, the topography and the aspect of each house.

4.2.3   Extensions or alterations may adopt a design approach that integrates the proposal into the design of the original building, or they may adopt a contemporary design approach that complements its design. In both cases, the proposal must be considered together with the original building, so that it creates a coherent and well-designed whole.

4.2.4   The Council's Core Strategy Policy CS7 specifically encourages innovative architecture. The Council will therefore welcome modern design using contemporary materials provided it is high quality and appropriate to its context. A high quality, contemporary design can help to improve the environmental sustainability of a property and, at the same time, enhance the appearance of a building.
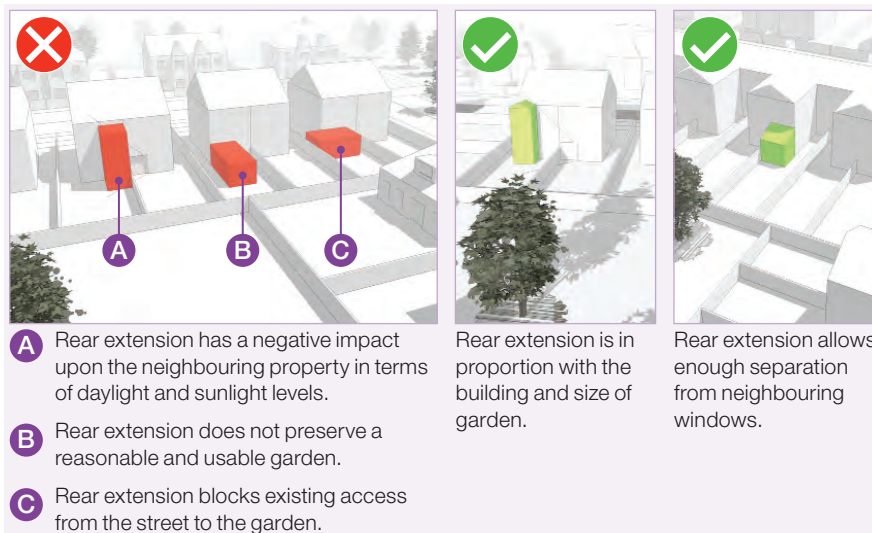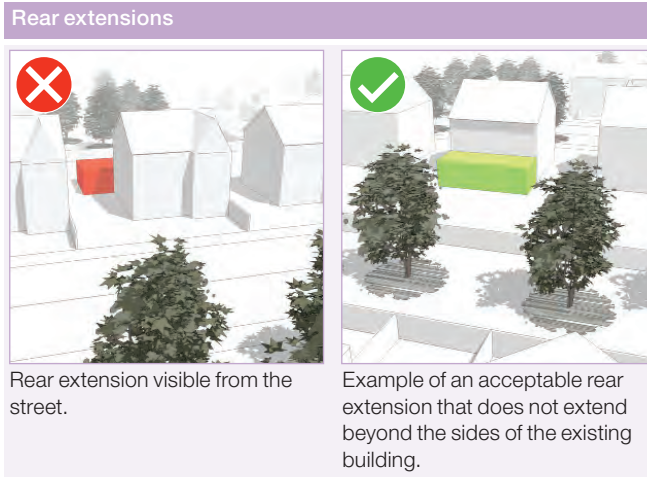
4.2.5   Where an innovative architectural approach is proposed, then designers should provide a rationale for their design approach, including where departing from any of the detailed design guidance below.

4.3 Rear extensions

4.3.1   Rear extensions should maintain the quality of residential environment, should relate well to neighbouring buildings and should generally not be visible from the street.

4.3.2   Rear extensions should retain a reasonable living environment for the property being extended, by:

■ preserving a back garden of a reasonable size, appropriate for the potential number of occupants of the house, and able to accommodate activities such as playing, drying clothes, cycle and refuse storage;

■ being set behind the original building, and not projecting beyond it at the sides;

■ maintaining an external access to the garden;

■ being subordinate to the original building in height, with eaves height no taller than the original eaves height;

■ following the style of the original building, or complementing it with a high quality modern addition;

■ ensuring that the roof form is well proportioned and does not alter or interfere with the main roof form; and

■ being appropriate in size to the buildings, gardens and plots of both the original and neighbouring properties.

Rear extensions

Rear extension visible from the street.

Example of an acceptable rear extension that does not extend beyond the sides of the existing building.

A   Rear extension has a negative impact upon the neighbouring property in terms of daylight and sunlight levels.

B   Rear extension does not preserve a reasonable and usable garden.

C   Rear extension blocks existing access from the street to the garden.

Rear extension is in proportion with the building and size of garden.

Rear extension allows enough separation from neighbouring windows.

118

4.3.3   Rear extensions should maintain the quality of environment for neighbours, by:

- ensuring reasonable levels of daylight and sunlight to the habitable rooms in adjoining properties - use the 45 degree rule to check this (see diagram opposite);

- positioning windows to minimize any potential overlook the neighbouring property or its garden;

- where windows are required in side elevations, ensuring that any at first floor level are obscure glazed with opening fanlights only; and

- setting the extension away from the property boundary so as to avoid any dramatic change in scale in relation to the neighbouring garden.

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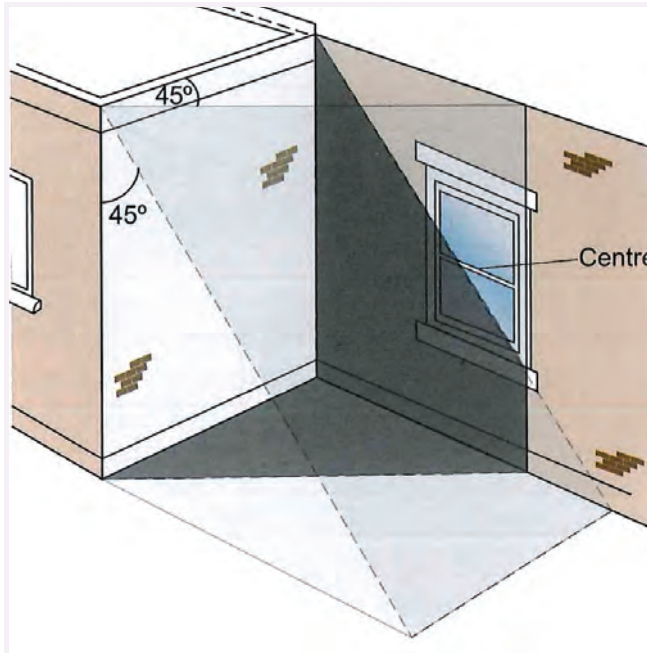
Application of the 45 degree approach to a domestic extension. A significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the window lies within the 45 degree angle on both plan and elevation. Here the centre of the window lies outside the 45 degree angle on elevation, both impact of the extension is likely to be small.
Taken from *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight A Guide to Good Practice* **Second Edition 2011 BRE Press.**
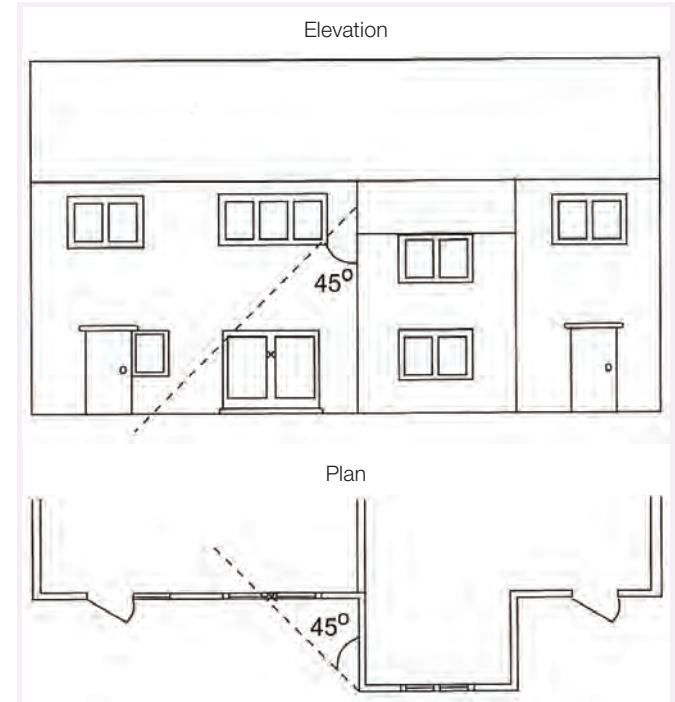
Here the extension has a pitched roof, so a point halfway along the roof slope is used as the start of the 45 degree line on the elevation. The affected window is a patio door, so a point 1.6 metres above the ground has been taken. This point is within the 45 degree angles on both plan and elevation, so a significant reduction of light is likely.
Taken from *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight A Guide to Good Practice* **Second Edition 2011 BRE Press.**

4.4 Rear infill extensions

4.4.1 Rear infill extensions are popular in traditional terraces of houses, where there is an L-shaped building with a side return. The side return is generally a narrow and relatively dark alley to the garden. Filling in the side return offers owners the opportunity to create open plan kitchen and living areas at the rear of their properties.

4.4.2 Infill extensions should generally retain the form of the original building and should be carefully designed to make sure they maintain the quality of living environment for neighbouring properties.

4.4.3 Infill extensions should:

- be subordinate to the original building and limited to a single storey in height;

- minimise the height on the party wall line;

- maintain the integrity of the original building, for instance by retaining a column at its rear corner, and avoiding a wrap around extension; and

- follow the style of the original building, or complement it with a high quality modern addition.

4.4.4 They should maintain the quality of environment for neighbours by ensuring reasonable levels of daylight and sunlight to the habitable rooms in adjoining properties, preferably with a sloping roof and keeping the height on (or adjoining) the party wall as low as possible.

120
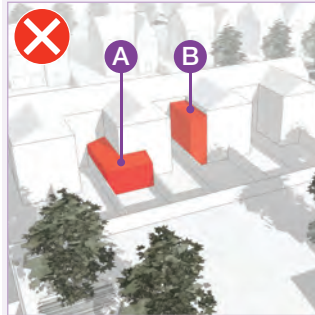
Infill extensions

A Wrap-around extensions do not retain the integrity of the original building.

B This infill extension is overbearing and impacts on the neighbouring environment.
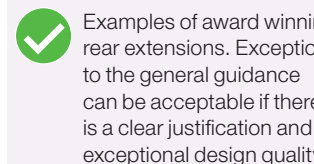
Examples of award winning rear extensions. Exceptions to the general guidance can be acceptable if there is a clear justification and exceptional design quality.

4.5   Side extensions

4.5.1   In some residential areas, there is a regular pattern of buildings and spaces, for instance in 1930s semi-detached suburban housing. In these locations, where the rhythm of the street frontage contributes to local character, side extensions should not interfere with this.

4.5.2   Side extensions should be sited and designed so as to minimise any impact on local character, by:

- being well back from the original building line, and preferably not seen in views along the street;

- being subordinate to the original building, in particular so that extensions of 2 storeys are noticeably smaller in footprint than the original building;

- having a carefully designed roof form that is in scale with the original roof;

- following the style of the original building, or complementing it with a high quality modern addition; and

- avoid terracing where this is not currently present.

4.5.3   Side extensions should retain a reasonable living environment for the property being extended, by:

- maintaining a gap between the dwelling and the site boundary of at least 1m to allow external access to the garden; and

- retaining off-street parking provision behind the building line where it exists at present.

4.5.4   Side extensions should maintain the quality of environment for neighbours, by:

- ensuring reasonable levels of daylight and sunlight to the habitable rooms in adjoining properties – use the 45-degree rule to check this (See section 4.3.3);

- positioning windows to minimise any potential to overlook the neighbouring property or its garden;

- where windows are required in side elevations, ensuring that any at first floor level are obscure glazed with opening fanlights only; and

- setting the extension away from the property boundary so as to avoid any dramatic change in scale in relation to the neighbouring garden.

4.5.5   On corner plots, side extensions may be considered as being both side extensions and front extensions, as they will potentially relate to both streets. Both elevations should be designed as street frontages.

4.5.6   On corner plots, side extensions should contribute to local character by:

- turning the corner, i.e. facing in both directions to create two frontages, each with windows at ground floor and upper levels overlooking the street;

- being set back from the existing building line on both streets; and

- following the boundary treatments along both streets, in terms of its position, height and materials.

Side extensions
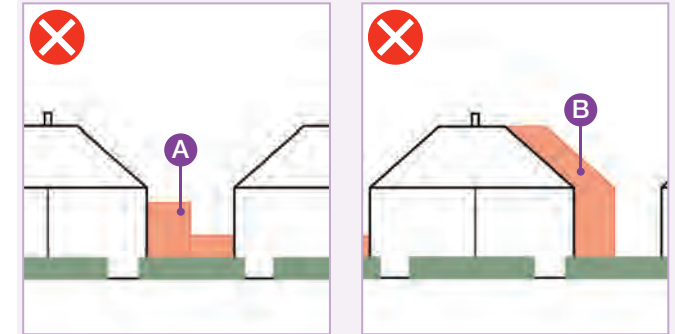
A   Side extensions, even when subordinate can lead to the infill of gaps between houses, detracting from character.

B   A side extension to this semi-detached house makes it look unbalanced and 'lop-sided'.
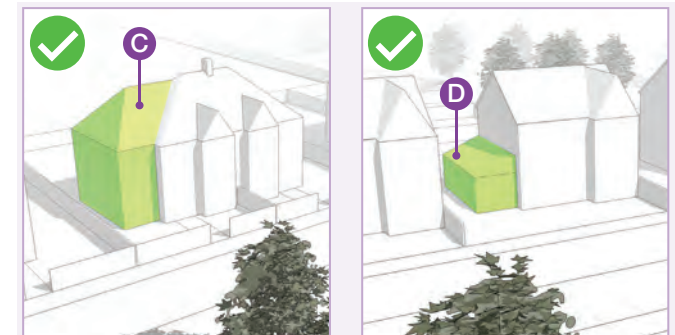
C   Side extension is subservient and in proportion with the existing building.

D   Side extension retains space between buildings and is clearly subservient to the existing building.

121

4.6   Front extensions and porches

4.6.1   Front extensions are highly visible in the streetscene and should be carefully designed to make sure they do not erode local character.

4.6.2   Generally, small porches are an acceptable form of front extension. Because of their prominence in the streetscene, the design, materials and details of any other front extension will need to be high quality.

4.6.3   Front extensions should maintain local character by:

- being small in footprint relative to the original building;

- being set behind the existing building line so that they are not dominant elements in the streetscene;

- being subordinate in scale so that they do not dominate the original building;

- generally following the style of the original building in terms of design, materials and detailing, including roof materials and pitch; and

- being consistent with others on a terrace or other group of buildings, and not having an unbalancing effect on the group as a whole.

4.6.4   They should maintain the quality of environment for neighbours, by ensuring reasonable levels of daylight and sunlight to the habitable rooms in adjoining properties – use the 45-degree rule to check this (See figure 3.1)

Front extensions and porches

Front elevations that sit in front of the existing building line negatively impact upon the streetscene.
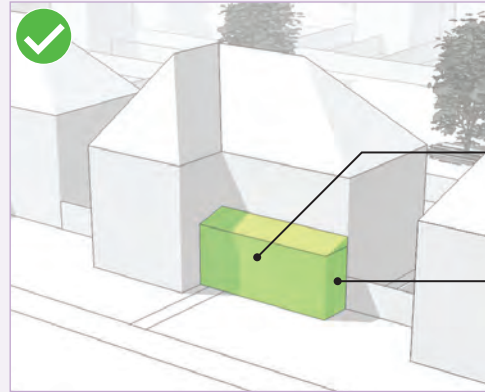
Example of an acceptable extension.

Sits behind predominant building line.

Does not extend beyond width of original building.

4.7 Roof extensions

4.7.1   Roof extensions should not affect the local character or the environment of neighbouring properties.

4.7.2   Roof extensions should:

- not unbalance the symmetry of a terrace or semi-detached dwellings;

- be clad in appropriate materials;

- ensure that the roof material and the shape of new windows relate well to the original building;

- position dormer windows with care, avoiding front or side slopes where they may unbalance the building or disrupt the consistency of a group or terrace;

- size dormers so they are subordinate elements at roof level, and do not extend across the full width of the roof;

- ensure that dormers do not rise above the ridge or hip of a roof;

- preferably align new openings with those on lower levels; and

- preferably locate skylights on side or rear roof slopes.

Roof extensions

A Dormer is out of proportion with the remainder of the house.

B Impacts on the symmetry and integrity of the semi-detached houses.

C The dormer and its windows have a poor relationship with the rest of the house.

Example of an acceptable roof extension.

The dormer extends above the roof-line.

Example of an acceptable dormer window.

4.8 Windows and doors

4.8.1   The design and detailing of windows/doors on the street frontage is of particular importance as it contributes to local character.

4.8.2   The design of new windows and doors should relate well to those originally used in the building.

4.8.3   Replacement windows and doors on street frontages should:

- complement the existing by matching the opening arrangement, material and details to the originals;
- maintain the original glazing pattern which is generally an integral part of the appearance and quality of the building; and
- where the building is part of a group or terrace, they should maintain its consistency of appearance.

4.9 Solar panels, satellite dishes and air source heat pumps

4.9.1   These additions generally do not require planning permission. However, it is important to consider their impact on the attractiveness of new and existing individual dwellings and the street.

Solar panels

4.9.2   Where possible solar panels should not be placed on the front elevation of buildings or in a position that is visible from the street frontage. They should preferably be mounted in a regular pattern with equal set backs from the eaves and ridgelines.

Satellite dishes

4.9.3   Satellite dishes should be placed in the least prominent position, avoiding the front elevation wherever possible.

Air source heat pumps

4.9.4   Air source heat pumps should not be placed on front elevations or in a position that is visible from the street. If this cannot be avoided then they should be sensitively screened.

4.10 Balconies and roof terraces

4.10.1   New balconies and roof terraces on existing buildings should not affect neighbouring properties, or alter local character, either of a group of buildings or of the streetscape.

4.10.2   Balconies, including Juliet balconies, and roof terraces should be:

- positioned, and screened if necessary, so that they do not overlook neighbouring homes or gardens; and
- sited away from locations that are sensitive to additional levels of noise or disruption.

124

4.11 Garages and outbuildings

4.11.1   New garages and outbuildings should not affect the quality of the living environment or the character of the streetscene or the area.

4.11.2   Garages and outbuildings should:

- preserve a back garden of a reasonable size, appropriate for the potential number of occupants of the house, and able to accommodate activities such as playing, drying clothes, cycle and refuse storage;

- be set back behind the building line of the original house so they do not intrude in the streetscene;

- be subordinate in footprint and scale to the original house;

- follow the style of the original building, or complement it with a high quality modern addition; and

- ensure that the roof form is well proportioned and in scale with the original house and its roof.

Garages and outbuildings

A   Garage at rear of garden does not retain a usable garden area.

B   Garage is extends beyond the front building line.

C   Garages should not be located at corners.

Location of garage retains rear access and sits behind the building line.
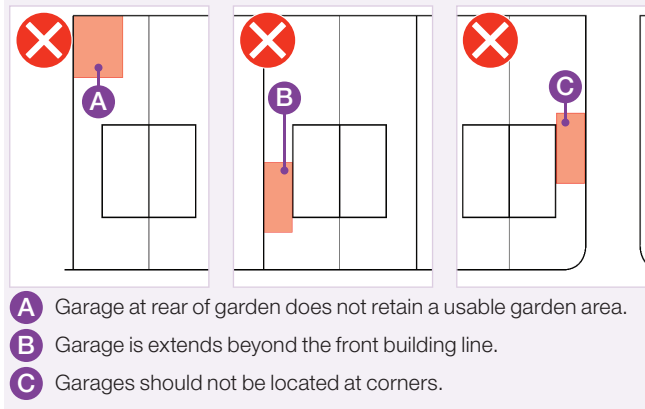
5   Design and Access Statements

5.1   Introduction

5.1.1   A Design and Access Statement is a short report that needs to be submitted with certain applications for planning permission and listed building consent. These include:

- all major development proposals;
- development in conservation areas for one or more dwellings;
- development in conservation areas for more than 100 sqm of floorspace; and
- listed building consent.

5.1.2   A Design and Access Statement is used by the local planning authority and others to help understand the development proposal, why it is as it is, and how it has evolved.

5.1.3   The level of detail should be proportionate to the complexity of the application but it should not be a long document.

5.1.4   This section refers to applications for detailed planning permission. For information on listed building consent applications, please contact the Planning section of the Environment, Culture and Communities department.

5.2   Content of a Design and Access Statement

5.2.1   The Design and Access Statement should explain how the development proposal is a suitable response to the site and its setting and it should demonstrate that it can be accessed by all.

5.2.2   It should:

- explain the relevant design principles and concepts;
- outline the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development;
- demonstrate how the design approach takes that context into account;
- explain the approach to access;
- explain how relevant Local Plan polices have been taken into account;
- detail any consultation with the local planning authority and local residents and how this has informed the proposals; and
- explain how any specific issues that might affect access have been addressed.

5.2.3   Outline planning applications must provide information about the proposed uses and amount of development proposed for each use. They must also indicate the area or areas where access is proposed to the development. Applicants may also provide additional information as part of the application to help the Council assess it against planning policies. The Design and Access Statement should explain how the application will achieve high quality design and so comply with Core Strategy Policy CS7 and any other relevant policies.

5.2.4   A Design and Access Statement is an opportunity for an applicant to showcase the development proposals. It should be easy to understand, engaging to read, have a high level of information expressed in a diagrammatic format and should realistically communicate what the proposals will look like, how they will function and the impact they will have on the surrounding area.

5.2.5   For more information on Design and Access statements, please see:

http://wwwdesigncouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-and-access-statements-how-to-write-read-and-use-them

26

127

Bracknell
Forest
Council

Design Supplementary Planning Document

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

July 2016

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2 Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive)) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) specific types of plans that set out the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment.

1.3 There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at a local level and for minor modifications if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

1.4 In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), the Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. Where the Council determines that SEA is not required then under Regulation 9(3) the Council must prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.

2.0 Design Supplementary Planning Document

2.1 The Design Guide document provides design principles and best practice to guide the design quality of development proposals. It elaborates on the design principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them.

2.2 Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design requires proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve good design, through Design & Access Statements, clear and informative drawings, including street-scenes, and other material that may define the future quality of development proposals, including concept statements, development briefs, masterplans or design codes.

2.3 The Design SPD focuses on design principles for built development in order to complement the other SPD documents that the Council has already adopted.

2.4 The Council intends to adopt the Design SPD following a thorough public consultation process. Once adopted, it will form part of the Council's policy context and will be a material consideration when applications are being considered. It is also intended to be of help to householders who may wish to make changes to their properties under their Permitted Development rights.

2.5 The scope covers:

- Design and Context
- Built Form and Spaces
- Extensions and Alterations
- Design and Access Statements

2.6 Design and Context, focuses on how development proposals should respond to their surroundings. This is relevant to all development proposals, for residential and commercial developments as well as for householder extensions and alterations.

2.7 Built Form and Spaces, provides general design principles for buildings and spaces, and how to relate them together to create positive places. It also provides principles for the design of buildings, and for the associated requirements that need to be accommodated on plot, such as parking, servicing and amenity space. It also provides guidance on the relationships with neighbouring properties. These design principles apply to all forms of development.

2.8 Extensions and Alterations, provides design principles for the design of residential extensions and alterations to existing properties.

2.9 Design and Access Statements, sets out the Council's expectations for Design and Access Statements where they are required to accompany a planning application.

3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening

The SEA Screening Process

3.1 The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations. A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted.

3.2 Within 28 days of making its determination the authority must publish a statement setting out its decision. If it determines that an SEA is not required, the statement must include the reasons for this.

3.3 This draft document is subject to consultation from 7 July 2016 to 18 August 2016 with the relevant bodies. Their comments will be included in a final version of this document, in which the Council will set out its final determination.

3.4 Practical guidance to the SEA Directive, published by the Department of Environment in 2005 but still relevant, provides a useful diagram of the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs) shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes

Figure 2 – **Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.

1. Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))

No to both criteria

Yes to either criterion

2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))

No

Yes

3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))

No to either criterion

4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))

Yes

No

Yes to both criteria

5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)

Yes to either criterion

6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)

No

Yes

No to both criteria

7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8, 3.9)

Yes

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)*

No

No to all criteria

Yes to any criterion

DIRECTIVE REQUIRES SEA

DIRECTIVE DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA

*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

3.5 The process in Figure 1 has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in Table 1. This shows the assessment of whether the WNP will require a SEA. The questions in Table 1 are drawn from Figure 1 above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

Table 1: Assessment of Characteristics of a Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Y/N	Reasoning
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	The SPD is prepared by, and will be adopted by, the local authority.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? ((Art. 2 (a))	Y	The SPD is prepared under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. The process is prescribed by legislation. Once adopted, it will provide detailed guidance for the implementation of Core Strategy Policy CS7 for the area and be used when making decisions on planning applications in the area it covers.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes 1 and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2 (a))	Y	A SPD is primarily prepared for the purposes of town and country planning and land use. It influences the framework for development, including infrastructure development which may fall under no. 10 of Annex II of the EIA Directive as 'urban development' (for example, housing, community infrastructure or employment).
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N	The Design SPD elaborates on the design principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment which has been agreed with Natural England.
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at a local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art.3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The SPD may determine the use of small areas at a local level, for example the layout of a site.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	Once adopted a SPD provides detailed guidance for the implementation of Development Plan policies and will be a material consideration in the decision making process on planning applications.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or	N	The SPD does not deal with these issues.

Stage	Y/N	Reasoning
budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8. 3.9)		
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art.3.5)	Y?	A SPD could potentially have an effect on the environment. However, whether this is significant depends on the proposals within the SPD. This requires detailed assessment – (see Table 2).

3.6   The conclusion of the assessment in Table 1 is that depending on the content of the Design SPD, an SEA may be required. For this reason a specific assessment of the Design SPD is required to determine the likely significant effects.

Likely Significant Effects

3.7   To decide whether the Design SPD might have significant environmental effects, its potential scope should be assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Using the information available at the current stage of preparation (see Section 2 for the broad scope of the Design SPD at the internal consultation draft stage), the assessment in Table 2 has been made:

Table 2: Assessment of likely significant effects against Schedule 1 criteria

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:		
1a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The Design SPD elaborates on the design principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
1c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	Principles set out in the Design SPD are planned to have a positive impact on the integration of environmental considerations (e.g. climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable approach to construction, water efficiency, flexible and adaptable accommodation). The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. Core Strategy Policy CS7 itself aims to have a positive impact on the integration of environmental considerations; the SPD just provides more detail on how this should be achieved. The Design SPD does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
1d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme:	No	Providing further detailed design guidance to the existing development framework, is not likely to exacerbate environmental problems (such as the condition of European sites, or Air Quality Management Areas). The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
1e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The Design SPD is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation and does not allocate potentially polluting development.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:		
2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
2b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
2c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	The extent of any effects will be within the borough boundary. The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
2d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No risks to human health or the environment have been identified as a result of policies in the Design SPD. The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The Design SPD is only concerned with development within Bracknell Forest borough. The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA).
2f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – i) special natural characteristics	No	The Design SPD is applicable to development within the whole of Bracknell Forest borough, which includes many conservation areas

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
or cultural heritage ii) exceeded environmental quality standards of limit values; or iii) intensive land-use.		and listed buildings. Some environmental quality standards within the borough are not being met (e.g. Water Framework Directive objectives, air quality standards). The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA) which included the assessment of these issues.
2g) the effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	No	The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA), including effects on areas of landscape.

4.0   Conclusions

4.1   Having reviewed the criteria, the Council has concluded that the emerging Design SPD is not likely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- The Design SPD elaborates on the design policies and principles set out in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Core Strategy Policy CS7 Design and sets out how development proposals can achieve them. It does not present any policies, and serves only to provide greater clarity about the council expectations in relation to existing policies within the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA) and assessed as having no significant environmental effect.

APPENDIX A

Consultation Response from Natural England

APPENDIX B

Consultation Response from Historic England

APPENDIX C

Consultation Response from the Environment Agency

Consultation Strategy for the Design Supplementary Planning Document

Document Title	Design Supplementary Planning Document
Nature of Plan being Prepared	The Design SPD provides design principles and best practice to guide the design quality of developments proposals in the borough. It builds on the design guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Council's own policies as set out in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007; the saved policies of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 and the Current Streetscene SPD and Character Area Assessment.
Purpose of Consultation	The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the content and guidance provided within the Design SPD which is intended to provide advice to architects or other suitably qualified professionals as well as local residents who wish to improve their home.
Nature of issues that need to be consulted upon	The content of the document and the advice in respect of: - Design and Context i.e. how development proposals should respond to their surroundings. - Built form and Spaces i.e. guidance on general design principles for buildings and spaces, and how to relate them together to provide positive spaces. - Extensions and alterations i.e. guidance on the principles for the design of residential extensions and alterations to existing properties. - Design and Access Statements i.e. guidance on the Council's expectations for Design and Access Statements.
Who should be consulted	As prescribed in the Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012, including: • Those living and working within the Borough; • Parish/Town Councils within the Borough; • Adjoining District and Borough Councils; • Specific consultees including Environment Agency, Historic England; Natural England; the Highways Agency; the sewerage and water undertakers. • General consultees (including voluntary bodies, bodies which represent the interests of: different racial, ethic or national groups, different religious groups, disabled persons, and persons carrying on a business in the Local Authority area).
Why we are consulting them	Those living and working within the Borough have the potential to be directly affected by the content of the Design SPD which provides guidance on the quality of development proposals in the Borough. The Design SPD provides design guidance which extends beyond the Borough boundary and which requires liaison with specific bodies (such as adjoining Authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, the Highways Agency and Historic England).
How we will be consulting	Regard needs to be given to the Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (February 2014). The Council will use a diverse range of communication methods in order to ensure inclusive consultation on the Design SPD as follows:

Document Title	Design Supplementary Planning Document
	a) Letter or email to consultees explaining the nature of the consultation, and where information is available. b) Update the front page of the Council's web page (including 'Consultations' page), and Design SPD web page to include notification that the Design SPD Consultation has commenced and provide a direct link to consultation event. c) Update strap line of emails of staff within the Planning section to include information on the consultation. d) Press release to local newspapers at the start of consultation. e) Information on the Council's social media (Facebook and Twitter), at the start of the consultation. f) Make available a hard copy of the Design SPD at local libraries (computer access is also available at local libraries). g) Notification to BFC Parish/Town Councils and provision of a hard copy of the Design SPD consultation document. h) Provision of a hard copy of the Design SPD consultation document (& supporting documentation) at the Council's Time Square office. i) Consultation with local voluntary and community groups via 'Involve'. j) Consultation with the Council's Access Group. k) Consultation with local business interest via the Council's Business Enterprise team.
When consultation will take place	Core consultation is planned to commence on 17th October for a period of 6 weeks.
Accessible/Inclusive Consultation	As set out above, the Council will use a diverse range of communication methods in order to ensure inclusive consultation on the Design SPD, such as a hard copy of the Design SPD being made available in local libraries and Parish/Town Councils through to it being made available on the Council's web site. A press advert will also be placed in a local newspaper We will aim to ensure that the press advert is in plain English. The Council also liaises with 'Involve' who send out consultation information on the Council's behalf (usually a letter setting out the nature of the consultation, where information can be viewed and how they can comment). 'Involve' is the central support agency for over 600 voluntary and community action groups. They liaise with such groups as Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance and Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief Forum. Copies of documents can also be obtained in large print, Braille, audio cassette or in other languages. The CLP is accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment which considers these matters in further detail.
How comments will be taken into account	Following the consultation, any comments received will be set out in a 'Consultation Report', which will summarise the key issues raised, how we have dealt with comments, and how they have been taken into account. These will be made available on the Council's website.
How comments will be reported	Comments received will be reported in a Consultation Report.

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Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening:	Directorate: Environment Culture and Communities	Section:Spatial Policy
1. Activity to be assessed	Design Supplementary Planning Document	
2. What is the activity?	☐✓ Policy/strategy ☐ Function/procedure ☐ Project ☐ Review ☐ Service ☐ Organisational change	
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	☐ New ☐✓ Existing	
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Max Baker/Hilary Coplestone	
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Max Baker/Hilary Coplestone	
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	The purpose is to assist in the implementation of planning policy by setting out guidance on design principles against which to assess proposed development within the Borough.	
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	All residents irrespective of their background, ethnicity gender or physical needs. It will also be relevant to developers and landowners by providing guidance on the Council's requirements for parking from new developments	

Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no		Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.	Y ✓	N	Positive	There will be a positive impact since the SPD reinforces existing planning policy guidance to lead to the creation of safe and accessible environments in terms of built form and spaces.
9. Racial equality	Y	N ✓		
10. Gender equality	Y	N ✓		
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y	N ✓		

12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N ✓	
13. Age equality	Y	N ✓	
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N ✓	
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y	N ✓	
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N ✓	

17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.	The SPD aims to secure good design and create places, buildings and spaces that work for everyone, that are accessible to all and are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.		
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A		
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	N/A		

20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?	Y	N ✓	Please explain for each equality group
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?			
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	Y	N ✓	Full assessment not required as no potentially negative impacts have been identified.

23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria

24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Planning and Transport
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	The SPD provides guidance to secure the creation of safe and accessible environments in terms of built form and spaces
26. Chief Officers signature.	Signature: Date:

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Unrestricted

TO: EXECUTIVE
27 SEPTEMBER 2016

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME – TWO YEAR TRIAL CONSULTATION RESPONSE
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Executive at its meeting on the 12 April 2016 agreed to consult the existing householders living in the relevant areas regarding the future of the residents parking trial based on a recharge scheme as set out in Annex A. This paper appraises the Executive of the outcome of that consultation exercise and proposes a way forward in light of the outcome having due regard to the current fiscal position.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Executive agrees:

(i) **To reduce the residents parking scheme as shown in Annex A to that as shown in Annex B,**

(ii) **To maintain the current rules of the scheme without alteration (Annex C),**

(iii) **To advertise a Traffic Regulation Order to remove those areas, as above (Annex B), from the residents parking scheme, and to amend the charges in line with Annex D, and**

(iv) **To inform the residents within the original residents parking area of the outcome.**

(v) **Post implementation to thereafter review the charges as part of the annual review of fees and charges to ensure that the scheme continues to be self funded.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In order to inform the future of the scheme, a consultation has been carried out and all residents living within the Resident Parking Scheme were invited to give their views on the key elements of the scheme. The feedback has been used to inform the future of the overall scheme on an area by area basis. The objective being to find the most suitable scheme that protects residents from the parking pressures associated with the regenerated town centre having due regard to the feedback and the need to avoid an unacceptable pressure on council budgets.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The Council has been clear that the scheme has to be self funding. From the feedback it has become clear that unless the scheme is to be totally abandoned, a compromise is necessary to allow a slightly modified scheme to continue. If the scheme was to be abandoned the risk of a significant percentage of the 3,000 new workers in the new town centre using the local estate roads for parking is considered high. Experience within some of the areas covered by the scheme proves the high risk of non local residents parking if there is no scheme in place.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   The trial scheme was designed to be as simple and economical as was possible. The scheme avoids the need for official marked parking bays, only requiring that vehicles display a permit in the streets affected as signed. Vehicles parking in a road where the scheme operates are required to display a permit in their windscreen during the hours of operation. Failure to comply risks a Penalty Charge Notice. A number of exemptions were included to apply to postal deliveries, public services and for general loading/unloading of goods or passengers etc. **It is not proposed to change any of the current rules of the scheme (Annex B) based on the learning and results of consultation.**

5.2   To make the scheme self funding as was always intended it was necessary to change the charging regime. The Executive were advised of the income and expenditure relating to the current trial, together with various assumptions on the likely take up of permits to establish a fee structure for the purposes of consultation. The proposed fees that were part of the consultation reflects that assessment in order to make the scheme self funding.

5.3   The overall response rate was 30% of the total number of households. The consultation was not limited to 1 per household, therefore the depth of analysis is limited but helps give a general overview of the views in the community.

Resident Consultation Summary

5.4   Papers were delivered to all properties within the current resident parking zones (Annex A). All householders were also able to respond on line using the Councils web page. We received 436 eligible responses to the consultation.

5.5   The initial questions in the consultation dealt with the location, number of cars and garages for each respondent; specifically, questions 5 and 6 identified which road and street respondents were in. The other details are summarised as follows:

Question 8: focussed on the use of visitor permits. The responses revealed that the majority of people used their four hour reusable permit once a week (32%) with the scratch cards being used most frequently on a monthly basis (4 hour scratch cards 32%, 24 hour scratch cards 38%).

Question 9: asked if the residents believed that a continued resident parking scheme would be beneficial to their road when considering the regenerated town centre and the increased shopping and working opportunities. 52% of the respondents said yes and 31% said no. (17% did not answer)

Question 10: asked if the residents believed that the scheme had provided a benefit to date. There was an equal split of 45% for both yes and no. (10% did not answer)

Question 11: asked about residents' views on the application process. It was clear from the responses that the process was considered to be user friendly with 77% saying it was simple and easy to follow.

Question 12: sought views on the level of enforcement. 47% felt there was not enough enforcement, 38% thought the enforcement level was about right and 9% thought there was too much enforcement. (6% did not answer).

Question 13: sought views with regard to the future of the scheme. This question asked if the resident would be in support of continuing the scheme if the proposed level of charges was to be introduced. Of the 419 responses to this question 186 (44%) were in favour of the scheme continuing, and 233 (56%) were against. The respondents to this question were asked to tick a box to show they were in support of continuation of the scheme with charging or a box to say they prefer the removal of the scheme. It should be noted that some of the respondents, in addition to ticking one of the two boxes, added additional comments to say they wanted the scheme to continue but did not want to pay. These results have not been tabulated as this was not an option given. Therefore any respondents saying they would like the scheme to continue have been classed as a 'continue with the scheme' response, whether or not they added comments to say without paying.

5.6   The responses to question 13 have been broken down into separate roads and zones so that patterns can be identified and the perceived relative merits of the scheme can be better understood.

Zone A - Priestwood & Garth West

Road Name	No. of properties	For	Against	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of responses against continuing with charges	% of responses In support of continuing with charges
		No. who support continuing with charges	No. who are against continuing with charges				
Appletree Place	6	1	4	5	83.3	80.0	20.0
Arlington Close	13	2	7	9	69.2	77.8	22.2
Clintons Green	16	1	2	3	18.8	66.7	33.3
Downshire Way (part)	11	3	4	7	63.6	57.1	42.9
Fairfax	23	5	6	11	47.8	54.5	45.5
Hawthorn Close	32	0	4	4	12.5	100.0	0.0
Honeyhill Road	57	8	12	20	35.1	60.0	40.0
Limerick Close	24	0	7	7	29.2	100.0	0.0
Portman Close	11	1	2	3	27.3	66.7	33.3
Windlebrook Green	8	1	4	5	62.5	80.0	20.0
TOTALS	**201**	**22**	**52**	**74**	36.8	70.3	29.7

COMMENT: The results for Zone A show that residents were not in favour of continuing the scheme with charges. Each individual road shows a % of respondents over 50% against continuing. This is likely because Zone A is the furthest from the Town Centre and so will have experienced less parking issues associated with the old town centre and expect less or little change with the new town centre.

Zone B - Priestwood & Garth East

Road Name	No. of properties	For	Against	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of properties against continuing with charges	% of properties In support of continuing with charges
		No. who support continuing with charges	No. who are against continuing with charges				
Albert Road	18	3	2	5	27.8	40.0	60.0
Ashridge Green	16	4	0	4	25.0	0.0	100.0
Binfield Road (part)	86	0	8	8	9.3	100.0	0.0
Birchetts Close	26	8	14	22	84.6	63.6	36.4
Bull Lane	13	1	1	2	15.4	50.0	50.0
Braybrooke Road (part)	6	3	2	5	83.3	40.0	60.0
Daventry Court	32	4	1	5	15.6	20.0	80.0
Dukeshill Road	37	2	10	12	32.4	83.3	16.7
Fowlers Lane	5	3	3	6	120.0	50.0	50.0
Folders Lane (part)	17	1	0	1	5.9	0.0	100.0
Fraser Road	31	5	7	12	38.7	58.3	41.7
Hart Close	29	3	8	11	37.9	72.7	27.3
Horsneille Lane	105	22	21	43	41.0	48.8	51.2
Keates Green	29	6	4	10	34.5	40.0	60.0
Merryhill Road	84	4	19	23	27.4	82.6	17.4
Shepherds Lane	47	8	16	24	51.1	66.7	33.3
St. Anthonys Close	37	0	5	5	13.5	100.0	0.0
TOTALS	**618**	**77**	**121**	**198**	32.0	61.1	38.9

COMMENT: The results for Zone B show that residents had a mixed opinion, for example, roads such as Albert Road, Daventry Court and Keates Green show 60%+ of respondents in favour of continuing with the charges, whilst roads such as Shepherds Lane and St Anthony's Close are against continuing. These results do support the idea that the further from the town centre you live, the less support for the scheme there is likely to be.

Zone C - Grange Road Area

Road Name	No. of properties	For — No. who support continuing with charges	Against — No. who are against continuing with charges	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of properties against continuing with charges	% of properties In support of continuing with charges
Grange Road	24	14	1	15	62.5	6.7	93.3
Willow Drive	17	3	1	4	23.5	25.0	75.0
TOTALS	**41**	**17**	**2**	**19**	46.3	10.5	89.5

COMMENT: The results for Zone C show that residents are strongly in favour of continuing the scheme with charges. Both roads shows have a majority of respondents in favour.

Zone D - Deepfield Road Area

Road Name	No. of properties	For — No. who support continuing with charges	Against — No. who are against continuing with charges	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of properties against continuing with charges	% of properties In support of continuing with charges
Deepfield Road	106	18	1	19	17.9	5.3	94.7
Fielden Place	39	2	13	15	38.5	86.7	13.3
Forest Green	18	1	12	13	72.2	92.3	7.7
North Green	33	3	4	7	21.2	57.1	42.9
Smith Square	19	2	7	9	47.4	77.8	22.2
TOTALS	**215**	**26**	**37**	**63**	29.3	58.7	41.3

COMMENT: The results for Zone D show that residents had a mixed opinion, for example, the main through road for the Zone, Deepfield Road had a 95% response rate in favour of continuing with charges. However, the side roads, accessed off Deepfield Road had a different opinion, with 92% of respondents in Forest Green

155

being against continuing. Many of the respondents from the side roads explained in their response that they believe, since the residents parking scheme was introduced, that parking from within Deepfield Road has been displaced into these side roads. This was not expected as the side roads are also within the Zone and so any vehicle parked on street in the side roads would be subject to the exact same restrictions as on Deepfield Road. If these displaced vehicles are parking illegally within the Zone then this could be an enforcement issue

Zone E - Goodways Drive Area

Road Name	No. of properties	For — No. who support continuing with charges	Against — No. who are against continuing with charges	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of properties against continuing with charges	% of properties In support of continuing with charges
Drayton Close	19	2	2	4	21.1	50.0	50.0
Farnham Close	30	2	0	2	6.7	0.0	100.0
Goodways Drive	37	11	2	13	35.1	15.4	84.6
Kenton Close	13	0	1	1	7.7	100.0	0.0
Tebbit Close	18	4	2	6	33.3	33.3	66.7
The Oaks	41	9	2	11	26.8	18.2	81.8
TOTALS	**158**	**28**	**9**	**37**	23.4	24.3	75.7

COMMENT: The results for Zone E show that residents are strongly in favour of continuing the scheme with charges. All roads show a majority of respondents in favour with the exception of Kenton Road, which only had a single respondent, against continuing.

Zone F - Old Bracknell Lane Area

Road Name	No. of properties	For — No. who support continuing with charges	Against — No. who are against continuing with charges	Total responses received	% of properties who responded	% of properties against continuing with charges	% of properties In support of continuing with charges
Broome Court	20	0	2	2	10.0	100.0	0.0
Crowthorne Road	8	0	0	0	0.0	no	no

North (part)						response	response
Faircross	29	7	5	12	41.4	41.7	58.3
Friendship Way	21	2	1	3	14.3	33.3	66.7
Leverkusen Road	11	1	3	4	36.4	75.0	25.0
Old Bracknell Lane East (part)	22	6	1	7	31.8	14.3	85.7
TOTALS	**111**	**16**	**12**	**28**	25.2	42.9	57.1

COMMENT: The results for Zone F show that residents are in favour of continuing the scheme with charges. Whilst the response rate was low, the main through route, Old Bracknell Lane East showed a 6 to 1 majority in favour 86%. Leverkusen Road showed a small majority against and Broome Court was also against, although again, a very small response rate.

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

5.7 A key element of the consultation was on the merits or otherwise of having one self funded scheme. The feedback suggests that there is not support over all of the Zones. Accordingly, the options are either to abandon the scheme in its entirety, continue the scheme as trialled or to consider some form of variation.

5.8 If the Council stopped the scheme this would result in a significant number of the residents' streets being used by shoppers, shop workers, residents of the numerous new or planned town centre flats, by commuters or students from the local College. The pre-trial experience confirms that this was already the case in some zones.

5.9 If the results are taken in their simplest form there is a 55% response in favour of discontinuing the scheme if charges are to be introduced. However, 52% of respondents have said they believe the residents parking scheme will be beneficial in the future. To impose a change across all the Zones would mean disregarding either the positive responses from Zones such as C, E and F or non supportive views expressed by those living in Zone A and the northern Part of Zone B, the majority of whom were against the proposals.

5.10 A compromise option is possible that seeks to address the majority views on a street by street basis which involves amending the scheme to reduce its size, whilst still introducing the proposed charging regime. The feedback strongly suggests a general correlation between the distance from the town centre and the desire to pay for a residents parking scheme. i.e. the further from the town centre the resident lives, the less popular the residents parking scheme with charges becomes. It would therefore be possible to remove certain roads from the scheme, whilst maintaining it in roads closer to the town centre. To do this a few basic rules have to be applied:

- If a main through road within a zone is to be included (based on consultation responses), the minor side roads accessed from this main road have to also be included within the zone, regardless of the result of the consultation. (Whilst the side roads may have responded to not be in the zone, they would be at a greater disadvantage if the larger main road was still included and they were not. Excluding them would mean that they could no longer park in the main road but any resident or visitor to the main road could park in the minor side roads).

- If a main through road within a zone is to be removed from the scheme, the minor side roads will also be removed from the scheme. (This is to prevent small isolated areas of residents parking that are not included within a zone).
- That an existing road within the scheme will not be split. The entire road will either be included or removed based on the consultation results,. (This will prevent there being neighbours in a street living with different parking conditions).

5.11   Based on the above, the parking scheme can be reduced in size as shown on the plan in Annex B. This shows that Zone A has been removed from the scheme in its entirety, Zone B has been split, with southern residents in the zone and northern residents out of the zone, and Zones C through to F have been included. The roads included within the scheme are listed.

5.12   The table below shows the number of respondents from within the proposed reduced residents parking scheme showing a majority in favour of continuing.

Zone	Against continuing	In favour of continuing
A	-	-
B	32	39
C	2	17
D	37	26
E	9	28
F	12	16
Total	92	126

Table showing the number of responses to question 13 from residents in the reduced Zone (Annex B).

5.12   Reducing the scheme as proposed does have a fiscal impact. The original cost estimate for the annual running of the scheme was £104,000 based on a full scheme and with many assumptions. The results of the survey and the proposed changes have necessitated a review of those costs. To run a scheme over a smaller area enables some of the original costs to be reduced, e.g. day to day patrols and printing costs. By changing the approach to in particular how we police the scheme and reducing some back office costs such as printing it is possible to reduce the annual cost of running the scheme from £104k to £64k. Working over a reduced area and by being intelligence led the current enforcement arrangements will be replaced with a more reactive and targeted approach, as seen elsewhere within the Borough. The proposed changes are therefore believed to enable the council to introduce a self funded residents parking scheme on the same level of fees as per the consultation and working to the original assumptions. There will be a need to review the situation post implementation to ensure the overall objectives are still being achieved.

5.13   If the proposal is agreed all residents in the original area will be appraised of the decision. They would have the right to make representations in response to the proposed changes to the TRO. Any representations would then be considered as part of the normal adoption process.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   As an appropriate consultation has been undertaken and considered, no significant legal issues arise from this report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   There are no direct financial implications inherent in the report. It is intended that the Resident Parking Scheme should be self-funding and both the initial proposal which was sent for consultation and the reduced proposal following the results of the consultation meet this criteria.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3   Undertaken as part of the trial.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4   Projecting income for a scheme like this relative to costs is difficult and the charges that have been consulted on could significantly under recover the predicted revised net costs. Whether or not it is will not be known until full implementation and offer a settling in period. Whilst the overall response rate to the consultation was high for such an exercise, the level of engagement was still less than we would have preferred. As a result the decision to exclude some areas could result in some unmet demand. Should that be the case the Scheme could be extended through use of the Traffic Regulation Order process.

7   CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   The report has been produced taking account of the public consultation involving all residents living in the residents parking trial area.

Method of Consultation

7.2   Direct mail shots and on-line

Representations Received

7.3   Included in the report

Background Papers

- Residents' Parking Scheme - Bracknell Forest Borough Council (Waiting Restriction and Permit Parking) Order 2014
- Executive report 12 April 2016
- Survey results

Contacts for further information

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RESIDENT PARKING ZONES

KEY:

ROADS & PROPERTIES WITHIN RESIDENTS PARKING AREA

SELF CONTAINED PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS (VISITOR PARKING PERMIT ALLOCATION ONLY)

i) Bevan Gate
ii) Boyd Court
iii) The Croft
iv) Kelvin Gate
v) Sabine Gates
vi) Winterbourne Court
v) Gordon Clifford Court

ZONE A
Appletree Place
Arlington Close
Clintons Green
Downshire Way (part)
Fairfax
Hawthorn Close
Honeyhill Road
Limerick Close
Portman Close
Windlebrook Green

ZONE B
Albert Road
Ashridge Green
Binfield Road (part)
Birchetts Close
Braybrooke Road (part)
Bull Lane (part)
Daventry Court
Dukeshill Road
Folders Lane (part)
Fowlers Lane
Fraser Road
Hart Close
Horsneile Lane
Keates Green
Merryhill Road
Shepherds Lane (part)
St. Anthonys Close

ZONE C
Grange Road
Willow Drive

ZONE D
Deepfield Road
Fielden Place
Forest Green
North Green
Smith Square

ZONE E
Drayton Close
Farnham Close
Goodways Drive
Kenton Close
Tebbit Close
The Oaks

ZONE F
Friendship Way
Leverkusen Road

ZONE F
Broome Court
Crowthorne Road North
Faircross
Old Bracknell Lane East (part)

BULL LANE

TOWN CENTRE

A329 MILLENNIUM WAY

A329 SKIMPED HILL LANE

A329 LONDON ROAD

A3095 WARFIELD ROAD

LARGES LANE

A3095 CHURCH ROAD

A3095 BAGSHOT ROAD

WOKINGHAM ROAD

BERKSHIRE WAY

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Proposed Reduced Resident Parking Scheme

KEY:

CONSULTATION AREAS

SELF CONTAINED PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS (VISITOR PARKING PERMIT ALLOCATION ONLY)

i) Kelvin Gate
ii) Sabine Gates
iii) Winterbourne Court
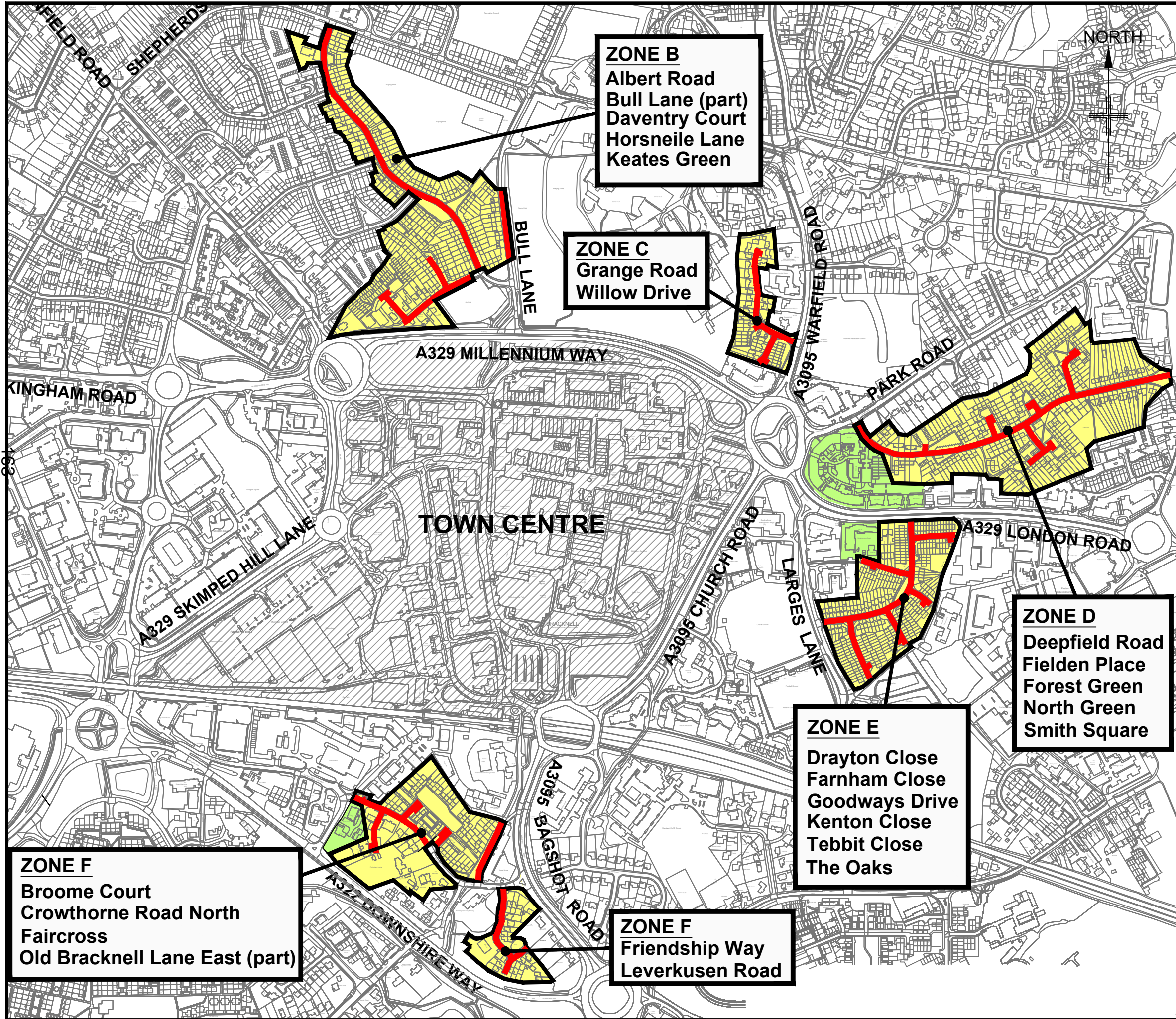
NORTH

ZONE B
Albert Road
Bull Lane (part)
Daventry Court
Horsneile Lane
Keates Green

ZONE C
Grange Road
Willow Drive

ZONE D
Deepfield Road
Fielden Place
Forest Green
North Green
Smith Square

ZONE E
Drayton Close
Farnham Close
Goodways Drive
Kenton Close
Tebbit Close
The Oaks

ZONE F
Broome Court
Crowthorne Road North
Faircross
Old Bracknell Lane East (part)

ZONE F
Friendship Way
Leverkusen Road

TOWN CENTRE

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Ordnance Survey LA100019488

Amendment	Date	Initials

Bracknell Forest Council

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES
Traffic & Safety Group

Project title
PROPOSED REDUCED RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME

Drawing title
LOCATION OF ZONES

Prepared by	CW	Checked by	NM
Scale	NTS	Date	JUNE 2016

Project Number	Drawing Number 4928/005	Amend Letter	Print Suffix

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RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME RULES

RESIDENT PERMITS (Subject to a 2 year trial period – 01/11/2014 to 31/10/2016)

<u>Property Eligibility</u>

A maximum of 5 annual Resident Parking Permits can be issued to each household within a residents parking zone. A household is a house or flat that is registered for Council Tax. Flats are treated as separate addresses if they are separate for Council tax rating, but houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's) are treated as one household with permits being issued on a first come/first served basis.

<u>Vehicle Eligibility</u>

Certain commercial vehicles require a Vehicle Operator Licence and any vehicle meeting the criteria for such a license is required (legally) to be stored in an 'operating centre' (depot/storage yard) and therefore should not be parked on the public highway when not in use. If a commercial vehicle meets any of the following criteria then it requires an operator's licence and therefore will not be eligible for a Residents Parking Permit:

- A gross plated weight of more than 3.5 tonnes; or
- if it has no gross plated weight, an unladen weight of more than 1.525 tonnes.

However, recovery vehicles (where on-call) are exempt form this condition and may park within a permit parking area if displaying a valid permit.

The same weight restrictions will apply to non-commercial vehicles.

<u>Providing Proof of Residency and Vehicle Eligibility</u>

With each application for an annual Residents Parking Permit the Council will require

- Proof of residency. A copy of a relevant specified document will be required as part of the application process, providing proof of the applicants name and address within the relevant permit parking zone.
- A copy of a relevant specified document which identifies the residents' ownership, or responsibility for, a vehicle operated from the applicants address within relevant permit parking zone.

<u>Cost</u>

The cost of annual Residents Parking Permits:

- 1st permit: **£Free of Charge (FoC)**
- 2nd permit: **£FoC**
- 3rd permit: **£20**
- 4th permit: **£40**
- 5th permit: **£70**

Disabled Badge Holders - **£FoC**

Motorcycles - **£FoC** *(motorcycles park free of charge in town centre car parks)*

<u>Notes:</u> The maximum limit of 5 permits per household will also apply to combinations of Resident Permit and/or Business Permit issue. Variations from this policy will be subject to individual consideration via the Discretionary Parking Permit Process.

VISITOR PERMITS (RESIDENT)

Eligibility

Any household listed within a permit parking area.

Permit Allocation/Cost

Visitor Permits (Resident) are issued in the form of a re-usable permit (max stay 4 hours) and single use scratch cards entitling either 4 hour or 24 hour stay.

Visitor Permit allocation and charge rates, per household, are set out below:

- 4 hour permit (re-usable) x1: **£FoC**

- 4 hour permits (scratch card) - up to 100 per annum
- Initial issue 50: **£FoC**
- Further 50: (by request): **£FoC**

- 24 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 100 per annum
- Initial issue 50: **£FoC**
- Further 50 (by request): **£FoC**

Note: These maximum allocations relate to the discounted rate - further visitor permits will be issued at a cost equivalent to 4 hour or all-day parking in the town centre.

Initial Visitor Permit issue (for a household) will be available to the first Residents Parking Permit applicant from that address.

Purchase of additional Visitor Permits (Resident)

Additional permits can be purchased without the need for further proof of address. These will be posted to the original address of the applicant.

Application for Visitor Permits only (initial application)

Where a resident has not already acquired a Resident Permit, an application for Visitor Permits (Resident) will require proof of residency. A copy of a relevant specified document will be required as part of the application process, providing proof of the applicants name and address within the relevant permit parking zone.

Private Landlords

A valid Landlords Tenancy Agreement for a property located within the permit zone will entitle private landlords to the following visitor permit allocation/and charge rates:

- 24 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 10 per annum: **£10** for book of 10
- 4 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 20 per annum: **£5** for book of 10

Self Contained Private Developments

Where located within, or immediately adjacent to a permit zone, residents of certain private developments will be entitled to acquire/purchase Visitor Permits (scratch card only) for use in adjacent roads. Allocation and charge rates will match that of standard Visitor Permits. The following private developments will be eligible:

- Kelvin Gate - The Croft - Boyd Court - Sabin Gates - Bevan Gate -

BUSINESS PERMITS

Eligibility

> i)   Businesses with premises located within a permit parking zone;
> ii)   Defined businesses located outside a permit zone, where access is required.

Permit Allocation/Cost

Businesses with premises <u>located within</u> a permit parking zone will be entitled to annual Business Permits as set out below:

- 1st permit: **£FoC**
- 2nd permit: **£FoC**
- 3rd permit: **£20**
- 4th permit: **£40**
- 5th permit: **£70**
- 4 hour permit (re-usable) x1: **£FoC**

Access for businesses, <u>located outside</u> of a permit parking zone, who meet one of the definitions below, may acquire/purchase Business Permits up to the limits and durations shown:

- Professional Tradesperson/Service Provider: **1** permit – all zones/ **£20** (max 4 hours)

Access for businesses, <u>located outside</u> of a permit parking zone, who meet one of the definitions below, will be authorised to self manage an agreed access permit system - subject to negotiation and agreement with the Council.

- Housing Associations: self managed by agreement (max stay based on activity)

Providing Proof of Address

With each application for a Business Permit the Council will require proof of address. A copy of a relevant specified document will be required, providing proof of the business address within the relevant permit parking zone.

Providing Proof of Vehicle Eligibility

With each application for a Business Parking Permit the Council will require a copy of a relevant specified document which identifies the business' ownership, or responsibility for, a vehicle operated from the applicants address within relevant permit parking zone.

Note: The maximum limit of 5 permits per property address will also apply to combinations of Business Permit and/or Resident Permit issue. Variations from this policy will be subject to individual consideration via the Discretionary Parking Permit Process.

BUSINESS VISITOR ARRANGEMENTS

Self Management

In the first instance, businesses located within the permit parking area will be expected to provide their own off-street visitor parking arrangements. In some cases, on-street limited waiting bays, or unrestricted kerbside spaces, may be available nearby.

Where no alternatives for visitor parking exist, and where the nature of the business involves visitor appointments or planned visits (i.e. <u>dentist surgery, doctors surgery</u>, etc) the organisation

will be authorised to self manage an agreed access permit system - subject to negotiation and agreement with the Council. All back office costs associated with permit application/issue to be met by the business.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PERMITS

Eligibility

A Member of a clinical, health and/or social care profession whose duties necessitate parking within a permit parking area. Evidence of the operational boundaries of the practice/organisation should be provided. The following are examples of professions which will qualify for Healthcare Professional Permits:

      i)   GP;
      ii)   District / Community Health Nurse;
      iii)   Practise / Community Midwife;
      iv)   Home Care Assistant;
      v)   Health Visitor;
      vi)   Community Psychiatric / Mental Health Nurse / Occupational Therapist.

NHS Healthcare

The NHS (Berks Healthcare NHS Trust) will be authorised to self manage an agreed access permit system - subject to negotiation and agreement with the Council. Healthcare Professional Permits will be vehicle registration specific.

Non NHS Healthcare

Private or charitable healthcare services that cannot be accommodated within the Resident Visitor Permit scheme will be subject to application through the Discretionary Parking Permit process.

TEMPORARY PERMITS

Permit Eligibility

A Temporary Permit may be issued for the following reasons:

      i)   New vehicle application / change of vehicle (temporary or permanent) – where appropriate proof of vehicle eligibility is not immediately available;
      ii)   Change of address - where proof of address is not immediately available.

Beyond these constraints applicants may apply through the Discretionary Parking Permit process explaining their circumstances.

Urgent Temporary Permit

Urgent temporary permits are available from Council Offices (Times Square / Easthampstead House) during office hours – 08.30-17.00, Mon-Fri – if applicants are in possession of the appropriate paperwork. Multiple applications will be declined.

Single use daily scratch card parking permits are available to Professional Tradespersons or Service Providers for periods 0-4 hrs: **£FoC**

REPLACEMENT PERMITS

Replacement permit (change of details) where original permit is surrendered: **£5**
Replacement permit (change of details) where original permit is not surrendered: **£20**
Replacement permit (loss): **£20**

DISCRETIONARY PARKING PERMIT PROCESS

A Discretionary Parking Permit process will consider applications for permit issue where the standard criteria are not met. Applications through this process will be made in writing, and each case considered individually. An appeals process will apply.

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Bracknell
Forest
Council

Proposed Pricing Structure for Resident Parking Permits

Permit type	Current charges	Proposed charges
Resident and business - 1st permit	Free	£25
Resident and business - 2nd permit	Free	£40
Resident and business - 3rd permit	£20	£60
Resident and business - 4th permit	£40	£80
Resident and business - 5th permit	£70	£100
Resident and business - 4 hour reusable visitor permit *(1 per household)*	Free	£25
Resident and business - Blue Badge holders *(1 permit per badge holder - to be included in the maximum allocation)*	Free	Free
Resident and business - Motorcycles	Free	Free
Visitor scratch cards - 50 x 4-hour single use	Free	£15
Visitor scratch cards - 50 x 24-hour single use	Free	£40
Visitor scratch cards - additional 50 x 4-hour single use (only available after 6 months)	Free	£15
Visitor scratch cards - additional 50 x 24-hour single use (only available after 6 months)	Free	£40
Tradesperson/service provider - single 4-hour reusable permit for all zones	£20	£60
Landlord - 4-hour permit (scratch card)	£5 per book of 10	£10 per book of 10
Landlord - 24-hour permit (scratch card)	£10 per book of 10	£20 per book of 10
Replacement permit - where original permit surrendered (if surrendered to the parking office)	£5 (per permit)	£5 (per permit)
Replacement permit - where original permit not surrendered	£20 (per permit)	£25 (per permit)

All permit allocations will be in line with the existing rules of the scheme.

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Unrestricted

TO: **EXECUTIVE**
         27 SEPTEMBER 2016

BRACKNELL FOREST SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To inform the Executive of the work of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board during 2015-2016.

2   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   That the Executive notes the report.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1   The Care Act 2014 states that each the local Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB) must publish an annual report detailing what the SAPB has done during the year to achieve its main objectives, and what each member organisation has done to implement the strategy as well as detailing the findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews (previously known as Serious Case Reviews) and subsequent action.

3.2   This report details the breadth of activity undertaken by Board members and identifies the achievements against the Boards development plan for the year.

3.3   The aims and objectives of the Board's 2016-2019 strategic plan are contained within the report as well as the planned developments by partner agencies for the coming 12 months. In line with the requirements set out in the Care Act the Board will continually develop its strategic objectives and consult/ take into account feedback from the public during the year.

3.4   Ensuring there is a local Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and that the Board is effective is a statutory duty for the Council; as such it is important that the executive are sighted on the work of the Board.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   Not applicable

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   The report highlights the achievements against development plans and the challenges identified during 2015/2016 along with the work developing for 2016/2017 and beyond. During 2015/2016 the board implemented all actions to address the areas for development identified in the peer review and reported in the previous annual report.

Contact for further information

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Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report

April 2015 – March 2016

FOREWORD

As independent chair of the Board I am pleased to introduce the 2015/16 Safeguarding Adults Annual Report on behalf of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board. It sets out the local response to this complex and fast developing agenda. It provides an overview of progress against priorities set out in the 2014/15 Annual report as well as priorities over the coming three years.

The report evidences a great deal of achievement and an ongoing and significant commitment to continuous improvement in safeguarding adults. In this context the Board has a commitment from organisations in the statutory sector (Police; CCG and Bracknell Forest Council) to contribute to a partnership budget to support developments in safeguarding adults. This resource funds the Independent Chair; Board Manager and contributes towards carrying out Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

The Care Act is a significant catalyst for change in safeguarding adults. This change has been embraced by the Board and local development is taking place in the context of the definition, purpose and responsibilities set out in the statutory guidance. I include below some key aspects of the expectations set out in the guidance to ensure a common understanding of the Board's role and responsibilities.

The Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB) does not deliver operational services nor does it have sole responsibility for safeguarding adults in Bracknell Forest. Its role, as set out in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance (March 2015), is one of seeking assurance of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements are led and developed by organisations across the partnership (providers providing quality care and support; commissioners assuring themselves of safe and effective services; CQC ensuring compliance with regulatory standards; Police preventing and detecting crime). The statutory guidance reminds us that safeguarding is not a substitute for these. The SAPB is an important source of advice, supporting partners to improve their safeguarding mechanisms. There are clear overlaps with other key partnerships and the SAPB is taking steps to further develop these so that there is mutual support on key agendas.

"The SAPB has a strategic role that is greater than the sum of the operational duties of the core partners. It oversees and leads adult safeguarding across the locality and will be interested in a range of matters that contribute to the prevention of abuse and neglect. These will include the safety of patients in its local health services, quality of local care and support services…. It is important that SAPB partners feel able to challenge each other and other organisations where it believes that their actions or inactions are increasing the risk of abuse or neglect. This will include commissioners, as well as providers of services". (Care and Support Statutory Guidance, issued under the Care Act, March 2015).

The Board's direction and strategic plan support implementation of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance. Terms of Reference and the Strategy of the Board have been revised to reflect expectations of the Care Act. Most importantly we will continue

to ensure that the core principles set out in the Act in respect of safeguarding adults remain central to the way in which we work. Those principles are reflected in the Statutory Guidance within its definition of what safeguarding is and why it matters.

The guidance underlines that *"People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professionals and other staff should not be advocating "safety" measures that do not take account of individual well-being".* This is at the heart of the central theme in the Care Act of *Making Safeguarding Personal.* Bracknell Forest Council has engaged in all available opportunities nationally over the past three years to develop this approach and this report sets out tangible and effective ways in which this is being progressed, not least in the case studies presented. The Board must now focus on supporting all organisations across the partnership in understanding and carrying out their role in ensuring that we make safeguarding personal in Bracknell Forest.

This report provides evidence of a great deal of hard work and significant progress both on objectives individual organisations set out in the development plan and on challenges presented by the peer review (reported in last year's annual report). The detail of these wide ranging achievements is set out in the body of the report. Developments across and within organisations include: a range of organisations who have developed specific posts with a focus on safeguarding adults; further development of joint work on assuring the quality of service provision; a focus on developing practice in the context of the MCA; a recognition of a range of issues in which there is a joint responsibility and interest across partnerships (including Domestic Abuse; E-Safety; Prevent); addressing quality assurance issues including the need to generate both qualitative and quantitative information and for a focus on making a difference in people's lives.

In 2015/16 action in Bracknell Forest has targeted a response to the peer review and significant progress on objectives that individual organisations set for themselves in a development plan (see section 8). Moving forward, whilst continuing to work on individual organisational objectives, a strengthened commitment to achieving shared objectives is required. The strategic plan is intended to facilitate this.

The Board and partners have demonstrated a willingness to learn lessons/to review where things have gone wrong, to develop and to understand strengths and weaknesses (The Board has begun two SARs during this year; worked on the findings of the peer review; engaged in a Board development day, discussing challenges and achievements openly; self-audits have begun in Health organisations). However in this context the report highlights the need for development of a quality assurance framework so that activity can be targeted on real improvement in safeguarding support in necessary areas. The Board intends to put in place a more robust quality assurance framework across organisations. It is intended that this will be a key part of the role of a new quality assurance subgroup with support from the new Board Manager. It is clear from the data presented that for example the Board needs to analyse and understand some of the trends so as to take appropriate action (including analysis of the reduction in the number of referrals made into safeguarding and the

significant numbers of safeguarding referrals involving neglect). This will be a priority over the next year and going forward.

The realisation of objectives set out in the strategic plan for 2016/19 will require significant contributions from all organisations. The Board will need to provide strong leadership in ensuring that subgroups are populated by those who are best placed to further these objectives.

Case studies illustrate that safeguarding support is making a significant difference to people's lives. The data indicates that this support is also effective in reducing or eliminating risk in the majority of cases. However Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Board is not complacent and remains committed to continuous improvement and learning. There is a shared desire across the partnership to find effective approaches to complex and emerging issues.

I would like to thank all partner agencies for their support in this work.

Jane Lawson
Independent Chair of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is Bracknell Forest's Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board's (SAPB) first annual report since the introduction of the Care Act 2015. It represents a transition as it describes and takes account of the development of a new Board strategic plan which contains actions which will be reported on in future annual reports.

1.2 This report details the breadth of activity undertaken by the Board's members and identifies the achievements against the Boards development plan for 2015/16, as well as future challenges.

1.3 The aims and objectives of the Board's 2016-2019 strategic plan is contained within the report as well as the planned developments by partner agencies for the coming 12 months. In line with the requirements set out in the Care Act the Board will continually develop its strategic objectives and consult/ take into account feedback from with the public during the year.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY MESSAGES

Summary

2.1 The report highlights the achievements against development plans and the challenges identified during 2015/16 along with the work developing for 2016/17 and beyond. During 2015/6 the board implemented all actions to address the areas for development identified in the peer review and reported in the previous annual report.

2.2 Personalisation remains a focus for safeguarding within Bracknell Forest. The annual report highlights feedback from residents and views of practitioners that, along with the data provided, confirms that the approach to making safeguarding personal is ensuring that people are feeling safer as a result of enquiries they have been involved in.

2.3 The increase in concerns reported nationally is not replicated locally in Bracknell Forest where the number of concerns raised has reduced during 2015/16 compared to the 2014/15 period. Work is on-going to identify the reasons for this decrease however it is possible that the greater awareness amongst partners and organisations locally has had the effect of a better understanding about adult safeguarding in Bracknell Forest and therefore more appropriate concerns are being reported. The impact of the local training sessions conducted for practitioners and partners will be examined further to establish if this has a bearing on the figures reported. It is pleasing to note the number of substantiated or partially substantiated concerns is low (51), and lower than the previous year (80). As in 2014/15, the majority of cases where abuse was substantiated or partially substantiated during 2015/16 occurred in the home, and on the majority of occasions the type of abuse experienced was neglect. Further work will take place during 2016/17 to analyse data further and to identify preventative actions. Bracknell Forest has

seen a further increase in the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, an increase of over 3000% compared to 2013/14 and due to the landmark Supreme Court ruling regarding what constitutes a Deprivation of Liberty.

2.4   The report contains the aims and objectives of the board's new strategic plan covering 2016 – 2019. The aims, objectives and actions within the plan have been developed as a result of a board development day which considered: the requirements of the Care Act; lessons learned nationally from SARs/SCRs; analysis of data and discussions with partner agencies representatives which provided a picture of the challenges facing the board in the coming years. The progress in implementing the actions within the strategic plan will be reported in the 2016/17 annual report. It is set out in section 14.

3   THE BOARD

3.1   All partner organisations in Bracknell Forest prioritise safeguarding with an approach based on promoting dignity, rights, respect, helping all people to feel safe and making sure safeguarding is everyone's business. The Board leads adult safeguarding arrangements across its locality.

3.2   The main objective of the Board is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in the area (para 14.133 statutory guidance) who meet the criteria set out in the Act[1]. That is, they:
   - Have needs for care and support and
   - Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and;
   - As a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from risk of or experience of abuse

3.3   The SAPB has a role in overseeing and leading adult safeguarding across the locality. It has a role too as a source of advice and assistance. (para 14.134-135). This includes a focus on:
   - Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
   - Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
   - Seeking assurance that agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
   - Assuring itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

3.4   The Board develops and actively promotes a culture with its members, partners and the local community that recognises the values and principles contained in 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. The Board has an independent chair and meets on a quarterly basis. The attendance record for the Board is set out in annex C. The Board's member organisations are currently:-

            ▪ Bracknell Forest Council

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[1] Care and Support Statutory Guidance, March 2016

- Thames Valley Police
- Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- West London Mental Health Trust (Broadmoor Hospital)
- National Probation Service
- Berkshire Care Association
- Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Involve (formally Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action)
- Bracknell Forest Healthwatch
- NHS England

4   NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

NATIONAL

The Care Act

4.1   The Care Act legislation and guidance have had a significant impact on safeguarding adults practice and the role of the safeguarding adults' boards during since the introduction of the legislation. In summary, the changes that the Care Act 2014 introduced for Boards are:

- Safeguarding Adults Partnership Boards are now on statutory footing
- The objective of the Board is as set out in 3.3-3.4
- The Board has three core duties to
  - publish a strategic plan
  - publish an annual report
  - Conduct Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Safeguarding Adults Partnership Boards must arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review (formerly serious case reviews) when someone with care and support needs dies as a result of neglect or abuse and there is a concern that the local authority or its partners could have worked more effectively to protect them.
- The SAPB must also arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review if they know or suspect an adult in its area has experienced serious abuse or neglect.
- Duties to co-operate over the supply of information on relevant agencies
- Local authorities must arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support a person who is the subject of a Safeguarding enquiry or review if the individual would experience substantial difficulty in participating.

Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

4.2   The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) 2009 provide additional protection for the most vulnerable people living in residential homes, nursing homes, hospital environments and supported housing through the use of a rigorous, standardised assessment and authorisation process. They aim to protect those

who lack capacity to consent to arrangements made in relation to their care and/or treatment, but who need to be deprived of their liberty in their own best interest to protect them from harm. They also offer the person concerned the right:

- To challenge the decision to deprive them of their liberty;
- To have a representative to act on their behalf and protect their interests; and
- To have their status reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

4.3   DoLS help to ensure that an institution only restricts liberty safely and correctly and only when all other less restrictive options have been explored. The Local Authority manages this process and reports to the local Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Care Act One Year On

National Challenges

4.4   The following organisations: Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS); the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Health (DH) have been monitoring the progress of the Care Act reforms within local authorities. In November 2015 the figures collected suggest that there were 100,000 safeguarding enquiries undertaken in the six months after the Act came into force. This amounts to approximately the same number of cases in the 12 months from April 2014 to March 2015[2].

4.5   A combination of factors may have contributed to this increase such as: increased reporting, greater awareness of the need for safeguarding interventions for issues such as modern slavery, and the Care Act's statutory threshold may be broader than the local definitions previously used by councils.

Adult Safeguarding and the Care Act 2014 - Top Tips

4.6   LGA and ADASS have produced top tips for Adult Safeguarding and the Care Act 2014[3]. These tips have been incorporated into the development work of the board:

1   Ensure that the Care Act principles and the person centred approach is well understood by all partners. This should embed good social work practice in all aspects of the Care Act.
2   Ensure that partners resource the SAPB; the SAPB has a 3 year strategy and annual plan for 2015/16, as well as the capacity to deliver them.

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[2] http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/04/01/one-year-care-act-achieved/

[3] http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5756320/Top+tips+for+DASSes+on+Adult+Safeguarding/1796e615-2759-4c9b-9ce0-edcb914a941b

3   Ensure that Making Safeguarding Personal is being delivered in the local area; ensure that people are asked about the outcomes they want, that these shape actions taken and that the difference made by these actions is identified.

4   Ensure there are arrangements in place to deal with everyone who may need safeguarding as described in the Care Act in an effective and proportionate manner; ensure that local authority staff and staff of partner organisations have sound assessment processes, know how to make safeguarding enquiries and can make the right decision

5   Ensure that safeguarding is embedded in corporate and service strategies across the Council, partners and partnership arrangements.

6   Ensure that procedures enable practitioners to focus on making a difference in people's lives and that they emphasise user outcomes not process, and are easy to follow

7   Ensure the SAPB audits itself (with a self assessment tool) to drive business plans and adopt a performance framework that demonstrates how safeguarding interventions have made a difference.

8   Ensure that there is multi-agency safeguarding training available for all people working with adults and that practitioners have the tools (knowledge, skills, legal literacy etc.) to do their jobs.

Updated National Guidance

4.7   In March 2016 the Department of Health updated the Care and Support statutory guidance. This is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance. The statutory guidance supports implementation of part 1 of the Care Act 2014 by local authorities, the NHS, the police and other partners. The new edition supersedes the version issued in October 2014. The eleven revisions to the Safeguarding chapter (14) have been made for reasons of accuracy or clarity. Some are more substantial, reflecting learning through the first period of implementation and feedback from stakeholders and partners. The changes have been set out by the LGA[4].

Impact on DoLS

4.8   The increase in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards cases (DoLS) as a result of the Supreme Court judgement in March 2014, has created a heavy demand on the Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service; this has impacted on the ability of local authorities to provide Care Act advocacy.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Demographics

4.9   Demographic changes provide a focus for the board; nationally between 500,000 and 800,000 older people are subject to abuse and/or neglect in the UK each year and this number is set to rise by 1.6 million by 2050. By 2021, the number of people aged 65 and over in Bracknell Forest is projected to rise

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[4] http://www.local.gov.uk/care-support-reform/-/journal_content/56/10180/7740017/ARTICLE

to 19,673 people from a current population of 14,267 (ONS Mid-Year 2011 estimates).This, together with increasing numbers of people with disabilities reaching adulthood, places additional demands on adult services.

Local Challenges

4.10   The Board's main challenges identified during 2015/16 include

- Developing the partnership into a robust and committed alliance; this will consist of ensuring the specific measures required of the Care Act 2014 are in position and ensuring that all partner agencies understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring safeguarding practice across the partnership focuses on improving the safety and wellbeing of people and the fulfilment of the outcomes they want
- Improving the understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and ensuring its principles are appropriately applied in Making Safeguarding Personal
- Ensuring that risk is effectively managed across the partnership
- A focus on prevention

4.11   It is recognised that the board needs to work effectively with other partnership boards within Bracknell Forest and with other adult safeguarding boards in East Berkshire. In developing an effective partnership board and establishing sub groups, it is recognised that there are additional demands on partners who are represented on other adult safeguarding partnership boards. The board is committed to establishing an effective and meaningful process for people who may be in need of safeguarding services to engage with the board, and recognises that this will be a priority over coming years.

4.12   Local Best Practice seminars have identified the need for further support and information in relation to dealing with domestic abuse and self neglect. Practitioners have also highlighted the potential challenge of austerity measures as well as the implications and requirements of the Care Act, and the need for greater multi agency working.

Local Challenges highlighted by Partners

Main Challenges highlighted by partners during the 2014/15 development day were:

- How to measure effectiveness/success
- MSP roll out across partnership and including with providers
- Practicalities of working multiagency efficiently (more than one Board to work with)
- Work on domestic abuse in older population
- Sharing information issues
- Transition
- Targeting those most in need and promoting safeguarding referrals amongst the public.

- Resource implications
- Addressing the "new categories" of abuse set out in the Care

5 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Safeguarding Adults Forum

5.1   The Safeguarding forum meets on a quarterly basis and is an information sharing and consultation forum, which supports local stakeholders to remain engaged in the safeguarding agenda.

5.2   Topics this year have included: Self Neglect, Sexual Exploitation, Financial Abuse and Awareness and Prevention of Scams. Presentations have been provided by representatives of Trading Standards, Health Watch and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue service.

Domiciliary Care Provider Forum

5.3   This forum meets on a quarterly basis and provides an opportunity for Domiciliary care providers (and relevant representatives from the Council) to share information, discuss developments, issues or concerns and any actions that need to be taken.

Community Engagement

5.4   The Safeguarding Development workers regularly engage with different community groups and organisations to raise awareness of safeguarding and the support that is available in Bracknell Forest. Examples include:

- Be Heard (self advocacy group for people with learning disabilities) recent production of a video explaining what safeguarding is
- Health Watch - to share information and ensure peoples' needs are being met in relation to safeguarding concerns.
- 'Safeguarding Awareness' presentations to:

    - The Bracknell Macular Society
    - Police training College.
    - Heathlands Residential Home
    - Holly House - Younger Adults supported living.
    - Clement House – Older Adults supported living.
    - Bracknell licensed vehicles – Taxi Drivers/Community Transport
    - The Wayz – Younger Adults activities centre.
    - Waymead short term care
    - Cambridge House Care Home
    - Bracknell Open Learning Centre
    - Woodmancoats Older persons Day Centre
    - Park House Dentist Surgery.

6   PARTNERSHIP WORKING

6.1   The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding team supports the Board to gain assurance that adult safeguarding links to other parts of the system. During 2015/16 the team contributed to co-operation and collaboration between agencies, which in turn contributed to the aim of the prevention of abuse and neglect, through strong links with the following groups:

- MAPPA (Multi agency public protection Arrangements) – monthly meetings attended where arrangements to manage the risk posed by the most serious sexual and violent offenders have been discussed.

- Multi Agency police tasking group - monthly meetings attended enabling the resolution of crime matters in Bracknell Forest.

- Anti social behaviour group – multi agency monthly meetings attended contributing to the resolution of Anti-Social Behaviour matters in Bracknell Forest.

- SEMRAC (Sexual Exploitation & Missing Risk Assessment Conference) – multi agency meetings attended reviewing referred young people and considering their current level of risk.

- LSCB CSE strategy subgroup – meetings attended gaining awareness of those at risk of CSE in order to prevent children from becoming victims.

- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) – monthly risk management meetings attended where information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse has been shared and risk management plans implemented

- DASC (Domestic Abuse Service Coordination) - monthly risk management meetings attended where information on medium risk cases of domestic violence and abuse has been shared, risk management plans and actions implemented to prevent situations from escalating further.

- Domestic Abuse Forum – meetings attended to increase awareness of services to those affected by domestic abuse and identifying and promoting good practice.

- Domestic Abuse Executive Group – multi agency quarterly meetings attended developing strategy and overseeing the Domestic Abuse Form.

- FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) Task and Finish group – meetings attended ensuring systems are in place to raise awareness of those at risk of FGM, the referral processes and the support available.

- E –safety Group – meetings attended raising awareness and providing training within the community for anyone working with vulnerable groups of people. The group has also monitored and responded to specific incidents.

6.2 Over the next 3 years a review of forums and practice that have a focus on risk will take place as part of the Board strategic plan to maximise effectiveness.

7 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Progress against Board objectives from 2015/16 development plan

7.1 Both of the Boards key objectives in the 2015/16 development plan were achieved. An independent chair was appointed and started as chair in October 2015 and a board manager was appointed in March 2016.

Progress against Peer Review areas for consideration

7.2 The peer review identified many examples of good practice as well as areas for consideration. The actions taken to address areas for consideration are contained in detail in annex 2. The review identified four areas for consideration –

1 How the Board works including membership and attendance

Following the appointment of an independent chair a strategic plan and Board terms of reference have been developed to support an effective and focused board where board members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and contribute actively to achieving aims and objectives. Sub groups are being developed to support the board to identify and implement required actions.

2 Decision Making and Accountabilities

The board will receive performance reports to ensure that decision making to improve safeguarding practice is based on evidence. The board has developed a strategic plan with a proposal for a quality assurance sub group. This will establish a Quality Assurance framework so that the Board is assured of effective practice across the partnership. This includes audit and mutual challenge across the partner organisations.

3 Ownership and Leadership

In addition to the appointment of an independent chair, resourcing of the board is being addressed through meetings of statutory partners to secure funding. A communication task and finish group will be convened to ensure clear and consistent communications and that all partners and stakeholders are aware of and contribute to safeguarding.

4 Partnerships

The limited resources of some key partners who support SAPB's across Berkshire has been considered and taken account of in the development of proposals for sub groups to support the draft strategic plan. Meetings will take place with SAPB representatives of other east Berkshire boards in order to align work and sub groups where possible.

Approach to Making Safeguarding Personal -   Case Studies

7.3   The overall approach to safeguarding within Bracknell Forest aims to promote independence, wellbeing, social inclusion and maximise choice in service provision and safeguarding support. The following case studies demonstrate this commitment to "making safeguarding personal" and include feedback from residents who confirm that their interests were the focus of the enquiries.

Case Study 1 - Mr and Mrs X

Safeguarding professionals at Bracknell Forest Council were made aware of domestic abuse between an older couple, Mr and Mrs X in 2014; domiciliary care workers reported physical and verbal aggression from Mrs X to Mr X when Mrs X was intoxicated through alcohol abuse.

Both people were contacted about the safeguarding referral and they agreed to the issue being followed up through the safeguarding procedures; both had the mental capacity to agree to proceed in this way. They were open about the fact that alcohol had always been a key social feature of their lifestyle and of their 54 year relationship. Mr X acknowledged that Mrs X could become aggressive after she had a drink and he felt that since moving nearer to their family and away from their social circle, her behaviour had worsened when she had been drinking. Mr X had also become more physically frail during this period of time. The couple were invited to a number of safeguarding meetings which either or both of them attended; practitioners worked with them about the risks to Mr X when Mrs X had been drinking. Although options for support were discussed with both of them Mr X did not feel that further intervention was necessary, although he did agree to a visit from a charity for victims of domestic abuse to discuss his situation. Safeguarding professionals remained concerned about them, as neither Mr nor Mrs X perceived any issues of risk; in particular Mr X felt he would be able to defend himself against Mrs X should she attack him, despite his increasing frailty. The safeguarding plan that the couple agreed to was that domiciliary care workers would continue to support them and would monitor the safety of Mr X at the time of their visits; care management would remain regularly involved with Mr X as a precaution.

Mrs X continued to drink; Mr X became frailer in physical health. The situation escalated in the summer of 2015 when Mrs X attempted to attack her husband with a kitchen knife whilst intoxicated. Mr X was unhurt but Mrs X was arrested and taken into custody; she was released the following day without any further charge. The safeguarding plan, to which Mr X agreed, was for a respite stay in a residential home as a protective measure, and Mrs X agreed to participate in a substance misuse treatment programme locally.   Safeguarding professionals and the police worked to support Mr X with decisions about future risks that he faced should he return home; he retained mental capacity and he chose to return home to be with his wife believing that he would be able to defend himself if he needed to. Eventually in August 2015 Mr X made the decision that it was no longer safe for him to remain living at home with his wife, and he decided to move into a residential environment. Mrs X visited him weekly and there were no reported problems between them from the Home.

Case Study 2 - Mr T

T is a gentleman with learning disabilities who relies on staff to support him in all areas of personal care, accessing the community and keeping himself safe. T is unable to manage his own finances and support staff help him to spend his money as he wishes on a weekly basis whilst ensuring a system is in place to cover bills. A safeguarding referral was made by a support provider following their weekly audit process when they discovered that T's bank balance was less than it should be. Protective measures were put into place to ensure that no further money could be removed and a safeguarding meeting was arranged. As T was unable to attend the meeting himself, an advocate visited him prior to the meeting in order to ascertain his views and preferred outcomes. At the meeting, T's advocate was able to feedback his anxieties regarding the loss of his finances and how this had affected him in terms of his relationship with his staff team as he had trusted them all. T's advocate also highlighted the nature of T's limited budget and how this is already stretched out across the week in order to maximise his access to and enjoyment of the community.

Following discussion, additional measures were put into place to minimise the risk of any further incidents of financial abuse. The support provider agreed to reimburse T as they felt accountable for this incident. They also noted that the police were unable to take this case any further due to the lack of evidence but that their internal investigations were still ongoing. The support provider's responsibilities i.e. to refer to DBS should a particular member of staff be found guilty were discussed as were the rights of the staff member should the internal investigation prove inconclusive.

At the meeting, it was agreed that T's safeguarding outcomes had or would be met in terms of:

1.   Keeping his money safe

2.   Ensuring that he was reassured that we had listened to what was worrying him

3.   Offering him the reassurance and support that he needs to help him to continue to trust the majority of staff supporting him.

As a result of good partnership working between all parties including an open and transparent approach combined with a strong desire to ensure that T remained central to the process even if he was unable to be present at the meeting, it was agreed that this safeguarding case could be closed. Following the meeting and with support from his advocate, T was able to inform the safeguarding team that he had felt listened to within the process and was happy with how things have turned out.

8 PROGRESS AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS SET OUT IN THE 2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Status Legend	
Where there may be delay in achieving the action.	(A)
Where the action has started, is not yet completed, but is on schedule	(G)
Where the action has been completed (regardless of whether this was on time or not)	(B)
Where the action is no longer applicable for whatever reason	(NA)

Developments	Year End Update	Status
Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)		
New safeguarding lead to work with Deputy Director of Nursing (safeguarding) April 2015.	Safeguarding lead employed until November 2015. New appointment from March 2016.	(B)
Agreement to make a financial contribution to the running of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adult Board on behalf of local NHS organisations.	achieved	(B)
To remain a key and active member of the Board and appropriate subgroups.	Achieved and on going	(B)
Self-assessment tool adult safeguarding tool will be developed and rolled out to providers and analysed by the CCG safeguarding team for gap analysis/improvement planning.	Tool Developed and roll out from April 2016.	(B)

Developments	Year End Update	Status
Led by the Deputy Director of Nursing, development of MCA train the trainers programme for health and social care providers; including ongoing support for the trainer pool.	Two successful MCA train the trainers programmes undertaken. Over 30 staff trained to deliver training across the health economy and partner agencies. Also production of MCA information cards for staff.	B
Working with West Berkshire CCGs plan and implement a MCA cross Berkshire conference	Cross Berkshire MCA multiagency conference held September 2015.	B
Ongoing monitoring of provider safeguarding activity at the CCG Quality Committee.	Provider performance of safeguarding compliance tabled at the CCG quality committee every 3 months.	B
Primary care safeguarding BASE training with emphasis on the Care Act implications prevents training, MCA/DOLs and lessons from national and Berkshire serious case reviews.	Prevent awareness delivered to over 150 GPs and practice nurses at practice training session 1.12.15.	B
Berkshire Care Association (BCA)		
This years annual Conference in Oct 2015 will have Safeguarding as major theme.	Achieved	B
Berkshire Care Association has appointed a development officer to work with care providers in raising standards with particular emphasis on safeguarding issues.	Achieved	B
Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership		
Maintain a programme of training around relevant community safety issues, such as Domestic Abuse (including MARAC and DASH, Stalking and Harassment Awareness and Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage), E-Safety and Prevent.	Free multi agency workforce training has been delivered across all subject areas throughout the year. There has been representation from frontline practitioners working with vulnerable adults at each of these training sessions.	B

192

Developments	Year End Update	Status
Develop a programme of E-Safety awareness raising sessions for community groups working with vulnerable adults	Awareness raising sessions have only been delivered to two organisations as take up has been low. However information and resources have been provided to organisations upon request.	B
Implement actions from the MARAC Action Plan and learning from local and national Domestic Homicide Reviews.	The Domestic Abuse Executive Group continues to monitor the implementation of the MARAC Action Plan with a continuing plan of improvement in place	B
Maintain and develop new publicity campaigns to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse and E-Safety.	The "Its Never Ok" website has been completely revamped and new publicity materials produced. There have been a number of publicity campaigns throughout the year, with particular use being made of social media	B
Further develop the DASC project, taking in to account the recommendations made by Cambridge University.	Both recommendations from the initial Cambridge Evaluation have been implemented and a final evaluation of the project is due in late 2016	B
Bracknell Forest Council Adults Social Care, Health and Housing		
Adult Social Care will review its operating model for responding to safeguarding concerns in light of the Care Act.	Ongoing. The Care Act 2014 does not specify how safeguarding systems in adult safeguarding work should be arranged. According to recent research in the UK several models of practice have been identified of which Bracknell operates a 'Dispersed Specialist' model. This entails senior safeguarding social workers, coordinating and managing all safeguarding referrals and investigations, whilst the locality social workers carry out the safeguarding enquiry alongside their normal duties. The research findings offer a basis for analysis and managerial considerations about the implications of different organisational models of adult safeguarding which can contribute to a review of the operating model.	G

193

Developments	Year End Update	Status
To embed the making safeguarding personal approach across all services	Continuous Development on the status already achieved	B
To review the safeguarding performance monitoring information to ensure that it captures both qualitative and quantitative information	Continuous Development on the status already achieved	B
Bracknell Forest Council Learning and Development		
Review and update all safeguarding training to ensure they are commensurate with the Care Act and the associated statutory guidance.	Achieved	B
Redesign the safer workforce training to reflect feedback from providers and ensure compliance with the Care Act.	Achieved	B
Monitor and evaluate the success of the new approach to impact evaluation and review this again if necessary	Achieved	B
Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board		
Recruit and Independent Chair and Business Manager.	Independent chair and business manager appointed	B
Develop the board safeguarding strategy in consultation with Healthwatch	Strategy has been developed, and a draft strategic plan produced, in consultation with HealthWatch	B
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust		
Continue to support the work of Bracknell SAPB working closely with all agencies to improve adult safeguarding practice.	BHFT have continued to support the SAPB with regular attendance at the Board and Sub Groups .	B
To ensure that staff targets for MCA/ DOLs and adult Safeguarding training are met. Develop a train the trainer course for MCA/DOLS to further support staff knowledge of the principles of the MCA and apply the principles in practice.	MCA/DoLS and safeguarding targets for 2015/16 were met. 6 Members of staff attended the MCA train the Trainer course arranged by the CCG's and a training plan is in place for 2016/17	B

194

Developments	Year End Update	Status
Wrap training dates on the training slate of the intranet for staff to access for 2015	WRAP3 Training is in place and we have over 1500 members of staff trained in addition to 1100 who have completed Chanel Awareness	B
Continue to chair the Adult Safeguarding Partnership Group	We continue to chair the Berkshire Partnership meeting	B
Frimley Park NHS Foundation Trust		
Current safeguarding adults training to be reviewed to meet the needs of the new organisation, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust.	Achieved	B
Training for level 1 and 2 are now in place and will continue to be delivered in order to reach the target of 95% over three years.	Achieved	B
Level 3 training is now in place and has been opened up to include all trained professionals from band 6 and above.	Achieved	B
Share good safeguarding adults practice across the whole of the new organisation to improve outcomes for patients	Achieved	B
To facilitate further Prevent training Trust wide	Achieved	B
To facilitate further Mental Capacity Act training for clinical staff.	Achieved	B
Ensure the formal links between the safeguarding leads and the complaints team are effective in ensuring that all complaints that come in to the Trust are reviewed to see if there are any safeguarding concerns within the complaint	Achieved	B
Develop effective partnership working between the two Safeguarding Adult Leads in the new organisation Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	Achieved	B

195

Developments	Year End Update	Status
To implement the legislative guidance that will be mandated following the Care Act	Achieved	B
To complete the Annual Safeguarding Adults Self Assessment and Assurance Framework Tool and monitor progress against the agreed actions.	Achieved	B
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFR)		
Continue to develop stronger links with the Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board as a result of very good progress during 2014/15 with the aim of further improving awareness of services provided by RBFRS which can support the Boards objectives	Achieved and On going	B
RBFRS intends to reduce the number of fire deaths and injury from fire and to work closely in partnership to learn where incidents do occur	On going	G
Thames Valley Police		
To continue to be active participants in the Board	Achieved	B
To continue the campaign to raise greater awareness of the support that is available and to encourage victims to report incidents of domestic abuse.	The "Its Never OK" campaign and website are up and running. They are managed by the Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Forum and continue to deliver and raise public awareness of domestic abuse and provide information on services available to the general public and professionals. A leaflet and Infographic have been produced to highlight the website and campaign. The last social media advertising campaign over the two weeks of Christmas 2015, generated 252,261 impressions and reached 42,169 users on Facebook. As well as 1307 website clicks.	B

196

Developments	Year End Update	Status
West London Mental Health Trust (Broadmoor Hospital)		
Work will be progressed to embed the Care Act into practice.	With the implementation of the Care Act in April 2015, the mandatory Safeguarding Adults training package was completely revised in May 2015 to incorporate the Care Act requirements. The training packs were further updated to ensure full Care Act compliance. We have a current 96% staff completion rate for 2015-2016.	B
The current safeguarding adult's guidance pack will be revised in the next three months to ensure that we have incorporated Care Act provisions and Duties and a more generic threshold definition	The Safeguarding Adults guidance packs known as the "grab pack" was fully revised in May 2015 to incorporate the new definitions of abuse and provide relevant information to all staff and patients in respect of The Care Act 2014. The Safeguarding Adults threshold definition was revised and was replaced by the generic Care Act definition, using the SCIE detailed definitions of abuse.	B
The Safeguarding Adult training package which is delivered on a monthly basis will be updated throughout the year to ensure the training represents all recent developments, national and local, including PREVENT. Within 2014-2015 we had an overall 97% staff completion rate.	Four NHS England approved training slides on PREVENT were incorporated within the Safeguarding Adult induction and refresher training programmes. Since December 2015, we have implemented a mandatory PREVENT workshop, which takes the form of a two hour training session. Both the Head of Forensic Social Work and the Social Work Manager have completed the required NHS England PREVENT accreditation in order to deliver these sessions. To date 104 staff at Broadmoor Hospital have received this training and there will be monthly training sessions offered throughout 2016.	B
The Trust is recruiting two Safeguarding Adult posts, the first being a Safeguarding Adult Development post and the second a Trainer	In May 2015, the Trust appointed a full time Named Professional Safeguarding Adult Lead. Although a full time	B

197

Developments	Year End Update	Status
position. These are full time posts and the functions will be able to support Broadmoor Hospital in continuing to develop its safeguarding procedures and ensure staff and patient awareness	training post was advertised, the central Trust Safeguarding team have been unable to recruit to this post at the time of writing.	
The hospital Social Workers are currently undertaking a modular programme on the Care Act 2014, which includes a full one day training session on the Care Act and Safeguarding	The substantive Social Workers at Broadmoor Hospital have completed the modular Care Act training sessions, commissioned by Ealing Council. Staff within the department have had further opportunities to attend other related training sessions and seminars in relation to The Care Act and Safeguarding Adults. The Social Workers have been furnished with information about the revised Statutory Guidance issued in March 2016, including the LGA table, which sets out the changes in respect of Safeguarding Adults.	B
We are developing a short briefing session on the Mental Capacity Act, where the Social Workers will brief staff and patients within the structure of the wards' community meetings. Work will also progress to make the Mental Capacity Act training a mandatory training package. Training on mental capacity is also being delivered across the whole of West London Mental Health Trust Wall charts providing detailed process mapping on The Mental Capacity Act, Mental Health Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are being obtained to place in ward areas	Ward briefings have been undertaken by individual Social Workers in respect of the Mental Capacity Act. These have taken place with patients during community meetings. Registers of those in attendance have been taken. Additionally, a laminated "quick guide" to The Mental Capacity Act was produced and issued to all ward areas and is displayed on the ward notice boards. Detailed Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards wall charts were obtained as planned and distributed accordingly across the Trust. In addition, at Broadmoor Hospital, we have distributed brief information cards, produced by Bracknell Forest Council to staff and patients across the hospital about the Mental Capacity Act. The Mental Capacity Act training is not yet a mandatory course and this will be taken forward to be approved within the next period. A report is due to be submitted to the Trust Management	B

198

Developments	Year End Update	Status
	Team with a recommendation that this course becomes a mandatory requirement. Since March 2015, 43 staff have received this training as a non-mandatory course. West London Mental Health Trust also has an established E-learning training programme on The Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.	
We are in the process of creating patient leaflets on safeguarding adults.	A Trust wide Safeguarding Adult patient leaflet has been produced. We are just awaiting hard copies to be published and these will then be distributed to patients at Broadmoor Hospital.	Ⓑ

199

9   PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Performance Summary 2015/16

How many safeguarding concerns were recorded?

9.1   The table shows that there was a decrease in the number of concerns received during 2015/16 compared to the previous year. However the number of concerns was more than those received during 2013/14. There was an increase in the percentage of concerns that led to enquiries during 2015/16 compared to the previous year.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
No of Concerns	452	738	632
No of Enquiries	181	118	173
% concerns leading to enquiry	40%	16%	27.4%

What was the source of the safeguarding concerns?

9.2   The table below shows the source of concerns which demonstrates the engagement within the partnership during 2015/16.

Organisation / Sector	Concerns	Enquiries	Percentage Progressed
Adult Social Care Staff	164	43	26.2%
Health Staff	219	21	9.6%
Self	31	12	38.7%
Family / Friend/ Neighbour	41	12	29.3%
Other Service Users	1	0	0%
CQC	2	1	50%
Housing	6	0	0%
Education / Training / Work	2	1	50%
Police	63	7	11.1%
Other	103	76	27.4%

Who was referred for a Safeguarding Enquiry?

9.2   Data from the enquiries carried out and that were closed shows that most enquiries in 2015/16 were for the over 65 age groups, although the percentage of enquiries completed involving the over 65 group dropped from 60% in 2014/15 to 51% in 2015/16.   Similarly to the previous year, during 2015/6 more women (58%) were referred than men (42%) and the majority of referrals have continued to relate to adults at risk who are of white ethnic origin (86% during 2015/16)

What type of abuse was alleged?

9.3   The diagram shows that, from the information for enquiries closed where the outcome was substantiated or partially substantiated, the most commonly alleged type of abuse in Bracknell Forest during 2015/16 was neglect. The other most common types of abuse were physical and psychological. This is similar to 2014/15 where the main categories of abuse were neglect followed by physical and financial.
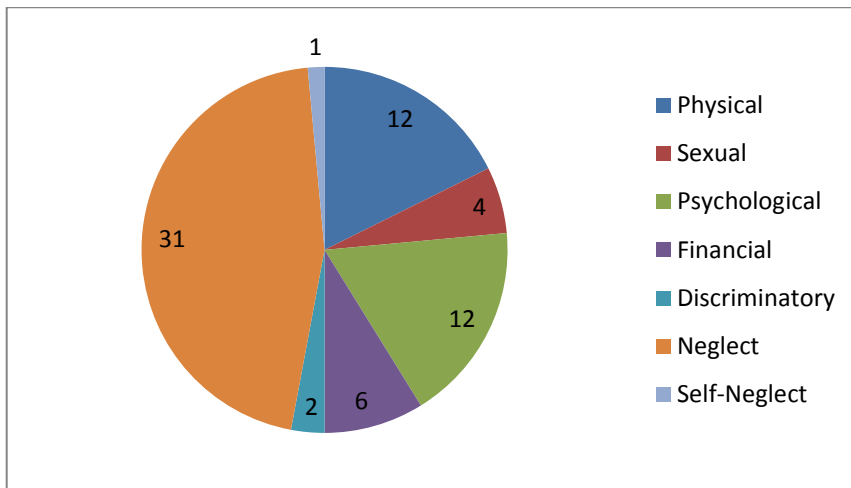
Where did the alleged abuse take place and what was the source of risk?

9.4   The chart shows that, for enquiries closed, where abuse was wholly or partially substantiated, as in previous years adults at risk are most likely to experience abuse in their own home (36 cases or 70% of cases in 2015/16 compared with 47 or 59% of cases in 2014/15).
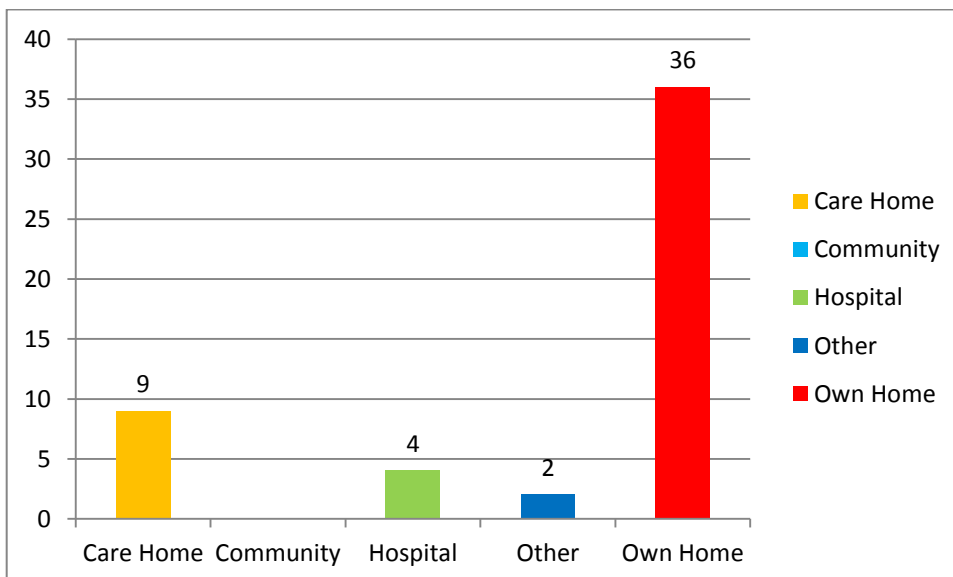
9.5   The diagram shows that, in term of the source of risk, on the majority of the enquiries that were closed where abuse was substantiated or partially

substantiated, the alleged perpetrator was known to the person. On 20 (38%) occasions the person who caused harm (where this was substantiated or partially substantiated) was either the partner, family member or neighbour / friend of the individual. This is roughly similar to the number recorded during 2014/15. On 31 (60%) of occasions the person who caused harm was a member of the health or social care workforce, this is a reduction from the 43 occasions in 2014/15. For the remaining 1 occasion where harm was substantiated or partially substantiated, the harm was caused by someone not known to the individual. This compares to 22 occasions during 2014/15 where harm was caused by someone not known.
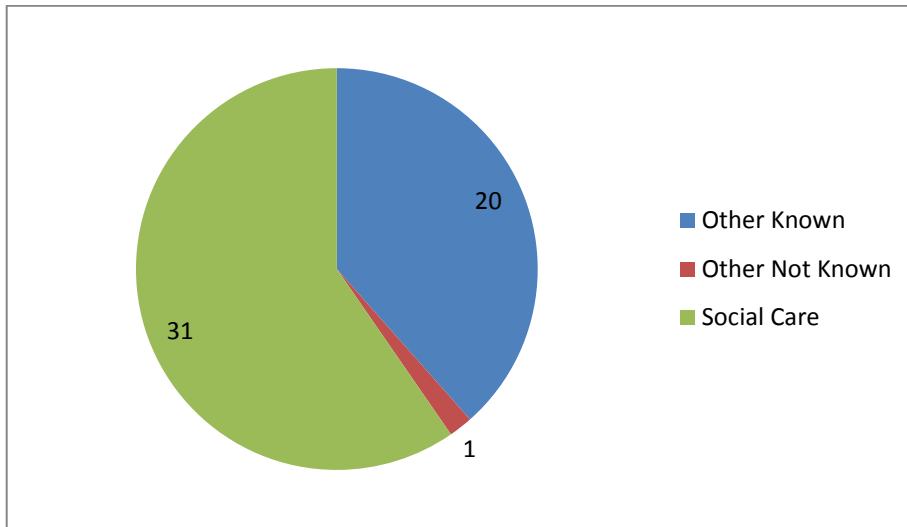
What was the outcome of our investigations?

9.6   The diagram shows that, for enquiries closed, the proportion of cases where abuse has been wholly or partially substantiated was 46% (51 cases). This compares to 68% (80 cases) of safeguarding assessments that concluded that abuse was wholly or partially substantiated in 2014/15. However during 2015/16 13 investigations ceased at the individuals request, compared to 4 in 2014/5, and 11 cases were awaiting conclusion.
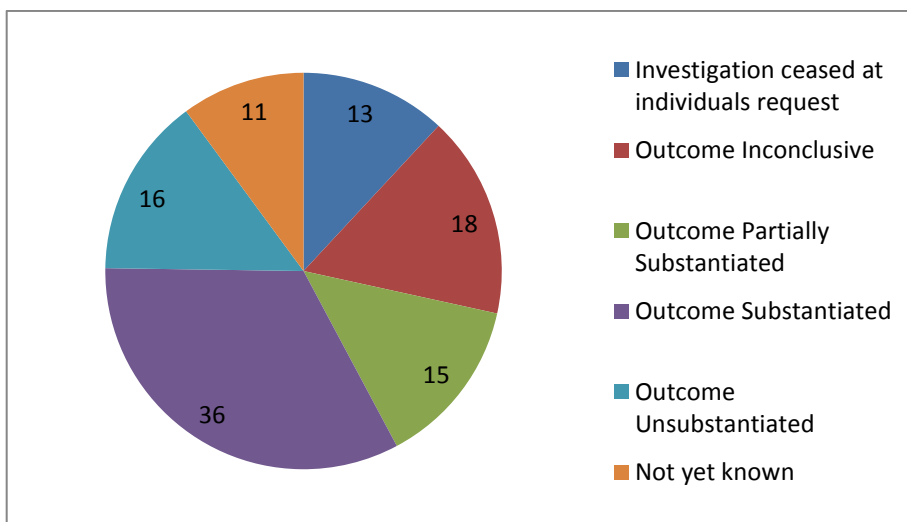
What action has been taken to manage the risks people face?

9.7   The chart shows that, for enquiries closed, risk reduced and risk removed are the most common types of action taken to manage the risk that people face (87%). This compares closely to 2014/15 when 88% of enquiries closed resulted in the risk being reduced or removed. The small number where safeguarding action has been taken and the risk remains involves people who have capacity. These people receive ongoing support through care management processes which supports with managing the risks.
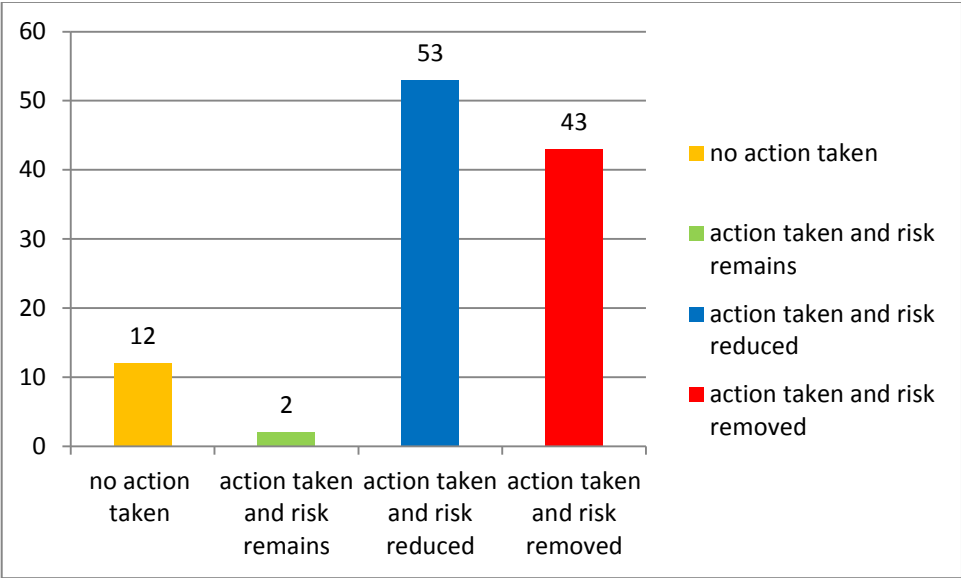
How safe do our service users feel now?

9.8   Local authorities conduct an annual survey for social care service users, including people who have been through the safeguarding process. The survey includes questions that aim to find out what proportion of people feel as safe as they want to be, and whether care and support services help people feel safe.

9.9   Information collected for enquiry closed during 2015/16 reveal that 69% of people who were subject of a safeguarding enquiry felt safer as a result of the enquiry. 11 people were unable to communicate their views and 2 people reported not feeling safer. This compares to 2014/15 where 83% of people who were subject of a safeguarding enquiry feeling safer as a result of the enquiry with 9 persons not able to communicate their views, and 1 person reporting that they did not feel safer.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

Applications received

9.10   The chart shows that a total of 351 applications for authorisation of deprivation of liberty were received in 2015/16, which is a 56% increase on the number received during 2014/5 (224).
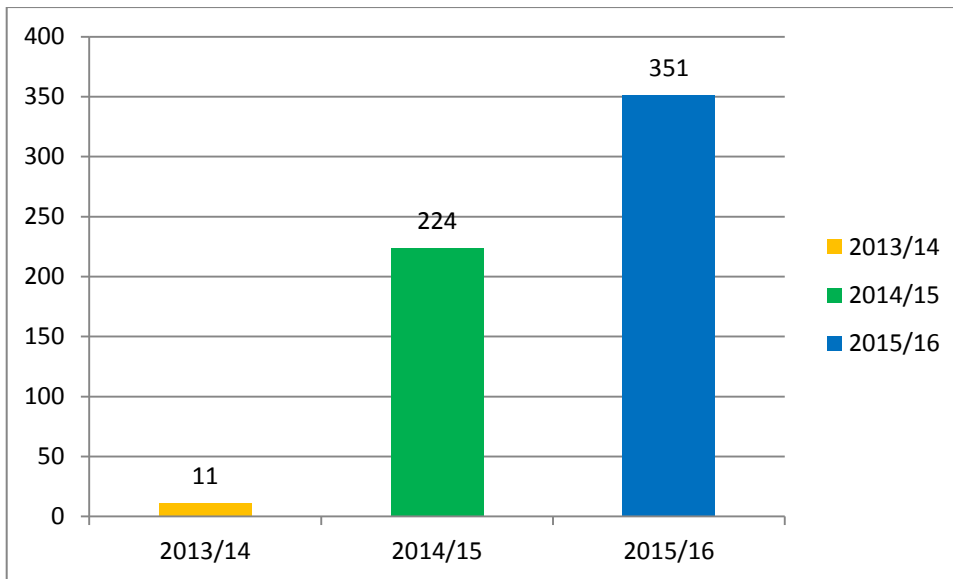
Applications Granted

9.11   During 2015/16, 261 of the applications (74%) were granted and 51 (14%) were not granted, with 34 application awaiting decision and 5 withdrawn. This compares to 183 applications (81%) being granted during 2014/15, with 22 (10%) not granted and 14 (6%) withdrawn.

Primary Reason for Support

9.12   The chart identifies that of the applications received, 124 (35%) related to people whose primary reason for support were related to dementia. 91 (30%) applications related to people whose primary support reason was physical disability, 45 (12%) related to learning disability, 12 (3%) related to mental health issues and 45 (13%) related to no disability.
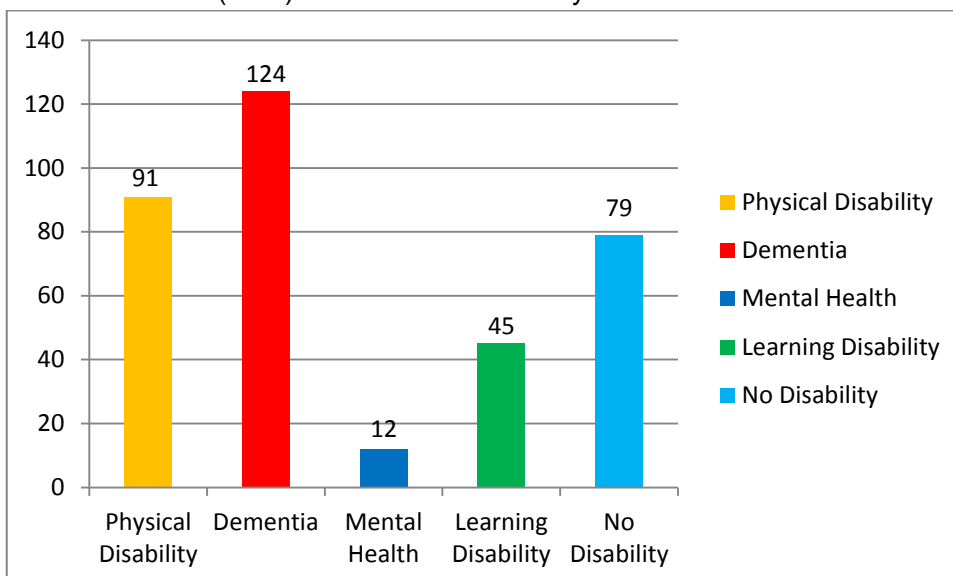
10   SAFEGUARDING ADULT REVIEWS

10.1   Safeguarding Adults Partnership Boards must arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) when someone with care and support needs dies as a result of neglect or abuse and there is a concern that the local authority or its partners could have worked more effectively to protect them. A SAR is also intended to ensure that lessons are learned, and is required to publish the outcomes in the SAPB annual report.

10.2   The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board commissioned two Safeguarding Adult Reviews during 2015 – 16 which have not yet concluded. The outcomes will be reported in the Board's 2016/7 annual report.

11   QUALITY ASSURANCE

Care Governance

11.1   It is the responsibility of the Council to work with providers of adult social care to ensure continuous improvement. This is particularly important where services are not judged to meet appropriate standards. The Council's approach to Care Governance is one of working in partnership with care and support providers to ensure the safety and quality of services within the borough and to residents who have been placed in care settings outside the borough, where the Council retains a duty of care for those individuals. The main decision making body in relation to this is the Care Governance Board which has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the quality and safety of the support provided. The Board makes decisions on the 'flag status' of providers which has an impact on whether support will be commissioned from them. The Board also decides actions that need to be taken to improve the quality of support and may decide people receiving support need to be visited and welfare checks undertaken to ensure they are not being placed at risk. The purpose of Care Governance is to ensure there is effective monitoring and – where necessary – action to ensure that people are in receipt of good quality care and support to achieve their required outcomes. This action includes managing risk and providing assurance that the right things are being done in the right way and at the right time.

11.2   The Care Governance Board meets monthly to share, discuss and agree actions in relation to information received from internal and external sources regarding providers of services. The Board receives information from a range of sources including:

- CQC reports and regulatory letters/information

- Other Local Authorities and NHS partners

- Safeguarding Alerts and or referrals

- Requests and authorisations for deprivation of liberty

- Quality assurance visits completed by Adult Social Care Contracts team

- Reviews undertaken by Health and Social Care Practitioners

- Complaints, MP enquiries and Member enquiries

- Financial Checks and Insurance Checks

- Feedback from people receiving support and their families and informal carers

11.3 The Board considers each 'referral' on its own merits and what action, if any, is required. Where appropriate, the provider is supported to develop an action plan which identifies the actions required and timescales for completion. Where concerns have been identified regarding a provider, their commissioning status will be reviewed by the Care Governance Board on a monthly basis. The status is assessed as being red, (high risk – do not use), amber, (medium risk – use with caution) or green (low risk) from the information provided to the Board.   A subgroup of the CGB meets once a month prior to Board meetings to share findings and update on actions requested at the last meeting.

Quality Assurance -Safeguarding Adults

11.4 In order to ensure that the safeguarding process is carried out consistently and to a high standard across the department, audits of the process are carried out at a number of levels:

1 Safeguarding questionnaires are completed for all safeguarding cases where the individual (or family member) agrees to this. Support with completing this is provided by either the Adult Safeguarding Development Worker or an advocate if the person was unable to attend the meeting. Family may be asked to complete the questionnaire if this is more appropriate.
2 An internal audit is carried out within LAS through completion of the safeguarding case on the database and approval must be gained at agreed points within the process.
3 Regular audits are held between safeguarding team and the 4 individual adult social care teams.   These audits have been devised so that the following areas of practice can be monitored:

   a. Compliance with the safeguarding procedures
   b. Person centred practice
   c. Quality of record keeping
   d. Multi agency working

11.5 Learning gathered from any of the above processes can then be shared with other teams and through other forums as appropriate. Use of Adult Safeguarding Development Workers as Safeguarding Chairs also ensures a level of consistency across teams, enabling good practice to be shared, trends to be identified and monitoring to occur in a more informal and person-centred way. A range of other meetings and forums e.g. team meetings, departmental administrator meetings, Designated Safeguarding Manager Forum and Safeguarding Forum and best practice seminars also feed into the quality

assurance process by providing opportunities to share information, raise awareness, identify trends and ensure consistency.

Quality Assurance Sub Group

11.6   In order to ensure co-ordination of quality assurance a new sub group of the board will be instigated during 2016. The quality assurance sub group will support the achievement of objectives in the board's new strategic plan, for example by analysing safeguarding data to better understand the reasons that lie behind local data returns and use the information to improve the strategic plan and operational arrangements. The sub group will provide a report for the 2016/17 annual report.

12   TRAINING PROVIDED BY BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

Course	Total Attendance (of which PIV)
A Safer Workforce for Providers of Social Care in Bracknell Forest	4 (3)
Adult Safeguarding Best Practice Seminar 1	29 (0)
Adult safeguarding Best Practice Seminar 2	40 (1)
Adult Safeguarding Best Practice Seminar 3	29 (0)
Adult Safeguarding Best Practice Seminar 4	42 (0)
Community Deprivation of Liberty Practice and Process	96 (1)
Introduction to the Mental Capacity Act	68 (41)
MCA & DoLS	14 (13)
Safeguarding Adults Level 1 - Introduction to Safeguarding	138 (82)
Safeguarding Adults Level 2 & 3	19 (0)
Safeguarding Adults Level 2 & MCA	32 (1)

12.1   The table above sets out the breadth of training opportunities made available to local stakeholders during 2015/2016. The Bracknell Adult Safeguarding team has also provided a number of safeguarding awareness sessions to prevent and neglect.

13 DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR 2016 -2017

Agency	Actions
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	➤ Greater awareness of self neglect and safeguarding ➤ Maintaining compliance with training targets ➤ Closer working with the trust domestic abuse practitioner
Berkshire Care Association.	➤ Appointment of development officer for one year post working directly with care providers to promote best practice in all areas including Safeguarding, with particular emphasis on hard to reach services ➤ Conference in Oct 2016 – Safeguarding one of the themes for presentation and workshop ➤ Care providers safeguarding event planned for June 2016 with BFC

Agency	Actions
Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group	- New Named Professional to work 30 hours per week to support Deputy Director of Nursing (Safeguarding) - Increase support to lead GPs for adult safeguarding by: implementing 6 monthly lead GP meetings, implementing annual newsletters, improving communications to GPs where there is concern about a relevant provider and increasing access to supervision from CCG safeguarding team where there are concerns. In line with safeguarding team annual plan. - CCG to continue to be actively represented at the SAPB and SAR subcommittee by the Deputy Director of Nursing (safeguarding) and the named professional safeguarding, with input from Director of Nursing. - Annual primary care training to incorporate lessons learnt from local SARs and update in DoLs and MCA. - Named Professional safeguarding to chair task and finish group to map safeguarding adult training with new intercollegiate guidance (2016) across the health economy and produce a safeguarding adult strategy in line with the guidance for primary care. - Named Professional safeguarding to review guidance for modern day slavery and disseminate professional guidance across the health economy. - CCG to request audit of quality of MCA assessments to be conducted by FPH and BHFT 2016/17. - Primary care safeguarding self-assessment to be undertaken and reported to the SAPB Autumn 2016. - Safeguarding self-assessment to be undertaken by BHFT and FPH and reported to the SAPB during 2016/17. - Deputy Director of Nursing (safeguarding) to report to SAPB on SAR and DHR conducted in Slough and lessons learnt 2016/17.

209

Agency	Actions
Bracknell Forest Adult Social Care	- To create an up-to-date current training programme linked to the necessary competencies. Once reviewed and developed, training will include the following stages: - Induction - Level 1 - level 2 & 3 (with separate courses for practitioners and external partners) Training will be delivered in a variety of mediums ranging from short e-learning courses to more intensive workshops. - To review and update our current audit process to ensure each person going through the process receives a consistent service that is a. Care Act compliant b. Follows best practice guidance c. Ensures the person is at the centre of the process (Making Safeguarding Personal) - To develop a strategy to support individuals who are going through the financial abuse process in order to ensure a more robust and consistent response. This will include raising awareness of the process internally as well as with partner agencies; involving financial institutions in the creation of a more responsive and accessible pathway and developing better links with support services.

210

Agency	Actions
Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership	➢ Maintain a programme of training around relevant community safety issues, such as Domestic Abuse, E-Safety and Prevent. ➢ Expand the remit of the DASC project to include victims of familial abuse, with a particular focus on vulnerable adults. ➢ Renew the Strategic Assessment process to consider emerging threats and trends, including issues such as modern slavery and trafficking. ➢ Develop a new protocol for Closure Orders involving vulnerable drug users ensuring that appropriate support and safeguards against trafficking are in place. ➢
Bracknell Forest Council Learning and Development Team	➢ Fully implement the electronic impact assessment process to identify how people have improved their practice as a result of undertaking learning opportunities. ➢ Ensure that any Best Interest Assessor standard and refresher training meets the needs of the Council and that an East Berkshire BIA Forum is developed to enable the sharing of best practice. ➢ Regularly update the contents of the Introduction to Safeguarding and the Mental Capacity Act training programmes

211

Agency	Actions
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	**Learning and Development** ➤ There is an on-going work-stream around safer discharge from hospital which is resulting in a number of safeguarding alerts made back in to the hospital for a variety of reasons. ➤ There is on-going work to strengthen the identification of domestic abuse and use of the DASH risk assessments within the Emergency departments, EDOU's and the ward areas. There is also a piece of work linked to confidentiality and breaching this when the patient has asked specifically for their information not to be shared
National Probation Service	➤ For the NPS to be aware of the complexities and sliding scale of the condition of Autism and other learning disabilities/difficulties; ➤ To work with other organisations involved in adult safeguarding to risk manage and support offenders with learning disabilities/difficulties. To understand the offender's needs and the links to their offending behaviour; ➤ To work with other organisations involved in adult safeguarding to support victims of serious sexual and violent offending, ensuring offenders do not commit further offences against the victim of the original serious offences.

212

Agency	Actions
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue service	➤ Continue to develop stronger links with the Adult Safeguarding Partnership with the aim of further improving awareness of services provided by RBFRS which can support the Boards objectives ➤ Continue to reduce the number of fire deaths and injury from fire and to work closely in partnership to learn where incidents do occur ➤ Develop "making every contact count" and "safe and well" toolkits enhancing the home fire safety check programme further supporting the vulnerable in the community
Thames Valley Police	➤ Domestic Abuse will continue to be a focus, with the learning from the local DASC project used to inform and improve local safeguarding outcomes. ➤ Crime reduction and safeguarding messages around fraud, both online and in person, will be developed. The particular risk to vulnerable adults from this sort of offending will be integral to those messages.

213

Agency	Actions
West London Mental Health Trust	- At Broadmoor Hospital, we will strive for all staff within the hospital to have completed the mandatory PREVENT training and engage in the Mental Capacity Act Training as a mandatory course, either face to face or via the new E-Learning package. - Patient leaflets will continue to be distributed and a revised MCA brief information card will be distributed across the hospital. An existing MCA "pocket guide" has already been distributed across the Hospital and the revised guide will be distributed shortly. - There will be planned briefing and discussion sessions on Safeguarding and the MCA with Carers as part of the Carers Forum, a quarterly event for relatives and friends of Broadmoor Hospital patients, held on a Saturday. - There will be an evaluation and analysis of closure forms and exit questionnaires to measure effective outcome data. - The Hospital will remain committed to ensuring Care Act compliance with its safeguarding procedures. - The Hospital will ensure that PREVENT referrals are made accordingly throughout this next year. - A revised Tri-Partite agreement will be completed to reflect the changes required within The Care Act 2014 and the vision and strategy of the SAPB.

214

Agency	Actions
Involve	➢ Proactive membership and involvement with the ASB ➢ Disseminate important information regarding safeguarding adults to the Voluntary and Community Sector ➢ Deliver level 1 adult safeguarding training for volunteers and the voluntary and community sector ➢ Support charities and community groups within Bracknell Forest regarding their safeguarding policies and procedures (as required)

215

14   THE BOARD'S STRATEGY AND DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/19

14.1   The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board's safeguarding strategy sets out the Board's ambitions for safeguarding in Bracknell Forest until 2019, focused on the difference all partner agencies can make for adults at risk. The strategy contains a vision that safeguarding should be about

- *Working together in partnership* with people who need safeguarding support, the broader community and across organisations
- *Transforming people's experience of safeguarding support:* informing them; putting them in control; ensuring that safeguarding responds to what they want
- *Supporting and empowering people* to manage risk of harm; enhancing resilience
- *Prevention as well as intervention*
- *Protection: outcomes that support wellbeing alongside making people safer*

14.2   A draft strategic plan has been developed for 2016 – 2019 to deliver the board's vision. In setting its aims and objectives, the strategic plan has taken account of national guidance and reviews, discussions between the independent chair and representatives of partner organisations represented on the board and the outputs of a development day which highlighted challenges faced by the board and partner organisations. The strategic plan aims and objectives for 2016 – 19 are as follows

- **AIM 1:** Establish a robust and committed partnership demonstrating clarity as to how the SAPB will hold partners to account and gain assurance of effectiveness of arrangements. This to include establishing a Quality Assurance framework and making effective links with other partnerships
    - **Objective 1** Ensure that the specific measures required of the Board by the Care Act are in place
    - **Objective 2** Partner organisations and board members are aware of their duties and responsibilities
    - **Objective 3** Implement an effective quality assurance framework

- **AIM 2:** Making Safeguarding Personal is embraced across organisations: the way in which people experience safeguarding support is personal and supports them in achieving the outcomes they want. People who may be in need of safeguarding support influence the development of safeguarding in Bracknell.
    - **Objective 1** Individuals are at the centre of the safeguarding process
    - **Objective 2** Ensure the board engages with people who may be in need of safeguarding services
    - **Objective 3** Support for the person centred approach

- **AIM 3** MCA and DoLS: The Board understands what the priority issues are that can support more confident and person-centred practice in safeguarding. The principles of the MCA are integrated into safeguarding support/practice so as to transform the experience of safeguarding support.
    - **Objective 1** The partnership promotes, and partner organisations demonstrate, a clear working understanding and competence in applying the core principles of the Mental Capacity Act. This promotes a Human Rights based approach and a

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

42

personalised approach to safeguarding support. It promotes a focus on wellbeing as well as safety.

- **Aim 4** Work alongside people to offer effective support in addressing risk in their lives: risk is effectively identified, assessed and managed and resilience is enhanced
    - **Objective 1** A partnership framework of principles is in place (and supported by L&D opportunities) that embraces the core safeguarding principles and supports service users in decision making. This to support all organisations/ staff/ professionals in effectively balancing choice, wellbeing and safety, alongside service users, with reference to the MCA. Integrate approach to self-neglect within this framework.
    - **Objective 2** Multiagency forums for managing risk support effective management of key areas of risk that are in the scope of safeguarding adults
    - **Objective 3** Seek assurance of partnership and public awareness of areas of risk including (those highlighted in Chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory guidance as requiring a focus within safeguarding support services): domestic abuse; human trafficking; radicalisation; FGM

- **Aim 5** Prevention:
    - **Objective 1** Assurance of effective transition
    - **Objective 2** Assurance of effective use of data and intelligence
    - **Objective 3** Assurance of quality and safeguarding in provider services

14.3   The draft strategic plan contains actions to achieve its aims and objectives and these action will be monitored throughout the year and progress reported in the 2016/17 annual report. Whilst developing the strategic plan the board has highlighted the importance of working in collaboration with neighbouring adult safeguarding boards, and with other partnership boards within Bracknell Forest, to share plans, actions and resources wherever possible. The 2016/17 annual report will provide evidence of how successful adult safeguarding is at linking with other parts of the system, for example children's safeguarding, domestic violence, community safety and how well agencies are co-operating and collaborating. The development work has also highlighted the need for the following sub groups of the board to ensure co-ordination and implementation of the strategic plans aims and objectives.

- Safeguarding Adult Review Sub Group
- Quality Assurance Sub Group
- Learning and Development Sub Group (East Berkshire)

14.4   In addition to the sub groups, a communications task and finish group and a task and finish group to focus on working with risk will be formed during 2016 in order to develop and implement actions to support the development of a new risk framework and support community engagement and communications amongst the community, practitioners, partners and the board in order increase community awareness of and engagement with adult abuse and neglect and how to respond.

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

43

Peer Review Progress

Area for Consideration	Action / Progress
1 How the Board works	
1.1 Overall	
The SAPB was seen, particularly by Bracknell Forest Council, as being under resourced in comparison to children's safeguarding	Independent chair recruited Board Manager recruited Resources under constant review
Most people interviewed felt that some consideration should be given to balancing the resources provided by the statutory partners	Resourcing under review
There was a unanimous view that the current chairing was good, but meetings were dominated by the Council. This was compounded by the minutes which all appeared to have the Bracknell-Forest Council logo on them rather than the Board logo	Independent chair recruited Independent chair has met with all partners agencies represented on the board – feedback is being used to inform future agenda setting
A number of people saw that an independent or rotating chair was a way of ensuring that the Board not dominated by the Council "having someone completely independent would be better….independent chair would provide more challenge". "My experience of an independent chair …challenges, particularly the culture". One person, however, questioned whether such arrangements would make a fundamental difference outcomes for people " will it make a difference to the person…resident"	Independent chair recruited
Partners were concerned that they were required to sit on a number of Safeguarding Boards, and for statutory partners, provide resources. Statutory partners were concerned that they did not have the resources to do this, and would like to agree a way forward that	Geographical areas covered by partners requiring them to sit on a number of boards is being considered in developing the board's strategic plan and corresponding structure (e.g number of sub groups).

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

44

reflects their agencies geographical spread.	
1.2 Membership and attendance	
The SAPB reflects those agencies working across Bracknell-Forest, but a number of people wanted to ensure that people attending should be decision makers within their own organisations	One of the priorities in the strategic plan is to ensure that the board continues to be Care Act Compliant and to ensure that all agencies represented at the board are aware of their responsibilities to both the board and their organisations
There are a number of notable exceptions to the membership GPs, Pharmacists and Dentists. This group are not represented either in their own right, through NHS England who currently commission these services or through an agreement between the CCGs and NHS England. Given Primary Care's crucial role in spotting and supporting people within the community, including in residential settings, it is suggested that this is addressed.	The CCG is represented on board
Bracknell Forest has good links with the voluntary sector and citizen groups. It is not clear how these groups input into safeguarding and it would be helpful to articulate this	The strategic plan includes work to develop the work of the voluntary sector in relation to adult safeguarding and to engage to a greater extent with people in the community to inform the development of safeguarding.
It would be helpful to establish clear links to the Royal Berkshire Fire Service who have in other areas become crucial to safeguarding in other areas	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are members of the board, and will be providing regular reports to the board
Some commercial providers were not aware that they had a 'representative' on the SAPB. Where organisations represent a 'group' of others such as this, there needs to be clarity about how organisations carry out their 'representative role', feeding back issues to member organisations, raising sector wide issues etc.	The strategic plan contains a priority for the board to continue to be "Care Act compliant". The Board terms of reference clarify responsibilities of Board members. Actions within the strategic plan are aimed at supporting board members with consistent information for dissemination.

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

45

(again a memorandum of agreement could formalise expectations).	
1.3 Communications and campaigning	
The Board has a developing communication plan led by the Council. When the Board development is discussed this may be an area for more development, especially a campaigning plan about reducing adult abuse	This is to be taken forward through the strategic plan actions. A task and finish group will be formed to co-ordinate this.
1.4 Agenda setting and papers	
Many people felt that the agenda was dominated by ASC and would like to see the agenda reflect a more balanced approach. This would include regular updates from all partners about activity and actions	Independent chair has met with all partners agencies represented on the board – feedback is being used to inform future agenda setting. Partners are already participating in leading on agenda items.
There was a view that debate about more challenging issues should be encouraged more.	As a result of the feedback from partners, following meetings with the independent chair, the agenda will facilitate greater debate i.e. no information only items
Safeguarding performance data from individual partner organisations did not appear to be routinely shared e.g. SUIs	A quality assurance group is being formed to support the strategic plan priorities. This will involve ensuring safeguarding performance data is available and being used. Performance reporting is included in the board agenda
The Board's role in prevention was unclear to some and a discussion about the Board and partners roles could be clarified	Prevention is one of the priorities in the strategic plan actions associated with this will be developed over the three year period of the plan
Although the Board has four sub-groups, updates on activity are not routinely reported on and it did not appear that the groups undertake work determined by the Board. It may be helpful for the Board to consider how these groups report in and work on the Board's work plan.	The development of the new strategic plan has included a review of the sub groups to determine which sub groups should be in place to support delivery of the plan, and how they should operate. It is proposed that a quality assurance, learning and development and safeguarding adult review sub groups should support the board

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

1.5 Training, development and support	
One person was not clear about how the training for the voluntary sector could be accessed and it may be helpful to re-state how this can be accessed	The strategic plan includes work to develop the work of the voluntary sector in relation to adult safeguarding and also to ensure clear communications.
Some people would like to see safeguarding training to be accredited which would enable staff to have transferable qualifications.	A learning and development sub group covering east Berkshire is in place. Training development opportunities will be taken forward through this group
1.6 Governance	
It was unclear how partners are providing feed back on safeguarding issues to their 'home' organisations Boards. It might be helpful if an assurance system was put in place	A quality assurance sub group is to be formed which will support the board to gain assurance that partner agencies have safeguarding processes in place
The Chief Executive of the Council will from April have key responsibility for safeguarding. Again it would be helpful for there to be some consideration given to how this would work.	The independent chair reports directly to the chief executive. The annual report will be provided to the chief executive under the requirements of the Care Act
2 Decision Making Process	
2.1 Use of evidence	
To put in place an audit process that provides data and evidence before decisions are made and to ensure that that the SAPB can point to decisions that had improved practice.	A quality assurance sub group is being developed which will support the board to ensure that decisions are evidenced based and that they do improve practice
Performance information is key to improving services and provides a way for to improve understanding of partners issues. Section 11 provides this framework for Children's Safeguarding Boards and the Board might want to consider how it can replicate a similar process within adult services. This would also enable an independent view of activity to be made.	A quality assurance framework will be developed by the quality assurance sub group. Opportunities to replicate the section 11 audit for children's safeguarding boards are already under discussion.
2.2 Accountabilities	
There are clear links within the Council for	The board's strategic plan is being developed

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

221

decision making, but these arrangements need to be reconsidered in light of the Care Act and the CEOs new responsibilities	with consideration of other partnership plans, and particularly the Council's Plan.
The Lead Cllr would want to consider lines of accountability for any independent Chair, if appointed. Particularly how they would be held to account and would like there to be some consideration given to this being the Health and Wellbeing Board	The independent chair has been recruited and is accountable to the chief executive. The development of the strategic plan has confirmed the importance of linking the boards planning to the work of other partnerships including the health and well being board. The board's annual report will be sent to the chair of the health and well being board as required by the Care Act.
There is an aspiration that the Board should report into the HWBB as this could ensure that by working together it will "remove many of the impediments to working together	The development of the strategic plan has confirmed the importance of linking the boards planning to the work of other partnerships including the health and well being board
Partners have in place some procedures to 'go back' to their home organisations when decisions relation to policy or procedures were required. this links to both whether Board members are empowered to make decisions for their organisations and how these are fed back to their home agencies	Board terms of reference are in place. As part of this it is recognised that members of the board need to recognise their responsibilities to the board and to their organisations, and that representation is at sufficiently senior level.
Ensuring that all partners corporate governance structures have clear links to the Board	Terms of reference in place. As part of this it is recognised that members of the board need to recognise their responsibilities to the board and to their organisations, and that representation is at sufficiently senior level
3 Ownership and leadership	
3.1 Chairing and membership of the SAPB	
Clear view that it is time to appoint an Independent Chair, in partnership with another Council or solely for Bracknell-Forest. This was not seen as a reflection of the current chairing but an acknowledgement that partners are likely	An independent chair has been recruited. Funding arrangements are under constant review

to feel that there is more responsibility on them to contribute if the SAPB is not led and chaired by ASC, however there was a strong view that "partners need to buy into and therefore fund any new arrangement"	
The introduction of an independent chair, if agreed could provide a catalyst to reviewing the Board membership and support arrangements	An independent chair has been recruited and has met with all board members to gain support and feedback on areas for improvement. The independent chair is overseeing the implementation of a new three year strategic plan
When reviewing membership and Board arrangements the following points might want to be considered • how the voice of users and voluntary sector might be strengthened • How can the SAPB "add value (and) what would make a difference?" • ensuring that all participants have adequate authority to take decisions • ensure that there are up to date role descriptions for board members • agreement about who needs to attend from the different statutory partners • who needs to be a voting member and who is 'in attendance' • the Board is seen to be dominated by ASC staff and it is suggested that this could be reduce • ensure all partners are clear about how they are expected to link 'back' • ensure that the Board is a shared responsibility and each member is a champion for safeguarding • how to ensure that service users/carers	All considerations for improvement in terms of reviewing board membership is being taken into account, particularly through the strategic planning process where the priorities are being determined and the resources that will be required to achieve the boards desired outcomes

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

223

are represented, and how this links with the various other service users/carers groups • any changes to the Board needs to ensure that the authority of social care and its statutory requirements placed on it as part of the Care Act is not lost	
3.2 Resources	
Statutory partners should be asked to make a contribution to the whole running of the Board.	Funding and resourcing is constantly reviewed with meetings of statutory partners taking place
Resourcing was not just seen as funding a Independent Chair and associated costs but also: • joint training costs • ensuring that board members took more of a leadership role and for example lead campaigns l	Resourcing is being addressed through the strategic planning process
3.3 Communications	
Communications was seen as a key component of ensuring that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'.	Communications has been highlighted within the boards strategic plan and a task and finish group is being developed to support the boards work
Partner communications arrangements could be used to ensure that all partners and stakeholders are aware of and contribute to safeguarding	Communications has been highlighted within the boards strategic plan and a task and finish group is being developed to support the boards work
4 Partnership working	
There is a need to recognise the limited resources of some key partners who are also supporting ASPBs across Berkshire and beyond – more use could be made of subgroups such as the Serious Case Review subgroup that could be run on a whole Berkshire or East Berkshire basis	The issue of geographical areas covered by partners requiring them to sit on a number of boards has been recognised in developing structures including sub groups. A learning and development sub groups covers the whole of East Berkshire. The independent chair and head of safeguarding meet with their counterparts for the two other East Berkshire safeguarding adult partnership boards.

BRACKNELL FOREST SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD ATTENDANCE
2015 - 2016

Organisation	2012/13 attendance	2013/14 attendance	2014/2015 attendance	2015/16 attendance
LSCB	50%	40%	80%	25%
South Central Ambulance Service	0%	0%	0%	0%
Bracknell Forest Council – Learning and Development	50%	80%	20%	75%
BFC - Housing Strategy & Needs	33%	100%	100%	50%
W. London Mental Health Trust (Broadmoor Hospital)	67%	40%	40%	75%
National Probation Trust (formally Thames Valley Probation Trust)	33%	40%	60%	75%
Berkshire Care Association	67%	60%	80%	75%
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	83%	60%	80%	100%
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing - BFC	67%	100%	80%	75%
Bracknell Forest Council - Community Safety Team	83%	100%	80%	100%
Thames Valley Police	67%	80%	40%	100%
Bracknell Forest Council – Legal Services	33%	60%	40%	25%
Bracknell Forest Council – Adult Social Care	100%	100%	100%	100%
Frimley Park Hospital	33%	80%	60%	50%
Bracknell and Ascot CCG	100%	80%	100%	100%
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	-	-	-	50%

Adult Safeguarding – Everybody's Business

51

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TO: THE EXECUTIVE
      27 SEPTEMBER 2016

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COMPLAINTS AGAINST BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL IN 2015/16
Chief Executive

1   PURPOSE OF DECISION

1.1   To brief the Executive about complaints made against the Council in 2015/16. This forms part of the ongoing work to be responsive to residents' concerns, in pursuit of the Council's Strategic Theme of Value for Money, in which a key measure of success is that resident and staff satisfaction levels remain high.

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

      That the Executive:

2.1   Endorses the approach taken to dealing with and learning from complaints to the Council;

2.2   Notes the Annual Review letter of the Local Government Ombudsman to the Council for 2015/16; and

2.3   Notes the information on other complaints against the Council in 2015/16.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   This annual report gives the Executive information on an important aspect of the Council's services to residents, in keeping with the Council's Charter for Customers, which includes always putting the customer first, learning from feedback, and continually aiming to improve the Council's service and performance.

3.2   To support the implementation of the corporate Customer Contact Strategy, endorsed by the Council's Executive on 5 July 2011. This strategy's overarching aim is to improve the quality of customer service to residents and service users.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   None.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Annual Review Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman

5.1   The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has statutory powers under the Local Government Act 1974 to investigate complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities. The LGO investigates complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, education, social services, consumer protection, drainage and council tax. The objective of the LGO is to secure, where appropriate, satisfactory redress for complainants and better administration for the authorities.

5.2   The LGO usually requires complainants to give the council concerned an opportunity to deal with a complaint against it first, using the council's own complaints procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied with the action the council takes, he or she can complain to the LGO, or ask a councillor to do so on their behalf. The LGO's Annual Letter is therefore an important, independent 'barometer' of the effectiveness of the Council's complaints resolution process and service to residents generally.

5.3   Within the Council, the Chief Executive's Office co-ordinates the responses to any complaints referred from the LGO to the Council in liaison with departmental officers, and acts as the main contact point with the LGO.

5.4   The LGO's Annual Review Letter to the Council for 2015/16 is attached at Appendix 1. Drawing on this, also other published and internal information, notable points are:

a)   The figure of 26 complaints received by the LGO against the Council in 2015/16 is higher than the 18 complaints received in 2014/15, and higher than the annual average of 19 complaints the LGO received about the Council over the preceding three years 2010/13.

b)   The number of complaints made to the LGO about the Council was lower than any other Unitary Authority in Berkshire, and around half the national average for all councils.

c)   The LGO made formal decisions on 26 complaints against the Council (some of which related to complaints from 2014/15). Of the complaints which were subject to a detailed investigation, the number (2) upheld against the Council was lower than any other Council in Berkshire, and a third of the national average for all councils.

d)   In their 2015/16 Annual Report, the LGO stated, 'W*e upheld 51% of all complaints where we carried out a detailed investigation'.* The corresponding figure for Bracknell Forest Council was much lower, at 33%.

e)   The Council's average speed in responding to LGO cases has remained well within the 28 days usually requested by the LGO.

5.5   During 2015/16, the LGO decided to uphold two complaints against the Council. The full circumstances of these were reported publicly to the Executive at their meetings on 15 December 2015 and 14 June 2016. In summary:

a)   In the first case, the LGO concluded there had been maladministration by the Council in its approach to de-registering a volunteer ('Mr B') from its Appropriate Adult service and that this had resulted in the complainant suffering injustice. This finding was made notwithstanding the fact that the Ombudsman acknowledged the steps the Council had taken in investigating the complaint internally, specifically finding in Mr B's favour on the issue, apologising to Mr B and offering him an opportunity to make representations with a view to possible re-instatement.
As a consequence of the Council's representations, the Ombudsman's final report dated 4 September omitted two of the three limbs of maladministration they had originally levelled against the Council. The Ombudsman advised that as the Council had previously acknowledged the fault and remedied it, the Ombudsman had no alternative but to conclude that there had been maladministration and injustice. The Ombudsman also recommended some further remedial actions, which have been actioned.

b)   In the second case, the LGO decided that there was maladministration by the Council in respect of the accuracy of some measurements included in an officer report to the Planning Committee. The Council had previously apologised that the officer report to the Planning committee had wrongly understated the full width and depth of the property in question, consequently the distance from the development to the complainant's house boundary and roof height were also understated. However, this did not detract from the officer recommendation to approve the planning application.

The Council had satisfied itself that the dimensions shown on the plans were correct, and therefore enforceable. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Planning Committee had confirmed that the unclear dimensions in the report would not have detracted from members' understanding, in reaching their majority decision to approve the planning application. The faults in measurements in this case were regrettable, though the error was isolated, minor and wholly inconsequential. This was explicitly accepted by the Ombudsman, who determined that, *'While there was some limited fault in the reporting of measurements in the officer report, I cannot conclude but for this fault a different outcome would have resulted.'*

In both cases, the Executive resolved that no further action needed to be taken.

5.6   In summary, the number of complaints to the LGO concerning Bracknell Forest Council has risen but it remains low when compared to other authorities, and very low in view of the huge number of customer interactions by the Council each year. The extent to which complaints to the LGO are upheld is lower still. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that, however few complaints are made, they are all important to the people who raise them and are treated seriously by the council.

5.7   As reported to the Executive at its meeting on 22 September 2015, there was a significant change in the way the LGO arrived at its decisions on complaints from 1 April 2014. The consequence of the changes is that all councils can expect to receive more LGO decisions that complaints have been upheld, and that there has been maladministration, even on very minor issues. Officers have continued to challenge what they regard to be incorrect assessments on significant cases, and this can be very time consuming.

5.8   The Borough Solicitor, as Monitoring Officer, is required by Section 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to prepare a report to the Executive on any cases where the LGO had determined there was maladministration by the Council in the discharge of its Executive functions and these reports are required to be copied to each Member of the Council*. There is an additional and quite separate requirement on an Authority which is subject to a finding of Maladministration under the Local Government Act 1974 to notify the LGO within three months from the publication of the LGO's final report of the action which has been taken or will be taken in response to the report.

        * (in the case of maladministration relating to a non Executive function the Monitoring Officer's report is required by Section 5 of the Act to be presented to the Council rather than the Executive)

        Other Complaints against the Council

5.9   The Council's overall complaint statistics for 2015/16, as reported by departments in their Quarterly Service Reports (QSR), shows a 7% reduction on the 2014/15 figures, and are given in Appendix 2. Individual complaints which move through the different stages are recorded separately at each stage of the process, such that an individual complaint can be repeated in the table. The figures at Appendix 2 exclude complaints dealt with at the point of service, such as verbal reports to front line staff. No central records are kept of such stage 1 complaints. The figures also exclude complaints to schools, matters for which a right of appeal to a tribunal or other legal remedy exists, and any complaints about councillor conduct, for which there is a separate procedure. Following Executive approval, there are separate annual reports published on complaints received by Adult Social Care, also on Children's Social Care and Public Health, which are governed by statutory requirements. Last year, the complaints procedure was streamlined reducing the stages from four to three.

5.10   The statistics in Appendix 2 continue to show that the majority of complaints are resolved without recourse to later stages in the process. The figure of 14 LGO complaints cases

differs to the 26 in the LGO letter mainly because it excludes complaints dealt with by the LGO without reference to the Council. Officers have previously queried with the LGO why they no longer inform us of such cases.

Learning From Complaints in 2015/16

5.11   The Council's overall approach has continued, to train and empower front line staff to deal effectively with complaints at the earliest opportunity. The Council's publication, 'Comments, Compliments or Complaints about council services' was last revised and reissued in 2014, as were the Council's internal guidelines for staff on handling complaints. Quarterly Service Reports, which are reviewed by Departmental Management Teams, the Corporate Management Team, the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny members, publish information on complaints and how the Council has learnt from them. Examples of this learning process in 2015/16 have included:

Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

5.12   There are regular meetings within the Adult Social Care team to ensure learning from complaints is disseminated and acted on. The data is collated as the year progresses and is reported annually within the Complaints Report for Adult Social Care. Improvements in practices and processes arising from complaint investigations in 2015-16 included:
- An action plan was put in place to strengthen the processes and expectations around Ordinary Residence, including the role of the Care & Support Panel.
- Advice and guidelines were given to the front desk team who deal with incoming enquires, to ensure that when carers contact Adult Services they are properly advised regarding the role and status of Berkshire Carers Services before being referred on for assessment.
- Finance processes were reviewed to see how the area of invoicing (where charges are being made in arrears) can be improved to make things clearer to people receiving support and their carers and family.

5.13   Two housing complaints were made by customers who were unhappy with the welfare service. Both claims were very complex and the learning point was that complex issues are unlikely to be resolved via correspondence and there is a better chance that customers will understand what is required via a face to face meeting.

5.14   Over half of the housing complaints in one quarter were made against a welfare and housing caseworker. In the main those complaints were not upheld. However, training has been provided for staff concerning how to provide unwelcome news to customers.

Corporate Services

5.15   Upon investigation of a complaint about the Council's council tax reduction scheme, it became clear that the Council had not promoted the service of an officer visiting to help people complete their Council tax reduction scheme form. The form was revised to take this and other improvements into account.

5.16   Following a complaint being upheld, the Council's Website information was clarified regarding waste collection, fees and charges.

Children, Young People and Learning

5.17   A 'learning from complaints' pro forma is sent to an appropriate Manager or Head of Service for completion following the investigation and closure of a complaint. This is used to record an agreed action plan, identifying staff involved, timescales and how progress will be monitored. Where a complaint has been difficult or complex, a 'learning from complaints' meeting is held with Senior Managers in Children's Social Care and usually chaired by the

Head of Service for Performance and Governance. This meeting has been introduced to reflect and learn from the situation and put in place measures to reduce the risk of issues arising in the future. There have been two such meetings during the year. Examples of specific actions from learning from complaints in 2015-16 were:

- Parents should be updated following the meeting of professionals (in relation to their case) and Section 47 assessments where appropriate.

- During the course of an investigation, that the Complaints Manager writes to the complainant to elaborate on any likely actions that need to be undertaken before the next contact.

- When a 'looked after child' placement is coming to an end, identify quickly what needs to be transferred / actioned, i.e., mobile phone contracts, NHS documentation, NI number.

Environment, Culture and Communities

5.18 Arising from a complaint about high hedges in neighbouring properties, it was decided to review the Council's internal practice note on dealing with high hedges, and to remind staff that they must adhere to set requirements and not jeopardise the Council's impartiality.

5.19 Following a complaint about trees, which was not responded to promptly, internal procedures were improved to help ensure this does not happen again. Also, Parks and Countryside staff were reminded to be more careful not to raise expectations wrongly, concerning council funding of trees works.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Monitoring Officer is required by law to report to the Executive on any Local Government Ombudsman findings of maladministration against the Council relating to its Executive functions (and the Council in relation to non Executive functions). He has had cause to issue two such reports in 2015/16. The facts of each are set out in Paragraph 5.5 of this report.

Borough Treasurer

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

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 There are no direct impact issues to be considered.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 This report presents no strategic risk management issues for the Council.

Other Officers

6.5 None.

7   CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   Corporate Management Team

Method of Consultation

7.2   Consultation was carried out on the draft information report.

Representations Received

7.3   None.

Background Papers

Quarterly Corporate and Departmental performance reports 2014/15

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Local Government OMBUDSMAN

21 July 2016

By email

Timothy Wheadon
Chief Executive
Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Dear Timothy Wheadon,

Annual Review Letter 2016

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2016.

The enclosed tables present the number of complaints and enquiries received and the decisions we made about your authority during the period. I hope that this information will prove helpful in assessing your authority's performance in handling complaints.

Last year we provided information on the number of complaints upheld and not upheld for the first time. In response to council feedback, this year we are providing additional information to focus the statistics more on the outcome from complaints rather than just the amounts received.

We provide a breakdown of the upheld investigations to show how they were remedied. This includes the number of cases where our recommendations remedied the fault and the number of cases where we decided your authority had offered a satisfactory remedy during the local complaints process. In these latter cases we provide reassurance that your authority had satisfactorily attempted to resolve the complaint before the person came to us. In addition, we provide a compliance rate for implementing our recommendations to remedy a fault.

I want to emphasise that these statistics comprise the data we hold, and may not necessarily align with the data your authority holds. For example, our numbers include enquiries from people we signpost back to the authority, but who may never contact you.

In line with usual practice, we are publishing our annual data for all authorities on our website, alongside an annual review of local government complaints. The aim of this is to be transparent and provide information that aids the scrutiny of local services.

Effective accountability for devolved authorities

Local government is going through perhaps some of the biggest changes since the LGO was set up more than 40 years ago. The creation of combined authorities and an increase in the number of elected mayors will hugely affect the way local services are held to account. We have already started working with the early combined authorities to help develop principles for effective and accessible complaints systems.

We have also reviewed how we structure our casework teams to provide insight across the emerging combined authority structures. Responding to council feedback, this included reconfirming the Assistant Ombudsman responsible for relationship management with each authority, which we recently communicated to Link Officers through distribution of our manual for working with the LGO.

Supporting local scrutiny

Our corporate strategy is based upon the twin pillars of remedying injustice and improving local public services. The numbers in our annual report demonstrate that we continue to improve the quality of our service in achieving swift redress.

To measure our progress against the objective to improve local services, in March we issued a survey to all councils. I was encouraged to find that 98% of respondents believed that our investigations have had an impact on improving local public services. I am confident that the continued publication of our decisions (alongside an improved facility to browse for them on our website), focus reports on key themes and the data in these annual review letters is helping the sector to learn from its mistakes and support better services for citizens.

The survey also demonstrated a significant proportion of councils are sharing the information we provide with elected members and scrutiny committees. I welcome this approach, and want to take this opportunity to encourage others to do so.

Complaint handling training

We recently refreshed our Effective Complaint Handling courses for local authorities and introduced a new course for independent care providers. We trained over 700 people last year and feedback shows a 96% increase in the number of participants who felt confident in dealing with complaints following the course. To find out more, visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Ombudsman reform

You will no doubt be aware that the government has announced the intention to produce draft legislation for the creation of a single ombudsman for public services in England. This is something we support, as it will provide the public with a clearer route to redress in an increasingly complex environment of public service delivery.

We will continue to support government in the realisation of the public service ombudsman, and are advising on the importance of maintaining our 40 years plus experience of working with local government and our understanding its unique accountability structures.

This will also be the last time I write with your annual review. My seven-year term of office as Local Government Ombudsman comes to an end in January 2017. The LGO has gone through extensive change since I took up post in 2010, becoming a much leaner and more focused organisation, and I am confident that it is well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Local Authority Report: Bracknell Forest Council
For the Period Ending: 31/03/2016

For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our website:
http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/interpreting-local-authority-statistics

Complaints and enquiries received

Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and Other Services	Education and Children's Services	Environment Services	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
4	1	1	8	1	1	2	7	1	26

Decisions made

				Detailed Investigations				
Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	Total
2	0	12	6	4	2	33%	26

Notes

Our uphold rate is calculated in relation to the total number of detailed investigations.

The number of remedied complaints may not equal the number of upheld complaints. This is because, while we may uphold a complaint because we find fault, we may not always find grounds to say that fault caused injustice that ought to be remedied.

The compliance rate is the proportion of remedied complaints where our recommendations are believed to have been implemented.

Complaints Remedied		
by LGO	Satisfactorily by Authority before LGO Involvement	Compliance Rate
1	0	100%

Explanatory Notes by LGO

How complaints and enquiries were dealt with is explained below:

- **Upheld:** These are complaints where we have decided that an authority has been at fault in how it acted and that this fault may or may not have caused an injustice to the complainant, or where an authority has accepted that it needs to remedy the complaint before we make a finding on fault. If we have decided there was fault and it caused an injustice to the complainant, usually we will have recommended the authority take some action to address it.

- **Not upheld:** Where we have investigated a complaint and decided that a council has not acted with fault, we classify these complaints as not upheld.

- **Advice given:** These are cases where we give advice about why LGO would not look at a complaint because the body complained about was not within the LGO's scope or we had previously looked at the same complaint from the complainant, or another complaints handling organisation or advice agency was best placed to help them.

- **Closed after initial enquiries:** These complaints are where we have made an early decision that we could not or should not investigate the complaint, usually because the complaint is outside LGO's jurisdiction and we either cannot lawfully investigate it or we decide that it would not be appropriate in the circumstances of the case to do so. Our early assessment of a complaint may also show there was little injustice to a complainant that would need an LGO investigation of the matter, or that an investigation could not achieve anything, either because the evidence we see shows at an early stage there was no fault, or the outcome a complainant wants is not one we could achieve, for example overturning a court order.

- **Incomplete/invalid:** These are complaints where the complainant has not provided us with enough information to be able to decide what should happen with their complaint, or where the complainant tells us at a very early stage that they no longer wish to pursue their complaint.

- **Referred back for local resolution:** We work on the principle that it is always best for complaints to be resolved by the service provider wherever possible. Furthermore, the Local Government Act 1974 requires LGO to give authorities an opportunity to try and resolve a complaint before we will get involved. Usually we tell complainants how to complain to an authority and ask them to contact it directly. In many instances, authorities are successful in resolving the complaint and the complainant does not recontact us.

Complaints Remedied - For the year 2015/16 we provide information about complaints remedied. Where we find that an authority has acted with fault and this has caused an injustice to a complainant, we will make a recommendation about the action an authority should take to remedy that injustice. An Ombudsman's recommendations are not binding however most authorities comply with our recommendations without the need for any further action by the Ombudsman. We will also uphold a complaint that has come to us where the authority has already accepted during its own complaints processes that it acted with fault and it has offered what we consider to be a suitable remedy. The figures for 'complaints remedied satisfactorily by Authority before LGO involvement' demonstrate the number of times we have received complaints against an authority but it has already taken all the steps it needed to.

COMPLAINTS – 2015/16

Department	Statutory Stage 1	Statutory Stages 2&3	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total Complaints	Of Which (excluding on-going cases):		
							Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Chief Executive's Office	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	N/A	N/A	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
Environment, Culture and Communities	N/A	N/A	6	4	8	18	1	1	14
Children, Young People & Learning	26	2	3	3	2	36	5	7	17
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing	18	N/A	13	0	4	35	10	10	11
Total	44	2	24	7	14	91	17 (22%)	18 (23%)	42 (55%)

COMPLAINTS – 2014/15

Department	Statutory Stage 1	Statutory Stages 2&3	Stage 2[1]	Stage 3[2]	Stage 4	Ombudsman	Total Complaints	Of Which (excluding 14 on-going): Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Chief Executive's Office	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	N/A	N/A	13	0	N/A	0	13	2	3	8
Environment, Culture and Communities	N/A	N/A	10	8	N/A	4	22	8	1	11
Children, Young People & Learning	10	3	3	1	N/A	2	19	1	2	13
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing	21	N/A	17	4	N/A	2	44	6	17	19
2013/14 Total	31	3	43	13	N/A	8	98	17 (19%)	23 (25%)	50 (56%)

2013/14 Total	42	2	49	15	8	14	130	28 (24%)	19 (16%)	69 (59%)
2012/13 Total	39	3	28	9	11	9	99			
2011/12 Total	41	3	20	8	5	15	92	Information not collected		

238

[1] The former stages 2 and 3 were combined to form the new stage 2 from 1 January 2015
[2] The former stage 4 became the new stage 3 from 1 January 2015

Unrestricted

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
27 September 2016

COUNCIL PLAN OVERVIEW REPORT
Chief Executive

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To inform the Executive of the performance of the Council over the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year (April - June 2016).

2   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   To note the performance of the Council over the period from April to June 2016 highlighted in the Overview Report in Annex A.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1   To brief the Executive on the Council's performance, highlighting key areas, so that appropriate action can be taken if needed.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   None applicable.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Performance Management

5.1   The Council's performance management framework provides for the preparation of Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) by each department. These QSRs provide an update of progress and performance against departmental Service Plans.

Quarterly Service Reports

5.2   Executive Portfolio Holders will have received the first quarter QSRs for their areas of responsibility in August. QSRs are also distributed electronically to all Members, and will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Scrutiny Panels. This process enables all Members to be involved in performance management.

Council Plan Overview Report

5.3   The QSRs have been combined into the Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR), which brings together the progress and performance of the Council as whole. The CPOR enables the Corporate Management Team and the Executive to review performance, highlight any exceptions and note any remedial actions that may be necessary, either from under-performing or over-performing services, across the range of Council activities.

5.4   The CPOR for the first quarter (April - June 2016) is shown at Annex A.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   There are no specific legal issues arising from this report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3   Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4   Any specific issues are included in the QSRs and in the CPOR in Annex A.

Other Officers

6.5   Not applicable.

7   CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   Not applicable

Method of Consultation

7.2   Not applicable.

Representations Received

7.3   None.

Background Papers
QSR – Corporate Services – Quarter 1 2016/17
QSR – Chief Executive's Office – Quarter 1 2016/17
QSR – Environment, Culture and Communities – Quarter 1 2016/17
QSR – Adult Social Care and Health – Quarter 1 2016/17
QSR – Children, Young People and Learning – Quarter 1 2016/17

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CMT Report.doc

COUNCIL PLAN OVERVIEW REPORT

Q1 2016 - 17
April – June 2016

Chief Executive:
Timothy Wheadon

Contents

Section 1: Chief Executive's Commentary

1 Introduction

1.1 This report sets out an overview of the Council's performance for the first quarter of 2016/17 (April - June 2016). The purpose is to provide the Executive with a high-level summary of key achievements, and to highlight areas where performance is not matching targets or expectations, along with any remedial action that is being taken. It complements the detailed Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) produced by each Director, which were circulated to Members in August.

1.2 Overall, very good progress has been made against the actions in the departmental service plans. At the end of the first quarter progress showed

- 148 actions (90.3%) are on target to be completed within the timescales set
- 9 actions (5.5%) are at risk of falling behind schedule
- 1 action (0.6%) has fallen behind schedule
- 6 actions (3.6%) have been completed.

1.3 Section 3 of this report contains information on the performance indicators across the Council for each of the strategic themes. Again the picture is positive, showing that the status for the Council Plan indicators in the first quarter is:

- 33 (89.2%) green – i.e. on, above or within 5% of target
- 1 (2.7%) amber – i.e. between 5% and 10% of target
- 3 (8.1%) red – i.e. more than 10% from target.

20 further indicators have no set target.

2 Overview of Q1

- The quarter has seen good progress on all Transformation projects. In June, the first gateway review for the arts strategy took place and this was followed in July by gateway reviews for the projects looking at the future libraries and leisure provision and customer contact. Meanwhile good progress is being made on the review of support services and our property investment strategy is being developed for consideration by Members in the autumn. Projects on school support services looking to respond to the Government's plans to withdraw Education Services Grant and to further encourage academisation is also well underway.
- The final assurance rating for the Bracknell Forest 2016 Better Care Fund (BCF) submission is expected shortly from NHS England. The provisional rating provided in April 2016 was "Assured", which was the highest rating from a possible range of "Assured"; "Assured with Support or Not Assured". The Bracknell Forest fund was the only 'Assured' rating in the south east.
- A number of Expressions of Interest (EOI) for DfE grant funding have been prepared. These are in the main partnership bids and are focused on young people who are on the edge of care or who are looked after. There are two bidding rounds and the two EOIs from Round 1 have been approved by DfG to go forward into full bids. Further EOI will be presented for consideration in July at Round 2. The themes of the EOI are all linked with developments within Children, Young People and Learning and will enhance the Transformation Projects which

are in place. The two bids between them are valued at around £4.6m and provide massive support to the prevention and early intervention approach being developed.

− The Coral Reef project refurbishment is going well and to programme. The contract with Brymor for the construction, and Van Egdom for the aquatic element, has been signed and Brymor have been at Coral Reef since the end of May and have begun the internal strip out. A webcam has been installed and is going live shortly so that customers can view the main roof and flume tower works progress.

− This quarter has also seen the successful implementation of the £3m Coral Reef signalisation scheme, finishing in April, 5 months ahead of programme and on budget. The scheme is already improving traffic flows and should increase the capacity of the junction by 33%.

− Planning permission was granted for The Blue Mountain Learning Village and associated housing and open space. Building works (beginning with an archaeological survey) are expected to start on site towards the end of August. The Council is currently working with the Parish Council to provide a community hub on the site. With just under £1m of S106 monies available as a contribution to its development.

3   What went especially well?

− The new Station Green open space provided to compensate for the loss of pubic open space in Charles Square has been delivered ahead of time and on budget with the opening being scheduled for July 16.

− The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) went live as of 16 May and early indications show this multi-agency model is effective.

− Performance in Development Management remained above the target of 80% of applications being dealt with within prescribed time limits. In May planning application performance was excellent with 100% being dealt with within agreed timescales for all application types.

− The O&S Working Group looking at Planning Procedures was given complete freedom to look at any issues they felt needed to be explored. The review did not identify any major problems and the Executive accepted the majority of the recommendations.

− The number of individual clients attending Youthline sessions was 154 for April to June 2016 which is a 57% increase on the previous quarter. This positive increase can be contributed to Youthline engaging with an additional school and now working in partnership with the Family Focus project. The increase also reflects the work being done by youth workers to actively promote Youthline.

Awards and positive inspections

− School Ofsted inspections continue - Easthampstead Park Community School achieved 'Good' and all the Borough's maintained secondary schools are now rated as good or better. There are two Academy Secondary Schools of which Ranelagh remains 'outstanding' whilst Brakenhale requires improvement. The percentage of primary and secondary schools rated good/better by OFSTED has therefore exceeded the expected targets, currently set at 80% and 67% respectively. All eligible early years settings have also received good/better ratings.

− Bracknell was awarded 'Town of the Year' at the Thames Valley Property Awards. Judges were looking for a Thames Valley town that had implemented a successful town-centre strategy and which had enhanced the town's brand.

4   What we are doing about things going not quite so well?

− The quarter saw a higher level of household nights in non-self contained accommodation than anticipated. At the end of June there were 24 households in shared accommodation (including B&B and Tenterden Lodge) which equated to 1,109 household nights against a target of 793. In part this increase was due to delays in the completion of Downshire Homes property purchases. Once all purchases have been completed the situation should improve as it will provide an additional 17 properties. By the end of August the number of properties acquired by Downshire Homes had reached 16.
− Work is continuing to improve recycling and reduce landfill but more significant action is needed to address the issue of food waste and surplus residual bin capacity. Over the coming months various options, including food waste collections and or a reduction in bin size, will be explored with the results feeding into the Transformation programme for 2018/19 to ensure that costs do not rise.
− Planning appeals performance dipped early in the year with a series of appeals being upheld. This appears to have reversed with the vast majority of recent decisions being dismissed by Planning Inspectors including a notable success at Locks Ride. There were 16 appeal decisions of which 3 were Allowed and 13 Dismissed. Regular appeals performance monitoring meetings have been established to review decisions and identify and raise awareness of any learning points.
− Early Years Foundation Stage, Phonics and Key Stage 1 results are above the national average but overall KS2 results were only broadly in line with the national average. Work is currently being done with individual schools whose performance is below average to understand the reasons for this and to improve the situation and this will be a key priority for the new Director of Children, Young People & Learning when she takes up post in early October.

Timothy Wheadon
Chief Executive

Section 2: Budget Position

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

At the end of the first quarter the budgetary control reports for the General Fund reported a potential over spend of £1.612m. Details of individual variances are outlined in each department's Quarterly Service Report (QSR).

This net over spend comprises the following:

- Placement costs within Children's Social Care are a pressure (£0.386m). While there has been a reduction in the number of high cost places from the 87 assumed in the budget to 84, there has been an increase in the average cost, partly due to one unexpected long term placement in a secure unit.

- Mental Health for Older Adults (MHOA) is forecast to over spend by £0.900m which relates to rising residential and nursing costs, continuing the trend from 2015/16, plus the need to make in-year care package savings of £1m, of which MHOA's share is £0.257m.

- Five new supported accommodation packages are the primary reason for the projected over spend on Mental Health (£0.240m).

- Older People and Long Term Conditions is forecast to overspend by £0.475m. This primarily reflects the need to make in-year savings of £0.390m in this area. Although work has started on identifying these savings, it is in its early stages. There is also a pressure of £0.145m relating to the night service at Clement House supported accommodation.

- The under spend on Learning Disabilities (-£0.787m) relates to the cost of care purchased from external providers where the under spend trend from last year has continued. This partially offsets the over spends in Mental Health and Older People and it is likely there will be some realignment of budgets during the year to reflect the changing profile of social care costs.

- Whilst it had been known that the progression of the Coral Reef project would mean the closure of the facility during 2016/17, no adjustments were to be made to the budget on the understanding that any overspend, due to the loss of income, would be met from the Contingency. The Department's HR team have developed a strategy for the redeployment of retained staff during the closure, which has saved salary costs, however the overall estimated pressure for the year is currently £0.384m.

The projected over spend excludes the £1m balance on the Contingency which therefore reduces the overall variance to £0.612m. It is anticipated that the over spend will be managed downwards.

At this stage in the financial year there remain significant risks to the budget. Those budgets representing the greatest risk will continue to be scrutinised in detail as part of the Council's usual budget monitoring arrangements.

Section 3: Strategic Themes

Value for money

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
L051	Percentage of current year's Council tax collected in year (Quarterly)	98.26%	29.33%	29.41%	G
L053	Percentage of current year's Business Rates collected in year (Quarterly)	98.90%	33.08%	26.80%	G
L221	Satisfaction level expressed in survey of contact with Customer Services, across all channels (Quarterly)	72.00%	78.40%	75.00%	G
L255	Subsidy on leisure services (Quarterly)	£1,129,352	£48,904	-£295,486	R
L256	Percentage of transactions carried out online and the use of the customer portal (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	39.0%	No target set	N/A
L257	Cumulative number of complaints received at stages 2 and 3, statutory social services complaints, and complaints referred by the Local Government Ombudsman (Quarterly)	90	21	28	G
L261	Level of staff sickness absence (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	1.48	No target set for Q1	N/A
L262	Level of voluntary staff turnover (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	2.7%	13.0%	G

A strong and resilient economy

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
L265	Number of newly incorporated businesses (Quarterly)	207	121	No target set	N/A
L267	Business closure rate (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	81.0	No target set	N/A
L268	Percentage of working age people who are unemployed (Quarterly)	2.8%	2.3%	No target set	N/A
L269	Percentage of working age population in employment (Quarterly)	82.4%	83.4%	No target set	N/A
L271	Percentage of the borough covered by Superfast broadband(Quarterly)	96.2%	96.2%	96.2%	G

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure 2015/16	Current Figure 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
NI167	Congestion - average journey time per mile during the morning peak (Annually)	2.31	Will be reported in Q2	2.33	N/A

People have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
NI114	Number of exclusions from secondary schools (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	0.0%	6.5%	G
NI117	Number of 16 - 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	3.5%	5.0%	G
L139p	Percentage of Primary schools rated good or better (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	80.6%	80.0%	G
L139s	Percentage of Secondary schools rated good or better (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	83.3%	67.0%	G
L237	Number of apprenticeships starts for 16-24 year olds through City Deal interventions (Quarterly)	4	5	5	G

People will live active and healthy lifestyles

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
OF1c.1a	Proportion of people using social care who receive self directed support (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	100.0%	98.0%	G
OF1c.1b	Proportion of carers who receive self directed support (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	100.0%	98.0%	G
OF1c.2a	Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	21.9%	No target set	N/A
OF1c.2b	Proportion of carers who receive direct payments (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	100.0%	No target set	N/A
L003	Number of visits to leisure facilities (Quarterly)	2,108,031	465,414	360,000	G
L015	Number of attendances for junior courses in leisure (Quarterly)	130,183	34,492	26,000	G
L030	Number of lifelines installed (Quarterly)	204	199	200	G
L031	Percentage of lifeline calls handled in 60 seconds (Quarterly)	97.46%	98.46%	97.50%	G
L217	Smoking quit success rate (Quarterly in arrears)	83.0% (Q3)	80.9% (Q4 15/16)	60.0%	G
L218	Uptake of specialist weight management treatment programme (Quarterly)	173	245	100	G
L277	Number of people receiving Falls Risks Assessments (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	77	40	G
L278	Percentage of adult social care records in the Adult Social Care IT System that contain the person's NHS number (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	78.0%	85.0%	A
L279	Number of young people who actively engage with KOOTH (Quarterly in arrears)	New for 2016/17	Will be reported in Q2	115	N/A
L280	Percentage of young people who receive a response from KOOTH within 24 hours (Quarterly in arrears)	New for 2016/17	Will be reported in Q2	95.0%	N/A
L281	Number of individual clients attending Youthline sessions (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	154	No target set	N/A

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure 2014/15	Current Figure 2015/16	Current Target	Current Status
OF1e	The number of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment as a % of adults with learning disabilities who receive a long-term service (Annually in arrears)	Previously reported quarterly	TBC	15.0%	TBC

A clean, green, growing and sustainable place

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (Quarterly)	9	8	6	G
NI157a	Percentage of major applications determined in 13 weeks (Quarterly)	85%	95%	80%	G
NI157b	Percentage of minor applications determined in 8 weeks (Quarterly)	78%	86%	80%	G
NI157c	Percentage of other applications determined in 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time period (Quarterly)	95%	93%	80%	G
NI181	Time taken in number of days to process Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (Quarterly)	4.0	9.0	9.0	G
NI192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (Cumulative figure for 15/16 reported quarterly in arrears)	39.3% (Q3 15/16)	38.0% (Q4 15/16)	42.0%	A
NI193	Percentage of municipal waste land filled (Cumulative figure for 15/16 reported quarterly in arrears)	22.9% (Q3 15/16)	22.0% (Q4 15/16)	20.0%	R
L146.1	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness is above EPA standard - Litter (Quarterly)	100.0%	100.0%	99.0%	G
L146.2	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness is above EPA standard - Detritus (Quarterly)	100.0%	97.0%	98.5%	G
L146.3	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness is above EPA standard - Graffiti and Fly posting (Quarterly)	100.0%	100.0%	99.0%	G
L178	Number of household nights in non self contained accommodation (Quarterly)	1,455	1,019	793	R
L179	The percentage of homeless or potentially homeless customers who the council helped to keep their home or find another one (Quarterly)	71.00%	79.00%	88.00%	R
L241	Income from CIL (Quarterly)	290,548	489,248	205,598	G
L284	Number of homes given planning permission (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	650	No target set	N/A
L286	Percentage of successful planning appeals (Quarterly)	66.0%	82.0%	66.0%	G

Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure Q4 2015/16	Current Figure Q1 2016/17	Current Target	Current Status
NI062	Stability of placements of looked after children in terms of the number of placements (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	4.0%	12.5%	G
NI063	Stability of placements of looked after children - length of placement (Quarterly)	Previously reported annually	59.3%	60.0%	G
L092	Number of children on protection plans (Quarterly)	115	113	No target set	N/A
L161	Number of looked after children (Quarterly)	98	99	No target set	N/A
L185	Overall crime (Quarterly)	5,094	1,257	No target set	N/A
L202	Number of families turned around through Family Focus Project (Quarterly)	5	0	0	G
L203	Number of Referrals to Early Intervention Hub (Quarterly)	84	88	No target set	N/A
L204	Total number of CAFs and Family CAFs undertaken (Quarterly)	81	88	No target set	N/A
L242	Number of cases that step up to Children's Social Care (Quarterly)	4	4	No target set	N/A
L243	Number of cases that step down from Children's Social to Early Intervention Hub (Quarterly)	41	27	No target set	N/A
L287	Number of children in need supported under Section 17 of the Children Act (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	652	No target set	N/A
L288	Number of foster carers recruited to meet need (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	4	3	G
L289	Average caseload per children's social worker (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	17.3	No target set	N/A
L290	Rate of referral to children's social care (Quarterly)	New for 2016/17	167.6	No target set	N/A

Note: Details of the annual indicators not being reported on this quarter are contained within the departmental quarterly service reports (QSRs).

Section 4: Corporate Health

a) Summary of People

Staff Turnover

Department	Quarter 1	For the last 4 quarters	Notes
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing	3.73%	14.07%	The last quarter has seen the closure of Heathlands and the Public Health Resources team, bringing about a number of redundancies.
Corporate Services	2.4%	9.13%	Of the 15 vacancies recruitment is currently underway for posts within ICT, Finance and Democratic & Registration Services.
Chief Executive's Office	0%	3.23%	Vacancy is within Regeneration
Children, Young People & Learning	2.03%	14.87%	13 employees new to Bracknell Forest joined including 6 people in social work posts.
Environment, Culture & Communities	2.32%	9.59%	The vacancy rate has decreased from 9.48% last quarter to 7.91% this quarter.

Comparator data	%
Total voluntary turnover for BFC, 2014/15:	13.4%
Average UK voluntary turnover 2014:	12.8%
Average Local Government England voluntary turnover 2014:	12.7%

(Source: XPertHR Staff Turnover Rates and Cost Survey 2014 and LGA Workforce Survey 2013/14)

Staff Sickness

Department	Quarter 1 (days per employee)	2016/17 Projected Annual Average (days per employee)	Notes
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing	2.21	17.04	There were 8 cases of long-term sickness - 4 cases have now returned to work and 4 cases are still to return, but are being monitored by Occupational Health.
Corporate Services	0.98	3.92	Sickness for this quarter stands at 195 days which is significantly lower than last quarter and also the same period last year.
Chief Executive's Office	2.11	8.44	59 days were due to long term sickness.
Children, Young People & Learning	1.50	5.98	A large proportion of the absence (46%) is accounted for by 9 long term sickness cases (268 days). 7 of these have been resolved, with just two ongoing.

Department	Quarter 1 (days per employee)	2016/17 Projected Annual Average (days per employee)	Notes
Environment, Culture & Communities	1.45	5.80	Sickness this quarter has decreased compared to last quarter. 8 employees who were on long-term sick returned to work before the end of the quarter.

Comparator data	All employees, average days sickness absence per employee
Bracknell Forest Council 14/15	5.2 days
All local government employers 2014	7.9 days
All South East Employers 2014	N/A

(Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Absence Management Survey 2014)

b) Summary of Complaints

Corporate Complaints

Department	New complaints activity	Complaints activity year to date	Outcome of total complaints activity year to date
Stage 2	7	7	4 not upheld; 2 ongoing; 1 partially upheld
Stage 3	3	3	2 not upheld; 1 ongoing
Local Government Ombudsman	1	1	Ongoing
TOTAL	**11**	**11**	

Statutory Complaints

Department	Stage	New complaints activity	Complaints activity year to date	Outcome of total complaints activity year to date
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing	Statutory	5	5	2 partially upheld; 1 not upheld; 2 ongoing
	Ombudsman	0	0	
Children, Young People & Learning	Stage 1	3	3	2 not upheld; 1 partially upheld
	Stage 2	2	2	2 ongoing
	Stage 3	0	0	
	Ombudsman	0	0	
TOTAL		**10**	**10**	

c) Strategic Risks and Audits

The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by the Strategic Risk Management Group on 2 June, by the Corporate Management Team on 8 June and by the Governance and Audit Committee on 29 June 2016. The only key change made to the Register during quarter 1 was to decrease the likelihood and impact for risk 6d, Coral Reef now that the project is going forward.

In the quarter there were 7 limited assurance audit reports issued, four of which were schools related:

- Procurement in Schools
- Uplands Primary School
- Winkfield St Mary
- Ascot Heath Infants

The remaining three were:

- Home to School Transport
- Construction and Maintenance
- Mental Health

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Unrestricted

TO: EXECUTIVE
27 SEPTEMBER 2016

REGULATORY SERVICES – JOINT SERVICES PROPOSAL
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   Regulatory Services within Bracknell Forest Council comprises of environmental health, trading standards and licensing. The services were combined to form one business unit several years ago in order to drive out efficiencies and to help reduce the inspection burden on businesses.

1.2   This report proposes the creation of a combined unit with West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils proposed to be known as the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). The proposals will enable further efficiencies to be realised whilst still ensuring the mandatory duties are undertaken on behalf of the Council.

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   In so far as the following are Executive functions that the Executive agrees:

(i)   to authorise the arrangements set out in this report including the creation of a Joint Committee for the strategic policy and oversight of the delivery of public protection services with Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council through the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) with effect from 13 January 2017,

(ii)   that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Borough Treasurer and Director of Environment, Culture & Communities, be authorised to finalise the terms of the PPP as set out in the draft Inter Authority Agreement between the three Councils (Annex 1) and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments to the terms of the draft Agreement which are necessary to reach final agreement but do not materially affect the intent and substance of the Agreement,

(iii)   to authorise the Joint Committee to determine policy, strategy and oversee the performance monitoring and management of the new PPP and have the powers set out in the terms of reference contained in Schedule 1 of the draft Inter Authority Agreement,

(iv)   that the Council's representatives on the Joint Committee will be the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection and the Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee with any Member of the Executive being able to act as a substitute,

(v)   that all existing service specific specialist equipment and the associated ongoing liability be transferred to West Berkshire from the 13 January 2017,

(vi)   that any associated existing contracts with the Council are transferred to West Berkshire to administer on this Council's behalf until such time as they can be renegotiated,

(vii) that, as a consequence of this proposal, the disabled facilities grants, Home Improvement Loans, home energy functions and all associated staff and budgets be transferred to the ASCHH Department, as soon as it is practical to do so.

2.2 In so far as any of the foregoing provisions also relate to the exercise of non Executive functions, to recommend to Council to authorise the same.

2.3 That the Executive notes that as a consequence of this proposal the disabled facilities grants, Home Improvement Loans, home energy functions and all associated staff and budgets be transferred to the ASCHH Department, as soon as it is practical to do so.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   As a small unit, the regulatory services team can no longer continue to offer any significant level of savings whilst still fulfilling the mandatory functions of the Council. A merger with others provides the most sustainable option relative to the Council's fiscal and legal obligations. Furthermore, the proposal provides the best job opportunity for those in the relevant professions which are increasingly challenging to recruit to.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1   Whilst outsourcing to a private company is an option taken by some councils, the proposed approach builds on the learning from the re3 officer/Member joint management structure in respect of governance. It also takes into account the experience coming out of West Berkshire and Wokingham in respect of their current delivery models for their shared trading standards and their shared environmental health functions. The proposal for a combined single service involves joining these service areas into one large unit with the licensing function. It is believed that the joining of these three service areas in this way provides the greatest opportunity to drive out further efficiencies, maintain service standards and further reduce costs. The model proposed allows for further expansion, income generation and should it ever be considered a better option, outsourcing to the benefit of the partner organisations.

5   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1   Wokingham and West Berkshire's shared environmental health and trading standards functions currently operate as two separate units. As such they have already delivered significant savings for those authorities primarily through reducing management overheads, merging of systems and procurement savings. Over the same period of time BFC has, through a different approach, also been able to significantly reduce costs and introduce efficiencies. The proposal seeks to take the learning from all three councils and combine it into one service department.

5.2   There are several drivers for seeking change within all three councils, not least the need to contribute to the savings targets. A merger enables the realisation of significant savings whilst also providing greater opportunity for job enrichment and advancement. The proposals would result in one large team of about 100 staff. Bigger teams working across a wider area provide a greater range of professional challenge as well as scope for operational and management efficiencies. The alternative is limited to ongoing small cuts year on year potentially making the service

unviable and filling vacant posts almost impossible without the payment of significant premiums.

5.3 The proposals enable overall savings of 15%, circa £151k in salaries plus savings in supplies and services with a client budget of £35k remaining. These savings arise from reductions in staffing and operational budgets. Any loss of income can be offset by the associated cost reductions.   The cost of the staff being transferred is circa £1,035k and along with its associated transferred budget of £987k reflects the need to realise a managed vacancy factor. If the decision were not to enter into this agreement, it is believed that the service could only offer a saving of circa £61k in staffing costs accepting the same reduction to direct service provision as would be the case with this proposal (refer to para 5.15). It is important to recognise that the service is already bottom quartile relative to the level of resources committed hence why the scope for any more savings within the existing arrangements is considered to limited without serious risk of compromise to the mandatory obligations that would otherwise arise. Details of the current and proposed structures are set out in Annex 4 and the savings mentioned above in Annex 5.

Other associated opportunities

5.4 In the year 2016/17 the total service as currently structured attracted £696k in support costs. There are no set savings targets set as part of this review against these costs. This is because other than HR the existing support arrangements will continue largely unchanged on commencement of the new service. Staff will still be in BFC offices, supported by BFC ICT and customer services for example. However, the proposal does enable negotiations as regards to how the new service may assume certain additional responsibilities thereby giving rise to mutually beneficial opportunities. For example BFC might in time wish to realise office space, or perhaps have the new service take on its own legal work. This will be a matter for negotiation later. The service does not have to have an operational base within Time Square. If the Council was minded to reshape its arrangements in respect of its customer interface, for example with timed appointments, web links and back office support moved off site, then further opportunities might arise.

5.5 There are some service areas that are not considered suitable for the merger. Having reviewed the options, and regardless of the proposal for a merger, the conclusion formed is that there is no service or customer benefit including the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) service in these arrangements.   Some minor changes to current practice will enable efficiencies to be realised whilst also improving the level of service. Accordingly, it is proposed that this service area be transferred to the ASCHH Department. For much the same reasons it is also proposed that the home improvement loans and the home energy functions also be transferred to this department. The enforcement of housing standards would remain a regulatory service function undertaken by the new service. The effect of this is that 4 posts and their associated budgets, would be transferred out of the ECC department (Annex 3, table B).

5.6 The way that we provide for pest control is also different to that offered in Wokingham and West Berks. There is no legal obligation to provide a pest service and it is proposed that the current post be deleted from the existing establishment. This is an area of service reduction that would have been proposed next year regardless of the decision in respect of the new service. A small operational budget will however need to be retained at least for the first year to aid any transitional and unforeseen needs.

5.7 The service also has a number of small contracts for example in relation to stray dogs and air quality monitoring. These would be transferred as part of the arrangements and in time they would be renegotiated by the new organisation to establish common arrangements to cover all three councils.

Governance arrangements

5.8 The proposed Governance arrangements are illustrated in the Joint Service Delivery Plan (The Plan) Annex 2. These are very similar to those of the re3 partnership that this and Wokingham already have experience of at both senior officer and Member levels. As can be seen from that detail the proposal is for the new service to be given the strategic direction and be held to account through joint management arrangements led by a formal joint member led Executive Board. This is essentially a statutory Joint Committee and will comprise of two members from each council. Legislation requires one of the nominees to be an Executive Member. For BFC it is suggested that this would be The Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection and the Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee.

5.9 The Joint Executive Board would not assume any responsibility that already falls to the Licencing and Safety Committee. Each council would retain its own licensing functions, associated legal processes and appeal panels.

5.10 The Board would be supported by the Joint (Officer) Management Group. This Group would, again be similar to those set up as part of re3 and would comprise of nominated senior (client) officers from each of the three councils. It would also include the heads of the new combined service. The Group will be responsible for driving core business and ensuring the respective needs of the three councils are properly considered at an operational level. Overall daily management will be a function of the operational management team lead by the host authority. The Group would manage the overall operational needs and ensure progress against targets are reported to the Joint Executive Board through a number of pre determined key performance indicators.

5.11 In order to drive out efficiencies one of the early tasks would be to try to develop common policies and practices. When it comes to licensing for example the Executive Board would be responsible for ensuring that the necessary resources are available to do this. Each licensing Authority would then be asked to adopt them. When it comes to other plans and strategies e.g. the mandatory Food Safety Plan the Executive Board would be expected to seek comment from each of the Councils before approving them. The need is to ensure an effective interface between the organisations at all times. The Board would have the authority and responsibility to manage risk and deliver the required service levels within the approved budget.

Staff implications

5.12 All three councils are looking to be able to realise savings through the merger. Within BFC it will require the loss of 4 posts and 3 current post holders through redundancy as identified in Annex 3. Some savings can also arise from giving up some vacant posts where we have been able to realign work over past months as we prepare for a potential merger. Some posts have also been covered by agency and overtime in order to give maximum flexibility to the new service and reduce the need for redundancies. Annex 3 (table C) details the current staff and posts that would be TUPE'd to West Berkshire.

5.13 West Berkshire would under the proposals become the employing and administrative authority. They are the current employer for the Wokingham and West Berks joint services arrangements and there is no merit in changing this arrangement. To get the efficiencies needed there can only be one central body with such responsibilities. West Berkshire has the necessary experience and is willing to take the lead and the associated risks. A draft Inter Authority agreement is attached as Annex 1. This sets out the respective rights and responsibilities of each party under the proposed arrangement

5.14 The nature of a proposal like this inevitably gives rise to concerns within the current workforce. For some months now all potentially affected staff have been aware of the option being considered and kept appraised of the relevant detail. More recently they have been given more detailed information as to the proposals and the implications. The Trade Union has also been appraised of the proposals. Over the months any concerns raised have been discussed and where possible addressed. Most staff recognise that the prospect of there being such a proposal has been around for some years. Within regulatory services the proposed model is becoming more common across the country. The main concern that has been raised to date has been in relation to the prospect of there being continued employment, followed perhaps by 'who will be my manager?' In respect of the former whilst there will be some job losses these are envisaged to be by agreement. As for the 'who will be in what position' type of question this will not be known until an equitable matching process has been completed under the TUPE rules.

Service Impact

5.15 Taking 15% out of the budget cannot be done without there being some service reduction. The proposed arrangements will achieve the most significant level of saving by a reduction in management costs and service efficiencies from day one. However, there will be some other operational changes relative to what and how we currently deliver services. Perhaps the most significant direct change will be that in common with the other two authorities we will no longer offer a pest control service. The reduction in service resources requires an acceptance that we can no longer deal with matters in the same way that we used to. The work that will be carried out will be based upon risk and impact. Going forward the new service will use the National Intelligence Model to set priorities and will respond immediately only to those matters which are considered to be of high risk or impact. In addition, the licensing officers will no longer be providing the link between the Police and landowners when if comes to travellers. That function would be taken up by the Community Safety Team who is best placed to build on their links with crime and disorder and close working with Thames Valley Police.

5.16 Until such time as maybe otherwise agreed the client function of the new arrangement would remain with the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection. It is important to note that unlike most other contractual arrangements there is no client team associated with this function and it is possible that in future years the senior officer representing the Council's interests at the Board would have no relevant professional experience. A small client budget of circa £35k will be retained to aid transition. The need to keep that budget would be reviewed in the next budget round.

5.17 One of the major service benefits to all councils is that the arrangements improve the overall resilience. With a team of circa 100 staff there is more scope for developing professional expertise in specialist areas thereby reducing the need for consultants

for example. Additionally a larger business is better able to accommodate staff turnover, sickness and the seasonal pressures due to leave.

Opportunities for the future

5.18   The new service would be able to seek new sources of income. It will also be expected to deliver service economies and cashable savings over the term. The proposals provide a mechanism for equitable profit sharing or reallocation of any future savings based on the original cost basis. The Executive Board would be responsible for setting targets and monitoring performance.

Contract term and time table

5.19   The timetable for any change is tight and the proposal is to enter into an agreement commencing 13 January 2017.   The initial agreement is for a ten year term. The agreement includes for break clauses and extensions.

6   ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1   The report proposes the setting up of a shared Berkshire Public Protection Service (BPPS) between three Local Authorities including Bracknell Forest Council (BFC). The service is intended to cover Trading Standards, Environmental Health and some Licensing functions. Licensing functions which fall under the Licencing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 cannot in law be delegated and will therefore remain exercisable by the BFC Licencing Committee.

          The proposed shared service model is based on a Statutory Joint Committee (referred to in the report as a Joint Executive Board) which will have powers delegated to it by each of the participating authorities to take decisions on behalf of all of them. As a Joint Committee is not a legal entity separate from its constituent authorities, it cannot enter into contracts, own land or employ staff in its own right. There is therefore a need for one of the Authorities (in this instance, West Berkshire Council) to take a lead authority role to undertake these activities on behalf of the other authorities. An inter Authority Agreement will be entered into prior to the shared service becoming operational setting out the contractual obligations of the three parties under the arrangement. Affected staff will be transferred to West Berkshire Council and placed at the disposal of all three participating Authorities pursuant to S113 of the Local Government Act 1972.

          Where, as in this case, the Joint Committee is intended to carry out a combination of Executive and Non-Executive functions the decision to set up the Joint Committee must be taken by Council, but both Council and the Executive must agree the arrangements and each must separately resolve to delegate their particular functions to the Joint Committee. A separate report for approval will therefore need to be presented before a future Council meeting delegating those functions.

Borough Treasurer

6.2   The financial implications are contained within the body of the report (paragraph 5.3). The need to transfer the staffing costs less the budgeted vacancy factor was discussed with West Berkshire and the figures reflect this accordingly. The ongoing annual savings of £151k will be achieved from 2017-18, with a part year effect to be realised in the current financial year.

There will be severance costs due to the 3 proposed redundancies, the costs of which will need to be met from the structural changes reserve.

Chief Officer: Customer Services

6.3   The issue of customer access to the service has been considered throughout the research and planning stage, and there are no concerns about how this will be managed through the new arrangement. Work to develop enhanced online service provision and self-service has been deferred, pending any changes to working processes or procedures. This work will be re-established, once the decision about the future shape of the service has been made.

Chief Officer: Information Services

6.4   It is anticipated that staff transferring will continue to use Bracknell Forest equipment in the short to medium term. It will continue to be supported by the ICT Helpdesk. This is the model currently being operated by Wokingham and West Berkshire. At this stage they will also continue to use the local software system, IDox. Again this the current model used in the other partner authorities. In the longer term the goal is to have a single shared instance of the business support software and the ICT delivery and support model will need to be addressed by all the partner authorities at that time.

Chief Officer: Housing

6.5   The proposals to locate the Home Improvement Agency and Disabled Facility Grants, and flexible Home loans with the Adult Social Care Health and Housing Department is a logical proposal both strategically and operationally. Disabled facility grants are now funded from the Better care fund. Meeting the needs of disabled people and families in terms of housing can be met from either adaptations or provision of suitable alternative accommodation whichever is the best course of action and most economic. Thus there is service synergy in locating the services within the Welfare and Housing Service.

Human Resources

6.6   All staff involved in the proposed changes have been consulted and the Trade Unions have also been appraised. Where possible due account has been given to any concerns made and officers with such concerns have had one to one discussions with those leading the process. Once all councils have determined their intentions should there be an agreement to go forward then a series of meetings will be arranged starting in early October with a meeting of all staff from across the three councils where all will be given the detail about how the proposed new structure, business planning and operational management arrangements that have to be in place by January 2017. Those individuals in posts which are proposed to be removed from the Establishment list will be put at risk and the appropriate processes followed according to the Organisational Change Protocols. ECC HR will work closely with the West Berkshire HR team to ensure effective communication and consultation is provided and that TUPE regulations are followed, for those being transferred across to West Berkshire.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.7   Access arrangements to services are not going to change as a result of these proposals should they be agreed.

        Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.8   The proposal seeks to ensure continued delivery of mandatory services within a reduced budget.

7   CONSULTATION

        Principal Groups Consulted

7.1   All staff involved in the potential TUPE transfer and all service areas providing support to the existing function. The Union were invited and attended the formal briefing prior to this report being produced on the 9 August.

        Method of Consultation

7.2   Emails and meetings

        Representations Received

7.3   Comments made during the consultation have helped inform the proposals for the new service. Any further comments received will be reported verbally

Background Papers

Joint Services Delivery Plan
Draft Legal Agreement

Contacts for further information

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