

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council New Report Format - Help for the Reader

Background

A new style of report is being introduced to provide clearer information to support decision making. It also identifies how report recommendations link to a range of existing policy priorities and service monitoring arrangements.

The new format is being introduced over the next 2 months and will be formally reviewed in November to consider the need for any amendments/improvements.

For the meetings in September and October, there will be a mix of the old and new format of reports and readers are requested to note that during this transition period there may be some differences in the report layout. All reports, however, contain the appropriate levels of detail and information to consider the issues properly and reach decisions.

What does the new report look like?

The new style of report has a very different layout to the older style reports and now has 3 sections; which are as follows:

- Section 1 – provides a summary of the purpose of the report, an outline of the decisions required, details of the author and a list of documents that support the report
- Section 2 – provides an overview of the impacts the proposals are expected to have, the risks associated with the proposals and an indication of which of the council priorities the proposals support. These are set out in a series of tables.
- Section 3 – Provides the details of the proposals and/or issues and forms the main part of the report.

Which committees are using the new reports?

In short, all of them. This is to ensure that there is a consistent corporate approach to report writing that meets the needs of the decision-makers and the legal requirements for report writing. The only exception is development control committee reports, because the legal information required within the reports does not suit the new format. Work is being undertaken with development control to see how their needs could be met within the new format.

The User Guide:

To assist readers in understanding the new report layout, the following table sets out a more detailed breakdown of the type of information provided in each section:

Section 1 – Front Sheet	<p>The front page of the report provides the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The title of the report• The status of the report – shows if the report is confidential or open to all• The areas (Wards) in the Borough affected by the proposals• Whether or not the decision is a key decision¹.• The name of the report writer and their senior manager• A list of the papers containing additional detailed information to support the report• A list of the background papers used to help the author write the report• A summary of what the report is about and why it is needed• Details of the recommended decisions needed
Section 2 – The Priorities, Impacts and Risks Page	<p>There are a series of tables in this section of the report which present the following information:</p> <p>The priorities: This section of the report is used to identify which of the priorities within the Council's 3 Year Plan² and/or the Community Strategy³ the proposals help to achieve.</p> <p>The impacts: This section of the report identifies the level of impact, both positive and negative, the proposals will have on the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial implications – cost of the proposals• Personnel implications – impact on council staff and training• Legal implications – is it legal?• Equality and Diversity issues – legal duty to consider impacts• Crime and Disorder⁴• Health impacts of the proposals• Environmental impacts of the proposals• Economic impacts of the proposals• Communication and Consultation – e.g. the views of users, general public, residents or an outline of the consultation plans• Partners – details of how we will work with other organisations to deliver the proposals

	<p>The table of impacts in the report shows the reader the paragraph numbers that they can refer to in order to see the detailed information on this particular issue.</p> <p>The Risks: This section of the report highlights the quantity of risks associated with the report and whether or not they have been included on the corporate risk register. Details of significant risks are outlined within the main body of the report.</p>
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<p>Section 3 – Main Considerations Page</p>	<p>This section provides the details of the proposals/issues and forms the main part of the report.</p> <p>It provides more details about the associated impacts and risks of the work being proposed. The level of information will vary depending on the subject of the report.</p> <p>There may be electronic links throughout the report to additional information or reports, these links may not work via the council’s website. Should this be the case, please contact the author of the report and ask them to email you a copy of the information you require or to post you a hard copy.</p>
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Additional help with the new format:

Help with using the new format is also available from the Council’s Policy and Partnerships Team on 01256 844844 or direct from the report author/contact listed in the report.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

¹ KEY DECISION:

A decision is classed as a ‘key decision’ if it meets one or more of the following statements:

- It is worth more than £50,000 or 25% of the annual revenue budget of the service or function of the capital allocation to the scheme concerned, whichever is the greater
- It affects individuals or organisations in more than one ward

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- It affects individuals or organisations outside the borough
 - It will have a long-term (5 years +) or permanent effect on the council or borough

² COUNCIL PLAN:

The Council Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the next 3 years; what it is aiming to achieve, how it plans to achieve it and what it will cost the Council. A copy of the Council Plan can be found at <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk>.

³ COMMUNITY STRATEGY:

The Community Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane, 'Pride in our Place', sets out the aspirations for social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the local community over the next 10 -15 years. The Community Strategy document is prepared by Basingstoke Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Council is a key partner of the LSP and is already delivering on many aspects of these aspirations. A copy of the Community Strategy can be found at <http://www.basingstokelsp.org> or <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk>.

⁴ CRIME AND DISORDER:

Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Borough Council has a duty to 'exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area'. As such every decision taken by the Council should consider whether there is any relevance to crime and disorder of the outcomes of that decision, and if so what they are. Furthermore, if the decision is likely to have a negative impact of crime and disorder then consideration needs to be given to mitigation measures

Functions of the Council that may indirectly or directly encompass crime and disorder and/or potentially support in reducing the fear of crime include:

- Designing new developments, regeneration, neighbourhood renewal etc – design out crime
- Alcohol Licensing – using new powers for increased control over licensed establishments
- Housing – accommodation for families with a history of anti-social behaviour
- Transport – Safer Routes to School, late-night transport provision
- Street lighting/maintenance – well lit areas can deter anti-social behaviour