



Quarterly Operations Report

Chief Executive's Office

Quarter 3

2006/07

Prepared by

Victor Nicholls

Assistant Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

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

2. Progress during Previous Quarter

Town Centre

The S106 obligation relating to the outline planning permission for the regeneration of Bracknell town centre was signed in December and the decision notice issued.

Negotiations continued on the development agreement with the town centre developers. Good progress was made although key areas remain outstanding. It is hoped that these issues are resolved in the final quarter of the current service plan year.

Work continued on all the town centre regeneration workstreams, including a town centre management strategy and communications. Following the Council's withdrawal from the EU "Renaissance" project, work has been undertaken in the development agreement and a sustainability strategy to help ensure the delivery of a sustainable town centre, delivering lower carbon emissions than would otherwise be the case. .

Work started on progressing 3rd party sites outside of the BRP committed development. A review of all voluntary organisations to be displaced as part of the regeneration was undertaken.

Civic Hub

Considerable work was undertaken to verify the costs of the proposed new hub and works to Time Square to ensure it could be delivered within the scope of the development deal with the town centre developers.

Agreement was reached on how the concept designs would meet the functional requirements of the Council, especially the library and customer services. The design team was put on hold while historic covenant and development agreement issues were resolved.

Work internally to support the Council's relocation progressed significantly. A 'business plan' template has been created to outline what the Council 'must' and 'would like to have' in the new building. Work-stream leaders started to undertake necessary work to complete the business cases.

Work was undertaken to examine the viability of having Combined Heat and Power in the new hub and, potentially, Time Square.

Consultation was undertaken with Members and staff on the concept designs of the new hub, including an externally-facilitated Design Quality Index workshop.

Community Engagement

The Community Register of Consultation was re-launched in the quarter as an open-access online tool for any organisation, group or person in the local area to use. In addition to testing and launching the tool, time was spent during the quarter promoting the register. The information held within the register continues to grow.

The report on the Bracknell Forest 1500 health survey was published during the quarter and circulated to members of the Health and Social Care Partnership Board for their review and consideration in the fourth quarter.

A budget consultation was carried out during the quarter with the Bracknell Forest 1500 and via a public web form. The results of both consultations are in the process of being collated and analysed.

Local Area Agreement

The preparation of the LAA has continued culminating in a further draft submission to GOSE in early December. The process involved very detailed negotiation with Government service departments and Council officers, through the Chief Executive's Office and GOSE. The LAA was submitted formally to GOSE in January 2007.

CPA 2006

The department continued to co-ordinate the CPA 2006 process during the quarter by undertaking the following activities:

- Analysing the Audit Commission's Direction of Travel performance information pack in readiness for the meetings with the Council's Relationship Manager which took place during the quarter;
- Liaising with managers across all directorates to check, query and/or verify the list of performance indicators to be used to calculate those CPA service block assessments undertaken directly by the Audit Commission;
- Submitting of all data for the best value user satisfaction surveys undertaken during the quarter;
- Developing terms of reference for the Council's Corporate Performance Management Group with regards to CPA.

CPA 2007

Work started during the quarter in preparation for the management of the CPA 2007 process, which will include a full Corporate Assessment. Outline timescales were established for the 2007 process as well as holding initial discussions with the Education, Children's Services and Libraries department about the best way to work effectively during the parallel inspection timetables. The Government guidance on the 2007 framework has been analysed and any issues and uncertainties have been identified for discussion with the Council's Audit Commission Relationship Manager.

Annual Report

The Council is required to publish its Annual Report by 30 June 2006. Work will be undertaken in the next quarter in preparation for the production of the Annual Report for June 2007.

Community Cohesion

As a result of new legislation, the Council is required to publish a Disabilities Equality Scheme. Consultants were appointed to prepare a draft scheme, upon which the Council sought appropriate consultation. The final scheme was published by the due date in early December. However the consultation period was extended to the end of January to allow more time to develop a detailed action plan as part of the Scheme. It is intended that this will be completed for April 2007.

Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its Panels continued their work , progressing reviews including Anti-Social Behaviour, Libraries, the Youth Service and Health issues. Following Council approval, the new Joint East Berkshire Health Scrutiny Committee with Slough BC and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead met informally and its first public meeting will be held in January 2007.

Communications Project Support

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

ABC/recycling – bins labels were produced to support the ongoing work with residents to help them understand the new system. Information was produced and distributed to all residents about the Christmas and New Year collections. The borough hosted the Tonight with Trevor McDonald programme for filming.

Your Homes – a media briefing was carried out at the show home in December. Staff briefings were organised and carried out across the Council. Support was provided to develop a logo for the new housing association, Bracknell Forest Homes. A monthly Your Homes newsletter was produced and sent to all tenants and leaseholders. A video was produced which will be sent out to all tenants and leaseholders in February with the “offer document”.

Civic hub – work has been ongoing to carry out the agreed communications plan for 06/07 including branding for the new civic hub and the business case for supplying signage and public information in the new building.

Town centre regeneration – a statement was sent out to all local media regarding the formal issuing of planning permission. A feature with the MJ magazine has been organised.

Budget consultation 07/08 – a media briefing was held; new web pages were created including an online survey using the questionnaire from the BF1500 survey.

External Communications

Town & Country – the December edition was produced as per schedule.

Election communications protocols – has been drafted.

Wedding and celebrations brochure – a wedding brochure to promote the Council’s Syrett Suite has been produced, funded by advertising.

Street Map – the new street map for the borough was produced.

Business Guide – advertising for the updated Business Guide has now been sold and the listings are being pulled together.

Media – A total of 182 media enquiries were answered in this quarter (October 83; November 57; December 42). A total of 72 news releases were sent to the media (October 27; November 22; November 23).

A monthly column from the Chief Executive was drafted for the Bracknell News.

Internal Communications

Boris development – a communications plan has been drafted to support the launch of the new staff intranet site, Boris.

Forest Views – the staff newsletter was produced monthly, with a special edition in December celebrating staff achievement.

Corporate messages – were produced monthly and cascaded to staff via team meetings.

Bracknell Forest Partnership

During the previous quarter the Partnership has approved the Local Area Agreement and the Board has signed a Memorandum of Agreement to endorse the partnership approach and tighten partnership arrangements with the inclusion of risk management and scrutiny. The Partnership has launched integrated performance management across the theme partnerships and begun delivering an action plan to improve its internal and external communications. The Partnership has also considered key cross-cutting issues such as the Borough's economy, crime reduction and sexual health.

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	20	15	5	17.83	1	4.76
Department Totals	22	17	5	19.83	1	4.35

Comments - None

3.2 Staff Turnover

For the quarter ending	31 December 2006	4.35%
For the year ending	31 December 2006	10.53%

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 two 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 October - 31 December 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	0.00	0.00
Chief Exec's Office	20	23.5	1.17	2.73
Department Totals	22	23.5	1.17	2.73

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

- Both BRP and the Council are aiming to have the development agreement ready for exchange by the end of March. The main issues to resolve include the consideration, design issues for the Eye and claw back.
- Progress on the application will be limited while it is in the 3 month judicial review process.

Civic Hub

- Revised concept designs that take into account the restrictive covenants and the floor space restrictions of the OPP will be reissued for sign-off by the Council.
- The construction procurement route of the hub will be finalised
- Work-stream business plans will be completed to enable the Council to prioritise the 'fit out' of the hub.
- Detailed viability study of CHP inclusion in hub and Time Square will be completed.

Community Engagement

- Ongoing development of the new Community Register of Consultation. The department will continue to monitor and promote the new tool so that it can grow into a useful partnership / community resource.

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

- Finalise the document following feedback from GOSE in January 2007. For final submission to GOSE at the end of January, for ministerial signing in February 2007.
- Start preparations and planning for the LAA refresh 2008/09

CPA 2006

- The CPA star rating and Direction of Travel assessment will be published late February by the Audit Commission. The Performance and Scrutiny team will continue to work with the Commission up until that point to ensure they have the information they need to make a fair and comprehensive judgement. The findings and conclusions of the Audit Commission will also be distributed and analysed with a view to co-ordinating any necessary improvement planning.

5. Forward Look

CPA 2007

- Planning for the CPA 2007 process, including the corporate assessment inspection process, will continue during the next quarter and beyond.

Community Cohesion

- Hold workshop style event in preparation for the new Community Cohesion Strategy
- Prepare proposed objectives/priorities for new Community Cohesion Strategy ready for consultation
- Prepare brief and consultation plan for new Gender Equalities Scheme.

Scrutiny

- The Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its Panels will soon be agreeing their indicative work programme for the 2007/08 Municipal Year, to be included in their Annual Report to Council, due in February 2007. All current reviews are scheduled for completion by May 2007.

External Communications

Work will continue towards achieving the communications strategy including:

- Town & Country will be produced and distributed in March;
- The elections communications protocols will be distributed to all members;
- Planning work will be carried out for Bracknell town centre communications including the Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) process and relocations policy.
- Civic hub communications work will be ongoing as per the plan agreed by the Regeneration Committee, including consultation work with customers that use the current buildings.
- The Your Homes Communications and Consultation plan will be carried out including the "Offer Document" being sent out to all tenants and leaseholders on February 7.

Internal Communications

Work will continue to achieve the internal communications strategy including:

- The launch of the new staff intranet, Boris;
- The launch of the new Plain English Guide with training for staff;
- Chief executive staff briefings to be organised including consultation on the Council's "values";
- Forest views will be published monthly.

5. Forward Look

Bracknell Forest Partnership

The Bracknell Forest Partnership Board will continue to concentrate on the development and delivery of the Local Area Agreement (including LPSA2), including giving support to the theme partnerships in the development of improved communications and performance management processes. It will be preparing for the refresh of the Sustainable Community Plan, the six monthly GOSE review of the current Local Area Agreement and the annual refresh of the Local Area Agreement, all of which must be completed during the 07/08 financial year. In addition, the Partnership will be reviewing key multi-agency issues including the state of the borough's economy and community cohesion.

