

NOTICE OF MEETING

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Thursday 27 May 2010, 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, Finnie, Harrison, Leake, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Virgo, Ms Whitbread and Worrall

Church Representative Members (Voting in respect of Education matters only)
Mr G S Anderson and One Vacancy

Parent Governor Representative Members (Voting in respect of education matters only)
Dr P Josephs-Franks and One Vacancy

Teacher Representative Members (Non-voting)
Miss V Richardson and One Vacancy

Social Care Representative
One vacancy

cc Substitute Members of the Commission
Councillors Baily, Mrs Beadsley, Beadsley, Dudley, Phillips, Mrs Pile and Wade

Executive Members Invited:
Councillors Mrs Ballin and McCracken

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.

If you require further information, please contact: Sue Hills
Telephone: (01344) 352060
Email: sue.hills@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Published: 18 May 2010



**Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Thursday 27 May 2010, 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 meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 25 March and 12 May 2010 .

1 - 10

3. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests and the nature of that interest, including the existence and nature of the party whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

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.

Crime and Disorder Committee

5. Local Policing

Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive a presentation by Steve Rowell, Assistant Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police, on Local Policing.

11 - 12

6. Thames Valley Police Authority

Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, to receive a presentation by Khan Juna, Chairman, on the role and activities of the Thames Valley Police Authority.

13 - 16

Holding the Executive to Account

7. Bracknell Forest Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership

To discuss with the Chairman and Lead Officer of the Bracknell Forest Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership its governance, performance management, financial management, and related issues, with reference to the questionnaire sent out in advance of the meeting. 17 - 30

8. Executive Forward Plan

Forthcoming items on the Executive Forward Plan of a corporate nature are attached for consideration. 31 - 38

Overview and Policy Development

9. Public Engagement with Overview and Scrutiny

To note the letter to the Council's Leader and Chief Executive concerning measures to improve public engagement with Overview and Scrutiny. 39 - 48

10. Updates from Panel Chairmen

To receive verbal updates from Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen and the Chairman of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission will be on 15 July 2010

This page is intentionally left blank



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
25 MARCH 2010
7.30 - 9.15 PM**

Present:

Councillors Edger (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Finnie, Leake, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Virgo, Ms Whitbread and Worrall

Parent Governor Representative:

Dr P Josephs-Franks

Executive Members:

Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Also Present:

Councillor Baily
Dr Lise Llewellyn, Chief Executive, NHS Berkshire East
Mary Purnell, NHS Berkshire East

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Harrison
Mr G S Anderson
Miss V Richardson

In Attendance:

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive
Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Sue Hills, Democratic Services

64. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as spouse of the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest as spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health & Housing.

65. Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item 5 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under category 3 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).

66. **Review of the Bracknell Healthspace**

The Commission considered the responses of NHS Berkshire East and the Council's Executive to the report of the Review of the Bracknell Healthspace undertaken by a working group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Dr Lise Llewellyn and Mary Purnell, NHS Berkshire East, attended the meeting to speak to NHS Berkshire East's written response and to answer any questions put by Commission members. Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing, also attended the meeting for this item.

Matters which arose during questions included:-

- Issues around communication were explored and Mary Purnell outlined the broad programme of communications on health issues, which included the Bracknell Healthspace.
- Financial aspects of the development.
- The prospective planning application.
- Identifying partners and commissioning services. Services had been identified and there would be a tender process to determine who would provide the best services.
- Aspects of project management.
- Concept of urgent care. Workshops had been held on this issue where helpful discussions had been held with stakeholders.
- The provision of services at Brants Bridge by Royal Berkshire Hospital.

The Commission was glad to hear Dr Llewellyn state that it was accepted that care needed to be brought closer to the community. She also explained that services would begin to change in the borough's existing health centres, prior to the opening of the Healthspace.

The Chairman invited Lise Llewellyn and Mary Purnell to attend the meeting of the Commission on 15 July 2010 to give a presentation on the current status of the project at that time. He thanked them for their honesty in responding to members' questions, which was appreciated by the Commission. He also thanked Councillor Birch for his ongoing involvement with the project.

The Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be invited to the meeting of the Commission in July.

The public and press were re-admitted to the meeting.

67. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 28 January 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny confirmed that there were no outstanding actions.

68. Review of the 14-19 Education Entitlement

The Commission considered and noted the report of the Assistant Chief Executive which introduced the Executive's response to the review of delivering the 14-19 education entitlement undertaken by a working group of the Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

No additional views had been expressed by the Children's Services and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 24 March.

The Chairman had attended the meeting of the Panel and commended its format for considering the PMRs, ie picking three items for the officers to discuss in detail.

69. Executive Forward Plan

The Commission noted the Executive Forward Plan relating to corporate issues. Particular issues raised –

EWP 1019270, contract award for the supply of fixed line telephony, and EWP 1020670, contract award for the supply of network infrastructure. - the date of the decision was two weeks prior to the date of this meeting.

EWP 1010993, Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Strategy – The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the date of the decision would probably be revised to the end of the year. The Commission's involvement in developing the strategy would be invited once the review with Bracknell Regeneration Partnership had been completed. He also indicated that there was planned an all-member briefing on the subject in May. The Commission was keen to be kept updated.

EWP 1021705, S106 Jennetts Park Community Centre – Councillor Mrs Shillcock queried why Binfield and Warfield ward members had been consulted on this item and not Great Hollands ward members. The Assistant Chief Executive explained that Wykery Copse was in the Binfield and Warfield ward. Councillor Mrs Shillcock requested that Great Hollands ward members also be consulted. The Director of Corporate Services informed Councillor Mrs Shillcock that she was happy to show her the draft plans at any time. Councillor McCracken confirmed that the S106 money would be allocated to the Jennetts Park Community Centre. He also reported a conversation about a police point being provided at the community centre.

70. Performance Monitoring Reports

The Commission considered the Performance Monitoring Reports for the third quarter, October to December of the financial year 2009/10, for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department.

Chief Executive's Office

The Assistant Chief Executive had nothing to add to the report. The Chairman drew attention to the fact that no complaints had been received during the period in question. Officers confirmed that no complaints against the Chief Executive's Office were likely in the final quarter.

Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services had nothing to add to the report and there were no questions.

71. **Corporate Performance Overview Report**

The Commission considered and noted the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) for the third quarter, October to December, of the 2009/10 financial year.

Arising from questions or in discussion –

- Councillor Mrs Shillcock expressed disappointment that due to budgetary restraints there would be no dedicated campaign to raise awareness of the need for foster carers for children and teenagers.
- Councillor Virgo raised an issue on voluntary sector grants which the Assistant Chief Executive would discuss with him outside of the meeting.

72. **Review of the Council's Key Objectives 2010/11**

The Commission considered and noted the Assistant Chief Executive's report on the Executive's response to the recommendations of the Commission's Working Group which reviewed the proposed key objectives for the Council in 2010-11.

Of the 18 changes recommended by the Working Group, 10 had been accepted in full, two partially accepted and the remaining six had not been accepted for reasons stated.

The Chief Executive in his report to the Executive stated that the Commission's working group had been a valuable contribution to planning for the services to be delivered to residents and businesses over the coming year.

73. **Overview & Scrutiny Quarterly Progress Report**

The Commission considered the quarterly progress report which set out the overview and scrutiny activity and the national and local developments.

The Chairman said this was a useful report and if members had any queries they should take them up with the Chairman or the Head of Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the overview and scrutiny activity for the period November 2009 to January 2010, set out in section 3 and appendices 1 and 2 of the report be noted;
- (ii) the developments in overview and scrutiny set out in section 4 of the report be noted.

74. **Updates from Panel Chairmen**

Health O&S Panel

Councillor Leake reported –

- The working groups had virtually completed their programmes. The only outstanding report was on public health emergencies.

Adult Social Care O&S Panel

Councillor Turrell reported –

- The failure of a speaker from the Care Quality Commission to attend the Panel's meeting on 2 March was being followed up.
- The working group on the personalisation programme had held two meetings with officers and had particularly discussed matters in relation to safeguarding. The working group hoped to meet people who had taken part in the pilot and the new Head of Adult Safeguarding.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

Councillor Finnie reported –

- The working group on the review of highway maintenance was currently on hold.
- He would look at the review on performance in the severe weather conditions which had commenced and was being led by Councillor Harrison.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel

Councillor Ms Whitbread reported –

- A good Panel meeting was held on the new college premises when the new facilities were viewed and the Panel met the new Director of Children, Young People and Learning, Janette Karklins.
- The Panel hoped that the working group on safeguarding children would soon commence.

75. **Annual Report of Overview & Scrutiny**

The Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny for 2009/2010, including the indicative work programme for 2010/2011 was submitted for the Commission's consideration.

Councillor Leake wished to reinforce and support comments in the report on the professionalism and commitment of officers supporting the scrutiny function. He considered support at Bracknell Forest was outstanding compared to his experience of other authorities.

Councillor McLean commended the annual report and felt that it demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of a well established scrutiny function.

Council Worrall expressed concerns at the number of vacancies for co-opted members. The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised the Commission of the measures taken in attempts to attempt to fill the vacancies. In relation to the Social Care representative vacancies, the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel had decided not to appoint to the Panel but to invite individuals to take part in selected reviews, as appropriate. These vacancies would be reviewed and the papers submitted to Annual Council may be amended.

The Commission agreed:

- i) to adopt the annual report of Overview and Scrutiny for 2009/2010 including the indicative work programme for 2010/11.
- ii) to delegate to the Chairman, any changes to the report arising from observations from the Corporate Management Team and the Council's Executive.

76. The Good Scrutiny Awards

The Chairman and the Head of Overview and Scrutiny reported that a submission had been made to the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual Good Scrutiny Awards Scheme, in recognition of the work of the Council in the scrutiny of the borough's partnerships.

CHAIRMAN

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
12 MAY 2010
8.46 - 8.48 PM**



Present:

Councillors Edger (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Finnie, Leake, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Virgo, Ms Whitbread and Worrall

Apologies for Absence were received from:

Councillor Harrison

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Edger be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

COUNCILLOR EDGER IN THE CHAIR

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

3. APPOINTMENT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED that the following Overview and Scrutiny Panels be appointed:

(a) Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Conservative

Baily
Blatchford
Mrs Fleming
Harrison
Leake
Phillips
Turrell
Miss Wilson

Labour

Mrs Shillcock

Substitute Members

Conservative

Mrs Angell
Bowers
Brossard
Finch
Mrs McCracken

Labour

Beadsley
Mrs Beadsley

(b) Children, Young People and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Conservative

Mrs Birch
Dudley
Kensall
Mrs McCracken
Osborne
Phillips
Mrs Ryder
Ms Whitbread

Labour

Mrs Beadsley

Substitute Members

Conservative

Edger
Mrs Fleming
Harrison
Leake
Virgo

Labour

Beadsley
Mrs Shillcock

Church Representatives

Mr G S Anderson
1 vacancy

Parent Governor Representatives

Dr P Josephs-Franks
1 vacancy

Teacher Representatives

Miss V Richardson
1 vacancy

Social Care Representative

1 vacancy

(c) Environment, Culture and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Conservative

Mrs Barnard
Bowers
Finch
Finnie
Mrs Fleming
Leake
Mrs McCracken
McLean

Labour

Beadsley

Substitute Members

Conservative

Mrs Angell
Brossard
Harrison
Thompson
Turrell

Labour

Mrs Beadsley
Mrs Shillcock

(d) Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Conservative

Mrs Angell

Baily

Brossard

Burrows

Harrison

Leake

Thompson

Virgo

Substitute Members

Conservative

Edger

Mrs Fleming

Kensall

Osborne

Miss Wilson

Co – Optee

1 vacancy

Labour

Mrs Shillcock

Labour

Beadsley

Mrs Beadsley

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
(CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE)
27 MAY 2010**

**LOCAL POLICING
(Head of Overview and Scrutiny)**

1. Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission is to receive a presentation by Steve Rowell, Assistant Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police, on Local Policing.
2. At its meeting on 16 July 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission reviewed the new statutory guidance issued by the Home Office in May 2009 on the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters, and resolved to involve the Thames Valley Police Authority in work undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Committee by co-opting a Police Authority member onto the Committee when policing matters were being considered.
3. The Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority, Mr Khan Juna, is attending this meeting of the O&S Commission.

SUGGESTED ACTION

4. **That the O&S Commission, meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee:**
 - (i) **Co-opts onto its membership for this meeting the Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority, Mr Khan Juna.**
 - (ii) **Receives a presentation by Steve Rowell, Assistant Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police, on Local Policing.**

Background Papers

Agenda and papers of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, 16 July 2009.

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283

e-mail: richard.beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
(CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE)
27 MAY 2010**

**THE ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AUTHORITY
(Head of Overview and Scrutiny)**

1. Meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission is to receive a presentation on the role and activities of the Thames Valley Police Authority, by its Chairman, Mr Khan Juna.
2. A leaflet produced by the Thames Valley Police Authority entitled 'Ten things you need to know about your Police Authority' is attached for Members' information.
3. Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection, who is also the Vice Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority, will be present.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283

e-mail: richard.beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	Ten things you need to know about your police authority	
	Find out more at www.tvpa.police.uk	

Ten things you need to know about **your** police authority

- 1** Your police authority is a group of 19 local people who hold the police to account on behalf of communities.
- 2** Your police authority consults with local communities to find out what you want from your local police.
- 3** Your police authority's job is to make sure that the Chief Constable delivers a police service which balances both national priorities and the concerns of local people.
- 4** Your police authority hires and, if necessary, fires chief constables and senior police officers – and also checks on complaints against police.
- 5** Your police authority publishes an annual plan, based on consultation with local people, setting out the services your police force should deliver in the year ahead, and the targets it should achieve.
- 6** As part of the annual policing plan, your police authority sets employment targets to ensure your local police reflect the diversity of local communities.
- 7** Your police authority holds the police budget. It consults with local people before it sets police council tax to ensure you get value for money.
- 8** Your police authority has a legal duty to promote equalities and good relations between different groups of people. As part of this, it ensures people know their rights if they are stopped or searched by police.
- 9** Around 10% of police authority members are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around 30% are women.
- 10** Your police authority makes sure the police service does everything it can to keep improving policing for your community.

Find out more about **your** police authority
www.tvpa.police.uk



**Thames Valley
Police Authority**



For more information about police authorities in general, visit www.apa.police.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION 27 MAY 2010

REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THEME PARTNERSHIP (Head of Overview and Scrutiny)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the agreed approach to the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) of the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP), the Chairman and Lead Officer of each of the BFP theme Partnerships has been invited to meet the O&S Commission or relevant O&S Panel to discuss the Partnership's governance, performance management, financial management, and related issues, with reference to a questionnaire completed in advance of the meeting. The BFP's Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership is one of the BFP theme partnerships within the purview of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the O&S Commission discusses with the Chairman and Lead Officer of the Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership, Mr Timothy Wheadon and Mr Victor Nicholls respectively, its governance, performance management, financial management, and related issues, with reference to the completed questionnaire at Appendix 1.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The approach to O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership has been endorsed by the O&S Commission and Panels, also the BFP Board, and implementation has commenced. The agreed approach includes a structured programme of information gathering and initial analysis of the BFP's affairs. This work has been apportioned as follows:

O&S Commission – BFP's Board and the Town Centre Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and the Economic and Skills Development Partnership.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel - the Strategic Housing Partnership, the Cultural Partnership, the Transport Partnership, and the Climate Change Partnership.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel - the Children's Trust, and the Early Years, Child Care and Play Partnership.

Adult Social Care O&S Panel - the Health and Social Care Partnership.

- 3.2 The information gathering comprises initially asking the Chairmen and Lead officers for the ten Theme Partnerships to complete a questionnaire, and then for the responses to the questionnaire to inform individual meetings by the Commission/Panel concerned with the Chairmen and Lead officers for each of the Theme Partnerships, individually. These will form part of the public meetings of the Commission and Panels throughout 2009/10. The structured series of meetings with

the Chairmen and lead officers of the Theme Partnerships will contribute to relationship building.

- 3.3 The purpose of the questionnaire to be sent in advance of the meetings is to gather all the basic information on the work and organisation of each Theme Partnership, to make best use of members' time at the ensuing meetings.

Background Papers

Agenda and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 1 April 2009

Contact for further information

Richard Beaumont – 01344 352283

e-mail: richard.beaumont@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

A: Name of Partnership: Economic and Skills Development Partnership	Comments
Chairman's name and contact details:	Timothy Wheadon
Lead Officer's name and contact details:	Victor Nicholls

B: Partnership details	Comments
1. Please attach the terms of reference for the partnership. If it is not in the TOR, please outline the agreed aims, key objectives and key functions	See attached
2. Please provide a few examples of the partnership's major achievements	A production of a monthly economic indicators report and priority action plan all within weeks of the Council adopting a new overarching priority
3. Where do you think the partnership currently is in terms of its stage of development? E.g. early formation, delivering shared outcomes, or fully developed?	Early formation
4. Please describe any major obstacles towards the partnership's success	The future of the global economy
Membership	See Terms of Reference
5. If not in the TOR, please list the current members of the partnership and the organisations they represent	
6. If not in the TOR, please describe the arrangements for	See Terms of Reference

appointing members to the partnership	
Minutes	See attached
7. Please provide minutes of meetings in the last year	

C: Governance arrangements	Comments
1. Please provide any recent self-assessment of governance arrangements for the Partnership, or describe any plans to do so.	Recently undertaken through the production of the terms of reference
2. How are decisions made? Is there a scheme of delegation that makes clear who can take decisions?	Decisions are made in the overall interests of the partnership
3. How are decisions recorded?	Through the productions of minutes
4. Who makes sure decisions are acted upon?	Lead officer
5. Please describe how the partnership is held to account, and by whom	Quarterly performance reports to the BFP board including LAA performance
6. Risk management - Has the Partnership itself carried out a formal risk assessment of the Partnership? If yes, please provide details	Not as yet. Early stage in the partnership's development which has been focused on the 'forming' stage

D: Performance management	Comments
1. Please describe the arrangements for setting output/outcome targets, and give details of the partnership's targets for 2008/09	1) Key targets in the LAA 2) Action plan agreed (with priority actions separated out)

2. Please describe the arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress against targets	1) Part of the partnerships performance monitoring every quarter (for LAA) 2) Action plan monitoring at each meeting
3. How does the partnership agree action on targets that are not likely to be met?	Through discussions at the partnership meeting involving robust challenge from the chair
4. How do you demonstrate publicly that the partnership adds value?	Through the work of the BFP and the partnership newsletter, available on the BFP website
5. How does the public know that the partnership achieves value for money?	Through the work of the BFP and the partnership newsletter, available on the BFP website and the 'Beat the Credit Crunch' website
6. Does the Partnership contribute accounts of success to the BFP's communications group?	Yes through the 'Beat the Credit Crunch' website

E: Financial Management	Comments
1. How is the partnership funded? (on the basis of the last financial year)	Last financial year – partners organisation staff time Note that this financial year a small (£37k) budget has been allocated for initiatives
2. Who decides on how to spend the money?	Partnership members
3. Can the money be reallocated? If so, who can authorise this?	Chair
4. What are the financial reporting arrangements?	Through the Council's financial reporting system and action plan monitoring each quarter

F: Serving the Public (For response just by BFP's Board)	Comments

1. Does the partnership have a communications policy? If so, please provide this	No
2. How does this partnership achieve accessibility for the public? (for example, are meetings open to the public?)	Meetings are not open to the general public
3. Is there a complaints and suggestions process the public can use?	N/A

G: Overview and Scrutiny of the Partnership	Comments
1. Does the partnership have any views on how O&S can assist in its development and achievement of objectives?	At this early stage, the partnership needs to continue to focus single-mindedly on action to support local residents and Bracknell Forest economy
2. Does the partnership have any suggestions for O&S reviews to be considered for the partnership O&S programme?	It would be valuable to review potential areas for O&S reviews towards the end of the financial year

22

If there are any queries on the completion of this questionnaire, please contact Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, Bracknell Forest Council on 01344 352283 or Richard.Beaumont@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

Bracknell Forest Partnership

Economic and Skills Development Partnership

Purpose and principles:

1 Purpose:

- To sustain and promote Bracknell Forest's thriving economy.
- To promote skills and availability of local people to fill local jobs as a key element of sustaining the local economy.

2 Terms of reference:

- Create and sustain a vision for economic well-being and skills development for all living and working in Bracknell Forest.
- Lead the economic development, enterprise, and skills elements of the Local Area Agreement
- Address the Regional Economic Strategy in Bracknell Forest, including the principles of "smart growth"
- Ensure that local economic developments benefit local people
- Develop a dialogue with business and educational and skills providers around common interests to make Bracknell Forest a better place in which to do business
- Maximise the number of local people in local employment
- Ensure that the benefits of regeneration are enjoyed by existing and new residents.
- Provide the spatial context (physical, social, environmental, economic) for existing businesses to remain in the borough, and for new start up businesses to be encouraged.

3 Principles

- To build trust and understanding between organisations
- To encourage partnership working
- To support innovation
- To support communities through a thriving economy
- To support joint funding and the best use of resources

- To promote community cohesion and equalities

4 Key aims:

- Stimulate leadership and consensus over economic and skills issues in Bracknell Forest
- Engaging with the local economy and businesses to remove barriers to success where possible
- The key forum for economic and skills issues arising from national, regional and local plans/initiatives
- Implement and monitor local economic and skills development plans
- Identify sources of funding that would help achieve local plans
- Research activity or action needed to underpin the long term economic success of the Borough
- Address the changing sub-regional economic development agenda
- Actively work with surrounding areas to sustain the local and Thames Valley economy, including liaison with the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board.
- Lead the production of a local economic assessment
- Acknowledge and support the Council's future commissioning role for training and skills promotion following the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council.

5 Suggested Membership

5.1 The Partnership Board is not a body which is elected by the public. The Partnership is a group of organisations from the public, community and private sectors who come together voluntarily to improve the quality of life of the residents of Bracknell Forest. The Partnership Board is composed of representatives of the main public, community and private sector organisations and agencies that deliver services that can make a difference to quality of life. Its membership is selected by the partnership members rather than elected by the public.

Organisation	Who	Why
Members:		
Bracknell Forest Council	Tim Wheadon	Chief Executive Chair, Bracknell Forest Partnership Board Member of Berkshire Economic Strategy Board.
	Victor Nicholls	Assistant Chief Executive Lead officer for economic development and enterprise

	Cllr Mary Ballin	Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development; Member of SEERA; BESB Board Member
	Cllr Bob Wade	Small Business Champion
	Bev Hindle	Chief Officer: Planning and Transport
	David Jones	Senior Lifelong Learning Officer
	Simon Hendey	Chief Officer: Housing
		Head of Regeneration and Enterprise
	Communications officer	Head of Communications
	Martin Surrell	Senior Advisor-14-19 Partnership
Bracknell and Wokingham College	Howard O'Keeffe	Principal and Chief Executive
	Reverend Nick Parish	Chair of Governors
Bracknell Regeneration Partnership	Helen Barnett	Key business rep
Business Link	Ganesh Selverajah	Responsible for LAA delivery on business development
Chamber of Commerce	Philip Montague	Key link with local small business Attends Bracknell Forest Partnership
Connexions	Janet Hughes	
East Berkshire Education Business Partnership	Sandra Woledge	Managing Director
Grow Our Own	Amanda Waters	Project Manager
	John Moody	Project Facilitator
Job Centre Plus	TBC	Bringing more people into employment
SEEDA	Claire Gillion	Area Manager
TVEP	TBC	Global competitiveness lead for BESB

POSSIBLE CO-OPTEEES:		
Berkshire Skills and Productivity Alliance		
BFC Transport Officer		
Learning and Skills Council – Thames Valley	Jill Goddard	Economic Development Director
GOSE		
School Head teacher representatives		
Reps from major local business(es)	Richard Knight	Federation of small businesses
Executive Job Club	Robert Tickler/Jim Morrison	Senior Professionals

- 5.2 Membership is open to any organisation or service provider in Bracknell Forest wishing to support the work of the Partnership and its aims. Membership includes the acceptance of the responsibility to work within the terms of this Agreement and Protocol.
- 5.3 Membership is primarily aimed at organisations rather than at individuals who do not represent an organisation. However, the Partnership has a responsibility to actively involve under-represented groups and it may wish to involve individuals on other areas of partnership working, where they represent a minority interest or issue.
- 5.4 The ESDP is a sub-theme of Bracknell Forest Partnership and is bound by the principles set out in the Local Government Act 2000.
- 5.5 Substitutes to the above list will be accepted by the Partnership Board in the event of any member being unable to attend.
- 5.6 The Partnership Board shall require a quorum of 9 members to be present in order to make decisions on behalf of the Board. The chairman of the board will have the casting vote.
- 5.7 Administrative support will be provided by Bracknell Forest Council unless the Partnership Board decides to make other arrangements.
- 5.8 All of the members of the partnership will need to identify how they will support the agreed objectives of the partnership both in terms of general allocation of resources and in terms of the specific allocation of the resources required to deliver the projects/targets agreed by the partnership. It is envisaged that this may be through the commitment of staff time and where appropriate through the commitment of revenue or capital resources. It is not intended that any additional

resources will have to be committed by the voluntary and community sector unless it relates to projects that would normally be funded by them. At all times any funding or resource will remain the responsibility of the member organisation.

- 5.9 Where a partner contributes funds to be spent by another partner, the formal agreement must include provision for the provider to require the Chief Financial Officer of the receiver to provide written assurance that the money has been spent properly in line with the terms of the partnership and properly accounted for. In addition, agreements should include a provision that, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. suspected fraud or corruption), the provider reserves the right to ask the receiver's External Auditors to investigate.

6 Working arrangements

- 6.1 Quarterly closed meetings will be held in places that are accessible and acceptable to all members. The agenda and papers will be circulated one week in advance. The meetings will be formally minuted and the minutes will be published in the internet. The agenda papers will be published on the internet unless it is considered expedient to restrict members only by virtue of the personal, contractual or sensitive nature of the contents.

7 Decision making process

- 7.1 Partners shall bring along their own expertise to the decision making process, but decisions will be taken in the overall interest of the Partnership objectives.

8 Duration and termination

- 8.1 If any individual member wishes to withdraw from the partnership, written and verbal notice must be given of how any funding committed to the partnership will be maintained.
- 8.2 The partnership may be dissolved by mutual consent of all partners if such time arises where this is the appropriate cause of action. In this situation the partnership agreement will be terminated with immediate effect. Upon termination of the agreement, the partners agree to co-operate with each other to ensure an orderly wind down of the partnership arrangements so as to minimise disruption to all members. At dissolution, partners may need to inform the funders; provide appropriate final reports and inform all stakeholders as appropriate.
- 8.3 In the case of statutory partnerships that are a requirement by law (such as CDRP, implemented by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act) the termination of the partnership will only take place upon such time as a change in Government legislation. In the event of a partnership terminating in these circumstances, the same arrangements of termination will apply.

9 Risk management

- 9.1 As an essential aspect of good governance, each formal partnership agreement will include provision for a risk management process. The process will identify all significant risks which might threaten the objectives of the partnership. These

risks will be set out clearly in a risk register. Each risk will be allocated an owner and the register will identify the mitigating factors which are already in place or will be put in place (with responsibilities and timetables included). Risks will be reassessed at least annually or with document refreshes.

10 Communications

10.1 Effective communications are critical to the success of any initiative, particularly the ones that seek to strategically integrate the delivery of services to improve the well-being of communities. The Partnership recognises the agreed Bracknell Forest Partnership Communications Strategy and associated Identity Guidelines that set out rules for:

- The badging and promotion of the Partnership;
- The authorising of individual partners to speak on behalf of the Partnership;
- The issues of press statements and public relations material in relation to the activities of the Partnership through its media protocol.

11 Equalities and diversity

11.1 It is important that the Partnership is built upon the fundamental principles of cohesion and equality for all. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for every strategy or plan produced by the Partnership.

12 Conduct and behaviour

12.1 Members of the Partnership are to be willing to take on a role in the broader programme appropriate to the skills and resources of the partner organisation, to act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the Partnership's aims and objectives, and be open about any conflict of interests that might arise.

12.2 Within Partnership meetings, declarations of interest and provision for withdrawal from meetings of the Partnership Board should be made both orally and in writing prior to each meeting.

12.3 Partnership members are also expected to encourage joint working and promote the sharing of information, resources and skills between public, private and community sectors and to act wherever possible as ambassadors for the project. They are also expected to communicate regularly with other partners throughout any project so that problems can be identified and shared to achieve their successful resolution.

12.4 All Partnership members must work together in a harmonious relationship based upon mutual respect, courtesy, trust, honesty and understanding of each others roles. This should prevail in all meetings and contacts, whether formal or informal.

13 Dispute Resolution

- 13.1 With goodwill, respect and integrity on both sides, there ought to be very few occasions when a disagreement between members of the Partnership cannot be resolved amicably. If there is a serious dispute of substance it should be discussed, in the first instance, between the members concerned. If such discussions should not produce an acceptable settlement, reference may be made to the Chairman of the Partnership, but this should be seen as a last, rather than a first resort. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily after reference to the Chairman, it may be referred to an expert selected by mutual agreement by the parties involved.

14 Audit and Scrutiny

- 14.1 All members of the Partnership shall abide by the extant and nationally recognised procedures, guidelines and standards for ensuring probity and good governance in public life.
- 14.2 The meetings of the Partnership can be observed by any individual who has received permission from the Chairman of the Partnership to attend. The Partnership shall report progress annually to the public. The Partnership shall carry out an effectiveness self-assessment annually.
- 14.3 The papers, including the agenda and minutes of each meeting are available to the public after each meeting, as long as information is not deemed to contain personal, financial or sensitive confidential information that is not suitable for public disclosure. In this case the minutes will be published without this information. It will be made clear when details have been removed.
- 14.4 Bracknell Forest Council shall facilitate the scrutiny of the work of the Partnership through its Overview and Scrutiny process.

15 Counter Fraud

- 15.1 The Partnership is wholly opposed to all forms of fraud, corruption or theft and will not tolerate fraud in any form in the administration of its responsibilities, from any members. Action will be taken against anyone who attempts to defraud the Partnership by deliberately falsifying, substituting or destroying records for personal gain; intentional breaches of financial regulations and procedures; the offer, giving or acceptance of inducements to influence action or decisions, or by abuse of position as a Member of the Partnership to benefit friends, family or others. This includes the use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, avoiding an obligation or causing loss to another party.
- 15.2 The Partnership also expects that individuals and organisations (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Partnership with integrity and without actions involving fraud and corruption.
- 15.3 The Partnership will treat attempted fraud as seriously as actual fraud.

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	I020670
------------------	---------

TITLE: Contract Award for the Supply of Network Infrastructure

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the contract award.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget

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

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 21 May 2010

REFERENCE	I020064
------------------	---------

TITLE: Office Accommodation Strategy

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To endorse the approach being taken to meet the needs of the Council for office accommodation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Council Officers.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Meeting(s) with interested parties.

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I022147
------------------	---------

TITLE: Anti-Social Behaviour Minimum Standards

PURPOSE OF DECISION: The Home Office is requiring each CDRP to publicise a set of minimum standards around what can be expected from the partnership when tackling anti-social behaviour.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Costs of producing publicity to be covered through ASB Fund.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Thames Valley Police and other members of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Discussed by the CDRP.

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I020122
------------------	---------

TITLE: Inspection, Comprehensive Maintenance & Testing of Heating, Ventilation, Hot Water Systems & Gas Fired Property in Bracknell Forest.

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To appoint a contractor for the above service provision.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED:

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Several consultations and full OJEU tendering process being followed.

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I021681
------------------	---------

TITLE: Update of Corporate Asset Management Plan

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider updates to the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan, which was approved in 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I021873
------------------	---------

TITLE: Revenue Expenditure Outturn 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To note outturn expenditure and make recommendations to the Governance.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None at this time.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I021879
------------------	---------

TITLE: Capital Expenditure Outturn 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To note outturn expenditure and financing and to approve carry overs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None at this time.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 15 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	I021685
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Relief

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider new applications for discretionary rate relief and hardship relief.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing Budget.

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

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 30 Jun 2010

REFERENCE	1022646
------------------	---------

TITLE: Complaints 2009/2010

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To brief the Executive about complaints made against the Council in 2009/10.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Not applicable.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Not applicable.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I022610
------------------	---------

TITLE: Commitment Budget 2011/12 - 2013/14

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Commitment Budget and budget process for 2011/12 and beyond.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None at this time.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I019862
------------------	---------

TITLE: Corporate Performance Overview Report - Quarter 4, 2009/10

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To inform the Executive of the performance of the Council over the fourth quarter of 2009-10.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: No financial implication

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Jul 2010

REFERENCE	I019134
------------------	---------

TITLE: Sale of Land at Bay Road

PURPOSE OF DECISION: The purpose of the report is to seek agreement from the Executive to dispose of the surplus land at Bay Road to Thames Valley Housing Association.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: A capital receipt will be received if the land is successfully marketed.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 14 Sep 2010

REFERENCE	I021687
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Relief

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider new applications for discretionary rate relief and hardship relief.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing Budget.

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

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None.

DATE OF DECISION: 30 Sep 2010

REFERENCE	I021689
------------------	---------

TITLE: Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Relief

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider new applications for discretionary rate relief and hardship relief.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing Budget.

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

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 31 Dec 2010

REFERENCE	I010993
------------------	---------

TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

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: Not before 29 Mar 2011

Agenda Item 9



Councillor Bettison
Leader

Timothy Wheadon
Chief Executive

Bracknell Forest Council
Easthampstead House
Town Square
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1AQ

Date: 16th March 2010

Dear Paul and Tim

IMPROVING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

As you may know, we have been giving a lot of thought to how we might improve public engagement with Overview and Scrutiny, to enhance its effectiveness. I would welcome your views on the changes I have in mind on this subject before I approach the members of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Commission.

Public engagement with the O&S process in Bracknell Forest is low, and this is the same with most councils. We recognised this in our annual report to Council last year, and we arranged for the 2009-10 Service Plan for the Chief Executive's Office to include an objective to: 'Research best practice in improving public engagement with O&S and formulate proposals.' That research is summarised in the attached report by the Head of Overview and Scrutiny. This sets out in paragraphs 3 and 4 what the Council already does to stimulate public engagement with O&S, it includes some interesting research findings and a summary of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's self-evaluation which we undertook, and it ends with recommendations on the way forward.

The report also recognises the important new statutory duty all councils have under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to promote democracy - putting local authorities at the forefront of the drive to reconnect people with public and political decision-making. I believe that O&S has a valuable role to play in that regard.

The additional measures proposed for public engagement in O&S are set out in paragraph 11 of the report. I regard these to be sensible, valuable and capable of being delivered within the resources available. In the event additional resources became available to O&S, I should also like to undertake the further engagement activities set out in Annex 2 to the report.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Bracknell Forest Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ
T: 01344 352000 Minicom: 01344 352045 www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

I would welcome your views on these proposals, and I would be happy to meet to discuss them if that would help. I then intend to raise the subject with my fellow members of the O&S Commission.

With best wishes,

Councillor Bob Edger OBE
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Copies to: Councillor McLean
Assistant Chief Executive

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Bracknell Forest Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ
T: 01344 352000 Minicom: 01344 352045 www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Introduction

1. This report proposes a way forward for better public engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) process at Bracknell Forest Council. This is included as objective 10.7.20 in the 2009-10 Service Plan for the Chief Executive's Office: 'Research best practice in improving public engagement with O&S and formulate proposals.'

Background

2. As one of the principal means of public accountability, effective scrutiny needs to take account of the views and concerns of residents, and provide opportunities for the public to be involved and engaged with the O&S process. Most recently, this has had legal backing through the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The Act contains a new duty on local councils to promote democracy - putting local authorities at the forefront of the drive to reconnect people with public and political decision-making. The duty is aimed at ensuring all sections of the community understand how the council works, who makes the decisions on their behalf in their neighbourhood, and how they can get involved if they wish to. A further new duty in the Act is to designate a Scrutiny Officer, whose functions include promoting O&S.
3. Public engagement with the O&S process in Bracknell Forest is low, and this is the same with most councils. Our Annual Report of O&S for 2008/09 stated:

As a main purpose of O&S is to act on behalf of residents in holding decision makers to account, it is important that we continue to improve our engagement with the public. All Councils have found that engaging the public with the O&S function has proved to be challenging. The measures we have taken to improve public engagement in 2008/09 are set out below, and we will be looking to see how we can improve this further in 2009/10.

- *O&S have held meetings in places other than the Council offices so people see and hear about O&S (for example at Garth Hill College, Sandhurst Town Council, Heatherwood Hospital, and working group visits to many places including a waste recycling centre, schools and children's centres)*
 - *Deciding to co-opt representatives of social care organisations onto O&S, and welcoming a member of the Local Involvement Network and a new Parent Governor representative into the O&S Commission and related O&S Panels*
 - *Consulting the public, for example we hosted a tea party for a group of carers*
 - *Actively inviting views from residents, for example by including a suggestion post card at the end of this annual report*
 - *Improving the presentation of our annual report of O&S to make it more accessible.*
4. Other measures to promote public engagement have included: production of a 'flyer' leaflet on O&S; having a full and informative set of web pages on O&S on the BFC website; occasional news items in 'Town and Country'; issuing press releases on publication of some O&S reports; and hosting visits by other councils interested to hear about how BFC operates O&S. Despite all these efforts, we still have very low public engagement, for example very few members of the public attend O&S meetings, and we had only one response to the reply paid card in the last annual Report.

Best Practice

5. The Chairman of the O&S Commission led an exercise in 2009 to complete the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Self Evaluation Framework for Local Authorities. This showed that the Council's O&S function is performing well or better on the majority of headings. The main area of weakness was public engagement. The self assessment was that:

- In common with the vast majority of councils, there is much more work to be done in involving the general public directly in the scrutiny process. However, there are examples where the public and partner organisations have been involved in Working Groups on a number of issues.
- BFC has good levels of resident satisfaction with its services, with rare issues of major concern. This contributes to a lack of interest by the general public in those issues that they are unaffected by as well as a lack of understanding of the local government procedures.
- It is difficult to involve a public that generally is reluctant to get involved with detail and effort to produce a positive outcome.
- In common with the vast majority of councils, it is very unclear what more we can do to improve public engagement with O&S. There is a recognisable inertia in public interest in scrutiny unless it involves single item concerns surrounding, e.g. hospitals, education, child care and adult services. Even then the core group will be that which is affected by the issue.
- We will only overcome this inertia if we make scrutiny more relevant and interesting in a way that encourages people to take an interest. A more challenging co-operation with the local press and involvement of members of the general public in specific reviews is something that we must improve upon.
- We could consider embarking on a review of a topic chosen by the NAG's and have them actively involved in the work and in producing the report. This could possibly be on speeding, a known and widespread concern.
- Lack of public interest in general local government affairs that are perceived as only mildly affecting the day to day lives of individuals. There is a view within the electorate that elected members are chosen to act on behalf of the public as a whole and the majority will be satisfied to 'let them get on with it'. This lack of interest and commitment is extremely difficult to overcome.
- Our corporate arrangements for media and public relations need to be improved. Insufficient attention is paid to the scrutiny process at the moment which may be one of the reasons why we have not yet developed a proper dialogue with the public. However, the understanding of officers in the process is vastly improved and is something we must continue to pursue.
- We could publicise O&S more in 'Town and Country'.
- We should refresh the corporate induction material for officers.
- We should strive to understand more fully what matters to residents, and ensure O&S addresses those.

6. The O&S Chairmen met on 4 November 2009 to consider what further actions might be considered to improve public engagement with O&S. Possible measures were seen to include:

- Involving the Youth Parliament;
- Using Community TV to advertise the programme of O&S reviews;
- Considering Podcasts;
- Asking people's views on specific O&S reviews, a good example being the review of highway maintenance;
- Work with schools to include an O&S focus to a sixth form citizenship event;
- Providing an opportunity for children and young people to question O&S Commission members;
- Hold a media interview at the time of publishing the annual report of O&S;
- Extend the formal public participation scheme to cover O&S meetings;
- Councillors to actively seek out public opinion on issues which should be considered by O&S;
- Adopt a targeted approach to interested parties for each O&S review, and refer to them in the scoping document;
- Issue press releases about the O&S work programme and forthcoming O&S reviews, along with the scoping documents.

The meeting did not explore the resource requirements for these additional possible measures, and subsequently the O&S officer team has been reduced in size.

7. The most recent (2008) annual survey from the Centre for Public Scrutiny revealed that, in relation to public engagement:
 - The average number of suggestions for scrutiny topics coming from the general public in the last year was 4, a marked decrease from the average of 6 in 2007, and 11 in 2006. 55% of authorities reported having received no suggestions for scrutiny topics from the public.
 - The average number of external witnesses who have attended overview and scrutiny meetings in 2008 was 20, which is 1 fewer than in 2007. The average value is skewed by a small number of large values and when the top 10 results are removed the average value falls to 14.
 - The experience of those councils which have been more successful at public engagement with O&S is that the most successful way to engage the public seems to be around topic or issue selection for scrutiny reviews or consideration.
8. The Office for Public Management (OPM) has issued good practice guidance in this area, recognising that public and stakeholder engagement in scrutiny is an important part of the work of local authorities. The OPM has set out six principles for this:
 - (I) Co-ordinate scrutiny with other corporate activities by using and adapting known consultation and engagement processes.
 - (II) Create confidence by publicising scrutiny and review processes, demonstrating the role of scrutiny and reassuring the public that checks and balances are in place.
 - (III) Clarify the review process, including how people can be involved.
 - (IV) Use terms such as 'checking' or 'reviewing' rather than the term 'scrutiny' which can be off-putting and jargonistic.
 - (V) Communicate both internally and externally about the processes and benefits of scrutiny reviews, as people are most interested in what has changed, and the added value from a review.
 - (VI) Confirm any change and improvement by letting residents know that scrutiny has made a difference.
9. Annex 1 to this report contains practical examples of acknowledged good practice by some council in relation to public engagement with O&S.

The recommended way forward

10. Effective public engagement requires resource, and particularly Member and Officer time. The reduction of the O&S Officer team from 3 to 2 will result in less O&S activity and we do not have the resource to pursue many of the various good ideas for improving public engagement set out in this report. Examples of specific public engagement activities which could be considered if resources permitted are in Annex 2.
11. Given the resource constraints above, and with reference to the CFPS self-evaluation and best practice examples and guidance, it is proposed to:
 - (I) Continue with the current arrangements set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, excluding the reply-paid card in the annual report;
 - (II) Councillors through their regular contact with local residents, should actively seek out public opinion on issues which should be considered by O&S, and report these to the O&S Officer team.
 - (III) For every O&S review, actively consider:
 - Co-opting someone onto the review who has expertise in the subject matter.

- Issuing a press release before the review commences, describing the purpose of the review, saying how residents can contribute their views, and advertising (if appropriate) the date of the public meeting of the Working Group.

- carrying out a site visit, meeting the people directly connected with the issue under review.

- Sending a questionnaire (or use an on-line survey) to interested organisations.

- (IV) Produce an information leaflet for 'witnesses' for O&S reviews, explaining the process and arrangements to achieve fair, balanced and accurate reports.
- (V) Issue a press release to coincide with the presentation to Council of the annual report of O&S, and referring to the new O&S work programme, showing how topic selection was informed by surveys and other feedback from residents.
- (VI) Design and secure approval for a formal public participation scheme to cover O&S meetings.
- (VII) Refresh the corporate induction material for officers.
- (VIII) Use the responses to periodic surveys, for example the BF1500 survey in 2009 and the neighbourhood surveys, to inform the design of the O&S work programme, so that it reflects the main interests and concerns of residents.

12. These proposals are the most we can reasonably accommodate within our resources, and they should result in raising awareness of, and public engagement in, O&S in Bracknell Forest. This should additionally contribute to demonstrating to residents the Council's accountability arrangements.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOOD PRACTICE AND EXAMPLES

Kirklees

Kirklees practice in overview and scrutiny is central to the corporate management of the authority. Its scoping process for reviews has involved members of the public through its citizens' panel. This feedback is used to decide the review process for the year, along with information from other stakeholders and data sources.

Kirklees also invites comments from external stakeholders about topics and issues that could be subject to scrutiny. Like a number of authorities, a form on the website invites such comment. The council also promises to get in touch with the correspondent to confirm whether the issue will be considered either as part of scrutiny, or through a ward councillor or not at all. This is a simple but often forgotten consideration that keeps communication channels open.

Kensington and Chelsea

Kensington and Chelsea has a well established programme of public involvement and consultation including a citizens' panel and a group of resident reviewers who comment on services more directly – itself a way of adding a public voice to the scrutiny process.

Cornwall

A theatre group was commissioned to work with dementia sufferers and their carers to use humour and drama to discover their views on the quality of dementia care. This demonstrated the value of a good engagement process for those who take part, as well as those organising the event.

Coventry

A health scrutiny review of the discharge from hospital process used older people as peer researchers to talk to the elderly patients, both in hospital and after they had returned home. This allowed them to report on the patients' experience of health and social care in a sympathetic fashion.

North Somerset

A summit was held with representatives of the local media and the Youth Parliament to enable young people to put questions directly to the media about the way in which they were stereotyped as hoodies and hooligans. As a result, the local paper set aside a page in each issue where young people were able to write their own stories and provide a different perspective.

Public understanding of and input into select committee work has recently been enhanced through a partnership with Radio 4's 'You and Yours' programme. On a monthly basis, a Committee Chair reports on a current enquiry and asks for listeners to contribute evidence by phone or via web form. Some councils have similar arrangements to discuss overview and scrutiny items on local radio stations.

Somerset Council says the following on agendas

"At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total. A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the

agenda for this meeting will be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

If you wish to speak, please tell the Committee Administrator, before the meeting.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally, to two minutes only."

In common with a number of others, **Herefordshire Council** invite the public, via a public information sheet in the agenda, to submit questions (2 days prior to the meeting) for consideration at the meeting on issues that appear on the agenda. This has proved useful particularly when there is a hot topic and lots of the public want their say on a similar theme.

Herefordshire also include on the agenda, following the minutes, an Item 'Suggestions from members of the public on issues for future scrutiny.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES – UNRESOURCED

1. Carry out the planned project to engage with local schools during Local Democracy Week, to carry out a 'mini' O&S review.
2. Regular slot in Town and Country
3. Regular slot in local paper
4. Working with the Youth Parliament
5. Hosting an Online O&S forum
6. Using Council's complaints to inform work programme
7. Consultation with Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs)
8. Annual O&S Conference/event
9. Public discussion sessions
10. Presentations to interested groups
11. Local paper letters page, asking residents for views
12. Public workshops at the start of O&S reviews
13. Using Community TV to advertise the programme of O&S reviews
14. Considering Podcasts
15. Working with schools to include an O&S focus to a sixth form citizenship event
16. Providing an opportunity for children and young people to question O&S Commission members
17. Holding a media interview at the time of publishing the annual report of O&S
18. Local radio slot for O&S promotion – to explain what is currently happening, possibly a phone in.
19. Consulting the Citizens' panel (the Bracknell Forest 1500).
20. Public question time at meetings/written questions in advance.

This page is intentionally left blank