

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
8 SEPTEMBER 2009

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
Assistant Chief Executive

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity over the period May to July 2009, also the national and local developments in O&S.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the quarterly progress report on Overview and Scrutiny.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

(i) Overview and Scrutiny Activity

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 3.1 The indicative work programme for O&S in 2009/10 was contained in the Annual report of O&S, adopted by Council in April 2009. This has been considered by the newly appointed Commission and Panels and the Commission adopted the revised work programme at its meeting on 16 July. The Chairman of the O&S Commission sent the revised programme to the Leader and Chief Executive on 6 August.

Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

- 3.2 The table at Appendix 1 sets out the current status of the O&S Working Groups, along with the list of completed reviews. Reports finalised and published in the quarter included: the Working Group reports on the reviews of Housing & Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan, and Waste and Recycling.

Partnership Scrutiny

- 3.3 The approach to O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership was endorsed by the BFP Board on 21 May and implementation has commenced. Questionnaires have been sent to the ten Theme Partnerships, whose Chairmen and Lead Officers have been invited to meet the Commission or relevant O&S Panel. Nominations have been received from partner organisations for the Partnership O&S Group, whose first meeting is planned for 28 September.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- 3.4 The O&S Commission continues to meet on a two-monthly cycle. At its meeting on 11 June, the main items included: meeting the Chairman and Lead Officer of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership; adopting the two Working Group reports on Waste & Recycling and the Review of the Council's Older People's Strategy; receiving the Executive's response to the review of services for Adults with Learning

Disabilities; and considering the final 2008/09 Performance Monitoring Reports for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department. At its meeting on 16 July, the main items considered by the Commission were: the Executive's response to the review of Children's Centres and Extended Schools Services; the final 2008/09 Corporate Performance Overview Report; adopting the report of the O&S review of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Improvement Plan; considering the new statutory guidance on scrutiny of crime and disorder matters; and adopting the O&S work programme for 2009/10. The Commission's next meeting will be on 24 September.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

- 3.5 The Panel has continued to meet on a three-monthly cycle. At its last meeting on 23 June, the Panel: appointed Councillor Finnie as Chairman and Councillor McLean as Vice-Chairman; reviewed the Department's Performance Monitoring report; received a report and presentation on the Section 106 procedure; received an update from the Cleaner Borough Group and received the report of the review of the Implementation of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan. The Panel is commencing a new review on Highway Maintenance, with participation from Town and Parish Councils, and has received a separate briefing presentation on the Play Builder Scheme. The Panel's next meeting is on 8 September, at South Hill Park.

Health O&S Panel

- 3.6 The Panel has continued to meet on a three-monthly cycle. At its last meeting on 18 June, the main items included: determining the Panel's response to proposals from Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Trust (H&WPHT) on service changes; considering information produced by the NHS Trusts on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; also the 'Aiming High' programme; determining the Panel's response to the consultation on the Broadmoor Hospital redevelopment; reviewing information from H&WPHT on their financial position; and considering the Executive's response to the Panel's letter concerning the Council's Health and Wellbeing strategy. The Panel's next meeting is on 3 September.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel

- 3.7 The newly restructured Panel has commenced a three-monthly meeting cycle. At its last meeting on 10 June, the main items considered by the Panel included: reviewing the statutory annual report for children's social care complaints; considering the Ofsted Inspection report on the Council's Adoption Service, together with the action plan; receiving a presentation on Education Transport policy; and reviewing the department's latest Performance Monitoring Report, also the quarterly report of O&S. The Panel's next scheduled meeting is on 16 September.

Adult Social Care O&S Panel

- 3.8 The newly restructured Panel has commenced a three-monthly meeting cycle. At its last meeting on 2 June at Heathlands Day Care Centre, the main items considered by the Panel included: consideration of the Panel's work programme, informed by a presentation by the Chief Officer for Adult Social Care; receiving the Executive's response to the review of services for Adults with Learning Disabilities; reviewing the statutory annual report for adult social care complaints; considering the report of the review of social care and community transport; receiving an update on the 'Caring about Carers' O&S report; and reviewing the department's latest Performance

Monitoring Report, also the quarterly report of O&S. The Panel's next scheduled meeting is on 1 September.

Joint East Berkshire Health O&S Committee

- 3.9 This Committee, now chaired and serviced by Slough BC until May 2010, continues to meet broadly on a three-monthly cycle, rotating between the three Councils' venues. The last Committee meeting was on 29 June in Bracknell, when the Committee: confirmed co-opted members; received a presentation by H&WPHT on proposed service changes; questioned H&WPHT on their car park charging policy; reviewed the link between the Primary Care Trust's operating framework and budget; and considered the Committee's work programme for 2009-10. The Committee's next meeting will be on 14 September at Slough.
- 3.10 Responses to the feedback questionnaires on the quality of O&S reviews are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 3.11 External networking on O&S in the last quarter has included two O&S Chairmen and two O&S officers attending the annual conference of the Centre for Public Scrutiny in June.
- 3.12 Quarterly review meetings between O&S Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Executive Members and Directors are taking place regularly for the Commission and the Panels. Agenda-setting meetings continue to be held, usually in combination with the review meetings.

(ii) Developments in O&S

- 3.13 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill is still going through its Parliamentary stages, and is due for its third reading in October. As advised in the last quarterly report, the main clauses relating to Overview and Scrutiny relate to the handling of petitions.
- 3.14 The O&S provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 commenced on 1 April 2009. The accompanying regulations and guidance relating to scrutiny of local strategic partnerships is awaited. Statutory guidance has been issued by the Home Office on the O&S provisions in the Act flowing from the Police and Justice Act. This guidance was considered by the O&S Commission, in its capacity as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee in July, and discussions are on-going with Thames Valley Police Authority.
- 3.15 On 23 July, the Government's Communities Secretary launched a consultation entitled 'Strengthening Local Democracy'. This envisages increased O&S powers for local authorities, with councils becoming a local point of accountability for citizens to call on to scrutinise public spending decisions. Greater influence over all the money coming into their area would mean that councils could scrutinise more than £100bn a year from other deliverers of public services. DCLG has said that councils would become the setting for select committee style sessions at which councillors could 'grill anyone charged with spending public money - not only police chiefs, health bosses but also representatives from Job Centre Plus and the Environment Agency - and demand action where they are coming up short'. Other services provided by organisations outside the public sector such as utility companies whose actions equally affect people's quality of life would also be subject to a new level of council scrutiny.

- 3.16 The new arrangement whereby O&S reports are personally presented to the Executive at their briefing meeting by the Lead Member of the O&S review, commenced during this quarter.
- 3.17 The revised structure of O&S, with the Social Care and Learning O&S Panel being split into two: Adult Social Care, and Children's Services and Learning, was implemented in this quarter, with all Panels electing Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, and agreeing their work programmes for the municipal year. The O&S Commission have now met twice in their new capacity as the Council's statutory 'Crime and Disorder' Committee.

Background Papers

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

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS – 2009/10

Position at 6 August 2009

Overview and Scrutiny Commission								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Older People's Strategy	Edger (Lead), Mrs Birch & Virgo	Victor Nicholls	Richard Beaumont	√	√	√	√	<u>Completed</u> - Executive response received on 22 June to letter of 29 April containing O&S observations on the strategy

Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Services for People with Learning Disabilities (Social Care Modernisation Agenda)	Leake (Lead), Mrs. Shillcock & Virgo	Glyn Jones	Andrea Carr	√	√	√	√	<u>Completed</u> The Executive response to the letter of 6 April 2009 summarising the work of the Working Group and making

								recommendations was received by the Panel on 2 June 2009.
Transforming Social Care (TSC)	To be appointed	Glyn Jones	Andrea Carr					All-Panel workshops are proposed to familiarise members with distinct areas of TSC before a working group is set up to undertake more in-depth review work in this area.

Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Strategic Review of Waste	Brunel-Walker (Lead), Mrs. Angell, Beadsley, Mrs. Ryder, Wade (Crowthorne), Allen (S'hurst & Ms Healy (Warfield)	Steve Loudoun / Janet Dowlman	Andrea Carr	√	√	√		The report was adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 11 June 2009 and subsequently submitted to the Executive member. A response is

								expected in September 2009.
Supporting People (SP)	Mrs. Shillcock (Lead) & Mrs. Fleming	Simon Hendey / Clare Dorning	Andrea Carr	√	07/08 √ (Annual monitoring)	07/08 √ (Annual monitoring)	N/A	The Working Group met on 30 September 2008 to monitor progress against implementation of the SP programme and reported its findings to the Panel on 18 December 2008. It will meet again in autumn 2009 to monitor progress.
Housing Strategy	Finnie (Lead), Mrs. Fleming and Finch	Clare Dorning	Richard Beaumont	√	√	√	√	<u>Completed</u> Detailed input provided to draft strategy, which was finalised and approved by the Executive in July 2009
Implement-ation of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service	Finch (Lead), Beadsley, Burrows	Simon Hendey / Shanaz Alam	Emma Silverton (Richard Beaumont to Support)	√	√	√		Awaiting Executive response to report sent on 22 nd July 2009

Improvement Plan								
Review of Highway Maintenance	Beadsley, Brossard, Leake and Mclean Parish and Town Councillors: Edwards (Binfield) Kensall (Bracknell) Withers (Crowthorne) Mrs Cupper (Sandhurst) Young (Winkfield)	Steve Loudoun	Richard Beaumont					First meeting arranged for 28 September 2009.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies (previously known as Patient	Burrows (Lead), Mrs. Angell, Thompson. Mrs. Mattick,	David Steeds	Andrea Carr	√				The re-launched Working Group has met on 5 occasions and met the Director of

Focus)								Public Health and the Council's Head of Environmental Health & Safety and Emergency Planning Manager. Further meetings with reps of the Primary Care Trust, Health Protection Agency and Emergency Preparedness Division of the Dept of Health are proposed.
Bracknell Health Space	Virgo (lead) Mrs Angell, Baily, Leake, Mrs Shillcock	Glyn Jones/ Mary Purnell	Richard Beaumont	√				Three meetings held to date, also a site visit to the private sector builder of the Healthspace. Further meetings are being arranged.

Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Hospital Discharge Procedures	Baily, Coad (Slough BC), Napier (RB W&M)	N/A	Andrew Scott (RB W&M)	√				No progress in last year and now under review.

Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Extended Services & Children's Centres (Joint with Health OSP)	Leake (Lead), Mrs. Birch, Mrs. Angell, Mrs. McCracken, Burrows, Beadsley	Graham Symonds / Karen Frost	Katie Dover/ Richard Beaumont	√	√	√	√	The Executive response to the report has been received and it will be considered at the Panel meeting on 16 September.

14-19 Years Education Provision	Mrs Birch (Lead) Dr Josephs-Franks, Kensall, Mrs McCracken,	Martin Surrell	Andrea Carr (Emma Silverton to support)	√				The Working Group has met on nine occasions to date and visited
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	Mrs Ryder							Bracknell & Wokingham College and Ranelagh and Sandhurst Schools. A visit to Garth Hill College is proposed and a questionnaire has been sent to local employers.
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Completed Reviews

Publication Date	Title
December 2003	South Bracknell Schools Review
January 2004	Review of Adult Day Care Services in Bracknell Forest (Johnstone Court Day Centre & Downside Resource Centre)
May 2004	Review of Community & Voluntary Sector Grants
July 2004	Review of Community Transport Provision
April 2005	Review of Members' Information Needs
November 2005	The Management of Coronary Heart Disease
February 2006	Review of School Transfers and Performance
March 2006	Review of School Exclusions and Pupil Behaviour Policy
August 2006	Report of Tree Policy Review Group
November 2006	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Review of the ASB Strategy Implementation
January 2007	Review of Youth Provision
February 2007	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2006
February 2007	Review of Library Provision
July 2007	Review of Healthcare Funding
November 2007	Review of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

December 2007	Review of the Council's Medium Term Objectives
March 2008	2007 Annual Health Check Response to the Healthcare Commission
April 2008	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2007/08
May 2008	Road Traffic Casualties
August 2008	Caring for Carers
September 2008	Scrutiny of Local Area Agreement
October 2008	Street Cleaning
October 2008	English as an Additional Language in Bracknell Forest Schools
April 2009	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09
April 2009	Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check 2008/09 (letters submitted)
April 2009	Children's Centres and Extended Services in and Around Schools in Bracknell Forest
April 2009	Older People's Strategy
April 2009	Services for People with Learning Disabilities
May 2009	Housing Strategy
June 2009	Review of Waste and Recycling
June 2009	Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan

Results of Feedback Questionnaires on Overview and Scrutiny Reports

Note – Departmental Link officers on each review were asked to score the key aspects of each O&S review on a scale of 0 (Unsatisfactory) to 3 (Excellent)

	Average score for previous 8 Reviews ¹
PLANNING	2.9
Were you given sufficient notice of the review?	
Were your comments invited on the scope of the review, and was the purpose of the review explained to you?	2.9
CONDUCT OF REVIEW	2.6
Was the review carried out in a professional and objective manner with minimum disruption?	
Was there adequate communication between O&S and the department throughout?	2.6
Did the review get to the heart of the issue?	2.8
REPORTING	2.9
Did you have an opportunity to comment on the draft report?	
Did the report give a clear and fair presentation of the facts?	2.4
Were the recommendations relevant and practical?	2.5
How useful was this review in terms of improving the Council's performance?	2.4

¹ Road Traffic Casualties, Review of the Local Area Agreement, Support for Carers, Street Cleaning, Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, English as an Additional Language in Schools, Children's Centres and Extended Services, and Waste and Recycling.