



NOTICE OF MEETING

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Thursday 11 September 2008, 7.30 pm

Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

To: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Edger (Chairman), Councillor McLean (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mrs Birch, Brunel-Walker, Burrows, Finnie, Leake, Mrs Shillcock, Thompson, Virgo, Ms Whitbread and Worrall

Church Representative Members (Voting in respect of Education matters only)

Mr G S Anderson and Mr M G Gibbons

Parent Governor Representative Members (Voting in respect of Education matters only)

Mr I Sharland

cc: Substitute Members of the Committee

Councillors Baily, Mrs Beadsley, Beadsley, Browne, Dudley, Mrs Pile and Wade

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 If you hear the alarm, leave the building immediately.
- 2 Follow the green signs.
- 3 Use the stairs not the lifts.
- 4 Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

Contact: Priya Patel
Telephone: (01344) 352281
Email: priya.patel@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Published: 2 September 2008

**Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Thursday 11 September 2008, 7.30 pm
Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House,
Bracknell**

AGENDA

Page No

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 17 July 2008.

1 - 8

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interest 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.

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.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

5. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Risk Management Update prepared by the Head of Audit and Risk Management is attached for the Commission's consideration prior to its submission to the Executive on 16 September 2008.

9 - 24

OVERVIEW & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

6. REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR CARERS

A report resulting from the review of the support for carers undertaken by a working group of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel is attached for approval. The report will be considered by the Panel on 10 September 2008.

25 - 54

7. REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

A report resulting from the review of the Local Area Agreement undertaken by a working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission is attached for approval.

55 - 90

8. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**
To note the Quarterly Progress Report of the Assistant Chief Executive. 91 - 98

9. **UPDATES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRMEN**
To receive verbal updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen.

HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT

10. **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**
To consider forthcoming items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to the Chief Executive's Office and Corporate Services Department. 99 - 104

This page is intentionally left blank



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
17 JULY 2008
7.30 - 8.55 PM

Present: Councillors Edger (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Brunel-Walker, Finnie, Mrs Shillcock, Thompson, Virgo and Ms Whitbread

Mr G S Anderson (Oxford Diocese Representative)
Mr I Sharland (Parent Governor Representative)

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Ballin and McCracken

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Burrows, Leake and Worrall

Absent: Mr M Gibbons (Portsmouth Diocese Representative)

In attendance: Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive
Alex Jack, Borough Solicitor
Jo Alderson, Head of Procurement
Richard Beaumont, Head of Performance & Scrutiny
Sue Hills, Democratic Services Officer

16. **Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting representatives of Wokingham Borough Council who had come to observe the scrutiny process in Bracknell Forest.

17. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that subject to Minute 13, paragraph on the Social Care & Learning Scrutiny Panel being amended to read as follows:

“The English as an Additional Language Working Group had completed its visits to schools and was on target to produce an interim report in July. The Support for Carers Working Group had met with the Executive Member and work was progressing. The Working Group on Social Care Modernisation was nearing the end of the information gathering stage“,

the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 5 June 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting or indications that Members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

19. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

20. Road Traffic Casualties Working Group Report

The Panel noted the report of the Assistant Chief Executive and received the response of the Executive Member for Planning and Transportation, tabled at the meeting.

The report of the Working Group had been well received by the Executive and all five recommendations had been agreed. The Executive had welcomed the involvement of Thames Valley Police in the review.

The Commission noted

- Government Office for the South East had approved targets in the LAA for reduction in the number of fatalities or serious injury in the borough.
- The report had been copied to all Thames Valley Highway Authorities and feedback had been received from three.

Councillor Mrs Ballin thanked the Working Group for an excellent piece of work on a very important subject.

21. Corporate Performance Overview Report

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) for the period January to March 2008. The CPOR brought together the progress and performance of the Council as a whole. 92% of actions in support of the 12 interim Corporate Themes were achieved by year end. The areas of underperformance were due mainly to resource constraints. He highlighted:

- The transfer in February of the housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes.
- The reduction of 12.5% in crime over three years.
- The successful bid for lottery funding for renovation of the grounds at South Hill Park.
- The successful Ofsted report of the Joint Area Review of Children's Services.
- Exceeding the year end target of 26% of household waste recycled.
- National recognition of solid performance by the CPA 'Four Stars, Improving Strongly' rating.

Matters that arose in discussion or in response to members' questions included:

- (i) The delay in publishing a five year programme of masterplans for neighbourhood centres in the former New Town areas had been due to workload and to waiting for the housing stock transfer. Following the appointment of the new Head of Planning and Transportation scoping work was now proceeding.

- (ii) The production of a Strategy for Older People had been delayed due to staffing shortages in the Chief Executive's Office. A consultant had been engaged to carry out this work.
- (iii) In relation to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Strategy, 10 of the 11 indicators of the BVPI had been complied with. The strict wording required in the tenancy agreement for Bracknell Forest Homes did not meet exactly with the requirement in measure 9 of the BVPI. This was not an issue for the Council but for Bracknell Forest Homes.
- (iv) In relation to assessing the opportunities for capital investment in youth facilities, the Assistant Chief Executive informed the Commission that options would be developed and taken to the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee and involve Bracknell Town Council.
- (v) The Commission noted that, in an effort to increase the number of bus and train routes in the borough, officers were working closely with First Beeline and targets were included in the LAA in an attempt to promote an increase in buses to hospitals.
- (vi) The introduction of a self-service facility to the library service had been delayed as the current library management system was not compatible. Members expressed the view that the introduction of a new management system should be investigated and implemented as soon as possible and that the service should not be deferred until the library moved to the new Civic Hub. The Chairman asked that a note on the current situation be prepared and sent to members.
- (vii) The review of Joint Arrangements and subsequent amendments to Joint Arrangement Agreements had been delayed due to pressure of work and vacancies within the Legal Services Section.

22. **Annual Governance Statement**

The Commission noted the Borough Solicitor's report on the Annual Governance Statement, for which there was now a statutory requirement, in place of the Statement on Internal Control. The Annual Governance Statement was attached as appendix 1.

The new CIPFA/SOLACE guidance "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework" defines six core principles that should underpin the governance of each local authority. The Framework recommends that authorities:

- Review their governance arrangements to ensure they meet the six core principles;
- Update their Local Code of Governance
- Produce an Annual Governance Statement.

Included in the significant governance issues set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.7 of the Statement were:

- The Audit Commission had advised that the functions of the Council's Audit Committee being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission did not satisfy the requirement for a committee charged with governance, in particular because the Commission did not have decision making powers.

The terms of reference of the Final Accounts Committee have been extended to enable it to satisfy governance requirements on an interim basis whilst the arrangements for members to review governance and audit were given further consideration.

- The existing Member and Officer Protocol would be reviewed to ensure it supports the already effective working relationship between the Leader and the Chief Executive.

The Commission noted that an action plan had been developed to address the significant issues and to further enhance the Council's governance arrangements.

23. Teacher, Parent Governor and Other Representatives on the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel

A review of the appointment of teacher representatives and Parent Governor representatives to the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel had been undertaken and the Commission considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services which included the recommendations of the Social Care and Learning O & S Panel.

Mr Gordon Anderson, Oxford Diocesan representative, expressed concerns at the broadening of the remit of the former Lifelong Learning and Children's Services O & S Panel and indicated that he would like to see more education matters on the agenda of the Commission. The Chairman assured him that his view on any subject was valued, although it was acknowledged that he would only be able to vote on education matters.

RESOLVED that

- i) in addition to the statutory requirement of two parent governor and two Diocesan representatives, two teachers (one primary and one secondary) and two social care representatives be appointed to the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- ii) teacher, social care and Church representatives be appointed initially for a three year term to coincide with the life of this Council, and thereafter from May 2011 for a four year term;
- iii) in the event that teacher, social care and Church representatives did not complete their term of office, their successor be appointed to complete the remainder of the original term of office;
- iv) social care representatives be sought in consultation with the new Bracknell Forest Local Involvement Network (LINKs);
- v) nominees for teacher representation be sought by writing to head teachers formally inviting nominations;
- vi) it was not necessary to consult the Teachers Association and other organisations over the change to the arrangement whereby teacher representation is sought;
- vii) it was not necessary for the teacher representatives to be restricted to current teachers only;

- viii) current arrangements for parent governor representatives be formalised by allocating places for two parent governor representatives on the Panel, one primary school and one secondary school parent governor, with a term of office of four years each;
- ix) if it was not possible to appoint a parent governor from each category (primary/secondary), two parent governors be appointed from any category;
- x) in the event that these parent governor representatives did not complete their term of office, their successor be appointed to complete a normal full term of four years;
- xi) general information about the role of representatives on the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel be provided on a website accessed by teachers and governors.

24. Update on the Local Area Agreement Working Group

The Chairman gave an oral update on the Local Area Agreement Working Group. Useful meetings had been held with the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board, officers, the Chief Executive, and Martin Gilman, Director, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action, A separate meeting was to be held with Chief Inspector Simon Bowden. It was anticipated that an interim report would be available in September.

The Assistant Chief Executive expressed the view that this review was useful from the point of view of the 10 themed Partnerships.

25. Overview & Scrutiny Progress Report

The Commission noted the report of the Assistant Chief Executive outlining the activities of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Commission.

26. Updates from Panel Chairmen

Updates on Working Group progress:

Strategic Review of Waste

Councillor Brunel Walker reported on a very informative visit to the Reading Smallmead waste facility. A draft report should be available in September.

Street Cleaning/ Street Scene

Councillor Finnie informed the Commission that the final report was being prepared and should be available in the autumn.

Support for Carers

Councillor Mrs Birch reported that a full report should be going to the Panel in September. Councillor Mrs Shillcock informed the Commission that the Working Group had not been able to talk to anyone from the Indian Association but it was hoped that another ethnic group would meet with them.

Social Care Modernisation Agenda

Councillor Virgo reported that the report had been drafted by Councillor Leake.

English as an Additional Language

Councillor Mrs Birch reported that the report would be submitted to the Panel in September. Mr Sharland, a member of the Working Group, had found it an interesting experience and was pleased to be able to make a contribution by participating in the process.

Extended Services and Children's Centres

Progress was being made and it was hoped to report in September.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Councillor Virgo reported that the recommendations of the Working Group had largely been adopted by Executive Members.

Patient Focus

Councillor Virgo reported that the Working Group was looking at the out of hours service. Work had only recently commenced on this review.

Councillor Mrs Shillcock appraised the Commission of two meetings on Wednesday of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that Committee plus Buckinghamshire. For the first time parties had not been in general agreement on the PCT 'Right Care, Right Place' proposals. Bracknell Forest and Slough found the proposals broadly satisfactory but Windsor and Maidenhead held a different view and a majority vote was passed in favour of the proposals.

27. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission noted the Executive Forward Plan. The Chairman noted that the Member Development Strategy was on the forthcoming Council agenda.

The Chairman asked for clarification whether the Executive meeting on 22 July had been cancelled.

28. **Work Programme for 2008/09 Municipal Year**

The Commission received the report of the Assistant Chief Executive inviting members to consider the revised work programme for 2008/09 which was attached at appendix 1.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2008/09, appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (ii) CMT and the Executive be formally consulted on the work programme by the Commission Chairman.

29. **Exclusion of Public and Press (S 100A)**

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

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), provided that information in this category is not exempt information if it is required to be registered under the Companies Act 1985; the Friendly Societies Acts 1974 and 1992; the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1986; or the Charities Act 1993.

30. **Procurement Update - Further Information**

Jo Alderson, Head of Procurement, introduced the exempt information report requested by the Commission on:

- The system used for internal procurement actions;
- Levels of off contract procurement spending throughout the year; and
- Whether there was a case to centralise procurement.

Appendix A - detailed extracts from Contract Regulations.

Appendix B - detailed an off contract spend analysis.

Appendix C - detailed an extract from a report by SIGMA on centralised and de-centralised public procurement.

In addition, the report also highlighted the importance of:

- The Scheme of Delegation in each department; and
- Membership of the Strategic Procurement Group.

The Commission noted the information on:

- procurement approvals, both through Agresso and through the tendering process;
- off contract spending, including the analysis of expenditure on advertising, non-care agency staff, electricity and photocopiers; and
- centralised procurement.

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION 11 September 2008

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE **Director of Corporate Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Risk management forms a key part of the Council's corporate governance and internal control framework and should form part of all decision-making and policy-making. Through effective risk management, the Council is better placed to meet its strategic and directorate priorities by:
- Enabling the early mitigation of threats or maximisation of opportunities to the achievement of opportunities;
 - Promoting better decision-making;
 - Encouraging innovation by being risk-aware rather than risk-averse;
 - Embedding a consistent approach to risk management which is a key part of day-to-day business functions; and
 - Ensuring the Council meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities relating to risk management.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Commission with an update on progress on risk management at the Council.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Strategic Risk Register

- 2.1 Developing and maintaining a robust Strategic Risk Register is vital for effective risk management. During 2007/08, Zurich Municipal was appointed to undertake an exercise to develop a new Strategic Risk Register for the Council. Discussions were held with individual members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to identify what they considered to be the significant risks to achieving the Council's medium term objectives (see Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Following this, Zurich Municipal facilitated a workshop to discuss the potential risks that had been identified and CMT agreed which risks needed to be included in the Strategic Risk Register. CMT established its risk tolerance threshold (see Appendix 3), evaluated each risk in the Register in terms of impact and likelihood and agreed risk owners for those risks over the tolerance threshold. Members were consulted on potential risks to the achievement of the medium term objectives at the Risk Management Workshop for Members. These were consistent with the risks agreed at the CMT workshop.
- 2.3 CMT agreed that the Strategic Risk Register should be reviewed on a quarterly basis. The Register as developed by Zurich Municipal has therefore now been updated to take into account changes and new risks arising since the start of the new financial year. The updated Register was reviewed by the Strategic Risk Management Group Register in April and June and changes proposed by the Group were taken into account in presenting the updated register to CMT on 2 July.

Following this, the Executive considered and approved the updated Register on 22 July. The approved register is attached at Appendix 1. The Executive also agreed that actions to address risks over the tolerance level should be developed by officers who have been identified as risk owners and that these be monitored by the Executive on a quarterly basis through the Performance Management Reports.

Risks in Service Plans

- 2.4 Significant effort has been made to improve the identification of risks and mitigating actions in directorate Service Plans for 2008/09. Senior officers were engaged in a workshop to assess the risks included in the Strategic Risk Register and identify how they impacted on Service Plans. The results of this were used to help develop the Risk Sections of each Service Plan. Risks in the draft Service Plans were then reviewed in detail by the Head of Audit and Risk Management and feedback was provided to assist directorates in ensuring all significant risks had been included and that appropriate actions had been identified. Risks in Service Plans will be monitored through the quarterly Performance Management Reports.

Risk Management Strategy and Guidance

- 2.5 An internal audit review of risk management carried out in March 2008 recommended that the Risk Management Strategy and Guidance which was issued in 2006 should be reviewed. The Head of Audit and Risk Management is updating the Strategy and Guidance and the revised document will then be reviewed by the Strategic Risk Management Group before being taken to the Executive for approval.

Risk Management Training

- 2.6 Risk management training was provided to Members at a workshop on 18 February 2008 facilitated by the new Head of Audit and Risk Management who joined the Council in January 2008. In addition, the Head of Finance provided training to senior managers in January on risks in Service Plans and how these should reflect the Council's strategic risks. Further training will be provided to officers following the updating of the current Risk Management Strategy and Guidance. All reports for decision making already include a section on strategic risk and the planned training will cover the factors to be considered when completing this section.

Background Papers

Zurich Municipal Strategic Risk Management Report
Risk Management Internal Audit Report

Contact for further information

Alison Sanders – 01344 355621
Alison.sanders@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Sally Hendrick – 01344 352092
sally.hendrick@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Doc. Ref

G/Technical and Audit/Internal Audit/Sally/My documents/risk management/Overview and Scrutiny risk management report 11 September 2008

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AS AT 22 JULY 2008

RISKS AGREED AT CMT WORKSHOP IN JANUARY 2008 OVER TOLERANCE LEVEL (* risk over tolerance level)								
No	Rating		Short name	Link to Medium Term Objectives (see below)	Vulnerability	Trigger	Consequence	Risk Owner
1	B2	*	Decision making	Medium Term Objective 10	<p>Current financial circumstances mean that the Council must take and maintain some potentially difficult decisions, as outlined previously to inspectors, and maintain a tight financial regime.</p> <p>Some of these decisions will have an impact on frontline services, and there may be a reluctance to do this.</p>	The Council is unwilling / unable to take difficult decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to make key decision • Savings cannot be made • Savings made from other areas or across the board • Salami slicing of a number of service areas • Impact on frontline services • Further impact on support services • Service delivery affected • Adverse effect on performance • Complaints from stakeholders • Adverse publicity • Image of Council damaged 	Chief Executive
2	B2	*	Demographic and socio economic changes	Medium Term Objective 6, 7 and 9.	The council plans in advance for possible demographic changes and estimates of this have been built into the budget. A high number of the services provided by the Council are demand-led, however, and it can be difficult to predict	Unplanned demographic or socio-economic changes have significant detrimental impact on the delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community does not receive services they require • Sudden surges in community and police issues • Impact on recruitment • Adverse publicity • Reputation damaged 	Director Social Care and Learning / Director of Environment Culture and Communities

					<p>this accurately.</p> <p>It is recognised that the profile of elderly and young people, and ethnic diversity is rapidly changing in a number of other areas also, which can be difficult to map, and can have a significant impact.</p>			
3	B2	*	Demand led services	Medium Term Objective 5, 6, 7 and 9.	<p>There are challenges to the demand-led care services within Bracknell Forest. The population of older people is set to dramatically increase and there are more, younger, people coming into the system with intensive support needs and there is a changing incidence of disability. These services represent major components of the Councils funding provision.</p>	<p>Finances and/or resources required to support demand are significantly higher than planned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more resource is needed to run the services • Significant budget overspends • Money drawn from other services • Cost spiral • Reductions in service level the council can offer • Revenue problems not resolved by capital investments • Adverse effect on staff morale affected • Adverse effect on assessments • Members need to make unpopular decisions. • Councils finances compromised 	Director Social Care and Learning
4	C2	*	South East Plan	Medium Term Objective 3.	<p>The South East plan will mean a significantly increased level of housing in the borough. (approx 11k houses)</p> <p>The increased number of houses will require an accompanying level of infrastructure improvements (transport, schools, hospitals)</p>	<p>Houses built without accompanying improvements in infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands on services increase • Infrastructure is put under pressure • Transport system under pressure • Area becomes less attractive to employers • Risk of unemployment • Area becomes less attractive place to live. • Residents complain • Image of Council damaged 	Director of Environment Culture and Communities

5	D1	*	Town Centre	Medium Term Objective 1.	A key element of the Town Centre redevelopment is securing a high profile anchor store. Discussions are quite well advanced, however there still needs to be confirmation secured.	Key elements may not go ahead eg. third party funding eg. anchor store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Scheme potentially unviable • Delays • Council reputation damaged • Satisfaction with Council and services decline 	Chief Executive / Director of Environment Culture and Communities
6	D2	*	Key people leave	Medium Term Objective 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 9.	<p>The council is a lean organisation delivering a wide range of services and improvement programme with little excess capacity or resources. A large amount of knowledge and expertise in the council rests with a few key people in key positions.</p> <p>The council is in competition for staff with a number of similar authorities in the area and London.</p>	A number of key person(s) leaves or is unavailable for a significant period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of skills, knowledge and experience • No-one else in council has skills or capacity to cover the post • Impact felt across whole council • Remaining staff under pressure • Adverse impact of staff morale leading to stress, increased absenteeism or high turnover • Service delivery or improvement programme affected 	Director of Corporate Services
7	B2	*	Income projections	Medium Term Objective 10	The Council has made projections and forecasts around income levels. e.g. leisure fees and charges, commercial property and interest	Significantly lower income than projected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant amount of money needs to be found • Budgets have to be cut to balance the books • Services have to be prioritised/reduced • Staff workloads increase • Staff feel they are being targeted for cuts • Staff are frustrated at situation 	Borough Treasurer

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services suffer from lack of resources • Public dissatisfaction with Council services • Detrimental impact on Council • Council reputation damaged 	
RISKS AGREED AT CMT WORKSHOP IN JANUARY 2008 BELOW TOLERANCE LEVEL (* risk over tolerance level)							
15	8	B3	Limited staffing resources	<p>Medium Term Objective 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 9.</p> <p>The council is a lean organisation delivering a wide range of services and improvement programme with little excess capacity or resources. There is a perception of a dependency on key individuals (usual suspects) in some positions. Senior managers have to balance their strategic v operational roles.</p> <p>There are some concerns around having sufficient critical skills e.g. project and change management across the organisation.</p>	BFBC does not have enough of the right people in the right job at the right time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge & expertise continue to be held with a few key people • Senior management involved in too much day to day operational and tactical management • Stretches the capacity of the few key people • Long hours culture continues • Key staff burn out • Levels of stress and staff absenteeism • The council is not 'growing its own' for the future • Some members of staff skill sets do not match those required for the job they are in • Talented people feel under utilised, or frustrated, in their current role and leave • Inertia and resistance to change 	
	9	C3	Realising benefits of the town centre redevelopment	<p>Medium Term Objective 1.</p> <p>The town centre redevelopment will include a new civic hub, which, alongside a significant investment in IT capability over recent years will be key elements of changing how the Council interacts with the public, particularly in terms of CRM and service transformation.</p>	Maximum benefits or improvements of significant change and investment are not realised or demonstrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes do not have desired impact • Value of changes not seen • Service improvements not delivered • VFM questioned • Promises not met, or not seen to be met • Staff frustration • Impact on morale • Adverse publicity • Image of Council suffers 	

10	E2	Potential failure of key contractor(s)	Medium Term Objective 10.	A significant number of council services are provided through contracts with external providers.	Failure of key contractor to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service fails / adversely affected • Public expectations of service need to be met • Alternative arrangements need to be made • Service brought back in house • Increased costs • Effect on Council Tax/reserves • Contract examined • Legal implications • Censure by audit/inspection • Adverse publicity 	
11	D3	Impact of area based funding through the LAA	Medium Term Objective 10.	<p>As part of the move to a more area based approach, specific grants have been moved into a more area basis through the LAA.</p> <p>This may mean that the overall amount available falls and that the Council's direct influence on how it is used diminishes, as it will require agreement from partners, and will increasingly be provided cross-organisationally.</p>	Realigning of funding to a more general approach leads to a relative reduction to funding available to specific services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant amount of money needs to be found • Budgets have to be cut to balance the books • Impact on Council Tax • Possibility of Council Tax capping • Services have to be prioritised/reduced • Staff workloads increase • Staff feel they are being targeted for cuts • Staff are frustrated at situation • Services suffer from lack of resources • Public dissatisfaction with Council services • Detrimental impact on Council • Council reputation damaged • Censure by audit and inspection 	
12	E4	Increasing delivery of services through partnership arrangements	Medium Term Objective 3,5,6 and 9.	The council is involved in a number of key partnerships to deliver services for local people and going forward this will be an even more important part of how Local Authorities deliver better outcomes for their area.	A key partnership fails to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on service delivery • Community outcomes compromised. • Tension between partners • Relationships with other bodies deteriorate • Unforeseen accountabilities and liabilities fall on the council • Financial implications 	

							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claw-back of grants • Don't get joined up approach to achieving the vision for the borough • Impacts the ability to deliver on a long-term vision for the borough • Impact on reputation 	
OTHER RISKS IDENTIFIED AT WORKSHOP TO BE MANAGED IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF ACTIVITIES (* risk over tolerance level)								
13	B2	*	Travel planning	Medium Term Objective 10	Systematic approach for the Council to review the impact of its travel and transport plans and promote greener travel alternatives.	Reduced levels of parking mean that fewer staff are provided with free parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impact of staff morale • Loss of staff • Impact on recruitment of new staff 	
NEW RISKS / RISKS IN PREVIOUS CORPORATE RISK REGISTER AS AT MARCH 2007 (* risk over tolerance level)								
14 17	E2		Performance Management and Data quality	Medium Term Objective 10.	The Council's priorities, activities and resource allocation are informed by an extensive evidence base drawing on data collected across Council departments and from partners. The robustness of this data is crucial to ensuring good decision-making. There are a number of factors which can jeopardise good-quality data, including the complexity of the processes used to obtain data; the age, stability and general fitness-for-purpose of the systems used to obtain data; the expertise of relevant staff; and the robustness of third-party data validation processes.	The performance management information reported internally via PMRs and externally to partners and audit and inspection bodies is based on poor-quality data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badly informed prioritisation and resource allocation, leading to deterioration in services, poor staff morale and wasted resources • Increasing numbers of externally reported performance indicator outturns qualified by auditors, leading to censure, damage to the Council's reputation, and adverse publicity • Disruption of relationships with partners due to the lack of a single, reliable evidence base on which all are agreed • Inability of the Council to take full advantage of emerging opportunities for benchmarking and peer review, or successfully to meet the challenges and opportunities of partnership working, area-based funding and the increasing emphasis on local innovation 	

15	B2	*	Funding pressures	All Medium Term Objectives	Financial pressures due to potential factors such as reduction in funding, increased costs, major project overspend, savings targets not being achieved, inability to identify additional income or as a result of changes to national or European legislation, eg Social rent Reform.	Inability to meet financial targets and reduction to funding available for specific services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets have to be cut to balance the books • Impact on Council Tax • Services have to be prioritised/reduced • Staff workloads increase • Staff feel they are being targeted for cuts • Staff are frustrated at situation • Services suffer from lack of resources • Public dissatisfaction with Council services • Detrimental impact on Council • Council reputation damaged • Censure by audit and inspection 	
16	E3		Thames Basin Heath's SPA	Medium Term Objectives 2,3 and 4	The Government has designated the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive. This recognises the international importance of heathland as a habitat for endangered bird species. Natural England have advised that new housing within 5 kilometres of the SPA may harm the rare bird populations. A mitigating strategy is in place but this needs to be modified to meet regional needs.	Mitigating strategy may not satisfy regional needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to meet the housing needs of the growing regional population • Educational and social needs not met • Target outcomes not achieved around education and social care • National performance targets not achieved • Public dissatisfaction with the Council • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection 	
17	D2	*	Loss of systems and data	Medium term objectives 6,7, 8,9 and 10	The Council is heavily dependent on its IT systems to deliver and record the delivery of services and process	IT system failure or loss of paper based sensitive information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of key management information • Potential loss of income if unable to record and process transactions for front line services • Loss of personal data on employees or 	

					transactions. IT failure would impact significantly on this. In addition, the Council holds sensitive information on individuals in both electronic and paper form.		<p>residents including vulnerable groups such as children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breach in data protection legislation • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection 	
18	D2	*	Business Continuity Incidents	Medium term objectives 2,7 and 10	The Council's activities could be disrupted by a major incident such as a national flu pandemic or a serious fire. This may also arise from a more mundane occurrence such as temporary loss of water in one of its key buildings that would make it impossible to operate on health and safety grounds.	Serious incident disrupting the Council's ability to continue its operations eg. flu pandemic, terrorist attack, utilities failure, power failure, flu crisis, loss of a building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff unable to get to work • Unable to access buildings/ IT to deliver services • Service fails / adversely affected • Vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly put at risk • Public expectations of service not met • Alternative manual arrangements need to be made • Loss of income where systems to record transactions are not operational • Increased costs where alternative IT arrangements/accommodation needed • Effect on Council Tax/reserves • Censure by audit/inspection if unable to sustain service and meet legal requirements 	
19	D2	*	Loss of reputation	Medium Term Objective 10	The Council's standing is built on its sound performance. This is reflected in the external assessments such as CPA, OFSTED, etc which have concluded that it is performing strongly. Stakeholders such as residents, businesses and partners consequently have confidence in the Council to deliver but this could be	Critical external inspection, poor exam results, bullying incidents inappropriate use of public monies by Members or officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on recruitment and retention of staff • Public dissatisfaction with the Council • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection • Adverse publicity • Impact on funding bids • Relationship with partners impaired 	

					undermined by any factors that would cast doubt on the Authority.			
20	D2	*	IT Security/Identity breach	Medium term objectives 6,7, 8,9 and 10	The Council's and contractors' IT systems hold sensitive data such as suppliers and employees bank account details which could potentially be misused or stolen if not secure. The Council also holds large amounts of personal data on staff, residents, vulnerable individuals such as children and adults with social care needs. It is therefore potentially a key target for potential fraudsters intent on committing identity fraud.	Breach in IT security leading to loss of monies or personal data. Identity theft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of personal data on employees or residents including vulnerable groups such as children • Breach in data protection legislation • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection • Breach in requirements for holding credit card details 	
21	E2		Major fraud or corruption	Medium Term Objective 10	The Council's Codes of Conduct, Constitution, Fraud and Corruption Policy and Employee Handbook provide guidance to both officers and Members on standards of behaviour. However, a small number of irregularities continue to arise each year.	Major fraud and corruption identified from Whistleblowing, disciplinary or complaints process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost implications if unable to recover financial losses arising from fraud or corruption • Staff resources in investigating fraud and corruption cases • Risk of challenge if associated with procurement • Public dissatisfaction with the Council • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection 	
22	E1	*	Corporate Manslaughter	Medium Term Objective 10	New legislation effective from 1 April 2008 means that the Council may potential culpable as an	Successful prosecution under the Act resulting in a publicity order,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial impact • Financial targets not achieved • Need to identify savings to cover unanticipated costs 	

					organisation for the death of individual(s) arising from failure at senior management level.	unlimited fine and remedial order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detrimental impact on Council reputation • Censure by audit and inspection • Adverse publicity 	
23	D2	*	Project management	Medium Term Objectives 1, 6 and 0	The Council has several large projects ongoing eg Town Centre re-generation, Civic Hub, Garth Hill. Failure to manage projects effectively could potentially have severe financial, reputational and service impacts.	Failure to control implementation of a major projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project objectives not achieved • Cost overruns • Delays • Council reputation damaged • Satisfaction with Council and services decline 	
24	E2		Combined Heat and Power (CHP).	Medium term Objective 1	Installation of combined heat and power for the new civic hub and Times Square. Decision on the responsibility for delivery of the CHP is outstanding. Responsibility for CHP would bring with it liability for any delays to the overall project that CHP might cause.	Delay in CHP if the Council were responsible for the delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial penalties • Significant fees invested not recouped if the combined heat and power installation is not delivered. • Proposed energy savings not achieved. 	
25	E2		Car parks	Medium Term Objectives 1, 2 and 3	New car space has opened in the town in competition with Council parking. Equipment in the multi-storey car park is 25 years old and overdue for replacement. Also need to consider re-tendering of contract in terms of a new car park strategy once this has been	Reduction in use of Council car parks. Equipment fails and cannot be repaired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential financial impact due to loss of car park income • Unable to operate car park if equipment fails • Cost of equipment replacement might not be recouped 	

					developed.			
26	C2	*	Industrial Action	Medium Term Objectives 2, 5,6,7 and 9.	Trade Unions have rejected local government pay offers and have confirmed strike action for 48 hours in mid July. Further action may arise if demands are not met.	Confirmed and potential further strike action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on ability to deliver services • Risk that critical functions might not be delivered • Impact on performance targets • Negative impact on Council reputation with residents and local businesses • Staff morale affected if industrial action results in services and targets not being achieved 	
27	D2	*	Financial settlement	Medium Term Objective 10.	A significant element of the Council's funding comes from central government grant. The allocation of the grant is based on a set of formulae and ministerial discretion. Whilst the annual settlement is now part of a three year agreement and the grant 'floor' currently ensures that the annual increase in grant is at least 2%, there remains the risk that significant changes may be made either during the three year period if there is a change in government or at the end of the three year review period.	Change in grant 'floor' reduces central government funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant amount of money needs to be found • Budgets have to be cut to balance the books • Impact on Council Tax • Possibility of Council Tax capping • Services have to be prioritised/reduced • Staff workloads increase • Staff feel they are being targeted for cuts • Staff are frustrated at situation • Services suffer from lack of resources • Public dissatisfaction with Council services • Detrimental impact on Council • Council reputation damaged • Censure by audit and inspection 	

MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES

Priority one: a town centre fit for the 21st century

Medium term Objective

1. To build a vibrant Bracknell town centre that residents and businesses are proud of.

Priority two: protecting and enhancing our environment:

Medium term Objectives

2. To keep our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities accessible and attractive.
3. To promote sustainable housing and infrastructure development.
4. Keep Bracknell Forest clean and green.

Priority three: promoting health and achievement:

Medium term Objectives

5. To improve health and well being within the Borough.
6. To improve the outcomes for children and families through the Children and Young People's Plan.
7. Seek to ensure that every resident feels included and able to access the services they need.

Priority four: create a borough where people are, and feel, safe:

Medium term Objectives

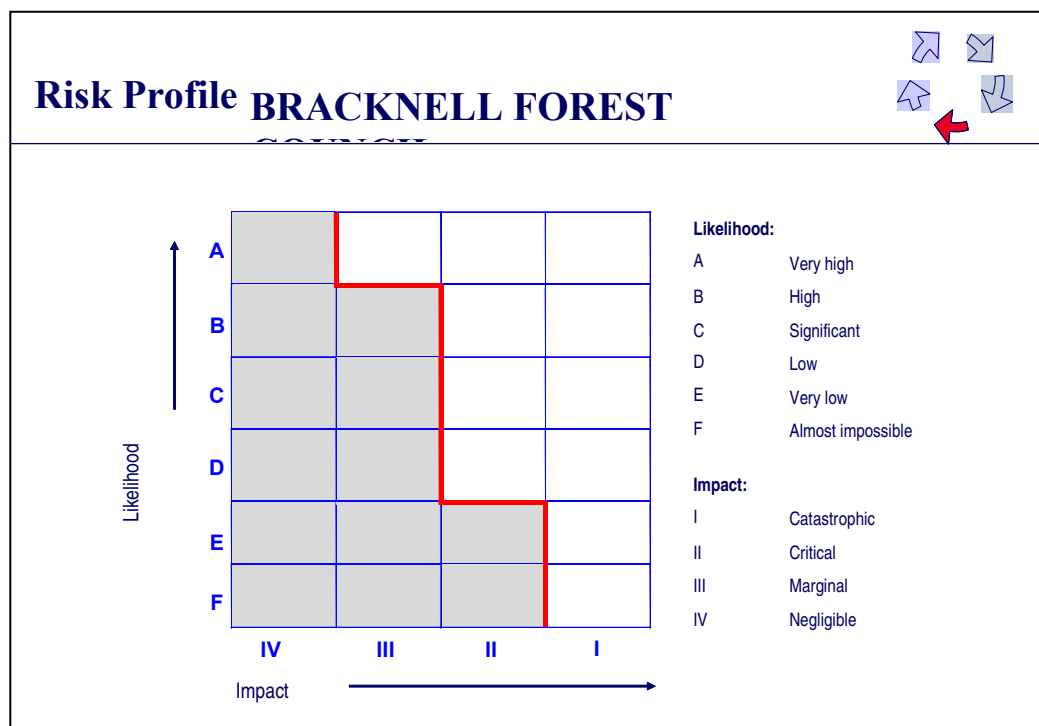
8. To reduce crime and increase people's sense of safety in the Borough.
9. To promote independence and choice for vulnerable adults and older people.

Priority Five: value for money

Medium term Objective

10. To be accountable and provide excellent value for money.

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL RISK TOLERANCE LEVEL



The risk tolerance level as denoted by the bold line in the diagram above was determined by the Corporate Management Team at their risk workshop.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION 11 SEPTEMBER 2008

SUPPORT FOR CARERS – WORKING GROUP REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report introduces the attached report resulting from the review of support for carers undertaken by a working group of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.2 The Working Group's report is being considered by the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 10 September 2008 and any substantive changes agreed will be reported at this meeting.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission adopts the attached report of the review of support for carers undertaken by a working group of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel, for sending formally to the relevant Executive Member.**

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283
e-mail: Richard.Beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Andrea Carr – 01344 352122
e-mail: andrea.carr@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Doc. Ref

-

This page is intentionally left blank



Caring About Carers

**Review of Support Services for Carers in Bracknell Forest
by a Working Group of the
Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel**



August 2008

Table of Contents

	Page Number
1. Foreword by the Lead Member	1
2. Background	2
3. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis	4
4. Conclusions	14
5. Recommendations	16
6. Glossary	17
7. Appendix 1 – Detailed Responses to the Questions to Carers	18
8. Appendix 2 – Government Précis of National Carers Strategy	21

Acknowledgements

The Working Group would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the following people for their co-operation and time. All those who have participated in the review have been thanked for their contribution and will be provided with a copy of this report.

Martin Gilman	Director, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
Barbara Briggs	Chairman, Carers UK (Bracknell Branch)
Twelve local carers	
Councillor Thompson	Pensioners' Champion
Barbara Knight	Chairman of Age Concern's Worlds End Day Centre
Nina Wilmot	Chief Executive of Age Concern's Worlds End Day Centre

The following officers from Bracknell Forest Council:

Glyn Jones	Chief Officer: Adult Social Care, Social Care and Learning (SCL)
Mira Haynes	Head of Older People and Long Term Conditions, SCL
Hannah Doherty	Development Manager, Learning Difficulties, SCL
Marilyn Kemp	Older People's Joint Community Mental Health Team Manager, SCL
Alison Melabie	Long Term Care Team Manager, SCL
Jo Wyatt	Assistant Short Term Services Team Manager, Therapy, SCL
Theresa Wyles	Community Mental Health Services Manager, SCL
Andrea Carr	Policy Officer (Scrutiny), Chief Executive's Office

1. Foreword by the Lead Member

- 1.1 Carers provide a vital service to thousands of our most vulnerable Bracknell Forest residents. Carers often feel very isolated - many caring for 24 hours a day, most of the year and with very little time of their own. The direct benefit they have on the health and well-being of people needing care services can be profound, and through their efforts, the taxpayer is saved millions of pounds every year. Bracknell Forest Council (the Council) has a legal duty to support carers.
- 1.2 The Working Group was set up to review the range of support offered to carers and to identify gaps in provision.
- 1.3 Definition of a carer – ‘A Carer is someone, who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who couldn’t manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.’¹
- 1.4 The Working Group comprised:

Councillor Mrs Shillcock (Lead Member)
Councillor Simonds
Councillor Turrell

¹ Source: Princess Royal Trust for Carers

2. Background

2.1 The Council's former Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered a list of potential themes to be reviewed in detail by working groups of the Panel during 2007/08 to complement its ongoing work. Having considered the relative merits of seven suggested review topics, the Panel, which was subsequently re-structured to form part of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel, decided that its 2007/08 work programme would consist of reviews of the following topics by working groups:

- Support for carers
- Social care modernisation agenda
- Care homes

This report records the outcome of the Working Group established to undertake the review of support for carers.

2.2 The Working Group welcomed undertaking a piece of work in respect of carers in order to ascertain the number of carers in the Borough, the nature of their problems and needs and whether they were adequately supported. It noted that some carers were children, falling in to the age category of five to sixteen years, whilst others were often elderly partners of those being cared for. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) had found in its inspection of the Council's Older Person's Services in 2006 that when carers were known to the Council and aware of available services, they received good support. However, many were unaware of the support that the Council could offer and possibly did not consider themselves to be carers. It was the latter group that the Council needed to engage.

2.3 The work programme was subsequently agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, the parent body of the Panel, following consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council.

2.4 The purpose of the review of carers support has been to explore the nature and range of information describing services available to carers; to assess the accessibility of services to support carers; and to examine the delivery and quality of services to carers.

2.5 Key objectives of the review have been to evaluate the support to carers provided by the Council, the Carers' Forum, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA) and other agencies; to track the care assessment process; to identify any gaps in services to support carers and address solutions; and to assess the quality of services and support provided.

2.6 The scope of the review has been to obtain information on the services available to support carers; to gain an understanding of the carer support process; to consider methods of engaging with hard to reach carers; and to review the social care support to carers.

2.7 It was considered that a review of the support for young carers and parents who care for children with learning disabilities should not be included as it was expected that their needs would be very different.

- 2.8 A number of witnesses, both internal and external to the Council, were invited to meet the Working Group to assist with the review. One site visit and an opportunity to meet with carers were also arranged.
- 2.9 The Working Group is aware that there are a number of small support groups and local branches of national organisations. These groups, such as stroke clubs and the Alzheimer's Association, offer respite, help and advice, talk shops, coffee mornings, lunches and self-help. The Working Group acknowledges that it has not been in contact with representatives of all relevant voluntary sector organisations.

3. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis

3.1 The census undertaken in 2001 identified 8,278 carers in Bracknell Forest in the following categories:-

- 6,230 carers providing 1 – 19 hours care per week (per person)
- 676 carers providing 20 – 49 hours care per week (per person)
- 1,372 carers providing 50 or more hours care per week (per person)

3.2 Since 1995 governments have recognised the value of the work carried out by carers. A number of Acts have been produced placing responsibilities on local authorities. In 1999 a national Carers Strategy was launched and this has been updated recently (July 2008), a précis of which is attached to this report at Appendix 2 for information.

3.3 The Working Group's attention has been drawn to Bracknell Forest's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2008 which is a new statutory process for which Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities are responsible. The purpose of the JSNA is to identify current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population, and to use this information to help plan local services. The JSNA process is not intended to highlight where current services are succeeding, but rather to discover how the local population could benefit from improvements in future.

3.4 A draft Bracknell Forest JSNA 2008 has been prepared and includes the following three issues relevant to carers:-

- (i) Reduce health and social inequalities for carers;
- (ii) Improve carers' access to services; and
- (iii) Improve availability of advice to carers.

Although issues (i) and (ii) have not been addressed by the Working Group as they fall outside the scope of its review, it has looked at and made recommendations around (iii).

3.5 The Working Group commenced its work at a meeting with the Chief Officer: Adult Social Care in November 2007 to scope the review of services for carers. It has met on eight subsequent occasions to interview Adult Social Care officers involved in the support of carers and their cared for, the Director of BFVA, the Chairman of Carers UK (Bracknell Branch), the Council's Pensioners' Champion and to meet a group of carers at a 'Carers Tea Party' before a further meeting with the Chief Officer to consolidate the information received to date and agree the way forward. A further group of carers was invited to meet the Working Group and a visit to Age Concern's Worlds End Day Centre was arranged to enable the Working Group to explore services provided there. The outcome of the Working Group's investigation and information gathering is summarised below.

Scoping Meeting with Chief Officer: Adult Social Care

- 3.6 Whilst scoping the review with the assistance of the Chief Officer: Adult Social Care, the Working Group learned that there was a Carers' Forum, the administration of which was supported by the Council. The Forum met at two monthly intervals and organised quarterly Carers' Lunches. These provided information and advice for carers. The Council provided support to carers by offering respite care, some of which was delivered through BFVA. The Council provided financial assistance in the form of the carers grant to BFVA / Carers UK to support carers in the following amounts:-

2006/07 - £130k

2007/08 - £138k

2008/09 - £143k

- 3.7 The Working Group was advised that the Council block booked a bed in a private care home to offer respite care and services provided at Waymead Short Term Care Unit were being developed to make them more amenable to those receiving respite care.
- 3.8 Members ascertained that carers could access services by approaching the Council directly, through the Carers' Grants Panel or via general practitioner (GP) referral. Council services were measured against performance indicators which sought action within 48 hours of first contact with a new client and complete assessment of services was required within 28 days. At the time of the meeting, the Council was achieving performance in the highest band against these indicators. A regulatory framework applied where carers received Council services and / or purchased services registered by CSCI.
- 3.9 A study of those with physical disabilities in receipt of Council or private services had indicated that the majority were satisfied with the services received. Other work undertaken featured contact with Black Minority or Ethnic (BME) groups such as the Indian community. This included the establishment of specialist day care at Heathlands Day Care Centre for the Indian community featuring refreshments and showing Indian language films. Work with the Nepali community was currently being undertaken and if the Indian initiative was successful it could be repeated with a Nepali theme in Sandhurst for that community. Although work with the Nepali community was less advanced than that with the Indian community, Adult Social Care staff had met Nepali community representatives to explain the care process and would seek feedback on service needs. The Council is required to report on the provision of services to BME communities.

Information Received from Adult Social Care Officers of Bracknell Forest Council

- 3.10 Adult Social Care has five specialised teams providing services for those people needing care. The Working Group looked at this provision because it was seen as 'a first priority for carers'.

Older People and Long Term Conditions Team

- 3.11 Client groups were divided into specialist teams and this team worked with older people and those with physical disabilities, chronic / long term conditions and frailty. These clients were also divided between short and long term teams.

The short term team supported people at home during the first six weeks following discharge from hospital. The long term team, staffed by social workers and occupational therapists, then provided ongoing care where needed. The care managers (social workers and occupational therapists) were trained in both social and psychological functioning and concentrated on the social care of people in every day life. Occupational therapy specialised in provision of equipment and adaptations to assist people in the home and promote their independence.

- 3.12 New client contact and re-contact was via the duty desk in the short term team and led to needs assessment and allocation to either the short term or long term teams depending on need. Clients were regularly re-assessed to ensure that changing needs were met and cases were allocated to a team member who acted as their care manager until there was no further need for regular involvement. Care managers undertook the initial assessment of their clients and where there was no allocated care manager, the team aimed to undertake an annual review of clients' needs. Clients were able to request earlier re-assessment when they felt it was called for.
- 3.13 Respite care was provided at a number of day and residential care venues including Ladybank Residential Care Home, Bridgewell Centre, Heathlands Residential Home and Day Care Centre and Downside Day Centre. Ladybank was a resource for care of older people offering long term residential accommodation with one bed bookable for respite care and an intermediate care facility known as the Bridgewell Centre which included non-bookable emergency respite care provision. Heathlands was a residential care home for elderly people with permanent beds and a purpose-built day centre that catered for mentally infirm clients. The day centre was open 7 days a week and provided a number of activities and services. It also provided night care support on three evenings per week. Downside Day Centre was accessible to the whole community and provided information, advice and opportunities to break down the barriers that existed between disabled and older people and those who are able-bodied.

Community Mental Health Team – Older Adults

- 3.14 The Manager of this team advised that it worked with older people suffering from dementia, mental health or depression and their carers and with younger people with dementia, the youngest of which was 49 years of age. The team currently comprised four community psychiatric nurses, two social workers, an assistant care manager and a community support worker. A further community psychiatric nurse and community support worker were being recruited. A referral assessment process was in operation and the occupational therapy services provided by the long term team were utilised where necessary. This team undertook assessments and reviews in a similar manner to that pursued by the Long Term Team.

Community Mental Health Services Team

- 3.15 The Working Group was advised that this team, a joint health and social care team, worked with those from the age of 16 years if out of school and there was no upper age limit. 550-600 cases were open at the time of the meeting. Intensive crisis management consisted of twice daily contact during the first 6 – 8 weeks following an episode of mental ill health. Those with longer term mental health disorders such as severe depression and schizophrenia were re-

assessed every six months and received weekly or monthly visits depending upon need. Where those aged between 16 and 18 years were concerned, the team worked closely with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Early intervention was employed at the first sign of a mental health condition and support was offered where early indications of psychotic behaviour were displayed. Following treatment by CAMHS, clients were referred to this team and the small number of referrals from elsewhere were mainly via GP practices or schools. Early intervention also featured a watching brief involving 18 residential clients at Glenfield House and others at home or in homes in the community with support. The team was resourced with 50 staff working in a range of different disciplines.

Learning Disabilities

- 3.16 The Development Manager explained that the Learning Disabilities team was a joint health and social care team consisting of 40 staff including two assistant managers, one with a health service background and the other from Adult Social Care; team leaders; psychologists; social workers; speech and language therapists; and psychiatrists. At the time, 360 clients were known to the team excluding transitional ones. One social worker focused on the transition from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care working jointly with people aged 14 years plus. A yearly review of the people receiving support was undertaken.
- 3.17 Encompassing support was provided for carers of all ages and it was recognised that different age groups of carers had different needs e.g. some younger carers needed to be in employment. Enabling carers to lead a normal life was the object of their support and the Carers' Opportunities Act placed the onus on local authorities to provide the necessary services.

Short Term Services Team

- 3.18 This fully integrated team was funded jointly by Bracknell Forest Adult Social Care and Berkshire East PCT. The team was staffed by 90 who were split into various sub-sections of social workers, therapists, Intermediate Care support workers, intermediate carers and medical and GP cover. Both domiciliary and residential support were provided, the latter in the Bridgewell Centre housed in the Ladybank building. At the time of the meeting, there were 72 domiciliary care places and the number was growing leading to growth in the team. There was a single point of access for all referrals and the majority were referred to the Short Term Team before being signposted on to other teams if necessary. The team catered for anyone over 18 years of age and aimed to improve the quality of life by promoting independence and assisting people to remain in their homes. Although the onus was on people to access necessary care, there was a vast range of communication to inform the public of available services which were advertised via the Council's website, leaflets and other forms of publicity such as the Council's Town and Country publication distributed to all homes in the Borough. Many contacts and referrals were received from GPs, district nurses, hospital trusts and relatives or self referrals were made. Front desk staff were familiar with services and were able to screen clients and refer them to the appropriate sector of the service.

Provision for Carers

- 3.19 The Working Group established that carers were entitled to support where the person they were caring for was eligible for local authority services. In order to

establish this, an assessment of the receiver of care was necessary and assessment was often sought by the carer who would be involved throughout the assessment process. An assessment of the needs of the carer was also made to establish how caring affected the carer's life and determine the support required such as respite care, financial advice or other information. Allocated care managers had a responsibility to offer and provide carers with an assessment and carers could self assess via a Carers (Needs Assessment) Questionnaire. Respite care was intended to be in the form which most benefited the carer and included home support, private care, the voluntary sector, day centres, day companions and PCs for home shopping. Demand for respite care increased at weekends and during school holidays. People with learning disabilities could receive day support at Day Services (formerly known as the Bracknell Resource and Opportunity Centre) although the reprovision of day services and use of Waymead Short Term Care Unit, which offered 8 beds for respite care, was under consideration to identify service improvements. Day facilities, which were available for all client groups, were being modernised and moving away from building based activities towards accessing mainstream facilities such as community centres and leisure services using direct payments.

- 3.20 The Head of Older People and Long Term Conditions advised that the Council listened to and consulted with carers, engaged with organisations including Carers UK (Bracknell Branch), BFVA and the Alzheimers Association and fostered links with the community through Carers' Lunches and Conferences to promote services available to support carers and access hard to reach groups. Feedback from carers, which featured many compliments, was also received via the Pensioners' Champion, Councillor Cliff Thompson, and Barbara Briggs, the Chairman of Carers UK, and all issues were fed back for resolution.
- 3.21 Carers were encouraged to specify whether they were in need of less or greater help and care managers worked closely with the families of those in need of care. An overnight service was available at Heathlands Residential Home to give carers a 24 hour break and a Government grant of £32k enabled emergency respite care to be provided in an event such as a carer being taken ill. Although initially some carers were reluctant to hand over care in order to have a break from caring, once they had received some intermediate services they became accustomed to, and grew to appreciate, regular respite support.
- 3.22 The quality of carers' services was measured via quality questionnaires and annual reviews and feedback was received through the Carers' Lunches and Conferences. Regulations required quality monitoring of home support, which all external providers were obliged to carry out, with a view to promoting good practice. Bracknell and Wokingham College ran some courses directed at carers.

A Strategy for Supporting Unpaid Informal Carers

- 3.23 Resources for respite care were made available by the Council to enable carers to attend the quarterly Carers' Lunches which provided opportunities for information exchange and socialisation. A Carers' Conference was held every two years and was well attended. The next would be held in 2009. The Conferences were themed and topics for inclusion were suggested by carers.
- 3.24 A Carers Strategy Group was set up in 2005. Membership consisted of representatives of BFVA, Adult Social Care, the PCT, the voluntary sector and carers. The purpose of the Group was to develop a Carers Strategy. The

Strategy was now in draft form and included an Action Plan. It was the Group's intention to take this draft document to the Carers Forum in September for consultation. It was then expected that the Strategy would be signed off by all organisations involved in its preparation and delivery. In the Council's case, the Strategy would go to the relevant Executive Member for his support and agreement.

- 3.25 One of the outcomes of the Strategy was the decision to update the Carers' Information Pack and this was currently in hand. The pack would contain contacts for carers' organisations and support groups and for Adult Social Care in addition to information relating to services for carers, benefits, rights, health and wellbeing. The packs would be in a loose leaf format to facilitate updating and when complete copies would be sent to GP practices, Adult Social Care, BFVA, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, support groups, practice nurses via the PCT and displayed in relevant places.
- 3.26 This year BFVA have set up a Carers' Information and Support Group who plan to meet regularly to provide additional opportunities for information exchange.

Information Received from Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA)

- 3.27 Martin Gilman, the Director of BFVA, outlined the organisation's involvement with carers in the Borough and explained the role of the Carers' Services Manager, who oversaw the carers' grant allocation process, offered increased support to carers and undertook related development work. The Working Group received copies of the draft Carers' Strategy; Carers' Services, Business Plan and Costings 2008-2011; the Carers' Services Manager's job description; and information leaflets for carers which were displayed in GP practices and public locations around the Borough.
- 3.28 BFVA also had an Adult Carers Development Worker who concentrated on offering support for carers through events and training. She worked closely with BME communities and was commencing work with the PCT to provide a carers' training pack with care, handling and medical aspects. The support criteria for carers had been widened and included respite care hours. Direct Payments could be utilised and although respite care had typically been for one hour per week previously, this had now been increased to two hours or more to widen carers' respite activity options. Many carers sought to pursue hobbies, interests and travel as a form of respite and utilised their carers' grant for this purpose.
- 3.29 The Working Group was advised that the delivery in Bracknell Forest of the carers' grant from central Government was unique in the country in that it was delivered through the voluntary sector, namely BFVA (the amounts are set out in paragraph 3.2). This had occurred as five years previously there had been an issue of how funds reached carers and as the voluntary sector had links and contacts with carers it was considered appropriate for BFVA to deliver the grant. A Carers Grants Panel controlled this process and grants were allocated to carers on application on a monthly basis and approximately 150 carers received a grant for respite care in total. The carers' grant was used towards funding short breaks for carers. All grant applicants were required to produce references from a social worker, GP or similar professional. Careful checks were made before grants were released and assistance with grant applications was offered where needed. Careful financial management ensured that there was a little funding remaining at the year end and any surplus was carried over to the following year.

- 3.30 Although the census in 2001 had revealed that there were 8,278 people registered as a carer in Bracknell Forest, the majority of whom were part time carers, this number was likely to have increased over the last seven years. There was national recognition of the amount of spending carers saved the tax payer which was estimated to be in the region of £87m per annum.² As at October 2007, BFVA had 191 carers on its database. In addition to BFVA and the Council, a significant number of other groups provided support and services to carers. Many carers did not wish to access services as they were content to remain independent, did not consider themselves to be carers or wished to avoid what they perceived as interference.
- 3.31 The receipt of a lottery grant to reach those carers in most need who were not accessing support was welcomed and work in this area would now be pursued following the recent appointment of a new Carers' Services Manager.
- 3.32 The amount of information regarding carer support services in the public arena had increased during the last 9 to 12 months and included leaflets, press articles, Carers' Lunches and the DVD 'My life as a Carer'. Carers had been invited to an event held in Brakenhale School on 19 December 2007 to receive information in respect of relevant legal matters. BFVA worked with the Citizens' Advice Bureau to obtain information relating to benefits and eligibility. There were occasional articles in Town and Country and the quarterly BFVA newsletter included two pages concerning carers, one for young carers and the other for adult carers. There were 600 entries on the newsletter mailing list and it was hoped that it was seen by others as copies were displayed in community centres, libraries and GP practices.

Information Received from Carers UK (Bracknell Branch)

- 3.33 Barbara Briggs, the Chairman of the Bracknell branch of Carers UK, a national association, gave the Working Group an overview of her role with carers and explained the functions of Carers UK. Mrs Briggs was involved in numerous organisations associated with carers, for many of which Carers UK acted as the umbrella organisation supporting all age groups and disabilities. Her work encompassed Adult Social Care and the health service and included an afternoon tea / conversation group sought by Adult Social Care for consultation purposes, two dementia groups for younger and older sufferers and two stroke groups. Representatives of such groups were members of the Carers UK committee to enhance feedback and networking. Her background prior to undertaking her present role had been that of a carer for 24 hours per day 7 days per week.
- 3.34 There were 45 members of the Bracknell branch of Carers UK and one of its main activities was to organise Carers' Lunches which were open to all carers in Bracknell Forest, over 60 of whom had attended the Carers' Lunch at Christmas 2007. Ex-carers were invited to the Carers' Lunches as they had experience and knowledge to share and were able to assist with consultation / feedback. The Carers' Lunch had been introduced nine years ago as an annual event and popularity had led to it now being held on four occasions per annum. The Lunches also provided Adult Social Care with an opportunity to engage with carers and consult them on needs and services. There were themed and facilitated events featuring speakers on subjects of interest to carers such as

² Source: Carers UK

Adult Social Care provision, health matters, benefit eligibility and legal issues etc. The next Carers' Lunch would include a presentation in respect of the next phase of the carers' grant.

- 3.35 Mrs Briggs confirmed that Bracknell Forest operated differently from other local authorities in that it passed a significant portion of the carers' grant from central Government to BFVA for direct allocation to carers. This arrangement enabled hidden carers to be identified, added to a database of carers and invited to access carers' services and events. Although the national carers' grant to the local authority had increased year on year until two years ago when it had begun to decrease, the Council had increased the amount of funding passed to BFVA and the amounts are set out in paragraph 3.2.
- 3.36 Many carers sought four hour sitting service slots and therefore Carers UK was looking at new funding methods as it was not in a position to provide these in addition to the Carers' Lunches, which were viewed as constituting a break to which carers could bring their cared for if necessary. Many did not see themselves as carers and it was a role that tended to gradually increase as the needs of the cared for grew. Accordingly, Carers UK had asked Adult Social Care to inform carers at the first point of contact of the services available so they knew what was accessible should the need arise. If carers appeared to be approaching crisis point they were encouraged to seek assistance. A link worker with Adult Social Care had identified many hidden carers in the course of her work and advised them to request an assessment whether they felt they required services or not as this enabled accurate data on the number of carers to be compiled. The hidden carers contacted included BME carers. When asked at Carers' Lunches what services and support they required, carers had sought a contact to assist with assessments.
- 3.37 When asked whether Carers UK had a 'wish list', Mrs Briggs advised that the first Carers' Information Pack had been delivered from a wish list. Although carers had also sought a coffee shop where they could meet, interact and leave their cared for whilst they shopped etc., little use had been made of the coffee shop run for carers at the Tea House on Tuesdays for one year. Also, minimal use had been made of the carers overnight respite service provided at the request of Adult Social Care.
- 3.38 Mrs Briggs felt that the carers' grant constituted the greatest change to carers' lives and eased their role. Mrs Briggs had experienced very few problems working with Adult Social Care and she felt that more could be achieved through joint working.

Information Received from Carers at the 'Carers Tea Party'

- 3.39 In order to gain the views of local carers in respect of the accessibility, range and quality of services available to carers, a group of carers was invited to attend a 'tea party' at Easthampstead Baptist Church to meet the Working Group informally as they preferred this approach to completing a questionnaire. Twelve carers, all of whom belonged to the Carers' Forum, had accepted the invitation. Although this was a small group, they represented the full range of caring. Some carers had more than one caring role and the conditions suffered by their cared for included dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, learning disabilities, Autistic syndrome and mental health. The discussion focused on the following four questions to carers:-

- a) Is the support you receive to help you provide care appropriate?
 - b) How do you get the information you need?
 - c) Do you get a break from your caring role and is it what you want?
 - d) Is there some other help you would like to see made available?
- 3.40 In the general discussion the point was made that most carers took on the role almost without realising it as the needs of the individual they were looking after developed over time. Much of the caring was seen as part of their normal responsibilities. Their own needs were not taken into consideration until their caring role was considerable and they became aware of their own exhaustion.
- 3.41 Once they were in the system and receiving support for themselves as well as their cared for, carers were complimentary and appreciative of the various respite care and other support available. They were particularly complimentary of the current Adult Social Care and Carers UK provision.
- 3.42 There was considerable discussion on how difficult it was for carers to get information and most admitted they had found it difficult – although they appreciated that the situation had improved over the last few years. The main difficulty was that carers were often tied to the home and so information that might be available in libraries, etc., they were unlikely to see. It was felt strongly that information should be easily available through their GP as this was one service they regularly used. It was also suggested that if information could be made available into the home through newsletters, such as Town and Country, this would be very helpful.
- 3.43 There were varied views on carers' own ability to have a break. Some received regular short breaks and others almost no time for themselves. Most used short breaks when their cared for was at a day centre or something similar to catch up on domestic chores. Short breaks of 2 hours at a time were not thought to offer long enough to get involved in any leisure or similar activity.
- 3.44 All of the carers present emphasised that the views they expressed were based on a period over many years as they were long term carers and they did recognise that services had improved considerably over the last few years.
- 3.45 Full details of the responses to these questions are attached at Appendix 1.

Discussion with Councillor Thompson, Pensioners' Champion

- 3.46 Councillor Thompson had received a copy of an early draft report of the Working Group's review and had been invited to meet the Working Group to give his views thereon and to provide information acquired in his role as Pensioners' Champion.
- 3.47 The Working Group was advised that Age Concern provided respite care at its World's End Day Centre where some spaces were purchased by the Council in addition to other day centres. Age Concern also arranged outings for users and a week's holiday in the summer and another, 'Tinsel and Turkey', later in the year to celebrate Christmas. Volunteer carers took part in the outings, which included visits to garden centres and trips on narrow boats, and also in the holidays to give respite care. The charity also offered a handyman service and produced a leaflet which detailed the services available. The Pensioners' Champion advised that a visit to the Day Centre would be beneficial and he confirmed that a number of other agencies provided a service to carers.

3.48 The 'Shopmobility' scheme offered a valuable service for carers.

Visit to Age Concern's Worlds End Day Centre

3.49 On the advice of the Pensioners' Champion, the Working Group visited the Worlds End Day Centre, Bracknell, which was leased in perpetuity and run by Age Concern, to meet the Chairman, Barbara Knight, and the Chief Executive, Nina Wilmot, to gain information in respect of the services provided.

3.50 Day Centre facilities included a small enclosed garden area, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, toilets, activity room, bedroom, an office which was utilised as a quiet sitting room during the afternoon and facilities for toe nail cutting and hairdressing. As it was sixteen years since the Day Centre had opened in June 1992, some of its facilities were in need of refurbishment / replacement and fund raising was taking place with a view to renewing kitchen and bathroom facilities and extending the sitting room area by adding a conservatory.

3.51 The Day Centre was open from Monday to Friday and discussions were being held with the Council with a view to obtaining funds to enable Saturday opening also. Many of the Day Centre clients were referred there directly from hospital as part of their care packages. Anyone could refer a client to the Day Centre and some referrals came from the Community Psychiatric Service. Clients visited the Day Centre between one and three days per week depending on capacity. There was constantly a waiting list to access the Day Centre which currently had 55-56 clients in total and could receive a maximum of 20 people per day. It was commented that turnover of clients in the last twelve months had noticeably increased. The Day Centre could accommodate clients for extended periods to offer increased respite care if needed providing that carers collected their cared for. An audit undertaken two years ago had indicated that carers were satisfied with services offered by the Day Centre.

3.52 The Day Centre provided various activities such as craftwork and making displays for the activity board and there were proposals to equip the activity room with PCs, a billiard table and facilities for painting etc. 'Recognition' work was also undertaken in the form of quizzes. The Day Centre had a health and wellbeing brief that focused on care of the frail and improving quality of life. The Day Centre organised trips and two holidays each year. Participants were able to bring a carer if needed and, although the charity had insufficient funds to offer carers' holidays, these escorted holidays offered a form of break.

3.53 The number of clients with dementia has increased and four to five clients in their 60's with severe dementia attended the Day Centre for respite care as their spouses needed to be in employment. The majority of the remaining clients were in their 80's and in need of much care as they were older and frailer. They tended to utilise the Day Centre for a brief transitional time before entering residential care or because their carers often struggled to cope and the Day Centre offered some respite. Demography of the Borough indicated that there would be a growing number of older people in the future and the Chairman and Chief Executive expressed concern in respect of meeting the associated increase in care needs.

4. Conclusions

From its investigations, the Working Group concludes that.

- 4.1 Carers provide invaluable services to those whom they care for and by doing so they save the taxpayer large sums of money. The Working Group has been very struck with the immense dedication shown by the carers it met, for example in one case the carer had had just one break of one week in a period of five and a half years of caring. Carers deserve to be and are mostly well supported by the Council, whose services have improved significantly over the last few years, according to the carers the Working Group met and the voluntary agency staff it spoke to.
- 4.2 Many carers do not consider themselves to be carers and it is a role that tends to gradually increase as the needs of the cared for grow.
- 4.3 Carers consider that the carers' allowance, which is a maximum of £50.55 per week depending on the receipt of other benefits, is insufficient and they seek opportunities to supplement this through employment. The Working Group recognises that the allowance is set by central and not local government.
- 4.4 Carers seek good day services to enable their cared for to take part in stimulating activities whilst giving themselves respite, shopping / housework and employment opportunities.
- 4.5 The carers' respite grant is considered to constitute the greatest change to carers' lives and eases their role.
- 4.6 Many carers are unaware of methods of accessing services when new to their caring role as they are unable to spend much time away from home and do not receive related information unless it is evident at their GP practice. GPs have a significant role to play in this area as they are often the first point of contact for carers needing support. There is a need for Adult Social Care and GPs to work closely together to improve carers' access to information.
- 4.7 The best method of engaging with GPs may be a system of holding regular meetings with GP practice managers to cascade information to GPs and practice nurses and reception staff. The Carers Strategy Working Group addresses this concern in its Action Plan.
- 4.8 As there is competition for article / promotional space in the Council's 'Town and Country' magazine, there may be merit in reviewing alternatives such as the inclusion within Town and Country of a separate information 'flyer' leaflet relating to support services for carers which will be delivered directly to their homes.
- 4.9 There is a considerable range of information available for carers. Despite this, the gap between the estimated number of carers in the Borough and those benefiting from support suggests a continuing need to explore new ways of providing information to reach carers.
- 4.10 'Carers Week', an annual event, and the 'Voice of Experience' two-yearly conference provide good opportunities for information exchange.

- 4.11 The five specialist teams in Adult Social Care provide a good service to those in need. This is recognised and valued by the carers whose first priority is to ensure that their loved ones receive appropriate support. This has also been recognised in recent inspections and the Dementia Team winning a national award.
- 4.12 It is also recognised that the support provided by the Bracknell Branch of Carers UK and the Carers Support Team of BFVA is invaluable.
- 4.13 We welcome the Carers Strategy and look forward to the implementation of its Action Plan.
- 4.14 The setting up this year of a new Carers' Information and Support Group is a useful addition to information dissemination.
- 4.15 The work currently being undertaken by the Council and BFVA to improve services for the Indian and Nepali communities is to be welcomed.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended to the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing that:-

- 5.1 The Council investigate a pilot scheme using the 'Look In' to run an advice and information service for carers and the possibility of offering on-site respite care for short periods;
- 5.2 A 'flyer' leaflet providing information and contact details relating to services for carers be included in 'Town and County' on a regular basis to access hard to reach carers;
- 5.3 Staff in Adult Social Care be asked to work in partnership with the Berkshire East Primary Care Trust and general practitioners to implement an effective system of drawing to the attention of carers up to date information relating to services for carers (as is planned in the Carers Strategy Action Plan);
- 5.4 Staff in Adult Social Care be requested to work with health centres and hospitals to ensure that they provide appropriate information to carers;
- 5.5 The Chief Officer: Adult Social Care be asked to support partners in the delivery of the Carers Strategy Action Plan; and
- 5.6 Performance against Local Area Agreement targets for National Indicator 135 (Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information) be reported on regularly to the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

It is recommended to the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel that:-

- 5.7 The Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel may wish to give future consideration to reviewing services to support young carers and parents of children with learning disabilities.

6. Glossary

BFVA	Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic communities
BWC	Bracknell and Wokingham College
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection
GP	General Practitioner
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LD	Learning Disabilities
O&S	Overview and Scrutiny
PCT	Berkshire East Primary Care Trust
SCL	Social Care and Learning
The Council	Bracknell Forest Council

Detailed Responses to the Questions to Carersa) Is the support you receive to help you provide care appropriate?

- i. One carer had experienced difficulties in obtaining a carer's assessment for which there had been a lengthy wait owing to the number of carers in need of assessment. She found that as her needs were changing continual re-assessment was required. Although she had initially remained independent and not sought help, a new GP referred her cared for to a Falls Clinic via Adult Social Care at which point she had accessed Intermediary Care services. She praised the service pattern that had then emerged and commented that her previous GP would not have offered such assistance.
- ii. A second carer, whose cared for suffered from memory loss, had also encountered difficulties and delays in accessing services. One year ago, when suffering from exhaustion, depression and stress, the carer herself was referred to Adult Social Care by her GP as she could no longer cope without assistance. Long waits for incontinence pads and day centre placements were then experienced. The carer knew of other carers who had experienced lengthy waits for services.
- iii. Although assistance with completing assessment forms was available, there was said to be a two-three month wait for this and several carers claimed not to have ever received a form. Delay in the GP referral process was generally highlighted as an issue which Adult Social Care was endeavouring to resolve. It was recommended that where GPs were unhelpful an alternative doctor be sought. One carer cited an example of not being allocated a social worker which had been recommended by her GP.
- iv. Another carer had been unaware of the process of accessing services and knowing who to contact and felt that carers should be made fully aware of this at the outset. Although GPs were usually the first point of contact, she had a different GP to her cared for and the links had not been made. She found the assessment forms complicated to use.
- v. One carer reported that his GP had advised him to approach Adult Social Care for assistance with caring as a result of which he had been allocated a care manager who provided information and advice. He was satisfied with the services provided and felt that this was the correct route for accessing services.
- vi. The carers' assessor in Adult Social Care was held in high regard and was said to find half of those she assessed in need of services which led to her frustration at the lack of resources available to support them. A carer made the point that carers focused on their cared for which diminished their time and energy for seeking services for themselves. As the nature of the caring role caused carers to face greater challenges and stresses on some days than others, there was a danger of their needs being under assessed when assessments were undertaken on less demanding days when their needs were less visible. Also, carers could lack specific awareness of all the caring functions they undertook as these were carried out automatically as part of the daily routine.

- vii. Another carer described the difficulties she had encountered with attempting to access services to assist with caring for her son who suffered from mental health conditions. Approaches to senior staff in Adult Social Care and the local MP had been required in order to receive assurances that the Department would assist. Despite these assurances, being given contact names and informed that she had a right to a carers' assessment, she continued to wait for meetings and assessments.
- viii. The carers appreciated the support and advice offered by Carers UK which enabled them to access information from many different professionals and obtain solutions to problems. It was felt that support for carers had improved over the last year or two and this included the annual grants for carers' breaks. Another recent development was the domestic support service which had been introduced in 2007 by BFVA at the request of the Council to provide a service to frail, elderly and vulnerable people in the community who required assistance with housework, shopping, laundry and pension collecting etc. Help the Aged was reported to act rapidly to help in situations where older people were in need of care and assistance.
- ix. Attention was drawn to three instances where Adult Social Care had advised carers not to install equipment or make adaptations to their homes, such as the installation of a disabled bathroom, to accommodate their cared for as they may be eligible for a grant from the Council which was repayable with interest. Some carers were reported to have waited for up to one to two years for assessment of eligibility for such grants which caused them difficulties.

b) How do you get the information you need?

- x. The carers generally felt that information concerning services for carers should be made more readily available, particularly for new carers who would benefit from learning from experienced carers. The Working Group was mindful that new carers initially felt able to cope unassisted but their needs grew in time. GP practices, hospitals, chemist shops, supermarkets, shopping centres, libraries, day centres, notice boards and the British Legion were suggested as suitable places to promote such services. As much of carers' time was spent at home with their cared for, it was felt that information should be delivered directly into the home. The Borough's 'Town and Country' publication was identified as a means to achieve this but, as it was said to contain insufficient article space, it was suggested that it be expanded to include information relating to carers' services. One carer made reference to a mental health carers' awareness day that had been held elsewhere and another drew attention to an event being held at Brakenhale School to advise on disabilities, work and pensions. It was felt that Adult Social Care was not aware of all of the opportunities for carers provided and funded by BFVA.

c) Do you get a break from your caring role and is it what you want?

- xi. The carers were in receipt of respite care in order to attend this meeting. It was reported that in instances of mental health it was not known whether the cared for could be left until the last minute owing to the possibility of sudden mood changes or other manifestations which prevented their carers from booking activities in advance. Some carers needed to be in very frequent telephone contact with their cared for which lessened the benefit they gained from respite care. Carers generally sought more and longer breaks which left them

refreshed and better equipped to care. The amount of breaks received varied considerably and whilst one carer received a break on one evening per month, another benefited from respite care on three occasions per month. A third carer advised that she had received a break of one week in the last five and a half years and was attempting to secure a placement for her cared for at a day centre to increase her opportunities for receiving breaks. One cared for attended skills for life and continuing education courses at Thames Valley University which gave him personality and self-confidence development opportunities whilst his carer received a break. Attendance at The Ravenswood Centre, the Ark charitable trust and leisure centres offered the double advantage of benefiting both the cared for and carer. A carer expressed the view that the demise of traditional day services was detrimental to both carers and cared for as such services enabled carers to pursue employment whilst their cared for took part in stimulating activities. The modern service alternative of cared for spending in the region of two hours per session at a leisure centre or similar activity was not thought to offer these opportunities.

d) Is there some other help you would like to see made available?

- xii. A carer reiterated the view that good day services to assist carers and benefit cared for were sought. The carers' allowance was considered insufficient and prospects to supplement this through employment were needed. Another carer supported this view feeling that carers were denied their own wishes which came second to their cared for and she saw day services as her only chance to regain time and life opportunities for herself. She struggled to maintain a house and garden whilst looking after her cared for and emphasised the point that carers should be enabled to pursue employment opportunities bearing in mind that financial resources were made available to provide residential care for those without carers. A carer drew attention to Woodlands Assessment Centre where he took his cared for one day per week to enable him to undertake domestic chores or pursue other activities. Carers were made aware of other day and respite care centres in the area.
- xiii. Carers expressed a lack of peace of mind for the future. They drew the Working Group's attention to the numerous amount of cared for off-spring in 'supported living' who were of 40 years of age or more and raised concerns with regard to who would care for them in the future when their parents / carers became aged and frail or died. The absence of staff cover at Glenfield House, a sheltered housing project for clients recovering from mental illness, from 5 to 10 p.m. each day was another cause for concern centred around security issues. Glenfield House was seen as a potentially volatile facility owing to its mixed clientele with mental health conditions of varying types and stages. The necessity to apply for grants each year was taxing for carers, particularly as incorrect use of terminology could prejudice grant eligibility.

CARERS AT THE HEART OF 21ST CENTURY FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
HM Government – 10th June 2008

1. Definition of a Carer

A carer spends a significant proportion of their life providing unpaid support to family or potentially friends. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.

There are approximately 6 million Carers in the UK.

Of those, 3 million Carers are balancing their caring role with employment.

During an average year nationally 2 million Carers begin their caring role and 2 million cease to be Carers.

1 in 10 adults in Britain is currently a Carer, with the majority being females

3 in 5 will become a carer at some point in their life

By 2037, the number of cases is expected to increase to 9 million due to an ageing population

2. Introduction and background

Since 1995 there has been a growing national recognition of the import role Carers have as care providers for our most vulnerable groups of people in our society.

Following the first Act in 1995, Carers (Recognition and Services) Act, which placed a legal duty on Local Authorities to recognise and assess the needs of the carers of clients who where in receipt of services under the Community Care Act 1990, the Prime Minister launched the 1999 National Carers Strategy – “Caring about Carers”.

The Government’s strategy had three key approaches:

- Information for Carers
- Support for Carers
- Care for Carers

To support the strategy the Government introduced the Carers’ Grant, funding to Local Authorities to develop respite opportunities, support services and comprehensive information for all ages of Carers, including Young Carers.

Following the first strategy there has been the introduction of significant legislative changes to continue to raise awareness, impact on the role of Carers through assessment, increase recognition and the development of service provision:

- ***The Carers & Disabled Children Act 2000***

- ***The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004***
- ***The Work & Families Act 2006*** (extended the right to request flexible working to employees)

3. “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say” 2006

In 2006 the Government’s White paper “Our Health, our care, our say” announced a new deal for Carers made up of four parts:

- a) A comprehensive national information service. To be in place Spring 2009. £2.775m per year available.
- b) The establishment of Caring with Confidence, a training programme for carers. Training to be available August 2008 & on a distance-learning basis from December 2008. £46m per year.
- c) Emergency Care Cover. £25m additional funding per year from October 2007.
- d) A revised Prime Minister strategy for Carers, a ten-year strategy supported by a set of commitments.

4. The Strategy 2008: Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities “A caring system on your side. A life of your own”

In June 2008 the Government launched a new 10 year strategy for Carers.

Commitments

The 2008 Strategy sets out a strategic agenda for the next 10 years to improve the lives of those who care for the ill, frail or disabled relatives or friends.

Short term: Commitments

- Increased funding for breaks for carers.
- Pilots to assess innovative approaches to the provision of breaks, their quality and their cost-effectiveness.
- Sharing of best practice in supporting carers across local authorities.

Longer term: Identified priorities

- Consideration of further increases in break position, taking account of evidence about quality and outcomes.
- Dissemination of models of best practice on quality and innovative approaches to break provision, based on evidence gathered in the pilots.
- In the context of community empowerment and the reform of the care and support system, to consider how the relationship between local authorities and the third sector and carer-led organisations can be developed to make better use of the expertise of these organisations, and to provide carers with greater choice and

control over the way in which services are provided to them. As part of this, we will also examine how best to utilise the Carers Grant to the benefit of carers.

Funding

By March 2011, £1.7 billion for councils to support Carers through the Annual Carers Grant.

Within the £1.7 billion, £25m a year is for emergency break provisions.

A further £22m committed to set up an information service via a helpline, plus a training programme for Carers.

Also, £3.4m to directly support Young Carers through extended Families Pathfinders.

Currently £255m invested on new commitments as part of the Strategy.

The Vision

By 2018, Carers will be universally recognised and valued.

Carers support will be tailored to meet individual needs, enabling Carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities, and a life outside of caring, whilst enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen.

- Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role.
- Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role.
- Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role.
- Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity.
- Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods, and to achieve against all the *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

5. Local Demography and Grant Details

Across East Berkshire, based on ONS data of 2001 census there are in the region of **29,966** people over the age of 18 years providing unpaid care on a daily basis.

However, with growing numbers of older people, people with long term conditions and people presenting with specific diseases across the area, we can make an assumption that this figure is an underestimation. This figure does not include Young Carers, who are by the very nature of their situation often hidden.

The total national Carers Grant 2008/09 is £224m;

East Berkshire Grant allocations to Local Authorities for 2008/09 are:

Bracknell Forest	£ 327,000
RBWM	£ 420,000
Slough	£ 514,000

Bracknell Forest

The 2001 census identified **8,278** Carers in the following categories:

- **6,230** Carers provide 1 – 19 hours care per week (per person)
- **676** Carers provide 20 – 49 hours care per week (per person)
- **1,372** Carers provide 50 or more hours care per week (per person)

In 2007, **522** Carers were known to Adult Services.

In 2007/08 **510** Carers received an assessment of their needs.

During 2007/08 **510** Carers received services to support them in their caring role.

During 2007/08 **31** Young Carers received services providing support and respite.

Key areas of spend were:

Adult Carers Development Worker
Flexible breaks for carers including:
Holidays,
Accessing learning events and training
Driving lessons
Group activities/outings
Carers' lunch
Respite breaks

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

The 2001 census identified **11,501** carers in the following categories:

- **8,889** Carers provide 1 – 19 hours care per week (per person)
- **915** Carers provide 20 – 49 hours care per week (per person)
- **1,697** Carers provide 50 or more hours care per week (per person)

In 2007, **1421** Carers were known to Adult Services.

During 2007, **330** Adult Carers were receiving services in support of their caring.

During 2006/07, **279** Carers had received an individual assessment or review of need, with a further **1083** having had their needs assessed or reviewed jointly.

RBWM Carers Grant 2008/09 £ 420,000

Key areas of spend being:

Children – Children with Autism respite; Children with Disabilities respite; Spot Purchase includes Holiday Projects.

Older People – EMH respite; Voucher system; Alzheimer society.

Learning Disability – Spot Purchase; Respite.

Mental Health – Spot Purchase; Emergency Support.

Misc: - Young Carers Project; Princess Royal Trust for Carers; Hospice Asian Worker.

Slough

The 2001 census identified **10,187** carers in the following categories:

- **6,924** Carers provide 1 – 19 hours care per week (per person)
- **1,267** Carers provide 20 – 49 hours care per week (per person)
- **1,996** Carers provide 50 or more hours care per week (per person)

In 2007/08 **1,853** Carers were known to Adult Services.

In 2007/08 **629** Carers received an assessment of their needs.

During 2007/08 **629** Carers received services to support them in their caring role.

During 2007/08 **249** Young Carers received services providing support and respite.

Key areas of spend were:

Carers Support Service – Specialist workers Generic and Mental Health Support Workers

BME Carers Link Workers for parents of adults with LD

Carers Respite including specific care group respite - EMI, Mental Health, BME, PDSN and LD

Young Carers Worker

Young Carers Respite and time off activities

Summer and school holiday “Respite Scheme for parents of disabled children”

Carers Training, including specific Mental Health Training

Carers Taxi Voucher Scheme

Carers Assistance Voucher Scheme

Carers Direct Payments

Specialised Dementia Carers Respite

Carers Support Group x 5

Carers Forum

Carers Emergency Responder Service

6. Next Steps – Implementation

The Government is committed to implement the vision set out in the 2008 Strategy and has established a Standing Committee on Carers (December 2007) who will have a key role in advising the Government of the progress of the strategy. This will include a specific overview on equalities issues and advising on ways Carers can be further supported as demography changes.

The Government also plan to establish a programme board to complement the work of the Committee. The board will be responsible for ensuring preparatory work is undertaken to support the delivery of the longer-term proposals set out in the Strategy and that the next two years’ commitments are implemented.

The JSNA and LAA will maintain a regional and local overview of progress which will be monitored by the Local Performance framework. However, the Government has made a series of new commitments within the document, which are laid down as follows:

Short term: Commitments:

- Establishment of cross-government programme board

- Module on Carers in an Omnibus Survey
- Inclusion of a question on Carers in the 2011 Census
- A national Carers' experience survey

Longer terms: Identified priorities

- Review of National Indicator Set to set ensure that Carers' experience of service is measured

Recommendations for BE JSCB

One of the most significant announcements in the Strategy is the increased funding available for respite breaks. There will be an additional **£150m** which will be allocated to PCTs. This funding will require PCT's to work with LA's to develop and publish joint plans for the provision of breaks.

The following points are recommended to the board for discussion and as potential actions for board agreement:

- Map existing respite services across Berkshire East including detailed spend
- Identify gaps
- Agree resources
- Identify potential jointly commissioned respite opportunities for Carers from all care groups including Young Carers
- Develop services that can be commissioned via PBC's
- Agree monitoring and reviewing processes

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION 11 SEPTEMBER 2008

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – WORKING GROUP REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report introduces the attached report resulting from the review of the Local Area Agreement by a working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission adopts the attached report by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's Working Group on the Local Area Agreement, for sending formally to the responsible Executive Member and the Chairman of the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board.**

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283

e-mail: Richard.Beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Doc. Ref

This page is intentionally left blank

DRAFT 29.8.08



LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

**Report by a Working Group of the
Overview and Scrutiny Commission**



September 2008

Table of Contents

- 1. Foreword**
- 2. Background**
- 3. Information gathering**
- 4. General Analysis arising from key player meetings**
- 5. Conclusions**
- 6. Recommendations**

Glossary of Terms

Appendices

- Appendix A - Scoping document for this review**
- Appendix B - Meeting with Victor Nicholls and Claire Sharp**
- Appendix C - Meeting with Chief Executive**
- Appendix D - Meeting with Martin Gilman Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action**
- Appendix E - Attendance at Bracknell Forest Partnership Board**
- Appendix F - Meeting with Chief Inspector Simon Bowden**
- Appendix G - Meeting with Leader of the Council**

Acknowledgements

The WG expresses its thanks to the following for their co-operation and time. A copy of the draft report has been provided to them for their comments:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Councillor Paul Bettison | - Leader, Bracknell Forest Council |
| Timothy Wheadon | - Chief Executive, Bracknell Forest Council |
| Victor Nicholls | - Assistant Chief Executive, Bracknell Forest Council |
| Claire Sharp | - Senior Policy Officer, Partnerships |
| Chief Inspector Simon Bowden | - Local Area Police Commander, Thames Valley Police |
| Martin Gilman | - Director, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA) |

1. Foreword

1. Bracknell Forest Council has an established track record of achievement in close, productive and harmonious partnership with many public, voluntary and private organisations operating in the Borough, and this has been widely commended¹. Central Government has put increasing importance on such local partnerships and has reinforced this through evolving Councils' legal and financial frameworks. Councils can no longer deliver services in isolation, and the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) function similarly needs to 'move with the times' and look to see how its work can be adapted to meet this new partnership landscape most effectively. That has been the purpose of this Working Group (WG).

2. The timing of this work has necessarily been something of a compromise as nationally the development of the formal partnership agenda is fast-moving. On the one hand, we do not yet have government guidance or enactment of all relevant legislation, neither have we found examples of established best practice to draw on. On the other hand, our Local Strategic Partnership – Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP) - has entered a new era with a new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), an Area Based Grant, and a new Local Area Agreement (LAA), of much greater operational significance than previously. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission (O&SC) therefore decided that it was necessary to make a start in shaping effective O&S arrangements for the LAA, though the wider developments in train mean that the thinking in this report will need to be revisited and refined in due course.

3. The Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 (the Act) sets a new duty on Unitary Authorities to prepare an LAA in consultation with others for approval by the Secretary of State, via the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). It sets a duty on Unitary Authorities and other 'partner' authorities to co-operate in determining local improvement targets in the LAA. These 'partner' authorities include organisations such as Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Probation Services, Learning and Skills Councils amongst others.

4. The Act also set a responsibility on the local authority and its partners to have regard for local improvement targets in carrying out their function and to do this in a spirit of co-operation as stated above.

5. With regard to the scrutiny of LAA's the Act allows:

¹ See paragraph 6 of Corporate Assessment of Bracknell Forest Council by the Audit Commission, February 2008. The report can be viewed on the Audit Commission's website at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/CPA-CORP-ASSESS-EPORT.asp?CategoryID=ENGLISH^576^LOCAL-VIEW^AUTHORITIES^111705&ProdID=6363DFE3-0B29-4322-B63D-0B9137ED753F>

- A power for the Secretary of State to make regulations concerning the information which partner authorities must provide for scrutiny.
- A requirement that, where a report or recommendations concern a local improvement target which is specified in the LAA and which relates to a partner authority, that authority must have regard to the recommendations of O&S.

6. Because of this the O&SC was prompted to task a WG to review the current LAA process to inform it of the following:

- The purpose of the LAA and the SCS
- The manner in which the LAA is developed
- The contribution of partner organisations
- How partner organisations approached scrutiny of their functions

7. The key objectives of the WG were to:

- Ascertain examples of good practice of scrutinising LAAs
- Explore with partners how O&S could be used in a positive and meaningful way in relation to the LAA
- Establish effective arrangements for O&S of the LAA and SCS

8. The following members were appointed to the WG:

Councillor Bob Edger OBE – Lead member, Councillor Robert McLean and Councillor Mike Beadsley.

2. Background

9. LAAs are three year negotiated agreements between upper tier Councils (Unitary and County) and Central Government. The agreement sets out a series of targets that a Council, together with its partners, must deliver.

10. The improvement targets in the LAA are challenging and so attract reward money if a Council and its partners can deliver them.

11. If a Council embarks on scrutiny of a Council's partnerships or partner stakeholders both in the LAA and the SCS it is vital to be clear about the scope and objectives of the review. The partners are legally independent of the Council and have their own governance arrangements which must be respected, thus sensitivities are involved and to ensure that partners embrace scrutiny properly it is clear that the process must be transparent, constructive and not intimidating.

12. The recently published SCS and LAA encapsulate the period from 2008 to 2014 and 2011 respectively. In developing these documents stakeholders, listed in the LAA, were consulted on the various themes and targets to be included in the document. Of the 198 indicators set by Central Government the Council consulted with its stakeholders, of which the O&SC was one. The O&S response was regarded by the BFP to be very thorough and of the 31 indicators highlighted as high priority by O&S, 16 were within the final designated targets given in the LAA document.

13. Of the remaining 15 suggestions, 3 were found to be unsuitable for the Borough as the data wasn't available at Unitary level or the cohort size was too small; 5 were replaced with similar targets that officers in that field felt were more appropriate; 3 were very new indicators and it was considered too difficult to set up measures within the timescale available and 4 were not considered to be priorities compared to other areas due to already good performance or did not have sufficient resources allocated to impact performance.

14. In Bracknell Forest there are ten themed partnerships that are all represented in the BFP organisation. From this wider membership a Bracknell Forest Partnership Board (BFPB) of key partners is selected to deal with the delivery of policy and action. The Chairmanship of themed partnerships alternates between members.

15. Partnerships are by their very nature complex. Agendas differ and the very nature of the work each organisation does will not always connect or dovetail into those of another partner. However, by providing the opportunity for dialogue across the range of targets and issues agreed in the LAA all participants have an important stake in how the Borough is run and how the Council meets its medium term objectives to the eventual benefit of its residents .

3. Information gathering

16. The WG undertook the following meetings in 2008 during the review:

- 9 April - Draft scoping meeting - Appendix A
- 13 May - Meeting with Victor Nicholls and Claire Sharp- Appendix B
- 19 June - Meeting with Timothy Wheadon - Appendix C
- 10 July - Meeting with Martin Gilman - Appendix D
- 17 July - Attendance at BFP Board - Appendix E
- 22 July - Meeting with Chief Inspector Simon Bowden- Appendix F
- 20 August - Meeting to discuss draft report
- 28 August - Meeting with Councillor Paul Bettison - Appendix G

4. General analysis arising from key player meetings

1. The Draft Scoping Meeting

17. As stated earlier the WG very soon realised that the issue of partnerships was complex. It was unlikely that the term 'Overview and Scrutiny', a Local Government term, would be readily recognised by partner organisations, who would more commonly understand the terms 'governance' and 'accountability'. A number of issues were identified such as who was the Lead Executive Member for the LSP, what organisations had an overarching scrutiny system, and whether the partnership administration was robust enough to withstand change in key officers. The former point was determined as being the Council Leader and it was subsequently confirmed that the administration was sufficiently robust to withstand change.

18. From this meeting an agreed scoping document was produced that is the foundation of this review although the WG realise that this is by no means the end of the process and that further meaningful work remains to be carried out by the Commission and the Panels, taking account of forthcoming legislation and guidance if the scrutiny of partnerships is to be carried out successfully.

2. Meeting with Victor Nicholls and Claire Sharp

19. Victor Nicholls explained that an officer group of Unitary authorities in Southern England had been established to share work and develop partnerships. He described the work done by Southampton City Council in this respect and shared the final report of a study undertaken for that authority by South East Employers.

20. Claire Sharp gave a wider explanation of the process undertaken to produce the LAA. She described how the 35 'designated' indicators with targets had been selected through consultation and why some recommendations from partner groups had not been accepted. She stated that the LAA process was about delivering improvement outcomes within three years that are measurable under the national indicator framework. 6 Primary Care Trust (PCT) led targets, amongst others, were included in the final document.

21. With regard to funding she showed how a new Area Based Grant (ABG) would replace a number of existing funding streams and that these grants would now flow into one basket for the Council to use at it saw fit. Future schemes would include Multi-Area Agreements that would involve setting targets across regions.

22. A summary of the action points arising from the meeting is given at Appendix B.

3. Meeting with Chief Executive

23. The Chief Executive stated that Bracknell Forest Partnership was working efficiently with all major partners represented at the right level. Having established a two-tier structure, whereby a BFPB had been established, it now worked well. He was the permanent chairman of the Board whereas the chairman of the wider Partnership alternated between members.

24. He said that the ten themed partnerships were the real drivers of the system but should problems arise which were not resolvable within a themed partnership or were of a wider nature, the BFPB could intervene to assist.

25. The BFPB has a clear agenda which it decides on; it meets monthly and monitors the SCS and the LAA . Each partnership reports back monthly on the LAA to the Board who monitor targets to ensure that they are being maintained, if not the Board decides on what can be done to help.

26. The Chief Executive described how the ABG was a small proportion of the Council's overall expenditure and how it was difficult to move funds between single organisations in to joint ventures.

27. When asked how the work of partnership scrutiny would serve the needs of local residents he said that the focus should be on partnership working and should be specifically targeted at the outcomes that partnerships were delivering through the LAA and not the partnership in general or its core terms. Although he did think that scrutiny of some partners through lead officers being invited to Panel meetings would give the scrutiny of partnership a healthy 'edge'.

28. However, scrutiny of some areas that overlapped from one organisation to another would need to be careful in its approach. It needed to be seen as inquisitive rather than adversarial and should have the same ethos as partnership itself i.e. investigation to benefit the outcome.

29. Minutes of this meeting are given at Appendix C.

4. Meeting with Martin Gilman BFVA

30. Martin Gilman said he thought the Partnership was working well. In his opinion there was a common agenda between partners and a common willingness to help residents. Good relationships had been forged and Board members had an understanding of each other. Through their work in prioritising the 35 targets in the LAA and through the negotiations with GOSE the relationship had been strengthened. He did caveat that these relationships were dependant upon the personalities involved remaining in post.

31. He thought that communication between agencies was now acceptable but was unsure that the general public knew a great deal about the Partnership's work although he did his best to communicate whatever information he could across the 450 volunteer groups with which BFVA deals.

32. When asked if volunteer organisations had embraced the partnership concept he said that the voluntary sector had the highest response rate to the priority target and felt that this was because his sector was less constricted by what it could say and do than the public and private sectors. He warned that whilst over 13,000 people were involved in voluntary work in one way or another the matter of finance was always a problem with some volunteers spending their own resources in terms of experience and time to fulfil the commitments placed upon them.

33. Martin Gilman felt that the Partnership improved performance and outcomes as skills, expertise and resources were shared, and no one agency had all the answers. There was a need to publicise good news stories from the partnership, such as the fall in reported crime, as this would stimulate more interest in what the partnerships sought to achieve. Communication was paramount and the essential element in community improvement.

34. Minutes of this meeting are given at Appendix D.

5. Attendance at Bracknell Forest Partnership Board meeting

35. Being invited to attend a Board meeting gave the WG an opportunity to observe how members engaged with each other and the calibre of the discussion and debate. It was clear that there was a mutual understanding between members of the issues on the agenda and a positive contribution being made by each member involved. The fact that GOSE was represented, as is the Audit Commission when appropriate, gave balance to the group demonstrating the importance that Central Government places on these meetings.

36. Notes on this attendance are given at Appendix E.

6. Meeting with Chief Inspector Simon Bowden

37. When asked if the BFP was working effectively the Chief Inspector was positive in his response saying that in his opinion it was and that key to its success and the themed partnerships was strong leadership and having the right members on the Board able to make decisions and commit funding as appropriate. He added that he thought the current membership had the same strategic vision for Bracknell Forest, which was to be a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live. However, sometimes individual organisation's agendas were at odds particularly with regard to Government target setting. For example a lot of youth justice matters were better dealt with through early intervention and the Youth Offending Team but Government targets for the police focus on detection and arrest rates and these were at odds with this approach.

38. In being told that the Chief Executive felt that the recent reduction of reported crime in the Borough would not have been achieved other than

through the existing partnership arrangements he agreed that this was true to an extent and that the key Council Officers in this context were those in the Community Safety Team (CST) and the themed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). Partnership money was used to enhance the Community Nuisance and Disorder Information System (CADIS) that had been better adapted to this Borough than it perhaps had been in other authorities.

39. To improve policing outcomes for local residents he described how GOSE would be looking at overall acquisitive crime through the LAA. In partnership with the Safer Communities Manager this has been broken down into its component crimes that gave the opportunity to gauge which ones impact most upon the local community and the focus of police resources on these areas where they can make a difference. In this way crimes such as burglary and theft of cars had been reduced.

40. When asked about governance and accountability in his own organisation he explained that this was well established through the Local Area Policing Board, the Police Authority, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and the Chief Constable. He felt that the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process might be a good thing if it combined with its other inspections. He understood that scrutiny was not willingly accepted by some organisations that might be suspicious of it and there were some who have little capacity to become fully involved in either the scrutiny or partnership arrangements.

41. The Chief Inspector maintained he got good value from partnerships and what money he had to support it was spent after discussion with other partners. However, as we live in rapidly changing times he was concerned about stretched resources as the town continued to expand and that there were some schemes that he would like to introduce if more funds were available such as the introduction of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system.

42. In conclusion the Chief Inspector was of the opinion that if the partnership system was to cease it would be significantly disadvantageous.

43. Minutes of this interview are at Appendix F.

7. Meeting with Councillor Paul Bettison

44. *[To be completed following the meeting on 28 August]*

45. Minutes of this interview are at Appendix G.

5. Conclusions

46. BFC and its partners in the BFP are already operating very successfully together, and the new SCS and LAA are evidence of that. The Council's O&S function, in concert with those exercising similar roles in partner organisations, needs to support that journey of improvement through constructively scrutinising the partnership's policies, plans and achievements. Our aim for this O&S work is to serve and empower the Bracknell Forest community by stimulating public engagement, influencing plans and outcomes, and holding decision-makers to account. This lies at the heart of effective O&S.

47. As stated in the foreword the WG was tasked by the Commission to inform it of the following:

- The purpose of the LAA and the SCS
- The manner in which the LAA is developed
- The contribution of partner organisations
- How partner organisations approached scrutiny of their functions

We will take each item in turn:

1. The purpose of the LAA and the SCS

The SCS sets out a long-term vision for the Borough which is ambitious, realistic and sustainable. It covers all aspects of life for people in the Borough in examining where the Borough wants to be by 2030. The LAA is a three-year agreement between BFP and Central Government. It sets out the outcomes and targets the partnership will deliver in the next three years to progress the achievement of the vision set out in the SCS.

In an officer information paper to the WG dated the 13 May 2008 the purpose of these documents were explained as follows:

'3. STATUTORY BASIS

3.1 The Council has a statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 2000 to produce an SCS for the Borough (in cooperation with specified partners). Once finalised the SCS must be agreed by Council in accordance with existing regulations.

3.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced further duties on:

- Local Authorities to develop LAAs in partnership with other agencies
- Local Authorities and named partners to co-operate in agreeing LAA targets and to have regard in meeting them.

The Council's Constitution Review Group agreed on the 9 April 2008 that the function relating to LAAs be designated as an Executive Function. This was

approved by Council on 23 April 2008 and the Council's Constitution was amended accordingly.

The SCS and LAA are published on the Council's website² and copies are available on request. The WG conclude this detail is sufficient to define the purpose of both these documents other than to reiterate that the themes, targets and indicators are the result of wide consultation with many organisations that have brought a positive sense of purpose to the BFP and Council for the benefit of residents that was not there before.

It should be noted that the statutory basis for partner scrutiny already encompasses the scrutiny of National Health Service (NHS) organisations. The Council has an established Health Scrutiny function and a constructive relationship with the NHS organisations operating in the Borough. This gives the Council and the BFP a sound basis for expanding partner scrutiny arrangements.

2. The manner in which the LAA is developed

The first stage of the process to produce the new LAA and SCS was the development of a detailed evidence base and this was followed by two conferences in Autumn 2007 to gather stakeholder opinion on potential scenarios for the future and key priorities. This information was used in draft frameworks for both documents. Both were presented for open public and stakeholder consultation in early 2008. This consultation included those named partners with a duty to co-operate, local partners/theme partnerships, O&S and the business and voluntary sector. 35 responses were received regarding the LAA and 20 for the SCS. They came from a good range of stakeholder groups. The two final documents were drawn up for approval and endorsement by various partners during May 2008 to the following timetable:

- 30 April - BFC Corporate Management Team endorsed final LAA and SCS
- 6 May - BFC Executive Briefing on final LAA and SCS
- 15 May - BFP Board endorse final LAA and SCS
- 20 May - BFC Executive endorse final LAA and SCS
- 30 May - Final LAA submitted to GOSE
- 18 June - Final LAA endorsed by Council and SCS adopted.

The WG is of the opinion that sufficient evidence exists to confirm that a wide consultation took place that encompassed all relevant sections of the community and that the responses were useful and informative. All participants in the BFP had opportunities to have an input and the resulting documents that have been adopted appear to have been accepted across the board.

² <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/yc-bracknell-forest-partnership.htm>

3. The contribution of partner organisations

The WG believes that sufficient evidence exists to confirm that most partners made a contribution to the development of both the LAA and the SCS. Further evidence from our interviews with partners is that they are committed to contributing to the partnership by delivering their own LAA targets and supporting other partners to achieve theirs. Because there are so many disparate organisations operating within the Borough it will probably never be the case that all of them will play an active part in producing a policy or document intended to meet the needs of the majority. There will always be those who have no desire to contribute. However, these 'hard to reach' communities must be kept informed of events as much as possible so that they understand the changes and improvements going on around them which may be to their advantage.

The responsibility of the themed partnerships to seek to do this through their networks is essential to the consolidation of the partnership scheme and there is every reason to believe that is already the case.

4. How partner organisations approach scrutiny of their function

The WG understands that some of the key players in the BFP have sound methods of self-scrutiny although they may not use this terminology. As stated elsewhere in this report the use of the term 'Overview and Scrutiny' will be little understood outside Local Government authorities. The words 'governance' and 'accountability' will be more acceptable.

Having said this it is important that whilst the partnership scheme continues to develop and more funding streams through grants and direct payments are fed into it factors concerning good governance and financial accountability are important elements in ensuring proper administration. It is likely that this form of funding will be accompanied by stringent controls and parameters with which some organisations may not be well acquainted.

In conclusion, it is therefore essential, in the opinion of the WG, that all partners must be encouraged to consider scrutiny as an important aspect of their organisation and to understand that robust self-evaluation systems are needed so that the Partnership as a whole is confident in its governance and the way its membership conducts its business.

The Council's O&S also has a responsibility to ensure that local partnerships and the LAA are strengthened through constructive scrutiny that is inquisitive but non-threatening, helpful but not intimidating. Partners interviewed expressed a willingness to contribute to such a process.

The WG believes that constructive scrutiny will be an asset to the partnership scheme overall and all partners should embrace opportunities to participate in it. It has found in all the key participants it has interviewed that there is a strong desire to make the BFP work well and efficiently to the benefit of the whole community.

6. Recommendations

48. Three key objectives of the WG were to:

- Ascertain examples of national good practice of scrutiny in the LAA
- Explore with partners how O&S could be used in a positive and meaningful way in relation to the LAA
- Establish effective arrangements for O&S of the LAA and SCS

The WG has not identified any evidence of national good practice of scrutiny of LAAs. The reason for this is that the partnership scheme is still evolving and the most recent document has just been published. In the past the LAA was renewed annually but it is now relevant for three years, with only 'light touch' annual refreshes.

49. Based on our key objectives, the WG makes the following recommendations:

- a) The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is currently consulting on developing O&S in the partnership context³. The consultation closes on 30 October 2008, and the O&SC should respond to it.**
- b) The O&SC should continue to be alert to emerging national good practice of scrutiny of LAAs, and contribute to it.**
- c) As a start to effective scrutiny the BFPB is asked to provide quarterly progress reports on the LAA to the O&SC and should discuss with Council officers how this might be best achieved.**
- d) O&S Panels should consider the themed partnerships that exist within their areas of coverage and invite leading officers to Panel meetings to describe the work they do and the way in which the scrutiny process may aid this.**
- e) Effective O&S can be achieved by establishing the arrangements described in this report. The BFPB should consider what issues may gain advantage to the decision-making process by being referred to the appropriate O&S Panel or the Commission for enquiry. This is a service with which the Council as a leading partner already has good experience and skill to carry out.**

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityempowerment/communitiesincontrol/>

- f) The BFPB and the Council's Executive are invited to acknowledge that the Council's O&S function has two principal purposes: to carry out O&S in relation to the Council's own contribution to the SCS and LAA, in dialogue with Councillors and Council officers; and in collaboration with those charged with ensuring accountability in the BFP partner organisations, to coordinate a programme of O&S of major issues of interest to the partnership as a whole.**
- g) In regard to f) above, the O&SC should establish arrangements to ensure that a coordinated programme of O&S coverage is designed and delivered in concert with partners.**
- h) With the support of the BFPB, the O&SC should map all the principal scrutiny and accountability arrangements in the BFP. This should include sending a short questionnaire requesting information from all BFPB Members and the Board Members of the BFP Themed Partnerships.**
- i) When the Council's O&S work programme is being developed the Chairman of the O&SC should write to the BFP Board to seek their comments.**
- j) That when draft reports are prepared by O&S Panels those matters that might be related to partnership issues should be sent first to the BFPB for comment before passing them to Executive Members for comment.**
- k) That the scrutiny of any themed partnership is undertaken with sensitivity. Scoping must be agreed by all parties involved before work begins, to avoid misunderstanding, unnecessary concern or dispute. Any success arising from scrutiny reviews should be jointly acknowledged with contributing partners; to enhance the spirit of co-operation we aim to achieve through partnership working.**
- l) That a closer working relationship is encouraged between the BFPB and the O&SC in order to develop a positive and constructive atmosphere and understanding for effective scrutiny to strengthen the LAA.**
- m) That the O&SC receives a progress report on the action taken on these recommendations in six months time.**

GLOSSARY

ABG	Area Based Grant
BFC	Bracknell Forest Council
BFP	Bracknell Forest Partnership
BFPB	Bracknell Forest Partnership Board
BFVA	Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
CADIS	Community Nuisance and Disorder Information System
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CST	Community Safety Team
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NHS	National Health Service
O&S	Overview and Scrutiny
O&SC	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
WG	Working Group

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

WORK PROGRAMME 2008 – 2009

Terms of Reference for:

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORKING GROUP
ON THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA)**

Purpose of this Working Group / anticipated value of its work:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inform the Commission about the purpose of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)2. Review the manner in which the LAA is developed3. Investigate the contribution of partner organisations4. Define the approach to Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) of the LAA and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP) |
|---|

Key Objectives:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To ascertain examples of national good practice of LAA Scrutiny2. To explore with partners how O&S could be used in a positive and meaningful way in relation to the LAA3. To establish effective arrangements for O&S of the LAA and SCS |
|--|

Scope of the work:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To review the new LAA for 2008-09 to 2010-112. To interview specific lead officers, Executive Members and primary partners to establish the existing arrangements and any necessary improvements3. To review the LAA Draft Improvement Outcomes – and comment on their usefulness to the overall consultation (already completed)4. To make relevant recommendations as appropriate5. To produce a report for consideration by the Commission |
|--|

Not included in the scope:

<p>The nature of this review is to study the existing arrangements for producing the LAA and to consider what value it gives to the work of the Council and its partners. It is not the intention of the Working Group to re-write the document or comment on the nature of the work being carried out by the Council's partners</p>
--

**Terms of Reference prepared by: Councillor RC Edger OBE
Chairman O&S Commission**

**Terms of Reference agreed by: Councillor RL McLean
Councillor MJ Beadsley**

**Working Group structure: Councillors Edger, McLean,
Beadsley**

Working Group Lead Member: Councillor RC Edger OBE

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Bettison, Leader of the
Council**

BACKGROUND:

The LAA is an emerging document and a great deal of importance is attached to it in Local Government. The O&S Commission is concerned that members understand the document and that it is given suitable scrutiny to ensure that it works in the best interests of the Borough's residents; and gives transparent value.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR THE PANEL TO ADDRESS:

- 1.
2. **TO BE AGREED**
- 3.
- 4.

INFORMATION GATHERING:

Witnesses to be invited

Name	Organisation/Position	Reason for Inviting
Claire Sharp	Senior Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Office	Briefing on the LAA and SCS
Partner Representatives	To be confirmed	To explore with partners how O&S could be used in a positive and meaningful way in relation to the LAA
Victor Nicholls	Assistant Chief Executive	To be confirmed
Timothy Wheadon	Chief Executive	To be confirmed
Councillor Bettison	Leader	To be confirmed

Site Visits

Location	Purpose of visit
	Unlikely that site visits are needed but these will be arranged as appropriate

Key Documents / Background Data / Research

1.	The existing and new LAAs
2.	The Sustainability Community Strategy
3.	The WG contribution to the LAA Draft Improvement outcomes
4.	Conduct a mapping of scrutiny/accountability arrangements in each of the BFP organisations
5.	Any other documents pertinent to the review of the Working Group

TIMESCALE

Starting: As soon as possible

Ending: Draft Report 20 Nov 08

OUTPUTS TO BE PRODUCED

1. Verbal update report to the Commission Thursday 5 Jun and 17 July 08
2. Initial Draft report for WG validation by Thursday 11 September 08

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Body	Date
O&S Commission – Draft Report	20 November 08

MONITORING / FEEDBACK ARRANGEMENTS

Body	Details	Date
O&S Commission	Verbal update	5 Jun and 17 July 08
WG	Initial draft for validation and assessment of further work if needed	11 September 08

**Local Area Agreement O&S Working Group
13 May 2008**

Present: Councillors Edger (Chairman) and McLean
Katie Dover, Victor Nicholls, Claire Sharp

Apologies: Councillor Beadsley

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

2c: Not able to progress this as not aware yet of the governance arrangements.

2e: Whilst Claire was significant in the project through her role as Project Manager for the LAA, the LSP/LAA support role was shared by a number of lead officers. There were two senior officers, Claire and Belinda Clack, and also support via a junior officer, Caroline Little. In addition, about 15 service department senior officers were leading on their own target negotiations with regards to the LAA. The Chief Executive's department role was to provide an overview and co-ordination role but with each target negotiated directly with the lead officers in the departments.

2f: The Executive Portfolio holder for the LAA was Councillor Paul Bettison. The Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader would have delegated authority to sign off any outstanding targets in the LAA following the May Executive meeting. The LAA was an Executive function; as agreed at the previous council meeting.

2g: Dealt with under the information from Victor Nicholls on the Southampton pilot project.

It was confirmed that the working group would aim to meet the target of September for their first report. It was noted that an internal audit on the LAA would be done in the autumn.

5. Report from Victor Nicholls

A new South of England officer group had been set up by the unitary authorities to help co-ordinate information sharing regarding the work ongoing to develop LAAs and manage LSPs. So far, Southampton had been the only council to be moving forward on the issue of scrutiny of LSPs:

Southampton City Council's previous administration had rejected their Community Strategy as their Members had been concerned with LSP issues. They had commissioned "Progress through Partnerships" to undertake a scrutiny pilot project through their LSP and undertake research to ensure the process ran smoothly.

The learning points from this were:

- a) When the O&S work programme was developed, the Chairman of the Commission would write to the LSP to see if there was anything they would wish to scrutinise
- b) When O&S developed draft recommendations that related to partnership working, these could be sent first to the LSP as drafts for commenting on, and then to the Executive with a final recommendation

- c) The Southampton LSP provides an annual report which is presented to their OSC for approval.

Action: Victor to provide the research report from Southampton when published.

Action: Bob Edger to contact Robin Taylor regarding the research work.

6. Report from Claire Sharp

Claire reported that the LAA would be going to the council's Executive on 20th May for approval followed by the submission to government of the final document on 30th May 2008 (with GOSE approval required in advance of this).

Claire explained the process that had been undertaken to distil the results of the stakeholder consultation into the required 35 'designated' indicators with targets. 70 stakeholder organisations had been consulted on this issue with 35 responses received. Those consulted included parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups, partnerships/commissioning groups and regional bodies. The LGPIH Act listed named partners that had to be consulted. It had been an extensive and thorough process and generally much more inclusive better than the previous time.

General consensus areas had been found, and also the areas that all stakeholders felt were less relevant to Bracknell Forest. The issues had been given a grading system to summarise stakeholder opinion – of red (little support), amber (some support) and green (general consensus of support). Work had been undertaken with the partnership, CMT, GOSE to identify which of the amber indicators should be included alongside the green ones to make up the final basket of 35 indicators.

Some of the indicators were rejected as they were not appropriate for a unitary council. For example, the "employer skills gap" survey results were collected by SEEDA only at a county level. Others were not appropriate as the minimum cohort size was not met, or the indicators were delayed nationally due to being too difficult to put in place in the first year.

Technical lead officers were consulted to refine the rest of the list, in terms of finding the most suitable indicator that would most effectively measure the outcomes that were raised as priorities.

In a small number of cases (e.g. street cleanliness), indicators had to be rejected as performance was already high and GOSE were unwilling to negotiate achievable improvement targets. The question arose as to what the value of a particular target was if it had to be discounted as not achievable. In these cases, the outcome was picked up using a broader indicator (such as overall satisfaction with the area). This enabled the document to talk about the overall expectations of an area and gave balance to the overall document.

The question arose as to how far the framework matched the concerns of the Borough's residents. Councillor Edger noted that in a previous survey of the Borough, residents were most concerned about i) the environment, ii) speeding and parking and iii) anti-social behaviour. These top priorities might not be reflected as such in the LAA, even though it sought to improve the quality of life.

Claire reported that the evidence base had taken account of public consultation results (including those from the neighbourhood action group survey) and issues such as litter and speeding would be picked up through the overall satisfaction with

the area indicator – the improvement plan for which is based on neighbourhood's physical environment. Anti-social behaviour had its own indicator within the final basket of 35. It was noted that the national indicator framework was however imposed on the council and therefore it did have to adapt to a certain extent to the targets imposed.

GOSE brought a national steer to the table and had its own recommendation for the basket of 35. There was overlap on at least 25 with those of high priority in Bracknell Forest. Some national steers such as the climate change target which has already been picked up by Bracknell Forest's evidence based approach. The detailed evidence based approach gave Bracknell Forest a very strong negotiating position for favouring local priorities over national ones.

The LAA process was about delivering improvement outcomes within three years and about being measurable under the national indicator framework. The final balance of the document reflects stakeholders' priorities, even though it is set within the confines of the national indicator set.

Claire was asked to talk about the benefits of the LAA. Claire reported that the LAA document was an action document, with achievable but stretching targets that would be measured. Partners were being asked to sign up to 3 year targets whereas previously this had been an annual process. Measurement would be done quarterly. Some of targets involved data available quarterly and others were based on "opinion of service", only collected every two years by survey. Here Officers were asked to come up with a "proxy trend" e.g. the anti-social behaviour reports to the CADIS system to measure a trend in between the national survey.

The question of inclusion of the health agenda arose. Health targets included stopping smoking and obesity targets. On this issue the PCT was fairly open and information was obtained via the Public Health Working Group. 6 PCT led targets were included.

Overall delivery of the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy would be mapped via an action framework. This would show where targets for each priority sat – LAA, Service Plans, Local Transport Plan etc.

The reward scheme attached to the new LAA was not announced yet, and the funds yet to be defined; however they would replace the LPSA2 money of around £2.2million. The new funding was likely to be under 1 million as there was no pump-priming money up front as before.

A new area-based grant replaced a number of different existing funding streams from Government that were previously ring-fenced to discreet areas. Now the funding would all go into one basket for the council to spend as it saw fit. As the year 1 funding was to be arriving quickly, it was decided to keep the spending allocation as it was previously, being mindful of the ability to review this later on if required.

BFBC undertook much of the servicing of the Partnership Board. The partners helped with contributions to discreet projects. The current LPSA2 reward split has been agreed in advance and includes agreement for the council to top slice 10% of the funding in order to pay for the Partnership work. The question arose as to how other councils obtained contributions from partner agencies.

The question arose as to how targets matched those with neighbouring authorities. In future years Multi-Area Agreements would be available that would enable targets to be set across regions.

7. Summary of Action Points

- a) *Victor to provide the Southampton report. The group might want to get in touch with Southampton after reading the report.*
- b) *Bob Edger to write to Chairman of the LSP to see which areas they suggest we look at and invite him to come to speak to the group.*
- c) *Scrutiny of the LAA could be done by O&S looking at quarterly reports, and an annual report if produced by the Partnership*
- d) *LAA to go on OSC agenda for 5-6-08 with the document marked to follow as would miss publication date. It would be useful for the OSC to familiarise themselves with the document and decide how to pursue– KD to inform Richard Beaumont –*
- e) *1 or 2 Members of the working group to attend the LSP to find out what goes on*
- f) *Further information required on the LAA audit – the group would like a copy of the scoping document.*

The first performance report would be published in October.

8. Date of Next Meeting

To be set shortly, email to be circulated by Katie Dover as to date options.

**Working Group on Local Area Agreement
19 June 2008**

Present: Councillors Edger (Chairman), and Beadsley
Timothy Wheadon and Katie Dover

Councillor Edger opened the meeting by noting that he had a list of questions to ask the Chief Executive about the Local Area Agreement and its development. He quoted Jessica Crowe, Chief Executive of the Centre for Public Scrutiny at their recent annual conference, where she had mentioned that the primary concerns were accountability and governance in the scrutiny of partnerships.

Questions were as follows:

1. Was the Partnership Board working efficiently?

Tim Wheadon reported that it was working efficiently with all major partner organisations represented at the right level. Now with a two tier structure it worked well. There was a Chair and lead Officer from each of the ten themed partnerships on the full Bracknell Forest Partnerships and in addition an Executive Board. This included the Chief Executive, the Police Area Commander, the Local Area Director of the PCT, a Fire Authority representative, the Chief Executive of BFVA; Martin Gilman and a GOSE representative. The Executive Board meant that the bodies most involved and interested in the work, were represented at the forum where overall co-ordination took place.

2. Clarify how this relates to the rest of the Partnership?

The real driver for action was the themed partnerships; where the real work was done e.g. Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership – now a Trust. The Board can intervene if there is a problem. The Executive Board took decisions on cross cutting issues such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.

3. Is there a set agreed agenda of work?

The Partnership Board has a clear agenda which the board decides on. The Executive Board meets monthly and works on such issues as the Local Area Agreement, Sustainable Communities Strategy and gathers information on other issues upon which it needs gain insight. With regards to the LAA, each body reports back on performance against indicators to the Board. Hence if targets are not reached then something can be done about it. If, however a body such as the PCT were not reaching their targets it would be more complicated to address.

Other statutory agencies such as the Police and Fire Authority have gained some reward grants from the partnership process but it was stipulated by the Board at the commencement that these could only be spent in Bracknell Forest.

The area based grant for 2008/09 is approximately £4.5m, rising to £6.5m in 2009/10 with the inclusion of Supporting People Grant. The Council's total expenditure for 2008/09 amounts to almost £70m and as such these grants make up a small proportion of our overall expenditure.

There was a broad acceptance within the partnership that current services should be maintained at the moment. They could talk about what it would be ideal to do, but it was difficult to move funds from single organisations into joint ventures.

4. If money is spent in a way not appropriate, can the Board point out that no improvement has been made?

This was not the current style of operation which currently focussed on core business. They were focussing on trends of main importance e.g. burglaries. Work was successful when each part of the partnership understood which parts of work overlap between organisations they were concentrating on. It was considered that Local Government should be better as a result of this partnership working.

5. Where are outcomes improved?

Tim outlined the example of the Crime and Disorder partnership, where the membership has been changed eighteen months ago and the team had relocated over to the Chief Executive's Office. All team players were brought together and focus was placed on the top 20 issues such as car crime at the "Meadows" and the Sports Centre car parks. Through team working swift and appropriate action had been taken in each case to tackle the crime levels which had now dropped significantly. A similar reduction in crime levels had been achieved at a nightclub in the town through partnership working.

6. How would partnership of scrutiny work to serve the needs of the area as a whole?

The focus would be on the partnership working and should be specifically targeted on the outcomes that partnership work was delivering through the local area agreement and not on partnership in general terms. This could be done by monitoring the progress to targets on a six monthly basis, and speaking to the lead officer in each case at a scrutiny panel. It was felt that this approach, although new to some of the partners would give the scrutiny of partnership a healthy "edge".

Councillor Edger referred to the Southampton study from the South East Employers and noted the model they proposed for scrutiny. It was noted that too intense a scrutiny of partners might result in the relationship between them becoming more difficult and that it would be important to contain the scrutiny to items within the local area agreement and also to maintain a positive spirit of investigation in an appropriate manner for the organisation concerned.

The group noted that some of those representing partner agencies might be volunteers and not therefore used to the "overview and scrutiny" environment. A concern would be how the message of scrutiny would be received by them.

There might at times be issues of public concern which were not part of the overlapping work areas between some organisations. These cases, although not part of the partnership agenda, the requirement to scrutinize them would come under the community leadership agenda. Careful scrutiny approaches would be required in these cases in an inquisitive rather than adversarial way. These routes into scrutiny would have to be used in a very careful way. Scrutiny should therefore have the same ethos as partnership itself i.e. investigation to benefit the outcome.

7. What is the council getting out of this?

The working more closely with agencies had huge benefits including a drop in crime rates in the Borough. Partnership working fostered better and fuller working together. In the case of the Right Care, Right Place consultation, the Chief Executive considered that partnership working had enhanced the provision of health facilities in the town centre.

It was also considered that all partners benefited. Through the Safer Communities Fund, the police had been involved in targeting funds to where required – hence having more impact on crime rates. The Police were noted to have a BCU Fund and they consulted the Partnership on the use of that fund.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Partnership was regularly rotated but the council's own Chief Executive remained the permanent Chairman of the Executive Board.

8. Would Overview and Scrutiny cause any problems which would impact on the partnerships?

Only if scrutiny went down the route of non priority areas and if not looking at core business. In that case, partnerships might start to disengage. Scrutiny should stick to the shared agenda on the local area agreement and the council should still maintain the community leadership role.

Follow up Actions

Richard Beaumont to arrange for Martin Gilman to speak to the group in the next couple of weeks.

**WORKING GROUP ON LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT
Thursday 10 July 2008**

Present: Councillors Beadsley and McLean
Martin Gilman, Director, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
Katie Dover

Councillor Beadsley welcomed Martin Gilman to the meeting, thanking him for the opportunity to seek his views on the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board and the Local Area Agreement.

Councillor Beadsley explained that this Overview and Scrutiny working group had been triggered by the development of the Local Area Agreement, and that the council was interested to develop views on how the partnership was working but also how it would be able to develop scrutiny of partners and the LAA issues.

Martin stated that he felt the Partnership was working really well. There was a common agenda amongst partners and a common willingness to help the Borough's population. Good relationships had been forged and all Board Members now had reached an understanding of each other. Through their work prioritising their 35 targets, and through negotiations with GOSE, the relationship had been strengthened but of course this was dependent to a certain extent upon those personalities currently in post remaining.

The Partnership had been expanded to include more Members such as the parish council representatives. It was noted that the approach to the partnership was inevitably different from the private and voluntary sectors. It was also clear that the voluntary sector was made up of many different bodies with different views.

In response to a question regarding whether the Board was effective in taking up work on particular issues, Martin stated that the Board was well supported by Claire Sharp and her team and that it was an action orientated Partnership. The BFVA aimed to try to map the links and crossover issues between the different Members on the various parts of the partnership by pictorial means in order to enable information sharing between them.

Communication was thought to be good between the Board and agencies but Martin questioned how much the public knew about the work of the Board. Events had been arranged to promote the Board but these only reached a small percentage of people.

Martin was asked whether the voluntary sector had "bought into" the partnership concept. He stated that the voluntary sector had the highest response rate to the priority targets. People in the voluntary sector might be freer to state their own opinions than in the private sector. Ten voluntary sector representatives were elected onto various fora within the partnership. Their issues of concern often differed from the private sector. However the partnership was interested in the reasons that private companies were attracted or otherwise to site themselves in Bracknell Forest. It looked at issues relevant to private companies such as to how to overcome the skills shortage within the Borough for example. The Lifelong Learning Partnership was looking at the issue of retraining people to work in the retail market.

Martin Gilman was in contact with 450 voluntary groups and the BFVA newsletter reached in the region of 13,000 people – all volunteers who work within the Borough. Although not under his “command” Martin represented these people.

Every Partnership Board had the issue of how to reach people with their messages. He thought that publicising the outcomes of the Board was very important. It was noted that the voluntary sector could reach the “hard to reach” groups through the 13,000 activists who made a huge difference to the community. However the voluntary sector was financially poor and Martin considered that a financial impetus was required to encourage the work. Some volunteers were now also contributing financially as well as through their expertise and time. The volunteers were spread across the borough, therefore a coordinating point needed to be reasonably central and accessible.

Further negotiation with GOSE was still required with regards to the targets for the voluntary sector and there were some issues with the place survey undertaken. Martin felt that the survey was worthy of challenge, with local figures to back this up. Martin felt that it would be appropriate to maintain the work of the voluntary sector at this time, rather than aim at an increase due to the current financial situation. He reported that companies within the borough took on the responsibility of helping out, but that help was often on an ad hoc basis and that there was a gap in the area of regular volunteering. Most of the current regular volunteers were over sixty years old. In the South East many working people were cash rich but time poor, so volunteers tended to be retirees.

Martin also noted that many of the youth in the South East went to university, and if they volunteered before university, the voluntary sector trained them up but then they were unlikely to return afterwards which meant that the investment in them was lost. If they did return they would then be busy developing a career and trying to move up the housing ladder.

Core funding came from the council to the voluntary sector, to fund key personnel at the centre. Some organisations gained through discretionary funding e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau. Financial planning needed to be on a 3 to 5 year plan so that organisations could be prepared for the future. Martin noted that most of the staff were doing work for the Primary Care Trust and yet were supported by the council. This issue was not yet part of the partnership discussions.

All the work towards targets could be done better in partnership as no one agency has all the answers and it was better to share expertise, skills and resources. The Fire Service’s information system would be of use to the Board by helping to pull essential data together. Recommendations could be worked out at board level but then it would be the individual agencies to act to bring tangible benefits for the residents. There was a need to publicise the good news stories from the Partnership such as the fall in the rate of reported crime.

In relation to a question about the best use of scrutiny in this area, Martin suggested that the quarterly monitoring reports to the Chief Executive’s office could be of benefit. The reports used the traffic light system for objectives and targets. These reports could be put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to show progress and answer relevant questions.

The professional standard of the voluntary sector was rising all the time. It was their intention to apply for the ISO900 qualification – but again BFVA would need to know it had funding over the next few years in order to do so.

The Board met at least six weekly, but currently on a monthly basis. GOSE and SEEDA sit on the Board which helped to flag up any cross-boundary issues.

With regards to the targets, it was noted that 35 bring rewards but all 197 were measured. It was noted that in the star rating system for council's that the Audit Commission picks voluntary sector representatives to speak to.

Councillor Beadsley noted that if people were offering a service quasi-contractually to the council then it was good to keep an eye on progress, but with the voluntary sector the relationship was different. It was important not to antagonise those doing such good work.

Martin noted the problem of trying to measure the contribution made by the voluntary sector. If targets were signposted as green, then the statutory organisation should make positive announcements to say so. Also lessons could be learnt from the success stories.

In response to a question regarding how the overlap of different targets worked with the different statutory agencies, it was noted that the area has its own Police Commander which helped. The Fire Service was common across the six unitary authorities, health again had a different context to work in. Communication was paramount to get the good messages across and there was a need to remember that all were working together for a better Bracknell Forest.

The group thanked Martin Gilman for attending the meeting.

Bracknell Forest Partnership Board, 17 July 2008

Easthampstead Baptist Church, South Hill Road, Bracknell

Present:

Helen Barnett, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership
Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Thames Valley Police
Steve Buck, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Martin Gilman, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
Mary Purnell, Berkshire East Primary Care Trust
Timothy Wheadon, Bracknell Forest Council
Clare Wormald, Government Office for the South East

In attendance:

Councillor Mike Beadsley, Bracknell Forest Council
Barry Dellar, ACTVAR
Councillor Bob Edger, Bracknell Forest Council
Inspector Mark Harling, Thames Valley Police
Victor Nicholls, Bracknell Forest Council
Claire Sharp, Bracknell Forest Council
Katharine Simpson, Bracknell Forest Council

The Working Group members attended the whole of the meeting, and the extract from the draft minutes of the meeting relating to the scrutiny review is reproduced below.

Update from Partnership Scrutiny Working Group

The Board received a report outlining the review of the LAA being carried out by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission. It was noted that the review would:

- Explore how overview and scrutiny could be used in a positive and meaningful way in relation to the LAA
- Establish effective arrangements for overview and scrutiny of both the LAA and the SCS and
- Identify examples of national good practice of LAA scrutiny

The Commission would be meeting with members of the Board to establish how the existing LAA working arrangements had been organised and if there are any improvements that might be made to the process.

The Local area Commander for Thames valley Police offered that the Police could be part of the scrutiny review on a voluntary basis, despite police services officially being excluded from the new scrutiny powers.

Once the review had been completed the draft report would be circulated to the Board for comment.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT WORKING GROUP
Notes of Meeting with Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Thames Valley Police
22 July 2008**

Present: Councillor Mike Beadsley, Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Councillor Bob Edger

1. Is the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP) Board Working Effectively?

Yes. Certainly from a police context we get a lot from it. The key to the success of the Board and its theme partnerships are strong leadership and having the right members on board who are able to make decisions and commit funding where required.

All members of the Board have the same strategic vision for Bracknell Forest to be a pleasant, safe place to live and work.

Tim Wheadon thought that the significant reduction in crime and disorder wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for the partnership

This is to an extent true. For the police the key players at the council are Ian Boswell and the Community Safety Team. For example there is a smaller working group that sits under the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) that involves representatives from a range of areas including housing and car parks and they look at the top ten crime hotspots across the Borough and devise solutions to address these problems. The Police have someone dedicated to working on anti-social behaviour and they work closely with the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator (who is also part funded by the Police)

Partnership money has also been used to fund enhancements to the CADIS data system which means that it is more tailored to the Borough than in other areas for example Windsor and Maidenhead and so it can be used to support other work areas for example NAGS and by linking it to crime mapping data it can help direct operational patrols.

2. Do partners share the same agendas?

Sometimes individual organisation's agendas are at odds particularly with regard to Government target setting. For example a lot of youth justice matters are better dealt with through early intervention and the Youth Offending Team but Government targets for the police focus on detection and arrest rates and these are at odds with this approach.

As for the Partnership as a whole all members are signed up to the indicators in the Local Area Agreement (LAA)

3. Do all partners in the wider partnership 'buy in' to the concept?

Buy in varies.

The wider partner meetings tend to be a lot of information sharing session but they work better when that information sharing is tied to break out problem solving sessions.

How does this then feed back into the Board?

The Board is where the business gets done. The wider partnership could do with going through the LAA and look at what they can do as individual organisations to help meet the targets. This could then go back to the Board for further work.

4. Outcomes for residents?

A good example of how the partnership has influenced individual partner organisations work occurred at this morning's local policing performance meeting where we looked at both crime across the area and the LAA targets and used these to give ourselves better leverage for agreeing more realistic force targets i.e. targets that are bespoke to the area and are in line with the LAA targets rather than blanket targets across the area.

In the LAA GOSE will be measuring only overall serious acquisitive crime rates and In partnership with Ian Boswell, Safer Communities Manager, this has been broken down into its component crimes and we have looked at which ones impact most on residents and then used this information to focus police resources where they can make a difference i.e. through the agreement of stretching reduction targets around burglary and theft of cars and then focusing resources on these areas.

5. What is governance and internal scrutiny like?

For the statutory organisations its okay as we are held to account through a range of bodies e.g. the Local Area Policing Board, the Police Authority, HMIC and the Chief Constable. But ten years hence a significant number of services will be delivered through voluntary groups and we have no control over their governance. Similarly BRP is a private business and again we have no control over them.

6. The CAA will encompass partnerships in 2009. How well will the BFP cope with the inspection?

If a number of inspections can be combined into a single inspection then it can only be a good thing.

Robust inspection is right but shouldn't it be based on performance indicators and how organisations are delivering against those performance indicators and then develop bespoke inspections for partnerships rather than blanket intrusive inspections.

7. Attitudes towards overview and scrutiny

Some would be less willing to engage with overview and scrutiny for example the PCT were unwilling but a lot of work has been done to address this and they are now fully engaged with the partnership.

Other groups that are less willing include the Probation Service as they don't have the capacity to get involved in partnership work and other joint tactical meetings.

8. What is the Police getting out of the Partnership? Is it good value?

Yes we do get good value.

The challenge is that in real terms budgets are shrinking. We have £90,000 for partnership policing which we spend as we see fit and in consultation with Tim Wheadon. But we are faced with a rapidly changing environment for example the development at Jennets Park and the town centre regeneration and resources (staff and budgets) that aren't growing. Consequently we need to be smarter about how we spend that money and we may need to spend large sums of money early on.

For example on the procurement of CCTV. If this isn't done early enough then we run the risk of two different systems developing which will need further money spent on them to ensure they co-ordinate properly. The introduction of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system will cost money and although TVP should supply some of the funding the other partners will benefit from it and should also contribute e.g. Housing stock transfer money could be used for this in order to improve safety for residents.

9. Could you do without the Partnership?

It would put the clock back ten years if we did and working in a silo would be impossible.

Being on first name terms with key members of other organisations is good because it enables things to be done on an informal basis.

The characters involved are important and crucial to the success of the BFP. Having confidence in and respect of partners is also important.

The movement of key characters can impact on a partnership. This movement happens a lot in the police and the key is how continuity is provided. When I took over from Rob Povey I shadowed him and then moved into the post as an interim position before the job was confirmed and I hope to be able to do this with my successor.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT WORKING GROUP
Notes of Meeting with Councillor Paul Bettison
28 August 2008**

[Notes to be inserted following the meeting]

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION 11 SEPTEMBER 2008

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT (Assistant Chief Executive)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the fourth quarterly progress report on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S).

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That this report be noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Structure of Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.1 The revised structure of O&S, as approved by Council at its meeting on 23 April, has been implemented, with all the restructured Panels having met for the first time, with Chairmen elected and Vice Chairmen appointed.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 3.2 The indicative work programme for 2008/09, contained in the 2007/08 Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny, has been refined by the O&S Panels in consultation with Directors and was due to be approved by the O&S Commission at its meeting on 17 July. The Corporate Management Team and the Executive will subsequently be formally consulted on the work programme.

Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

- 3.3 The attached table sets out the current status of the 17 O&S Working Groups. This continues to represent a heavy and ambitious programme, demanding on member and officer time. The involvement of departmental link officers is continuing to be very useful. The shaded rows indicating completed reviews will be removed once the 2008/09 work programme has been finalised.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- 3.4 The O&S Commission continues to meet on a two-monthly cycle, with its last meeting at Sandhurst Town Council. At the Commission's July meeting, the main items will include: receiving the Executive's response to the Road Traffic Casualties O&S report, the Quarter 4 Corporate Performance Overview Report, the Annual Governance Statement, external representatives on Panels, the O&S work programme for 2008/09 and an update on Procurement issues. The Commission's agenda continues to be substantial.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

- 3.5 The Panel has continued to meet on a three-monthly cycle. At its June meeting, the Panel received an update on the Council's Housing function, agreed the recommendations of a Working Group, and considered the quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Reports, also the Panel's work programme. The main work of the Panel is being progressed through the working groups (see attached), which are progressing well. The Panel's next meeting is on 22 September.

Health O&S Panel

- 3.6 The Panel has continued to meet on a three-monthly cycle. At its June meeting, the Panel considered the appointment of Co-Optees and the Panel's work programme. The Panel also received presentations on reducing hospital-acquired infections and the outcome of the 'Right Care, Right Place' consultations. Working Groups are making progress, as attached. Its next meeting is on 4 September, when the main item will be an update on the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing strategy.

Social Care and Learning O&S Panel

- 3.7 The Panel has continued to meet on a three-monthly cycle. At its July meeting, the Panel reviewed the quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Reports and the Joint Area Review Action statement, and considered the appointment of Co-Optees and the Panel's work programme. The main work of the Panel is being progressed through the working groups (see attached), which are progressing well. Its next meeting is on 10 September.

Joint East Berkshire Health O&S Committee

- 3.8 Officers have completed the transfer of the officer support for this Committee to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, who will also be chairing this Committee from the commencement of the 2008/09 municipal year. The Committee continues to meet broadly on a three-monthly cycle, rotating between the three Councils' venues, with the next meeting on 16 July in Maidenhead. At that meeting, the Committee will deal with the Chairman's election and Vice Chairman's appointment, receive a presentation on the outcome of the 'Right Care, Right Place' consultations, and consider its work programme. The Committee continues to be represented on the Berkshire East Primary Care Trust's Strategy Implementation Group.

Other issues

- 3.9 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) published on 9 July a White Paper¹ entitled 'Communities in control: real people, real power'. This covers a range of proposals, some centred on raising the visibility of the O&S function. CLG has said that it will do this by encouraging councils to consider new approaches to scrutiny, including:
- encouraging more creative involvement of the public, for example through holding deliberative events along the lines of 'America Speaks' (large scale citizen engagement forums involving up to 5,000 people);

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

- moving committee meetings and hearings out of the town hall and into the community, and considering webcasting;
- greater public involvement in suggesting and selecting topics for review;
- making information more readily available and accessible on websites and at council offices;
- further enhancing the powers of O&S committees in local authorities to require information from partners on a broader range of issues;
- if necessary providing councils in areas with district and county councils with a power to combine resources in 'area' scrutiny committees;
- requiring some dedicated scrutiny resource in county and unitary councils; and
- increasing the visibility of local public officers, including the right to petition to hold them to account, at public hearings, possibly as part of the strengthened O&S procedures.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the legislative changes will be progressed through the planned Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill, which CLG say will be introduced during the 2008/09 Parliamentary session. Consultation, both formal and informal, is expected on a number of proposals. Developments on this are being monitored, meanwhile it can be noted that Bracknell Forest Council's O&S arrangements already cover many of the proposals in the White Paper.

- 3.10 An article was published in 'Town and Country' to recruit another Parent Governor Representative onto the Social Care and Learning O&S Panel / O&S Commission.
- 3.11 External networking on O&S in the last quarter has included O&S Member and officer attendance at the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference in June.
- 3.12 In July, presentations on the work of O&S were delivered to Members and officers of Wokingham Borough Council and Slough Borough Council, at the request of those Councils.
- 3.13 Quarterly review meetings between O&S Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Executive Members and Directors are taking place regularly for the Commission and the Panels. Agenda-setting meetings continue to be held, usually in combination with the review meetings.

Contact for further information

Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive
Victor.Nicholls@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk
 Tel: 01344 355604

Richard Beaumont, Head of Performance and Scrutiny
Richard.Beaumont@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk
 Tel: 01344 352283

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS – 2008/09

Position at 10 July 2008

(Shaded rows indicates completed reviews)

Overview and Scrutiny Commission								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Medium Term Objectives	Thompson (Lead), Mrs. Birch & Browne	Victor Nicholls	Richard Beaumont	√	√	√	√	Completed – final report forwarded to Leader and Chief Executive, and response received.
Healthcare Funding	Edger (Lead), Leake, Beadsley, Browne	Lise Llewellyn Glyn Jones	Katie Dover/RB	√	√	√	√	Completed - Executive and PCT response considered by O&SC in Nov 07. Referred on to Health Panel.
Scrutiny of Local Area Agreement	Edger (Lead), Beadsley & McLean	Victor Nicholls/Claire Sharp	Katie Dover	√	√			4 th meeting arranged for 10 July 2008

94

Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Strategic Review of Waste	Brunel-Walker (Lead), Mrs. Angell, Beadsley, Mrs. Ryder, Wade (Crowthorne),	Steve Loudoun / Janet Dowlman	Andrea Carr	√				Visit to Smallmead Material Recycling Facility took place on 8 July and a visit to Planners Farm composting centre and further meetings

	Allen (S'hurst & Ms Healy (Warfield)							to interview reps of the food industry & Waste Review Action Programme are proposed.
Street Cleaning / Street Scene	Finnie (Lead), Finch, Mrs. McCracken, Leake (Binfield), Mrs. Thompson (Crowthorne) & Mrs. Cupper (S'hurst).	Steve Loudoun	Andrea Carr	√				6 th meeting to consider responses to the Waste Action Plan and consolidate findings to date to took place on 10 July.
Community Arts Development Plan	Mrs. Fleming, McLean & Finnie	Helen Tranter	Andrea Carr	N/A				Working Group gave input at a meeting on 26.3.08. The draft strategy is expected later in 2008.
Road Accidents	Finch (Lead) Virgo Mrs. McCracken & McLean	Roger Cook	Richard Beaumont	√	√	√		Completed - Final meeting held on 17.4.08 and report issued to Executive Member on 13 May, awaiting Executive response
Supporting People	Mrs. Shillcock (Lead) & Browne	Simon Hendeay	Andrea Carr	√	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	Ongoing monitoring. Working Group has been invited to attend Supporting People Commissioning Board.
Housing Strategy	Mrs. Fleming, Finnie and Finch	Clare Dorning	Richard Beaumont					First meeting arranged for 18 July

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Patient Focus	Mrs. Mattick, Leake (Lead), Virgo Mrs. Angell	Glyn Jones	Katie Dover	Drafted awaiting confirm by group				Meetings have been held, and met PCT Director of Commissioning. Visit arranged to out of hours service on 15 th July. Meeting with CEX of out of hours service 5 th August
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Leake (Lead), Thompson, Virgo	Victor Nicholls	Richard Beaumont	√	√	√	√	Completed. Draft report adopted by O&SC on 22 November and Health Panel on 6 December.
Extended Services & Children's Centres (Joint with SC&L OSP)	Leake (Lead), Mrs. Birch, Mrs. Angell, Mrs. McCracken, Burrows, Beadsley	Graham Symonds / Karen Frost	Katie Dover	√				Met 8 times since September 07 Met a variety of key people. Visited Children's Centres & Area Steering Groups, Birch Hill and Sandy Lane primary schools in April. Also visited Portsmouth L.A. A further meeting is proposed to sum up and plan report writing.

Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Hospital Discharge Procedures	Baily, Coad (Slough BC), Napier (RB W&M)	N/A	Andrew Scott (RB W&M) [Katie Dover to liaise]					Met on 17.4.08. Update given at JEB in June. Work programme for this Committee is on agenda for 16 July meeting.
Annual Health Check	All committee members allowed to contribute	N/A	Katie Dover/RB	N/A	√	√	N/A	Completed – O&S comments sent formally on 28.3.08

Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Carers	Mrs. Shillcock (Lead), Simonds & Turrell	Glyn Jones	Andrea Carr	√	√			Report has been drafted and final meetings are taking place. A visit to an Age Concern day facility is arranged for 14 July.
Care Homes	Browne (Lead), Baily & Blatchford	Glyn Jones	Andrea Carr	√				Visits to care homes / services have been held. 1 st meeting took place on 14 April to define the scope of the review. This

								Working Group has been put into abeyance for the time being.
Social Care Modernisation Agenda	Leake (Lead), Mrs. Shillcock & Virgo	Glyn Jones	Andrea Carr	√				7 th and 8 th meetings with professional carers and Head of Learning Disabilities at Oldham being arranged.
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Mrs. McCracken (Lead), Burrows, Ms Whitbread & Mr. Sharland	Tony Eccleston	Andrea Carr	√				Working Group has met on 4 occasions and visited The Brakenhale School, Garth Hill College and 3 primary schools. A further meeting with the EAL & Diversity Team to consolidate information received and agree the way forward is proposed.
Extended Schools & Children's Centres (Jointly with HOSP)	See Health O&S Panel							

Agenda Item 10

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME: Chief Executive's/Corporate Services

REFERENCE	I012396
------------------	---------

TITLE: Provision of Agency Staff

PURPOSE OF DECISION: Proposed adoption of the new Hampshire County Council contract with Manpower for use by BFBC.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Director of Corporate Services

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: The decision paper has been produced in consultation with the Borough Treasurer, Legal Department and the Strategic Procurement Group

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Several

DATE OF DECISION: Before 26 Sep 2008

REFERENCE	I012418
------------------	---------

TITLE: Office of Government Commerce Framework Extension for the Supply of Stationery

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree the proposed two-year extension.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Distributed to Strategic Procurement Group and Legal Representative

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Not applicable.

DATE OF DECISION: 26 Sep 2008

REFERENCE	I011536
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief - New Applications

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider applications for discretionary rate relief

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Public Protection

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Before 30 Sep 2008

REFERENCE	I012469
------------------	---------

TITLE: Small Land Sales Policy - 39 Elizabeth Close, Bracknell

PURPOSE OF DECISION: Executive Member approval

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Waiving clawback if sale proceeds to completion

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Finance, Resources and Assets

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Borough Treasurer & Borough Solicitor

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Letter

DATE OF DECISION: Before 3 Oct 2008

REFERENCE	I010008
------------------	---------

TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Strategy - Approval for Consultation

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To confirm a Strategy for the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Town Centre Stakeholders

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: External consultation

DATE OF DECISION: 21 Oct 2008

REFERENCE	I010545
------------------	---------

TITLE: Capital Strategy

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree the Council's Capital Strategy for 2009/10 onwards

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None at this time

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Capital Group

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: The Council's internal capital group

DATE OF DECISION: 21 Oct 2008

REFERENCE	I010465
------------------	---------

TITLE: Calculation of Council Tax Base - 2009/10 Local Council Tax discounts - 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree calculation of council tax base for 2009/10 and the level of local council tax discount offered for 2009/10

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Director of Corporate Services

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Not applicable.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Before 26 Nov 2008

REFERENCE	I010455
------------------	---------

TITLE: Draft Capital Programme 2009/10 - 2011/12

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree draft budget proposals for consultation

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Council Taxpayers and business ratepayers

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: To be determined

DATE OF DECISION: 16 Dec 2008

REFERENCE	I010457
------------------	---------

TITLE: Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree draft budget proposals for consultation

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Council taxpayers and business rate payers

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: To be determined

DATE OF DECISION: 16 Dec 2008

REFERENCE	I011538
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief - New Application

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider an application for discretionary rate relief

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Public Protection

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Before 31 Dec 2008

REFERENCE	I010459
------------------	---------

TITLE: General Fund Revenue Budget 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the General Fund Revenue Budget 2009/10 for submission to Council

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Council taxpayers and business ratepayers

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Widespread consultation with stakeholders via meetings and the Council's website

DATE OF DECISION: 10 Feb 2009

REFERENCE	I010461
------------------	---------

TITLE: Capital Programme 2009/10 - 2011/12

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the capital programme 2009/10 - 2011/12 for submission to Council

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Council taxpayers and business ratepayers

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Widespread consultation with stakeholders via meetings and the Council's website

DATE OF DECISION: 10 Feb 2009

REFERENCE	I010463
------------------	---------

TITLE: Financial Reporting Process 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To agree the detailed Budget Book which forms the basis of the Council's scheme of virement

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: The Leader

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Before 10 Mar 2009

REFERENCE	I011541
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider an application for discretionary rate relief.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Public Protection

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: Before 31 Mar 2009

REFERENCE	FIELD_ISSUE_ID
------------------	----------------

TITLE: FIELD_TITLE

PURPOSE OF DECISION: FIELD_SUMMARY

FINANCIAL IMPACT: FIELD_BACKGROUND2

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: FIELD_DMTITLE

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: FIELD_CONSULTEES

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: FIELD_CONSULTATION

DATE OF DECISION: FIELD_DUE_DATE