



Quarterly Operations Report

Chief Executive's Office

Quarter 2

2006/07

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1. Introduction

This is the second Chief Executive's Office Quarterly Operations Report for 2006/07 and it provides information about the diverse work carried out over the period from the beginning of July 2006 to the end of September 2006.

2. Progress during Previous Quarter

Town Centre

Significant progress has been made on the drafting of the Development Agreement. Most drafting is now complete with the consideration to be received by the Council being the main outstanding issue. The terms of the DCNA agreement (interim working agreement with BRP before the Development Agreement becomes unconditional) have been agreed with BRP.

Work has taken place to finalise the details of the s106 agreement (primarily highways and environmental assessments) and is near completion. Commentary has been given on all draft strategies received from BRP to support the Outline Planning Application. Work has been undertaken on progressing the town centre relocations, including identifying sites and costs associated. Work has started on investigating third party sites that new to be brought forward as part of the wider town centre regeneration.

Work has been ongoing on withdrawing the Council formally from the Renaissance project. In tandem, the Council has produced a sustainability strategy with BRP to ensure that carbon reduction and energy efficiency is delivered in the town centre.

Civic Hub

Working with the Director of Corporate Services, the overall project programme for the civic hub has been revised to take into account all internal work that needs to take place to successfully relocate. A Master programme has been created.

Good progress has been made on the design of the civic hub with draft designs completed up to stage C. Covenant issues on the proposed site for the hub have meant that the designs could not be signed-off by the Council and significant work has needed to be undertaken to try to resolve the matter. Further investigative work into the sustainability of the new civic accommodation has been undertaken.

The Council's consultants have been jointly working on the cost of delivering the civic hub and any works to Time Square and how this needs to be reflected in the consideration to be received from BRP.

Community Engagement

The Autumn 2006 round of Neighbourhood Forums is underway and due for completion in December 2006.

In response to some of the community issues raised, the Take Pride campaign was launched in May 2006 to support the community in tackling issues such as speeding, crime awareness, litter and graffiti. More than 70 people are registered to date. The pilot speedwatch work is complete in Owlsmoor and this has been expanded to Binfield.

Following the pilot of an intranet-based register of consultation in previous years, work has been done during the quarter in preparation for the launch of a new web-based register of consultation early in quarter 3.

Local Area Agreement

The draft Local Area Agreement was submitted to GOSE on 29 September 2006. This will be put through each of the individual partners' decision making processes

(along with the supporting Memorandum of Agreement and Protocol) for endorsement.

CPA 2006

The Council completed and submitted its Value for Money self-assessment during the quarter and substantially completed its Direction of Travel self-assessment for submission early in Quarter 3. After an analysis of timetables for CPA in 2006 and 2007 under the revised framework, the decision was taken to establish a new project group which will plan and manage all activities with regards to CPA.

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan has been renamed the 'Annual Report'. This was published in print and online in advance of 30 June in accordance with the Government timetable.

Community Cohesion

The Corporate Community Cohesion Working Group has now been combined with the Community Engagement Working Group and has a regular meetings schedule arranged. The Group have approved the Annual Progress report for 2005/06 and have received a report from consultants outlining recommendations and actions that the Council needs to take to meet the requirements of forthcoming legislation.

Work commenced immediately on the preparation of a Disability Equality Scheme which needs to be in place at the Council by December 2006.

Best Value Review of Emergency Response

A draft final report is currently being considered by the review team.

Scrutiny

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission and its Panels continued their work, concluding a report on Trees policy and progressing reviews on Anti-Social Behaviour, Libraries, the Youth Service and Health issues. Subject to Council approval, Scrutiny Members will be entering into a Joint East Berkshire Health Scrutiny Committee with Slough BC and Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, consequent on the creation of the East Berkshire Primary Care Trust.

Communications Project Support

The communications and marketing team supported a number of high priority projects including:

ABC – the communications and marketing plan was successfully implemented with our targets being exceeded for the number of blue bins and other recycling containers ordered.

Civic hub – a communications plan for 06/07 was agreed by the Town Centre Regeneration Committee.

E+ card – a new discount directory was published. Promotions were carried out in the town centre.

Town centre regeneration – a media briefing was held about the decision to look at alternative ways of introducing sustainable energy into the development and not building an energy centre. Briefings with key stakeholders were also held and letters sent to other interested parties.

Your Homes – The communications and consultation strategy and protocols have been agreed. A media briefing was held to explain how the project would move forward and the setting up of a shadow board. A monthly newsletter was produced for tenants. Workshops have been held for housing/BFS staff and councillors.

Change for Children – a regular electronic staff newsletter was produced.

Take Up campaign – bus shelter adverts and other promotion was carried out throughout September to promote online services, linked to the national campaign.

External Communications

Town & Country – the October edition was produced as per schedule

A-Z of Services – a new A-Z of Services guide was distributed to all households with October Town & Country.

Media – A total of 267 media enquiries were answered in this quarter (July 99, August 77, Sep 91). A total of 83 news releases were sent to the media (July 32, August 26, Sep 25).

Monthly Bracknell News columns were drafted for the Chief executive and the Safer Communities Partnership.

Internal Communications

Plain English Guide

Intranet development

Forest Views – the staff newsletter was produced monthly, as per schedule.

Corporate Messages – were produced monthly and cascaded to staff via team briefings.

Bracknell Forest Partnership

The Bracknell Forest Partnership Service Board continues to concentrate on the development of the Local Area Agreement. It has begun quarterly monitoring of the LPSA2 projects and this performance work will expand to include the Local Area Agreement when this goes live in April 2007.

Sustainable Community Plan Priorities

The work of the Chief Executive's Office goes across all of the services in the Council and therefore the officers support all of the Sustainable Community Plan priorities in one way or another through the course of their work.

3. Staffing

3.1 Detailed information on staffing issues, including staff turnover, vacancies and sickness levels etc

STAFFING LEVELS AS AT 30 September 2006.

(Table A)

	Establishment Posts	Staffing Full Time	Staffing Part Time	Total Posts FTE	Vacant Posts	Vacancy Rate
Chief Executive	2	2	0	2	0	0
Chief Exec's Office	18	14	4	16.43	2	10
Department Totals	20	16	4	18.93	2	9.09

Comments

3.2 Staff Turnover

For the quarter ending	30 September 2006	5.26%
For the year ending	30 September 2006	21.05%

2005/6 turnover for the Council: 13.6% (excluding schools)

2004/5 average turnover for local authorities in the South East, 15.6% (excluding schools)

Source: People Skills Scoreboard

Comments

There have been four leavers during this financial year.

3.3 Sickness Absence

	ALL EMPLOYEES, AVERAGE DAYS SICKNESS ABSENCE PER FTE
Bracknell Forest Borough Council 05/06	7.85 days
Employers Organisation for the South East 04/05 (Larger authorities)	10.5 days

3.4 Staff Sickness

(1 July - 30 September 2006)

(Table B)

Section	Total staff FTE	Number of days sickness	Average per employee (FTE)	Projected annual average per employee (FTE)
Chief Executive	2	0	0	0
Chief Exec's Office	18	9	0.50	1.74
Department Totals	20	9	0.50	1.74

Comments:

None

4. Budget

4.1 Revenue

Information is included in the Corporate Services & Resources QoR.

4.2 Capital

Information is included in the Corporate Services & Resources QoR.

5. Forward Look

Town Centre

- S106 finalised and the Outline Planning Permission to be granted
- The amount of consideration to be received for the town centre to be agreed and drafted into the development agreement
- A regeneration framework drafted, including delivery of third party sites

Civic Hub

- Completion of civic hub designs to stage C
- Members workshop undertaken to consult on design
- Resolution of covenant issues

Community Engagement

- The next round of Neighbourhood Action Groups will take place in January/February 2007, to begin action planning against the key issue raised within each neighbourhood.
- Take Pride events will continue throughout the year

Bracknell Forest Partnership Board

- The Bracknell Forest Partnership Board will continue to concentrate on the development and delivery of the Local Area Agreement, including giving support to the theme partnerships in the development of improved communications and performance management processes.

Local Area Agreement

- Feedback from GOSE on the draft Local Area Agreement is expected soon. The final version will be agreed by December 2006, for ministerial signing in February 2007.

CPA 2006

- Management of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process for 2006 will continue to be a priority for the remainder of 2006/07. Service assessment data will be reviewed and formally verified during quarter 3 to ensure the Audit Commission uses accurate data in its assessment of the Council's performance. The results of Best Value User Satisfaction Surveys will inform the Audit Commission's development of a final 2006 scorecard which will be publicised in February 2007. The Chief Executive's Office will continue to manage the Council's activities with regards to CPA in the lead up to and beyond this point.

Community Cohesion

- Complete the preparation of a Disability Equality Scheme for the Council
- Prepare for a workshop style event to start the development of a new strategy for April 2007 onwards.

5. Forward Look

Best Value Review on Council Emergency/ Out of hours services

- To finalise the Council report for the review.

Scrutiny

- ♦ The Overview & Scrutiny Commission and its Panels will soon be deciding their work programme for the remainder of 2006/07 and determining their approach for drawing up a programme for 2007/08. All current reviews will be concluded in time for the Annual Report to Council next spring.

External Communications

Work will continue towards the communications strategy including:

- Town & Country will be produced in December
- An elections communications protocol will be developed;
- Ongoing information will be made public about the updates of town centre regeneration and the civic centre plans;
- The Your Homes communications and consultation plan will be implemented including monthly tenants' newsletters, and filming a video to be sent to all tenants to highlight the offer document to them.

Internal Communications

Work will continue towards the internal communications strategy including:

- Staff information and consultation regarding the civic hub;
- Support for the development of the new staff intranet;
- Plain English Guide to be developed;
- Your Homes staff briefings to be carried out;
- Forest views to be published monthly.

Appendix A – Progress towards Objectives

Appendix A – Progress towards Objectives

(Refers to Section 2 of the original Service Plan)

Sustainable Community Plan Priority

Developing a Town fit for the 21st century

Medium Term Objective

1. To lead the regeneration of Bracknell to provide a town fit for the 21st century

Action Points & Key Objectives for 2006/07

1. Determine the planning applications for the comprehensive regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre
2. Finalise detailed plans and commission architects to design a new Civic Hub, including new library and arts provision
3. Support and sustain the Town Centre by working with partners and others on effective town centre management
4. Promote the use of renewable energy in the town centre by working with town centre partners and others to maximise the use of sustainable energy in new development
5. Develop and publish a regeneration strategy

ACTION	BY WHEN	PROGRESS TO DATE
Action 1.1 Draft and consult on internal regeneration strategy, based on Town Centre workstreams	May 06	Town centre work streams currently being revised to inform strategy
Action 2.1 Approve and agree concept designs for Civic Hub	August 2006	Delayed due to covenant issues

Appendix A – Progress towards Objectives

ACTION	BY WHEN	PROGRESS TO DATE
Action 2.2 Approve and agree detailed design for Civic Hub	March 2007	On target
Action 2.3 Ensure Members and Scrutiny Function are involved in the development of the Town Centre	March 2007	Current Scrutiny work is concentrating on the Library provision in the new Civic Hub. Further Scrutiny coverage of the development of the Town Centre will be considered by Members in the context of their 2007-2008 work programme.
Action 3.1: Co-ordinate and implement communication strategies for the town centre regeneration, including the vitality of the town before regeneration, internal communications and the council's element of the project e.g. Civic Hub	Ongoing	Ongoing
Action 3.2 Draft Town Centre management strategy, ready for consultation	March 2007	Town Centre Management Strategy event planned for Jan 07
Action 3.3 Integrated CCTV – work with partners on an integrated CCTV strategy for Bracknell town centre.	March 2007	-
Action 4.1: Develop strategy for carbon reduction and use of renewables in new Town Centre with Bracknell Regeneration Partnership and external funding	July 2006	Completed with BRP. A Corporate Energy Strategy now been drafted to promote sustainability throughout the borough.

Appendix A – Progress towards Objectives

Sustainable Community Plan Priority

Providing decent and affordable housing

Medium Term Objective

2. Promote sustainable communities through innovative housing strategies and effective maintenance

Action Points & Key Objectives for 2006/07

1. Complete Phase 2 of the Stock Options Appraisal, exploring the option of stock transfer with tenants and leaseholders

ACTION	BY WHEN	PROGRESS TO DATE
Action 1.1 Deliver the communications action plan to support the Your Homes project to consult with tenants and leaseholders about stock transfer	May 2006 – ongoing dependent upon Executive decision in May	Initial plan up to May 2006 now delivered. Council decided to move forward to a ballot of tenants and a new communications and consultation plan has now been developed to lead us to March 2007.

Appendix A – Progress towards Objectives

Sustainable Community Plan Priority

Promoting community safety

Medium Term Objective

3. To provide a safe framework for developing the Community

Action Points & Key Objectives for 2006/07

1. Implement the Council's Corporate Community Cohesion Strategy and in particular to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and Council ambitions

ACTION	BY WHEN	PROGRESS TO DATE
Action: 1.1 Ensure community cohesion questions are included in consultations and use as part of an evidence base for prioritising interventions to promote community cohesion	Ongoing	A number of community cohesion questions were included within the Best Value user satisfaction General Survey to ensure that the Council collects the baseline information it needs.
Action 1.2 Prepare annual report for Community Cohesion strategy	June 2006	Complete. Due to be presented to Overview & Scrutiny Commission in November 2006
Action 1.3 Implement final year of Community Cohesion Strategy	March 2007	Ongoing
Action 1.4 Review the way forward at the end of the Strategy	March 2007	Workshop is being arranged to start this work. Research begun into the existing data that the Council holds in relation to communities and equalities.
Action 2.1 Assist and support the Overview & Scrutiny review of Anti-Social Behaviour	Dec 200	The ASB review is nearing completion, with the interim report having been considered by the Executive Member.

