

NOTICE OF MEETING

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Thursday 13 September 2012, 7.30 pm

Council Chamber, Fourth Floor, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

To: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Councillor Leake (Chairman), Councillor Angell (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mrs Angell, Mrs Birch, Ms Brown, Finnie, Gbadebo, Harrison, Heydon, McLean, Turrell and Virgo

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

Mr D Moss and One Vacancy

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

Mrs S Cauchi and Mrs C Murray

cc: Substitute Members of the Commission

Councillors Allen, Baily, Kensall, Ms Miller, Mrs Temperton and Worrall

There will be a private meeting for members of the Commission at 6.45pm in the Function Room, Easthampstead House

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

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Published: 5 September 2012



**Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Thursday 13 September 2012, 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 12 July 2012

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3. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Members are requested to declare any Personal Interests including the existence and nature of the Party Whip. Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer In attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days

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.

5. Public Participation

To receive submissions from members of the public which have been submitted in advance in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

Overview and Policy Development

6. 2013/14 Budget Overview

To discuss with the Borough Treasurer the main issues likely to influence the design of the 2013/14 Council budget.

11 - 22

7. Local Council Tax Support Scheme

To give views on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as part of the open consultation process.

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8. **Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions**

To receive a report on the proposed technical changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions.

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Performance Monitoring

9. **Quarterly Service Reports (QSR) 2012/13**

To consider the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the QSRs for the first quarter of 2012/13 (April to June) relating to:

- The Chief Executive's Office
- The Corporate Services Department

Please bring the previously circulated Quarterly Service Reports to the meeting. Copies are available on request and attached to this agenda if viewed online.

The Chairman has asked that any detailed questions arising from the Quarterly Service Reports should be referred to either the Assistant Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services in advance and only raised in the meeting if you consider the issue requires wider discussion.

10. **Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR)**

To consider the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report for quarter one (April to June) of the 2012/13 financial year.

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The Chairman has asked that any detailed questions arising from the report should be referred to the Assistant Chief Executive in advance and only raised in the meeting if you consider the issue requires wider discussion.

11. **Work Programme Update**

To note the progress against the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2012-13.

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12. **Updates from Panel Chairmen**

To receive verbal updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen on each panel's progress against the work programme, drawing attention to any new major issues or changes needed to the programme:

- Adult Social Care and Housing: Councillor Turrell
- Children, Young People and Learning: Councillor Mrs Birch
- Environment, Culture and Communities: Councillor Finnie
- Health: Councillor Virgo

Holding the Executive to Account

13. Executive Forward Plan

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

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14. Date of Next Meeting

The next planned meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission will be on 22 November 2012.



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
12 JULY 2012
7.30 - 9.45 PM**

Present:

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Mrs Birch, Ms Brown, Finnie, Gbadebo, Harrison, Heydon, Turrell and Virgo

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor McLean

Ms S Cauchi, Parent Governor Representative
Mrs C Murray, Parent Governor Representative

In Attendance:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Simon Heard, Assistant Borough Solicitor

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 3 May 2012 and 16 May 2012 were approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

5. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest as she was the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Public Participation

There were no items submitted under the Public Participation Scheme.

8. Localism Act

The Assistant Borough Solicitor provided an update on the Localism Act 2012 with a particular focus on the implications of the Community Right to Challenge.

The Community Right to Challenge, brought into force on 27 June 2012, enabled voluntary and community bodies, a body of persons or a trust established for charitable purposes only, parish councils, two or more employees of an Authority or any other person or body specified by the Secretary of State to express an interest in

running a local authority service. The Authority on receiving an expression of interest must consider it and where it accepts it run a procurement exercise for the service. The procurement exercise must be “appropriate having regard to the value and nature of the contract that may be awarded” however at the end of the procurement exercise there was no obligation to award a contract.

Work was taking place within the Council to identify all the Council’s future contracts and where relevant map out timeframes for when expressions of interest might be received. Once this had been completed work would take place to identify when expressions of interest might be submitted for those services not already within the tendering arena.

The Department for Communities and Local Government had made a £11.5million funding pool available to support groups wishing to submit an expression of interest.

Arising from Members’ questions and comments the following points were noted:

- The criteria for rejection of an expression of interest had been quite broadly expressed by the Department for Communities and Local Government
- When a service ceased to be carried out by the local authority a service change had occurred and this should be dealt with under TUPE regulations
- Employees of a local authority could make an expression of interest before they incorporated themselves into a relevant body
- If an employee group submitted an expression of interest they could, if awarded the contract, potentially continue to work for the local authority however this would be dependent on their terms of employment and any perceived conflicts of interest
- If a procurement exercise was triggered under the Community Right to Challenge then the procurement would be open to anyone who wished to participate. Additionally, a challenger did not have to be invited to participate if the authority considered the challenge to be weak for example it was not felt to be financially viable
- It was felt that there were sufficient legislative tools available to prevent companies who were classified as non-relevant bodies from using the Community Right to Challenge legislation to their advantage
- The Act’s provisions concerning Assets of Community Value had not yet come into force

It was noted that over 30% of the Council’s services are already delivered by external companies and it was acknowledged that it was difficult to gauge the level of interest that the legislation might generate at this stage. It appeared that, to date, no expressions of interest had been received by other councils.

The Commission thanked the Assistant Borough Solicitor for his update and requested that the procurement timetable be brought to a future meeting for consideration.

9. Work Programme Update

The Commission received an update on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2012-13.

It was noted that work was progressing well across all areas of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. However the limited resources available to support the scrutiny function meant that there was limited capacity to take on the review of

School Governance and other new work, and the Chairman commented that there was insufficient officer resource to support pre-decision scrutiny. It was suggested that departments might nominate officers on an ad-hoc basis to provide additional capacity to support the Overview and Scrutiny Function exercise greater pre-decision scrutiny.

10. **Updates From Panel Chairmen**

The Commission received updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen on each Panel's progress against the Work Programme.

Adult Social Care and Housing

- Following a departmental change the Panel had now assumed responsibility for scrutinising the Council's Housing function
- In advance of changes to Council Tax support, the panel was looking at the issue as a matter of urgency and would be feeding into the Council's consultation

Children, Young People and Learning

- Following the Working Group review of the Common Assessment Framework schools had been proactive in taking on board the issues raised pertaining to information sharing and additional resources had been put in place to support schools.
- The possibility of formally involving the Youth Forum in the Panel's work was being explored

Health

- The Panel was working with the Executive and officers to formulate a single response to the NHS' Shaping the Future pre-consultation proposals

11. **Quarterly Service Reports (QSR) 2011/12**

The Commission considered the Quarterly Service Reports for Corporate Services and the Chief Executive's Office for the fourth quarter, January to March, of 2011-12.

The Commission noted that it had been a particularly busy quarter for the Human Resources Section as they dealt with 66 redundancies and this had subsequently impacted on a number of the Human Resources indicators. A report providing more detail on these performance measures would be considered by the Employment Committee.

A piece of joint working between the Chief Executive's Office and Job Centre Plus had resulted in a logistics company taking the decision to relocate to Bracknell Forest. The relocation would result in the immediate creation of 88 semi and low skilled jobs. Over the next five years the company expected to expand its workforce by a further 250 jobs.

The Commission noted the reports.

12. **Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR)**

The commission received the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report for quarter four (January to March) 2011-12.

The rationale behind the imposition of car parking charges at Waitrose was questioned. It was thought that in an effort to encourage the use of town centre car parks planners had requested that parking charges be levied either on the basis of the time spent parked or on the basis of a minimum in-store spend however this rationale would be confirmed.

The Commission congratulated officers on the maintaining of high levels of collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

13. **Service Plans 2012/13**

The Assistant Chief Executive provided a briefing on the preparation of service plans for 2012/13 for the Corporate Services and Chief Executives Departments.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Figures for the number of people responding to the Town and Country survey would be circulated
- A number of discussions had taken place over the best way of distributing Town and Country including consideration of the possibility of withdrawing paper copies
- Officers were working with a market management company to develop an approach to the market offer that works well for Bracknell both now and in the future. It was expected that these plans would be discussed with the market traders in the Autumn with a view to starting work in the spring
- The shading in Section 3 was used to differentiate between the 198 National Indicators and locally decided performance indicators
- Anti-social behaviour targets were cumulative
- When setting targets officers tried to strike a balance between setting a target that stretched performance whilst being realistic at the same time
- Responsibility for the Bus Station refurbishment was split between the Chief Executive's Office, who had responsibility for securing funding, and the Planning and Transport Teams who were responsible for delivery. More detailed information on the highway improvements at the Twin Bridges roundabout would be sent to members
- The Government are encouraging larger organisations to pay all invoices within 30 days to help stimulate the economy and support small and medium sized enterprises
- The possibility of offering net monthly invoices as part of contracts would be explored
- Staff turnover figures included staff made redundant
- The percentage of staff leaving within one year of starting was considered high and it was thought that the number of staff employed in the leisure section on a casual basis had a significant impact on this figure. The possibility of separating this indicator to show turnover rates for both casual and permanent staff would be explored

The Commission thanked officers for a particularly informative report.

14. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission considered items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to corporate issues, particularly postal services, insurance and community cohesion, and the following points were noted:

- It was a statutory requirement that all decision reports had to be published a minimum of seven days before the decision was made. If reports were ready before this deadline then they were published ahead of schedule. If members wished to know more about a decision before reports were available then officers would be able to provide a briefing on the matter if requested
- Long term planning was tied to the Council's Medium Term Objectives which in turn were time limited to the lifetime of the Council however many strategies did look further into the future than this

15. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission would take place on 13 September 2012.

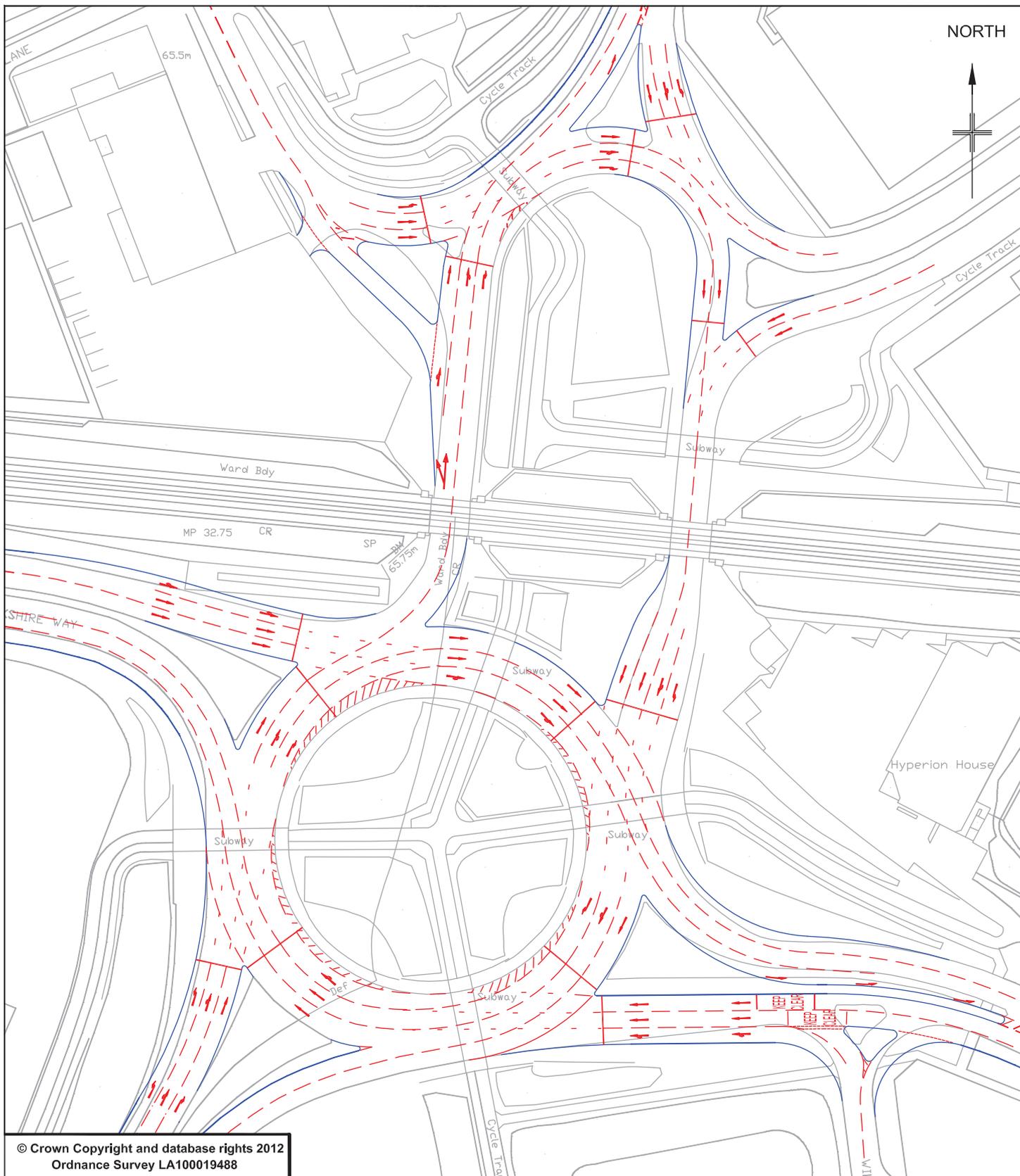
CHAIRMAN

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ACTIONS TAKEN: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEETING – 12 JULY 2012

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Action Required</u>	<u>Response/ Action Taken</u>
8. Localism Act	Include Procurement Timetable in future agenda items	The timetable is anticipated to be available for the Commission meeting on 22 November
12. Corporate Performance Overview Report	Confirm rationale for Waitrose car parking charge	Discouraging long term car parking was a consideration on the Waitrose application which went before the Planning Committee. The store car park is close to the town centre and would attract parking by shoppers visiting the wider town centre, and people working in the town centre too, if there was not a cut-off time for free parking and a high charge for over-staying that. The approach fits with the wider town centre transport proposals, and has highway benefits. Waitrose policy is to stop longer term parking in their private car parks, and the imposition of a £20 charge for parking in excess of two hours is clearly signposted at the store.
13. Service Plans 2012/13	Circulate plans of Twin Bridges Roundabout improvements to Members	A concept scheme has been published on the public website as part of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document work (attached). Works planned this year include a topographical survey, analysis of current vehicular movements and 2 safety audits which will inform the detailed design of the junction improvements.
	Advise whether the possibility of having net monthly invoices as part of contracts has been explored	<p>The Borough Treasurer has advised that his understanding of net monthly invoices is that payment is made on the last day of the month following the one in which the invoice is dated.</p> <p>The impact of this would be to delay payment to suppliers by up to two months after the invoice date. This would have a positive impact on the Council's cash flow and the interest that it is able to earn. Conversely, it would have a detrimental impact on the supplier's cash flow, resulting in increased costs.</p> <p>The possibility of introducing net monthly invoices has not been considered to date as it is contrary to the guidance that Members have provided in the past. In essence, the view has been that the Council should be supporting businesses during the recession. This has led to a policy of paying all undisputed invoices within 30 days (currently achieving 93.4%) unless contractual terms require payment within a shorter period of time.</p>

		<p>In addition, the Council utilises a procurement card which enables businesses to opt for payment of their invoices within an even shorter timescale should they so wish. In practice few businesses exercise this option because the banks levy a charge (known as a merchant fee) if suppliers accept payment via a procurement card.</p> <p>The introduction of net monthly invoices would represent a reversal of the current policy and as such requires wider discussion amongst Members followed by a formal decision by the Executive Member for Transformation and Finance.</p>
13.	Cllr Angell asked for more information on the survey of 'Town & Country' readers	The total number of responses to the survey carried out in October/November of last year was 595. Cllr Angell was sent the full report of the survey results on 18 July.



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ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES
Traffic & Safety Group

Amendment	Date	Initials	Project title	
A	Aug 12	GW	TWIN BRIDGES ROUNDABOUT	
			Drawing title	
			CONCEPT PLAN	
			Prepared by	Checked by
			AT	NM
			Scale	Date
			NTS	DEC 2010
			Project Number	Drawing Number
			Amend Letter	Print Suffix

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**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

2013/14 BUDGET OVERVIEW Borough Treasurer

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 3 July 2012 the Executive approved the Commitment Budget for 2013/14 to 2015/16, together with the overall budget strategy and timetable for 2013/14. A copy of the report is attached at Annex A.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission is asked to comment on the key assumptions underpinning the Commitment Budget 2013/14 to 2015/16 and provide any feed back on the proposed strategy and timetable for 2013/14.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Commitment Budget 2013/14 to 2015/16 is the first step in setting a budget for 2013/14 and beyond. As such, it updates the Council's current spending plans, identifies the resources that are likely to be available to finance future budgets and makes assumptions about future inflation, interest rates, capital spend and capital receipts.
- 2.2 The fundamental difference between the 2013/14 budget and other recent budgets is the uncertainty around future Government support. With many of the details associated with the relocalisation of business rates still awaited and the likelihood that many existing specific grants will be absorbed within the new funding arrangements, the Council will not know the precise level of resources it has available to fund the 2013/14 budget until the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement is published in December.
- 2.3 For this reason the Commitment Budget contains a number of options ranging from a 2% (best case) reduction to a 7% (worst case) reduction in Formula Grant. Given the Government's commitment to tackle the national deficit there remains the possibility that changes to Formula Grant will fall outside of this range and the Council will need to plan accordingly.
- 2.4 The budget proposals will be approved for consultation by the Executive on 11 December, with the budget and Council Tax being agreed by Council on 27 February.

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 None

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 These are set out in paragraph 6.4 of attached report.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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TO: THE EXECUTIVE
3 JULY 2012

COMMITMENT BUDGET 2013/14 – 2015/16
Borough Treasurer

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

1.1 This report updates the Executive on the significant issues that are likely to impact upon the Council's budget in future years and represents the first step towards setting a budget for the 2013/14 financial year and beyond.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Commitment Budget for the period 2013/14 to 2015/16, summarised in Table 1 of the report be approved.

2.2 That the proposed budget process for 2013/14 as set out in paragraphs 5.19 to 5.23 of the report be approved.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The recommendations are designed to allow the Executive to develop its Medium Term Financial Strategy and to start to consider an appropriate budget strategy for 2013/14 and beyond.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Background information relating to the options considered is included in the report.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Commitment Budget 2013/14-2015/16

5.1 The preparation of the Commitment Budget for the coming three year period brings together the Council's existing expenditure plans and is the first formal stage in planning for the revenue budget for 2013/14. The Council's Commitment Budget is shown in detail in Annex A and summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Commitment Budget 2013/14-2015/16

Department Plans	Base Budget	Planned Expenditure		
	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Base Budget		72.330	71.650	71.388
Movements in Year		-680	-262	99
Adjusted Base	72.330	71.650	71.388	71.487

This table illustrates the Council's current planned spending. The Commitment Budget is based upon the 2012/13 budget approved by Council in February adjusted to exclude the effects of drawings from balances, and takes account of approved

existing commitments, including the full-year effect of pressures and economies approved for the 2012/13 budget.

5.2 Savings identified for future years within the revenue proposals for 2012/13 have been included in the commitment budget. Significant changes to the Commitment Budget submitted in February include:

- The introduction of charging for the collection of garden waste from 1 April 2013 (-£250,000)
- The full year effect of savings proposals being implemented during 2012/13 i.e. youth service, public transport and concessionary fares and community transport (-£436,000)
- Under the current refuse collection contract, refuse vehicles are purchased by the Council from capital resources and any revenue impact will be assessed when the capital programme is considered. Under the old contract, vehicles were purchased by the contractor and the cost to the Council was reflected in the revenue service charge. This element of the service charge has now been removed (-£181,000)
- Impact of the 2012/13 capital programme on interest receipts and the Minimum Revenue Provision (+£140,000).

5.3 As part of the process for building the 2013/14 budget, all commitments will be reviewed over the coming months to ensure that they remain valid and have been accurately costed.

Resources

5.4 There are a number of inherent difficulties in medium-term financial planning, in terms of accurately estimating both available resources and spending needs.

5.5 Significantly, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2013/14 is unlikely to be published before December 2012. The Comprehensive Spending Review assumes that there will be further reductions to Central Government support of 2% in 2013/14 and 4% in 2014/15. For planning purposes, it has been assumed that 2% in 2013/14 represents the 'best case' scenario, given that the actual reductions in the Council's Formula Grant have exceeded considerably the planning assumptions contained in the earlier years of the Comprehensive Spending Review period (i.e. actual reduction of 14.3% compared to the planning assumption of 8% for 2011/12 and 10.4% compared to 6% for 2012/13).

5.6 The overall position is further complicated by Government proposals for the relocalisation of business rates from 1 April 2013. There are many uncertainties around these proposals as the details are only beginning to emerge as the Local Government Finance Bill passes through Parliament and the Department of Communities and Local Government publishes a range of consultation papers on implementation. It is highly unlikely that this new means of funding local government will be any more transparent than any of its predecessors, especially as recent announcements indicate that a range of existing specific grants will be absorbed within the new funding arrangements.

5.7 Given this uncertainty three scenarios have been developed for 2013/14. The 'best case' scenario assumes a 2% reduction in Government support, in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review. The 'worst case' scenario assumes a further 5%

reduction in Government support (to 7%) and the 'central case' is midway between these and assumes a 4.5% reduction in Government support.

- 5.8 The Council also receives substantial external funding through a number of specific grants for which the following assumptions have been included within the latest budget projections.

Council Tax Freeze Grant

Whilst there are no plans for a Council Tax Freeze Grant in future years the grant on £1.212m initially received in 2011/12 will continue to be received in each year of the planning period. Up until 2014/15 this is consistent with Government policy announcements and within the financial provision made in the Comprehensive Spending Review. The planning assumption is that the Council Tax Freeze Grant will continue, in some form, into 2015/16, but that the additional Council Tax Freeze Grant of £1.220m received for 2012/13 will be a one off.

NHS Funding for Adult Social Care

The Council will receive £0.932m in 2012/13. Similar provision has also been made in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16, with the first two years being in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Executive will be aware that this source of income represents a significant budget risk until firm agreement is reached with the PCT for the payment of these funds to the Council.

New Homes Bonus

This funding stream is designed to encourage the development of new properties and will generate £1.434m in 2012/13 based upon the number of new homes built in the two years to October 2011. Each year's bonus is payable for six years. Increases of £0.5m are forecast for each year of the planning period on the assumption that over 300 houses will be built each year. This assumption also represents a considerable budget risk as its impact is compounded by increasing the yield from Council Tax by a similar amount.

Specific Grants

In 2012/13 the Council will receive seven specific grants totalling £13.685m. Although specific, none of these grants are ring fenced. Details of the specific grants are set out in table below:

Table 2: Specific Grants 2012/13

	2012/13 £000
Early Intervention Grant	4,693
Learning Disability & Health Reform	7,951
Community Safety	69
Homelessness	50
Lead Local Flood Authority	153
Extended Rights to Free Travel	75
Housing and Council Tax Benefit Admin	694
Total	13,685

Expenditure associated with these grants has already been incorporated in the base budget and it has therefore been assumed that any reductions in these

grants will be accompanied by an equal reduction in expenditure (either from the grant supported expenditure or elsewhere) so that there is no overall impact on the budget forecasts.

Inflation and Interest Rates

- 5.9 Forecasting future levels of inflation and interest rates is fraught with considerable risk as the outlook for global economic growth is still dominated by exceptional uncertainty in many different dimensions including;
- Continuing Eurozone concerns
 - Global economic growth
 - Unsustainable historically low UK interest rates
 - Persistently high UK inflation
 - Need for further austerity measures to eradicate UK structural deficit
- 5.10 Based on advice from the Council's Treasury Management advisers the Budget projections reflect a rising Bank Rate moving from 1% in late 2013/14 to 4% by 2015/16.
- 5.11 In terms of pay inflation, it has been assumed that the current Government policy of a 1% increase in public sector pay in 2013/14 will be followed through, but that increases of 2% should be factored into the following years reflecting the likelihood that public sector salaries will then track the lower level of prices over the medium term.
- 5.12 The outlook for inflation remains uncertain, especially as the Consumer Price Index at 3% remains above the Bank of England's target rate of 2% and the Retail Price Index is currently 3.5%. The assumption used in the current model is that general inflation will average 2.5% over the three year planning period. However the impact of inflation will be reviewed and forecasts updated as the 2013/14 budget process progresses. A 1% inflation rate translates into higher costs of approximately £500,000.
- 5.13 The Council should continue to remain debt-free in 2013/14 and as such have cash balances that can be invested, in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, in financial markets. Based on the forecasts above the assumption has been made that the Council can achieve a return of 1% on its cash balances during 2013/14. As a guide a variation in the average interest rate of 1% would result in a change to investment income of approximately £150,000.

Fees and Charges

- 5.14 Increases in fees and charges are determined by the overall economic conditions, the willingness of customers to pay the higher charges and continued demand for Council services. For planning purposes it has been assumed that income from fees and charges will increase in line with the Council's general inflation forecasts i.e. averaging 2.5% over the three year planning period. The Council's long term average rate of increase in fees and charges is between 3.25% and 3.75%. If the market will bear increases of this magnitude in 2013/14 this will have a positive impact on the budget forecasts. As a guide, a further 1% increase in fees and charges could be expected to yield an additional £130,000 in 2013/14.

Capital Programme

- 5.15 The indicative Council funded three year General Fund capital programme included with the budget report to Council in February 2012 is £7.88m for 2013/14 and £8.28m for 2014/15. In addition it is anticipated that the Council will continue to generate capital receipts of around £3.0m per annum primarily from the sharing arrangements with Bracknell Forest Homes that were agreed as part of the housing stock transfer. With the scope for generating income from capital receipts limited by both the underlying economic conditions and the availability of surplus land/assets the capital programme has a significant impact on the revenue account with accounting regulations requiring resources to be set aside to cover underlying borrowing costs. Therefore the Council will need in due course to consider whether the indicative capital programme is affordable as part of its overall budget strategy.

Budget Overview

- 5.16 Drawing together the above projections for future commitments and resources provides a starting point for considering the budget strategy for 2013/14 and beyond.

Table 3: 'Central Case' Preliminary Budget Overview 2013/14 to 2015/16

	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Base Budget	72.330	75.083	77.682
Known Commitments	-0.680	-0.262	0.099
Loss of Council Tax Freeze Grant	1.220	0	0
Capital Programme/Interest Rates	0.113	0.461	0.440
Inflation	2.100	2.400	2.400
Budget Requirement	75.083	77.682	80.621
Government Support (incl New Homes Bonus)	-22.583	-22.200	-22.276
Council Tax (at current rate with assumed growth in number of properties)	-49.359	-49.920	-50.486
Funding	-71.942	-72.120	-72.762
Funding Gap	3.141	5.562	7.859

- 5.17 The table above indicates, based on currently available information, that the Council faces an underlying funding gap of around £7.9m by 2015/16. However, it should be noted that this is before considering service pressures and developments. At this stage it is not possible to quantify the precise impact but experience has shown that the Council typically needs to add around £1.5m to £2m per annum to the budget for essential service pressures. This would arise, for example, as a result of demographic change and an increase in some demand led services. The most significant uncertainty at present is the proposal to localise Council Tax Benefit. Dependent upon future decisions the impact of this on the Council's revenue budget in 2013/14 could be between zero and £1m. For the purposes of this report it has been assumed that whatever the budgetary impact of this proposal it will be contained within the essential service pressures. This therefore suggests that the total budget gap over the next four years could be up to £13.9m (i.e. over 17% of the budget requirement in 2015/16).

- 5.18 The table above is based on the 'central case' scenario for 2013/14 (see paragraph 5.7). Using the best case scenario the gap would reduce to 2.562m in 2013/14 and under the worst case scenario would increase to £4.219m.

Budget Strategy

- 5.19 When reporting on the financial outturn for 2011/12 earlier on tonight's agenda revenue balances were £10.266m at 31 March 2012. The 2012/13 budget includes plans to spend £0.394m of this reserve on the assumption that the Council is able to spend within budget for the fifteenth consecutive year. Historically £4m has been considered to be the minimum prudent level for revenue balances. There is therefore £5.872m available to support future expenditure.
- 5.20 The forecast for 2013/14 and beyond is extremely uncertain given the pending localisation of Business Rates, and should therefore be considered as a starting point for budget planning purposes at this early stage.
- 5.21 The focus over the coming months will be on the challenge posed by the likely funding gap in 2013/14. The Council has a track record of delivering efficiency savings and reducing back office costs in order to protect front line services although it is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve similar types of savings year-on-year. This will not be sufficient to bridge the anticipated funding gap so the Council will also need to consider:
- a) taking a firm line to limit future year's pressures
 - b) utilising available balances
 - c) increasing the Council Tax, with each 1% generating £490,000 additional income
 - d) identifying savings to front line services which may result in service reductions or closures.
- 5.22 In practice it is likely that a combination of all four approaches will be required.

Budget Timetable

- 5.23 Preparatory work at officer level has already been instigated by the Corporate Management Team to allow greater time to explore options. Within this context the key milestones for budget preparation are set out below:

Service Planning Process identifying key work streams	Jul 12 – Feb 13
Development of savings proposals	Jul 12 – Nov 12
Provisional settlement	Early Dec 12
Executive agree proposals for consultation	11 Dec 12
Overview and Scrutiny Commission reviews budget proposals	31 Jan 13
Executive considers responses to consultation and agrees final budget proposals	12 Feb 13
Council agrees budget and Council Tax	27 Feb 13

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to set the level of the Council Tax by 11 March each year. It is impossible to achieve this without having agreed an affordable revenue budget for the year in question.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The financial implications of this report are included in the supporting information.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 None.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The Borough Treasurer, as the Council's Chief Finance Officer (section 151 officer) must formally certify that the budget is sound when it is recommended for approval in February. This will involve identifying and assessing the key risk areas in the budget to ensure the robustness of estimates and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage those risks, including maintaining an appropriate level of reserves and contingency. This formalises work that is normally undertaken each year during the budget preparation stages and in monthly monitoring after the budget is agreed.

The Council's Strategic Risk Register identifies a number of key risk areas including:

- Financial and economic
- Demands for services
- Staffing
- Information management and information technology
- Other major programmes and projects
- Business interruption/continuity
- Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- Infrastructure and maintenance of assets
- Working effectively with partners, residents, service users, the voluntary sector and local businesses
- Litigation and legislation, and
- Town centre regeneration

The budget includes resources sufficient to enable the Council to monitor these key risks and where possible to minimise their effects on services in accordance with the strategic risk action plans. Specific risk reduction measures that are in place include the following:

- Budget Setting Process
 - Production and regular monitoring of a robust medium-term financial strategy
 - Regular analysis of budgets to identify legislative, demographic, essential and desirable service pressures / enhancements

- Detailed consideration of budgets by officers and Members to identify potential budget proposals
- Robust scrutiny of budget proposals prior to final agreement
- Ensuring adequacy and appropriateness of earmarked reserves
- Budget Monitoring
 - Robust system of budgetary control with regular reporting to CMT and through the Quarterly Service Reports (QSR's) to Members
 - Exception reports to the Executive
 - Annual review of the Councils' budget monitoring arrangement by external audit to ensure they remain fit for purpose
 - Taking corrective action during the year to ensure the budget is delivered every year (as in 2009/10, 2006/07, 2005/06 and 2000/01)
 - Specific regular review by Group Accountants of particularly volatile budget areas

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 No groups have been consulted at this stage.

Background Papers

None.

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Doc. Ref

Commitment Budget 2013/14 to 2015/16

	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000
Chief Executive / Corporate Services				
Approved Budget	15,285	15,285	15,194	15,194
Borough Elections				70
Unified Training Budget - realignment of training year		-10		
Vacating Seymour House		-75		
Invest to Save - Refurbishment of Time Square		-6		
Net Inter Departmental Virements				
Chief Executive / Corporate Services Adjusted Budget	15,285	15,194	15,194	15,264
Children, Young People and Learning				
Approved Budget	12,809	12,809	12,449	12,289
Suitability Surveys		-20		20
Schools Music Festival		10	-10	10
Local foster home placements		-100	-150	
Youth Service		-250		
Net Inter Departmental Virements				
Children, Young People and Learning Adjusted Budget	12,809	12,449	12,289	12,319
Adult Social Care, Health and Housing				
Approved Budget	21,534	21,534	21,392	21,267
Carers Accommodation Strategy		-125	-125	
Senior Management Structure Changes		-17		
Net Inter Departmental Virements				
Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Adjusted Budget	21,534	21,392	21,267	21,267
Environment, Culture and Communities				
Approved Budget	26,908	26,908	26,277	26,300
Landfill Tax / Waste Disposal PFI		42	51	TBC
Landfill Tax Increase		104	99	TBC
Local Development Framework		25	-135	TBC
Capital Invest to Save 06/07 - Easthampstead Park		-1	-1	-1
Coroners Service - transfer from TVPA		9	9	
Flood and Water Management Responsibilities		-153		
Public Transport / Concessionary Fares		-136		
Community Transport		-50		
Waste Management - Brown Bins		-250		
Olympic Torch Relay		-14		
Refuse Collection Contract - Capitalisation of Vehicle Purchases		-181		
Senior Management Structure Changes		-18		
Invest to Save - Solar PV Array at Bracknell Leisure Centre		-8		
Net Inter Departmental Virements				
Environment, Culture and Communities Adjusted Budget	26,908	26,277	26,300	26,299
Total Service Departments	76,536	75,312	75,050	75,149
Non Departmental / Council Wide				
Approved Budget	-4,206	-4,206	-3,662	-3,662
2012/13 Capital Programme (Full Year Effect) - Interest		34		
Minimum Revenue Provision		104		
2012/13 Use of Balances (Full Year Effect) - Interest		2		
Terms and Conditions				
Increase in Employers Pension Fund Contributions		151		
Ceasing to Pay Pension Fund Contributions in Advance		200		
Transfer and increase in Local Authority Flood Grant		153		
Pay Provision		-100		
Net Inter Departmental Virements				
Non Departmental / Council Wide	-4,206	-3,662	-3,662	-3,662
TOTAL BUDGET	72,330	71,650	71,388	71,487
Change in commitment budget		-680	-262	99

For management purposes budgets are controlled on a cash basis. The following figures which are used for public reports represent the cost of services including recharges and capital charges:

	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000
Corporate Services	6,967	6,876	6,876	6,946
Children, Young People and Learning	20,922	20,562	20,402	20,432
Adult Social Care and Health	23,974	23,832	23,707	23,707
Environment, Culture & Communities	36,236	35,605	35,628	35,627
Non Departmental/Council Wide	-15,769	-15,225	-15,225	-15,225
	72,330	71,650	71,388	71,487

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME CONSULTATION
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members on the consultation taking place on the proposals to form a local Council Tax Support Scheme.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the consultation.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Council will be required to have in place a local Council Tax Support Scheme by the 31st January 2013 to replace the national Council Tax Benefit Scheme or it will be required to implement a Government default scheme.
- 3.2 The Executive Member for Adult Social Care Health and Housing considered a report on the 12th July and agreed a number of proposals that should be subjected to consultation so as to inform the construction of the Council's new scheme. The decision is included at Appendix A.
- 3.3 Views of Town and Parish Councils and major precepting authorities have been sought and the proposals discussed at the town and parish liaison meeting on the 11th July.
- 3.4 On the 30th July consultation with all current Council Tax benefit recipients began by an independent research company and an open questionnaire to all households in Bracknell Forest was made available on the Council's website. The consultation will run for twelve weeks.
- 3.5 Voluntary and community groups have also been written to seek their views on the proposals.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Local Council Tax Support Scheme will inevitably lead to changes in the level of financial support provided to vulnerable households compared to that they received under the national Council Tax Benefit Scheme. Therefore, it is important that the Council undertakes thorough and robust consultation so as to inform its decision on the nature of the new scheme. If the Council decided not to implement a local scheme and was required to adopt the Government default scheme it would in all likelihood lead to significant financial pressures for the Council.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Government has signalled its intention to localise Council Tax Support and has abolished Council Tax Benefit from 1st April 2013. The new scheme will be funded by a fixed grant from government which will be at least 10% less than the current Council Tax Benefit expenditure. Estimates of the overall financial impact of the new scheme for the Council if it were to provide similar levels of financial support to households as the old Council Tax Benefit Scheme are in the region of £ 1.1 million. The Government has made clear that older people are not affected by this. To address this potential funding gap the Council can reduce financial support to households, offer up other compensatory savings or seek to generate additional income or a combination of the three. It is the first area that the Council is consulting upon with individual households.
- 5.2. The Council has recognised that if financial support is to be reduced to households who are currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, proposals should be developed to target those households who are most able to address that reduction. That is because the new scheme will operate as a reduction on a household's Council Tax liability and so any reduction in financial support will lead to a Council Tax liability that the household will be required to pay.
- 5.3. The Council has identified the following seven areas which could be used to formulate the new local Council Tax Support Scheme:
- Removing the provision to make extended payments;
 - Removing the provision to back date claims;
 - Removing second adult rebate;
 - Increasing non-dependent charges;
 - Reducing the level at which the amount of capital a household has removes them from financial support;
 - Restricting financial support to a specific Council Tax band;
 - Including income that is current disregarded under the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme when calculating household eligibility for financial support.
- 5.4. Over 3,500 current Council Tax Benefit customers have received questionnaires on the proposals and offered the ability to return the questionnaire or complete it on line. At the time of writing there had been 250 responses. There will be in-depth interview with households and focus groups with those households who indicate a willingness to take part.
- 5.5. On the 1st August the following members from the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel met with officers to discuss the proposals; Councillor Turrell, Councillor Allen, Councillor Harrison. They offered the following observations on the proposals:

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- If extended payments were to be ended then households should be offered flexibility in paying their Council Tax Liability;
 - For those households who had no prior experience of the Benefit system backdating of one month should be allowed from when they apply for financial support;
 - If financial support is to be limited by restricting to a Council Tax band that should be after an interim period of six months from when the financial support starts based on the actual Council Tax Liability;
 - A hardship fund should be established to provide additional financial support for a short period of time;
 - If the capital limit is to be reduced whereby households would no longer be eligible for financial support it should not go below £5,000;
 - If non-dependent charges are to be increased for the higher bands of earned income it should lead to the household receiving no financial support rather than generating what could be small Council Tax liabilities;
 - If non-dependent charges are to be increased for students that should only be where students have earned income;
 - It was recognised that the scheme would need to be reviewed in its first year of operation and that further changes may be required in the future to address demographic changes or unintended consequences of the design of the scheme.
- 5.6. It is intended to report to the November meeting of the Executive on the results of the consultation and the proposed new scheme. The Council will be required to agree the new scheme following consideration by Executive.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal requirements particularly the need for consultation and EIA are addressed in the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The relevant financial provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be provided as part of the report to Executive in November.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 If the Council fails to establish a scheme by the 31st January 2013 it will be required to operate the default scheme provided by the Government. If the Council sets up a local scheme which results in Council Tax liabilities that households will struggle to

meet then it runs the risk of increased bad debt provision being required and increase in collection costs.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 This is contained in the body of the report.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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**TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING
12 JULY 2012**

**LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority to begin consultation on the options to establishing a Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS).**

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the following options to establish a Local Council Tax Support Scheme are subjected to consultation:**
- 2.1.1. That the provision to make extended payments of benefits is ended (see paragraph 5.8).**
- 2.1.2. That the provision to back date claims for Council Tax Support is ended (see paragraph 5.9).**
- 2.1.3. That the second Adult Rebate Scheme is ended (see paragraph 5.10).**
- 2.1.4. That non-dependent charges are increased from the current levels (see paragraph 5.11).**
- 2.1.5. That the amount of capital that a household has at which financial support is provided is decreased (see paragraph 5.13).**
- 2.1.6. That the maximum financial support provided is restricted to a Council Tax liability band.**
- 2.1.7. The type of household income that is disregarded when calculating financial support under the new scheme**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The Government signalled its intention to localise Council Tax Support in the 2010 spending review. It stated that it would reduce expenditure by 10%. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 contains provisions for the abolition of Council Tax Benefit thus paving the way for localised schemes. The Local Government Finance Bill makes provision for the localisation of Council Tax Support in England by imposing a duty on all billing authorities to make a localised Council Tax reduction scheme by the 31 January 2013 and to consult with major precepting authorities and such other persons as it considers likely to have an interest in the scheme about the scheme. The Local Government Finance Bill will also prescribe certain classes or groups who must receive reductions. This will include classes of eligible pensioners based on the same factors that have determined pensioner eligibility and award under the Council Tax Benefit System. The bill will also prescribe a default scheme which will take effect if the billing authority has not made a scheme by the 31 January 2013.**

- 3.2. The new schemes will operate on the basis of providing a discount on the Council Tax liability depending upon the local criteria established in the LCTSS. The Government will no longer provide 100% funding for the Council Tax support, instead it will provide a specific grant to billing and major precepting authorities. The Government has issued a consultation document on the proposed funding allocation. Using this indication of available funding compared to the estimated Council Tax Benefit expenditure for 2013/14 based on the current national scheme the funding gap could be as much as £1.1 million.
- 3.3. The Council has two main options for bridging this gap; reducing the amount of Council Tax support to working age households and compensating the reduction through localised spending reductions. A combination of these options could be used together with the flexibility to introduce technical changes to the Council Tax scheme. These changes will have differing impacts on households and also the precepting partners. The purpose of this report is to seek authority to consult on a range of options that could be employed to construct the LCTSS and so at this stage there is no need to make a decision on the preferred elements.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The Council could decide not to consult on options to construct the LCTSS. This would generate the risk that any scheme the Council implemented could be challenged or alternatively the Council would be required to implement the default scheme. The draft default scheme proposed by the Government in its statement of intent operates as close to the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme as possible. Therefore, adoption of the default scheme would run the risk of requiring the Council to fund the shortfall between the Government funding and the current predicted costs of the Council Tax Benefit Scheme in 2013/14 of £1.1 million.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The current Council Tax Benefit Scheme is a national scheme administered locally. There is very little local discretion in the operation of the scheme. Currently Council Tax Benefit is paid to households on pass ported benefits such as income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Guarantee Credit (part of State Pension Credit) and Income related employment and Support Allowance. Other people on low incomes receive Council Tax Benefit in relation to their income compared to the amount the Government believes they should have to live on based on the size and circumstances of their households.
- 5.2 The Government published a statement of intent for local Council Tax Support Schemes and an indicative funding consultation at the end of May. The Government have exemplified the future level of funding that each authority will receive, based on the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates of total subsidised Council Tax Benefit (CTB) and the local shares based on 2010/11 Out-turn figures. It is not clear whether the OBR estimates will be updated before 1 April 2013, but the "local-share" distribution will be updated to reflect 2011/12 Out-turn data. This is then compared to Bracknell's "local-share" of the 2012/13 estimated CTB bill – split into the two categories "Pensioner CTB" and "Working Age CTB" based on the latest estimate of the current split.

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		£'000
CTB Forecast 2012/13		6,045
Bracknell Forest Council		4,835
Pensioner CTB		2,089
Working Age CTB		2,746
Parishes		282
Berkshire Combined Fire Authority		246
Thames Valley Police Authority		682

5.3 As such, taking account of the exemplified funding level of £4.159m as notified in the DCLG funding arrangement consultation, the Council will face a shortfall of £0.676m assuming no other changes occur in the uptake of the new discount scheme. Any increase in the Band D Council Tax rate for 2013/14 will need to be reflected in the model, as there will be in effect a reduced yield resulting from the impact of the new discount scheme. For the purposes of this exercise a 3-year national average Council Tax increase of 2.9% is used– a 1% variation will result in a variation of around £50,000. As such the table below highlights that, before taking into account any change in the uptake of the scheme, a resource gap of £0.816m will be faced by the Council assuming the “default” scheme.

	2012/13 Base	Council Tax Increase	2013/14 Base
		2.90%	
	£000	£000	£000
Pensioner CTB	2,089	61	2,150
Working Age CTB	2,746	80	2,826
	4,835	140	4,975
	4,159		4,159
Resource shortfall	-676		-816

5.4 However given the change in the nature of the scheme, from a “benefit” to a “discount”, it is believed by DCLG and others that there will be a behavioural shift in the numbers of people that will apply for the scheme. Whilst very subjective and based on the historical take-up of benefits in 2008/09, CLG have indicated that the base scenario should include a 10% uptake for all groups. Clearly this is open to discussion and as can be seen from the impact on the funding shortfall this variable needs to be given careful consideration.

5.5 Off-setting this increase in demand, the model also sets out to reflect the potential reduction in working-age claimants as a result of the up-turn in the economic cycle. This has been modelled both on local estimates and the national forecasts of the OBR. It assumes a potentially optimistic reduction in working age claimants of almost

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8% in 2013/14 with consistent reductions in future years. The impact of both these scenarios is highlighted below.

	Uplift Claimants	Reduction in Working Age Claimants	Net Impact
	10%	-7.80%	
	£000	£000	£001
Pensioner CTB	215	0	215
Working age CTB	283	-242	40
	498	-242	255

- 5.6 As such, based on an assumed 2.9% increase in Council Tax, a 10% uplift in all groups of claimants combined with a 7.8% reduction in working age claimants resulting from the economic cyclical upturn, the total resource gap faced by the Council will be £1.071m in the first year.

Budget Implication	2012/13 Base	2012/13 Base	Uplift Claimants	Reduction in Working Age Claimants	Estimated Cost
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Pensioner CTB	2,089	61	215	0	2,365
Working Age CTB	2,746	80	283	-242	2,866
					5,230
				Central Government Grant	4,159
				Resource Gap	-1,071

Options to address the funding gap through the LCTSS

- 5.7 Software has been purchased to enable the Council to model proposed changes in the amount of discount awarded to households in the form of benefit. Using this software and based on the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) of the 21 May the Council Tax Benefit expenditure for 2012/2013 it is possible to model reductions in benefit to existing Council Tax Benefit customers. The proposed strategy is to target reductions in support for those households who demonstrate the ability to pay as well as changing elements of the scheme that can be implemented in terms of changes to the Council's IT system by 31 January 2013. As part of the consultation the council will be required to state the classes of person who will be entitled to a reduction under the new scheme:

- The income of any person liable to pay Council Tax to the Authority in respect of a dwelling;
- The capital of any such person;
- The income and capital of any other person who is a resident of the dwelling;

- d) The number of dependants of any person within paragraph a) or c);
- e) Whether the person has made an application for the reduction.

Removal of provision of extended payments

- 5.8 There are a number of elements in the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme which could be removed in the LCTSS. The first is extended payments which are payments of Council Tax Benefit for a period of six weeks after a customer returns to work to act as an incentive to enter work. Although the guidance for LCTSS suggests that schemes should not include dis-incentives for returning to work it is recommended that this should be removed so as to offset the impact on all Council Tax Benefit Customers. Removing this provision would reduce expenditure on Council Tax support by £17,691 a year. It would be possible to revise the period that extended payments are made.

Removal of provision to allow backdating

- 5.9 The existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme enables customers to backdate a Council Tax benefit claim to the date at which benefit entitlement began if before the benefit claim was made. It is recommended that benefit is only paid from the date at which a claim is made. This could reduce expenditure on Council Tax support by £8,991 a year. It is not possible to quantify the number of households who could be affected by this. The implication of this proposed change is that households who do not claim for Council Tax support in a timely way will not receive that support and thus will be liable for their Council Tax. This can be mitigated by effective publicity of the scheme and liaison with agencies that will come into contact with customers whose income changes.

Removal of second adult rebate

- 5.10 It is recommended that we consult on removal of the Second Adult Rebate from the LCTSS. This scheme is for Council Tax bill payers who have a person in their household who is; not a partner or civil partner, aged 18 or over, or paying rent, not paying Council Tax themselves, and on a low income. The Second Adult Rebate is based on the circumstances of the other household. The maximum benefit paid is 25% of the Council Tax liability. Removal of this scheme will mean that some household's liability will increase by the amount of benefit they are currently receiving and thus it is reasonable to expect the Council Tax bill payers to pass that costs on to the second adult. Removal of this scheme will reduce expenditure on Council Tax support by £9,352 and effect 33 households (average reduction on benefit of £283 a year).

Change in non dependent deductions

- 5.11 In line with the strategy to target reductions in Council Tax support to those households who have demonstrated the ability to pay it is recommended to consult on proposals to increase the non-dependent deductions in calculating benefit entitlement. Non-dependants are usually adult sons/daughters, other relatives or friends who live in a benefit customer's home on a non-commercial basis. Benefit customers may receive some money from the non-dependants towards their costs. This is not treated as the benefit customer's income; instead it is deducted from their housing and Council Tax benefit. In effect this will create a Council Tax liability equivalent to the annual value of the non dependent deduction. Council Tax benefit non-dependent deductions are considerably lower than those for housing benefit

reflecting the higher level of benefit paid for housing benefit and thus the percentage of benefit awarded. It is recommended to increase the non-dependant deductions up to 50% of the equivalent deductions for housing benefit purposes. The following table sets out the proposed changes:

Non-dependent	Existing Council Tax Benefit rate £	Proposed rate £ per week
Student	0	5.58
In receipt of Income Support / Job Seekers Allowance / Employment Support Allowance	0	5.58
Not in remunerative work not on JSA / ESA/ IS	3.30	5.58
In remunerative work maximum up to age 18	3.30	5.58
Up to £183 a week income	3.30	5.58
Up to £316 a week income	6.55	12.81
Up to £394 a week income	8.25	30
More than £394 a week	9.90	37.43

- 5.12 These proposals will reduce expenditure on Council Tax support by £147,000 and take 74 households out of benefit all together. The risk from increasing non-dependant deductions is that the Council Tax bill payer will be unable to collect those amounts from the non-dependant and thus is left with a liability with no income to meet it. It is possible that a non-dependant may decide to leave the household if confronted with these charges which would mean the reduction in expenditure may not be met and council tax support expenditure may increase.

Change in capital limits for benefit purposes

- 5.13 It is recommended to consult on proposals to reduce the capital limits which are used to calculate benefit entitlement. The current benefit system takes account of capital the benefit customer has in calculating a tariff income capital from £6,000 to £16,000. Above £16,000 benefit is not paid. Capital is regarded as savings, stocks and shares, property unless it is the home the customer lives in, redundancy pay and tax refunds. The capital limit at which financial support would not be provided could be reduced. If the limit was reduced to £ 2000 it would reduce Council Tax support expenditure by £242,700 and take 275 households out of benefit all together. The following table provides an indication of the changes in Council Tax support expenditure and households moving out of Council Tax support by each £1,000 band of capital.

Capital £	Savings £	Drop out cases
2,000.00	242,700.00	275
3,000.00	184,000.00	211
4,000.00	148,900.00	168
5,000.00	119,500.00	136
6,000.00	94,700.00	104

Limit Council Tax support to Council Tax liability bands

- 5.14 It is recommended to consult on limiting the total Council Tax support to a Council Tax liability band. The actual limit will vary depending upon the location of the property in terms of the parish as the parish precept will vary. The following table sets out the reduction in Council Tax Support expenditure and households affected by restricting discounts to the relevant bands: As can be seen restricting support to band B would reduce Council Tax support by £551,300 and impact on 2,234 single claimant households including lone parents as well as 454 couples.

Council Tax Band	Number couple of households affected	Annual saving £'s	Number single of households affected	Annual saving £'s	Total annual saving
A	493	167,600	2481	719,600	887,200
B	454	92,200	2234	459,100	555,300
C	359	38,400	1604	262,600	301,000
D	103	17,300	876	151,000	168,300
E	35	4,700	185	27,900	32,600

- 5.15 The following table sets out an example of the recommended areas for consultation in summary based on the highest and lowest reductions in financial support for capital limits and council tax band liability restriction and the total amount of Council Tax expenditure that would be saved from their implementation.

Proposals for consultation	£'000's reduction based on highest reductions	£'000's reduction based on lowest reductions
Funding gap	1100	1100
Remove extended payments	-18	-18
Remove backdating	-9	-9
Remove second adult rebate	-9	-9
Increase non-dependant deductions	-147	-147
Reduce capital limits	-243	-95
Limit Council Tax support	-553	-32
Resulting funding gap	121	790

- 5.16 The highest level of reduction in support would lead to 141 households who are currently on passported benefits i.e. they have never paid Council Tax previously to a position where they will be required to pay their full Council Tax liability due to non-dependant deductions and capital limits changes. There would be 208 standard earning claimants who will come out of benefit all together.
- 5.17. The lowest level of saving in council tax financial support would result in 46, based on £6,000 capital limit, households currently on passported benefits being required to pay their full council tax and 58 standard earning claimants who would come out of benefit all together.
- 5.18. When calculating household income all sources of income are taken into account for example: earning's, social security benefits, maintenance payments and other sources such as tariff income from capital. Depending upon the type of income it may be fully or partially ignored when calculating Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

There are also disregards in relation to type of household and circumstance. For example; for a single person who has earned income £5 is not counted, for a lone parent bringing up children alone with earned income £25 will not be counted. There are further disregards when a claimant or partner has child care costs. For example: £175 per week is disregarded for one child meeting criteria and £300 for 2 or more children. There are standard disregards such as child benefit, maintenance received for a child, disability living allowance, attendance allowance, any monies from social fund, any monies for fostering children, war widows pension (national scheme up to £10 a week in BFC all income from this source disregarded), Income from those lodging in a home, the first £20 is disregarded. There is a disregard of £17.10 of working tax credit a week. It is specifically recommended to consult on removing the disregard for child maintenance although the consultation will cover other disregards as well.

- 5.18 The Council currently operates a discretionary scheme to disregard household income from war widow's pensions when calculating financial support. The cost of this discretionary scheme will fall to the Council.
- 5.19 The Council will be required to establish a process to allow a LCTSS claimant to appeal a decision. Regulations are awaited concerning what decisions can be appealed and the prescription of any appeal body.
- 5.20 The Council has the ability to make up any shortfall in funding for the LCTSS from savings. However, if the Council decides to fund the scheme from savings following consultation responses it will in effect be requiring the precepting authorities to adopt the same approach.
- 5.21 The Government intends to introduce changes to the Council Tax scheme such that the Council will be given discretion over the relief granted to second homes and some empty homes from 1 April 2013. If the Council were minded to use the proposed discretion it is estimated it could generate up to £0.5 million additional tax base and subject to collection, the same income.

6. CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

- 6.1 The DCLG Statement of Intent for Localising Support for Council Tax emphasises the importance of consultation and the threat of challenge due to the impact of a local scheme on vulnerable groups. It is suggested consultation should start with the precepting authorities.
- 6.2. The necessary consultation timetable will take place before the provisions in the Local Government Bill regarding local Council Tax support will come into force. Provisions will be included in the bill to ensure that if the consultation takes place in line with the statement of intent it will not be invalid.
- 6.3 The consultation will be undertaken by the independent corporate research company. It is intended to complete a 12 week consultation programme by mid October . The decision on the adoption of the new scheme is a matter for full Council as determined by Local Government Finance Bill schedule 4 paragraph 5.

7. ADVICE RECIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

7.1 Borough Solicitor

The relevant legal issue at this stage is discussed at paragraphs 3.3 and 4.1 of this report; a decision not to consult on the available options will expose the Council to the risk of legal challenge.

7.2 Borough Treasurer

The Council faces a significant financial pressure brought about by these reforms. At this early stage there are a number of assumptions that need to be carefully considered in order to inform the level of the costs faced by the Council. The decisions taken to bridge this gap will also impact on the Council's precepting authorities and as such highlights the need for early and transparent consultation. Any budget pressures arising from the localisation of Council Tax Benefit will be considered as part of the Council's 2013/14 Budget Process.

7.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening is included at Appendix A. Although data exists on the protected characteristics of the current caseload there is no information on the impact of proposals in relation to the groups that will be established via the consultation and reported to members to inform the final scheme.

8. Strategic Risk Management Issues

8.1 All the calculations are based on the latest SHBE containing Council Tax benefit expenditure by households currently claiming that support. The proposals do not make a provision for non-payment or changes in demographics in the year except for those households who will become pensioners during 2013/14. The risk exists that if there is a major failure of an employer in Bracknell Forest in the year it would lead to increased unemployment and thus demand for Council Tax support. The modelling cannot take account of households who move into the Borough in the year that may be eligible for Council Tax support.

8.2 It is possible that the implementation of the recommendations could lead to unintended consequences. For example increasing non-dependant deductions could lead those members of households moving out into their own accommodation and rather than contributing to Council Tax payments and reducing Council Tax support claiming that support themselves.

8.3 If Council Tax liability increases are greater than the cash grant allocated to Bracknell Forest a shortfall will be created that the Council will have to fund.

8.4 The increase in liability for some households who to date have not been required to pay their Council Tax will lead to collection of Council Tax from households on limited means. Therefore, a bad debt provision will be required which is not allowed for in the local scheme.

8.5 There are considerable risks in changing the current Northgate IT system so that the new LCTSS can be administered for April 2013. Officers met with Northgate to discuss this and reassurance has been received that the changes the Council requires will be available in a special software release in December 2012. This

release will require system testing by the Council and time available to deal with any problems will be limited. To mitigate the risks all the recommendations other than limiting the total benefit to be paid can be manually implemented in the existing system.

- 8.6 This is one of many Welfare Benefit changes that will be implemented during 2012. The backdrop is the introduction of Universal Credit from October 2013 which will lead to the transfer of work in relation to housing benefit from the Council to the Department of Works and Pensions. If Benefit staff perceive these developments as threats to their long terms employment they may consider seeking alternative employment. The loss of key staff would impact on implementation of major Benefit Scheme changes.
- 8.7 There will be a need for robust and extensive consultation and Equality Impact Assessments of the proposals. If the LCTSS is challenged in terms of lack of due consideration of impact on the community the timescale for implementation is unlikely to be achieved.

9 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 9.1 A consultation plan has been established which will provide for general consultation via the Council's website, targeted consultation with households who will be impacted by the proposals as well as targeted consultation with key stakeholders.

Method of Consultation

- 9.2 Consultation will take place via websites, direct correspondence and focus group meetings.

Representations Received

- 9.3 The response to the consultation will be reported to Executive to support recommendations for the LCTSS to be implemented.

Background Papers

DCLG Localising Support for Council Tax, a statement of intent;
DCLG Localising Support for Council Tax, funding arrangement consultation;
Single Housing Benefit Extract modelling of Council Tax Support Scheme proposals.

Contact for further information

Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing
Adult Social Care, Health & Housing
Tel. No. 01344 351688
simon.hendey@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: 6 th June 2012	Directorate: ADSCHH	Section: Housing
1. Activity to be assessed	Proposals to establish local council tax support scheme	
2. What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	x New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing	
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Simon Hendey	
5. Who are the members of the EIA team?	Simon Hendey / Shanaz Alam	
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>To provide financial support to low income households towards their council tax liability. The Council will be required to set up a local council tax support scheme by 31/11/13 to replace the national council tax benefit scheme. The Council will receive funding from Government for the new scheme as a cash grant. The new scheme should not disadvantage pensioners compared to what they received under the national council tax benefit scheme. The new local scheme will need to reduce financial support for working age households, compared to what they received under the national scheme, so to keep within the available funding.</p>	
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	Those working age households who have been in receipt of the national council tax benefit	
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.
		What evidence do you have to support this? E.g equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality	Y	The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with disabilities
9. Racial equality	Y	The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics.

Unrestricted

			current working age claimants is as follows:
White British	290	8.01%	
White Irish	2	0.06%	
White any other background	13	0.36%	
Mixed white and black caribbean	1	0.03%	
Mixed white and Asian	1	0.03%	
Mixed any other mixed background	2	0.06%	
Asian or Asian British: Indian	4	0.11%	
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1	0.03%	
Asian or Asian British: any other Asian background	6	0.17%	
Black or Black British: African	3	0.08%	
Black or Black British: Any other Black Background	1	0.03%	
Not recorded	3296	91.05%	
Total	3620	100.0%	

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<p>10. Gender equality</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics</p>	<p>The current council tax caseload has been modelled to establish the impact of proposals to form the local council tax support scheme. The gender breakdown of the current working age caseload based on the main claimant is as follows,</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>GENDER OF CLAIMANT</th> <th></th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MALE</td> <td>1169</td> <td>32.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FEMALE</td> <td>2451</td> <td>67.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3620</td> <td>100.0%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	GENDER OF CLAIMANT		%	MALE	1169	32.3%	FEMALE	2451	67.7%	3620	100.0%	
GENDER OF CLAIMANT		%													
MALE	1169	32.3%													
FEMALE	2451	67.7%													
3620	100.0%														
<p>11. Sexual orientation equality</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics</p>	<p>The current council tax caseload has been modelled to establish the impact of proposals to form the local council tax support scheme. Sexual orientation is not monitored within the system but recorded separately and as such it cannot be linked back to the caseload in terms of age. Therefore the following information is based on the whole caseload not just working age claimants.</p>												

Unrestricted

				<table> <tr> <td>Bisexual</td> <td>11</td> <td>2.65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gay</td> <td>5</td> <td>1.20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heterosexual</td> <td>394</td> <td>94.94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lesbian</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transgender</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>3</td> <td>0.72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>415</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Bisexual	11	2.65%	Gay	5	1.20%	Heterosexual	394	94.94%	Lesbian	1	0.24%	Transgender	1	0.24%	Other	3	0.72%	Total	415	100.00%
Bisexual	11	2.65%																							
Gay	5	1.20%																							
Heterosexual	394	94.94%																							
Lesbian	1	0.24%																							
Transgender	1	0.24%																							
Other	3	0.72%																							
Total	415	100.00%																							
12. Gender re-assignment	Y		The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics	Information on claimants who have undertaken gender re-assignment is not recorded.																					
13. Age equality	Y ?	N	The local council tax support scheme will follow national prescription that will protect pensioner households so they will not be adversely effected. The support scheme is not relevant to those under the age of 16? Therefore the impact of the proposals will be borne disproportionately by those in the 16 – 65 age group?	<p>The current council tax caseload has been modelled to establish the impact of proposals to form the local council tax support scheme. The age of working age claimants based on the age of the main claimant is as follows,</p> <table> <tr> <td colspan="3">AGE OF MAIN CLAIMANT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-34</td> <td>1304</td> <td>36.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-49</td> <td>1549</td> <td>42.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-60 (to PC qualifying age)</td> <td>767</td> <td>21.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>3620</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </table>	AGE OF MAIN CLAIMANT			18-34	1304	36.0%	35-49	1549	42.8%	50-60 (to PC qualifying age)	767	21.2%	Total	3620	100.0%						
AGE OF MAIN CLAIMANT																									
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35-49	1549	42.8%																							
50-60 (to PC qualifying age)	767	21.2%																							
Total	3620	100.0%																							
14. Religion and belief equality	Y		The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics	Information on claimants religious belief is not recorded.																					
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y		The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics	There are currently 37 claims where the claimant or partner is in receipt of maternity benefit.																					
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y		The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme have the potential to adversely impact on households with these protected characteristics	Whether a claimant is in a civil partnership is not recorded.																					

Unrestricted

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<p>17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carer's/ex-offenders) and on promoting good community relations.</p>	<p>The proposals to form the local council tax support scheme will involve reducing the financial support currently enjoyed by households under the national council tax benefit scheme. Therefore, low income households will be required to make increased payments towards their council tax liability.</p>		
<p>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?</p>	<p>The Council is required to establish a local council tax support scheme and will be provided grant funding for the new scheme. The impact on individual households will be in relation to their household characteristics and income levels. That impact will be on households in the protected characteristic groups but it will not be due to their protected characteristics.</p>		
<p>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</p>	<p>The differential impact will be due to the household characteristics in terms of their income in relation to the proposals to establish a local council tax support scheme.</p>		
<p>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</p>		<p>N</p>	
<p>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</p>	<p>Detailed information will be required on households to assess the impact of the proposals to establish a local council tax support scheme. It is intended to undertake interviews with individual households that reflect the protected characteristic groups to better understand the impact of the proposals and to understand what mitigation is possible. This will be part of a wider consultation process with stakeholders in the community as well as residents who do not fall within one of the protected characteristic groups.</p>		
<p>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</p>	<p>Y</p>		<p>A full equality impact assessment will be produced with a 12 week consultation period to provide the information that is needed to better understand the impact of a series of options on individual households, as well as providing the opportunity for partners and the wider community to give their views on the proposals.</p>
<p>23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.</p>			
<p>Action</p>	<p>Timescale</p>	<p>Person Responsible</p>	<p>Milestone/Success Criteria</p>
<p>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</p>			
<p>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</p>	<p>Please list</p>		

Unrestricted

26. Chief Officers signature.	Signature: Simon Hendey	Date: Please add
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**TO: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**BRIEFING PAPER
COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS
(Director of Corporate Services)**

1 PURPOSE OF BRIEFING PAPER

- 1.1 The Government recently issued a consultation paper on proposals to give billing authorities greater discretion over the reliefs from council tax available in respect of second homes and some empty properties along with other potential reforms of the council tax system.

Following the consultation the Government has announced that it intends to introduce the changes from 1 April 2013. Apart from item 5.2, below, the proposals will require legislative changes which will be included in the Local Government Finance Bill currently before Parliament.

These changes are distinct from the proposed changes to Council Tax Benefit which is the subject of a separate paper from the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 There is a range of options to be considered, which are outlined in the following information. Where possible, the impact of each option on existing customers has been illustrated. Please note that this is a snapshot, and the actual numbers of customers affected is subject to fluctuation.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To identify opportunities to increase income from council tax.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are a range of options, some of which are identified and quantified in the supporting information.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The potential options for change are:

5.1 Long term empty properties (empty over 6 months)

These are properties emptied of furniture and effects. The council tax payer currently benefits from an exemption for the first six months (see 5.3 below), after which they are entitled to a discount for as long as the property remains unoccupied and unfurnished. The discount for this class of property was reduced from 50% to 10% from 1 April 2008.

Current number of cases	279
Current position	10% Discount
Option	To remove the discount
Maximum additional income	£30k

The taxpayers in this group fall into the following categories:

Private individuals	119
LA & Housing associations	59
Companies	101

5.2 Second homes & unoccupied furnished lets

These are properties where the liable person maintains a property elsewhere which they regard as their main home, or furnished properties with no-one resident. The discount for this class of property was reduced from 50% to 10% from 1 April 2004.

Current number of cases	214
Current position	10% Discount
Option	To remove the discount
Maximum additional income	£20k

The taxpayers in this group fall into the following categories

Private individuals	131
LA & Housing associations	5
Companies	78

5.3 Replacing the exemption for vacant homes with a discount

These are properties emptied of furniture and effects. For the first six months no council tax is payable and after that period a 10% long term empty property discount applies (see 2.2 above). There are presently two options but it is not certain whether the final legislation will allow a choice.

Current number of cases	414
Current position	6 month exemption from Council Tax
Option	To replace the exemption with a discount
Maximum additional income	£540k if no exemption or discount is allowed

Option 1 - reducing the exemption period

Reducing the 6 month exemption to 5 months	additional income £10k
Reducing the 6 month exemption to 4 months	additional income £40k
Reducing the 6 month exemption to 3 months	additional income £100k
Reducing the 6 month exemption to 2 months	additional income £190k
Reducing the 6 month exemption to 1 months	additional income £330k

Option 2 – replacing the 6 month exemption with a discount

Applying a discount of 75%	additional income £135k
Applying a discount of 50%	additional income £270k
Applying a discount of 25%	additional income £405k

Removing the current six month exemption on empty properties would be a contentious issue. The main argument against the measure, arising from the central government consultation, came from landlords, who felt that it was unfair that they should instantly become liable for council tax when a tenancy ended, and that it would inhibit the rental market.

The taxpayers in this group fall into the following categories

Private individuals	277
LA & Housing associations	86
Companies	51

5.4 Replacing the exemption for dwellings requiring or undergoing major repair or structural alterations

These are properties which require or are undergoing major repair works/ structural alteration to make them habitable. For the first 12 months no council tax is payable and after that period they receive the 10% long term empty property discount.

Current number of cases	45
Current position	12 month exemption from Council Tax
Option	To replace the exemption with a discount
Maximum additional income	£50k

Introducing a charge instead of the current twelve month exemption could be a contentious issue. These homes are, however, often obtained as an investment and reducing the period during which no council tax is paid would have a positive effect in that the number of empty properties would be expected to reduce.

The taxpayers in this group fall into the following categories:

Private individuals	38
LA & Housing associations	1
Companies	6

5.5 Empty homes premium (properties empty over two years)

Nationally a large number of dwellings are kept empty for long periods and the proposals are to enable local authorities to charge a premium of up to 50% on properties empty for more than two years, in addition to the normal council tax. These properties currently receive a 10% discount as long term empty properties but this will be removed if the option at 2.2 is chosen.

Current number of cases	142
Current position	10% discount
Option	To charge a premium
Maximum additional income	£70K based on a 50% premium

The taxpayers in this group fall into the following categories

Unrestricted

Private individuals	71
LA & Housing associations	41
Companies	30

5.6 The exemptions, listed below, are not affected by the changes and no council tax will be payable in respect of properties

- Owned by charities (for the first six months only)
- Left empty by prisoners
- Left empty by patients living in a hospital, nursing or care home
- Left empty by people who have died
- Where occupation is prohibited by law
- Waiting for a minister of religion to occupy
- Left empty by people living elsewhere to receive care
- Left empty by people living elsewhere to provide care for another person
- Left empty by full-time students
- Which are the responsibility of a trustee in bankruptcy
- Forming self-contained annexes where sub letting is prohibited

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 These provisions are contained in a Bill not yet enacted.

Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that decisions under Sections 11A of that Act (discounts for unoccupied properties) should be made by full Council. That is not to be changed. In relation to the proposed Section 11B (powers to set higher amounts for long term empty dwellings) Clause 11(7) of the Bill proposes that Section 67 of the 1992 Act should be amended such that determinations under the new Section 11B will have to be made by full Council.

I cannot see anything in the Bill which requires consultation before amendments to the discount/higher amount under Sections 11A/11B are made.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 Based on the latest forecasts the Council faces a budget gap of between £2.7m and £4.4m in 2013/14. Increasing income from council tax by amending discounts and exemptions will reduce the overall budget gap.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 None required at this time.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 Balancing the budget on an annual basis represents one of the key risks facing the Council. Increasing income from council tax helps to address the underlying budget gap.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 It is not considered that there is a requirement to consult with people affected.

Method of Consultation

7.2 N/A

Representations Received

7.3 N/A

Background Papers

Communities and Local Government
Technical Reforms to Council Tax - Summary of Responses Report

Contact for further information

Brian Blackmun, Corporate Services – 01344 352097
brian.blackmun@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT

Q1 2012-13
April - June 2012

Chief Executive:
Timothy Wheadon

Contents

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Section 1: Chief Executive's Commentary

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out an overview of the Council's performance for the first quarter of 2012/13 (April – June 2012). It complements the detailed Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) produced by each Director, which are being circulated to Members in tandem with this report. The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive with a high-level summary of key achievements, and to highlight areas where performance is not matching targets or expectations, along with any remedial action that is being taken to address this.
- 1.2 As might be expected at the end of the first quarter, the Council is continuing to perform well. The overall anticipated work of the Council for 2012/13 is contained in the departmental service plans which contain 206 new sub-actions to be completed in support of the 72 Key actions.

At the end of quarter 1 2012/13 the actions were

- 3 (1.5%) blue – complete – the Public Spaces Strategy has been completed; Solar PV panels have been installed at Bracknell Leisure Centre; the Bracknell section of the Olympic Torch relay was successfully delivered.
 - 188 (91%) green – on target
 - 15 (7.5%) amber (not yet started or possibly could fall behind schedule)
 - 0 (0%) red (not yet started but should have been or behind schedule).
- 1.3 Section 2 of this report, contains information on the Key performance indicators, across the Council, these show that the current status is
- 49 (70%) green
 - 4 (6%) amber
 - 11 (16%) red
 - 3 (4%) where current figures not yet provided
 - 3 (4%) awaiting a target

(In addition there are 18 (20%) where it is not appropriate to set a target)

N.B There are significantly less indicators reported in quarter 1 each year because many of the indicators are annual, and therefore will be reported in quarter 4.

Overview of the 1st quarter

- 2.1 Although the first quarter of the year has the least number of performance measures recorded (the majority of annual indicators being reported in quarter 4 each year) there were a number of areas where performance was good or improved. Notable examples include:
- Highest ever level of recycling in the borough (42.5%) being recorded for end of year 2011/12
 - Target for carers having their needs reviewed has been significantly exceeded

- The target of people eligible for self-directed support receiving their support has been met
- Good progress on implementing the planned maintenance programme
- Income at Coral Reef has been excellent as customers have sought alternative indoor activities in wet weather
- Lowest level of waste going to landfill recorded for year end (20.9%) which is down from 60% only 4 years ago
- Overall decrease in recorded crime in Bracknell Forest by 15.3% compared to quarter 1 last year.
- The Youth Offending Service performed well against the three national youth justice indicators, exceeding the national average and the South East region average. No young people have been sentenced to custody during Quarter 1.
- There has been an improvement in the resolution of ICT incidents from 91% to 97%.

2.2 Inevitably there are a small number of areas where performance did not match targets for the year. The most noteworthy are highlighted below.

- The numbers in residential care may be reducing over time although not meeting target at present. We are working towards meeting the target at year end.
- There has been a dip in the percentage of intermediate care referrals seen within 2 hours (80% in Q1 compared to 96% in quarter 4). There has been difficulty in recruiting to the post of Out of House Therapist. However this has now been done.
- The number of properties let to first time housing applicants has increased from 39 (Q4) to 46 (Q1) however it is still not meeting the target of 60. This is due to the increase in homeless demand. We need to increase the number of lettings to homeless households to meet our Temporary Accommodation targets.
- Overall serious acquisitive crime – The total number of SAC offences has risen mainly due to a rise in Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV) offences this quarter, although the total figure is still a reduction on Q1 2010/11. There is a reduction in burglary dwelling offences but not as much as was planned, this is also lower than the Q1 2010/11 figure. Whilst not on target, the level of serious acquisitive crime is still 30% lower than the same quarter in 2010/11. TFMV and burglary dwelling remain the focus of partnership activity through the joint tasking and police tasking processes.
- Repeat incidences of domestic abuse – although the overall repeat rate has dropped considerably since April (45.8%) to June (40.3%) the target set has not been met this quarter. We are however, looking to refine this target so that it focuses on the cohort that the Council is specifically engaging with, as part of our enhanced programme of tackling domestic violence. The more targeted figure will be available in quarter 2.
- Number of web-enabled transactions in libraries - Charging for requests has decreased the number of requests made.
- An increase in the non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered suggests the condition of the surveyed road network has deteriorated. The most

probable cause of this decline is damage caused by past poor winters.

- Target for answering calls from customers has not been met (68.2% against a target of 80.0%). There are several reasons for this – an upgrade to the Customer Services system has been taking place and some challenges have been experienced. Customer Services, ICT and contractor all working together to resolve these; there have been new services taken onto the system and changes in services with some resourcing issues (one member of staff on maternity and another on secondment to Adult Social Care, Health & Housing); changes to garden waste collection service have resulted in a large increase in calls during the quarter and addition of Nationality Checking Service has led to significantly longer calls.

2.3 Other issues of note include:

2.4 The number of looked after children dropped very slightly from 100 in Quarter 4 to 99 in Quarter 1. However the Council is taking part in the Troubled Families Initiative (a 3 year project), which will focus on those families where there are issues around parental unemployment, youth offending, anti-social behaviour and young people with poor school attendance. This initiative will bring significant pump-priming monies but will then be based on a 'payment by results' programme. There is also a positive move to focus on early intervention work across the Council. £0.5m has been set aside to support prevention and early intervention work which can demonstrate a future saving. Of this, £0.1m will be ring fenced to support the Troubled Families Initiative.

2.5 The highest number ever of children with protection plans has been recorded (102 at 31st May 2012). The majority of these (42%) are for emotional abuse with 40% being for neglect. Children with protection plans meet Bracknell Forest thresholds and are continually kept under review. As part of the approach to combating this, £0.2m of the early intervention fund was allocated, during July, to a project to focus on a specific group of families, where inadequate parenting is increasing the risk of children coming into care.

2.6 During this quarter there have been several statutory guidance notes issued. The Department for Education (DfE) consultation on the statutory guidance for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Munro Review progress report (moving toward a child centred system), both signal further changes for safeguarding and children's social care. There are also changes to the National Curriculum ie revised programmes of study for English and mathematics, and major changes to Special Educational Needs following the SEN Green paper, these include new arrangements for funding support and establishing closer links with health.

2.7 The housing team has successfully moved into the ASCHH department.

2.8 There has been extensive consultation with providers of residential and nursing care for older people, this aimed to improve our understanding of their costs in order to help inform the council's decision on setting fees for LA-funded places. This has resulted in fees increasing by 2.5%

- 2.9 More people are choosing to take up their support in the form of a direct payment – numbers in Bracknell Forest are up by over a quarter compared to last year.
- 2.10 The council's new public website was launched in April along with a mobile version. This is a significant development with the Council enjoying over 43% of residents using the website, the highest of any English council. The council's "Channel Strategy" has been agreed at Executive. This sets out how the Council wants to serve customers and residents in the most cost effective way. The new website is a critical element for this strategy, to encourage more online service provision at a significantly lower cost.
- 2.11 A significant amount of work has been undertaken in preparing for changes to office accommodation; preparatory works are currently underway to reduce storage, plan office layouts and ICT configurations.
- 2.12 There is likely to be significant service disruption due to migration of all ICT systems from old, unsupported Novell infrastructure to modern supported Microsoft infrastructure – this is a difficult project but important for the future as software and services currently being used are coming to the end of their life and will no longer be supported or developed, which at best would leave the authority in a technology cul-de-sac.
- 2.13 Wet weather has had a significant impact on performance in ECC areas:
- landscape services have been challenged with the combination of prolific growth of vegetation and land simply being too wet to take heavy equipment. If the weather holds fair, 2 or 3 cycles of work will be needed to bring the borough back up to previous standards
 - income is down at Downshire Golf Complex
 - roads surface dressing programme fell seriously behind schedule (however the contractor was able to mobilise teams from elsewhere in the country and the programme is now virtually back on track)
- 2.14 On 10th July over 30,000 people are estimated to have lined the route taken by the Olympic Torch through the borough, from Ascot Racecourse to Twin Bridges, before it was driven down the A329 for the evening ceremony in Reading. The event was seen as a massive success, totally vindicating the Council's decision to apply to London Organising Committee for the Olympic & Paralympic Games in 2011, to be one of the host boroughs. Great credit goes to the team who worked on the event and to the public who embraced it so fully.
- 2.15 There were 2 authorisations regarding RIPA applications. One was for testing purchasing tobacco at 5 premises; the other was for test purchasing alcohol at 7 premises.

External inspections, audit and scrutiny

- 3.1 Children Young People & Learning hosted a peer challenge of the Educational Psychology Service. This involved senior officers from four other local authorities. They highlighted the excellent working relationship that the team have with our schools and the popularity of the new traded service officer.

- 3.2 Two schools had full Ofsted inspections – one was graded good, the other graded as satisfactory. A further monitoring inspection also took place at the school previously graded “inadequate”. This showed that the school has made real improvements with satisfactory progress being reported against the actions previously agreed.
- 3.3 An inspector has been appointed to examine the Council’s Site Allocation Development Plan Document. We are currently awaiting the public examination schedule.
- 3.4 Overview and Scrutiny continued to contribute to the development of the Council's plans and strategies in the quarter. Working Groups on Public Transport Subsidies and Concessionary Fares, the Community Infrastructure Levy, Modernisation of Older People’s Services, Corporate Sponsorship, Substance Misuse, the Communications Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy progressed their work in the quarter. The recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny are taken into account before final decisions are taken by the Executive.

4 Strategic Risks

- 4.1 The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed in May and approved by the Executive. This is done on an annual basis. No new risks were identified and no changes were made to the scores of the eleven strategic risks. The greatest risks to the Council remain those related to financial and economic factors. Other significant risks facing the Council include the tight timescales for the modification of IT systems to implement the national benefit changes, the delivery of major projects and programmes e.g. implementation of responsibilities under the proposed new Health and Social Care Bill and limitations on funding to secure adequate infrastructure and to maintain highways and buildings. Following on from this some operational risks have been revised by departments.

Timothy Wheadon
Chief Executive

Section 2: Key Indicator Performance

Adult Social Care & Health

Data for ASCH not available on PARIS or in QSR

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
All Sections						
NI132	Waiting times for assessments (Quarterly)	85.8%	86.9%	90.0%		
NI133	Waiting times for services (Quarterly)	86.3%	83.5%	90.0%		
NI135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information (Quarterly)	35.9%	10.0%	10.0%		
OF2a.1	Adults aged 18-64 admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	1.30	1.30	3.99		
OF2a.2	Older people admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	699.00	160.8	363.5		
L137	Number in residential care (quarterly)	162	164	140		
L138	Number in nursing care (Quarterly)	107	109	135		
L159	People receiving Self-Directed Support as a percentage of Eligible People (Quarterly)	85.0%	84.1%	80.0%		
L172	Timeliness of financial assessments (Quarterly)	N/A	35.00%	95.00%		N/A
Community Mental Health Team						
OF1f	Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment (Quarterly)	20.0%	18.0%	13.0%		
OF1h	Adults receiving secondary mental health services in settled accommodation (Quarterly)	87.0%	89.0%	84.0%		
Community Response and Reablement						
OF2c.1	Delayed transfers of care - total delayed transfers per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	3.1	3.9	10.0		
OF2c.2	Delayed transfers of care - delayed transfers attributable to social care per 100,000 population (Quarterly)	1.3	0.6	7.0		
L135.1	Percentage of Enhanced Intermediate Care Referrals seen within 2 hours (quarterly)	96.20	80.00	95.00		
L135.2	Waiting time for OT support (Quarterly)	N/A	88.00	90.00		N/A
Community Support & Wellbeing						
L136.1	Number in receipt of direct payments (Quarterly)	460.00	311.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
L136.2	Number in receipt of community support excluding direct payments (Quarterly)	890.00	890.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community Team for People with Learning Difficulties						

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
OF1e	Adults with learning disabilities in employment (Quarterly)	14.8%	15.0%	15.0%		
OF1g	Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation (Quarterly)	85.2%	85.0%	85.0%		
Housing						
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (Quarterly)	34	50	23		
NI156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation (Quarterly)	48	42	50		
NI181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (Quarterly)	6.1	11.9	17.0		
L007.1	Number of properties let by the housing applicant queue - Homeless (Quarterly)	8	17	7		
L007.2	Number of properties let by the housing applicant queue - Transfers (Quarterly)	29	36	33		
L007.3	Number of properties let by the housing applicant queue - First time applicants (Quarterly)	39	46	60		
L029	Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice services and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation (Quarterly)	283	65	75		
L030	Number of lifelines installed (Quarterly)	151	158	165		
L033	Percentage of customers receiving the correct amount of benefit (Sample basis) (Quarterly)	94.9%	95.5%	95.0%		
L124	Number of households in B&B at end of quarter (Quarterly)	16	6	6		
L173	Number of lifelines demonstrated (Quarterly)	168.0	179.0	70.0		

Children, Young People & Learning

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
Children's Social Care						
NI043	Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody (Quarterly)	0.08 (ytd)	0.16 (ytd)	To be set	-	Previous data not available
NI067	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales (Annually)	98.3%	100.0%	98.0%		
NI068	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment (Quarterly)	87.0%	74.1%	70.0%		
NI103.1	Special Educational Needs – statements issued within 26 weeks – excluding exception cases (Annually)	100.0%	100.00%	98.5%		

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
NI103.2	Special Educational Needs – statements issued within 26 weeks – all cases (Annually)	61.5%	95.8%	85.0%		
L092	Number of children on protection plans (Quarterly)	82	96	N/A	N/A	
L123	Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral (Quarterly)	83.1%	85.9%	85.0%		
L140	Percentage of children looked after in family placement or adoption (Quarterly)	62%	60%	62%		
L161	Number of Looked After Children (Quarterly)	100	99	N/A	N/A	
Health and Wellbeing						
NI111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice system (Annually)	108.6 per 100k population	147.4 per 100k population	To be set	-	Previous data not available
Learning and Achievement						
L139	Schools judged good or better by Ofsted (Quarterly)	68%	68%	71%		
Strategy, Resources and Early Interventions						
L141	Number of youth centre attendances (Quarterly)	2,476	2,155	2,000		New indicator

Chief Executive's Office

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
Community Safety						
L095	Total violence against the person (Quarterly)	1,173	213	279		
L097	Number of incidents of sexual offences involving victims under 18 (Quarterly)	74	Data awaited	21	Data awaited	Data awaited
L105	Criminal damage (Quarterly)	912	224	244		
L108	Nuisance anti-social behaviour (Quarterly)	4014	1070	1079		
L143	Overall serious acquisitive crime (Quarterly)	649	174	162		
L152	Overall repeat incidences of domestic abuse (Quarterly)	673	190	165		
Overview and Scrutiny						
L116	Percentage of high level complaints dealt with in accordance with corporate standards (Quarterly)	100%	100%	90%		
L132	Number of local government ombudsman complaints requiring a local settlement (Quarterly)	2	0	1		

Corporate Services

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
Customer Services						
L051	Percentage of Council tax collected in year (Quarterly)	97.40%	29.15%	29.40%		
L053	Percentage of business rates collected in year (Quarterly)	98.60%	36.65%	37.00%		
L055	Satisfaction level expressed in survey of telephone contact with Customer Services (Quarterly)	93.70%	99.00%	90%		
L056	Percentage of calls answered within 5 rings (Quarterly)	83.70%	68.20%	80%		
Finance						
BV8	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days (Quarterly)	92.0%	93.4%	95.0%		
L065	Return on investments exceeds 7-day LA cash benchmark rate (Quarterly)	0.96%	1.25%	0.50%		
Legal Services						
L086.1	Percentage of Freedom of Information requests refused because information is publically available (Quarterly)	12%	11%	N/A	N/A	N/A
L086.2	Percentage of Freedom of Information requests refused because the time limit would be exceeded (Quarterly)	5%	5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
L086.3	Number of Freedom of Information requests received (Quarterly)	249	191	N/A	N/A	N/A

Environment, Culture & Communities

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
Environment & Public Protection						
NI184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law (Annually)	96	95	90		
N191	Residual household waste per household (Quarterly)	617	Data available in quarter 2	161	-	-
NI192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (Quarterly)	42.5%	Data available in quarter 2	42.0%	-	-
NI193	Percentage of municipal waste land filled (Quarterly)	20.90%	Data available in quarter 2	25.00%	-	-
L006.1	Number of highways service requests (Quarterly)	1044	1065	N/A	N/A	
L006.2	Number of highways service requests outstanding at quarter end (Quarterly)	91	123	N/A	N/A	
L021.1	Number of environmental health service requests (Quarterly)	849	877	N/A	N/A	
L021.2	Number of environmental health service requests outstanding (Quarterly)	21.6%	26.7%	N/A	N/A	
L022	Number of licensing service requests per quarter completed within 28 days	95%	99%	95%		

Ind Ref	Short Description	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Current Target	Current Status	Performance Trend
	(Quarterly)					
L023	Number of trading standards service requests per quarter completed within 28 days (Quarterly)	85%	88%	85%		
L128	Number of reported missed collections of refuse bins (Quarterly)	61	48	180		
L146.1	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness falls below EPA standard – Litter (Quarterly)	0%	0%	1.00%		
L146.2	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness falls below EPA standard – Detritus (Quarterly)	0%	2.84%	3.00%		
L146.3	Percentage of borough where environmental cleanliness falls below EPA standard – Graffiti (Quarterly)	0%	0%	1.00%		
Leisure and Culture						
L003	Number of visits to leisure facilities (Quarterly)	2,221,993	599,867	500,000		
L017	Number of web enabled transactions in libraries (Quarterly)	60,704	12,426	14,650		
L018	Number of web enabled transactions in leisure (Quarterly)	31,242	8,515	5,000		
L020	Number of people enrolled in the Leisure Saver Scheme (Quarterly)	501	515	520		
L035	Income from Leisure Facilities (Quarterly)	9,040,000	2,664,000	2,200,000		
L151	Number of visits to libraries (Quarterly)	424,260	130,526	110,000		
Planning and Transport						
NI047	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (Quarterly)	26	30	N/A	N/A	
NI 154	Net additional homes provided (Quarterly)	263	115	To be set	-	
NI168	Principal roads where maintenance should be considered (Annually)	7%	8%	7%		
NI169	Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered (Annually)	6%	8%	6%		
L008	Number of planning applications received to date (Quarterly)	271	294	N/A	-	
L009	Number of full search requests received (Quarterly)	369	431	N/A	-	New indicator
L014	Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents (Quarterly)	251	277	N/A	-	
L046	Percentage of full searches answered in 10 working days (Quarterly)	100%	100%	N/A	-	
L048.1	Number of days overrun on streetworks projects – statutory undertakers (Quarterly)	5	54	N/A	-	
L048.2	Number of days overrun on street works projects – BFC Contractors (Quarterly)	61	37	N/A	-	

Traffic Lights		Performance Trend	
Compares current performance to target		Identifies direction of travel compared to same point in previous year	
On, above or within 2.5% of target		Performance has improved	
Within 2.5% and 7.5% of target		Performance Sustained	
More than 7.5% from target		Performance has declined	

The following indicators are annual measurements where data is not available this quarter:-

Adult Social Care & Health

Ind Ref	Short Description
OF1a	Social Care Related Quality of life
OF1b	Proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life
OF1c	% of social care clients receiving self-directed support
OF1d	Carer reported quality of life
OF3a	Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support
OF3b	Overall satisfaction of carers with social services
OF3c	The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussion about the person they care for
OF3d	Proportion of people who use services or carers who find it easy to find information about services
OF4a	The proportion of people who use services who feel safe
OF4b	The proportion of people who use services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secure

Children, Young People & Learning

Ind Ref	Short Description
Children's Social Care	
NI019	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders (Annually)
NI060	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 days of their commencement (Annually)
NI061	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption (Annually)
NI062	Stability of placements of looked after children - number of placements (Annually)
NI063	Stability of placements of looked after children - length of placement (Annually)
NI064	Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more (Annually)
NI065	Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time (Annually)
NI066	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales (Annually)
NI067	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales (Annually)
NI068	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment (Annually)
NI103.1	SEN statements issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases (Annually)
NI103.2	SEN statements issued within 26 weeks – all (Annually)
NI147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation (Annually)
NI148	Care leavers in suitable education, employment or training (Annually)
L153	Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 (Annually)

Ind Ref	Short Description
L154	Looked after children reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2 (Annually)
L155	Looked after children achieving 5 A(star)-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths) (Annually)
Health and Wellbeing	
NI112	Under 18 conception rate (Annually)
NI117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) (Annually)
Learning and Achievement	
NI073	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Annually)
NI075	Achievement of 5 or more A(star)-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Annually)
NI076	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 55 percent of pupils achieve level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2 (Annually)
NI078	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30 percent of pupils achieve 5 or more A(star)-C grades at GCSE(Annually)
NI079	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 (Annually)
NI080	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 (Annually)
NI081	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 (Annually)
NI082	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 (Annually)
NI087	Secondary school persistent absence rate (Annually)
NI091	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training (Annually)
NI092	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20 percent in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest (Annually)
NI102.1	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers - Key Stage 2 (Annually)
NI102.2	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers - Key Stage 4 (Annually)
NI106	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education (Annually)
NI107	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups (Annually)
NI108	Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups (Annually)
NI114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school (Annually)
L158	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 60% of pupils achieve Level 4 in both english and maths at KS2 (Annually)

Corporate Services

Ind Ref	Short Description
Community Engagement and Equalities	
NI006	Participation in regular volunteering (Biennially (every two years))
Corporate Property	
BV156	Percentage of buildings open to the public which are suitable for and accessible to disabled people (Annually)
L075	Number of commercial property voids (Annually)
Customer Services	
L052	Cumulative percentage of Council Tax collected for the previous year at 31 March (Annually)
L054	Cumulative percentage of business rates collected for the previous year at 31 March (Annually)
Democratic Services	
L060	Percentage response to the annual canvass (Annually)
Human Resources	
BV12	Average number of working days lost to sickness (Annually)
BV14	Percentage of early retirements as a percentage of total employees (Annually)
L069	Percentage of ill-health retirements (Annually)
L070	Percentage of employees with a disability (Annually)

Ind Ref	Short Description
L071	Percentage of black and ethnic minority employees (Annually)
L072	Gender pay gap (Annually)
L073	Average number of off the job training days per employee (Annually)
L130	Percentage staff turnover (Annually)
L131	Percentage of staff leaving within one year of starting (Annually)
ICT - Annual	
L078	ICT User satisfaction - service user survey (Annually)

Chief Executive's Office

Ind Ref	Short Description
Community Safety	
L164	Number of metal thefts (Quarterly) definition for this indicator in the process of being revised.

Environment, Culture & Communities

Ind Ref	Short Description
Environment & Public Protection	
NI192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (Annually)
NI193	Percentage of municipal waste land filled (Annually)
NI191	Residual household waste per household (Annually)
Planning and Transport	
NI047	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (Annually)
NI167	Congestion - average journey time per mile during the morning peak (Annually)
L160	Supply of ready to develop housing sites (Annually)

Section 3: Corporate Health

A) Summary Complaints

Complaints

Department		Q1	Notes (Q1)
Adult Social Care & Health	Total: Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	1 1 0	There is a statutory complaints procedure for Adult Social Care. See ASCH QSR quarter 1 for more details.
Corporate Services / Chief Executive's Office	Total: Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	4 1 3 0 0	The complaints relate to Corporate Services – see QSR quarter 1 for more detail.
Children, Young People & Learning	Total: Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	1 1 0 0 0	It should be noted that there is a statutory complaints procedure for Children's Social Care. For more details see CYPL QSR quarter 1.
Environment, Culture & Communities	Total: Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	4 2 0 1 1	Letter sent and complaint not continued. Complaint not upheld by Ombudsman
BFC	Grand Total:	10	

B) Audits with Limited or No Assurance Opinions

Department	Q1	Notes
Adult Social Care & Health	0	
Corporate Services	0	
Chief Executive's Office	0	
Children, Young People & Learning	0	
Environment, Culture & Communities	0	

C) Summary of People

Staff Turnover

Department	Quarter 1 (%)	Year ending 31 March 2013 (%)	Notes
Adult Social Care & Health	2.42	To follow	
Corporate Services	1.79	13.39	Vacancy rate has gone down to 4.8% this quarter from 5.51% in quarter 4. Turnover is very low this quarter.
Chief Executive's Office	0	20	
Children, Young People & Learning	2.8	11.2	Overall number of staff in post has reduced by 17 people (10FTE)
Environment, Culture & Communities	2.23	10.15	13 leavers this quarter which is a decrease of 8 compared to last quarter. Turnover is down compared to the same quarter last year.

The overall staff turnover across the Council for 11/12 was 19.09% which includes the redundancies that were made at 31 March 2012.

Total turnover for BFC, 2010/11: 15.24%
 Average UK turnover 2010: 14%
 Average Public Sector 2010: 12.6%
 (Source: XPerHR Staff Turnover Rates and Cost Survey 2011)

Staff Sickness

Department	Quarter 1 (days per employee)	2012/13 Annual Average (days per employee)
Adult Social Care & Health	2.17	8.7
Corporate Services	0.89	3.57
Chief Executive's Office	0.44	1.76
Children, Young People & Learning	0.84	3.57
Environment, Culture & Communities	1.52	6.09

Adult Social Care & Health – 11 long term sickness absences with one employee leaving the Council following a period of extended ill health.

Corporate Services – Sickness is slightly higher than last quarter, however this is in part attributable to one case of long term sickness

Chief Executive's Office – 0 long term sickness absences

Children, Young People & Learning – The number of sickness days has reduced significantly during this quarter. There are 6 cases of long term sickness

Environment, Culture & Communities – includes 12 cases of long term sickness absence.

N.B. 20 days or more are classed as long term sickness

Staff Sickness Comparators

Comparator data	All employees, average days sickness absence per employee
Bracknell Forest Council 10/11	5.42 days
All local government employers 2010	9.6 days
All South East Employers 2010	7.3 days

(Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Absence Management survey 2011)

N. B. A more detailed analysis of the staff sickness and staff turnover figures will be included in the Annual Workforce Monitoring Report to be published in September 2012.

D) Summary of Money

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

At the end of the first quarter the budgetary control reports for the General Fund reported a potential under spend of -£0.497m. Details of individual variances are outlined in each department's Quarterly Service Report (QSR).

This net under spend comprises the following:

- There have been a number of changes to Looked after Children placements since the budget was set resulting in an over spend (£0.125m). All cases are currently being reviewed to establish whether action can be taken to reduce the forecast overspend.
- Additional agency staff costs within Children's Social Care arising from maternity leave and on-going difficulties in recruiting experienced employees required for the more complex cases (£0.145m).
- Within Adults and Commissioning changes to the level of support being provided after the budget was set has meant that the full year effect of these commitments has reduced by -£0.360m.
- Within Older People and Long Term Conditions, changes to the number of people being supported since the budget was set has meant that the full year effect of these commitments has reduced by -£0.195m.
- Waste Management is projected to under spend by -£0.344m with the most significant variances arising from contract inflation being less than forecast and refuse vehicle purchases now being made from capital rather than the revenue budget.
- An economy of -£0.100m was included in the 2012/13 budget in respect of additional Planning Fees in the anticipation that the new regulations regarding the setting of fees at a local level would be introduced on 1st April 2012. It is now unlikely that these regulations will be passed in this financial year and therefore this additional income will not now be achievable (£0.100m).

In addition to the above there are two other variances which increase the overall under spend to -£1.593m:

- The Council has received a one-off VAT repayment of -£0.429m relating to Downshire Golf Course and changes in VAT legislation.
- There is likely to be a significant one-off receipt arising from school academy funding arrangements. For 2012/13, the Council's Formula Grant was reduced by £0.553m for academy school funding, based on an assumption of an average number of academy conversions during the year. This amount will be recalculated in 2013 to reflect the actual number of pupils in academy schools in the borough. If no further conversions take place, the Council can expect to receive a one-off rebate of -£0.410m for 2012/13 plus a further refund of -£0.257m in respect of 2011/12.

At this stage in the financial year there remain significant risks to the budget. Those budgets representing the greatest risk will continue to be scrutinised in detail as part of the Council's usual budget monitoring arrangements.

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT
Assistant Chief Executive**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Work Programme for 2012-13, with particular reference to Working Groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

- 2.1 **Reviews the progress by the O&S Commission and the O&S Panels against the work programme**
- 2.2 **Notes the progress achieved to date by the Commission's Working Groups.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

O&S Work programme

- 3.1 The O&S Work Programme for 2012-13, incorporating where available each Chairmen's assessment of progress, is at Appendix 1.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group

- 3.2 The Working Group comprises Councillors Leake (Lead Member) Angell, Mrs Birch, Heydon, Virgo and Worrall. The Group held its first meeting on 23 February 2012, and has subsequently met on six occasions. The Commission Chairman has consulted the Chairman/Mayor of each Town and Parish Council (T&PC) on how best to inform and involve the T&PCs with this working group, and a number of ways have been adopted to achieve this, including regular progress reports to the Parish & Town Councils' Liaison Group (two, to date).
- 3.3 The main items covered to date have been: to receive a comprehensive briefing on the CIL and the progress made to date; discussing and agreeing the approach to be taken by the Working Group; discussing with the Council's consultants the CIL Viability Assessment for the Borough and the wider picture on the development of CIL nationally; commencing the review of the Major Infrastructure Schedule; discussions with the Executive Member, Director, Borough Treasurer, Borough Solicitor, the Home Builders Federation, a visit to Portsmouth City Council; and reviewing examples of CIL Charging schedules from other local authorities. The Working Group has made a number of recommendations to the Executive concerning the draft CIL Charging schedule, which were considered by the Executive before the draft schedule was finalised for consultation.

- 3.4 Further meetings of the Working Group are being planned, with timing to match the timeline for the introduction of CIL in Bracknell Forest

Communications Strategy Working Group

- 3.5 The Working Group comprises Councillors Leake (Lead Member), Gbadebo, Thompson and Wade. It met on 10 May to: receive a briefing, review an example of another council's communication strategy, to consider the current communications arrangements, and to discuss prospective priorities and deliverables for the new strategy.
- 3.6 The Working Group met on 30 July, and suggested a number of changes to the draft Communications strategy before its submission to the Executive. No further meetings are planned.

Delegated Authorities

- 3.7 The review of the scheme of delegation and the extent of powers delegated to officers has yet to commence.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS/ EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / OTHER OFFICERS/ CONSULTATION – Not applicable

Contact for further information

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Monitoring Of Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny in 2012/13

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Chairmen's assessment of the progress on the work programme for O&S in 2012/13 is shown below, where the symbols represent:



Completed or on course for completion



Delayed or completion at risk



Will not be completed as planned

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION	Status / Comment
Co-ordination of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels	
Routine monitoring of the performance of the Council's corporate functions	
Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan	
2013/14 Budget Scrutiny	
Crime and Disorder Committee	
Policy Development	
a) To complete the Working Group contributing to the Council's plans for the Community Infrastructure Levy.	
b) To contribute to the update of the Council's Communications Strategy.	
c) To receive a briefing on the implications of the Localism Act for the Council, and to contribute to the formulation of the Council's plans for the 'Community Right to Challenge'.	
Delegated Authorities	
To review the scheme of delegation and the extent of powers delegated to officers.	

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	Status / Comment
Monitoring the performance of the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department	

Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan	
2013/14 Budget Scrutiny	
Modernising Older People's Services To complete the Working Group monitoring the proposed implementation of a wide range of measures intended to modernise and improve support for older people in the Borough.	
Substance Misuse To complete the Working Group reviewing the Council's response, and that of its partners, to the Government's requirements contained in its 2010 Drug Strategy.	
Policy Development	
a) <u>Carers' Strategy</u> – To monitor the delivery of this Strategy (Panel discussion).	
b) <u>Joint Autism Strategy</u> – To review the implementation of the Strategy (Panel discussion).	
c) <u>Personalisation</u> – An update at a Panel meeting, and depending on the outcome and the availability of resources, to review a further strand of the personalisation of Adult Social Care.	
d) <u>Adult Social Care White Paper</u> – to receive briefings on the progress of the White Paper and monitor its implementation	
e) The implementation of the new national structure for <u>Housing and Council Tax benefits</u> .	
f) The implementation of the <u>Supporting People Programme Action Plan</u> on an annual basis.	

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	Status / Comment
Monitoring the performance of the Children, Young People and Learning Department	
Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan	
2013/14 Budget Scrutiny	

<p>Schools Governance</p> <p>A Working Group to review the comments by Ofsted about governance in Bracknell Forest Schools, and the arrangements being made to ascertain and achieve effective governance in all schools.</p>	
<p>Policy Development</p> <p>To contribute to the formulation of the Council's new Early Intervention and Prevention strategy.</p>	

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	Status / Comment
<p>Monitoring the performance of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department</p>	
<p>Exercising pre-decision scrutiny by reference to the Executive Forward Plan</p>	
<p>2013/14 Budget Scrutiny</p>	
<p>Monitoring significant departmental issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the Local Development Framework. • The implementation of Community Planning. • The procurement of environmental works 	
<p>Highway Maintenance</p> <p>To complete the review of the Council's plans and performance for highway maintenance.</p>	
<p>Commercial Sponsorship</p> <p>To complete the Member Reference Group exploring the possible procurement of a commercial sponsorship scheme.</p>	
<p>Public Transport Subsidies and Concessionary Fare Support</p> <p>To review the proposed reductions to public transport subsidies and concessionary fare support. The Working Group might re-form to contribute to the development of a Bus Strategy for the Borough.</p>	
<p>Policy Development (the O&S input will be conducted at Panel meetings)</p>	

<p>a) <u>Local Transport Plan</u> – To review the outcome of public consultation, and to contribute to the development of future policy, with a particular focus on highway improvements.</p> <p>b) <u>The Environmental Management of Schools</u> – To receive progress updates.</p>	 
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HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL	Status / Comment
<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>To contribute to the development of the Council's statutory 'Health and Wellbeing' strategy [Working Group].</p>	
<p>Policy development and monitoring the implementation of the major changes from the 2012 Health and Social Care Act</p> <p>To contribute to the Council's and NHS policy development, and monitor in particular: the transfer of the Public Health responsibilities from the PCT to the Council; the creation of the GP Clinical Commissioning Group, Local HealthWatch and the new Health and Wellbeing Board; and establishing the new arrangements for Health Overview and Scrutiny. [Panel updates and a Working Group]</p>	
<p>Monitoring the performance and budget of the Berkshire Primary Care Trust and the NHS trusts serving Bracknell Forest</p> <p>[Panel updates] Member briefing sessions will be held on Stroke treatment and Mental Health issues, which may in due course lead to focussed reviews.</p>	
<p>Responding to NHS Consultations</p> <p>The Health O&S Panel is a statutory consultee for any substantial variation in NHS services affecting the Borough. A major consultation is expected to occur on 'Shaping the Future', concerning hospital and community health services in East Berkshire. [Working Group]</p>	

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN ITEMS RELATING TO CORPORATE ISSUES
Assistant Chief Executive**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents current Executive Forward Plan items relating to corporate issues for the Commission's consideration.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission considers the current Executive Forward Plan items relating to corporate issues appended to this report.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Consideration of items on the Executive Forward Plan alerts the Commission to forthcoming Executive decisions and facilitates pre-decision scrutiny.
- 3.2 To achieve accountability and transparency of the decision making process, effective Overview and Scrutiny is essential. Overview and Scrutiny bodies are a key element of Executive arrangements and their roles include both developing and reviewing policy; and holding the Executive to account.
- 3.3 The power to hold the Executive to account is granted under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 which states that Executive arrangements of a local authority must ensure that its Overview and Scrutiny bodies have power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive. This includes the 'call in' power to review or scrutinise a decision made but not implemented and to recommend that the decision be reconsidered by the body / person that made it. This power does not relate solely to scrutiny of decisions and should therefore also be utilised to undertake pre-decision scrutiny.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS/ EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / OTHER OFFICERS/ CONSULTATION – Not applicable

Background Papers

Local Government Act 2000

Contact for further information

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

REFERENCE	I034386
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TITLE: Postal Service - Award of Contract

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To award the contract for the Councils Postal Service for the next 3 years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The Financial implications will be detailed in the Director of Corporate Services Report.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive Member for Transformation & Finance, Director of Corporate Services

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: CMT , the Service Efficiency Group and other key postal users across the Council. Bracknell Sports Centre and Revenue Services have already been consulted.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Representatives from Procurement and the Central Post Team form part of the Project team and will be responsible for ensuring that particular areas are adequately consulted.

DATE OF DECISION: 24 Sep 2012

REFERENCE	I032936
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TITLE: Discretionary Rates Relief - New Applications

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 2012

REFERENCE	I036677
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TITLE: Aviation Policy Framework - Government Consultation

PURPOSE OF DECISION: Agree the Council's response to the Government's consultation on Aviation Policy Framework

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: N/A

DATE OF DECISION: 16 Oct 2012

REFERENCE	I034687
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TITLE: Communications Strategy

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Communications Strategy and Action Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be contained within the report.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: DMTs
Overview & Scrutiny
Members

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Meetings

DATE OF DECISION: 16 Oct 2012

REFERENCE	I037063
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TITLE: Pooling of Business Rates

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To consider proposals for the creation of a Berkshire Business Rate Pool.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Revenue savings anticipated

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: To be determined

DATE OF DECISION: 16 Oct 2012

REFERENCE	I036940
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TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Update

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To obtain endorsement and approval to the continuing approach to the Town Centre Regeneration

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within the report

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: N/A

DATE OF DECISION: 5 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I035977
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TITLE: 'All of Us' in Bracknell Forest - A Corporate Strategy for Promoting Community Cohesion 2008/09 - 2011/12

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Council's final report on the 'All of Us' Community Cohesion Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: No financial implications

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I036588
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TITLE: Award of the Works Contract for Time Square and Easthampstead House

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To award the works contract in relation to refurbishment of Time Square and Easthampstead House.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Accommodation Strategy Steering Group.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Meetings with interested parties.

DATE OF DECISION: 13 Nov 2012

REFERENCE	I036551
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TITLE: Binfield Nursery

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To advise the Executive of the offers received after marketing the property.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: To be determined

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Not applicable

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Not applicable

DATE OF DECISION: 11 Dec 2012

REFERENCE	I034741
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TITLE: Capital Budget 2013/14

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Council's capital budget proposals for consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Council's annual budget proposals.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Targeted consultation exercises will be undertaken with business rate payers, the Over 50's Forum, the Schools Forum, Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. In addition, this report and all the supporting information will be publicly available to any individual or group who wish to comment on any proposal included within it. Internal consultation is via officers, members and more specifically the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and its panels.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: The Council's web site, a dedicated mailbox and a letter to all business ratepayers.

DATE OF DECISION: 11 Dec 2012

REFERENCE	I036141
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TITLE: Corporate Performance Overview Report

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To inform the Executive of the Council's performance over the second quarter of 2012/13

FINANCIAL IMPACT: No financial implications

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 11 Dec 2012

REFERENCE	I034610
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TITLE: Draft Revenue Budget 2013/14

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To approve the Council's budget proposals for consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The financial implications will be set out in the report on the proposals.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Targeted consultation exercises will be undertaken with business rate payers, the Over 50's Forum, the Schools Forum, Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. In addition, the report and all the supporting information will be publicly available to any individual or group who wish to comment on any proposal included within it. Internal consultation is via officers, members and more specifically the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and its panels.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: The Council's web site, a dedicated mailbox and a letter to all business ratepayers.

DATE OF DECISION: 11 Dec 2012

REFERENCE	I032938
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TITLE: Discretionary Rates Relief - New Applications

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 2012

REFERENCE	I036942
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TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Update

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To obtain endorsement and approval to the continuing approach to the Town Centre Regeneration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within the report

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: N/A

DATE OF DECISION: 7 Jan 2013

REFERENCE	1034983
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TITLE: Contract Award for Insurance Services

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To seek endorsement of the recommendation of the procurement panel, following an evaluation of the tenders in relation to insurance services received in accordance with the criteria set out in the procurement plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Within existing budgets

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Not applicable.

DATE OF DECISION: 8 Jan 2013

REFERENCE	1034743
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TITLE: Capital Budget 2013/14

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To recommend to Council the annual capital budget.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Council's annual budget.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: The Council's web site, a dedicated mailbox and a letter to all business ratepayers.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: Targeted consultation exercises will be undertaken with business rate payers, the Over 50's Forum, the Schools Forum, Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. In addition, this report and all the supporting information will be publicly available to any individual or group who wish to comment on any proposal included within it. Internal consultation is via officers, members and more specifically the Overview

DATE OF DECISION: 12 Feb 2013

REFERENCE	I034612
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TITLE: Revenue Budget 2013/14

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To recommend to Council the annual budget.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The financial implications will be set out in the report on the proposals.

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: Targeted consultation exercises will be undertaken with business rate payers, the Over 50's Forum, the Schools Forum, Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. In addition, this report and all the supporting information will be publicly available to any individual or group who wish to comment on any proposal included within it. Internal consultation is via officers, members and more specifically the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and its panels.

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: The Council's web site, a dedicated mailbox and a letter to all business ratepayers.

DATE OF DECISION: 12 Feb 2013

REFERENCE	I036145
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TITLE: Corporate Performance Overview Report

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To inform the Executive of the Council's performance over the third quarter of 2012/13.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: No financial implications

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Executive

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: None

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: None

DATE OF DECISION: 12 Mar 2013

REFERENCE	I036944
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TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Update

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To obtain endorsement and approval to the continuing approach to the Town Centre Regeneration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within the report

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: N/A

DATE OF DECISION: 18 Mar 2013

REFERENCE	I032940
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TITLE: Discretionary Rates Relief - New Applications

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: 29 Mar 2013

REFERENCE	1036946
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TITLE: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Update

PURPOSE OF DECISION: To obtain endorsement and approval to the continuing approach to the Town Centre Regeneration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Contained within the report

WHO WILL TAKE DECISION: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee

PRINCIPAL GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED: N/A

METHOD OF CONSULTATION: N/A

DATE OF DECISION: 20 May 2013

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