



Corporate Performance Overview Report

**Second Quarter 2009/10
(July-September 2009)**

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Chief Executive**

Overview of Council Performance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out an overview of the Council's performance for the second quarter of 2009/10 (July-September 2009). It complements the detailed quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs) produced by each Director, which were circulated to Members in November. 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 The division of the former Department of Social Care & Learning into two new Departments (Adult Social Care & Health; Children, Young People & Learning) was carried through at the beginning of the quarter, with budgets and service plan responsibilities being successfully transferred to their new owners. The two new departments produced separate Quarter 2 PMRs.

2 Overview of Performance

- 2.1 The departmental service plans for 2009/10 contain 287 detailed actions to be completed in support of the 13 medium-term objectives which underpin the Council's six overarching priorities for 2008/09-2010/11. As summarised in Annex A, at the end of the second quarter 274 (96%) of these actions had been completed or were on target to be completed by their due date (✓), whilst eight (less than 3%) were in need of some remedial action (✗). More detailed information on these is contained in the full Quarter 2 dataset, available on request from the Chief Executive's Office.

3 Progress against Medium-Term Objectives

- 3.1 As evidenced by the figures above, the second quarter of 2009/10 saw good overall progress towards achieving the Council's priorities. The following paragraphs highlight some areas of notable progress against each medium-term objective.

Medium-Term Objective 1: Build a Bracknell Town Centre that residents are proud of

- 3.2 Negotiations continued with BRP and third party developers during the quarter to bring forward the regeneration in phases, and joint work to review regeneration plans was ongoing with BRP. The Development Management team worked with the preferred provider of the Bracknell Health Space as they prepared for a pre-application submission, and the town centre environmental improvements commissioned by the Town Centre Partnership were all completed. In addition, pre-commencement legal work on the improvements to the Bracknell railway station forecourt was completed, enabling site work to begin.

Medium-Term Objective 2: Keep our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities accessible and attractive

- 3.3 The Britain in Bloom results were announced in September, with Bracknell winning the Thames & Chiltern in Bloom Small City category as well as the regional award for Best Floral Input. The recession does, however, continue to have a negative financial

effect on the council's leisure facilities. Although overall usage figures remain broadly stable, secondary spending has reduced significantly putting real pressure on income against target.

Medium-Term Objective 3: Promote sustainable housing and infrastructure development

- 3.4 Once again this quarter, no homeless households were housed in bed and breakfast accommodation. There was also a further reduction in the number of newly homeless households as a result of the continuing homeless prevention work that is taking place. Over the quarter 51 households were prevented from becoming homeless by finding them homes in the private rented sector. The quarter saw development application numbers down by 28% compared to the same period last year, but indications are that there may be some confidence returning, with developers continuing to approach the Council in respect of development proposals which they intend to bring forward as the economic climate improves.

Medium-Term Objective 4: Keep Bracknell Forest clean and green

- 3.5 Longshot Lane reopened to the public and trade in July, and an official opening was held in September. Re3 Waste Minimisation Officers also held an open day at Longshot Lane in October. The number of complaints about the Council's refuse collection policy saw a year-on-year fall of 34% for the period June-August.

Medium-Term Objective 5: Improve health and well being within the Borough

- 3.6 Work on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was ongoing during the quarter, and the 2009 edition was subsequently presented to Executive in Quarter 3. It will be used to inform council and PCT priorities. DEFRA's comments on the Local Air Quality Management Report 2009 were received during the quarter. The council is required to undertake a detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide by April 2010 which could result in the declaration of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) at Bagshot Road, Downshire Way and Bracknell Road.

Medium-Term Objective 6: Improve the outcomes for children and families through the Children and Young People's Plan

- 3.7 The new Department of Children, Young People & Learning became operational at the start of the quarter. Provisional Key Stage and GCSE headline results were received during the late summer. Overall, results remain in line with or above national levels of attainment, with good performance and improvement in some areas. Results from the Early Years Foundation Stage show strong improvement, with 77% of five-year-olds achieving 78 points or more overall (up two percentage points on last year). Key Stage 1 results show general improvement in mathematics (against a national downward trend), but those in writing show general deterioration. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of young people achieving five or more GCSE grades A*-C has risen by over two percentage points to 64%. Full details of Summer 2009 examination attainment can be found in the Quarter 2 PMR for Children, Young People & Learning. The new independent chair of the Safeguarding Board has now been appointed, and the corporate Learning and Development team have led a large-scale safeguarding training programme for all frontline staff. 51 children were subject to a child protection plan at the end of September 2009, an increase of nearly 25% on the previous quarter. An issue that is causing increasing concern both locally and nationally is the rising number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), so the Bracknell Forest NEET action plan is due to

be further strengthened in Quarter 3. The Economic Development Skills Partnership are also holding a special workshop on 8 December to look at ways of addressing this important issue. On a more positive note, the borough has two care leavers who will be commencing degree courses in the Autumn.

Medium-Term Objective 7: Seek to ensure that every resident feels included and able to access the services they need

- 3.8 The Bracknell Forest Partnership Community Engagement Strategy was published during the quarter, and a Partnership equalities working group was established. The annual monitoring of the Community Cohesion Strategy and the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes was completed, and the Neighbourhood Survey was developed and distributed to all households in the borough.

Medium-Term Objective 8: Reduce crime and increase people's sense of safety in the Borough

- 3.9 At the end of Quarter 1, serious acquisitive crime was up by 23% but by the end of Quarter 2 that rise had been reduced to only 3.8%. Indeed, most of the crime indicators are now beginning to show a downward trend, at a period in the year when crime was rising in 2008/09. Integrated Offender Management is due to absorb the Prolific and Priority Offender scheme between now and the end of the year. This will focus resources on the main offenders. A new alcohol arrest referral project, which targets conditions on those arrested for alcohol related offences, is also expected to make an impact on the rise in violent crime offences.

Medium-Term Objective 9: Promote independence and choice for vulnerable adults and older people

- 3.10 The new Department of Adult Social Care & Health became operational at the start of the quarter, with Mira Haynes (older people and long-term conditions) and Zoë Johnstone (adults and commissioning) taking up the two new Chief Officers roles. The personalisation pilot was commenced during the quarter, and progress was made on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment by the multi-agency group responsible. Quarter 2 also saw the conclusion of the regulatory assessment of adult social care for 2008/09, the results of which will inform judgments in the Comprehensive Area Assessment that is reported elsewhere in the agenda.

Medium-Term Objective 10: Be accountable and provide excellent value for money

- 3.11 In-year collection of council tax was at 57% at the end of Quarter 2, slightly down on the same period last year, while the equivalent figure for business rates was 64%, slightly up on last year. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy was published during the quarter, and an unqualified audit opinion was received on the 2008/09 Statement of Accounts. Effectively this draws a line under the qualified issues from the previous year.
- 3.12 Budget monitoring at the end of Q2 suggested a potential overspend at year end. More recent information has confirmed this, largely due to exceptionally low interest rates, the impact of the recession on income streams such as car parking, leisure and development control, along with some demographic pressures. At the end of October, when taken together, these amounted to around £2.25m. CMT have therefore instructed a detailed review of spending, with a view to implementing a package of in-year savings to ensure that the Council's record of delivering spending

within budget every year is maintained. The budget report elsewhere on this agenda contains further details.

Medium-Term Objective 11: Understand and promote the borough's economic activity and potential

- 3.13 The Economic & Skills Development Partnership action plan was approved by the Executive during the quarter. Work has also begun with the local Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to identify and communicate local problems and issues, and further events and opportunities for engagement are planned. Close working has been developed with the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board to promote a range of county-wide initiatives.

Medium-Term Objective 12: Promote workforce skills

- 3.14 The Adult and Community Learning team met contractual targets for all four Learning & Skills Council funded programmes in adult learning for the academic year 2008/09, while work to refurbish and rebuild the Bracknell Open Learning Centre was completed.

Medium-Term Objective 13: Limit the impact of the recession

- 3.15 Work commenced during the Quarter to refresh the recession advice on the Council's website to focus more on maintaining long-term financial security. Work was also ongoing to develop job clubs, with a particular emphasis on those sectors – such as high earners – who are not currently catered for by agencies such as Job Centre Plus. A Pan-Berkshire Future Jobs Fund bid was submitted, co-ordinated by the Council-funded Grow Our Own project, with results of the second round of sifting due during Quarter 3. Work is progressing to establish a Berkshire credit union supported by the Council.

4 Information on Corporate Health, Budgets, and Bracknell Forest Partnership

- 4.1 Information on Corporate Health is set out at Annex B. Budget information is set out at Annex C. Work achieved and ongoing by Bracknell Forest Partnership is outlined at Annex D.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 As is demonstrated by the robust performance outlined above, the Council's work to ensure it meets its medium-term objectives for 2008-2011 continued well during Quarter 2, helping it to maintain and strengthen its tradition of offering the best possible services to residents at a cost which represents outstanding value for money.

*Timothy Wheadon
Chief Executive
November 2009*