

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Angell (Chair),
Councillor Virgo (Vice-Chair),
Councillors Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, MJ Gibson, Mrs Mattick,
Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mossom, Porter and Temperton



Thursday 16 March 2023, 6.30 pm
Council Chamber - Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, RG12 1JD and online

Agenda

All councillors at this meeting have adopted the Mayor's Charter which fosters constructive and respectful debate.

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute Members.	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	5 - 12
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 12 January 2023.	
3.	Declarations of Interest and Party Whip	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests and the nature of that interest, including the existence and nature of the party whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</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>	
4.	Urgent Items of Business	
	Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.	

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5.	Public Participation	
	To receive submissions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.	
6.	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service - consultation on draft Corporate Plan and Corporate Risk Management Plan 2023-2027	
	<p>The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are carrying out an 11 week consultation on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBFA) draft Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for the years 2023-2027.</p> <p>Representatives from RBFA, Tim Readings (CRMP Group Manager) and Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead), will be in attendance to explain how the organisation has set out its intentions to meet its goals to create safer and more resilient communities by preventing incidents, protecting homes and businesses, and responding to emergencies.</p> <p>The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue-related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks. These risks include house fires, road traffic collisions and chemical spills, but they also include other less common hazards such as wide area flooding, terrorist attacks and building collapse.</p> <p>Please read the documents via the link below in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Have Your Say on the Future of Your Fire and Rescue Service Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (rbfrs.co.uk)</p> <p>Also, please bring your smart phones to the meeting as you will be asked to scan a QR code and actively participate in the online survey individually as representatives from RBFA take you through the questions.</p>	
7.	Council Plan Overview Report	13 - 46
	<p>Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR) covering the third quarter of 2022/23 is attached.</p> <p>Members of the Commission are asked to submit technical or detailed questions in advance of the meeting.</p>	
8.	Overview and Scrutiny Commission Report 2019-2023	
	<p>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.</p> <p>This report acknowledges the work of the Commission and its Panels during 2022-23 but is a review of the past four years, to cover the Commission's whole term of office. Report to Follow.</p>	

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9.	Enforcement Strategy Review	47 - 60
	To consider the draft Enforcement Strategy review report prepared by the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel for submission to the Executive on 21 March 2023.	
10.	Evaluation of Recommendations - Blue Badge Review	
	To consider the draft Evaluation of Recommendations to the Executive which arose from the Blue Badge prepared by the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel for submission to the Executive on 21 March 2023.	
11.	Child Criminal Exploitation Review	61 - 74
	To consider the draft Child Criminal Exploitation Review report prepared by the Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel for submission to the Executive on 21 March 2023.	
12.	Exclusion of the Public and Press	
	<p>To consider the following motion:</p> <p>That pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item X which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:</p> <p>(1) Information relating to any individual (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).</p>	

Date of next meeting

The next Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting is scheduled for 8 June 2023, but this may change to 1 June - TBC. The focus of the meeting will be the new work programme for 2023-2027.

Forward plan and decisions taken

Commission members are able to view upcoming decisions by looking at [Browse forward plans | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#) and consider decisions taken since the last Commission meeting by using this link [What's newly published | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#) and altering the date range.

Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media is permitted. Please contact Louise Connelly on, 01344 354047, louise.connelly@bracknell-forest.gov.uk, so that any special arrangements can be made.

Published: 8 March 2023

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
12 JANUARY 2023
6.30 - 8.16 PM**

Present:

Councillors Angell (Chair), Virgo (Vice-Chair), Mrs Birch, Brossard, MJ Gibson, Mrs Mattick, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, Temperton and Heydon

Present Virtually:

Councillors McLean, Mossom and Porter

Apologies for absence were received from:

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery

Executive Members Present:

Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance

Executive Members Present Virtually:

Councillors Mrs Hayes MBE, Executive Member for the Environment

Also Present:

Sue Halliwell, Chief Executive

Stuart McKellar, Executive Director: Resources

Victoria Hill, Parent Governor representative

40. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 3 November 2022 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

Responses to all of the queries and requests for information raised in the meeting had been received or formed part of the agenda.

41. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest made.

There were no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

42. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

43. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

44. Budget Consultation

The Commission considered the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24 which were open for public consideration. The Commission invited Councillor Heydon

Executive Member for Transformation and Finance and Stuart McKellar, Executive Director: Resources to attend the meeting to answer their questions on the details of the proposals.

Prior to detailed questions Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance provided a recap:

- There was a significant budget gap that needed to be addressed through a combination of further savings, raising council tax and transfers from reserves. It was added that there was flexibility to raise the council tax by three percent plus two percent, which was understood to be the increase applied by the vast majority of other authorities. A point was added that one of the Council's key manifesto pledges was to remain within the 10 lowest council tax bands of the unitary authorities. Whilst the settlement was published last month the details were still being worked through.

Stuart McKellar, Executive Director: Resources added the following points:

- The finance settlement provided some answers and helped to put the draft budget in the overall funding context. However, the 2023/24 budget was complex due to the national revaluation of the business rates system. In addition, the Government changes to the designation of businesses from local lists to the Government central list had impacted large telecoms companies, with Bracknell Forest being the most significantly affected council in England. The Summer 2022 consultation around the Government's planned approach to achieve a cost neutral impact from this change provided some reassurance for the Council.
- The finance settlement was positive in the respect that there was a small increase in funding of about £130 000 relative to what was expected. The grant for social care provided a further £600 000 which could be used to fund either existing pressures or new spend.
- The reserves will be used to balance the budget, within the region of £4.5 – 5 million pounds, in line with the planned amount. Final budget decisions including the level of Council Tax would not be made until February 2023 when all the information and full context were available.

Arising from the discussion the following points were made:

Capital budget

- Clarification was sought regarding whether the budget was based on council tax being raised by 4.99%. The response by the Executive Director: Resources was that the budget was prepared on an expectation of 3% prior to the information in the Autumn budget and that there was now flexibility to increase it further. It was also noted that regardless of the council tax changes a large sum of the reserves would need to be used. The significance of income from council tax increases is that it is always there as revenue whereas reserves will run out at some point. The Member for Transformation and Finance added to this response by commenting inflation and salary awards have also added pressures.
- A question on the capital programme around funding for schools was raised. The question was whether this funding was for all schools, maintained and academies. It was clarified that this funding was only for maintained schools, with academies being funded directly. A further question was raised about if Bracknell Forest would receive any grant funding for schools. It was clarified that Bracknell Forest would not expect to receive any grant to enhance the scale of current provision due to there being surplus places in schools. There was however a possibility to receive some funding for maintenance.

- In relation to scheduled computer equipment and the impact of phase 4 not being completed due to increased costs, it was explained that all staff would still have access to equipment but that it may be older equipment is not refreshed. Frustration was expressed about using older, less efficient equipment and a question was asked about what the extra cost to complete phase 4 would be. **Action: Executive Director: Resources to ask IT department for detailed costs.**
- A query was raised about maintenance of the High Street car park, specifically around issues with the structure, as there was no reference to it in the capital programme. It was noted that this was generally covered by the maintenance programme. However, due to the scale it might need to be looked at as a separate capital proposal.
- It was noted that there was no money allocated for the Coronation within the capital budget. It was acknowledged that this was something which needed to be considered in the final budget proposal. A further point was made by the Chief Executive that there was revenue budget allocated to this.
- In relation to the issue of the weight of electric cars causing potential damage to car park structures a question was raised about when or if, in the future, there would be money within the budget to address this problem. In response it was explained that before anything was seen in the budget there would need to be conditioned surveys to test the load conditions of car parks. It was acknowledged this would mainly be a problem for older car parks. A further point was made that the consideration of added weight from electric vehicles was currently part of the work of the consultant engineers employed by the Council.
- Concern was raised around the infrastructure upgrade within car parks and if this implied the loss of ticket machines. In response it was explained that there is a project currently in place to look at how ticketing within car parks could be improved in terms of response times and reliability as more people go online. Further concern was shared that this would be a retrograde step and it was suggested this was taken offline.
- Concern was raised about the statement within funded highways maintenance regarding the point that many significant maintenance projects are now beyond reach and an acceptance that there will be increasing highway claims due to reduced condition levels. It was pointed out that the Council get a lot of funds and grants for major highway projects and the question was asked about if it was possible to receive more money through government grants for projects like repair of potholes. It was explained that the wording of this was set out to explain the proposal to add an extra £1.6 million from council funds in addition to grant funding. It was however acknowledged that the wording within this part would be reviewed.
- A point was made about the spend on roads within the borough with concern for the upkeep of infrastructure due to lack of funding. A request was made for an accurate and detailed breakdown of spend for highways. It was acknowledged that the budget papers focus on changes to budgets rather the current spending levels and so the current allocation covering the revenue budgets as well would need to be looked at to answer this question fully. **Action: Executive director: Resources to provide further information.**
- In response to a question about whether the Council spent £30k applying for an investment zone which has now been withdrawn it was clarified that the only costs associated were with officer time.
- The highway network is a valuable asset, and it was noted that more money being spent on it was a positive point. However, it was noted that there was an error in the figures and clarification was sought. The Executive Director: Resources explained that the increase referred to in the detailed text from £1.2 million to £1.8 million would be achieved in 2025/26.

- A further point was made that this was not a high figure and concern was raised that this would have a negative impact on infrastructure. In response, it was noted that Bracknell Forest were among a minority of councils who are able to significantly supplement the level of Government capital grant funding from their own resources. The Executive Member for Transformation added a further point that in addition to this funding there was also money from ongoing maintenance revenue budgets.
- A question was asked about how much money has been given towards play equipment within the borough to ensure they remain safe. The answer was that due to investment in previous years bringing equipment to a reasonable standard there was no inclusion for funding within this area in this budget. A further point was raised that a lot of the play areas are owned by the parishes, although this is not always the case. It was agreed that this point would be taken offline for further discussion.

Revenue Budget

- A point was raised around the transport strategy, which stated that the council were putting an additional £387k in 2023/24 with a question being asked about what the total contribution to this was. Due to not having the base budget information available it was not possible to answer this question although members were assured that the aim was to continue funding at the same level to ensure the same network coverage as now. **Action: Executive Director: Resources to advise of this total.**
- It was noted that external auditor fees are going to increase next year, and a question was raised about why it was not in the 2023/24 budget. It was confirmed that the increased costs of around £100 000 will be felt in 2024/25, when the audit of the 2023/24 accounts will take place.
- A query was raised about Forest care and the removal of pressure, asking why this wasn't shown until 2024/25 where money back is shown. In response it was explained that Forest care is a trading arm which should break even, therefore it was expected that by 2024/25 a business plan would be brought forward to secure that position. Further clarification was provided through the explanation that the commitment budget shows a three-year plan which relates to next year and future years.
- Under savings within ground maintenance the reduction of weed spraying from 3 to 2 sprays per annum was challenged citing a risk of greater damage to verges and roads which could cause future pressures. It was noted that this reduction of sprays had occurred a few years ago and was subsequently reinstated due to damage caused. In response it was clarified that the reduction was put forward as a budget saving, to address the significant levels of savings required. The impact of this would need to be addressed back to the service area who had done an assessment of the risks prior the decision. **Action: Executive Director: Resources to provide additional information regarding the risk assessment.**
- Under savings within ground maintenance/street cleaning the 25% reduction in litter bins through the Borough which would provide a saving of £30k in 2024/25 was challenged. Concern was that this reduction would have an adverse effect resulting in more litter. In response to this decision, it was stated that this was identified as a further saving. Members of the Commission strongly felt that risking the cleanliness of the borough, for a saving of £30k was letting residents down, diluting services and potentially adding to the Boroughs carbon footprint and wished to make clear to the Executive their opposition to this draft saving proposal. An additional concern was raised that the proposed reduction to the large-scale fly tipping budget could also contribute to a greater number of incidents of fly-tipping. It was felt that decisions regarding savings in areas like this needed to be made through a strategic approach. The Executive Director:

Resources clarified that the views on this topic would go to the executive, via the minutes of the meeting, and be considered as part of the final budget proposals.

- During the pandemic staff car parking charges were suspended, regarding the possible reintroduction of these a question asked about whether the reintroduction would hinder retention of staff and impact wellbeing. It was clarified that when these are reintroduced, they would be small charges of around £5-£10 per month.
- A query was raised about the additional above inflation payments for the waste collection contract and whether this was to cover salary increases for the staff. It was explained that this recognises that the Council have worked proactively to provide a realistic pay level for staff and to cover cost of running vehicles to ensure the Council would not face industrial disputes.

Fees and charges

- Under concessionary fares it was pointed out that the new annual Senior Citizen Railcard was going to be increased from £17 to £19 which was an 11.8% increase, a question was asked about how this was decided. It was explained that the fees and charges were approached within average guidelines and each individual service area would look at average figures in relation to the market situation. It was noted that all areas, businesses, and individuals are facing a cost-of-living crisis and a balance had to be found to be able to continue to provide the statutory and discretionary services to residents.
- A £5 increase on brown bin charges was noted and questions were asked about how this decision was made and calculated. It was explained that a standard increase of around 7.5% is applied and that each area looks into the applicability of that for those charges. Whilst it was agreed that this does offer value for money the council needed to ensure it was reviewed with the long-term impact in mind.
- A question was raised about why the increase to marriage and civil partnership is smaller this year than next - 3% for 2023/24 and 7.5% for 2024/25. It was acknowledged that the service area would have looked at these proposals with an awareness of the market around them.
- Under cemetery it was noted that for a person aged 18 or over there was no change to fees. However, fees for a child aged 3 years 1 day -17 years 364 days was increasing by 7.9 % and fees for a stillborn child, foetus or under 3 was increasing by 7.7%. It was felt that these increases in fees were focussing on the wrong people. The Executive Director: Resources recognised that this was a sensitive area, and these increases were made through careful review. **Action: Executive Director: Resources to provide additional information regarding how these decisions were made.**
- Regarding agency staff and the aims around keeping costs down within this area it was confirmed that there has been a large amount of work within children's and adult social care staff. There has been a review of terms and conditions to make them more attractive. The first adverts with these changes were published in early January 2023 and it was anticipated that this would help attract and retain more staff. This methodology was also hoped to be implemented across other areas including planning.
- A comment was made about the budget calculation of the council tax stating its complex use of percentages rather than meaningful figures. It was felt that this wasn't presented in a way that was meaningful to the public. In response the Executive Director: Resources explained that at this stage they are only looking at the tax base calculation and that the actual level of tax levied by the police authority, fire authority and local parish town councils goes through the full council meeting in February 2023. Whilst this is a technical matter and might not be of

interest to some members of the public at this stage, it was important to parish and town council colleagues.

- Clarification was sought around the council tax levy of 4.99% and if this would ease problems raised. The draft budget proposals set out a budget gap of almost £8 million which assumed no increase in council tax. The greater the council tax rise the less reliance on reserves and realistically this was the only sustainable financial position for the council in the long term.
- With the removal of the council tax support that was in place for 2023/24 a point was made that the new system of support available from new government grants should be adequately publicised. It was agreed that once final budget discussions had taken place, and this was confirmed it would be shared.

45. **Council Plan Overview Report**

CPOR report Q2

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Council are looking to improve the clarity of their messages in terms of performance. Some changes have been made throughout the report to make it more engaging with narrative and visuals. The aim was to make it easier to capture key messages using graphs to present and track trends. There was also an additional section to include community health indicators which would provide a broader context set against the performance of other councils.

It was noted that there have also been some changes to the website to ensure this information benefits the public when they try to find out the performance of their Local Authority. Key highlights for Q2 were that children's services achieved an outstanding Ofsted result. The Council agreed the financial hardship action plan which took a strategic and sustainable cross-council approach in supporting residents to become more financially sustainable.

Several community events have been facilitated, including the Royal funeral and support for Ukrainian arrivals. There have been some challenges including inflationary and general costs amongst all service areas. Despite these challenges 81 % of actions are on track to support the council plan.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- A question was asked about the quarterly indicators on satisfaction with customer services. This was down from 81% to 59.2% and concern was raised about reasons behind this or even an explanation of how it was measured. The Chief Executive explained that this was as a result of a specific resourcing issue that was no longer a problem.
- A query was raised regarding whether the KPI's for SEND, which would be good indicators to highlight improvements, would be reported in the quarterly report. This was asked because it was felt that for many concerned parents there was a need to show improvements are being made. Further concern was raised that there was not a place in the report to display progress figures and simply stating that the assessment team have worked to reduce the number of out of time assessments and finalise a number of long outstanding cases did not address the issues. It was felt that clear identification of how these are being managed was required. The Chief Executive accepted that this was a challenge and that the key indicators would be revised, and these concerns addressed.
- Concern was raised that with the local elections on 4 May 2023 the Coronation of the King on 6 May 2023 would be overlooked. It was confirmed that budget had been allocated to support the Coronation and in addition to this the Lexicon had a project underway to create the largest crown in Berkshire out of a mural of photos

submitted by residents. The council's communications team were aligning and working together with the Lexicon on this event.

- In response to a query about the strategy to deliver IT and whether this work in progress was on track the chief Executive confirmed that there were no issues escalated and would therefore be on target.

46. **Primary Parent Governor Representative Appointment**

Victoria Hill was formerly appointed as the Primary Parent Governor representative on the Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny panel.

47. **Work Programme Update**

Environment and Communities

The RAG rating for Enforcement strategy review was green and it was aiming to have the draft report ready for the February commission meeting.

Looking ahead the panel was hoping to review the burial choices in response to tests that were concluded on a piece of land identified within this review. Additionally, after the May 2023 elections the panel was planning to look at the introduction of food waste in flats as this was not performing as well as it should be.

Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The final meeting for the Child Criminal Exploitation review was due to take place and would present the final six recommendations. The draft report was on track for the February commission meeting.

Work was ongoing to discuss what topics would be covered in the next four years.

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The start of the adult safeguarding review was delayed due to officer sickness but was otherwise on track with meetings planned. The review of the blue badge review was to take place and would provide an update on progress against recommendations agreed.

CHAIRMAN

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TO: The Executive
21 March 2023

Council Plan Overview Report **Chief Executive**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Executive of the performance of the council over the third quarter of the 2022/23 financial year (October-December 2022).

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **To note the performance of the council over the period from October-December 2022 highlighted in the Overview Report in Annex A.**
- 2.2 **To approve the process change for councillor review of the CPOR, noting the re-timetabling of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for Q4 onwards.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To brief the Executive on the council's performance, highlighting key areas, so that appropriate action can be taken if needed.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 None applicable.

5 Supporting Information

Quarterly Service Reports

- 5.1 The council's performance management framework requires the preparation of Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) by each directorate. These QSRs provide an update of progress and performance against departmental service plans and are published on the intranet.

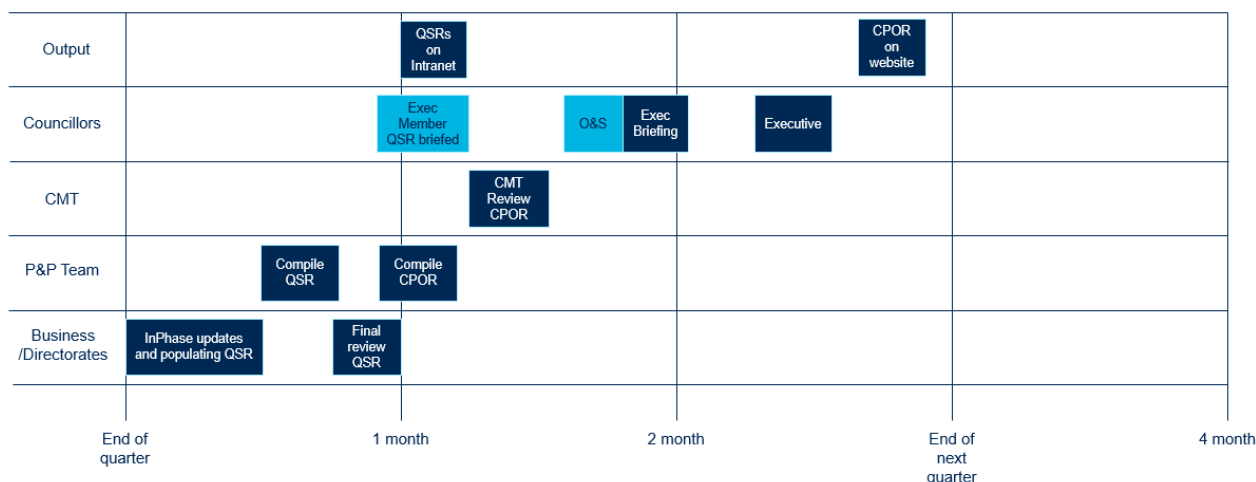
Council Plan Overview Report

- 5.2 The QSRs have been combined into the Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR), which brings together the progress and performance of the council as a whole. The CPOR enables the Corporate Management Team and the Executive to review performance, highlight any exceptions and note any remedial actions that may be necessary, either from under-performing or over-performing services, across the range of council activities.
- 5.3 Key achievements during quarter three have included:
- The launch and promotion of seven Community Winter Hubs across the borough, including a Winter Wellness activity programme.
 - The VSI Razom Community Hub was opened in Princess Square to support Ukrainian and other displaced people.
 - The council hosted part of the 'Running out of Time Relay' –from the COP26 venue (Glasgow) to the COP27 venue (Sharm-El-Sheik).
 - Schools' Ofsted performance has further improved, with 97% of schools rated as good or better, in the top 10 local authorities nationally.
 - The town centre reactivation projects were highly commended in the European SOLAL awards; the first international award.

- 5.4 There also continue to be challenges the council is working to resolve:
- The national economic uncertainty including rising inflation is creating additional challenges for the council to balance the budget.
 - There remain challenges recruiting to key frontline posts, with increasing reliability on agency staff who are also now becoming difficult to find. The recruitment and retention project has continued to progress this quarter to reduce the impact of this challenge.
- 5.5 The full CPOR for the third quarter (October-December 2022) is shown in Annex A.

Overview and Scrutiny

- 5.6 The CPOR is also reviewed by The Overview and Scrutiny Commission (O&S). This process enables all Members to be involved in performance management. It has been requested that the process for O&S involvement is reviewed to enable more timely discussion.
- 5.7 It is proposed that the process be amended as per the timeline below to provide earlier ratification and scrutiny of the performance data, prior to Executive approval of the formal record of council performance.



- 5.8 In this proposed process, all activity and scrutiny is completed within the quarter making the output more timely and meaningful. The report would be presented at the public O&S Commission meeting as the ‘Draft CPOR’ and would provide the O&S Commission the opportunity to explore the information, prior to making their recommendations and endorsement to the Executive. The Executive can then better fulfil their role of holding the Chief Executive to account through the tested, quality CPOR content, knowing that additional rigour has been applied to the data.
- 5.9 For the O&S commission review to precede the Executive and to allow amendment time following CMT, the CMT approved version would need to be submitted to Executive briefing (as per the current process) instead of the O&S version. A short additional annex would be provided as a supplementary note to Executive Briefing item and added to the final report to include the O&S commentary and key notes. This would ensure that the O&S feedback could still be built into the Executive’s consideration.
- 5.10 Should these proposals be endorsed, the following timeline has been drafted for implementation from Q4 onwards, aligning with the start of the new administration.

	Submitted to CMT	CMT	Submitted to O&S	Indicative	Submitted for	Executive Briefing	Submitted for Executive	Executive
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				O&S meeting date	Executive Briefing			
Q4	11 May	17 May	23 May	1 June	31 May	7 Jun	8 Jun	20 Jun
Q1	10 Aug	16 Aug	21 Aug	31 Aug	29 Aug	5 Sep	7 Sep	19 Sep
Q2	9 Nov	15 Nov	22 Nov	30 Nov	2 Jan	9 Jan	11 Jan	23 Jan
Q3	8 Feb	14 Feb	19 Feb	29 Feb	27 Feb	5 Mar	7 Mar	19 Mar

6 Advice Received from Statutory and Other Officers

Legal Advice

6.1 There are no specific legal implications relevant to this report.

Financial Advice

6.2 There are no specific finance implications relevant to this report. Key budget information is included in section two.

Other Consultation Responses

6.3 None specific

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 This report does not require an equalities impact assessment as this is a management reporting tool.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 There are no specific strategic risk implications relevant to this report.

Climate Change Implications

6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂. The reasons the Council believes that this will have no impact on emissions are that this is a management reporting tool.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

6.7 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications relevant to this report.

Background Papers

[Performance reports \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

QSR – People Directorate – Quarter three 2022/23

QSR – Delivery Directorate – Quarter three 2022/23

QSR – Chief Executive’s Office – Quarter three 2022/23

QSR – Resources Directorate – Quarter three 2022/23

QSR – Place, Planning & Regeneration Directorate – Quarter three 2022/23

Contact for further information

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Varad Paranjape, Chief Executive’s Office – 01344 352174

Varad.paranjape@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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COUNCIL PLAN OVERVIEW REPORT

Q3 2022-23






October – December 2022

Chief Executive:
Susan Halliwell

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Key

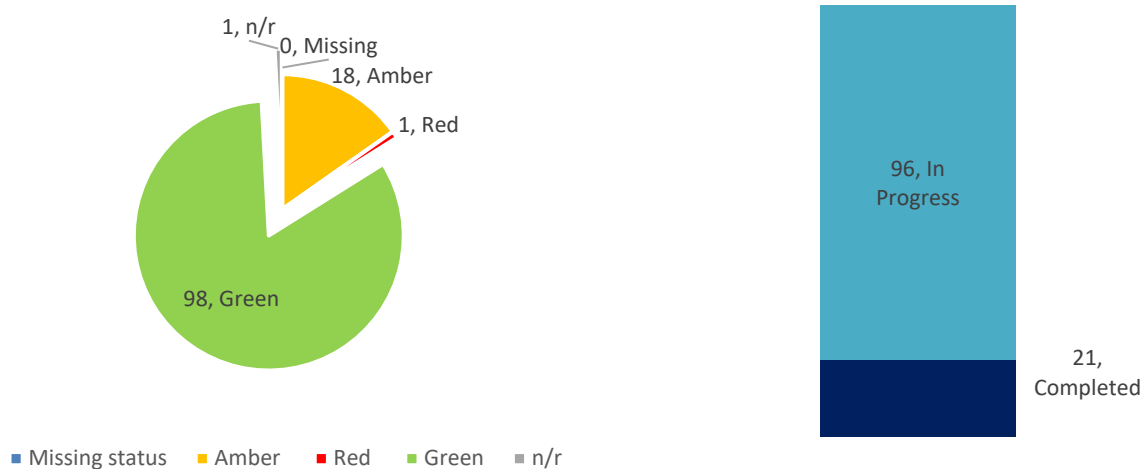
	Performance is very good
	Performance is causing concern
	Performance is weak
n/a	RAG rating not applicable
	Missing data
	Missing target

Section 1: Chief Executive’s Commentary

Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out an overview of the council’s performance for the third quarter of 2022/23 (October – December 2022). The purpose is to formally provide the Executive with a high-level summary of key achievements against the Council Plan. It highlights areas where performance was not matching targets or expectations, along with any remedial action that is being taken. It complements the detailed Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) which are available on the [intranet](#).
- 1.2 This is the third quarterly report of the 2022/23 financial year and at the end of the third quarter progress showed:
- 98 actions (83%) are green (21 complete, 77 in progress)
 - 18 actions (15%) are amber (18 in progress)
 - 1 action (1%) is red (1 in progress)
 - 0 action (0%) have a missing status)
 - 1 action (1%) does not require an update yet (due to start later in the financial year)

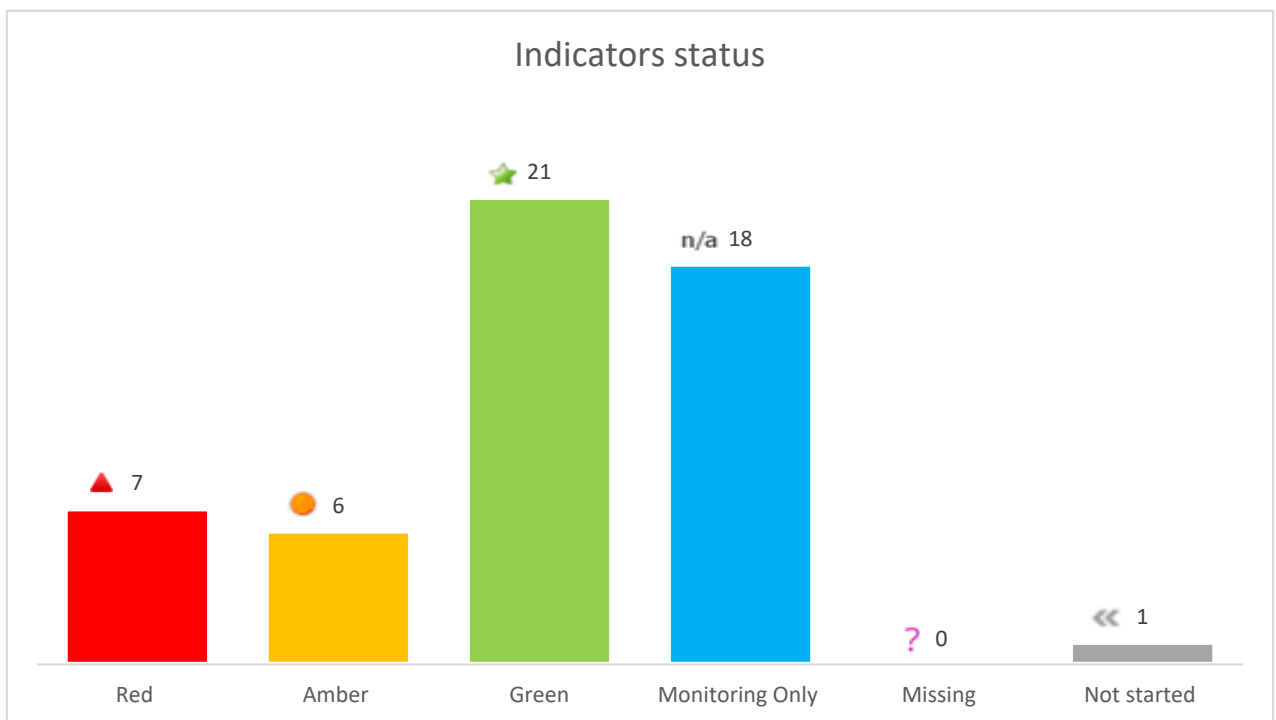
Actions status



1.3 Section three of this report contains information on the performance indicators across the council for each of the strategic themes. Indicators have continued to be included in this quarter’s CPOR, however as the majority of these were established at the start of the Council Plan period, in 2019, many are no longer particularly relevant to measuring effective performance. For Q3 there were 53 indicators presented. The status for the key indicators in the Council Plan in the third quarter is:

- 21 (40%) green
- 6(11%) amber
- 7 (13%) red

18 indicators (34%) have no target set as they are for monitoring only, these provide intelligence about specific trends, but where a directional target may not be appropriate. One indicator has no data since the work has not yet started on it.



1.4 The full suite of performance indicators will be reviewed as part of the next Council Plan development.

Overview of Q3 and what went especially well



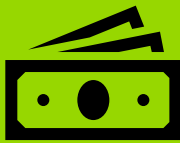
Seven Community Winter Hubs were launched and promoted across the borough, including a Winter Wellness activity programme.



Schools' Ofsted performance has further improved, now at 97% good or better, in the top 10 nationally.



The VSI Razom Community Hub was opened to support Ukrainian and other displaced people during Q3.



Over £300,000 was distributed to residents as part of the household support fund and wider financial hardship action plan.



The town centre reactivation projects were highly commended in the [European SOLAL awards](#); the first international award.



Six additional Afghan families moved to the borough and were supported with integration to the community.



Over 70% of staff took part in the staff engagement survey, results will be published in Q4.



32 new electric vehicle charging points were installed within community car parks.



A planting project at Tarmans Copse was completed with 800 new trees planted.



The council hosted part of the 'Running out of Time Relay' – from the COP26 venue (Glasgow) to the COP27 venue (Sharm-El-Sheik).

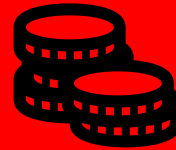
A new payment structure was agreed for adult social workers as part of a pilot recruitment and retention project.

The giant poppies returned across the borough in November for Remembrance Day.

What are we doing about things not going so well?



There remain challenges recruiting to key frontline posts, with increasing reliability on agency staff who are also now becoming difficult to find.



Managing the financial risk of inflationary pressures and balancing the budget in year is creating a difficult climate for the council to operate within.

Susan Halliwell
Chief Executive

Section 2: Budget Position

Revenue Budget Monitoring

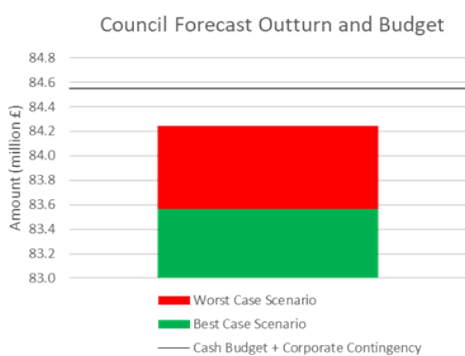
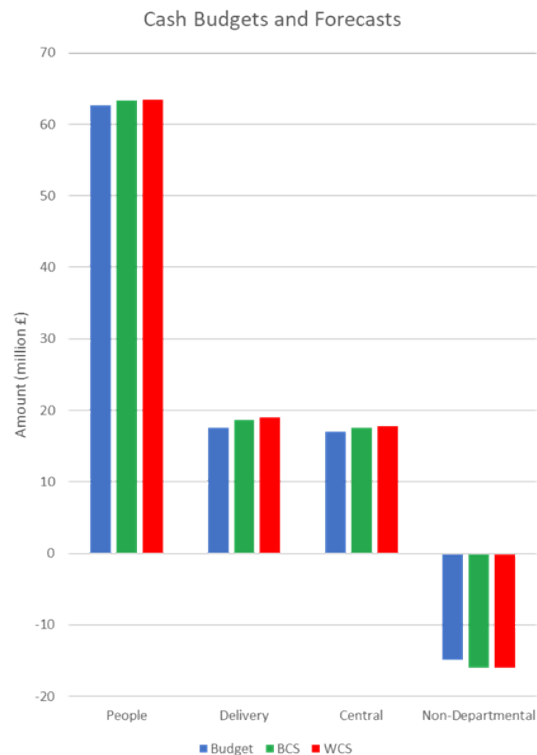
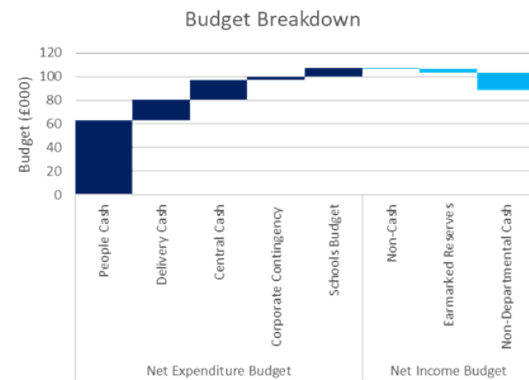
The monthly monitoring returns are set out in detail in each directorate's Quarterly Service Report (QSR).

The returns include estimated best and worst case scenarios which reflect actual expenditure to date plus a range of financial predictions from Assistant Directors covering the remainder of the year. Following significant budget pressures being reported in the early months of the year, the most recent monitoring report indicates the position is stabilising.

Across the council, variances have been identified indicating expenditure is below the approved budget (-£0.985m Best Case and -£0.306m Worst Case) after taking into account the balance on the Corporate Contingency (£2.093m). These figures now include the additional cost of the 2022/23 pay award which has been met by using all the Inflation Reserve (£1.5m) plus a draw down from the Corporate Contingency (£0.062m).

Key information around directorate variances being reported follows.

Overall Summary



Summary – Assistant Director Level

	Original Cash Budget (£'000)	Virements & Budget C/Fwds (£'000)	Current Approved Cash Budget (£'000)	Variance – BCS (£'000)		Variance – WCS (£'000)	
				Last Month	This Month	Last Month	This Month
Director: Place, Planning & Regeneration	7,397	1,617	9,014	421	401	614	541
Director: Resources	5,969	216	6,185	110	110	160	160
Chief Executive's Office	1,779	55	1,834	95	44	100	49
CENTRAL	15,145	1,888	17,033	626	555	874	750
Executive Director of Delivery	219	79	298	0	0	0	0
Assistant Director: Customer Services & ICT	10,741	192	10,933	1,118	1,118	1,288	1,288
Assistant Director: Property Services	-5,447	71	-5,376	0	0	0	0
Borough Solicitor	676	35	711	-17	-17	-17	-17
Head of Democratic & Registration Services	1,724	117	1,841	0	0	0	0
Assistant Director: Contract Services	9,271	-58	9,213	-167	-62	6	110
DELIVERY	17,184	436	17,620	934	1,039	1,277	1,381
Executive Director of People	1,617	9	1,626	24	24	24	24
Education and Learning	2,150	190	2,340	197	239	197	239
Children's Social Care	19,489	322	19,811	-1,670	-1,642	-1,469	-1,498
Contribution to Costs from Schools Budget	-468	0	-468	0	0	0	0
Commissioning	3,247	41	3,288	73	71	73	71
Adult Social Care	20,005	158	20,163	688	948	885	946
Mental Health & Out of Hours	10,818	329	11,147	1,315	1,310	1,415	1,310
Early Help & Communities	4,368	408	4,776	-172	-295	-172	-295
PEOPLE	61,226	1,456	62,682	455	655	953	797

Summary – Assistant Director Level

	Original Cash Budget (£'000)	Virements & Budget C/Fwds (£'000)	Current Approved Cash Budget (£'000)	Variance – BCS (£'000)		Variance – WCS (£'000)	
				Last Month	This Month	Last Month	This Month
Interest and Investment Income	1,645	0	1,645	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
Minimum & Voluntary Revenue Provisions	2,242	0	2,242	-161	-161	-161	-161
Council Wide Items	657	-532	125	20	20	20	20
New Homes Bonus Grant	-2,294	0	-2,294	0	0	0	0
Covid-19 LA Support Grant	-1,160	0	-1,160	0	0	0	0
Local Council Tax Support Grant	-9,537	0	-9,537	0	0	0	0
Business Rates Income Growth & Grants	-7,500	0	-7,500	0	0	0	0
Other	-61	1,664	1,603	0	0	0	0
NON-DEPARTMENTAL	-16,008	1,132	-14,876	-1,141	-1,141	-1,141	-1,141
TOTAL	77,547	4,912	82,459	874	1,108	1,963	1,787
CORPORATE CONTINGENCY	1,900	193	2,093	-2,155	-2,093	-2,155	-2,093
TOTAL	79,447	5,105	84,552	-1,281	-985	-192	-306
EARMARKED RESERVES	1,529	-5,105	-3,576	0	0	0	0
OVERALL TOTAL	80,976	0	80,976	-1,281	-985	-192	-306
NON-CASH BUDGETS	-546	0	-546	0	0	0	0
SCHOOL BUDGET	7,682	0	7,682				
OVERALL TOTAL	88,112	0	88,112				

Cash Budget Summary – New Variances

The variances reported by directorates indicate expenditure below the approved budget in the Best Case scenario (-£0.985m) and the Worst Case scenario (-£0.306m), after taking into account the use of the Inflation Reserve to help meet the final pay award and the balance on the Corporate Contingency (£2.093m). This is a deterioration of £0.234m Best Case and an improvement of £0.176m Worst Case since last month.

CENTRAL

Significant Variances

- The Worst Case overspend for Development Control income has been revised downwards to £0.232m (-£0.053m Worst Case).
- The DSB position has improved within the Chief Executive's Office (-£0.051m both scenarios).

DELIVERY

Significant Variances

- A reduction in the underspend on the Waste PFI arrangement following a change in the charging mechanism for waste containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) from 1st February 2023 (£0.036m both scenarios).
- Further pressure on car parking revenue with income edging towards being 17% down on the budget (£0.069m Best Case and £0.068m Worst Case).

PEOPLE

Significant Variances

- Within Adult Social Care an increase in care costs in a number of areas partly offset by additional grant income. The Worst Case has been brought into line with the Best Case as all CTPLD Supported Living accruals have now been reconciled and an additional pressure is no longer required (£0.260m Best Case and £0.061m Worst Case).
- Mental Health and Out of Hours - the worst case scenario has been brought in line with the best case as additional costs for Heathlands are now not needed due to closure of the service and likelihood that it will not reopen this financial year (-£0.005m Best Case and -£0.105m Worst Case).
- An increase in the underspend on Welfare and Benefits relating to overpayments recovery (-£0.046m) plus underspends in a number of other housing and welfare areas from the use of grants to meet expenditure and vacant posts (-£0.123m both scenarios).

Cash Budget Summary – New Variances

The variances reported by directorates indicate expenditure below the approved budget in the Best Case scenario (-£0.985m) and the Worst Case scenario (-£0.306m), after taking into account the use of the Inflation Reserve to help meet the final pay award and the balance on the Corporate Contingency (£2.093m). This is a deterioration of £0.234m Best Case and an improvement of £0.176m Worst Case since last month.

NON DEPARTMENTAL

Significant Variances

- No new variances to report.

CONTINGENCY

Significant Variances

- An allocation of £0.056m was made from the Contingency to help meet the additional costs of the 2023/24 pay ward. This reduced the remaining balance to £2.093m which has been reported as an underspend.

Section 3: Strategic Themes

Value for money









Action	31/12/2022				
	Stage	Percentage Complete	Due Date	Status	Comment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.01.01 Maintain Council Tax	Completed	100%	31/03/2023	✔	The approved Council Tax level remains in the bottom 10% of English unitary authorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.01.02 Spending is within the approved budget for this year	In Progress	60%	31/05/2023	★	The variances reported by directorates indicate expenditure below the approved budget in the Best Case scenario (-£1.281m) and the Worst Case scenario (-£0.192m), after taking into account the Corporate Contingency (£2.155m). This is an improvement of £0.080m Best Case / £0.088m Worst Case since last month. The impact of the 2021/22 pay award has now been fully costed and will be reflected in next months budget monitoring. The additional cost will be £1.562m, £1.5m of which will be funded from Inflation Reserve with the balance of £0.062m met from the Contingency. Overall variances will then become -£1.219m Best Case / -£0.130m Worst Case.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.01.05 Delivery of the transformation programme	In Progress	75%	31/03/2023	★	On track for delivery of current portfolio of projects. CMT to complete a full review of the programme's aims and objectives in Q4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.01.07 Delivery of Business Change Savings	In Progress	60%	31/05/2023	●	There is still uncertainty around achieving the savings budgeted for The Lookout phase 2, Asset Review/Corporate Landlord model and Heathlands.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.01.08 Council Tax Financial Support	Completed	100%	30/09/2022	✔	Council Tax bills were reduced by £150 for council tax support claimants for 2022/23.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.03 Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy	In Progress	70%	31/03/2023	★	The Recruitment and retention project on social care was approved by Employment Committee and has now been implemented. The objective to reduce spend on agency together with stabilising the workforce will be closely monitored. The staff engagement survey has been undertaken with an impressive completion rate of 70% achieved. The results of the survey will be considered and action planning undertaken in Q4. This will be accompanied by work to assess the health and wellbeing of the workforce. The revised learning and development programme for managers will be rolled out in Q4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.06 Develop Recruitment and Retention Strategy	In Progress	55%	31/03/2023	★	Recruitment continues to be a challenge in many areas of the Council. The work undertaken in social care will lead to similar reviews being undertaken in other areas of the Council which are subject to recruitment difficulties. Attendance at recruitment fairs including for school events are stepping up to increase the visibility of the Council and the employment opportunities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.10 Move services online and via self-service	In Progress	80%	31/03/2023	★	The project to migrate forms from govService to Netcall Liberty Create has been completed. govService has been decommissioned and is no longer available A separate project is underway to develop a Blue Badge service in Liberty Create. A process for this has been developed by Netcall and the service is currently going through User Acceptance testing prior to going live. A Complaints module has been downloaded from the Netcall App Share and is currently being reviewed by a Business Analyst find out if it can be implemented as a new service. A Freedom of Information has been downloaded from the Netcall App Share and will be reviewed by a Business Analyst in the New Year to find out if it can be implemented as a new service.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.16 Deliver year one customer experience strategy	Completed	100%	31/03/2023	✔	The work programme for year one of the strategy has been delivered and the team are now working on the activities for year two. Good progress has been made with upgrading the contact centre software and a plan is in place to extend the use of the channels and functionality made available by the new platform. The project to move the Customer Relationship Management system to a new platform is also progressing well.


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.17 Deliver the Digital and ICT Strategy	In Progress	50%	31/03/2024	★	Work has continued to determine the programme of development for the Low Code platform. Configuration of the security components in M365 and Azure is continuing.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.02.19 Implement hybrid technology for Council meetings	Completed	100%	30/09/2022	✔	The technology has been installed in the Council Chamber and Board Room to facilitate hybrid working and meetings are regularly being run as hybrid meetings so that officers and councillors can join meetings remotely and in the Chamber or Board Room.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.03.01 Appraisal of Asset Management Plan	In Progress	50%	31/03/2023	★	New asset management plan in draft.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.03.03 Review of Council's Commercial Property Assets	In Progress	75%	31/12/2023	★	Property continues to prioritize of the council's commercial property assets. In so doing, allows for the effective use and utilisation of the estate, high levels of compliance and optimisation of the annual maintenance programme.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.03.05 Redevelop Commercial Centre	In Progress	28%	31/03/2023	★	The contractor returned to site and recommenced works on the 5th Dec and currently works are progressing well.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.04.04 To work in partnership with other public authorities in Berkshire for the One Public Estate	In Progress	80%	31/03/2023	★	Property continues to work in partnership with other public authorities and the OPE to bring forward developments. In this quarter, a grant funding application has been submitted to seek funding for demolition of 74 and 76 Binfield road.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.04.05 To develop and work on the council's Asset Management Plan	In Progress	75%	31/03/2023	★	Property continues to support the project by keeping the BF Cambium Partnership development plan in line with the council's Asset Management Plan, in order to maximise regeneration and development option. Construction works now have commenced on the Coopers hill site.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.2.02 Identify and engage low income households	Completed	100%	30/09/2022	✔	Use of LIFT has enabled us to target 2 campaigns so far in 2022. This has resulted in over £6000 of an underpayment for 1 customer alone and continues to enable us to support those in financial hardship and we continue to use it to identify additional support that households would be entitled to.

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Current Target	RAG
> L051 % of council tax collected	55.0%	81.9%	84.0%	★
> L053 % of Business Rates collected in year	58.1%	83.6%	87.5%	★
L220 Number of ICT Helpdesk Calls	6,147	5,222		n/a
> L221 Satisfaction with Customer Services	59.2%	82.1%	85.0%	★
L257 Number of complaints received		75		n/a
L391 % of vacant posts temporarily filled with agency staff	26%	28%	30%	★
L392 % of agency workers council wide	8%	8%	5%	●
L395 Number of self-service transactions processed via customer account		16,723	20,000	▲
L397 % of IT estate delivered from cloud	98%	98%	50%	★
L444 Number of Facebook followers for Public Health	15	22		n/a
L445 Number of users accessing Thrive!	459	396	200	★
> L261 Level of staff sickness absence	1.57	2.47		n/a
> L262 Level of voluntary staff turnover	7.02%	3.38%		n/a

Economic resilience

Action	31/12/2022				
	Stage	Due Date	Percentage Complete	Status	Comment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.01.02 Develop affordable Housing Supply Supplementary Planning Document	In Progress	31/03/2023	20%	●	An updated affordable housing policy is part of the emerging Local Plan, which is currently at examination, with the Stage 1 and 2 hearings completed and the Inspectors' post hearings letter awaited. Initial scoping work for a new affordable housing planning document was undertaken earlier this year. However, drafting and implementation will not progress until the new Local Plan has been recommended for adoption. The timescales for this depend on the Inspectors' findings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.02 Work on development of The Deck and the sustained viability of Town Centre	In Progress	31/03/2023	35%	●	Development Agreement, progressed to unconditional
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.03 Develop an Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	20%	●	A specification of requirements has been written and published, with a view to commissioning a specialist Arts consultancy to support the development of the strategy.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.04 Develop a new library strategy leading to an enhanced new central Bracknell Library	In Progress	31/03/2023	20%	●	This work will be developed alongside the Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy. The Head of Libraries will work closely with the consultancy appointed to develop the strategy, to ensure the Library Strategy is a core element.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.05 Town Centre Masterplanning	In Progress	31/03/2023	40%	★	The Masterplans have been completed in draft and will be developed further to accompany the Local plan in any future consultation stages.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.06 Review JV Business Plan	In Progress	31/03/2023	99%	★	2022 Business Plan completed March 2023. Next Business plan due to Executive March 2023
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.02.07 Developments at Coopers Hill, Market Street and Central Depot	In Progress	31/03/2023	40%	★	Coopers Hill Start on Site Q3 2022, First Home Completion Q3 2023, Last Home Completion Q4 2024. Marketing will commence April 2023 and show-home will be open early summer 2023. Market Street - start on site (sewer move) end January 2023. Depot site - paused until mid 2023 for ISDP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.04.02 Support the Economic Skills and Development Partnership	Completed	31/03/2023	100%	★	ESDP work programme updated. UKSPF investment plan confirmed. to be delivered over the next two years
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.04.03 Support for Local Economy	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Business engagement continues through BID and ESDP activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.04.04 Promote and support the Bracknell Business Improvement District (BID)	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	●	The BID continues to develop its presence and the Council continue to support many of its activities and projects. The Bid Levy remains an issue which is being addressed by IT and the Revenues Team.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.05.02 Implementation of changes to property assets	Completed	30/09/2022	100%	✔	Item closed as action no longer relevant within the plan structure.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.06.01 Increase engagement through the Business Liaison Programme	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	●	Revised programme to commence in January 2023 linked to Economy Strategy preparation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.07.05 Highway improvements for sustainable travel	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Promotional and awareness programmes continue to be held to support the Government's national Active Travel initiative (walking and cycling) and also encourage increased public transport use. The last quarter has seen promotional events being held at business within the BID area with the help from Sustrans cycling organisation

 2.07.06 Implement Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan	Completed	30/09/2022	100%		The new 2022 HIAMP has been adopted by Executive. Highway Maintenance activities will now be prioritised in accordance with the agreed strategy.
 2.07.07 Grants for transport and infrastructure	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%		DfT grants for Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance have been fully allocated across the Highways and Transport work programme for 2022/23. Scheme implementation is well advanced.
 2.08.02 Infrastructure Funding Statement	Completed	31/03/2023	100%		Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2021-22 is now complete and has been published on our website in December 2022. The next IFS for 2022-23 must be completed and published by 31st of December 2023.
 2.08.03 Completion of S106 planning agreements	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		There have been 8 S106 agreements completed within this period

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Current Target	RAG
L268 % of working age people who are unemployed	2.9%	2.9%		n/a
L269 % of working age population in employment	77.5%	79.7%		n/a
L271 % of borough covered by superfast broadband	98.2%	98.0%	99.0%	
L442 Vacancies on school governing boards	21%	19%	18%	

Education and skills

Action	31/12/2022				Status	Comment
	Stage	Due Date	Percentage Complete			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.01.02 Property support to ensure capacity is in line with School Places Plan	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%		★	Property services continue to support education service with changes to schools premises.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.01.03 Transport for Warfield School Migration	Completed	30/09/2022	100%		★	All Highway works have been completed. The crossings were fully operational in time for the start of the September school term.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.01.04 Work on Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Needs Analysis	Completed	31/03/2023	100%		★	Application for 2 special schools were submitted in October 2022 as a result of the needs analysis and awaiting outcome of application, which we are hoping will be by the end of March 2023. Needs analysis has shown that we need 30 ASD places in SRP's for September 2023 and we are currently in discussions with schools around delivery. Primary SEMH hub has been identified, which should be available from September 2024 onward and are now in discussions with school around implementation. Have engaged with DfE refurbishment programme around special schools and submitted Kennel Lane school for this scheme. Conditional survey took place by DfE in October 2022. Now awaiting further information.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.02.02 Support for schools with standards and effectiveness partners	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		★	Standards and Effectiveness Partners (STEPs) provided the full support package for the 25 schools who purchase the Standards and Effectiveness SLA. A detailed evaluation of an aspect of the school's curriculum was undertaken in each school, alongside support for target setting, an evaluation of outcomes, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's improvement planning. Evaluation of the work of the STEP's at the end of the term has been very positive, with school leaders reporting that they have valued the support and challenge. Those schools of concern who are subject to a Standards Monitoring Board have been provided with additional support from the STEP's, and the vast majority are making good progress.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.02.03 Promote best practice in schools	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		★	A wide range of strategies to promote best practice have been deployed over the autumn term this year. There has been widespread brokerage of school-to-school support, providing expertise from other schools to those schools who need it. This support has taken the form of support for SEND, Early Years, English Subject Leadership, and school finance. New headteachers embarking on their first headships have been provided with experienced headteacher mentors. All subject leader network meetings have taken place this term, and have included the sharing of current research articles and best practice case studies. The subject networks have also drawn upon the local DfE Hubs which are beacons of best practice. Best practice in teaching and leadership have also been promoted through the Early Career Framework provision and the promotion of the National Professional Qualifications. Nearly all Bracknell Forest Headteachers attended a briefing by attached Ofsted HMI focused on the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, with a particular focus on best practice in curriculum development.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.02.04 Retain good School Ofsted ratings	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		★	The proportion of schools judged to be good or better continues to stand at 97%. As a result, Bracknell Forest is now ranked 6th out of 152 Local Authorities nationally against this measure. College Town Primary School, King's Academy Binfield and Edgbarrow School were all inspected during this quarter. College Town Primary School and Edgbarrow both retained their previous judgements of good and outstanding respectively, and King's Academy Binfield was inspected for the first time, and was judged to be good.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.03.01 Economic Skills and Development Partnership: Education Sub-group	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		★	The ESDP Employment & Skills Sub group has reviewed its work programme to refocus on the UKSPF support for the skills and training hub. The funding has now been confirmed for 2024/25 with the aim of developing the project during 2023/24. The results of a borough wide business survey will provide a steer for the future devily of skills provision. The Local Skills Improvement Plan will provide a regional framework to assess skills needs and capacity.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.04.03 Review Youth Provision and Commission Support	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%		★	This is on target with colleague who will be re commissioning the service.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.04.04 Review Youth Justice Services	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%		★	The Youth Justice Strategy has been submitted. The services is due a full inspection, expected within the next 6 months. An outcomes framework is being developed to support bespoke child focus and continuation of partner join up.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.05.01 Increase council entry level apprenticeships	Completed	31/03/2023	100%		★	6 posts for apprentices have successfully commenced with two recent starters commencing in both the Finance and Audit teams.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.05.02 Effectively use the apprenticeship levy	In Progress	31/03/2023	70%		★	Increasing apprenticeship numbers are impacting positively on spend against the levy. The total amount of spend is being reviewed monthly with the target of maximising the opportunities to develop the current workforce and encouraging new entry roles is being pursued.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.06.01 Support the efficacy of early years professionals	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	The Autumn EYFS Network Meeting was well attended and provided the opportunity for leaders of EYFS to consider further ways to strengthen provision for PSED (personal, social and emotional development) and physical development (gross and fine motor skills). Schools across Bracknell Forest are sharply focused on the development and prioritisation of early reading and leaders valued the opportunity to discuss the impact to date, of their chosen programme to deliver the teaching of Phonics, alongside ways in which settings are developing vocabulary rich environments. EYFS Strategic Partners have been supporting the development of provision and practice in three schools across the autumn term.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.07.01 Support care leavers to access education, training or employment	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	18 of the 52 Care Leavers aged 19-21 are currently NEET, 10 of whom are not in a position to become EET due to other circumstances.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.07.02 Suitable accommodation for care leavers	Completed	31/03/2023	100%	✔	Joint housing and Children social care protocol now in place.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.08.01 Establish a culture of high expectations for all children	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Inclusion continues to be a key focus of the Standards and Effectiveness team. A new SENDCO Forum newsletter has been produced with a strong focus on collaborative working and inclusion, providing SENDCo colleagues with information from across a number of services and the parent/carer community including – SEND, Inclusion and SEMH, Standards, Bracknell Forest Parent Carer Forum. This includes sign posting to up-to-date research, training, resources that can be used in school to enhance practice and provision. The SENDCo Forum was attended by 28 colleagues face to face from across 25 Bracknell Forest schools. The focus of this forum was the child. Trauma informed practice, engaging in play, research relating to inclusion and how best to use TA support to develop engagement and independence, as well as short breaks provision were key sessions provided in the forum, as well as a focus on strengthening the SENDCo Hubs. 94% of evaluations said that the forum was good or outstanding. All of the above key sessions were highlighted by SENDCos as areas where they developed learning in the forum and that they were going to take the learning away and use. The commissioned SEND Review programme is continuing to develop. Dates are currently in the process of being confirmed for the engagement days, updates to the progress of the programme have been given at the December Headteachers Briefing, and marketing and booking processes are being confirmed to provide schools with the opportunity to book early to the programme.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.08.02 Support transition to next stage of learning	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	The transition working party met during the Autumn term. Eight teachers and members of SLT attended the meeting, representing three secondary schools, and three primaries. Several strategies to take the transition project forward, were discussed. The next meeting on the 6 February 2023 will finalise the strategies thought worthy of pursuing. An action plan will be developed from this and the strategies will be carried out in schools in the Summer term.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.08.03 Review the role of Education in the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)	Completed	30/09/2022	100%	✔	Action completed - Safeguarding in Education Officer time is now embedded in MASH supporting triage of contacts and support to schools who refer into the MASH. A trial was undertaken with half a day a week, but this have become more fluid and spread out over the week to respond to dynamic nature of demand in a MASH context.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3.08.04 Develop SEND Improvement Plan	Completed	30/09/2022	100%	✔	SEND Improvement Plan has been completed and signed off. Programme governance established and all actions relating to Qtr 1 have been delivered on time. Work has been progressed to submit the report for the first formal monitoring meeting with the DfE and NHS England and reporting for the November Executive.

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Current Target	RAG
L394 % of staff that have undertaken apprenticeship training : Education and skills	2.5%	2.5%	2.8%	●
L402 % of care leavers aged 19-21 years who are NEET : Education and skills	23%	35%	25%	●
L403 % of care leavers aged 19-21 years who are in touch with LA : Education and skills			89%	n/a
> L139 % of schools rated good or better : Schools	97%	97%	94%	★
> L139 % of schools rated good or better : Maintained Primary Schools	95%	95%	94%	★
> L139 % of schools rated good or better : Maintained Secondary Schools	100%	100%	100%	★
> L139 % of schools rated good or better : Academy Primary Schools	100%	100%	100%	●
> L139 % of schools rated good or better : Academy Secondary Schools	100%	100%	100%	★

Caring for you and your family

Action	31/12/2022				
	Stage	Due Date	Percentage Complete	Status	Comment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.01 Increase participation in sports, leisure and cultural activities for all residents	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	●	Although this target was set up before COVID, it has still been a good proxy for engagement, participation and community connection. That said, the evidence base is poor and the collecting of the data hasn't been as robust as necessary to come to firm judgments. Therefore, further work is now being commissioned to sit alongside the current measuring tools, specifically looking at which communities are not participating. A review of South Hill Park, has been more positive, in that the Trust has a good outreach programme, that is addressing some of the deficits that our other offers are missing. It should also be noted that the library network is now the core of the warm hubs projects and is working with Public Health on addressing isolation and loneliness.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.02 Implement and monitor the key actions set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%	★	Detailed plans for delivery of the each priority was coproduced with partners. The plans were presented to the Health and wellbeing board for approval. The multi-agency working groups are working to implement the plans
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.04 Develop a cross-council financial hardship action plan	In Progress	31/03/2023	90%	★	The cross-council financial hardship action plan was agreed at Executive in October. Implementation is underway and the plan continues to be reviewed where there are opportunities for new initiatives, such as the recent Community Winter Hubs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.05 Community Development for Health Inequalities	In Progress	31/03/2023	25%	●	Initiation of the Thriving Communities programme delayed. In Q3 a community engagement event has been delivered to gain the input of the VCFS to the design of the programme and work has been completed to select a pilot community to work with. Programme to start Q1 23/24.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.06 Develop a CYP(Children and Young People) Plan	In Progress	31/03/2023	72%	●	The Children & Young People's Partnership are overseeing the development of a new strategic plan. The project is on course for completion with progress in engagement, identifying priorities and developing an action plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.01.07 Develop People Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	★	The work continues with development strategy and the activity plans for Q4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.03.01 Strengthened Working with Health	In Progress	31/03/2023	65%	★	The council have continued to work closely with NHS colleagues in relation to a range of shared operational and strategic challenges. In quarter 3 we have agreed a range of activities to support the NHS winter plan to ensure effective and timely discharge from hospital.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.04.02 Monitor take-up and impact of new Housing Assistance Policy	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%	●	Implemented April 2022. Website updated with additional information. Policy to be reviewed after first six months of implementation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.05.02 Deliver the new Health and Community Hub at Binfield	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%	★	The construction of the Health and Community Centre is progressing in line with timetable and budget
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.06.03 Facilitate the delivery of new Community Hub in Warfield	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	●	Ridge have been commissioned and have started work with BFC and WPC to update the 2019 feasibility study for the hub and update the cost plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.06.04 Facilitate new Bucklers Park Community Hub	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	●	The procurement of an operator to manage the community hub and its outdoor facilities was delayed in Q2 but significant progress was made in Q3 in finalising the procurement documentation and the two stage procurement process will commence early in Q4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.06.05 Finalising management arrangements for Binfield Community Hub	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	●	In Q3 BFC and Binfield Parish Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding in support of BPC taking on the management and operation of the community centre at the Binfield Health and Community Hub. The lease has been drafted and sent to BPC to be agreed and completed in Q4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.07.01 Family hub services expansion and development of multi-disciplinary teams	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	CAMHS Getting Help Services/MHST are working in Hubs. The Reducing Parental Conflict additional post, funded through the DWP has been recruited to. Report to CMT on 23/02/23 to propose a migration team reporting to the Head of Early Help to coordinate and join up the management and delivery of all migration programmes. Approved Mental Health Professional supporting EHP's one day a week. Supporting Families next steps to evidence how Early Help is being delivered through partners. Locality Manager has reinstated termly face to face meetings with family support advisers across all Bracknell Forest Schools. Head of Service refreshing terms of reference and increasing membership of the Early Help Network Partnership meeting. The purpose is to ensure that the aims of the Early Help Strategy and Plan are achieved through a strong partnership.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.08.03 Funding for Adolescents Work	In Progress	31/03/2023	95%	★	Funding approved from April 2022 for 24 months. This will enable the continuation of the family safeguarding adolescent project work, to ensure effective edge of care services and that only the appropriate children enter care.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.08.04 Increase in-house fostering capacity	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	Changes to fostering allowance being presented to exec for a decision in October. Support services to foster carers also reviewed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.08.05 Review Family Safeguarding Model	Not Started	31/03/2023	0%	n/r	n/r
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.09.04 New Health and Care Service at Heathlands	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	▲	The CQC undertook a further inspection in November to identify whether the nursing provider was delivering required improvements in line with their improvement plan. The report was not published at the time of writing and the outcome was not known. Council Officers and colleagues from NHS teams continue to work closely with the service to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents and to oversee continued progress.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.10.01 Promotion of volunteering for grounds maintenance at the Cemetery & Crematorium	In Progress	31/03/2023	66%	★	The first placement of a volunteer at the cemetery and crematorium via the collaborative 'Green and Active Heroes' scheme between Involve and BFC commenced during Q3. The initial progress has been very good. Further opportunities for more volunteer engagement and expanding on numbers involved are being explored.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.10.02 Leisure, libraries and arts services used for social prescribing	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%	★	Work has continued to develop libraries for use as Warm Spaces during the winter. The Library team continues to work closely with education and social care colleagues to ensure the range of services on offer helps to meet their needs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.10.03 Social prescribing and primary prevention programmes	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	Winter wellness programme in place; working with primary care and referrals from non-clinical settings are high
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.11.02 Schools service level agreement for PE	In Progress	30/09/2023	75%	★	Autumn term 2022 has been a period of re-establishing 'business as normal' post COVID restrictions with our partner schools. This has been evidenced through schools' desire to attend and practitioners engaging with our programmes appropriately and following guidance and priorities by working with targeted groups of young people. We have increased our activity aimed at the hard-to-reach young people and the less active. Attendance has been strong and on first analysis appears to be in line with that prior to the pandemic. Schools' commitment to the service is demonstrated by the fact that all primary schools apart from one have attended two or more opportunities this term.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.11.03 Develop a new leisure strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	10%	★	A consultant has been engaged to start work on a gap analysis and audit of leisure provision in the Borough. This will take place in January / February 2023.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.12.01 Implement improvements to Suitable Natural Green Space (SANG)	In Progress	31/03/2023	90%	★	SANG creation and management in place through pump priming and is ahead of anticipated demand.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.12.02 Improvements for open spaces	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	Capital enhancement completed to achieve major bridge replacement at Shepherd Meadows, plus various other projects.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.12.03 Promoting Active Travel	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	A new website tool to promote all forms of active and sustainable travel has been launched. The 'My Journey' site [Home myjourney (bracknell-forest.gov.uk)] provides information and advice on walking, cycling, bus, rail, taxi and eco-driving while also signposting visitors to more detailed information.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.13.01 Coordinate and lead on the work of the Bracknell Forest Civilian Military Partnership	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	★	Work has been focused on setting up the Royal Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership (RBCMP). A meeting has been held with the RMAS Station Staff Officer in Q3 to agree the next steps required to review the remit and action plan of the Bracknell Forest Civilian Military Partnership in early 2023 following the establishment of the RBCMP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.13.03 Support the development of a Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	Following the launch of the Royal Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership in June 2022 at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), a meeting of the supporting unitary authority officers is planned in Q4 to define the activities required to take forward the action plan and the agenda for the next meeting of the Partnership in March 2023.

Monthly Indicators	31/01/2023			
	Last Month	This Month	Current Target	RAG
> L346 Average caseload for Family Safeguarding Model	20	22	16	▲
> L385 Rate per 10k of children on Child Protection Plans	56.0	67.5	43.0	n/a
> L386 Rate per 10k of Children Looked After	53.5	54.2	50.0	n/a

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Current Target	RAG
L003 Number of visits to leisure facilities managed by Everyone Active	362,252	286,691	380,000	▲
L404 Number of children and young people visits to leisure facilities managed by Everyone Active	129,504	89,065	110,200	●
L405 Number of older people visits to leisure facilities managed by Everyone Active	26,163	17,348	48,412	▲
L411 Number per 10,000 of care proceedings	n/r	n/r	n/r	◀◀
L412 Number per 100,000 of first-time entrants to criminal justice system	29.8	29.8	20.0	n/a
L413 Time taken in weeks to process Disabled Facilities Grant applications	17.0	0.4		n/a
L414 % of children who achieve a BMI Z-score reduction	0%	0%	15%	★
L415 % of smokers who have quit at 4 weeks in the quarter (co-verified)	31%	41%	30%	★
L416 % of smokers who have quit at 4 weeks in the year to date (co-verified)	0%	48%	30%	★
L436 Number of visits by customers with a disability to leisure facilities managed Everyone Active	813	665	26,600	▲

Protecting and enhancing our environment

Action	31/12/2022				
	Stage	Due Date	Percentage Complete	Status	Comment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.01.03 Local Plan Implementation	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Implementation of the new Local Plan will commence once it has been adopted. The programme for adoption will depend in part on the timescales for the planning inspectorate feeding back following the end of the local plan hearings. Stage 2 Hearings are scheduled for October 2022 and it is anticipated that consultation will need to be held on proposed modifications to the plan prior to its adoption.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.01.05 Management of land assets	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	★	Work continues with parish councils on transfer of land ownership.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.01.06 Improve biodiversity through grounds maintenance programme	Completed	31/03/2023	100%	★	At the very beginning of quarter 3 the once a year mowing was completed on the biodiversity areas across the borough. These areas are then left untouched during the winter months.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.01.07 Enhancements at The Look Out and Horseshoe Lake	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	HL car park works ordered, awaiting construction pending contractor capacity. The Look Out completed business evolution projects within the period, awaiting further discussion with landlord.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.02.01 Green development of our waste collection services	In Progress	31/03/2023	25%	★	Assessments of flats continued and just over half of the borough's flats have now been assessed for their suitability for food waste collection. Managing Agent or Housing Association support for the service is still proving to be a challenge. New flats that are joining the food waste collection service are door knocked before their first collections and residents respond positively to this.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.02.02 Educate, enable and encourage residents to maximise their recycling	In Progress	31/03/2023	90%	★	The annual waste collection hanger went on all refuse bins in October and this contains the annual collection schedule and information on the waste and recycling services available to residents. Quarter 3 sees the build up to Christmas, a time when residents generally produce more waste, however much of the extra waste produced is recyclable. In the run up to Christmas social media posts reminding everyone to use their blue bins, food bins and the recycling sites went out alongside messaging relating to reducing or reusing where possible. Reminders on how to maximise recycling over Christmas were also included in Town and Country and also in the December waste and recycling e-newsletter.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.02.03 Landfill site at Strong's Heath	Completed	31/12/2023	100%	✔	No further updates as the schedule work has been completed and decision made not to go ahead with the original proposal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.03.01 Parking bay schemes	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	The residential parking improvement schemes for 2022/23 are progressing through the construction phase.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.05.02 Managing Partner for Buckler's Forest SANG	In Progress	31/03/2023	90%	★	Site management arrangements progressed. Extension of responsibility to include organise community growing, in conjunction with those undertaking the separate operation of Community Hub when opened.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.05.03 Review and enhance open spaces and recreation	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Various reviews and enhancements undertaken, including customer feedback form.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.06.01 Climate Change Action Plan and Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Excellent progress has been made on the implementation of the strategy. The Officer project group continues to push forward with the projects on the action plan. Further, additional projects continue to be added to the roster, with the Greening of our energy project having been given new project resources of £1m to spend on a number of corporate and community buildings, saving significant Co2 in 2023/24. The council's website has been refreshed, in light of feedback from the community on the accessibility of the work programme. The schools' section in particular has attracted positive feedback, building on the engagement work that we have already completed with schools and the additional funding provided to them for local projects. Work commenced in this period on improving links with businesses in the borough, in order to ensure that every business in the borough has a Climate Change plan. We have also been coordinating the council's work programme with those of the Town and Parish Councils, ensuring that all aspects of the borough wide target is being progressed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.06.02 Increase the range of digital services, reducing the number of customers visiting council	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	●	Work continues to determine the programme of development for the Low Code platform. The Customer Services Team is working closely with the Library Service to identify further opportunities for customer support to be provided at libraries. Work has progressed to design digital means of managing visitors to Time Square, and to redirect enquiries to libraries.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.06.05 Technology Solutions for Ways of Working	In Progress	31/03/2023	80%	★	Five new hybrid meeting rooms have been equipped at Time Square. Work is underway to design digital ways of managing visitors to Time Square.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.06.07 Improve energy efficiency for low income households	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Final achievements from participation within the Local Authority Delivery phase 2 (LAD2) scheme are as yet unknown, although BFC expects to have received a small number of energy efficiency home improvements. The Council was successfully accepted to participate within a Berks-wide energy efficiency scheme during Q3 - Sustainable Warmth, comprised of Local Authority Delivery phase 3 (LAD3) improvements to on-gas grid homes and Home Upgrade Grant phase 1 (HUG1) for off-gas grid homes. Q3 has been spent identifying and target marketing the scheme to (most likely to be) eligible households based on their current energy efficiency and their household income. Actual works delivery will commence in Q4. The Council has also expressed an interest to join a further Berks-wide scheme (Home Upgrade Grant phase 2 (HUG2) from April 2023. Works to support households most vulnerable to the effect of the cold has also continued via the Warm, Safe and Well scheme with a further 41 homes expressing an interest in benefiting during Q3. In terms of overall progress the average SAP band rating for all known households in the borough is now 69.1 (a 'C' rating) - up 0.3 since Q2. The government ambition is for all homes to be at least a 'C' by 2035.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.06.08 Seek alternative low-carbon highway materials	Completed	31/03/2023	100%	✔	The 2022 summer surface programme is complete which has trialed the use of Warm mix surfacing materials.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.07.03 Promote bus travel	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Bus patronage continue to grow slowly as we emerge from the Covid 19 Pandemic. This trend matches the national trend with concessionary travel still remaining low and impacting on the viability of services. The supported contracts have now been re-rendered and award likely in the next quarter.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.07.04 Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	90%	★	The document "Electric Vehicle Charging - A Summary and Guide" has been published and placed on the Council's dedicated EV webpage. The Government's EV Charging Strategy has recently been published and sets out the roles for the private and public sectors. Local authorities are encouraged to develop their strategies further as part of the LTP(4) development process. Meanwhile, 32 new EV bays have now been installed within community shop car parks across the borough. A corporate working group has been established to explore further Council led opportunities in areas within its control.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5.07.06 Review the Essential Car User allowance and green travel initiatives	In Progress	31/03/2023	10%	●	The objective for this has grown to further consider green travel initiatives. Work needs to be progressed on this during 2023.

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Target	RAG
L241 Income from CIL receipts	£1,275,327	£1,757,469		n/a
L284 Number of homes given planning permission		55		n/a
> L286 % of planning appeals dismissed	75%	58%	66%	●
> L356 % of major planning applications determined within timescales	80%	88%	85%	★
> L357 % of minor planning applications determined within timescales	68%	66%	90%	▲
> L358 % of other planning applications determined within timescales	76%	79%	90%	▲
L418 Customer visits to Time Square	0	0	5,000	n/a
L434 Planning permissions granted for net additional dwellings not yet implemented	1,749	0	0	n/a
L446 Impact of Social Prescribing as a primary prevention programme on reducing loneliness	88%	81%	30%	★

Communities

Action	31/12/2022				
	Stage	Due Date	Percentage Complete	Status	Comment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.01.01 Undertake health check and action plan for retail centres	In Progress	31/03/2023	25%	●	Future programme under review with Property Services.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.02.01 Support for Community Associations	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	Ongoing support, advice and guidance provided to the Community Associations. The Engagement team continues to liaise with Property Services, other service areas and Involve Community Services to resolve specific issues and support the community associations. The Community Development Manager is now in post and community association network meetings have resumed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.02.02 Cultural offer available through libraries	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	170 cultural events took place in Libraries in Quarter 3. Children and adults can immerse themselves in every form of art, film, music and dance through performances and attending classes in the Libraries as the full programme of Library events have resumed. They can also learn about art and culture, local and family history through reading. The cultural offer includes arts and crafts' demonstrations, author talks, shadowing book awards and prizes, music streaming and recently the Library Service has launched the loaning of Ukeleles. The Library Services Manager has been collaborating with Bracknell and Wokingham College, providing photography and art students with a brief on interesting places to read or challenging Library stereotypes and the winning exhibits are on display in Bracknell Library, and the images are being used in the Library Services' social media campaigns.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.02.03 Develop the offer in Libraries to support the Adults and Children's agendas	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	The Library Service has undertaken the following to support both Adults' and Children's Services agendas: Delivering books to the housebound and clinically vulnerable through the Home Library Service in order to combat social isolation. 25 tablets were loaned to people with dementia and their carers, working closely with the BFC Dementia Services Coordinator. These tablets are now available to loan to the general public to assist with developing their digital skills and to combat digital exclusion. Organising a large programme of physical and virtual events, in order to bring people together who are lonely, and to promote reading for pleasure as a means of improving mental health and well being. Working closely with the Public Health Team and, in particular, with the Social Prescribing Team, who are signposting their clients to Library events, and promoting the Libraries' collections of "Reading Well" self-help books. There is now also a special collection of "Reading Well for teens" books to support young people with mental health issues. Working with Children's Services to form a Library offer as part of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, to support looked after children and children from low income families and to improve literacy and encourage a love of reading. Working with the DWP and BFC's Financial Hardship Team to provide support for the unemployed, providing free access to PCs, printers and scanners, staff assistance to access job listings and help with ICT queries, access to online training and materials relating to employment, and free advice and training sessions provided by BEEP, Adviza and Northern training Solutions in Bracknell Library. Providing assistance and signposting for anyone applying for Universal Credit and Benefits' applications, and Government Services. Enrolling eligible customers for disability bus passes. Offering 6 Libraries as Community Winter (warm) hubs, where anyone struggling with financial hardship can come to keep warm, have free refreshments and take part in free activities and obtain advice on winter wellness and dealing with financial hardship. Increasing the collections of books to support debt management, eating well for less and recycling ideas.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.02.04 Collaboration and Community Hub at Time Square	Completed	30/09/2022	100%	✔	The project is now complete and has been handed over to business as usual.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.03.02 Addressing Hate Crime	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	BFC Community Safety continues to monitor and review all hate crime weekly. TVP review all incidents, occurrences and crime with a hate crime marker at their Daily Management meeting for identification of trends, repeat victims/perpetrators, hot spots and the appropriateness of their response. There have been no repeat victims or perpetrators during August. There is no change in the current landscape, almost all of reported hate crime is a characteristic of a different incident, i.e. on-going neighbour dispute, family dispute or other crime/disorder. There is a slight increase in the number of occurrences with a hate flag attributed to it, compared to previous years. However, there is still no evidence of any group or community being targeted because of who they are.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.03.06 Develop harm in the community strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	This is a Pan Berkshire strategy and progress is on track. During the progression period we do have a local BFC strategy which is overseen by a local strategic multi agency group.

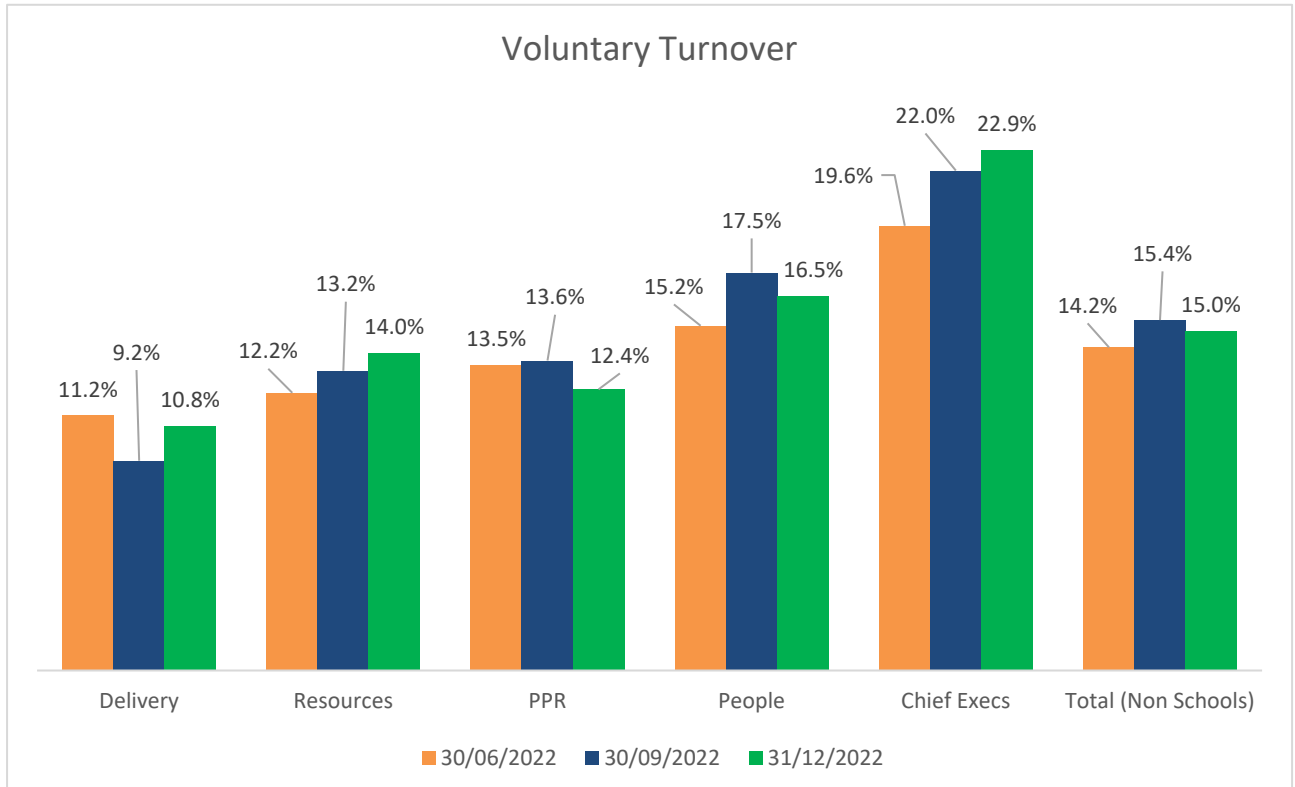
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.03.07 Review the Community Safety Partnership Priorities	Completed	30/06/2022	100%	★	The annual review of the priorities is now complete after a partner and public consultation. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Steering Group will monitor progress at each quarterly meeting. The 3 key focus areas for 2022/23 are: Tackle exploitation and serious violence across all ages Reduce town centre anti-social behaviour and crime Reduce harm caused by domestic abuse: - Management of perpetrators and enforcement - Delivery of the safe accommodation action plan The CSP will continue to monitor and respond to borough-wide crime and ASB hotspots, burglary and vehicle crime
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.03.08 Develop Domestic Abuse Strategy	Completed	31/03/2023	100%	★	The DA Strategy was adopted by the Executive on 15 November 2022 thus completing the Bracknell Forest Council approval process. It is due for review on 1 April 2024
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.03.09 Develop a Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	A strategic assessment of serious violence and exploitation in Bracknell Forest has been commissioned to be take place in January 2023 - March 2023 and this will inform a strategy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.04.01 South Hill Park Development	In Progress	31/03/2023	70%	★	Colleagues from South Hill Park Arts Trust will be involved in the development of the Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy. The Trust will have a key role to play in the delivery of the action plan resulting from the Strategy.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.07.01 Owned and leased properties for Homelessness	In Progress	31/03/2023	65%	★	High-level feasibility has been completed to create 7 additional units for Homeless families and which is currently considered by the Planners for the proposed development.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.08.01 Affordable housing planning policy	In Progress	31/03/2023	85%	★	Existing affordable housing policy continues to be implemented. Updated affordable housing policy is part of the emerging local plan which is currently at examination with Stage 2 hearings scheduled for October 2022. Its implementation will commence on adoption of the new local plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.08.03 Develop a new Housing Strategy	In Progress	31/03/2023	98%	★	The strategy has been completed and submitted for final approval by Executive on 24 January
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.09.02 Develop new allocations policy for all live cases	In Progress	31/03/2023	10%	●	A new policy project plan is now in place. Anticipated implementation date Feb/March 2024.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.10.02 Cultural Festival	In Progress	31/03/2023	50%	★	Initial discussions have taken place with the Town Centre Events and Marketing Officer regarding the possibility of hosting a Culture and Community Day in the town centre.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.10.04 Community groups supporting the half marathon	In Progress	31/03/2023	60%	★	Further meetings have taken place this quarter. The race entry is now live and plans are progressing for the inclusive event on the Saturday.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.10.07 Cultural events in Bracknell Town Centre	In Progress	31/03/2023	40%	★	All events completed on target with outputs achieved.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6.10.08 Support the integration of Ukrainians who arrive in the borough	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	The council continues to work with partner agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sector to support Ukrainian guests, their hosts and the existing Ukrainian community. This support has included ongoing engagement and supporting local events, working closely with the Lexicon and key partners to support Vsi Razom community group to open a community hub at Princess Square and launching a one-off grant fund to help meet the immediate and medium-term community integration needs of Ukrainian guests across the borough.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.019 Community Cohesion and Engagement Partnership	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	The partnership has continued to meet quarterly and considered a range of community issues. The partnership met last on the Tuesday 20 September 2022.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.025 Prevent Action Plan and Equality Scheme	In Progress	31/03/2023	75%	★	The Prevent Steering Group continues to meet quarterly, last meeting on the 8th September to review the delivery of the Bracknell Forest Prevent Steering Group's action plan and the Local Authority Self-Assessment for 2022. Publishing of the Government's Prevent review is imminent and an executive summary will be reviewed by the group.

Quarterly Indicators	31/12/2022			
	Last Quarter	This Quarter	Current Target	RAG
L185 Overall crime	1,883	1,928		n/a
L406 Number of visits to libraries	135,266	200,223	87,500	★
L421 Number of community events held in libraries	685	1,144	538	★
L422 Number of educational events held in libraries	204	360	200	★
L424 Number of cases resolved by the partnership problem-solving groups	8	9		n/a
L425 % of homelessness preventions		70%	58%	★

Section 4: Corporate Health

a) Summary of People

Staff Voluntary Turnover

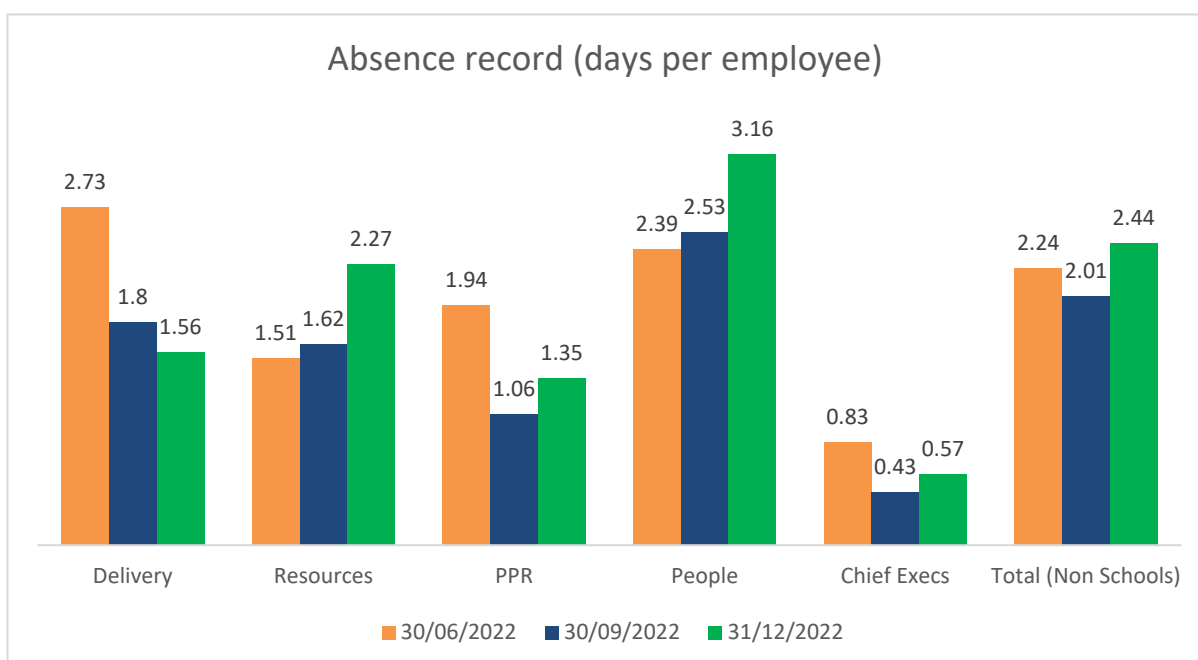


Comparator data	%
Total voluntary turnover for BFC, 21/22:	13.83%
Average voluntary turnover rate UK public sector 2021:	8.8%
Average Local Government England voluntary turnover 2020:	10%

(Source: XpertHR Labour Turnover Rates 2022 and LGA Workforce Survey 2021)

Staff Sickness

Department	Quarter 3 22-23 (days per employee)
People	3.16
Delivery	1.56
PPR	1.35
Resources	2.27
Chief Executive's Office	0.57
Total staff sickness excluding maintained schools	2.44



Comparator data	All employees, average days sickness absence per employee
Bracknell Forest Council (Non-Schools) 21/22	6.94
Public Sector employees 2021	6.4

(Source: ONS Sickness absence in the UK labour market)

People

Absence this quarter has risen by approximately 25% since last quarter. In the last quarter, it was 2.53 days per employee and it has increased to 3.16 now.

Long term sickness however now only equates to 52% of the absence whereas last quarter this figure was 67% therefore the number of short-term absences is on the increase. There were 27 people off long-term sick during the quarter of which there are still 13 absent.

Delivery

Absence has reduced by approximately 15% since the last quarter. Long term sickness equates to 17% of the absence this quarter which is significantly lower than last quarter.

Resources

Absence in Q3 has risen by about 40% since last quarter. Long term sickness now equates to 54% of the absence and will account for a lot of the increase. There are two members of staff on long term sickness, both are still absent.

Covid-19 equates to approximately 6% of the total absence which is lower than last quarters figure of 14%.

Place, Planning and Regeneration

Absence has risen by approximately 27% since last quarter. Long term sickness equates to 34% of the total absence which explains some of the increase. There were two members of staff on long term sick during the quarter one of which has returned to work.

Chief Executive's Office

Absence levels this quarter are very similar to those of quarter two. Covid-19 relates to just over 50% of the absence which is a reduction on last quarter.

There was no long-term sickness this quarter.

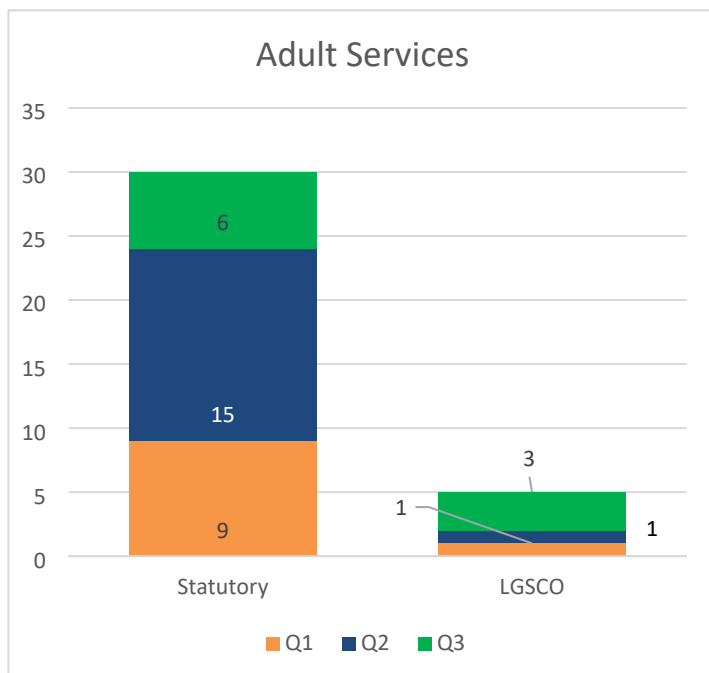
b) Summary of Complaints

Note: Stage 1 complaints are now included for all departments. This is a positive step which may reveal inconsistencies in how stage 1 complaints are handled across departments. If necessary, this data will provide a basis for future work on consistency.

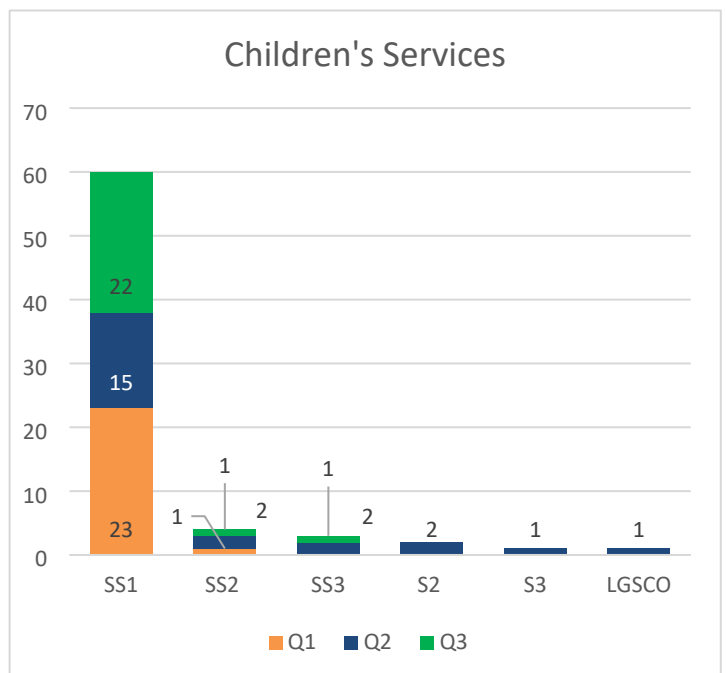
The Chief Executive's Office is not included within the complaints reporting due to the minimal frequency of complaints received.

Key –

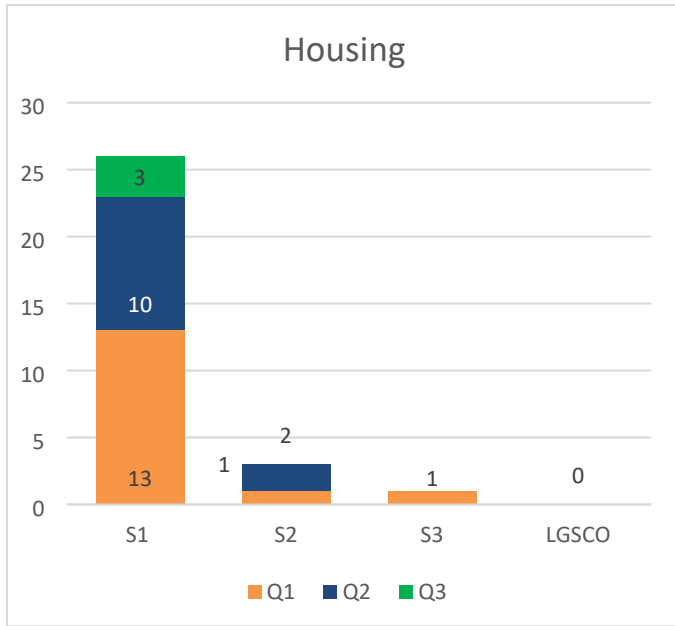
Q1 – Quarter one	Q2 – Quarter two	YTD – Year to Date
SS1 – Statutory stage one	SS2 – Statutory stage two	SS3 – Statutory Stage three
S1 – Stage one	S2- Stage two	S3 – Stage three
LGSCO - Local Government Ombudsman and Social Care Ombudsman		



- Total YTD – 35
- Fully upheld – 3
- In Progress – 3
- Not upheld – 13
- Partially upheld- 11

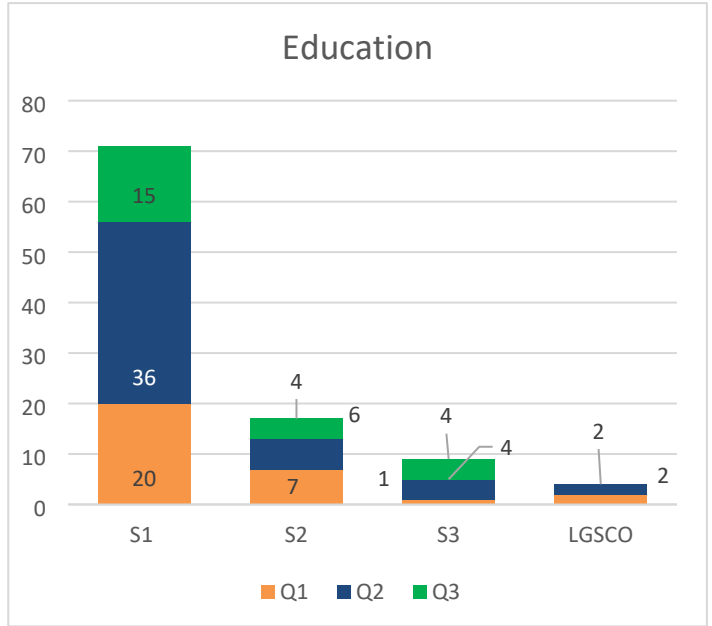


- Total YTD – 61
- No investigation - 2
- In Progress – 4
- Not upheld – 25
- No finding – 2
- Partially upheld – 32
- Onto next stage – 3
- From previous quarter - 1

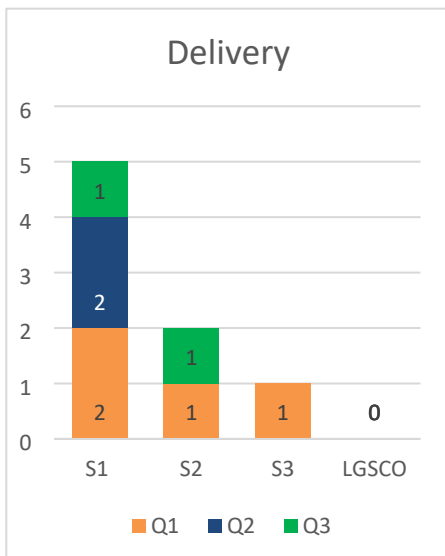


- Total YTD – 30
- Not upheld – 19
- In progress – 1
- Partially upheld – 6
- No finding – 1

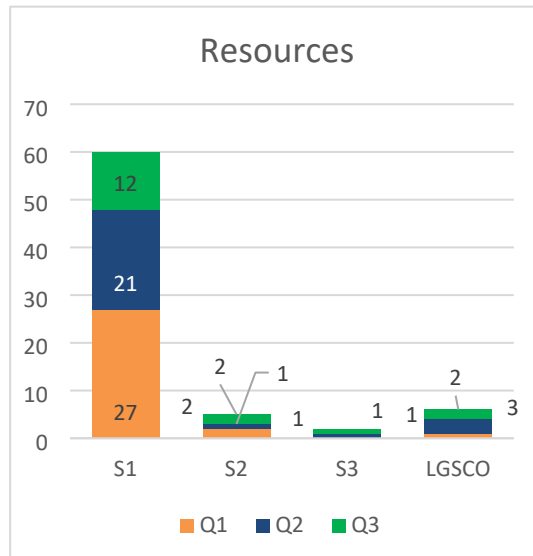
Onto next stage – 3



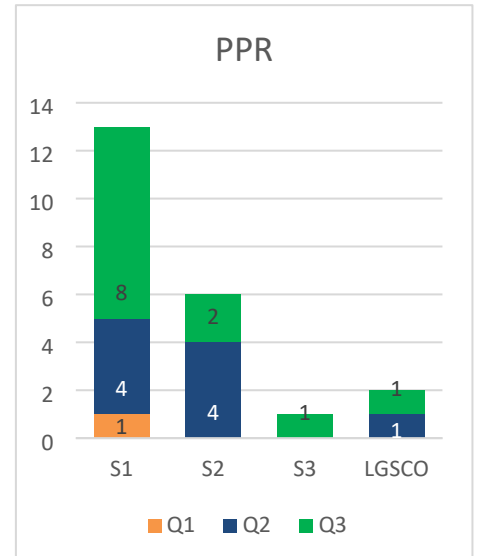
- Total YTD – 75
- Fully upheld – 26
- Not upheld – 17
- Partially upheld – 25
- Onto next stage – 15
- From previous year/ quarter - 9



- Total YTD - 5
- Not upheld – 2
- In progress – 2
- Partially upheld – 1
- Onto next stage - 2



- Total YTD – 64
- Not upheld – 58
- In progress – 7
- No investigation - 4
- Onto next stage – 7



- Total YTD – 15
- Full upheld – 3
- In progress – 2
- Not upheld – 4
- Partially upheld – 5

- Premature complaint - 1

- No finding – 1
- Onto next stage – 7

c) Strategic Risks and Audits -

The council's Strategic Risk Register was reviewed and updated by the Strategic Risk Management Group and the Corporate Management Team on 10 November 2022 and 11 January 2023 respectively. The key changes made to the register were to:

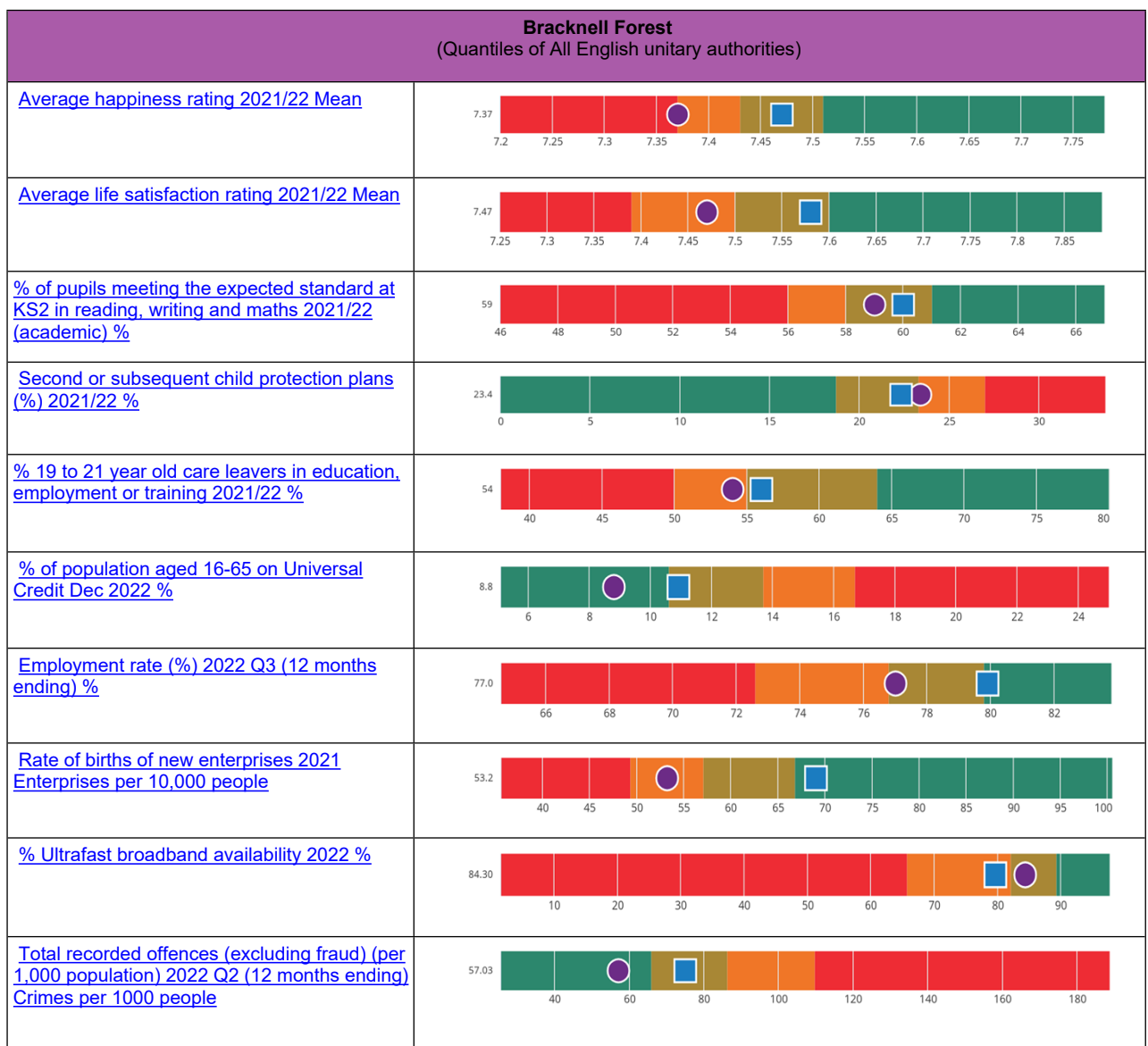
- Remove the Covid risk as this is now managed under business as usual; and
- Add a risk on climate change.

A number of internal audit reports were issued with high priority recommendations during quarter three. A summary of the key points coming out of these audits was included in the Head of Audit and Risk Management's to the Governance and Audit Committee on 25 January 2023.

Section 5: Community Health

There are a number of indicators available to benchmark council performance on by using [LG Inform](#). In particular, it can be useful to compare performance with CIPFA neighbours which represent a group of authorities with similar characteristics. Therefore, this comparison is used along with the English authority average.

The purpose of including the community health data is to provide wider context for assessing the performance of delivering the council plan priorities and to further support decision making and planning. The needs and patterns within the community will affect the delivery of council services and achievement of the priorities. It also may suggest where new areas of focus are needed. The specific items below are pilot indicators included to show the range of possible areas that can be reported.



◆ Mean for Bracknell Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours

● Bracknell Forest Council

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**
16 March 2023

Overview and Scrutiny Review of Enforcement Strategy Report **Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's report to the Commission following the Panel's review into enforcement strategy.
- 1.2 To provide the advice of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (SSO) to inform the Commission's decision whether to endorse the Panel's recommendations to the Executive.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers whether to endorse the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the Panel report (attached as Appendix A) and paragraph 5.5 of this report, taking into account the comments of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 It is the role of the SSO to advise the Council on any issues or concerns that may arise about the operation of the scrutiny function and the SSO may on occasion be required to make a determination about what the law says and how this should be applied to any particular situation. In carrying out this statutory role, there is a need to have a nuanced and meaningful understanding of the scrutiny function in order to accurately make judgments about its operation when disagreements or other issues arise.
- 3.2 The SSO is responsible for ensuring that the scrutiny function is adequately resourced and that service departments and partners are contributing sufficiently to reviews to ensure that they are effective.
- 3.3 The SSO is also responsible for providing advice to the Commission on whether the recommendations within review reports are robust, taking account of resource, legal, climate change, equalities, health and wellbeing and strategic risk implications.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Commission could decide:
 - to endorse the recommendations to the Executive (and others) as set out in the Panel's report
 - to endorse the recommendations in part
 - to ask for further work to be undertaken before the report is submitted to the Executive recognising that this would delay the Panel's next piece of work

- to note the Panel report and not make any recommendations to the Executive (or others)

5 Supporting Information from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission commissioned the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to carry out a review into enforcement strategy as part of the overview and scrutiny four-year work programme, which has been developed to track themes within the new Council Plan.
- 5.2 In support of this review a broad range of witnesses gave evidence putting the Panel in a good position to use this intelligence to frame the review and produce insightful recommendations.
- 5.3 The Panel was supported by Esther Prangle, Governance and Scrutiny Officer who supported the Panel to draw up the scope of the review and prepare an evidence pack of relevant information; to facilitate a number of Panel sessions to interview a range of contributors; to draw out findings from the Panel's investigation, and to prepare a review report. This involved in the region of 200 hours of scrutiny officer time and 5 hours 45 minutes of Panel meetings.
- 5.4 In summary it is the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's view that this review activity had adequate resources and that service departments contributed effectively to the review. The majority of review activity took place between September 2022 and January 2023. The comments from the relevant officers and partners set out below do not indicate any concerns with the proposed recommendations.
- 5.5 The recommendations are:
- 1. Executive member for Planning and Transport to contact the relevant minister, with a request for local authorities to have greater power in declining retrospective planning and prevent abuse of the planning system. This should be achieved by July 2023.**
 - 2. Raise awareness of [One.network](#) on the Council website to enable residents to find who is responsible for highways works and identify unauthorised works. This should be achieved by July 2023.**
 - 3. Investigate development of the use of CCTV as an enforcement tool to simplify the enforcement process when issuing fines, e.g., for fly-tipping. This will be an ongoing process; however, an update will be expected in 12 months' time.**
 - 4. Increase enforcement through the development of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) training.**
 - **By adding value to the existing enforcement toolkit e.g., the use of the power to stop vehicles.**
 - **Look at the effectiveness of the existing partnership arrangement with the Lexicon security operators.**

This will be an ongoing process; however, an update will be expected in 12 months' time.
 - 5. Develop and maintain the policy of enforcement regarding flyposting to ensure consistency is achieved throughout the borough. To be reviewed within 6 months.**
 - 6. Improve communication on the Council website:**
 - **To include greater coverage and reporting of success stories within enforcement including successful prosecutions.**

- Provide more information around highways works and the fact that emergency work can go ahead with retrospective application for a permit.

Progress on this should be expected imminently and reviewed within 12 months.

6 Commentary from Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chair, Councillor John Porter

- 6.1 This review was a direct result from the Integrated Enforcement review which was completed in September 2022. The panel wanted to ensure that the policy and strategy of enforcement were being followed

7 Response from Assistant Director for Contract Services

- 7.1 In Contract Services we have had a number of enforcement options being used successfully since the previous O&S review.
- 7.2 The opportunity to participate in this further deep dive into enforcement strategy has helped the team understand the Council's priorities. It's particularly pleasing to see the recent introduction of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme in partnership with the Lexicon being identified as an example of good practice.

8 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial Advice

- 8.2 These recommendations will mean additional responsibilities are to be added to existing employees' workloads. All costs (including training) will be contained within existing budgets but if they exceed these they will be highlighted as budget pressures and additional funding will be requested as part of the annual budget cycle. Some costs may well be offset through additional income gained by enforcement activity.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.3 The review scope, activities and recommendations were all considered in the initial equalities screening attached at Appendix B.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 8.4 The implications of poor enforcement performance would be reputational damage for the Council as there would be a potential for increased levels of low level and anti-social crime, an inability to protect our highly valued green spaces and appearance of residential communities. At the same time this would undermine the basis of formal application and approvals processes described within the attached report.

Climate Change Implications

- 8.5 The recommendations in Section 2 and 5 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO2 because there is no suggested increase in activity or travel that would generate a change.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 8.6 The Council is committed to actively protecting and enhancing the borough's environment to keep it clean and green through enforcement. This supports Bracknell Forest being one of the healthiest places to live. Residents will therefore experience better health, both physical and mental.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Kevin Gibbs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer - 01344 355621

kevin.gibbs@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Esther Prangle, Governance & Scrutiny Officer - 01344 352326

esther.prangle@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report

REVIEW TITLE	O&S PANEL	DATE
Enforcement Strategy	Environment and Communities	16 March 2023

“This review was a direct result from the Integrated Enforcement review which was completed in September 2022. The panel wanted to ensure that the policy and strategy of enforcement were being followed.”



Councillor John Porter,
Chair: Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Recommendations



1. Executive member for Planning and Transport to contact the relevant minister, with a request for local authorities to have greater power in declining retrospective planning and prevent abuse of the planning system. This should be achieved by July 2023.
2. Raise awareness of [One.network](#) on the Council website to enable residents to find who is responsible for highways works and identify unauthorised works. This should be achieved by July 2023.
3. Investigate development of the use of CCTV as an enforcement tool to simplify the enforcement process when issuing fines, e.g., for fly-tipping. This will be an ongoing process; however, an update will be expected in 12 months' time.
4. Increase enforcement through the development of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) training.
 - By adding value to the existing enforcement toolkit e.g., the use of the power to stop vehicles.
 - Look at the effectiveness of the existing partnership arrangement with the Lexicon security operators.This will be an ongoing process; however, an update will be expected in 12 months' time.
5. Develop and maintain the policy of enforcement regarding flyposting to ensure consistency is achieved throughout the borough. To be reviewed within 6 months.
6. Improve communication on the Council website:
 - To include greater coverage and reporting of success stories within enforcement including successful prosecutions.
 - Provide more information around highways works and the fact that emergency work can go ahead with retrospective application for a permit.Progress on this should be expected imminently and reviewed within 12 months.

Background information and key findings

This companion review follows the Integrated Enforcement Review (September 2022) which identified that enforcement is a complex area covering a wide range of services across various departments, organisations, and agencies. It focussed on looking at what enforcement powers the council holds and how these are distributed across teams within the council. One of the recommendations was to develop enforcement strategies encouraging greater collaboration across services and with partners. Therefore the aim of this review was to focus on the use,

effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers within the council and discuss if any changes to policy or approach should be recommended.

The panel found that:

- Enforcement processes can be complex which can make it difficult for residents to understand or follow, this was evident when looking at enforcement strategies within planning.
- Greater power within planning for local authorities needs to be sought.
- There was evidence of good examples of effectiveness of powers within enforcement, specifically with the recent implementation of CSAS powers for Lexicon staff. Further success was seen within the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) regarding the issue of fly tipping.
- Greater publicity of enforcement strategies and success stories will help to improve the effectiveness of enforcement powers.
- One.network is a useful tool that can enhance residents' knowledge of highways work.

Good Practice



The panel recognised the good work that exists within enforcement, specifically the recent success story around the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) which has provided security staff at the Lexicon with greater powers to help curb anti-social behaviour (ASB). It is anticipated that this scheme will act as a pilot and be a useful contribution to the recommendation to increase enforcement through the development of the CSAS scheme.

Review findings



As acknowledged in the recent integrated enforcement review enforcement is an activity which covers a broad range of services across many departments within the Council. The review highlighted that the range of activities within enforcement can be complex and is often not helped by public misinformation regarding processes and policies. Awareness of enforcement can be raised through publicity to make sure residents can see the results of successful enforcement within the borough and are aware of the processes involved in enforcement across the Council.

A focus in this review was for the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to look at strategies and policies with consideration of the following:

- ✓ Is the policy fit for purpose or does it need to be reviewed?
- ✓ Is it being adhered to, if not why?
- ✓ Are there any ways the process or policy can be enhanced?

The Panel identified and interviewed senior officers from Bracknell Forest Council including the Executive Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration, Assistant Director of Contract Services, Head of Natural Estates, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Highways and Transport and the Head of the Public Protection Partnership. Additionally, desktop analysis of policies and other relevant documents was undertaken by the panel.

Planning



Councillors highlighted that a common complaint from residents was regarding concern around planning enforcement. This was often in relation to what is, to the casual observer, a dismissive

approach to planning applications which can result in the erection of buildings larger than the submitted plans followed by a reliance on retrospective planning to resolve the issue. Councillors are concerned that planning enforcement within the borough is perceived as weak which may result in an increase of planning breaches.

Senior officers explained that after a breach of planning has been reported the enforcement process can be lengthy. Buildings need to be physically measured and compared to approved plans. Officers then need to check to see if retrospective planning could be made and assess the harm that the breach has made. To appeal against a refusal of planning requires a long list of grounds. However, if there is genuine reason and harm being caused by a breach then it is pursued using a rigorous eight-phase investigation which forms part of the council's [local enforcement plan](#) for planning. Retrospective applications then need to be dealt with on the same basis as the initial application which adds further time to the process.

The panel raised the point that the tightening of planning enforcement is not a priority within central government and the wider planning system. In fact, there is a focus to deliver more homes through permitted development and hence increased possibilities for people to make changes without the need for planning permission.

Discussions around the conversion of office blocks, which is covered by prior approval processes, highlighted a need for improved protection of residents. Planning enforcement follows legislation and therefore doesn't have much input into the conversions of these buildings. There have been concerns with one particular property, Hayley house, which needed to be passed onto the PPP and the fire service.

Overall, the planning team confirmed that they are confident with the strengths of their enforcement strategy and feel it supports and reinforces cases where they need to go to court to make prosecutions. Evidence of this is seen within the planning policy document where an eight-phase investigation flow chart, on page 28, can be found which details the process from receipt of complaint through to direct action if necessary. This strategy remains successful due to regular reviews and updates in response to changes in legislation.



After discussions about issues within planning enforcement the panel felt that local authorities should have greater powers to help address abuse of the planning system, specifically regarding retrospective planning. It was felt that a step towards achieving this would be for the Executive member for Planning and Transport to contact the relevant minister in central government.

Highways and Transport



An issue discussed around highways was the volume of work taking place, however, it was acknowledged that companies have a statutory right to carry out work. The council cannot decline applications but are able to control when the work happens. The website [one.network](#) can help increase awareness and provide a platform to find out when and where work is taking place.

By registering for free residents can use the one.network website to receive updates of work due to take place in the selected area and also the duration of the work. This information is helpful for residents as it keeps them up to date with disruption within the chosen area caused by highway work. If they wish residents can also use the information to report unauthorised works to the council which will assist officers to investigate and implement enforcement to contractors and companies undertaking works without a permit.



After learning about the benefits the one.network website can provide the panel recommends improving awareness via promotion on the council website. This will be beneficial for residents and the council and could be a useful tool to help monitor and report unauthorised highways work.

Public Protection Partnership		
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The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) is a shared service delivering Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards on behalf of two authorities Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council.

A focus within the PPP’s strategy is to take an approach of tackling issues from 3 ways:

- ✓ Prevention – using media and information on the website to provide information to the public around a topic. The use of signage and CCTV as a preventative measure.
- ✓ Intelligence gathering – encouraging residents to report offences, highlighting ways to achieve this i.e. Who to contact, where on the website to find forms to report concerns and breaches of enforcement.
- ✓ Enforcement – issue of fines

This strategy has produced some successful results:

- **The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS)**
Thames Valley Police have accredited ABM Facility Services UK Ltd, a private company who hold the security contract at the Lexicon Shopping Centre in Bracknell. Five of their Security Officers have been presented with individual CSAS certificates. These members of the security team have been granted police powers to assist them in tackling ASB, all have been police vetted and completed a CSAS training course. Working in partnership with Thames Valley Police and Bracknell Forest Council, the Security Officers have the authority to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN) for graffiti, fly-posting, cycling on a footpath as well as breaches of the Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).
- **Fly tipping** – there has been a marked reduction in fly tipping and resulting prosecutions for offenders. A decision was made about 12-18 months ago to employ a dedicated resource to specifically deal with this problem. Some recent successes in this area are evidenced here:

Offence 	Outcome 
Fly tipper convicted after collecting rubbish from residents to be disposed of was found fly tipped at a disused school site.	The defendant was fined £320 and was ordered to pay a contribution towards the prosecution costs
Fly tipper convicted at Reading Magistrates Court following rubbish found fly tipped outside a charity shop.	The Court sentenced by way of a conditional discharge for 12 months and ordered the defendant to pay a contribution towards the prosecution costs.

- The PPP also utilise the positive effects that publicity of successful cases and outcomes can have. The main benefits of this:
 - Develops knowledge and awareness of enforcement which can result in increased reporting from the public of enforcement breaches.
 - Can help to act as a deterrent if there is publicity around the fines given.
 - Provide reassurance that Councils are implementing successful enforcement strategies.

The good practice and examples provided by the PPP have highlighted some ways to enhance enforcement strategies within the Council. Therefore, the panel proposed the following recommendations:



- Improve communication, through greater coverage and reporting of success stories on the Council's website. This could be used to develop and increase understanding of enforcement processes.
- Increase enforcement through the development of CSAS.
- Investigate the use of CCTV to enhance the enforcement process when issuing fines, e.g for fly-tipping. CCTV can additionally act as a deterrent and provide reassurance to the public with respect to fly-tipping hotspots.

Parks and open spaces (rangers)



There was discussion within this review regarding CSAS training of park rangers, which could enable them to issue fines regarding littering, dog fouling etc. Whilst currently staff within the Parks and Countryside don't have enforcement powers it was acknowledged that expanding CSAS powers within this area would not be appropriate for the following reasons:

- ✓ Due to the nature of their work park rangers often work on an individual basis and therefore for safety reasons it was not felt appropriate to provide them with CSAS powers
- ✓ Residents are respectful of park rangers, and it is felt that this relationship could be harmed through providing them with powers to enforce fines. It was acknowledged that they can achieve good results through speaking with and asking residents to pick up litter or clear up dog fouling without additional powers enabling them to issue fines. They are respected within the community and have a good relationship with the public.

The Parks and Countryside team carried out an extensive piece of work to look at how some enforcement action might be delivered for dog fouling and environmental crime issues. It was found that this wasn't straightforward in terms of ensuring how staff would be able to witness offences and then go through a process of issuing a fixed penalty notice. They concluded that giving rangers these additional responsibilities would be too much of a shift in terms of the core work they are currently required to do. An important aspect noted was whether pursuing CSAS training for park rangers was worthwhile to target a minority of people who commit these crimes. It was however noted that there is a process in place if a ranger, or member of the public, were to witness an offence such as dog fouling where a form can be completed, and the issue is followed up with the PPP partnership to take further action.



The panel concluded that no recommendations were necessary within the parks and countryside team, and it was agreed that the team is successful in their approach towards enforcement and the work they do.

Financial considerations

These recommendations will mean additional responsibilities are to be added to existing employees' workloads.

All costs (including training) will be contained within existing budgets but if they exceed these they will be highlighted as budget pressures and additional funding will be requested as part of the annual budget cycle. Some costs may well be offset through additional income gained by enforcement activity.

Review Panel

Councillor Angell	Councillor Mrs Ingham
Councillor Allen	Councillor Kirke
Councillor Brossard	Councillor Mrs McKenzie-Boyle (Vice chair)
Councillor Brown	Councillor Porter (Chair)
Councillor Ms Gaw	


Contributors to the review

Andrew Hunter	Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration, Bracknell Forest Council
Damian James	Assistant Director: Contract Services, Bracknell Forest Council
Sean Murphy	Head of Public Protection Partnership
Alison Beynon	Strategic Manager, Public Protection Partnership
Councillor John Harrison	Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection
Councillor Chris Turrell	Executive Member for Planning & Transport
Wayne Scott	Traffic Manager: Highways and Transport
Stephen Chown	Head of Natural Estates: Parks and Countryside
Max Baker	Assistant Director: Planning
Esther Prangle	Governance and Scrutiny Officer, Bracknell Forest Council

Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening:	Directorate:	Section:	
1. Activity to be assessed	Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Environment and Communities review into Enforcement Strategy. This review will consult with the Public Protection Partnership (PPP), council officers and desktop analysis of enforcement policies		
2. What is the activity?	<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		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Esther Prangle, Governance & Scrutiny Officer		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Esther Prangle, Cllr Porter, Cllr Mrs McKenzie-Boyle		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	The Purpose of this activity is to focus on the use, effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers within the council and discuss if any changes to policy or approach should be recommended.		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	All residents		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact?	What evidence do you have to support this?
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.	Y N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact disability equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
9. Racial equality	Y N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact racial equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
10. Gender equality	Y N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact gender equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact sexual orientation equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.

12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact gender re-assignment equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
13. Age equality	Y	N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact age equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact religion and belief equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y	N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact pregnancy and maternity equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N	No Impact identified	The recommendations will not impact marriage and civil partnership equality but should have an overall positive impact on all groups by improving effectiveness, and consistency of application of enforcement powers.
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.	No other Impact identified			
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A			
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	N/A			
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?		N		

21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	This review considered a range of data from policies within Bracknell Forest Council and the PPP. This was collated in an evidence pack which is available on BFC website		
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?		N	
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
See recommendation contained in the report		Cllr Porter	Recommendations are endorsed by the O&S Commission and agreed by the Executive.
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Overview & Scrutiny Commission work plan		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	Please see recommendations contained in the report.		
26. Assistant director's signature.	Signature: 		Date: 7 February 2023

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report

REVIEW TITLE	O&S PANEL	DATE
Child Criminal Exploitation	Education, Skills and Growth	March 2023



“The review was originally in our forward plan to investigate how County Lines operate within Bracknell Forest and consider how a range of partners work together to reduce opportunities for exploitation. However, the Covid Pandemic had a huge impact on how these operate. Therefore, the review was broadened to look at Child Criminal Exploitation and looked at any changes to CCE activity because of the pandemic. National evidence pointed to an increase in localised CCE activity. Safeguarding of our young people is incredibly important in this age of fast communication and social media pressures that can make them far more vulnerable to exploitation. How our council and community work in partnership is key to protecting them.”

Councillor Gill Birch, Chair: Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Recommendations



1. Collaborate with Thames Valley Police and other relevant partners to develop and implement regular Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) awareness campaigns within schools, targeting both children and parents. **12 months.**
2. Engage with local businesses and community organisations to develop strategies designed to both raise awareness of CCE and promote the creation of safer places for children and young people. **12 months.**
3. Conduct a comprehensive review of the website to enhance its usability and accessibility in relation to child exploitation. Ensure the information on the relevant web pages is clear and concise, and that there are links to relevant external resources. Engage with children and young people during the process and consider ‘Good Practice’ from other Local Authorities identified by the Education, Skills, Growth O&S Panel. **6 months.**
4. Develop and implement a survey focused on CCE for safeguarding leads from schools in the borough. Use the findings to identify gaps and areas for improvement in existing policies and practices relating to CCE. Consider working with the Education, Skills, Growth O&S Panel on this. **6 months.**
5. Conduct regular awareness campaigns on the use of cannabis and its impact on vulnerable children and young people. Use a variety of communication channels such as social media, print materials and public events to reach a wider audience. **6 months.**
6. Work with partners to develop and maintain a map or database of vulnerable areas and hot spots related to CCE. **12 months.**

Key findings

The Panel found that:

- Councils have a key role in identifying support as early as possible to help children and young people escape and recover from the exploitation that they have suffered.
- Raising awareness of child exploitation has the potential to disrupt or prevent exploitation. There are a number of ways awareness can be raised, from communication campaigns to drama productions, social media and word of mouth.
- Exploitation around drugs has become more localized and grooming is increasingly happening online.
- Child Criminal Exploitation hotspots do change, partly due to multi-agency work but also as groups and children move on.
- The multi-agency group is getting stronger in sharing intelligence and educating children about technology use.
- There's a screening tool in place that is suitable for all exploitation and referrals are encouraged from anybody that's worried that a child might be exploited. When a referral is received it goes to a triage meeting where there are a number of agencies involved including Makesafe, Youth Justice, Youth Services and the permanency team within children's Social Care.
- Where the victim, the perpetrator, and the location are known, then there is a strategy in place to disrupt one of these three things in an attempt to prevent harm or a crime. An increasing challenge associated with this approach is that while locations used to be predominantly physical locations, they are now often online which makes it harder to detect the perpetrator, and therefore makes it harder to disrupt.
- Every two weeks, internal departments within Thames Valley Police meet and review all the intelligence around county drugs lines that are currently operating in the area. That meeting is broken down into vulnerable persons and locations.
- Nationally, there isn't a strong data set around the crossover between CCE and Children Looked After (CLA). However, children who come into care (particularly later on in their lives) are more likely to go missing. In this context, a young person under the age of 18 years is to be considered "missing" if they are absent from their place of residence without authority, or in circumstances where the absence causes concern for safety of the child. Research shows there is a strong correlation between children who are missing and CCE. There is also a strong correlation between children excluded from school and CCE.
- Community prevention and contextual safeguarding are developing aspects of CCE prevention at the Council. More work is needed to make sure that our communities are vigilant and supportive.
- One important aspect of responding to exploitation is the more holistic the service's responses to young people are, the better trajectories are for children and young people.

Good practice:

- There has been much multi-agency work undertaken in Bracknell Forest to tackle County Lines. Additionally, a lot of prevention work relating to CCE is done within the partnership with the Thames Valley Police, Missing And Child Exploitation (MACE), and Makesafe. This has led to a yearly decrease in number of children who are reported as missing.
- The Council has undertaken considerable work on developing and embedding a language that is considerate and careful and does not include victim-blaming vocabulary towards children who are being exploited.
- In the financial year of 2018/19 greater resources were put into the missing and exploitation team by the Council, which led to the creation of the exploitation prevention manager post. As this has continued to develop a strong emphasis on seeing young people face to face was introduced, particularly for return conversations, and this has played part in the decrease of the number of missing children in recent years. This new approach facilitates a conversation in a much more informal way. As a result, the quality of the information from return home conversations has become much better and much more effective in helping identify sources of harm. Now, these conversations are one of the most important sources of information.

- It was recognised by officers at all levels that the staff support offer for officers in Children Services is strong. The work within social care (including work around CCE) can be emotionally demanding and so it is important that officers feel supported. Some of this work includes a monthly supervision meeting where a well-being score takes place.

Background

Child exploitation is a serious and growing crime. It is complex and continually changing. In general, child exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of a power imbalance to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into criminal or sexual activity or modern slavery. The effects of child exploitation can be devastating and have a profound impact on children for the rest of their lives.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) activity can include children 'being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, being forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or threatening other young people. One of the most common types of CCE activity is County Lines. This involves 'organised drug dealing networks that exploit children and vulnerable adults to move, hold and sell drugs across the UK using dedicated phone lines to take orders'. Exploitation is a key component of the business model and gangs use children because they are 'cheaper, more easily controlled and less likely to get picked up by the police.' More local carrying of drugs, across the same borough or district, is also increasingly seen by councils and partners.

The Bracknell Exploitation Annual Report 2021/22 noted significant multi-agency work in Bracknell Forest to tackle County Lines drug dealing. In this period, there was one county drugs line active in Bracknell that was known to have exploited children to move drugs and there were no known missing children linked to CCE. These reductions suggest the problem profile is now largely confined to the town itself.

Councils have a key role to play in tackling child exploitation, from awareness-raising and staff training to prevention and support for children who have been victims. Councils cannot do this alone and so close working with partners including the police, NHS and schools is vital if areas are to have the right systems in place to prevent and disrupt criminal activity putting children and young people at risk.

Review findings

Makesafe

The Bracknell Forest Makesafe is a small team comprising a manager, a specialist social worker and a specialist family worker. The team undertakes direct work with children at risk of exploitation. In 2021/22 the Council's Makesafe team reported that the number of vulnerable children assessed as Level 3 (evidence of active exploitation) had halved from the previous year.

	2020/21	2021/22
Assessed as Level 1 (Vulnerabilities to exploitation but no indications child is being groomed)	51%	67%
Assessed as Level 2 (Indicators that the child is being groomed for the purposes of exploitation)	24.5%	22%
Assessed as Level 3 (Evidence of active exploitation.)	24.5%	11%

The reduction in level 3 cases creates a shift towards more awareness raising and preventative support for young people.

The Makesafe team noted that “nothing has been usual for children since the pandemic began”. The goal is to move forward collaboratively to make Bracknell Forest as safe as it can be for children as they regain some of the opportunities lost in covid. This review aimed to support that goal by considering key aspects of safeguarding and scrutinising how effective they are.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH is the ‘integrated front door’ for all new safeguarding concerns about children consisting of staff from Social Care, Early Help, Youth Justice, Police, Education, Health, Housing, and Probation collectively working to triage new reports about children. Reports are received from referral partners all across the Borough – including members of the public, professionals and families of children directly.

The MASH has embedded the use of an integrated CCE screening tool into practice to collate information and screen these worries or indicators – this is either completed by the MASH or the MASH support other agencies who know children best to complete the screening tool to draw out the level of concern/risk and the next steps. MASH staff are trained to use the tools appropriately, as well as how to use professional judgement alongside the tool.

The MASH is the central point for receiving all missing children notifications from the Police into Children’s Social Care and plays an integral role in coordinating follow-up activity for each child who is reported missing – including ensuring that Return Home Conversations take place by the relevant agency and practitioner.

Return Home Conversations may take place by the Youth Service, Children’s Social Care fieldwork teams or the Make Safe exploitation team – the MASH role is to ensure that contacts are received, triaged and allocated to the correct follow-up agency with minimal delay and no later than 24 hours.

Missing And Child Exploitation (MACE)

The MACE is concerned with oversight and scrutiny and aims to ensure everything that should be done for that child is being done. The MACE may also look at how partners can work together to neutralize hotspots.

MACE convenes once a month, but many other meetings happen as issues emerge. The agenda is fixed, and a child will stay on it until such a time it is agreed as a collective that the risk is lessened. Once this happens the child will go on to the risk management meeting and agenda. This is a meeting between the police and Makesafe.

This allows the sharing of police intelligence, concerns around CCE and any information that provides partners to maintain a grasp on what’s going on. They work together to prevent and avoid the criminalisation of children.

Youth Justice Team

The Youth Justice Team works with children over the age of ten who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Some of these children who come into contact with the service may be demonstrating behaviours that could be indicative of CCE – for example using substances or showing violence and aggression at home toward their parents.

The team use a range of assessment tools (including the screening tool) to help identify children whose behaviour may be caused by CCE and work closely with the exploitation team in these instances. The team works with the police to prevent and avoid criminalisation of children who have offended because they have been exploited by others to do so.

Youth Justice Team is multidisciplinary. There is a health worker social worker speech and language worker, and mental health worker. The ability to respond to all areas of a child’s life where they’re struggling or navigating difficult things culminates in playing a part in tackling CCE.

If there is evidence of a child being exploited there is a National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The referral will be evaluated by the staff at the NRM who will then provide conclusive grounds that the child in question has been exploited. This can be used as evidence in court. It is a useful tool that supports a child through a criminal investigation where they are the victim. If a child ends up in court because of a drug offence etc, and there is evidence of exploitation, Youth Justice will mitigate for them on that basis.

The Youth Justice Team works closely with schools to keep young people in school. There is an education worker in the team who links with the schools and will attend some of the exclusion meetings. The education worker will try to put things in place to make it easier in school for that child and to hopefully prevent exclusion. The team have also done some group work in schools where they have talked about exploitation with a group of boys. This started before the pandemic and is starting to resume again now. Children tend to react positively to the sessions.

The Youth Justice Team and Thames Valley Police recently carried some sessions on knife crime with the children and parents at a local school within the borough.



After learning of recent successes of crime related awareness activities in local schools, the Panel recommends Officers collaborate with Thames Valley Police and other relevant partners to develop and implement regular CCE awareness campaigns within schools, targeting both children and parents.

Community Safety Team

The Community Safety Partnership's (CSP's) three-year plan for 2020-23 contains a priority of reducing and responding to exploitation. The plan is required to be reviewed each year and, in 2021/22, a key focus area of Serious Violence and All-age Exploitation was set. In terms of governance, a strategic Serious Violence and Exploitation Sub-Group has been set up to collectively identify how to prevent and tackle it as well as manage performance and progress and report back to the CSP. The sub-group also oversees two operational groups: one for u18s at risk of exploitation and serious violence and one for adult victims at risk and perpetrators (including those who may present a risk to u18s). The strategic group and both operational groups are all multi-partner groups involving organisations and Council services including Involve, Berkshire Youth, BFC Youth Services, police, school representatives, the Lexicon and The Wayz.

BFC Community Safety co-ordinates bids against the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund which, in 2022/23, has included youth diversionary work in the town centre and a youth project in Crowthorne Parish which involved Parish Council engagement. Both projects are being conducted using community youth organisations.

BFC Community Safety is also currently supporting the NHS to conduct a focus group of professionals across several boroughs to look at the prevention of serious violence and exploitation involving young people up to the age of 25. The project aims include identifying where there are gaps and opportunities in provision to reduce young people's involvement in serious violence.

BFC Community Safety has arranged access to a Serious Violence Dashboard which has been set up by the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) showing local perpetrators of serious violence and the people (including children and young people) who are at risk from those perpetrators. This data will be used by the two operational groups to manage local offenders and safeguard those at risk from them. A wider programme of work is taking place with the VRU, one strand of which is auditing existing community and voluntary sector provision as well as identify gaps in provision.

BFC Community Safety has a growing network of contacts with the local community through services and organisations including Involve and Parish/Town Councils. For ease, awareness and advice content is mostly shared online or by e-mail as this enables messages to be shared to as wide an audience as possible without incurring costs and requiring large resources - although it is recognised that not everyone regularly uses or has access to the internet. Officers have set up stands and held events in the past but did generally find that engagement was difficult, attendance was sporadic, and reach was limited.

It is acknowledged by officers that CCE awareness does need to be regular and available in different formats. Examples of recent CCE awareness activities include an online modern slavery and exploitation event featuring several different speakers hosted by Involve. Attendance was fair but several resources were produced and shared. Work also took place with Bracknell and Wokingham College's Media Department where films on child exploitation were made and shared publicly.

Contextual Safeguarding

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and a growing number of other key national publications and research papers provide local authorities and partner agencies with a mandate to address the growing concerns around contextual risks affecting children and young people.

The approach of Contextual Safeguarding was developed by Dr Carlene Firmin and colleagues at the University of Bedfordshire in 2015. It's an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Contextual Safeguarding is therefore the intervention into the contexts presenting harm to children- those being peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods and online.

Most of the Council's work with businesses on reducing child exploitation is focused within the town centre, which is the social hub of Bracknell Forest. The Community Safety Partnership has a close working relationship with the Lexicon and the Peel Centre, and this relationship is in place in meetings such as the Partnership Problem-Solving Groups and Town Centre Management meeting. Police, the Council and businesses work together in this way to problem-solve crime and disorder issues. CCTV in the town centre is in place, not only to prevent crime and disorder but also to offer a level of protection to children and young people. Braccan Walk Youth Centre is also a well-placed safe space for children and young people and work is taking place to map what it currently offers as well as what its potential is.

The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board is leading on contextual safeguarding within the borough. Identified with the Board's strategic plan is the aim to address contextual safeguarding and the Board aims to achieve this by "promoting a contextual safeguarding approach by partner organisations". Adopting this holistic approach to safeguarding practices encourages earlier identification of any potential harm within the wider environment and promotes collaboration with wider partners to help reduce risk.



As part of the ongoing work to address contextual safeguarding in Bracknell Forest it is recommended officers at the Council engage with local businesses and community organisations to develop strategies designed to both raise awareness of CCE and to promote the creation of safer places for children and young people.

The changing nature of CCE

Officers from the Council highlighted the importance of recognising the changing nature of the issue and how the Council and its partners respond to it, both flexibly and collectively. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis was identified by officers from the Council and its partners as an emerging issue that will have an impact on the ever-evolving nature of child criminal exploitation.

Nationally, recent trends have seen younger children as well as children from more typically middle-class backgrounds being targeted by criminals, with social media increasingly used to lure them in. Snapchat is particularly used by exploiters as the primary function of the popular app is the ability to send impermanent content. In addition, during the Covid lockdowns, there was an increase in the use of children's bank accounts by criminals to store illicit cash. This was also seen across the country.

These changes will require another shift approach, as is often the case with the evolving CCE landscape, for the detection of earlier signs of CCE is becoming harder.



Due to the changing nature of Child Criminal Exploitation and the role education plays in protecting children from exploitation it is recommended officers develop and implement a survey focused on CCE for safeguarding leads from schools in the borough. Use the findings to identify gaps and areas for improvement in existing policies and practices relating to CCE.

As highlighted, exploiters adapt their tactics and techniques. For instance, if there is an increased police presence or more public awareness of exploitation at a particular place then the exploiters will move. This can be challenging to monitor, and the sharing of information is key in ensuring there is a quick response when there is a change of location.

The changing of 'hotspots' is discussed regularly in MACE meetings. Targeting vulnerable locations used by exploiters is part of a wider strategy to prevent or reduce exploitation. Some of these locations may have businesses nearby.



It was recognised by officers there is potential for work to be done with partners to allow for more effective monitoring of hotspots by regularly exchanging relevant information. Therefore, it is recommended the Council work with its partners to develop and maintain a map or database of vulnerable areas and hot spots related to CCE.

It is recognised by officers that cannabis use is a gateway for exploitation in the local area. Moreover, the drug market is changing across the country, and there is a rise in the use of cannabis edibles by children. They are often sold online and are delivered in the post so they are hard to trace as they look like sweets. The consumption of these edibles (as well as cannabis in general) by children and young people is a significant concern. The impact of cannabis on children who are vulnerable (particularly with mental health concerns) can be really dangerous and officers recognise more can be done locally to promote this impact.



It is recommended that the Council conducts regular awareness campaigns on the use of cannabis and its impact on vulnerable children and young people. A variety of communication channels such as social media, print materials and public events should be considered in order to reach a wider audience.

Website feedback

Website Desktop Exercise

The Panel met in person to carry out a review of the Council's website within the context of child exploitation. The Panel concluded:



The information on the '*Report child abuse or concern about a child*' webpage is too long and 'wordy'. The language used is overly technical and is not clear or concise enough.



It is not clear on the webpage who MASH is. It is also unclear what hours the phone line is open.



There are very few links to useful and relevant external resources relating to child exploitation.



The Croydon Council's website was identified as an example of good practice.



Based on their findings during the website review, the Panel recommends officers conduct a comprehensive review of the website to enhance the usability and accessibility in relation to child exploitation. Ensure the information on the relevant webpages is clear and concise, and that there are links to relevant external resources. Engage with children and young people during the process and consider 'Good Practice' from other Local Authorities identified by the Panel during this review.

“It was wonderful to learn how the different partners work together care so much about our young people. The case studies showed how they really make a difference to young people and their compassion and understanding of the problems that our young people face was brilliant.’

This review was fascinating, and all the panel members learnt a great deal about how our Community Partnership and businesses work together. Partnership working has always been a strength of Bracknell Forest Council, but I would like to say thank you to everyone who gave evidence and came to talk to us for their professionalism and dedication in keeping our young people safe. Many thanks to all the officers, police, Community and young people for their input and support.

A special thank you to Joey Gurney and my Vice- Chairman Michael Brossard for all their help and patience.

I commend the recommendations in the report to you all and we will review this in a years' time.”

Councillor Mrs Gill Birch, Chair: Education, Skills and Growth Scrutiny Panel

Review panel

Councillor Mrs Birch (Chair)	Councillor Ms Hayes
Councillor Brossard (Vice Chair)	Councillor Ms Merry
Councillor Ms Gaw	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Gbadebo	Councillor Temperton
Councillor Hamilton	Victoria Hill (Parent Governor Representative)

Contributors to the review

Sonia Johnson	Assistant Director: Children's Social Care, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Lou Richer	Head of Service for Specialist Services, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Nick Young	Partnership Relations Manager, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Helen Kenny	Chief Inspector, <i>Thames Valley Police</i>


Steve Bailey	Head of Service for First Response Family Safeguarding & Youth Justice, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Fiona Tolson	MASH Team Manager, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Jo Graves	Youth Justice Team Manager, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Dave Phillips	Safeguarding Board Business Manager, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Alison O’Meera	Head of Community Safety, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>
Joey Gurney	Governance and Scrutiny Officer, <i>Bracknell Forest Council</i>

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Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: October 2022 and updated following the review recommendations in February 2023	Directorate: Delivery	Section: Democracy and Governance	
1. Activity to be assessed	Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Education, Skills and Growth review into Children Criminal Exploitation.		
2. What is the activity?	<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		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Joey Gurney, Governance & Scrutiny Officer		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Joey Gurney, Cllr Mrs Gill Birch, Cllr Michael Brossard		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	The purpose of the activity is to		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	All residents.		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact?	What evidence do you have to support this?
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.	Y	Positive impact.	The recommendation to increase local awareness of the impact of cannabis use on children and young people will have a positive impact within mental health. Cannabis can have a detriment effect on young people's mental health and wellbeing and by increasing awareness of its impact it aims to act as a deterrent.
9. Racial equality	N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact racial equality.
10. Gender equality	N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact gender equality.
11. Sexual orientation equality	N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on sexual orientation equality.

12. Gender re-assignment		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on gender re-assignment equality.
13. Age equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on age equality.
14. Religion and belief equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on religion and belief equality.
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on pregnancy and maternity equality.
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality		N	No impact identified.	The recommendations will not impact on marriage or civil partnership equality.
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.	No other impact has been identified.			
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A			
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	N/A			
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?		N		
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	We considered a wide range of data from local and national sources. This was collated in an evidence pack which is available on BFC website.			

22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?		N	
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
See recommendations contained in report.		Cllr Mrs Birch	Recommendations are endorsed by the O&S Commission and agreed by the Executive.
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Overview & Scrutiny Commission work plan		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	Please see recommendations contained in the report.		
26. Assistant director's signature.	Signature: 		Date: 22 February 2023

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