



# Corporate Performance Overview Report

**Fourth Quarter 2009/10**  
**January-March 2010**

**Timothy Wheadon**  
**Chief Executive**

# Overview of Council Performance

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out an overview of the Council's performance for the fourth quarter of 2009/10 (January-March 2010). It complements the detailed quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs) 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.

## 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. At the end of 2009/10, 276 (96%) of these actions had been completed or were on target to be completed by their due date (✓), whilst six (2%) were causing concern (✗). Five of these incomplete actions related to the town centre and Civic Hub.
- 2.2 Paris, the council's new performance management software, was launched at the beginning of Quarter 1 and was used to gather information on actions and indicators for the Quarter 4 reporting round. As expected, there have been some technical issues but the new system will improve the council's performance management through greater accessibility, flexibility and data quality.

## 3 Progress against Medium-Term Objectives

- 3.1 The fourth quarter of 2009/10 saw good overall progress towards achieving the Council's objectives. 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 progressed with BRP and third-party developers during the quarter to bring forward the town centre regeneration in a phased manner, reflecting the difficult market conditions. Work also continued to support our partners to deliver the new Healthspace, where a number of technical issues remain to be addressed and the submission of the application for this is affected by the forthcoming application to extend the implementation period for the town centre permission. Officers are also continuing to review the council's accommodation options.

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

- 3.3 The economic challenges of 2009/10 combined with unusually wet and severe weather to create a difficult year for Bracknell Forest's leisure sites, but by the close of Quarter 4 there was some evidence that the corner had been turned, with a number of new initiatives aimed at driving up visitor numbers. (2009/10 quarter 4 visitor numbers were 493,761 compared with quarter 3 visitor numbers of 386,685.) A number of site quality improvements were also completed by the Parks & Countryside team, while five tenders were received for the lottery-funded restoration

of the South Hill Park grounds, with an Executive decision due in April. In line with the constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny review of the council's response to the severe weather will be considered by the relevant Panel on 15 July and reported to the Executive in September.

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

- 3.4 The choice-based lettings scheme (BFC My Choice) was successfully launched in January, enabling prospective tenants to bid for vacant properties online. A review of housing register entries which accompanied the launch of the scheme resulted in an 18% reduction in the number of households on the register. Spatial policy work during the quarter continued to focus on the preparation of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, which was based on identifying land to accommodate the balance of the 12,780 dwellings allocated to the borough in the South-East Plan. This included the use of an online consultation system and the holding of four local workshops to focus in more detail on the eight potential strategic locations. The programme for further work is now subject to review in light of the announcement that the South-East Plan is soon to be abolished. Works at Bracknell station were almost completed during the quarter, providing improvements to all modes of transport interchange, including pedestrians.

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

- 3.5 Waste collections in January, including post-Christmas collections, were disrupted by the adverse weather, but key learning points were captured and work involving Members and officers is underway to progress these. The Colnbrook Energy from Waste Plant became fully operational during the quarter, and has already resulted in a significant reduction in the proportion of Bracknell Forest waste which goes to landfill – down from 58% in Quarter 1 to 48% in Quarter 3 (latest available data).

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

- 3.6 Changes were announced within the healthcare system which will require NHS Berkshire East to transfer its provider operation to another provider. Bracknell Forest Council considered its position, but the contract will need to cover the whole of East Berkshire, and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust was eventually selected as the preferred option for this transfer. The number of disabled facility grants completed rose to 69 in 2009/10, up from 36 in 2008/09. A total of £420,000 was made available to disabled residents in this way during the year.

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

- 3.7 The Garth Hill College project remains on programme and on budget, and work to create the new post-16 centre at Edgbarrow is also making good progress. The number of children subject to a child protection plan at the end of the quarter was 70, nearly 60% up on the equivalent figure last year. This reflects the national significant increase in children subject to a protection plan, but further analysis is being undertaken to understand the local reasons for the increase. The overall number of contacts with, and referrals to, the Children's Social Care team has also risen over

the year, but targets for the proportion of these contacts which go on to formal assessment continue to be met.

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

- 3.8 The council continues to work towards the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework. Work in Quarter 4 focussed on preparations for a formal external peer review in July 2010 and on delivering equality and diversity training sessions to managers. The development of new community centres at the Parks and Jennets Park was also progressed during the quarter, as were options for the redevelopment of community centres in Harmans Water and Great Hollands.

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

- 3.9 At the end of 2009/10, all crime in Bracknell Forest had fallen by 7.7% compared to the previous year. Serious Acquisitive Crime had fallen by 18.7%, with particularly strong performance in the reductions of vehicle crime and burglary. Criminal damage offences fell by 15% during the year, which is significant as this is the most commonly reported crime in the borough and is closely linked to anti-social behaviour. The successes of 2009/10 are built upon good partnership working, information sharing and an offender-targeted approach to reducing crime. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership will carry this approach forward into 2010/11. Whilst the cold weather during the winter no doubt played a part in reducing crime, Bracknell Forest clearly outperformed neighbouring areas in key categories of crime reduction. Plans to publicise these successes in Quarter 4 had to be postponed following two incidents of extremely serious crime in the borough. Thanks to intensive efforts by the police and, where appropriate, relevant council officers, all alleged perpetrators have been arrested.

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

- 3.10 The personalisation pilot was completed during Quarter 4, with analysis and evaluation of the outcomes largely complete. All national milestones were successfully achieved. Following an Executive decision in January, a consultation commenced on the future of the Downside Resource Centre. The new Integrated Adults System went live during the quarter, with all relevant staff receiving training.

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

- 3.11 In-year collection of council tax was at 97.5% at the end of March, broadly equivalent to the same period last year, while the equivalent figure for business rates was 98.1%, slightly down on last year. The council's budget and council tax proposals for 2010/11 were approved by Full Council during Quarter 4, and detailed work on implementing the International Financial Reporting Standards continued. Extensive work also took place on the job evaluation scheme, with 72 preliminary posts evaluated and 24 evaluators fully trained up.

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

- 3.12 The latest figures for those that are not in employment, education or training is 144 (6.3% of total 16-18 year olds), with the latest unemployment figure being 3300 for the period from October 2008 to September 2009. The council worked jointly with Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham councils to develop a local economic assessment. The first outputs from this process are expected in July.

*Medium-Term Objectives 12 and 13: Promote workforce skills and limit the impact of the recession*

- 3.13 The Adult Learning team completed a Digital Learning Champions programme during the quarter, promoting the use of the internet, email and other IT applications to support everyday life among people who had not previously used a PC. The Grow Our Own project opened an office in the Bracknell Open Learning Centre, providing advice and skills provision for people looking to return to employment or support their career development through further education.

#### **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. For the twelfth year running, the council delivered within its budgets by year end.

#### **5 Conclusion**

Bracknell Forest has not been immune to the financial difficulties experienced by organisations throughout the public sector in recent months, but at the end of 2009/10 some 96% of the council's targeted actions were either completed or on schedule. Ongoing fiscal retrenchment across the sector will continue to present even greater challenges for the council for the foreseeable future. With the new government now in place at Westminster, changes in direction in national policy have already made their impact felt locally, not least in the in-year public-sector savings which have included major grant cuts for Bracknell Forest. The new policy environment in which local authorities are operating will also require council departments to amend their service plans for 2010/11 to ensure that the council maintains its tradition of offering the best possible services to residents at optimal value for money.

*Timothy Wheadon  
Chief Executive  
June 2010*

# ANNEX A

## SUMMARY PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORT

This exception report is provided in lieu of the complete data set for Quarter 4, which is available via Paris and on request from the Chief Executive's Office.

### 1. Indicators

#### 1.1 Data Availability

- 1.1.1 Performance reports in Quarter 4 have been produced using Paris, the council's new performance management software. The introduction of the new software has proceeded smoothly overall, although a number of teething issues have been encountered. The transition to a devolved model of performance data collection, in which lead officers around the organisation are responsible for the updating of their own information, is a major cultural shift which is likely to present issues for a further few quarters, although these will be actively managed from the corporate centre to ensure that difficulties are minimised.
- 1.1.2 Particular problems have been encountered with producing hard-copy reports from indicator data. These problems will be resolved in time for the Quarter 1 reporting round, and Quarter 4 information will also be made available as soon as the issues are resolved.

### 2. Actions

#### 2.1 Action Statuses at Year-End

At the end of the year, of the 287 actions included in departmental service plans for 2009/10:

- 276 (96%) were Green.
- Six (2%) were Red.
- Five (2%) were no longer applicable.

The most common reason for an action being marked Red was the delay to the town centre regeneration caused by the economic uncertainty.

#### 2.2 Complete List of Red Actions

Ref	Action	Dept	Commentary by lead officer
1.1.3	Publish regeneration strategy.	CXO	Delayed pending review with development partners. To be included in 2010/11 service plan.
1.4.2	Assist with the development of a new library, civic offices and Jubilee Gardens.	CS	Plans are on hold while the decisions are made on the timescales to the overall regeneration. However plans are developed fully to the current design stage (Stage D).
1.4.3	Finalise plans for the new democratic office suite in the Civic Hub.	CS	Plans are on hold while the decisions are made on the timescales to the overall regeneration. However plans are developed fully to the current design stage (Stage D).

Ref	Action	Dept	Commentary by lead officer
1.4.5	Provide all necessary support and advice for the IT Infrastructure in the Civic Hub.	CS	Plans are on hold while the decisions are made on the timescales to the overall regeneration. However plans are developed fully to the current design stage (Stage D).
1.4.6	Provide all necessary support and advice on the customer services area in the Civic Hub.	CS	Plans are on hold while the decisions are made on the timescales to the overall regeneration. However plans are developed fully to the current design stage (Stage D).
7.2.5	Develop and implement campaign plan to raise awareness of the need for foster carers for children and teenagers.	CXO	Due to resource pressures within the Communications & Marketing team, support will be provided from communications to support the work of the foster team on an ongoing basis.

Further details on all aspects of council performance are available from the Chief Executive's Office.

## ANNEX B CORPORATE HEALTH

### Complaints

Department		09/10	Q4	Notes (Q4)
Adult Social Care & Health	<b>Total:</b> Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	<b>20*</b> N/A* N/A N/A 1	<b>5</b> N/A N/A N/A 1	Five complaints in total. ASCH has a statutory complaints procedure different to the corporate procedure. See ASCH Quarter 4 PMR for details. Ongoing complaint.
Corporate Services / Chief Executive's Office	<b>Total:</b> Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	<b>16</b> 14 2 0 0	<b>2</b> 2 0 0 0	Two Corporate Services; 0 Chief Executive's Office. See Corporate Services Quarter 4 PMR for details.
Children, Young People & Learning	<b>Total:</b> Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	<b>12*</b> 9* 0 0 0	<b>5</b> 2 0 0 0	Three statutory complaints also received. See CYPL Quarter 4 PMR for details.
Environment, Culture & Communities	<b>Total:</b> Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4: Ombudsman:	<b>12</b> 10 0 0 2	<b>1</b> 1 0 0 0	Pre-application planning delay.
<b>BFC</b>	<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>62*</b>	<b>13</b>	

\*Two Stage 2 complaints were received by the former Department of Social Care & Learning in Quarter 1. These are not included in the YTD figures for ASCH or CYPL but are included in the BFC grand total.

### Audits with Limited or No Assurance Opinions

Department	Q4	Notes
Adult Social Care & Health	0	
Corporate Services	1	ICT Services Government Connect - Gsi Code. See CS Quarter 4 PMR for details.
Chief Executive's Office	0	
Children, Young People & Learning	0	
Environment, Culture & Communities	0	

## Staffing

### Staff Turnover

Department	Quarter 4 (%)	2009/10 (%)	Notes
Adult Social Care & Health	2.22	11.35	
Corporate Services	4.02	11.55	
Chief Executive's Office	2.70	13.50	
Children, Young People & Learning	2.85	10.61	
Environment, Culture & Communities	2.20	9.88	

### Staff Sickness

Department	Quarter 4 (days per employee)	2009/10 Annual Average (days per employee)
Adult Social Care & Health	1.67	6.69
Corporate Services	1.11	4.51
Chief Executive's Office	0.98	3.18
Children, Young People & Learning	1.51	6.06
Environment, Culture & Communities	1.66	6.36

### Staff Sickness Comparators

Comparator data	All employees, average days sickness absence per employee
Bracknell Forest Council 2008/09	5.7 days
All sectors employers in South East 2008 (Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey 2008)	7.6 days
BVPI 12 outturn 2008/09	7.43 days sickness per FTE

## ANNEX C

### REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

At the end of the third quarter the budgetary control reports for the General Fund reported a potential under spend of £0.412m. By the end of the financial year the under spend had increased to £0.704m. This means the Council has spent within budget for the twelfth successive year. Details of individual variances are included in each department's Performance Management Report (PMR).

The main variances include:

- Impact of the severe weather conditions including repairing potholes - £0.368m.
- A significant reduction in income as a consequence of the recession and credit crunch. Those income budgets experiencing the greatest pressure are:
  - Car parks (both cash sales and season tickets) - £0.216m
  - Easthampstead Park Conference Centre - £0.250m
  - Downshire Golf Complex - £0.060m
  - Development control - £0.270m
  - Interest - £0.317m
  - Commercial and Industrial Property – £0.110m
- Creation of a new reserve for Capital Feasibility Studies (£0.200m) and a contribution to the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre Reserve (£0.250m).
- An over spend on people with a physical disability within Adult Social Care and Health - £0.181m.
- Additional expenditure on school's reactive maintenance and service contracts - £0.194m.
- An over spend on looked after children arising from changes in numbers and placement costs - £0.208m.
- In year savings package - £1.639m
- Further under spends within Environment, Culture and Communities including:
  - Reduced tonnage and a lower than anticipated business rate valuation at Longshot Lane and Smallmead within waste management - £0.378m
  - Greater allocation of Housing Planning and Delivery Grant than budgeted - £0.143m
  - Additional income from the Cemetery and Crematorium - £0.091m.
- Further under spends in Adult Social Care and Health including renegotiation of prices with providers of learning disability services, lower than expected costs from

transition clients and those losing support in the community and reduced staff and running costs of in house units and teams - £1.175m.

The under spend also takes account of approved budget carry forwards into 2010/11 which amount to £0.101m. The most significant carry forwards being:

- Job Evaluation Scheme Funding (£0.024m).
- Projects relating to “Full Core Offer” of Extended Services (0.024m).
- Support for School Improvement Plans (£0.016m).
- On/Off Street parking maintenance works (£0.018m).

In addition to the above the Council has also received £2.583m from the repayment of VAT. Changes in VAT legislation have resulted in various services being reclassified from standard rated to exempt for VAT purposes. At the time these changes were introduced the Council raised and submitted claims for overpaid tax but was only able to claim for the previous three years. This three years cap has been successfully challenged in court and as a result claims were submitted for sporting, leisure and cultural services, excess parking charges, adult and junior sporting course and bulky household waste. A number of claims are still outstanding and further sums of at least £0.300m should be repayable. The precise timing and outcome of these further claims is, however, uncertain. These VAT repayments will be added to General Fund balances and made available to support future year’s budgets.

The VAT refund provides the opportunity to take a more prudent view of the provision for potential losses arising from the Council’s deposits in Icelandic banks and to set aside £2.575m which represents the worse case loss. Expert advice at present suggests that the Council need only make immediate provision for losses of £0.3m however there continues to remain some risk that the losses could be greater than this sum. The actual return of the Council investments is dependent on a legal case currently going through the Icelandic Courts.

A full review of all the variances arising in 2009/10 will be undertaken so that any variances that have an impact in 2010/11 and beyond can be identified and built into the Council’s medium term financial plans.

## ANNEX D

### UPDATE ON BRACKNELL FOREST PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership Board has spent the first three months of 2010 refreshing its governance and work planning arrangements for the forthcoming financial year. Along with an updated protocol and memorandum of agreement, a new BFP Handbook has also been created and can be found on the web at [www.brackellforestpartnership.co.uk](http://www.brackellforestpartnership.co.uk).

The Handbook includes all forthcoming meeting dates and contacts for all lead officers and it also sets out the Board's work programme for 2010/11. This year the programme is structured under three broad themes:

- Strategy and outcomes
- Management and improvement
- Engagement and involvement

Work has been completed for the annual refresh of the Local Area Agreement and the final document which now includes numerical baselines and targets for every indicator was submitted to Government in early March. The evidence base for the Sustainable Community Strategy has also gone through its annual update to ensure the vision and outcomes are still valid.

The Board now has monthly discussions with each of the theme partnerships in turn, to strengthen working relationships and to identify any challenges that the Board could help to resolve. So far discussions have been held with the Children and Young People's Trust and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Finally, in March the Board began discussions about the possibilities of finding ways to better co-ordinate the customer service and front desk functions of each of the partners. A small working group will be established to explore this project further.

## ANNEX E

### UPDATE ON DATA QUALITY

In February 2010 the Audit Commission produced a report on 2008/9 audit on data quality for Bracknell Forest Council. The report made a number of recommendations based on indicator spot checks. The progress against these recommendations is set out below:

Indicator	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility	Progress
Data Quality Strategy	Roll out the new data quality strategy. As part of this ensure that staff understand processes necessary to achieve data quality.	High	Andrea Durn	PARIS has gone live and includes data quality in the work flow and for data sign off. All users trained in processes including data quality. Data quality action plan and strategy refresh included in 2010/11 project and work plans.
NI 59 - % of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral	Assess whether current arrangements identify and investigate errors on originating documentation	Low	Sandra Davies	A monthly activity report is produced which monitors referrals, initial assessments, core assessments etc. Two reports are run to produce this data: 1. shows data where dates are recorded on forms; 2. shows the system date data. These are compared each month and show any discrepancies in recording which are sent to team managers to action/amend. Mandatory fields have also been introduced to ensure dates are entered in the appropriate form fields.
NI 135 – Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	Reassess the system for capturing data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the level of manual intervention</li> <li>• Set data quality standards</li> <li>• Clarify responsibility</li> </ul>	High	Sandra Davies	<i>Background</i> Bracknell Forest Council Adult Social Care went live with IAS Protocol in March 2010. There have been some delays in delivering a fully operational reporting tool for the purposes of government returns and ongoing data validation and analysis and Bracknell Forest are working hard with

	<p>for validating raw data used by producing the NI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate contractual standards for groups submitting data to staff with responsibility for producing the NI</li> <li>• Provide training including specific guidance to those inputting to SWIFT and standardise templates used</li> <li>• Complete the guidance for compiling the indicator</li> </ul>		<p>suppliers to resolve these issues. We anticipate resolving the reporting issues within IAS Protocol during Q2 and Q3 of 2010/11. The action plan for NI 135 is planned within this timescale and will be fully operational during 2010/11.</p> <p><i>Reducing the level of manual intervention</i> It is anticipated that the new arrangements for collating data for the NI 135 indicator within IAS Protocol will significantly reduce the levels of manual intervention previously experienced for this indicator and therefore, data quality will improve as a result.</p> <p>By when: Q2/3 2010/11</p> <p><i>Setting data quality standards</i> A working group comprising of members of the Performance and Governance team and members of the Performance and Partnerships team meet regularly in order to agree on data quality standards and consequent actions. Action points will be cascaded down into the performance team as necessary.</p> <p>By when: Ongoing across 2010-11.</p> <p><i>Clarify responsibility for checking data input by care groups / Clarify responsibility for validating raw data used for producing the</i></p>
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				<p><i>NI/ Complete the guidance for compiling the indicator</i></p> <p>The NI 135 indicator has been allocated a lead officer from the business and a calculating officer within the performance team. The calculating officer will work closely with the lead officer to ensure that the raw data for producing the indicator is validated on an ongoing basis. This partnership will also ensure that responsibilities for checking data input are clarified.</p> <p>The calculating and lead officers will be responsible for compiling the guidance for the indicator.</p> <p>By when: Q2/Q3 2010/11</p> <p><i>Communicate contractual standards for groups submitting data to staff with responsibility for producing the NI</i></p> <p>Bracknell have begun the process of amending Service Level Agreements with key partners in order to incorporate partners' contractual responsibilities in the area of data quality and validation. The contracts also define partner's responsibilities in respect of data templates.</p> <p>By when: Q2 2010/11</p>
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				<p><i>Provide training including specific guidance to those inputting to the Community Care System and standardise templates used</i></p> <p>Full training was provided to all users of IAS Protocol as part of the project implementation of IAS. Ongoing training will be provided through the corporate training team. Templates have been agreed with partners and are now operational.</p> <p>By when: Completed / training ongoing</p>
NI 142 - % of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	Consider developing and implementing spot checking of data submitted by providers to validate data more reliably	Medium	Simon Hendey	In the face of reduction of the Supporting People administration grant this recommendation will not be achieved.
NI 155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Strengthen arrangements for producing NI 155 to ensure that properties completed towards the end of the year are included in the correct year	Low	Simon Hendey	Every quarter RSLs notify us of completions and send us Practical Completion Certificates which confirm completion types and dates. The audit trail is more robust and performance management improved.
NI 198 – All children (aged 5 – 16 years) travelling by car, including van or taxi (but excluding car share) to school	Strengthen arrangements for producing NI 198 by assessing if checks should be made to source documentation	Medium	Roger Cook	Transport and Education do not believe that spot checks of source data are required at the present time. The issue will be continually assessed as part of the ongoing data quality action plan.
NI 198 – All children (aged 5 – 16 years) travelling by	Ensure the correct treatment of data from independent	Medium	Roger Cook	A file note has been added to the NI 198 folder:

<p>car, including van or taxi (but excluding car share) to school</p>	<p>schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the correct treatment of boarding pupils</li> <li>• Ensuring there is support for pupil numbers at all schools</li> <li>• Applying the methodology correctly for schools where data has not been provided</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• highlighting that boarders are not to be included in the totals from independent schools.</li> <li>• All independent schools will be contacted directly to verify total pupil numbers</li> <li>• A copy of the Audit Commission report has been added to the folder so that anyone calculating or checking the figures is aware of the correct procedure</li> </ul>
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