

## Notice of Meeting

### Council

Councillor Ms Merry (Mayor)  
Councillor Gbadebo (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors Allen, Angell, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bhandari, Bidwell, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mossom, Neil, Parker, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Turrell, Virgo and Wade



**Wednesday 20 April 2022, 7.30 - 9.00 pm**

**Hybrid meeting via both Council Chamber - Time Square Market Street, Bracknell, RG12 1JD - and Microsoft Teams**

**Timothy Wheadon**  
Chief Executive

### Agenda

Item	Description	Page
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**The meeting will be opened with prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain**

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	5 - 30
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 23 February and 24 February 2022.	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	

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4.	<b>Presentation from Business Improvement District (BID)</b>	
	To receive a presentation from Maria Sabey from Fujitsu and Ian Ferguson from Partnerships for Better Business covering progress of the Business Improvement District.	
5.	<b>Mayor's Announcements</b>	
6.	<b>Executive Report</b>	31 - 34
	To receive the Leader's report on the work of the Executive since the Council meeting held on 23 February 2022.	
7.	<b>Review of Contract Standing Orders</b>	35 - 58
	To consider the recommendation to replace the Council's existing Contract Standing Orders with the attached updated version.	
8.	<b>Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny</b>	59 - 80
	To receive an update on progress made in respect of the operation and development of Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2021 - 22.	
9.	<b>Champions' Annual Report</b>	81 - 118
	To receive a report on the activities and outcomes of the Council's Champions 2021 - 2022.	
10.	<b>Councillor Development Annual Report</b>	119 - 130
	To receive the Councillor Development Annual Report 2021 - 22.	
11.	<b>Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10</b>	
	<p><u>Councillor Temperton to Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning</u></p> <p>The Ofsted/CQC report on our SEND provision was damning and shameful. Despite the claim 'children are at the heart of all we do', we have clearly failed many of our most vulnerable children. Will the portfolio holder for Children, Young People &amp; Learning explain how this happened on his watch and what could have been done to prevent it?</p> <p><u>Councillor Temperton to Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning</u></p> <p>Which Bracknell Forest Schools have accepted students from other schools as a 'Managed Move' since September?</p> <p><u>Councillor Bidwell to Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance?</u></p> <p>This month Bracknell Forest residents will face increases to NI, doubling of</p>	

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	<p>the cost of energy bills and an increase in council tax, the maximum permitted. Although there has been social media advice on how to receive the £150 council tax grant can the responsible councillor advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How much money was in the hardship fund?</li><li>• What has been the take up e.g. number of residents and amount of money given?</li><li>• How many residents who applied via the BFC website have been denied and why?</li><li>• What is the council's strategy for broadcasting the availability of the hardship fund other than the BFC website?</li></ul>	
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Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media is permitted. Please contact Kirsty Hunt, 01344 353108, [kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk), so that any special arrangements can be made.

Published: 7 April 2022

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**COUNCIL – ADVISORY MEETING  
23 FEBRUARY 2022  
7.30 - 10.20 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Ms Merry (Mayor), Gbadebo (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Angell, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bhandari, Bidwell, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Neil, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Turrell, Virgo and Wade

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Brunel-Walker, Mrs McKenzie, Mossom and Parker

At the commencement of agenda items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 the Mayor advised the advisory Council that the decisions on each item would be taken at the in-person Council meeting to be convened the following day. This was as a result of the decisions being reserved to Council and therefore could not be delegated to the Chief Executive.

**44. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 12 January 2022 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**45. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dr Barnard declared an affected interest in agenda item 6, Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23, by virtue of his role as governor on both Warfield Primary and Garth Hill Secondary Schools as both have been identified to receive funding through the capital programme proposals.

Councillor Bidwell declared an affected interest in agenda item 6, Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23, by virtue of his role as a governor at Fox Hill Primary School.

**46. Mayor's Announcements**

Civic Events

The Mayor advised the meeting that it had been a relatively quiet time since the last meeting with a number of events cancelled due to Covid including her proposed Platinum Ball.

Challenge the Mayor

The Mayor announced her 'Challenge the Mayor initiative' in which she invited residents and businesses in the borough to challenge her to take on a task in exchange for a donation to her civic charities. The first challenge would be undertaken on Monday 28 February in Great Hollands and she thanked Councillor Temperton for challenging her.

## Charity Events

The Mayor thanked Councillor Gibson for raising funds for her military charities by shaving off his hair and beard. Councillor Gibson explained that he had an affinity for the charity due to previously representing IS Uxbridge and more poignantly due to the recent loss of his friend.

## Memorial Service for Squadron Leader Lawrence Benny Goodman

The Mayor reflected on the memorial service for Bracknell resident Squadron Leader Lawrence 'Benny' Goodman which she had attended on Friday 4 February. Benny had died aged 100 on the 18th of July 2021 following a career in the RAF and flying in many missions, raids and bringing back liberated Prisoners of War. The Mayor shared a video of the Squadron leader reading the poem 'Remembrance'.

## Tree Planting Programme

Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection reported that more than 3,000 young trees had been planted in the borough during the Winter period by the Parks and Countryside Rangers as well as local volunteers. He gave a special thanks to Warfield Environment Group, Easthampstead Rotary Group, Bracknell Conservation Volunteers and Town and Parish colleagues planting in their own areas.

## 47. **Executive Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 12 January 2022. The Executive had met twice on 25 January and 8 February 2022.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- Revenue Budget and Capital Programmes had been considered and were subject to separate reports at both meetings.
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 had been agreed with an overall aim "to prevent homelessness and assist those who do become homeless to find and keep suitable housing". The Strategy set out five priorities:
  - Universal prevention – awareness of options
  - Targeted prevention – reaching people earlier when at risk
  - Preventing and relieving at crisis point
  - Recovery
  - Providing a range of suitable options
- Funding had been agreed to design 20 self-contained units for people with learning difficulties at Bridgewell Supported Living. This would facilitate independent living in shared accommodation and was likely to generate significant savings of £0.975m over five years.
- Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan was a joint plan covering Bracknell Forest, Reading, RBWM and Wokingham. Hampshire County Council had been commissioned to develop the plan. The draft had been submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2021 and had been

considered at Public Hearings during September and October 2021. The required modifications were subject to six weeks consultation.

- Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership was created with Countryside in 2020. The Annual Review of the Joint Venture Business Plan 2020 – 2023 had been undertaken by the LLP Board and recommended to both parties with no significant changes to the established strategy.
- Two significant procurement plans were agreed covering Temporary accommodation housing maintenance and the Short breaks play and leisure scheme.

In response to Councillor Bidwell's question regarding where the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 was available, Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing confirmed this was published on the Council's website.

#### 48. **Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23**

The Council considered the report by the Executive Director: Resources which set out the financial plans and revenue budgets for the financial year 2022/23 and the supporting information which presented the Council's spending plans for 2022/23 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and Capital Programme.

Councillor Heydon gave a comprehensive presentation placing particular focus on the following matters:

- He stated that the Council was focused on value for money, maintaining services and green spaces, and remaining one of the lowest taxed authorities
- He reflected that the covid funding had supported the borough in a variety of ways including bringing the Forest Giants to Bracknell and made available unprecedented levels of funding to local voluntary and community groups, through the Bracknell Forest Recovery Grant. The Council had worked closely with Involve targeting support at the agreed priority areas of health and wellbeing, education and skills, disadvantage and exclusion, and building stronger communities. The Council had also funded a whole range of initiatives to help address financial hardship in low-income households, for example topping up the value of school holiday supermarket vouchers last Summer.
- He advised that detailed planning for the coming year's budget started back in September 2021. Based on assumptions from the high-level Spending Review announcement in late October the draft proposals were published in December for consultation. He stated that the overarching aim was to protect front line services and within this context, the capital programme did not contain any new funding for additional major schemes, to avoid placing significant pressure on the revenue budget. Schemes that have already been approved and are underway would be funded including work to redevelop the central depot facilities and, in partnership with the NHS, to construct a new health and community hub in Binfield.
- He reflected that the Heathlands partnership model had been genuinely ground-breaking, that it had taken a number of years to bring forward a local care and health facility for local residents and he was disappointed that the recent storm had prevented the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care attending his planned visit.

- He thanked the Executive Director for Resources and his team for their commitment, professionalism and wise counsel.
- He noted that on average, mainstream schools would receive a 5.7% increase in funding per pupil next year from the separate Dedicated Schools Grant. It is expected that this will cover rising costs overall, although the impact will vary between individual schools.
- He advised that, as with many local authorities, the Council faced significant pressures on the High Needs Budget which funds provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Funding for those pupils would increase by 11.5% in 22/23. Although this was a generous settlement it would fall short of forecast costs. A potential overspend of around £7.5m was predicted next year, leading to a cumulative deficit of around £20m. He concluded that work was underway on a strategy to provide more local places for children with complex needs, but it would take time to bring these facilities on board to deliver both service advantages and savings compared to out of area placements.
- He reported that typically inflationary costs would add around £2m to the budget each year but for 2022/23 over double that was being allowed for to maintain the same level of service.
- He advised that there were continually rising costs in both adult and children's social care. This was not due to significant increases in the number of vulnerable people receiving care services but rather due to increasing levels of complexity, combined with tightening supply in the social care market, most notably for children's services.
- He reflected that it was becoming increasingly difficult to make efficiencies to help balance the budget when faced with such pressures. For 2022/23 £2.3m of savings had been identified and included in the draft proposals.
- He was pleased to report that the budget consultation had received 86 responses from members of the public. The Council has responded as follows:
  - Almost three quarters of the responses were from local taxi drivers, raising objections to some of the proposed increases in license fees. The Council asked colleagues at West Berkshire Council, who do the work to administer these, to review those charges and they have been reduced.
  - Thirteen responses raised concerns about our draft proposal to extend access to our libraries using our Open Plus technology, with a small reduction in staffed opening hours. Since December, the Library service has looked again at how the proposed saving could be achieved. Through deleting a small number of vacant posts and a modest reduction to the book fund budget, the same level of saving is being achieved without any impact on current staffed opening hours.
- He stated that the level of council tax was one of the most difficult decisions to balance. The local government finance settlement confirmed that Bracknell Forest was permitted to increase the level of council tax by up to 4.5% in 2022/23. This comprises a 2% general increase and a 1% Adult Social Care Precept that applies to all authorities with social care responsibilities plus a further 1.5% Adult Social Care precept carried forward from 2021/22. The maximum permitted council tax increase of 4.49% in 2022/23 was being proposed.
- He advised that the future level of Government funding was at risk with business rates system being reset in 2023/24, a new grant funding methodology due to be introduced as well as uncertainty around the impact of "levelling up" on Bracknell Forest.



- He explained that the proposals included the use of over £1m of reserves to support the budget but that using more reserves would be a short-term plan and not anticipating the pressures that were going to affect the borough.
- Despite the proposed council tax increase, he stated that Bracknell Forest residents would still be paying one of the lowest levels of council tax in the country. In recognition that some low-income households are already struggling with meeting household bills an additional £100 council tax discount to all working age households receiving council tax support was proposed. This was being funded from Bracknell Forest's own resources and was completely separate from any other Government schemes.

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

On the proposition of Councillor Temperton, Leader of the Opposition, seconded by Councillor Bidwell the following amendment was proposed:

This Council supports the recommendations submitted by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme 2022/23 – 2024/25 and the Revenue Budget 2022/23 as set out in pages 19 and 20 of the agenda, with the following amendments (highlighted in bold);

## 2.2 Revenue Budget 2022/23

i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 3) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2(pages 4), 3.3 (pages 4 to 5), 3.4 (pages 5 to 7), 3.6 (pages 7 to 8),3.9 (pages 9 to 11), 7.2 (page 20) and 7.3 (page 20) of the report, **plus an additional one-off pressure of £0.100m for improvements to parking on our estates** be agreed;

viii) A contribution of **£1.560m** (after allowing for additional interest from the use of balances) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure. Comprising £775K already in the core budget, plus an extra £677K to cover the reduced Council tax and some for lost interest;

x) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at **£70.065m**

xi) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	<b>968.10</b>
B	7/9	<b>1,129.45</b>
C	8/9	<b>1,290.80</b>
D	9/9	<b>1,452.15</b>
E	11/9	<b>1,774.85</b>
F	13/9	<b>2,097.55</b>
G	15/9	<b>2,420.25</b>
H	18/9	<b>2,904.30</b>

**That the impact of the above changes be reflected in a revised Council Tax Resolution.**

The meeting was adjourned for councillors in attendance to consider the circulated amended Council Tax resolution.

On being put to the vote the amendment fell.

A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion and the voting was as follows:

FOR (33): Councillors Allen, Angell, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bhandari, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Gbadebo, Mrs Gibson, M J Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Mrs Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Ms Merry, Porter, Skinner, Turrell and Wade

ABSTAIN (4): Councillor Bidwell, Brown, Neil and Temperton

Therefore it was **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** on 24 February 2022 that:

## **2.1 Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25**

- i) General Fund capital funding of £16.311m for 2022/23 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 184 to 186 of the agenda report be agreed;
- ii) The inclusion of £7.037m of expenditure to be externally funded (including £1.133m of S106 funding) as outlined in the summary report for Council (page 179) and included on pages 184 to 186 of the agenda report;
- iii) That those schemes that attract external grant funding be agreed for inclusion within the 2022/23 capital programme at the level of funding received;
- iv) Capital schemes that require external funding can only proceed once the Council is certain of receiving the grant;
- v) The inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for 'Invest to Save' schemes be agreed.

## **2.2 Revenue Budget 2022/23**

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 3) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2 (pages 4), 3.3 (pages 4 to 5), 3.4 (pages 5 to 7), 3.6 (pages 7 to 8), 3.9 (pages 9 to 11), 7.2 (page 20) and 7.3 (page 20) of the report, be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out in Annexe G (pages 106 to 170) be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £4.368m be approved;
- iv) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (pages 23 to 24);
- v) That the Council should make additional funding available for distribution to schools through the local funding formula at the level set out in section 4.1 (pages 11 to 12) of the summary report for Council subject to any minor amendments made by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning following the receipt of definitive funding allocations for Early Years and High Needs pupils;
- vi) A general contingency totalling £1.900m be included, use of which is authorised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Director: Resources in accordance with the delegations included in the Council's constitution;
- vii) Subject to the above recommendations the revised draft budget proposals be agreed;
- viii) A contribution of £0.775m (after allowing for additional interest from the use of balances) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure;

- ix) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £87.337m (page 22), be approved;
- x) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £70.742m;
- xi) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	977.46
B	7/9	1,140.37
C	8/9	1,303.28
D	9/9	1,466.19
E	11/9	1,792.01
F	13/9	2,117.83
G	15/9	2,443.65
H	18/9	2,932.38

At the meeting on 08 February 2022 the Executive recommended the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and noted that strategy together with the Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement were matters which the Council needed to approve.

- xii) The Council approves the following indicators, limits, strategies and policies included in Annexe E (pages 75 to 98):
  - The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2022/23 to 2024/25 contained within Annexe E(i);
  - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy contained within Annexe E(ii);
  - The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and the Treasury Prudential Indicators contained in Annexe E(iii);
  - The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator in Annexe E(iii);
  - The Investment Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annexe E(iv);
- xiii) The formal Council Tax Resolution contained in section 3 be approved.

### **3 Council Tax Resolution**

- 3.1 That the recommendations of the Executive outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 be agreed.
- 3.2 That it be noted that the amounts calculated for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are:

#### **(a) 48,249 TAX BASE FOR THE WHOLE COUNCIL AREA**

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

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

**EACH PARISH AREA** £

Binfield	4,482
Bracknell	20,528
Crowthorne	3,087
Sandhurst	8,007
Warfield	5,220
Winkfield	6,925

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

3.3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act):

(a) £324,342,353

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, PARISH PRECEPTS AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY DEFICIT ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

(b) £249,764,964

**TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY SURPLUS ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

(c) £74,577,389

**BOROUGH AND PARISH PRECEPTS NET EXPENDITURE TO BE FINANCED FROM COUNCIL TAX**

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

(d) £1,545.68

**AVERAGE BAND "D" COUNCIL TAX FOR WHOLE BOROUGH**

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

(e) £3,835,188

### PARISH PRECEPTS

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

(f) £1,466.19

### BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX FOR BAND "D" PROPERTIES

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

(g) Part of the Council's area	<b>BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH PARISH FOR BAND 'D' £</b>
Binfield	<b>1,520.75</b>
Bracknell	<b>1,560.70</b>
Crowthorne	<b>1,551.13</b>
Sandhurst	<b>1,540.95</b>
Warfield	<b>1,510.75</b>
Winkfield	<b>1,546.63</b>

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

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

Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,013.83	1,182.81	1,351.78	1,520.75	1,858.69	2,196.64	2,534.58	3,041.50
Bracknell	1,040.47	1,213.88	1,387.29	1,560.70	1,907.52	2,254.34	2,601.17	3,121.40
Crowthorne	1,034.09	1,206.43	1,378.78	1,551.13	1,895.83	2,240.52	2,585.22	3,102.26
Sandhurst	1,027.30	1,198.52	1,369.73	1,540.95	1,883.38	2,225.82	2,568.25	3,081.90
Warfield	1,007.17	1,175.03	1,342.89	1,510.75	1,846.47	2,182.19	2,517.92	3,021.50
Winkfield	1,031.09	1,202.93	1,374.78	1,546.63	1,890.33	2,234.02	2,577.72	3,093.26

*being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable*

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

- 3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Police and Crime Panel have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley	160.85	187.66	214.47	241.28	294.90	348.52	402.13	482.56

- 3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 15 February, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	49.30	57.52	65.73	73.95	90.38	106.82	123.25	147.90

- 3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.3(h), 3.4 and 3.5 above, the council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

(a) Part of the Council's area	<b>TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND</b>							
<b>Parish</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,223.98	1,427.99	1,631.98	1,835.98	2,243.97	2,651.98	3,059.96	3,671.96
Bracknell	1,250.62	1,459.06	1,667.49	1,875.93	2,292.80	2,709.68	3,126.55	3,751.86
Crowthorne	1,244.24	1,451.61	1,658.98	1,866.36	2,281.11	2,695.86	3,110.60	3,732.72
Sandhurst	1,237.45	1,443.70	1,649.93	1,856.18	2,268.66	2,681.16	3,093.63	3,712.36
Warfield	1,217.32	1,420.21	1,623.09	1,825.98	2,231.75	2,637.53	3,043.30	3,651.96
Winkfield	1,241.24	1,448.11	1,654.98	1,861.86	2,275.61	2,689.36	3,103.10	3,723.72

#### 49. Report of Independent Remuneration Panel

The Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Council met in November at the Council's invitation. The Council was asked to consider the Panel's recommendations and to decide whether to make any changes to the current allowances scheme.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chair of Employment Committee, seconded by Councillor Allen it was proposed that:

- all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022;
- the list of approved conferences, set out in Annex B of the agenda report, be approved for insertion in the Scheme; and
- the Council notes that Hilda Johnston has resigned from the Panel and thanks her for the contribution she made.

On the proposition of Councillor Temperton, Leader of the Opposition, seconded by Councillor Bidwell the following amendment was proposed:

- all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022 **excluding the proposal to index Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees' Allowances, Civic Allowances and payments to Members of Independent Education Panels (paragraph 98 of the report)**

On being put to the vote the amendment fell.

Therefore it was **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** on 24 February 2022 that

- i) all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022;
- ii) the list of approved conferences, set out in Annex B of the agenda report, be approved for insertion in the Scheme; and
- iii) the Council notes that Hilda Johnston has resigned from the Panel and thanks her for the contribution she made.

#### 50. **Appointment of Local External Auditors**

The Council considered the recommendation from the advisory meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee regarding arrangements for the appointment of local external auditors under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 for the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee, seconded by Councillor Heydon it was

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** on 24 February 2022 that

- i) Bracknell Forest remains part of the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) collective procurement arrangement to appoint an External Auditor from the 2023/24 financial year on the grounds that this approach is most likely to achieve best value in a restricted market and avoids the need and cost of the Council itself undertaking a complex and time-consuming procurement process; and

- ii) the Executive Director: Resources be authorised to progress discussions with other s151 officers in Berkshire and the PSAA around whether a single audit firm should be appointed to cover all authorities in the county area.

**51. Annual update of the Council's Pay Statement**

In accordance with the 2011 Localism Act and in line with the Transparency Regulations the Council is required to publish an annual Pay Statement. The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 for publication.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chair of Employment Committee, seconded by Councillor Allen it was

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** on 24 February 2022 that

- i) the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 be agreed.

**52. Recruitment of Chief Executive Officer**

The Council considered the report advising councillors of the arrangements to recruit a permanent Chief Executive to provide management direction in the delivery of the Council's strategy and fulfil the statutory position of Head of Paid Service.

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor Birch it was

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** on 24 February 2022 that

- i) the process by which a new Chief Executive is to be recruited, as set out in paragraphs of the agenda report be noted; and
- ii) an Advisory Appointment Committee be appointed to support the Council in this appointment process as set out in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4.

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

Councillor Mrs Birch asked Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning the following published question:

Can the Executive member share with the Council the different approaches that can be taken when Leadership and management concerns about a local authority or academy school are reported?

In response Councillor Dr Barnard stated that there was a comprehensive answer due to the partnership working and governance framework surrounding the management of schools. A full version of the response would be appended to the minutes. He summarised that in relation to Local Authority maintained schools there were a number of mechanisms used to closely monitor performance. The Standards and Effectiveness Team met fortnightly to discuss any concerns. Where a range of intelligence created a broader picture of concern around a particular school, perhaps in relation to leadership or the quality of education, or where standards drop to unacceptably low levels, the Head of Standards and Assistant Director decide whether a Declaration of Concern was necessary. A very prescribed process would then follow. This could be provided but is available as part of the Bracknell Forest



Learning Improvement Strategy available on the Bracknell Forest Council website. Since the strategy was implemented, the process has been effective, and no schools have been issued with a formal Performance and Standards Warning notice. The Council's approach had been to intervene early and avoid things reaching the point where this was necessary.

In relation to Academies if similar concerns were to exist then the Local Authority would write to the Chair of Governors, the Head of the Academy/Multi Academy Trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner, outlining the concerns requesting a Declaration of Concern meeting. The Local Authority can either broker additional support for the school and agree to monitor its progress with the Regional Schools Commissioner, or if there are more significant concerns, the Regional Schools Commissioner will issue a formal Performance and Standards Notice. This process was set out in the Bracknell Forest Learning Improvement Strategy. He advised that where specific concerns were raised about academies, the Assistant Director or Head of Standards could address these directly with either the Headteacher or the CEO of the trust, as appropriate.

He advised parents to contact the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors if they had concerns. He wanted to reassure that if there were significant concerns processes were in place and existing safeguarding processes would be followed if appropriate.

Councillor Mrs Birch asked what the process was for parents and carers to express concerns about a school. Councillor Dr Barnard encouraged parents and carers to engage with the school to resolve the issue. However he added if they remained unhappy then they could raise concerns with Ofsted directly who would then take a view as to whether they need to contact and take action with the school depending on the seriousness of the issue. He concluded by repeating that if the Local Authority had concerns then they would liaise with the school and decide if further action needed to be followed.

Councillor Temperton asked Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning the following published question:

This year the half term holiday just passed and the Easter school holiday dates do not align with neighbouring local authorities. This has put an extra stress on all those working in schools who live or work in one Borough but whose children attend a school in another. This at a time when school staff so desperately need our support.

How did this happen and can residents be assured it will not occur again?

In response Councillor Dr Barnard apologised to everyone affected and recognised the inconvenience and frustration this situation would have caused. He explained the process followed in setting term dates for Bracknell Forest community schools was to consult with immediate neighbours and then with all Bracknell Forest Headteachers to try and align dates wherever possible. There was no statutory timing for consulting on or setting term dates, and all authorities consult on and set their dates at different times which sometimes also creates mis-alignment.

He advised that the 2021/22 term dates were consulted upon with all Headteachers and there were no comments received back. Some of local authority neighbours chose to publish different dates after the Bracknell Forest dates had been agreed,

and some of these were different to that they had previously advised the Council that they were consulting on; presumably because Easter falls later this year.

He confirmed that term dates for the 2022-23 academic year this issue did not occur, and the term dates that were agreed last year are aligned. He recognised the difficulty that mis aligned term dates could cause for schools and parents. He stated that there could unfortunately be no guarantee that this would not happen again in future years because the dates set by neighbouring authorities were outside of the Council's direct control, however he concluded that they would be vigilant in future years to minimise any disruption.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Agenda item 11 - Councillor Mrs Birch to Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning**

**Can the Executive member share with the Council the different approaches that can be taken when Leadership and management concerns about a local authority or academy school are reported?**

The different approaches that can be taken when Leadership and management concerns about a local authority or academy school are reported:

- Broad concerns about the effectiveness of a school or academy

### LA maintained schools

A number of mechanisms exist by which the performance of schools is closely monitored. The Standards and Effectiveness Team hold a fortnightly meeting, at which each STEP provides a brief update on each of their allocated schools (maintained and academies who purchase the SLA), and any concerns from the wider team, including governor services, are shared. In addition to this, teams from across Education and Learning attend the Schools of Concern meeting, usually held twice per year, at which all Bracknell Forest schools are discussed, and intelligence relating to each school is pooled to gather a holistic view, and to identify any emerging patterns or concerns. It is also common practice for specific concerns raised about schools, either by LA officers, elected members or parents, to be shared with the Assistant Director for Education and Learning and/or the Head of Standards.

Where a range of intelligence creates a broader picture of concern around a particular school, perhaps in relation to leadership or the quality of education, or where standards drop to unacceptably low levels, the Head of Standards and Assistant Director decide whether a Declaration of Concern is necessary. Where this is the case, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors are invited to meeting with the Assistant Director and Head of Standards, to explain the evidence underpinning the concerns and inform them that they are to be issued with a Declaration of Concern. School leaders are then required to produce an improvement plan, and are subject to 6-weekly Rapid Response Board (RRB) meetings, and have 12 weeks to demonstrate improvement. Where there is evidence to support improvement after this time, the school continues to be monitored via 6-weekly Standards Monitoring Board (SMB) meetings for a maximum of two further terms. If insufficient progress is seen after this time, a formal Performance and Standards Warning notice meeting is held. In line with the DfE's Schools of Concern guidance, a formal warning notice is issued to the school, and copied to Ofsted and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). At this stage, the school has 15 days to submit an action plan, and within a further 15 days, the LA intervene by implementing a number of possible additional measures, including removing the governing body and implementing an Interim Executive Board (IEB). Should these measures still not result in improvements, the final stage includes escalation to the Secretary of State.

In Bracknell Forest, since this strategy was implemented, the RRB/SMB process has been effective, and no schools have been issued with a formal Performance and Standards Warning notice. Our approach is to intervene early and avoid things reaching the point where this is necessary.

Through the Standards Monitoring Board process, the school are closely held to account, and are required to demonstrate their progress against the milestones identified within their plans. They are also eligible for additional support: additional STEP time beyond that set out within the Service Level Agreement; school to school leadership support brokered by the LA; additional reviews and monitoring activities to inform action planning; where appropriate,

funding to facilitate additional training, resources and support for staff and leaders to improve standards, etc.

### Academies

Where similar concerns exist regarding academies, the LA would write to the Chair of Governors, the Head of the Academy/MAT and the Regional Schools Commissioner, outlining the concerns requesting a Declaration of Concern meeting. The LA can either broker additional support for the school and agree to monitor its progress with the RSC, or if there are more significant concerns, the RSC will issue a formal Performance and Standards Notice.

This process is set out in the flow chart on pages 27 – 29 of the Bracknell Forest Learning Improvement Strategy:

[Learning Improvement Strategy \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/learning-improvement-strategy)

- Specific concerns

Where *specific* concerns are raised relating to a particular aspect of leadership and management of a school, these are usually referred to the appropriate LA team, e.g. Standards and Effectiveness, Early Years, Safeguarding and Inclusion, or SEND etc., and these are tackled directly with the school. The school STEP is often informed and involved in discussions about particular issues. This information feeds in to the wider view of leadership at the school, and can shape the school improvement work carried out in partnership with the school.

Where specific concerns are raised about academies, the Assistant Director or Head of Standards can address these directly with either the Headteacher or the CEO of the trust, as appropriate.

**COUNCIL**  
**24 FEBRUARY 2022**  
**5.30 - 6.40 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Ms Merry (Mayor), Allen, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bidwell, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Harrison, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Leake, McLean, Porter, Temperton and Turrell

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Gbadebo, Angell, Atkinson, Bhandari, Brossard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Kennedy, Kirke, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, Mossom, Neil, Parker, Skinner, Virgo and Wade

**54. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dr Barnard declared an affected interest in agenda item 3, Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23, by virtue of his role as governor on both Warfield Primary and Garth Hill Secondary Schools as both have been identified to receive funding through the capital programme proposals.

Councillor Bidwell declared an affected interest in agenda item 3, Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23, by virtue of his role as a governor at Fox Hill Primary School.

**55. Financial Plans and Revenue Budgets 2022/23**

The Council considered the report by the Executive Director: Resources which set out the financial plans and revenue budgets for the financial year 2022/23 and the supporting information which presented the Council's spending plans for 2022/23 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and Capital Programme.

Councillor Heydon referred to the comprehensive speech he had made at the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 and placed particular focus on the following matters:

- He stated that the Council was focused on value for money, maintaining services and green spaces, and remaining one of the lowest taxed authorities.
- He stated that the level of council tax was one of the most difficult decisions. Due to future uncertainty about levels of funding the maximum permitted council tax increase of 4.49% in 2022/23 was being proposed.
- In recognition that some low-income households are already struggling with meeting household bills an additional £100 council tax discount to all working age households receiving council tax support was proposed. This was being funded from Bracknell Forest's own resources and was completely separate from any other Government schemes.

On the proposition of Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, seconded by Councillor Bettison OBE the recommendations of the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 were moved.

On the proposition of Councillor Temperton, Leader of the Opposition, seconded by Councillor Bidwell the following amendment was proposed:

This Council supports the recommendations submitted by the Executive in respect of the Capital Programme 2022/23 – 2024/25 and the Revenue Budget 2022/23 as set out in pages 19 and 20 of the agenda, with the following amendments (highlighted in bold);

## 2.2 Revenue Budget 2022/23

i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 3) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2(pages 4), 3.3 (pages 4 to 5), 3.4 (pages 5 to 7), 3.6 (pages 7 to 8),3.9 (pages 9 to 11), 7.2 (page 20) and 7.3 (page 20) of the report, **plus an additional one-off pressure of £0.100m for improvements to parking on our estates** be agreed;

viii) A contribution of **£1.560m** (after allowing for additional interest from the use of balances) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure. Comprising £775K already in the core budget, plus an extra £677K to cover the reduced Council tax and some for lost interest;

x) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at **£70.065m**

xi) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	<b>968.10</b>
B	7/9	<b>1,129.45</b>
C	8/9	<b>1,290.80</b>
D	9/9	<b>1,452.15</b>
E	11/9	<b>1,774.85</b>
F	13/9	<b>2,097.55</b>
G	15/9	<b>2,420.25</b>
H	18/9	<b>2,904.30</b>

**That the impact of the above changes be reflected in a revised Council Tax Resolution.**

On being put to the vote the amendment fell.

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

FOR (13): Councillors Allen, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Harrison, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Leake, McLean, Ms Merry, Porter and Turrell

ABSTAIN (2): Councillor Bidwell and Temperton

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

## 2.1 Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25

- i) General Fund capital funding of £16.311m for 2022/23 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 184 to 186 of the agenda report be agreed;
- ii) The inclusion of £7.037m of expenditure to be externally funded (including £1.133m of S106 funding) as outlined in the summary report for Council (page 179) and included on pages 184 to 186 of the agenda report;
- iii) That those schemes that attract external grant funding be agreed for inclusion within the 2022/23 capital programme at the level of funding received;
- iv) Capital schemes that require external funding can only proceed once the Council is certain of receiving the grant;
- v) The inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for 'Invest to Save' schemes be agreed.

## 2.2 Revenue Budget 2022/23

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 3) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2 (pages 4), 3.3 (pages 4 to 5), 3.4 (pages 5 to 7), 3.6 (pages 7 to 8), 3.9 (pages 9 to 11), 7.2 (page 20) and 7.3 (page 20) of the report, be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out in Annexe G (pages 106 to 170) be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £4.368m be approved;
- iv) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (pages 23 to 24);
- v) That the Council should make additional funding available for distribution to schools through the local funding formula at the level set out in section 4.1 (pages 11 to 12) of the summary report for Council subject to any minor amendments made by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning following the receipt of definitive funding allocations for Early Years and High Needs pupils;
- vi) A general contingency totalling £1.900m be included, use of which is authorised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Director: Resources in accordance with the delegations included in the Council's constitution;
- vii) Subject to the above recommendations the revised draft budget proposals be agreed;
- viii) A contribution of £0.775m (after allowing for additional interest from the use of balances) be made from revenue balances to support revenue expenditure;
- ix) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £87.337m (page 22), be approved;
- x) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £70.742m;
- xi) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	977.46
B	7/9	1,140.37
C	8/9	1,303.28
D	9/9	1,466.19
E	11/9	1,792.01
F	13/9	2,117.83
G	15/9	2,443.65
H	18/9	2,932.38

At the meeting on 08 February 2022 the Executive recommended the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and noted that strategy together with the Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement were matters which the Council needed to approve.

- xii) The Council approves the following indicators, limits, strategies and policies included in Annexe E (pages 75 to 98):
- The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2022/23 to 2024/25 contained within Annexe E(i);
  - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy contained within Annexe E(ii);
  - The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and the Treasury Prudential Indicators contained in Annexe E(iii);
  - The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator in Annexe E(iii);
  - The Investment Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annexe E(iv);
- xiii) The formal Council Tax Resolution contained in section 3 be approved.

### **3 Council Tax Resolution**

3.1 That the recommendations of the Executive outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 be agreed.

3.2 That it be noted that the amounts calculated for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are:

#### **(a) 48,249 TAX BASE FOR THE WHOLE COUNCIL AREA**

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

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

<b>EACH PARISH AREA</b>	<b>£</b>
Binfield	4,482
Bracknell	20,528
Crowthorne	3,087
Sandhurst	8,007
Warfield	5,220
Winkfield	6,925

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

3.3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act):



(a) £324,342,353

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, PARISH PRECEPTS AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY DEFICIT ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

(b) £249,764,964

**TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY SURPLUS ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

(c) £74,577,389

**BOROUGH AND PARISH PRECEPTS NET EXPENDITURE TO BE FINANCED FROM COUNCIL TAX**

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

(d) £1,545.68

**AVERAGE BAND "D" COUNCIL TAX FOR WHOLE BOROUGH**

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

(e) £3,835,188

**PARISH PRECEPTS**

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

(f) £1,466.19

**BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX FOR BAND "D" PROPERTIES**

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

Part of the Council's area	<b>BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH PARISH FOR BAND 'D' £</b>
Binfield	<b>1,520.75</b>
Bracknell	<b>1,560.70</b>

Crowthorne	<b>1,551.13</b>
Sandhurst	<b>1,540.95</b>
Warfield	<b>1,510.75</b>
Winkfield	<b>1,546.63</b>

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

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

<b>Parish</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,013.83	1,182.81	1,351.78	1,520.75	1,858.69	2,196.64	2,534.58	3,041.50
Bracknell	1,040.47	1,213.88	1,387.29	1,560.70	1,907.52	2,254.34	2,601.17	3,121.40
Crowthorne	1,034.09	1,206.43	1,378.78	1,551.13	1,895.83	2,240.52	2,585.22	3,102.26
Sandhurst	1,027.30	1,198.52	1,369.73	1,540.95	1,883.38	2,225.82	2,568.25	3,081.90
Warfield	1,007.17	1,175.03	1,342.89	1,510.75	1,846.47	2,182.19	2,517.92	3,021.50
Winkfield	1,031.09	1,202.93	1,374.78	1,546.63	1,890.33	2,234.02	2,577.72	3,093.26

*being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands*

3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Police and Crime Panel have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley	160.85	187.66	214.47	241.28	294.90	348.52	402.13	482.56

3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 15 February, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	49.30	57.52	65.73	73.95	90.38	106.82	123.25	147.90

3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.3(h), 3.4 and 3.5 above, the council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

(a) Part of the Council's area	<b>TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND</b>							
<b>Parish</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,223.98	1,427.99	1,631.98	1,835.98	2,243.97	2,651.98	3,059.96	3,671.96
Bracknell	1,250.62	1,459.06	1,667.49	1,875.93	2,292.80	2,709.68	3,126.55	3,751.86
Crowthorne	1,244.24	1,451.61	1,658.98	1,866.36	2,281.11	2,695.86	3,110.60	3,732.72
Sandhurst	1,237.45	1,443.70	1,649.93	1,856.18	2,268.66	2,681.16	3,093.63	3,712.36
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Winkfield	1,241.24	1,448.11	1,654.98	1,861.86	2,275.61	2,689.36	3,103.10	3,723.72

## 56. Report of Independent Remuneration Panel

The Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Council met in November at the Council's invitation. The Council was asked to consider the Panel's recommendations and to decide whether to make any changes to the current allowances scheme.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chair of Employment Committee, seconded by Councillor Allen the recommendations of the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 were moved as follows:

- all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022;
- the list of approved conferences, set out in Annex B of the agenda report, be approved for insertion in the Scheme; and
- the Council notes that Hilda Johnston has resigned from the Panel and thanks her for the contribution she made.

On the proposition of Councillor Temperton, Leader of the Opposition, seconded by Councillor Bidwell the following amendment was proposed:

- all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022 **excluding the proposal to index Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees' Allowances, Civic Allowances and payments to Members of Independent Education Panels (paragraph 98 of the report)**

On being put to the vote the amendment fell.

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that

- all the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in their report, be accepted for implementation from 1 April 2022;
- the list of approved conferences, set out in Annex B of the agenda report, be approved for insertion in the Scheme; and
- the Council notes that Hilda Johnston has resigned from the Panel and thanks her for the contribution she made.

#### 57. **Appointment of Local External Auditors**

The Council considered the recommendation from the advisory meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee regarding arrangements for the appointment of local external auditors under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 for the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee, seconded by Councillor Heydon the recommendations of the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 were moved.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- Bracknell Forest remains part of the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) collective procurement arrangement to appoint an External Auditor from the 2023/24 financial year on the grounds that this approach is most likely to achieve best value in a restricted market and avoids the need and cost of the Council itself undertaking a complex and time-consuming procurement process; and
- the Executive Director: Resources be authorised to progress discussions with other s151 officers in Berkshire and the PSAA around whether a single audit firm should be appointed to cover all authorities in the county area.

#### 58. **Annual update of the Council's Pay Statement**

In accordance with the 2011 Localism Act and in line with the Transparency Regulations the Council is required to publish an annual Pay Statement. The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 for publication.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chair of Employment Committee, seconded by Councillor Allen the recommendation of the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 was moved.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 be agreed.

59. **Recruitment of Chief Executive Officer**

The Council considered the report advising councillors of the arrangements to recruit a permanent Chief Executive to provide management direction in the delivery of the Council's strategy and fulfil the statutory position of Head of Paid Service.

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor Birch the recommendations of the Advisory Council meeting held on 23 February 2022 were moved.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that

- i) the process by which a new Chief Executive is to be recruited, as set out in paragraphs of the agenda report be noted; and
- ii) an Advisory Appointment Committee be appointed to support the Council in this appointment process as set out in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4.

**CHAIRMAN**

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To: COUNCIL  
20 April 2022

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## EXECUTIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL The Leader

### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Council agenda for the 23 February 2022 was published, the Executive met on the 15 March 2022. This report summarises decisions taken by reference to the relevant portfolio within which they fall. The meeting was conducted remotely and as such was acting in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to the individual executive members who are empowered to make the formal decisions. This approach was in line with the decisions taken by Council on 28 April 2021 to reduce, as far as possible the need for face-to-face meetings whilst the risk of COVID-19 infection remains a threat to the lives of members and officers.
- 1.2 Updated Forward Plans are published every Friday and can be viewed online at [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk). Full details on the decisions taken by individual portfolio holders can also be accessed online through the Council's website.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to note the report.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### 4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

### 5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### Planning & Transport

#### 5.1 Bus Operator Enhanced Partnership– National Bus Strategy

- 5.1.1 The Executive agreed that the proposed Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme would be adopted, and that authority would be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, to amend and implement the Enhanced Partnership Scheme to accord with future Government funding allocations.

5.1.2 The National Bus Strategy was published in March 2021 and sets out a number of requirements to improve bus services and aid operator recovery from the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. A key obligation for Local Traffic Authorities is to enter into an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan with local bus operators, including an accompany EP Scheme which identifies the supportive actions which future Government funding allocations could deliver.

## **5.2 Capital Programme 2022/23 - Highways and Transport**

5.2.1 The Executive approved the overall Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2022/23.

5.2.2 The overall Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2022/23 totals £4.013m, of which over 85% of funding is derived from external sources. Alongside the annual DfT grants for Transport and Highway Maintenance, the programme includes further DfT funding for electric vehicle charging provision following a successful bid. Developer contributions via S106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) supplements the programme along with a local contribution from Borough Capital of £200k to support road maintenance and a further £400k toward the essential lamp column replacement programme to address highway risk.

## **5.3 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2022**

5.3.1 The Executive agreed the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2022.

5.3.2 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan sets out the Council's strategic approach to managing the long-term maintenance of its highway assets and supports key objectives within the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP3). The Department for Transport (DfT) and leading highway industry bodies consider Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan's to be the benchmark for demonstrating an efficient and responsible approach to managing planned highway maintenance.

5.3.3 Against this background the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan sets out an approach to deliver responsible management of highway assets for the benefit of residents and highway users. The presence of a plan is also key to eligibility for additional highway maintenance funding from the DfT.

5.3.4 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan addresses long-term maintenance needs and considerations for highway assets including carriageways (460km), footways and cycleways (534km), highway structures (193), drainage networks (inc. 21,598 gullies), lighting/electrical equipment and street furniture (inc. 14,138 lamp columns and 20km of railing). It does not address short-term 'day to day' reactive maintenance functions as these are covered by the Highway Management and Maintenance Plan.

## **Council Strategy and Community Cohesion**

### **5.4 Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan**

5.4.1 The Executive agreed to publish the Peer Challenge report on the Council's website and also agreed to endorse and publish the action plan.

5.4.2 In November 2021, a team made up of five peers visited Bracknell Forest to undertake a peer challenge. During the visit they explored how the council operates, focusing on five themes, as recommended by the LGA.



- 5.4.3 Overall the review team found many strengths in the council's approach. This included Councillors having a clear focus on good services, effective managerial leadership and positive relationships between Members and Officers. The team also reflected on major achievements such as the successful regeneration of the Bracknell Town Centre, the collective response to the pandemic, and the overall quality of services. The team recognised that most residents are happy with the council's work and the support they receive.
- 5.4.4 Whilst the feedback from the peer team was overwhelmingly positive, there are a small number of recommendations and suggestions for the council to reflect on. The action plan contains eight recommendations, three of which relate to the forthcoming appointment of a new Chief Executive and five relate to the Council's approach to emerging from Covid.

## **5.5 Council Plan Overview Report**

- 5.5.1 The Executive noted the performance of the council over the period from October-December 2021 as highlighted in the Overview Report.
- 5.5.2 At the end of the quarter, 102 actions (89%) were rated as "green" (8 complete, 94 in progress) and 9 actions (9%) were "amber" and 1 action was red.
- 5.5.3 Progress against key performance indicators across the Council was also very positive, particularly in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic with 18 (86%) "green", 1 (5%) was "amber" and 2 (9%) were "red". 32 further indicators have no set target or data is currently unavailable.

## **Culture, Delivery and Public Protection**

### **5.6 Procurement Plan for Environmental Monitoring**

- 5.6.1 That the Executive approved the Strategic Procurement Plan for Environmental Monitoring services and delegated authority for the contract award decision to the Executive Director, Delivery and Executive Member for the Environment. The Executive also delegated authority for enacting the permitted contract extension to the Executive Director, Delivery. Adult Services, Health and Housing.

## **Health and Housing**

### **5.7 BFC Approval of the Strategic Procurement Plan for Domestic Abuse Refuge & Outreach Services**

- 5.7.1 That Executive approved the Council's plan for procuring Domestic Abuse Refuge and Outreach Services under the "Social and other Specific Provisions" of the Public Contracts Regulations (also known as the "Light Touch Regime").
- 5.7.2 The procurement of the Domestic Abuse Refuge and Outreach Service Contract supports the delivery of our Statutory Duties: Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Children's Act 2004, Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 5.7.3 The COVID-19 pandemic has put additional demand on domestic abuse service providers both nationally and locally. During 2020/2021, there was an increase in Domestic Abuse incidents reported to police in Bracknell Forest. The re-tendering of

this contract enables domestic abuse victims and their children to continue to access refuge and outreach services.

## **5.8 Section 75 Agreement (NHS Act 2006) between Bracknell Forest Council and Frimley Clinical Commissioning Group – Arrangements for 2021/22- 2022/23 and beyond**

- 5.8.1** The Executive agreed that the S75 for 2021/22 would be extended by a further 12 months (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023), while a new S75 is developed for 2023/24, between BFC and Frimley CCG and to delegate authority to the Executive Director for People to agree he extended S75 with an estimated expenditure for the required services. The Executive also approved that the extension to the S75 would cover any changes to the legal footing of Frimley CCG, as a new statutory corporate body – an NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) would likely replace Frimley CCG in 2022.

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

### Borough Solicitor

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

### Executive Director: Resources

- 6.2 The Executive Director: Resources' comments have been addressed in the reports to the Executive.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

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

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

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

### Background Papers

Executive Agenda – 15 March 2022

### Contact for further information

Hannah Harding, Delivery - 01344 352308  
Hannah.harding@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

To: **Council**  
**20 April 2022**

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## **Review of Contract Standing Orders Executive Director of Delivery**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the replacement of the Council's existing Contract Standing Orders with an updated version as set out in **Appendix 1**

### **2 Recommendation; That the Council**

- 2.1 That Council updates the Constitution to replace the existing Contract Standing Orders with the version proposed in **Appendix 1**

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)**

- 3.1 The Current Contract Standing Orders need to be updated to ensure they reflect legislative requirements and the Council's scheme of delegation

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 To retain the Current Standing Orders is not a viable option in order to ensure clarity of purpose and compliance with legal requirements.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The law requires a local authority to make Standing Orders with respect to contracts for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works.
- 5.2 The Standing Orders must include provisions for securing competition and for regulating the manner in which tenders are to be invited. They may exempt contracts for a price below that specified in the standing orders and may authorise the authority to exempt any contract from the relevant standing order when it is satisfied that the exemption is justified by special circumstances.
- 5.3 The Council has adopted Contract Standing Orders as part of the Constitution which have been amended from time to time as required to meet the Council's operational needs.
- 5.4 This report recommends that Council replaces its existing Contract Standing Orders with the version set out in **Appendix 1** to the report. An accompanying Contract Standing Order Best Practice checklist **Appendix 2** will be circulated to all Council Heads of Service once the revised Contract Standing Orders have been approved by Council.
- 5.5 A summary of the material changes is set out below;

### 5.5.1 Thresholds

There are different thresholds which trigger application of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for different types of contracts and these are updated every 2 years.

The most recent update to the thresholds was on 1 January 2022 and the new thresholds are as follows (now inclusive of VAT whereas previously VAT was not included):

Concession Services Threshold: £4,447,447.50 (assuming VAT applies at 20%)

Works Contract Threshold: £4,447,447.50 (assuming VAT applies at 20%)

Standard Supply Services Threshold: £177,897.50 (assuming VAT applies at 20%)

Social and Other Services Threshold: £552,950 (assuming VAT applies at 20%)

### 5.5.2 Consideration of Grants

Under the current published Contract Standing Orders, grants of any form were excluded from scope. However, just because the Council is using a grant, does not mean that this is exempt from the procurement regime. Therefore grants which are “procurement activity grants” (i.e giving funding to an organisation to deliver a service commissioned according to the Council’s requirements) have been included as being within scope under the proposed new Contract Standing Orders. Grant to voluntary organisations which are merely supporting those organisations’ existing activities rather than delivering a service on behalf of the Council will remain outside of scope.

### 5.5.3 Effect of approved Procurement Plans on decision making process

The current published Contract Standing Orders state that when it comes to contract award, if a procurement above £1m has been the subject of an approved procurement plan, further approval at contract award stage is only required where cost and scope as stated in the procurement plan are not met or where the procurement plan states that such approval is required. However it is considered that should actually refer to “further approval *by the Executive*” not being required, as it would be expected in practice that Executive Member approval would still be sought for contract award for contracts above £400,000 and that Executive Director (or person with delegated authority) approval would be sought for contracts below such amount, even if the contract award did not exceed the cost and scope as stated in an approved procurement plan. Hence the new Contract Standing Orders reflect this.

### 5.5.4 Contract Standing Order Waivers

The current published Contract Standing Orders suggest that an Executive Director could waive a requirement to follow the Contract Standing Orders provided that the associated value did not exceed the PCR 2015 threshold. However, as the limit of an individual Executive Director’s authority is set at £400,000, and the threshold for works contracts which triggers application of the PCR 2015 is above £4million, it does not seem proper that an Executive Director acting alone could approve a waiver of the requirement not to follow a competitive procurement for such a sum. Hence it is proposed that Borough Solicitor approval will also be required if the contract is above threshold or above £400,000 (Borough Solicitor approval is already required if contract is above threshold so amendment is really just to make clear that Executive

Director alone cannot approve waiver for contract which has associated value of more than £400,000).

#### 5.5.5 Contract Extensions and Variations

Under the current published Contract Standing Orders, it is not clear who would need to authorise extensions or variations, apart from that Borough Solicitor approval is required if the extension or variation is not clearly provided for in the original contract and, once the extension or variation is included, the contract has a total contract value which exceeds the relevant threshold under the PCR 2015.

To make it clearer what authority is needed, new Contract Standing Orders propose that this depends on what expenditure was authorised within the approved Contract Award Report. If the total contract value, inclusive of the extension or variation, now exceeds the sum approved in the Contract Award Report, then this should be treated as a new procurement for governance purposes (in line with the tick sheets appended to the Contract Standing Orders).

If the total contract value, inclusive of the extension of variation, does not exceed the sum approved in the Contract Award Report, then the Executive Director can approve this if the total value does not exceed £400,000 whereas Executive Director approval and Borough Solicitor approval would be required if the total contract value exceeds £400,000.

#### 5.5.6 Checklists

Checklists within the form of ticksheets are already included within the current published Contract Standing Orders. These have been amended to reflect the changes to the main body of the Contract Standing Orders.

Further, a separate checklist (separate to the Contract Standing Orders), has been prepared which sets out good practice in relation to procurement and entering into contracts.

## **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 6.1 Section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to issue Contract Standing Orders with respect to contracts for the supply of goods or materials and for the execution of works.
- 6.2 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 imposes a duty on the Council to consider social value in its procurement activities.
- 6.4 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on the Council to provide best value in the delivery of its services.
- 6.5 These implications have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the proposed contract standing orders.

### Financial Advice

- 6.6 Robust control of external expenditure committed through supplier contracts is essential for the Council to properly manage its financial status. The proposed changes ensure that appropriate controls are in place and all procurement activity is conducted and approved in a compliant manner whilst ensuring that commercial flexibility of the Council is not compromised.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.7 The proposals incorporate the Principles set out in the Public Contract Regulations relating to non discrimination.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.8 It is recommended that the Council adopts the proposed Contract Standing Orders for the reasons outlined in this report.

### Contact for further information

Claire Bradford Contracts & Procurement Lawyer, Delivery Directorate - 01344 355277  
Claire.bradford@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

## SECTION 11 – CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

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

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

### **DEFINITIONS**

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

“Concession”	Where the Council entrusts the provision and management of the services to a contractor where the main benefit for the contractor is the right to commercially exploit the services.
“Concession Services Threshold”	£4,447,447,50 as at 1 January 2022 or any different figure that may be substituted by applicable legislation from time to time. Note that this figure has been calculated on the basis that VAT will apply to the procurement at a rate of 20% (see also paragraph 6.2 of these Contract Standing Orders)
“Corporate Contract”	A contract relating to the procurement of supplies, works or services that has been tendered and managed by the Council
“Executive”	Means a meeting to which the Leader and all those Members that are serving as Executive Members have been invited, or in the case of non-executive functions references to “the Executive” are deemed to be references to the Council or the committee or sub-committee to which the Council has delegated responsibility for that function
“Executive Director”	The Chief Executive or the most senior officer in a department of the Council or the Governing Body of a school with delegated responsibilities under the Local Management of Schools Regulations
“Executive Member”	Means the Member of the Executive with responsibility for the service for which a procurement is being carried out
“Framework Agreement”	Means an agreement or other arrangement between one or more

	contracting authorities and one or more suppliers which establishes the terms (in particular as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which suppliers will enter into one or more contracts with the Council in the period during which the framework agreement applies
“Non Commercial Considerations”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. whether contractors employ self-employed individuals,</li> <li>2. any involvement of the business activities or interests of the contractor with irrelevant fields of Government policy,</li> <li>3. the conduct of the contractor in industrial disputes,</li> <li>4. the country of origin or location of suppliers,</li> <li>5. any political, industrial or sectarian interest of the contractor,</li> <li>6. financial support or lack of financial support by the contractor for any institution,</li> <li>7. use or non use by a contractor of technical or professional services provided by the Council under the Building Act 1984.</li> </ol>
“Procurement Manual”	The manual containing guidance and mandatory rules on the procurement of all supplies services and works and any further matters referred to in these Contract Standing Orders
“Public Contracts Regulations”	The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 No 102) as amended or the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 as amended
“Responsible Officer”	The Executive Director or a person to whom the Executive Director has given clear written delegated responsibility to exercise a function which these Contract Standing Orders identify
“Social and Other Specific Services Threshold”	<b>£552,950</b> as at 1 January 2022 or any different figure that may be substituted by applicable legislation from time to time. Note that this figure has been calculated on the basis that VAT will apply to the procurement at a rate of 20% (see also paragraph 6.2 of these Contract Standing Orders)



“Strategic Procurement Plan“	Means the Strategic Procurement Plan available from the Procurement pages on the Council’s intranet
“Supplies and Services Threshold”	<b>£177,897.50</b> as at 1 January 2022 or any different figure that may be substituted by applicable legislation from time to time. Note that this figure has been calculated on the basis that VAT will apply to the procurement at a rate of 20% (see also paragraph 6.2 of these Contract Standing Orders)
“Total Contract Value”	The whole of the estimated value which the Council expects to give under the contract, calculated according to the valuation principles within the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and applicable legislation
“Threshold”	Means the Supplies and Services Threshold or the Social and Other Specific Services Threshold or the Works Threshold (under the Public Contract Regulations 2015) or the Concession Services Threshold under the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016, as the case may be
“Works Threshold”	<b>£4,447,447.50</b> as at 1 January 2022 or any different figure that may be substituted by applicable legislation from time to time. Note that this figure has been calculated on the basis that VAT will apply to the procurement at a rate of 20% (see also paragraph 6.2 of these Contract Standing Orders)

## 1. Introduction and application of Standing Orders

These Contract Standing Orders set out the framework for the procurement of supplies, works and services. They are an essential set of rules and compliance with them will ensure that officers both seek and obtain good value for money and that public money is properly spent and accounted for.

**These Standing Orders apply to all contracts for the procurement of supplies, the provision of services (including adults and children's care services and concessions) or the execution of works by the Council or on its behalf. Whether a grant falls within the scope of these Contract Standing Orders is to be decided according to the guidance given at paragraph 2.4 of the Contract Standing Orders.**

- 1.1 In any procurement where quotations or tenders are required no matter what the value may be, officers must always apply procedures that allow a fair and non-discriminatory competitive process, and equal treatment of all potential suppliers and contractors.
- 1.2 Contracts must not be artificially split to avoid the application of the key thresholds contained in these Standing Orders.
- 1.3 Officers dealing with the procurement of standard or repetitive supplies and services should always consider the use of Framework Agreements and corporate contracts and should seek guidance from the Head of Corporate Procurement or from the Borough Solicitor.
- 1.4 These Contract Standing Orders do not apply to the following:
  - A contract for service for the employment of staff by the Council
  - The engagement of Counsel
  - The acquisition disposal or transfer of land or an interest in land and property
  - Hire of premises
  - Non procurement activity grants as defined in paragraph 2.4.1 of these Contract Standing Orders
  - Direct payments to individuals for social care services or services brokered on behalf of individuals in receipt of an individual budget.
  - Contracts for services or goods provided by the Council to schools within the Borough, provided the Total Contract Value is below the Threshold as defined in these Contract Standing Orders.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Executive Directors are responsible for ensuring that chief officers and all staff with procurement responsibilities within their directorates fully understand and comply with these Standing Orders.
- 2.2 Executive Directors are responsible for all purchase orders and contracts tendered and let by their directorates, are accountable to the Executive for the performance of their duties in relation to contract letting and management and must ensure that all council officers comply with these Standing Orders. The duties set out in paragraph 2.3 also apply to a Responsible Officer (except for paragraphs 2.3.5, and paragraphs 2.3.13 to .15 which are duties to be complied with by an Executive Director personally)

- 2.3 Their duties are as follows:
- 2.3.1 To seek and obtain value for money and secure continuous improvement in all procurements.
  - 2.3.2 To ensure no contract is entered into by their Directorate without there being adequate and agreed budget provision.
  - 2.3.3 To ensure compliance with all applicable legislation, seeking advice from the Borough Solicitor or the Head of Corporate Procurement at an early stage in the process whenever appropriate.
  - 2.3.4 To ensure that Non Commercial Considerations do not influence any decision to seek quotations or tenders or to enter into any contract.
  - 2.3.5 To ensure all staff (including any agents or consultants acting on their behalf) dealing with procurement for their directorate are fully aware of and comply with these Standing Orders and those parts of the Procurement Manual which are stated therein as compulsory in accordance with these Standing Orders and to arrange adequate training on their operation.
  - 2.3.6 To declare to the council any pecuniary interest whether direct or indirect they personally have in any contract to be let, and to make that declaration in writing to the Borough Solicitor.
  - 2.3.7 In the event of any breach of these Standing Orders to take immediate action and report it to the Borough Solicitor and/or the Executive Director of Resources.
  - 2.3.8 To ensure every contract over the Supplies and Services threshold has a named officer with responsibility for it.
  - 2.3.9 To keep securely proper records of all purchase orders, signed contracts and copies of all relevant documentation so as to provide a full audit trail of actions taken.
  - 2.3.10 To comply with the Council's arrangements for the obtaining and opening of quotations and tenders as set out in the Procurement Manual.
  - 2.3.11 To ensure that the council's seal is affixed to any contract where this is required to give the contract legal efficacy or to reflect established industry practice and to ensure that all other contracts are signed by an Executive Director or by a person authorised under delegated powers to act on his or her behalf or placed through the Corporate Finance System.
  - 2.3.12 To keep a record of any waivers of these Standing Orders.
  - 2.3.13 To keep a written record of any delegations they make of their powers under these Standing Orders and ensure these are published on the Council's Intranet.
  - 2.3.14 To ensure that records are kept in a manner that ensures reviews of contracts are undertaken in good time ideally at least one year in advance of termination dates and that appropriate action is taken.
  - 2.3.15 To make arrangements for the publication of tenders and of contracts awarded as the Council may require from time to time.

- 2.4.1 Grant allocations by the Council which are a procurement activity, i.e *funds given to procure services on behalf of the Council*, referred to hereon as “procurement activity grants” irrespective of whether this involves expenditure of external funding, shall be subject to the principles detailed at paragraph 2.4.2. Grants given to or applied for by the Council which are for internal use only or grants given by the Council to a voluntary organisation which has bid for funds and is providing services *directly to individuals as part of their charitable work rather than carrying out a service on behalf of the Council* (referred to hereon as “non procurement activity grants”) are outside the scope of these Contract Standing Orders. However for non procurement activity grants it is still recommended that all usual due diligence and principles of good practice are followed (with legal advice sought where required).
- 2.4.2 Procurement activity grants, as defined in paragraph 2.4.1, shall be subject to the same requirements for advertising and authorisation as any other type of procurement, as per the relevant appendix of these Contract Standing Orders. The relevant Appendix within the Standing Orders to be followed shall depend upon the nature of the grant (i.e if a grant for services which are not covered by the “Light Touch Regime” then Appendix 1 shall be followed and if a grant for works then Appendix 2 shall be applicable).

### **3. Consultation and approvals prior to advertising a procurement**

- 3.1 Officers must take advice from the Head of Corporate Procurement or the Borough Solicitor on the relevance of the Public Contract Regulations for any procurement where the Total Contract Value is estimated to be more than the Supplies and Services Threshold, including advice on the classification of a procurement as Supplies and Services, Works or Social and Other Specific Services or as a Concession.
- 3.2 When it can reasonably be anticipated that the Total Contract Value might exceed the Supplies and Services Threshold the Executive Director must ensure that an estimate of the anticipated Total Contract Value is prepared and recorded in writing. The estimate should not be more than twelve months old when tenders or quotations are invited and is to be inclusive of Value Added Tax.
- 3.3 For all procurements of supplies and services with an estimated Total Contract Value in excess of the Supplies and Services Threshold, and procurement of works with an estimated Total Contract Value in excess of £400,000, a Strategic Procurement Plan in the form set out in the Procurement Manual and incorporating comments from the Executive Director of Resources, Borough Solicitor and Head of Corporate Procurement, must be prepared for the approval of the Executive Director and, if appropriate, the Executive Member or the Executive (see Appendices 1, 2,3 and 4). In all cases the Strategic Procurement Plan must be approved before the contract is advertised.
- 3.4 The Council’s Constitution defines Executive Decisions and Key Decisions and the procedure for making these, for example publication for making these, for example publication for 28 days before decision and call-in for 5 days afterwards. Planning of a procurement must take into account these procedures in consultation with Democratic Services.

### **4. Obtaining quotations and tenders**

- 4.1 (a) Subject to paragraph 4.1(b) below, for any procurement of supplies or services the required number of quotations or tenders must be sought in accordance with the financial limits and procedures set out in the Procurement Manual and applicable Appendices of these Standing Orders..
- (b) Procurements of residential care placements, care and or support provided in the person's home or for the special educational or other needs of younger people (including fostering) shall be carried out in accordance with procedures authorised by the relevant Executive Director in consultation with the Executive Member with the advice of the Executive Director of Resources, the Borough Solicitor and the Head of Corporate Procurement and published in the Procurement Manual
- 4.2 Where advertising is preferred, but not required by these Contract Standing Orders, officers choosing not to advertise must record the reasons for their decisions.
- 4.3 Where any works contract is to be let the required number of quotations or tenders must be sought in accordance with the financial limits and procedures set out in Appendix 2.
- 4.4 The Responsible Officer must ensure that the selection of suppliers from whom tenders or quotations are sought is carried out openly, fairly and transparently. The requirements for advertising, which are made to ensure compliance with legal requirements for transparency and freedom from discrimination, are set out in Appendices, 1, 2,3 and 4 and must always be followed.

## **5. Contract documentation and standard contract conditions**

- 5.1 The provisions of any Statute or Regulation take precedence over anything said in these Standing Orders, and all contracts entered into by the Council must comply with all of those requirements.
- 5.2 It is preferred for the Council's standard conditions of contract to be employed unless,
- (1a) Leasing arrangements are involved, or
- (1b) the requirement is particularly complex or the use of the standard conditions is inappropriate
- AND in each such case the formal advice of the Borough Solicitor has been given, or
- (2) the supplier requires the Council to contract on terms supplied by it, and the total value is no more than £35,000.

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

## **6. Approval and acceptance of quotations and tenders**

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

- 6.2 The evaluation of written quotations and tenders and any pre-qualification of bidders must be carried out according to the procedures set out in the Procurement Manual, clearly documented and, if above the Threshold, advice must be sought from the Head of Corporate Procurement. It has been assumed for the purposes of setting out the different Thresholds within the definitions section of these Contract Standing Orders that VAT will apply to the procurement, due to VAT being included in the calculation of the Threshold. If however Finance have confirmed within a Strategic Procurement Plan that VAT will not apply to the procurement then the figures within the definitions section of these Contract Standing Orders may be disapplied and the figures referred to in “Procurement Policy Note – New Thresholds Values and Inclusion of VAT in Contract Estimates” (dated December 2021 and published by the Cabinet Office), as updated from time to time, may be used instead for the purposes of establishing whether the planned procurement is above Threshold.
- 6.3 Where the estimated Total Contract Value is more than the Supplies and Services Threshold and only one tender is received the Executive Director must take advice from the Head of Corporate Procurement and the Borough Solicitor on the appropriate action.
- 6.4 The Responsible Officer may accept a tender or quotation for **works, supplies or services** where the Total Contract Value is not more than £400,000. Where the tender is above the Supplies and Services Threshold, a report should be submitted by officers to the Executive Director, but if an Executive Director has not delegated power to a Responsible Officer to accept a quotation the Executive Director must prepare a report on the acceptance of the tender or quotation and keep it available for auditing.
- 6.5 (a) The Executive Director shall not accept tenders for supplies, services or works where the Total Contract Value is more than £400,000 without securing the written agreement of the Executive Member (through a report to the Executive Member).
- (b) Executive Director written approval (through a summary report to the Executive Director) shall be required for a contract award which has an associated cost of below £400,000, unless another individual is authorised to approve under a scheme of delegation. However for a contract award which has an associated cost of below £5,000 then the written approval of the Executive Director (or other individual authorised under a scheme of delegation) without a summary report, will be sufficient.
- 6.6 Where a procurement above £1,000,000 has been the subject of an approved Strategic Procurement Plan, further approval *by the Executive* at contract award stage is only required:
- a) where cost as defined in the Strategic Procurement Plan has been significantly exceeded or scope significantly altered;
  - b) the Strategic Procurement Plan as approved specifically states that the award is to be approved by the Executive – for complex or sensitive matters.

The result should be recorded and communicated to the Executive Director and Executive Member. Where the cost and scope for a procurement above £1,000,000 does not exceed that outlined within the Strategic Procurement Plan, then a report to the Executive Member from the Executive Director shall still be required.

- 6.7 Where the Executive Director wishes to accept a tender other than the lowest acceptable tender, full supporting documentation must be kept to evidence why the lowest acceptable tender was not accepted. If the tender is one to which paragraphs 6.5 or 6.6 apply, the Executive Director shall report the values of all tenders received and the reasons for selecting the preferred tender.
- 6.8 All contracts entered into by the Council shall be completed (subject to delegated financial limits) in accordance with the following requirements (however note separate requirements which apply to works contracts as set out in Appendix 2).

<b>Total Value</b>	<b>Method of Completion</b>	<b>Signed By</b>
Up to and including £5,000	Purchase order or oral	Responsible Officer
£5,000 to the Supplies and Services Threshold	Purchase order or contract	Executive Director or Responsible Officer as delegated
Over the Supplies and Services Threshold	Signed contract or execution under seal if required to give the contract legal efficacy or to reflect established industry practice	Executive Director or Responsible Officer as delegated or executed under seal by Borough Solicitor

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

## **7. Waiver of Contract Standing Orders**

- 7.1 If there are special circumstances to waive or suspend any section or sections of Contract Standing Orders, the following approvals must be obtained depending on contract value:
1. for all contracts up to the relevant Threshold (as defined in these Contract Standing Orders), not to exceed £400,000, to be calculated according to total contract value inclusive of any previous extension or variation, the Executive Director may approve.
  2. for contracts in excess of the relevant Threshold (as defined in these Contract Standing Orders) or above £400,000, to be calculated according to total contract value inclusive of any previous extension or variation, the Borough Solicitor and the Executive Director (taking advice from the Head of Corporate Procurement) may approve. A waiver in respect of a direct award alone will not remove the requirement to follow any aspect of the internal authorisation process for expenditure relevant to the procurement (set out in the Appendices of these Standing Orders) unless this is specifically included as part of the waiver (noting that a waiver to not follow such processes will only be granted in exceptional circumstances).
- 7.2 The standard Waiver form is to be used.

7.3 The Executive Director must ensure that a record of all cases where Contract Standing Orders have been waived is sent to the Head of Corporate Procurement, recording the reasons for waiver and the approvals obtained. The Head of Corporate Procurement shall maintain a full record, sequentially numbered, of all Waivers granted.

## **8. Contract extensions and variations (see also flowchart at Appendix 5)**

8.1 Where an extension or variation (including any change in requirement) is not clearly provided for in the original contract and, once the extension or variation is included, the contract has a total contract value which exceeds the relevant Threshold under the PCR 2015, advice must be taken from the Borough Solicitor.

### ***Circumstances where the variation or extension falls within approved contract value authorised in Contract Award Report***

8.2 Subject to paragraph 8.1, extensions or variations below £400,000 (inclusive of total contract value) can be approved by the Executive Director.

8.3 Subject to paragraph 8.1, if the sum for the variation or extension of the contract falls within the approved contract value in the relevant Contract Award Report but exceeds £400,000, then for the extension or variation, *Executive Director and Borough Solicitor* written approval shall be required.

### ***Circumstances where the variation or extension does not fall within approved contract value authorised in Contract Award Report***

8.4 If the variation or extension of the contract does not fall within the approved contract value authorised in the relevant Contract Award Report then officers should proceed as in the case of a *new procurement* and follow the procedure within the relevant appendix of these Contract Standing Orders, as determined by the total contract value inclusive of the extension or variation.

8.6 If a variation or extension takes the Total Contract Value above £400k then this will need to be recorded as a Key Decision unless advised otherwise by the Borough Solicitor or Democratic Services.

## **9. Framework Agreements**

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



## Best Practice For Contracts – Checklist

### Procuring a New Service/Goods

1. **Have you read the most recent version of the Contract Standing Orders** which is available on the Council's intranet by searching for "Contract Standing Orders"? (Note that this document is currently under review and the new version will be published on the intranet in due course).

**The procurement process you will be required to follow under the Contract Standing Orders will depend upon the value of the contract and the nature of the service.**

By way of example, for contracts with a value of up to £35,000 you will need to seek a minimum of three quotes, having first had approval from your Executive Director or individual with delegated authority (as per the scheme of delegation for your Directorate).

Even if the value of the procurement is below the value which triggers the requirement to carry out a competitive procurement exercise under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (for which the updated [thresholds](#) now include VAT, so are in effect lower) you will need to refer to the Contract Standing Orders to establish whether a competitive procurement exercise is required.

It is not surprising that the higher the value of the contract, the more onerous the requirements under the Contract Standing Orders become in terms of who is required to authorise the procurement and the competitive process required (for example, a procurement for a contract estimated at a value of £1 million would require approval from the Executive, appropriate advertising and a formal tender seeking a minimum of five tenders, or use of an established framework agreement).

You are spending taxpayers money therefore think of it as spending your own money – very few people would buy a car or house without some research into what's available and how much would it cost.

2. **Who will sign the contract?**

Only an Executive Director is authorised to sign a contract of up to £400,000 unless it is the case that there is another individual who is authorised to sign under a scheme of delegation.

The Executive Director may sign contracts above the value of £400,000 and below £1 million once the approval of the relevant Executive Member has been obtained.

For contracts above £1 million for which the procurement was authorised by the Executive, further Executive approval is not required for the award of the contract unless the cost and scope connected to the contract award are outside that set out in the Strategic Procurement Plan. Where the cost and scope does not exceed the SPP, then the Executive Director (or other person with delegated authority) can sign having first consulted the Executive Member.

Always check the related Strategic Procurement Plan to see what was agreed regarding approval.

**3. Does expenditure need to be recorded as a Key Decision?**

Expenditure which exceeds £400,000 or has a significant effect upon the communities of two or more wards will need to be recorded as a key decision (please contact Legal Services if you have any queries regarding this).

**4. Have you got a suitable form of contract in place which protects the Council's position?**

The starting point should be that the Council's standard terms and conditions are used. The majority of external framework terms and conditions, such as Crown Commercial Services, are also acceptable but always check with Legal Services as these can be complicated.

However, there are some occasions when the Council's terms will not be appropriate and when it might be acceptable to use the terms of the provider if you are satisfied that the provider's terms adequately protect the Council's position. You must consult with Legal Services if you are proposing to use the provider's terms.

Points to check within a provider's terms include:

- a) ensuring that there is a full and proper description of the service/specification,
- b) there are performance measures in place and the Council is not required to pay for goods or services which are inadequate or fall below certain standards,
- c) that the cost is clearly stated and the provider does not have the right to increase the costs without the consent of the Council,
- d) that the Council has clear termination rights and the ability to terminate immediately for a serious breach or repeated breaches of the contract and that insurance/indemnity clauses are adequate.
- e) Finally, there should also be a clear process for exit and details arrangements as to handover as specific to the service.

**5. Have you ensured that the Council will be compliant with the UK GDPR?**

By using the Council's standard terms and conditions (and filling in details as appropriate) you will be likely to have protected the Council with regards to data protection compliance.

If you are using a contract which is different to the Council's terms and conditions, then you should compare the terms on data protection with those set out in the Council's terms and conditions – the ideal would be to require the provider to accept the data protection provisions from the Council's terms and conditions as these reflect a minimum standard required by law. If the supplier is not willing to sign up to such terms or ensure that their terms include the same points in relation to data protection, then you should consult our Data Protection Officer (Elise Battison) before entering into any contractual arrangements.

**Please do not sign any contract sent to you by the provider unless you actually intend to enter into a contract on their terms.**

## **Extending or Varying an Existing Service or Contract for Goods**

**1. Have you read the most recent version of the Contract Standing Orders?**

Just as you are required to read and apply the Contract Standing Orders for a new procurement, the same applies when you are looking to vary or extend a contract.

**2. Do you know who will sign the contract variation or extension?**

Unless a person has delegated authority then it should only be the Executive Director who signs the contract variation or extension.

Check with your manager if in doubt and if there is still uncertainty then contact Claire Bradford in Legal Services.

**3. Have you decided on how you will record the contract variation or extension?**

It is not best practice to simply record the variation or extension by email. Instead a formal document should be used – please contact Claire Bradford in legal services if you are unsure about how best to document a contract variation or extension. There needs to be clarity on the terms which will apply for the duration of the variation or extension (including clarity on the service to be provided and associated costs).

**4. Does the extension of variation need to be recorded as a key decision?**

Expenditure which exceeds £400,000 or has a significant effect upon the communities of two or more wards will need to be recorded as a key decision (please contact Democratic Services if you have any queries regarding this). For example, if under the contract you have already spent £200,000 and the extension will involve further expenditure of £250,000, then this will exceed £400,000 meaning that this will need to be recorded as a key decision.

**5. Have you considered UK GDPR compliance?**

If you are changing the scope of the service as part of the contract extension/variation so that different service users may be included or different arrangements made with regards to the collection of personal data then you will need to consult our Data Protection Officer (Elise Battison).

Lastly, when entering into a contract or looking to vary contract terms, due consideration should be given to “best value” which is a legal duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the Council’s functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In practical terms this means ensuring that the contract terms reflect best value for money whilst at the same times meeting the aims of the service, which can include non-financial considerations such as quality of service and value added services (criteria which ought to have been included at the time of advertising the contract).

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# Appendix 1

Jan-22

## Supplies and Services

Minimum Requirements

✓ = Mandatory

Total Contract Value		Up to £5k	>£5k to £35k	>£35k to £177,898 <sup>(1)</sup>	>£177,898 <sup>(1)</sup> to £400k	>£400k to £1m	>£1m	
<b>Strategic Procurement Plan (SPP)</b>	Add SPP to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	
	<b>Appropriate Report</b>	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup> and add to EWP if a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>		
		Report to Executive Member with SPP as confidential annex					✓	
		Report to Executive with SPP as confidential annex						✓
<b>Format</b>	Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Extended RFQ for more complex requirements	✓ oral	✓	✓				
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				✓	✓	✓	
<b>Specification</b>		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Terms</b>	BFC standard terms and conditions (Purchase Order or Services)	Preferred	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	
<b>Competition</b>	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes	Preferred	✓	✓				
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders				✓	✓	✓	
	Utilise a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement (single supplier Framework Agreement permitted)						
<b>Advertising</b>	SE Business Portal (or equivalent) and Contracts Finder (except maintained schools)		Preferred above £25k <sup>(6)</sup>	Preferred <sup>(6)</sup>	✓	✓	✓	
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)				✓	✓	✓	
<b>Approval of Contract Award</b>	Add approval to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup> .	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	✓			
	Report to Executive Member with confidential annex					✓	✓	
	Report to Executive with confidential annex	Where a procurement above £1m has been the subject of an approved procurement plan, further approval by the Executive at contract award stage is only required where cost and scope as stated in the procurement plan are not met or where the procurement plan states that such approval is required.						
<b>Form of Contract</b>	Purchase Order approved by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	✓ oral	✓	✓				
	Contract signed by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>				✓	✓	✓	
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice						
<b>Contract Award Notice</b>	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder (maintained schools are exempt from Contracts Finder requirement)		Where advertised <sup>(5)</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)				✓	✓	✓	
<b>Waivers, extensions and variations</b>	Add contract award to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	
	Waivers - refer to para 7 of Contract Standing Orders.							
	Contract extensions and variations - refer to para 8 of Contract Standing Orders							

(1) As of 1st January 2022, the Supplies and Services Threshold is £213,477 inclusive of VAT, or £177,898 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

(2) "If > one ward" applies where the resulting contract would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Borough. If in doubt seek legal advice.

(3) Or person with expressly delegated authority under Register of Contract Delegated Authority

(4) Seek legal advice

## Appendix 2

Jan-22

### Works

#### Minimum Requirements

✓ = Mandatory

	Total Contract Value	Up to £5k	>£5k to £35k	>£35k to £177,898 <sup>(1)</sup>	>£177,898 <sup>(1)</sup> to £400k	>£400k to £1m	>£1m
<b>Strategic Procurement Plan (SPP)</b>	Add SPP to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Appropriate Report						
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup> and add to EWP if a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>		
	Report to Executive Member with SPP as confidential annex					✓	
	Report to Executive with SPP as confidential annex						✓
<b>Format</b>	Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Extended RFQ for more complex requirements	✓ oral	✓	✓			
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				✓	✓	✓
<b>Specification</b>		✓ outline preferred	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Terms</b>	BFC standard terms and conditions or JCT terms <sup>(4)</sup>	Preferred	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>
<b>Competition</b>	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes	Preferred	✓	✓			
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders				✓	✓	✓
	Utilise a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement					
<b>Advertising</b>	SE Business Portal (or equivalent) and Contracts Finder (except maintained schools) <sup>(7)</sup>					Preferred	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)						Mandatory above Threshold <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>Approval of Contract Award</b>	Add approval to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	✓		
	Report to Executive Member with confidential annex					✓	✓
	Report to Executive with confidential annex	Where a procurement above £1m has been the subject of an approved procurement plan, further approval by the Executive at contract award stage is only required where cost and scope as stated in the procurement plan are not met or where the procurement plan states that such approval is required.					
<b>Form of Contract</b>	Purchase Order approved by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	✓ oral	✓	If < £50k			
	JCT Contract signed by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>			If > £50k	✓	✓	✓
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice					
<b>Contract Award Notice</b>	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder (maintained schools are exempt from Contracts Finder requirement)		Where advertised <sup>(6)</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)						Where advertised
<b>Waivers, extensions and variations</b>	Add contract award to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Waivers - refer to para 7 of Contract Standing Orders.						
	Contract extensions and variations - refer to para 8 of Contract Standing Orders						

(1) As of 1st January 2022, the Supplies and Services Threshold is £213,477 inclusive of VAT, or £177,898 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

(2) "If > one ward" applies where the resulting contract would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Borough. If in doubt seek legal advice.

(3) Or person with expressly delegated authority under Register of Contract Delegated Authority

(4) BFC standard terms (Purchase Order or Services) to be used below £50,000 and The Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) terms to be used above £50,000. If not appropriate, seek legal advice.

(5) As of 1st January 2022, the Works Threshold is £5,336,937 inclusive of VAT, or £4,447,447 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

## Appendix 3

Jan-22

### Social and Other Specific Services

Minimum Requirements

✓ = Mandatory

	Total Contract Value	Up to £5k	>£5k to £35k	>£35k to £177,898 <sup>(1)</sup>	>£177,898 <sup>(1)</sup> to £400k	>£400k to £1m	>£1m
<b>Strategic Procurement Plan (SPP)</b>	Add SPP to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Appropriate Report						
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup> and add to EWP if a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>		
	Report to Executive Member with SPP as confidential annex					✓	
	Report to Executive with SPP as confidential annex						✓
<b>Format</b>	Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Extended RFQ for more complex requirements	✓ oral	✓	✓			
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				✓	✓	✓
<b>Specification</b>		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Terms</b>	BFC standard terms and conditions (Purchase Order or Services)	Preferred	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>
<b>Competition</b>	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes	Preferred	✓	✓			
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders				✓	✓	✓
	Utilise a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement					
<b>Advertising</b>	SE Business Portal (or equivalent) and Contracts Finder (except maintained schools) <sup>(7)</sup>			Preferred <sup>(7)</sup>	Preferred <sup>(7)</sup>	✓	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)					Mandatory above Threshold <sup>(5)</sup>	✓
<b>Approval of Contract Award</b>	Add approval to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	✓		
	Report to Executive Member with confidential annex					✓	✓
	Report to Executive with confidential annex	Where a procurement above £1m has been the subject of an approved procurement plan, further approval by the Executive at contract award stage is only required where cost and scope as stated in the procurement plan are not met or where the procurement plan states that such approval is required.					
<b>Form of Contract</b>	Purchase Order approved by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	✓ oral	✓	✓			
	Contract signed by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>				✓	✓	✓
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice					
<b>Contract Award Notice</b>	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder (maintained schools are exempt from Contracts Finder requirement)		Where advertised <sup>(6)</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)					Where advertised	✓
<b>Waivers, extensions and variations</b>	Add contract award to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Waivers - refer to para 7 of Contract Standing Orders.						
	Contract extensions and variations - refer to para 8 of Contract Standing Orders						

(1) As of 1st January 2022, the Supplies and Services Threshold is £213,477 inclusive of VAT, or £177,898 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

(2) "If > one ward" applies where the resulting contract would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Borough. If in doubt seek legal advice.

(3) Or person with expressly delegated authority under Register of Contract Delegated Authority

(4) Seek legal advice

(5) As of 1st January 2022, the Social and Other Services Threshold is £663,540 inclusive of VAT, or £552,950 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

## Appendix 4

Jan-22

### Concessions

Minimum Requirements

✓ = Mandatory

	Total Contract Value	Up to £5k	>£5k to £35k	>£35k to £177,898 <sup>(1)</sup>	>£177,898 <sup>(1)</sup> to £400k	>£400k to £1m	>£1m
<b>Strategic Procurement Plan (SPP)</b>	Add SPP to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Appropriate Report						
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup> and add to EWP if a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>		
	Report to Executive Member with SPP as confidential annex					✓	
	Report to Executive with SPP as confidential annex						✓
<b>Format</b>	Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Extended RFQ for more complex requirements	✓ oral	✓	✓			
	Invitation to Tender (ITT)				✓	✓	✓
<b>Specification</b>		✓ oral	✓ outline	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Terms</b>	BFC standard terms and conditions (Purchase Order or Services)	Preferred	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>	Where suitable <sup>(4)</sup>
<b>Competition</b>	Seek a minimum of 3 quotes	Preferred	✓	✓			
	Formal Tender - seek a minimum of 5 tenders				✓	✓	✓
	Utilise a Framework Agreement	Mini competition of all suppliers able to meet the requirement - or otherwise as defined in the Framework Agreement					
<b>Advertising</b>	SE Business Portal (or equivalent) and Contracts Finder (except maintained schools) <sup>(7)</sup>					Preferred <sup>(7)</sup>	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)						Mandatory above Threshold <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>Approval of Contract Award</b>	Add approval to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Summary report to Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓	✓		
	Report to Executive Member with confidential annex					✓	✓
	Report to Executive with confidential annex	Where a procurement above £1m has been the subject of an approved procurement plan, further approval by the Executive at contract award stage is only required where cost and scope as stated in the procurement plan are not met or where the procurement plan states that such approval is required.					
<b>Form of Contract</b>	Purchase Order approved by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>	✓ oral	✓	✓			
	Contract signed by Executive Director <sup>(3)</sup>				✓	✓	✓
	Deed signed under seal by Borough Solicitor	Where required to give the contract legal efficacy or if requested, for example to comply with industry practice					
<b>Contract Award Notice</b>	SE Business Portal and Contracts Finder (maintained schools are exempt from Contracts Finder requirement)		Where advertised <sup>(6)</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Find a Tender Service (FTS)						Where advertised
<b>Waivers, extensions and variations</b>	Add contract award to Executive Work Plan (EWP) as a Key Decision	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	If > one ward <sup>(2)</sup>	✓	✓
	Waivers - refer to para 7 of Contract Standing Orders.						
	Contract extensions and variations - refer to para 8 of Contract Standing Orders						

(1) As of 1st January 2022, the Supplies and Services Threshold is £213,477 inclusive of VAT, or £177,898 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

(2) "If > one ward" applies where the resulting contract would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Borough. If in doubt seek legal advice.

(3) Or person with expressly delegated authority under Register of Contract Delegated Authority

(4) Seek legal advice

(5) As of 1st January 2022, the Concessions Threshold is £5,336,937 inclusive of VAT, or £4,447,447 exclusive of VAT if assumed at 20%

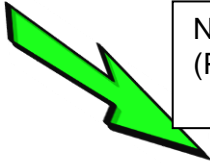
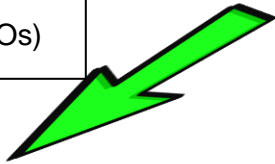


**Flowchart summarising process for contract extensions and variations – see para 8 of CSOs**

Does extension or variation fall within approved contract value authorised in contract award report? (Previous extensions and variations to be included in assessing this).

Yes  
(Para 8.2 of CSOs)

No  
(Para 8.4 of CSOs)



Is total contract value, inclusive of the proposed extension or variation, below £400,000?  
(Para 8.2 of CSOs)

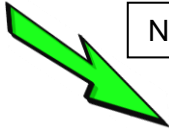
Is total contract value, inclusive of the proposed extension or variation, below £400,000?  
(Para 8.4 of CSOs)

Yes

No

Yes

No



Can be authorised by Executive Director (however Borough Solicitor advice to be taken where an extension or variation is not clearly provided for in the original contract and, once the extension or variation is included, the contract has a total contract value which exceeds the relevant Threshold under the PCR 2015).  
  
(Paras 8.2 and 8.1 of CSOs)

Must be authorised by Executive Director AND Borough Solicitor  
  
(Para 8.3 of CSOs)

Can be authorised by Executive Director (however Borough Solicitor advice to be taken where an extension or variation is not clearly provided for in the original contract and, once the extension or variation is included, the contract has a total contract value which exceeds the relevant Threshold under the PCR 2015).  
  
(Paras 8.5 and 8.1 of CSOs)

To be treated for governance purposes as a new procurement: follow procedure in relevant Appendix based on type of service/goods and total contract value.  
  
Note that Borough Solicitor advice to be taken where an extension or variation is not clearly provided for in the original contract and, once the extension or variation is included, the contract has a total contract value which exceeds the relevant Threshold under the PCR 2015.  
  
(Para 8.4 and 8.1 of CSOs)

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To: **Council**  
**20 April 2022**

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## **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22** **Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to submit an annual report to the Council on overview and scrutiny activities and their outcomes. The attached report informs councillors of progress made in respect of the operation and development of overview and scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2021-22. The Commission recommends that Council adopts the report.

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the 2021-22 annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted.**

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the Constitution.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Not applicable.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The activities of overview and scrutiny in 2021-22 are summarised in the annual report at Appendix A. The outcomes of individual reviews are reflected in the report.
- 5.2 Overview and scrutiny has established a structure that allows activity to better align with the themes of the Council Plan. The function has reviewed and delivered against a work programme that supports the council objectives over the period. The Commission has reviewed its arrangements for health scrutiny and introduced changes to clearly signal when it is formally considering health matters, and has scrutinised the budget and monitored the performance of all council departments through the Council Plan Overview Report.
- 5.3 Overview and scrutiny will continue to evolve the positive changes that support effective contribution to the Council Plan, with particular focus on maintaining momentum following a pause due to the pandemic. The Commission will continue to develop its programme management role to deliver the work programme in line with council objectives and available resources.

### **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

Legal Advice

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

#### Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 6.3 The annual report highlights the work of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels and the outcomes of this work. Overview and scrutiny has exercised its functions in order to support the development of policy within the council, to scrutinise the council's financial proposals and to improve services the council and its partners provide with the overarching objective of seeking to benefit local communities. Through the continued disruption of the pandemic, the strength of scrutiny is its focus on the long-term development of the council and how the council can meet its communities' needs.

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Throughout all scrutiny activity members are reminded to consider what equality impacts there may be, and review activities are delivered in a way that avoids barriers to wider involvement e.g. timing of review activity, length of reviews and access to information. As part of the scoping process for each review an initial equalities screening is explicitly undertaken and a full equalities impact assessment undertaken if required.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 Effective scrutiny is important to the successful functioning of local democracy by securing the efficient delivery of council services and driving improvements. A robust work programme is essential in order to ensure that overview and scrutiny activity contributes successfully to the work of the council. Poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and/or service failure.

#### Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendation in Section 2 above are expected to:  
Have no impact on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The reasons the Council believes that this will have no impact on emissions is that there is no direct link between the recommendations in this report and carbon emissions. Each individual review will assess the impact of climate change, including carbon emissions with details provided in the review scope.

#### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 The recommendation in Section 2 will have no direct impact on health and wellbeing.

However, the activities of the Commission, which are reflected in the annual report, have a positive effect on health and wellbeing through the health scrutiny function it

performs. In addition, each individual review assesses the impact on health and wellbeing with details provided in the review report.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Councillor Robert Angell, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission  
Robert.angell@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

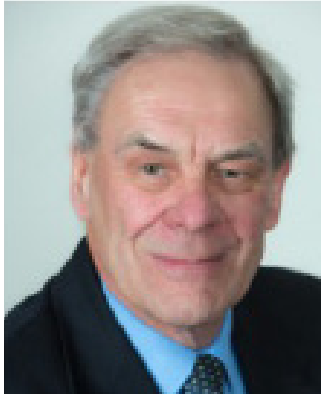
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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report



2021 - 2022

## Foreword from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chair: Councillor Robert Angell



Overview and Scrutiny Commission Vice-Chair: Councillor Tony Virgo

This report covers April 2021 to March 2022, a period when the new approaches and ways of delivering the overview and scrutiny (O&S) function within Bracknell Forest Council have begun to be embedded.

Theme-based scrutiny is now weaved through the work programme to support the effective delivery of the council's objectives. The Commission and panel chairs continue to recognise the sustained pressures on services and are keen to manage them carefully by designing reviews to support service activity. Work programme activities have regained their previous momentum after being refocused on covid recovery so that each review scope considered the impact of the pandemic and set a clear path for O&S to have a positive impact for residents. I must take this opportunity to thank the officers and staff who have maintained a high level of support for the O&S activity in these changing times. The Commission has developed its role of critical friend to consider the proposals from the three panels, and the quality of reviews and the reports being submitted to the Executive is evident. The reviews are set out in more detail later in this report with each panel chair describing their panel's activities in the past year.

As well as sponsoring the panel activities, the Commission's annual work programme now has three established milestone sessions: strategic health, crime and disorder and budget scrutiny.

In September the Commission discussed the current health provision and key issues in Bracknell Forest. The Commission took the opportunity to reflect on its strategic approach to health scrutiny to ensure that statutory responsibilities were being met within the new model. It formally agreed that one meeting per year be designated as the Commission's Strategic Health Scrutiny Committee and that the Finance and Wellbeing O&S Panel be retitled as the Health and Care O&S Panel. This recognised that the strategic theme of value for money was being managed by the Commission, whilst the Wellbeing and Finance O&S Panel's focus was on health and social care activities.

Councillor Mike Gibson was confirmed as the Chair of the Health and Care O&S Panel, following his nomination by Council in July. I would like to thank the previous chair, Councillor Malcolm Tullett for his hard work and commitment to the role.

In October the Commission considered the performance of the Community Safety Partnership and the priorities in the Community Safety Plan for the coming year. In reviewing performance, crime and reporting data the Commission were able to reflect on the successful partnership working undertaken as well as highlight where issues remained for Bracknell Forest residents.

In November the Commission invited the Executive Member for Transformation and Finance and the Executive Director: Resources to address the meeting before considering key issues and discussing how to prepare for the upcoming budget proposal consultation. This was followed up at the January meeting, where the Commission considered the council's draft budget proposals for 2022/23 before deciding whether they supported the recommendations which were open for public consultation.

Overview and Scrutiny has a vital role in performance management by linking the planning and delivery of services to the experiences of and impact upon local people. The Council Plan sets out the key objectives for 2019 to 2023. At the end of each quarter, the Chief Executive provides a high-level summary report of performance



across all services to the Executive, known as the Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR). Throughout the year the Commission has tracked progress towards delivering the Council Plan by reviewing the overview report which identifies achievements, as well as areas of concern, and demonstrates the action being taken where required. By aligning performance and finance information with the experiences of service users, members of the Commission are able to consider the potential impact on all of the borough's residents.

Responding to government guidance, the Commission has continued to hold remote meetings which has enabled sustained high levels of councillor engagement, attendance by experts and a diversity of witnesses. It is hoped that the new hybrid meeting technology will provide the opportunity for these benefits to continue in a blended approach with in-person meetings resuming as soon as practical.

O&S benefits from a wide range of experience and viewpoints, and the Commission welcomes input from residents and local organisations via its [public participation scheme](#). I would like to see this used more frequently so increased publicity will be a feature of the coming year to attract wider opinions on the council's performance.



## Introduction from Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery, acting as Statutory Scrutiny Officer



The important role that Bracknell Forest Council's Overview and Scrutiny functions provide as part of the corporate governance of the council has been illustrated by the programme of meetings and reviews completed in this performance year. The Centre for Public Scrutiny set out

guidance for approaches to scrutiny during the Covid-19 crisis. Within this guidance, it sets out "...[the] arguments in favour of continued, robust member-led scrutiny in this time of crisis" (The Centre for Public Scrutiny).

The requirement for local authorities in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in [sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000](#) as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Statutory guidance "[Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities](#)", sets out that as each council is a "democratically-elected body", it is for each council to determine how it sets out its arrangements to meet the requirement of the Act. Therefore, in line with this guidance, the arrangements in Bracknell Forest Council were revised in 2019, taking on board the feedback from the council's own commissioned review of its arrangements, and the issuing of the statutory guidance (May 2019). The current arrangements have been in place now for just over two years, demonstrating that the thematic structure of our panels, with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission overseeing the work programme, is an approach that has demonstrated its effectiveness for the council.

Within the council's Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement), prepared by the council's Monitoring Officer, he has confirmed that:

Overview and Scrutiny has established a structure that allows activity to better align with the themes of the Council Plan. The function has established and delivered against a work programme that supports the council objectives. The Commission has carried out research and made recommendations to support the Council's climate change targets and has scrutinised the budget and monitored the performance of all Council departments through the Council Plan Overview Report. ([Annual Governance Statement 2020/21](#))

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer has responsibility for promoting the role of overview and scrutiny, and supporting and advising:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Commission & panels
- The council's Executive and Executive Portfolio holders
- Officers and Chief officers of the council

In my role of Statutory Scrutiny Officer, I am required to make regular reports to full council on the state of scrutiny, explicitly identifying any areas of weakness. I am happy to give the council assurance that scrutiny is effective and adequately resourced to achieve the work programme.

That said, in September 2021, in response to concerns raised around the adequacy of the council's statutory health scrutiny, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, asked for a review of the arrangements and formal report back to the Commission.

The review noted that

Along with social care functions, Overview and Scrutiny must, and must be seen to, hold all commissioners and providers of publicly funded health and social care services to account for the quality of their services. The powers of the health scrutiny are not just limited to requiring the council's Executive Members to attend and answer questions at meetings held in public, the scrutiny function can also hold to account committees of the council with a health focus, health partnerships between the council and the NHS, plus provision in the voluntary sector. The Health and Wellbeing Board also comes under the local authority scrutiny function, although decisions of partnership boards cannot be 'called in' as they are not decisions of the council's Executive.

The formal report confirmed that the arrangements were sound, although some changes could ensure that when the Commission was formally considering health matters, this could be more clearly signalled by designating one Commission meeting per year as the Commission's Strategic Health Scrutiny Committee (similar to the process the Commission uses when sitting as the Crime and Disorder Panel). Further, that the Finance and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel be retitled as the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel, reflecting the reality of their work programme, which has been focused exclusively on health matters, and that the Commission had been leading on the Council Plan theme, Value for Money.

No other substantive reviews were carried out, in terms of the arrangements for scrutiny or the resources available.

The support to councillors for the provision of policy and research support, plus organising and administering meetings, has been set at 86 hours per week since 2018-19

A total of 74 hours has been spent in Commission and panel meetings delivering budget, performance, health and crime scrutiny and five separate panel reviews. The Commission and panels have interviewed 83 internal and external witnesses, and five Executive Members.

As part of the pre-budget scrutiny, the Commission reviewed the arrangements for supporting the function and the budget allocation for this work, in the context of other budget proposals. No recommendations were made following this review.

I am content that the function has adequate resources and that service departments are contributing sufficiently to reviews to ensure these are effective. I am therefore able to give the council my assurance that an effective culture of support for scrutiny exists and that the prerequisite for overall effectiveness has been met.

## Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel



**Chair: Councillor Mrs Gill Birch**



**Vice-Chair: Councillor Michael Brossard**

All the panel members work very well together, and I thank them all for their help and support during 2021-2022. I really appreciate their commitment, expertise and drive to make the council and services better for our residents.

I would like to thank Tracey Wright, who left the area in July, for all her support as a parent governor representative on this panel. Parent governor representatives make sure councillors hear parents' views on educational issues and I have valued the contributions of both our representatives over the year.

The coronavirus pandemic continued to impact our capacity to meet in person so some activities have taken longer this year. However, the four-year plan has been realigned and we are now on track to deliver all our planned reviews. Despite the pandemic disruption, officer support has been excellent and councillor involvement has increased so I would like to thank everyone for their commitment and efforts.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The council places great emphasis on making sure there is sufficient infrastructure in the right locations at the right time to support investment and growth. This can also be said of the six parish and town councils in the borough. This review found that towns and parishes had used their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in excellent ways to support the community, as shown in the examples.



**Fence around a cedar tree in Hedgehog Park, Birch Hill Central (photo by Mary Flynn)**



**Crowthorne's Morgan Recreation Ground**



**Security fencing at Crowthorne Parish Hall to prevent anti-social behaviour and vandalism**

The parish and town councils participated fully in all the meetings during this review, demonstrating how well we all work together in partnership.

The review recommendations were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 4 November 2021, and all six recommendations were accepted by the Executive on 14 December 2021. Follow up monitoring is now standard practice and the outcomes of recommendations will be reviewed in November 2022.

The review created a CIL survey to understand the approaches in the town and parish councils. The panel will ask the town and parish councils to complete the CIL survey again in November 2022 to compare responses. Also, the Chair and Vice-Chair will go to the Town and Parish Liaison meeting to monitor progress with the recommendations.

Training on CIL will now be part of borough councillors' development and will also be offered to town and parish councillors.

## **Care Leavers**

The recommendations from the care leavers review were monitored at the Commission in June to evaluate progress on outcomes. It was very pleasing that all had been actioned, although two were only partially implemented due to Covid restrictions.

This was the first formal evaluation of recommendations so it was an opportunity to develop a clear approach than can be used for all future monitoring.

## **Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)**

The SEND review has been scoped and is well underway. We are meeting with parents, carers and council officers, carrying out mystery shopping tasks on relevant services and reviewing the Ofsted SEND report and action plan. At the time of writing, the review is expected to be completed by the July Commission meeting.

In addition to the review activities above, the panel met in September to look at the forward plan, and in November to discuss the budget.

## **Findings and observations**

- Weekly meetings with the lead officer have helped to manage the progress of the SEND review. If possible, I would recommend it as good practice to other panels.
- Monitoring the care leavers review was excellent and enabled the review to be concluded. Monitoring reviews is now firmly embedded as good practice, with a template approach now available.
- Councillor involvement in the CIL review was high, with up to 14 people, and the SEND review has similar good engagement.
- Having meetings at different times, especially in the evening, has meant more councillors have been able to contribute.
- There was more opportunity to look at the budget and scrutinise it, and I would like a separate opportunity for the panel to look at it in greater depth in 2022-2023.
- Having the latest quarterly performance data has been a challenge during the pandemic. I hope going forward we will have the opportunity to receive the latest data to enable effective scrutiny.

**Councillor Mrs Gill Birch**

## Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel



**Chair:**  
**Councillor John Porter**



**Vice-Chair:**  
**Councillor Mrs Tina McKenzie-Boyle**

The objective of the panel changed at the start of the new term in 2019. The panel will still scrutinise how each service item has been delivered and whether it met its key objectives and will also now input into reviews of upcoming contracts, initiatives and plans. This welcome change increases the influence of scrutiny and allows councillors to make a greater contribution on behalf of residents.

### **Registered providers of social housing review**

The first review to complete in the current year looked at registered providers of social housing. This review was carried out due to an increase of residents contacting their councillor regarding issues.

The panel interviewed the main providers of social housing within the borough establishing how they work and engage with their residents. The panel also had presentations from Public Protection officers, Assistant Director: Customer Experience, Digital and ICT, Assistant Director Early Help and Communities, housing enabling officers, senior housing resources officers and residents from Silva, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing and Southern Housing.

The panel learnt that during Covid 19 all the providers had made welfare phone calls to vulnerable customers and supplied tailored

support including help with shopping and medicines collection.

The panel learnt how providers deal with complaints and how they are logged within the organisation. A key recommendation from the review was for Bracknell Forest Council to provide information on their website about what to expect from landlords, including statutory health and safety requirements.

The panel made five recommendations to the Executive, which were all accepted at the meeting of the Executive in April 2021.

A review will be held later in 2022 to ensure that the recommendations have been implemented.

### **Food waste in flats and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs)**

After the very successful implementation of food waste collection from households, the panel reviewed the viability and introduction of food waste collection from flats and houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

The panel had presentations from waste and resources action programme (WRAP), ReLondon (previously the London Waste and Recycling Board), Suez (a waste contractor), Executive Member for the Environment, Assistant Director: Contract Services and Head of Environmental Services. It was noted that Bracknell Forest at the time of the review had no HMOs.

After the presentations from WRAP and ReLondon and hearing about the experiences of local authorities in London and across the country, councillors were keen to carry out site visits to see the issues and understand how Bracknell Forest Council could overcome them. Several councillors visited three sites, accompanied by environmental services. During the visits it was noted that some had poor lighting, cramped space which led to poor dry recycling and a lot of contamination. The site visits also showed some excellent storage solutions and small blocks of flats that recycled to a very high standard.

The panel was advised that the council needed to purchase an additional vehicle to collect food waste as the amount being collected from households had exceeded expectations. The purchase would create a small amount of spare capacity and this was to be used for food waste collections from flats. The panel then looked at how the council could best implement the roll out for the best return. It was decided to introduce

strict criteria based on dry recycling rates to establish those flats that would be provided with food waste collections.

The panel made three recommendations to the Executive which were all accepted at the Executive meeting in September 2021.

## **Highways and transport capital programme scrutiny**

In December, the panel met to scrutinise the capital programme for highways and transport. The purpose of the meeting was for councillors to gain a stronger understanding of the highways and transport capital programme, particularly discussing the programme in areas such as funding process and prioritisation. This was achieved by having the Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration and the Assistant Director: Highways and Transport present.

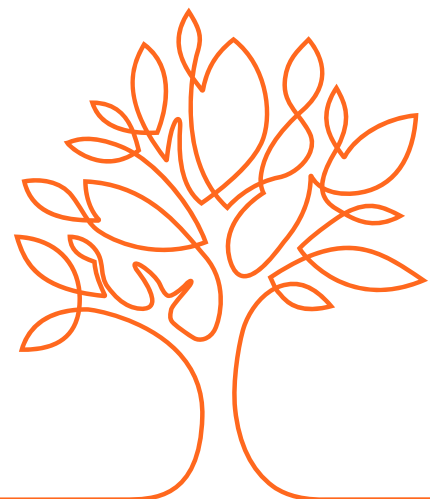
The panel identified seven key findings and provided a report for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider ahead of the budget discussion meeting.

## **Observations**

- Reviews have continued to be held remotely which has helped outside bodies participate in the reviews more easily.
- Reviews have not suffered by being remote.
- The themed approach has facilitated reviews across departments which have helped form policies.
- Future meetings could be a mixture of face to face and remote.

I would like to thank members of the panel, officers and outside bodies for their hard work and dedication in helping bring two excellent reviews and one scrutiny to the council.

**Councillor John Porter**



## Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel



**Chair: Councillor  
Mike Gibson**



**Vice-Chair:  
Councillor Mrs  
Isabel Mattick**

I became Chair of this panel in July and would like to thank my Vice-Chair, panel members, all the overview and scrutiny chairs and the scrutiny officers for their support as I moved into this role. Scrutinising the services and decisions that affect the health and wellbeing of our residents is a responsibility and a privilege, and I am keen to ensure this panel adds value in all its activities.

For me, that means we start with the data. Reviews should begin with the evidence, which we expand by talking to people about their experience and what that actually means. Each review, by necessity, is a snapshot, and we take the time to understand the wider context and overall direction of travel in order to be most effective. Putting the data in context, or asking ‘so what?’, is key to practical recommendations that make a difference.

Reviewing outcomes then helps us understand how effective we have been. Next year I look forward to reporting on what we have achieved over the electoral cycle and, importantly, what we have learned.

### **Blue badges**

In April 2021, the Health and Care Panel scrutinised the application process for blue badges. We found an incomplete data set meant that Bracknell Forest’s national position on acceptance rates could not be accurately stated. However, interviews with officers and applicants

did highlight some opportunities. It was reassuring that the department was already addressing these areas and was running an internal project to implement change.

The panel collaborated with the Assistant Director to ensure a joined-up approach across the blue badge reviews and an effective route to implement any changes. The panel made five recommendations to the Assistant Director who agreed to take these into account in her project. A further two recommendations on reviewing refusal letters and creating local guidance were endorsed by the Commission in July and accepted by the Executive in September.

### **Mental health**

In September, the panel began a review into the accessibility and effectiveness of primary care and voluntary sector mental health services. The review recognised that demand for mental health services is increasing, and that vulnerable people can progress to more serious mental illness if they can’t easily access early help.

The panel interviewed a range of services across primary care and the community and voluntary sector to understand data and context, including Talking Therapies, Friends in Need and Stepping Stones Recovery College. We also heard from residents about their experience of mental health services. At the time of writing, the review is nearing completion and has identified a range of practical actions that the council and our partners can take to help people access support more easily. The recommendations, which focus on visibility of services, communication and engagement, will be presented to the Commission in April.

The panel experienced good working relationships across services and sectors, and I would like to thank all our partners for their full contribution to this review. It was also an opportunity to work across panels and I am grateful for the involvement of Councillor Mrs Birch, Chair of the Education, Skills and Growth O&S Panel.



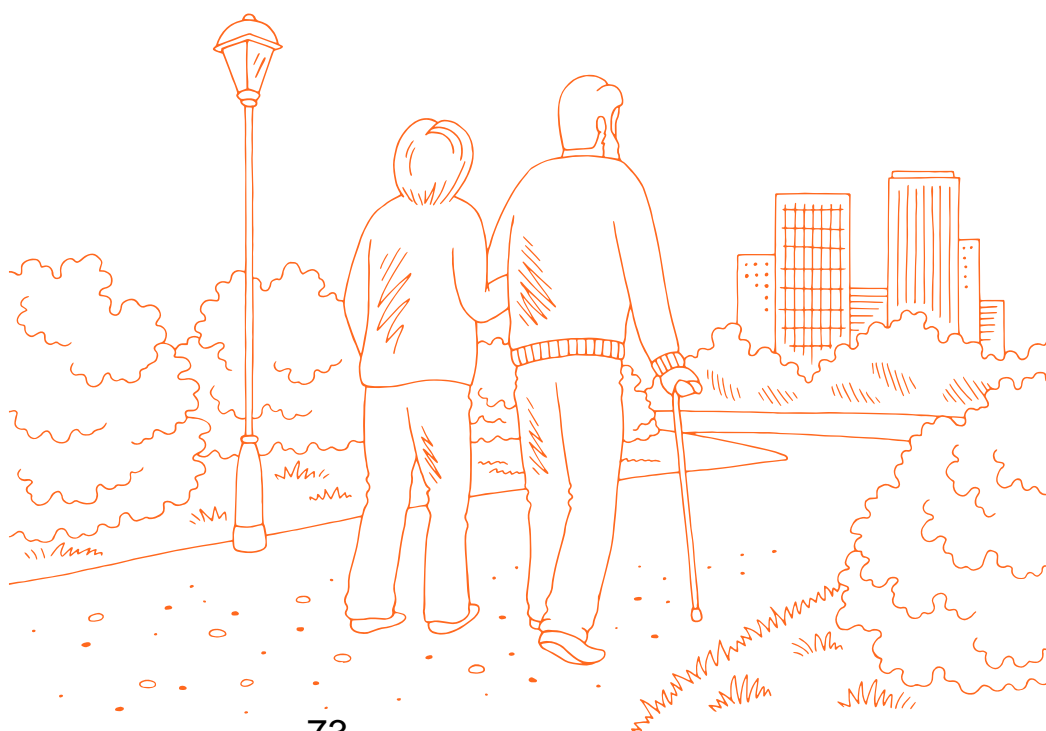
## Future topics

The panel recently held a workshop to identify topics for future reviews. We considered a number of topics, ranging from the care work marketplace to dentistry, and have selected the most appropriate for further scoping work.

## Observations

- Reviews have been delivered via remote meetings this year. Online meetings help attendees to balance review work with other responsibilities, increasing the range of people who can participate. They can also help reduce mobility challenges for some.
- However, technology introduces barriers in some cases so flexibility is important. Residents were offered a range of ways to participate in the blue badge and the mental health reviews. The council is introducing hybrid meetings technology which I am keen to use where appropriate.
- Reviews benefit from a 'core' of regular attendees who provide consistency and knowledge across all sessions.
- However, every councillor can add value, regardless of how many sessions they are able to attend. Review attendees are welcome for any period and their insights will be valuable.
- The ready availability of evidence packs and meeting recordings via webpages also supports contributions from less regular attendees
- The mental health review was very collaborative and a wide range of partners were willing to be involved. Partnership working improves outcomes for residents and ensures the benefits of effective scrutiny are available to more bodies.
- Addressing health and care inequalities is a key part of effective health scrutiny. Social care looks after our most vulnerable residents, and vulnerability can often be linked to inequalities. I aim to keep equalities at the heart of this panel's review work.

## Councillor Mike Gibson



## Overview and scrutiny at Bracknell Forest Council

Overview and Scrutiny is structured with an overarching O&S Commission and three O&S panels, which are described in detail below. Each panel is responsible for up to two themes from the Council Plan. By aligning activity areas with strategic themes, O&S can focus on topics that closely support the council's objectives over the four-year administration period.

These arrangements recognise that scrutiny is most effective when operating the task and finish group model rather than as sub-committee. Panels work flexibly to carry out focussed enquiries and deep dive reviews across a wide range of topics in support of the council's objectives. Panels meet as required to deliver the work programme rather than on a pre-agreed fixed cycle.

The format is also flexible, and activities range from a single scrutiny panel meeting on an issue to a three - six month focussed review. In addition to the core panel membership, all non-Executive members can take part in any review work. This enables the O&S function to tap into the skills and knowledge of members across a wide variety of topics. It also means that councillors who need to balance external responsibilities can be involved effectively based on their availability, interests and knowledge.

This approach recognises the importance of non-Executive members' involvement in policy development and pre-decision input and scrutiny, ensuring that scrutiny not only provides challenge but also actively contributes to the work of the council.

### Overview and Scrutiny Commission

#### Membership:

Councillor Angell (Chair), Councillor Virgo (Vice-chair)

Councillors Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mossom, Porter, Temperton, Gibson

#### Responsibilities:

- Create a focussed work programme to ensure scrutiny activity contributes effectively to the Council Plan objectives
- Continually manage the work programme to ensure the best use of resources, accommodating any necessary extensions or urgent short-term issues
- Act as sponsor for panels as they undertake deep dive reviews or support policy development
- Consider the recommendations from panels' scrutiny activity and, where they are supported, refer to the appropriate decision-maker
- Scrutinise the council's budget proposals
- Hold the Executive to account for council performance according to the Corporate Performance Overview Report
- Carry out the council's crime and disorder responsibilities and strategic health responsibilities.
- Strategic theme: Value for money
- Manage call in (the process to scrutinise Executive decisions).
- Review the policy framework.

## Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

<p><b>Panel membership:</b>                  Councillor Mrs Birch (Chair), Councillor Brossard (Vice-chair)                  Councillors Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Gbadebo, Ms Hayes, Ms Merry, Skinner , Temperton                  Parent governor representatives (voting): Mark Glanville</p>	<p><b>Strategic themes:</b>                  Education and skills                  Economic resilience</p>
---	--

## Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

<p><b>Panel membership:</b>                  Councillor Porter (Chair), Councillor Mrs McKenzie-Boyle (Vice-chair)                  Councillors Angell, Brossard, Brown, Ms Gaw, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke</p>	<p><b>Strategic themes:</b>                  Communities                  Protecting and enhancing our environment</p>
---	--

## Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

<p><b>Panel membership:</b>                  Councillor Mike Gibson (Chair), Councillor Mrs Mattick (Vice-chair)                  Councillors Allen, Atkinson, Bhandari, Brossard, Finch, Mrs L Gibson, Mrs McKenzie, McLean, Skinner, Temperton</p>	<p><b>Strategic themes:</b>                  Caring for you and your family</p>
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Each panel is responsible for up to two themes from the Council Plan. By aligning activity areas with strategic themes, O&S can focus on topics that closely support the council’s objectives over the four-year administration period.

O&S activities are supported by officers from the Democratic and Registration Services function, providing 86 hours of support per week. Interim Covid arrangements are in place and the 86 hours are currently delivered by four people:







Governance & Scrutiny Officer	Governance & Scrutiny Officer	Governance & Scrutiny Officer	Governance & Scrutiny Manager
0.68 FTE	0.68 FTE	0.68 FTE	0.3 FTE







Governance and Scrutiny officers work across all three panels, supporting one review at a time. Moving support between panels ensures sharing of good practice and increases collaboration and understanding across strategic themes. It avoids siloed working and provides a balance of opportunities for councillors and officers to develop and share their skills

**Ann Moore**  
 Assistant Director:  
 Democratic &  
 Registration  
 Services

## Overview and Scrutiny in figures

This section summarises O&S activities over the current administration:







Commission		
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
 <p><b>6</b> meetings held</p>  <p><b>Climate Change review commenced</b></p>	 <p><b>9</b> meetings held</p> <p><b>3</b> reviews completed – recommendations to Executive</p>	 <p><b>9</b> meetings held</p>
2 over 2 hrs	8 over 2 hours	1 over 2 hours
Average 1.40 hrs each	Average 2.20 hrs each	Average 1:0 hrs each
<b>Total = 9.45 hrs</b>	<b>Total = 20.20 hrs</b>	<b>Total = 15.15 hrs</b>

Panels		
2019-20	2020-21	2021- 22 (to mid-March)
 <p><b>14</b> panel meetings held across 3 panels</p>	 <p><b>25</b> panel meetings held across 3 panels</p>	 <p><b>36</b> panel meetings held across 3 panels</p>
 <p><b>2</b> reviews completed – recommendations to Executive</p> <p><b>1 review almost complete – on hold</b></p>	 <p><b>1</b> reviews completed – recommendations to Executive</p> <p><b>2 reviews close to completion</b></p> <p><b>3 reviews in early stages of pre-review preparation</b></p>	 <p><b>5</b> reviews completed – recommendations to Executive</p> <p><b>1 review close to completion</b></p> <p><b>2 reviews in progress</b></p> <p><b>1 post-review feedback completed</b></p>

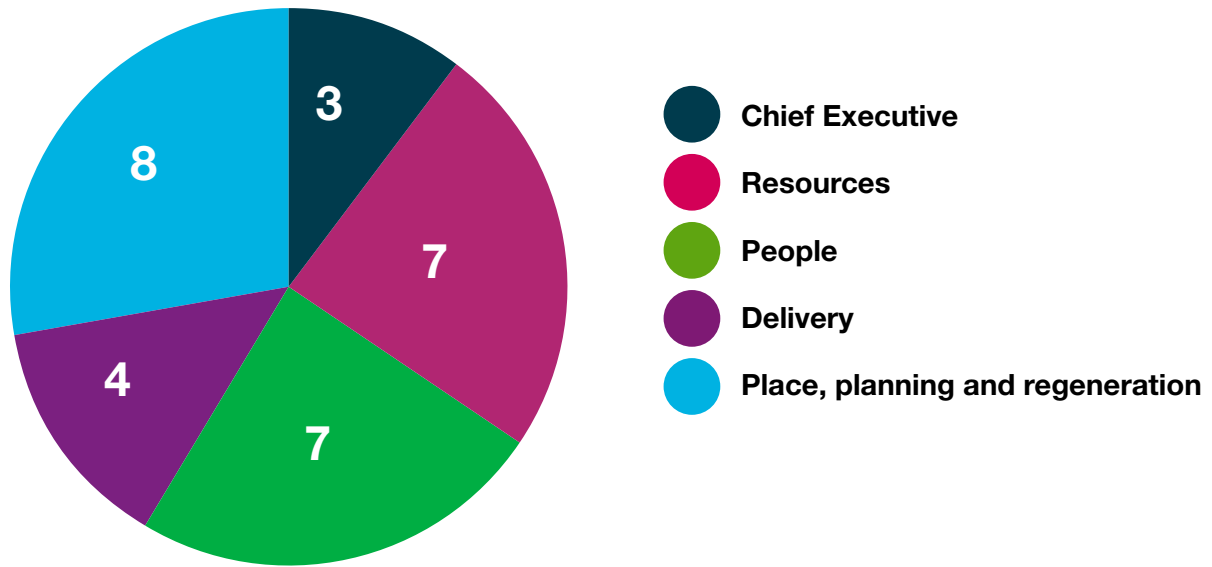
## Here are further insights into O&S activities in 2021-22:

Activity overview by council theme		
 <p>Value for money</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 34 hours Pages of evidence: 424</p>	 <p>Caring for you and your family</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 24 hours Pages of evidence: 118</p>	 <p>Economic resilience</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 7 hours Pages of evidence: 242</p>
 <p>Protecting and enhancing your environment</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 11½ hours Pages of evidence: 277</p>	 <p>Education and skills</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 13 hours Pages of evidence: 166</p>	 <p>Communities</p> <p>Time in panel meetings: 3 hours Pages of evidence: 61</p>

### Summary of witnesses:

Commission	Panels	Total
 <p><b>11</b> Officers</p>	 <p><b>18</b> Officers</p>	 <p><b>29</b> Officers</p>
 <p><b>5</b> External</p>	 <p><b>49</b> External</p>	 <p><b>54</b> External</p>
Executive members: 3, over 5 meetings	Executive members: 3, over 4 sessions	<b>Executive members: 5, over 9 occasions</b>

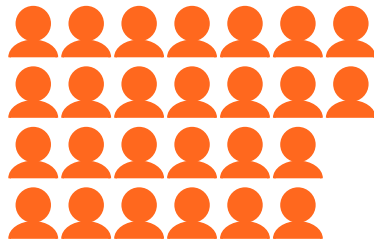
## Bracknell Forest Officer witness by directorate



## Number of councillors involved in reviews:

**26**

(not including Executive Members)



## Total press articles:



## Getting involved

Overview and scrutiny activities benefit from a wide range of knowledge, experience and viewpoints and the Commission is keen to encourage wider participation. Review recommendations help shape the services we deliver for residents. Here are some insights from partners and officers about what they gained from recent reviews.

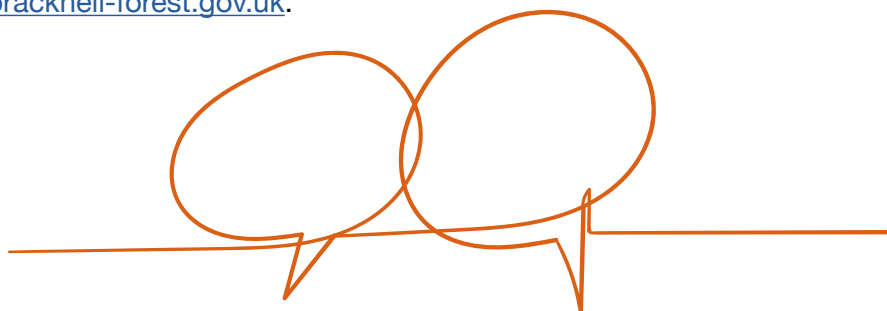
“The timing of the O&S review was a good fit in relation to the roll out of food waste, which started in March 2021. Naturally, the council was keen to build on a very successful household collection with a further roll out to flats, and this review helped steer the recommendations to the Executive. Hearing from other authorities and landlords who had already introduced schemes helped us to focus on the best way to maximise food waste recycling while keeping the scheme parameters realistic. The end result will begin rolling out from Spring 2022.”

Damian James, Assistant Director: Contract Services, regarding the food waste review

“The findings of the mental health review chime with our experience and we will look to build on them in our work to increase access and self-referral. Being involved in this scrutiny review highlighted the collaboration already in place across primary mental health services and meant we were able to help shape quality recommendations for the benefit of patients.”

Nadia Barakat, Director for Mental Health, NHS Frimley Clinical Commissioning Group

Find out more about the [overview and scrutiny work programme](#). If you would like to be involved in future activities contact [committee@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:committee@bracknell-forest.gov.uk).







To: **Council**  
**20 April 2022**

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**Champions' Annual Report 2021/22**  
**Executive Director: Delivery – Democratic and Registration Services**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The attached Annual Report appraises all councillors of the work undertaken by the Council's four Champions during the year 2021-22. The report informs councillors of activities and their outcomes.
- 1.2 As part of the Council's Constitution one of the Champions' key tasks is to submit an annual report on work undertaken throughout the year for consideration by the Council.

## **2 Supporting Information**

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

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

### **3 Equalities Impact Assessment**

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

### **4 Strategic Risk Management Issues**

- 4.1 The role of Council Champion is specific to Bracknell Forest and was created to link the planning and delivery of services to the experiences of and impact upon local people, considered in terms of the section of the community or range of activities. Successful performance of this role will enhance the efficient delivery of Council services and help drive improvements.

#### Background Papers

None.

#### Contact for further information

Ann Moore, Head of Democratic and Registration Services – 01344 352260  
[ann.moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:ann.moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)



# **Champions' Annual Report**

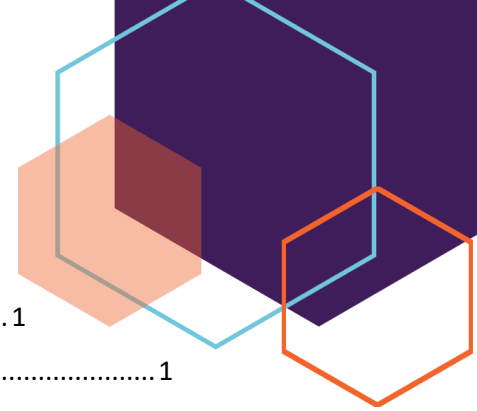
## **2021 – 2022**

The purpose of this report is to appraise all Members of the work and progress undertaken by the Council's Champions during the year 2021-2022.

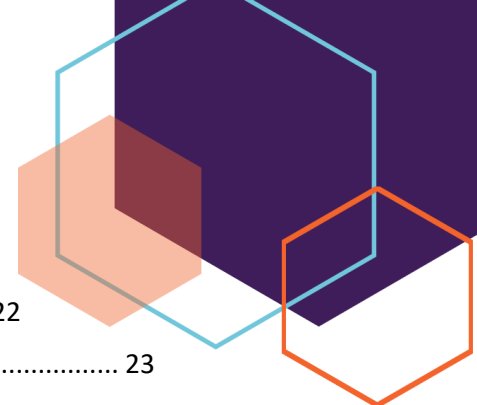
The report informs Members of activities and their outcomes and outlines proposed future activities.

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## Small Business Champion

### The Business Environment

It is forecasted that a typical household's income will fall by about £1,000 this year once the effect of inflation is accounted for, which would be the biggest real-terms fall in incomes since the mid-1970s.

Many are already expecting their monthly spend to go up when the energy price cap jumps in April (and again in October), and National Insurance contributions rise. Further, the war in Ukraine has pushed up energy prices and UK families are squeezed even more as the prices of fuel and other goods surged.

Inflation is forecast to peak in April at 8.3%, which is much higher than the Bank of England's forecast of 7.25% back in February; with an annual projection of 9%!

The UK's post-Covid economic recovery is well under way, but a deep living standards downturn is just getting started. Also, a warning that wages are not forecast to grow particularly fast. These factors will severely affect the fortunes of the SMEs.

### Welcome Back Funding (WBF)

WBF grants have been awarded to projects underway for Crowthorne, Bracknell and Sandhurst retail parades - new/replacement street furniture, social media support for businesses – it's all about getting people back out an about.

Funded by the WBF, Crowthorne High Street retail and environment regeneration includes hanging baskets installed in February. More 3 tier tower planters are proposed. BFC's WBF Officer has arranged for a photographer/press report on the market and various independent shops in Crowthorne to take promotional shots and conduct interviews. These can then be used by BFC and CPC for promotional purposes.

The WBF Officer is also looking to procure social media training for traders to enable them to better promote their goods and services on-line.

### The High Street

The situation on the High Street is still a concern with circa 20% shop closures. Notwithstanding the government support programmes, many High Street businesses have floundered. The shift from "product" to "services" outlets continues together with increased on-line activity. The hospitality businesses have been severely affected due to ever-increasing costs and lack of qualified staff. Some are now offering "special deals" to improve footfall.

**COUNCILLOR  
BOB WADE**



**Small Business Champion**

[bob.wade@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:bob.wade@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

High Streets must be changed into vibrant places to live, work and visit with streets cleaned up, and communities given the opportunity to have a stake in their local pubs, sports grounds and “corner” shops.



### *The Lexicon*

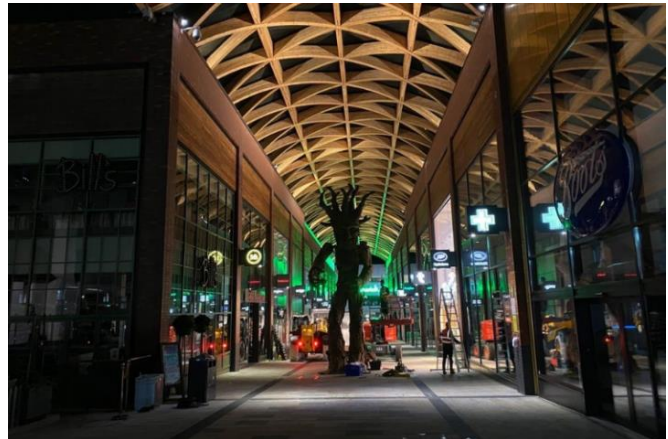
Town Centre activity has been encouraging with new stores reporting good trade and footfall at expected levels. The market location has moved to a more central position to encourage more stalls to attend.

The plan to move the library is now underway, as is the progress on the Deck.

The Town Centre Plan is now focusing on the “southern gateway” and the civic quarters.

### *The Forest Springs Event*

BFC has teamed up with The Lexicon with a spectacular ten-day “Forest Springs” event in April. The Lexicon will be transformed into a watery extravaganza - celebrating water and the important role it plays in everyone’s lives. This event is helping to secure The Lexicon’s position as a key regional shopping and leisure location. This follows the extremely successful *Forest Giants* event that took place in August to celebrate the borough’s forest. The centrepiece of the summer activity were 3 tree giants, the tallest of which, stood 6.5metres tall. Each Bracknell Forest Giant had a magical story to tell about the preservation and conservation of the amazing forests surrounding the town.



### *Nationwide*

A net figure of 10,059 stores exiting UK high streets, shopping centres and retail parks over the last year - a huge number, but 750 less than 2020.

The biggest change driving net closures has long been the decline in store openings. Also, many openings are natural churn or the re-siting of existing stores. It should be noted that these net closures impact the associated supply chains many of which are SMEs.

### *John Lewis Dilemma?*

John Lewis is making 18 (of 47) store closures after falling to its first ever annual loss in 175 years. They also plan to introduce JL-branded areas into their Waitrose supermarkets. Their on-line shopping now accounts for 75% of sales compared to 42% pre-pandemic.

### *Amazon closes their bookstores*

Amazon is getting out of the physical bookstore business. The retail giant is shutting 65 stores across the U.S. and U.K., including all of its Amazon Book locations, Pop Up shops and 4-star stores. Amazon's physical stores have lagged its overall retail business in recent years, logging lower sales in 2021 than in 2018.



## **Prompt Payments to SMCs**

The Prompt Payment Code is a national initiative to prevent businesses failing because of late invoice payments. It aims to pay suppliers on time, provide clear guidance to suppliers and encourage best practice.

BFC encourages all commercial suppliers to sign up to the terms and conditions of the HMG Prompt Payment Code, which includes:

- by paying 95% of invoices within the agreed payment terms and without attempting to change terms retrospectively.
- by paying 95% of all invoices within 60 days, and 95% of invoices from SMEs within 30 days.
- by acknowledging their right to use late payment legislation to invoice for late payment interest and charges, when appropriate.

All organisations should benefit from faster payments, particularly SMEs, further down the supply chain.

## **The Labour Market**

At the start of 2021 there were 5.5 million SMEs (1 to 49 staff) and they employed over 16 million people. This accounted for three fifths of all private sector jobs and around half of turnover at an estimated £2.3 trillion – a very significant SME contribution to the UK economy.

However, the total business population decreased 6.5% (between 2020 and 2021) and is considerably larger than the 0.5% decrease between 2017 and 2018.

There are significant staff shortages, especially in the hospitality sector. The projected cost of living increases further dampen the prospects for a quick return to “normality”.

*“Small businesses have been unable to plan, hire and grow amid political turmoil and a challenging economic landscape.*

*“The small business community must be kept front and centre when it comes to improving the state of the nation’s broadband, reforming business rates and our future trading relationship with the EU. It’s vital that we secure a pro-business trade deal which protects the three t’s: trade, talent and transition.*

*“Small firms are the backbone of the UK economy, and this is why it’s more important than ever that they are given the support needed to invest, grow and succeed.”*

FSB National Chair - Mike Cherry,

## **South Hill Park (SHP)**

South Hill Park hosts over 300 shows, events, films and exhibitions each year, alongside a busy programme of over 250 visual and performing arts courses. Also, it offers a stunning surrounding for any wedding, corporate, community or private event.

As a registered charity, SHP relies on public donations to deliver such a diverse range of events, alongside our extensive community work.



As an SME they provide a great environment for the social and mental well-being of all residents, but they totally rely on all our support.

### **BFC Support for the business sector**

Currently, BFC are providing the following support to the business sector:

- omicron hospitality and leisure grant.
- additional restrictions grant – omicron.
- recovery loan scheme.
- claim back statutory sick pay paid to employees.
- how to treat certain expenses and benefits provided to employees during coronavirus.

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/news/2022/02/support-available-due-covid-19?medium=email&source=GovDelivery>

### **Economic & Skills Development Partnership**



#### *BFC / ESDP 2021 Business Survey:*

This was a telephone survey of 504 businesses in Bracknell Forest, aimed at understanding the views and experiences of local businesses, including on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, as well as issues such as recruitment, skills and retention, and views on infrastructure.

In summary:

#### *The Impact of the Covid Pandemic:*

A third of businesses said their business turnover was substantially lower due the pandemic but over half expected business performance to improve over the next 12 months. Most businesses mentioned at least one negative impact of the pandemic, including loss of income and reduced profitability. Several larger businesses mentioned closing site premises.

#### *The Impact of Brexit:*

Half of businesses in Bracknell Forest said leaving the EU had no notable impact on their business. Among those who had experienced a negative impact were around importing from the EU, supply chain problems and the increased cost of business.

#### *Recruitment, Skills and Retention:*

Three-quarters of businesses did not feel that there are gaps in their skills base. This is lower than the figure seen in the 2020 Business Skills at 85%. Approaching two thirds of businesses have found at least one vacancy hard to fill. The main reason for difficulties finding recruits with the right skills, was a low number of applicants either with the required skills or with the required attitude. Half of businesses said they do not offer any of the types of training and development, although a quarter offered apprenticeships.

#### *Infrastructure and Support:*

There was a positive response for the provision of catering, greenspace, cycling/walking, education, and broadband in Bracknell Forest; with the road network, traffic, parking and reducing business rates considered key actions to improve infrastructure.

Bus services and the provision of electric vehicle charging points were rated lowest out of the categories listed.

*Broadband:*

Most businesses were not aware of Superfast Berkshire, as was the case in 2020. Above two fifths of businesses have access to superfast broadband with a similar proportion not having access. Three quarters of businesses were not aware of the Building Digital UK Gigabit project.

Two thirds of businesses said that having Gigabit capable broadband is important to their business.

*Green Agenda:*

Businesses were asked what actions they are taking to become net zero. Whilst half of businesses have the intention of being more environmentally friendly, few have a specific target or aim to achieve net-zero, and even less setting any deadline.

*The Employment and Skills Sub-Group:*

A Training and Education Symposium was held in March at Easthampstead Park. This was a face-to-face 'roundtable' discussion aimed at bringing together local training and education providers and local employers to identify clear and deliverable actions to support future training, education and reskilling in Bracknell Forest, including for small businesses.

The symposium identified the challenges facing different business sectors and employee groups, as well as the specialist training resources, and supporting information that businesses required. A report will be issued.

*The Infrastructure Sub-Group:*

This group focussed on how to increase the implementation of electric vehicle charging points in Bracknell Forest. This initiative will involve close liaison with BFC, the Bracknell BID and Bracknell's businesses; many of which, have already installed charging points.

*BID Update:*

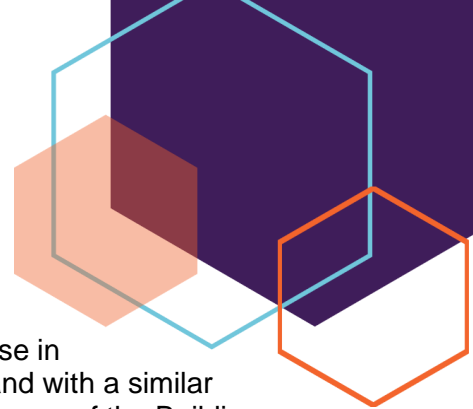
The Bracknell Forest BID has been successfully delivering a series of projects that will improve the attractiveness and safety of their business areas and provide new facilities for local employees. The BIDs will provide new direction signposts to improve navigation around the BID area for cyclists and pedestrians and help develop a sense of identity for the area. The 'pocket park' at Farley Lake will provide new seating and picnic facilities as well as outdoor gymnasium equipment, and the newly established 5K healthy run/walk route. The BID has also been holding 'Meet Your Neighbour' business breakfasts and is planning to hold a 'Know Your Neighbour' event in April.

## **Networking**

As reported in 2020, this past year's networking has essentially been through virtual meetings. Latterly, there has been a move to face-to-face meetings with great relief to all! SMEs generally remain optimistic but recognise the ever-increasing challenges.

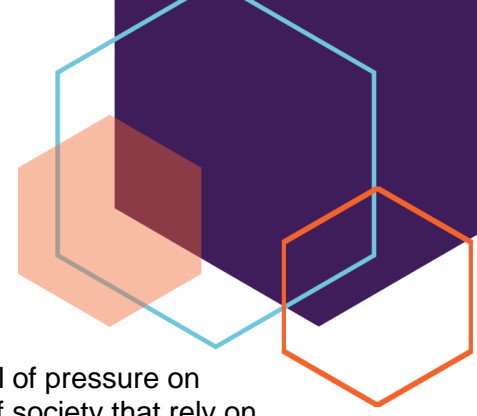
## **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding an encouraging improvement in output by 0.8% in January, returning the UK to pre-pandemic levels, the confrontation in Ukraine coupled with the persistence of Omicron are creating significant economic uncertainty. It is thought that inflation is likely to rise to 9% this year – the worst level since the 1970s.



Businesses and households alike will be hoping for some much-needed relief, but sadly, they are likely to be disappointed. In April, energy bills are set to significantly increase together with a raft of other tax rises. These issues coupled with the continuing challenges within Europe do not give much hope for optimism. There is now a great deal of pressure on the government to reduce the fuel duty, since this impacts all sectors of society that rely on “getting about” to transact their daily lives.

One of the lasting legacies of the pandemic will be the ability to work in different ways, in different places, and more companies will have distributed workforces empowering their teams to work closer to or from home. On this basis, SMEs will be able to offset some of the challenges 2022 will present. Hopefully, this will auger well for SMEs.





## Commuter Champion

### Overview

Covid-19 has continued to have a significant impact on public transport services in Bracknell Forest over the last 12 months. The Government's 2021 message to avoid using public transport and use alternative means, has been lifted and both bus and train services are now seeing increases in patronage. However, current levels are still significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Post-lockdown hybrid working is likely to see a majority of commuters working two to three days in the office and the balance from home, and so the Government and transport operators are having to adjust to this 'new normal.'

### Trains

I reported last year that both of our train operating companies, Great Western Railway (GWR) and South Western Railway (SWR) had signed short term 'Emergency Measures Agreements' whereby the Government took on their franchise commercial risks. These agreements were replaced with 'Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements' and these in turn are now being replaced by 'National Rail Contracts' (NRC).

SWR's NRC commenced on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021, with a two-year term and options to extend for two further years to May 2025, at the Department for Transport's (DfT) discretion. Train operating companies bear no revenue risk and very limited cost risks under these NRCs. These risks are now transferred to the DfT. SWR will be paid a fixed management fee and an additional performance fee, designed to incentivise train operating companies to achieve punctuality and operational targets to meet 'the highest level of performance for customers.' NRCs also place obligations on our local train companies to develop decarbonising policies and roadmaps towards achieving net zero carbon emissions.

GWR is now operating under similar arrangements, with their directly awarded contract running to 1 April 2023, with an extension option of up to one year.

Commenting on these NRCs, Matthew Gregory, First Group (the holding company for GWR and SWR) Chief Executive, said:

*"We welcome the announcement today by the Secretary of State of a plan for the future of the UK rail industry with the expertise, innovation and experience of private sector rail operators at the heart of the model. The National Rail Contracts leave us well-placed for lower risk, cash generative rail operations on those two networks. We have long called for this transition to a new contract structure with a far better balance of risk and reward, and which*

**COUNCILLOR  
NIGEL ATKINSON**



**Commuter Champion**

[nigel.atkinson@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.atkinson@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

*benefits customers by a clearer focus on performance, including the introduction of a new set of passenger service metrics.*

*“As the country begins the process of ‘building back better’ the essential role of public transport has never been clearer and our leading position in the sector means that we have an important role. Our rail services have a vital part to play in driving economic growth, combating climate change and supporting the development of vibrant and sustainable communities.”*

What have Bracknell Forest residents using our train services actually experienced over the last 12 months, in the light of all of these franchise changes?

Service reliability has generally been good, and trains are still noticeably cleaner than pre-pandemic. The move towards electronic and mobile ticketing has continued, with increased use of smartcards and improved apps. The new Flexi Season tickets introduced last year in response to hybrid working (allowing any 8 days travel in 28 days), will benefit some commuters, but anyone commuting more than 2 days per week on average, is likely to find that an annual season ticket will still be the most cost-effective ticket type. Train service timetable frequencies, particularly in peak hours, have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels, which is having a significant impact on our residents who commute into London.

The train service from Bracknell and Martins Heron to London Waterloo continues to suffer from a lack of any significant investment and I am working with James Sunderland MP, to lobby Government for more infrastructure improvements.

You may have seen in the news last year that the Government intends to create a new public body ‘Great British Railways’ (GBR) to *‘integrate the railways and deliver passenger-focused travel with simpler modern fares and reliable services.’* This new public body will integrate the railways, owning the infrastructure, collecting fare revenue, running and planning the network, and setting most fares and timetables. The trains themselves will still be run by train operating companies such as GWR and SWR. A fundamental aim of GBR is to simplify the current mass of confusing tickets, but we will have to wait until 2023 to see any of these benefits, when GBR will commence operation.

I attended Network Rail’s Wessex Stakeholder Conference on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **Buses**

Local bus operators have suffered similar Covid-19 problems as the train operating companies. Although patronage has slowly been increasing, towards the end of 2021 passenger levels were only at circa 70% of pre-Covid-19 levels on the best routes served.

In last year’s report, I referred to a government announcement of £3bn ‘bus revolution’ investment across England, which will result in passengers benefiting from more frequent, reliable, easier to use and cheaper bus services. As part of the initial funding, Bracknell Forest Council received funding to pursue enhanced partnerships with local bus operators. More details on this government funding for bus operators are contained further down. I attended an online seminar on the Government’s National Bus Strategy on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

## Great Western Railway (GWR)



The new trains for journeys through Crowthorne and Sandhurst stations that I mentioned in the last two year's reports have still not entered into service, although GWR has at least been running test trains on the North Downs Line. In Early October

2021, I asked Jane Jones, GWR's Head of Public Affairs for an update on the introduction of these tri-mode diesel electric trains, but she could not give a firm commitment on a date, citing Covid-19 and drivers having to work in 'Covid bubbles' which is impacting driver training, as the main reason for delay. I am more hopeful now though with the ending of lockdown, that Crowthorne and Sandhurst residents will benefit from these more sustainable trains in 2022, particularly as identical trains have completed testing and are operating passenger services in the Northern train franchise. I attended the GWR Annual Stakeholder Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.



At Sandhurst Station, unfortunately, we have not made any further progress with GWR in identifying suitable areas for providing more cycle storage capacity. This station has limited parking facilities and so any increase in cycle storage would relieve pressure on commuter parking in local streets. Sandhurst station is not easy to find an affordable workable and secure solution, but we are continuing to investigate options.

## South Western Railway (SWR)



Two key issues have impacted Bracknell Forest residents using the Bracknell and Martins Heron to London Waterloo services in the last 12 months; reduced frequency timetables during lockdown and shortened train formations.

Whilst the pre-pandemic off-peak half hour service frequency has been maintained, peak hour services have been cut back from up to 4 trains per hour, to nearer 2 trains per hour, particularly on evening peak hour services from London Waterloo. This coupled with train lengths often being reduced from 10 to 5 carriages, made it impossible to maintain any form of social distancing in October/November 2021. Following my own commuter journey experiences and being contacted by local residents with similar concerns, I raised this issue with David Wilby, SWR's Regional Development Manager. I also raised this issue at the SWR Annual Stakeholder Conference on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.

This issue of short formation trains arose because SWR had transferred some existing trains to another train operator, on the expectation that its new Class 701 trains as I reported last year, would be in service in Summer 2021. However, these new trains have still not entered service yet (see below) and this led to the shortage of carriages. Following the Stakeholder Conference and as a response to me raising this issue, Steve Tyler, SWR's Performance and Planning Director, advised that SWR was investigating transferring some carriages from other lines to the London Waterloo to Reading line and by early December 2021, most of our train services had returned to the full 10 carriage length.

I will be continuing to monitor this situation in 2022 though, as SWR is planning to transfer the current trains on the London Waterloo to Reading line, to the London Waterloo to Portsmouth line, again on the expectation that the new Class 701 trains will be in service. Although train lengths do not seem to be affected at the moment, some of the current trains appear to have been sent for refurbishment, which is likely to put additional pressures on train availability. I have recently written to David Wilby at SWR to seek his assurance that

SWR will maintain full train lengths on the London Waterloo to Reading line until the new Class 701 trains are in operation.

It is now looking likely that these new Class 701 trains branded 'Arterio' by SWR, will not be introduced until the summer or autumn of this year. SWR has yet to formally accept any of these trains, despite over 450 of the 750 carriages having been built. The delays are in part due to software issues and the operator has stated that *'SWR is waiting for manufacturer Alstom to supply a train that performs to specification and will deliver consistently better journeys for customers and colleagues. When they do, SWR will begin its extensive programme of testing, training and business mobilisation.'* The train drivers' union ASLEF has also raised a number of issues with the train's cab layout which Alstom is working on resolving.



All 750 carriages of these Class 701 trains were supposed to have been in service by the end of 2021. I am hopeful that I will be able to report some better news on these trains towards the end of 2022.

Last year, Network Rail published its South West Main Line Strategic Study. Significant investment is planned for the mainline between London Waterloo and Southampton, in response to predicted traffic growth. Disappointingly, apart from the introduction of new trains, Network Rail and SWR do not have any plans to upgrade the infrastructure on the London Waterloo to Reading line. Although the new trains represent a significant investment, these will not deliver any significant reduction in journey times or eliminate journey delays resulting from London Waterloo to Reading line trains being held behind other slower services, due to an absence of any passing places.

In September 2021, Bracknell Forest Council submitted a joint Officer and Councillor response to SWR's Consultation on its proposed December 2022 timetable. Our response covered a wide range of issues generally specific to the London Waterloo to Reading line. These included concerns about reduced peak hour service frequencies, which have been justified by SWR on the basis that the new Class 701 trains will have greater capacity, poor current journey times between Bracknell and Martins Heron and London Waterloo, maintaining service frequencies at Martins Heron station and a request to introduce night-time train services.

### **Buses - £3bn 'bus revolution'**

BFC will be submitting a draft 'Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan' as part of a wider 'Bus Service Improvement Plan' (BSIP) to the DfT in April 2022, with the final version expected to be submitted to the DT later this year. This plan has been agreed with the local bus operators and aims to provide a focus and framework working with local operators to develop the bus network and improve performance both in terms of increasing the viability of commercial services and ensuring that those services supported financially by BFC, continue to effectively meet the need of the communities that they serve.

BFC's vision for its Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan is *'To develop a viable and stable bus network that supports the local economy, provides better choice and improves quality of life in a safe and healthy environment.'*



The Plan focuses on commercial services, as these already carry a large proportion of passengers and represent the best opportunity to attract more use through modest frequencies and other improvements. This in turn will increase revenues and allow operators to invest in further improvement, to try to establish a cycle of growth.

Four workstreams are envisaged to deliver the aspirations of the BSIP:

- **Building up the network** – enhancing and developing services.
- **Building efficiency** – by tackling delays and pinch points.
- **Building value** – through easier ticketing and fares discounts.
- **Building up confidence** – by improved information and passenger infrastructure.

BFC is bidding for Government funding over the next 3 years, with the aim of more buses running to more places at more times, with cheaper fares and quicker journey times. This will improve the image of buses and increase their contribution towards the better economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Bracknell Forest’s residents.

BFC’s BSIP is available to download [here](#)

BFC has continued to challenge local bus operators to provide low emission and electric buses. However, the operators have advised that they are waiting for the larger national bus operators to start placing volume orders, which will reduce prices and make these vehicles more affordable.

### Courtney Buses and White Bus



Rebranding of Courtney buses to Thames Valley Buses following the takeover by Reading Buses, has continued over the last 12 months. All Courtney and White Bus services are now operating to their normal timetables following Covid-19 timetable adjustments in 2020/2021.

**white bus** Following the withdrawal of some BFC financially supported bus routes last year, there have been no further withdrawal of services this year. It is hoped that the BSIP implementation will eventually drive passenger usage and help to make more existing supported bus routes commercially viable in Bracknell Forest.



### Berkshire Local Transport Body and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

I am a nominated substitute on the Berkshire Local Transport Body and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and I attended meetings throughout 2021.

This body provides funding from a multi-million- pound devolved Government transport budget. Recent Bracknell Forest highway projects that have benefited from this funding have included improvements on the A322 Bagshot Road to improve capacity at the Sports Centre Roundabout.





I would like to take this opportunity to thank BFC Highways and Transport officers for their continued help, advice and support to me in the role of Commuter Champion over the last 12 months.





## Older People’s Champion

**COUNCILLOR  
MOIRA GAW**

### Overview

Over the past twelve months my priority has been to promote Older People in the Borough of Bracknell Forest, highlighting the opportunities and activities available for all our senior residents and assist where practical to promote available funding and signpost pathways to encourage engagement in health and wellbeing, through physical, practical, social, and holistic activities.

### Heathlands

In an exciting first for the Trust, a new therapy-led intermediate Care unit, with innovative and evolving roles throughout, is opening.

Heathlands is a purpose-built unit with 20 beds to support the people of Bracknell to receive their rehabilitation and treatment closer to home. It will be led by the therapy team, with a senior AHP running the unit, along with blended roles for HCA’s and Therapy Assistants so all care and treatment is rehab- focused. A rotation for Occupational Therapists between Bracknell Forest Council and Heathlands has been developed. This truly is a local service for residents, based in the heart of Bracknell



Older People’s Champion

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### Older Person’s Day

The Mayor of the Borough of Bracknell Forest, Councillor Ash Merry, stepped into the role of bingo caller for the day to celebrate Older Person’s Day at Bracknell Shopmobility. This free event was organised to celebrate the contribution Older People make to every aspect of life. The team at Bracknell Shopmobility hosted the event and prizes were donated by Waitrose, Hotel Chocolat, Whittards, Keep Mobile, Brown Bag, Marks and Spencer, The Old Manor, Coffee Barker, Kaspas and Tesco Martins Heron.



Everyone who came to the event joined in to make it the great success it was, and it was heartening that local businesses sponsored the event. It was a fun way to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions and achievements of older people in Bracknell Forest.



The MP for Bracknell Forest, James Sunderland also celebrated Older Person’s Day with a visit to Astbury Manor Care Home. The visit highlighted the contribution older

people make and provided an opportunity to thank them for the service they have given to the many different communities over the years. It was also an opportunity to thank the dedicated staff at Astbury Manor.

The Community Centre at Great Hollands was the venue for tea party with a difference on October 1<sup>st</sup>. This was a huge success with residents. The Mayor, Mayoress and Sixth Form pupils from Easthampstead Park School all joined the party. The sixth form pupils provided a variety of entertainment and a well-researched quiz for all those attending. Everyone concluded it was “good for both generations” and there are similarly intertwined celebrations to come next year.



### **Bracknell Forest Older People’s Consortium**

Many organisations across Bracknell Forest who offer direct delivery services to older residents have come together to develop the Bracknell Forest Older People’s Consortium. Representatives are from Age UK Berkshire, Sandhurst Day Centre, COATS Crowthorne, Age Concern Bracknell Forest, British Red Cross, The Ark Trust, Involve Community Services, Bracknell Forest Public Health and Bracknell Forest Council. The consortium has been funded by the NHS Charities Communities Partnerships Grants and is responsible for finding new and innovative ways of delivering both services and helping residents to reconnect with their support systems and communities. By working together, Bracknell Forests Older People’s Consortium will find more opportunities to deliver better outcomes for older people following the pandemic

**Bracknell Forest Older People’s Consortium** have been visible in the Lexicon sharing information on support services available to older residents and carers of older people in Bracknell Forest.



**Digital Inclusion** for Older People has been one of the key topics covered by the Bracknell Forest Older People’s Consortium, this has been supported by the Ark trust. A support service has been launched to ensure that older residents (over 60) in Bracknell Forest can stay digitally connected.

The Digital Inclusion Champions can offer free internet access, IT support and training and surveys have been in place to gauge the training and support required. The Digital inclusion survey involves making sure that residents have access to information and communication technologies. Over the last two years, access to these tools, and the knowledge of how to use them, has become more important than ever. Bracknell Forest Council are currently running a project to understand the level of digital inclusion in the borough, including the barriers people are facing to getting online and the support currently available from other organisations.



### **Older Drivers Awareness Week 2021/2022 Webinars**

Older Drivers Awareness Week took place virtually in September and covered topics such as risks faced by older drivers on the roads and safe driving tips to help them reduce risks, as well as advice for older drivers who are considering an electric vehicle.

Driving appraisals and assessment, should everyone have a dash cam? Understanding notifiable medical conditions and driving with dementia were popular topics. The week

culminated with eyesight, diabetes and understanding the effects on driving.

The Older Driver's Forum will be carrying out online webinars about the recent changes to the Highway Code during March 2022. There will be speakers from various agencies and PC Liz Johnson of the Road Safety Team will be on the panel to answer questions on the recent changes. This is a key service that offers practical knowledge, help and solutions to many of our older driver's questions.

### **Age Concern Bracknell Forest**

This well-run day centre provides a safe and secure environment for older people to be together, communicate and have fun. The Unit is fully dementia friendly, and the bespoke service really does take care of resident's individual needs in a vibrant community environment. The variety of activities is impressive with day visitors recreating master artists, preparing vegetable gardens, all manner of craft activities and an enviable treasure trove of puzzles. Dancing, singing and the in-house cinema complete the offer available to support older people. The staff work hard to make sure that care is a priority and fun is a regular daily activity.

### **Sandhurst Day Centre**

The Sandhurst Day centre continues to enable older people in the community to have access to a facility which provides for their social needs and wellbeing. A minibus service collects and returns members to and from the centre. Companionship, social activities, meals, and a range of care facilities are provided. The pandemic has curtailed activities over the past year, but it is now business as usual with former members returning and many new members joining. The centre is supported by the Sandhurst Day Centre shop which is now open six days a week and is always ready to accept donations that when sold, benefit the Sandhurst Day Centre residents.

### **Local Support Sessions for People with Dementia**



Age UK Berkshire has run various services for people with dementia. This includes the Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy Group. Attendees can take part in meaningful and stimulating activities, proven to help maintain memory and mental function. The groups provide a fun, supportive environment where people can build new relationships and take part in;

- ~ Discussions
- ~ Quizzes
- ~ Creative Arts
- ~ Word Games
- ~ Physical Activities
- ~ Musical Sessions

There are also various local Dementia Walks available, and sessions were run in Bracknell on the 16th September, 14th October, 11th November and 9th December. All proved to be well supported and very successful.

### **Organisations Supporting Older People with Funding**

I have been fortunate to be able to match organisations supporting older people with funding that is available which they have not been aware of. This has helped put in place additional resources where they are most needed.



*Funding For Wellbeing Activities Reducing Isolation.*

Funding is specifically for activities and projects that further the needs of the ageing adult population through wellbeing activities and programmes to prevent social isolation and loneliness. There are new guidelines for applications and criteria that must be fulfilled to be

eligible to apply. Funding is limited and so those applications that are championed by a local Home Instead Office will be prioritised.

### **Funding for Charities Working with Older People**



Grants of between £15,000 and £75,000 are available to charitable organisations which provide care and services for older people, particularly if they have a neurodegenerative condition or are isolated. The Wolfson Foundation will provide funding for new build, refurbishment or equipment projects which aim to provide increased access to services for new and existing users, improve the quality and range of services, and improve the financial stability of the organisation. Match funding is required for projects costing more than £50,000.

The **Hodge Foundation's** aim is to support projects that have effective solutions to helping those most in need. The funding is awarded around four main areas but the key area for older people is Welfare.



**Welfare** – the Foundation supports charities working with people who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged and who need assistance to improve their lives. This includes a variety of causes and groups including the elderly, homeless, disabled, special needs and those with mental health issues.

**The W.G Edwards Charitable Foundation** support a diverse range of charities supporting older people, from large institutions to small community-run organisations. Around 70 organisations each year are successful in obtaining grants, usually between £1,000 to £,3000. The average grant is £1,500. The Foundation was established to support capital projects and innovative projects but is unable to assist with running costs or salaries. The Foundation will consider a donation if around 80% are over the age of 65.

### **Organisations Supporting Older People**



This year a popular local *Facebook* page ran a community Secret Santa initiative for local elderly people, both private and care home residents who would usually perhaps not get anything at all for Christmas, with residents buying from a list of small gifts (scarves, candles, mugs etc.) that the residents themselves requested. The community group also asked for any additional nominees to be sent through and added them to the list. This was a very successful initiative and the partnerships developed between care homes, residents from all walks of life and a community spirited Facebook are to be applauded and will be further developed next year.

It is one of my priorities to help develop this initiative in Bracknell Forest in time for Christmas 2022. We have the means and desire to be able to reach out to older residents and support them over the Festive period.

Re3 have proved beyond doubt that they are committed to reaching those residents who have no PC or internet access and need to take rubbish items to the tip. They have provided a contact number to call which is manned Monday to Friday. Callers are given a slot time and order number so that they can take items for disposal. This service has been very well received by older people who do not have up to date technology available to them and has enabled them to access the tip at a day and time to suit them.

*U3A* I have been involved for some time now with this well supported charitable organisation, catering for people who are no longer in full time employment, and who come together to learn, laugh, and live. They share existing hobbies, explore new ones, and develop skills while making new friends. There are many different streams of opportunity from guest speakers to theatre trips, regular meet ups and coffee mornings. There is something for everyone to enjoy. Regular activities take place during the day Monday to Friday, so are aimed at the retired and those working part time prior to retirement. There is a modest annual membership fee and older people can access over 50 different interest groups including walking, trips out, languages, IT, book groups, music, arts, and dance.



This Christmas they also offered a Christmas day chat via Zoom for members who were spending the day on their own.

*Keep Mobile* continues to provide transport for the elderly and is committed to door-to-door pick up and drop off. As well as operating a “dial a ride scheme,” *Keep Mobile* also provides opportunities for group trips to the theatre and other events. They also cover a wide range of day excursions to the seaside and other interesting venues such as Cheltenham, Salisbury, and Hayling Island. The trips are available for older people and their carers, and all drivers are specially trained to transport older people.

During the pandemic, *Keep Mobile* operated a flexible programme helping older residents with shopping, collecting prescriptions, running trips to the hospital, and taking members safely to vaccination centres for their vaccines. The transport for vaccinations was free of charge to all and has helped many older residents in getting vaccinated.

*Everyone Active* are currently offering a bespoke senior membership package for those aged 66 and above. The aims are to ensure that all abilities can access exercise suitable to individual needs, promoting a healthier lifestyle. Additionally, senior swimming sessions are available for all those aged 50 and over helping to maintain a healthy weight, healthy heart, and lungs.

*Bracknell Forest Help Yourself* has a directory of different activities and interests for everyone as well as Older People in the Borough and residents can find interesting opportunities such as group exercise classes, walking clubs, cookery clubs, book clubs, art clubs, continuing education, jewellery making, pet therapy and music groups available for those with specific interests. Additionally, Parish and Town councils are also able to help with information in their local areas.

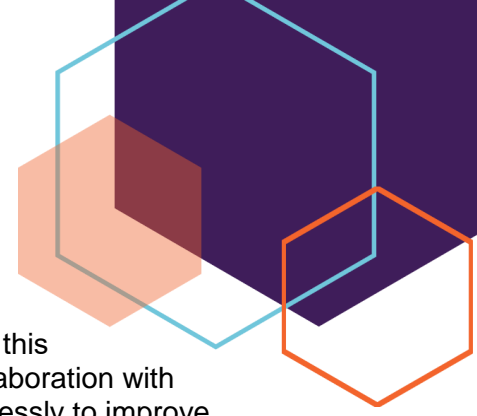
*Martins Heron, Monthly Community Party* I have been working with the Tesco Community Champion to develop the community party held monthly at Tesco Martins Heron. This outreach project provides togetherness for older residents on a regular basis and senior party goers can be heard singing along whilst enjoying food and drinks. It also provides companionship and a listening ear when required and has become a very popular event in the area. It would be lovely to replicate this generosity with regular community parties in other parts of the Borough.



“Re-engage” (previously known as Contact the Elderly), are currently searching for volunteers to be “tea party organisers” to assist in running tea parties, to act as social groups

for older people at a time in their lives when their social circles are diminishing. This will provide some of the life-enhancing social connections which are vital for health and wellbeing.

It has been a pleasure to work as the Older Peoples' Champion during this municipal year and I have been particularly proud of the increased collaboration with community partners, residents, charities, and individuals who work tirelessly to improve, enhance, and develop facilities for older residents living in Bracknell Forest. My thanks go to fellow councillors and officers who have assisted on this journey by giving their time, support, and resources.





## Large Business Champion

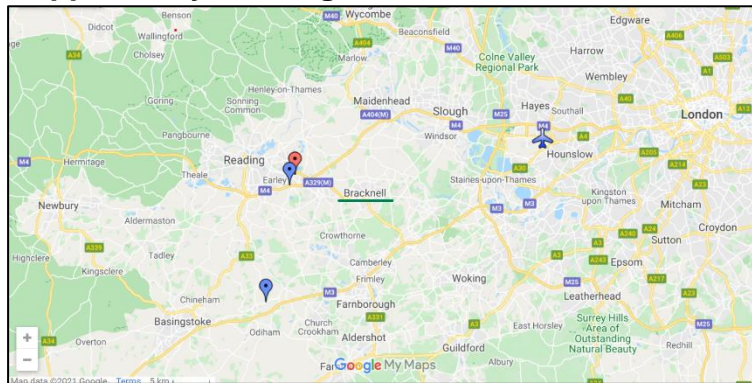
**COUNCILLOR  
ANKUR SHIV BHANDARI**

### Driving Large Business Forward

As a council we started focusing on large businesses separately during the current council term. As a recap, large businesses are the ones with more than 250 employees. Although the past few years have been challenging on many fronts for both small and large businesses, I am hopeful of a strong upward trajectory going forward. In my report, I will re-emphasise some of the positives we have in Bracknell which are conducive to large business growth and will introduce new points as have arisen in the past year and also those which are in focus for the future.

### Bracknell: An opportunity for Large Businesses

Bracknell offers distinct advantages for large businesses to prosper in the borough. Some of the key benefits are:



**Large Business Champion**

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- a) Proximity to strong road network infrastructure with robust access to both M4 and M3 motorways.
- b) Proximity to Heathrow airport.
- c) Proximity to London and ease of access through road, rail and bus networks.
- d) Access to a strong talent pool due to its location.
- e) A preferred place to stay for employees supported by beautiful green parks and countryside, robust education provision for school children and a good IT infrastructure.
- f) 85.9% (68,200) of Bracknell Forest's working age population is economically active compared to an average of 82% of those in the Southeast and 79% in Great Britain.
- g) Bracknell Forest has a highly skilled work force with 42.7% of its' workforce being educated to NVQ level 4 (degree level) and above. This is marginally lower than the Southeast figure of 43.3% but higher than Great Britain's at 40.3%.
- h) Excellent infrastructure with a recently renovated town centre for which phase 2 was completed in 2017. When the Lexicon opened, the development included:
  - 1. 70 new retail and food and beverage outlets, including two 80,000 sq. ft stores housing Fenwick and Marks and Spencer, and a 12-screen cinema.



2. 3,800 car spaces were provided in new or upgraded car parks.
  3. 8 core buildings and 6 place-making squares for events and activities.
  4. £6.5 million extra investment in the highway infrastructure from Bracknell Forest Council.
- i) Bracknell Forest also fares well in the latest iteration of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) where it ranks as the 284<sup>th</sup> least deprived area out of 317 local authorities.



## Journey so far



Bracknell has been home to many large businesses for several years including Panasonic, Waitrose, Fujitsu, Syngenta, Boehringer Ingelheim etc. However, we have also lost some big businesses or had their presence significantly curtailed, such as Vodafone, BMW, Dell, HP etc. This highlights the need for efforts to ensure both retention of existing large businesses and to

attract new ones. Business needs change and we as a council need to see how best we can continue to support these changing business needs of our large businesses. The renewed focus of Bracknell Forest Council to support large business will support this journey more strongly moving forward.



## Path post-Covid

Drawing on the most recent business survey, the local economy is now emerging from the pandemic with 51% of those surveyed, expecting to see an improvement in their performance. However, 35% said their business turnover was substantially lower than normal as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. 52% have changed the way their business works over the longer term as a result of Covid-19.

44% of businesses said the pandemic impacted on the wellbeing of staff and 23% said that their staff had suffered from increased stress levels as a result of Covid-19.

Recruitment remains an issue for businesses with potential employees now expecting to adopt hybrid working patterns and salaries to reflect increasing cost of living levels.

Supply chain reliability has also affected some sectors such as the construction industry and computer tech businesses. Changing requirements for commercial floorspace are not yet known as businesses review the need for bricks and mortar accommodation.

Promoting carbon-neutral programmes, health, and wellbeing. Increased awareness about the opportunities to invest in broadband through the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group, Bracknell BID/BEIS.

## **Economic Growth Review**

Inward investment has been relatively static over the last twelve months due to the uncertainties around the pandemic and the EU transition. Promising signs of increasing confidence with the purchase by a Singapore company, Keppel Capital of the Vodafone premises and the SEGRO site progressing with the final phase for a distribution business.

Focus is to promote electric vehicle charging infrastructure across business settings and to increase take-up of sustainable travel modes.

## **Levelling Up Impact**

With the publication of the Levelling Up White paper and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, further details of which are awaited, the Council will have the opportunity to identify potential investment and economic development projects to support local businesses.

## **Digital Infrastructure Review**

The delivery of full fibre across the borough continues as part of the Berkshire wide Digital Infrastructure Group. The DIG successfully bid for funding to work collectively to deliver and achieve improved digital connectivity across the Thames Valley Region. This will develop the digital asset platform, driving consistency in asset data standards and the importance of 5G connectivity engagement, collaboration with Estates, Legal, Highways and Planning teams. This will shape the way we look at local authority asset management and the approach to delivering 5G technology.

## **Skills Development**

The Bracknell Forest Economic and Skills Development Partnership has identified skills and training as a potential barrier to economic growth. Through the ESDP small, medium and larger businesses are being invited to contribute their insight and experiences which in turn will be used to shape future programmes and initiatives. The government's Levelling Up agenda is expected to involve businesses and employers in the delivery.

## **BFC/Dept for Works & Pensions (DWP) Partnership Agreement**

The Partnership Agreement entered into by the Council and DWP aims to work collaboratively to support our residents to gain employment. Through a detailed mapping process, we will identify actions to improve the gateways to employment for the individual and the employer. Businesses are being engaged to help shape the emerging workstreams.

## **The support system and collaborations to support Large Business**

Bracknell Forest Council works with many different agencies to support businesses in our borough. Some of these are listed below:

*Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership* is a business-led, multi-sector partnership mandated by government to lead activities that drive local economic growth. To date, they have secured and allocated £182m of UK and European public funds to deliver a wide range of initiatives in the Thames Valley Berkshire area. Alongside London, the area is the UK's economic powerhouse contributing over £42.5bn in GVA



The LEP contributes to the sustainable economic growth of the Berkshire area through the implementation of a Strategi Economic Plan which has four programmes:

- a) Business Environment
- b) Skills, Education and Employment
- c) International
- d) Infrastructure



*The Thames Valley Berkshire Business Growth Hub (berkshirebusinesshib.co.uk)* offers fully



funded, impartial support services and expert advice to entrepreneurs, start-ups and established businesses in Berkshire. The service includes free clinics and workshops on a range of business issues, alongside a special High Growth Programme to provide tailored support to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) with high growth potential.

*Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group* is the voice of business in the Thames Valley. On behalf of micro to multinational organisations, they aim to drive better economic conditions and new opportunities for members and the wider community. Through their recognised centre of excellence for global trade and inward investment, they provide services that promote and create opportunities for the Thames Valley business community. They do this whilst protecting trade and the local/national economic environment. They offer local engagement, regional representation, and global opportunity.

*Bracknell Business Improvement District* A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area within which, the businesses have voted to invest collectively to improve their trading environment. Businesses in the Southern and Western areas of Bracknell voted in favour of plans to set up a Business Improvement District (BID) to run from 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2025.

The Bracknell BID area's vision is to be recognised as the place where businesses develop and grow through collaboration and investment. Bracknell BID has two objectives:

**1. Objective 1 Infrastructure**

Provide a great infrastructure and a smart working environment for businesses to operate and people and services to communicate, access and move around, safely and effectively.

**2. Objective 2 Business Growth & Investment**

Support businesses in Bracknell to grow, develop and invest by creating a great working environment to operate effectively and attract talent and investment.

**3. Collaboration between the Council & BID**

- Board representation and officer support.
- Public realm and environmental projects.
- Crime and public safety schemes.



- Skills and recruitment.
- Business specific information sharing.



*Economic and Skills Development Partnership (ESDP) The ESDP focuses on:*

- Providing a co-ordinated voice and support for the Bracknell Forest local business community;
- Developing and supporting programmes and initiatives for:
  - business recovery & renewal;
  - training and skills development;
  - infrastructure development;
- Representing the local business community in responding to central and local government consultations;
- Supporting Bracknell Forest businesses and the local authority in seeking funding from government and the private sector;
- Providing advice and support to Bracknell BID;
- Developing strong working relationships with the local authority, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Thames Valley Growth Hub, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and other business support organisations.

In the near future, the ESDP, through the sub-groups will champion the following:

- **Business Recovery & Renewal:** with the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, Bracknell BID, Growth Hub, LEP and the local authority;
- **Skills:** Undertake projects and initiatives with the Chamber of Commerce, higher education providers (including Active Learning), Bracknell BID and the local authority covering adult learning, CPD and skills development;
- **Infrastructure:** Undertake projects and initiatives in partnership with the local authority, Bracknell BID and LEP.

Importantly, The Bracknell BID has also identified the value of a coherent influencing voice for the business sectors and has asked Bob Collis as the chair of the ESDP, to lead a sub-group with input from the BID to develop key themes as above.

## **Potential impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War**

(provided by Thames Valley LEP)

### **1. The caveats within this note**

Whilst it has horrified us all, the crisis in Ukraine has been going for less than a month at the time of writing this paper. The outcome of the crisis is impossible to predict. We know that Russian expectations of a quick operation due to its overwhelming superiority in numbers, has not come to pass; we don't know the degree to which Russia will dig in or whether Putin, aware that he has overplayed his hand, will seek a face-saving exit. If Russia were to install a puppet government, non-compliance from the Ukrainian people, possibly with resistance type activities, could follow. Some argue that with the West's eyes on Russia, China might exploit the moment to stake its claim over Taiwan. The Director General of the CBI, Tony Danker, told the Treasury Select Committee last week: *"I do not think companies are trying to make long term calculations about when this war might end or otherwise"*.

This note is therefore written in the context of much uncertainty. The note also cannot hope to capture the myriad of possible effects of the war in Ukraine. Indeed, the day before this note was written, a seminar held by the Resolution Foundation at which guest speakers were Jared Bernstein of President Biden's Council of Economic Advisors, Rachel Reeves, the Shadow Chancellor, and John Van Reenan, Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, covered practically nothing of Ukraine, the speakers evidently feeling

that they couldn't say very much about the economics of Ukraine with credibility at this stage. This note does, however, flesh out one or two key issues.

## 2. Economic Outlook

The Ukraine crisis comes just as business was hoping for better news after two years of Covid, and all that that implies for the economy. Since the Autumn, the UK has enjoyed the strongest peacetime growth in a century, with around 300,000 more people in employment.

The obvious area that the war in Ukraine could affect the UK, is in imports-exports to Russia and Ukraine and the effects of economic sanctions on Russia. It should be noted that the UK does not import or export massive amounts to Russia, so sanctions will affect us less directly than some. In Tony Danker's words, this will not be a "devastating hit", but Russia is a closed market for the medium to longer term.

Moreover, Russia has 90% share of the global market in neon (needed for semi-conductors) and over 50% in pig-iron (used to make steel), so sanctions against Russia will hit industries particularly reliant on those materials. Less tangibly, wars, quite simply, make people afraid. Fear and uncertainty could encourage firms to put off investment decisions. The conflict is likely to weaken GDP growth and increase the probability of a recession.

This comes at a time when, whilst the economic recovery is underway, the UK already faced a cost-of-living crisis. According to the Resolution Foundation, rising food and energy prices risk driving a second inflation spike this Autumn that could reach over 10 per cent for poorer households – significantly higher than the peak for richer households. This is because the poorest tenth of households spend twice the share of their family budgets on food and energy bills compared to the richest tenth of households. Professor Jagjit Chadha of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research told the Treasury Select Committee that he thinks growth will be somewhere in the region of 1 per cent lower this year and 0.5 per cent lower next year, on current forecasts.

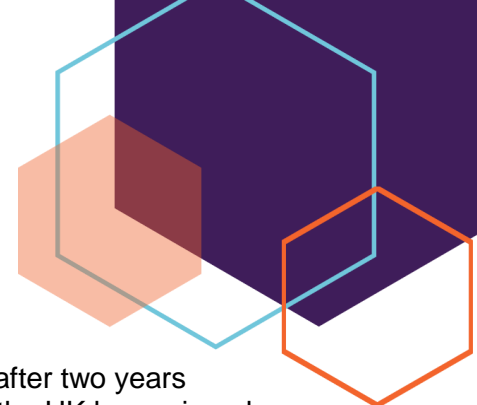
The Chancellor will present his Spring Statement to Parliament on 23 March. What had looked like a low-key event may now be more significant.

## 3. Oil, Gas and Diesel

The most obvious area for concern is the oil and gas imports that previously came from Russia. In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2021, the UK imported £558.7 million worth of gas from Russia, as well as £2.6 billion worth of refined oil and £1 billion worth of crude oil. Russia also supplies over a third of Europe's gas, according to Reuters, and economic difficulties on the continent could affect the UK economy as well, given our close trading ties.

This last point is important; despite the numbers above, the UK imports very little oil, although a third of UK diesel comes from Russia. Even gas is less than 4 per cent. The problem is that oil is a global market, with the price set by the marginal buyer. We do not have the spare capacity to compensate for Russian oil, even within OPEC. Oil was already heading to \$100 a barrel before the war; it recently peaked at \$140 a barrel, although the price subsequently fell back.

Apart from the effect on families, especially the low paid, many companies will struggle to cope in the next six months without help, whether energy intensive users, SMEs or others. We already know that the average energy bill will move up to £200 a month from April. According to Nathan Piper, Head of Oil and Gas Research at Investec, giving evidence to



the Treasury Select Committee, there will be a doubling in people's energy bills year on year. [Note, however, that not every industry pays the same price for energy.]

Petrol prices are rising and with diesel now hitting around £2 per litre, this will inevitably hit logistics and distribution companies. The majority of public transport is still diesel powered and suffering from post-Covid drop in passenger volumes. Diesel could be rationed in Germany, as soon as next month, with repercussions for the UK.

#### **4. Other Industrial Sectors**

Apart from oil, gas and diesel, the UK imports £1.3 billion of non-ferrous metals from Russia, while, again in the four quarters to Q3 2021, we exported £386 million worth of cars, £272.2 million of medical and pharmaceutical products, along with large amounts of specialised machinery, mechanical power generators and general industrial machinery. The exports of pharmaceutical products mentioned above may particularly impact Berkshire, given our strengths in life sciences.

UK trade with Ukraine is inevitably much smaller, but in the timeframe mentioned above, the UK exported £85.5 million of medicinal and pharmaceutical products, £83 million of cars and £45.7 million of 'other' chemicals. Again, Berkshire's life sciences sector may take a hit from this.

#### **5. Net Zero**

The UK and, indeed, wider Europe will need to find ways to plug the gaps in their energy consumption if sanctions prevent access to Russian gas. Speaking at the Resolution Foundation, Rachel Reeves argued that this meant we must go further and faster on green energy in the UK. She wondered if the government would instead focus on sourcing more domestic oil and gas in the short-medium term, thereby compromising our net zero target, as well as reintroducing fracking. Reeves wondered if a divergence would open up between government and opposition on this issue.

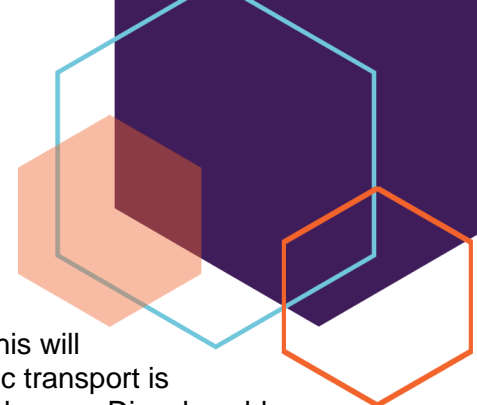
Tony Danker of the CBI has spoken of more oil and gas sourced from the UK but has opposed fracking. Danker told the Treasury Select Committee that we need to double down on renewable and clean energy solutions. Amrita Sen, Director of Research at Energy Aspects, told the Treasury Select Committee that, in the small print, Germany has said it will no longer retire coal by 2030. In order to avoid turning off the lights, it may end up using hydrocarbons rather than a renewables only strategy.

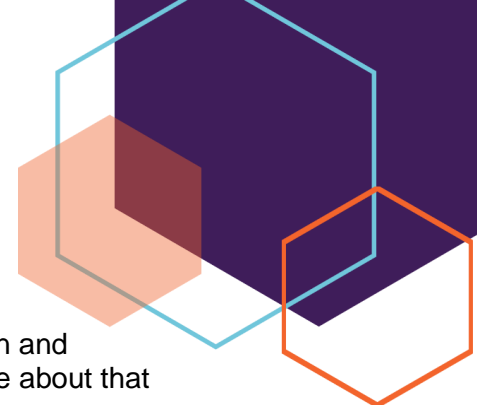
#### **6. Charitable giving**

Finally, there may be some impact on charitable giving to UK based charities as the horror and vacuum of a European war sucks in the available charitable cash to a big high profile 'good' cause. Donated goods may go to the Ukrainian relief effort rather than UK charity shops and outlets. Many UK-based charities reported financial difficulties after losing two years of fundraising events etc. through Covid, so a new charitable 'whale' event could be the final push to those hoping that 2022 would restart the flow of donations back to the UK charitable sector.

### **Looking Forward**

As we move forward into 2022 and beyond, there are certain important factors that will play a strong part in how the landscape for large businesses evolves in the Brough of Bracknell Forest. Some of the key ones are highlighted below:

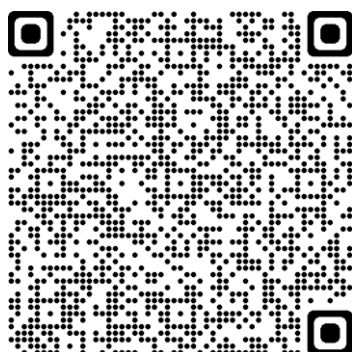




## 1. Post Covid Growth

How we ensure growth coming out of the pandemic will be key. At a council level, we will continue to work on a development plan and in addition, we will leverage the support of our partner agencies. The Local Enterprise Partnership has launched a recovery and renewal plan and we will be leveraging key aspects from that as well. You can view more about that plan from here:

<http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/getfile/Thames%20Valley%20Berkshire%20LEP%20Recovery%20and%20Renewal%20Plan-compressed.pdf> or through scanning the QR code below:



## 2. Increasing non-retail share of business.

Although retail as a sector continues to be a very important sector for Bracknell, to ensure further resilience to economic forces, it is important that we try to develop the presence of non-retail businesses in the borough as well. The below snapshot provides a view of our recent status in terms of businesses from various sectors.

GVA										
Industry	Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste	Manufacturing	Construction	Distribution	I&C	Finance	Real estate	Prof	Public services	Other services
<b>Local Authority</b>										
Bracknell Forest	£34m (1%)	£127m (3%)	£175m (4.5%)	£912m (23%)	£884m (22%)	£99m (2.5%)	£553m (13.5%)	£639m (16%)	£412m (10%)	£178m (4.5%)
Slough	£286m (4%)	£952m (14%)	£193m (3%)	£1.475bn (21.5%)	£1.699bn (25%)	£84m (1%)	£490m (7%)	£961m (14%)	£531m (7.5%)	£187m (3%)
Reading	£622m (8.5%)	£175m (2%)	£261m (4%)	£1.288bn (18%)	£1.594bn (22%)	£453m (6%)	£654m (9%)	£1.126bn (15.5%)	£834m (12%)	£216m (3%)
Wokingham	£410m (7%)	£268m (4%)	£263m (4%)	£814m (13%)	£1.836bn (29%)	£95m (2%)	£924m (15%)	£819m (13%)	£660m (10%)	£205m (3%)
Windsor and Maidenhead	£108m (1.8%)	£258m (4.4%)	£388m (6.6%)	£1.220bn (20.7%)	£1.028bn (17.5%)	£156m (2.7%)	£1.093bn (18.6%)	£740m (12.6%)	£561m (9.5%)	£332m (5.6%)
West Berkshire	£314m (4%)	£904m (12.5%)	£467m (6.5%)	£1.136bn (16%)	£1.537bn (21.5%)	£214m (3%)	£821m (11.5%)	£785m (11%)	£691m (9%)	£331m (5%)

Source: ONS, 2017

You can see that the manufacturing industry percentage in Bracknell is one of the lowest amongst other neighbouring boroughs. We should be trying to redress this imbalance.



### 3. Increasing collaboration with partner agencies

As we move forward from the past year of uncertainty, it is critical that Bracknell Forest Council leverages all the potential support available through partner agencies to assist large businesses in the borough.

### 4. Carbon reduction

The council has committed to aggressive carbon reduction targets by 2050. Large businesses have an important role to play in this. Below are some of the measures planned in collaboration with partner agencies to achieve that objective.

#### 1. Initiatives in partnership with Bracknell BID (Business Improvement District)

- a) The BID has several projects planned or ongoing that will contribute to the reduction of the carbon footprint.
- b) The BID is actively working with the council on improving cycle/walkways around the BID area through improving navigation signage, white lining and vegetation overgrowth clearance and management. They are also looking at making these routes more attractive and safer to users, by increasing lighting and installing CCTV.
- c) BID are looking at improving connectivity throughout the BID area by looking at potential problem areas which have been highlighted where pedestrians may have difficulty crossing roads. It is hoped that by delivering these projects it will increase the use of sustainable means of travel, such as walking and cycling, and reduce emissions.
- d) The BID is working on improving outdoor amenities throughout the BID area such as pocket parks and a healthy walking route. It is hoped this should lead workers to spend some time outside of the office and thus reduce lighting, heating etc.
- e) The BID has promoted 'Low Carbon Workspaces Grant' to BID businesses, in its e-bulletin, website and social media channels. The BID has also encouraged suppliers to offer discounts to those who avail of this grant.
- f) The BID is looking at electric vehicle charging points throughout the BID area, with the aim of these being installed sometime in the future.

#### 2. Initiatives in collaboration with Thames Valley Berkshire- Local Enterprise Partnership

- a) **Low Carbon Workspaces** <https://www.lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk/> ERDF funded scheme offering Berkshire SMEs grants of between £1,000 to £5,000 to cover up a third of the cost of making energy.
- b) **TVB Smart City Project** – More details can be viewed from the link: <http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/tvbsmartcity.htm>
- c) **Lora WAN network** (Internet of Things/IoT network) is currently being built out across Berkshire – target completion Summer 2021 – will give 98% coverage of Berkshire and will allow public services/LAs (as well as the private sector) to utilise the platform to help save money and improve services.
- d) **Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum** – This continues to look at strategic transport options focused on reducing the carbon footprint.
- e) **M4 LEP Corridor hydrogen infrastructure project** – This is in early stages but work is ongoing with LEPs along the M4 corridor (Swindon and Wilts LEP leading) to review if an infrastructure intervention is required to facilitate hydrogen fuel infrastructure installations on the corridor. <https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/news-events/business->





[growth-summit-2018/our-place-in-hydrogen-technology.pdf?sfvrsn=d29c3143\\_2](https://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/growth-summit-2018/our-place-in-hydrogen-technology.pdf?sfvrsn=d29c3143_2)

- f) **The LEP** have also undertaken a Net Zero Carbon research to identify gaps or focus areas required towards moving to Net Zero. The report can be accessed here: [Berkshire Net Zero Research Gap Analysis and Recommendations.pdf](https://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Berkshire%20Net%20Zero%20Research%20Gap%20Analysis%20and%20Recommendations.pdf) ([thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk](https://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk))

#### **5. Alignment on KPIs to measure progress**

As we focus on further supporting large businesses, it is essential that we measure progress of the same to ensure momentum. For this, Key Performance Indicators (**KPIs**), not more than 5, will be aligned with key stakeholders and measured at agreed intervals.

#### **6. Raising awareness of the support available to Large businesses from the council**

In some initial meetings I have had with the leaders of large businesses in our area, I was surprised to find that they had limited knowledge of the scope of support that was available from the council. Moving forward, ensuring this awareness would be important.

**7. Review and update** information provided through BFC website, social media, and external networks to provide emerging advice and guidance. Join up the Public Health agenda with local businesses through the ESDP.

**8. Promote skills & employment partnership** with key stakeholders to identify needs and delivery – building on the newly established working arrangements with DWP

**9. Promote electric vehicle charging infrastructure** across business settings. Increase take-up of sustainable travel modes. Increase awareness about the opportunities to invest in broadband through the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group, Bracknell BID/BEIS.

**10. Marketing campaign to increase knowledge** of suitable alternatives and finance, initiatives, or grants, directly involving the BID and ESDP.

#### **What can Large Businesses expect from the Council?**

Bracknell Forest Council wishes to ensure the prosperity and health of the large businesses in our borough. Below are some support options that are available for large businesses and any bespoke support can always be discussed:

- Information support on regulations governing Business operations.
- Capability development support options for their employees.
- Provision of infrastructure and services support to launch/expand/relocate any large business.
- Long-term strategic planning to ensure the long-term interests of the large business and Bracknell Forest council are aligned.
- Access to various business support bodies to provide bespoke assistance as required.

Above all, we wish to play any role we can to support the growth of large businesses in the borough. Business leaders should feel comfortable discussing any challenges or growth options.

## **Synergies between Large and Small Businesses**

There will be important synergies between large and small businesses in the borough and they need to be leveraged wherever possible. The best scenario for Bracknell is where both large and small businesses exist in a resourceful and profitable ecosystem for all. Local supply chains between businesses can bring more growth and prosperity to all businesses and the borough. I will continue to work with Councillor Bob Wade in his role as a small business champion to realise these synergies wherever possible.

## **My continued personal focus on supporting Large Business Growth**

I am passionate about the growth of business and businesses in our borough and will prioritise my focus over the next year in the following areas:

- Ensuring key contact points between large businesses and the council are connected.
- Raising awareness of the support available to large businesses from the council.
- Exploring options to further grow the share of non-retail businesses in the borough.
- Leveraging the support available from our partner agencies to assist large business growth.
- Exploring options to build the non-retail share of business in the borough.
- Looking at opportunities to further build the capability of the employees of large businesses.
- Working with our partner agencies to continue to reduce the carbon footprint in the borough.

## **Conclusion**

Challenges still remain with rising costs of energy, geo-political conflicts impacting the country and the aftereffects of Covid. However, there is hope on the horizon as the world and Bracknell emerge from the pandemic. There is a buzz of activity in the business world, and we will use this to generate and maintain momentum where we can. Our focus continues to further support the growth of existing large businesses, attract new businesses and hopefully support the realisation of these opportunities.

## Voluntary Sector Champion

### Introduction

With this report, I had wanted to concentrate on the wonderful staff who have helped the volunteering process over the Covid period. However, the recent events in Ukraine are at the front of my mind and my thoughts are with everyone who is affected by the conflict.



At the time of writing, Putin has recently invaded Ukraine. As you read this a month on, it's difficult to know what the situation will be. I can only hope that it is improving, and that diplomatic resolution is more of a possibility.

The conflict in Ukraine has, sadly, brought another huge and devastating requirement for volunteering. Bracknell Residents have once again done whatever they can, with many people offering a variety of support.

A reminder that the best way to support those affected is by donations to official aid agencies, who are best placed to get supplies to those affected quickly and efficiently. Residents may wish to make financial contributions to aid agencies, such as:

[Disasters Emergency Committee – Ukraine humanitarian appeal](#)  
[UNICEF – Ukraine crisis: donate now to protect children](#)  
[British Red Cross – Ukraine Appeal](#)

There is something about great adversity that brings out great kindness and strength in people. I regularly hear, and say myself, 'what can you do?'. Then I remember that volunteering is about doing what you can, whatever the size of the challenge. Despite recent worldwide events, we should remember it's not only large, catastrophic events that depend on and motivate volunteers. There are hundreds of volunteers making a difference to people in Bracknell Forest every day.

### Infrastructure

Volunteering is not a nine to five job. Even for employed staff, the past few years have seen them go above and beyond their job descriptions and 'paid hours'. I want to recognise how council and partner employees have exceeded the expectations of their 'normal' roles to put in place the right infrastructures to support people in situations we have never experienced before. It has taken effort and dedication from volunteers and staff alike to put effective frameworks



**COUNCILLOR  
MIKE GIBSON**



**Voluntary Sector Champion**

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in place, making sure we have been able to look after vulnerable residents during this period. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in this.

### Community Response Service

The Bracknell Community Response Service was developed as a partnership between Bracknell Forest Council and The Ark Trust CIO. Throughout the pandemic, the service has worked with partners across the public and voluntary and community sector to support people who are clinically extremely vulnerable, shielding or self-isolating.

The Ark Trust CIO has provided a community response helpline and a borough-wide network of more than 500 volunteers. Volunteers have provided advice, dealt with referrals, collected shopping and prescriptions, distributed emergency food, carried out welfare checks and many other tasks that those shielding without support, have been unable to do.

Here is an overview of their activities:

- **560** partnership volunteers.
- **9160** tasks completed to July 2021. (shopping/other tasks).
- **4009** deliveries on behalf of pharmacies.
- **280** Pulse Oximeters delivered for Covid+ residents from Berkshire Primary Care.
- **5224** 3-hour shifts completed at the Waitrose vaccine hub since December 2021.
- Over **10,000** welfare check phone calls made by Bracknell Forest Council customer services to clinically extremely vulnerable people shielding.



I am amazed at the number of people and the number of ways that help has been provided by this service, and I thank all the volunteers and staff who have made it possible.

With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the service is evolving to continue to provide effective support to those who may still need it. The Ark Trust CIO has received additional funding to:

- a) use community response volunteers to provide a new community car scheme for older and disabled residents across the whole of the Bracknell Forest local authority area.
- b) to make contact with clinically extremely vulnerable residents who frequently used the community response hub during lock down restrictions to check on their health and wellbeing (physical, mental, emotional and financial) and signpost to other services if necessary.

The results of the council's Covid-19 impact survey in May 2021 showed that 86% of respondents who had volunteered intended to keep on volunteering in the local community. The pandemic created huge challenges and sadness for many of us, but I take some comfort in this legacy of volunteering and innovative services that is left behind.

## **Voluntary and Community Sector Covid Recovery Fund**

In November 2021, Bracknell Forest launched the Voluntary and Community Sector Covid Recovery Fund. This grant scheme is intended to financially support any registered charity, community group or social enterprise assisting borough residents, which has been economically impacted by the pandemic. With £250,000 available, the panel has already received in excess of 30 applications. 60% have been successfully awarded funds to a maximum value of £20,000. In some cases, this financial aid has been an absolute lifeline to their delivery and sustainability.

Unsuccessful applicants have also been supported with clear advice on the reasons for this. In all cases where an award could not be made, this was because essential criteria were not met. In such circumstances, Involve Community Services has offered a hand of friendship, providing bespoke funding advice and grant writing services as appropriate.

## **Partners**

As the council representative to Citizens Advice, I have attended their meetings and kept up with their activities this year. This is the first year of operations since Bracknell & District merged with Maidenhead & Windsor to create Citizens Advice East Berkshire. The new arrangements are bedding in, and the service continues to support local people through staff and volunteers in the local community.

Partners like Citizens Advice are so valuable, providing skills and services that are complementary to council activities. Partners provide a level of independence which increases the support options for our residents.

The council recognises that the voluntary sector is uniquely placed to provide this independence and intimacy that many of our residents need. I would like to thank Involve Community Services for their vital role in providing the voluntary sector infrastructure, enabling many organisations to seek funding, work effectively and develop their skills to support others.

## **Mental Health**

I came across a wide variety of voluntary organisations through the mental health review carried out by the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel. We heard from social prescribers how the voluntary sector provides a wide range of options for referrals. I have seen how voluntary organisations act within the overall system of support, fulfilling a vital role in partnership with local government.

The last time I wrote this report, we were hopeful that Covid was subsiding. Perhaps this time it will actually be the case. There will certainly be changes as we all get used to living with Covid, and this is equally true for the voluntary sector. Next year, I hope to be able to return to the more formal side of being a champion, and I intend to focus on how the voluntary sector is recovering from the pandemic.



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To: Council  
20 April 2022

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## **Councillor Development Annual Report Executive Director of Delivery – Democratic and Registration Services**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present to Council an overview of activity which has been completed to support councillor's development in 2021 – 2022.

### **2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the councillor development annual report 2021 – 2022 is noted.

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)**

- 3.1 Under the current strategy, councillors receive an annual report each year on the progress of member learning and development. This report details the progress made under each guiding principle and has a particular focus on learning undertaken to adapt to working with hybrid options.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None. The development activities have been carried out in line with the Councillor Development Strategy 2020 – 2024.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The Councillor Development Strategy was developed by the Member Development Charter Steering Group in 2020. The Steering Group have reviewed the Strategy and determined it remains robust and relevant, so no amendments have been proposed.
- 5.2 The Councillor Development Strategy has 5 main principles which shape the member development programme and supporting activities:
- continuing to build on established activity
  - recognise the requirements of the councillor role and deliver training and support that is tailored to that role
  - ensure that content is engaging, relevant, up to date and pitched at an appropriate level
  - use a diverse and flexible range of delivery methods and
  - capitalise on opportunities to work with others.

## 6 Consultation and Other Considerations

### Legal Advice

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

### Financial Advice

- 6.2 *The costs associated with the councillor development work detailed in the annual report 2021/22 have been contained within the 2021/22 budgets for conferences (£10,460) and councillor training (£7,360).*

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 *An Equalities Impact Assessment initial screening has been completed and is attached at Appendix B.*

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

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

### Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to:

Reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>

The reasons the Council believes that this will reduce emissions is because training has been carried out remotely, therefore reducing the journey's taken by car and public transport to attend training in person.

### Background Papers

Member development annual report 2021 – 2022

### Contact for further information

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# Councillor Development 2021-22: What have we done?



## Delivering a bespoke development programme

Throughout the year we have offered a range of development opportunities. Whether it is working to develop general key skills or training which would help full councillors reach their full potential in specialist roles, there have been over a hundred development opportunities offered to do so.

For the most part the of this year, the council was still constrained by ongoing COVID restrictions, such as remote working and meetings. This has meant an easy access to online webinars and training activities. However as we are phasing out of restriction measures hybrid options are being rolled out.

Equality and Diversity is a focus following on from the creation of the Councillor Equalities Working Group in the previous year. This is a skill that is beneficial for everyone, particularly for Executive Members and Chairs to facilitate inclusive conversations at meetings.

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, councillor development continues to be delivered in line with the strategy through webinars and online conferences. As we return to normality it is a priority to deliver hybrid sessions to make development activities as accessible as possible.

The Councillor Development Charter Steering Group continues to work in collaboration with officers to identify development needs to ensure our councillors are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to excel.“

Councillor Nick Allen, Chairman of Councillor Development Charter Steering Group

## Working in partnership

As remote working continues, much of the opportunities to work with others have been by organising training with external providers. Most notably with the LGA and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Webinar topics included:

- COVID-19 vaccinations
- Health inequalities
- Housing
- Modern slavery
- Cybersecurity
- Disability
- Climate change

Internally, sessions organised for Councillors have caught the eye of other officers in the Council who were eager to attend. Our session on the 5 Year Housing Land Supply, delivered by the Planning and Place directorate, was also attended by officers working in Legal Services.

## Councillor Development Steering Group

This year the steering group is updated on a monthly basis by officers working in development, with any updates and proposed plans, with officers regularly seeking feedback from the group.

## Councillor attendance at a glance

Approved Conferences	Additional Conferences	Development Sessions	Training Sessions	Information Sessions
3	23	94	51	49

## Chief Executive updates

COVID-19 updates were frequently provided to councillors through Chief Executive meetings to ensure all were equipped with the latest information for the borough. As the benefits of such updates were noted, the updates are continuing to be delivered post-pandemic at a less frequent rate.

## Adapting to the climate

If there is anything we have learnt in the past few years, it is to be prepared for anything. Adaptability is key to ensuring that the Council remains up to date and councillors feel prepared to confidently deal with issues that are topical. Urgent news continues to be circulated through Democracy Snapshot – including the death of His late Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.

Following the death of MP Sir David Amess, a personal safety skills session was organised for councillors which sought to provide essential knowledge on ways to work safely in their role.

## Microsoft Stream Channel

As many development sessions continue to be delivered online, a Microsoft stream channel was set up to upload recordings for those counsellors who are unable to attend or for those who wish to go back and re-watch the session.

Microsoft stream comes with accessibility features such as transcription services and subtitles which are automatically generated.

## Feedback

Feedback is vital in evaluating development sessions to determine what worked well and when improvements are needed.

Towards the end of this year a new feedback form is being trialled to keep the council up to speed with modernising interactions with councillors. This online feedback form was circulated to members of the steering group for feedback and was also trialled for a few additional conferences.

The purpose of the new feedback form is to easily track responses and gain statistics from the feedback given, such as a rating, and look at scale and space for any additional comments that counsellors wish to provide.

Another positive aspect of this feedback form is that it is accessible on both desktop and mobile devices, which means that all councillors will have easy access to the forms.



## Leaders update

Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Bettison OBE, provided 8 updates on the intranet to keep Councillors and residents informed.

Briefings	Avg. Attendance
34	29

## Democracy Snapshot



### Topics included:

- IT Tips
  - Development sessions follow up articles
  - Data protection and GDPR
  - Latest pandemic information
  - Overview and Scrutiny updates
  - Training opportunities
  - Councillor workbooks
  - Meetings list
  - Ward alerts.
- 104 weekly recipients with average readership of 99.77%.**

## Councillor Blogs

**BLOG**

This year we have published several blog submissions for the intranet.

Whether it's a personal story, such as 'Calling out the Big C' from Councillor Ian Kirke – who conducted an interview with Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle about her experience of cancer; or to commemorate an event, like 'Celebrating Volunteers Week' from Councillor Ray Mossom who shares sporting memories; or even to show what was learnt on an educational trip, such as 'What happens to the food waste we collect in our caddies' from Councillor Sandra Ingham, blog posts have provided an excellent opportunity for councillors to share experiences.











## Looking forward...










**The councillor development programme 2022-23 is being designed with a focus on making sure that strategy aspirations are delivered, and evaluation of the four-year programme informs the next administration's induction programme and strategy.**

**As the 2023 elections are on the horizon, the steering group will be working with officers across the council to tailor an induction to keep candidates briefed, prepare newly elected councillors for their role and refresh skills and knowledge for re-elected councillors.**



## Appendix A Councillor Development Programme 2021 – 22

Topic	Origin / link to strategic plan or report	Themes supported	Delivery method options	Other authorities	Date of delivery	Provider	Cost	Attendees
Community leadership – getting the best outcomes for your residents	Response to issues raised by officers and partners		Practical session – multiple times offered	Not applicable	3 sessions booked during June	Beth Evans	£1385	16/24
Food Waste briefings	Place DMT		Briefing session with Q&A via Teams	Not applicable	No. of session held	Contract Services team	Officer time	Attendance not recorded
PPP – RIPA	Executive report		Briefing session recorded and will be available via intranet and through Democracy Snapshot	Shared with Wokingham and West Berkshire	June 2021	Public Protection Partnership	Officer time	Delivered via video so number of viewings not available
Mindfulness	Extension of offer for employees		Practical sessions – multiple times offered and introduction session available via intranet	Not applicable	Through June / July 2021		Cost covered corporately	32/42 Attendance not recorded
Member discussion session - pulse survey	Members' Equalities Working Group		EWG working with experienced facilitator to design a programme of workshops and activities to respond to survey	NA	All 7 – 9pm: Tuesday 13 July Tuesday 20 July Monday 26 July	Yvonne Howard – from Heroes and Stardust	£1900	31/42
PPP training on role of service	Delivery DMT		Briefing session will be recorded and made available via intranet	Shared with Wokingham and West Berkshire	July 2021	Public Protection Partnership	Officer time	Delivered via video so number of viewings not available
Planning – application process	Planning Chairman		Briefing session will be recorded and made available via intranet	Not applicable	19 July 2021	Places directorate	Officer time	12/42
PPP Workshop on the Public Protection Partnership priorities and benefits to residents	Executive member and Executive Director		Briefing followed by workshops	Not applicable	6 October @ 2021 @ 7.30pm	Delivery Directorate and PPP	Officer time	21/42
Housing briefing – overview of current activities and issues across both housing and enforcement	O&S review into RSLs		PPP are planning a drop in session – virtual or physical? Breakout rooms for topics? Are there any e learning resources available?	Enforcement element could be shared with Wokingham and West Berkshire	18 October 21 @ 7pm	People Directorate and PPP	Officer time unless external resources need to be purchased	26/42
Creating the Bracknell Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Executive member and Executive Director		Briefing followed by workshops	Not applicable	21 October @ 6pm and 28 October @ 6pm	Place Directorate	Officer time	22/42

Topic	Origin / link to strategic plan or report	Themes supported	Delivery method options	Other authorities	Date of delivery	Provider	Cost	Attendees
Progress update on Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership (JV) business plan	Officers		Length 1 hour/1 hour 15 Attendees: me, Stuart, Kevin, Kamay plus all councillors (Countryside will be presenting) and then questions	Not applicable	1 November 2021 @ 7pm	Countryside	Officer time	19/42
People briefing: Capital strategy, SEND and Children's Social Care	Executive member and Assistant Director		Briefing followed by Q&A	Not applicable	3 November 2021 @ 7pm	People Directorate	Officer time	13/42
Governance risk and resilience training	Support team		Provisionally booked just need order and publicity material	Not applicable	11 November @ 2pm and 15 November @ 7pm	Kate Grigg at CfGS	£800 for two video conference sessions	29/42
Drug and Alcohol training	Drug & Alcohol Services		Online sessions via Teams	Not applicable	6 February 2022 @ 1pm More dates to follow	Drug & Alcohol Services	Officer time	External delivery so no attendance figures possible
Planning induction	Identified in CDP		121 session with officer and Cttee Chairman	Not applicable		Place Directorate	Officer time	1/1
Planning training – five-year land supply	Chair of Planning and Assistant Director: Planning		Online briefing followed by Q&A via Teams	Not applicable	7 February 2022 @ 6pm	Place Directorate	Officer time	27/42
Councillor Personal Safety Skills training	Officers		Booked as Zoom meeting, key slides will be provided and made available via intranet	Not applicable	16 February 2022 @ 6.00pm 7 March 2022 @ 10.00am	David McGrath at Link Support UK	£3050 for preparation and delivery of two sessions	16/42
Licensing induction	Identified in CDP		121 session with officers	Not applicable	11 March @ 11am	Delivery Directorate	Officer time	1/1
Scrutiny questioning skills	Initial query from individual		Practical session – multiple times offered if popular, introduction to be recorded and made available via intranet	Neighbouring authorities if appropriate	14 March 2022 @ 7pm	Miranda Smythe at The Baikie-Wood Consultancy Ltd	£595	13/42
LGA Webinars promotion	Support team	All themes	Webinar and slides shared with participants	National programme	As booking becomes available	LGA	Free	
LGA Leadership programme	Support team / Leaders Office	All themes	Various	National programme	As booking becomes available	LGA	Variable but some fully funded	
Approved Conferences as per schedule 2	Support team / Leaders Office	All themes	Various	National programme	As booking becomes available	Various	Variable	

Topic	Origin / link to strategic plan or report	Themes supported	Delivery method options	Other authorities	Date of delivery	Provider	Cost	Attendees
Individual training	Support team / Leaders Office	All themes	Various	National programme	As booking becomes available	Various	Variable	


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## Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

<b>Date of Screening:</b> 31/03/2021	<b>Directorate:</b> Delivery	<b>Section:</b> Member Services	
<b>1. Activity to be assessed</b>	Member Development activity which includes training, support and engagement with residents.		
<b>2. What is the activity?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
<b>3. Is it a new or existing activity?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New		
<b>4. Officer responsible for the screening</b>	Paris O’Keeffe-Johnston, Democratic & Registration Services Officer		
<b>5. Who are the members of the screening team?</b>	Paris O’Keeffe-Johnston		
<b>6. What is the purpose of the activity?</b>	To report to the Council the progress of learning and development activity completed in the last year.		
<b>7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?</b>	Councillors		
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Please tick yes or no</b>	<b>Is there an impact?</b>	<b>What evidence do you have to support this?</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>N</b>	No impact identified.	The development activities will not impact racial equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>9. Racial equality</b>	<b>N</b>	No impact identified.	The development activities will not impact racial equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>10. Gender equality</b>	<b>N</b>	No impact identified	The development activities will not impact gender equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>11. Sexual orientation equality</b>	<b>N</b>	No impact identified.	The development activities will not impact sexual orientation equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.

<b>12. Gender re-assignment</b>		<b>N</b>	No impact identified.	The development activities will not impact on gender reassignment equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>13. Age equality</b>		<b>N</b>	No impact identified	The development activities will not impact age equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>14. Religion and belief equality</b>		<b>N</b>	No impact identified	The development activities will not impact any religious beliefs.
<b>15. Pregnancy and maternity equality</b>		<b>N</b>	No impact identified.	The development activities will not impact Pregnancy and maternity equality but, should have an overall positive impact on all groups through widening learning opportunities.
<b>16. Marriage and civil partnership equality</b>		<b>N</b>	No impact identified	The recommendations will have no impact on marriage or civil partnerships.
<b>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.</b>	None identified.			
<b>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?</b>	N/A			
<b>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?</b>	N/A			
<b>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</b>		<b>N</b>	Learning and development activities are aimed at increasing equality for all members by giving them the tools and skills they need to complete their role.	
<b>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</b>	N/A			



22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?		N	This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed retrospectively.
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.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Milestone/Success Criteria</b>
It is not expected that these development activities will affect any particular group.	April 2022	Kirsty Hunt	The annual report is received by Council
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Democratic and registration services		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?			
26. Assistant director's signature.	Signature: 		Date: 1 April 2022

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