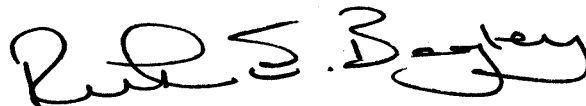


Date of issue: Friday, 31 August 2012

MEETING:	NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL (Councillors Minhas (Chair), Bains, Bal, Carter, Dar, O'Connor, Plenty, Sohal and A S Wright) <u>Non-Voting Co-Opted Members</u> Darren Morris (Customer Senate) Terry Conroy (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents)
DATE AND TIME:	MONDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2012 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	MEETING ROOM 3, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
SCRUTINY OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	SARAH FORSYTH 01753 875657

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



RUTH BAGLEY
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I



AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

Apologies for absence

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

2. Declarations of Interest
(Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and personal prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the local code of conduct.)

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 June 2012 1 - 4

SCRUTINY ISSUES

3. Member Questions
(An opportunity for Panel Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated.)

4. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service - Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation (45 minutes) 5 - 34

5. The Future of Housing Post Localism Act 2011 (30 minutes) 35 - 40

6. Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (30 minutes) 41 - 50

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7. Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel 51 - 52

8. Forward Work Programme 53 - 56

9. Attendance Record 57 - 58

10. Date of Next Meeting - 15 November 2012

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services for further details.



Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 21st June, 2012.

Present: Councillors Minhas (Chair, left 7.15 p.m.), Bains, Dar, Plenty, Sohal and A S Wright (Vice-Chair)

Non-Voting Co-Opted Members Present: Darren Morris (Customer Senate) and Terry Conroy (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents)

Also present under Rule 30: Councillor Strutton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Carter and O'Connor

PART 1

50. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

51. Election of Chair

The nomination of Councillor Minhas was moved and seconded. There being no other nominations it was –

Resolved – That Councillor Minhas be appointed Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2012 / 2013 municipal year.

(Councillor Minhas in the Chair)

52. Election of Vice-Chair

The nomination of Councillor Wright was moved and seconded. There being no other nominations it was –

Resolved – That Councillor Wright be appointed Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2012 / 2013 municipal year.

53. Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st March 2012

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 1 March 2012 were approved as a correct record, subject to confirmation of declaration of interest by Councillor Strutton relating to Minute No. 45.

Matters Arising: Members requested confirmation as to the arrangements made for them for the Olympic Torch Relay as discussed at 1 March 2012 Panel meeting.

54. Member Questions

Question submitted by Councillor Wright

Please could officers respond to the following:

Two traders on the Britwell estate have been asked for £9000 each in backdated rent rises backdating back 8 years. Rent rises had been imposed on businesses in the area in 2005, but due to an error these 2 traders had not received the rise.

The error had been discovered during a rents review, and the demands issued, along with an apology, to be fair to everyone. Legal limitations meant that the demand was for 6 years rather than the full 8 years.

Response from John Rice (Interim AD, Environment and Regeneration):

“Avarto, as part of the new contract, have reviewed the implementation of rent reviews. They identified that the a rent review was undertaken by Valuation Services and Finance but for reasons which are unclear the rent reviews were not implemented for 2 of the traders on Wentworth Avenue that are the subject of the article in the Slough Express. Unfortunately the outstanding amount dated back eight years but the Council is statutorily limited to be able to recover only up to six years of back rents.

Whilst highly unfortunate to have to seek recovery of the outstanding rent, it would be unfair to other traders who have paid the full rent not to seek recovery. Consequently Avarto on behalf of the Council issued a demand for the payment of the arrears and offered terms for the repayment over the next two years.”

Members asked that confirmation be given whether there was a mechanism in place to allow for repayment to take place over a longer period should the economic climate impact on traders ability to pay.

55. Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel- Work Programme- 2012/2013

Sarah Forsyth, Scrutiny Officer, outlined a draft programme in which a number of priorities and topics had been identified for the 2012/13 municipal year.

The Panel endorsed the suggested topics set out in Paragraph 5 of the report and suggested a number of further topics which could be added.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Panel add the following items to its work programme for the 2012/13 municipal year:

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 21.06.12

1. Review of effects of council housing on resident's health (as requested by the Health Scrutiny Panel)
2. Youth Facilities Provision
3. Accessibility Issues

- (b) That the work programme as set out in the report for the 2012/13 Municipal Year be endorsed.

Note: Following completion of Agenda Item 6 (Minute No. 55) Councillor Minhas excused herself from the meeting and Councillor Wright assumed the Chair.

(Councillor Wright, Vice Chair in the Chair)

56. Slough Borough Council- Tenancy Agreement

Ken Hopkins, Head of Housing Management, presented the report on proposed new Tenancy Agreement, which aimed to provide a consistent approach to the Council's management of tenancies, clarify what is required of tenants, provide an effect tool for managing tenancies and taking enforcement action where appropriate, and to take account of changes to the Housing Act 1985 introduced by the Localism Act 2011.

The Panel discussed the impact of differing types of succession tenancies, and differing lengths of flexible tenancies.

Recommended –

- a) that Cabinet approve the new Tenancy Agreement;
- b) that Cabinet approve that SBC specifies in the Tenancy Agreement that succession is permitted for spouses, civil partners and the children of tenants, provided that they meet the qualifying criteria of having lived in the property as their only home for at least a year;
- c) that Cabinet approve the use of 3-year flexible tenancies where appropriate and when the necessary tenancy strategy is in place;

Noted – the consultation exercise which will offer all tenants an opportunity to comment on the proposed agreement.

57. Introduction of Dog Control Orders

Dympna Sanders, Head of Neighbourhood Enforcement, presented the report on proposals to implement a range of Dog Control Orders following a public consultation.

The consultation was carried out by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team during the summer 2011, interviewing a total of 204 people across the Borough. The results showed an overwhelming response in favour of the

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 21.06.12

introduction of the Orders, with a majority of the measures proposed receiving over 90% support. The notable exception was the exclusion of dogs from marked sports grounds, which received only 66% support.

The Panel discussed the overall impact of Fixed Penalty Notices on dog fouling, and were informed that due to the legal requirement of actually witnessing the offence the number of FPNs issued was minimal, but that letters were issued to offenders if the public reported an offence. It was felt by officers that the impact of education on the public could be seen clearly in the drop of dog fouling offences in local parks following the 'Cut the Crap' campaign in 2010/11 (a leaflet from the campaign was circulated to the Panel), and officers were undertaking early-morning patrols of 'hotspot' areas in order to target the worst offenders.

Recommended –

- a) that the Cabinet, in endorsing the findings of the public consultation, approve the introduction of Dog Control Orders in order to tackle the following prescribed offences under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005:
 - i. failure to remove dog faeces (Borough-wide Order);
 - ii. failure to keep a dog on a lead in specified locations;
 - iii. failure to pick up and keep a dog on a lead when directed by an Authorised Officer (Borough-wide Order);
 - iv. permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded; and
 - v. limit the number of dogs under control of any person in a designated area (Borough-wide Order)

- b) that the Cabinet endorse the addition of the following as paragraph 85a, Part 3 to the Scheme of Officer Delegations for Assistant Director of Enforcement and Regulation:

“Authority to amend and/or extend existing Dog Control Orders in consultation with the relevant Commissioner.”

58. Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

Details of the following information reports were noted:

- *Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel*

59. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 10 September 2012.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.15 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 10 September 2012

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Forsyth – Scrutiny Officer
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875657

WARD(S): All

PART I
CONSIDERATION & COMMENT

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION PLAN 2013/14 CONSULTATION

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Panel with the opportunity to question and comment on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan: Action Plan 2013/14 consultation.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 That the Panel consider and comment on the proposals in the consultation document.

3 Background Information

3.1 The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has a statutory obligation to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The current Plan covers the period 2010/11-2015/16.

3.2 The RBFRS is currently consulting on proposals being made under the Action Plan for 2013/14, which sits underneath the main IRMP.

3.3 The Action Plan contains 12 proposals for the 2013/14 year under the following headings:

- 1) Emergency Cover Arrangements
- 2) Newbury and Windsor Fire Engine Crewing
- 3) Day Crewing Plus
- 4) Multi-Role (Command) Vehicle Provision
- 5) Off-road Firefighting Capability
- 6) Theale Fire Station
- 7) Review of Fire Cover from Pangbourne and Mortimer Fire Stations
- 8) Risk Location of Wholetime Fire Engines
- 9) Thames Valley Fire Control Service
- 10) Windsor Fire Station
- 11) Training Resources Review
- 12) Review of Prevention and Protection Departments

Details of the proposals can be found in the attached consultation document.

4 **Conclusion**

4.1 The Panel have the opportunity to respond to the RBFRS IRMP: Action Plan 2013/14 consultation.

5 **Appendices Attached**

A - Five Year Integrated Risk Management Plan 2010/11-2015/16: Action Plan 2013/14

FIVE YEAR INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010/11 - 2015/16



Action Plan 2013/14



**ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY**



Consultation Document



PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Front page shows a selection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service appliances

Annual Action Plan: 2013/14

Contents:

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Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	6
Our Performance	7
What we have done in 2012	12
Updated Timeline	14-15
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Do you want to become a Retained Duty System Firefighter?	21
Contact us	22
Confidential Monitoring	25-26

यदि आप यह जानकारी हिन्दी में चाहते हैं तो कृपया हमारा संपर्क करें
જો તમને આ માહિતી ગુજરાતી માં જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરો
Jeśli wymagasz tej informacji po POLSKU, proszę się z nami skontaktować
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ
اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات اردو میں درکار ہوں، تو ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے

Chairman's Foreword



In common with the rest of the United Kingdom's public sector, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is subject to increasing financial pressures. The Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process is the means by which we match our resources against risk levels to best meet the needs of the public we serve. As part of this process we produce an IRMP action plan every year.

This year's action plan contains several proposals that would change the way in which we keep Berkshire safe. The proposals are centred on public and firefighter safety but look at delivering our objectives in a more flexible way.

We are keen to hear your views on the proposals and are also consulting with our staff in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The elected Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority take their responsibilities very seriously and make their decisions only after considering the fullest available information.

IRMP is about balancing resources against risk. Members and Officers have worked very hard to research and develop these proposals. We believe they provide the best options for Berkshire, with the funding that is available to us.

Please do let us have your comments.



Councillor Colin Dudley
Fire Authority Chairman



**PROTECT YOUR HOME
WITH SMOKE ALARMS**
**TEST YOUR
SMOKE ALARMS
EVERY WEEK**

For further fire safety advice
and information visit...

www.rbfrs.co.uk

Introduction

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan for 2013/14. It sets out what we intend to do over the coming years and includes updates on previous plans. We review the action plan continually to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

This Integrated Risk Management Action Plan is part of the Service's five year 2010/11 - 2015/16 Integrated Risk Management Plan available at www.rbfrs.co.uk

The aim of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan is to deliver the **Right Resources** at the **Right Time**, in the **Right Place**.

The Integrated Risk Management Planning process includes how we:

- Reduce the occurrence of fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce loss of life in fires and accidents
- Reduce the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergencies
- Safeguard our environment and heritage
- Provide value for money

The Comprehensive Spending Review, announced by HM Treasury in October 2010, included a 25% reduction in central funding, for fire and rescue services. The reductions extend over a four year period, from 2011/12 to 2014/15. Some of the savings made by the Service to date are shown in the 'What We Have Done' section.

Government policy has confirmed the requirement for ongoing financial efficiencies over the next two years, during which time we will continue to deliver the high standards of service to the communities of Berkshire.

Consultation on the Annual Action Plan was previously undertaken between October and December to fit in with the budget planning timetable. Government has indicated that fire and rescue services will not be notified of their allocated funding for 2013/14 and subsequent years, until December 2012. Because of this and to enable us to plan and implement our savings programme, we are consulting on the Action Plan earlier than usual.

As some of the proposals may take some time to implement and require negotiation with the workforce, officers will commence preparatory work now to ensure that once any necessary reviews have been completed, we will be able to deliver savings from the start of the next financial year. The consultation period for this action plan will therefore run from 23 July until 22 October 2012.

MAKING BERKSHIRE SAFER

Royal Berkshire Fire And Rescue Service



Key to Reading Fire Stations

- 01 Caversham Road
- 02 Wokingham Road
- 03 Dee Road
- 20 Whitley Wood Road

Resources available to serve the community of Berkshire

- 18 Fire Stations
- 22 Fire Engines
- 15 Specialist vehicles
- 540 Firefighters
- Free Home Fire Safety Check Service for vulnerable people
- Fire Prevention Education Team
- Fire Safety Inspecting and Enforcement Officers

Our Performance

Several of the projects in this year's action plan are part of the Five Year Plan. You will find updates on the following pages and an updated timeline in the centre pages of this document.

Prevention

Following the restructure of the Prevention and Protection department in April 2011, the department's activities were reviewed. This resulted in the formation of four specialist teams, each focused on a key area of activity in Making Berkshire Safer.

Home Fire Safety Check Team

During 2011/12 the Service completed 5,929 Home Fire Safety Checks and installed 8,872 Smoke Detectors. Of these, 69% were targeted toward higher risk members of the community e.g. the elderly, people with disabilities and people referred by agencies such as Social Services. The remaining 31% were carried out in areas where dwelling fires had occurred.

Risk Reduction Team

This team works with all sections of the community to deliver safety messages in support of the Service's targets to reduce accidental and deliberate fires. Team members also work with groups, supporting people who have physical or learning disabilities and those with mobility problems.

Safer Communities Coordinators

Safer Communities Coordinators link the Prevention department with our fire stations and the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities. They provide each Fire Station Commander with a detailed profile that enables firefighters to focus on areas where prevention activity is needed most.

During 2011 the Safer Communities Coordinators delivered a six-week Electrical Safety Campaign which brought together public and private sector partners from across Berkshire. The campaign delivered safety messages and raised awareness about the dangers of electrical intake fires in residential and commercial buildings, emphasising how such fires can develop uncontrollably if flammable items are stored too closely to intake equipment.

Volunteers

In 2011/ 2012, volunteers working with the Service identified 583 households for Home Fire Safety Checks. They took part in 184 events and activities and contributed 783 hours of their time. Around 65% of the work undertaken by our volunteers is work that would not have been undertaken by Prevention staff due to high workloads.

In addition to identifying Home Fire Safety Checks, our volunteers are helping to deliver Young Firefighter and public information events. Work is now underway to train volunteers to take the Service's outreach vehicles into the community.

This year we have created a three year plan for delivering measured outcomes which focus on the high quality targeted Home Fire Safety Checks for wholetime stations. Targets have now been set for volunteers to deliver 96 of these checks per month.

Protection

The Protection department is responsible for ensuring that the Fire Authority's statutory fire safety duties are discharged effectively. It is an important factor in reducing the impact of fire in non-domestic premises. This year, the team has:

- Completed 2,413 risk based inspections
- Seen a 19% reduction in the number of fires in commercial premises
- Completed 96% of post-fire inspections (in commercial buildings) within two working days
- Completed 1,966 consultations (statutory and non statutory) within agreed national protocols
- Undertaken six prosecutions. These resulted in three guilty pleas, with the offenders paying fines and costs totalling £26,655



Firefighters attending a Road Traffic Collision

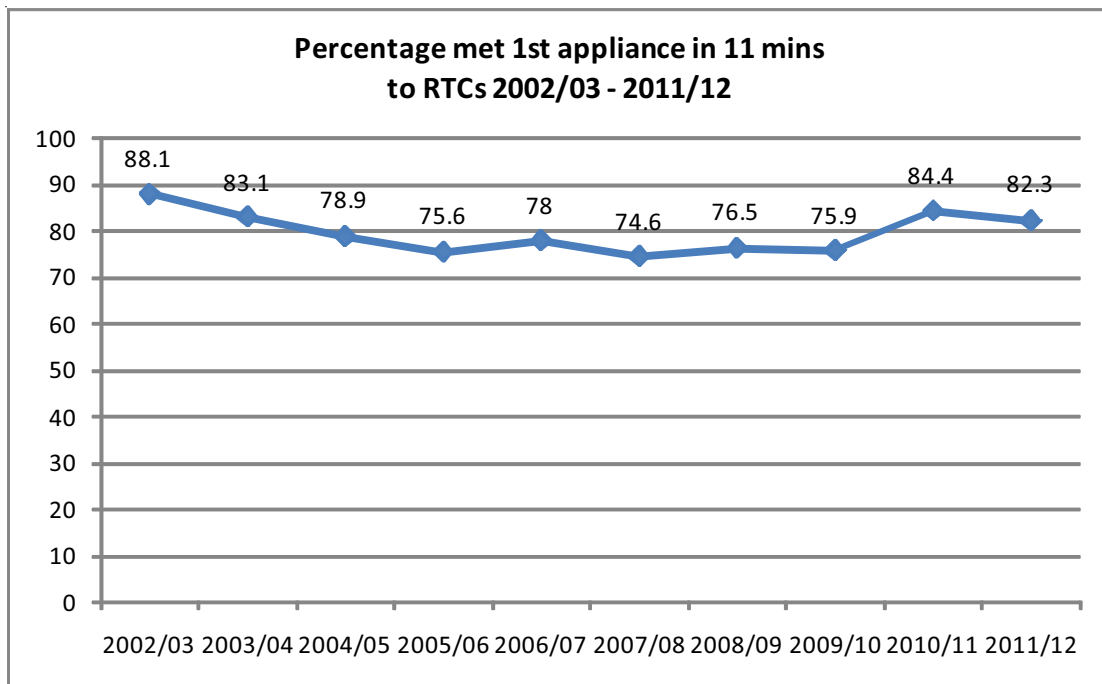
Emergency Response

The downward trend in numbers of emergency incidents attended by the Service continued in 2011/12, falling to an all time low of 7,558 compared with 14,232 in 2003/04. This is attributable to a number of issues but is certainly due in part to the successful prevention work carried out by firefighters in the community.

Response to Road Traffic Collisions

Despite the best efforts of the Service to reduce the number of road traffic collisions, through joint safety education programmes, they still happen. The Service has set the following response standard.

- To make an initial attendance to road traffic collisions, with the necessary resources to commence extrication of casualties, within 11 minutes.



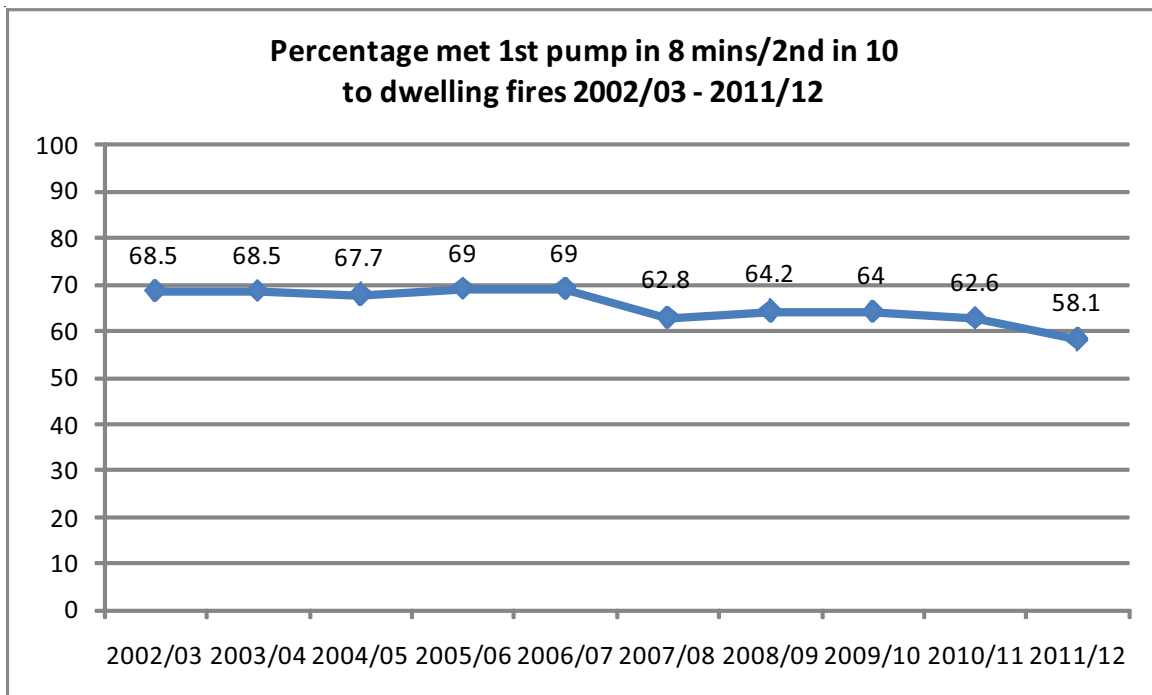
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service performance against the response standard for road traffic collisions (where people were trapped in vehicles and required assistance)

Last year's action plan identified a decrease in performance in this area so a trial of revised attendances was introduced to improve performance. This proved successful and was adopted as standard practice.

Response to Dwelling Fires

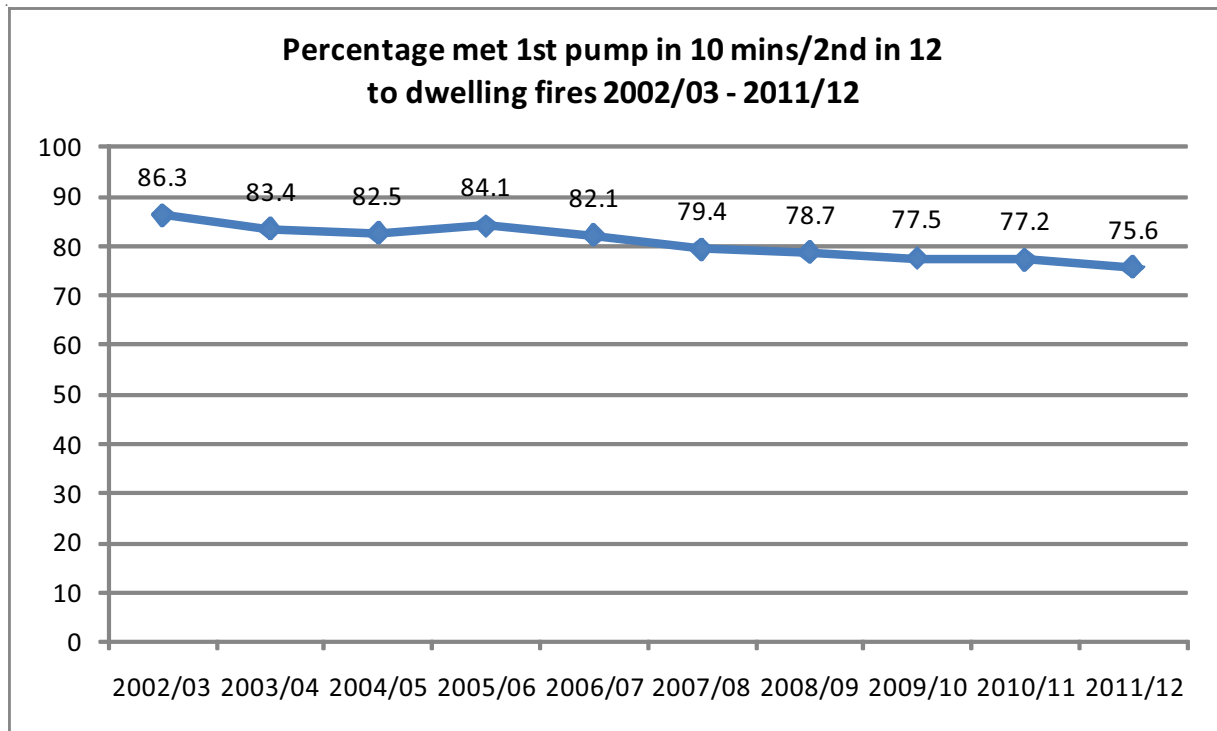
Despite our best efforts to reduce the number of dwelling fires, they still happen. The Service has set the following standards for attendance.

- An optimum response standard of 8 minutes for the first appliance and 10 minutes for the second appliance for dwelling fires.
- A standard response of 10 minutes for the first appliance and 12 minutes for the second appliance for dwelling fires.



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service performance against the optimum response standard for dwelling fires.





Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service performance against the standard response for dwelling fires

The Service's performance in this area has decreased in comparison with the baseline year of 2002/03. This is because although the number of calls to dwelling fires has reduced significantly, those that occur in locations more remote from the nearest fire stations affect overall attendance figures.

Any failure to achieve attendance times is investigated in detail to identify the cause and to establish how performance could be improved.

What We Have Done In 2012

Specialist Rescue Vehicles

The new Heavy Rescue Unit will be relocated to Dee Road Fire Station in Reading, as soon as the crews at the fire station have been trained in its use. The Rescue Support Vehicle, currently located at Slough Fire Station will also be relocated to Dee Road Fire Station and used as a reserve appliance when the Heavy Rescue Unit is not available due to maintenance or other reasons.

The new vehicle will be based at a more central location within the county. This enables us to optimise response times to the specialist type of incidents that the vehicle is designed for, giving an enhanced capability and a higher standard of service.

Low Risk Call Attendance

After last year's Consultation, the Fire Authority directed that a six-month trial be conducted into the use of wholetime firefighters for lower risk (e.g. fence and bin fires) incidents on retained station grounds. The outcome of the trial was reported to the Fire Authority in June 2012. The results showed that the scheme would not deliver the financial savings anticipated. It was agreed that the trial would cease and we would revert to our previous practice of using the nearest available fire engine at all times.

Retained Support Unit

Following the Retained Duty System Review in 2010/11, two units of retained support officers, each consisting of six experienced staff, have been formed to support our retained fire stations. They do this by crewing fire appliances when necessary and by assisting with station administration and operational training. The units are located at Newbury and Ascot fire stations. Work continues to improve the recruitment and retention of retained firefighters to help in increasing the availability of our retained fire engines.

Officer Review

A revised officers' duty system came into force in February 2012. This has changed from a five-week emergency cover duty system to a four-week pattern that has also resulted in an overall reduction in officer establishment posts, from 45 to 36.

Review of Specialist Appliances

Last year's action plan included a review of the provision and use of some of our specialist fire appliances. This work has been completed and the following outcomes have been determined.

Water Rescue Unit and Boat

The rescue unit and boat are still fit for purpose so the detailed review of these units will take place in two years time. This will also link in with the expiry of the lease on the current rescue boat.

Operational Support Unit

The Service has two Operational Support Units which are curtain-sided vehicles that transport modular equipment pods for a range of different emergency incidents. One is due for replacement in 2013 and a project team will be formed to review the current provision to ensure it is fit for purpose and continues to offer value for money.

Aerial Ladder Platform (high reach appliance) at Slough

There are two appliances with this capability within the Berkshire area, one at Whitley Wood in Reading, the other at Slough Fire Station. With the advent of better fire precautions in buildings and early fire detection, the emergency use of these vehicles has decreased over time, although they are occasionally required during operational incidents. The continued provision and use of these appliances will be reviewed.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service

This project, formerly known as the Control Collaboration Project, is making excellent progress towards achieving a single joint Control Room for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Grant funding totalling £3,600,000 has been received from central Government and the joint service project team continues to develop the partnership.

Replacement for Dee Road Fire Station

In last year's plan, we said we would review the location of the fire station in Dee Road Reading. This work is progressing well with locations in Theale and Calcot having been identified as possible sites for the new fire station.

We are working with West Berkshire Council and professional property advisors to identify a final option. In addition, as a result of last year's training review, we have decided to look at the provision of a new dedicated rescue training facility on the same site, to minimise additional costs.

Windsor Fire Station

Since October 2011, Windsor Fire Station has been crewed by wholetime staff between the hours of 08.00 and 20.00 hours, seven days a week. Night-time cover arrangements are provided by two firefighters from Slough and an additional two staff from other fire stations, using the fire engine at Windsor. This has resulted in the station being crewed 24 hrs a day with only two exceptions since last October.

Officers from the Service and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead continue to work towards a relocation of the Windsor crew to a new fire station in the Dedworth area of Windsor. The progress of this project is dependent upon the provision of a new fire station facility by the Royal Borough.

Road Traffic Collisions

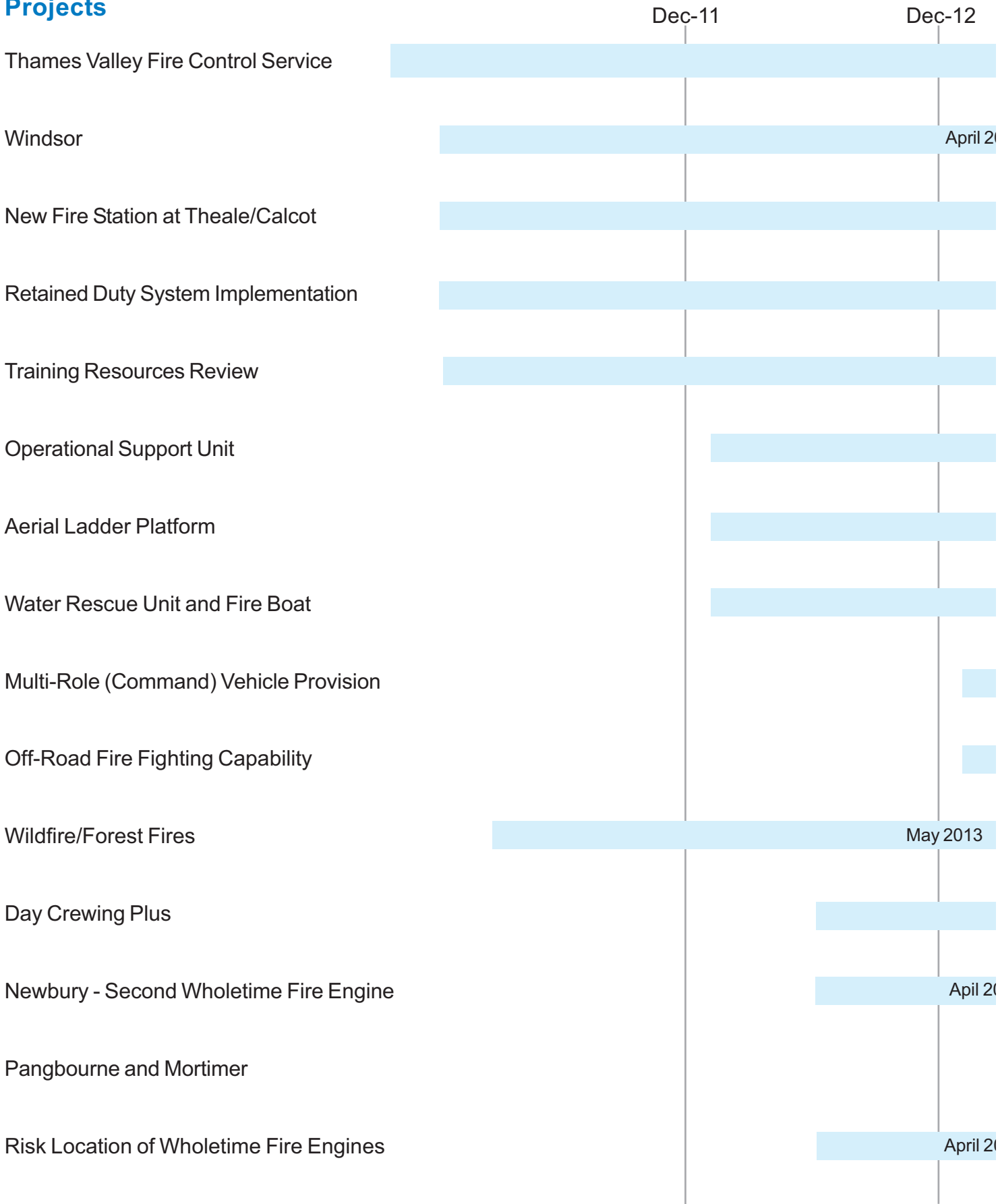
As reported in the 2011/12 Action Plan, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service won the world championship road traffic collision competition. The skills acquired by the team have been passed on to operational team leaders to improve the capability of the crews they command at emergency incidents. Further work will be undertaken to disseminate the team's skills across the Service.

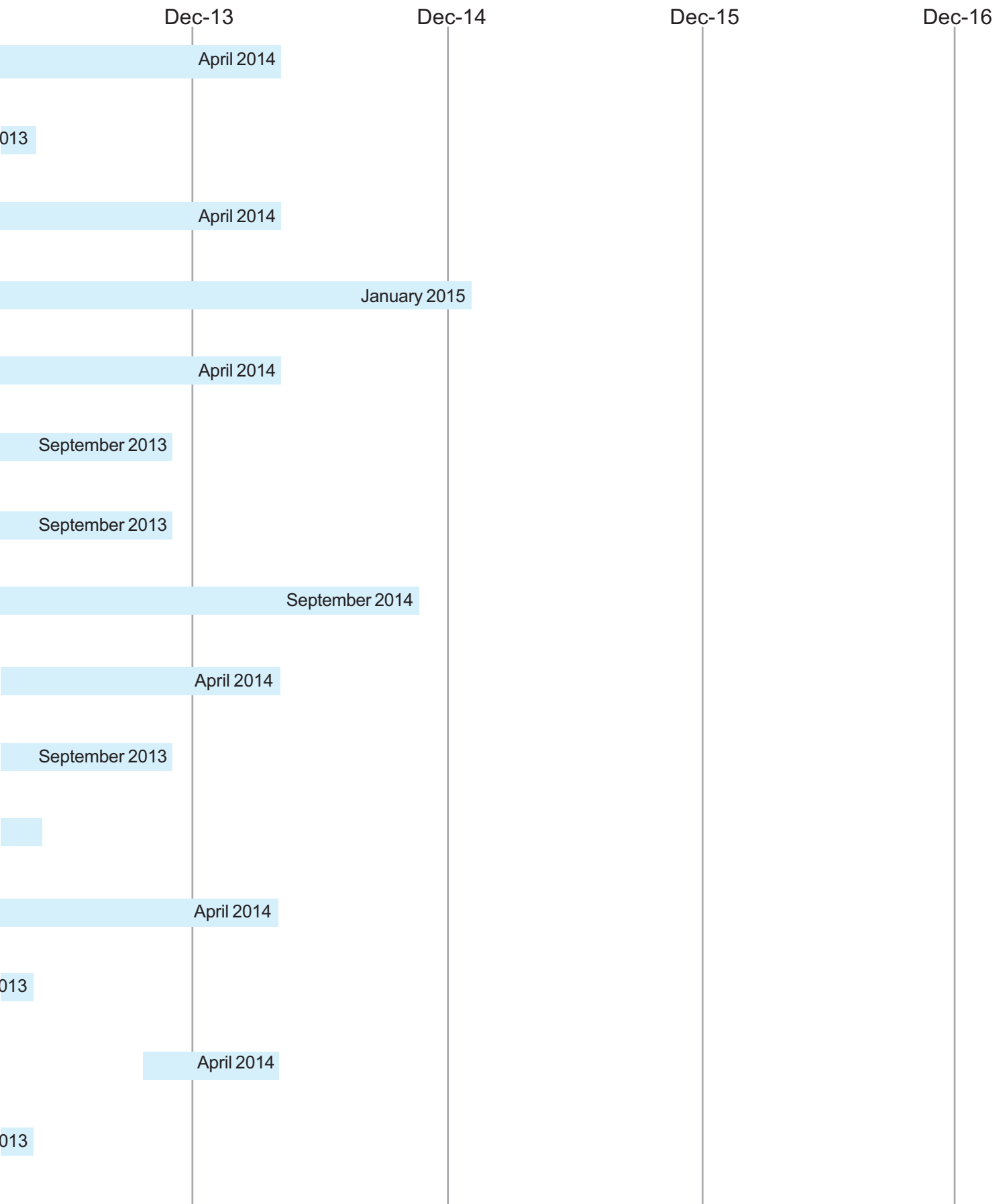
Training Review

The project was completed last year and work is now underway to implement the proposals. Key themes include the provision of a new dedicated Rescue Training facility at the new Fire Station in Theale/Calcot.

Updated Timeline

Projects





Wildfire/Forest Fires

The report of the multi-agency debriefs carried out after the Swinley Forest fire has been completed and a project team has been formed to implement the required improvements. Completion is scheduled for May 2013.



Wildfire spread at Swinley Forest

Action Plan 2013/14 - What We Are Going To Do This Year

Emergency Cover Arrangements

Following previous work in this area and the need to reduce the impact of the financial cuts, we have decided to review the way we crew our fire engines at key locations throughout the county.

Two new areas are currently being considered namely, the provision of an additional wholetime fire engine in the Newbury area and a Day Crewing Plus shift system. Additionally as part of the crewing review it is possible to provide firefighters to crew the appliance at Windsor 24 hours a day.

The work will examine alternative approaches for the staffing of our fire engines that will enable us to continue to meet our response standards, whilst also offering options for generating cost savings.

Newbury and Windsor Fire Engine Crewing

An additional wholetime fire engine at Newbury Fire Station is being considered because the long-term future of the retained service in Berkshire is unclear. There are two primary reasons for this. Firstly, the uncertainty of the current proposals around the European legislation placing a threshold on working hours (retained staff usually have a full time job as well as being a retained firefighter) and secondly, the ability of the Service to recruit staff from the communities to be retained firefighters.

The Retained Review identified a need to provide an additional wholetime resource in the West of the county, should the crewing of retained appliances in the area become unviable.

Crewing of the Windsor fire engine has been the subject of several previous action plans and the following proposal has been reached, subject to the provision of a new fire station as referenced in this document.

It is proposed to disestablish the 14 firefighter posts at Windsor Fire Station and transfer eight of them to Slough, along with the Windsor fire engine. Following the removal of the Rescue Support Vehicle from Slough, a number of firefighter posts are available for other duties and these, in addition to the eight from Windsor, will be used to enable the Windsor fire engine to be crewed with at least four firefighters. At every shift the Windsor fire engine and crew will proceed from Slough to the proposed new fire station in Windsor, to undertake their duties and respond to emergency calls.

The remaining six firefighter posts will be transferred to Newbury Fire Station to crew the proposed second wholetime fire engine. Subject to this proposal being viable it is proposed to close the retained section at Newbury. As additional firefighters will be required to crew the second fire engine at Newbury, £198,000 will be used from the current under-spend in the retained firefighter budget to fund these posts.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Day Crewing Plus

Day Crewing Plus is a duty system already in operation in a number of fire and rescue services throughout the country. As an example the system enables the total number of firefighters, on a single fire engine fire station, to be reduced from 28 to 14, effectively reducing the number of Watches (teams of firefighters) to two.

However the system maintains the same level of fire cover to the community, as separate rest areas are provided for staff, enabling them to work four duty shift days and four nights (on call) followed by four days off. The provision of rest areas enables staff to eat and have a break from the work place when they are available for duty.

The benefits arising from this duty system are: (i) the same level of emergency cover is maintained across the county area, (ii) annual savings in the region of £330,000 are made by the Service for each fire station where it is introduced and (iii) crews will receive an enhanced salary for providing the additional hours on call. We will consider the options for this duty system within the Service area.

Multi-Role (Command) Vehicle provision

The Multi-Role (Command) Vehicle is currently located at Dee Road Fire Station in Reading. With the relocation of the new Heavy Rescue Unit to Dee Road, we will review workloads for staff at this station along with the crewing and location of the vehicle.



The Multi-Role Vehicle

Off-road Firefighting Capability

Our current off-road firefighting capability consists of a number of 4 x 4 Land Rovers that can carry lightweight pumps and other equipment, a six wheel-drive vehicle and a 4 x 4 lightweight off road appliance. We are also introducing a number of 4 x 4 front line fire engines at key locations across the county. These vehicles will make the Service more adaptable in poor weather conditions as well as enhancing our off-road firefighting capability.

As some of these vehicles are quite old their use will be reviewed to establish potential future requirements, taking into account the growing risks of forest and heathland fires, flooding and other abnormal weather conditions.



The Pinzgauer six wheel-drive off-road pumping appliance

Theale Fire Station

Meetings with West Berkshire Council and detailed project work with professional property advisors will continue. Based upon current estimates, it is anticipated that the new fire station should be completed by April 2014.

Review of Fire Cover from Pangbourne and Mortimer Fire Stations

With the difficulty in providing a fire crew during certain times of the day at these fire stations, a review will be undertaken to establish the affect of the proposed fire station in Theale. Initial risk modelling indicates that a new fire station in Theale could provide an emergency response to Pangbourne and Mortimer from the new fire station, within the response standards set by the Fire Authority.

Risk Location of Wholetime Fire Engines

The locations of our wholetime fire stations currently provide optimum levels of emergency cover for the areas they serve. However, with the significant decrease in the number of emergency incidents we attend, it may be more effective to use flexible locations for our fire engines, for better emergency deployment at different times of the day/night. Risk modelling will be undertaken to establish where such alternative locations may be.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service

This project has been running since December 2010. Work is progressing well to develop a single, joint service Control Room with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. We have now completed the initial resilience phase of the project and it is expected that Stage 2, which will enable both Control Rooms to mobilise each other's resources, will be completed by October 2013.

Following approval by both Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority the new joint Control Room will be located in Calcot Berkshire.

This programme has recently completed a dedicated consultation process and accordingly this is an information only item and does not form part of this Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation process.

It is anticipated that the project will be complete in Spring/Summer of 2014, when the new joint Control Room will become fully operational. It is then intended to offer the facility to other fire and rescue services and other partner agencies with call-handling requirements.

Windsor Fire Station

Officers from the Service and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead continue to work towards enabling implementation of this proposal, which includes the provision of a new fire station in the Dedworth area of Windsor.

Revised proposals for the new fire station include the provision of a full-size fire engine with a dedicated 24-hour crew.

Training Resources Review

This project was completed last year and work is now underway to implement the proposals. Key themes include the provision of a new dedicated Rescue Training facility at the new fire station in Theale.

With the decline in numbers of emergency incidents, it is essential for firefighters to maintain their operational skills by undertaking realistic training.

Review of Prevention and Protection Departments

A comprehensive review of the resources and management of both departments was undertaken recently, which resulted in a significant reorganisation. However, the reduction in funding from central Government makes it necessary to undertake a further review of these departments.

Do You Want To Become A Retained Duty System Firefighter?

There is currently a shortage of part time firefighters at some fire stations in the Brigade. This is particularly true in our small towns and rural areas because nowadays there are fewer people who live and work in their local towns and villages. You might be just the person to fill the gap.

What Do You Get Out Of It?

Apart from the excitement, the challenge and the satisfaction of a job well done, you learn to be more self-reliant and confident. After all, if you can cope in a real emergency, you are ready for anything else which life might throw at you. You will meet a lot of people in your local community and earn their confidence and respect. You will also get training in the use of equipment, and in other more general skills like first aid. Added to all this, you get paid! You get paid a basic retainer, plus a fee for call outs and another fee for going into action. You get paid for training and duties like equipment maintenance.

Where Do You Work?

First of all, you need to live or work near to a fire station because you have to be able to get there within a few minutes of a call. That's a few hundred yards on foot or a drive of up to one mile.

Secondly, because we can't predict when you'll be called out, you have to be flexible in your work. The chances are that you'll be working at home, self-employed or for a community-minded employer who can let you off from time to time.

Are You Fit For The Job?

To apply to join Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service you don't need any paper qualifications. You must be at least 18, with good all-round fitness. You will be asked to take a straightforward physical test as part of the process, and just as important are qualities like common sense, commitment and enthusiasm.

How Often Will You Be Needed?

On average, you will be called out two or three times a week for a couple of hours. If you cannot be available all the time, that's not a problem. You can be paid for being "on call" for only part of the day or week. There is a particular shortage of people who are available during midweek working hours, so you could have evenings or weekends free if you need to, and still do a valuable and worthwhile job. If you really can't be on call - for example because of a holiday or a deadline at work - you can "sign off". You will also be required to attend training once a week for three hours on a Monday evening.

If you think you've got what it takes to join the team, contact your local fire station for further information, or check out our vacancies page at: <http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/vacancies.asp>

Contact Us

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service welcomes your comments on the Action Plan 2013/14 at any time during the consultation period **23 July - 22 October 2012**

Please take this opportunity to make your views known, as it will help to develop strategies and policies to meet local needs.

* **Please note:** further copies of this document can be downloaded from our website at www.rbfrs.co.uk/irmp_options.asp

How To Reply

You are invited to comment on our plans using any of the following methods:

- In writing, using the following **FREEPOST** address:
IRMP Consultation
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
FREEPOST (RG2 669)
103 Dee Road
Reading
RG30 1BR
(Remember, no stamp is required)
- Email to: irmp@rbfrs.co.uk
- Visit our Website at: www.rbfrs.co.uk
- Telephone us on: 0118 938 4331
- Fax us on: 0118 959 0510

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Top tip



**Avoid open fires
in the countryside**



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters taking part in a school visit

Confidential Monitoring

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is keen to ensure that its consultation with the public is effective and inclusive - so please answer the following questions and return these pages together with any comments you may wish to make to the FREEPOST address shown overleaf. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, all personal information will be confidential to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. It will be used for no purpose other than improving services.

Q1 Are you...? (Please cross **one** box only)

Male.....

Female.....

Q2 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please cross **one** box only)

16 to 24..... 35 to 44..... 55 or over.....

25 to 34..... 45 to 54.....

Q3 What is your ethnic group? (Please cross **one** box only)

White - British, Irish or any other White background.....

Mixed - White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African, White Asian or any other mixed background.....

Asian or Asian British - Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background.....

Black or Black British - Caribbean, African or any other Black background.....

Chinese or Other ethnic group.....

Q4 What is your first language? (Please write in)

Q5 Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Yes..... No.....

Q6 How did you become aware of this consultation? (Please cross all boxes that apply)

Website..... Newspaper..... RBFRS employee....

Email..... Through the post...

Other (Please specify)



Q7 If applicable, in which Local Authority area is your main home in Berkshire?
(Please cross **one** box only)

Bracknell Forest Borough Council.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Berkshire Council.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wokingham Borough Council.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading Borough Council.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slough Borough Council.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return these pages together with any comments you may wish to make to:

IRMP Consultation
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
FREEPOST (RG2 669)
103 Dee Road
Reading
RG30 1BR
(Remember, no stamp is required)



**ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

103 Dee Road
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 4FS

www.rbfrs.co.uk

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood & Community **DATE:** 10 September 2012
Services Scrutiny Panel

CONTACT OFFICER: Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing & Environment
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875527

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhoods and Renewal - Councillor Swindlehurst

PART I

CONSIDERATION & COMMENT

THE FUTURE OF HOUSING POST LOCALISM ACT 2011

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Localism Act gained Royal Assent late last year and proposed a variety of changes to the management of social housing by local authorities. This report highlights some of the changes already implemented and those yet to be introduced.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 The Panel is requested to

- a) consider the impact of the Localism Act 2011 on the Council's Housing Service; and
- b) agree to receive a further report within six months to further update on the implementation status of the Act.

3 Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

3.1 Priorities:

- Economy and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Regeneration and Environment
- Housing
- Safer Communities

The provision of good quality, inclusive and efficient housing services are fundamental to delivering the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and, as such, accurate interpretation of legislative changes together with the use of inherited flexibilities will ensure that the service and the council as a whole is best placed to meet the needs of the local community.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial consequences inherent within this report and in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy all budgets and expenditure are kept under review to ensure services are efficiently delivered and that resources, both financial and operational are deployed where they are needed. The current financial climate means that there are increasing pressures on homelessness services and the sooner the proposals are enacted the sooner the Council can rise to this challenge.

(b) Risk Management

As with any new legislation there is a period of time when responses are open to legal challenge, and caselaw and best practice guidance clarify the accepted intentions of the Act. Officers are keen to implement the new proposals, however, we will not be moving forward until the Government has provided the necessary guidance to safeguard the Council and ensure that we are free from legal challenge in having interpreted the legislation incorrectly.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no human rights or other legal implications arising from this update report.

5 **Supporting Information**

Background

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 16 November 2011. The Act devolves more powers to Local Authorities in relation to governance and planning, and gives local communities more control over local decisions such as housing and neighbourhood planning. It also introduces "community rights", such as the right for community groups to bid to run local services and to take over local assets.
- 5.2 Although a full timetable for the commencement of some of the provisions in the Act is yet to be published, the majority of the Act came into force in April 2012. Therefore the Council is preparing now for the changes to ensure that we take advantage of the opportunities in the Act, and prepare ourselves for the challenges that may present themselves to the Authority as a result of the Act.

Council Tenancies

- 5.3 Future council tenancies will continue to be known as Secure Tenancies however while at present they are unlimited in length (generally known as lifetime tenancies), in future the Council will be able to grant tenancies of a fixed term, usually for a minimum of five years, but in special circumstances this can be reduced to two years.
- 5.4 There are numerous benefits to the Council of this approach, the greatest being that the Local Authority will in future be able to review a tenant's eligibility to continue as a tenant and also their entitlement to any specific property. This might provide, for example, an easier resolution to cases of persistent but low level anti-social behaviour which could not otherwise have lead to an eviction. Alternatively a

review might determine that a family residing in a three bed property no longer need such accommodation once the children have reached adulthood and moved away into their own properties. This is most starkly identified where parents evict teenage children from council houses thereby under occupying a much needed home while the Council is charged with responsibility for also finding accommodation for the homeless teenager.

- 5.5 A fixed term tenancy will also be a useful tool associated with another aspect of the Localism Act proposals whereby individuals undertaking work of community benefit can be afforded some degree of priority on the housing allocation waiting list. One such example might be fostering & adoption where a couple or individual might be granted a tenancy for a period while they undertake the function but have their eligibility reviewed at any future time when they decide to stop.
- 5.6 Fixed term tenancies will assist the Council in recovering possession of properties where domestic violence or matrimonial dispute leads to one party leaving the family home. In circumstances where a partner leaves with children and the remaining adult has no childcare obligations or other needs or vulnerabilities, it will be much simpler for the Council to end the housing obligation.
- 5.7 Consultation with existing tenants has already been undertaken on these issues and a new tenancy agreement, reviewed by this Panel at its meeting on the 21 June 2012, is due to be adopted by Cabinet next week ready for immediate introduction. While existing lifetime tenancies cannot be extinguished in favour of fixed term tenancies, the issuing of new agreements has also given the council the opportunity to review the details of the document and the new versions will be much more explicit regarding the Council's and tenant's obligations and what constitutes a breach of tenancy conditions. This will assist in the management of the stock and assist in the eviction of persistent offenders who through their actions affect the quiet enjoyment of their neighbour's homes on an ongoing basis.

Rights of succession

- 5.8 The Act also proposes amendments to the rights of succession to a council tenancy when an existing tenant dies. This is currently an area which causes more grief than almost any other for tenants and Housing Officers alike. Housing Officers are charged with securing vacant possession of desperately needed homes at the time when surviving partners, relatives or co-habitees are coming to terms with the loss of a loved one so improving clarity for all concerned is to be welcomed.
- 5.9 In essence the Government has introduced a proposal that the single right of succession can be limited to only a spouse or civil partner, rather than anyone who has been resident in the property for at least 12 months at the point of succession. Council's also have discretion to adopt any alternative proposal which meets their needs and in the case of Slough, we have opted to limit successions to spouse or civil partner and sons and daughters.
- 5.10 There will be no discretion so the proposals will be clear for all in advance, identifying who will and who will not succeed to a tenancy. It should also be noted that the right of succession is to the tenancy which does not necessarily mean the current property, therefore in future a single adult child succeeding to their parents three bed house, might succeed but be allocated an alternative property which meets their needs.

Allocation of council homes

- 5.11 Until now Local Authorities have had very little discretion as to who is eligible for a council house or who has priority to be allocated a council home. Although yet to be enacted, the Act will allow council's to determine who is eligible to join the waiting list as well as who is ultimately eligible to be allocated a home. Although existing policies are based upon a fair and reasonable assessment of priority, the system has led to a public perception that only the least deserving cases are allocated homes with many being given straight to families who have newly migrated to the country. In fact this has never been the case but the Council has always been forced onto the back foot in defending nationally determined policies.
- 5.12 In future the Council will be able to determine eligibility for housing based upon positive criteria rather than negative ones, for example, giving priority to households in full employment or children in full time education, or with no ASB complaints and clear rent accounts, rather than offering rehousing because someone is perceived to be a problem family.
- 5.13 Households found guilty of benefit fraud or other criminal behaviour could be determined as ineligible for housing either for a fixed period or permanently. Whereas those on low incomes or who undertake voluntary or charity work could be afforded a degree of priority to reflect the community benefit that they provide.
- 5.14 The options for inclusion and exclusion are almost infinite and the forthcoming proposals will be subject to wide consultation to ensure that the emerging policy reflects the priorities of the Council and the community which it serves. All that is awaited before commencing the project is the production of the necessary subordinate legislation and codes of guidance from the Government which, although promised since April, are yet to be released.

Homelessness

- 5.15 As with changes to allocation policies, proposals to amend the Council's obligations to homeless households are yet to be implemented in the new Act, but when it arrives the changes to this area are likely to have a major impact on the Council and its finances. At present any household found to be unintentionally homeless, in priority need and eligible for assistance, must be provided with temporary accommodation and then ultimately a council or housing association property. As with current allocation policies this leads to a perception that the least deserving cases get priority when households who strive to resolve their own housing issues never have the chance of accessing a council home.
- 5.16 Once enacted this proposal will enable councils to accept the liability for a homeless household and then to discharge its duty by placing the household in a suitable private rented sector home. Homelessness will no longer be seen as a quick route into council housing and, unfortunately while many homelessness cases are genuine and unavoidable, it will mean that households who contrive to worsen their own situation in order to access council housing will not benefit from doing so. Instead, in future, priority access to council homes will be limited to those who strive to sort out their own situations and who would benefit and thrive from such housing, rather than those who might sit around waiting for others to provide for them.

Complaints

- 5.17 In addition to any Council's Corporate Complaint Policy there has always been the option for a complainant, dissatisfied with the Council's response to forward the issue to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). In parallel, housing associations and other registered providers have where necessary been called to account by the Housing Ombudsman (HO). The Act rationalises this so that in future all housing-related complaints are the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman regardless of the nature of the provider.
- 5.18 Although there is a clear sense in this, one can imagine that complaints regarding, for example ASB, will still be a grey area and may not be clear whether this is the remit of the LGO or the HO.
- 5.19 In accordance with the requirements of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) the Housing Service has established an independent tenant's complaints panel to hear any Stage III formal complaints. While the Panel will be given every support and necessary training, the service aspirations are of course to improve services and responses such that complaints never reach this stage.

Tenant Services Authority

- 5.20 The TSA set up to regulate housing in the last year of the previous government has been scrapped and its regulatory responsibilities reduced to one primarily concerned with the financial stewardship of housing providers. This reduced role will now be undertaken by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Self-financing

- 5.21 The Localism Act also dismantled the housing subsidy system through which approximately one third of the rent collected annually by Slough was passed back to the Government for reallocation to other metropolitan housing authorities. Instead we are now operating in a system known as self financing through which the council took on a debt of £137,000,000 in lieu of the rent to be collected over the next 30 years. Essentially this can be thought of as having remortgaged the housing stock and the Council now has to prudently manage and maximise its income to ensure that it can make the necessary loan repayments, fund the management of the service, invest and maintain the stock and if all goes according to plan, for the first time in a generation, build new council houses to meet the needs of local people.

7 Conclusion

Nothing within this report constitutes a policy decision of the Council. Other than the changes to council tenancy agreements and the rights of succession all other aspects remain to be determined in detail and consulted upon with elected members and the wider community. However, this report demonstrates that the Localism Act is beginning to change the operational face of Housing and this change will accelerate throughout the remainder of this year as the Government implements the additional parts of the Act.

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 10 September 2012

CONTACT OFFICER: Gillian Ralphs – Assistant Director Enforcement and Regulation
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875239

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Commissioner for Environment and Open Space -
Councillor Satpal Parmar

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 For Members to consider the recommendations and provide views on the development of a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Panel is requested to:

- a) endorse the designation of land at Herschel Park as a Local Nature Reserve; and
- b) provide views on the indicative masterplans outlined in the report.

3 Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

3.1 Parks and open spaces benefit communities across all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Economy and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Regeneration and Environment
- Housing
- Safer Communities

3.2 Parks and open spaces present opportunities to deliver social benefits to all communities and to contribute to the economic and environmental well being of the Borough. These include spatial planning, landscape management, enhancement/conservation of biodiversity, sport, play, provision of outdoor recreation and carbon reduction initiatives.

3.3 This work responds to two recent government white papers concerning public health and the environment. Both these white papers recognise that parks and open spaces are important to achieving national targets in respect of public health and environmental well-being, and are under-utilised in these regards.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial Implications

This report has no immediate financial implications.

Herschel Local Nature Reserve – The designation of land at Herschel Park, a Local Nature Reserve, has no additional financial or resource implications. Its management is funded through existing provision for the delivery of the approved Herschel Park Management and Maintenance Plan.

(b) Risk Management

Endorsement of the proposed approach will not give rise to any significant risks. It will create opportunities for the Council to enhance park management and provision. This will then support applications for Green Flag status for key parks.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
Endorsement of the designation of land illustrated on Plan A at Herschel Park as a Local Nature Reserve.	The designation of the site will protect it as a place for the conservation of biodiversity and for people to have access to high quality natural environment.	None required.
Endorsement of the proposed approach outlined in the indicative masterplans.	Endorsement of the proposed approach will not give rise to any significant risks. It will create opportunities for the Council to enhance park management and provision. This will then support applications for Green Flag status for key parks.	None required.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The Council has powers to acquire, declare and manage LNRs. LNRs must be controlled by the local authority through ownership, lease or agreement with the owner. The main aim must be to care for the natural features which make the site special. The Council owns the freehold of the land at Herschel Park intended for designation as a LNR.

Designation of the land as an LNR will mean the land will be protected under relevant policies in the Development Plan. It is already identified as Public Open Space in that plan and protected under relevant policies.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Council seeks to make parks and open spaces equally available to all and accords with current Council equality policies and the law. Parks provide facilities for all sectors of the community. Parks and open spaces benefit everybody but can be of particular benefit to people in relatively deprived areas. They are free at the point of use, bring many benefits in respect of health and well-being and present many opportunities to raise the quality of the places people live in.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix E) and endorsed by the Council's Equality and Diversity Advisor.

5 Supporting Information

Background and strategic context

- 5.1 An update report concerning the parks service was presented by the Assistant Director Environmental Services and Quality to Cabinet in November 2010. Opportunities were identified to raise the standard of Slough parks, notably through better corporate planning, co-ordination and communication where cross cutting services have impacts on these types of facility.
- 5.2 Since that report was approved in 2010, parks and open spaces have seen considerable improvements achieved through improved facility management and maintenance. Three parks have been brought up to Green Flag status; there has been substantial further investment in play provision; and operational changes have been made with Slough Enterprise to improve how services are delivered. A Parks and Open Spaces Management Framework has been developed as an operational plan for parks provision and management.
- 5.3 The development of a new Strategy will build on the Parks Strategy adopted by the Council in 2005/2006. The proposals in this report provide a basis for further consultation with wider stakeholders and the public in order to inform the development of a new strategy for parks and open spaces.
- 5.4 The Council manages approximately 411 hectares of parks and open space. They are diverse in their character, with two heritage parks (Herschel Park and Baylis Park), the large Upton Court Park, with a strong landscape character, and the more formal Green Flag parks at Salt Hill and Pippins.
- 5.5 Council open space is currently managed by different departments of the council, notably Parks, Housing Services and Highways. We intend to apply a consistent principles and management approach to all council open space to achieve a corporate approach.
- 5.6 All park sites have been assessed for condition, their potential for enhancement and their overall quality. A number of other criteria are also measured. This assessment is used to understand how the Council might make best use of each site and the type of investment that is most appropriate to each.

5.7 Currently the highest priority parks are:

- Baylis and Godolphin Parks; Masterplan (Appendix B). Restoration/conservation need and need to improve overall condition
- Herschel Park; Heritage Lottery Funded requirement to enhance maintenance standards and to conserve the completed improvement works.
- Salt Hill Park; Delivery of Green Flag management plan actions to deliver improved management and maintenance.
- Kennedy Park; Contributing to the regeneration at Britwell
- Pippins Park; Delivery of Green Flag management plan actions to deliver improved management and maintenance.
- Upton Court Park. Masterplan (Appendix C). Largest park with the most opportunities for enhancement through structured programme of improvements.

5.8 These sites are among the larger and higher profile parks, but the majority of parks and open spaces in the Borough, regardless of their size, have potential to deliver some level of improvement across the social, health, environmental or economic spectrum.

5.9 Grant and award schemes including Green Flag and Heritage Lottery programmes expect Local Authorities to have park management strategies in place to support applications. A strategic approach to resource management is critical to effective management, financial planning and quality control, which will raise the Council's chances of success when seeking external funding or awards.

5.10 Cross-council working is enabling a new generation of schemes including safe transport routes for pedestrians and cyclists at Baylis Park and Salt Hill Park and work on potential flood alleviation measures involving open space land. Service improvements are being developed in respect of park buildings, site specific management plans, and improvements to sports, play and outdoor recreation facilities.

5.11 A strategic approach will help to secure and direct developer contributions received through town planning for park improvements spanning transport, play, landscape quality, property improvement, passive recreation and sport provision. This will also complement a number of related strategic plans, for example those involving play, sport provision, spatial planning, transport planning, health and flood alleviation.

5.12 Park standards have been raised substantially in recent years through better planning of investment, improved management/maintenance and better financial monitoring, and this work is ongoing.

5.13 Changes have been implemented to the management of key park facilities like children's play areas to improve governance, management and maintenance. As a result there is progressive improvement in the standard of these facilities. A complementary Play

Strategy has been developed to co-ordinate their management and maintenance, recognising that the majority of council play areas are part of park or open space facilities. The Play Strategy was adopted by Council in 2011.

5.14 Key improvement to parks in recent years include:

- Herschel Park has been comprehensively improved with funding from the Council and Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Salt Hill café has been restored and brought into beneficial use as a café and high quality restaurant with the benefit of council and private sector investment;
- Salt Hill and Pippins Parks have successfully achieved Green Flag standards demonstrating excellent overall management;
- masterplans have been completed for Upton Court Park, Baylis and Godolphin Parks to lead discussion about their future enhancement (Appendices B and C);
- Herschel Park Nature Reserve is being proposed to be formally designated a Local Nature Reserve (Appendix A);
- enhanced levels of safety inspections and maintenance have been introduced for children's play areas;
- the quality of many outdoor sports pitches and sports facilities have been improved as part of an ongoing programme of investment and enhanced management;
- contamination of land at Upton Court Park has been remediated with the assistance of a grant from the Environment Agency, part of which involved the planting of areas of woodland as a sustainable solution that also conserves the landscape character and quality of the open space;
- five new football pitches with changing rooms and car parking have been secured at Cippenham through new development;
- significant progress has been made to bring redundant park buildings back into beneficial use;
- Friends Groups have been established for Salt Hill, Pippins and Herschel parks; and
- a reviewed Events Policy has been implemented to improve the effective use of parks for community events, maximise revenues from commercial events in parks, provide appropriate support for community events and improve coordination of event management within the Council.

5.15 It is proposed to continue work to improve open spaces, working with other Council services by:

- securing Green Flag status for Herschel Park;
- restoring Baylis and Godolphin parks;
- promoting a Council-wide 'Trees for Slough' initiative;
- planting a sustainable Jubilee Woodland at Upton Court Park (Appendix D);
- continuing to identify and implement improvements to the quality of play sites, play equipment and play environments;
- bringing traditional sports activities back into use, including cricket at Cippenham village Green and Salt Hill Park;
- improving/creating multi-use games areas in appropriate parks in the Borough;
- implementing the Kennedy Park Masterplan through the funding created from the Britwell regeneration project;
- continuing the implementation of Salt Hill and Pippins Park management plans to retain Green Flag status;

- addressing the under-occupancy and poor condition of empty park buildings, working through the Corporate Asset Management Plan;
- considering how parks might contribute more to sustainable urban drainage;
- investigating ways to manage parks in a more environmentally sustainable way. This will include protection of the natural environment, seeking ways to use them more effectively as pedestrian and cycle routes, especially to create safer routes to schools, and minimising the use of non-renewable resources, notably energy and water;
- investigating opportunities to generate increased income and/or reduce costs, especially through opportunities for improved cost recovery; and
- improving links between green spaces in the Borough such as the Jubilee River, Linear Park and the Grand Union Canal.

6 **Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report provides an update on the work that has been undertaken since 2010 to raise the standard of parks and open spaces in Slough, and the proposals, set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.15, for taking this work forward through the development of a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

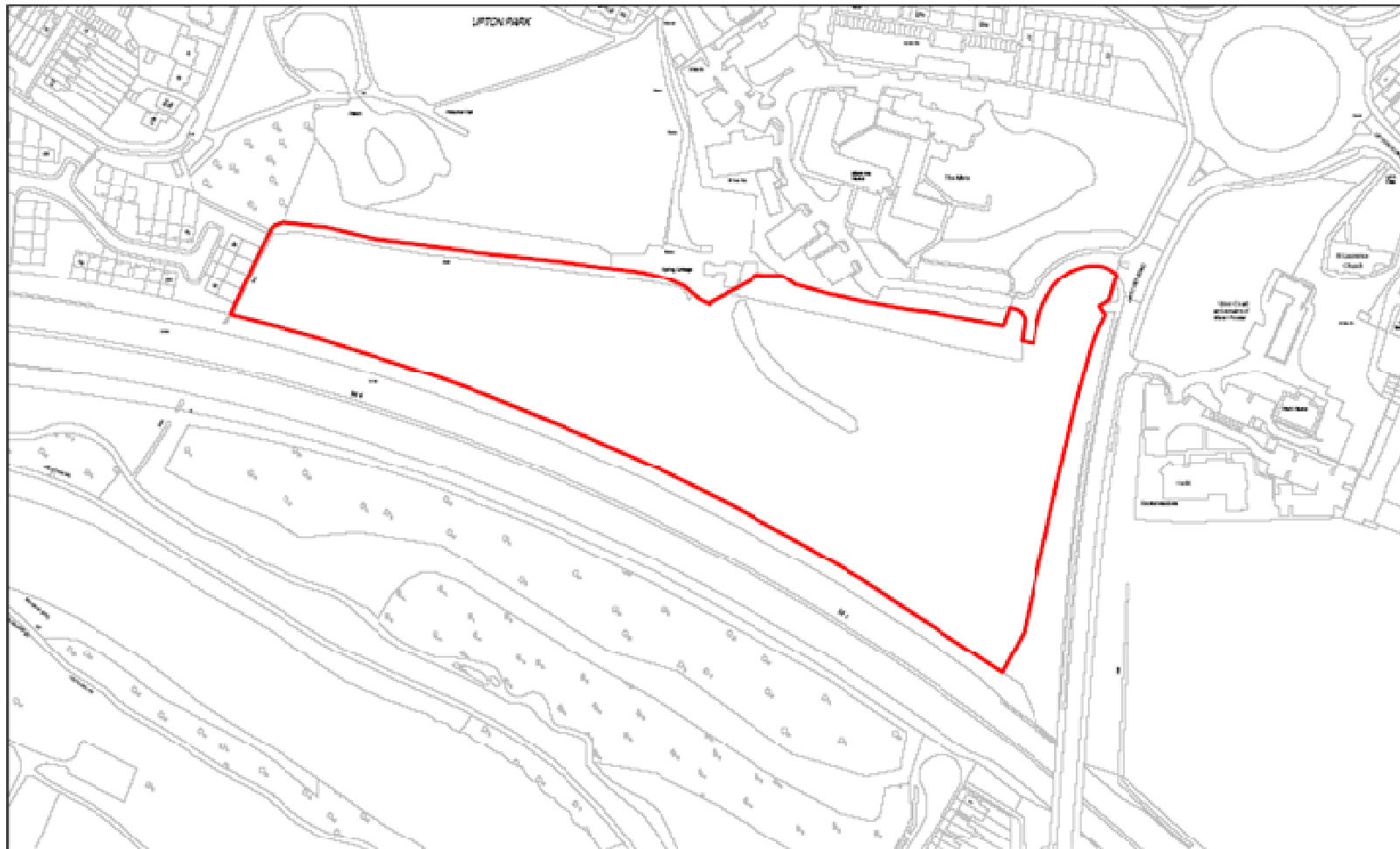
7 **Appendices**

- Appendix A Plan showing the extent of land to be designated by the Council as a Local Nature Reserve.
- Appendix B Park Masterplan for Baylis Park (including Godolphin Park)
- Appendix C Park Masterplan for Upton Court Park
- Appendix D Indicative plan showing proposed Jubilee Wood at Upton Court Park

8 **Background Papers**

1. Parks and Open Spaces management Framework 2012 – 2017. The full framework document is available from the Environmental Services and Quality Team in .pdf format, or if preferred, as hard copy. Please contact Ollie Kelly, 01753 875252 or email Ollie.Kelly@slough.gov.uk
2. Slough Borough Council Sustainable Communities Strategy
3. Slough Borough Council Play Strategy 2011 - 2014

Appendix A: Plan showing the extent of land at Herschel Park to be designated by the Council as a Local Nature Reserve



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Herschel Park, Slough
Area proposed as Local Nature Reserve
Scale 1:2500
October 2011

Slough Borough Council
Regeneration and Environment
51 Bath Road
Slough
SL1 3UF

Appendix B: Park Masterplan for Baylis Park (including Godolphin Park)



Appendix C: Park Masterplan for Upton Court Park



Appendix D: Indicative plans showing the areas at Upton Court Park to be made available for the planting of the Woodland Trust Jubilee Wood project



SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community **DATE:** 10 September 2012
Services Scrutiny Panel

CONTACTS: Councillor Sharif – Slough Borough Council representative on
Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel
Sarah Forsyth – Scrutiny Officer
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875657

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Munawar – Commissioner for Community and Leisure

PART I

TO NOTE

THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

1 Purpose of Report

To update the Panel on the establishment of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel, which will play the role of scrutiny body to the newly elected Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner following the election to that post in November 2012.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

To note the report.

3 Current Position

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) met officially for the first time on the 19 July 2012. This meeting focused primarily on the arrangements for the Panel, electing a Chair and Vice Chair for the year, agreeing the Rules of Procedure it will follow, discussing a communications plan for the Panel and reviewing the budget.

This initial meeting did, however, also begin looking at the outline work programme for the PCP. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) election will take place on 15 November 2012, and once elected the PCC has to work very quickly to set out the Thames Valley priorities and strategic direction for next five years, this will be the Police and Crime Plan. With such a tight timescale imposed by legislation on the PCC, the PCP has to be focused on the details and priorities of a range of issues related to crime in order to assist the PCC in develop the Plan.

Initial discussions have seen the PCP looking at crime across all areas, but the challenge for all the elected members involved will be to keep the focus at the strategic level, while recognising the varying needs of the different communities across the Thames Valley.

7 **Conclusion**

This report provides an update on the work that is ongoing to develop the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel in the lead up to the election of the first Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner. Further briefing papers will be prepared as the Panel develops in order to keep members updated, and should any issues arise which the NCS Scrutiny Panel feels should be raised, arrangements will be made to add an item to the NCS Panel's work programme.

8 **Background Papers**

- 1 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 published by TSO (The Stationery Office)
- 2 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill report to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 15 September 2011.
- 3 - Policing White Paper (Policy Briefing 5, Centre for Public Scrutiny) July 2010
- 4 - Policing and Social Responsibility Bill (Policy Briefing 8, Centre for Public Scrutiny) February 2011
- 5 - Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel report to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 21 June 2012

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 10 September 2012

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Forsyth – Scrutiny Officer
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875657

WARDS: All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & DECISION

**NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL – 2012/13
WORK PROGRAMME**

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 For the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel to review its current work programme.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

2.1 That the Panel:

- a) review and agree the current work programme for the 2012/13 municipal year and propose amendments or additions as required; and

3. **Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities**

- **Housing**
- **Regeneration and Environment**
- **Safer Communities**

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, along with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the Local Authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

3.2 In particular, the NCS Panel specifically takes responsibility for ensuring transparency and accountability for Council services relating to housing, regeneration and environment, and safer communities.

4. **Supporting Information**

4.1 The current work programme is based on the discussions of the Panel at its previous meeting, looking at requests for consideration of issues from officers and issues that have been brought to the attention of Members outside of the Committee's meetings.

4.2 The work programme is a flexible document which will be continually open to review throughout the municipal year.

5. **Conclusion**

5.1 This report is intended to provide the Panel with the opportunity to review its upcoming work programme and make any amendments it feels are required.

6. **Appendices Attached**

A - Work Programme for 2012/13 Municipal Year

7. **Background Papers**

None.

Thursday 15 November 2012
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olympics Review – lessons learned • Slough Sheds (Request from O&S Committee)
Thursday 10 January 2013
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Commissioner • Bus Station Review – Communications For Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prostitution – monitoring of progress
Wednesday 6 March 2013
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways Schemes for 2012-13 For Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCP Update

Unprogrammed:

- Housing Repairs Service Review
- Customer Complaints Review
- Customer Service Review
- Street Cleansing Fixed Penalty Notices
- Accessibility Issues
- Youth Facilities Provision
- Effects of Housing on Resident's Health (Request from Health Scrutiny Panel)

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MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD
NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2011-12

COUNCILLOR	MEETING DATES						
	21/06/2012	10/09/2012	15/11/2012	06/12/2012	10/01/2012	06/03/2012	
Bains	P						
Bal	Ab						
Carter	Ap						
Dar	P						
Minhas	P*						
O'Connor	Ap						
Plenty	P						
Sohal	P						
Wright	P						

P = Present for whole meeting
 Ap = Apologies given

P* = Present for part of meeting
 Ab = Absent; no apologies given

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