

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**
27 February 2025

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 Cabinet. This details the performance of the council over the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (October - December 2024). This is the third CPOR for the 2023-2027 Council Plan.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **To review the performance of the council over the period from October to December 2024, highlighted in the Overview Report in Annex A, and make any recommendations for the Cabinet 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 CPOR reflects the Council Plan 2023-27 and [service plans](#) for 2024/25, with actions and indicators reported under the four strategic priorities: Engaged and healthy communities; Thriving and connected economy; Green and sustainable environment, and; Ambitious, resilient and sustainable organisation. The process for reviewing the service plans for 2025/26 has also now commenced ahead of 1 April 2025.
- 5.4 The CPOR for the third quarter (October - December 2024) is shown in Annex A.
- 5.5 Key achievements during the third quarter include:
- Early Years funded nearly 3,000 placements – almost double compared to last year.

- The Warfield Community Hub net-zero design and budget was approved in partnership with Warfield Parish Council
- The official opening event of Binfield Health and Community Centre was held in October.
- Free single bus rides on Thames Valley Buses and Reading Buses to support Christmas shoppers, was extended to both Saturdays and Sundays.
- Council adopted the Economic Strategy and Town Centre Masterplans, both focussed on creating the conditions for a strong economy and the continued regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre.
- The trial of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in a waste collection vehicle has been successful. Park rangers are running a fully sustainable fleet with HVO and electric vehicles.
- The Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment backlog has been cleared and timeliness at highest level since 2022. Work continues to improve the quality of EHCPs;
- Woodland biodiversity enhancements were made at South Hill Park, plus the creation of more open water habitats.

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

- Budget challenges, including particularly related to the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The council had undertaken a range of measures to reduce expenditure, yet the continuing increase in the number of education health and care plans (EHCPs) for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has caused spending to rise by almost £4m from the approved budget.
- There are delays on progress to build Forest View Academy School for 100 pupils with autism. This is related to the national review of the Safety Valve Programme. The project has currently been put on hold by the Department for Education. An update is expected in early 2025.
- Building Control continues to be a risk with recruitment of suitably qualified Building Control Inspectors remaining difficult, alongside the many legislative changes that the new Building Safety Regulator is bringing into force. Over the coming quarter, an external independent audit of the service is being undertaken along with 50 other smaller authority areas.

5.7 There are some further updates since the end of quarter three, particularly related to the latest financial information. Efforts have continued across the organisation to bring spending in line with the approved budget by the end of the financial year. The most recent budget monitoring information presented to the Corporate Management Team on 19 February showed further improvements, with the core position predicted by the year end being a £0.624m underspend, rising to a potential £0.335m overspend once emerging issues and risks are added. This indicates that spending is likely to be very close to budget by the year end.

5.8 Related to specific savings targets, the anticipated street lighting is proving more challenging. Although the target to reduce the council's KW hours of energy use is likely to be exceeded, the unit cost calculated for the saving (as part of budget setting) was £41p per KW. The unit for the 2024/25 financial year dropped to 29p, affecting the monetary saving. As such, the beneficial Climate Change related energy savings will not be matched by the anticipated revenue saving.

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 CO₂ 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 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Contact for further information

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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

5 December 2024

Having reviewed the report, the Commission did not make any recommendations to the Cabinet but did make the following observations:

Page 27, street lighting – work was being undertaken currently to understand what had caused an overspend in this area.

Page 30, car parking in Market Street – it was noted a request to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to remove the property from the listing had been denied and an appeal had been submitted, which included negotiations on the business rate.

Page 45, 2.3.1KR – it was queried if a refund could be sought from the street cleaning contractors as targets had not been met. It was agreed a written response would be circulated to Commissioners in response to this question.
