



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40
1B Non **WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', with a long, sweeping tail.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 12 March 2024

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council’s Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/CaHlruPybz8?feature=share>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council’s control.

Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

Appendix Acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EYFS	Early Years Foundations Stage
FGB	Full Governing Body
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
NLE	National Leader of Education
NLG	National Leader of Governance
RI	Requires Improvement
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
SDP	School Development Plan
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SIB	School Improvement Board
SIO	School Improvement Officer
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TSA	Teaching School Alliance
WLP	Wokingham Learning Partnership

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Andrew Mickleburgh (Chair)
Anne Chadwick
Andrew Gray

Jane Ainslie
Graham Howe

Ian Pittock (Vice-Chair)
Phil Cunnington

Substitutes

Pauline Helliard-Symons
Chris Johnson
Michael Firmager

Morag Malvern
Alison Swaddle

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Tony Skuse

Parent Governor Representatives

Vacancy, Parent Governor Representative
Vacancy, Parent Governor Representative

Diocesan Representatives

Richard Lamey, Church of England Representative
Vacancy, Roman Catholic Representative

Community Representatives

Sarah Clarke, SEND Voices Wokingham

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
71.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
72.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 January 2024.	7 - 20
73.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
74.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for	

submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions

75.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.	
76.	None Specific	OFSTED FOCUS VISIT To consider the Ofsted report which will be published on 20 March 2024. The report will be available in the following link: Wokingham Borough Council - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Verbal Report
77.	None Specific	SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING STRATEGY To receive and consider the School Place Planning Strategy report.	21 - 48
78.	None Specific	SAFETY VALVE & SEND IMPROVEMENT To receive a presentation containing information about the progress of the Safety Valve Programme and the SEND Improvement Plan.	49 - 60
79.	None Specific	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS To receive and consider the Children's Services Key Performance Indicators.	61 - 74
80.	None Specific	EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE To receive a verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Verbal Report
81.	None Specific	COUNCIL OWNED CHILDREN'S HOMES To receive a report containing information about the Council Owned Children's Homes.	Verbal Report
82.	None Specific	EDUCATION UPDATE To consider a report giving details of schools and education performance in the borough.	75 - 82
83.	None Specific	FORWARD PROGRAMME To consider the Committee's Forward Programme of work.	83 - 86
84.	None Specific	ACTION TRACKER To consider the regular Action Tracker report.	87 - 90
85.		EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information	

as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

86. None Specific

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN – PART 2

91 - 96

A report containing details of schools causing concern will be considered in a Part 2 session.

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh (Chair), Ian Pittock, Anne Chadwick, Graham Howe, Phil Cunnington, Chris Johnson and Andrew Gray

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Prue Bray (Executive Member for Children's Services), Stephen Conway (Leader of the Council) and Jackie Rance

Diocesan Representatives

Richard Lamey, Church of England representative

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Sudeshna Banerjee, Service Manager Intelligence and Impact
Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools
Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help
Mark Douglas, Quality Assurance Consultant
Frances Haywood, Head of Strategic Housing
Helen Watson, Interim Director of Children's Services
Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND

55. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Jane Ainslie and Sarah Clarke. Councillor Ainslie was substituted by Councillor Chris Johnson.

56. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below, and signed by the Chair.

Correction: that on page 7, where it read '*6 November 2023*', this be changed to 6 September 2023.

57. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

58. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

59. AMIT MEHTA ASKED THE CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

One of the Safety Valve workstream is listed below:

EOTAS Dedicated focus project on alternatives to EOTAS after two terms and clear intervention and support via AP to reduce long term EOTAS packages and cost.

I have looked through Safety valve agreement and there is no mention of EOTAS, which suggests above workstream is LA initiated, can I please ask why LA believe stopping short a provision which is working for a child is beneficial for child's learning?

Has LA completed any impact analysis which gives them the confidence around impact on child's learning will most likely be a positive one.

Answer

Whilst the AP & EOTAS review project is not recorded in Wokingham's Safety Valve Agreement published by the DfE, the project has always been part of the Deficit Management Plan and the wider programme of activities designed to deliver a high quality and sustainable SEND System for the area.

We are an inclusive authority and our starting point is that for the vast majority of Children & Young People being in school / college provides the best outcomes (as evidence supports) and many of the parents of children with an EOTAS package have told us that earlier opportunities to support their child were missed and that they have ended up with an EOTAS package as a last resort, not a desired outcome.

Therefore, our intention through the AP and EOTAS review is to ensure that early intervention through a range of measures should be focused on reintegrating young people into school and that this will thereby minimise the numbers ending up with an EOTAS package. This is not focused on ceasing existing packages but is expected to have the result of reducing the frequency with which these are required going forward.

We would not plan to stop commissioning a provision which is beneficial for a child's learning but if more appropriate options for young people on EOTAS packages are identified, then we will seek, in dialogue with families, to reintegrate these young people back into education settings. Assessment of need and decisions regarding the most suitable provision would be carried out as part of the annual review cycle in terms of individual cases.

I hope you would agree that any EOTAS package should be regularly reviewed, to check whether it is benefiting the child for whom it is provided.

Supplementary question:

This is a rather lengthy reply, but I think I will try. One of the things in the reply you mentioned to support early intervention with a range of measures and to look and use opportunities which exist now with regards to alternative provisioning. So is there a list of alternative provisioning providers which the SEND Team are looking to provision as part of early intervention, and I guess some detail around those providers would definitely assist in trying to understand, I guess the medium to long term vision of the SEND Team is proposing to through these measures.

Supplementary answer:

The Chairman asked Officers to assist in answering the supplementary question.

Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND stated that this was work in progress, there was a list of APs (Alternative Providers) which both local authorities and schools used. They were being quality assured at the moment.

The Chairman asked Amit Mehta to continue the dialogue and engagement with WBC. There was a desire to improve and achieve the best outcomes for children in the borough.

60. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

61. YOUTH COUNCIL

The Committee was informed that the Youth Council had not been able to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

Members were advised that the Youth Council had invited members of the CSO&S Committee to attend one of their meetings, as an alternative to their attendance to CSO&S. Members were asked to consider this option and there was general willingness to attend a Youth Council meeting.

Helen Watson, Interim Director for Children's Services informed that the election of the Youth MP was due to take place on 23 January 2024. In response to a comment, she clarified that this was a private process.

RESOLVED That Members of the CSO&S Committee were willing to attend a meeting of the Youth Council, and this would be communicated to the Youth Council via Officers.

62. SAFETY VALVE UPDATE

Jonathan Wilding, Safety Valve / SEND Consultant shared a presentation containing the update on the Safety Valve project. Some of the points highlighted are listed below:

- WBC was now nine months into the Safety Valve programme and significant development had been achieved so far;
- A monitoring report had been submitted to the DfE in December 2023. The slides contained details of the development in:
 - Early Intervention and demand management
 - Sufficiency and new provision
 - Commissioning and quality assurance
- The fees for independent sector providers were kept at below inflation increases;
- Work was being undertaken with Health and Social Care to ensure that the funding for services was being provided in partnership (historically Education had provided the majority of the funding for services);
- Data analysis was much improved;
- Schools Forum had agreed to transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block;
- The early intervention measures aimed, where appropriate, to reduce the need to 'jump' straight into applying for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- There was an almost 50-50 split between schools and parents' requests for EHCPs. The level of parental requests in Wokingham was slightly higher than other comparable local authorities. Work was being undertaken to understand the reasons behind this trend. It was believed that earlier intervention would help to improve this situation;

- The informal feedback prior to the submission of the monitoring report to the DfE had been positive. The formal feedback had not yet been received;
- The project was on track to achieve a balanced Budget by 2028/29;
- 94 EHCPs had been successfully ceased for 2023, which was above the target;
- 51% of those with an EHCP were now being supported in a mainstream education settings;
- The total number of children with an EHCP was now in line with the projected/target figure in the Safety Valve programme;
- The identified risks included:
 - New Special Free Schools – The DfE was still to respond to WBC’s request to lead the capital development of the two new special schools. It was believed that WBC was best placed to lead on the capital programme in order to mitigate any pressures and avoid delays;
 - Increased parent resistance - some of the recent changes were resulting in increased parental challenges. There was an increase in the number of SEND tribunals and mediations;
 - Joint commissioning with Health – the tri-partite funding for complex cases was being reviewed to ensure that all partners are contributing appropriately (Health and Social Care). It was also important to support Health colleagues to address the barriers to achieve timescales;
- SEND Strategy – the initial draft was released for feedback early December. Health colleagues have since requested more opportunities to input into the strategy, this was being arranged with three workshops in the first quarter of 2024. It was anticipated that the final draft would be presented to the Executive for approval on 30 May 2024.

During the discussion of the item the following questions and comments were made:

- Councillor Chadwick asked if the reason behind the parental challenges was the fact that some EHCPs were being ceased or not being awarded?
- Jonathan Wilding explained that when young people were moving out of education it made sense to cease their EHCP. Parents could rightly feel anxious and concerned if there was not a clear pathway into adulthood. Therefore, there was work being undertaken with colleagues in Adult Services and Health to ensure that there was a clear transition plan;
- With regards to EHCPs not being awarded, much work was being undertaken to support schools and SENCOs to ensure that needs were met early, without the need to immediately escalate to an EHCP. Two terms of early interventions should be allowed to ascertain that those interventions were being effective. The process for obtaining an EHCP was being more rigorous, with better early intervention being put in place;
- In response to a question Jonathan Wilding explained that over 90% of EHCPs only ceased when a child finished education. However, it was possible to cease an EHCP if the child’s needs stabilised and no longer required a plan;
- Councillor Howe wondered if there was a correlation in the fact that Health colleagues had asked for greater involvement in the strategy and the fact that Health was being asked to increase their financial contribution?
- Members were informed that Health wished to have more opportunity to have an input in shaping the strategy. It was agreed that it was beneficial to work together, and it was important to help Health colleagues to address challenges, for example the delays in the speech and language therapy. Both the Council and Health faced financial

pressures, and there was a desire to make the resources available were used effectively;

- Other areas of focus with Health were:
 - Autistic diagnostic pathway - at the moment the wait list was very long and to address this issue it was important to ensure that there was early intervention in place to support the child before a diagnosis was established – this was called ‘waiting well’ (offering support and provision whilst waiting for a diagnosis)
 - Mental health – there was a dramatic increase demand and CAMHS was overwhelmed. There was a gap between preventative services and the CAMHS offer – more joint support from Health, Education and Social Services at an early stage was needed to address this challenge;
- Councillor Cunnington asked if there was any support available for parents to help address the children’s needs. Jonathan Wilding explained that this was a grey area, it was uncertain how much of the Education budget should be spent on home support, even though it was accepted that family support was beneficial. Wokingham had a good local offer for Early Help, which could be utilised;
- Councillor Bray, Executive Member for Children’s Services stated that it was important to look at children holistically. The Wokingham Borough Education Partnership Board had been considering how to better use data from different service areas to get a better understanding of the family situation. This was progressing, but there was still some work to do to join up the data;
- Richard Lamey asked about the numbers in relation to tribunals, there was mention of the fact that 98% of tribunal cases were found in favour of the parent, but it was not clear how many cases this related to? Also, what lessons were being learnt from tribunal cases?
- Jonathan Wilding informed that the 98% figure was a national statistic. Locally there were around 30-35 cases in progress. Every effort was being made to avoid tribunals and resolve issues earlier, through mediation meetings;
- The local authority was paying close attention to the findings of tribunals. Although most tribunals found in favour of parents, some decisions were perverse and against professionals’ advice, this was a complex landscape;
- Members considered the possibility of receiving more information with numbers/statistics and an anonymised example of a tribunal case, however there was no consensus if this would be helpful. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Executive Member and senior officers would discuss this outside of the meeting and make a recommendation;
- Jonathan Wilding pointed out that his comments regarding tribunals were his own views as an external advisor/ consultant;
- Councillor Bray stated that there was a general resistance to change from parents, they perceived change negatively because for many years they had had to fight the system to obtain the support needed for their children. It was important to work with parents to achieve the best outcomes for their children and consequently avoid the need for tribunals;
- Councillor Bray made reference to cases in other local authorities where tribunals made decisions which had significantly negatively impacted their budget. It was important to avoid those situations by trying to resolve matters without the need for a tribunal;
- Councillor Gray asked for assurances that the reduction in the number of EHCPs were in the best interest of the children, and how were SENCOs at schools viewing this change?

- Jonathan Wilding stated that SENCOs understood the need for early intervention and that this may avoid the need for escalation to an EHCP. In the past SENCOs had applied for assessments even when a child's need may not be high enough to need an EHCP, but there had been limited or non-existing support for low level needs and they only way to access support would have been through and EHCP. The local authority was now addressing these issues and looking fill any gaps in the early support offer;
- Jonathan Wilding explained that there was no desire to cut down on the number of EHCPs, just to manage the system better, and by offering early support, it was believed that better outcomes could be achieved, both in terms of the children's outcomes and financially for the local authority;
- The Chairman asked, in view of the fact that now 51% with EHCPs were being supported in mainstream settings, if schools were able to cope and were receiving the necessary support? Was there any feedback from schools?
- Ming Zhang, Assistant Director for Education and SEND stated that it was important to ensure the quality of decision making in order to secure the right placements. He added that the number of tribunals were relatively low, and efforts would continue to be made to avoid tribunals and find a solution earlier at mediation meetings;
- Ming Zhang stated that overall schools felt well supported, and the local authority was putting in place a lot of measures to support schools;
- Councillor Bray stated that it was positive that Schools Forum had agreed to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, his represented a change to their previous position. This money would be used to support schools. An outreach service for schools was being developed, and staff had already been appointed to start working on providing this service to schools.

Members thanked Jonathan Wilding for his work and noted that the SEND Strategy would be presented at the next meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Safety Valve Update report be noted; and
- 2) The Chairman, Vice-chairman and Senior Officers would discuss the possibility of including more data and statistics around tribunals in future reports.

63. YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOUSING STRATEGY

Councillor Conway, Leader of the Council and Samuel Watt, Senior Strategic Officer presented Young People's Housing Strategy.

Councillor Conway commended the report and the work that had been undertaken to put it together. The Executive was looking to work together with Members of the CSO&S Committee and would like to take into account their views prior to its final submission to Executive.

It was agreed that Wokingham had a lack of affordable housing, despite the increase in the amount of house building. Wokingham was an area that attracted a lot of people and demand for housing outstripped demand. It was believed that the need for affordable housing was now half of the total need for housing, and young people were particularly affected by this need.

The Young People's Housing Strategy aimed to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable young people in society, such as care leavers, unaccompanied asylum seekers

and those 16-17 young people at risk of homelessness. The Council had a corporate responsibility to care leavers as corporate parents.

Sam Watt informed that the Council did have a previous strategy that had run from 2014 to 2019 which had produced good results. However, things had changed both nationally and internationally which impacted housing, and it was appropriate to set out a new strategy.

There were challenges in relation to high rents and tenancy sustainability for care leavers. There was a shortage within the private rental sector, with limited options in Wokingham, all set within the context of increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers care leavers.

The strategy identified four priorities and was to run from 2024 to 2028. It will sit under the Affordable Housing Strategy and alongside other strategies such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy. There had been internal consultation with other areas within the Council, the strategy was being co-produced in partnership with stakeholders.

The priorities aimed to increase the quantity and quality of housing options:

1. Increasing the Council's housing options
2. Developing clear housing pathways
3. Supporting tenancy sustainment
4. Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping

The internal consultation was nearing completion and public consultation would begin in the next couple of weeks and would finish at the end of February. Accessibility options were being considered and young people were being consulted as part of the process.

During the discussion of the item the following questions and comments were made:

- Councillor Chadwick asked how information would be communicated with families? Samuel Watt explained that the objective was to signpost families to offers of support for early intervention (not just from the Council) in order to help young people to stay at home and avoid homelessness;
- Councillor Chadwick asked how the Council proposed to monitor and help young people living in private accommodation? Samuel Watt explained that the strategy was targeting young people who were likely to be known to the Council through the Rent Guarantee Scheme;
- Councillor Gray asked for more information around the Council's housing responsibilities to its Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who were placed outside of the borough, potentially in more expensive areas such as London;
- Samuel Watt informed that the Council did have a responsibility to house UASC under its care who lived outside of the borough. In such cases, consideration was taken to ascertain where they were placed. Sometimes, due to cultural and local community connections it was preferable to find accommodation in other areas. However, consideration was also taken about the possibility of bringing them to Wokingham, it was important to increase local provision;
- Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help added that care leavers tended to be accommodated in the area where they were placed as children. Therefore, developing more placements locally was desirable;
- Councillor Bray informed that she had attended the National Conference for Adults and Children in November. It was interesting to hear that some local authorities had received feedback from the children that they had acquired through the national

transfer scheme for UASC, that they would prefer to be placed within the community of their home local authority;

- Councillor Gray asked for more information about the setting up home grant. Adam Davis informed that this grant was for care leavers and the amount given depended on the type of accommodation a young person was moving in to and what was needed in terms of furniture etc. This was worked out with the personal assistants and was part of the care leavers offer;
- Councillor Howe pointed out that there was a large number of young people who had been educated in the borough, gone to university outside of the borough but who also struggled to find affordable housing in Wokingham. Many young people were now opting to go to a more local university. He suggested consideration of a scheme to attract young talent to the borough through the Young People's Housing Strategy;
- Councillor Conway acknowledged the situation alluded to, and informed that work was being undertaken with Reading University already. The eligibility criteria placed a great deal of importance on young people with a local connection, but consideration was being made into how to make an exception for key workers housing who may be from outside of the area. This strategic focused on vulnerable young people, other young people were considered under the wider Affordable Housing Strategy;
- Members felt that the title of the strategy did not accurately reflect the cohort it was aimed at and asked that it be reconsidered;
- Councillor Conway informed that this point had been considered but a clearer title had not been found;
- Councillor Johnson stated that when young people left the armed forces, the only place they could apply legally for housing was the place where they were attested (recruited). With the loss of the Arborfield garrison area, there could potentially be a lot of young people affected by this issue with no support available to them. He wondered if there was any consideration about this group of young people?
- Councillor Conway agreed to reflect on the issue mentioned above and try to find ways to help this group of young people;
- Councillor Pittock was of the opinion that the law which limited young people who left the armed forces from applying for housing assistance in the place where they were attested needed changing;
- Councillor Conway confirmed that the Housing Advisory and Implementation Group (HAIG) was a cross party group who met regularly and worked effectively, they had already reviewed this strategy;
- The Chairman asked for information about the Young Person's Housing Panel. Samuel Watt informed that this group had been set up following a review by a consultant a couple of years ago. It was created in an effort to improve co-production between Housing Services and Children's Services;
- Councillor Bray informed that as a result of the work of the Young Person's Housing Panel, there had been a reduction in the number of young people going into temporary accommodation of 71%, in the period since April 2023;
- Adam Davis reiterated the fact that it was important to work together with Housing colleagues to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Consideration be given to ways in which to support young ex- service young people living in the borough in the Affordable Housing Strategy;
- 2) Consideration be given to finding a clearer title for the strategy; and

3) Officers and all those involved in the production of the strategy be thanked for their work.

64. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Sudeshna Banerjee, Service Manager Intelligence and Impact presented the Key Performance Indicators report.

Councillor Pittock felt that the arrows on the right side of the tables did not make the performance and direction of travel clear, he believed that a RAG system would make the report clearer.

It was explained to Members that some indicators were not 'positive or 'negative' they were just a measure of data. Sudeshna Banerjee suggested adding a column saying 'better' or 'worse' where applicable.

Mark Douglas, Quality Assurance Consultant stated that all indicators were important and he would discuss ways to best present the report with Sudeshna Banerjee outside of the meeting. Even where there was no measure of better or worse in terms of performance, it was important that Members be informed of the level of demand for services.

Additionally, Members noted that some indicators included total numbers at the top, others only included percentages. Therefore, it could be difficult to understand performance. Officers agreed to look into ways to present the data in a more meaningful way.

Members looked at each dashboard in the report and the following questions and comments were made:

Dashboard Item 1 – Funded Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Members asked what could be done to improve the figures in relation to EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of referral?

Sudeshna Banerjee explained that 80-85% completion was above the national average. Ming Zhang added that much work had been undertaken to achieve 80-85% completion rates, work was now under way to continue performing at this high level. To achieve this, it important to understand the key performance drivers, such as staff shortage and to monitor it closely.

Dashboard Item 3 – Children's Social Care Front Door

Were there any particular pinch points that were inhibiting performance of the timeliness of assessments?

Adam Davis explained that much work had been undertaken to improve the timeliness of assessments, and last month 97.8% of assessments were completed within the timescales. Much better timescales were being achieved in this quarter.

Helen Watson added that this was a significant indicator which was reported corporately at a senior level. It was important to keep the performance at around 90%.

Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Do we know if those care leavers who are not in touch are more likely to be Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or in unsuitable accommodation?

Sudeshna Banerjee stated that most of those care leavers who were not in touch were in independent accommodation.

Adam Davis explained that it was a very different situation for every young person. Some young people were missing (one or two) and some did not want to continue receiving support from the local authority. The local authority would make a decision as to whether to close the case after the age of 21 for those that did not want to continue to have support.

Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/ Care

Nationally, 20% of children were not attending school, what was the situation in Wokingham?

Sudeshna Banerjee stated that school attendance in Wokingham was much better than the national average. This included figures from maintained schools, free schools and academies.

Dashboard Item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

Sudeshna Banerjee informed that the quarter 2 figure was 13.33% and there had been an amendment to the quarter 1 figure – it was actually 10.53% (12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers).

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Officers would discuss ways to improve the presentation of the Key Performance Indicators to make it clearer for Members; and
- 2) The report be noted.

65. EDUCATION UPDATE

Gillian Cole, Schools Service Manager presented the Education update.

The report highlighted a number of Ofsted inspections which had taken place in the last six months. The results and links to Ofsted reports were displayed in the agenda report. Of particular interest was the ‘Outstanding’ result awarded to Chiltern Way School, this was a very good result.

Members were informed that a new Chief Inspector of schools had taken post this month. Inspections were currently paused until 22 January whilst all inspectors underwent mental health and wellbeing training.

More information about the work around inclusion would be provided once the Southampton University project was completed.

The report contained information about the work being undertaken around supporting the multi-race ethnicity which was increasing in the borough.

The report contained information about the work being undertaken with the Wokingham Schools Hub. Members were encouraged to browse the website. The website was aimed at educational professionals and required a login, but Members may be interested to overview the headlines.

Members were very pleased to see the positive Ofsted results achieved by schools.

In response to a question, Gillian Cole explained that the Wokingham Schools Hub was not new, but it had recently been reviewed and modernised.

Councillor Bray informed that she had contacted Chiltern Way School to congratulate them on their achievement.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

66. REVIEW THE POST OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Helen Watson presented the Review of the Post Ofsted Improvement Plan report.

Following the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection in March 2023, the local authority was required to produce an improvement plan. The first iteration of the plan was submitted to CSOS Committee in September 2023.

The lead Ofsted inspector met with officers in October, and the plan being presented had been reviewed and improved as a result of that conversation with the lead inspector. The current plan included more consideration of impact.

The Improvement Plan Board met monthly and there was a clear focus on the delivery of improvement.

Councillor Pittock asked about the progress of the recruitment of the new Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Manager. Adam Davis informed that recruitment had been successful, however this person would not be able to start for a few months.

Councillor Pittock asked for an update on the development and implementation of the Care Leaver Policy (paragraph 7.3). Adam Davis agreed to investigate and report back to Members.

Councillor Gray asked if there were or would be any other follow up reviews with the lead Ofsted inspector to ensure that the local authority was on the right path to achieve a good result at the next inspection? Helen Watson stated that another inspection could happen any time now. It was anticipated that an inspection would take place before March, possibly a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). However, there would not be another opportunity to meet with Ofsted prior to an inspection.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

67. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Bray stated that most topics had already been discussed. She informed that the local authority had purchased three new properties to become children's homes. There process of recruiting a care manager, other members of staff and registering the homes was ongoing. It was hoped that they would be operational by the beginning of the next financial year.

A care leavers Christmas lunch took place on 22 December 2023, and this event had been very successful.

Much work was being undertaken in relation to school place planning. It was anticipated that sufficient school places would be available by the national offer day.

Councillor Chadwick stated that she had been advised that there was some doubt that the Forest School would receive the £600k they had been promised to help them become co-educational. She asked for more information about this issue.

Councillor Bray explained that the school had been asked to prioritise and work with the property team within the Council. She confirmed that an amount of money had been put aside to aid the school to do things like building girls changing rooms and toilets.

Ming Zhang added that negotiations were ongoing with the trustees and the headteacher about how to use the £600k which had been put aside for the school's conversion to become a co-educational school.

In response to a question about a leaking roof at the Forest School, Councillor Bray explained that academy schools were responsible for their own building maintenance.

RESOLVED That the Executive Member update be noted.

68. FORWARD PLAN

The next meeting of the Committee would be on 20 March 2024.

Members would consider whether to have the Youth Council attend the next meeting or to take up the offer to attend one of their meetings.

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist informed that the dates of meetings for the next municipal year were due to be agreed at the next meeting of Council on 18 January 2024. The Forward Plan would be populated once the dates were confirmed.

RESOLVED That the Forward Plan report be noted.

69. ACTION TRACKER

The Chairman asked for an update on the action in relation to SEND Voices meeting with the School Transport Team to discuss ideas for improvement in communication with drivers/escorts and families.

Councillor Bray informed that the government had not yet confirmed if the funding for holiday activities and food programme would continue. The Council relied on government funding for these activities, and it would not be able to continue the offer without the government grant. The Council was lobbying the government to continue with this funding.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

70. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for item 70, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

71. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

This item was considered in a Part 2 session.

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Agenda Item 77.

TITLE	WBC School Places Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 March 2024
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Wokingham Borough School Places Strategy provides a clear strategic direction for the delivery of the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient local mainstream education places, in line with community demand. The development of this Strategy marks an important first step in the ongoing management of the Council's obligations in this respect, in the context of a diverse range of challenges.

RECOMMENDATION

That Overview & Scrutiny note the content of the accompanying School Places Strategy and the plans for its future development.

To note that it is intended to take the Strategy to the Executive for formal approval, prior to publishing on the WBC website.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Wokingham Borough School Place Strategy 2024/25 to 2029/30 assesses the sufficiency of education provision over this period and, where deficiencies are identified, proposes remedial measures and options. This report provides an overview of the key elements of the Strategy, as well as the plans for its future development.

Background

The Wokingham Borough School Place Strategy 2024/25 to 2029/30 assesses the sufficiency of education provision over this period and, where deficiencies are identified, proposes remedial measures and options. The strategy considers the needs of children and young people in the key education phases of Early Years (pre-statutory school age); mainstream statutory school age (age 4 to 16); and post-16 in the Borough. This breadth reflects the Council's core statutory duties for education. The Strategy also considers longer term needs, tied to developing Borough development plans for the period to 2037/38. The analysis is underpinned by the most recent 2023 roll projections, which extend to 2027/28 for the primary phase and 2030/31 for the secondary phase, backed by a range of relevant contextual housing, planning and demographic data.

Analysis of Issues

As indicated above, the Strategy is divided into four core components.

Early Years:

The Strategy indicates that there is a broad sufficiency of Early Years provision in the Borough. A small 26-place shortfall is forecast for next year, although proposals for new provision that would more than meet this deficit are already in the pipeline. As such, no substantial proposals for future development are currently set out in respect of this area of the Strategy.

Primary:

The Borough-wide forecasts for the primary sector are presented in the below table:

Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2023/24	311	240	54	57	63	47	-71	701
2024/25	360	254	179	67	-4	27	-15	868
2025/26	322	305	194	191	5	-38	-35	944
2026/27	288	267	246	207	139	-29	-102	1016
2027/28	288	233	207	259	156	108	-97	1154

As can be seen from the above, there is a substantial surplus of places projected for the Borough over the forecast period. However, these figures mask variance within the Borough's seven primary planning areas, which can be broadly categorised as follows:

- Type I – Surplus at KS1 and deficit at KS2 – Earley; Wokingham Town East; and Woodley.
- Type II – Small surplus at KS1 and KS2 – North; South East; and Town West.
- Type III – Deficit across KS1 and KS2 – South West.

The Strategy develops proposals in line with these three demand profiles:

- Type I – potential for opening a Year 6 class at St. Cecilia's C of E Primary School
- Type II – proposed PAN reductions that will need to be agreed in partnership and proactively managed in future.
- Type III – expansion of a primary school in the Shinfield area.

Secondary:

The Borough-wide forecasts for the secondary sector are presented in the below table, alongside the Council's previously agreed strategy for managing the forecast places shortfall:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Y7 Shortfall	-177	-162	-182	-256	-268	-204	-140
St Crispins	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
Emmbrook	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Piggott	46	45	45	45	45	45	45
Bohunt	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Oakbank	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Waingels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Holt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forest	90	60	60	60	60	60	60
Maiden Erlegh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bulmershe	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total Extra Places	274	243	243	243	243	243	243
Balance	97	81	61	-13	-25	39	103

As can be seen from the above, there is a substantial 9FE shortfall forecast to 2028/29. In order to meet this demand, the Council has agreed to fund the expansion of 5 schools, creating c. 8FE worth of additional capacity. There is a small level of excess demand forecast in 2027/28 and 2028/29, which could be mitigated by reduced migration, or else by a 1FE bulge. In this respect, it is critical to ensure that places are not oversupplied, in view of the long-term forecast of reduced rolls in primary transitioning to falling numbers at a secondary level.

Post-16:

The forecasts for demand at post-16 are based on three different models, as shown in the below table:

Year	Total places	Standard Forecast	Surplus / Deficit	WBC Increase	Surplus / Deficit	Alt. Capacity	Surplus / Deficit
2024	2,286	2,141	145	2,151	135	2,542	391
2025	2,286	2,319	-33	2,318	-32	2,602	284
2026	2,436	2,547	-111	2,536	-100	2,752	216
2027	2,586	2,814	-228	2,775	-189	2,902	127
2028	2,586	3,013	-427	2,918	-332	2,902	-16
2029	2,586	3,141	-555	3,009	-423	2,902	-107
2030	2,586	3,174	-588	3,033	-447	2,902	-131

The third model (represented by the final two columns) accounts for local flexibilities in intake (limited to the impact of endogenous WBC growth), as well as the fact that building capacity requirements are less rigid than for compulsory-age facilities (with some sixth forms already operating over capacity). On this basis, the Council anticipates being able to deliver places within the existing estate to 2027, supplemented by some already agreed additional capacity at Bohunt. This will allow time for the Council to undertake a review of the current post-16 offer, with a view to increasing its breadth at the same time as supplementing capacity, so as to ensure that it is aligned with local educational demand and skills needs.

Future Development:

As stated above, this represents the first iteration of the Strategy and it is proposed to more fully develop this into a School Organisation Plan over the course of the next year, in line with the below timetable:

Action	Date
Rebuild Forecasting Model	April – June 2024
New Forecasts Produced	July 2024
Revise Options Appraisal	July – September 2024
Stakeholder Engagement I	October – November 2024
Draft 2025-2030 Strategy	December 2024 – January 2025
Stakeholder Engagement II	February – March 2025
Final 2025-2030 Strategy to Executive	April 2025

Critical developments within the next iteration will be the following:

- A review of the forecasting model.
- Coproduction with key partners (schools; admissions authorities; parents/carers).
- Integration of sections focusing on SEND and Alternative Provision.
- A synthesised approach to estate management / sufficiency (seeking to intelligently repurpose vacant spaces to meet demand in other areas).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

There are no direct financial implications of the Strategy, as all of the proposals / options contained therein have been / will be the subject of distinct Executive decision-making processes and consequent inclusion within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The synthesis of these proposals within a single document consolidates strategic planning of the places programme as a whole, which should provide opportunities for estate rationalisation and consequent capital cost efficiencies in future iterations of the Strategy.

In addition, the further development of the options contained within this strategy should provide for a reduced reliance on home to school transport and consequent amelioration of pressures on the associated council budgets.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

It is important to ensure that new developments are provided with sufficient local school capacity. As such, there is a substantial overlap between the contents of the strategy and the wider planning agenda, insofar as the former should be developed in alignment with the Borough's strategic plans for housing development.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken. An equalities assessment is not required at this stage but may be required in relation to the development of future iterations of the Strategy, especially in view of the ambition to incorporate planning for SEND provision.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

The Strategy's core purpose is to ensure that local education provision is well aligned with demand, in terms of both its form and overall capacity. In delivering against this goal, there is a related benefit of reducing the need / incentive for families to undertake journeys in low-capacity transport, with an increased emphasis on sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

Wokingham Borough School Places Strategy 2024/25 – 2029/30.

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Wokingham Borough School Places Strategy

2024/25 to 2029/30
(To be refreshed annually)

Next review date: April 2025

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Introduction

The Wokingham Borough School Place Strategy 2024/25 to 2029/30 (the strategy) assesses the sufficiency of education provision over this period and, where deficiencies are identified, proposes remedial measures and options. The strategy considers the needs of children and young people in the key education phases of Early Years (pre-statutory school age); mainstream statutory school age (age 4 to 16); and post-16 in the Borough. This breadth reflects the Council's core statutory duties for education. The Strategy also considers longer term needs, tied to developing Borough development plans for the period to 2037/38.

There are 10 secondary schools within the Borough. All are (or will shortly be) Academies or Free Schools. In addition, there are 55 primary schools, currently consisting of 26 Academies, 3 Free Schools, 4 Voluntary Aided Schools, 4 Voluntary Controlled Schools and 18 Community Schools.

The strategy sets out how and why the child population of the Borough is changing. It considers how factors behind current population trends may themselves change and what these changes could imply for school place planning. It sets this need in the context of inter-Borough movement of children and young people from other local authorities into borough schools and vice versa. The analysis is underpinned by the most recent 2023 roll projections, which extend to 2027/28 for the primary phase and 2030/31 for the secondary phase, backed by a range of relevant contextual housing, planning and demographic data. The longer period of the secondary projection reflects the greater reliability of projections for older children, as the forecast is entirely based on living children, rather than forecast births.

Key constraints and policy imperatives that the strategy and any plan for action must take account of are set out. In doing this, the strategy establishes how the different parties including the local authority, the Department for Education (DfE), Academy Trusts and other bodies interact to ensure that all children have a school place.

The strategy sets out the key challenges for the Early Years, primary (aged 5 to 11), secondary (11 to 16) and post-16 mainstream phases. It sets out options for meeting needs and makes recommendations concerning future action. In some cases, further work will be required before an action plan can be agreed.

The Strategy will be refreshed annually to reflect the regular update of pupil forecasts and consequent alterations to the approach to addressing sufficiency. It is also the aim to incorporate sections in relation to SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) sufficiency in future iterations of this document.

Local Authority Legal Duty for School Sufficiency

Early education and childcare sufficiency

Provision of early education and childcare is vital for the local economy and for developing stronger communities. One aim of childcare is to ensure parents are supported to be economically active, either in work, or in study or training for work. Early education focuses on the specific learning needs of very young children, and the benefits can extend far beyond the early years - children build confidence, develop their fine and gross motor skills, and expand their communication and social skills through play and exploration, preparing them for lifelong learning. Funded early education for 2-year-old children aims to reduce levels of inequality and narrow the pre-school educational gap for disadvantaged children.

Local Authorities are required to secure sufficient early years and childcare provision (Childcare Act 2016; Childcare Act 2006; Children and Families Act 2014; The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014; The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Amendment) Regulations 2016; The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016). In practice this translates as follows:

- Sufficient childcare means securing the right type and volume of provision, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (up to 18 for a disabled child).
- Sufficient early years provision means families being able to access their free entitlement for qualifying 2, 3 and 4-year-old children:

The free entitlement is:

- from April 2024, all working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week.
- from September 2024, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 15 hours per week.
- from September 2025, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 30 hours free childcare per week.

Alongside the free entitlement, some parents will wish to purchase additional childcare hours from their provider where, for example, they require more childcare to be able to undertake their choice of work.

School places duties

Local authorities with statutory education duties are required to:

- Ensure sufficient school places (Education Act 1996 Section 14).
- Increase opportunities for parental choice (Section 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which inserts sub-section 3A into S14 of the Education Act 1996).
- Comply with any preference expressed by parents provided compliance with the preference would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 86).
- Ensure fair access to educational opportunity (Section 1 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserts sub-section 1(b) into S13 of the Education Act 1996).

Turning to land use planning, paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. This includes local planning authorities giving substantial weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools when preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

Post-16 duties

Local authorities hold responsibilities for the sufficiency of post-16 education and training and promoting continuing education to young people.

These are:

- To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained (Education Act 1996 S15ZA). To fulfil

this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.

- To make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training under Section 68 of the ESA 2008.

However, the Council's legal duty in relation to young people's post-16 participation and its statutory powers to enable it to fulfil this duty are not precisely aligned. It has no formal role in the planning of Further Education provision; it can propose sixth form provision, but decision-making lies with the DfE Regional Director. Therefore, to fulfil this legal duty, the Council is required to work in partnership with education, skills training providers, and local businesses.

A changing population

As at the latest census in 2021, there were 177,502 people living in Wokingham Borough. That is 15% more people than in the previous census 10 years prior in 2011, when the population was 145,380.

Looking further back, the population of Wokingham Borough has been increasing by approximately 12% every 10 years, based on population changes between 1981 and 2021.

The number of resident children is determined by the number of births to Borough residents, modified by net internal and international migration.

Births: The trend in both annual births and underlying fertility rates is downwards in the Borough and in neighbouring Local Authorities. Birth numbers peaked in 2012 with just under 2,000 births. By 2022 birth numbers had dropped to less than 1,700 (but with considerable annual variation, most recently in 2021 when over 1,800 children were born). The children now entering secondary schools were born when the birth numbers peaked. Annual births have been at least 100 less in subsequent years than the 2012 peak.

Migration: Wokingham Borough is characterised by strong rates of child migration into the Borough. Until 2021 the consistent picture from ONS data was that migration was strong for early years (>100 annually per year group), slightly less strong for primary (average c.60 per year per year group), and very low for secondary year groups (6 per year group). This has been facilitated by high rates of housebuilding and churn (families moving into older homes). While there is no ONS post-2021 data yet, it is clear from admissions and roll data that post-2021 there has been a significant increase in international migration of children into the Borough. Much of this is due to increased numbers of British Nationals (Overseas), from Hong Kong. Numbers of additional primary age children per year have more than doubled and secondary rolls have also increased, but from much lower annual base numbers.

Currently the high migrant numbers from 2021 onwards are at least balancing the impact of falling birth numbers on rolls.

Should international migrant numbers drop to pre-2021 levels, pupil intake will begin to fall. Housebuilding has also been a significant factor in migration to the Borough. While it is expected that housing growth will remain strong given national planning policy requirements, the housing market is volatile and subject to economic conditions. While there are a number of large schemes in development, if annual new home completions fall, there will likely be a corresponding fall in the number of children requiring school places.

Constraints

The council makes decisions within the constraints of the statutory framework that governs the provision of education, the priorities of the various parties within that framework and available resources.

Local Authorities have some powers and responsibilities for existing maintained schools (community, and voluntary (church) schools). However, education is increasingly provided by schools within Academy Trusts, rather than by local authority-maintained schools. All Wokingham Borough's secondary schools are (or will shortly be) Academies or Free Schools. The Borough's primary schools are also increasingly converting to academy status. Academies are responsible to their managing Trusts, and to the DfE Regional School Director (RSD), who approves all changes to Academies / Free Schools.

Therefore, while the school place sufficiency duty is solely held by the council, it must focus on partnership working with other parties to ensure there are sufficient places.

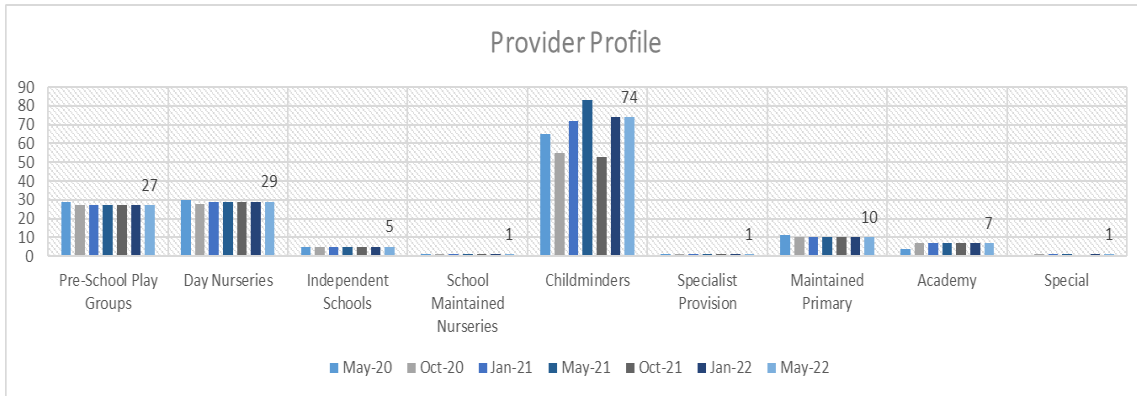
Wokingham Borough Council has wider responsibilities, though, and education planning takes place within this broader framework of objectives. In particular, the council has committed to making the fullest possible contribution to reducing the carbon footprint to meet carbon neutrality by 2030, which leads to an emphasis on local provision and energy efficient development.

The council's resources are limited, with pressures on both capital and revenue budgets. There is a strong imperative, therefore, to look to measures that reduce revenue costs (such as school transport costs) with a minimal capital cost. Revenue costs associated with new or enlarged schools come from the DSG Growth Fund, which is agreed annually with the Wokingham Schools Forum (a statutory body).

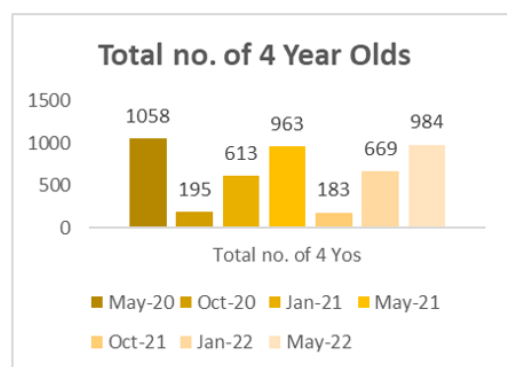
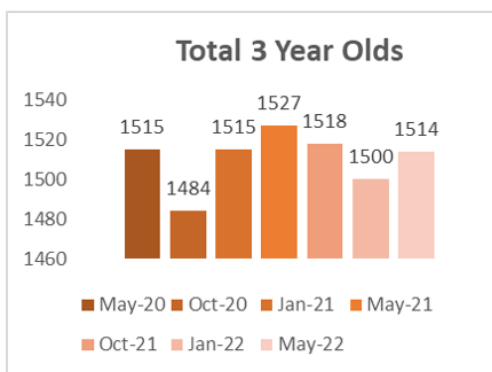
Early Years sufficiency

The 2022 childcare sufficiency report noted that both childcare provision and demand had remained constant over the period May 2020 to May 2022. The one area where place supply had changed materially was child minding, where the number of registered child minders had declined from 244 (December 2019) to 198 in 2022 (an 18% reduction). This is in line with national trends. Key aspects of Early Years sufficiency are the provision of free entitlement places and the provision of services to vulnerable learners (children entitled to free 2-year-old provision and children with SEND).

The profile of setting offering free entitlement places from May 2020 to May 2022 is set out in the table below. Note that provision (measured by number of providers) has remained largely static over this period. One area of positive change though, is the increase in the proportion of childminders offering free entitlement places (up from 40% in December 2019 to 71% in October 2022).

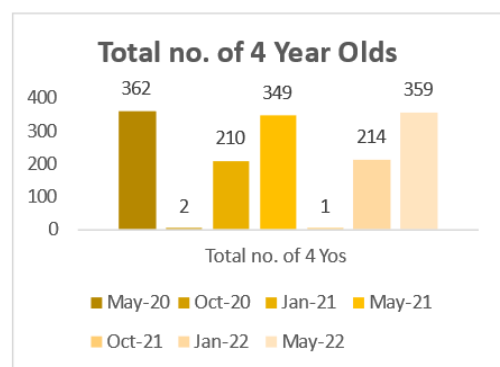
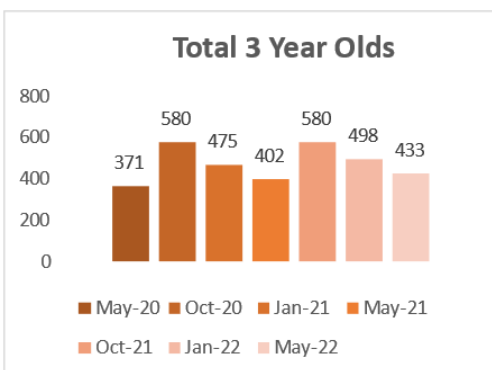


The numbers of children taking up Free Entitlement places has remained relatively constant over the May 2020 to May 2022 period. It should be noted that Early Years numbers follow an annual cycle, so it is important to compare May, October and January figures separately.

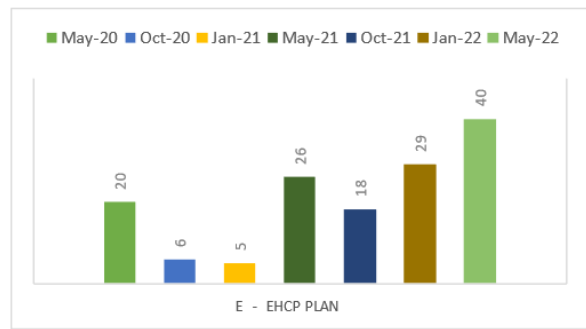
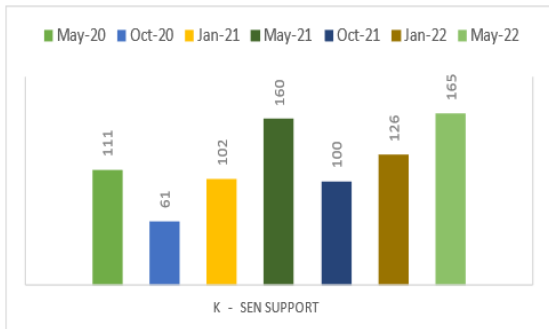


The graphs above show the number of 3- and 4-years-olds using Free Entitlement places in private settings and at childminders over this period.

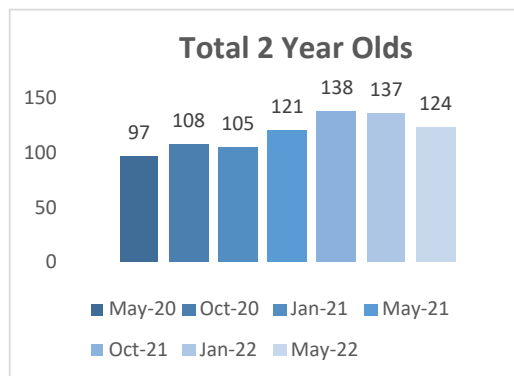
The graphs below show the same data, but for users of school settings.



One service area that has seen increased usage is provision for children with SEND and vulnerable 2-year-olds. Both numbers of children requiring SEND support and those with EHCPs increased over the May 2020 to May 2022 period, as shown in the graphs below.



The number of vulnerable 2-year-olds benefitting from Free Entitlement places has also increased, as shown in the graph below.



On the basis of the above, the report concluded that there are broadly enough places across the Borough for families to access the funded hours for which their child is eligible. This includes enough spaces for the new entitlement for working families of 2-year-olds which comes into effect in April 2024. Subsequent to this review, the DfE carried out a national local authority readiness assessment (published February 2024) in preparation for the expanded Early Years entitlements. In relation to Wokingham, the overall assessment states that the Borough would need an additional 26 places (a 1% increase) by September 2025. Given the recent level of activity to create additional Early Years capacity by Wokingham schools and other parties (with a number of projects currently in the pipeline), this is not considered to be a significant risk, but will require annual monitoring.

It is important to note that early years' sufficiency can change quickly, for example if a key provider closes or receives a poor Ofsted judgement. Therefore, local authority will continue to identify areas which may be vulnerable and where additional provision may be needed due to growth in demand, for example from new housing development.

Primary Phase sufficiency

As noted above, the key factors of Wokingham School Place Planning are:

- Declining birth rates over the past decade
- High migration rates in the recent past
- Balanced inter-Borough movement

Therefore, the primary roll projections point to low Reception admission numbers (generally declining in line with birth numbers), leading to significant surpluses in Key Stage 1 (290 to 360 per

year). However, high net migration rates have led to rolls steadily rising year by year from initial admission, leading to deficits in Key Stage 2 (Year 6 in particular). There are variations though, between areas, with some areas having projected surplus capacity in all phases, some having Key Stage 2 deficits, and one having a projected deficit in both Key Stages.

Movement between the Borough and other local authorities sees a small net gain of Wokingham Borough rolls of 165 pupils and no future changes are currently forecast in respect of this pattern. The below table sets out these patterns in more detail.

LA	Wokingham Borough residents' destinations	Wokingham Borough school roll from out of Borough
Reading	380	512
Bracknell Forest	204	284
Hampshire	73	32
Windsor and Maidenhead	46	44
West Berkshire	38	28
Oxfordshire	11	13
Others	20	24
Total	772	937

Net gain to Wokingham Borough rolls	165
Total Roll Number	15,385
% of total	1.1%

Note that migration rates are likely to be susceptible to short term change (because they are directly related to government policy, variable home building rates and volatile preferences). Should migration rates decrease, much of the Key Stage 2 pressure set out below would be alleviated.

Borough-wide primary projections are as follows:

Borough									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
16475	2023/24	311	240	54	57	63	47	-71	701
16505	2024/25	360	254	179	67	-4	27	-15	868
16535	2025/26	322	305	194	191	5	-38	-35	944
16565	2026/27	288	267	246	207	139	-29	-102	1016
16610	2027/28	288	233	207	259	156	108	-97	1154

The Borough's seven primary school planning areas can be grouped as follows, according to the challenges they face. In the tables below red cell colouring indicates too few places.

Areas with a surplus in Key Stage 1 and a deficit in Key Stage 2: Earley, Wokingham Town East (of the town centre) and Woodley.

Earley									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
3145	2023/24	66	10	-17	-57	15	-5	-2	10
3100	2023/24	106	46	-10	-30	-60	12	-7	57
3055	2023/24	94	88	27	-23	-33	-64	10	99
3010	2023/24	108	75	71	16	-26	-36	-66	142
3010	2023/24	108	91	58	60	14	-29	-38	264
Town East									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2310	2023/24	76	21	17	28	11	-22	-56	75
2310	2024/25	62	61	6	6	20	-18	-56	81
2310	2025/26	65	47	47	-6	-4	-7	-52	90
2310	2026/27	48	49	32	36	-16	-32	-41	76
2310	2027/28	48	30	34	21	27	-44	-69	47
Woodley									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2835	2023/24	43	44	13	-2	7	-9	-31	75
2835	2024/25	74	35	42	9	-14	6	-36	81
2835	2025/26	73	66	33	38	-3	-15	-20	90
2835	2026/27	107	66	64	28	27	-4	-44	76
2835	2027/28	107	100	65	60	17	26	-33	47

Areas with a small current projected surplus for both Key Stages: the North (of the A329M), South East (Finchampstead and Wokingham Without), and Wokingham Town West (which includes Winnersh).

North									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1791	2023/24	28	31	15	36	6	52	-5	163
1776	2024/25	36	27	27	20	29	6	50	195
1761	2025/26	27	35	23	33	12	29	3	162
1746	2026/27	-4	26	32	29	27	12	26	148
1731	2027/28	-4	-5	21	38	23	27	9	109
South East									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1674	2024	55	49	28	42	18	3	0	195
1674	2025	37	50	47	47	36	5	-3	219
1674	2026	68	32	48	67	43	23	-1	280
1674	2027	42	64	28	68	61	30	19	312
1674	2028	42	37	61	48	62	49	26	325
Town West									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2755	2023/24	47	45	1	9	5	26	21	154
2755	2024/25	46	41	31	12	-4	20	19	165
2755	2025/26	47	40	27	43	-1	12	13	181
2755	2026/27	41	41	26	37	32	15	4	196
2755	2027/28	41	36	26	36	26	48	6	219

An area with a projected deficit across all Key stages: the South West (Shinfield, Arborfield, Barkham, Swallowfield and part of Finchampstead within the Arborfield Garrison SDL area). It is worth noting that this area includes both the Shinfield and Arborfield SDL areas, and therefore has very high numbers of homes completed over the past decade, with further homes to follow. The Shinfield area is seeing the highest rate of growth and is the area with immediate capacity issues.

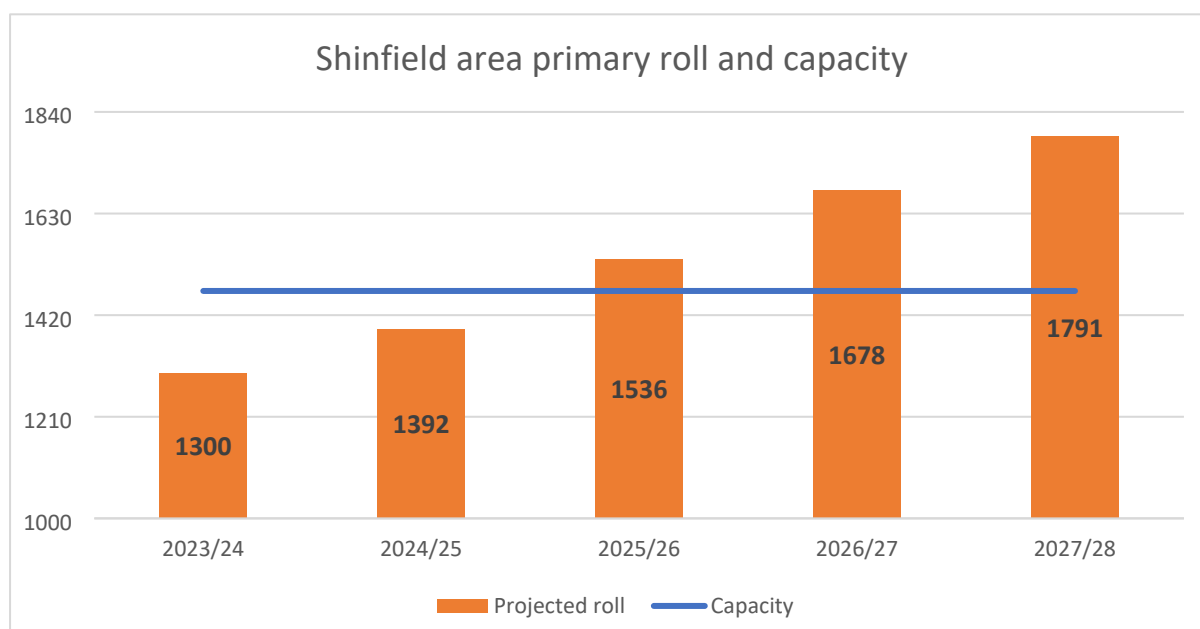
South West									
Capacity		R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1965	2023/24	-4	40	-3	1	1	2	2	39
2055	2024/25	-1	-6	36	3	-11	-4	18	35
2145	2025/26	-52	-3	-11	39	-9	-16	12	-40
2235	2026/27	-54	-54	-7	-7	34	-14	0	-102
2295	2027/28	-54	-56	-58	-4	-13	31	2	-152

The South West area is effectively divided by the Loddon Valley, with Shinfield South Ward to the north-west, and Arborfield, Barkham, Swallowfield and parts of Finchampstead to the south-east. In

Shinfield, major developments being sited around the Shinfield Village, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross communities (South of the M4 SDL). In the south-east the schools are in the Arborfield Green and Arborfield Cross communities. The Arborfield SDL is sited where the Arborfield, Barkham, Finchampstead South and Swallowfield wards meet. The Arborfield SDL is the major population centre in this area, with c.1,800 further homes planned for the period 2023 to 2030.

Currently, within the South West area, the Shinfield area is experiencing the highest rates of growth and school place pressures. The Shinfield SDL is now largely built out, although a further c.630 homes are planned for the period 2023 to 2030, completing the development of 3,000 new homes.

Disaggregating the projections and capacities of the Shinfield schools from other South West schools makes this clear. In essence, rolls are rising and there is a current local deficit of 30 Reception places (with children placed in other Borough schools), and a projected deficit against whole school capacity by 2025/26. Note that the surplus capacity seen below reflects the fact that the Alder Grove CoE Primary School is filling one year group at a time through Reception class admissions, with this surplus capacity expected to be filled for 2025/26 admission.



Actions proposed for place planning

In response to the above-described analysis of each admission area’s trend of school place needs, the following actions are proposed for next five year’s primary school place planning:

Areas where more Key Stage 2 places would be helpful: Earley, Wokingham Town East and Woodley.

The Council has been working with the Keys Trust to develop an option to add a bulge Year 6 class at St. Cecilia’s C of E Primary School, should applications / in year admissions merit this. Such an option would only be deployed if required in order to meet the Borough’s sufficiency obligations.

Areas where it might be possible to reduce Planned Admission Numbers (PANs), without significant risks to Key Stage 2 capacity: North, South East and Wokingham Town West.

Note that when PANs are decreased this increases the likelihood that additional Key Stage 2 capacity will need to be agreed and funded as children age through the primary phase. While it is clearly preferable for schools to maintain a 1 to 30 teacher to children ratio in Key Stage 1 and a 1 to 32

ratio in Key Stage 2, the implication of making PAN reductions to maintain these ratios is that the Council may have to fund an increased number of places in older Key Stage 2 year groups, if the current rate of mid-phase growth is maintained. Without reduced PANs additional children could be absorbed into classes with significant numbers of unfilled places. It is therefore important that the Growth Fund is funded and resourced appropriately to meet this challenge.

If the rate of migration into the Borough slows to pre-2021 levels, the Council would need to look to make significant reductions in the number of primary phase places. This would likely require area school re-organisation, rather than reductions in PANs at a number of schools.

In recent years, the Council made a number of applications to the Schools Adjudicator to reduce primary school PANs, with mixed results. In future, it is intended to make adjustments to primary PANs through the annual admissions determination process.

Area where there is a case for additional Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 capacity: South West (Shinfield focus)

Rolls are rising now and there is a local need for at least an additional 30 places per year. Place need is projected to increase above this level, as developments complete. In the long term, though, demand may drop back towards current levels, as new homes age and children age out of the primary phase.

Shinfield options:

A range of options for action have been considered, including “do nothing”; expansion of an existing school; and the creation of a new school. “Do nothing” is not recommended because alternative provision is not within statutory walking distance, which could lead to an unsustainable increase in home to school transport spend by the Council. The expansion of an existing school would provide a sustainable, flexible option and good value for money. The Council must also explore the alternative option, building new school premises on a separate site. A site is available, in Spencers Wood but this is within AWE Burghfield’s Detailed Emergency Planning Zone and consequently may be subject to additional planning restrictions. Currently, the Council holds c.£4m in S106 contributions that are linked to this site, and it may be better value for money to build school premises here, to avoid losing this money. New school premises could be run as a new school or as a satellite of an existing school. As population growth in this area is housing led, it is anticipated that growth would be maintained, even if the rate of international migration into the Borough fell back to pre-2021 levels.

It is proposed that the Council takes steps to create at least 210 places, with an option to add a further 210 places if required. The Council will test options in this respect over the course of the coming year, with a view to anticipated delivery of additional building capacity for September 2026 (taking advantage of exiting temporary surplus capacity in the interim, if necessary).

Secondary Phase Sufficiency

Background

The council’s secondary schools are divided into two areas for place planning purposes.

- **North area schools:** Maiden Erlegh, Bulmershe, Waingels and the Piggott schools.
- **South area schools:** Oakbank, Forest, Emmbrook, Holt, St Crispins and Bohunt Wokingham Schools.

All these schools are, or will shortly be, Academies or Free Schools. Holt School is the sole single sex (girls) school in the area. The Forest School is converting from a boys to a co-educational school from September 2024.

The North area has seen markedly lower rates of housebuilding in the last decade than the south and, because of the limited building opportunities in the north (much of the area is either built up or designated green belt) this is likely to be true in future too. This is expected to have implications for the future balance of the Wokingham child population between these areas.

As noted above the key factors of school place need are:

- High numbers of children currently feeding through from the primary sector, reflecting high and growing birth numbers until 2012.
- High migration rates
- Inter-Borough movement

Year 7 numbers required for next three years are projected to remain high, well above current permanent Year 7 place capacity, reflecting the impact of both high continuing rates of migration of primary school age into the Borough and high numbers coming through from the primary sector, reflecting high and rising birth rates until 2012. Should the migration rates fall, the number of children who have arrived to date is expected to maintain Year 7 numbers above those established in 2021 and earlier projections. However, demand across the projection period will reduce and Year 7 numbers can be expected to fall too, in this event.

There are also challenges due to the increase in the number of mid-secondary-phase applicants. These are particularly acute for girls, as in most year groups there are places for boys at the Forest School. This school is converting to co-educational status through annual changes to the admissions to Year 7 arrangements. As a consequence, the challenges the council faces placing girls in older year groups are likely to persist throughout the five-year period it takes the school to become fully co-educational.

Movement between the Borough and adjoining local authorities is not balanced, with more Wokingham Borough children securing out of Borough places than vice versa. The number of children crossing the Borough boundary is much higher than is the case for the primary sector, and the net movement is a much more significant issue, with a net balance of 382 or 4% more of Wokingham Borough's resident secondary state school attendees on roll at an out of Borough school than there are out of Borough children on roll at a Wokingham school. While there is no obvious reason to expect this to change in the immediate future, this is a potential place planning vulnerability.

A new secondary school, River Academy Reading (part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust family of schools) opens in September 2024. This school is planned to provide capacity for north Reading, but the actual impact will not be seen until 2024 admission. It is possible that the new school may have an indirect impact and make more Year 7 places available at Wokingham Borough residents' preferred Reading Schools.

The most significant movements are Wokingham Borough children to Grammar schools in Reading and Slough and Wokingham Without (Crowthorne) children to Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. Conversely significant numbers of Reading children attend Wokingham Borough schools, with the highest numbers being at schools in Earley and Woodley.

Local Authority	Wokingham residents' destinations	Wokingham school roll from out of Borough
Reading	781	1010
Bracknell Forest	575	118
Hampshire	63	54
Windsor and Maidenhead	15	33
West Berkshire	27	19
Oxfordshire	15	12
Buckinghamshire	17	5
Slough	139	0
Others	16	15
Total	1648	1266

Net loss from Wokingham Borough schools	-382
Total Roll Number	10,752
% of total	-4%

The projection of secondary place needs (made in 2023):

	7	8	9	10	11
2023/24	-164	-143	-59	37	50
2024/25	-177	-212	-202	-73	25
2025/26	-162	-222	-274	-227	-87
2026/27	-182	-215	-284	-315	-240
2027/28	-256	-221	-277	-325	-329
2028/29	-268	-331	-283	-318	-338
2029/30	-204	-374	-394	-324	-331
2030/31	-140	-250	-437	-438	-337

These figures take account of current school capacity (and therefore do not include planned additional places at a number of Wokingham schools).

There are also two local issues, one related to recent development and another long standing, which are significant enough to require specific focus of place planning for next five years:

Firstly, Shinfield is served by one secondary school, Oakbank, which admits c.120 pupils a year. Local primary schools admit 210 pupils (with further growth to follow). Alternative schools are not within walking distance, so the provision is unbalanced. There are no immediate local solutions, but one may become available in conjunction with the proposed Loddon Valley Garden Village (Hall Farm), which was a preferred allocation in consultative stages of the emerging local plan. Conversely, the schools that many Shinfield residents do rely on are in Winnersh and Wokingham Town. The option of a new school in Hall Farm could negatively impact on the current schools that supply the places for children in Shinfield. However, further residential development on the southern edge of Wokingham Town is expected and the number of children living in the communities around that area requiring secondary places will also increase. As a consequence, it is possible that rebalancing

could be achieved, in time, without any detriment or need to make changes to existing Winnersh / Wokingham Town provision.

Secondly, much of Wokingham Without (part of Crowthorne) is served by Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. Rising numbers of children in Crowthorne have meant that some local Wokingham Borough children have not been admitted to that school. While the school has advised that they would offer additional places, this would be dependent on financial support. Bracknell Forest Council have no grounds to give such support and the DfE have advised this local authority that it should not do so. However, if Bracknell Year 7 numbers do begin to decline, it is likely that the place availability issue for Wokingham resident families will become less acute in time.

Options for action

Year 7 place shortfall: The council has a number of options, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The “do nothing” option and reliance on provision in other boroughs could be eliminated quickly, because neither was likely to meet statutory need. A new school would be expensive and vulnerable should rolls begin to decline, as they are projected to do. Accordingly, the council has focused on expansion at existing schools. The expansion programme has focused on larger expansion schemes, on three school sites near areas of continuing residential growth (at St Crispins, the Emmbrook and the Bohunt schools), and a fourth (Piggott School) in the north of the Borough. Other schools have provided useful capacity too, but at a lower scale.

Current programmes of school place expansion

Plans were agreed in 2022 for expansion projects at a number of secondary schools, based on forecasts that year 7 rolls would peak in 2022-24 and decline towards a level that could be accommodated in the permanent Year 7 capacity, over much of the following decade.

More recent projections, taking account of the impact of increased international migration from 2021 onwards, point to a need for the enhanced capacity to be maintained for a longer period. Moreover, the proposals that had been developed before 2023 were found to be unaffordable within the council’s financial constraints and needed to be modified. New and modified plans have been developed. While some of these are still subject to final legal agreement with schools, they have been verified through value for money checks and considered to be deliverable within resource constraints.

In 2023, a significant effort has been made across the council departments led by the Education and SEND Service to pursue expansion programmes of existing schools while having a focus on outcomes and value for money, as well as a revised place forecasting model to inform any need to modify the programmes.

The new approach with cross-cutting council-wide efforts and stronger partnership with schools have led to successfully securing sufficient secondary school places for next three years until 2027.

However, our forecast indicates that Wokingham will still need extra secondary school places for the remaining planning period from 2027-28 until at least 2030-31. The need for extra places in addition to what has already been secured is minimal and manageable.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30*	2030/31*
Year 7 shortfall	-177	-162	-182	-256	-268	-204	-140
St Crispins	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
Emmbrook	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Piggott	46	45	45	45	45	45	45
Bohunt	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Oakbank	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Waingels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Holt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forest	90	60	60	60	60	60	60
Maiden Erlegh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bulmershe	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total Extra Places	274	243	243	243	243	243	243
<i>Balance</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>-13</i>	<i>-25</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>103</i>

* Current school place expansion programmes cover next five years' planning period up to 2029/30. The continued delivery of the increased numbers for the future years beyond 2029 (highlighted in yellow below) will need to be confirmed with the relevant schools by November 2024, the time for an annual review of this strategy. Sufficiency for 2029-2031 will also be achieved once this has been confirmed.

As the Forest School will convert to co-educational status from September 2024 there is no requirement to make adjustments for unusable places for boys, as was the case in 2022 and 2023.

International migration will in time reduces back to pre-2021 levels. Should that occur in the near future in the near future, the number of places required will also reduce significantly, at least eliminating the 2027 to 2030 projected deficit against existing plans.

Proposal for action

The projected shortfalls of the later years of this planning period will be reviewed in the light of the 2024/25 updated projections, taking account future changes to the immigration rate and inter-borough movement. Any necessary actions will be developed in partnership with schools in the Autumn 2024 to Spring 2025 period, in good time for the budget making process for the 2027 Financial Year. If additional temporary capacity is required, this is likely to be delivered in the form of bulge classes, so as to ensure that places are not oversupplied, in view of the falling rolls issue currently filtering through the age range.

Post-16

Local sufficiency for post-16 participation requires cross departmental collaboration between Skills, Growth and Economic Development and Education Services in Wokingham Borough and in neighbouring local authorities.

Most post-16 provision for the Borough is through sixth forms in eight of the Borough's secondary schools. These are academically selective; largely offering A Levels and other Level 3 courses. A minority of students go onto sixth forms, sixth form colleges and other provision outside the

Borough for A-level study. Most Level 2 and vocational courses are offered out of Borough, with majority of them in Reading and Bracknell Forest at Further Education colleges. The Council has agreed to work with the Bohunt Education Trust to open a new sixth form at the Bohunt Wokingham School (currently planned for September 2025). Schools have considerable discretion around the size and nature of their sixth form offer.

Several Wokingham Borough school Sixth Forms have surplus capacity. In May 2025, three schools had sixth form rolls below the DfE’s minimum size expectation for a new sixth form of 200 students. However, Sixth Form rolls are forecast to rise over the projection period of 2023/24 to 2030/31, as the rising numbers of students being admitted to secondary schools age into the post 16 sector. Moreover, some of the preferred out of Borough provision (Sixth Form Colleges in particular) may be unable to admit Wokingham Borough students, because of rising demand for their post-16 places from nearby communities. There is therefore a concern that the demand for sixth form places may in the foreseeable future exceed local sixth form capacity. Other providers, the FE Colleges in particular, are known to have more flexibility, and would reasonably be expected to respond positively to increased demand from Wokingham Borough students for Level 3 (A/T Level) courses. Although the council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient sixth form places, the DfE do not provide capital funding to enable local authorities to create this capacity.

The sixth form roll projection is the standard Wokingham Borough roll forecast. It is based on the average of the last three years Year 12 rolls at a school with a sixth form, as a proportion of the preceding year’s Year 11 roll (e.g. Year 12 2023 ÷ Year 11 2022). Sixth form capacities are estimated through a number of methods, following DfE guidance.

The current sufficiency analysis (gap between projected need and current provision) points to there being a significant sixth form place deficit over the projection period, even taking account of the new sixth form for the Bohunt School scheme that is in active development. However, there is an example of a school operating successfully with an apparent deficit. In this case, its actual and projected rolls include significant numbers of young people from outside the Borough. Wokingham schools are not compelled to offer significant number of places to students from outside the Borough. Taking account of these facts, part of the deficit could be discounted, so that any operational deficits will occur much later in the projection period, if they occur at all. On this basis any deficit will be more limited and probably be manageable within existing Borough resources.

Year	Total places	Standard Roll Projection ¹	Surplus / Deficit	Restricted to ex WBC Year 11 ²	Surplus / Deficit	Alternative place calculation ³	Surplus / Deficit
2024	2,286	2,141	145	2,151	135	2,542	391

¹ The standard roll projection uses the historic relationship between Year 11 and Year 12 rolls (and between Year 12 and Year 13) to derive projected future Year 12 and 13 rolls. This would mean that out of Borough admissions to WBC sixth forms would rise in line with WBC origin sixth form rolls.

² This projection is on the basis that out of Borough entry to WBC sixth forms will not rise in line with WBC origin rolls, where schools have discretion over external admissions to sixth forms. For the purposes of this exercise this is modelled by freezing one school’s sixth form at 500 on roll.

³ WBC core concern is whether all young people 16+ have suitable provision available to them. Some schools have apparent current shortfall in sixth form provision but are able to deliver high quality post-16 education despite this. This may simply reflect the inadequacy of the tools and information available for sixth form capacity evaluation. This measure removes sixth capacity shortfalls at schools that are known to have current calculated deficit, but which operate successfully. Inclusion of these deficits risks masking genuine capacity deficits that may result in young people being unable to secure desired sixth form places.

Year	Total places	Standard Roll Projection ¹	Surplus / Deficit	Restricted to ex WBC Year 11 ²	Surplus / Deficit	Alternative place calculation ³	Surplus / Deficit
2025	2,286	2,319	- 33	2,318	- 32	2,602	284
2026	2,436	2,547	- 111	2,536	- 100	2,752	216
2027	2,586	2,814	- 228	2,775	- 189	2,902	127
2028	2,586	3,013	- 427	2,918	- 332	2,902	- 16
2029	2,586	3,141	- 555	3,009	- 423	2,902	- 107
2030	2,586	3,174	- 588	3,033	- 447	2,902	- 131
2031	2,586	3,176	- 590	3,035	- 449	2,902	- 133

Proposed actions

Given:

- that schools have discretion over the size of their sixth forms;
- the significant level of surplus sixth form capacity at a number of Wokingham Borough schools;
- the small size of some Wokingham Borough sixth forms;
- the uncertainty over future needs; and
- the planned 2025 opening of a new sixth form at the Bohunt School,

it is proposed that the Council continues to monitor current place needs and developments in sixth form provision in neighbouring local authorities. Apart from the review of post-16 place sufficiency, the Council will need to review, with local and strategic partners, the fit of the current post-16 offer with local educational demand and skills needs. It is important that post-16 education provides young people with the skills that will enable them to thrive, in line with the expectations raised in the “Skills for Jobs” White Paper from 2021. To this end, the Council will look to develop proposals for broadening the local post-16 offer, alongside any increase in capacity.

Future community needs

The council is required to plan for long term development needs, including the need for additional housing. Whilst work continues, consultative stages of the local plan have proposed two new major housing allocations. If confirmed, planning permission would need to be gained and so first housing completions likely be five years away with full realisation over a period extending into the 2040s. The major proposals will give rise to significant demand for school places. Education proposals are to a large extent, prudent planning for possible future need, rather than firm commitments to actions that may be a decade or more in the future.

Loddon Garden Village

The most important potential major development (c.3,750 homes) is the Loddon Garden Village proposal focused on land around the University of Reading’s ownership at Hall Farm. It is proposed that this development should have two primary school sites and one secondary school site. The two primary schools could be sustained by the need arising from development alone. Secondary schools need to take a minimum intake (at least 180 children per year) to be viable, and this would not be generated by this development. The school would therefore need to serve a wider area, i.e. Shinfield and possibly parts of Lower Earley too (fringe areas normally outside Maiden Erlegh School’s recruitment radius). This points to the need to plan any new provision in partnership with the

Anthem Trust, who are responsible for the Oakbank School. It will be several years before works start on site, and the area requires extensive work before the school could be built. As agricultural land it has no utilities, roads, or other infrastructure to enable development. However, strategic local planning is being initiated to maximise the opportunity and sustainability of this future development for school improvement.

South Wokingham SDL Extension

This proposal would add up to a further c.1,150 homes to the existing South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL). Although the first part of the SDL, Montague Park, is now complete, the land south of the Wokingham to Bracknell rail line is yet to be delivered. The area south of the railway scheme has a planned primary school within it, to be brought forward if necessary. The new scheme is expected to have a further primary school site reserved. This gives the council assurance that it will be able to meet needs locally, if a further school is required. Although, as with the Loddon Garden Village proposal, there is much site work to be completed before the school could be built, the plans are more developed and so delivery of new homes is expected to commence at an earlier date.

Risks

Risk	RAG rating	Mitigation	Post mitigation RAG rating
Current projections are unreliable, because they are underpinned by high rates of international migration, which may return to or towards pre-2021 levels at any time	Red	By moving to annual all-phase plans, proposals can be developed, and commitments made on an annual basis (“just in time”) rather than some years in advance.	Yellow
The Council’s financial position could deteriorate further, and the capital programme commitments may be undeliverable.	Yellow	The purpose of the “Gold” review process was to ensure that schemes were reduced to their minimum costs so as to be deliverable within the council’s resources. The new School Place Planning Working Group galvanises the joint efforts of planning, education, property services of the Council to find the VfM solutions.	Green
Further changes to the Borough’s population, such as an increased rate of migration into the area, could make the current proposals too limited in scope to meet needs.	Yellow	Changes such as this are outside the council’s control. However, the national view is that the level of net migration seen last year is exceptional and will reduce in future years.	Yellow
School priorities (broadly, standards) may be out of alignment with the council’s need to work within budget constraints.	Red	The Gold process, of negotiation by senior officers, led by members of the council’s most senior leadership team is believed to have arrived at a set of proposals that provide additional capacity and meet essential school requirements. The assessment is left as “amber” because the underpinning formal agreements are still in preparation.	Yellow
Further increases in construction costs, labour shortages and diversion of manufacturing capacity to help meet other identified national needs (such as providing temporary accommodation for RAAC affected schools) makes the construction programme undeliverable.	Red	As far as is practicable the growth programme emphasises use of existing premises to achieve growth aims. Minimising the need for investment provides better VFM and minimises risks to programme delivery from this source.	Yellow

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Appendix 1: Shinfield area primary phase delivery plan

There are five primary phase schools in Shinfield Parish: Shinfield Infant and Nursery and Shinfield St Mary's Junior Schools, Lambs Lane Primary School, Alder Grove CoE Primary School and Grazeley Parochial VA COE Primary School. Shinfield Infant and Nursery Schools, Shinfield St Mary's CoE Junior School and Grazeley Parochial Schools were all expanded in the early 2010s, and none are thought to have significant future expansion capacity. Lambs Lane provided additional "bulge classes" at that time and is not thought to have further significant expansion potential. The site is small and car parking provided on leased land. Grazeley Parochial also has a limited site and is not within walking distance (by a safe route) of the new Shinfield communities.

There are two viable options for creating additional capacity in Shinfield:

- a) Expansion of the Alder Grove CoE Primary School
- b) A new school site in Spencers Wood.

There is an additional strip of land available through the S106 agreement for the Shinfield West development to enable the expansion of the Alder Grove CoE Primary School. Capacity delivered on this site is likely to cost significantly less than delivering additional capacity on an entirely new site.

There is a primary school site in Spencers Wood available through the S106 agreement for the Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross housing development. Although the costs per place would be higher than at Alder Grove, the site has the potential to offer more places than would be possible through the Alder Grove expansion scheme.

In addition, the Council holds c£4m of S106 funding ringfenced to the Spencers Wood site. This would require a deed of variation to enable the funds to be used on the Alder Grove project. Although discussions are ongoing, to date, agreement has not been given to this.

However, the Spencers Wood site is within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone of the AWE Burghfield site and, as such, there is a risk of objection or restrictive planning conditions being applied to any development.

The Council is developing proposals for both sites whilst negotiations with the developers are ongoing, on the basis that forfeiture of the S106 funding would make expansion on either site difficult to achieve in view of the current financial context.

Initial indicative timetable

Task	Date
Planning application for a development brief for the Spencers Wood site	Spring / Summer 2024
Decision on Preferred Option	Spring 2025
Additional children admitted to an existing school	September 2025
Construction contract let	Spring / Summer 2025
Initial site occupation	September 2026

Author/Officer: Piers Brunning – School Organisation and Place Planning Manager

Safety Valve Programme & SEND Improvement

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*- Update for Children Services
Overview and Scrutiny*

20th March 2024



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Agenda Item 78.

The presentation provides updates on the following areas:

- **Safety Valve Programme Update**
- **SEND Strategy Update**
- **Financial Analysis and Benchmarking of High Needs Block spending**

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Safety Valve Programme Update



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Early Intervention & SEN Support

- ✓ Co-designed and launched new Area SENCO Service
- ✓ Launched new outreach model for SLCN
- ✓ Increased investment in outreach for SEMH, and ASD
- ✓ Recruited additional capacity in Early Years
- ✓ Launched new inclusion training
- ✓ Recruited new Local Offer Coordinator
- ✓ Completed Vulnerable Learners Panel Pilot

Sufficiency and New Provision

- ✓ Additional interest secured from schools for resource bases, with awards made to two primary schools for first cohort – to open Sept 2024
- ✓ Opened additional capacity at Addington Special School satellite
- ✓ New Oak Tree Special School opened
- ✓ Agreed specification for two new Free Schools, ultimately providing 240 places
- ✓ Developed new Preparation for Adulthood checklist, tracker, guide, and webinar series
- ✓ New PfA Coordinator appointed

Commissioning and Quality Assurance

- ✓ New Alternative Provision model designed, working group established and HT seconded to lead work
- ✓ New targeted approach to quality monitoring of providers
- ✓ Successfully contained independent sector provider uplift requests at lower inflation than neighbours
- ✓ Identified joint funding opportunities for complex placements

Also...

- ✓ Reviewed and strengthened panel processes and decision-making
- ✓ Recruited additional data analysis capacity and created new performance dashboards
- ✓ Agreement from Schools Forum for 0.5% High Needs Block transfer

And much more!

End of year Headlines - *what has been achieved in the first year?*




SEND Strategy Update

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Structure of the workshops

Workshop 1 	Workshop 2 	Workshop 3 
<p>Priority 1 – Inclusion, Access and Early Intervention</p> <p>54 Priority 2 – SEND Sufficiency</p>	<p>Priority 4 - Effective Transitions</p> <p>Priority 5 – Communication and Co-Production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bringing together outputs from work thus far and agreeing concrete next steps.• What will be added to strategy document or action plan?• What are key next steps?• How will this work be structured and who needs to be involved?
<p>Priority 3 – Consideration of joint commissioning to be taken forward outside of these workshops by the relevant parties.</p>		

SEND Strategy – Priorities and Principles

Priorities

Inclusion,
access, and
early
intervention

Sufficiency of
services and
support

Joint
commissioning

Effective
transitions

Communication
and co-
production

Principles

Co-Production is central - We will ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families shape our services

Ensure that children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities

Early support and prevention

SEND is everyone's business

We are ambitious for Children and Young People with SEND

Support will be needs-led NOT diagnosis-led

Honesty, integrity and trust will be hallmarks of the local system

SEND Strategy – Timetable

- Final Co-Production Workshop – 28th March
- Write up and circulation of final draft for Approval – April
- Submitted to CLT for approval on 24 May
- CS O&S - 20th March and 26th June (the day before Exec)
- Executive - 27th June – (Needs to finalised and released by 17 June)

Summary of Financial Analysis and Benchmarking



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Aim

- Schools and LA to work in partnership to co-produce High Need spending plans with shared knowledge of current funding level and the priorities agreed for the finite resources.

Current position

- Need for EHC Plans on course with projections
- BUT Financial pressure is not reducing as fast as expected – remains unsustainably high (in keeping with national trends)
- Particularly acute pressure from placement in Independent and Non-Maintained sector (INMSS) and increased placement and costs in mainstream and Alternative Provision
- We have carried out more detailed analysis of the position to understand the drivers for this – this is summarised below.

Observations and analysis

- Fewer EHCPs (per head of population) than comparators but higher spend per head
- Low levels of pupils at SEN Support indicates that system is intervening late
- Uneven distribution of EHCPs between schools – whole system is heavily reliant on small number of schools with high levels of funding. Whilst these schools are very inclusive they are in a dominant position, which creates system-wide vulnerabilities
- Top up funding bands starts at a very high rate – there is no lower tier for less complex needs
- ⁵Top up funding across the board seems to be very ad-hoc – some schools are in strong position to negotiate special terms for individual cases.
- BUT we now have high % of EHCPs in mainstream, which is welcomed as the hallmark of an inclusive system, so we need to proceed with caution
- Comparative spending on SEN Support and Inclusion is **very low** – we are investing money at too late a stage and it is costing the system more. Recent additional investment still leaves WBC in a relatively low-funded position in this area.

Proposed actions to address this position

- **Recommendation from high-performing areas with more sustainable HN spending** – “Create a simple banding framework”
- **Review of Banding Framework** will address some of these anomalies
 - Re-established the review team: SEND leads, Commissioning, Finance and Data team.
 - Refined scope to clearly outline the specific goals, objectives.
 - Reviewed existing data for As-Is position and assessment of current system issues to be addressed
 - Conducted initial stakeholder consultations: Engaging with key stakeholders, including educational professionals, and LA colleagues in Wokingham and wider region, to gather their perspectives and input.
 - Piloted a draft banded funding formula with Oak Tree (recently opened Special School) & developed a critical analysis of that banded funding matrix: Assessing the effectiveness, equity, and fairness of the current funding structure. Identify areas for improvement and potential areas for reform.
- Need to **build greater consistency across the system at every level** – a review of our **guidance on our Ordinarily Available offer** and **Peer Moderation** led by new Area SENCO will begin to address this at SEND Support level
- Investing in early intervention at SEND Support as part of Ordinarily Available Offer, including Area SENCO Team, new AP model of multi-agency support for schools and pupils, as well as specialist outreach



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Children's Services Dashboard

Quarter 3 2023-24

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Introduction

This report covers Children's Services performance during October 2023, November 2023, and December 2023, which will be referred to as quarter three (Q3) throughout this report.

Dashboard Item 1 – Funded Education, Health & Care Plans

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs placed in borough (snapshot at end of period)	1075	1017	1075	1135	1176	1199	↑
Current EHCPs placed out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	513	471	513	534	548	581	↑
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral (excl. exceptions)	57.1%	33.3%	73.6%	84.1%	80.9%	47.6%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council where the children have an educational placement both in the borough and out of the borough has increased slightly since last quarter.

The EHCPs issued within 20 weeks has decreased compared to the previous quarter, with an average timeliness of 47.6%. This is below WBC's target of 70% and currently compares unfavourably to the national average of 50.7% but is higher than statistical neighbours of 39.27%.

Analysis

There continues to be a high demand within the 'SEND system' for Education, Health, and Care needs assessments, which has resulted in the increase of the number of EHC Plans maintained by WBC.

The total number of EHC needs assessments requested during October to December 2023 was 114, 48% higher than Q2 (77 requests) and similar to Q3 in 2022 (112 requests). This compounded pressure on the Education Psychology service as well as therapy assessments through CYPIT.

There continues to be challenges however with the provider commissioned by Wokingham Borough Council, particularly in relation to occupational therapy assessments where late advice (reports) can impact on timeliness.

Next steps

To reverse this trend, the SEND Service held a meeting with the Performance Team and Principle Education Psychologist, with the following developments:

- A new 'timeliness' dashboard has been developed (currently in beta form), that provides live data and can be used as a supportive tool by SEND Managers to monitor and step in if any EHC Plans appear to be at risk of being overdue.

- An EHC assessment request dashboard has also been produced- which will help with short-, medium- and long-term planning, to support staff to prioritise, and request additional capacity to assist with peaks in demand.

- Through Commissioning, we will continue to monitor (and raise concerns if required) the timeliness of statutory advice through CYPIT, which currently impact overall EHCP timescales”.

Regular performance meetings have diarised with the provider commissioned to deliver statutory advice and provision (speech and language and occupational therapy) to identify and troubleshoot any issues that may impact timeliness.

The Head of SEND is working closely with finance and data colleagues to predict future demand into the SEND system to support an early intervention approach.

Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	1591	415	376	397	367	479	↑
No. Early Help Assessments	1395	324	367	311	360	312	↓
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	28	28	33	30	34	33	↓

What does this show us?

In Q3, the number of Early Help referrals increased by 31% compared to Q2 and is 15% higher than the number of referrals for the same period last year.

In Q3, the number of assessments has decreased by 13% compared to Q2 and 4% compared to the same period last year.

The service has been able to reduce the average length of time taken to complete an assessment between this quarter and the last, albeit it remains slightly longer than in the same quarter last year. This is reflective of the challenges that have been experienced by the service in terms of the management of a sustained volume of activity with a reduced workforce.

Although there are no nationally set timescales our local practice standards target is 30 days.

What is the background to this?

There are no targets for the number of referrals received by Early Help, or the number of assessments carried out.

What action is the service taking?

The Integrated Early Help Service provides targeted support to children and families at the point of presenting need, to try to prevent problems becoming more acute and requiring escalation into statutory services.

The service continues to carefully monitor demand and take steps to build capacity to respond to identified increases. Whilst recruitment to the vacant posts previously highlighted was successful, the service remains three staff members down; two long-standing staff members have recently left to take up other work/training opportunities and a third remains away from the office due to health reasons. The service expects to be fully staffed by March 2024.

What is the national context?

Comparative national figures are not available for Early Help activity and timeliness.

Dashboard Item 3 – Children's Social Care Front Door

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-23	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
No. of Contacts progressed to Referral	1607	355	507	405	445	417	↓
% of referrals to which are repeat referrals within 12 months	20.2%	21.0%	17.9%	20.0%	18.2%	21.2%	↑
% Assessments completed within 45 working days	66.7%	68.5%	52.8%	73.7%	67.6%	89.0%	↑

What does this show us?

417 referrals were recorded in Q3 (2023-24) which is a decrease of 6.2% in comparison to the previous quarter but higher than same period last year. There were 88 repeat referrals within 12 months (21.2%).

Timeliness of Assessments completed within 45 working days increased by 21.4% this quarter and 20.5% higher than the same period last year.

What is the background to this?

When an agency shares information with the local authority on a Multi-Agency Referral form, or a member of the public shares concerns about a child, this is considered a Contact. A Contact progresses to a Referral when a decision has been taken to complete an Assessment. There is no target for the number of Referrals to CSC as each Contact is individually assessed.

CSC aims for less than 20% of its referrals to be repeat referrals within 12 months and strives for 80% of Assessments to be completed within 45 days.

The data has been interrogated which led to targeted work to improve timeliness. There has been a huge focus in the last quarter in terms of monitoring timescales, and we have been able to target specific areas where improvement was needed and reduced the number of days assessments were open.

What is the national context?

The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022-23 for assessments completed within 45 days are 83% and 82% respectively.

The national average for repeat referrals within 12 months is 21% and the statistical neighbour average is 22%.

Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	157	134	157	157	144	123	↓
% Of children coming onto a CP plan for a second or subsequent time ever	21%	18.6%	24.5%	13.8%	17.4%	23.3%	↑
% Of child protection visits within timescale (10 working days)	72%	73%	72%	78%	75%	78%	↑

What does this show us?

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) has fallen this quarter and is lower than the same period last year (figures show a decrease of 8.2% when compared to Q3 2022-23). 30 children became subject to a CPP in Q3 2023-24, 7 of these children had a previous plan, compared to 23 children becoming subject to CPP and 4 having a previous plan in the last quarter.

The proportion of CP visits completed within timescales has increased this quarter (78%) compared to (75%) in Q2 and is higher than the same period last year (73%).

What is the background to this?

The increase seen in the % of children becoming subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time needs to be seen in the context of the lower number of children subject to CP Plans at the end of Q3. Three families were made subject to repeat CP Planning. Previously these children were subject to Child Protection Plans over 2 years ago and were registered under different categories of harm. Child Protection Conference Chairs are proactive in their oversight of children on repeat CP plans and know that they must raise any concerns about the progress of the plan with the service manager.

Wokingham sets itself a best-practice standard of carrying out Child Protection visits within 10 working days of the previous visit. This has been an area of focus for the service to develop and achieve the target of 80% of visits in timescale.

What action is the service taking?

Although performance for Child Protection visits has increased in Q3 we are aware that there are some children that we have difficulty accessing but there is management oversight of this and plans in place to mitigate the risks for these children.

What is the national context?

Wokingham's figure for Child Protection Plans per 10,000 at the end of 2022-23 was (38), which is below the England average of (43) in 2022-23.

Across 2022-23 Wokingham's figure for repeat Child Protection Plans (CPP) was 21% which is below the national average (24%) and that of statistical neighbours (26%).

Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
No. Children in Care (snapshot at end of period)	137	140	137	123	135	132	↓
No. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)	40	41	40	37	40	38	↓
% visits to children in care within timescale	80%	81%	85%	85%	86%	87%	↑
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	37%	36%	37%	41%	49%	54.2%	↑

What does this show us?

The number of children in care at end of Q3 has decreased by 2.2% compared to Q2 and 5.7% lower than the same period last year.

There has been consistency in the percentage of visits to children in care taking place within the timescale. On a positive note, a slight increasing trend is observed. Out of the 455 visits conducted in Q3, 397 were within the timescale.

The percentage of children in care who have had more than one allocated worker in the previous 12 months has increased since last quarter the change of social worker is not always necessarily negative. It can take place organically when a child transfers over from one team, when proceedings have been concluded and the long-term care plan has been confirmed, they then transfer to the Here4u team where they will be supported until 18 and beyond 18 as care leavers. Within the Here4u team there has been relative stability within the work force however recently we had one social worker move on from the service. We had another take up a secondment opportunity and there was some long-term sickness/ maternity leave.

What is the background to this?

Wokingham's children in care figures are historically lower than those of statistical neighbours and regional averages, which could be influenced by the boroughs' demographic, and our approach to only taking children into care when all other safe alternatives have been explored and found not viable. The focused interventions offered to our families and children through Early Help and the Compass service also aides in achieving this more positive position.

Whilst it is our ambition for the change in social worker to be as low as possible, and every effort is made to limit the disruption caused for each child, if a change of social worker is unavoidable. We acknowledge that there will always be some occasions where a change of social worker will be in the best interest of the child.

What action is the service taking?

The number of visits carried out within timescale has increased quarter-on-quarter in the last year. Q3 2023-24 shows 87% compared to 81% in Q3 last year. This is very encouraging and positive progress. CSC emphasises a child-focussed approach to social work; in some instances, visits will be allowed to go outside of timescale to ensure that children are visited by the same social worker to provide reassuring continuity in relationships and case planning.

We also need to recognise that sometimes with our older children they refuse to be seen or make themselves available to social workers which can impact on timeliness of visits. In these instances, the service continues to make all efforts to secure the child's engagement.

What is the national context?

The rate of Children in Care per 10,000 at the end of March 2023 is (71) for England, (51) for statistical neighbours and (57) for the South-East, with the Wokingham rate being significantly lower at (32).

If Wokingham were looking after the South-East regional average rate (57) per 10,000 we would have at least 235 children in care.

Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
No. of Care Leavers (snapshot at end of period)	115	104	115	121	131	129	↓
No. of Care Leavers in Touch (snapshot at end of period) (18-24)	103	92	103	111	115	125	↑
% of care leavers aged 18-24 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	100%	99%	100%	100%	96%	97%	↑
No. of Care Leavers 'in touch' & NEET (snapshot at end of period)	35	39	35	37	50	43	↓
% of care leavers aged 18-24 'in touch' and who are NEET (snapshot at end of period)	33%	42%	33%	33%	43%	34%	↓
No. of Care Leavers 'in touch' and suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	98	89	98	106	110	117	↑
% of care leavers 18-24 'in touch' in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	95%	97%	95%	95%	96%	94%	↓

What does this show us?

We have recently updated our policy on “Hard to engage and not in touch Care Leavers”. This is to ensure that there is clear expectation on the efforts we make to keep in touch with our care leavers.

43 (34%) of care leavers 'in touch' are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Q3. Of the cohort 22 are “NEET other”, our focus is trying to get them into education/training/employment. The rest of the cohort is made up of young people unable to engage in Education/Employment due to their person situation which includes - custody, disability/health concerns and parenting commitments.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has increased from the previous quarter.

What is the background to this?

The target is to stay in touch with at least 90% of care leavers, we are currently at 97% and we have sustained a strong position over the year with our lowest percentage being 96%. Amongst the reasons for care leavers under 21 not being in touch with CSC could be a refusal to engage with the Service or they have yet to develop mechanism to engage, or no longer needing the support provided.

In line with Corporate Parenting duties when Care Leaver turn 21, they can choose whether they want to access the service, if they do not contact the service for 12 months, our duty is to make contact once a year. This is done by sending a birthday and Christmas card to remind them of the services available should they wish to re-engage.

The Service aims to have high levels of care leavers in education, employment, or training, despite the increased challenging economic situation. Care Leaver's employment, education and training figures have remained consistently high throughout 2022-23. Currently 56% of our young people are in education, training, and employment with 34% presenting as NEET. This is a positive picture however work is ongoing to further improve this.

CSC endeavours to ensure at least 90% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation, which it continues to achieve. It is positive to note that we have been able to achieve 94% and above over the course of the year.

What action is the service taking?

CSC will continue to place emphasis on maintaining good relations with care leavers so that they can receive all the support they need, particularly during the current challenging times.

The Service places great importance on the future of the children for which it has responsibility, and addresses each care leaver's situation individually, helping them either re-engage with education, training or supporting them to find suitable employment opportunities where possible. Focus on this has increased in response to the current economic situation.

Monthly NEET meetings are held and each young person who is NEET has an action plan to try to get them into employment or training. Many of the young people who are NEET are young parents or have experienced mental health which impacts on their availability to access employment or training. We also have an apprenticeship strategy which is actively being progressed to offer young people as much opportunities as possible.

The number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation has increased over the course of this year. A housing strategy is in progress to reduce the need for young people to go into temporary accommodation which is not suitable. The number living independently and semi-independently has increased.

Social Care and Housing work closely together to ensure our care leavers are provided with suitable accommodation. The joint housing panel for young people has now been running for a year and is subject to a review to look at progress and any changes that might be needed to make it more effective.

What is the national context?

National averages at the end of March 2023 shows 92% of care leavers (19 -21 years) were in touch with their Local Authority; 38% of care leavers (19-21 year) were NEET; and 88% were in suitable accommodation. The DfE does not currently publish data on Care Leavers over 21 years old.

Dashboard Item 7(a) – Children Missing from Home/Care

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home	114	43	35	22	18	21	↑
Missing Episodes - % of return home interviews accepted (out of number of return home interviews required)	49%	57%	49%	60%	78%	56%	↓
Missing Episodes - % return home interviews carried out on time	45%	78%	45%	67%	64%	75%	↑
Children missing from care	22	15	7	8	9	5	↓
Missing Episodes - % of return home interviews accepted (out of number of return home interviews required)	33%	47%	33%	33%	22%	67%	↑
Missing Episodes - % return home interviews carried out on time	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	↔

What does this show us?

A total of 26 children were reported as missing from home or care in Q3.

The percentage of return home interviews accepted (for children missing from home) shows how many interviews were accepted of those who required one (10 accepted out of 18 interviews required).

The percentage of return home interviews accepted (for children missing from care) shows how many interviews were accepted of those who required one (4 accepted out of 6 interviews required) 1 young person had 5 missing episodes in this quarter.

Child Social Care aims to have 100% of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) taking place within timescale.

What is the background to this?

It can be difficult to persuade children who have gone missing to engage with a Return Home Interview (RHI), achieving the timeliness target of 100% is therefore difficult to reach. Regardless, CSC's emphasis on tackling child exploitation risks has led to a focus on RHIs. Another factor that can impact on the completion of return home interviews is the change of classification where all events are classed as Missing, where in the past it factored in Absent episodes (shorter periods e.g. returning late or not having been in contact for an hour or tow etc). This means where a young person has multiple events during a week, they may engage with one and not want to engage with further discussions if there are repeat incidents.

What action is the service taking?

Children's Social Care works closely with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the issue of child exploitation remains a focus. The Service is currently examining the problems and risks of child exploitation, working with neighbouring local authorities to gain insight and develop a joined-up approach. We are also planning on joining a Working Group with Thames Valley Police to further develop our response to Children in Care who go missing.

Dashboard Item 7(b) – Children Missing Education

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
Children missing from education at the end of the period (not currently on a school roll)		6	19	40	24	17	↓
No. of permanent exclusions		9	8	x	7	x	↓

x Less than 4, suppressed to preserve confidentiality.

What does this show us?

The number of children not currently on role at a school during Q3 of 23/24, decreased in comparison with the previous quarter. Of the 17 CME cases, 10 are in the school place application process, 5 are waiting for a suitable special school placement and remaining children are reported to be no longer residing in our Borough, and as such the Local Authority is waiting for confirmation from the new home Authority that they are taking over the case.

There are 21 permanent exclusions in financial year 22-23 (Apr 22- Mar 23) but 24 in total during the 2022-23 academic year to date (Sept 22-Aug 23). The number of permanent exclusions in financial year 23 – 24 up till Q3, show that this year the Permanent exclusions are less than the previous financial year. The start of the academic year 23-24 with only one term data available as yet (Sep 23-Dec 23), shows that the number of permanent exclusions are 40% less as compared to the previous year (sep22-Dec22). The academic year 21-22 had 16 permanent exclusions which shows that the numbers are rising this year as compared to last. Reducing permanent exclusion is now one of the priorities of local area's SEND and Inclusion work.

A wide range of proactive strategies and actions are taken to reduce the number of CME and PEX. These include:

- EWS half termly 1:1 consultation with either the Head Teacher or appropriate member of SLT for all secondary schools to specifically discuss young people who are at risk of PEX.
- EWS identify and discuss young people who are classed as CME on roll at their consultations with schools. This enables early intervention and support.
- The CME Officer will track CME not on roll and support parents around applying for school places; referring to the FAP panel if no school places are available; making parents aware of other education options, such as Elective Home Education; advising on parents' responsibilities around their child being educated and possible legal consequences; referring to other local authorities if the young person has moved out of area.

- Advice and guidance are given at meetings, and also offer to facilitate any meetings to get the right people together to enable a positive outcome.
- A Vulnerable Pupils Panel meets every half term to discuss young people who are on the CME database and pupils who are at risk of PEX.
- Attending Behaviour Leads and Safeguarding Lead meetings and give advice to school leaders on individual cases, finding good alternatives to PEX.
- Emergency annual reviews are called if a young person who is at risk of PEX has an EHCP.
- half termly (secondary schools) and termly (primary schools) consultation meetings.
- mediation meetings where the relationship between school and parents has broken down.

What is the national context?

The statistical neighbour and England averages from January 2023 census day for CME (children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school) are 0.14% and 0.31%. At the end of Q3 period, there were 17 CME, which was 0.06% - lower than statistical and national averages.

Dashboard Item 8 – Children's Services Workforce

Measure	2022-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24	Q3 23-24	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers		13.33%	10.53%	10.53%	13.33%	18.7%	↑
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)		26%	25%	25%	24%	26%	↑

What does this show us?

The rolling turnover of permanent staff over the past 12 months is showing an increase. Across the full 12 months, the actual number of Qualified Social Workers in CSC that have left permanent roles is 13 (Jan 23 – Dec 23). We had 6 actual Perm leavers in Q3.

What is the background to this?

Permanency of workforce is a continuous focus for Children Social Care.

What action is the service taking?

Recruitment of permanent social workers is ongoing via various mediums including social media, and specialist publications. We have also signed up to the refreshed Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) across the Southeast.

The MoC is an agreement between the 19 authorities in the Southeast to work in a cooperative and collaborative way. It is designed to help control costs and reduce churn of both agency and permanent social workers. It also aims to improve the quality of information sharing between authorities when supplying references for agency social workers.

CSC have in post a worker whose primary focus on recruitment and retention, promoting and advertising vacancies as they occur. Providing support to team managers recruiting to post and streamlining the onboarding process.

In December 2023 we announced a £3k Market Supplement to be introduced to Children's Social Workers from April 2024 onwards. We anticipate this will reduce our turnover and contribute to an increase in permanent members of staff joining Wokingham.

In addition to attracting more experienced members of staff with our new Market Supplement; the recruitment plans for 2024 include 3 major projects with a key focus on 'growing our own'. We will be doing this via the following streams of recruitment:

- ASYE Recruitment: We aim to recruit 10 ASYE Social Workers in 2024.
- Frontline: We have recently partnered with Frontline and will be creating a pod of 5 student Social Workers in Wokingham who will be fast tracked through their degree and onto our ASYE scheme.
- Apprenticeships: Children's Services aim to mobilise the Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme to up to 4 colleagues within the service.

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TITLE	Schools Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 March 2024
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Understanding of the judgement of schools against national benchmarks. In particular a reference to those schools recently inspected by Ofsted.

RECOMMENDATION

For information

SUMMARY OF REPORT

National changes in inspection, the newly appointed HMCI has brought about some changes to the process of inspection in recognition of the tragic death of local headteacher Ruth Perry and the recommendations made by the coroner as a result of the inquest.

A telephone helpline has been set up enabling anyone to call and voice any concerns about an ongoing Ofsted inspection. This has been flagged to our schools and governors.

A Pause Policy has been introduced by Ofsted [Pausing state-funded school inspections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pausing-state-funded-school-inspections) setting out how school leaders can be supported to pause inspections.

Regional workshops have been set up by HMI to start discussions with the school system on the inspection process and officers from the Wokingham Education Strategic Partnership Team attended a regional event for Local Authorities in January. Regular monthly meetings continue with our link Education HMI where feedback on inspection experiences is shared.

The newly appointed HMCI has just introduced a public consultation and feedback request in respect of the work of Ofsted. The consultation is currently open and runs until 31st May 2024. The consultation can be found here [The Big Listen \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](https://smartsurvey.co.uk)

It covers four key areas

- how Ofsted report inspection findings
- how Ofsted carry out inspections
- how Ofsted can have a positive impact on the sectors Ofsted inspect
- what Ofsted needs to do to be a world-class inspectorate and regulator, trusted by parents, children and the sectors they work with

Inspection activity has continued across schools in the borough during the first half of the spring term 2024.

Not all reports are available to report at the time of writing, but 7 school reports are now available in the public domain and are hyperlinked in the attached excel spreadsheet. Some of these reports relate to schools inspected prior to the Christmas Break due to timing of the release of the reports.

Specialist ;

CAMHS Phoenix	S5 Inspection	OUTSTANDING
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Secondary;

Oakbank	S5 Inspection	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
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Primary:

Beechwood Primary	S5 Inspection	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
Polehampton Infant	S5 inspection	GOOD
Keep Hatch Primary	S8 inspection	Remains GOOD
Colleton Primary	S5 Inspection	GOOD
Wescott Infant	S5 Inspection	GOOD

A reminder of the inspection processes and outcomes is found in the table below.

Outstanding Schools:

Since the re-introduction of inspection for schools previously judged to be outstanding by Ofsted we have had more of our outstanding schools inspected. In line with the national picture we see some of our schools sustain that Outstanding judgement and others secure a GOOD grading.

As of February 2024 we still have 5 schools awaiting inspection under this new guidance who were previously judged to be outstanding.

We are delighted to celebrate the above outcome for CAMHS Phoenix Hospital School in securing a further Outstanding judgement.

At a local level we have been provided tailored support along with a universal offer to our Outstanding Schools to assist them in their preparation for inspection. This has included:

- Being ready for the 90 minute call
- Feedback from HMI on the exceptionality of the Outstanding Grade
- Briefing on HMCI Annual report findings on Outstanding schools losing their status
- Workshop for governors on the Outstanding judgement

- Series of 6 workshops on inspection judgement preparation for each key judgement

Positive feedback has been given by schools who have engaged with officers in preparing for inspection, noting the benefits in the work undertaken.

Ofsted previously invited headteachers from Outstanding Schools to specific inspection workshops to be held on regional basis. We are now working with the Ofsted Regional team to provide these materials across all schools in the borough in 2024.

Changes to the inspection handbook have been made for inspections taking place post 1st September 2023. These include further clarification of the expectations of schools in relation to safeguarding and enhanced processes, both during and post inspection, for headteachers to give feedback or make complaints regarding the process of inspection. The Education Partnership Team runs a full workshop series for schools in the Ofsted ‘window’ covering each of the inspection judgement areas and supporting effective self evaluation and preparation for inspection.

Summary table of Ofsted state-funded school inspections

Type of inspection	Graded	Ungraded	Urgent	Monitoring
Legal powers for inspection	Section 5 of the Education Act 2005	Section 8 of the Education Act 2005	Section 8 of the Education Act 2005	Section 8 of the Education Act 2005
Schools eligible for this inspection	All schools – but most schools with an outstanding/good judgement get an ungraded inspection instead	Schools with an outstanding/good judgement	All schools – but only triggered by a specific concern in a specific school	Schools with an inadequate judgement or 2 consecutive requires improvement judgements
Outcome	A grade (outstanding/good /requires improvement/ inadequate) for the 4 key judgements (quality of education/behaviour and attitudes/personal development/leadership and management) and for overall effectiveness	(1) The school remains good/outstanding (2) The school remains good, but with evidence it may be judged outstanding on a graded inspection (3) The school remains good/outstanding, but with evidence it may receive a lower grade on a graded inspection (4) The inspection was deemed a graded inspection	If inspectors have sufficient concerns about the school, they will deem the inspection a graded inspection and the outcomes will be as for graded inspections. If inspectors do not have serious concerns, they will produce a report setting out their findings in relation to the concerns that triggered the inspection	That the school is, or is not, making progress to improve
Likely timing of inspection after the previous graded or ungraded inspection (not including any COVID-19 delay)	Around 4 years for schools with an outstanding or good judgement and around 30 months for schools with a requires improvement or inadequate judgement	Around 4 years	N/A	Around 12 months for schools with a requires improvement judgement and 3 to 30 months (up to 5 inspections in that period) for schools with an inadequate judgement
Resets the statutory clock?*	Yes	Yes – except in outcome 3 (see above)	No	No

* The law usually requires the maximum interval for inspections to be within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the last relevant inspection took place. However, for schools last inspected before 4 May 2021, the legal maximum will, instead, be up to 7 years.

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

SIAMS is the statutory inspection of Church of England and Methodist schools with schools expecting their inspection to take place approximately every five years. These inspections sit under S48 of the Education Act 2005.

The National SIAMS team schedules inspections, recruits and appoints inspectors and conducts Quality Assurance of reports and the process.

SIAMS inspections focus on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision. It involves looking at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of this vision and how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish.

The Evaluation Schedule has one inspection question:

“How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?”

This is explored through seven strands:

1. Vision and Leadership
2. Wisdom, Knowledge, and Skills
3. Character Development: Hope, Aspiration, and Courageous Advocacy
4. Community and Living Well Together
5. Dignity and Respect
6. Impact of Collective Worship
7. Effectiveness of Religious Education.

One overall grade is awarded reflecting the contribution of these strands to the flourishing of pupils and adults in a Church school. In addition a standalone grade is awarded in all schools for collective worship and in voluntary aided (VA) schools and former VA schools for religious education (RE). This grade is based on teaching and learning alone.

SIAMS judgments are: Excellent, Good, Requires Improvement or Ineffective

More information on SIAMS can be found at [SIAMS Inspections | The Church of England](#)

At a local level the Oxford Diocese Board of Education (ODBE) supports diocesan schools in readiness for SIAMS. There are strong links between the ODBE and the WBC School Improvement team with regular information sharing and joint working.

Schools in the borough who are scheduled for a SIAMS inspection during the academic year :

Woodley CE Primary School
The Piggott School
Polehampton CE Infant School
Grazeley Primary

The Education Partnership Team work

The School Improvement Team repositioned its work from September 2023 and is now known as the Education Partnership Team. This reflects the facilitative and supportive way in which colleagues are working with the school system, brokering and commissioning support for schools. As the local system evolves, greater focus will be on the schools system developing robust processes for supporting the development of teaching and learning in schools. This will be achieved at a practitioner to practitioner level and using the developing structures as Multi Academy Trusts build system capacity.

The team continue to work closely with schools, sustaining a relationship with schools as they join Multi Academy Trusts and continuing to discharge statutory challenge and support functions with the community/maintained sector.

The work of the team follows the golden threads of the local priorities:

- Focussing on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, including work on narrowing the disadvantaged gap and ensuring inclusion
- Welcoming and celebrating the new entrants and refugees moving into the borough to ensure effective provision
- Building an embedded approach to diversity and racial equity
- Building inclusive practice in schools through providing training and support for those wishing to work with a relational approach to behaviour management through a Therapeutic Thinking approach.
- Linking national good practice for Early Years provision in schools

All of the above should contribute to the building of good provision for pupils and outcomes.

Promoting an embedded approach to diversity and racial equity

In February the team held a very successful Racial Equity and Diversity conference. Over a third of schools in the borough sent along senior leaders to hear from national experts in the education field and our own schools who are developing local practice. All of this work is planned with a local stakeholder consultation group.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
Please state clearly what the impact of the decision being made would be on the Council’s carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

Contact Gillian Cole, Ming Zhang	Service Education and SEND
Telephone No Tel: 07909998224,	Email gillian.cole@wokingham.gov.uk, Ming.Zhang@wokingham.gov.uk

WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS

School	Phase	Date	Inspection Grade	Status/Organisation	Ofsted Link
Alder Grove	Primary	Jul-23	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Alder Grove Church of England Primary School
All Saints Primary School	Primary	Sep-21	Good	Frays MAT	Ofsted All Saints Church of England Primary School
Bearwood Primary School	Primary	Mar-19	Good	maintained	Ofsted Bearwood Primary School
Bohunt	Secondary	May-19	Good	Bohunt Trust	Ofsted Bohunt School Wokingham
Bulmershe School	Secondary	Nov-17	Good	maintained	Ofsted The Bulmershe School
Colleton Primary School	Primary	Jan-24	Good	maintained	Ofsted The Colleton Primary School
Crazies Hill CE School	Primary	Dec-23	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Crazies Hill Church of England Primary School
Earley St Peter's Primary School	Primary	Sep-21	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Earley St Peter's Church of England Primary School
Emmbrook Junior School	Primary	Apr-22	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Emmbrook Junior School
Emmbrook School	Secondary	Nov-23	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted The Emmbrook School
Farley Hill Primary School	Primary	Oct-19	Good	maintained	Ofsted Farley Hill Primary School
Finchampstead Primary School	Primary	Oct-18	Good	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Finchampstead CofE VA Primary School
Forest School	Secondary	Jul-21	Good	Stand Alone Academy	Ofsted The Forest School
Foundry College	PRU	May-23	Good	maintained	Ofsted Foundry College
Gorse Ride Infant School	Primary	Nov-19	Good	maintained	Ofsted Gorse Ride Infants' School
Gorse Ride Junior School	Primary	Apr-22	Good	maintained	Ofsted Gorse Ride Junior School
Hatch Ride Primary School	Primary	May-22	Good	Corvus	Ofsted Hatch Ride Primary School
Hawkedon Primary School	Primary	Oct-18	Good	maintained	Ofsted Hawkedon Primary School
Hawthorns Primary School	Primary	Jun-22	Good	maintained	Ofsted The Hawthorns Primary School
Highwood Primary School	Primary	Dec-21	Good	maintained	Ofsted Highwood Primary School
Hillside Primary School	Primary	Dec-23	Good	maintained	Ofsted Hillside Primary School
Keep Hatch Primary School	Primary	Jan-24	Good	Frays MAT	Ofsted Keep Hatch Primary School
Lambs Lane Primary School	Primary	Jan-22	Good	maintained	Ofsted Lambs Lane Primary School
Loddon Primary School	Primary	May-23	Good	maintained	Ofsted Loddon Primary School
Montague Park	Primary	Jan-23	Good	GLF Trust	Ofsted Floreat Montague Park Primary School
Nine Mile Ride Primary School	Primary	Jun-22	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Nine Mile Ride Primary School
Oaklands Infant School	Primary	May-22	Good	Corvus	Ofsted Oaklands Infant School
Oaklands Junior School	Primary	Apr-22	Good	Corvus	Ofsted Oaklands Junior School
Polehampton Infant School	Primary	Jan-24	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Polehampton Church of England Infant School
Radstock Primary School	Primary	Jan-22	Good	maintained	Ofsted Radstock Primary School
Rivermead Primary School	Primary	Nov-18	Good	BelleVue Place	Ofsted Rivermead Primary School
Robert Piggott Infant School	Primary	Jun-18	good	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Robert Piggott CofE Infant School
Robert Piggott Junior School	Primary	Nov-23	Good	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Robert Piggott CofE Junior School
Shinfield Infant School	Primary	Feb-19	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Shinfield Infant and Nursery School
Shinfield St Mary's Junior School	Primary	Jul-23	Good	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School
Sonning Primary School	Primary	Mar-16	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Sonning Church of England Primary School
St Crispins School	Secondary	Jun-22	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted St Crispin's School
St Dominic Savio Primary School	Primary	May-19	Good	maintained Catholic	Ofsted St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School
St Nicholas Primary School	Primary	Nov-23	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted St Nicholas Church of England Primary, Hurst
St Sebastian's Primary School	Primary	Oct-21	Good	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Saint Sebastians Church of England Primary School
St Teresa's Primary	Primary	Apr-23	Good	Frassati Catholic Trust	Ofsted St Teresa's Catholic Academy
The Piggott CE School	All through	Jun-23	Good	Stand Alone Academy	Ofsted The Piggott School
Waingels College	Secondary	Jul-23	Good	The Orchard Learning Alliance	Ofsted Waingels
Wescott Infant School	Primary	Jan-24	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Wescott Infant School
Westende Junior School	Primary	Jan-20	Good	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Westende Junior School
Wheatfield Primary School	Primary	Mar-23	Good	GLF	Ofsted Wheatfield Primary School
Whiteknights Primary School	Primary	May-23	Good	Bellevue Place Education Trust	Ofsted Whiteknights Primary School
Willow Bank Infant School	Primary	Jul-22	Good	maintained	Ofsted Willow Bank Infant School
Willow Bank Junior School	Primary	May-23	Good	maintained	Ofsted Willow Bank Junior School
Windmill Primary School	Primary	Jan-20	good	GLF	Ofsted Windmill Primary School
Winnersh Primary School	Primary	Jan-20	Good	maintained	Ofsted Winnersh Primary School
Woodley Primary School	Primary	Nov-18	Good	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Woodley CofE Primary School
Addington School	Special	May-23	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted Addington School
Aldryngton Primary School	Primary	Dec-11	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted Aldryngton Primary School
Ambleside Centre	Nursery	Nov-21	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted The Ambleside Centre
CAMHS Phoenix	PRU Hospital	Feb-24	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted CAMHS Phoenix School
Chiltern Way	Special	Nov-23	Outstanding	Chiltern Way	Ofsted Chiltern Way Academy Wokingham
Emmbrook Infant School	Primary	Jan-19	Outstanding	The Circle Trust	Ofsted Emmbrook Infant School
Evendons Primary School	Primary	Jun-17	Outstanding	Bellevue Place Education Trust	Ofsted Evendons Primary School
Holt School	Secondary	May-23	Outstanding	Stand Alone Academy	Ofsted The Holt School
Maiden Erlegh School	Secondary	Mar-20	Outstanding	Maiden Erlegh Multi-Academy Trus	Ofsted Maiden Erlegh School
Polehampton Junior School	Primary	Nov-12	Outstanding	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted Polehampton Church of England Junior School
South Lake Primary School	Primary	Mar-13	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted South Lake Primary School
St Paul's Junior School	Primary	Jun-11	Outstanding	maintained Cof E	Ofsted St Paul's CofE Junior School
Walter Infant School	Primary	Nov-13	Outstanding	maintained	Ofsted Walter Infant School
Beechwood Primary School	Primary	Feb-24	RI	Frays MAT	Ofsted Beechwood Primary School
Grazeley Parochial Primary School	Primary	Nov-22	RI	maintained Cof E	Ofsted Grazeley Parochial Church of England Aided Primary School
Oakbank	Secondary	Jan-24	RI	Anthem Schools Trust	Ofsted Oakbank
Coombes Primary School	Primary	Jan-22	RI	Keys Trust C of E	Ofsted The Coombes Church of England Primary School
ST Cecilians	Primary			Keys Trust C of E	

Colleagues interested in any other Ofsted reports can search at the Ofsted Reports website

[Find an Ofsted inspection report](#)

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2024/25 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
25 June 2024	SEND Youth Forum	To receive an update from SEND Youth forum	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Transition Into Adulthood	To review the service offered in relation to transition into adulthood.	Challenge item	Children's Services/ Helen Watson and Matt Pope
	Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership	To receive information on the work of the BWSCP.	Information item	Children's Services / Helen Watson
	Children's Social Care Reform	To receive an information on the Children's Social Care Reform	Information item	Children's Services / Adam Davis
	Schools Update	To monitor schools' performance.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Executive Member Update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker

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Agenda Item 83.

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
16 September 2024	Home to School Transport Policy Review	Review and implementation of the revised policy since its implementation.	Update item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Review of Workforce Recruitment and Retention Initiatives	To receive an update on the workforce recruitment and retention initiatives.	Update item	Children's Services / Adam Davis
	Review of Post Ofsted Improvement Plan	To receive and update on the post Ofsted improvement plan.	Regular item	Children's Services / Helen Watson
	Childcare Support Reforms	To receive information about the childcare support reforms.	Information item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Key Performance Indicators	To receive information about Children's Services KPIs.	Regular item	Children's Services / Helen Watson
	Education Update	To monitor schools' performance and education in the borough.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Executive Member Update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
6 November 2024	SEND Voices Survey	To receive information about the annual SEND Voices Survey.	Information item	Sarah Clarke / Terri Walsh
	Education Update	To monitor schools' performance and education in the borough.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming Zhang
	Executive Member Update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker
DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
15 January 2025				
	Education Update	To monitor schools' performance and education in the borough.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming
	Executive Member Update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang

	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker
DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
19 March 2025				
	Schools Update	To monitor schools' performance.	Standing item	Children's Services / Ming
	Executive Member Update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	Standing item	Prue Bray
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To consider the work being undertaken to support schools causing concern in a part 2 session	Standing item	Children's Services/ Ming Zhang
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services/ Luciane Bowker

Regular updates on the post Ofsted Action Plan

CSO&S - Action Tracker 2023/24

CSO&S - 20 June 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
SEND Youth Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite the SEND Youth Council to attend CSO&S annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completed
UASC Draft Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To circulate the Virtual School annual report to CSO&S Members To consider organising a peer review of the UCAS Strategy in the next 12 months To present the peer review's findings to CSO&S The leader of the council to write to the Secretary of State and local MPs asking for an increase in the grant for UASC Care Leavers To send meeting invitations to members so they can attend a meeting of the Virtual School governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Completed Completed
Home to School Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extraordinary meeting be organised in August to discuss the new policy A written report would be submitted with information about the training for drivers and escorts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Completed
Safety Valve update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform Schools Forum's decision in relation to the request of 1% transfer from Schools Block to HNB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
Extraordinary CSO&S - 15 August 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Home to School Transport – Revised Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide data relating to numbers/ ages and costs of travel transport (in particular for under 5's and post-16) To review and make it clearer in the wording within the policy that discretionary arrangements will still be allowed. More clarity is needed around the definition of 'nearest most suitable school', including in post-16 provision a clear reference to course(s) rather than 'level'. To include links in the policy to the Parents Guide To School Admissions. To clarify the difference between 'qualifying' and 'suitable' school. To avoid ambiguity in the document. To make it more explicit in the document that children attending schools out of the borough can be entitled to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - these actions were addressed at the Extraordinary Executive meeting on 24 August 2023

	<p>assistance, provided they met the eligibility criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain what is the most suitable school for a child subject to a managed move. • To make it clearer that, following an assessment, SEND children can be given more time to prepare for new travel assessments (to be determined on a case by case basis). • In relation to Change of circumstances (page 116 of the Agenda) – to make it clear that any changes which may incur in withdrawal of travel support will be based on evidence. • To explain how the figures for post-16 travel assistance were calculated and to consider using mileage; and to make clear that these will continue to be considered on a case by case basis. • To review SEND Voices reference to the Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training – Statutory guidance for local authorities (January 2019) paragraph 29b – to ensure the wording in the policy is compliant with the legislation. To ensure that is clear that young people are able to attend the most suitable educational setting providing their chosen course. • To co-produce the travel training offer with SEND Voices and to involve young people in the development of the training programme. • To make the wording clearer in the policy with regards to parents’ right of appeal. • To review and clarify who will be considering and determining the outcome of parents’ appeals – clarification of what is meant by a ‘senior officer’. 	
CSO&S – 6 September 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various recommendations to be forwarded to Executive • To receive a progress report on the recommendations in 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Completed – added to forward programme
KPI’s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To add narrative to dashboards 2 and 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Holiday, Activities & Food Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide further information on levels of demand, sessions attended and the range of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Home to School Transport – Training for Escorts and Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca Brooks to meet with Sarah Clarke to discuss ideas for improving communication between drivers/escorts and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Forward Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To add SEND Strategy Refresh and SEND Voices Annual Survey to the November meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Action Tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand the action tracker to cover the last 12 months • Members be notified of upcoming Virtual School Governing Body meetings and notify Helen Watson if they wish to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
CSO&S – 1 November 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Complaints Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future complaints reports to include anonymised examples of how a case is resolved. • Richard Lamey asked if the raise in number of SEND complaints was as a result of the higher level of scrutiny in assessment or if it was because things that used to be funded before are no longer being funded because of budget constraints? • Are there any groups of people that are under-represented in the data provided? What can be done to address potential inequalities? • To consider the development of a survey for SEND parents – to gather data on complaints and compliments • To include information about the complaints and compliments processes be included in the local offer website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Ongoing • Complete • Complete • Complete
Draft SEND Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTU – SEND Voices still has not been contacted to help write letters and other communication to parents. • To share the membership of the Strategic SEND Partnership Board • Share with the Committee the details of the protocol for approaching all discriminatory incidents (page 71 of the agenda) • Add transition into adulthood to the Forward Programme • Request the Leader of the Council to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speak formally with neighbouring local authorities to gather data in relation to the lack of funding for schools to deliver SEND services; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Complete • Complete • Complete • Complete

	➤ Speak to the Berkshire Prosperity Group about the lack of funding for schools to deliver SEND services.	
Schools Update	• To send the list of Ofsted reports in Excell format to enable sorting.	• Complete
Forward Programme	• The Forward Programme to be updated to include suggestions made by the Children's Services senior leadership team and to include the Safeguarding Berkshire Partnership Board Annual report.	• Ongoing
CSO&S – 8 January 2024		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Youth Council	• Consideration of Members attendance to a meeting of the Youth Council.	• Ongoing
Safety Valve Update	• Consideration by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Executive Member and senior officers about the inclusion of tribunals case studies.	• Ongoing
KPI	• To include a column with 'better' or 'worse' in the KPI report.	• Ongoing
From previous meetings Home to Schools Transport Policy	• Rebecca Brooks to discuss ideas of improving communication with SEND Voices.	• Ongoing
Complaints Report	• Development of a survey to gather data on complaints and compliments.	• Ongoing

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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