

# Public Document Pack

## Notice of Meeting

### Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillors Chris Moriarty (Chair), Mark Howard (Vice-Chair), David Buckley, Maureen Hunt, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Julian Sharpe, Julian Tisi and Mark Wilson

Monday 25 March 2024 7.00 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

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### Agenda

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1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive any apologies for absence from Panel Members.	-
2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> To receive any declarations of interest from Panel Members.	3 - 4
3	<b>Minutes</b> To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2024.	5 - 16
4	<b>Council Plan 2024-28</b> <p>This report shares the new Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council's strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan.</p> <p>The report is being shared with the Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Recommendations made by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion. Where recommendations are accepted, they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> April for agreement and adoption.</p> <p>The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.</p>	17 - 70

5	<p><b>2023/24 Month 10 Budget Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>This report details the forecast outturn against budget for the 2023/24 financial year. It includes the revenue and capital budgets along with the financial reserve position at year end.</p> <p>The report will be considered by Cabinet on 27th March 2024 and the Panel are provided with an opportunity to further scrutinise the current financial position of the council.</p>	71 - 86
6	<p><b>Think Family/Inequality Project</b></p> <p>For the Panel to receive a presentation on the progress of the 'Think Family' project.</p>	Verbal Report
7	<p><b>Annual Scrutiny Report - Drafting Ideas</b></p> <p>Each year, Overview and Scrutiny is required to submit an annual report to Full Council highlighting the progress and achievements over the course of the past municipal year.</p> <p>The report is currently being drafted and the final report will be submitted to Full Council for consideration in July 2024. The Panel are asked to consider what they would like to include on the annual report for this year. The Annual Scrutiny Report for 2022/23 has been included as Appendix A to this report.</p>	87 - 100
8	<p><b>Work Programme</b></p> <p>To consider upcoming agenda items for future meetings of the Panel.</p>	101 - 102

By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Mark Beeley, [Mark.Beeley@RBWM.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Beeley@RBWM.gov.uk), with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024



## MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

### Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

### Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIS (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

*DPIS (relating to the Member or their partner) include:*

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
  - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
  - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### *Other Registerable Interests:*

- a) *any unpaid directorships*
  - b) *any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority*
  - c) *any body*
    - (i) *exercising functions of a public nature*
    - (ii) *directed to charitable purposes or*
    - (iii) *one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)*
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management*

### **Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

**You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### **Other declarations**

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.



# Agenda Item 3

## CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 29 January 2024

Present: Councillors Chris Moriarty (Chair), Mark Howard (Vice-Chair), David Buckley, Maureen Hunt, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Julian Sharpe, Julian Tisi and Mark Wilson

Officers: Mark Beeley, Andrew Durrant and Kevin McDaniel

Officers in attendance virtually: Elizabeth Griffiths and Rebecca Hatch

### Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

### Minutes

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes from the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.**

Mark Beeley, Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny, confirmed that the latest actions table had been circulated to the Panel before the meeting, this included completed actions from the November and December meetings.

### Quarterly Assurance Report

Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications, said that this was the second edition of the Quarterly Assurance Report in its current format following the first report being considered in November. The key message was that despite the financial challenges, overall performance across a number of indicators was very strong. Areas like adult social care, which was now relying on about a third of its workforce using agency staff, was also an area under significant challenge, both in terms of finances and risk. Considering adult social care on a national scale, the council had the best service in the country for quality of life, second best nationally for the number of people with disabilities in paid employment, third best nationally for residents feeling safe and fourth best nationally for satisfaction with the care and support provided. Rebecca Hatch confirmed that this would be the last time the Panel would be reviewing this exact set of metrics due to the development of the Council Plan, a new set of deliverables and performance metrics would link to the new priorities in this plan. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel would have the opportunity to review the Council Plan before Cabinet in March.

Councillor Hunt noted that the government had increased funding for local councils, specifically by £500 million for adult social care, she wondered whether any of this funding would be received by RBWM.

Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources, said that there had been a recent government announcement but the council were waiting to hear how much of that would be received. She was expecting around £1 million but considering the overspend in the current year on adult services this would only cover a fraction of the additional cost.

Kevin McDaniel, Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Communities, clarified that the £4.5 billion was the estimated increase in funding for local authorities, the share for RBWM was already built into the draft budget.

Councillor Reeves agreed that the additional funding for adult social care was not enough. It was great to hear the excellent ratings for adult social care and how the service was performing nationally. 70% of staff in the service area were permanent, he asked if this would have an impact on maintaining quality. Councillor Reeves asked when the new performance metrics would come in and if there would be an overlap with the current indicators in the Quarterly Assurance Report. He suggested that it would still be useful to see performance compared with the preceding period so that the Panel could see progress.

Kevin McDaniel said the national performance reflected the hard work done by staff across the adult social care service area. The challenge was recruiting sufficient high quality permanent staff and it was important that RBWM was an attractive place to work. A decision had been taken to not recruit to some of the vacant posts which had created some additional funding which allowed an increase in pay for current social workers. This was now more competitive with other Berkshire authorities and should hopefully see an increase in the number of permanent staff.

The Chair asked if there would be any communications or press releases around the achievements seen by adult social care.

Kevin McDaniel confirmed that a press release had been circulated before Christmas.

Rebecca Hatch confirmed that around two thirds of the indicators would be maintained for the new Council Plan. The Quarterly Assurance Report was only a small set of the total number of indicators which the council monitored regularly, so other metrics could be included with preceding data as it had already been collected. However, there could be some new metrics with no previous data so an alternative could be to compare with similar metrics which the council did collect data on.

Councillor Reeves suggested that national statistics could be used to benchmark the council to see how it compared to other similar authorities.

Councillor Price raised a number of points:

- The colours to show performance and arrows to show the direction of travel were useful and the report was well presented.
- At the last meeting, she raised an idea of setting up a fund to raise deposits for people who were unable to afford a deposit on their own and wondered whether this would be followed up.
- There was a group of people who were not eligible for temporary accommodation but were still homeless, it would be useful to understand the numbers in this cohort.
- On the table showing risks per directorate, Councillor Price asked if there was a comparison with the previous period and if a total could be included for each directorate.

- There was some narrative on Freedom of Information and the response times but Councillor Price noted that there was a national set period, it would be useful for this to be included for transparency.
- In the adult social care directorate scorecard, a number of metrics had question marks on whether the performance was improving.
- In the place directorate scorecard, there was a metric around the response to 24 hour and 2 hour orders. Councillor Price asked if the metric could consider the response to potholes specifically, as this was a key concern for residents.

Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place, confirmed that the council did have a rent deposit scheme and there had been over 40 loans issued in the last couple of years. There was provision for rent deposits but he would take the question away to understand the current situation including if there were any current active loans.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to provide further information on the rent deposit scheme, including the number of current loans issued through the scheme.**

On temporary accommodation, Andrew Durrant explained that the report did highlight the number of people that were currently homeless. However, there were unknown people who could be staying with friends or family, for example, and it was a difficult metric to measure.

Councillor Price considered how many people applied to go on the priority housing list but were told they were illegible.

Andrew Durrant confirmed that further discussions had taken place to consider how to best capture data. The Highways team had seen a number of issues with potholes over the past twelve months but the team were monitoring the number and also the potholes which were filled with the temporary solution against the permanent solution. It could be something for the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider.

The Chair added that the experience of residents needed to be considered in context of the performance of the council.

Rebecca Hatch confirmed that the team could look at adding arrow indicators to the risk table showing where risks had increased, decreased and which had been removed or added. Freedom of Information requests had to be responded to within 20 working days and this was also the measure used by the council. The question marks were due to there not being a target, these were metrics that were still monitored by the council. Rebecca Hatch added that the point Councillor Price raised was often referred to as 'hidden homelessness' and it would be very difficult to monitor this number.

The Chair suggested that he could discuss homelessness figures and performance when he met with the Chairs of the other two Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Councillor J Tisi queried the timing of the data as the report covered the period from July to September 2023. He understood that there was a timing issue but wondered if the gap could be reduced. It was positive to see more resident focused metrics and targets. Councillor Tisi noted the amount of funding going into adult social care and considered if this significant amount of funding meant the council were able to offer a high level of service. He noted that all of the strategic risks had been listed as static, Councillor Tisi was surprised as he would have assumed that financial risk would have worsened. On homelessness, there had been a significant amount of homeless people using Victoria Street car park in Windsor and asked whether there was anything more the council could do.

Rebecca Hatch said that it was a challenge to ensure the data was as up to date as possible. The Office for Local Government (Oflog) data had initially been included but this was taken out as it was a number of years out of date. It was possible to get more recent data for some, but not all, of the indicators and a decision had been made to have the same time period across all indicators.

Kevin McDaniel explained that the statutory duty was to ensure that residents were provided with care if they were unable to pay for it themselves, this was around 1500 people. Care was not delivered directly and needed to be brought through the care market. The vast majority of spend went on the cost of this care, particularly when the living wage was increasing which meant that care providers demanded a higher cost to pay their staff. The council had a commitment to only use good or outstanding care providers which helped ensure the quality of service experienced by residents was positive. Considering other adult social care providers, RBWM provided some of the cheapest adult social care in the country and this was why the level of funding allocated to adult social care could not be reduced further.

Councillor J Tisi summarised that for one of the lowest costing adult social care services it was one of the most high performing services nationally. It seemed like the cost increase was out of the control of the council.

Kevin McDaniel said that there were things the council were doing, for example negotiating with service providers.

Elizabeth Griffiths considered the question on strategic risks. The council was making progress and doing everything that it could do. At the time of the report being produced, a balanced draft budget had been finalised but looking at the current position there was a worsening forecast. Elizabeth Griffiths felt the risk assessment was suitable for the current situation.

The Chair considered whether there could be further narrative on risks, particularly with risks which were static and whether this was seen as good or where high risks were still classified as high and what needed to happen for these to receive a lower designation.

Rebecca Hatch agreed that it was a useful comment, she would explore this for future reports.

Andrew Durrant said it was concerning that some people were using Victoria Street car park. There was now better alignment in the service area. There were also issues in Hines Meadow car park in Maidenhead, officers had served community protection warning notices where necessary. Ideally people would be moved on to temporary accommodation but there were some who refused to engage.

Councillor Howard considered how a car park operator in the private sector would approach this situation and whether some of these approaches should be adopted.

Andrew Durrant gave the example of his previous local authority, Westminster, there were a significant number of private car parks and there could often be up to 300 people sleeping rough on an average night. The local authority supported all rough sleepers equally and gave support to all who needed it. Private car parks often had security measures like door fobs and vehicle entrance gates.

Councillor Howard said that there were a number of people leaving the council but it was not clear the level of knowledge and expertise which was being lost. He asked if there was a formal exit interview process.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that there were varying levels of vacancy rate depending on the service area. Some areas had higher skill sets and barriers to entry which were more difficult to replace. There was an anonymised exit interview process, this information was collated annually and presented as part of the annual workforce profile.

Andrew Durrant added that there were a wide variety of roles in his directorate which required specialist qualification but in some areas new people were not coming through. There was an officer in HR who was looking at recruitment and retention to help further with this.

Councillor Howard suggested that sometimes it was good for new people to join the organisation as people could be in the same role for too long, this would help bring variety and new learning to the table.

Rebecca Hatch said in the performance metrics you could have both too much and too little churn when it came to recruitment.

Elizabeth Griffiths felt that it gave managers an opportunity to restructure their teams and consider different ways of doing things rather than just recruiting to the same posts.

Councillor Reeves highlighted a strategic risk which was around failure to secure best value for contracted services. It was important that the council got best value from contracts particularly with the financial challenges. Some key mitigations were in progress around governance and capacity to deal with services. However, under the audits section there was a note around implementing a contract management framework with date of implementation being the end of 2023. No update had been received and Councillor Reeves requested that this was pursued ahead of the next Quarterly Assurance Report being considered. There was also training suggested for all contract managers and this was overdue since March 2023 as it could not be delivered by HR. Councillor Reeves felt that there was more work to be done around contract management and this could be brought as a separate item to be considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Reeves continued by mentioning drugs and alcohol, with treatment going up but this was still below target. Voluntary turnover in public health was over 20% when the target was around 7% and Councillor Reeves considered what mitigations could be put in place. On domestic abuse, there had been an increase but only the number of children in households affected was highlighted. It would be useful to see statistics around adults who had been impacted or were victims of domestic abuse, particularly with the increase around coercive control and abuse. There was a contract in place with the Dash Charity and the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group had discussed more support at GPs to help victims report abuse and get support. The contract was in place for current provision and this could be explored to see if the contract could be amended to add further value.

Elizabeth Griffiths explained that at the point the report was produced there was no update to give on contract management. There had been vacancies in the procurement team for a while but there were additional posts included in the budget to bring the service up to capacity. HR had provided support to the Head of Procurement to help restructure the team. Once the team was back up to strength, the mitigations outlined in the report would be addressed.

Kevin McDaniel said that the public health team was relatively small and there was a lot of rotation through the team. There had been an increased focus on managing the specific contract around drugs and alcohol support. Work had been done in collaboration with local GPs to better understand the links and ensure that individuals were supported across a range of provisions. On domestic abuse, there was a 'think family' approach with domestic violence being a specific strand. More could be done for adults and Kevin McDaniel confirmed that he was happy to share this with the Executive Director of Children's Services and Education to see if there could be further information provided in this area for future reports.

**ACTION – Kevin McDaniel to provide feedback on domestic abuse figures to the Executive Director of Children's Services and Education to investigate whether the number of adults affected by domestic abuse could be included in future Quarterly Assurance Reports.**

Councillor Buckley moved on to consider planning application performance, he suggested that a measure on enforcement would be useful to see particularly as this was important to residents. He said that to monitor the overall headcount of the council's workforce would help to highlight what was needed to offer a higher quality of service. Councillor Buckley highlighted the leisure centre attendance which was well above target however he was concerned about risk around staffing levels and maintaining a high quality of service. An issue raised at a previous meeting had been around the high cost of living in the borough against the often low salaries which were offered. Councillor Buckley asked what action plan was in place to attract staff to the council and maintain them.

Andrew Durrant explained that there was a wide variety of measurements around planning enforcement, he would take it away and discuss with the team to see what could be provided. The leisure centre attendance figures were pleasing and Leisure Focus managed the spaces in accordance with health and safety requirements. Officers at the council met with Leisure Focus on a bi-weekly basis to look at usage and discuss any issues but there were no current concerns.

**ACTION – Andrew Durrant to explore how planning enforcement measures could be included in the Quarterly Assurance Report.**

Elizabeth Griffiths said that recruitment and retention was being looked at but things needed to be offered that did not involve higher salaries. Holiday provision had recently been increased to add a further benefit for staff working for the council. RBWM had less funding to spend due to a low council tax base and other methods had to be explored.

Councillor Wilson noted the number of Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments completed within twenty weeks which had reduced but was still above target. Schools were waiting for EHCP assessments to be completed before additional funding could be accessed. He asked why the number being processed in timescales had been reduced and also whether EHCP assessments could be completed as soon as possible and at least within twenty weeks.

Kevin McDaniel responded by saying that there had been work undertaken to increase provision in more schools which should give schools the support they needed. A performance of over 90% processed within twenty weeks was among the best in the country and therefore performance in this area was deemed to be very strong.

**ACTION – Additional information around this question to be given by the Executive Director of Children's Services and Education.**

Councillor Wilson highlighted that twenty weeks was half a year and this was a significant impact on families who did not have their application processed in the timescales.

Councillor Sharpe asked for one thing officers would change in each of their service areas which would make a difference to the experiences of residents.

Kevin McDaniel said that income did not match the cost of providing good quality services. It was important that residents were supported and that resources were prioritised where needed. For example, a pothole that could be avoided did not need to be fixed in 24 hours if the council could save money by fixing it within a couple of weeks instead.

Andrew Durrant felt that staff across the council were working hard to deliver high quality services across all areas. Having the ability to step back and consider innovation and service improvement would be useful but this was currently not possible in some aspects due to staff needing to ensure standard day to day operation.

Elizabeth Griffiths agreed that officers delivering services were exceptional. The draft budget had closed a £6 million budget gap and this had been done through ideas, suggestions and sacrifices from services. Income was not meeting the level of service which the council wanted

to deliver. Elizabeth Griffiths acknowledged the level of commitment and effort that staff put into their jobs.

Councillor Hunt noted that the RBWM Property Company Governance Action Plan was on the work programme to be considered by the Panel. She requested that there was a full breakdown of all of the projects which the Property Company were involved in delivering. Councillor Hunt asked how the council was doing on fraud and anti-corruption policies and whether there had been any cases reported.

Elizabeth Griffiths confirmed that the council were looking at anti-fraud provision and discussions were ongoing with a service provider to assist with this and ensure that policy gaps were identified and rectified. No cases had been reported that she was aware of.

Councillor Reeves understood that teams were doing all they could based on the limited resources at their disposal. On the percentage of council tax collected, this was a major revenue generator and he asked if this was on track to hit the year end performance.

Elizabeth Griffiths responded that council tax collection was effectively on target currently and this was planned to be on target for year end.

Rebecca Hatch added that it was not an easy chart to interpret.

Councillor Price commented that producing data cost time and money, the Panel should recognise that there needed to be a balance.

The Chair summarised some of the comments and areas raised by the Panel.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the report and:**

- i) Undertook scrutiny of the Quarterly Assurance Report and considered potential implications for the Panel's forward work programme.**

### 2023/24 Month 8 Budget Monitoring Report

Elizabeth Griffiths introduced the report and explained that it covered the council's financial position for the month of November 2023. The financial position had deteriorated compared to previous months and there had been a shift in things the council could not control. There had been progress in reducing overspend and demand led services were finding ways to mitigate the increase in costs. The baseline budget was insufficient to deal with the demand currently being seen and it was projected that this increased demand would continue into the next financial year.

Councillor Price noted that reserves should be between 10% and 15% which seemed unachievable, she asked what the level of reserves would be going into the next financial year and how this compared to the level of reserves at the beginning of the year.

Elizabeth Griffiths explained that the council started the financial year with £10 million of reserves. The previous Executive Director of Resources felt that the minimum level should be £7.9 million and this was a subjective calculation. The council was often spending more than it was saving which meant that it was in a vulnerable position. Earmarked reserves had been used to fund spending in year where necessary to reduce overspend. Reserves were significantly depleted and these could be reduced by half going into the next financial year.

Councillor Price asked if the budget would be looked at again if there was no adequate funding in place to deliver some services. She asked if there was any news on how much

RBWM would receive from the government from the £500 million pot of funding which had been recently announced for local authorities.

Elizabeth Griffiths commented that the council was trying to find further ways to reduce spending. Now that the draft budget had been finalised, the work needed to take place to ensure that this budget was delivered. She was hopeful that the council would receive around £1 million from the government but given the level of spend in areas like adult social care this would make a relatively small difference.

Councillor Price asked if once the budget was approved in February, that this was confirmation from the S151 officer that she was satisfied with the budget.

Elizabeth Griffiths believed it was about the trajectory, with the balanced budget and transformation work planned it was hoped that the council's financial position could improve.

Councillor Wilson considered the methodology, with the forecast outturn between month 7 and month 8 worsening by around £650,000. The current overspend was £4.3 million after contingency, he asked if this looked at the current run rate of income and expenditure and projected this looking forward.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that there were a lot of nominals which were considered by the team and were presented as the summary table in the report.

Councillor Wilson asked if there was an update on the level of overdue debt, particularly when considering the current level of the reserves.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that additional resources had been brought in, it was a big risk. Transformation programmes would be charged to capital receipts and this would happen with corporate debt. She also hoped to be able to move some money from the revenue budget, charge it to capital receipts and free up some resources to bring in credit control to further reduce the debt figure.

The Chair mentioned that in his experience, factoring invoices could be explored.

Elizabeth Griffiths confirmed that it was an option open to the council. However, a significant amount of debt would be incurred by residents who were not the best position and this needed to be considered.

Councillor Wilson followed up on an action from the last meeting around Tivoli performance metrics, with a number of metrics way off target. He asked if it was possible to gain some money back from the contract due to underperformance.

Andrew Durrant explained that the team had ongoing dialogue with Tivoli on performance to identify areas which needed to be improved. Improving efficiencies were explored rather than going down the litigation route. Tivoli had been highlighted as an area of exploration by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Howard supported the principle of trying to improve the contract but this did not overlook the premise that the contract was not being delivered as agreed. He felt that the council was justified in approaching Tivoli to recoup some of the cost of the contract, particularly as Tivoli had saved money by not providing the service to the council.

Councillor Reeves said that there were lessons to be learnt from the Tivoli contract especially when it came up for renewal. He suggested that shared risk and benefits could be a good approach to take. Councillor Reeves commented on adult social care overspend and asked if more leverage could be placed on the government to increase the amount of funding the council received.



Kevin McDaniel reported that local authorities, through the Local Government Association, had highlighted that around £4 billion of additional funding was needed. The amount requested by the Office for Local Government had been around £1 billion and the amount actually received by the government had been £500 million. Officers made the case on a number of different areas directly to the government so that they were fully aware of the challenges that councils faced.

Councillor Reeves felt that this should be communicated directly to the public, so that they understood the lack of funding being received from the government. There was a huge amount of debt that needed to be serviced and he assumed that this would be revaluated, particularly with the interest rate forecast to fall.

Elizabeth Griffiths confirmed that the team were considering interest rate forecasts. However, some debt had been incurred at a low interest rate but was now being refinanced at a much higher rate.

Councillor J Tisi was aware that a significant sum of debt needed to be refinanced in the near future and asked if an update could be provided on this situation.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that only a small amount of the debt in question had been refinanced. Current short term cash flow was being closely monitored to ensure that the council was not borrowing too much to manage short term debt. Further capacity would be added to the team to help assist with forecast projections. The team were trying to shift the balance from just servicing debt to reducing the amount which had been borrowed and not yet been paid back.

Councillor J Tisi considered the estimated impacts, surpluses and pressures which had been outlined in the report. He asked if these amounts had been budgeted, especially as there were more pressures than surpluses.

Elizabeth Griffiths said the tables had been added for greater transparency of the financial position. A number of considerations went into the forecast. There was concern that adult services bad debt would not be cleared by the end of the financial year and this was offsetting savings made.

Councillor Sharpe felt that parking income was an important revenue stream for the council and was usually around £10 million. There was a proposal to increase parking charges, he asked how much this would be projected to raise income by and whether any work had been done to consider the potential impact on businesses.

Andrew Durrant said that there were current in year pressures related to parking and there had been behaviour changes, for example the demand for weekly and annual season ticket. It was a balance and there would be an increase to some parking charges in year. Work had been done with the Town Centre Managers to study the footfall and ensure that an increase in parking charges would not deter people from visiting town centres in the borough. The residents discount on parking had been frozen and would continue going forward. Mobile phone data could be utilised through a parking app to understand usage.

Councillor Sharpe was concerned that residents would visit other town centres instead of those in the borough and suggested that other revenue opportunities should be explored too.

Councillor Hunt queried the comment made on tracking residents through mobile phone data.

She was informed that the system was called Vista Insights, this was related to the permissions set on apps which would ask the resident if they were happy to share location data either while just using the app or at all times. It was an anonymous and secure system which was used by a number of councils and partners.

The Chair considered the outturn variances and that the Place directorate had been trying to soften these variances. He asked if the areas where savings were being made were essential services which could cause issues in future.

Andrew Durrant said that work had been done with contractors to find further efficiencies, grant funding had been utilised and service level delivery had been improved to further save money where possible.

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

- i) **Noted the forecast revenue outturn for the year was an overspend on services of £8.009m which reduced to an overspend of £4.347m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets.**
- ii) **Noted the forecast capital outturn was expenditure of £43.960m against a budget of £88.267m.**

Work Programme

Councillor Price discussed the proposed Panel meeting in February when the full suite of budget papers would be considered.

Mark Beeley explained that there was little flexibility on the date as the finance team were working to a tight deadline to ensure that budget report was ready for Cabinet, moving the meeting forward would shorten the timescales considerably.

Councillor Price asked when the Inequalities Project item could be scheduled in to be considered.

Rebecca Hatch said that the Think Families project was the main strand of work for the Inequalities Project and March would be a good time for the Panel to consider the progress of this piece of work.

Councillor Price commented that in her view, the 'report it' tool on the council website did not work.

The Chair agreed and suggested he would like to look at this, he'd discuss this with the relevant officers after the meeting.

**ACTION – Councillor Moriarty to discuss the potential of bringing an item around the 'report it' tool on the council website to a future meeting.**

Councillor Price asked if there were any further scoping documents which would be coming through from other Panel Members.

Mark Beeley highlighted the item on contract management process which had been suggested by Councillor Reeves.

**ACTION – Mark Beeley to work with Councillor Reeves on the scoping document for the contract management process.**

Councillor Price suggested that Panel Members could feed in concerns about the RBWM Property Company to officers to consider as part of the report which was on the work programme.

Councillor J Tisi questioned why the additional meeting planned for February was needed, particularly as Cabinet would be setting the budget on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

Mark Beeley explained that the meeting was to allow the Panel the opportunity to consider accompanying papers like the capital strategy and treasury management, which had not been seen in December. If the Panel did not feel like they needed to review the final proposed budget, then the meeting did not need to go ahead.

Councillor Sharpe suggested that the Panel should review Community Infrastructure Levy and how this was allocated. He also considered whether the report on the Property Company report could highlight how the organisation managed the various properties which it owned across the borough along with how many assets were owned.

Elizabeth Griffiths said that all assets were valued independently ahead of the audit.

On Community Infrastructure Levy, Mark Beeley made Councillors aware that there was a scoping document on the agenda for the next Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Reeves suggested that the corporate structure should be included as part of the report on the Property Company.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 10.10 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

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Report Title:	Council Plan 2024-28
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	
Meeting and Date:	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 25 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Stephen Evans, Chief Executive Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy & Communications
Wards affected:	All

www.rbwm.gov.uk



## **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report shares the new Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council's strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan.

The report is being shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27 March. Recommendations made by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion. Where recommendations are accepted, they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16 April for agreement and adoption.

The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.

## **DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- i) **Review the Council Plan including the Technical Appendix (Appendix A) and makes recommendations to Cabinet to be considered at their meeting on 27 March 2024.**

## **1. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

### **Options**

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Accept the recommendations in this report	<b>This is the recommended option.</b> The Council plan is a key

Option	Comments
	strategic document for the Council. A scrutiny review will help strengthen the plan and the technical appendix to ensure our alignment with the vision for the council and the borough.
Not accept the recommendations	<b>This is not recommended.</b> The Council Plan is the key strategic document, for the council.

1.1 The Council Plan is the council’s most important strategic document – it sets out our vision over the next few years for the council and the borough; our priorities; what we’ll do to deliver those priorities; and how we’ll measure our success.

1.2 The Strategic Aims and Priorities set out in the Council Plan, are as follows:

**Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively**

- Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council’s financial position.
- Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

**Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough**

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough’s key locations and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities.
- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

**Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood**

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.

- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

**Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities**

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.

**Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough**

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen the council’s governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.

**Council Plan: Technical Appendix**

The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, summarising a selection of activities that will be delivered in order to achieve our priorities, and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which will enable us to monitor progress, and identify and respond to issues. The Council Plan deliverables focus on the coming financial year (2024-25) and will be updated on an annual basis. The KPIs will also be updated on an annual basis to reflect any change in emphasis. The full Council Plan is attached at **Appendix A**.

We have incorporated suggestions provided by Corporate and Overview Scrutiny Panel during earlier scrutiny of Quarterly Assurance Reports while compiling the revised set of KPIs. Table 2 provides a summary of this.

**Table 2 Previous recommendations of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Your recommendations	Our actions
To ensure historic trends are available for analysis while compiling the new set of indicators	This revised set of KPIs include a number of indicators which were part

<b>Your recommendations</b>	<b>Our actions</b>
	of the interim PMF to enable panel members to view historic trends.
To include indicators where benchmarking is possible	The revised set of KPIs now includes national indicators to enable benchmarking.
To provide insights on staff in permanent roles, agency staff and vacancies	New workforce indicators in relation to staff in permanent roles and recruitment are included.
Inclusion of outcome metrics in addition to operational metrics	The revised set of KPIs is a mix of outcome indicators to track how what we do has a positive impact on the borough wide population, operational performance indicators to monitor and track progress of our service delivery performance and contextual indicators to provide additional contextual data.
To include metrics that has a wider impact on all residents	Additional indicators on grounds maintenance, fly-tipping, levels of litter are included, in addition to the existing metrics on missed bins and recycling.

### **Role of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

- 1.3 The report is being shared with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27 March. Recommendations made by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion. The Chairs of the People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel have also been invited to provide comments from their respective panels.
- 1.4 Where recommendations are accepted they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16 April for agreement and adoption.

### **Progress against the Council Plan**

- 1.5 Progress against the Council Plan will be monitored through the Quarterly Assurance Reports (QAR) to Cabinet and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.6 The Quarterly Assurance Report will include the revised set of KPIs included within the Technical Appendix and share updates on progress against deliverables. A full assessment of progress on delivering the Council Plan will



be included within an Annual Report. An annual review and refresh will be undertaken to reassess and update our deliverables and KPIs as appropriate.

- 1.7 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel will undertake scrutiny of the Quarterly Assurance Report on an ongoing basis and consider potential implications for the Panel’s forward work programme.

## 2. KEY IMPLICATIONS

**Table 3: Key Implications**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
Council Plan delivered	Performance off track on > 40% of KPI Failure to progress against substantial number of deliverables	Majority of KPI show performance on track. Good progress against majority of deliverables	Progress exceeds milestones identified in Technical Appendix. Performance against KPIs above target in substantial number of areas.		31 March 2025  (Annual Review and refresh)

## 3. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 3.1 The Council Plan provides the framework for decisions on resource allocation and the draft Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared as part of the reports to Cabinet and Full Council on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in November 2023 and February 2024. Budget allocations are informed by our priorities, and in turn, the activities undertaken to achieve these priorities are developed in line with the resources available.

The Council Plan makes it clear that setting the council on to a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively, must be the primary focus. The current financial position constrains the organisation’s ability to pursue wider priorities until it achieves a more stable financial position. However, the council remains ambitious for the borough. The council will spend almost £100m next year in delivering essential services, in addition to capital investment of £13m in the borough’s critical infrastructure. The council is also undertaking an ambitious transformation programme to change the ways in which we deliver services, and to enable more efficient and effective delivery of our priorities.

- 3.2 Following the review of the Council Plan by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 March 2024, the recommendations by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion on 27 March 2024. Where recommendations are accepted they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16 April for agreement and adoption.

#### 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None. Legal implications associated with specific deliverables will be considered as part of the development and delivery of these activities.

#### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Council Plan includes key deliverables and performance indicators which enable the council to monitor its performance and progress. This includes performance against our corporate priorities, delivery of statutory services and in delivering the savings and transformation needed to achieve a balanced budget. The Council Plan provides a strategic framework which supports the organisation to assess and manage risk.

#### 6. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 6.1 **Equalities.** An Equalities Impact Assessment for the Council Plan is attached at **Appendix C**. The Council Plan makes clear the council's commitment to addressing inequalities in the borough and providing support to those in need at the earliest opportunity. The specific priorities and deliverables focused on equalities, or with particular equalities impacts, are highlighted within the EQIA.
- 6.2 **Climate change/sustainability.** Climate change and sustainability are a key priority for the council, as reflected in **Strategic Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough**, and specifically under the priority to 'Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity'. The delivery of our climate change and sustainability aims requires action across all areas of the organisation and externally with our communities, businesses and partners.
- 6.3 **Data Protection/GDPR.** Not applicable.

#### 7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 7.1 The Council Plan has been informed by early engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups including young people, older people, people with disabilities, the voluntary and community sector (VCS) held during October. Later engagement sessions were held with members, parishes and staff during December where a draft of the aims and priorities for the Council Plan was shared for the discussion to focus more on the proposed structure. A second set of Member briefings were held during February to provide a further opportunity for input and to ensure that Members' priorities and focus areas were taken into consideration in the development of the Plan. The two Member sessions were attended by most Members.
- 7.2 A total of 224 people participated in the sessions, with more contributing to responses submitted via email or the online survey. There was support for the general direction of the council's emerging aims and priorities, with feedback contributing to their shaping and definition in a number of key areas, such as partnership working. The early community engagement highlighted priority

concerns for residents and the VCS and the later sessions fed into the definition of the aims and priorities, overall language and structure of the plan, ensuring it is easily understandable and reflects on collaborative working of the council. A summary of key themes from the engagement is included at **Appendix B**.

## 8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 If agreed by Cabinet, the Council Plan will be shared with Full Council on 16 April for their consideration and agreement. It will then be adopted with immediate effect. Communications and engagement with Members, staff and stakeholders will follow the adoption of the Plan, to ensure that it is embedded across the organisation and externally.

## 9. APPENDICES

9.1 This report is supported by three appendices:

- Appendix A: Council Plan, including Technical Appendix
- Appendix B: Council Plan Engagement Summary
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

## 10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None.

## 11. CONSULTATION

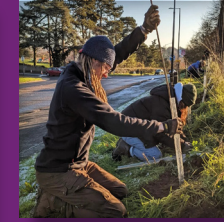
<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	12.03.24	15.03.24
Elaine Browne	Monitoring Officer	12.03.24	15.03.24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	12.03.24	15.03.24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	12.03.24	15.03.24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	12.03.24	15.03.24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services	12.03.24	15.03.24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	12.03.24	15.03.24

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To follow item?</b>
For information	No	Not applicable

Report Author: Radhika Thirunarayana-Govindarajan, Lead Performance Analyst.

# ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD 25 COUNCIL PLAN 2024 - 2028



A borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all

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# 1 Foreword

Our borough is an amazing place. Beautiful countryside, desirable towns and villages, fantastic schools, with strong transport links to regional, national and international connections, and a rich portfolio of heritage assets. We can all be proud of living here and it is not surprising that so many people come to live, work and enjoy time in our borough.

I'm a life-long resident and have been a councillor here for over 30 years now so I understand the importance of the council and the wide-ranging impacts it has on our communities. We are responsible not just for the highly visible services like fixing potholes and collecting rubbish but also providing essential services to the most vulnerable members of our communities including children, people with lifelong disabilities and older people.

The council continues to face significant financial challenges and remains in a weak and serious financial position, which will take time to turn around. Higher inflation and interest rates are driving up council costs, our income has fallen and demand for our services – particularly adult social care, children's services and housing – continues to rise. We also have specific circumstances, as a result of historic decisions, taken nationally and locally, and also macro-economic pressures more recently including high levels of inflation and interest rates which weaken the council's financial position. These include low rates of council tax compared to other authorities – meaning that the council is not able to bring in as much income as other local authorities to fund local services. We have high levels of debt relative to the size of the council's budget and low general fund reserves.

It is in this challenging context that we present our Council Plan to provide a framework of aims and priorities that we will focus on delivering over the coming years.



**Cllr Simon Werner,  
Leader of the Council**

**“I really want to see the council back at the heart of the community – being a champion for residents, supporting our communities and businesses and enabling our voluntary sector to thrive.”**

Creating more social housing is a key priority for the council going forwards.

We have a commitment to clean up the borough. I've seen for myself and heard from you how litter, graffiti and fly tipping are very visible across the borough and I am passionate about sorting out these problems. We also want to increase what the council is doing to head towards net-zero and increase our biodiversity, to ensure that we are responsible guardians of our landscape and wildlife.

In my view, for the times we are living through, there has never been a greater need for strong local government. Our new Council Plan demonstrates how a strong democratic council working collaboratively across the borough can deliver (and advocate for) the policies and resources that all residents need to live a good life within the framework of a resilient, sustainable, healthy borough.

***Cllr Simon Werner  
Leader of the Council***



Our top priority must be to put the council on a strong financial footing. Without money, we simply cannot do all the things we want to do and there continue to be tough choices ahead.

The borough's popularity means that housing is expensive, and many residents struggle to afford to rent and buy homes for their families.



## 2 Introduction

As the head of the council's officer team, I can say how proud we are to serve the people of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. We take our responsibilities seriously.

We know that the council plays a big part in people's lives – not just in providing services to all members of our community; but in supporting some of our most vulnerable residents; driving economic prosperity; creating opportunity for our young people and helping to shape the future of the borough – our people and places.

As someone who was born and brought up in the borough, I was very lucky to benefit from the opportunities it provides. My motivation is to make sure that everybody can benefit from those same opportunities – working to protect what people love about the borough and improve what needs to be improved.

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Local government – like many other parts of the public sector – faces some big challenges. Our council is no different. We undoubtedly face a serious position financially and this remains our top priority. But we also have big opportunities ahead and we're determined that the budget challenges we face won't define us. We'll continue to deliver high quality services and work tirelessly to improve the borough. I see such strong determination by colleagues at the council – our Councillors and staff – to get things done in difficult circumstances since I joined as Chief Executive in April 2023.

Our new Council Plan sets out our vision for the borough and for the council. It's not intended to capture everything we do, but it does set out those things we think are most important and the areas we will focus on. These are our strategic priorities – what we want to achieve as an organisation and for the people of the borough.



**Stephen Evans**  
**Chief Executive**

**“This document is intended to set out a blueprint for progress – driving a positive culture, reforming local services and delivering for the people we’re here to serve. My task is to build an organisation capable of delivering our ambitions day in, day out. That is my focus.”**

But it's important that we also set out what we're going to do to get there and how we'll measure our progress, so that the people of the borough can hold us to account. Which is why our new Council Plan sets out some of the key programmes and activities we will deliver over the next four years in order to achieve our ambitions, together with the performance targets we'll use to check we're on track.

As we look to the future, our goal is always to do what's best for the people of the borough. Working together towards a shared vision, putting the people of the borough at the heart of what we do, living our organisational values and demonstrating a strong customer ethos is what must drive us.

**Stephen Evans**  
**Chief Executive**





### 3 The Royal Borough context

Located in the heart of the Thames Valley, the Royal Borough is rich in areas of natural beauty and green space and home to 153,500 people.

Distinct towns and villages, connected by attractive countryside, create a high-quality environment in which to live, work and visit. The Royal Borough's long association with the Crown has gifted the borough with an impressive portfolio of heritage assets, attractions and world class events.

Borough residents broadly enjoy longer and healthier lives than average in England. Healthy life expectancy at birth is 69.7 years for men and 70.3 years for women. An active, skilled and caring volunteer community regularly give their time and energy to a range of causes, and this helps people of all ages to connect with each other and enjoy life.

With 93.8% of borough schools rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding, the borough's educational offer is strong and local educational attainment (73.2% achieving Grades 9-4 at Key Stage 4) better than the South East (67.5%) and England (65.4%) averages in 2022/23.

Strong regional, national and international links mean residents are able to take advantage of employment opportunities across the Thames Valley region and in the capital. The number of jobs available in comparison to working age residents (job density) is high compared to the South East, and unemployment is low at 3% (Oct-22 to Sep-23).

But there are challenges.

The majority of our population have happy and secure childhoods, go on to work in well-paid roles and enjoy a high quality of life. However, this can mask inequalities and there are concentrations of disadvantage and poverty within some neighbourhoods.

Around 230 households are in temporary accommodation, and many other residents have been supported with cost-of-living and benefits payments and services. In a 2022 survey, over half of residents said that the cost-of-living is their primary concern for the years ahead, with young adults (aged 18-34) being concerned particularly about access to affordable housing and job security. Around 4,000 households in the borough are in fuel poverty (2020) and around 2,000 children under 16 live in families with absolute low income (2021/22).

We are already living with the effects of climate change and weather events have increased in frequency and magnitude. These can have a devastating impact on the lives of residents and business owners in the borough, as seen most recently in the 2024 floods.

More information about the Royal Borough – including population, health, economy, and deprivation statistics – can be found online at [Berkshire Observatory](#) and benchmarking is available from [LG Inform](#).



# 4 About the Council Plan 2024-2028

## Our vision, aims and priorities

This Council Plan sets out our vision for the borough over the next four years. The intention of the Plan is not to capture everything we do as a council but to provide a framework for the decisions we take – how we prioritise and how we allocate the resources we have available to achieve these priorities. It describes the most important aims and priorities that we will focus on completing.

It's important that the Plan is more than a high-level strategic document, which is why the 'technical appendix' at the end of this document sets out the key deliverables we will take forward to help achieve our ambitions, together with a set of performance targets for measuring progress and against which we will be held to account.

Although our aims and priorities are likely to remain fairly constant over the medium term, the rapidly changing environment within which the council operates means that we will update this Plan every year.

## How we will measure our progress

The technical appendix in this Plan sets out:

- The priority deliverables we will complete to achieve our aims and priorities, with target delivery dates. The deliverables are focused on those actions we will complete in the coming year (2024-25) and new deliverables will be set ahead of each financial year of this four year Council Plan.
- A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measuring our performance across a range of important service areas. Our performance against these KPIs will be monitored and reported publicly on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

## Annual review

Council Plan aims, priorities and KPIs will be reviewed and updated each year to reflect any change in emphasis. An updated set of deliverables will be agreed by Cabinet on annual basis, focused on the year ahead.

The annual review will include an assessment of performance in the previous year and this will be reported to Cabinet alongside the annual budget, so that the council's strategic approach continues to influence how our resources are spent.

When strategic reviews are undertaken for service areas these may occasionally lead to changes in KPIs during the year; where this is the case, this will be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular quarterly reporting process and reflected in the next annual refresh of this Council Plan.



# 5

## Our vision

### Our vision for the council

We have a clear vision about the type of council we want to be:

- **An outward-looking, collaborative, learning organisation** where all colleagues feel empowered and take responsibility.
- **A council at the heart of the borough's communities** – championing local issues, caring for and empowering residents, and creating opportunity.
- **A council which operates on a regional footprint**, leading and convening partners and stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors to drive economic growth and prosperity and get the best outcome for our people and businesses.



### Our vision for the borough

Our vision for the borough is: **“A borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all”**.

This vision is underpinned by our five strategic aims:

- Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively.
- A clean, green, safe and prosperous borough.
- Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood.
- People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities.
- A high-performing council that delivers for the borough.

### Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all residents

We are committed to equality for all borough residents. As an employer, contractor of services and a community leader, we celebrate diversity and the contribution that different groups make to the borough.

We are committed to the delivery of accessible services and removing barriers to participation, making sure that we do not discriminate against someone because of perceived difference.

### Our workforce and organisational values

The talent, skills, passion, knowledge and experience of our workforce are central to all that we do. If our Council Plan is our strategic blueprint, the culture of the organisation is what will achieve our ambition.

Our organisational values – refreshed and relaunched in September 2023 – set the standard of the way we work and behave every day. This means that we are all invested in, and accountable for, building and maintaining a positive working culture for our customers, partners, elected members and each other.



**Humility**



**Empower**



**Respect**



**One Team**



# 6 Our strategic aims and priorities

Over the next four years to 2028 we will focus on achieving five aims. These are cross-cutting, so every area of the council will look for ways to work together to support the delivery of our aims. These aims and priorities will be delivered in partnership, through different services working together and with a wide range of partners across the borough.

## Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

- Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position.
- Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

## Aim 2: A clean, green, safe and prosperous borough

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough's key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities.
- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

## Aim 3: Children and young people have a good start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.



#### **Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities**

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.



#### **Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough**

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.



# 7 Technical Appendix

This technical appendix to the Council Plan sets out the key activities and deliverables we will focus on to achieve our strategic aims and priorities. The deliverables are in the main due for completion in the year 2024-25. Deliverables will be updated each year and focused on the most important actions that need to be taken to make progress towards our vision for the borough.

The appendix also contains the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which we will use to measure our progress and which we will report against publicly on a quarterly basis, so that the people of the borough can hold us to account. Many indicators have targets against which we will assess our performance. Some indicators are new measures, and we will be baselining data for this year with the intention of setting an appropriate target for next year. Some indicators do not have a specified target, but we will ‘track and report’ performance. We will assess our performance and progress by benchmarking against relevant comparator groups such as our CIPFA neighbours, our region or nationally where available and appropriate.

## Priority activities and Key Performance Indicators

### Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

Strategic Priority	Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Cabinet to review and scrutinise the in-year budget position on a monthly basis, with update reports published to aid public scrutiny. The annual draft budget to go through the scrutiny process before approval.	Process established	All directorates	
Create a new Performance & Resources Board – chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and attended by Assistant Directors from across services – to scrutinise and monitor budget forecasting, risk and savings delivery.	Process established	All directorates	
Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to scrutinise the in-year budget position on monthly basis. Directorate Leadership Teams to also scrutinise their budgets on a monthly basis.	Process established	All directorates	
Establish a new combined Quarterly Performance Report which brings together challenges; successes; progress against performance targets; risk management and audit performance – scrutinise the combined Report quarterly through ELT, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.	Process established	Chief Executive	

Strategic Priority	Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Review and refresh Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers and continue to report publicly on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.	Process established	All directorates
Review and update the Medium-Term Financial Strategy on an annual basis.	Process established	Resources

Strategic Priority	Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop and implement a new directorate level and corporate service transformation programme to drive service change and achieve savings. The new "Future Shape RBWM" transformation programme will ensure the right resources and governance structures are in place to improve delivery.	New programme established by April 2024	Chief Executive / Resources
Implement a new Case Management System (Mosaic) in Adults Services to support more effective service delivery and ensure income collection is timely and robust, including recovery of unpaid debt for care, and drive system and team integration to make "30-day billing with self-service" the norm for adult social care recipients.	March 2025	Adults, Health & Communities
Deliver Phase 1 of migration to a new Case Management System (LiquidLogic) in Children's Services to support more effective service delivery.	January 2025	Children's Services & Education
Embed new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to improve customer interaction.	September 2024	Resources
Upgrade and update our Content Management System (Phase 1) to support improvements to our public-facing website (Phase 2).	October 2024	Resources

Strategic Priority	Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money including insourcing where appropriate		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Develop and strengthen organisational capacity and capability in procurement and contract management, including through the recruitment of two new posts in the procurement team and developing a council-wide procurement pipeline document.	June 2024	Resources	
Review governance arrangements for contract management within the Place Directorate and embed improvements to strengthen practices, rationalise systems and quality assure delivery.	March 2025	Place	

Strategic Priority	Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
39 Review debtor management practices to improve collection rates across council functions and recover existing debt.	July 2024	Resources	
Identify and implement new commercial opportunities for revenue generation, including from events, advertising and sponsorship, with initial phase to review and rationalise existing cross-council approaches.	July 2024	Place	
Review all fees and charges on an annual basis to ensure that fee income continues to play an important role in generating income to fund local services.	Process established	Resources/all directorates	



Strategic Priority	Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Develop a Corporate Landlord Portfolio Management Plan to ensure council owned premises are well managed, compliant and that assets are regularly reviewed to optimise usage and commercial benefit.	March 2025	Place	

### Aim 1: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
37  <b>Budget</b>	% forecast variance to service revenue budget	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Forecast variance to service revenue budget (£000)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% savings made or on track	100%
	Savings made or on track (£000s)	Track and report [Monitoring]
	% of first bills for Adult Social Care delivered within 30 days	Baselining
	Overdue debts (excluding Housing Benefits over-payments) (£000s)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
<b>Revenues</b>	% of Council Tax collected	≥ 98.5%
	% of Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) collected	≥ 98.3%

## Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough

Strategic Priority	Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Engage with residents and businesses and deliver campaigns to keep the borough clean, increase recycling and promote positive behaviour in relation to reducing waste.	March 2025	Place	
Work in partnership to deliver key priorities for public protection in the reduction of serious violence, crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and enabling community resilience through community warden engagement.	Process established	Place	
Deliver effective regulatory functions to ensure a safe experience for our residents, visitors and businesses and encourage economic growth.	Process established	Place	
Deliver effective Emergency Planning response to major events (e.g. flooding) and maintain effective business continuity arrangements to protect residents, businesses and visitors.	Process established	Place	
Deliver an improved enforcement policy for businesses, to enable light touch, right touch enforcement along with civil penalties. Aim to prioritise based on risk, encourage self-compliance, with enhanced focus on repeat offenders and those who target the vulnerable.	March 2025	Place	

Strategic Priority	Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Secure external funding to deliver energy and decarbonisation projects, with a focus on design work to enhance energy efficiency within council-operated leisure facilities.	December 2024	Place	
Centralise council energy procurement and management in order to reduce utility costs.	April 2024	Place	
Assess condition of facilities (Phase 1) as part of improvement to parks, playgrounds and green spaces for recreation and leisure, and build on community involvement in protecting and enhancing the environment including biodiversity.	September 2024	Place	

Strategic Priority	Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Prepare a new Economic Growth Plan, with a focus on building stronger business partnerships, resilient and compliant businesses, vibrant town centres and local skills and employment.	October 2024	Place
Establish a new Berkshire Prosperity Board with the five other Berkshire local authorities to oversee a joined-up approach to driving economic growth and discharging functions transferred from Local Enterprise Partnerships.	May 2024	Chief Executive
Develop and agree a series of Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with anchor businesses and organisations to strengthen partnership working and support delivery of our priorities.	Process established	Place

39 Strategic Priority	Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough's key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Develop plans in partnership to unlock place-making opportunities within key town locations, including establishing programme governance for Windsor Vision, review and refresh of the Maidenhead Vision and Charter, and adoption of the Ascot Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).	March 2025	Place
Develop and embed a new Local Transport Plan.	April 2025	Place
Review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect priorities for investment.	March 2025	Place
Develop and adopt the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed advice and guidance on energy and carbon, climate adaptation, sustainable materials and construction, biodiversity and sustainable transport.	May 2024	Place

Strategic Priority		Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on tackling homelessness	
Deliverables		Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Review and revise Housing policies, practice and procurement to provide improved service and accommodation solutions to those who are homeless or seeking provision of social housing.		March 2025	Place
Identify opportunities and explore partnerships to increase availability of permanent housing/temporary accommodation and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.		March 2025	Place
Develop and adopt Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed guidance to support implementation of the affordable housing policy requirements in the Borough Local Plan.		July 2024	Place
Review empty Council Tax properties in the borough (Empty Homes Review) in support of central government initiatives to tackle the shortfall in national housing.		March 2025	Resources

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## Aim 2: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
Waste management & recycling	% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling	≥ 50%
	Average no. missed collections per 100,000 collections	≤ 60
Environmental services Revenues	% of reported fly tipping (hazardous and non-hazardous) instances removed within timescale	Baselining
	Levels of litter [NI 195a]	Baselining
	Levels of detritus [NI195b]	Baselining
	% of grass cutting completed against target (parks, highways and cemeteries)	≥ 89%

Indicator		Target 2024/25
<b>Highways</b>	% satisfaction with the condition of road surfaces [NHT Survey KBI 23]	Track and report [Bigger is better]
<b>Community safety</b>	# of anti-social behaviour incidents and complaints	Track and report [Monitoring]
<b>Environmental Health &amp; Trading Standards</b>	% food businesses that are broadly compliant with food law	≥ 80%
<b>Environment</b>	Borough's CO2 emissions estimates – Grand total (LA influence) (in kt CO2e)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Council's direct carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from council operations (in tonnes Co2e)	≤ 2,620
	% of borough land for nature	≥ 25.63%
<b>Economy &amp; Place-making</b>	% of working age people in employment	Track and report [Bigger is better]
	% of working age people who are unemployed	Track and report [Smaller is better]
<b>Housing &amp; Rough Sleeping</b>	% successful homelessness prevention activity for households subject to the Prevention/Relief duty	Track and report [Bigger is better]
	# of people sleeping rough	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of households in temporary accommodation that is located within the borough	Track and report [Bigger is better]

### Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

Strategic Priority	Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Publish the support available within the borough so that children, young people, families, and professionals know where and how to seek help.	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	
Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education	
Build on our targeted outreach support for young people and their families so that their needs can be safely met at home or in their communities, when appropriate.	September 2024	Children's Services & Education	
Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	
4 Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education	
Review and appraise options for sustainable delivery of statutory health visiting and school nursing duties, alongside specific early help interventions, and deliver preparatory work ahead the new health visiting and school nursing specification implementation in August 2024.	August 2024	Children's Services & Education and Public Health	

Strategic Priority	Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Participate in the Department for Education’s Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme to better recruit foster carers.	April 2024 & quarterly review	Children’s Services & Education	
Embed the Mockingbird programme to strengthen support for foster carers as part of the Department for Education’s Regional Care Collaborative pathfinder programme	September 2024	Children’s Services & Education	
Develop an in-house registered children’s home provision and supported accommodation model for Care Leavers to meet care needs safely and locally.	March 2027	Children’s Services & Education	
Strengthen our approach to Family Network Meetings and Family Group Conferences to promote viable alternatives to foster and residential care and enhance support to kinship and connected carers.	March 2025	Children’s Services & Education	
Develop a Care Leavers’ guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to Care Leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.	March 2025	Children’s Services & Education	

Strategic Priority	Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Active co-production with parents/carers and children/young people to ensure that the deliverables in the SEND Strategy are achieved.	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children’s Services & Education	
Develop a model for alternative education provision to better support children and young people with challenging behaviours who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school.	March 2025	Children’s Services & Education	
Develop resources to support assessment and early intervention in mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges.	June 2024 & quarterly review	Children’s Services & Education	

Strategic Priority	Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers.	March 2025 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Work with Adult Social Care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND.	April 2024	Children's Services & Education

Strategic Priority	Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
44 Develop an enhanced practice framework, based on the Signs of Safety practice model.	September 2024	Children's Services & Education
Develop a Participation Strategy to strengthen engagement with children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact their lives.	May 2024	Children's Services & Education
Empower and support children and young people to co-produce their own plans, chair their own meetings when appropriate and involve them in meetings where they have the opportunity to hold decision-makers to account for commitments made to deliver or improve services (e.g. Youth Council, Girl's Forum).	March 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Identify new external funding opportunities and partnerships to enhance our local offer and enable us to support families through challenges, eg cost of living crisis.	Process established	Children's Services & Education
Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education



Strategic Priority	Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence	
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate
Strengthen Family Hubs to bring together different support services into a single accessible location in local communities as part of the 'tell us once' principle.	September 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Improve information sharing between services as part of the Early Help Systems Guide and RBWM threshold document.	April 2024 & quarterly review	Children's Services & Education
Implement the national reforms to childcare so that all eligible working parents have choices about affordable childcare and early education for their children.	March 2025	Children's Services & Education

### Aim 3: Key performance indicators

Indicator	Target 2024/25	
<b>Care leavers</b>	% of care-leavers living in 'suitable accommodation' DfE (19-21yr olds)	≥ 95%
	% of care-leavers in education, training and employment (19-21yr olds)	≥ 60%
<b>Child Protection</b>	% of initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	≥ 90%
	% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for 2+wks visited within last 10 working days	≥ 95%
	% of children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2yrs	≤ 20%
	Domestic violence: # of children in households of MARAC referrals (including repeats)	Track and report [Monitoring]
	Domestic violence: # of reports to police in RBWM (crimes + non-crimes)	Track and report [Monitoring]

Indicator		Target 2024/25
Children in Care	% of Children in Care visited within statutory timescale (6wks)	≥ 95%
	% of Children in Care statutory reviews held within timescale	≥ 95%
	% of Children in Care with 3+ placements within 12mths	≤ 10%
	% of eligible young people with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	≥ 90%
	% of fostered children placed with Achieving for Children Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers	≥ 60%
	% of Children in Care who are attending a school rated by Ofsted as good/outstanding	≥ 90%
Children in Need	# of children referred per 10,000 population (cumulative)	≤ 530
	% of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12mths	≤ 22%
46 Education & SEND	% of borough schools rated by Ofsted as good/outstanding	≥ 95%
	% of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 (Disadvantaged)	≥ 44%
	% of EHCP assessments completed within 20wks (inc. exceptions)	≥ 90%
	# of new Education, Health and Care Plans issued	Track and report [Monitoring]
Family Hubs	# of children referred to Family Hubs	Track and report [Monitoring]
	% of referrals closed in the period with a positive outcome	≥ 90%
Health Visitors	% of children with a review at 2-2.5 years of age	≥ 77.2%
	% of eligible children receiving a 6-8wk review within 8wks	≥ 87%

#### Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

Strategic Priority	A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Refresh and embed our Health & Wellbeing Strategy to align across council priorities and embed a council-wide focus that builds in prevention for long-term improvements in healthy life expectancy.	Autumn 2025 (current strategy ends 2025)	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop a delivery plan and make progress towards RBWM becoming 'Smokefree' in line with the national ambition.	Summer 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.	Process established*	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.	March 2025	Adults, Health & Communities	
Increase access and opportunities for residents to be physically active as part of daily life, including sport, leisure, active travel, and participation within community clubs, supported by newly published strategies and plans.	December 2024	Place	

\* Phase 6 of [Whole systems approach to obesity: A guide to support local approaches \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) to be completed by November 2025

Strategic Priority	Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help to maintain and extend independent living		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review and embed stronger engagement practices with appropriate community sector partners to support early community-based, non-statutory help for residents, helping them to remain living independently for longer in their own homes.	September 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Work with Achieving for Children to provide clearer pathways into adulthood, including independent living, so that more young people can thrive in their local communities as adults.	September 2024	Adults, Health & Communities and Children's Services & Education	
Review ongoing arrangements for care packages and services such as day centres to ensure that clients receive targeted and effective support/provision at the right cost to the council. This includes services funded by the Better Care Fund as well as directly by the Council to ensure compliance with the Care Act 2014.	Process established	Adults, Health & Communities	
Help to reduce the impact of cost of living rises on our residents, with a focus on those most at risk, through targeted financial and practical support e.g. Here to Help, Household Support Fund, Warm Spaces, Multiply.	Process established	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.	November 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Review and revise the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy to enable wider use of the funding in supporting residents to live a safe and full life in their own homes.	September 2024	Place	


Strategic Priority	Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Drive continual service quality and practice improvement, building on forthcoming Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection recommendations: including co-producing solutions with service-users which seek to increase the length of time that residents can live independently at home. This includes timely reablement to further reduce the reliance on long-term support.	Refreshed plan following CQC inspection	Adults, Health & Communities	
Explore options and potential risk/return of working with Optalis to provide a council owned and run nursing home, catering for the most complex level of care needs.	November 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Develop more “lifetime homes” in Windsor and up to 18 “Shared Lives” arrangements across the borough to enable more people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes or with families, reducing the number of out-of-borough residential placements and further increasing service value for money.	March 2026	Adults, Health & Communities	

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#### Aim 4: Key performance indicators

Indicator		Target 2024/25
50	[Rank] % satisfied/very satisfied with the care & support services they receive (exc LD customers)	Ranking within England top 10%
	% of safeguarding concerns progressing to enquiry	Track and Report [Monitoring]
	% of permanent admissions to a care home for those aged 65yrs+ (previously self-funded)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	# of permanent admissions to care for those aged 65yrs+ per 100,000	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of clients with Learning Disabilities in settled accommodation	≥ 78.8%
	% of Mental Health clients securing appropriate employment	≥ 8%
	% of older people (aged 65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	≥ 80%
	Average length of stay in residential and nursing homes for older people (by enabling people to stay at home for longer)	35 days less than baseline
	# of people placed in Shared Lives	≥ 6
Health improvement	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Male)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Female)	Track and report [Smaller is better]
	% of service users who have successfully quit smoking at 4 weeks	≥ 60%
	# of residents with drug and alcohol issues engaged in treatment, support, and recovery services.	≥ 604
Leisure centres	# of attendances at leisure centres	1% increase on baseline

**Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough**

Strategic Priority	Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Develop and deliver a refreshed Communications and Engagement Strategy to strengthen and update the council's overarching approach to communications with our communities and other stakeholders.	December 2024	Chief Executive	
Continue to embed the council's engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.	August 2024	Chief Executive	
Establish a community-based Equality Forum in order to strengthen relationships with diverse groups in our communities.	June 2024	Chief Executive	
 Develop and embed a new Customer Services Strategy.	April 2025	Resources	
Develop a comprehensive asset-based community development plan to leverage existing community resources, skills, networks and grant funding priorities in order to strengthen communities. Further develop a targeted capacity-building program for communities to build the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate and lead asset-based community development projects.	January 2025	Adults, Health & Communities	

Strategic Priority	Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, and parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Review and embed stronger engagement practices with appropriate community sector partners to support early community-based, non-statutory help for residents, helping them to remain living independently for longer in their own homes.	August 2025	Adults, Health & Communities	
Further develop the infrastructure support and guidance for a wider range of community and voluntary groups so that there is a wide base of services to support residents across the Borough. Use this wide base to promote and support a range of targeted activities including delivery of projects which support community-led priorities.	March 2024	Adults, Health & Communities	
Engage with all stakeholders to review and revise the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to reduce Homelessness in the Borough and ensure that those in need have a safe place to call home.	March 2025	Place	

Strategic Priority	Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Deliver lawful elections and by-elections and ensure effective management of the Electoral Register.	December 2024	Resources	
Embed strong governance and strengthen programme and performance management, including through Quarterly Assurance Reports and a new Corporate Transformation Board.	Process established	Chief Executive	
Deliver the Planning Service improvement plan to strengthen service-delivery across key customer-facing and enabling functions.	March 2025	Place	
Deliver planned IT infrastructure upgrades and maintenance including: Broadband, Firewalls replacement, Network refresh, Laptop and mobile phone refresh, Wifi replacement and Telephony review.	March 2025	Resources	



Strategic Priority	Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Deliver planned digital migration of Local Land charges system.	December 2024	Resources	

Strategic Priority	Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future		
Deliverables	Target completion date	Lead Directorate	
Address continuing challenges with recruitment and staff retention by continuing to develop our staff offer and opportunities to reform terms and conditions	March 2025	All directorates	
Continue roll-out of HR platform (iTrent) modules (workforce). Identify and implement automation of HR platform (iTrent) to deliver increased functionality and reduce manual practices.	October 2024	Resources	
Continue to explore ways to improve staff Terms & Conditions to make RBWM a more attractive employer	Process established	Resources	

## Aim 5: Key performance indicators

Indicator	Target 2024/25	
<b>Customer service</b>	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [RBWM]	≤ 30%
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [Adults]	≤ 40%
	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld [Childrens]	≤ 40%
	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale [Adults/Childrens/RBWM combined]	≥ 70%
	% of calls answered within 2mins	≥ 80%
	% of calls abandoned after 5 seconds	≤ 4%
<b>Benefits</b>	Average # of days to process new claims (Housing Benefits)	≤ 12 days
	Average # of days to process changes in circumstances (Housing Benefits)	≤ 5 days
<b>FOI requests</b>	% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests processed within 20 working days or within agreed timelines	≥ 90%
<b>Planning</b>	% of major planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 80%
	% of minor planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 75%
	% of other planning applications processed in time (or within agreed time period)	≥ 85%
	% of planning decisions overturned	Track and report [Smaller is better]


Indicator	Target 2024/25	
<b>Workforce</b>	# of working days lost to sickness per headcount (YTD) [RBWM]	≤ 5.8 working days*
	% voluntary turnover (YTD) [RBWM]	15.5%*
	% of posts filled with permanent staff [RBWM]	Baselining
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [Achieving for Children]	≥ 70%
	% of social worker posts filled with permanent staff [Optalis]	≥ 81%
	% of vacancies advertised and filled successfully at first attempt [RBWM]	Baselining

\*Will be reviewed mid-year

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 [www.rbwm.gov.uk](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk)

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## Appendix B: Summary, Council Plan 2024-25 Engagement

### Introduction

Following the change of administration after the May 2023 local elections it was considered appropriate to review the Council's aims and priorities as expressed in the Corporate Plan, developed in 2021. The public engagement around the development of the 2021-26 Corporate Plan took the form of a public consultation, held in early 2022, which sought the public's agreement on the proposed headline commitments and objectives.

The development process for the 2024-2027 Council Plan (previously referred to as Corporate Plan) sought to undertake internal and external engagement that was broader than that carried out for the previous Corporate Plan and took place at an earlier stage. This enabled a wider range of stakeholders to have greater opportunity for input into the council's emerging aims and priorities. The challenging financial situation of the council makes effective engagement, and the enhanced insights and stakeholder buy-in associated with that, especially important for this Council Plan.

A series of separate engagement activities and events were carried out involving a range of stakeholders:

- 9-13<sup>th</sup> October 2023: Community (including residents and VCS organisations)
- 5-13<sup>th</sup> December 2023: internal colleagues (including Achieving for Children and Optalis)
- 11-12<sup>th</sup> December 2023: elected members
- 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023: parish councils

As the community engagement took place first, the Council Plan was at a more incipient stage and so the information presented to participants focused on the council's financial situation and the broader priorities for the council and borough. Discussions then took place in small groups on topics of interest that were relevant to each stakeholder group, and which aligned with the broad themes emerging within the Council Plan. For the later sessions held with staff, elected members and parishes, it was possible to share a draft of the aims and priorities for the Council Plan and for discussion to focus more on the proposed structure and content. Although formal early engagement did not take place with these latter groups, ongoing conversations with the Cabinet and with colleagues ensured that their priorities and focus areas were taken into consideration in the development of those aims and priorities.

### Summary of Engagement Sessions

#### Community engagement

Four in-person engagement sessions were planned, targeting specific groups of stakeholders: young people (aged 12-18, up to 25 years for care leavers); older adults (65+) and people with disabilities; voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations; and local businesses. These groups were chosen to represent a range of community stakeholders with different interests within the borough. The two 'resident-focused' sessions targeted demographic groups that are most likely to be in touch with the services which account for most of the council's budget (Adults and Children's Services) and that have the most potential to be affected by changes in budget allocation and service delivery. There was insufficient interest for the in-person business session to go ahead so this was replaced by an online survey, promoted through the Chamber of Commerce. Excluding current councillors and officers, there were 16 participants at the older and disabled people's

session, 19 at the VCS session, and 8 at the young people's session (with an additional 10 having attended an initial planning session to identify relevant discussion topics).

Alongside the in-person discussion sessions, a Facilitation Pack was created which contained information and resources to enable community groups and residents to run their own discussion session and to feedback their comments for inclusion with the feedback from the council-run sessions via an online survey. This approach was intended to increase the reach of this engagement and to make it more inclusive. Three additional groups provided feedback in this way.

### Staff engagement

Three sessions were held for staff members, which were open to colleagues from RBWM, AfC and Optalis. To maximise participation, two of these were online (with one promoted particularly to colleagues resident in the borough) and one was held as an in-person session in the Town Hall. Attendance across the sessions was good, with a total of 127 colleagues participating and all three organisations represented.

### Councillor engagement

Two online sessions were held for elected members of the council. There was good attendance from councillors, with a total of 28 attending the sessions.

### Parish Council engagement

One session was held for Parish Councils with 16 Parish Councillors attending.

### Community engagement feedback on local area

Participants at the community engagement sessions were invited to share what they felt were the strengths of the borough and what were the main challenges and areas for improvement.

#### Strengths of the local area

Some strengths were mentioned in all three in-person sessions:

- the location of the borough, particularly in terms of its connectivity and access to green spaces;
- the safety of the local area;
- local facilities, such as the libraries.

The strength and potential of the local voluntary sector came through strongly, although this is unsurprising considering the number of participants who were involved in the VCS. The relative affluence of the area was mentioned in several comments relating to residents' general health and wellbeing. This also fed into expressions of community cohesion, highlighting the sharing of community spaces and the willingness of people to look after those less well off.

#### Areas for improvement

From the in-person and online feedback received from the community engagement some issues were consistently mentioned as areas for improvement:

- Travel and transport
- Communication and engagement
- Community facilities
- Maidenhead town centre

## Feedback on Council Plan themes

### General feedback

There was overall agreement across the engagement sessions that the emerging aims and priorities were appropriate and reflected the direction that the council should be taking. Several participants in different sessions noted that without having more detail about the activities, metrics and timescales that would underlie the aims, it was difficult to provide as much feedback as they would like. Participants were keen to understand how the aims would translate into measurable actions and how residents could hold us to account.

### Structure and language of the Plan

There was discussion about the importance of highlighting the co-benefits of the different aims and priorities, and how best to reflect areas of work which span more than one aim. This also linked in with comments about the importance of moving away from the practice, or perception, or silo working.

Some suggestions were made about refining the wording of certain aims, in particular the reference to 'resilient neighbourhoods' (Aim 3). However, overall it was felt that the language and wording of the aims and priorities were acceptable and understandable for the council and its residents.

### Communication and engagement

A desire for better communication and engagement by the council (Aim 4 in the version shared) was a key theme for stakeholders in all sessions. From a community perspective, there were comments about the sharing of information and responsiveness to communication from council officers and members. Potential improvements in the council's communication and engagement of specific groups of residents, namely young people and people with learning disabilities, were also discussed.

There was a general feeling from internal and external stakeholders that the council should undertake engagement which is more representative and inclusive of the diversity within the borough and which enables a broader range of residents and stakeholders to inform council decision-making. Community engagement and local volunteering were identified as opportunities for building a sense of community and strengthening residents' feeling of responsibility and ownership for their local areas. More effective engagement and communication with partners was also highlighted as a key aspect in strengthening our approach to partnership working.

There was also an acknowledgement of the importance of the communication and engagement around the ongoing development of the Council Plan, and in particular the need to 'close the feedback loop' with stakeholders who have been involved in the process so far. There was discussion about how the Council Plan is presented to residents and what the narrative is, particular in terms of relevance to residents who are not in more vulnerable groups and so are not currently in touch with higher-need council services.

### Maidenhead town centre

A common theme with residents, as reflected in the staff sessions and in the community sessions, was a concern about the changing character of Maidenhead town centre. This was expressed as a reduction in the sense of pride in the town, the absence of ‘destination’ shops/venues in the town and a perception of a lack of a coordinated vision for recent development works. Concerns were also raised over the capacity of existing (and planned) infrastructure to support the increased demands from new developments. A suggestion was made to involve residents more through the coproduction of a town plan. It is worth noting that the focus on Maidenhead may reflect the fact that the in-person community engagement sessions were all held in Maidenhead (although involved participants from across the borough) and that the location of the main council offices at Maidenhead Town Hall may have resulted in a greater number of Maidenhead residents amongst the participants at the staff sessions. Discussion of how ‘clean and green’ the borough was prompted comments about littering, graffiti and poor maintenance of public spaces.

### Travel and transport

Travel and transport (and the infrastructure to support it) came across as a key priority in the community engagement sessions. Discussion focused primarily on dissatisfaction with public transport and active travel provision, including the accessibility of pavements. Some specific travel issues were mentioned, such as children travelling to school, bus transport in rural areas, and poor public transport services to key community assets such as Norden Farm. Car parking was also mentioned as an area to improve.

### Local facilities

Local assets and facilities including the libraries, heritage assets and community spaces were highlighted in the community sessions as strengths of the borough. However, this was coupled with a concern for the future of libraries and community facilities in particular and discussions about the lack of facilities and spaces that cater to young people and to older adults who want places to meet and engage with others. This feeling that there should be more focus on the needs of these particular demographic groups, especially as the borough has an ageing population, featured in more general comments as well.

### Other areas to include in Council Plan

The sharing of the draft aims and priorities at the sessions with staff, elected members and parishes enabled a discussion of whether certain topics and service areas were underrepresented in the Council Plan. One issue raised was that business and the local economy did not feature as prominently as it might and that there was also no consideration of benefits to visitors to the borough. A similar point was also made about aims and priorities around children and young people, beyond the council’s role as Corporate Parent, and around adult statutory services.

### Changes to the Council Plan following this engagement

As a result of these engagement activities and the feedback received, a number of amendments have been made to the draft aims and priorities:



- The original Aim 3 previously related to services supporting both children and adults. This has now been expanded into two aims: Aim 3 which focuses on children and young people and is aligned with the priorities of AfC, who deliver this service; and Aim 4, which focuses on adults.
- Aim 5 (formerly Aim 4), 'a high-performing council that delivers for the borough', now includes strengthening accountability and transparency in response to feedback from a number of sessions.
- Aim 4 (formerly Aim 3) has been changed from 'People live healthy and independent lives in inclusive and resilient neighbourhoods' to 'People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities', responding to feedback on the term 'resilient neighbourhoods'.
- The priorities under Aim 5 have been expanded to include reference to working with business.
- The process has been adapted to enable Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to review the KPI and Deliverables Technical Appendix in March. The full Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix, will be agreed at Full Council in April.

# Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

## Council Plan 2024-28

### Background Information

Service area:	Council-wide
Directorate:	Council-wide
Completed by: Clare Walsha Date: 15/03/2024	Approved by: Date

#### Introduction

This EQIA is for the Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council’s strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan. The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.

The five aims of the Council Plan are:

- Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively
- Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough
- Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood
- Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities
- Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

The Council Plan makes it clear that setting the council on to a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively, must be the primary focus. The current financial position constrains the organisation’s ability to pursue wider priorities until it achieves a more stable financial position. However, the council remains ambitious for the borough. The council will spend almost £100m next year in delivering essential services, in addition to capital investment of £13m in the borough’s critical infrastructure. The council is also undertaking an ambitious transformation programme to change the ways in which we deliver services, and to enable more efficient and effective delivery of our priorities.

The Council is committed to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community, whilst pursuing cost-effective solutions to support the enablement and empowerment of those with a lower level of need alongside a longer-term approach of prevention and early intervention. Under each of the five aims of the Council Plan there are a number of strategic priorities some of which are linked to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act. These strategic priorities are set out by the aims below.

#### **Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively**

EQIA for the budget has been carried out separately and was published as part of the papers for Budget Council Thursday 29 February, Agenda Reports Pack p.169.

**Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough**

- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

**Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood**

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

**Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities**

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.

**Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough**

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.

The EQIA sets out the deliverables under the priorities which will impact on the key groups.

**Consultation**

The Council Plan has been informed by engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups including: young people, older people, people with disabilities, the voluntary and community sector, Members, parishes and staff. A total of 224 people participated in the sessions, with more contributing to responses submitted via email or the online survey. There was support for the general direction of the council's emerging aims and priorities, with feedback contributing to their shaping and definition in a number of key areas, such as partnership working. The early community engagement highlighted priority concerns for residents and the VCS and the later sessions fed into the definition of the aims and priorities.

**Equality Impact Analysis**

	<p>How do the protected characteristics influence the needs of individuals within this proposal?</p> <p>How might these characteristics affect the impact of the proposal?</p> <p>(If no influence on impact, state 'N/A')</p>	<p>Overall impact</p> <p>(Tick where relevant)</p>
<b>Age</b>	<p><u>Older people</u>  A deliverable under aim 4 focuses on improving accessibility and inclusivity for older people (amongst under groups)  <b>Aim 4: Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time</b>  Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p> <p><u>Children and younger people</u>  Aim 3 focuses on children and young people and a number of deliverables will positively impact the experience of children and young people including through targeted out-reach, new 'Think Families' approach, development of services for children in need and those with mental health difficulties.  <b>Priority: Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives</b>  Deliverable: Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support.  Deliverable: Build on our targeted outreach support for young people and their families so that their needs can be safely met at home or in their communities, when appropriate.  Deliverable: Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health.</p> <p><b>Priority: Support young people and families</b>  Deliverable: Develop a Participation Strategy to strengthen engagement with children and young people and ensure their views are heard and included in decisions that impact their lives.</p>	<p>The overall approach of the Council Plan is designed to improve outcomes in the medium term, to mitigate impacts to the most vulnerable and to strengthen preventative services, and will therefore have an ultimately positive impact. Due to budget constraints, priorities and deliverables under Aim 1 in some cases have a negative impact which is covered by a separate EQIA.</p>

	<p>Deliverable: Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 4 specifically references intervention with regards to weight for children.  <b>Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing</b>  Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 5 specifically references improving engagement with young people.  <b>Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better</b>  Deliverable: Continue to embed the council's engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p>	
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Two deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving care and interventions for children with mental health and SEND.  <b>Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives</b>  Deliverable: Provide effective early help support to children and young people experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and/or mental health.  <b>Priority: support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes</b>  Deliverable: Work with Adult Social Care and housing providers to improve pathway and transition planning for young people with SEND.</p> <p>Two deliverables under Aim 4 specifically refer to those with disability and improving support for those living in their own homes and also increasing provision for those unable to live independently.  <b>Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time</b>  Review and revise the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy to enable wider use of the</p>	

	<p>funding in supporting residents to live a safe and full life in their own homes.</p> <p><b>Priority: Deliver quality adult social care</b>  Deliverable: Develop more “lifetime homes” in Windsor and up to 18 “Shared Lives” arrangements across the borough to enable more people with learning disabilities to live in their own homes or with families, reducing the number of out-of-borough residential placements and further increasing service value for money.</p> <p>A deliverable under aim 4 includes a focus on improving pathways and access to services for those with disability.</p> <p><b>Priority: provide access to the right support to residents at the right time</b>  Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p> <p>A deliverable under Aim 5 includes a reference to under-represented groups which includes people with disability.</p> <p><b>Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better</b>  Deliverable: Continue to embed the council’s engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p>	
<b>Sex</b>	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	
<b>Race, Ethnicity and Religion/Belief</b>	<p>A deliverable under Aim 5 includes reference to improving engagement with under-represented groups which includes minority ethnic groups and religious groups.</p> <p><b>Priority: strengthen how we work to serve the borough better</b>  Deliverable: Continue to embed the council’s engagement framework, including development of specific guidance to better engage with young people, and strengthen our approach to public consultation to better promote engagement with any under-represented groups.</p> <p>The following priority includes specific reference to strengthening partnerships with faith groups.</p>	

	<p><b>Priority: Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, and parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents</b></p>	
<p><b>Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment</b></p>	<p>Under Aim 4, there are plans to improve the provision of services to the LGBTQ+ community through partner working.</p> <p><b>Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.</p>	
<p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></p>	<p>The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.</p>	
<p><b>Care experience</b> (children in care and care leavers)</p>	<p>A number of deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving the experience of children in care and care leavers.</p> <p><b>Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Improve the timeliness of initial and annual health assessments for children in care and care leavers.</p> <p><b>Priority: support children and young people in our care</b></p> <p>Deliverables: Develop an in-house registered children’s home provision and supported accommodation model for Care Leavers to meet care needs safely and locally.</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop a Care Leavers’ guarantor scheme and improve the range of support available to Care Leavers to enable them to move into their own housing with appropriate support.</p>	
<p><b>Socio-economic disadvantage</b> (e.g., low income, poverty)</p>	<p>A deliverable under Aim 2 will benefit areas of high deprivation who are more likely to have higher levels of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p><b>Priority: Keep our neighbourhoods green and safe’ sets out a deliverable</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Work in partnership to deliver key priorities for public protection in the reduction of serious violence, crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and enabling community resilience through community warden engagement.</p> <p>Two deliverables under the Aim 2 are focused on improving people with socio-</p>	

	<p>economic disadvantage who are homeless or at the risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p><b>Priority: Ensure availability of housing that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Review and revise Housing policies, practice and procurement to provide improved service and accommodation solutions to those who are homeless or seeking provision of social housing.</p> <p>Deliverable: Identify opportunities and explore partnerships to increase availability of permanent housing/temporary accommodation and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Multiple priorities and deliverables under Aim 3 are focused on improving outcomes of those in poverty and/or socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p><b>Priority: support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Build on our multi-disciplinary teams to provide early support to children and young people as part of a "Think Families" approach, so that their needs do not escalate to requiring statutory support.</p> <p><b>Priority: Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Work to reduce gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between children in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant and their peers.</p> <p><b>Priority: Support young people and families</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Create a new child and family help service that supports children in need (CIN) and families needing targeted support.</p> <p>Multiple deliverables under Aim 4 will benefit those with socio-economic disadvantage because children who in poverty are more likely to be obese, people with socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to require access to drug and alcohol treatment services, people with socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to be adversely effected and more profoundly affected by increasing cost-of-living and therefore more likely to benefit from these interventions</p>	
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	<p><b>Priority: A Council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Develop and deliver a whole systems approach to healthy weight for children and families, focusing in areas with higher rates of overweight and obesity, including steps to improve the food environment.</p> <p>Develop effective pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity to drug and alcohol services.</p> <p><b>Priority: Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time</b></p> <p>Deliverable: Help to reduce the impact of cost of living rises on our residents, with a focus on those most at risk, through targeted financial and practical support e.g. Here to Help, Household Support Fund, Warm Spaces, Multiply.</p> <p>Deliverable: Develop effective service pathways to improve accessibility and inclusivity.</p>	
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> (in respect of employment discrimination only)	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	
<b>Armed Forces Community</b> (in respect of access to public services)	The Council Plan is not anticipated to disproportionately or differentially impact individuals based upon this protected characteristic.	

**Where a potential negative impact has been identified, what measures would be put in place to mitigate or minimise it?**

The Council Plan is not anticipated to have a negative impact on any of the groups within the EQIA, excluding those groups already identified through the Budget 2024/25. The Council Plan aims at explicitly improving services including accessibility and inclusivity for those who have protected characteristics.

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Report Title:	2023/24 Month 10 Budget Monitoring Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources Julian McGowan, Senior Finance Business Partner
Wards affected:	All

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## REPORT SUMMARY

This report details the forecast outturn against budget for the 2023/24 financial year. It includes the revenue and capital budgets along with the financial reserve position at year end.

### 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Cabinet:

- i) notes the forecast revenue outturn for the year is an overspend on services of £9.647m which reduces to an overspend of £6.069m when including unallocated contingency budgets and changes to funding budgets (para 4);
- ii) notes the forecast capital outturn is expenditure of £41.125m against a budget of £89.541m (para 9); and
- iii) approve the revenue budget virements set out in Appendix C.

### 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

#### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
To note the Council's outturn.	This is the recommended option.
To not note the Council's outturn.	This is not the recommended option.

### 3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council faces considerable financial risks that could have a significant and immediate impact on its finances. However, whilst reserves are currently above the minimum level that the S151 Officer deemed required in the February 2023 budget papers to protect against financial and service risks (£7.900m), they are projected to fall below £5m by the end of the year, based on the current forecast.

## 4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 RBWM faces significant financial challenges. In the Cabinet meeting of 27 September, the Chief Executive and S151 Officer gave an update to Cabinet, stating that the Council's reserves were low and there was a risk that a S114 notice would need to be issued. Since then, whilst a balanced 2024/25 budget was set at February Council, the in-year position continues to deteriorate.
- 4.2 The majority of the overspend is in our statutory services and, despite processes being strengthened and costs being mitigated, the pressure of additional placements is largely beyond our control. The risk attached to these rising costs is that the placements which drive them will continue into the new financial year creating an instant overspend on the budget which already had millions of pounds of additional funding added to cover these services but may not be enough to cope with ever increasing rises in demand.
- 4.3 The month 10 forecast is an overspend of £9.647m on service budgets, which reduces to £6.069m when considering contingency and funding budgets. This is an adverse movement of £1.0088m from the prior month.
- 4.4 The significant changes in month 10 are:
- Children's services additional social care placements costs (£0.242m).
  - Revised forecast of staffing in Children's services (£0.366m).
  - Shortfalls on income in Adult Social Care from subletting of block commissioned beds and Funded Nursing Care (£0.360m).

**Table 2: 2023/24 Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn**

	Current Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults and Housing	40,505	47,225	6,720	360
Children's Services	27,759	29,208	1,449	607
Place	11,985	14,041	2,056	(1)
Resources	13,023	12,459	(564)	18
Chief Executive Department	1,013	999	(14)	0
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>94,285</b>	<b>103,932</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>984</b>
Contingency	2,934	846	(2,088)	107
Other funding and non-service expenditure	(97,219)	(98,709)	(1,490)	(297)
<b>DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,069</b>	<b>6,069</b>	<b>794</b>

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	
Opening balance	(10,213)
Transfer out	6,069
<b>CLOSING BALANCE</b>	<b>(4,144)</b>

## ADULTS AND HEALTH

4.5 The forecast is an adviser variance of £0.360m from the prior month due:

- A more detailed review of income budgets has identified a pressure including £0.200m on leaseback income (whereby block beds are sublet) and £0.150m from Funded Nursing Care. Further work is being undertaken to maximise funding before year end, but it remains a challenging area particularly as the ICB face their own budget challenges.

**Table 3: Adults and Health Forecast Outturn**

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Exec Director & Commissioning	1,735	1,767	32	(293)
Adult Social Care	38,525	45,230	6,705	670
Transformation and Community	170	153	(17)	(17)
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,505</b>	<b>47,225</b>	<b>6,720</b>	<b>360</b>

### **Executive Director and Commissioning (forecast overspend of £0.032m)**

4.6 Note the favourable movement this month of £0.293m is largely offset by an adverse movement in Adult Social Care, as two Assistant Director posts have transferred back from Optalis to the Council.

### **Adult Social Care (forecast overspend of £6.705m)**

4.7 The primary cause of the overspend is placement cost which is £4.700m, £3.800m of this is due to the residential care costs of older people whilst £0.900m is due to mental health placements. The budget assumed demand would return to pre-Covid levels but that has not been the case. There is also significant inflationary pressures from all providers, especially those with no contractually agreed terms. This is particularly noticeable in residential and nursing home places where we are seeing requests for 8%-16% uplifts on existing placements, having budgeted 5%.

4.8 Staffing shows an overspend of £0.870m due to the large number of vacancies and the subsequent reliance on agency staff.

4.9 There is pressure of £0.470m on income forecast which is mostly driven by shortfall of £0.290m in Leaseback income, shortfall of £0.145m in Funded Nursing Care income.

4.10 Non-staff adverse forecast variance of £0.66m is primarily driven by bad debt provision. The current forecast variance is £0.52m adverse and this is likely to

increase to estimated £0.872m adverse variance at year end. In addition to non-staff variance is a vacancy savings target of £0.1m.

- 4.11 Ongoing actions to address the overspend overspend include establishing a rigorous panel process for new care placements, the Homefirst project that seeks to support people as they leave hospital to reduce the risk of care home placements, and a targeted review of care packages which started in August. There are early indications that the panel review and Homefirst are having positive impacts, but with demand led services we must wait to see longer term trends before drawing firm conclusions.

### Public Health

- 4.12 Public Health spend is met from the ringfenced grant and as such there is no impact on the General Fund, and nil variance reported.

## 5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 5.1 The forecast is an adverse movement of £0.607m in month 10 due to:

- Increase in residential placement of £0.242m. This is due to two young people who have moved from an independent fostering agency placement to residential due to their complex needs, review of support package for one young person and a 12-week mother and baby assessment placement has been extended for one family.
- Following an in-depth re-forecasting a further pressure of £0.366m is now being reported on social care staffing. There remain recruitment challenges at both a local and national level, due to a shortfall of qualified and experienced practitioners.

**Table 4: Children's Services Forecast Outturn**

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Mgt & Business Services	3,158	3,134	(24)	(63)
Education	1,279	820	(459)	(122)
SEND	3,676	4,394	718	73
Social Care & Early Help	21,043	22,577	1,534	737
Public Health	(11)	(45)	(33)	(17)
Grant budgets	(1,387)	(1,673)	(286)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,758</b>	<b>29,208</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>608</b>

- 5.2 Use of agency staff to cover vacancies is important to support safe services and retention of existing practitioners, whilst permanent recruitment takes place. Agency social workers cost an average of £0.030m more per year than permanent staff. There is active recruitment in progress, including conversations with agency staff members about whether they would be interested in permanent employment contracts. Children's services also

continue to review the local benefits package to ensure it is as attractive as possible. The service is also looking at how experienced (but not social work qualified) children's services practitioners could be used to carry out more functions.

- 5.3 The budget remains volatile due to the statutory duty to safeguard children of the borough. As a demand led service any increase in demand to support children and families will likely have an impact on the budget projections.

## 6. PLACE

- 6.1 There are no significant variances on the budget this month.

**Table 5: Place Forecast Outturn**

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast over / (under) spend	Change
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director of Place	20	20	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	8,027	9,848	1,821	(25)
Planning	1,330	1,785	455	24
Housing, ES & TS	2,134	2,005	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0
Infrastructure, Sust. & Transport	3,382	3,291	(91)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,986</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>2,056</b>	<b>(1)</b>

### **Neighbourhood Services (forecast overspend of £1.821m)**

- 6.2 There are significant cost pressures on the waste contract (£0.600m) due to haulage and vehicle costs. There also a pressure on the highways contract due to higher inflation than budgeted (£0.360m). There are ongoing discussions with contractors to identify savings.
- 6.3 On the positive side, reprocessing rates for dry mixed recycling is higher than anticipated (£0.325m) and a new contract for recycling has resulted in a saving (£0.180m) reduced by (£0.030m).
- 6.4 Parking income is £1.200m below budget (£0.750m daily parking, £0.390m season tickets). Compared to the previous year daily parking is 3% up, and season ticket 7%, but this is equivalent to increases in charges and is insufficient to make up the budget (2022/23 included a reduced target to reflect recovery from the pandemic). As reported last month, communications have been enhanced as part of the Maidenhead parking strategy. Promotions including the uptake of season tickets as well as the development of the parking strategy continue.
- 6.5 It should be noted that following public consultation, the February 2024 parking fees increase has been included in the full year forecast (£0.150m).

- 6.6 The Leisure Contract is £0.560m below budget as the budgeted concession income is less than currently obtained. There was uncertainty at the time of setting the budget as the tender was in progress at the time and has subsequently been delayed. This is partly mitigated by holding funding of the community wardens and identification of alternative sources of funding (e.g. Public Health). There are ongoing discussions with Leisure Focus on commercial options such as increase of prices.

### **Planning (forecast overspend of £0.455m)**

- 6.7 There is a pressure on planning fees (£0.760m) due to the current market and a low volume of building control applications. The planning fee increase of 35% has been included in the forecast (£0.055m).
- 6.8 Appeal costs of £0.180m have also been included (see Appendix B: Risks and Opportunities) for further information. It should also be noted that one-off CIL funding of essential tree works is included in the forecast (£0.570m).

### **Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards (forecast overspend of £0.129m)**

- 6.9 The underspend is due to release of earmarked reserves no longer required and agreed by ELT, and underspend on the air quality monitoring budgets. Housing Temporary Accommodation is a volatile budget, and it should be noted that although it is forecast to budget, it remains a volatile area and includes a one-off injection of funding from the Homes 4 Ukraine grant (£0.500m). There is also an Asylum Dispersal Grant of £0.298m which is forecast to be spent mostly after year end – see Appendix B Risk and Opportunities for further info.

## **7. RESOURCES**

- 7.1 There are no significant variances this month.

**Table 6: Resources Forecast Outturn**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>Forecast over / (under) spend</b>	<b>Change</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	(72)	0
Revenues, Bens, Library & Res	5,078	4,170	(908)	(11)
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	31	0
HR, Corporate Projects, and IT	3,355	3,283	(72)	0
Corporate Management	(196)	591	787	10
Finance	1,615	1,546	(69)	19
Governance	2,368	2,299	(69)	0
Legal Services	1,025	833	(192)	0
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>12,459</b>	<b>(564)</b>	<b>18</b>



**Executive Director of Resources (forecast underspend of £0.072m)**

- 7.2 The underspend is due to the Director post being vacant for the start of the year.

**Revenues, Benefits, Library & Residents Services (forecast underspend of £0.908m)**

- 7.3 The underspend is related to the release of earmarked reserves previously agreed by ELT (£0.799m). These reserves were mostly funded from New Burdens grants that related to previous years. There is also an underspend of £0.124m in Business Services and Registrars primarily due to vacancies and Court Cost income, and an overspend of £0.051m across library services.

**Human Resources, Corporate Projects, and IT (forecast underspend of £0.072m)**

- 7.4 The underspend is due to a number of smaller variances, most significantly savings on IT contracts (£0.065m).

**Corporate Management (forecast overspend of £0.787m)**

- 7.5 The pressure is caused by the additional external audit fees for 20/21 and the increase in the scale fee for 23/24 (£0.587m), and a saving in respect of a reduction in bad debt provision that is unlikely to be achieved.

**Finance (forecast underspend of £0.069m)**

- 7.6 Despite the pressures on agency staffing, finance is forecasting an underspend which is caused by increasing recharges to the Pension Fund and Propco to properly reflect the cost of providing this support, and vacancies in the Procurement Team. This may change as further interim resource is brought in at ahead of year-end.

**Governance (forecast underspend of £0.069m)**

- 7.7 The variance is made up of a number of smaller variances, most significant staff vacancies and member allowances budget not being used.

**Legal Services (forecast underspend of £0.192m)**

- 7.8 The forecast underspend is due to staff vacancies (£0.142m) including the case worker and an Executive Assistant post, and over achievement of income from legal fees (£0.050m).

**8. SUNDRY DEBT**

- 8.1 The current level of overdue sundry debt is £9.772m. On subsidiary systems there is also debt of £2.917m and £0.175m in relation to Housing Overpayments and Housing Rents respectively. This remains an area of high focus and actions being taken on this have been reported in previous Cabinet reports.

**Table 7: Aged debt**

	> 1 month	> 2 month	> 6 month	> 1 year	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Health					
Adult Social Care	171	759	670	2,759	4,359
Deferred Payments	23	146	114	540	822
Children's Services	6	1	19	6	32
Place					
Housing	43	4	3	1,325	1,374
Commercial property	193	129	555	130	1,007
Other Place	827	167	212	102	1,309
Resources	122	664	6	78	869
<b>Total Agresso Debt</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>1,869</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>4,939</b>	<b>9,772</b>

**Subsidiary systems:**

HB Overpayments	2,917
Housing Rents	175
<b>Total overdue debt</b>	<b>12,864</b>

*Note: excludes CTAX and Business Rates payable to the Collection Fund*

**9. CAPITAL**

- 9.1 The 2023/24 budget of £88.267m includes the capital programme of £35.338m and slippage of £52.929m from 2022/23 and prior years. All capital expenditure is under review to minimise external financing requirements and reduce spend where possible. The 2024-25 budget papers includes the estimated £43.011m of capital budget that will be slipped to future years though this is subject to further review. A final figure will be reported at year-end.

**Table 8: Capital programme forecast outturn**

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast slippage to 24/25 and later	Forecast variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000
ASC and Health	1,738	626	(899)	(213)
Children's Services	15,787	10,666	(5,121)	0
Place	68,243	27,834	(36,368)	(4,041)
Resources	3,774	2,000	(623)	(1,151)
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,541</b>	<b>41,125</b>	<b>(43,011)</b>	<b>(5,405)</b>

9.2 The following table details how this year's capital spend will be financed.

**Table 9: Financing of the capital programme**

	<b>£000</b>
Government Grants	15,585
Other Grants	275
Community Infrastructure Levy	12,116
Section 106	3,842
Capital Receipts	587
Borrowing	8,721
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,125</b>

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 In producing and reviewing this report the Council is meeting its legal obligations to monitor its financial position.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT**

11.1 Projected variances require mitigation to reduce them during the financial year.

## **12. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

12.1 Equalities. There are no direct impacts.

12.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no direct impacts.

12.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no direct impacts.

## **13. CONSULTATION**

13.1 None.

## **14. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

14.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately.

## **15. APPENDICES**

15.1 This report is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix A – Revenue monitoring statement
- Appendix B – Risk and assumptions
- Appendix C – Budget virements for Cabinet approval

## 16. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 16.1 This report is supported by one document, the budget report to [Council February 2023](#).

## 17. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory:</i>			
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources & S151 Officer	21/02/24	21/02/24
Elaine Browne	Deputy Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	22/02/24
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Deputy Director of Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	21/02/24	
Jane Cryer	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	
Helena Stevenson	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer	21/02/24	
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	21/02/24	21/02/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	21/02/24	21/02/24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	21/02/24	21/02/24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	21/02/24	21/02/24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	Yes
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## REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Julian McGowan, Senior Finance Business Partner

Service	Current budget	Forecast outturn	Forecast variance	Previously reported variance	Change from previously reported variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Chief Executive Department</b>					
Chief Executive	244	244	0	0	0
Strategy & Performance	769	755	(14)	(14)	0
<b>TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>					
Director of Children's Services	(79)	(79)	0	0	0
Achieving for Children Contract	44,686	46,135	1,449	842	607
Children's Services - Retained	58,853	58,853	0	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant - Income	(75,701)	(75,701)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>	<b>27,759</b>	<b>29,208</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>607</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Health</b>					
Executive Director and Commissioning	1,735	1,767	32	325	(293)
Adult Social Care	38,525	44,845	6,320	6,035	285
Better Care Fund - Spend	14,579	14,964	385	0	385
Better Care Fund - Income	(14,579)	(14,579)	0	0	0
Transformation and Community	170	153	(17)	0	(17)
Public Health Spend	5,392	5,392	0	0	0
Public Health Grant	(5,317)	(5,317)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE and HEALTH</b>	<b>40,505</b>	<b>47,225</b>	<b>6,720</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>Resources</b>					
Executive Director of Resources	155	83	(72)	(72)	0
Revenues, Benefits, Library & Resident Services	5,078	4,170	(908)	(897)	(11)
Housing Benefit	(377)	(346)	31	31	0
Human Resources, Corporate Projects & IT	3,355	3,283	(72)	(72)	0
Corporate Management	(196)	591	787	777	10
Finance	1,615	1,546	(69)	(88)	19
Governance	2,368	2,299	(69)	(69)	0
Legal services	1,025	833	(192)	(192)	0
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>12,459</b>	<b>(564)</b>	<b>(582)</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Place</b>					
Executive Director of Place	20	20	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	8,027	9,848	1,821	1,846	(25)
Planning Service	1,330	1,785	455	431	24
Housing, Environmental Services & Trading Standards	2,134	2,005	(129)	(129)	0
Property	(2,908)	(2,908)	0	0	0
Infrastructure, Sustainability & Transport	3,382	3,291	(91)	(91)	0
<b>TOTAL PLACE</b>	<b>11,985</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>2,056</b>	<b>2,057</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>94,285</b>	<b>103,932</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>8,663</b>	<b>984</b>
<b>Sources of funding and non-service expenditure</b>					
Contingency and Corporate Budgets	2,934	846	(2,088)	(2,195)	107
Precepts and Levies	2,066	2,066	0	0	0
Financing and investment (income) and expenditure	5,180	4,329	(851)	(557)	(294)
Taxation and non-specific grant income	(110,629)	(110,629)	0	0	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	3,139	3,572	433	433	0
Transfer to / (from) earmarked reserves	(1,375)	(2,378)	(1,003)	(1,000)	(3)
Contribution to Pension Fund deficit	4,400	4,331	(69)	(69)	0
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AND NON-SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(94,285)</b>	<b>(97,863)</b>	<b>(3,578)</b>	<b>(3,388)</b>	<b>(190)</b>
<b>(INCREASE) DECREASE IN GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,069</b>	<b>6,069</b>	<b>5,275</b>	<b>794</b>

Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
All	<p><b>FLOODING</b></p> <p>Costs in relation to recent flooding in the borough are expected. A central register is maintained of possible issues but it is too early to quantify accurately (i.e. impact of three car park closures in Windsor, contractor support in i.e. closing roads and cleansing, reallocate residents to nearby accommodation, council staff time, alternative adult social care provision when usual services unavailable, use of Windsor Leisure Centre etc).</p> <p>The government has announced support for households and businesses which the Council may be required to administer if the funding level is triggered. New Burdens grant may be receive to cover these costs.</p>	Unknown
Place	<p><b>TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</b></p> <p>This is a volatile area and there are a number of pressures, both locally and nationally, which make this worth noting as a risk as we head into year end. The current risk is based on figures as at the end of Jan 24, where spend has been higher than average previous months.</p> <p>There also remains a significant amount of Housing legacy debt on Agresso which needs further investigation (Housing rents moved onto a new system, ARA, from June 2022).</p>	0.250
Place	<p><b>ASYLUM DISPERSAL GRANT</b></p> <p>This is a specific grant for the asylum hotels (£298,500). There is a plan in place to utilise this funding but the assumption is that the grant can be carried forward to 2024/25, clarification is being sought from government. There is a risk that costs exceed the level of the grant.</p>	Unknown
Place	<p><b>HOUSING ROUGH SLEEPER DISPERSAL GRANT</b></p> <p>The grant has been used to pay for Temporary Accommodation costs for rough sleepers, however this is not part of the program agreed with DLUC. As such further work is required to move these Temporary Accommodation costs to the General Fund and to confirm the extent other costs can be substituted in.</p>	0.400
Place	<p><b>PLANNING APPEAL</b></p> <p>Costs in relation to a planning decision compensation / costs are expected. £0.180m has been included in the forecast but this is an estimate and may increase by an additional estimated £0.350m in case the planning committee's decision is overruled.</p>	0.350
Place	<p><b>TREE MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p>Increase in re-active maintenance as a result of ongoing inspections by end of March 2024 have been included in the forecast. However, the higher end of this forecast indicated potential additional costs of £0.085m which are not in the forecast.</p>	0.085
Resources	<p><b>EXTERNAL AUDIT FEES</b></p> <p>Deloitte have requested to the local government audit regulator (Public Sector Audit Appointments) that they be allowed to charge additional fees of £0.400m in respect of the 2020/21 audit, which includes additional work responding to objections. This has been included in the forecast we are challenging the scale of these additional fees so there could be a benefit if that was accepted.</p>	Unknown
Resources	<p><b>BAD DEBT PROVISION (excluding Adults&amp; Health / legacy Housing Debt pre ARA)</b></p> <p>A saving of £0.190m was included in the 2023/24 budget in respect of reducing the bad debt provision (though the saving relates to Place as well, it has been recorded in Resources for simplicity). However, it is looking unlikely that this target will be achieved and there will be a cost from a requirement to increase the bad debt provision. Bad debt provisions are volatile depending on the timing of large invoices, but there is a risk that the requirement for an increase in the provision will be significant. The current forecast assumes the saving will not be met, but there will be no increase in bad debt provision.</p> <p>There are however some unreconciled credits on Agresso of approximately £0.360m which may mitigate the pressure.</p>	Unknown
Resources	<p><b>HOUSING BENEFITS</b></p> <p>The Housing Benefit position is complicated and we are not in a position to reliably forecast this until several year-end procedures are complete, including completion of the subsidy claim and calculation of the bad debt provision. However, the recovery rate on overpayments has dropped which is likely to have a negative impact.</p>	Unknown
Children's	<p><b>HEALTH FUNDING</b></p> <p>The budget assumes health funding for four placement of young people, totalling £0.668m. However, there is a risk that health will not fund part or all of these costs.</p>	0.668

Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p><b>DATA QUALITY OF INFORMATION TO BASE ADULT SOCIAL CARE FORECASTS ON</b></p> <p>The lack of a care system that integrates with the ledger and automates processes results in significant concerns over the quality of data used to inform forecasting in Adult Social Care. Finance are reliant on the service to update manual spreadsheets of care packages, but there are significant differences between what is currently on the spreadsheets and the commitments recorded on the care system. This could be that the care system is not up to date, but each case needs to be followed up individually. As an example, in Mental Health there are £1.288m of care costs recorded on finance spreadsheets that are not recorded on the care system.</p> <p>There are also delays in notifying finance of new care package changes, some of which have been backdated to pre-1 April. So far prior year costs not accrued have been identified that total £0.194m. As an example, we have been made aware of services in October 2023 that backdate to December 2022.</p>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p><b>INCOME FORECASTING</b></p> <p>Client income is proving difficult to forecast and there remains a risk of significant variations in forecast in the final months leading up to year-end. This is due to the invoicing of clients being a manual process and therefore requiring complex manual spreadsheets to monitor, exacerbated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- frequent backdating of financial assessments, for example due to delays at Court of Protection granting deputyship;</li> <li>- data quality issues (see data quality above) meaning finance may not be aware of the care package and the associated assessed client contribution;</li> <li>- learning disability clients who finance have recorded as having to make a contribution (including CHC) but have not been invoiced;</li> <li>- s117 clients where it may be that the ICB should be meeting costs.</li> </ul>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p><b>RAISING OF INCOME</b></p> <p>Unlike with other departments, the finance team have to raise invoices for income from funding bodies (e.g. the ICB, other Councils). This is due to historic practice and also the budgets are on the RBWM ledger but the budget holders sit in Optalis. As accountants are raising the invoices, they are also having to take on the role of chasing this debt. The finance team are concerned over the completeness of records and the extent the service take ownership of this debt. Historic spreadsheets suggest there could be unclaimed income, but there appears to be no master list and finance have been requested to contact the ICB to resolve.</p>	Unknown
Adults & Health	<p><b>PROVISION FOR SOCIAL CARE COSTS</b></p> <p>At the end of 2022/23 we provided £314k for a Continuing Health Care case for which health have offered to pay 35% (£0.103m). We are still disputing this but if the 35% was accepted would allow us to release part of the provision.</p>	(0.103)
Adults & Health	<p><b>FUNDED NURSING CARE (FNC)</b></p> <p>FNC is a contribution from health to nursing residential placements. The Council pays care providers the FNC as part of its nursing block fees and then reclaims it from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Council is projected to pay £0.250m more FNC than it receives. However, because claims will only be backdated for 28 days the FNC received may be circa £35k for 23-24.</p> <p>Finance had recently reviewed FNC and identified FNC not paid to RBWM as far back as 2021. The ICB have agreed to pay £0.052m, the full amount identified by finance.</p>	(0.250)
Adults & Health	<p><b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES</b></p> <p>The ICB limited the uplift it will fund in 2023/24 to 1.8% so they are not paying the published fees and charges for Council / Optalis provided care services. The Director of Adults &amp; Health is challenging this decision.</p>	(0.060)
Adults & Health	<p><b>BAD DEBT PROVISION (ADULTS AND HEALTH)</b></p> <p>Although there is a project underway concerning the large amount of old debt in Adult Social Care, it is looking increasingly unlikely that any improvement will be realised in the year. The budget contains a bad debt saving of £0.350m which may not materialise in 2023/24. In addition the current bad debt provision is projected to increase by £0.522m. This makes a total projected overspend of £0.872m by March 2024. £0.524m is in the forecast. It should be noted that the current project chasing debt over 1 year old has shown some early success, with £0.090m of legacy debt paid following sending of standard letters.</p>	0.348
Adults & Health	<p><b>PUBLIC HEALTH REPLACEMENT SPEND</b></p> <p>The budget assumes Public Health funding of £0.190m will be received for preventative services (day care and supported employment). However, the Public Health team have previously indicated that such funding is predicated and a more substantive case being made. The forecast assumes Public Health will continue to provide this funding.</p>	0.190

Directorate	Risk / Opportunity Description	Estimated impact (Surplus) / Pressure £m
Adults & Health	<p><b>SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON S117 AFTERCARE</b></p> <p>In 2023 the Supreme Court ruled on determining responsibility for aftercare when people are placed out of area and then detained again under the Mental Health Act 1983. This impacts on which local authority has responsibility for aftercare , (including funding) for a person detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act. The ruling represents a change in the law resulting in £1m risk to RBWM arising from specific circumstances.</p>	1.000
Adults & Health	<p><b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE JOINT LEGAL TEAM COSTS</b></p> <p>No invoices have been received yet for legal costs in 2023/24, yet we have just been advised that costs of £0.185m are to be levied for the first 10 months. This is £0.060m more than the full year budget, and if costs continue at current rate this will rise to £0.083m.</p>	0.083



**REVENUE BUDGET VIREMENTS**

Where revenue budget virements exceed £0.100m, or £0.025m when funds move between departments, the Council Constitution requires Cabinet sign off. The virements up to the end of Month 10 that required Cabinet sign off are set out below, along with an explanation as their purpose.

Budget line	Debit £m	Credit £m	Explanation
Adults & Health – Adult Social Care	0.252		Use of earmarked reserves – COMF funding
Adults & Health – Public Health	0.075		Use of earmarked reserves – COMF funding
Resources – Revenues and Benefits	0.689		Use of earmarked reserves - New Burden grants
Place - Housing	0.117		Use of earmarked reserves – Housing grants
Funding from reserves		(1,133)	Use of earmarked reserves to support the current financial position, agreed by Executive Leadership Team. These reserves are legacy grants and not earmarked for future use.
Adults & Health – Executive Director	0.123		Transfer of budget between Optalis and the council to reflect insourcing of senior Assistant Director posts (part year)
Adults & Health – Adult Social Care		(0.123)	As above
Adults & Health – Executive Director	0.049		Further increases in the Coroners Joint Arrangement (hosted by Reading council) which will be funded from the contingency budget as the service has little control over it.
Contingency		(0.049)	As above

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Report Title:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report – Drafting Ideas</b>
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Meetings and Dates:	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 25 March 2024 People Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 18 April 2024 Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 22 April 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Mark Beeley – Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

*Each year, Overview and Scrutiny is required to submit an annual report to Full Council highlighting the progress and achievements over the course of the past municipal year.*

*The report is currently being drafted and the final report will be submitted to Full Council for consideration in July 2024. The Panel are asked to consider what they would like to include on the annual report for this year. The Annual Scrutiny Report for 2022/23 has been included as Appendix A to this report.*

## **DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**RECOMMENDATION: That the Corporate, People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Panels note the report and:**

- i) Provide any comments or suggest areas of focus for the Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24.**

The report will look to include:

- General information on each Panel, what its role and responsibilities are along with membership details.
- Information on the variety of topics considered by the Panel at meetings.
- A summary/introduction from the Chair.
- Statistics on the work of scrutiny over the course of the year to highlight the time scrutiny has spent considering key issues, along with officer resource.
- Improvements on how scrutiny can be changed to increase its effectiveness.

Questions for the Panel to consider and discuss:

- What do you think the Panel has achieved this year, highlighting any areas of success?
- What has gone well, any outcomes that you think need to be noted and highlighted on the report?
- What improvements can the Panel look to make for next year?
- Are there any organisations or partners that the Panel can look to work more closely with on future scrutiny topics?
- How can we look to increase engagement from residents in scrutiny?
- Can we look to involve the RBWM Youth Council in the work of scrutiny?

### **TIMETABLE FOR ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
March 2024	Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny and the three Chairs of each Panel begin drafting the Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24.
March/April 2024	Discussion at each Overview and Scrutiny Panel on what Panel Members would like to see included in the report.
May 2024	Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 drafted and amendments made as appropriate.
July 2024	Final version published and considered by Full Council.

### **APPENDICES**

This report is supported by one appendix:

- Appendix A – Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

This report is supported by one background document:

- [RBWM Constitution - Part 4 - Overview and Scrutiny](#)

Report Author: Mark Beeley – Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny <a href="mailto:mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk">mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk</a> 01628 796345
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# Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

## **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**



## Overview and Scrutiny at RBWM

Overview and Scrutiny at RBWM consists of three main panels; Corporate, People and Place. Each Panel is aligned to a core theme of the Corporate Plan, which was adopted in November 2021 and is more closely aligned with the responsibilities of each of the Executive Directors. People and Place have four scheduled meetings a year, with Corporate having six meetings a year due to its wider responsibility and overarching scrutiny role.

There is a requirement for Overview and Scrutiny to submit an annual report each year to a meeting of Council, highlighting the work of each Panel and what topics have been scrutinised. This report gives a brief summary of the work and findings of each Panel while looking to pick out some key areas of positive scrutiny, along with some commentary on what was achieved by the Panel.

The report concludes with some figures of Overview and Scrutiny across the municipal year and further information on how residents can become more involved in the scrutiny process.

Each Panel’s membership and remit are outlined below:

<b>Corporate Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
Membership: Councillors Gerry Clark (Chairman), John Story (Vice Chairman), Simon Bond, Karen Davies, Greg Jones, Lynne Jones, Helen Price, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim, Leo Walters and Simon Werner.	
Responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Revenues and Benefits</li> <li>• Library and Resident Services</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Strategy</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Transformation</li> <li>• Commissioning and Procurement</li> <li>• Performance Monitoring</li> </ul>

<b>Place Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
Membership: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Helen Taylor (Vice Chairman), Greg Jones, Maureen Hunt, Sayonara Luxton, Shamsul Shelim, Leo Walters, Joshua Reynolds, Mandy Brar, Gurch Singh and Jon Davey.	
Co-opted Members: Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury Parish Council) and Pat McDonald (White Waltham Parish Council)	
Responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Health Partnerships and Community Development</li> </ul>
<p>In addition, when considering matters of crime and disorder the Panel’s main objective is to ensure that the Community Safety Partnership is held accountable for the discharge of its executive functions, to enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard and drive improvement in public services. In addition to the Panel’s broad terms of reference as detailed above, the Panel will be responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the following:</p> <p>To consider the effectiveness of actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the Community Safety Partnership (‘CSP’);</p> <p>Make reports or recommendations to Cabinet/Council with regard to those policies developed by the CSP and the effectiveness of the functions managed through the CSP.</p> <p>To consider a number of issues in consultation with the relevant partners on the CSP which reflect local community need and make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>	



## People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Membership: Councillors Sayonara Luxton (Chairman), Maureen Hunt (Vice Chairman), Clive Baskerville, Catherine Del Campo, Gerry Clark, Carole Da Costa, Neil Knowles, Gary Muir.

Responsibilities:

- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Schools and Education
- Environmental Health
- Housing
- Public Health

The People Overview & Scrutiny Panel shall have powers to deal with routine matters within the functions relating to Adult Social Care, Adult Services general and Public Health Services. The Panel shall have the enhanced review and scrutiny powers in line with provisions in Health and Social Care Act 2012, including power of referral to the Secretary of State for Health.

Ensuring that the council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities, including child sexual exploitation. This needs to include children's social care and education provision.



## Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### Review of the Corporate Plan and Performance Reporting

The Panel has been closely aligned to the RBWM Corporate Plan and is involved in the oversight and monitoring of the Plan, ensuring that the 50 goals and objectives are on track. At regular intervals, the Panel has been presented with a summary of the latest position and any areas that are below or off target are highlighted. The Panel has been able to gain reassurance from key senior officers on performance.

Following the July 2022 meeting, the Panel agreed to refer air pollution performance to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further investigation. Following a review of the responsibilities of each Panel, the matter was added to the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme. Following the scope of the topic being clarified and agreed by both the Panel and Panel Members from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, it was decided that a Task and Finish Group would be the most suitable format to consider air pollution. Work on the Group commenced in spring 2023 but was unable to meet before the local election.

In November 2022, the Panel had the opportunity to consider a refresh of the Corporate Plan, a year after it had been adopted. The cost of living crisis was a significant issue for the council and some targets needed to be reconsidered as a result. There was also an opportunity for officers and the Panel to consider performance against all targets in the plan, particularly highlighting the goals which were not being achieved.

### Draft Budget Scrutiny Challenge Session

In December 2022, the Panel had an opportunity to scrutinise the draft budget proposals in a dedicated challenge session. Each Executive Director presented the budget proposals for their service areas before the meeting was opened up for a discussion. Councillors scrutinised various areas of the budget:

- How bus services would be funded going forward.
- Ensuring that adult social care services could still support residents who were moved back home.
- Considering how different groups of people would be affected by the budget proposals and how the budget tied in with the RBWM Corporate Plan.
- Understanding the risks and achievability of the savings outlined.
- Considering the level of Council Tax which was proposed to be increased by 5%.
- Discussing the quantity of council tax which went towards adult social care, along with the budget provided for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- The impact on staff at the council and community granted as a result of changes put forward.

The Panel decided to refer the relevant budget lines to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the People Overview and Scrutiny for further scrutiny on these areas. The Panel also provided comments and feedback to Cabinet on the fees and charges in the Budget at the January meeting, this helped to form the final budget which was presented to Cabinet in February 2023. The Panel made a number of comments and recommendations on parking to the Cabinet Member for Finance and these were considered as part of the final budget which was put forward by Cabinet.



## Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was considered by scrutiny in advance of being considered by Cabinet, to allow for some pre-decision scrutiny. Following approval by Cabinet, the report went to a meeting of Council in September to be adopted. The strategy was a high level look at long term savings, with the main aim to align the strategy with key areas set out in the RBWM Corporate Plan.

The Panel considered the strategy and looked to test the assumptions made by officers. The plan initially did not include reference to the health and wellbeing and climate objective in the corporate plan as they were difficult areas to achieve savings. A recommendation was made to Cabinet and agreed unanimously by the Panel, that the strategy should include reference to these two objectives as they were core parts of the corporate plan.

## Equalities

Following a scoping document produced by Councillor Helen Price, it was agreed that the Panel would receive updates on the work of the equalities programme. This took the form of a number of briefing notes which were circulated to Panel Members and allowed them to feedback any comments into the process. The Panel were able to consider two key documents; a review of the Equality Impact Assessment and a refresh of the equality objectives.

## Resident Scrutiny Suggestion – RBWM App

A topic submitted by a resident for consideration by the Panel involved the potential of an RBWM App, which residents could use to access council information and services, along with things like the Report It tool. The Panel had initially discussed the idea in the previous municipal year and it had been agreed that officers would take the idea away and explore the viability of an app being produced.

In November 2022, a report was brought back to the Panel. It was noted that due to the reorganisation of the transformation team and the resource available, there would be little benefit to producing a separate app. The website had been configured to work well on phones and officers had suggested that this should be focused on being improved further.

## Call In

The Panel considered two call ins over the course of the municipal year, with both items being considered at the same meeting in September 2022. Cedar Tree House was reconsidered by the Panel due to reasons including:

- Officers recommendation not being accepted by Cabinet and the reasons why this had not been accepted were not clear.
- No other sale options had been considered, the property would be sold at a loss.

The Panel debated the item and considered that all options that had been considered on Cedar Tree House. The Leader of the Council clarified that the option of transforming the property into three separate flats was considered as part of the report, this could be reconsidered at the next Cabinet meeting.

The result of the call in was that the matter was referred back to Cabinet, to discuss and reconsider the sale options for Cedar Tree House. Cabinet considered the comments made by scrutiny and agreed to sell the property as a family dwelling for best market consideration, while considering the option to sell as three separate flats.

The second call in considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel was on the St Cloud Way site in Maidenhead. The site had been sold to a developer but there was concern amongst Councillors that the amount the council was getting for the site was too low and needed to be reconsidered.

It was explained at the meeting that the land value was different to what had been put forward in 2017 but RBWM was in a contract with the developer to go ahead with the sale, the council could be in breach of contract and incur additional financial penalties should it not go ahead. Members of the Panel questioned the impact of the new land value on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and whether this value would have an impact on other projects and services that the council provided.

Following the discussion, the Panel concluded that the council needed to go ahead with the decision, however they requested further documentation on the land valuation from officers to increase their understanding and oversight of the decision.

### **Improvements highlighted by Panel Members:**

The Panel should look to be involved in policy development from Cabinet and be involved at an earlier stage. Pre-scrutiny would help improve decisions made and ensure that scrutiny was not used when decisions had already been made.



## People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### Resident Scrutiny Topic – Breastfeeding

The Panel considered a resident scrutiny suggestion on making RBWM a ‘breastfeeding friendly borough’. This was something that had been brought to the attention of the Panel and they agreed that it was something that mothers should be encouraged and supported to do in a safe environment. It was agreed by the Panel that the Public Health team would do a piece of engagement work which focused on interactions with local businesses to understand the current breastfeeding offer of services and venues from across the borough. The Economic Growth team would be part of the piece of work to consider how best to engage with local businesses.

### Adult Social Reforms

The Panel has been kept informed of significant changes in adult social care which have been proposed by the government. A significant change affecting adult social care had been due to be implemented in October 2023 but this had now been pushed back until October 2025. The main changes to the service would be its method of review by the Care Quality Commission. Regular inspection had not been a regular occurrence but this would change with a new inspection regime which had been due to start in April 2023. The adult social care service would be rated to be either adequate, inadequate, good, or outstanding.

The Panel agreed that written updates would be provided against the framework to allow scrutiny of how things were going in adult social care. This would allow the Panel to ensure that they had oversight of the reforms as they were implemented and could check progress on any future Care Quality Commission inspections.

### Sunningdale Health Hub

NHS Frimley had plans to open a new health hub in Sunningdale and the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel took the opportunity to scrutinise the plans and speak to those at the NHS who were involved in bringing the project forward. The Panel considered the impact that the hub could have on other local GPs and whether the provision was suitable to meet the needs of the local community.

It is expected that the Panel will be kept informed of developments on the Sunningdale Health Hub in the next municipal year as the projects progresses.

### Budget

Following the referral at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel in December 2022, the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel were given the opportunity to scrutinise the budget lines related to the People directorate.

Key areas scrutinised included:

- The schools budget and whether this was adequate for all schools in the borough.
- Why there had been a loss in income from Hackney Carriage Licenses.
- The impact of the domiciliary care contract on the budget.
- Whether pressure on the budget was being felt in different geographical areas of the borough.
- Questioning the removal of non-statutory Family Hub services.



- Considering the financial implications should the number of children in care be increased.
- Understanding how the quality and provision of services would be affected by the savings being proposed.
- Noting that funding would be provided for ensuring that residents were able to thrive at home, rather than at hospital.
- Hearing the value of vital services for residents like Meals on Wheels.
- Clarification on proposed redundancies and how these staff could be redeployed elsewhere in the council.
- The cost of a new case management system.

Following the discussion at the meeting, the Panel agreed to make a couple of recommendations to Cabinet:

- It was recommended that Cabinet used £500,000 of funding from the additional budget settlement to remove the amount of savings required for the non-statutory Family Hub services and create a new growth bid of £20,000 for the Family Hubs to accommodate increasing demand for the service.
- It was also recommended that the savings line to 'move Meals on Wheels to a full costed model' of delivery was removed from the budget.
- Following the Cabinet meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023, both of these recommendations were noted and acted on by Cabinet. An additional £670,000 was allocated to the children's services budget to reduce the saving on Family Hubs by £400,000, while an additional £500,000 was allocated to Adult Social Care to allow for the removal of the saving related to Meals on Wheels delivery.

### **Resident Scrutiny Topic - Air Pollution**

The second resident scrutiny topic considered by the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel was around the monitoring of air pollution around the borough and whether this was being done effectively. Officers agreed that the Panel would be informed of 2022 results to ensure ongoing monitoring, while also committing to three additional monitoring stations for PM10 and PM2.5. This would allow the council to consider data and make air quality decisions based on evidence. There were also proposals to use sensor equipment to monitor prevalence within the current five Air Quality Management Areas and then install high cost air quality monitoring units in two locations, should this be appropriate.

### **Task and Finish Group – Domestic Abuse**

Following the adoption of the RBWM Domestic Abuse Strategy, the Panel decided to undertake a piece of work considering whether the strategy meet the needs and supported those residents who were victims of domestic abuse. The work would use a task and finish group format to speak with witnesses, formulate evidence and make recommendations which could then be considered by the Panel.

An initial meeting of the group took place in February 2023 and a way forward was agreed. The group would look to formulate a number of questions which could be used to ask the following groups:

- Survivors
- Perpetrators
- Dash Charity
- Thames Valley Police
- Housing
- Health

Due to the election, the work of the group was paused following this initial meeting and there are plans to resume the group in the 2023/24 municipal year.

## Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### Resident Scrutiny Topics

Two resident scrutiny topics were considered over the municipal year by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The first one centred around pollution of the River Thames and what the council could do about it. This was something under the remit of the Environment Agency and the Panel discussed the possibility of inviting representatives from the Environment Agency to speak to the Panel about what they were doing to prevent untreated sewage being released into the Thames.

The other resident scrutiny topic considered by the Panel focused on the River Thames Scheme and flood relief in Wraysbury. The council had initially been part of the scheme but had previously been removed after the required funding could not be provided. It was also noted that the channel section 1 scheme no longer existed so it would not be possible for RBWM to re-join the scheme even if the funding could be identified.

The Panel decided that an alternative project could be scrutinised, on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Programme which was in the process of being developed by the Environment Agency and the council. The scope for this topic would be developed in the next municipal year and brought forward on the work programme once it was ready.

### Call In

The call in mechanism has been used a number of times by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel over the course of the previous municipal year.

The Electric Vehicle Charge Point Implementation Plan was called in for consideration, as there was significant concern that the consultation had not been run on a completed draft of the plan. The Panel agreed to take no further action on the matter but agreed with officers that they would be sent the final draft of the implementation plan seven days before the public consultation commenced.

In January 2023, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the South West Maidenhead Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document. The document had been called in due to issues around viability, infrastructure delivery and strategic placemaking. Following extensive discussion from the Panel and speaking to key officers and the Cabinet Member, the Panel decided that the decision had been made lawfully and that no further action needed to be taken.

The final call in of the year was on Maidenhead United Football Club's proposed move from their current stadium at York Road to a new stadium on land at Braywick Park. This was a delegated officer decision which had been taken by the Executive Director of Place Services. The main concerns of the call in signatories was around the lack of a full consultation, poor communication between interest parties and the impact of the loss of a significant amount of green open space for local residents. The Panel agreed to take action and decided to refer the decision back to the decision maker to reconsider the decision that had been made. The Panel recommended that the following concerns were taken into account:

- The date of the valuation for the lease of the site.
- Whether there was full consultation with the public on the proposals.
- Whether the length of time that the lease would last was appropriate.

The Executive Director of Place Services has referred the matter back to Cabinet to make a decision on, particularly given the change in political administration since the call in. This is due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2023.

## Budget

Following the recommendation by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel was given the opportunity to scrutinise the relevant lines of the budget. Key themes and areas scrutinised included:

- Funding for Climate Partnership and the source of this funding.
- The high saving figure for the line-by-line review.
- Recruiting of teams in house.
- Public transport subsidies.
- Operational changes in parks across the borough.
- The £67,000 saving on parking subsidies.
- Cashless parking and the use of the RingGo app.
- Income opportunities across the Neighbourhood Services team.
- Contracts for boat hire on the River Thames.
- Waste operational changes.
- Place Service transformation programme.
- Bringing contractors in house.
- Funding for Parish Councils.
- Economic growth and events across the borough.
- Planning performance agreements.
- Tree maintenance and inspections.
- Fly tipping.

The Panel made a recommendation to Cabinet on the budget. This was for Cabinet to explore all schools in the borough which required funding for school crossing patrols, to consider whether this was a necessary saving.

## Thames Valley Police Annual Presentation

A key part of the Panel's remit was around ensuring there was oversight of organisations involved in the Community Safety Partnership, including the police. The presentation allowed the Panel to hear information on the number of crimes investigated, contacts with the public and number of arrests made. Other areas explored included:

- Relationships with businesses in the borough and clamping down on shop lifting.
- Dealing with the traveller community.
- Using funding to provide further community wardens.
- Using the 101 service.
- Dealing with the night time economy.
- The relationship between the police and the CCTV control room.
- The approach to rural policing.

## Street Lighting Project

The RBWM Youth Council had contacted the Panel to discuss their concerns about street lighting across the borough. The Youth Council attended a meeting of the Panel to present a report which outlined their concerns and this included locations of where they felt street lighting should be reviewed.

Officers and Panel Members agreed that these areas should be reviewed and a piece of work was conducted to investigate the areas raised. At the following meeting in April 2023, the Panel heard the outcomes from this work from the Head of Neighbourhood Services. Further meetings had been offered with the Youth Council to discuss any issues in specific locations, but it was noted that all street lights were installed and lit to national standards. Should it be required, the Youth Council could present further findings to the Panel and officers on areas that they felt needed to be investigated.

### Improvements highlighted by Panel Members:

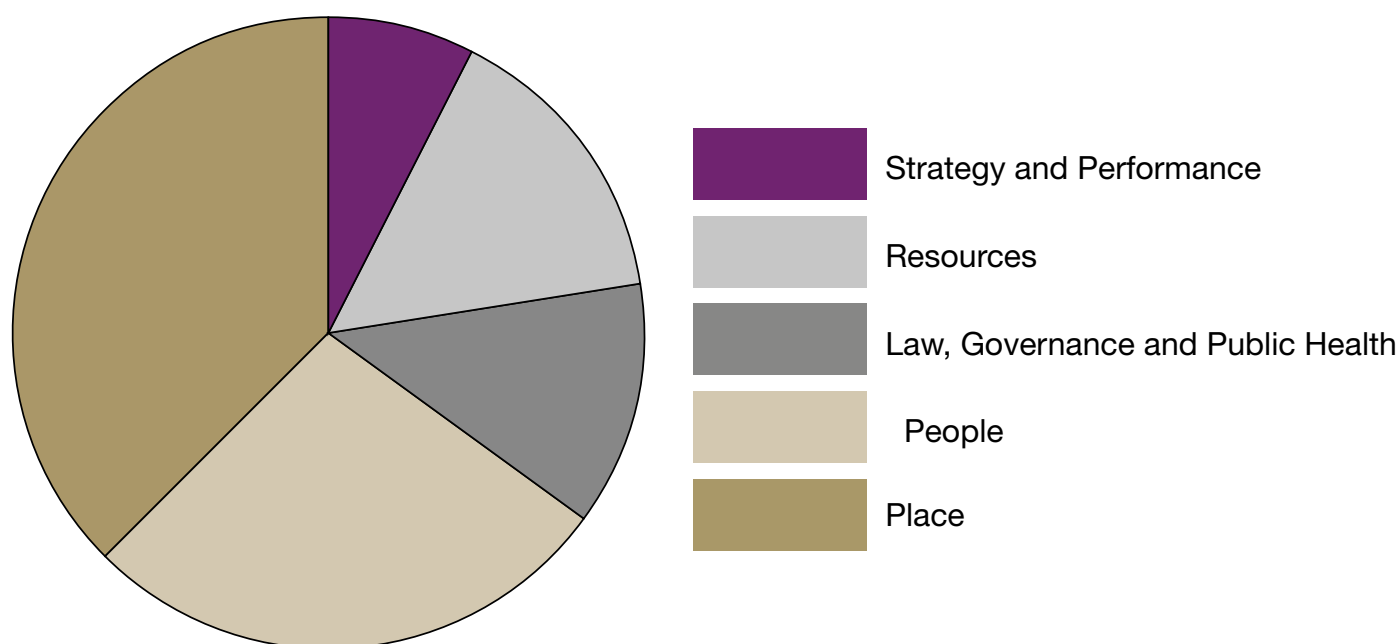
- The budget meeting had been a particular success, despite the meeting being lengthy. Information had been explored, scrutinised and recommendations had been made to Cabinet as a result.
- An opportunity could be explored to include residents feedback from the consultation as part of the budget scrutiny process.
- The project on street lightning which had been scrutinised in collaboration with the Youth Council was another success, the Panel were interested in working with the Youth Council again in future.



## Overview and Scrutiny in Figures

	Corporate	People	Place
Number of meetings held	7	4	7
Total meeting time	17 hours 30 minutes	9 hours	16 hours 45 minutes
Number of substantive agenda items	16	11	9
Number of recommendations made to Cabinet	2	2	3
Number of call ins considered	2	0	3
Total number of YouTube views	980	577	1,337

A total of 40 different officers have been involved in Overview and Scrutiny meetings this year, split by the following directorates:



### Get involved in overview and scrutiny

You can get involved in the work of overview and scrutiny at the council in a number of ways:

- Attend a public meeting, either in person or via YouTube, of any of our Panels.
- Register to speak at a scrutiny meeting.
- Contact your local Councillor with your views.
- Suggest a topic for consideration by scrutiny [on our website](#).



## WORK PROGRAMME - CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Evans (Chief Executive)</li> <li>• Elizabeth Griffiths (Executive Director of Resources)</li> <li>• Andrew Durrant (Executive Director of Place)</li> <li>• Kevin McDaniel (Executive Director of Adult Services and Health)</li> <li>• Lin Ferguson (Executive Director of Children’s Services and Education)</li> </ul>
<b>LINK OFFICERS &amp; HEADS OF SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Vallance (Deputy Director of Finance)</li> <li>• Elaine Browne (Deputy Director of Law and Governance)</li> <li>• Nikki Craig (Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT)</li> <li>• Louise Freeth (Assistant Director of Revenues, Benefits, Library and Resident Services)</li> </ul>

**Meeting dates are subject to change to fit in with the reporting timescales of the regular Quarterly Assurance Report.**

### MEETING: 5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Quarterly Assurance Report - TBC	<b>Rebecca Hatch</b> , <i>Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications</i>
Budget Monitoring	<b>Elizabeth Griffiths</b> , <i>Executive Director of Resources</i>
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

### MEETING: 8<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

### MEETING: 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

**MEETING: 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

**MEETING: 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2025**

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

**MEETING: 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2025**

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Work Programme	<b>Mark Beeley</b> , <i>Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview &amp; Scrutiny</i>

**ITEMS SUGGESTED BUT NOT YET PROGRAMMED**

ITEM	COMMENTS
Pickins Piece	<i>Currently TBC when this will be going to Cabinet – will come back to the Panel for pre-scrutiny for the final version of the report.</i>
RBWM Property Company Governance Action Plan	<i>On the Place work programme but is probably more appropriate to be considered by Corporate.</i>
Contract management process	<i>Councillor Reeves – update on when scoping document will be completed?</i>

[Terms of Reference for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel](#)

[Cabinet Forward Plan](#)