

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**  
**23 May 2024**

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## **Council Plan Overview Report** **Chief Executive**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide the draft Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR) to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, prior to review by the Executive. This details the performance of the council over the fourth and final quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (January – March 2024), together with an overview of highlights from 2023/24.

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **To review the performance of the council over the period from January to March 2024 highlighted in the Overview Report in Annex A, and make any recommendations for the Executive to consider.**

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation**

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

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None applicable.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The council's performance management framework requires the preparation of Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs) by each department. These QSRs provide an update of progress and performance against departmental Service Plans and are published on the intranet.
- 5.2 The QSRs have been combined into the Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR), which brings together the progress and performance of the council as a whole. The CPOR enables the Corporate Management Team and Councillors to review performance, highlight any exceptions and note any remedial actions that may be necessary, either from under-performing or over-performing services, across the range of council activities.
- 5.3 The current CPOR report is the final report to reflect the outgoing Council Plan (2019-2023). Reporting on the new plan will commence for Q1 (April – June) 2024.
- 5.4 The CPOR performance information will also be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny. This process enables all Members to be involved in performance management. Any recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission will be included within the report for the Executive to consider.
- 5.5 The CPOR for the fourth quarter (January-March 2024) is shown in Annex A.
- 5.6 Key achievements during quarter four have included:
- Adoption of a new Local Plan following extensive public consultation and formal examination, setting out where new homes, businesses and amenities will be located,

- Creation of new Berkshire Prosperity Board to help drive forward and deliver future economic success across the county endorsed by all six Berkshire councils,
- Confirmation from the Department for Education of £16m funding under the Safety Valve agreement, until 2029-30,
- Youth strategy review and consultation complete and National Lottery Funding secured to deliver art, and bike recycling activities,
- Larchwood, Bracknell's short breaks children's home, rated good by Ofsted,
- Financial Hardship Plan delivered, activities embedded in business as usual from 2024/25 and Household Support Fund extended into 2024,
- Food waste recycling collection service roll out to 1,800 flats and awareness campaigns such as 'recycle right' and recycling days delivered.

5.7 There also continue to be challenges the council is working to resolve:

- Budget challenges have continued up until the year end, although a concerted effort across the council has led to an improved position. The focus on managing costs into 2024/25, alongside delivery of the Safety Valve savings plan remains a priority.
- Significant financial pressures remain in the provision of adult residential and nursing placements and necessary out-of-borough placements for specialist education provision.
- The complexity of cases across children's and adult social care is increasing operational pressure, however the new target operating model in adult care is starting to deliver improvements for service users.
- Delays experienced on joint venture development at Market Street site, due to complex legal negotiations on the purchase of affordable units. However, work is due to commence in Q1.

## **6 Advice Received from Statutory and Other Officers**

### Legal Advice

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

### Financial Advice

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

### Other Consultation Responses

6.3 None specific

### Equalities Impact Assessment

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

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

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

### Climate Change and Ecological Implications

6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> or ecological considerations. The reasons the Council believes that this will have no impact are that this is a management reporting tool.

### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

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

Background Papers  
[All performance reports \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

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## **Annex A – Council Plan Overview Report**

*[Attached as a separate document]*

## **Annex B – Previous Overview and Scrutiny Commission review**

### **Date of Overview and Scrutiny Commission**

29 February 2024

### **Having reviewed the report, the Commission would recommend to the Executive the following area of focus, when reviewing the Quarter 9 report:**

- For Executive to consider how partners ensure there is sufficient capacity and timeliness in keeping to the 20-week timescale for agreeing Education, Health and Care Plans?

### **Summary of questions and answers during the Commission meeting:**

#### **Questions were as follows:**

Q - Page 60 – What has been done to address the rising number of absences in the workforce attributed to stress?

A – This data was directly related to the People Directorate, with staff in client facing roles, who work in a challenging environment. A number of support mechanisms were open to staff, such as free counselling and return to work support for individuals, which had been taken up by staff.

Q - How were the Council consulting with the public about updates to the SEND service?

A – The Council recently agreed a new SEND Strategy which was out to consultation. The Council was also consulting with the Parent/Carer Forum and listening to the children who used the service.

Q – How was the council supporting Welfare Officers to assist parents in getting children to school?

A – The Council could support and steer but schools were at the forefront of working with parents regarding children's school attendance.

Q – Does the Council have a strong and resilient staff cohort to manage priorities against SEND objectives?

A – There had been an increase in agency staff to meet demand and the directorate was in the process of restructuring to maintain permanent staff. It was considered there was better capacity than last year but the Chief Executive acknowledged there was still a lot of work to do in this area.

Q – What was the capacity in undertaking consultation on SEND activity?

A – Consultation required capacity and the Council were drawing in other mechanisms, such as IT, to assist with consultation and number of co-production opportunities were being increased.

Q – Page 51, indicator L139 – Why were 50% of maintained schools not good or better?

A – There were two maintained secondary schools in the borough, one of which was the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and was rated inadequate. It was noted the PRU was in the process of closing.

Q – Page 51, indicator L402 - Why was the percentage of care leavers NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) RAG rated red?

A – Out of 26 care leavers considered NEET, 14 were unable to be in education, employment or training due to illness or disability. Three others were due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities. In the last quarter the number of NEET were 18 and this quarter it was reduced to nine. It was also noted indicator L405 registered 95% of care leavers were in touch with the Council, which was thought to be positive.

Q – Page 65, section 5 under section 'Community Health' How was the Average Happiness Rating gauged?

A – This indicator was drawn from Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, collected nationally and officers were unaware how it was gauged.

Councillors thanked the Chief Executive and noted it had been a solid performance during Quarter 3.