



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held at the Civic Offices,  
Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 17  
NOVEMBER 2016 AT 7.30 PM**

Andy Couldrick  
Chief Executive  
Published on 9 November 2016

This meeting will be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website.

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Our Vision**

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

## **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

## **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
49.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence	
50.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 September 2016.	15 - 34
51.		<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest	
52.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> 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 the Council  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council 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 <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
52.1	Bulmershe and Whitegates	Prem Sharma has asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:  <b>Question</b> I have had two planning applications to fell a beach tree in my front garden refused by Wokingham Borough Council, despite my willingness to replace the tree in another part of my garden. After the second refusal, my health deteriorated further and I could not appeal due to my health. Before the appeal deadline I asked for an extension of the deadline but I had zero response from Claire Lawrence. As such the appeal deadline passed.  Due to the position of the tree, pigeons and other large birds perching on the tree chronically foul up my drive with their droppings. My wife and I are elderly, in our eighties, and suffer from heart and cancerous diseases and cannot keep up with daily cleansing of	

the drive as these bird droppings, especially from the pigeons, are a serious danger to our health. I have provided medical reports from medical specialist professionals to the Council to evidence that the pigeon droppings can further deteriorate our health due to our low immunity.

The Council's decision is that the tree is protected and that the health of the tree is more important than my and my wife's health! This is a bizarre and unjust conclusion on the part of the Council. Would the Executive Member please explain why the health of the tree is more important than the health of two very elderly and sick people? As far as general understanding goes, it is the responsibility of the local and central government to look after the elderly and vulnerable people of society. The environment is very important. I wish when hundreds of mature oak, beech and other trees were felled along the railway line, the Council should have stopped. There should be one rule for everybody.

52.2 Bulmershe and Whitegates; Hawkedon; Hillside; Maiden Erlegh

Guy Grandison has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

**Question**

Could the Executive Member tell me what the Council is doing to ensure that schools in Earley can keep pace with the growing population at both primary and secondary levels?

52.3 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe

Frank Moore has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

In April 2008 at a planning appeal for Sheeplands farm shop and coffee shop, a government appointed planning inspector stated that if he upheld the appeal, which he did, it would mark the transition of Hare Hatch Nursery from a nursery to a garden centre. He also stated that it would have severe consequences for the business if it was not allowed to compete with its neighbours. To what extent has Wokingham Borough Council taken the planning inspector's comments into consideration in subsequent discussions with Sheeplands?

52.4 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe

Mark A'Bear has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

By lifting the enforcement notice on Hare Hatch

Sheeplands, a full planning inquiry could proceed and determine an outcome for Wokingham Borough Council and Hare Hatch Sheeplands. Please can Wokingham Borough Council explain why it will not lift the notice so that the evidence can be heard and a speedy resolution reached?

52.5 Remenham,  
Wargrave and  
Ruscombe

Paul Westacott has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

It is my understanding that in April 2014 Mr Scott reached agreement with councillors regarding the future of Hare Hatch Sheeplands, and withdrew his appeal against the enforcement notice on the basis of this agreement. Why did Wokingham Borough Council renege on this agreement?

52.6 Remenham,  
Wargrave and  
Ruscombe

Andy Sherwood has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

The Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough Council, in a letter to the current Prime Minister dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 stated that Wokingham Borough Council would consider any sensible proposal put forward by Hare Hatch Sheeplands and suggested that they entered into pre-application discussions with Wokingham Borough Council. In response Hare Hatch Sheeplands withdrew their request for a judicial review of Wokingham Borough Council's decision to not consider their previous applications for their play area and Pet supplies concession. Then in August 2016 Wokingham Borough Council refused to enter into pre-application discussions with them. In the light of this please could Wokingham Borough Council provide examples of what these 'sensible' proposals might include?

52.7 Remenham,  
Wargrave and  
Ruscombe

David Piper has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

A letter from planning agents Gregory Grey, working on behalf of Sheeplands' competitor Wyevale, and dated April 27<sup>th</sup> 2011, threatened legal consequences if Wokingham Borough Council continued with Hare Hatch Sheeplands planning application. To what extent did this influence Wokingham Borough Council's decision to refuse the Sheeplands planning application in December 2011, especially after working with Hare Hatch Sheeplands for 18 months?

- 52.8 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Maria Lee has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:
- Question**  
Why is Wokingham Borough Council refusing to acknowledge the democratic will of thousands of its residents that have signed petitions and sent hundreds of letters or e-mails of support clearly demonstrating that they wish to see Hare Hatch Sheeplands continue in its current form as the local community garden centre?
- 52.9 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Shirley Sherwood has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:
- Question**  
Can you confirm that all members of the council are fully aware of the detailed planning history of Hare Hatch Sheeplands since 1992?
- 52.10 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Gordon Parry has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:
- Question**  
As early as May 2008, Wokingham Borough Council planning department, stated that it would have to be demonstrated in some detail that normal garden centre activity was essential for the financial viability of the site. When a detailed financial viability report was provided, and independently reviewed and supported by Wokingham Borough Council's own consultants, at great expense, what conclusions were drawn from this report by Wokingham Borough Council's planning department?
- 52.11 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Gill Saxon has asked the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance the following question:
- Question**  
If Wokingham Borough Council's actions result in Hare Hatch Sheeplands closing down, what assistance will the Council provide for redundant employees, especially the over 50's and the disabled, in finding new jobs?
- 52.12 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Nigel Timms has asked the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance the following question:

### **Question**

What will Wokingham Borough Council do to help the several small family businesses find alternative and affordable premises in the local area?

53.

### **PETITIONS**

To receive any petitions which Members or members of the public wish to present.

54.

### **PETITION DEBATE**

To debate a petition.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 3.5.4.2 a maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for petitions to be debated.

The process below will be followed at the meeting:

- a) the petition organiser(s) will be given five minutes to present the petition (if there is more than one petition organiser then they will share this time);
- b) the petition will then be debated by Councillors for a period not exceeding 30 minutes;
- c) the petition organiser(s) will have the right of reply of up to a maximum of three minutes;
- d) the Mayor will then ask for motions on how the Council wishes to respond to the Petition which may include;
  - i) taking the action or some of the action the petition requests;
  - ii) not taking the action the petition requests;
  - iii) referring the petition to another body for them to consider the matter and take the appropriate action;
- e) once a motion has been put forward it will be voted on without discussion or amendment;
- f) if the motion falls then the Mayor will ask for a further motion to be put forward;
- g) if the Mayor is of the opinion that a decision on how to respond to the petition cannot be reached then he/she can decide, on behalf of the Council, not to take the action that the petition requests.

54.1 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Petition submitted by Patrick Heather

On 7 October 2016 the following petition was submitted to the Chief Executive. The petition contained in excess of 1,500 signatures, which is the threshold to trigger a debate at Council:

*“We request, in the strongest possible terms, that Wokingham Borough Council does everything it can to ensure that Hare Hatch Sheeplands continues to operate as a financially viable enterprise. This will allow it to remain a highly valued community based asset used by so many different sections of the local population. We urge the Council to acknowledge that as well as the elderly, infirm and young, many social groups and organisations value it as a home for their activities. Schools and charities benefit from its support and local suppliers and companies benefit from its existence. We ask the Council to ensure this valuable asset remains in business and that the benefits it brings are not lost to us forever.”*

55. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
To receive any announcements by the Mayor

56. None Specific **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES LEVELS** 35 - 42

To receive the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel following their annual review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

- RECOMMENDATION:** The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Council that:
- 1) the time contributed component of the Basic Allowance be increased by 1% to reflect the increase in Officer pay, backdated to 1 April 2016;
  - 2) there be no change made to the multiples of the Special Responsibility Allowances paid to those roles as set out in the current Members' Allowances Scheme;
  - 3) Special Responsibility Allowances or Non-Executive Member payments should be limited to one per Member, being the one with the highest value, to bring the Council into line with the industry standard;
  - 4) there be no change in the rate payable for the Childcare and Dependent's Carers' Allowance

as set out the current Members Allowances Scheme in that it be set at the National Minimum/Living wage, whatever that may be in the future;

- 5) the £500 component of the Basic Allowance for the provision of IT should continue to be claimed only by those Members who provide facilities which allow constituents and Officers to communicate with them by e-mail and the self-certification process be continued;
- 6) the £500 component of the Basic Allowance for out of pocket expenses should continue.

<b>57.</b>	None Specific	<p><b>RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL</b></p> <p>To consider a report relating to the re-appointment of two members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a further period of 3 years.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That Council re-appoint Brian Shearing and Nikki Measures to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of 3 years, commencing on 22 November 2016.</p>	<b>43 - 46</b>
<b>58.</b>	None Specific	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICER - DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES</b></p> <p>Stuart Rowbotham, the current statutory Director of Adult Social Services will be leaving the Council in January 2017. As part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council senior management restructure the Personnel Board, at its meeting held on 12 October 2016, appointed Judith Ramsden to the role of Director of People Services with effect from 1 November 2016. This role covers both children's and adult's social care.</p> <p>Judith Ramsden is currently the statutory Director of Children's Services and also needs to be appointed to the statutory post of Director of Adult Social Services.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> That Judith Ramsden be appointed as Director of Adult Social Services with effect from 1 January 2017.</p>	
<b>59.</b>	None Specific	<p><b>CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION</b></p> <p>To consider a report containing revisions to the Planning Committee and Commons Registration Committee Procedure Rules and proposing the appointment of the Borough Solicitor as the Commons Registration Officer; as agreed by</p>	<b>47 - 50</b>

members of the Constitution Review Working Group.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the following changes to the Constitution, as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group, be agreed:

- 1) revisions to the Planning Committee Procedure Rules as set out in paragraph 1 of the report;
- 2) revisions to the Commons Registration Committee Procedure Rules as set out in paragraph 2 of the report;
- 3) appointment of the Borough Solicitor as the Commons Registration Officer and subsequent amendment of the Officer Scheme of Delegation as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

60.

**STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

To receive any statements by the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.23 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 20 minutes, and no Member shall speak for more than 5 minutes.

61.

**STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES**

To receive any statements from Directors of Council Owned Companies.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.24 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 10 minutes, and no Director, except with the consent of Council, shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

62.

**MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

To answer any member questions

A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice

Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply.

- 62.1 None Specific Pauline Helliar-Symons has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:
- Question**  
Could the Executive Member provide an update on the work of the Multi-Academy Trust Working Group?
- 62.2 None Specific Charles Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:
- Question**  
The rate of child poverty in Wokingham Borough at 10% is well below the UK average of 28%. However, more needs to be done. Could the Executive Member set out what steps she and her department can take to continue to lift our Borough's children out of the blight of poverty?
- 62.3 None Specific Laura Blumenthal has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:
- Question**  
Could the Executive Member provide an update on the Borough's Civil Parking Enforcement application to the Department for Transport?
- 62.4 None Specific Pauline Jorgensen has asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:
- Question**  
Could the Executive Member advise what steps the Council is taking to address the impact on waste bin emptying, grounds maintenance and other Environment services, caused by gypsy incursions?
- 62.5 None Specific Tim Holton has asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:
- Question**  
Could the Executive Member provide an update on the progress of the transition to online self-service for residents?
- 62.6 None Specific Alistair Auty has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:
- Question**  
Could the Executive Member inform the Council as to what steps the Authority can take to recover costs from the mess and damage caused by gypsy incursions?

62.7 None Specific UllaKarin Clark has asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing the following question:

**Question**

Could the Executive Member update the Council on negotiations with the Government to find a solution to the funding of the Borough's Better Care Fund requirements?

62.8 None Specific Michael Firmager has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration the following question:

**Question**

The Localism Act allows residents or community groups to nominate buildings or land as Assets of Community Value. Does the Executive Member believe that this will provide the opportunity for communities in our Borough to protect those assets that are important to residents from being sold and developed?

**63. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS**

A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions in relation to the latest circulated volume of Minutes of Meetings and Ward Matters

**64. MOTIONS**

To consider any motions

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.11.2 a maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for each Motion to be moved, seconded and debated, including dealing with any amendments. At the expiry of the 30-minute period debate will cease immediately, the mover of the Motion or amendment will have the right of reply before the Motion or amendment is put to the vote.

64.1 None Specific **Motion 388 submitted by Alison Swaddle**

This Council encourages public buildings in Wokingham Borough to fly the Union Flag. In a time of discord and uncertainty, this Council believes that these actions would help to inspire residents of different faiths and backgrounds to feel united as part of our national life and proud to be British.

64.2 None Specific **Motion 389 submitted by David Sleight**

Our Vision is that our Borough should be a great

place to live and an even better place to do business. The latter needs excellent transport links but our journey times by train from Wokingham to Waterloo are uncompetitive having been extended over the past 40 years. With the re-franchising of the South Western about to be completed, we call for a journey time reduction so that journeys from and to Waterloo take no more than 59 minutes – in other words, Wokingham in One.

64.3 None Specific

**Motion 390 submitted by Richard Dolinski**

Recent figures have revealed that the number of blood donors in England has fallen by 25 percent in the last 10 years. A particular shortage has been identified in young blood donors, black and Asian donors, and donors with blood groups O-negative and A-negative. This Council supports the Missing Type campaign run by NHS Blood and Transplant, which is encouraging people to register as donors. This Council will publicise details of the campaign and how to give blood on its website and in Council publications. Further, this Council will lead a drive to increase blood donations from Wokingham Borough councillors and staff.

64.4 None Specific

**Motion 391 submitted by Lindsay Ferris**

This Council believes that our current Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure of 856 homes per annum which covers the period up to 2036 is far too high and unsustainable.

This volume of house building (in excess of 17000 homes) will cause significant harm to this area and destroy the rural nature of many parts of the Borough for ever. It will also cause significant traffic problems over and above our current ones, potentially leading to grid lock in various parts of the Borough.

We call on the Senior Members of this Council to:

- (a) Actively lobby for a substantial reduction in this figure to one more in line with, or below those of our neighbouring councils.
- (b) Ensure that any homes being proposed include housing for low income families, plus make allowance for key workers, without whom our Hospitals, Schools, Nursing Homes and other vital services would not be able to function properly in the future.

- (c) Ensure that the Green Belt is protected wherever possible, with any impact kept to an absolute minimum.

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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