



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of an **INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION** will be held in LGF4 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 20 JULY 2023 AT 11.00 AM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 12 July 2023

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/4aL193p_nTQ?feature=share

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding 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 complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure 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 to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, 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 to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, 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.

For consideration by

Prue Bray, Deputy Leader of the Council

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

IMD NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	
IMD 2023/16	None Specific	APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE HIGHWOOD MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE	5 - 8

Callum Wernham

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Agenda Item IMD16

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2023/16

TITLE	Appointment of Member to the Highwood Management Conference
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Children's Services - Prue Bray
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	20 July 2023 LGF4 at 11am
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

To appoint a Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) member representative to the Highwood Management Conference for the 2023/24 municipal year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Deputy Leader of the Council appoint Councillor Tony Skuse to the Highwood Management Conference for the 2023/24 municipal year.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The reports sets out the background to the formation of the Highwood Management Conference, and provides context as to the need to appoint a second Member.

Background

The Conference was set up in 1965 by a legal agreement between Berkshire County Council, Wokingham Rural District Council, the Parish Council of Woodley and Sandford, and the Parish Council of Earley. It was set up as an annual meeting to *“consider matters affecting the open spaces (Highwood) and advise the Rural District Council and the Parish Councils as to the measures to be taken to secure the most effective use of the open spaces by the public”*. All parties to the agreement have the right to appoint two members to attend the Conference which should be held annually.

Following the dissolution of the County Council in 1998, the ownership of the Highwood Local Nature Reserve passed to Wokingham District Council (now Wokingham Borough Council). At that time the authority took the opportunity to reconsider the method of consulting with the local community about the management of Highwood.

Reports on suggested changes were considered by the Highwood Management Conference and Woodley, and Earley Town Councils in 1998. The change was to manage the site with a more formally constituted Friends Group (as happens at other sites managed by the Countryside Service) and Woodley and Earley Town Councils agreeing to withdraw from the 1965 Agreement to establish the Highwood Management Conference. The Conference did not support the suggestion that Highwood should be managed in the same way as other site, and Woodley and Earley Town Councils did not support any change.

In January 1999, the WDC Environmental Services Committee resolved that “The views of the Highwood Management Conference be noted and that, other than in exceptional circumstances, meetings of the Conference continue to be facilitated on an annual basis.”

Business Case (including Analysis of Issues)

The two largest Groups at WBC are entitled to appoint one Member each to the Conference. At WBC’s Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2023, Councillor Laura Blumenthal was appointed on behalf of the Conservative Group. At the time, the Liberal Democrat Group had not put a nomination forward.

Since the Annual Council meeting, the Liberal Democrat Group has resolved to nominate Councillor Tony Skuse as their representative. Whilst the nomination belongs to the Liberal Democrat Group, they are entitled to put forward a nomination for any Member of the Council, regardless of their political grouping, so long as that Member is content with such a nomination.

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)	£0	Yes	R
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	R
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	R

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
Appointment of WBC representatives to the Highwood Management Conference promotes partnership working.

Public Sector Equality Duty
Due regard has been given to WBC's duties under the Equality Act.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comments
Monitoring Officer	No comments
Leader of the Council	No comments

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Callum Wernham	Service Governance
Telephone No 0118 974 6000	Email callum.wernham@wokingham.gov.uk

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