

Date: 27 November 2008

TO: All Members of the Executive
FOR ATTENDANCE

TO: All Other Members of the Council
FOR INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** to be held in the **GUILDHALL, ABINGDON** on **FRIDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 2008** at **2.30 PM**.

Yours faithfully



Carole Nicholl
Head of Democratic Services

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct adopted on 30 September 2007 and Standing Order 34 regarding the declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

A G E N D A

A large print version of this agenda is available. Any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement. Contact Steve Culliford, Democratic Services Officer on telephone number (01235) 540307; e-mail: steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Please note that this meeting will be held in a wheelchair accessible venue. If you would like to attend and have any special access requirements, please let the Democratic Officer know beforehand and he will do his very best to meet your requirements.

Open to the Public including the Press

Map and Vision (Pages 6 - 7)

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting, together with a copy the Council Vision is attached.

STANDING ITEMS

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the public minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 October 2008, (previously circulated).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

Any Member with a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct, in any matter to be considered at a meeting, must declare the existence and nature of that interest as soon as the interest becomes apparent in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

When a Member declares a personal and prejudicial interest he shall also state if he has a dispensation from the Standards Committee entitling him/her to speak, or speak and vote on the matter concerned.

Where any Member has declared a personal and prejudicial interest he shall withdraw from the room while the matter is under consideration unless

- (a) his/her disability to speak, or speak and vote on the matter has been removed by a dispensation granted by the Standards Committee, or
- (b) members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, the Member can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, the Member must immediately leave the room once he/she has finished; or when the meeting decides he/she has finished whichever is the earlier and in any event the Member must leave the room for the duration of the debate on the item in which he/she has a personal and prejudicial interest.

4. **Urgent Business and Chair's Announcements**

To receive notification of any matters which the Chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the Chair.

5. **Statements and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32**

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under Standing Order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. **Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32**

Any questions from members of the public under Standing Order 32 will be asked at the meeting.

7. **Financial Monitoring**

(Pages 8 - 9)

Members are requested to consider and approve requests for virements or permanent budget adjustments.

OTHER MATTERS

8. **Accessible Information Policy**

(Pages 10 - 37)

To receive and consider report 123/08 of the Deputy Director (Organisational Development) and the Equalities Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and aims to deliver accessible services and employment opportunities which meet the needs of all residents and employees.

To help it achieve this, it needs to ensure that its service information is accessible to everybody. The Council needs to pay particular attention to the needs of disabled people, older people and people who have English as a second or other language.

The Accessible Information Policy sets out what the Council will do to meet the information needs of these groups, in terms of providing alternative formats, translations and interpreters (including sign language interpreters). It also highlights the need for all Council service information to be in Plain English, in an accessible font style and size and following a clear layout. These aspects should improve overall readability of Council information for the wider community.

This approach aims to be proportionate, practical and clear. It will also help the Council to meet its legal duties in terms of promoting disability and race equality.

This report summarises the purpose and need for the AIP and outlines what it covers. It explains what shaped the Policy and how it would be rolled out if approved by Council. This report also asks for the Executive Committee to recommend that Council adopts the Accessible Information Policy, with an implementation date of April 2009.

The contact officers for this report are Helen Bishop, Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support), telephone 01235 520202, email helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Katharine Doherty, Equalities Officer, 01235 520202, email katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

that the Executive recommends that Council adopts the Accessible Information Policy, with an implementation date of April 2009.

9. Corporate Governance - Second Quarter 2008/09

(Pages 38 - 52)

To receive and consider report 124/08 of the Senior Management Team.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Corporate Governance Report looks at the key areas of:

Corporate Priorities

National Indicators

Progress against Service Prioritisation Plans

Key staffing data (sickness levels and turnover)

Progress with Business Process Improvement Reviews

A Financial commentary

At its meeting on 20th October 2008 the Senior Management Team (SMT) considered a second quarter corporate governance exception report. SMT agreed the exceptions, comments and actions to be included in this report where performance / actions were not on target. The full versions of the individual reports are available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the 'about your Council / performance' section of the website.

The contact officer for this report is Robert Woodside, Principal Performance Management Officer, telephone (01235 520202 ext 499). Email address:

robert.woodside@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

that the Senior Management Team's Corporate Governance exception report be considered and that any further action be taken which needs to be taken to improve performance.

10. Half Year Reports on the 2008/09 Service Plans

Copies of Service Area Half Year Reports, covering the period 1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008, have already been circulated to members of the Executive and all members of Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Executive are asked to report back to this meeting (a template has been provided) on any significant issues for the service areas for which they are responsible.

All Members of the Executive are asked to bring their copies of the reports to the meeting.

11. **Exclusion of the Public, including the Press**

The Chair to move that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the remainder of the meeting to prevent the disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in Section 100(I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

- Item 12 Minutes
(Category 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.)
- Item 13 Joint Waste Procurement
(Category 3)

EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER SECTION 100A(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

STANDING ITEMS

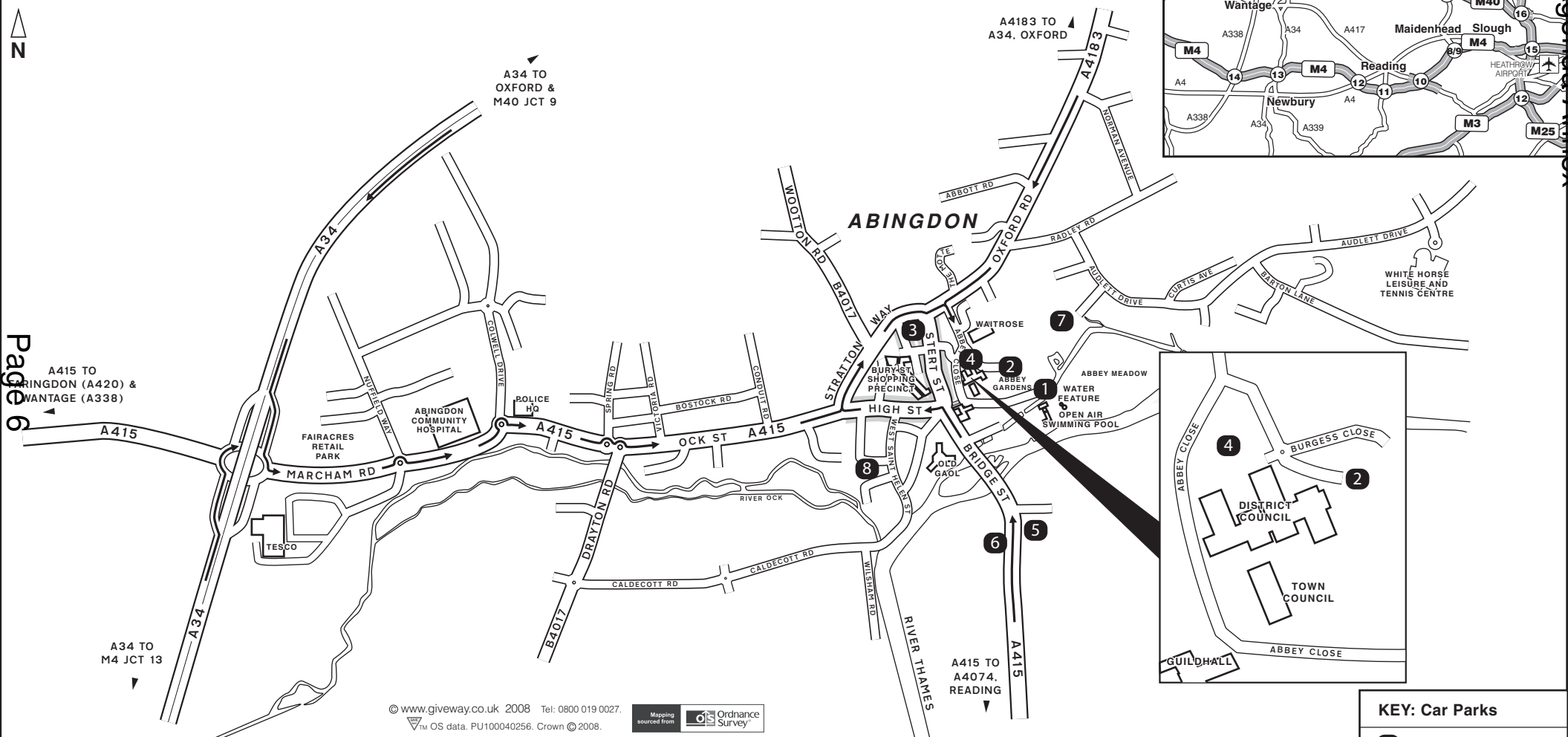
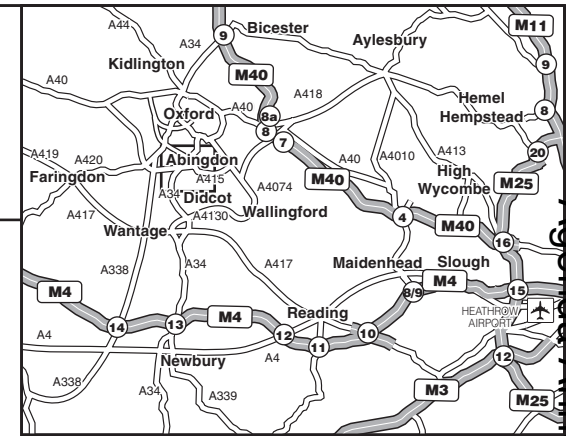
12. **Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 October 2008, (previously circulated).

KEY DECISIONS

13. **Joint Waste Procurement**

To receive and consider report 125/08 of the Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement). **REPORT WILL FOLLOW**



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KEY: Car Parks

1	Abbey Close
2	Cattle Market
3	Charter Multi-storey
4	Civic
5	Rye Farm
6	Hales Meadow
7	Audlett Drive
8	West St Helen Street

By rail – the nearest main line railway stations to Abingdon are either Didcot Parkway (seven miles) or Oxford (eight miles). Radley railway station is located on the main line between Oxford and Didcot and is three miles from Abingdon town centre. For details of train times visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 08457 484950

By bus – there are a number of bus routes serving Abingdon town centre. For details of services and timetables, visit Oxfordshire County Council's website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk. Contact details for bus operators can be found on the travel information pages on our website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Parking – details of car parks charges can be found on our website



The Council's Vision Statement

The Vale of White Horse District Council exists to serve its Citizens across all of its three Towns and sixty-five Parishes. This new Constitution sets out the detail of how this is to be managed. Our guiding principles will continue to be as set out in our "Vision Statement", adopted by the Council on 16th November 2005.

Our Vision and Aims-

Our Vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community

The Vale of White Horse District Council aims to:

Strengthen local democracy and public involvement through access to information, consultation, and devolution of power so that everyone can take part in our community and contribute to the decisions which affect our lives

Create a safer community and improve the quality of life among Vale residents

Encourage a strong and sustainable economy which benefits all who live in, work in or visit the Vale

Help disadvantaged groups and individuals within the Vale to realise their full potential

Provide and support high quality public services which are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of people within the Vale

Protect and improve our built and natural environment

It will be through the efforts of our staff, our Councillors, our Town and Parish Councils and by all members of our Vale community that we can, together, seek to turn this Vision into action.

*Adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council
16th November 2005*

Virement Requests for Executive Approval
(and requests approved under delegated powers for noting)

Key to Type

- 1 Within a subjective within a cost centre
- 2 Within a Cost Centre but across subjective headings
- 3 Within the cost centres of a service area
- 4 Across service areas
- 5 Over £10,000

Budget Virements and Ledger Maintenance requests received at 7 November 2008

Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type	Authorised by Director/ Deputy Director	Requires Executive Approval
Budget Virements												
09/09/2008	4400	CD31	Health Development	4400	EP12	Allotment Club	250	10.0%	To cover running costs of the Allotment Project as part of the Fit At Work and Staff Welfare Programmes	3	Y	N
24/09/2008	9027	RS41	Benefit Administration	4066	RS41	Benefit Administration	24,550	0.0%	Use of the Employment Support Allowance funding. This virement create matching income and expenditure budgets.	5	Y	Y
30/09/2008	9401	VA01	Property Trading	2003/9202	VA02	Mobile Home Parks Trading	20,000	1.0%	To create a matching income and expenditure budgets for the Mobile Home Parks to cover the cost of new pitches that are then sold at a profit. Currently this net income is included in Property Trading.	5	Y	Y
17/10/2008	1001/1003/1005	LG11	Legal Services	1100	LG21	Local Land Charges	4,700	1.5%	Use of unspent salary budget (due to vacancies) to cover the cost of agency staff.	5	Y	Y
		LG21	Local Land Charges		18,600	27.7%	5					
22/10/2008	9027	DS12	Flooding - July 2007	4066	DS12	Flooding - July 2007	105,190	0.0%	To create matching income and expenditure budgets for use of various flood relief income received following the floods of July 2007 and January 2008.	5	Y	Y
		DS13	Flooding - January 2008		DS13	Flooding - January 2008	17,750	0.0%		5		
27/10/2008	1001/1003/1005	PS61	Operational Property	1001/1003/1005	PS31	Estates Management	17,110	27.7%	To amend the salary allocations for the Property Surveyor who is currently split over three cost centres but should be charged to just one.	5	Y	Y
		PS71	Non-Operational Property		PS31	Estates Management	5,140	14.3%		5		
30/10/2008	4400	CM11	Consultations	4400	CM11	Corporate Communications	7,000	11.6%	Increased cost of distribution of Vale Views to be met from reduced expenditure in the Consultation budget. A growth bid has been submitted for next year.	3	Y	Y
06/11/2008	9102	SD02	Go Active	1001/1003/1005/4400	SD02	Go Active	12,920	0.0%	To create matching income and expenditure budgets for an externally funded post to be hosted by the Vale. (New cost centre within Sports Development).	5	Y	Y
06/11/2008	4400	RS51	Benefit Fraud	4400	RS61	Assisted Travel	1,000	3.3%	Increased consultancy costs within Assisted Travel to be met from reduced expenditure in Benefit Fraud	3	Y	N
Total Virements							234,210					

Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type	Authorised by Director/ Deputy Director	Requires Executive Approval
Ledger Maintenance												
24/09/2008	9029	RS42	Payment of Housing Benefit	9027	RS42	Payment of Housing Benefit	17,653,430	100.0%	The budget for receipt of Housing Benefit Subsidy is currently held on account 9029 but the income is coded to account 9027. The virement matches the budget to the actual, in line with previous years	5	Y	Y
24/09/2008	9029	RS43	Payment of Council Tax Benefit	9027	RS43	Payment of Council Tax Benefit	4,732,380	100.0%	The budget for receipt of Council Tax Benefit Subsidy is currently held on account 9029 but the income is coded to account 9027. The virement matches the budget to the actual, in line with previous years.	5	Y	Y
27/10/2008	9307	DS51	Maintaining Car Parks	9604	DS51	Maintaining Car Parks	60,000	100.0%	The budget for recharges for maintaining car parks is currently held on account 9307 but the income is treated as rechargeable works income coded to 9604. The virement matches the budget to the actual.	5	Y	Y
27/10/2008	1011	BC01	Building Control	1012	BC01	Building Control	5,150	0.9%	The budget for Standby payments is currently held on account 1011 but the expenditure is coded through the payroll system to account 1012. The virement matches the budget to the actual.	1	Y	N
							Total Ledger Maintenance	22,450,960				

Summary	
Total Type 1	5,150
Total Type 2	-
Total Type 3	8,250
Total Type 4	-
Total Type 5	22,671,770
Total	22,685,170

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR (ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT) AND THE EQUALITIES OFFICER TO THE EXECUTIVE
5 DECEMBER 2008

Accessible Information Policy (AIP)

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and aims to deliver accessible services and employment opportunities which meet the needs of all residents and employees.
- 1.2 To help it achieve this, it needs to ensure that its service information is accessible to everybody. The Council needs to pay particular attention to the needs of disabled people, older people and people who have English as a second or other language.
- 1.3 The Accessible Information Policy sets out what the Council will do to meet the information needs of these groups, in terms of providing alternative formats, translations and interpreters (including sign language interpreters). It also highlights the need for all Council service information to be in Plain English, in an accessible font style and size and following a clear layout. These aspects should improve overall readability of Council information for the wider community.
- 1.4 This approach aims to be proportionate, practical and clear. It will also help the Council to meet its legal duties in terms of promoting disability and race equality.
- 1.5 This report summarises the purpose and need for the AIP and outlines what it covers. It explains what shaped the Policy and how it would be rolled out if approved by Council. This report also asks for the Executive Committee to recommend that Council adopts the Accessible Information Policy, with an implementation date of April 2009.
- 1.6 The contact officers for this report are Helen Bishop, Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support), telephone 01235 520202, email helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Katharine Doherty, Equalities Officer, 01235 520202, email katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.0 Recommendations

That the Executive recommends that Council adopts the Accessible Information Policy, with an implementation date of April 2009.

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- 3.1 This report supports the objectives of the Council's vision and the Council's corporate priority to "improve and modernise access to services."
- 3.2 This report relates to the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11 and Communication Strategy.

4.0 Background and Supporting Information

4.1 The Accessible Information Policy sets out the Council's approach to ensuring that the information it provides is accessible to service users. It focuses specifically on how services will provide information (via written or verbal communication) to best meet people's needs in terms of:

- formats
- languages
- overall readability (use of Plain English, font size and style and layout)

The Policy aims to provide Council services with a clear, consistent and proportionate way of addressing these three areas. By adopting and implementing this Policy, the Council will be confident that it is maximising access to service information whilst taking into account the make up of the Vale's population

4.2 Providing accessible service information is important because without it, people's opportunities are immediately limited. They may not understand their social and legal duties and responsibilities and will find it difficult to engage with the Council.

Groups of people who are likely to find it more difficult to access service information are:

- disabled people (those with visual, hearing and learning impairments) – 13.1% of people in the Vale have a disability
- older people (they are more likely to experience visual and hearing difficulties) – according to the last census, 15% of people in the Vale are aged 65 or above. We also know that our population is aging (an issue highlighted in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-16)
- people who have English as a second or other language – the Vale has small pockets of people who have no or limited English. Anecdotal evidence highlights that a significant number of people from the Chinese community are likely to face language barriers.

4.3 The information needs of these groups are addressed by the AIP as follows:

- Council services will meet any requests they receive for alternative formats and translations (where information is translated into alternative languages), where there is a genuine need. Staff are encouraged to discuss any requests with the individual service users to ensure the right outcomes are achieved.
- This is also the case regarding requests for interpreters (including signers) and lip speakers
- In addition, services dealing with vulnerable people and/or a higher number of disabled/older people will need to take a more proactive approach. They will need to **offer to provide** key public information in alternative formats **upon request**. They will do this by including a statement on relevant documents which offers to make the information available in alternative formats upon request.
- Services dealing with vulnerable people and/or a higher number of people from ethnic minorities will also need to take this more pro-active approach. They will do this by including a statement on relevant key documents in English which **offers to provide** the information in alternative languages, **upon request**. They will also include a Chinese translation of the statement alongside the English version.

- 4.4 The AIP also sets out how the Council will write all its information for service users in plain English, using a clear layout and a standard font style and size. These considerations will help to make Council information more accessible to the wider population.
- 4.5 Providing information in these alternative ways will help the Council to meet its duties to promote equality under the Race Relations Acts and the Disability Discrimination Acts.
- 4.6 In addition to meeting legal requirements, the Policy has also been shaped by:
- anecdotal evidence from Council services about the requests they receive for alternative formats, translations and interpreters
 - Department for Communities and Local Government guidance for local authorities about translating publications (2007)
 - good practice from leading national charities that support disabled people
 - research carried out by the Council about the language needs of local ethnic minority businesses
 - consultation with the public, Councillors and Council staff (carried out in September-October 2008)
- 4.7 The AIP will be accompanied by a staff handbook called 'is your message loud and clear?' This will act as a guidance document, providing all the practical detail officers will need to implement the Policy.
- 4.8 If the Policy is adopted, the Equalities Officer and the Head of Communications will run an awareness raising campaign across the Council. Between January and March 2009, they will finalise the staff handbook, attend team meetings to explain how the Policy affects services and include articles in Team Brief and the Councillor's weekly information sheet to explain the Policy. The AIP will then come into force from April 2009.
- 4.9 Financial implications - service areas will be responsible for covering any costs associated with meeting requests to provide their information in alternative languages or formats. As specific budgets do not exist for such expenses, services will need to use under spends held in their existing service budgets. Any additional printing costs will be absorbed by the centralised printing budget. We do not expect to receive a significant number of requests but we will monitor this over the course of 2009/10 and review the funding situation if necessary.
- 4.10 Human Resource implications – there are none relating to this Policy.
- 4.11 Legal implications – see 4.5 above.
- 4.12 Equality implications - the AIP has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which did not identify any negative equality and diversity issues.

Helen Bishop
Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support)

Background Papers:

- a) Accessible Information Policy (attached)
- b) Equality Impact Assessment (attached)

Vale of White Horse District Council

Accessible information policy

Version control

Version number	Date	Author	Notes
1	16/05/08	Katharine Doherty (KD)	Partial draft, discussed with Nikki Malin
2	23/05/08	KD	First draft completed
3	10/06/08	KD + Nikki Malin (NM)	Nikki's comments
4	11/06/08	KD + NM	Nikki's amendments accepted, other changes made. Also, new timetable. All agreed by Katharine and Nikki
5	14/07/08	KD + NM	Amended following JB's feedback
6	04/08/08	KD + NM	Amended following Helen Bishop's feedback
7	28/08/08	KD + NM	Amended following feedback from senior managers – consultation draft
8	08/10/08	KD + NM	Post consultation draft (updated with amendments)
9	03/11/08	KD + NM	Final draft
10	24/11/08	KD + NM	Finalised - for the Executive Committee meeting on 05/12/08

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Every resident in the Vale has a right to access our services and this includes being able to access information about our services and opportunities. Council employees and councillors also need to have access to Council information. In all cases, the information we provide needs to be clear and meet the needs of individuals.

2. Our commitment

- 2.1 At the Vale of White Horse District Council, our vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community. We are committed to the principle of equal opportunities and aim to deliver accessible services and employment opportunities which meet the needs of all our residents and employees. This commitment includes providing accessible information. Our Communications Strategy also commits us to clear and involving communications to ensure the optimum number of people are informed about Council issues.
- 2.2 In addition, the Council has a corporate priority to improve and modernise access to its services which includes access to service information.

3. Our approach

- 3.1 This policy aims to ensure that the Council provides its service users, staff and councillors with clear information (written, and oral) which meets their needs in terms of:
- **formats**
 - **languages**
 - **overall readability**

It also aims to achieve a level of consistency across the Council regarding the provision of accessible information.

- 3.2 As well as striving to meet service users' needs, the Council also has a duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to provide services which are accessible to people regardless of race or disability. This policy helps the Council to meet this duty, in terms of providing accessible service information.
- 3.3 The Council recognises the need for proportionality and taking a reasonable approach, bearing in mind the make up of the Vale community and the resources available to the Council. With regards to meeting the information needs of people from ethnic minorities, our approach is in line with that of the Government. Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government states that 'we should reject automatic translation in favour of a more selective approach, where translation is targeted to particular needs'¹.
- 3.4 This policy is accompanied by a staff and councillor hand-book called 'is your message loud and clear?' which sets out in detail the steps they will need to take to make sure the information they provide relating to the Council is accessible.

4. What Council functions does this policy cover?

- 4.1 This policy covers all Council functions and services. We will also make sure that our major contractors and the strategic partnerships we're involved in are aware of this policy.

5. Links between this policy and other Council policies/strategies

- 5.1 The Council's Corporate Identity Strategy (1994) does refer to some of the things that are covered in this policy. However, as thinking, legislation and advice regarding access have changed over the past 14 years, this policy supersedes the relevant sections in the Corporate Identity Strategy.
- 5.2 This policy relates to the following Council documents:

¹ 'Guidance for local authorities on translation of publications', Department for Communities and Local Government - 2007.

- Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008/09 – 2010/11
- Communications Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Equality in Employment Policy
- Customer Contact Strategy
- Payments Strategy

6. Definitions

- 6.1 Translation – written communication in a second language which has the same meaning as the written communication in a first language
- 6.2 Interpreter – somebody who receives a message in one language and delivers exactly the same message in another language through a verbal exchange

7. Use of plain English

- 7.1 Plain English benefits everybody, including people with learning disabilities, younger and older people and people with limited English.

When should we offer written information in plain English?

- 7.2 The Council will write all its information (printed and electronic) for service users, staff and councillors in plain English

How should we offer written information in plain English?

- 7.3 Plain English guidelines are included in the ‘is your message loud and clear?’ hand-book for staff and councillors.
- 7.4 The Communications Team will be able to help staff and councillors to produce documents in plain English. They will also monitor the written information that the Council provides for the public, to ensure that it meets the plain English guidelines.

8. Standard font size, style and layout

- 8.1 The Council will use Arial font (or a similar sans serif font) for all its printed information and any electronic documents that it is converting into PDFs. We will also use point 12 as a minimum font size. Our text will be left aligned (not justified) with minimal use of capital letters and italics. For all Council information, we will use a strong contrast between the colour of the text and the colour of the background.
- 8.2 In some exceptional circumstances, we may not be able to produce printed documents in point 12 (for example, producing a lengthy printed document in point 12 could compromise the Council’s aim to save paper). Although producing a Council document in a smaller font size is not ideal, when this is the case, we will pro-actively offer the document in large print upon request.
- 8.3 It is also good practice to use photographs, pictures or symbols wherever possible (and appropriate) to illustrate points and get messages across to the reader. Diagrams and graphs can also be useful tools but it is important not to make them too complex or detailed.

9. Offering Council information in alternative languages

Background statistics

9.1 The following statistics set the local context regarding the language needs of the Vale population:

- 6.7% of the Vale's population is from an ethnic minority (all ethnic groups except for White British). White Irish people are included as an ethnic minority and account for 1% of the Vale's population.²
- 2.4% of the Vale's population is from a non-white ethnic minority. This equates to around 2,800 people³. The largest non white ethnic group in the Vale is the Chinese population.
- According to the Worker Registration Scheme data, the Vale had 540 migrants registering to work in the District between May 2004 and March 2007. This was the lowest number when compared to the other Oxfordshire districts⁴.
- Being from an ethnic minority does not automatically mean that a person has a language need. However, they are more likely to experience language barriers when accessing services than the ethnic majority population.

Written information

9.2 The Council will meet any requests it receives to provide written information in an alternative language, where it perceives there to be a genuine need. For long documents, it may be more appropriate to translate summaries (depending on the need of the person requesting the translation).

9.3 Services may themselves recognise that they need to provide translated information if they are dealing with any members of the public who have no or only a limited understanding of English. For example, if a service receives a letter or email from a member of the public and it is clear that they have a limited understanding of English, officers will need to explore whether or

² According to the 2001 Census data

³ According to the 2001 Census data

⁴ 'Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy - A long term vision for the county: Briefing Paper 9', The Oxfordshire Partnership – August 2007
http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/oxfordshirepartnership/News/SCSbriefingpapers/9_Population_3Aug07.pdf

not to provide further information in a suitable alternative language. This is particularly important when the officer is dealing with an issue which has potential legal and/or financial implications for the service user.

- 9.4 If services receive any letters or emails from a member of the public which are written in a language other than English, it is their responsibility to get the information translated.
- 9.5 In addition, the Council will pro-actively **offer to provide** certain written information in other languages, upon request. This pro-active approach is set out below:

Pro-active approach:

What will the Council offer?	When will this provision be offered?	How will it be offered?
We will offer to provide certain information in alternative languages and include a translation of the statement in Chinese ⁵	<p>Services which have a significantly higher proportion of service users from an ethnic minority (when compared to the local population) should offer key public advisory leaflets, consultation surveys, standard letters and service information leaflets in alternative languages, which they will make available upon request. These services will include licensing, food safety and economic development.</p> <p>Services which deal with significant numbers of vulnerable people should offer key public advisory leaflets, consultation surveys, standard letters and service information leaflets in alternative languages, which they will make available upon request.</p>	<p>For these documents, services will add the two following statements (the English and Chinese versions):</p> <p>‘This document is available in other languages, upon request. Please contact the Council on the telephone number below’</p> <p>此文檔備有中文版本以供選擇。如需索取，請通過以下的電話聯繫地區議會。 如果您不會講英語，您可以請講英語的親屬或朋友為您代勞。</p>

⁵ largest non white ethnic minority in the Vale

<p>Services will not be expected to have documents already translated in case somebody needs them. They will provide translations upon request.</p> <p>This list of languages will be under constant review to take into account the changing demographics of the Vale district. Therefore, it may be subject to change and all staff and councillors will be informed of any such amendments.</p>	<p>These services will include the benefits service, the housing service and the community safety team.</p> <p>Services dealing with enforcement cases should offer standard letters and related information in alternative languages, which they will make available upon request. These services will include planning enforcement, council tax collection, benefit fraud and car parking.</p> <p>Any corporate initiatives which specifically target people from ethnic minorities should offer relevant information in alternative languages, which the Council will make available upon request.</p> <p>Other services may identify that they need to offer key public documents in alternative languages if their Equality Impact Assessments highlight relevant access barriers.</p> <p>The Council's website home page will say that Council information is available in alternative languages upon request (where there is a genuine need) and will include the Chinese statement. The website home page will also provide the Communications Team contact details as a point of contact for such enquiries.</p>	<p>Services will also add the contact details of the service/relevant officer responsible for the document.</p> <p>Staff will be able to copy and paste the statements from the 'is your message loud and clear?' staff and councillor hand-book.</p>
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Verbal information

- 9.6 The Council will meet any requests it receives from service users to provide an interpreter in order to communicate Council information, where it perceives there to be a genuine need. This could be provided over the phone or face-to-face, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the service user.
- 9.7 Services may themselves recognise that they need to provide interpreters if they are dealing with any service users who have no or only a limited understanding of English (for interviews, meetings, telephone discussions etc). This is particularly important when the officer is dealing with an issue which has potential legal and/or financial implications for the service user.
- 9.8 As part of this policy, the Council will develop a voluntary 'languages register'. This register will list staff who speak languages other than English and are willing to provide an internal resource to help enable communications between the Council and members of the public who don't speak any English. Staff on the register would only be called upon by services to help assist them with any initial contact between their service and a member of the public who is unable to speak English. Staff listed on the languages register would not be asked to translate documents or to act as an interpreter other than at the initial point of contact with the service user. Further details about the languages register are set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.
- 9.9 If somebody who doesn't speak English visits the Abingdon or Wantage Council offices, they will be assisted initially by the Local Services Point (LSP) staff. Once it becomes clear which service they require (this may involve using the 'languages register' or a telephone interpreter), they will be referred to the relevant service which is then responsible for arranging interpreters.

Meeting any requests for alternative languages (written translations or interpreters)

- 9.10 Requests for written translations or interpreters will be met as soon as possible by the relevant Council service. The Council has identified preferred providers for translation work, telephone interpreting and face-to-face interpreting to help make it as easy as possible for staff and councillors to access these services when necessary. The 'is your message loud and clear?'

staff and councillor hand-book lists details about the preferred providers. The service will keep the person requesting the translated information or interpreter informed of the arrangements that have been made to meet their need.

Responsibility for providing information in alternative languages (written translations or interpreters)

9.11 Services are responsible for meeting any requests they receive for information in alternative languages. They are also responsible for covering any associated costs from their own budgets. Services will not charge people requesting the translated information/interpreter for the service.

10. Offering Council information in alternative formats

Background statistics

10.1 The following statistics set the local context regarding the alternative format needs of the Vale population and Council staff:

- 13.1% of the Vale's population are disabled. This equates to more than 15,000 people.⁶
- Over 17,000 people in the Vale are aged 65 or over
- 5.2% of staff declare themselves to be disabled⁷

Written information

10.2 The Council will meet any requests it receives to provide written information in alternative formats, where it perceives there to be a genuine need. If somebody requests to have a lengthy document provided in an alternative format, it may be appropriate to offer to produce a summary of the document in the alternative format. It may also be appropriate to talk

⁶ According to the 2001 Census data

⁷ Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) data as at end of March 2008

through the document with the person, on a one-to-one basis. The suitability of these options will depend on the need of the person making the request

- 10.3 Services may themselves recognise that they need to provide information in alternative formats if they are dealing with any members of the public who have visual impairments or learning difficulties. This is particularly important when the officer is dealing with an issue which has potential legal and/or financial implications for the service user.
- 10.4 In addition, the Council will pro-actively **offer to provide** certain written information in alternative formats. This pro-active approach is set out below:

Pro-active approach:

What will the Council offer?	When will this provision be offered?	How will it be offered?
<p>The Council will offer to provide certain written information in alternative formats, upon request.</p> <p>Services will not be expected to produce information in alternative formats on the off chance that somebody may need them. They will provide information in alternative formats upon request.</p>	<p>Services which have a significantly higher proportion of service users who are older and/or disabled (when compared to the local population) should offer key public advisory leaflets, consultation surveys, standard letters and service information leaflets in alternative formats, which they will make available upon request. These services will include assisted travel, Disabled Facilities Grants and assisted waste collection.</p> <p>Services which deal with significant numbers of vulnerable people should offer key public advisory leaflets, consultation surveys, standard letters and service information leaflets in alternative formats, which they will make available upon request. These services will include the benefits service, the housing service and the community safety team.</p>	<p>For these documents, services will add the following text to them (in font size 14 or above):</p> <p>‘This document is available in alternative formats upon request e.g. large print, email’</p> <p>Services will also add the contact details of the service/relevant officer responsible for the document.</p> <p>Further guidance will be included in the ‘is your</p>

	<p>Services dealing with enforcement cases should offer standard letters and related information in alternative languages, which they will make available upon request. These services will include planning enforcement, council tax collection, benefit fraud and car parking.</p> <p>Other services may identify that they need to offer key public documents in alternative languages if their Equality Impact Assessments highlight relevant access barriers.</p> <p>Any corporate initiatives which specifically target disabled and/or older people should offer relevant information in alternative formats, which will be made available upon request.</p> <p>The Council's website home page will say that Council information is available in alternative formats upon request (where there is a genuine need), and will provide the communications contact details as a point of contact for enquiries.</p>	<p>message loud and clear?' staff and councillor hand-book.</p>
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Verbal information

- 10.5 The Council will meet any requests it receives from service users, staff or councillors to provide a signer or a lipspeaker in order to communicate Council information, where it perceives there to be a genuine need.
- 10.6 Services may themselves recognise that they need to provide signers or lipspeakers if they are dealing with any members of the public who have hearing impairments (for interviews, meetings etc). This is particularly important when the officer is dealing with an issue which has potential legal and/or financial implications for the service user.

Meeting any requests for alternative formats (written information or signers/lip speakers)

- 10.7 Requests for alternative formats of written information and signers/lip speakers will be met as soon as possible by the relevant Council service
- 10.8 For requests for written information in alternative formats, service teams themselves may be able to meet some requests for alternative formats (e.g. documents in large print, documents sent via email). However, for other formats, services may need to use an outside resource. The Council has identified preferred providers for Braille, audio cassettes/CDs and easy read to help make it as easy as possible for staff and councillors to access these services when necessary. The 'is your message loud and clear?' staff and councillor hand-book lists details about the preferred providers.
- 10.9 To meet any requests for a signer/lip speaker, service teams should use the preferred providers which are listed in the 'is your message loud and clear?' staff and councillor hand-book.
- 10.10 The service will keep the person requesting the alternative formats or the signer/lip speaker informed of the arrangements that have been made to meet their need.

Responsibility for providing information in alternative formats

- 10.11 Services are responsible for meeting any requests they receive for information in alternative formats. They are also responsible for covering any associated costs from their own budgets. The person requesting the alternative format(s) or the signer/lip speaker will not be charged for the service.

11. Monitoring requests for translations, alternative formats, interpreters, signers and lip speakers

- 11.1 If a member of staff has to arrange for any Council information to be provided in an alternative way, they will need to log this information using a designated spreadsheet on the intranet.
- 11.2 The Equalities Officer and Head of Communications will review this data regularly to keep an eye on the demand for such services.

Appendix 1

A staff 'languages register' – details and guidelines

What will this look like?

- The electronic register will list all those members of staff who speak languages other than English (including sign language).
- Joining the register is totally voluntary and any member of staff wishing to be included would need to agree this with their line manager beforehand.

What is the purpose of the register?

- To provide an internal resource to help enable communications between the Council and service users who don't speak English.
- The register will help to provide a more efficient service, both for the service user and the Council (would reduce potential costs associated with having to source an external interpreting service)

How will the register be used?

- It will be a tool for staff to use, to help assist them with any initial contact between their service and the member of the public who cannot speak English. Via the informal staff interpreting, staff should be able to establish the nature of the person's query and collect contact details. Any further communication with the member of the public would need to involve an official interpreter (either face-to-face or telephone) and it will be the responsibility of the relevant team to arrange and pay for this.
- Staff on the register will not be called upon to translate documents or to act as an interpreter other than at the initial point of contact with the service user who cannot speak English.

- The register will also list members of staff who have some sign language skills so that if a member of the public who uses sign language contacted the Council, the relevant member of staff could help assist with any initial contact

Will there be a great demand for staff to help in this way?

- The number of people from ethnic minorities in the Vale is very small (6.7%) and the percentage of these who can't speak English is even smaller.
- Anecdotal evidence from Council officers suggests that it is rare for somebody to contact the Council who is unable to speak English.
- It would be very rare for a member of staff to be called upon to help in this way.
- Any service could be the beneficiary of this register.

How will the register be maintained?

- The Equalities Officer will update the register on an annual basis (removing those members of staff who had left the Council and contacting new starters to ask them if they would like to join the register)

JOINING THE REGISTER

How good do my language skills need to be if I want to be added to the register?

- You would need to be able to hold a conversation in the second language

What information would I need to provide if I joined?

- Your name, your job title, your extension number and the languages you can speak in addition to English.
- The register will be for internal use only and information within it will not be circulated outside of the Council.

USING THE REGISTER

Where could I find the register?

- It would be available to all staff via the intranet

If somebody visits the Council offices and doesn't speak English, how can we identify which language they are speaking?

- The LSP has a language card so somebody could point to their language (this will also be available on the intranet)

What if nobody on the register speaks the language of the person who's contacted the Council?

- The service team dealing with the person would need to use an over-the-phone interpreting service

Contact officer regarding the 'languages register':

Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer)

E-mail – katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tel – extension 407

Contact officers for this policy:

Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer)

E-mail: katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tel: extension 407

Nikki Malin (Head of Communications)

E-mail: nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tel: extension 376

This document is available in other languages, upon request. Please contact the Council on the telephone number below


此文檔備有中文版本以供選擇。如需索取，請通過以下的電話聯繫地區議會。
如果您不會講英語，您可以請講英語的親屬或朋友為您代勞。

This document is available in alternative formats upon request e.g. large print, email.

Please contact the Communications Team at the Vale of White Horse District Council:

 (phone) = 01235 520202

 (email) communications@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

 (address) = Communications Team
Vale of White Horse District Council
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

Assessing how a proposed new policy/strategy/function will ensure equality of access and promote diversity

Why might I need to do this short assessment?

Any new policy, strategy or function we develop needs to promote equality and diversity to ensure that the services we provide are accessible to all our residents and/or employees. In particular, it is essential that we think about the impact it may have on the following six groups (referred to as the 'equality groups'):

- Disabled people
- Women
- People from ethnic minority communities
- Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people
- Older and young people
- People from different religions/beliefs

We need to specifically consider how a new policy/strategy/function will meet their needs because they are more likely to face barriers when trying to access services and employment opportunities.

This short assessment provides officers with a framework to help them work through these considerations, ensuring that we are meeting our legal duties with regards to equality and diversity.

The assessment must be completed when a proposed policy, strategy or function is being developed/drafted (prior to any formal approval process) – the earlier the assessment is carried out, the easier it is to make any necessary amendments to the policy/strategy/function.

We have a statutory duty to carry out these assessments and they contribute towards our corporate priority to 'improve and modernise access to services'.

How will I know if I need to do this assessment?

Before starting this assessment, please contact Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer) on ex. 407 to check whether it is necessary for you to complete this paperwork. If the proposed policy/strategy relates to a service which is provided to the Vale public (based on an allocation decision or as a universal service for all), it is highly likely you will need to carry out the assessment below. This is the same if the new function you're proposing will be provided to the Vale public.

Your assessment paperwork

Assessment progress log

- Assessment completed by Katharine Doherty [10/10/08]
- Assessment emailed to Equalities Officer – n/a
- Feedback received from Equalities Officer – n/a
- Committee report refers to the completion of the assessment
- Council/Executive Committee approves Policy

Name of proposed policy/strategy/function:

Accessible information policy

Existing service it relates to:

It is a corporate policy so covers all Council services.

What are the aims of the proposed policy/strategy/function?

This policy aims to ensure that service users, staff and councillors are provided with clear information about the Council (written, and oral) which meets their needs in terms of:

- formats
- languages
- over-all readability

It also aims to achieve a level of consistency across the Council regarding the provision of accessible information.

Who will benefit and how will they benefit?

If Council service information is easier to understand, all service users, staff and councillors will benefit. Having information in plain English, using a clear text font and size and a straight forward lay-out will benefit everyone in the District.

In addition, this policy focuses on providing information in alternative languages. This will benefit people who have a limited understanding of spoken or written English (some people from ethnic minorities may not have English as their first language, for example).

This policy also focuses on alternative formats which will better meet the needs of some older and/or disabled people (e.g. people with visual impairments)

Do these aims promote equality and diversity/inclusive service provision?

Yes – if this policy is adopted by the Council, it means that everybody will be able to access the Council information they need. We will also take a more pro-active approach in some service areas to promote the availability of information in alternative languages and formats. It does aim to be proportionate, taking into account the local population and recent Government guidance.

1. In preparation for completing this assessment, you will need to gather evidence to inform and support your answers. Please list below what has helped shape your policy:

- The policy will support the current communications strategy.
- Census data provides information about local demographics (13.1% of the local population are disabled, 2.4% of people in the Vale are from a non white ethnic minority). The Council also has anecdotal evidence about the alternative language needs of the local community (e.g. via the Embrace research in 2006, feedback from services). Finally, the Equalities Officer has carried out research to look at how people from the Accession 8 countries have settled in the district. All this background data gives us an idea of the alternative language needs in the district.
- Whilst preparing the draft policy, the Equalities Officer looked at how other Councils were addressing the subject of providing accessible information. In particular, she looked at:
 - Cumbria County Council's Accessible Information Policy and Guidance
 - Norfolk County Council's guidelines on making information accessible
 - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's policy on translation, language and communication

The Vale’s draft policy is in line with these Councils’ approaches, indicating that it is not going to have a negative impact on any of the six equality groups.

- Positive feedback from Organisational Change Manager, Head of Communications and all Deputy Directors about the policy and the need for a clear, proportionate and consistent approach.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government has produced a guidance note about providing information in alternative languages and the Vale’s draft policy is in line with this.

2. Looking at the evidence you’ve considered, is your proposed policy/strategy/function likely to have a significant and negative impact on any of the target groups?

NO

a) Please explain:

The draft accessible information policy is not likely to have a significant, negative impact on anybody in the Vale because of their race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion or belief. In fact, it aims to help improve information for everybody, with particular focus on the information needs of people from ethnic minorities and older/disabled people.

b) Please list the evidence which supports your answer:

Please see above (Section 1) for my answers.

3. In addition, please consider how the new policy/strategy/function will actively ensure equality of access for people from the six equality groups regarding the following key factors:

<p>Access to information and advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy will improve access to all service information the Council provides to the public. Written and verbal. 	<p>Accessibility of meetings between members of the public and officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided for and at meetings will be more accessible • The policy covers the need for the Council to provide interpreters/signers/lip speakers if needed, to convey Council information verbally
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<p style="text-align: center;">Access to public events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided for and at public events will be more accessible • The policy covers the need for the Council to provide interpreters/signers/lip speakers if needed, to convey Council information verbally 	<p style="text-align: center;">Access to consultation opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All consultation information for the public will be in plain English, using a clear font and text size. • In addition, the policy states that services dealing with vulnerable people and/or a higher proportion of disabled/older people will proactively offer their consultation information (e.g. surveys) in alternative formats. Translations will then be made available upon request. • Also, the policy states that services which deal with vulnerable people and/or a higher proportion of people from ethnic minorities will proactively offer their consultation information (e.g. surveys) in alternative languages. Translations will then be made available upon request.
<p style="text-align: center;">The images/language we use</p> <p>n/a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monitoring service use with regards to ethnicity, disability and gender</p> <p>We will be monitoring the take-up of information in alternative languages/formats to ensure we continue to meet the information needs of our service users, staff and councillors.</p> <p>Communications team will monitor service information for the public to check it follows the policy.</p>
<p>Other factors:</p>	

4. Have you already carried out consultation to inform your proposed policy/strategy/function?

YES

a) **As part of your consultation, did you seek the views of people from the six equality groups?**

Yes – we carried out a four week public consultation on the draft policy. We had an online survey, posters in the Council's LSPs, informed representative groups and organisations via the Council's e-bulletin, informed the Vale Disability Access Group, informed staff and councillors.

b) **If 'yes', please briefly outline any issues they flagged up with regards to equality of access:**

The over-all feedback was that the Council's draft policy was putting forward the right approach to providing accessible service information.

Once completed, you will need to email this assessment to the Equalities Officer (Katharine Doherty), along with a copy of the draft policy/strategy (if appropriate). She will review the assessment and feed back to you, before your policy goes through the approval process.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
TO THE EXECUTIVE
5 DECEMBER 2008

Corporate Governance Report: Second Quarter 2008/09 (to 30 September 2008)

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

1.1 The Corporate Governance Report looks at the key areas of:

- Corporate Priorities
- National Indicators
- Progress against Service Prioritisation Plans
- Key staffing data (sickness levels and turnover)
- Progress with Business Process Improvement Reviews
- A Financial commentary

At its meeting on 20th October 2008 the Senior Management Team (SMT) considered a second quarter corporate governance exception report. SMT agreed the exceptions, comments and actions to be included in this report where performance / actions were not on target. The full versions of the individual reports are available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the 'about your Council / performance' section of the website.

1.2 The contact officer for this report is Robert Woodside, Principal Performance Management Officer, telephone (01235 520202 ext 499). **Email address:**
robert.woodside@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 *that the Senior Management Team's Corporate Governance exception report be considered and that any further action be taken which needs to be taken to improve performance.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports all of its objectives and does not conflict with any Council Strategies. It supports all of the strands of the Vale Community Strategy.

4.0 Exception Reports

4.1 Corporate Priorities Report.

SMT decided that 2 actions (1.1 and 1.2) and 3 local performance indicators (H1, H2, and H17) should be included in this report. Full details are included in Appendix A.

4.2 National Indicator Report.

SMT agreed that there are no National Indicators where progress should be reported to the Executive as exceptions. However, as these are relatively new, all of the indicators which are relevant for this Council and results are available quarterly or half yearly have been

included in Appendix B. As the indicators were only introduced from 1st April 2008 it is not yet possible to compare performance with that of other authorities.

4.3 **Service Prioritisation Plan (SPP) Progress Report**

SMT tracks progress against all of the 26 SPPs included in the 2008/9 budget. Progress against 1 SPP has been included in Appendix C. This is SPP 8: Cease overpayment of Street Cleaning Contract until new contract let mid 2010/11.

4.4 **Summary of Sickness and Turnover Report**

Sickness is slightly higher this quarter compared to the same quarter last year. However it is lower than in quarter 1. The total number of days lost during the quarter was 454. The cumulative number of days lost per FTE for the first half year is 3.7 days. The detailed results are shown in Appendix D.

The new Absence Policy uses Bradford Factor levels to prompt actions including return to work interviews. This is backed up by regular reviews of absences by Deputy Directors and their HR business partners. This has led to raised awareness amongst managers and staff, more accurate reporting and early intervention. It has meant patterns of absence can be identified and allowed sickness to be managed more proactively, with an increasing emphasis on long-term sickness.

Turnover is lower this quarter compared to both the previous quarter and also quarter two last year. The cumulative turnover rate for the first half year was 4.45% which equates to 13 leavers. The detailed results are shown in Appendix D.

4.5 **Progress with Business Process Improvement (BPI) Reviews**

A review of BPI projects in progress concluded that, overall, there was a low probability that the process would yield adequate savings to achieve the Authority's National Indicator 179 savings (see Appendix B), or to close the budget shortfall. This was reported to the Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting on 20th October in the context of the budget setting process. The Chief Executive asked that Deputy Directors bring forward Cost Saving Ideas (CSI) in their areas of 5% and 10%, together with a statement of impact. Deputy Directors were requested to forward these CSIs for collation and discussion at the next Strategic Director's meeting ahead of presentation to the Strategic Management Group. Once decisions were taken about which CSI to incorporate in the 2009/10 budget, the NI 179 calculation will be revisited.

Some of the individual BPI projects still have merit, and Deputy Directors were not excluded from including these in the 5% and 10% Cost Saving Ideas. One such project is the review of administration staff which is currently being restructured as part of a CSI to be presented jointly by Helen Bishop and Mike Mackay. The other two sample projects looked at as part of the BPI review in Housing and the Local Service Points are on hold.

Cash-releasing Value for Money gains (National Indicator 179): A figure of £458k was submitted to Central Government as the Vale's anticipated NI 179 outturn for the current financial year, based upon an assessment of achievable savings against projects currently in progress. This compares to a target figure of £560k being that required in year one of the three year assessment period to achieve the NI 179 target agreed for the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2008-11. Savings above target will need to be made in years two and three to correct this initial under achievement.

The Chief Executive reported upon the success of a 'lean' process review program at SODC ('Fit for the Future'). He suggested that the Vale should examine that exercise in

order to learn from it, and that this may lead to a revitalisation of the Vale's BPI programme in the coming year.

4.6 Financial Commentary: 1 April 2008 to 30 September 2008

The second quarter review of budgets and expenditure has taken place. The impact of the economic downturn continues to be a problem particularly to the income generating activities.

Commercial Services

The overspend on expenditure budgets £19,000 is mainly as a consequence of the increase in electricity costs and an increase in the Thames Water sewerage charges for emptying septic tanks. Overall income is still projected to come in over budget by (£22,594). The main variation is in respect of contract minor works income and expectations of growth have been put forward to be reflected in the 2009/10 base budget.

Contracts and Procurement

The overspend on expenditure budgets is partly as a consequence of an expectation of a saving on the street cleansing service which has not proved to be realisable. The full impact of this increased cost has been offset by staff vacancy savings.

The reduction in income of £18,000 is partly due to the catering contract for the Halls not being implemented as budgeted until 1st December 2008. Also parks income is reduced due to the closure of the Stanford Nursery.

Democratic Services

The under spend on expenditure budgets (£22,000) is as a consequence of the review of Members' Allowances scheme being agreed after the budget was set.

Environmental Health

The overspend on the budgets £59,000 is mostly due to employee costs as a result of being fully staffed.

Finance

The budget pressures that have arisen in the finance budgets are: Assisted transport – an additional £290,000; Capita income reduction £28,000; Investec budget shortfall £9,000; Housing benefit reduction in payments and subsidy resulting in a net increase of £18,000; and, Council tax benefit reduction in payments and subsidy resulting in a net increase of £15,000. After allowing for compensating movements against benefits income and expenditure the net variation is £360,000.

Housing and Community Services

The Homelessness team are continuing to report an increase in the Bed and Breakfast costs as a consequence of the team being unable to transfer clients from temporary accommodation to permanent accommodation. It is now reporting a total pressure on budgets of an additional £110,000.

Legal Services

The over spend on the salaries budgets of £25,000 are mainly as a consequence of agency staff being used to cover staff vacancies. The large under-recovery of income £142,000 is the reduction in land charges income. This is due to a reduction in the demand for full searches and the consequence of the general economic slowdown.

Organisational Development and Support

There is a predicted under spend of (£88,000) mainly on employee costs for administration because of vacant posts which are currently under review. Additionally, there is a projected under spend in Organisational Change due to the reduced costs of some equipment.

Planning and Community Strategy

The main area of over spend relates to high maintenance requirements on the car parks reflected in the higher than forecasted income to the Direct Services Organisation (DSO) in Commercial Services. There are also over spends on employee costs as a result of being fully staffed but these have been offset by a reduction in the use of consultants.

The large under-recovery of income £243,000 is due to the reduction in income from planning application fees £144,000 and pay and display parking fees £99,000. The reduction in parking income is being linked nationally to the roll out of concessionary fares in addition to the economic downturn.

Strategy

The under spend forecast in the strategy budgets is mainly as a consequence of the under spend on director's salaries.

Investment and Property Income

An income short fall of £152,000 is currently forecast due to voids and because anticipated rent reviews have not materialised – both a consequence of the general economic slowdown.

The table included in Appendix E shows the impact on the Council's budgets of the issues raised by the Senior Management Team as at the end of the second quarter of 2008/09. The total impact on the Council's bottom line is a forecast net over spend of £910,000 which has been built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan in the budget setting process.

Councillors may wish to consider instructing officers to implement special internal budgetary measures as implemented in January 2008.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Background Papers:

All of the background reports detailed in section 1.1 of the report can be viewed on the Council's website.

Appendix A - Corporate Priorities Report

1. Facilitating the provision of affordable housing

	Action for Improvement	Milestones	Timescale	Officer	Comments / Progress
1.1	Provide 75 units of affordable rented housing	This is an ongoing programme throughout the year to deliver affordable rented housing primarily as part of new build housing developments throughout the district in accordance with the Council's Local Plan and Local Development Framework (LDF) policies on affordable housing	31.3.2009 (measured quarterly)	Paul Staines	Below Target. 33 units provided in the half year. The economic slowdown is having an impact upon affordable housing completions and there have been no completions in the second quarter. Officers now estimate that only 34 affordable rented properties will be completed this year
1.2	Provide 25 units of Shared ownership and other intermediate housing	This is an ongoing programme throughout the year to deliver affordable shared ownership and other low cost home ownership housing primarily as part of new build housing developments throughout the district in accordance with the Council's Local Plan and LDF policies on affordable housing	31.3.2009 (measured quarterly)	Paul Staines	Below target. 8 units provided in half year The economic slowdown is having an impact upon affordable housing completions and there have been no completions in the second quarter. Officers now estimate that only 18 affordable rented properties will be completed this year

Local Performance Indicators 2008-9

Indicator	Target 2008/09	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
LPI H1 Number of additional units of affordable housing provided through the Local Area Agreement (LAA)	12	0	0			19 units expected by the year end.
LPI H2 Number of units of affordable housing completed / provided	100	33	0			Significantly below target as a result of the slowdown in house building. Officers predict circa 55 new units will be provided this year and sites currently under construction will deliver 226 units over the next 3 years.

Rising to the Challenge of Climate Change Local Performance Indicators 2008-9

	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
LPI 17 Level of insulation activity via insulation schemes supported by the Council. Expressed as the number of properties insulated.	250	58	50			Demand likely to increase during the winter months and expect target to be achieved

Appendix B - National Indicators Report – Second Quarter Corporate Governance Report 2008/9 (by Corporate Priority)

Indicators shaded in grey are included in the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008-11

Explanatory notes / key have been included at the bottom of the table.

Facilitating the provision of affordable housing

NI	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
154	T	Net additional homes provided. This indicator measures the net increase in dwelling stock over one year and is reported as the actual number.	LAA 3043		157			LAA indicator. Annual reporting across the county so there is no county wide picture of achievement available. However the Vale's performance is below projected completions at the half year stage
155	T	Number of affordable homes delivered. This includes the increase due to new builds and acquisitions.	LAA 735	33	0			LAA indicator. There were no completions for affordable housing in the second quarter. Some of the sites currently under construction are not due to complete until the 3 rd and 4 th quarters. Other sites under construction will take longer. The Vale's position mirrors the position across the county where only 90 properties have been developed in the half year, below target
156	T	Number of households living in temporary accommodation (provided under the homelessness legislation)	LAA 698	89	81			LAA indicator. Data collected quarterly – performance is judged on 4 th Quarter performance. The Vale are above target for this indicator, a position mirrored across the county

NI	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
157	T	Processing of planning applications "major" applications	VWHDC 65%	37.50%	47.06%			Only 13 "major" applications were decided in these 2 quarters, which makes the performance figures particularly sensitive. 9 applications were decided outside the 13 week target, and these include 4 larger-scale residential developments requiring complex negotiation and legal agreements. Other reasons for the unavoidable delays are: the County Council completing a legal agreement, the objections of the Environment Agency being addressed, Committee deferring a decision, and the need to commission an independent retail impact assessment.
		"minor" applications	VWHDC 70%	75.61%	74.06%			Above target
		"other" applications	VWHDC 85%	86.13%	87.81%			Slightly above target
159	T	Supply of ready to develop housing sites. The degree to which authorities are maintaining a 5 year supply of deliverable sites (%)	-	NYR	107.2%			Local Planning Authority - annual monitoring report. Above target.
170	I	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years (%)	-	NYR	1.50%			Data is provided by English Partnerships.

	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
180	T	Changes in Housing Benefit (HB)/ Council Tax Benefit (CTB) entitlements within the year. Number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' HB/CTB entitlement during the year.	-	15.71 (June only)	12.79			The Q2 figure is provisional year to date. Performance continues to improve. Official results for first quarter will not be available from the Department for Work and Pensions until December 2008.
181	T	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events. Reported as the average number of days	-	19.31 (June only)	16.27			The Q2 figure is provisional year to date. Performance continues to improve. Official results for first quarter will not be available from the Department for Work and Pensions until December 2008.

Creating a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment

NI	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
195	T	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting). This is measured as a %, with a value for all categories.	LAA Litter: 5% Detritus: 9%		Litter 0% Detritus 13% Fly post 0%			LAA indicator. The Results included in the Q2 column are the results from the first of 3 sample periods during 2008/9. The significant difference between litter and detritus is due to two main factors: under BVPI 199 this would have been a combined score (ie6.5%) and our primary focus has been on successfully driving down litter, this being the quickest way of improving BVPI 199, our focus is now on detritus. Second, inspectors are following ENCAMS guidance but there is disagreement nationally with ENCAMS over their interpretation of detritus which is being tackled at OWP. It is unlikely we will hit the County target this year but will do so by 2011.
15	I	Serious violent crime rate. Reported as the number per 1000 population.	-	NYA	NYA			Awaiting results from Thames Valley Police
16	I	Serious acquisitive crime rate. Reported as the number per 1000 population.	-	3.75	3.22			This represents 346 actual crimes at the end of the first half year
20	I	Assault with less serious injury rate. Reported as the number per 1000 population.	LAA 5.23% (-5%)	2.01	5.74			LAA indicator. This represents 285 actual crimes at the end of the first half year.

Improving and modernising access to our services

NI	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
179	T	Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the financial year. Reported as £' 000	LAA 3.1%	NYR	£458			LAA indicator. A detailed commentary is provided in section 4.5 of the report on progress with Business Process Improvement Reviews

Rising to the challenge of climate change

NI	T / I	Description	Target 2008/9	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
188	I	Adapting to climate change. The Council will assess how well it delivers against the 4 levels of performance detailed in the guidance.	LAA Level 1	0	0			LAA indicator. There are 4 levels for this indicator. 0 – 4. Currently undertaking Local Climate Impacts Profile. On target to achieve level 1 by the end of the 3 rd quarter.
191	T	Residual household waste per head. This is reported as Kg per household.	LAA 730 kg	135 kg	133kg			LAA indicator. Vale weights continue to be low, reducing and well ahead of County targets
192	T	Percentage of Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	LAA 40% VWHDC 34%	37.59%	37.64%			LAA indicator. Vale continues to be limited by its existing contract from collecting the full range of recyclables. Nevertheless % continues to grow due to garden waste at the same time as NI191 reduces.

Each indicator has been identified as either as Target (T) where there is a reasonable degree of control over the result or as an indicator (I) where there is a limited degree of influence over the result.

NYA – Not yet available

Appendix C – Service Prioritisation Plans (SPP)

No.	Service prioritisation options	Lead officer	2008/09 £'000 (savings) / costs	2009/10 £'000 (savings) / costs	2010/11 £'000 (savings) / costs	2011/12 £'000 (savings) / costs	
8	Cease overpayment of Street Cleaning Contract until new contract let mid 2010/11.	MM	(27.0)	(27.0)	(13.5)	0.0	Discussions with Portfolio Holder have concluded that this should not proceed, but that equivalent savings should be found from within the waste budgets

Appendix D – Sickness and Turnover Reports

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Sickness	Q1		Q2		Annual Totals	
Service Area	No. average days sickness mth.	Av .days lost per FTE/ mth	No. average days sickness/ mth	Av. days lost per FTE/mth	Total no. sick days 2008-09	Cumulative no of working days lost per FTE
Commercial Services	16.33	0.54	17.33	0.54	101	3.24
Contract & Procurement	73.83	1.96	47.33	1.29	363.5	9.65
Democratic Services	0.50	0.06	1.83	0.24	7	0.88
Environmental Health	8.50	0.36	9.50	0.39	54	2.26
Finance	12.83	0.82	9.83	0.61	68	4.3
Housing & Community Safety	4.67	0.17	2.5	0.09	21.5	0.77
Legal Services	0.67	0.12	0	0	2	0.34
Organisational Development and Support	17.50	0.32	50	0.95	202.5	3.79
Planning and Community Strategy	30.17	0.65	13.17	0.28	130	2.77
Strategic Director's Offices	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0
Totals	165.00	0.65	151.49	0.59	949.5	3.7
Comparison figure for 2007-08	172.17	0.68	132.34	0.52	2119	8.25

Turnover	Q1	Q2
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	Av. No. employees left/mth	Av. Turnover mth (%)	Av. No. employees left/mth	Av. Turn-over / mth	Total No Leavers	Cumulative Turnover
Commercial Services	0.33	1.03	0		1	3.03%
Contract & Procurement	0.67	1.37	0.67		4	8.16%
Democratic Services	0.00	0.00	0.33		1	12.50%
Environmental Health	0.00	0.00	0		0	0.00%
Finance	0.33	1.94	0		1	5.88%
Housing & Community Safety	0.00	0.00	0		0	0.00%
Legal Services	0.00	0.00	0		0	0.00%
Organisational Development and Support	0.33	0.52	0.33		2	3.17%
Planning and Community Strategy	0.67	1.29	0.33		3	5.56%
Strategic Director's Offices	0.33	4.71	0		1	16.67%
Totals	2.66	0.92%	1.66	0.57%	13	4.45%
Comparison figure for 2007-08	3.66	1.27%	2	0.69%		

Appendix E – Financial Commentary 1 April 2008 to September 2008**Budget monitoring 1st April - 30th September 2008**

		Original Budget £	Working Budget £	Working Budget profiled £	Actual £	Year End Projection £	Variance from Working budget £
Commercial Services	Exp	3,792,960	2,892,290	1,571,591	1,648,545	2,911,522	19,232
	Income	(2,518,380)	(1,826,480)	(982,328)	(1,139,299)	(1,849,074)	(22,594)
	Net	1,274,580	1,065,810	589,263	509,246	1,062,448	(3,362)
Contracts & Procurement	Exp	8,696,630	6,979,850	3,254,370	2,814,115	6,990,196	10,346
	Income	(2,321,580)	(1,848,340)	(833,856)	(691,871)	(1,830,002)	18,338
	Net	6,375,050	5,131,510	2,420,514	2,122,244	5,160,194	28,684
Democratic Services	Exp	1,216,110	839,860	403,459	378,330	817,941	(21,919)
	Income	(2,230)	(2,230)	(1,110)	10,741	(5,485)	(3,255)
	Net	1,213,880	837,630	402,349	389,071	812,456	(25,174)
Environmental Health	Exp	1,790,360	1,270,290	622,536	621,027	1,329,594	59,304
	Income	(525,820)	(306,590)	(111,705)	(133,363)	(302,036)	4,554
	Net	1,264,540	963,700	510,831	487,664	1,027,558	63,858
Finance	Exp	27,212,838	26,130,450	15,278,986	14,215,259	25,783,872	(346,578)
	Income	(25,036,980)	(24,010,150)	(11,930,716)	(11,468,034)	(23,303,885)	706,265
	Net	2,175,858	2,120,300	3,348,270	2,747,225	2,479,987	359,687
Housing & Community	Exp	3,164,640	1,797,540	923,958	879,231	1,906,113	108,573
	Income	(1,187,280)	(770,440)	(296,968)	(228,343)	(769,086)	1,354
	Net	1,977,360	1,027,100	626,990	650,888	1,137,027	109,927
Legal Services	Exp	675,130	458,460	237,541	234,645	483,482	25,022
	Income	(795,010)	(360,380)	(180,192)	(100,658)	(217,895)	142,485
	Net	(119,880)	98,080	57,349	133,987	265,587	167,507
Organisational Devt & Support	Exp	3,785,730	2,954,760	1,485,781	1,265,840	2,866,660	(88,100)
	Income	(3,354,910)	(47,670)	(23,838)	(10,965)	(29,205)	18,465
	Net	430,820	2,907,090	1,461,943	1,254,875	2,837,455	(69,635)

		Original Budget	Working Budget	Working Budget profiled	Actual	Year End Projection	Variance from Working budget
Planning & Community Strategy	Exp	4,228,300	2,984,920	1,585,373	1,561,689	3,000,810	15,890
	Income	(2,127,920)	(2,001,650)	(1,028,070)	(812,791)	(1,758,375)	243,275
	Net	2,100,380	983,270	557,303	748,898	1,242,435	259,165
Strategy CE	Exp	£ 24,850	£ 19,520	£ 10,354	£ 7,289	£ 17,305	£ (2,215)
	Income	0	0	0	(587)	0	0
	Net	24,850	19,520	10,354	6,702	17,305	(2,215)
Strategy SB	Exp	835,400	716,020	378,476	226,780	608,381	(107,639)
	Income	(10,000)	(10,000)	(5,004)	(31,061)	(30,593)	(20,593)
	Net	825,400	706,020	373,472	195,719	577,788	(128,232)
Strategy TS	Exp	22,740	11,790	5,910	2,245	9,950	(1,840)
	Income	(15,640)	0	0	0	0	0
	Net	7,100	11,790	5,910	2,245	9,950	(1,840)
Sub total services	Exp	55,445,688	47,055,750	25,758,335	23,854,995	46,725,826	(329,924)
	Income	(37,895,750)	(31,183,930)	(15,393,787)	(14,606,231)	(30,095,636)	1,088,294
	Net	17,549,938	15,871,820	10,364,548	9,248,764	16,630,190	758,370
Contingency	Exp	376,992	263,570	263,570	0	263,570	0
Investment and Property Income	Exp	0	0	0	143,894	0	0
	Income	(3,711,900)	(3,711,900)	(1,320,040)	(1,272,461)	(3,559,900)	152,000
	Net	(3,711,900)	(3,711,900)	(1,320,040)	(1,128,567)	(3,559,900)	152,000
Total services less contingency	Exp	55,822,680	47,319,320	26,021,905	23,998,889	46,989,396	(329,924)
	Income	(41,607,650)	(34,895,830)	(16,713,827)	(15,878,692)	(33,655,536)	1,240,294
	Net	14,215,030	12,423,490	9,308,078	8,120,197	13,333,860	910,370